

The Ghosts Of Tory's Hall

By Luke Maynard

The monks of Lindisfarne were not the last
To like their ceilings high. In Tory's Hall,
The empty headroom of that distant past
Left great minds of tomorrow feeling small.
The doubting men and women who sat massed
Beneath its condescending roof, stood tall
As giants in their earnestness, their moxie,
Their taste for spaces ponderous and boxy.

Like coursers pulling at the bit, we strain
Against the yoke of three hard years so fleeting
That we will not recall, nor come again,
Nor recollect with frosted hearts still beating
The vibrant life of silence, or this vain
And hopeful work – the feeling of a meeting
That ends with hope: we who return the keys
Will lose half into dream such times as these.

When we have scattered into the obscurity
Of twelve tall buildings overflown with riches,
The tort, the contract, and the odd security
Will nourish us, and scratch our spendthrift itches.
But as we come into our full maturity
Too big for all but the bespokest britches,
Will we still hark and heed the eerie chorus
Of all the minds who gamely went before us?

The Ghosts of Tory's Hall will give their lectures
Within the atria – the open galleries –
Of all our lawyer hearts, whose architectures
Are stamped and sponsored by who pays their salaries.

Beneath the vulgar noise and false conjectures
Of Bay Street life, it's Niblett's voice, and Alarie's,
Whose echoes, in our towers in the sky,
Will warn us what we've all become – and *why*.

Indeed, the most formidable facilities
Have too long been erected with the aim
Of luring scholars with of the best abilities
(Though typically, the middling students came).
If these stark walls have left you feeling ill at ease,
Know others in your year have felt the same,
As if some Pharaoh, blind in his ambition,
Hewed ceilings half as high as his tuition.

The landscape of a *school* is in the *minds*
That meet and fill its halls, however Spartan,
With reason and reflection. Motored blinds,
Whole rooms upholstered in their donor's tartan,
Goodman's café (the toaster is Henein's) –
At far extremes, this business can dishearten
Most students: but for access ramps and doors
To let minds in, such things the mind abhors.

The Ghosts of Tory's Hall – our predecessors –
Were bright young kids who fancied themselves scholars,
And came with the same need as their professors:
Not just the urge to whiten up their collars,
Nor still to lord themselves above their lessers,
Nor simply spend a lifetime grinding dollars.
They came to win a richness of the mind
As leaves such drab achievements miles behind.

The monks of Lindisfarne were not the last
To set their ceilings high – nor shall *we* be.
We've thoroughly *in vino veritass'd*;
We've striven for high honours (earned a "P");

And yet, the boundless wealth we have amassed

Exceeds the debt, and even the degree:

One short sleep past, the halls, the stacks, the shelves

All turn to mist – and we are ghosts ourselves.