

## ‘For the Fallen’: Paul Nash’s ‘Landscape at Iden’\*



25. *Landscape at Iden*, by Paul Nash. 1929. 69.9 by 90.8 cm. (Tate Gallery, London).

PAUL NASH painted *Landscape at Iden* (Fig.25) in 1929, a year in which his sense of mortality had been heightened by his father’s death in February.<sup>1</sup> In this article I suggest, on the basis of the literary and critical influences informing Nash’s work, that *Landscape at Iden* should be grouped with the several works linked to the theme of death which Nash produced that year.

*Landscape at Iden* depicts in a schematised fashion the view over the Rother Valley towards the Isle of Oxney from the back of Oxenbridge Cottage, Iden, near Rye, Sussex, where Nash and his wife Margaret lived from 1925 to 1930. In the centre foreground of the painting are an upright staff and a ‘trug’ containing some logs; to the left stands a wattle fence and to the right a large screen of the sort used to protect orchards from frost and wind.<sup>2</sup> The middle ground is occupied by a great trapezoid-shaped pile of sawn-up logs in front of a fence around which is entwined a snake. Behind the

fence are rows of fruit trees planted as an orchard, bounded on two sides by hedges and a gate. Above the hills in the distance six clouds stand out clearly against the blue sky. The scene is early spring: the greens of the lawn, orchard and hills are muted in the pale sunlight, and the young trees are not yet in leaf.

In their excellent discussions on *Landscape at Iden*, Andrew Causey<sup>3</sup> and David Peters Corbett<sup>4</sup> have both drawn attention to Nash’s use of accentuated perspective and the essentially geometric, man-made nature of the subject. Causey also convincingly referred to the work of de Chirico and to a diagram from a perspectival treatise of 1726 by the Abbé Dubreuil as important sources for this work. This article will try to show that literature was a third source of inspiration, and that the writings of Nash’s long-standing acquaintance, the poet and art scholar Laurence Binyon (1869–1943)<sup>5</sup> had an important influence on this composition.

\*This article is a revised version of a paper given at the conference ‘Rethinking Englishness: English Art 1880–1914’ at the University of York in July 1997. The illustrations of the works of Paul Nash and quotations from Paul Nash’s writings are reproduced by permission of the Tate Gallery, London. Books owned by Nash, which are now in the Tate Gallery Archive, are prefixed by TGA followed by the Archive reference number. Quotations from the works of Laurence Binyon are given by permission of the Society of Authors, on behalf of the Laurence Binyon Estate.

<sup>1</sup>A. CAUSEY: *Paul Nash*, Oxford [1980], pp.170ff.; J. KING: *Interior Landscapes: a life of Paul Nash*, London [1987], pp.126–30; M. BEAL: ‘Paul Nash’s “Event on the Downs” reconsidered’, *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE*, CXXXI [1989], pp.748–54.

<sup>2</sup>These are Sussex references. A trug is a ‘shallow oblong basket made of wood strips, with split bark handle and edging, characteristically made in Sussex’ (*Shorter Oxford Dictionary*). I am grateful to the Rural History Centre at Reading University for sending me information on the use of orchard screens to protect young fruit trees. They

were usually constructed in rows from wooden posts and struts covered in hessian.

<sup>3</sup>CAUSEY, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, pp.151–54, and p.406, cat. no.637.

<sup>4</sup>D. PETERS CORBETT: ‘The Third Factor: Modernity and the Absent City in the Work of Paul Nash’, *Art Bulletin*, LXXIV [1992], pp.470–71; *idem*: *The Modernity of English Art 1914–30*, Manchester [1997], pp.118–19 (see also this issue p.41).

