

Hardy's acute sense of the ironies of fate, the twisting and splintering of the square pegs of character in the round holes of circumstance.

Thus the reputation of the younger Pitt passed through the literature of nineteenth-century England. With animosities cooled and politically motivated praises no longer of any use, he emerged into the twentieth century as a great man manqué—a heroic figure out of the past, worthy of remembrance but never to be free of the stigma of defeat. In dealing with Nelson and Wellington, history forgets the failures and uncertainties and recalls only the triumphs; with Pitt, whose victories were those of finance and legislation rather than of cannon and warship, the failures were more spectacular and have remained longer in the public, and literary, imagination.

MORNING SMOKE

Bill Howell

Sitting on differences,
smoke and blue sky day clouds, almost
lost in white, feet too
lazy for walking.

Handing out hellos, like apples
to good little children, to friendly
neighbourly folks, munching by on shared smiles,
almost like friendly neighbours.

Staring at the stupid smoke, curling
the same way if it's from a first
cigarette from a new pack, or a spare
almost second last one from the last.

Wondering what would happen to the sky,
the smiles, if someone strolls along, asks
the day and you if you have another
smoke or apple.