

Dear John McCormick,

We met briefly at Pollok Community Centre when you came through to talk to Julie Frasers writers' group. Hello again.

I mentioned I had some poems that relate to the way I'd like to see Scotland, or indeed any nation, governed.

Could it be as much like 'Homeland' as possible?
Could it be as far from 'Wasteland' as possible?

I think every MSP should have a copy of each (i). Maybe I'll get round to it.

Kind Regards

Vince Handley

Homeland

A horizon unbounded by limitation.
A landscape to nourish the soul.
An environment free of contamination.

Where there is inspiration not exploitation.
Where there is enthusiasm not scepticism.
Where there is idealism not cynicism.
Where there is creativity not destruction.

Where each opportunity creates more opportunities.
Where craft is passed willingly from master to apprentice.
Where ideas form from goodwill and spread goodwill.

Where traditions are upheld.
Where heritage is respected.
Where old legends still live.
Where new ones are made.

A people who embody community.
A hospitality that welcomes outsiders.
A character that defies classification.
A kinship inherited from gentle ancestors.

Let everyone be safe.
Let everyone be free.
Let everyone be happy.
Let everyone be healthy.

Let no-one suffer.
Let no-one want.
Let no-one fear.
Let no-one despair.

If the sun shines, may it purify the spirit.
If it rains, may it mean a new lease of life.
If it snows, may it encourage playfulness.
If the wind blows, may it energise the heart.

May travellers smile when they recall their time here.
When we are travellers, may we be welcome everywhere.
May every visitor wish they lived here.
May every inhabitant not wish to live anywhere else.

Vincent Handley

Wasteland

The horizon? – Somewhere beyond our frontiers.
The landscape? – Undernourished.
The environment? – Unsustainable.

Where inspiration is the servant of exploitation.
Where enthusiasm is undermined by scepticism.
Where idealism is overwhelmed by cynicism.
Where creativity is shock-tested to destruction.

Where opportunities merely showcase what we've already seen.
Where craft is not a necessary component of the assembly process.
Where ideas become someone's 'intellectual property'.

Where traditions are corrupted.
Where heritage has an entrance fee.
Where old legends are mocked.
Where new ones are put on a waiting list.

A people alienated from community.
A hostility to outsiders.
A character tested and found wanting.
A kinship dimly recollected by the dying.

For 'safety' read 'suffering'.
For 'freedom' read 'want'.
For 'happiness' read 'fear'.
For 'health' read 'despair'.

If the sun shines, you will pay to sit in it.
If it rains, you will pay for shelter.
If it snows, you will pay extra for heating.
If the wind blows – time to fly the flag.

Travellers will frown when they recall their time here.
When we are travellers, we will simply impose ourselves.
Visitors will make their excuses and leave early.
Every inhabitant will dream of immigration.

Vincent