<sup>5</sup>Nash had received encouragement for his work from Binyon when as a student he had been a regular visitor to the British Museum print room, where Binyon worked from 1895–1932, becoming deputy keeper of the sub-department of oriental prints and drawings in 1913. For Binyon’s links with Nash, see BEAL, *loc. cit.* at note 1 above, pp.748–54; J. HATCHER: *Laurence Binyon*, Oxford [1995], pp.148, 189, 204, 206, 250 and 258. For Binyon’s relationship to artists in Britain, see D. FRASER JENKINS: ‘Slade School Symbolism’, in *The Last Romantics: The Romantic Tradition in British Art, Burne-Jones to Stanley Spencer*, ed. J. CHRISTIAN, London [1989], pp.71–76; PETERS CORBETT [1997], *op. cit.* at note 4 above, pp.26ff.



26. *The Angelus*, etching by Charles Waltner after Jean-François Millet, published by François Liénard, Paris. n.d.

In the year in which Nash painted *Landscape at Iden*, Binyon went on a tour of China and Japan, taking one of Nash's works with him to be included in an exhibition of English water-colours which Binyon helped to arrange at the Institute of Art Research at Ueno Park in Tokyo, to coincide with his highly successful series of lectures on English landscape in art and poetry, delivered at Tokyo Imperial University during the middle fortnight of October 1929.<sup>6</sup> In the final lecture Binyon described Nash as perhaps one of the most remarkable of the present generation of purely landscape painters in England, adding that Nash had not, he thought, quite found his style yet, but that he had 'great sincerity and original vision'.<sup>7</sup> It was, however, Binyon's original vision and primarily his book *Painting in the Far East* which, in my view, lay behind *Landscape at Iden*.

Three editions of Binyon's *Painting in the Far East* were published, in 1908, 1913 and 1923 respectively, and one of its aims was to inspire English artists to explore and reinterpret their own artistic and literary inheritance in the way the great oriental masters had worked within and developed their own cultural traditions. Although there is nothing particularly oriental about Nash's stylistic approach, the considerable importance he attached to his artistic and literary inheritance in his work is in keeping with the stated aim of Binyon's book. Indeed, Binyon's exhortation seems to find an echo in Nash's later statement that Surrealism – which he related closely to poetry – was a powerful message to 'live your dreams, open your minds, enter your poetic heritage'.<sup>8</sup> In the case of *Landscape at Iden* the first clue to the particular part of the English poetic heritage Nash had in mind is in the painting's title, to which (as is clear from his other works) Nash attached great

significance. 'Iden' means 'The place of the yew tree' – a location usually associated with graveyards, which as will be seen, is relevant to the subject of this picture. However the name can also be a play on the word 'Eden' and the inclusion of a snake in the garden at Iden is the first hint that this might be a valid interpretation.<sup>9</sup>

Both Nash and Binyon were deeply interested in the biblical Creation story. Nash had produced a series of woodcuts of the Creation to illustrate the opening chapter of Genesis in 1924,<sup>10</sup> and according to Margaret Nash, he also knew long passages of Milton's *Paradise Lost* by heart.<sup>11</sup> Binyon shared Nash's love of Milton's epic. He had written an ode entitled *Milton*, praising that poet as 'England's voice that rang over Europe',<sup>12</sup> and in 1903 he had published a long poem called *The Death of Adam*.<sup>13</sup> This was strongly influenced by *Paradise Lost*, which he described as the greatest poem in the world in the lecture he gave on Milton and English landscape in Tokyo in 1929.<sup>14</sup> Moreover Milton's work had been illustrated by William Blake, who as the greatest English artist-poet, was Nash's hero and equally part of his poetic heritage which he felt inspired to depict.

