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## **GENTLEMAN OF THE ROAD**

### **Poems of a Wanderer**

**D.W. Myatt**



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### **Hermit Tent**

It is so cold ice has formed  
In my boots while  
Frost-bitten snow crunches  
When you walk the short  
Distance to water  
Gathering ice in a pail

Ochre, the morning sun lies shrouded  
By mist, casting no heat  
As the birds do not cast  
The imprint of their feet  
Upon snow:

The rose cutting juts  
Above white there  
Where last week I buried  
That car-killed cat and where a leaf  
Unfurls in  
Intimation of Spring

Over the tree, a crow  
Calling:  
Nothing answers  
Awkwardly I amble through the cold  
While ice forms on my face:  
Slowly  
A crake awakes  
To life

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### Snow in Late April

My tent is cold - I have to huddle  
Again  
Within wool. Outside  
It is strange, this layer of white  
Which covers long grass;  
Never before the snow which  
Covers deep green.

There is an unutterable silence  
About the land; nothing stirs  
Only air, and the blackbird  
Whose perch was my pole  
Will have to unlearn to learn  
To eat bread.

It is strange - this windy desolation;  
There is a voice within the wind  
A sign written by snow  
And I have come to recall  
Through sitting huddled like an old man

Each meaning which strands together  
Life:

Shaken, the tent groans through the wear  
In its joints; it is old, this tent,  
Perched upon Earth - full of spiders  
And seeds  
As if seeking as seeds seek  
To cover themselves within Earth.

I will die here  
Says the wind  
My poems covered  
By snow.

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### Relict

Sun, broken by branch, seeps  
Into mist  
Where spreading roots have cracked  
The stones, overgrown, perhaps,  
For an hundred years

From a seed, flesh fed, the oak  
Sheltering

Mary  
Relict of William

And a breeze, stirring again  
This year  
The leaves of an Autumn's green gold

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### Spring Dawn

It is a cold dawn in Spring  
When the red disk rises  
Above hill  
And the frost-layered village  
Still sleeps.

Only I walk  
Where silent trees rear up  
Beneath blue.  
No sound  
Not even birds.  
In the valley, mist swirls  
Cold.

While on the hedge  
Neat-trimmed and almost dead  
Slivers of crystals cling  
As my feet become frozen  
Within boots.

On the green, a glaze  
Of white as in a field a horse  
Runs steaming  
To free the cold of night.

Nearby, a car awakes to ruin  
This peace and life

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### Traveller's Wait

So much neglect  
Even the platform has dirt:  
The young - they talk as they stand

Seeing through themselves  
Each other living life  
In moments

Appearance for them seems forever  
Reality:  
Nowhere a word for compassion  
Only destination signs.

I do not beg  
But rise from the bench  
To sit awhile, smiling.  
There is no haste  
While sunlight warms.

People come, rushing  
While I sit with my sack  
Gathering strength to spend  
A few pence for a tea.

So much neglect  
Even my boots have a hole

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### **The Two Faces**

I am the two faces of God -  
Vox Patris Caelestis -  
Within, within, a lewd Satan grins  
Playing at Change:  
My pieces are human who cried  
At my hurt.

I am alone, the cry  
While Treble voices sing  
Echoing, and strange shadows long dead  
Dance too briefly along the cloister wall.  
There is pain as I stare  
Past dying sun and a valley  
Winter cold  
Trying to believe while stars break

And a crescent moon  
Glowing like the whore's eyes  
In that dark room  
Jibbers over the heavy breasts  
Of the hill:  
No cloud  
To veil her shame.

No one, nothing  
Answers. Only  
Air, and I sit, still waiting  
And remembering prayer.  
In the ruins, my dead self comes to life  
Rising slowly, worm-slowly  
To the first singing blackness  
Of night.

No answers, nothing:  
Only this tramp sheltering  
In the ruins of a church -  
And memories, yes there are memories  
Glowing  
Like the lies of my life

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## Road

I wander aimless along a road  
Fresh food to allow me thought:  
Ahead, a dead thrush  
Its carcass decaying  
While in the hedge above, bush buds  
Burst with life.

