

fuck off he can do so without fear of being smashed for it. They aren't mollycoddled: they're treated as equals; so the adults react to them just as honestly.

They went to the local school for a while but didn't like it so they don't go now. They educate themselves.

We live fairly anarchistically. We eat communally (vegetarian) but there's no rotas, people just do what needs doing in their own time. We grow our own vegetables, we've goats and chickens, we dig our own peat and we'll sell the car soon and use a donkey and cart. We've also bought a cottage on an offshore island with 10 acres of land, where a neighbour has plans for some alternative technology projects.

I haven't solved anything like all my problems but Atlantis is the first place I've ever been able to show who I really am. I've dropped my old social roles and forms of relating: talking behind people's backs without a word to their faces, pretending not to be hurt when I wanted to burst into tears, philosophizing about problems of life in general while desperately avoiding discussing personal problems and interpersonal hassles, hiding my fears beneath parties, booze and dope.

I feel far more centred in me. I've slowly begun to break down the negative images of myself locked in my body through years of rejection, and I can see through others' shit far easier than before.

It's scary being open and admitting my needs and hurts but I can tell people and let my fear out in front of them, and my body's looser and freer and it's exciting too exploring areas of myself I've walled off for years.

Therapy isn't something separate from life. What I've learned in my sessions about how I was fucked about as a kid I apply to how I treat people in the present; so I don't mess up those I live (and love) with. I don't see Atlantis as an escape from society. It's the most real, alive part of society I've ever been in. The falseness and superficiality of most relating in the outside world sickens me, and the saddest thing is that just beneath that superficial front is a person with deep feelings who wants to be loved and to give love, and to be able to trust people enough to tell them who he really is.

DUOLOGUE

NOW

We have to decide
now
and each decision
proliferates alarmingly into so many possibilities
like cells multiplying
that we cannot see an end to it.
If you go out of the house,
now,

or an instant sooner, or later,
you may initiate a chain of circumstance
that leads you to your death
or someone else's.
Say this word,
now,
or leave it unsaid:
and you may find loves, or enmities,
springing like glittering spears on every side
to trap you.
And to do nothing,
dithering too long between alternatives,
is in itself a kind of action,
the one most likely to turn out badly.
The worst pitfall
is thinking back,
saying, I should have done this,
and then,
it would all have turned out differently.
You cannot ever be certain.
All you can do
is to be quite sure of what you want
and reach out for it
the moment it seems to be within your grasp;
although it may be illusion, although you find
a knife instead of a rose, curses in place of kisses,
hemlock for laurel.
Because whether you find or lose it, hold or kill it,
you cannot wait,
you have to decide
now.

Sheila Blanchard

ANOTHER NOW

I do not decide
now or ever.
without decision
life proliferates excitingly and unconfined
expanding cellular energies
unending, unforeseen, unforeseeable.
I go out of the house
or not
there is no if
no later sooner . . . now is now

I go now
I am the chain of circumstances
if they lead to death
mine or yours
they lead
there is no if.
whether I say the word or not
is not in my will
but in the chain
I am in the chain: I am the chain.
loves spring glittering and sometimes enmities
but there is no trap unless I see a trap
love is: hate is: the chain is: I am
doing nothing
poised in the balance between alternatives
is the only action
and it will turn out as it turns out
there is no goodly or badly
and no turning back or looking back
and who wants to be certain
a stone is certain, I think.
all you can do
is be and experience and exult in the chain
reach for nothing, want nothing
but drink in illusion
experience the knife's edge, the pain of cursing
the bitterness of now
because whether you find or lose it, hold or kill it,
you do not have to wait, or not wait
you do not have to decide or not decide
now is now is now

Vivian Milroy

IT IS ENOUGH TO BE

It is enough to be
when shaped by elemental forces;
buffeted by great winds,
gasping under keen rains,
Easy, then, to exult in the moment,
accept, drink in the experience,
become one with the chain and chance of circumstance.

Down in the sheltered valley, paths are smooth,
no currents lift the air, and nothing moves

unless one moves oneself: experience is stagnation:
acceptance, resignation come empty-handed.
And one still has to decide
whether to buy sausages or fish fingers for dinner.

Sheila Blanchard

BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

*Do you measure out your life with sausages?
Reach for the stars with fish fingers?
If you are in the valley
You have chosen the valley
And running in circles
Will only stir the corruption
Make the smooth paths smoother.
You can choose to decide
To live in the valley
And live off fish fingers
Or you can choose the sun and the rain
And the fear and loneliness.
Or you can sit quietly in your valley
Be totally aware and absorb its reality
And as you absorb it the air will move
And the sun warm.
But be still! Give life time to find you*

V.M.

YES, I AM STILL

I have worshipped gods, and made gods,
been god, and denied all gods;
and I remain.
I have drifted with the stream,
neither active nor passive,
but accepting.
My face has been open,
loving no-one nor hating any
of all creation's creatures.
Life has found me,
used me and left me empty,
too many times.
Now, beyond hope or despair,
I wait in the sun-filled valley
for the last shadow.

Sheila Blanchard