

SEE YOU THERE

26th of March 2022

Dear Reader,

Where should you be?

I mean...

Where would you rather be?

I mean...

I don't just mean in Corby today, but in life.

If you hadn't married that man.

And taken that job.

Had the kids.

Got sacked.

Or moved to Corby in the first place.

Or got old?

I'm not saying you look old, but you are older than you were last month. Even if you still feel 26 inside. But you don't think like a teenager does today. Or maybe you still are a teenager. Then if so, why are you reading this painting?

I used to identify as a middle-aged man called Bill Drummond but...

A couple of years ago someone offered me their seat on the bus.

And then later that day I was in a café.

And the new waitress asked the bloke in the kitchen who the cheese omelette, chips and beans were for.

And he said, "the elderly gentleman by the window."

And I looked around and I couldn't see any old bloke by the window.

But I knew I had ordered a cheese omelette, chips and beans.

And then the waitress brought the plate over to me.

And that was that, from then on, I was The Elderly Gentleman.

Or that is what I identified as, when it comes to painting these paintings to you.

As for where I should be, I was supposed to be travelling up the Nile, as in heading south down Africa, like Sammy in that film*, but with The 25 Paintings, as in my 25 paintings. All part of my twelve year world tour. But then I had my first brain seizure, and Covid happened, and I became The Elderly Gentleman, and I saw the world, or at least my place in the world in a different way. The globe was no longer this place for a white heterosexual male like me to stomp around thinking you might be impressed. So here I am back in Corby. And I have got this thing happening up in the Rooftop Arts Centre for most of June. The 25 Paintings will be there. And I will be doing the usual baking of cakes. And sweeping the streets. And building a bed for the Ghost of Gentleman Jim Reeves. And shining shoes. And going for a shave. And making soup. And having knit & natter session, while knitting the Million Stitch Blanket. And maybe even doing a couple of Tenzing Scott Brown's plays even though I pushed him under a bus. And maybe screening the film BEST BEFORE

DEATH. As in all, or at least some of, the stuff that I have been doing on The 25 Paintings world tour since it started in 2014. But this year The 25 Paintings have been repainted into Latvian – did I tell you that I repaint them every year into the language of whatever culture I'm attempting to celebrate that year?

So, if you want to answer the questions I asked you at the beginning of this painting, or just give me some advice about getting old, or being a teenager, or life in general, come up and tell me when my thing opens in the Rooftop place on the 4th of June.

See you there.

Yours Sincerely,

The Elderly Gentleman

**Sammy Going South (1963)*