

Phillip Mellor

**LIFE BEGINS
AT FORTY**

40 Selected Poems

Silent Days Studio
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FORTY

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THE BEACH

Dawn breaks.

The hazy sun that warms the sand
sparkles like stars glistening with sweet silence.

Alone I listen
as peaceful morning awakens.
Not a solitary footprint spoils the beach;
not a single voice speaks.

It is winter,
the wind cuts the air like a knife
slicing through the summer;
the happy laughter, and sandcastle memories

of all my summers pass
as fish flash silver in the waves.
The rain falls at last,
its fizz and rattle on beach hut roofs
lulls me back to the boy, and the beach, years away,
as storm clouds shroud the day.

A crack of thunder,
an echo of lightning ghosts the dark,
fading to blinked traces over the sea.
Hours pass in the rage.

The wind hurls the waves headlong to shore;
again and again they are flung,
until the caliginous clouds are cleaved open
by crepuscular rays of sun.

The storm is hushed.
The waves brush the sand
and peace returns to the beach once more.

MURMUR

We wait here
listening to the hum
that comes below the light
and catches us off guard
on this effervescent night.
At midnight we gather
below the old sycamore tree
to listen to it breathe;
pressing seeds into the soil
with our feet,
we wait for them to grow.

WHITBY

Here on the hill by the Abbey
an almost silence caresses your ears.
The whispered crash of the sea
on the sand below; the soft sighs of salty air.

A distant memory may touch your thoughts,
but the breeze will blow it away.
Wash it out of mind and make you think like new again.
As you lift your face to the sun,
you can almost feel the sea spray on your skin,
and your troubles ebbing away.

Oh how I love this quaint little town,
its winding hilly streets narrowly filled with feet.
The smell of smoking kippers in the air,
the gulls that swoop and soar.
The Jet as black as Dracula's heart,
the seaweed on the shore.
The one hundred and ninety-nine steps
to count as you climb,
a heaven to ascend, a dream to find
the sweeping panoramic view of the town,
as standing alone you look down
to see the boats on the Esk,
coming and going,
leaving white tails behind them
in a foaming bottleneck.