Apart from the snake, another clue linking this painting to *Paradise Lost* is the inclusion of the staff and trug of logs in the foreground. These were convincingly associated by Causey with symbols of male and female from Millet's *Angelus* (Fig.26)<sup>15</sup> – although in the latter the man possesses a digging fork, not a staff, and the woman's basket contains potatoes, not logs. The prayer of the Angelus which Millet's French Catholic peasants are reciting at sunset on the plain of Chailly is said at dawn, noon and dusk to recall the incarnation following the annunciation of the angel to the Virgin Mary and to sanctify the different parts of the day. At its heart is the 'Hail Mary'. In *Paradise Lost* Milton uses the precursor of this salutation when the angel greets Eve in the Garden of Eden before the Fall with words echoing those of the *Ave Maria*:

But Eve [. . .] on whom the Angel 'Hail'  
Bestowed – the holy salutation used long after to blest  
Mary, second Eve –  
Hail, Mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb  
Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons  
Than with the various fruits the trees have heaped upon  
this table.<sup>16</sup>

After the Fall, however, the fruits of Eve's womb bring death and destruction into the world and, if in Nash's painting the staff and basket of logs are taken to represent Adam and Eve, the fruits of Eve's womb are the cut-up logs in the basket and by extension the great pile of logs behind her and the bare fruit trees in the orchard. (The link between the logs in the basket and the pile of logs is made particularly clear by the placing of the eccentric triangular 'shadow' between these two objects.) Felled trees in Nash's vocabulary often represent corpses, so the great wood pile in the picture (akin

<sup>6</sup>HATCHER, *op. cit.* at note 5 above, p.250.

<sup>7</sup>R.L. BINYON: *Landscape in English Art and Poetry*, London [1931], p.285.

<sup>8</sup>See P. NASH: 'Surrealism and the Printed Book', *Signature* [March 1937], p.3, for his discussion on the existence of Surrealism in English poetry.

<sup>9</sup>See L. ROBINSON: *Paul Nash: Winter Sea, the development of an image*, York [1997], pp.104–05 for a perceptive interpretation of this painting. The author and I came independently to the conclusion that the title contained a punning reference to Eden. See also KING, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, p.98.

<sup>10</sup>P. NASH: *Genesis. Twelve woodcuts by Paul Nash with the first chapter of Genesis in the Authorised Version*, London [1924].

<sup>11</sup>Comments to Anthony Bertram on his biography of Paul Nash c.1954, in the Tate

Gallery Archive, p.3. Nash owned four calf-bound volumes containing *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* in an edition published in 1757–60. These were in the sale of 'Mrs Paul Nash deceased' at Messrs. Hodgson & Co., London, Thursday 15th June 1961, lot 56, sale catalogue p.3.

<sup>12</sup>R. L. BINYON: *Collected Poems*, London [1931], volume of *Lyrical Poems*, pp.159–60.

<sup>13</sup>HATCHER, *op. cit.* at note 5 above, pp.122–24. See BINYON, *op. cit.* above, volume of *London Visions, Narrative Poems, Translations*, pp.149–60.

<sup>14</sup>BINYON, *op. cit.* at note 7 above, p.50.

<sup>15</sup>CAUSEY, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, pp.151–52.

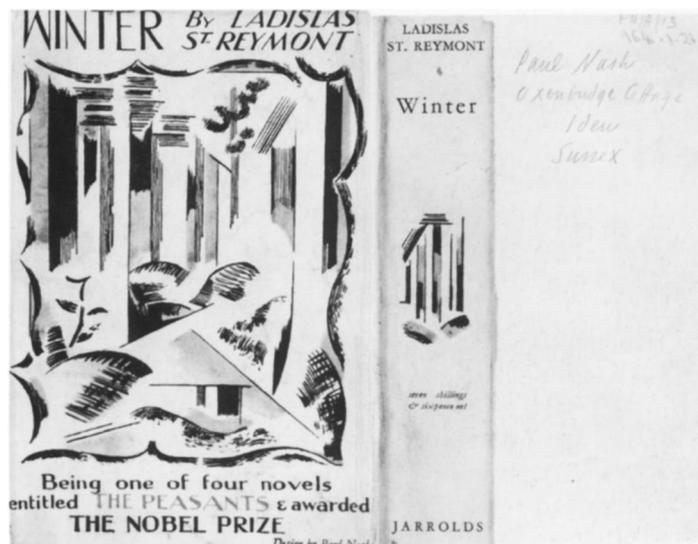
<sup>16</sup>*The Poetical Works of John Milton*, with introductions by D. MASSON, London [1934], p.132: 'Paradise Lost', Book V, line 379 and lines 385–91.

