

MADRID LIMELIGHT

There's a photo in the Telegraph this morning

Of globe-trotting Tony and his modish wife.

Calculated faces, sombre for the mourning,

Sit on practised poses like a black still life.

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Flaccid fingers, loosely bunched like bruised bananas,

Link a pair of worldly pros treading the boards.

While they masquerade before the press piranhas,

He's the Man of Sorrows; she's Therese of Lourdes.

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Pausing on the sacred steps before procession

Into Almudena, premier church of Spain,

Do they have some qualms about their motivation -

Heart-felt pity, personal glory, worldly gain?

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At the altar Mrs Want-it-All is praying.

Her devotions - are they hollow mummery?

For how can she square the words that she is saying

With her hocus-pocus new age flummery?

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Scheming Mr Do-it-All lacks the perception

That the stricken mourners in this grieving land

Will tomorrow spurn his hollow consolation

When he's seen to shake Gadaffi's bloodstained hand.

Bryan Harbottle