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KEVIN VOLANS

Patrick Leigh Fermor and Bruce Chatwin: Studies in Time

Bruce Chatwin and Patrick Leigh Fermor, two friends, Englishmen, travellers, writers, raconteurs, bon vivants, both with prodigious knowledge, were nevertheless very different in their approach to writing. While Bruce Chatwin is famous for his terse and lapidary prose, Patrick Leigh Fermor is known for his rich, elaborated style. Underlying their descriptions of journeys and places there seems to me to be a deep concern about time. Neither embraced its passing. Both used their work as a covert struggle against time's flow. In life too Chatwin tried to capture the moment, while Leigh Fermor regularly called a halt to its narrative while he digressed at length. The former died tragically young, the latter lived far longer than most.