

the same, break the long connection of friends with 13 Fitzroy Street. From 1 September, Rodrigo has taken the top-floor studio which used to be Geoffrey's before he moved downstairs.

I hung about and helped Geoffrey arrange for the gas fixtures to be moved and the telephone cut off, things he had hardly thought about, and then moved across the street to see Pasmore. He was happily installed in the studio, formerly Duncan Grant's, and presented a very different picture, as free from agitation as could be.

He was peacefully painting a very pretty girl, in a wide, flat, lacy hat, sitting before an easel. This is a much better way to spend one's last day alive than Geoffrey had found. I met Victor's friend once before, in Bertorelli's, and remember a long argument about colour—chemically, physically and aesthetically analysed in painters' terms. We had just as lively a debate on the international situation, but with less disagreement.

We were in the best of spirits, she sitting on a great sofa with her absurd but lovely hat, and Victor and I lolling in chairs comfortably about tables spread with paints and brushes, in this great room with its splendid height and widely scattered furniture and litter of canvases and easels, and the sunlight beaming in. Victor went out to get tea and twopennyworth of butter, and we washed cups in the bath during his absence, and then all sat down to tea with a workman who was painting the bedroom . . .

16 October 1939. At five, I was in Piccadilly, and from there I walked to Mecklenburgh Square. It is the changes to notice, not the sights anyone would come to London to see, which are the interest today: the prostitutes in the turnings off Bond Street standing at the corners so much earlier, the usual pairs, now in broad daylight and their colours looking sadly raw; lacking the lights, altogether *sans volupté*; the latticed window closely crisscrossed with pale brown, gummed paper, which give the streets a faintly oriental look; I wondered what it was that appealed and stirred my memory, until I recalled the *mashrabujeh* of Cairo, and there is that same suggestion of secrecy and furtive excitement in the shop windows here. Broadwick Street has been half rebuilt now; two large blocks in dull, compromise, modern style have ended the ramshackle air of that quarter; Soho Square, like the others, is dug into trenches; in Charlotte Street, Schmidt's restaurant and the German butcher's shop lower down have notices declaring they are British firms whose proprietors are ex-servicemen, Vaianis is blind-eyed and Poggiolis have a built-out shuttering covering their whole window space; Constable's house stands empty save for the ground floor, Rogers's rooms are quite bare and open for anyone to walk into: in short, everyone is retreating from some fear or other.

21 September 1940. A raid warning was given just as we left Tunbridge Wells, and

the car, we could hear nothing of the planes, nor see them, but we could calculate very well their course from the direction of the upturned faces of the little groups of men and women standing in the village streets, by the roadside, or in knots about cottage gates. It was odd driving through this countryside which I know so well, and having the impression that it had suddenly become more thickly peopled. I have never seen so many folk about on these roads; nobody can have taken shelter, but all had stepped outside to watch the planes. Mothers were holding up their babies even at the garden fences to point out the planes in the sky; we seemed to be the only ones indifferent to what was above.

Goudhurst Street was a wonderful sight. The hill was crowded with folk, clusters of hop-pickers and groups of soldiers, and on the terrace outside the pub at the bottom seemed even fuller, the drinkers jammed in the doorway and overflowing into the paved triangle in front of the house. It was a perfect Rowlandson village for the day: more packed with flirting girls and toppers than you could imagine anywhere but in his drawings.

11 October 1940. Father had promised to come home this afternoon for me to begin a portrait, and I had just finished stretching the canvas, and was at lunch, when he suddenly appeared, to tell us that there had been a bomb in Burgate Street, half an hour before. He had been attending a patient and all his windows had blown in; the patient was still waiting there, and he rushed across the road to catch the next bus to Canterbury. There was something very touching in the thought of this conscientiousness and energy kept up after a bad shock; I thought so as I watched him—a frail little man—running across the road to the bus.

I said to Mother as we sat down again: 'It is hard luck to be worried all the time, with half his practice gone, and then to be nearly bombed out twice in a few weeks'; and she burst into tears; and I found it difficult not to do so myself in the curious emotion and relief of survival. One feels saved oneself, as well as the possible victim.

I went into Canterbury. There was a rope across the street and, beyond it, a crowd of men in tin helmets, busy over a pile of wreckage in the roadway, grey, dusty beams and rubble; on one side, the side of Father's surgery, a huge gap where Williams the furrier's proud new shop had stood, and Carver and Staniforths' bookshop; both now heaps of spiky rubbish with men clambering over, prising up shards of timber, tossing them into the street with a clatter and a puff of plaster dust.

Beyond, the scarred side wall of Stephensons, the tailors, and the stripped front and the jagged hole of the shop below; this side, the gap a torn upper floor hanging into the street and a comb of rafters from the roof cocked above it. In that pile disappeared the bookshop which I never failed to visit when I was in the

town, where I was the first customer, and I had bought my books and browsed many unread, where, only yesterday, I went in to get *Horizon*; and in that pile, Carver had been killed, Miss Staniforth gravely injured, and there was not a book to be seen.

The furrier and his customers were too; a woman who had been stepping her car on the opposite side of the street was killed, too; old Mr Dukes, the bookmaker, dragged, covered with rubbish, only bruised, from the ruin of his shop, people our familiars for years.

On the other side of the road, where the tearoom where we lunched and took our friends to coffee, the Beazley's Gallery where I held my watercolour shows, three of my drawings for Jane were in the window; the secondhand shop; the pub at the corner of the street where Beazley slipped in for his tea, and I sometimes, too, with Tim Jordan, now with the fronts blown in and kicked awry, with scars and cuts all over the clumps of tiles jolted loose from the roofs.

I was allowed past the rope when I told my name and business; all the windows had been blown in, the glass scattered everywhere about the road, the floors and furniture, followed by dust and plaster chips, so that it looked like a street left by its owners and abandoned for years to wind and weather. Father was restless and could think of nothing but so I started on to clearing up, starting first everything on to the floor, then taking the glass off the carpets and taking it out to the garden at the back to be collected, the loose panes that might fall from the windows; then men came to nail muslin and boards across the windows, we had a cup of tea sent, and I looked a little more calmly about.

Father had to go to see an old friend, and, as we walked up to the garage and into a taxi, I saw Mr Beazley, of the tearoom across the road, being helped along by a young man. His clothes were indeed creased and covered with white dust, pieces of wood and plaster, his face flaccid, pale, like suet, and his eyes tiny, so pitifully weak and watery. He was to be the very type of prosperous and stout, confident and comfortable bourgeois.

He had just been to take Miss Staniforth's body to the mortuary. 'I wish it had been me. I wish it had been me,' he said in a strange, whimpering little voice. And it was all he had left in the world, for he had been his secretary in Paris, his companion for 30 years; once his mistress, always supposed.

It was a wonderful night; the moon almost full again, quite clear and bright, a siren came clearly to us from Canterbury. After supper, Father and I walked away up Bridge Hill, as we usually do, and suddenly, heard two clattering bombs between us and Canterbury. We started to run home and I with him, but neither of us would have done yet, had not for so distant a report, had it not come through the stillness of the night . . .