

# Two Poems

by [James Stevens Curl](#) (February 2019)



*The Embrace*, Egon Schiele, 1917

## **An die ferne Geliebte** *for Felis*

When evening comes, and shadows spread,  
Remember then the times we shared:  
And in your thoughts imagine well  
In tenderness, the *Sanctum's* bell:  
A silver note, a slight caress  
A whispered thought, a wantonness  
That promised life, and gave, and took  
All things, compressed, within our book.  
I love you now, by day and night,  
At eventide, in morning light:  
No hour goes by without your face  
Before my eyes, in some dark place

With troubles shared, distress consoled,  
In blessed thoughts dispelling cold  
That tightly grips, in wild dismay  
The agonies throughout each day.  
May every blessing Life bestows  
Make yours fulfilled, for my soul knows  
None other that could bring me peace  
So wonderful, so calm, to cease  
All stress: may gods protect you safe  
Keep you radiant, lovely waif,  
My joy, my lady, heart's desire,  
For no-one else could tend this fire.

*Sanctum Sanctorum, Hibernia, MMXIV*



*Schiffe auf Reede*, Caspar David Friedrich, 1816

## Islands

*for A M K P*

A strangeness, other of that entity  
as yet unformed, insinuates, invades,  
with senses dimmed; and bitter longing trades  
unconsciousness for lost tranquillity.  
Soft voices mingle; garlands on *that* tree  
exult in colour; indigo, the skies  
above this Baltic earthly paradise,  
are mirrored in the tideless, lulling sea.  
Then agonies, in waves against the shore,  
shatter dreams of distant sands in southern climes,  
where ancient wickedness returned once more,  
and *Pan the Cloven* laughed among the pines.  
Elusive northern light betrays no key  
to what disturbed the day's sad mystery.

Fredericia, MCMLXVIII

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**James Stevens Curl** is a leading architectural historian, and read for his Doctorate at University College London. He was twice Visiting Fellow at Peterhouse, University of Cambridge, and is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy, a Fellow of the Societies of Antiquaries of London and of Scotland, and a Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. His most recent books are *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture* (with contributions on landscape from Susan Wilson), 2015, and *Making Dystopia*, 2018, both published by Oxford University Press.

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