

WORDS IN EDGEWAYS – 21

An **Ode** on the **Departure** of Blair and the **Accession** of Brown

in the form of a re-cycled failed application for Poet-Laureate,
in hope that the present incumbent is to be removed from office, to be replaced by
your countryman, Jock McGonagall

O modern material meritocratic
middle-class midcult man – cause
and effect of
the profound dialectic
of the invisible hand,
O truly synthetic:
single-minded, well-meaning
at one with the world you are in,
let me apply to you, show me how to belong –
how to be like you,
always above me, always there to be seen,
your inexhaustible excellence filling our screens.

To be at one! – with the classless elites,
media-millionaire men in the streets,
educated from a Russell Group College
in all skills and relevant knowledge,
processes, procedures,
that led and still lead you,
to please and progress
to adapt for success
to lead you to lead us,
educate, educate, educate me,
to your style of correctness and unction,
admit me to shine in the laureate-function.

May I fashion one sentence,
 to lead to acceptance,
 this CV of a he who wants to believe in
 your mode of being,
 construct you this ode,
 as required
 for selection from those who aspire
 like you, to be part of it all, always active, untired,
 by so many admired –
 to rise with you, higher and higher,
 in Promethean fire.

Ah, but my genial spirit
 fails, minute by minute,
 there's something about me
 I know'll make you doubt me,
 suspect me, and flout me
 it is hard to get anything
 right in these times, when we sing:
 to spend day after day doing this
 sort of thing,
 hope against hope – O what must I be
 I plead, will you tell me.

I falter, I fail,
 I cannot prevail,
 this poet in despondency can only guess,
 at what it is to be best
 to arise and give pleasure
 by your standards of curriculum* and measure,
 be published and popular -
 from bottom to top: you are
 the only one who can help me,
 I know it,
 to be your own People's Poet
 conform to the norm,
 of what I should try to perform:
 inform me of, please send me the form,
 for I throb
 for the job,
 one of your own, with you, in our home-
 land of the Wheel and the Dome.

*Please pronounce *cricklum*, for the rhythm.

Brian Lee lives at the end of a bridlepath in Northumberland,
 and doesn't get out much.