

13th January 2022

Grey

**“Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean;
the world has grown grey from Thy breath.”**

Algernon Charles Swinburne, Hymn to Proserpine

For my journey to Islay this week, I'd armed myself with my camera so I could begin a pictorial record of my time here. But it wasn't worth it. The whole world, it seemed, had "grown grey". Whether that was from the breath of Swinburne's "Pale Galilean", or due to the vagaries of Scotland's winter weather, mattered little. It was just grey all around us for the two-hour ferry trip to Islay. I saw little or nothing. No decent photographs ...

It was grey from the ferry terminal to my home too, sometimes *very* grey, as low-lying parts of the winding road were shrouded in thick banks of mist. The sun is shining now (at least, it's trying to) but for my arrival here it seemed that Swinburne had it right – the whole world was grey.

Two thoughts came to mind in the greyness of my arrival. The first is the line of a song I ended up singing out loud as I arrived at my destination. It's from the pen of the wonderful Tom Paxton:

Even a grey day is a good day now.

Paxton sings of love, friendships, and all the things that sustain him in the worst of times. He, like of all of us, has his grey days. But even in the greyness, there was hope, and life, and love, and purpose. In *my* grey day, I felt exactly the same, and I thank God for what that does for me.

The second thought is from a prayer by the late George McLeod (one I quoted in full last Easter Day) which is included in *50 Great Prayers from the Iona Community*, (www.ionabooks.com):

*Thou art there within the cloud to challenge us to love.
Show to us the glory in the grey.*

Therein is my task: to believe that in my grey days, God will not abandon me to my greyness; to know that, within any grey cloud, there is the challenge to love, and go on loving; to keep my eyes open, and to be aware that, though the whole world may appear to have "grown grey", there will always be the light of the glory of God waiting to break through.

A prayer for today

Help me, loving God, even on the worst of days, to look for the glory in the grey. Amen

An original reflection by @ Tom Gordon

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