

## FLOWERS FOR FRANK

Dreams and visions of a better world.  
A long-haired cowboy on a bicycle,  
puffing a cigarette, crosses the bridge,  
coming from the street of the Blind Donkey,  
threading his way through the tourist throng.  
Spanish buildings of sixteen hundred watch  
while Frank Van Acker, dead burgemeester  
of twenty years, stares at the fishmarket  
over the wilting yellow wreaths at his feet,  
proof that even politicians can be loved.  
Motorboat megaphones murmur mysterious  
messages into the ears of passengers  
"doing" the town in a slightly different way.  
Schoolgirls float about answering quizzes  
on paper – or are they writing poems too  
to charm their contemporaries? Snatches  
of English in thick American accents. Snaps.  
In Venice too and in some Baltic cities,  
while these words are written, locals like me  
capture a so-called spring afternoon in words,  
comfortably installed on green benches  
while their partners pop round to see a friend  
who has also recently returned from abroad.  
Colourful flags flutter in the cool breeze  
coming from the west and threatening rain.  
Pigeons swoop over crenellated rooftops.  
A friend reads the paper in the port of Hydra,  
finding out which countries are at war,  
who has money and when the crash will come.  
A seagull chases his fellow off the wall  
overlooking the canal where black wavelets  
lap against the skirts of well restored houses.  
A boy in a red jacket puts his hand up  
to touch the bridge as the boat goes under.  
Furiously the glockenspiel announces to us  
the death of one hour and the birth of another.  
A playful German couple in their sixties  
come, and just as quickly go. Visions and dreams  
of worlds beyond the range of telescopes,  
moods conjured by fine and subtle music,  
the faintness of a watercolour angel.  
Can Frank, alive and well on planet Neptune,  
clearly see all this through his iron glasses?

Friday 11 May 12, 15.10.

Marcus Cumberlege [www.marcuscumberlege.com](http://www.marcuscumberlege.com)