

Walking with Yesterday

Today I walked the road
 I skipped along when I was young
 And fought to quell the rising melancholy in my heart;
 Where once I gathered primroses and violets,
 Kept secret the thrush's nest
 I found within the hawthorn hedge
 Nibbled on wild strawberries and sloes
 And smelt the fragrant garlic and wild onion after rain
 — Nothing grew.

The heavy flowing river
 Where I fished for sprats,
 And caught an eel,
 Is dehydrated now
 Choked with mangled metal scrap.

The low marshy meadow
 Where I squelched barefooted chasing butterflies,
 Plucked tall mayflowers through rustling green rushes
 Watching ripples fanning out from swimming
 waterhens
 Weaving here and there
 Past frog-spawn and water lily;
 Where long necked herons stalked back and forth
 Through stems of delicate bog cotton
 To crickets' chirrup and corncrakes' grate
 While the sun dripped endlessly.

Today this meadowland
 Of flora and fauna
 Lies immovable
 Locked deep in concrete dungeons.

The orchard trees I scrambled up
 Are there no more
 Nor is the pale skin Birch
 And Alder tree with milk
 Of human kindness in it's sap
 The scarlet berried Rowan bush
 And Damson hedge
 Have fallen victim of "man's advance"
 Gone too, the one that as a child
 Disturbed me most
 Yet grieves me now -
 The wishing to and fro
 Of the Sally Rod.

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