

MORIENDUM EST

When I shall come to die as die we must
 (We are in transit here on longer journey
 Trainloads of exiles travelling through dark tunnels)
 I know I'll fear loneliness more than death
 Being alone to undertake a journey
 By night, not knowing where it starts or ends.
 If you, for old time's sake, will sit beside me
 To watch the parting, lay your hands on mine,
 Dear beloved friend, wife, son and daughters;
 And I shall feel less lonely, less cut off
 Being remembered by those whom I have loved.
 Such contact for a while will soothe the fears
 Of renunciations; painful separations
 From those we cherish; from the daily tasks
 Of 'lectures' and 'research' performed with zest
 Expressing a deep urge to live through work.
 Shed no idle tears. Remember me gently,
 Forgive my brusqueness and recall instead
 The love that bound us tight as one large family,
 Your dear faces will haunt me after death
 As I shall long for your sweet company,
 Remember, friends, our fight for 'a square deal'
 Such little things as meals in the canteen,
 The jokes, the conversation of the day,
 The laughter in the hours of relaxation
 Between one Council harangue and another.
 Remember and forget; remember only
 The many kindnesses we showed each other,
 The years of comradeship in our Alma Mater.
 Forgive the frailties of human flesh and blood;
 Remember me by what was best in me
 (Are we not all part Shadow and part Light?)
 Then look around you who are still alive
 And have more years before you to enjoy
 The comradeship of work before you die.
 Allow one farewell wish before I go:
 I wish you the sweet comfort of a hand

Laid on your own before your last goodbye;
 The parting kiss that will dispel the darkness
 Of the Unknown and will reveal in part
 The Mystery of that Love our Father, God
 And His Son, Jesus and the Holy Ghost
 Reserve for mortals at their journey's end.
 I travelled by this Light through life's dark tunnel
 God help you find your road by your own Lamp.

11th April, 1969.

J. AQUILINA

MALTESE SOCIETY

If you give a cocktail party, all the guests will be there
 Including the very ornate pillars of Maltese society.
 If 'tis instead a talk you give, most are busy elsewhere
 Including the paladins of Social Propriety
 Unless the Speaker is a 'big gun' from the Establishment
 Whose favours are bought with salaams and blandishment.

March 1969

J. AQUILINA

SMILE

*You need not smile
 For I will not smile back
 Unless it were a nice girl smiling
 When due return is courteous
 Or irresistible
 Smiles are a luxury
 Their price gone high through further super-taxes
 You are not on the list on whom
 My sun may smile
 And so I switch it off.*

*And may I ask you please to dim your light
 Your glare sears my complexion
 Cracks my flash
 The last that I am saving.*

13.ii.68.

BERNARD MALLIA, S.J.