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Four Poems by Father Nikodim

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Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien
Albuquerque, New Mexico • Postponed to: July 30 – August 2, 2021



Four Poems by
Father Nikodim

Dysart

What was it I gathered from
Scotland? Uninhabitable wilderness.
The wracking sobs of silent men

forgotten but noble in the face
of abandonment, sucked dry
by their own home-bred affluence.

Tradition. A meeting of generations
of steady decay this century,
as crofter Neil in South Uist.

Lost sheep bleating for shepherds.
Abandoned monasteries. Coenobitic
old-world realities flickering low

in Harris. Broken, endless shores
black, beaten by a restless sea.
Grey lochs. Treeless landscapes,

wintry and isolated, mercilessly
ambushed by sheets of rain
blown up. Shattered stone walls.

Yet amidst stone circles, ancient
cairns, standing stones and duns
in this frigid waste stood planted

Teampull Mholuaidh in Lewis,
Cille-bharraidh in Barra.
Winds blow over these walls

now with no anchorite's song
to reply. It was here that
I drank most deeply, listening

to the springwater pouring
through my soul. I saw
their barely graspable life

in shadows on prayer-worn walls
inside, contoured by the desolation
now so precious and beautiful.

Snowfall

There is value in looking
back how one sculpted a thing
blow by wide-arc'd blow.
But I do not wish to now,

resting under the snow
blanket, warming from what has been
gathered within, anticipating
the spring's limpid thaw.

The Pasture and the Shore

I hear the gong-buoy again
tonight out in the strait
beneath the seugh of spruces.

It is a lonely sound. I wish
I could be closer and hear
clearly what it is knelling.

It seems to be singing to something
breathing low pitched notes on
pan-pipes across the water

just beyond my memory
through the brambles outside
before the pasture and the shore.

Arrival

Rain-drenched, wind-burnt,
clothed solely in shreds,
I've returned to this island.
I've answered Your summons.

Huddled astern between nameless shores
ashamed, small, near-naked within,
I hide my face in chilblained hands.
Have You no one left but me?