

The Holy Isle

Kenneth Steven

What was the point going there
except to be apart, to leave behind
the babble of the voices that could never know
how many angels there were dancing on a pin.
This was beyond: a place where silence spoke –
a few fields scattered in between the rocks,
a well of water for the quenching of their thirst
and beehive cells for shelter come the dark.
These were the simple things that made their lives.
What mattered more was breaking through
from out of solitude and quiet, now and then,
into somewhere else, a realm
where they could know the voice of God;
that took them from the ordinary
into a deeper light and out of time.

The Hermit's Cell

Kenneth Steven

I had to listen for a silence
that was born inside.
It took a whole year to find
and now it does not fail.
I need nothing;
all I want is where I am.
I used to pray, and praying then
was struggle with myself.
Now I am made prayer, am hollowed out –
a song that needs no sound.
I pick the blow of flowers, bring them back
in blues and reds and golds,
and in the slow of winter dark
I watch for dawn and know
that I am growing into light
a little every day.

Kenneth Steven is a widely published poet, novelist and children's author, with fourteen book length collections of poetry. Much of his poetry is inspired by the wild landscape of his native Highland Scotland; much has resulted from his love of the Celtic Christian story whose deepest roots are for him found in the island of Iona off Scotland's west coast. He is a frequent speaker at Scottish literary festivals, and he has written and presented numerous poetry programmes for BBC Radio.