

**Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
Creeps on this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time.
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!
Life is but walking shadow, a poor player
Who struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told of an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.**

I'm sure Ted knew that, and loved it.

He had great knowledge and love of high culture.

Not many who are aware of the concept of late Beethoven –the most difficult but profound and rewarding works.

His knowledge and love of literature was immense – he had a job which allowed him to read a lot.

He listened to a lot of music, and it seems to me that his knowledge of that was profound also.

He kept in touch – it was he who by so doing ensured that our friendship remained – When I bought my first house in about 1968 he as tenant there – he told me he still had the rent book.

He was present at my marriage to Elena– 40 years ago this year.He formed a warm relationship with my children, Benjie and Gaby. Playing language games with them, and suggesting and indeed buying books for them to read.

During life we went our different ways, he a signalman and Elena and I established professionals.

But he had his problems.

**Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorry,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleansethe stuffed bosom of that Perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?**

There is therapy set down 400 years ago.

Ted did seek therapy – two years at the Tavistock.

I think he had some more recently.

I don't think he ever got rid of his demons.

He made decisions in life that set him on a path.

He never did settle down permanently with a woman, and he did have opportunities. Nor did he have children – in fact he told me he did not want to be a father.

He could have done a degree and told me he had the chance of qualifying as a probation officer.

However, he said he did not want to give up the security of his job on the railway.

And who are we to say that his decision was wrong?

There was however a sense of potential unfulfilled.

He bought a place and also managed to save.

But it seems that his house was not place where he could feel at home – if that is the right way of putting it.

He always said it was too cluttered, and I for one have never been inside it – has anyone been entertained there?

But he did have a good circle of friends – just look around.

I wonder if we each thought that other people were seeing him

I for one knew of his ability to become depressed, and I learnt that if you did not hear from him for a little while, I should ensure I made contact with him.

Nothing in his life

Became him like the leaving it. He died

As one who had been studied in his death

To throw away the dearest thing he owned

As t'were a careless trifle.

I cannot comprehend his death, and I think that goes for all of us.

I understand that I was the last person to have a proper meeting with him, the last of his circle of friends that he saw.

I telephoned and he told me he had just bought his retirement flat.

We arranged that we would meet in Ikea for him to buy a bed.

He then changed the arrangement – he was not up to that, and we arranged to meet for lunch.

I telephoned to say I was running late, and he said he was in a bad way, and was not good company, and did I want to meet.

I knew that was the very time to meet him.

He said he was lonely.

We discussed his depression.

We agreed it was endogenous – not caused by an outside event, but welling up from inside him.

We discussed his new flat – that appeared positive, as if he was setting himself up for the future.

He had to sell his house, and Gill and other friends were helping him clear it out. – again that seemed very positive.

The first meeting with the other residents in his new flat was to be the next week – a scrabble evening I think.

He said how U3A was starting again next week, and what a godsend that was to him.

I suggested that he should do a more substantial course – one that would involve private study and its greater involvement. – Birkbeck, for instance.

He quite quickly turned the conversation round, asking how I and my family were.

He ate heartily, even finishing off my dish – he never liked waste.

We agreed to meet again, soon, either to buy the bed, help him move, or to have dinner at my place with Marie – I can't recall which.

That was on the Sunday, and it was on Friday that I got Gill's telephone call.

Subsequently I am left with a feeling that Ted had made his decision – had concluded intention.

No point in telling anyone – that would have resulted in a flurry of activity, I presume Ted felt, that would soon have died down and not have solved anything for him.

And Ted of course died alone.

A few lines from a Latin poem, which Ted knew and which Verdi put to music – the Requiem Mass

Agnus dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,

Dona eo requiem aeternam, qui pius es.

Oh lamb of god, who takest away the sins of the world, give him eternal rest, because you are kind.

Requiescat in pace.