

I read your sms about John Moriarty this morning. It's almost unbelievable - Gary McDarby's last few communications did give fair warning, of course, but it's still very sad to hear. For everyone who was set thinking by him, it's a shame. If he himself hadn't been so poetic about the possibilities inherent in our limited lifespan, it would be a disappointment and an injustice that he's died before seeing his College: he made it clear that in living with a mind for what's gone before and what will come, he intended to move beyond such a simplistic relationship with time and the world (next pay cheque, next bill, next project) to a simple one (I am alive and in a complex world made of simple things - how now will I live and then die?).

I go back over and over again to Nostos, taking passages randomly and chewing them over, or taking them over to other books and showing them to the pages, saying, "What have you to say about this, then? It's a problem, wouldn't you think?" I doubt I've read it all yet, although the number of hours I've spent on it would suggest I could have done. Anyway, the main reason for mentioning it was that autobiographies are generally, if they're the high-minded sort, a description of a life's work or actions. This one is categorically different in that it is the work, or a part of it. It's a simple part of what he was trying to do all along, to balance the real with the true, the obvious with the self explanatory, the religious with the spiritual and other subtle contradictions that would seem at first not to be contradictions. In this spirit, he did a lot and then he died, as did all the others, all the ones to whom we owe our world and our chance at a good life (another subtle contradiction). The main thing I keep getting from his books is: Listen. Just listen and if you have to say something, for God's sake make it a report and not a lecture (to which part I should listen more closely sometimes).

Lewis