The Knotting Poems

SAMPLER
Selected Books by Martin Booth

Poetry
The Crying Embers (1971)
Coronis (1973)
Snath (1975)
The Knotting Sequence (1977)
Extending Upon the Kingdom (1977)
Devil’s Wine (1980)
The Cnot Dialogues (1981)
Meeting the Snowy North Again (1982)
Killing the Moscs (1985)

As Editor
James Elroy Flecker, Unpublished Poems and Drafts (1971)
The Book of Cats (1977) (with George MacBeth)
Aleister Crowley: Selected Poems (1986)

Non-Fiction
British Poetry 1964 to 1984: Driving Through the Barricades (1985)
Carpet Sahib, A Life of Jim Corbett (1986)
Rhino Road: The Black and White Rhinos of Africa (1992)

Fiction
Hiroshima Joe (1985)
The Jade Pavilion (1987)
Black Chameleon (1988)
Dreaming of Samarkand (1989)
A Very Private Gentleman (1990)
The Humble Disciple (1992)
The Iron Tree (1993)
Toys of Glass (1995)
Adrift in the Oceans of Mercy (1996)
The Industry of Souls (1998)
Islands of Silence (2002)
Martin Booth

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SAMPLER

Shearsman Library
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SAMPLER
The Knotting Sequence

SAMPLER
for Jim and Norb & Katherine
who flew me

SAMPLER
NAMING THE PLACE

Chenotinga
Cnottinga
Gnottinge
Knotyng
Knottinge
Knotting

they have called
this the
Place of
the Sons
of
Cnot
INSTRUCTIONS TO READERS

52°. 15’. 40”
North

0°. 31’. 45”
West

a row of dying elms

the crack of frost

the cry of lapwings

Knotting
SAMPLER
at last a
place with no
enemies

said Cnot settling
there, unaware
of the sun’s
bite and the
moon’s pull and
the snow
in the name of
Offa

in the name of
Arthur

in the name of William
of Normandy

in the name of
Henry
John
Coeur de Lion
Victoria

I declare these
fields
royal

no screams the
dead Cnut

tese blades
of grass
are ours
THE TOADSTOOL

livid, white
in the brown,
busted earth

see it
raise its
ugly, venereal
head

*phallus*
*impudicus*

Cnot’s rude
jest
potsherds
beads

a knife-blade
stones

bones
a clay ball

I wish
there was a
way,
Cnot,
for you to
send to
me a

portrait
peace
is Cnot’s field

quiet
is Cnot’s field

soft
is snowfall
is Cnot’s field

green
is Cnot’s field

red berries
is Cnot’s field

wind-strewn grass
and birdsong
is Cnot’s field

you’ve
just
been

there
NOISES FROM THE WOLD

who owns those screams?
who lives to scream so?
who dies in such screaming?

not the trees
not the birds
not the voles and squirrels
not the dumb adders
not the licentious frogs
not even
the snared
and howling
hares

only one
can scream
so, said
Cnot

not I
not I
not I

he counted his
sons and daughters
and brothers and sisters and wives
and dogs

all correct

but some-
one was
screaming
in the forest
Cnot tried
screams

he howled
and the wolves answered

he twisted his flesh
and the snake loved him

he caterwauled
and the echo returned
to crawl into his mouth

and die

whatever
it was
it was not
the scream of a pulled grass stem
or the jay’s mimickry

Cnot drew
closer to the sound of pain

over it
and through it
he placed
a newer
noise

a grunt
a groan
a moan
a bellowed sigh
not a boar
not a lame man lifting a log
not a lover
with his jointed groin
and the release
of life

Cnot peered
over the chaos
of bushes

It is said that,
in the field above the
church in nearby
Yelden, there
was fought a
skirmish between the
local Belgae and
a small unit of the
Roman occupation
force sometime in
the last two
decades of the first
century AD an
arrowhead of bronze was
discovered when grave-
digging in the last
century the local
tribe were resoundingly
defeated.