

Tell us about the Reformation

*To the twin town visitors who asked us this question –
And whose ancestors have already heard about it:
“Change your religion or disappear!*

*You would have to look closely in this church.
The prayer books were replaced with new ones.
The stones can only vaguely tell us
Whose ideas prevailed.
When the new rulers decided against pilgrimages
To the saints of the conquered race*

*Walls stuck with remains
Of the church that the conquerors had built
When these went out of fashion
Under kings who gave us trial by jury.*

*The tombstone of the forest bosses,
Bugle, sword, measuring sticks:
Mind yourself between here and the castle,
The largest in the country and keen on the Earl's deer.*

*The man with the pick and the kibble
Was a garden decoration in the next village
Until the assistant Barmaster migrated here
And pulled rank the churchwarden who had kept him.*

*The tattered flag gathering dust
Was once brought and hoisted by locals,
And formed a defence against Napoleon
To stop him from breaking into the cotton factories.*

*In the twentieth century – Oh my goodness!
Fashion changes like a kaleidoscope,
Saints in long, bright clothes
Stained glass windows foreseeing transgender.*

*And six years later – the first year of the World War.
The illustrated newspaper showed Jesus
And a soldier who looks like he's taking a nap.
The image was a nationwide fundraiser for a shrine -
And has hung on this church wall for over a century.*

*“The enemies have changed,” you said.
Here in this city the new conditions are the struggle.
The High Sheriff is an old office that has been given a makeover.
She is the first black person to hold this position.*



**Erzählt uns
von der
Reformation**

Evan Rutherford