

1977

Planting

Mark Jarman

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Recommended Citation

Jarman, Mark. "Planting." *The Iowa Review* 8.3 (1977): 36-37. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2225>

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to us, please forgive me.
But don't look at me like that,
as if your eyes can't help

but hold an hourglass of light
in each, and light already six o'clock
and sinking. Makes me tired

enough to turn away from you
sometimes, from love
itself that makes me want

the two of us alive forever.

Planting / Mark Jarman

We are playing what our friend played
On the sea cliff: not falling.
It's a game where we walk the peaked
Mortar. Embedded gravel nicks our shoe heels.
And the wall, like a walk you dream of
In a bad dream, stretches out
From the coal bin to the end of the garden.
We won't fall. It's rhubarb on one side,
A plaster vase of bulbs on the other.
The factory chimney smears a black chalk line down the sky.

The day that boy crawled above us,
Delicate as a lizard, up the pigeon-holed cliff,
Dark blue in his school blazer and shorts,
We watched till the castle keep at the top
Melted him in shadow. How could he have fallen?
As if a trick had occurred
Like a blue bush from a hat, we turned
Our cricked necks to catch the magic
And he was down. A rain of torn clay
Pattered around us on the wet sand.

So, we are careful, remembering mainly
The way he mastered a wall—he could do it.
When you fall, rhubarb crunches like sugar.
When I fall, the plaster vase shatters
And the bulbs that the widow kept warm all winter
Spill over flagstones, ready for planting.

Anthony Burgess on “Apocalypse” / Interviewer: William M. Murray

The following interview was taped in Anthony Burgess's office in the English Department at The University of Iowa, October 27, 1975. A week prior to the interview, Burt Lancaster and Gian Carlo de Boscio, an Italian movie director, came to Iowa City to discuss a new film script with Mr. Burgess. Lancaster was interested in the life of Daniel Paul Schreber (Memoirs of a Mental Patient), and was trying to interest Burgess in doing a film script on Schreber's life. Mr. Burgess was already working on a script for a disaster film. He was also projecting a book on New York, and thinking of George III as a subject for an opera. His symphony had been performed here at Iowa by the University Orchestra, and so music was very much on his mind.

The interview remains substantially unchanged except for minor revisions for clarity and continuity. Mr. Burgess sits at his desk in a practically bare office, smoking a Dutch cigar. He speaks in bursts of monolog, waits, and then takes off again.

M: Mr. Burgess, I understand you are working at the moment on an apocalyptic theme. Are you thinking about apocalypse in terms of film or novel?

B: What happened was that I was approached by two big men in Paramount, or rather Universal, but Universal working along with Paramount for this particular project, Mr. Brown and Mr. Zanuck, who made a lot of money out of these disaster films, you know, *Earthquake* and *Jaws* and so on, and they want to make the ultimate disaster film about the end of the world.