

## Thought for the Day – Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021

By Revd John Marshall

**Malcolm Guite     After Prayer**

### **How to scan a poet**

I recently shared an experience with Malcolm Guite, when I had a scan. I was impressed by the care and efficiency of the staff at St George's. I was very pleased that the scan had my name on it.

How to scan a poet

My doctor tells me I will need a scan;  
I tap a nervous rhythm with my feet,  
'Just count to five,' she says, 'and then sit down.'

The gist of it is printed on this sheet,  
So read it over when you are at home,  
We'll have a clearer picture when we meet.'

I read the letter in a waiting room,  
Its language strangely rich for one like me;  
Image, Contrast, Resonance; a poem

Slips into view amidst the litany  
Of Latin terms that make our medicine  
A new poetic terminology.

The door is opened, I am ushered in  
To lisp my list of symptoms, to rehearse  
The undiscovered art of naming pain.

'It's called *deep inspiration*,' says the nurse,  
'Draw deep for me then simply hold your breath  
And stay composed.' So I composed this verse.

She says 'We dye for contrast, to unearth  
Each hidden image, which might bring  
Some clue that takes us closer to the truth.

Be still and I will pass you through the ring.  
Three passes, all in rhythm, and you're free  
The resonance will show us everything.'

And now my Muse says much the same to me,  
Scanning these lines, and calling me to sing.

After Prayer Malcolm Guite Canterbury press

I didn't have the dye; but the treatment was excellent.

Let us give thanks to God for the wisdom and skill of all who work in the NHS. For the imagination and knowledge that enables people to build and maintain such machines – we give you thanks for the scientists and engineers.