

# Caldey: after Compline

The sun that's bruised us these last eighteen hours  
Rounds into the Atlantic and away.  
A row of cormorants, black as though bereaved,  
Wait for their rumoured legacies; a seal,  
Fluid, evasive, polished and even-humoured,  
Lazes skilfully by the rocks to seaward.  
Coolly the shadow inches in towards us  
    Across Carmarthen Bay.

Shadows without malice, a curbing coolness;  
The old Welsh saints who are buried in this clay  
Do not disturb us with a twilight knocking.  
Their turbulent flesh, so teased with thorn and thong,  
Lies appeased in the green mounds of summer;  
The sowing is done, the reaping is not for them,  
Gone to a good and longer night than ours,  
    Gone to a good day.

I need no relic, no girdle or castoff shoe  
Or crunched by time a titbit of brown bone,  
To recall the twinge of flesh in which they flamed.  
Sufficient presence is a flight of steps  
Grassed over now, a canticle they sang  
In rough, half-mastered, Merovingian Latin,  
The long calm swell some evening like this one  
    Their coracles moved upon.

And I can move towards my own night now.  
Nothing will break it, neither the bright splinter  
The lighthouse levels over my swaying sleep  
Nor the gulls clamouring in their dark crevices.  
No devils leap from the hayfield I pass through.  
What bones the sea holds, or the landward caves,  
Are promised a rising just as this night makes peace  
    For all my flesh is kin to.

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