

## A SELF POEM IN TIME OF POLITICS AND PLAGUE 9.4.20

### *Haystack*

For children the world is a broken plate

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I and my school friend played on a haystack  
Bare knees we lurched climbed slid screamed with panic joy  
Dug dark cavernous hideaways in golden straw  
My friend's father owned the haystack  
A rich farmer  
In time he bought his son a motorbike  
The steel steed of the fens  
We were strangers with memories  
One night driving home on a long straight fen road to a bridge  
A lorry – accident – killed  
I was in the army national service  
Over me a wooden floor  
Power authority class-culture spoke the accent of heels  
Demobbed  
No education no manual skills  
Mindless jobs pittance paid  
Lonely bed sits in commuter dusty suburbs  
I have never begged on streets  
I scribbled  
Twenty years after the war heel-culture was still flushed  
Might victory even have a purpose?  
The wooden floor above me creaked  
The heels shuffled in a crippled dance  
I wrote a play  
Staged – banned – the censor laws abolished  
I was a playwright  
I wrote on the horizon of the lower eyelid  
I tumbled space  
She held my hand as I wrote  
They stamped  
The wooden floor above me fell apart  
Thrashed like wings of a dying bird  
The dead bird is stuffed with straw  
Over me I saw the sun in its sheet of ice  
I spend my life writing in a cement haystack