Even the wind seems warm  
As I walk  
Watching the White Horse on its hill  
While streaming streaks of high cirrus  
Cloud  
Fleck the changing blue

There is a freedom here  
A pattern to possess my life:  
Each day brings me  
Close

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## The Poet's Song

Remember the ones whom you killed  
You, the poet, in your youth?  
They brought a unity, those memories,  
A pain that possesses all things  
Bringing with their dread remembrance  
The field of connection grown  
From deep Space:

What was concealed is seen  
As what is felt is possessed into Word  
Through the possession of the consciousness  
That connects all life to itself

Because it is life through the origin  
Of growth  
And brings the tranquillity of age.  
There is remembering: the forgetting,  
The little goals to pass the days  
Between the next remembering

I see little needed in life:  
No books, houses, fine clothes or cars,  
Since this connectedness that makes  
The poet a child  
Makes him a place to rest awhile  
Between the troubled strophes of life.  
He, the forgotten values, seeks  
Only sufficient shelter  
Food enough to fill his gauntness  
For a day -  
All else is insufficient and inauthentic  
As he himself is an admission  
Of a god's weakness  
For Man.

All life is divine:  
Each field, each tree,  
And he the poet carries this message  
Gently, like cloud its rain.  
There is nothing special, unique:  
He is only the half-remembered aspirations  
Of his age  
Forgotten when they to whom connectedness  
Was a lie from birth, live in power  
Within the boundaries of a State.

There should be no preaching, no faith  
Without the connectedness of consciousness  
That uncovers divinity as the divine  
As there should be no guilt or sin  
While the

tireless worker for the Cause  
Stalks the streets of the chosen  
City. There was a sunset  
As he walked the hill home -  
A plethora of colours magnified

By cold caught his eye  
Briefly, for the wound on his face  
Hurt. But he got them,  
The bastards, and next time  
The Party will be strong

For each Cause defines a Goal  
To overturn the gods  
Creating illusion in expiation;  
There is no connectedness, only division  
And divide

Words will not end this  
Or any other admission of how we forget  
To remember  
As sublime music is not a premonition  
Of peace.  
They are only reminders of what is  
As my past is a reminder of what I  
Once was;  
And there are still enigmas, many questions  
Unresolved.

There is a natural balance between  
The outward challenge  
The inward look of age  
That decays with each present passing  
Week  
There is self-survival  
The question of inner Space

Words will not end  
But only the middle way between  
The word and the act  
Where desire is the poet's desire  
For passive divinity  
Can begin the remembering  
Of the connectedness that is divine  
Without the ending that is another's  
Death

## Waves

Waves of rain beat  
Upon this tent, wind rucked  
In wildness:  
I have no illusions

Cold the comfort of this bag  
With its dead duck down.  
Sometimes a little sun  
Brightens  
While boots dry  
And tired muscles rest

Freedom is hard  
While Winter lasts  
And Summer savings dry -  
Sometimes a little work:  
Over the lake  
A bittern booms

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## Pavilion Bench For A Night

Cold, I watched the moon  
Rise, until with weary body  
I settled down to sleep.

It was a bitter night  
And frost greeted me  
As I climbed through the glassless window

To stare with bleary eyes at the School:  
No one came  
And I was free to drink  
From their stream

When shall I learn peace?

Only will walk this body  
To another village blurred  
Like the rest  
By fatigue

Tuesday's rabbit is gone  
And, weary and sleep inclined,  
I sit by some stones  
Wishing the warmth of a home

When shall I learn peace?

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## Walking

Rain, falling heavy as rain does  
In storm.  
It is beating down  
While I wait in this cold tent  
For the light of dawn

I am alone, as I came, to this clearing  
Within trees:  
Trying to live the moments that are those  
Moments between the walks I walk

Upon roads:

Rain, beating heavy as the pain in my leg:  
I have no rôle to guide me, happy, toward  
My death  
Only a wish for some warm soup  
To suckle my soul.  
There is instead rain with no fuel  
For the stove

I am alone, as once I wished:  
And in the morning  
I shall shoulder my pack  
And walk -

Is rain the seed, the sun the sower  
For the fecund planet called Earth?  
Am I one seed who by silence alone  
Can breed a flower of Thought?

