

A LIFE WORTH LIVING

*Picture an old man quietly sitting in his chair,
his wife sitting opposite just over there.
Grandad reading his newspaper, 'Nan contented
as if this was where marital bliss was invented.
She speaks a few words that float away in the air,
the old man shakes his head in mock despair.*

*An ordinary scene from an ordinary day.....
two old people living quietly, unobtrusively you may say.
And you would never know, if I hadn't written it on this page
that these venerable people are ninety three years of age.
And if that in itself is well beyond ordinary -
for sixty nine years of their lives they've been bound in loving matrimony.*

*Now, behind every great man, perceived wisdom declares,
is a woman, equally great, and let's leave that thought there,
because this man in the chair transcends even longevity -
a man of distinction even greater than creates this human chemistry.
This is a giant of a man, if not in physical stature
but a man without peers, of extraordinary character.*

*David Boyle was brought up in a tough part of Glasgow
and at 17 he joined the war effort even though he didn't have to
As a railway engineer his occupation was reserved
which meant he could only join the Army if he volunteered.
Volunteer he did and joined the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)
And, in 1944, his regiment was involved in a mission that was vital.*

*Operation Epsom was the turning point in World War II, many consider,
when the Allies fought their way from the beaches through France until they reached the Rhine river
David Boyle fought too, though both his commanders had been maimed.
he fought for his country, and for France and for hosts of people unnamed.
He fought for his life as all around him comrades died on the spot,
he fought not for glory, but for freedom and for those who could not.*

*Try to imagine, if you can, you are just eighteen years old,
you had never seen a rifle until a few months ago.
You are a dispensable pawn in a game of war,
sometimes you wonder what you're fighting for.
Each time you awaken - if you have slept at all -
you realise you could die any minute if the Grim Reaper's scythe falls*

*David Boyle survived, and he might have said to himself,
I am one of the lucky ones, it's the hand I've been dealt.
And perhaps it was then he decided that his life,
was a life worth living when so many had died.
And whilst he has never told me, because he told very few,
I believe that it was these events then that created his personal milieu.*

*As David's life unfolded, excellence was simply the norm -
I'd be willing to bet that is how he was born.
He excelled at golf, he was a very fine footballer
He loved to sing on stage and he was a star performer
in many amateur dramatic shows and plays
and he was still golfing at ninety two before he called it a day!*

*I can recall, with fondness, hearing him sing Danny Boy
at my son's christening, and oh how we enjoyed
his rendition coming as it did from a true and proud Celt
every word that he sang, truly heartfelt.
But then whatever he did he did with real integrity and endeavour -
it was just natural for him and it stayed with him forever.*

*Even as I reflect and begin to write,
I'd forgotten all the things he crammed into his life.
He was Army boxing champion, so he must have packed a punch,
he was lead singer in a Big Band and I have a hunch
If David Boyle had decided to be a concert pianist,
I have not the slightest doubt he'd have been one of the finest!*

*He worked for Rolls Royce and de Havilland, as an engineer
Sheila looked after the children, Janice and Alyson, whilst he made a career.
They became adopted Winsfordians and live there to this day -
all from a chance meeting in the Gateway of Ireland we know as Bray
Janice and Alyson married Harry and Philip and Sam, Tom and Emma arrived -
for David and Sheila a source of great pride*

*They awarded David Boyle Chevalier, Ordre National de la Legion d'honneur
The highest French Order of Merit so now his valour endures.
For men and women, like David, who were ready and willing to give their lives,
have made it possible for all of us to have a choice.
We can choose how to live and we can choose which path to take
because of the ultimate sacrifice they were prepared to make.*

*Someone asked me recently if he had any heroes -
where he got the inspiration, did I have any theories?
He would say that all the inspiration and that which comes from inside
came from those soldiers and comrades he fought beside.
And Grandad, you should know, I may be the one to have written this
but these loving words are from every one of your proud family..... and sealed with a kiss.*