to his later illustration of the funeral pyre of logs for Sir Thomas Browne's *Urne Buriall*)<sup>17</sup> can be interpreted as a massacre. The identification of trees with the dead – particularly the war dead – appeared in much English poetry of the First World War; Edward Thomas, Richard Aldington and Harold Monro – all known to Nash personally – were three of the many poets who used such imagery in their work.<sup>18</sup> However, perhaps this tree symbolism was used most graphically in a book for which Nash designed the dust jacket and which, according to the address he inscribed in his own copy, he was reading while living at Iden (Fig.27). This was *Winter* by the Polish author Władisław Stanisław Reymont, published in 1925 as one of a series of four full-length novels under the general title *The Peasants*. The work won the Nobel Prize and contains a long and vivid passage on a forest being felled like men in battle, from which the following is an excerpt:

... as if laid out to be wrapped in their shrouds, stiff and still lay the murdered trees, and the heaps which had been their limbs and the lopped crowns of the mighty trunks stripped of their boughs, like mangled, mutilated corpses: while streams of yellow sawdust – the blood of the slaughtered forest as it were – were sinking into the snow ... groaning, the forest was slowly giving up its life as the trees fell: those who were like brave men in battle, packed close and propped up one by another fell little by little, giving way only to restless might, and without cry topple over into the jaws of death by whole ranks at a time.<sup>19</sup>

The impact of this passage on Nash seems to have been so profound that it rings through his later account of the dead trees or 'corpses' similarly bleeding yellow dust in the 'Monster Field' which he discovered and photographed in Gloucestershire in June 1938. Near this field, by the side of the Bristol-Gloucester road, he also photographed a huge pile of sawn-up wood,<sup>20</sup> aware that both these groups of felled trees heralded the slaughter to come in yet another world war: 'Both trees were by now bleached to ghastly pallor wherever the bark had broken and fallen away. At a distance, in sunlight, they looked literally dead ... here and there the smooth bole, gouged by the inveterate beetle, let out a trickle of yellow dust which mingled with the red earth of the field ...'.<sup>21</sup> Nash added that horizontally the two trees had assumed the personality of monsters – the word he used to describe the men transfigured by war on the Western Front after 1916 when writing on 'Art and War' in 1943.<sup>22</sup>

The pile of logs is not the only feature which can be read



27. Dust jacket for *Winter* by Władisław Stanisław Reymont (Ladislav St Reymont), designed by Paul Nash. London [1925]. (Front cover) 19.8 by 13 cm. (Tate Gallery Archive, London).

as fallen humanity in *Landscape at Iden*. Behind the logs the vulnerability of the young fruit trees would seem to reflect the defencelessness of youth, cut down before it flowers in the face of war. Stakes support some of the weaker trees, and they are exposed to the elements without the protection of the screen, the purpose of which should be to act as a break against winds or frost. Instead of standing alongside the young trees to protect them, the screen is instead placed adjacent to the trug of felled trees. Its position here may perhaps be interpreted as protecting or preserving the memory of the fallen.

Like Nash, Binyon also associated the wanton destruction of trees with the slaughter of men, and his description of the massacre of the fruit trees in an orchard in France which the retreating Germans had 'murdered' by sawing them through close to the ground is one of the most emotionally charged passages in *For Dauntless France* (1918), his memoirs of his time as a British Red Cross orderly in France in 1915–18.<sup>23</sup> The association of the fruit trees with the fallen was to inspire his poem *Spring has leapt into Summer*,<sup>24</sup> and appears in his description of blossoming fruit trees he saw near Nancy where 'the black ruins and white blossom haunted one's mind and my thoughts were full of the young who were dead, fallen in their faith and cause, and lying now in how many thousands of graves under the earth of their country, that spread before me in the spring sunshine. It seemed to my fancy that they had

<sup>17</sup>T. BROWNE: *Hydriotaphia. Urne Buriall and The Garden of Cyrus*, with thirty drawings by Paul Nash, ed. J. CARTER, London [1932], facing p.32. See also C. COLVIN: *Paul Nash, Book Designs*, exh. cat., The Minories, Colchester [1982], pp.59–60, no.19.9.