But it is late and I close my eyes  
To sleep

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### **Wandering and Free**

Clouds fastly moving across  
A Winter's sky:  
No rain, only a breeze  
Warm after the solstice-week  
Of ice;  
No one to hear as I tread a pat  
Bent by sack and memories  
That make a rhythm  
For my feet.

There are no answers within me  
As there are no cars to despoil  
This empty border glade  
And I am only a division because divided:  
Freedom is no one and nothing  
To care for - and no one  
Who cares  
But I have grown used to sleeping  
Ill within a tent  
Since pains are a Winter in my life.

Yet there was love  
Broken by the dreaming and the doubt  
And I that rainy Spring  
Left the passion and its pain  
To find this kind of peace:

I am torn, still, between  
Dreams, pride and the reality  
Of this road-walking life,  
But most miles tire  
And bring a kind of sleep.

There is music in me  
Which grows as I grow  
But I cannot compose  
And have only these words to sculpt  
From this crumbling rock  
My images of sadness and of joy.

Clouds  
Fastly moving  
Over a remembering voice  
That someone in some future  
Might recall as me -  
But like a cloud  
I am born to quickly fade  
And die

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## Intermezzo

No longer the low sun which caught  
The brown, hedged field under hill  
To show the covering of spider's silk  
Weaved, slow:  
Instead, twilight and clouds,  
Transforming

I cannot walk when such beauty  
Stops me -  
There is then a sitting by some stream,  
Perhaps a fire  
To warm the body that desire wearies  
By walking

No wind, now, to chill  
Or take me to some shelter:  
There is instead my small fire of wood,  
The peace brought by stillness;  
All journeys were a sign  
To this place  
While, on the distant road, some car  
Blares its horn  
In haste

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## City Autumn

Dawn's magickal moment when dim light  
That strains the eye  
Bursts upon a horizon still  
Clutching the mist of night:  
I was awake, experiencing,  
Trying to hold through sleepy eyes  
The silence that gave me for a moment

God;  
Then the birds, thrusting their song  
In the wind  
Which snatched trees  
Breaking the colours down  
Because rain has long rejoiced to seed  
This Earth.  
I, on a bench

Until the traffic came:  
Hard noise that crushed my spell -  
Clouds, that promised tomorrow

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### Waiting

No suffering, as Christians suffer -  
Only the stream, there  
By my tent.  
It is home, now,  
Green like its field, and at night  
With a shrunken stomach  
I sit by its flap and dream.

I cannot play the flute  
I have made from maple;  
But there is time  
There is always time  
For a madman like me to scheme.

It is not romantic, this life,  
Like others think.  
It is boring and hard yet I endure  
With endurance to bring more  
Than deep lines to my face.

My tent is a message  
As I myself am not me.

No falseness, as burning religion  
Makes false. Only a stream  
Of impressions that makes me  
Nothing unique.  
Each changing cloud reminds  
Just as I am a reminder  
Of what I and all others  
Might be

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### Apple Blossom in May

There is a reality about Spring  
When grass grows green with the sun:  
Days lengthen bringing the warmth  
That reassures and one is pleased  
To run a hand where wind moves  
And blossoms have been blown:

Every hour is unique  
When rain stops.

In the town - three hills  
And a valley to the left -  
Music slithers from a shop  
While people rush,  
Gathering.  
A drill strikes stone  
Where youths gather  
Sneering at people who pass.

There is a pleasure about Spring  
When free grass grows in the sun,  
A slowness when wind rushes tree:  
Nearby  
The curlew and lark  
Where sun glints  
Upon rain sodden earth:

*How are you today, Mr Hughes?*

Oh not so bad, you know -

Better for the sun.

*Aye, will dry the ground*

*So we can seed.*

Over the fields -  
White clouds making faces  
In the sun

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