



press and TV, a character. He read from the latest installment of his diaries. It produced a puzzling sensation. I felt I knew him from an obsessive study of such brilliantly disturbing works as *Butley*, *Close of Play*, and *Otherwise Engaged*, in a way that did not match up with the mellowed, vulnerable man, glasses sliding down his nose, who now reminisced about his childhood on Hayling Island.

The acted scenes, ripped from their contexts, didn't have much power. I watched Gray sit at a little desk off to the side as he suffered with—bemusement? memory? pride?—these crumbs from his life's work. When, after the final excerpt, we all applauded and got up to go, he didn't know what to do. Disoriented on the bare stage, he looked all around before Roger Rees very kindly took his arm and led him off into the wings.

I don't have any grand conclusions to draw from these encounters, but recently they have insisted on grouping themselves together in my mind. I suppose as I get older and have seen and heard so much, content begins to blur. There is a sameness about even the greatest accomplishment. What I find more striking, more individually moving, are visions of such very different lives given over to art, and how they all, in the end, come to nothing. One is left only with the attempt, nobly heroic, doomed to fail. Perhaps this thought could provide a degree of cold comfort in a time when art appears to be so marginalized: that it has always been so, that these three men, dedicated makers, possessors of talent and originality, flitted through this world and left almost no trace behind, "...a river in water."

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