<sup>18</sup>E. THOMAS: 'The Cherry Trees' in *Poems*, London [1917], p.28 (TGA 964.5.92); R. ALDINGTON: 'A Young Tree' in *Images of War*, illustrated by Paul Nash, London [1919], p.29 (TGA 964.1.10); H. MONRO: 'Trees' in *Strange Meetings*, London [1917], reprinted London [1921], pp.50–58 (TGA 964.5.50); Nash's copy of the 1921 edition, inscribed by Monro as a gift to him in 1924 is in the Tate Gallery Archive, along with the other two books. In 'Trees' Monro likened tree growth to a corridor between the Seen and Unseen, and trees to sentinels waiting between two worlds and keeping the passage of a gate from this sleep to that other sleep (death). Monro also gave Nash a copy of his book of poems *Real Property*, London [1922] (TGA 964.5.49) in June 1922, according to the inscription in Nash's copy of the book in the Tate Gallery Archive. It contains poems about the Garden of Eden ('The Garden'), pp.30–37, and Adam and Eve after the Fall ('Outside Eden'), pp.46–48. For an example of the influence of Monro's poetry on Nash's work, see CAUSEY, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, pp.179–83. See also P. FUSSELL: *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford [1977], pp.231–69, whose chapter 'Arcadian Resources' shows how English pastoral imagery and vocabulary infused English First World War poetry.

<sup>19</sup>W.S. REYMONT (LADISLAS ST REYMONT): *The Peasants*, translated from the Polish by

M.H. DZIEWICKI, London [1925–26], II: *Winter* [1925], p.372 and pp.373–74 (TGA 964.1.21). Nash's own set of the four volumes is in the Tate Gallery Archive; *Winter* is inscribed 'Paul Nash/Oxenbridge Cottage/Iden/Sussex'. It was reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* [12th November 1925], p.754.

<sup>20</sup>Photograph no.TG 7050.1104.L. by Paul Nash in the Tate Gallery Archive. Clare Neilson, who accompanied Nash on this journey, took a photograph of Nash in front of this woodpile by the Bristol-Gloucester road. This is no.47 in her photograph album in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and appears next to her photographs of the 'Monster Field'.

<sup>21</sup>P. NASH: 'The Monster Field' in *Outline. An Autobiography and Other Writings*, London [1949], p.244. *The Monster Field* was published by Counterpoint Publications, Oxford [1946]. See also KING: *op. cit.* at note 1 above, pp.194ff.

<sup>22</sup>P. NASH: 'Art and War', *Old and New Masters* 4, *World Review* [May 1943], pp.48–55.

<sup>23</sup>R.L. BINYON: *For Dauntless France: An Account of Britain's aid to the French Wounded and Victims of the War, Compiled for the British Red Cross Societies and the British Committee of the French Red Cross by Laurence Binyon*, London [1918], pp.225–26. See also HATCHER, *op. cit.* at note 5 above, pp.271 and 292.

<sup>24</sup>BINYON, *op. cit.* at note 12 above, pp.241–42.



