

Revelation

A bright blue day, blithe was the air.
No distress or anxiety, a merry dearth of care.
Thus was the land's state, as seen by most eyes,
When the weatherworn traveler came trundling by.

Clothes torn and shoes near-rags,
Heavily-laden with innumerable bags,
Yet a certain fire alit his walk,
I was entranced; eyes trained in a gawk.

Something about him; the way that he strode,
Plowing along, looking down at the road,
Not giving a thought, to what was around,
Simply walking, and *walking*, onward-bound.

Gathering my courage, forward I stepped,
The eccentric traveler, continued yet.
Hearing my approach, but no interest piqued,
He continued on, driving forward his feet.

To sate my interest,
(For I needed to know!)
I trailed on behind him,
Willing the traveler to slow.

But my luck was denied,
He did not lessen his tread.
So behind him I crept,
And poked the man's head.

"Eh?" he exclaimed,
But continued to walk!
"Excuse me good sir,
But could we stop and talk?"

"I noticed you walking,
And thought to myself,
Why such a hurry?
Could you use some help?"

"Your gait, it seems forced,
Your burden swallows your breast!"

Surely you're tired?
But yet, you don't rest!"
The traveler turned,
And I quite nearly ran!
As I stared, shocked, upon,
The face of this man.

His skin stretched so taut,
His mouth was so dry!
His nose red and burnt,
-but there was something, in his eyes.

His eyes I remembered,
They branded my mind!
I never forgot them,
For I'd never seen such a kind.

They seemed haunted and hurt,
Witnesses to pain.
Onlookers of evil,
And ill-earned fame.

They seemed to hold time,
Or at least know its depths.
To see things as they are,
To know life's very breadth.

But too long I stood wond'ring,
The man, he walked on.
Whistling to himself,
A gay sort of song.

"Wait!" I called out,
"Wait up for me!
Please could you stop?
I must ask you some things."

But seeing my efforts,
Were sadly for naught,
I ran to catch up,
For there were answers I sought.

Who was this man?
To where was he off?
I'd answer these riddles,
If the man would but stop!

I ran ahead of the man,
Set myself on the road,
Directly in front of him,
He would HAVE to slow!

Finally, it seemed,
I'd have victory,
As the queer old man stopped,
And looked up at me.

Heaving a sigh,
I read annoyance on his face,
As if I had been bothering him,
For all of the day!

Looking up, the man asked
"What is it you need?"
But at a loss for words,
I paid his question no heed.

"Come along boy!
I haven't all day!
If you've something you want,
Or something to say,

"You best get it out!
So that I may go on,
Or would you rather just stand there,
And gape the day long?"

"My apologies, good sir,
I don't mean to be slow.
I simply was wondering,
Where is it you go?"

A twinkle in his eye,
Merriment in his brow,
The man opened his mouth,
And began laughing aloud.

Puzzled I stared,
And thought in my head,
"Is this man unwell?"
Though outward I said,

“Are you quite alright?”
To which he replied,
“Yes my dear boy.
Now come, match my stride.

“I have little time to spare,
So if you must bother me,
I’d suggest you get on with it!
And then take your leave.”

“Thank you, dear sir,
Now I simply must ask:
Where is it you’re going?
And when will you be back?

“For I sensed great purpose
When I noticed you there,
Out on the road,
Walking- well, where?”

He emitted a chuckle,
Then proceeded to sigh,
Look unswervingly at me,
And force my gaze to those eyes.

“I cannot say where I’m going,”
The strange old man said.
“And I doubt I shall return,
Whether alive or yet dead.

“You see where I am going,
Is not truly a place,
I could ever depict,
Or ascribe name or face.

“More so I journey,
Not sure what I seek.
But knowing I must,
Each day and each week.”

“But why? What drives you?!
Keeps you looking ahead?
What bids you go on?
Going forward?” I said.

To this he replied,
Mirth and sorrow in his eyes,
“What is it I’ll gain,
In looking *behind*?”

“But surely you don’t travel,
Day in and day out,
With nothing to reward you,
But pain and more doubt.”

The man seemed unfazed,
Even pitying, it seemed,
As he stared long and hard,
His eyes, piercing beams.

At length he replied
“What holds you here?”
I pondered this greatly,
His meaning unclear.

“What is it you ask?
I do not understand.”
“Perhaps one day you will,”
Said the puzzling man.

“What is your purpose?
What is any of ours?
Why do you stay here-
Plant your feet in the ground?

Why not look ahead-
Tread a new road?
Find for yourself
The answers you’re owed.”

Then my soul; it grew stronger,
And I yelled out with a burst,
“Why is it you tease me,
With this vague, unclear verse?!

“I do not understand,
Where is it you go?!
Why do you pursue,
Things you do not know?!

“Your dream may be strong,
But the present- it’s stronger!
What compels you go forward?
To tread foolishly longer?!”

The man simply smiled,
Sympathy in his eyes.
“Perhaps one day you’ll see,
And you’ll follow my stride.

“Some things are too big,
To let fear in the way.
I hope you shall find,
Of what I speak, someday.”

With that the old man,
All his bags and his packs,
Abruptly sped up-
To never come back.

Long days after, I pondered
In the dead of the night,
What it was that he meant,
In “follow his stride.”

Why should it that I,
Alive and quite well,
Abandon my home-
And bid all farewell?

So I lived out my life,
In acceptance and peace,
Content with my lot,
And let former thoughts cease.

The old man, he faded,
From memory and mind.
And I happily lived,
A simple, calm, time.

And it was quite some years later,
That I opened my eyes,
What it was the man meant-
As clear as the skies!

I stumbled up from my bed,
Alacrity in my heart,
Only to fall back down,
And realize with a start,

My days, they were over.
I had spent my lifetime,
Settling for less-
The laugh was no longer mine.

If but I'd had the sense,
To ask why, look ahead,
Perhaps I'd be content,
Not filled with this dread.

Oddly enough,
It is now that I see,
The importance of walking,
In search of your dreams.

You see, dreams can be vague-
But an indistinct hope.
A mere inner feeling,
A tickle- nothing more.

But when we let these things slip,
And live out our lives,
As hollow machines,
Averse to sacrifice,

When we don't take the first step,
And accept the push out the door,
Let our chance pass us up,
And dream but no more,

Your life loses meaning-
It becomes but a game,
For some higher being,
Who won't remember your name.

You fade from all thought,
Your name fails to persist.
The dust from your bones,
Dries up- and that's it.

You die a piece in society,
Yet another lost soul,
Who failed to look up,
And wonder if there was more.