

*Poem 1*

Response to the Southern Shore

To live only on top of the land,

seems to me a half life; mere oil pearling the surface of water.

I don't wish, when asked to lie against its dirt,

under its sun and storm, alongside its fire and sweat

to reactively rise away.

I will not have the *unfamiliar* and *not-named*

become something 'other'.

To reach into the land and *know* it, is key;

to scent out its rhythms, in season and of place.

I wish the land to be wholly of itself.

And in my wishing,

for it not concern itself,

not a jot, with me.

But,

How to do this?

How to be one of those

who *reach into* and *know*?

There are clues, cairns, marks,

if you will.

Subtle signs that point to a way-path.

(Dare we call them gestures?)

Go out at dawn,

through new-light,

and taste the soft air, whether summer heat or biting frost.

Walk on hoar frost

and feel the night's subtle work in sound.

Watch a carry of clouds skit,

from the place where all is northward.

Move through mute stumps,

once woodland, now ghost.

Become a collector of stone, wood, scene or scar,

and stories that happened *here* or *here*.

Expand and craft lexis precise

to wild land-meaning.

Name, name and name again;

and then be content not to name.

Something in you will then point,

point as a compass points,

to *your* north in the land.

*Poem 2*

On being a writer

It occurs to me that to be a writer one must be made of hope.

Not just have it,

but to be made of the stuff.

Because it asks so much of you.

If you are not made of the very substance of it,

And require the acknowledgement of others,

It can leave you as a shell.

Scoured.

I am reminded of the Godfather.

Al Pacino: I tried to get out, but he pulled me back in...

*You must be made of the stuff.*