

The Setting

Ralph McTell

I will never forget the walk to the station,
Me with your suitcase being brotherly strong.
And trying to make light of the whole situation,
In mild conversation we moved through the throng, And above all the roar of the town was the blue sky,
I could hear the birds singing for the joy of the day
And there was no support from the city forthcoming,
No sympathy numbing your going away.
It's hard to say goodbye. And there was you with your bright eyes and best dress for travelling
And me in my work clothes, unshaven and plain,
Oh, I fully intended to put in the half day,
But my good intentions went with you on the train. And I never looked back as the train left the station,
Crossed over the road and walked into the park,
And there in a bar an old man was singing,
And I sat there drinking until it got dark. And outside the trees they grew starlings like apples,
Their hustle and chatter not dampened by the rain.
That washed down the pavements and into the gutters,
That soaked through my clothes as I set out again, And above me the stars were all hidden by rain clouds,
The song of the old man still locked in my brain,
And all emigration, the curse of a nation
The setting now fitting his sad sweet refrain.

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