

HILL DAYS Air: Loch Sunart (Mike France)

Days growing longer in the rolling springtide
A summons comes to me that can't be denied
North to the mountains and west to the sea
The highlands of Scotland are calling to me
In the clear morning I will rise and climb
Through heather and moss, over boulder and scree
Steep craggy ridges leading to the sky
On these few precious days I can roam wild and free

Snow dappled peaks marching line upon line
And all to be climbed in the fullness of time
Season by season and year by year
As new friends I greet them or old friends to cheer
Through fair and foul weather I ever must go
Sunburnt or wind-swept or lashed by the rain
Seeking a cairn in the fast falling snow
Then breaking through cloud into sunshine again

Alone but not lonely I roam throught the hills
A sweet healing spirit now softly distils
From this sad, empty land to refresh and restore
Deep peace where where once there was sorrow and war
By river and forest my footsteps trace
The long weary miles at the end of the day
At last to a refuge and a resting place
Plain comfort and friendship to drive cares away

The days of my youth and the days of my prime
Fade into the distance like mountains once climbed
The first frost of winter, the cold evening star
Old age touches limbs that have carried me so far
I stand by the lochside in the sunset's glow
The peaks standing stark in the fast fading light
Recalling those hill days of long years ago
Joyful memories illumine the dark winter's night.

Richard Hardaker May 1992

Dedicated to the memory of Nancy Smith of Fersit