

Relentless disk,  
above the heat-numbed town,  
I knew where I must go.  
Mind and body craving  
the quiet and the cool that this place offers.  
A hundred yards below the mountain top,  
and just above the slapped down buckling road  
my back is knuckled by the sheep-shorn scrub.  
I lay caressed by wind - embracing solitude.

But now an intruder: a man with a stick,  
the crazing cambered road tilting him  
unwelcome to my mind.

The knee-bent gait, forever climbing hills  
even on the flat of market towns.

And his blackthorn extra limb  
(that only night can wrest from him,  
and prop apart till dawn)  
pushes on and up, on and up.

His world not mine,  
and yet I feel an irksome sense of crowding.

A gesture drops the curtain  
on these projected thoughts.  
No turn of head; his practiced  
sidelong eyes home in on me,  
his stick is held aloft.

'Shw mae'? I call the verbal pittance  
of the gawping Anglo taff.  
He stops, swings around to face me,  
'Cymraig, Cymraig, good Cymraig I speak,  
a lovely afternoon think you'?

The accent: I mark him down as Polish,  
flotsam of the bloodied tides of war  
washed here to lick a living from the granite.

Subject for a poem!

The gut ache sends me blundering down to meet him.

He's drunk: a mystery,  
nearest fiery watering hole nigh on seven miles.  
Cymraig, Saisneg, signs, we weave  
the pattern of a conversation.  
He speaks of yearly visits to the city;  
remarks on changes seen.  
'But here' (he nods towards the bleating valley)  
'my clock forgot, is rarely set to tick.

I probe for past, for origins.  
He points to a silent struggle,  
a continuing stony quarrel;  
tenacious grip of farmhouse;  
relentless push of mountain.

'David Lloyd I am!.'

Welsh! twenty miles from Swansea  
and I hear this fractured English?  
I reap a strange excitement from this fact,  
equate him with the stubborn hanging farm,  
convey my envy of his brave existence.

The rising of an alcoholic sap  
has turned the bulging sinews of his neck  
to upland reeds.

Chin touching chest he tries to shake  
the anger from his head,  
his cap glides away.

'Four years ago I'm giving half a sheep  
to lay in drizzle with a village slut!'  
Stick stabs at ground, demanding equilibrium,  
he lurches, staggers; falls among his stones.  
When do you fuck! ' he screams at me.  
Sheep raise their heads and leer,  
wind stirs triumphant laughter in the bracken  
that hugs and hides the sniggering watercourse;  
yet flaunts the rich brown flicker

of the loudly ticking wren.

And I am hurtled back through snarling time,  
to hear the grunt and scrape of glacial congress  
and feel the shuddering birth pangs of his hills.  
Drink fuelled eyes glow up at me,  
his dead fern teeth are nibbling at my mind.  
Will he lie with rams; regurgitate my thoughts,  
gag, and spit them out to gather moss?

He's quiet now, in the trough of vented <sup>anger</sup>  
~~anger~~. Still prone, a song from him in <sup>welsh</sup>  
~~welsh~~; soft and slow.

A palm, hard and brown as rusted metal  
smoothes the weathered contours of a stone.  
I leave him stroking fur.