

SCOTTISH VILLAGE

*It was difficult to get into the  
Cemetery. The furrows in the fields  
Were long channels of mud. The  
Slanting rain stirred the red muck  
In the lane till it ran, like dark  
Blood, into the weed chocked gullies.  
Clouts of cow dung clung to my boots.  
The long grass, the dogs' dirt, the  
Empty cans of McEwan's lager guarded  
That neglected and forgotten place.*

*All that was left was a crumbling  
Monument and the arch of the Old Kirk.  
Lichen, like the scribbled writing  
Of some vandal, high on Crack was  
Sprayed on the red sandstone and  
Made the words near impossible  
To read.*

*'Here lies James Thomson, shot on  
The 1st June 1679, by Bloody Graham  
Of Clavers House, for Adherence to the  
Word of God, Scotland's Covenanted  
Work of Reformation.'*

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*Blood mixed with rain, trickling  
Down the wet grass. The wretched  
Fool, stands there, dirty, kicked  
Half starved, looking out to the murky  
Moors. That awful loneliness of those  
Moments before death. Beaten into  
Stubborn defiance, by the brutish  
Beasts who leer and spit. What makes  
A man suffer such a death?  
This is the paradox, the puzzle.*

*The two faces of a people. The  
Ambivalence which makes the Beauty lie  
Down with the Beast, the Idealist with  
The Barbarian, the Temperate Man with  
The extremist.*

*Bloody Graham, pig ignorant, still  
Haunts the village, a place of  
Weavers and miners. God's own country,  
Say some. God forsaken, I think.*

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*He sprays graffitti on windows,  
Burns cars, drinks himself senseless  
In the shattered market place shouting  
Obscenities at the other tribe.  
Bigotted. Envious. Violent.*

*Yet the stricken James still shares the  
Un hallowed ground. Still stands in  
The rain, rags clinging to his bruised  
Skin, wrists, purple, bloodied with the  
Rough rope, head lowered, waiting for  
The shot, the deafening roar;  
James, the fierce pride, the honesty, the  
Stubborn will, clinging to a truth,  
The simple man of courage.*

(AC) ANITA CAMPBELL