

1975

Poem for Chandravadan Mehta

John Drew

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The Idea fixed in the mind but actually not realized
Reduces life to a chaos, Cambridge to a kaleidoscope,
The Cavendish to atoms. Autumn's fruits are scattered;
Chapel or not, each college is a lunatic asylum.

The Image has no option; either it shifts or shatters
Or ends in dissolution with Oxford, Kashmir, Canada,
Names which cozen the ear or enter the eye as forms.
The Mind is a flat landscape, full of ditches to fall in.

This is but a beginning; no cause to grieve a world
We cease to be immersed in; reality is relative;
Our children are not relations, our roots not in the soil.
Come. See. Heaven lowers its branches for us to climb.

Poem for Chandravadan Mehta / John Drew

Old man, scholar and endearing rogue, what strange star led you to London
Where I met you, face eclipsed, diminutive in a suit from Savile Row
As grey and full of propriety as was the city itself on that bright August
day.

A couple of months later, half the globe and a whole world away, I watched
you grow
The cotton falling off you in folds, white and finely-spun as the chameli
flowers past which we walked,
Petals of which you took, crushed and the essence showered
Upon my intellect, then made for me a garland I cannot now discard
Although I am back in London. My mind has been deflowered.

Two Aspects of Paternity / John Drew

1
You will not remember how we used to walk
Down to the lakeshore, singing in the snow,
Stick in your one hand, other hand in mine,
Your whole being so utterly giving as flesh
Can be when it is not intransigent.
This harking on the past measures a distance
Between us in the present. As you grow
Your prettiest dress becomes a suit of armour.