

FIVE BRIDGES TO CROSS

ALAN REID

NOW WINTER IS DRAWING ITS CLOAK O'ER THE NORTH
AND THE SKY OVER SUTHERLAND'S HEAVY AND GREY
ALL THE BIRDS OF THE SUMMER LONG GONE TO THE SOUTH
AND DARKNESS FALLS EARLY TO SWALLOW THE DAY
ALL THE HILL FOLK THAT LATELY HAVE COME TO THE COAST
SIT QUIET AND HUNGRY AND CHILLED TO THE BONE
AND THE LEAVING HAS WEAKENED THE OLD ONES THE MOST
THE FIRE IN THEIR BELLIES HAS GONE

FIVE BRIDGES TO CROSS
THE BONAR. THE NESS, THE TAY AND THE FORTH
THE FIRST BRIDGE IS THE HARDEST OF ALL
THE ONE TO DECIDE IF YOU STAY OR YOU GO

NO WOODSMOKE AT MORNING OR BEASTS TO BE FED
NO REST ON THE HILL AS YOU BREAK YOUR NOON BREAD
NOR CALL OF THE CURLEW TO BECKON YOU HOME
OR DRINK WITH YOUR NEIGHBOUR AT EVENIN'
THIS TOWN'S DISAPPEARED IN A BLANKET OF GREY
WHEN THE HAAR AT THE DAWN SLITHERS IN FROM THE SEA
AND THE SMELL OF THE HILL SEEMS A LIFETIME AWAY
AND THERE'S NO SOUL ABROAD IN THE EVENIN'

FIVE BRIDGES TO CROSS.....etc

NOW SOME SAY YOU'D BE BETTER TO WAIT FOR THE SPRING
AND SOME SAY THE FISHIN' WILL COME BACK AGAIN
FOR THE FICKLE BRIGHT HERRIN' WILL SURELY RETURN
AND BRING HEALTH AND GOOD CHEER IN THE MORNIN'
BUT OTHERS CONTEND THAT DELAY IS A CRIME
AND THAT FORTUNE WON'T FAVOUR THE TIMID, THE BLIND
FOR THERE'S NO POT OF GOLD FOR THOSE WAITING BEHIND
JUST THE LONG ,WEARY GAME OF SURVIVIN'

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