

## SPECIAL H

*i.m. Henry Woolf, 20<sup>th</sup> January 1930-11<sup>th</sup> November 2021*

The brightest spark in the box twelve days ago found the corner  
That no-one hoped he'd discover until the next Century,  
Actor, Director, Writer, Presenter, Humourist, and Professor,  
Beloved husband and father, we mourn now and miss you,  
As the dark moves to kiss you and you suddenly become

History. But not for us, Henry Woolf; for you our door  
Remains open. For yours was the warmth to melt winters  
As Harold Pinter's love would attest. And for all British actors  
Your work reveals the range few can dream of;  
From the *Marat Sade* to the *Rutles*, death's firm rebuttal

Is to recast you now where stars crest. And where once more  
You'll make mirth with your former muckers, including  
Harold and Heathcote, your old cupboard tenant who wrote  
*AC/DC* for your Maurice, another seminal stance  
Your skill took. Henry, I didn't know. Caroline Kennedy

Told me and now you and Susan after 53 years close  
The book of your earthly love story, perhaps, but not  
The sort the romance that continues, across bright dreams  
And auras, and memory's film for the heart. I remember  
Being sat with your both in your flat as you described

Your first meeting, at the RSC; that connection,  
Seismic as it was, shook my earth; that I should find  
Such a bind, such a well wound love and connection,  
Would make me as charmed or as charming  
As your presence of mind, flesh and worth.

How Susan and the children will miss you, dear H,  
And your mixture of both Imp and Angel; and how  
Your legions of friends and colleagues will miss you,  
And what your wisdom and wit brought to bare;  
Not only a long life's rewards, but also

A canny acceptance of challenge, from Hackney  
To Hampstead, and onto the wilds of Saskatoon  
All was dared. Short, but dynamic, you blazed  
Beside those Clapton boys, Mick and Moishe,  
And then of course Henry and Harold who sat

Talking the world into tea, before taking it on.  
Your *Monologue* was real magic. From Strindberg  
To Steptoe, you turned dramatic art into glee.  
My own childhood was themed by your stint  
On *Words and Music*, and knowing you later,

Made me love you and your wife all the more,  
For what you brought to life and will continue  
To bring as it leaves you; a skill and a standard  
The like of which now I search for. So, you are  
Mister Kidd once again, in another part

Of the house, some strange storey, counting  
The floors while reminding us of a far richer time.  
*The Room* had been readied for you, and yet it is  
Emptier now, dearest Henry; and yet still,  
There's a shimmer of the glimmer you gave:

A soul sign pointing towards a new quality  
That your name both howls and humours.  
We will keep one particular Woolf at the door  
Here forever; a sacred H, as with Harold's,  
And Heathcote's, too. H divine.

David Erdos 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021