

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Home Thoughts from Abroad

by Janie Reynolds

Mars, 2100

Oh,
how I yearn
to return.
To a place,
you wouldn't believe.

A country,
so fair,
she roused romantic men,
to promise themselves,
not to women or boys,
but just to her temperate lands.

Browning, Shelly, Keats and Wordsworth,
privileged poets,
who basked in a nature,
so easy.
Where in Spring,
as it rose and then fell,
they could take off their shirts then put them back on.
Where in winter,
their leathers and wools
would shield and empower them,
to set off
and capture a snowflake.
And in summer,

where they could rip off their clothes,
splay bare,
and absorb all she had to give.
And in autumn,
would lament,
as the trees shed,
and the birds flew away.

Now, all lost,
for our children,
as they peer skeptically
across these burned sienna swirls
amidst the mud and rock
of this endless desert.

For those poets,
an english flower,
was predictable.
It blossomed and died,
just as the english tides
would rise and fall,
and the even-tempered grasslands of the moors,
would lay down their dusky heather cloaks,
as they always had.

Did they take it all for granted,
those thieves,
as they cast their shadows
over the great web of our land?

Like we did.

I once swam, naked,
before the oceans rose
and the rivers ruptured the banks.
When glaciers stood tall,
holding back Antarctica,
from drowning
the sea.
Before the ice sheets shattered
and the waters blistered
under our feet.
And the shrunken lakes
left nothing for us to drink.

I used to love to climb
the trees
that I saw devoured
by beetles,

powered by the heat.

And I watched
as multitudes
of limp technicolour fish
were dragged through bleached and acid corals,
drained of their complexions,
suffocated alive.

I saw the coming of the hurricanes,
that tore out the boats
and hurled them onto corroding rocks,
so all that was left of the fishing ports
was ghosts,
and piles of empty lobster pots
and wild, torn nets
dissolving in abandoned banks
of cracking mud.

We'd say that April was the cruelest month,
illuminating souls of the sad.
How naive we were
as we moaned that
fluffy clouds obscured the sun.

As I look to Earth,
to her lush, green belt,
now a strike of callous ash,
And a body beaten,
black where the fires raged,
blue where we all drowned at sea.
And huge swathes of green,
England,
Argentina,
Africa,
the Amazon,
gone,
and, as I look upon
this still and rusty soil,
I can't help asking,
Where is God?