

STAINED GLASS STATEMENTS

Here, I think, a young man (though not young when I encountered him) sat through compulsory chapel, termtime Sunday after Sunday while others yawned or dozed, but however boring or interesting the sermon, it would have been impossible to take his eyes off those windows. Abraham, a Dutchman, had painted these extraordinary scenes circa 1631. How did they escape? Perhaps the college, rich enough to pay for them, was secluded enough for the smashers of sacred glass to go elsewhere. Awe-inspiring visions, huge expanses of water, furious clouds, the whale heaving up to devour Jonah, Judgment Day. Christ seated on a rainbow, the naked dead climbing up, the damned going down to everlasting fire. The words went over his head, he dreamed of the seventeenth century, rain and sun on the glass obscured or emblazoned the colours. Oh yes, he thought, one day I'm going to write about this.

Merryn Williams