

THE HERMIT

*I knew a man who lived alone along the mountain range.
He stood apart, as men do stand, and most folks thought him strange.
He spent the hours and days and weeks just looking at the scenes
And slept in a tumble down old shack and dreamed his private dreams.*

*His bare and weathered feet would tread the hidden mountain ways.
His shirt and shorts and matted hair received the weather's rays.
A gnarled old man with a rough bare life and a tough old soul some said;
But there was a hidden side to him and to it I was led.*

*"The choices that we make in life," he told me, "set our course.
And I made one that few do make in my life's simple source.
I fully spurned all that I saw as treadmills of the way
That man will go to power and praise, possessions, worth and pay.*

*I chose the path of wonder, of gaze and awe and wow.
I simply chose to appreciate existence here and now.
I saw the bird upon the wing, the tree upon the land,
And fell in love with watching it and living in its hand."*

*He quoted from the poets, from simpler times and true.
Hour on hour; they were his friends; he spoke as they would do.
His voice would rise and fall and roll and tell of wonders seen,
And take my soul ten worlds away where grass is greenest green.*

*He rightly said that art's the force that civilizes man.
'Tis love and meaning all in all and the only path that can
Take us from the lower things of shelter, food and fun,
And cause our hearts to soar and scream and see into the sun.*

*"The world," he said, "acknowledges the artist's work as fine.
Elevates above all else and trades the work divine.
But the way of the world is against the way of gaze and sense and feel.
It is the way of get and earn, of concrete, wood and steel."*

*He said, "I followed the former way and other I have none.
But the former is the deeper well and in its path I've run.
It paid me back with loneliness as few do choose this line,
But it is a wealthy poverty that paints this life of mine."*

*He wrote no words, he left no art at all that I could find.
He had no need to publish it, art lived within his mind.
Some say he was a saddest man, lonely, without a mate.
To me he was a single voice beyond a wondrous gate.*

M. JAMES JORDAN

