

Phyllis Evelyn Beal
(1915-1995)

Solitude

The Hermit lives in his barren cave
In the high Himalaya and day long prayer
Unaware of solitude
In silent peace, serene, remote
No echo of the strident world
Impinges on his solitude
The deodars whisper in the wind
But whisper not of solitude
The liling stream leaps down the hill
But never lilt of solitude
With eyes fixed on the snowy peaks
He listens to the voice of God
And reckons not his solitude.

I live alone in an empty house
Where hurrying feet of passers-by
Tell me of my solitude
Children running home from school
With merry laugh and voices shrill
Remind me of my solitude
The ceaseless traffic rushes by
Driving in my solitude
The thunderous world is all around
Unheeding of my solitude.

When sitting at my husband's desk
The room is vibrant with his voice
Chiding at my solitude
I put my foot upon the stair
And nursery chatter fills the air
Tugging at my solitude
The greetings of friends I still recall
Whene'er I pass now through the hall
Luring me from solitude
The echoes rise now all around
Shrieking at my solitude
Hush! – Hush! Be quiet!
Hush! – Hush! Be still!
So I may hear the voice of God
And reckon not my solitude.

(Untitled)

I must shut the door of this little house
And leave for ever entombed here
The darling dreams of younger years

No roses crowd around the door
Not heartsease bloom besides the path
The perennial flowering unfruitful Hope
Withered with the snow of advancing years,
And behind long strands of windblown hair
The weeping willow hides her tears.

No merry echoes of children at play
No glowing embers of Christmas Day,
But silent and empty it ever it will be,
With no sad ghosts of what might have been.

Shut the door and go I care not where
For never more will I retrace my footsteps here.

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Winter



Summer