28. *The Cherry Orchard*, by Paul Nash. c.1917. Water-colour, ink, pencil and chalk on paper, 56.5 by 47cm. (Tate Gallery, London).

risen again in that triumphant blossom to reassure the world'.<sup>25</sup> Binyon's linking of an orchard with a graveyard was mirrored in Nash's water-colour of a graveyard in a ruined orchard near Vimy in 1917,<sup>26</sup> and also in his rendering of the bare, symbolically fruitless cherry orchard behind barbed wire (Fig.28), generally thought to have been painted when on leave from the front in July 1917.<sup>27</sup> At the time he was recovering from an injury which he had sustained at the front a few days before many of his company were slaughtered in the attack on Hill 60 on 25th May.<sup>28</sup> Nash painted *The Cherry Orchard* while staying at Far Oakridge, Gloucestershire, with John Drinkwater whose poem *Mystery*, which Nash illustrated in 1919, describes how it is in its clarity, unobscured by mist, that the English landscape yields up its mystery to the brain that reads the world aright.<sup>29</sup> Nash's title *The Cherry Orchard* refers directly to Chekhov's famous play, which Nash greatly admired and a copy of which he owned. Chekhov's orchard – cut down at the end of the play – is described by one of the characters as a 'fearful thing' in which 'from every cherry in the orchard, from every leaf from every trunk there

are human creatures looking at you. Cannot you hear their voices? Oh, it is awful . . . the old cherry trees seem to be dreaming of centuries gone by and tortured by fearful visions'.<sup>30</sup>

It would seem therefore that Nash intended the orchard in *Landscape at Iden* to be closely linked to the fallen, the well regimented fruit trees recalling the ordered rows of English war graves in Northern France. However, as in Chekhov's play, the spirits of the dead are still present to haunt the living in Nash's painting. For Nash, who quoted the Letter to the Hebrews in his 1934 contribution to *Sermons by Artists*, the spirits of the dead, (which he linked to an 'army of witnesses') 'roam the sky, watching over us . . . [this so great a cloud of witnesses] is to be about us, encompassing, like a cloud on the head of a mountain, even, perhaps, like a swarm of bees about our ears'.<sup>31</sup> In this painting Nash surely represents the spirits of the dead by the clouds in the sky, the trapezoid shapes of which echo the woodpile of corpses below, each cloud representing a funeral pyre of the dead. This was a concept he also used in *The month of March* (Fig.29) – likewise painted at Iden in the same year – and later in his picture *Event on the Downs*.<sup>32</sup> In *The month of March* the rungs of the ladder, which connect with and echo the bands of clouds in the sky, evoke Jacob's ladder linking earth and heaven, a theme which strongly attracted Nash. The imagery in all three paintings is close to Binyon's observation in *The Flight of the Dragon*, his treatise on Chinese painting published in 1911, that the soul identified itself with the cloud. His quotation on this subject from Shelley's poem *The Cloud*, with its unwittingly apt link of a cloud with a cenotaph, would not have been lost on Nash:

Then I silently laugh at my own cenotaph  
And out of the mist and the rain,  
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb  
I arise and unbuild it again.<sup>33</sup>

Given that *Landscape at Iden* represents the fallen, Nash's inclusion of references to Millet's *Angelus* can be seen as symbolising not only Adam and Eve, but also both the 'stand to' of the British troops on the Western Front,<sup>34</sup> and the French Catholic population recalling their dead at the beginning and end of the day in war-torn France, which both Nash and Binyon had experienced.

For Binyon, Millet's *Angelus* was an important part of the artistic inheritance of the West. In *Painting in the Far East* he takes Millet's picture and sets it in the context of a Chinese painting as a model for European artists to follow:

The great subjects of all art and poetry are common-places. Life, Love, Death; these all come to us, but to

<sup>25</sup>BINYON, *op. cit.* at note 23 above, pp.253–54.

<sup>26</sup>CAUSEY, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, p.362, cat. no.181. The water-colour *Graves in a ruined orchard near Vimy* is in the National Gallery of Canada.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p.90 and pp. 357–58, cat. no.126. Causey points out that the identification of this water-colour with the picture of this title shown at the London Group in November 1917 is likely but not certain. The two pairs of birds and the faintly visible female figure in the foreground mentioned by Causey would not be out of place as a symbol of wasted fertility in the face of bare (and hence non-fertile) trees. In Edward Thomas's poem 'The Cherry Trees' published in 1917 (see note 18 above) he describes how the trees are shedding their blossom for a wedding which will not take place as all are dead.

