



context distant, the word conveys an understanding that is almost participation. The scene of which the boy had been the centre and the meaning is broken down, translated into the constituents of something wholly different. The exultation in the action and the indifference of forces suddenly revealed, and in his own significance, is the real voice of the morality whose direct statement was only in triteness.

The conclusion<sup>1</sup> is in

the mist  
Which on the line of each of those two Roads  
Advanced in such indisputable shapes . . .

As de Selincourt pointed out, this echoes Hamlet's 'Thou comst in such a questionable shape'.<sup>1</sup> 'Indisputable', however, has its own meaning. Perhaps the mist that advanced along the roads was not to be mistaken for what he was expecting. But the real distinction is as before: that between the sheep and the tree as companions, and the sheep and the tree as themselves, and so as characters of deep meaning. The mist in retrospect advances and declares itself. That is to say, things as they are, and as they are sometimes seen to be. It is in this, after so much division and abstraction, that the mystery and the power are found.

<sup>1</sup> I prefer this to the 'camst' in the de Selincourt edition of 1926, p. 596, and the de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire edition of 1959, p. 615.

## *To My Little Daughter*

Her doodling  
on the fly-page of my scrap book  
flows free into  
occult signs of some prenatal visions,  
soon to ossify into  
rows of steel-edged words,  
punctured by stops and dashes,  
Clashing and clanging  
for the meaning  
that is not there.

SHIV KUMAR