

All That Lies East

At the crossroads
Where the path turned right
I stopped a moment
To ponder what lay
Beyond the trees
And the gap in the hills
Through which the chill May
Mist spilled into the valley.
Hard by the turnpike
Weeding fingerling carlin shoots,
First to break the earth
To speak spring's story,
A digger watched me search
The distant headland
Under the shade
Of a hand held to my brow.
Above our heads
Wheeling on the wind
Seagulls warned of storms
Imminent and rolling
Inland from the sea.
I gathered my coat close
And turned about
To pose my question.
"What manner of thing
Lies to the west?
Across the hills
Left, were I to turn
The other way?"
I asked, and pointed
My hand away and up
Toward the moorland sky.
Smiling he cradled the hoe
In his arms, safe against neglect,
And spoke with hale conviction:
"That way leads to everything
That isn't to the right;
Away from all
That's east along
The path that you have chosen."