<sup>28</sup>KING, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, pp.81–82.

<sup>29</sup>J. DRINKWATER: *Loyalties: A Book of Poems*, London [1918], reprinted [1919], pp.38–40. Nash's copy of the 1919 edition is TGA 964.1.27.

<sup>30</sup>*Two Plays by Anton Tchekov: The Seagull, The Cherry Orchard* . . . , II: G. CALDERON, London

[1923], p.20 (TGA 964.5.70). Nash's copy of this edition is in the Tate Gallery Archive, which contains a programme for a performance of *The Cherry Orchard* at the New Theatre, Oxford on 13th October 1941, and another (presumably belonging to Margaret Nash) at the Oxford Playhouse in November 1953.

<sup>31</sup>*Sermons by Artists*, London [1934], pp.8–9.

<sup>32</sup>BEAL: *loc. cit.* at note 1 above, pp.749–51 and p.753. For a discussion of other representations of the spirits of the dead soldiers, see J. WINTER: *Sites of memory, sites of mourning*, Cambridge [1995], pp.54–77.

<sup>33</sup>R.L. BINYON: *The Flight of the Dragon . . . an essay on the theory and practice of art in China and Japan based on original sources*, London [1911], pp.33–36. The association of a cloud with the English war graves in France is also found in Binyon's poem 'The English Graves' in BINYON, *op. cit.* at note 12 above, p.218.

<sup>34</sup>For the significance of the 'stand-to' at sunrise and sunset see FUSSELL, *op. cit.* at note 18 above, pp.51–63.

each one with a special revelation. It is by the new and original treatment – original because profoundly felt – of matter that is fundamentally familiar, that great art comes into being.

Let us consider one of traditional subjects in an existing example: 'The Evening Bell from a Distant Temple' by Mu Ch'i. [ . . . ] The subject is essentially the same as that which the poetic genius of Jean-François Millet conceived in the twilight of Barbizon, at the hour when the Angelus sounds over the plain from the distant church of Chailly. Well might such a subject become traditional in Europe. Yet our foolish and petty misconceptions of originality would cause the critics to exclaim against any painter who took up the theme again as a trespasser on Millet's property.

Each of these works, the twelfth-century Chinese painting and the nineteenth-century French painting, is thoroughly characteristic of its continent. In the European picture human figures occupy the foreground, and in their attitude is concentrated the emotion which pervades the picture. The Chinese painter, on the other hand, uses no figures; for him the spectator supplies what Millet places in the foreground. He relies on a hint, a suggestion which the spectator must himself complete.

What a public for a painter, one cannot help exclaiming, when the artist could count on his work meeting with minds so prepared, so receptive! To what a prevalence of taste and imagination in the society of the day the very slightness of the Sung landscapes, which many will think a fault of insufficiency, bears witness.<sup>35</sup>

It would seem therefore that in *Landscape at Iden* Nash took up Binyon's challenge to paint such a composition.

