

NEWARK BOOK FESTIVAL



Come Rest a Moment

for St Mary's Church

I know a place where we can rest awhile,
where sunlight streams through shards of coloured glass.
A sanctuary, built in Gothic style;
a glorious reminder of the past.

This great, imposing edifice of stone
belies the gentle solace found within.
A quiet spot to sit and be alone;
the cooling shade, like water on the skin.

Come breathe the tranquil scent. Embrace the calm
of momentary stillness, amplified.
The comfort of the silence is a balm
to sooth against the ceaseless haste outside.

A peaceful moment, borrowed from the past.
A sunbeam filtered through the coloured glass.

This poem is a Sonnet. A sonnet is a type of poem that has 14 lines, and a regular rhyming pattern. This poem celebrates the beauty and calm of St Mary's Church.

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Last Orders

for the Olde White Hart

Built of brick and beams and travellers' tales, the stories, told by painted saints, are much too strange and olde to understand. Now, each memory is sepia and white. Warmed by nostalgia and fleeting folklore, learnt by hart.

Every pint of ale, drunk through chapped lips, is treacle-thick, amber-coloured. "One more for the road!" The straw-floored stables steam out back. The smell of spilt beer and mutton stewing on the hearth. And the knowledge that, however far we roam, Newark beer is best!

When Cromwell's men sought to make starving examples of us, we stood strong. Stoic as saints. Well aware of the taste of unfiltered Trent water, and shoe leather. Dreaming of a frothing tankard by candlelight, and old songs sung loud and late.

These memories made mortar. Unchanging since fifteenth century folk flocked to soak up travellers' tales. Each century since warmed by the same shining sun. Histories building brick upon brick, word upon word, while bunting flutters in these breezy Market Place skies, here in the heart of England.

This poem is a Golden Shovel, which means that the last words of each line of the poem form a sentence or phrase. In this case, the last words of each line read: *The Olde White Hart is one of the best examples of a late fifteenth century building in England.*

NEWARK BOOK FESTIVAL



Stage Fright at Gladstone's Window

for the Clinton Arms

A public speech can bring a man prestige,
if he can quell the tremble in his heart.
Some men display their confidence with ease
while others pace and shake themselves apart.

If I can quell the tremble in my heart,
and turn this terror into competence,
I'll elevate composure to an art
and manifestly try to talk some sense.

Some men display their confidence with ease;
and others fake their faith until its sticks.
I'll deeply breathe until my fear's appeased,
dispensing with the politician's tricks.

While others pace and shake themselves apart,
I'll take the plunge, and make my courage heard:
so, let's begin the speech, let's make a start!
And judge me by my deeds and thoughts and words!

This is a modified version of a Trimeric poem – a form that plays with line repetition. In 1832, William Ewart Gladstone – the newly elected MP for Newark – addressed the crowds from the central window of the Clinton Arms. Was he nervous before he spoke?

NEWARK BOOK FESTIVAL



Besieged

for the Governor's House

Let's celebrate our history;
this place survived a Civil War!
When Newark was a town besieged –
relieved in sixteen forty-four –

this building was a vital part
of how the siege was lost and won.
A timber-bolstered hideaway,
where plans were forged, and deals were done.

It's stripy, like a boiled sweet,
but don't be fooled - it played its part!
If Newark is a living beast,
this house would be its beating heart.

Three hundred years and more have passed
since soldiers last surrounded town.
But, if they ever come again,
I know where we can hunker down.

So, if the town's besieged again
let's make our way to Stodman Street.
We'll hide out with the sausage rolls –
all camouflaged by pastry treats!

We'll shelter here, among the loaves,
the sandwiches and vegan bakes.
Let folk outside do as they please;
We'll be just fine, beside the cakes.

This is a Ballad – a simple rhyming type of poem, originating in Medieval Western Europe. Newark suffered three sieges during the English Civil War; one in February 1643, one in March 1644, and one from November 1645 to May 1646.

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View from the Town Hall

for the Newark Town Hall

I'm your Town Hall, and here I stand
My Georgian face is pretty grand!
A source of full-on civic pride;
for charm, I'm overqualified!
My gorgeous rooms in high demand!

On Market Place, I take command –
Revered and loved throughout the land.
My banquet rooms are idolised!
I'm your Town Hall.

Come seek me, and you'll understand,
I guide the town with steady hands.
Dependable, just like the tides
I wouldn't leave (I'd never try)
I hope that, here, I'll always stand.
I'm your Town Hall.

This is a rondeau – which is a type of poem with a strict rhyme scheme and a repeating refrain. This one is written from the point of view of Newark Town Hall. I think it has every right to have so much self-confidence. It is a very beautiful building!

NEWARK BOOK FESTIVAL



"Only Ruins"

For Newark Castle

"It's such a shame there's only ruins here"
says one well-meaning tourist to her friend.
As if some crumbly walls reduce its flare,
and partial deconstruction spells the end.

Still standing tall, despite some disrepair –
eight hundred years have brought us to this stage –
so, please forgive some minor wear and tear.
(I hope I look as good when I'm that age!)

See, when they took our roof, we dined outdoors,
transmuting every hardship into gold.
We celebrated beauty in our flaws
and never, ever did as we are told!

Some folk will ruin what they can't control.
This is no ruin: this is Newark's soul.

This poem is a Sonnet. A sonnet is a type of poem that has 14 lines, and a regular rhyming pattern. This poem celebrates the Castle, which was slighted in 1648. Is it a ruin? Or is it a beautiful place to meet friends, have a picnic and for music, culture and the arts.