

HE ASKED WHY I HAD COME

He asked why I had come.

I did not know.

But felt I had to say something to assuage his obvious anxiety.

Prison life had been quite unbearable for him.

I said I had come to help. And left it at that.

Perhaps I had over played my hand, for surely, it was as empty as a newborn's.

I felt a sudden need to confess ...

and, in that instant, our eyes fixed,

I, guilty of an offer not readily in hand, blurted out,

"I don't know. I'm sorry. Forgive me. Please."

I watched as his head lowered again, bowed in prayer,

or so I thought, although a praying man I took him not to be.

In truth it was mere curiosity which brought me here.

Him a killer, tho' a hero I thought him to be.

A mythical warrior, across a canvas of child-like reverie,

his long wavy locks blowing straight out

in a wind induced by his now charging steed ...

Distance is a wondrous thing ...

At battle's end, no screams of wounded,

no stench of dead,

no blood-soaked ground of the many assumed-to-be innocent young men.

Yes, distance saves us that.

Time be-clouds us much.

It cleanses the place where now dramatic actors, in stage make-up,

stand before us, postured and posed,

heroic symbols ...

what delusion!

Yet, there we sat.

Him, head bowed. Me, sweat running down my back.

I could take a message to a loved one, I offered, in recompense.

Who are you? he asked. What non-sense. Such non-sense, that.

After what seemed an endless pause, he looked on me again and said:

Why did you come?

Indeed ... why had I come?