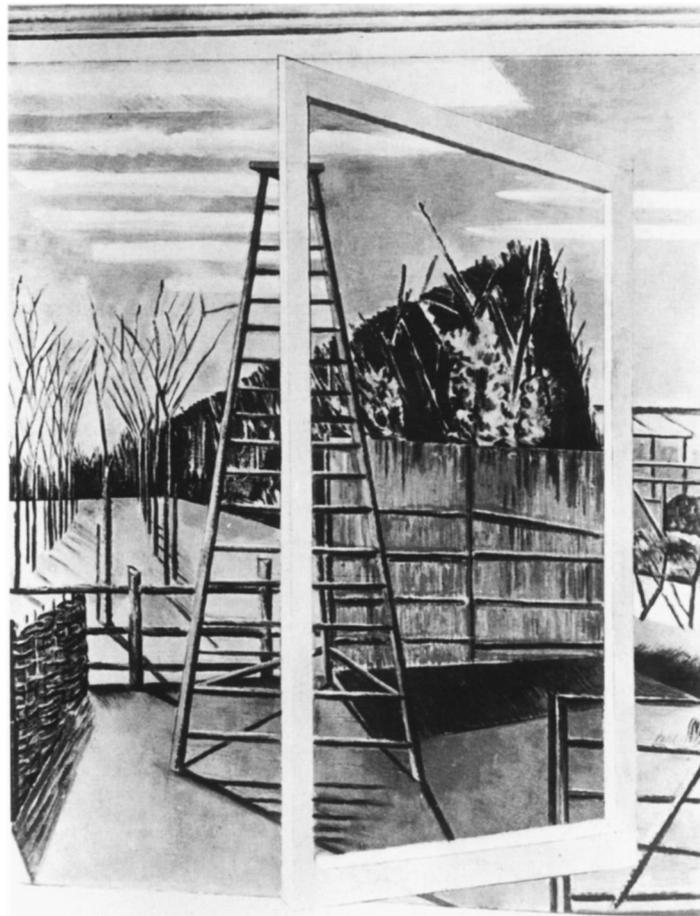
In *Painting in the Far East* Binyon also referred to Milton, whose poetry he compared to early Chinese pictures.<sup>36</sup> He made a similar connexion in one of his 1929 lectures in Tokyo where he linked Milton to Japanese poems of the evening bell, and thus by implication back to the *Angelus*; he pointed out that: ' . . . just as Japanese poets have listened to the evening bell, so Milton:

I hear the far-off curfew sound  
Over some wide-watered shore  
Swinging low with sullen roar'.<sup>37</sup>

With its reference to Milton, the 'Going Down of the Sun' in the *Angelus* and the young fruit trees felled too early, Nash's *Landscape at Iden* would seem to reflect many of Binyon's ideas. It can also be seen as a tribute to the most famous lines Binyon ever wrote:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.<sup>38</sup>

In 1928, ten years after the Armistice, Binyon wrote his poem *Anniversary* as an impassioned plea to the nation to build the



29. *The month of March*, by Paul Nash. 1929. 91.4 by 71.1 cm. (Private collection).

new world for which a generation died, so that they would not 'twice be killed'.<sup>39</sup> Among others writing in 1928–29 on the War were Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves (both of whose poems Nash had illustrated),<sup>40</sup> who published their recollections in *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man* and *Good-bye to All That* respectively; R.C. Sheriff's *Journey's End* was performed on the London stage; the artist David Jones started working on his war experiences for his book *In Parenthesis*; the English version of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* was published;<sup>41</sup> and Stanley Spencer was at work on the wall paintings in the Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere. *Landscape at Iden* can be seen as Nash's contribution, and confirms that he remained, as he said, 'a war artist without a war'.<sup>42</sup>

But perhaps the most poignant words to describe *Landscape at Iden* are Laurence Binyon's own:

It is the consciousness of a living soul in the world of nature, parallel to the soul in humanity, making in these sensitive and brief blossoms its manifestation and touching the mind with

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>35</sup>R.L. BINYON: *Painting in the Far East*, 3rd ed., London [1923], pp.149–50.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p.265.

<sup>37</sup>BINYON, *op. cit.* at note 7 above, p.49.

<sup>38</sup>BINYON, *op. cit.* at note 12 above, p.210: 'For the Fallen (September 1914)'; see HATCHER, *op. cit.* at note 5 above, pp.192–98.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p.285.

<sup>40</sup>S. SASSOON: *Nativity*, London [1927] (TGA 964.1.14), and R. GRAVES: *Welchman's Hose*, London [1925] (TGA 964.1.8), were both illustrated by Nash. Nash owned copies of both these works, now in the Tate Gallery Archive.

<sup>41</sup>FUSSELL, *op. cit.* at note 18 above, p.109.

<sup>42</sup>P. NASH: *Outline: An Autobiography*, with a preface by A. CAUSEY, London [1988], p.180.

<sup>43</sup>BINYON, *op. cit.* at note 35 above, pp.156–57.