

# HESWALL

a short sequence of poems by

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1

tonight the moon is as loud as neon  
and its fellow traveller  
drags it across a bright cloud sky

on Telegraph Road  
the Methodist church spire points  
its way into the stars

a rocket ship travelling  
far beyond the world  
an amplifier for our intentions

once prayers were sent  
from a universe  
with Earth at its centre

and they would pass beyond  
the third glass dome  
to where the science was made

“science is the gift of God  
like our intelligence”  
gives us the power to make mistakes

2

at the end of something  
we came to Heswall  
and found a beginning

a place to close the door  
and lock the world  
outside

we came with the children,  
Charlie and the fish  
brought our plants

and plans our books  
boxes of things  
and heads full of memories

found a place where faces smile  
and found a church  
along the road

3

“Do you believe  
*EVERYTHING* in the Bible?”  
he asked it with emphasis

the “everything”  
was ominous    waiting  
in ambush

he had his hit list  
of the incongruous  
implausible and archaic

waiting to snap out  
like a frogs tongue  
to catch a fly

I believe that it  
contains the Truth  
but not that it is all true

“That is the same thing.”  
he said  
I didn't argue with him



4

on the wall of the church  
you can read the names  
of the long ago dead

just names on plaques  
the people they were  
now otherwise unremembered

but their voices echo  
in the hymns that were old  
even when they sang them

you and I live in the moment  
sing our hymns  
live our lives

maybe some future generation  
will sit in the church  
and wonder

who sat there before them  
maybe they will read  
our names on a plaque

5

there is a familiar tune  
in the church  
but the black words  
on the bright screen  
are new

I have heard  
what they have to say  
in a thousand songs  
heard them sung  
in many languages

like folk songs  
reused resung  
reinvented  
a cathedral of sound  
built for worship

6

here in the church made from stone  
born from the particles  
of the great beginning

from atoms forged in the heart  
of stars to create  
a rock of ages

strong against passing time  
here we know this too  
will return like everything to dust

and there at the eternal  
cold end of the universe  
our God and Heaven wait

7

this morning  
the winter sun  
was low in the sky

long lazy shadows  
hugged the ground  
as the sunshine warmed us

we had a long walk  
across the common  
then back along Telegraph Road

over the rolling land  
as we watched traffic pass  
and heard the slow effort of cyclists

we topped a hill  
with one more rise to come  
one more small effort to reach home



8

the Bible in the bookshop  
was old    margins covered  
in spidery words

some owner after years of study  
attempting to understand  
what it was saying

had passed it on  
their legacy of hours spent  
showing on every leaf

and near the back  
covering a page of text  
a question mark

9

when I heard the news  
I prayed for you  
not the kneeling down

eyes closed  
hands clasped  
type of praying

but the other sort  
that speaks  
as voices in the mind

rolls over options  
presents them as argument  
for what is right and fair

you know that sort of prayer  
it's the one we all say  
everyone of us

10

late one evening  
the road was still  
snow fresh and falling

we walked  
along Telegraph Road  
planting feet in new drifts

the Church roof  
covered in snow  
the walls flecked white

alone on the hill  
no foot or wheel prints  
no sounds

just the snow  
crunching  
as we walk