



The Tholtan

By Mona Douglas

Upon the border of a wood
I found a small, forsaken house
Decaying slowly where it stood -
Some slates blown off, and others loose.

Small window-sockets gaping bare;
A doorway clear for the sun's grace
To enter and with the shadows share
White walls and blackened chimney-place.

Long, long ago the last red spark
On that black hearthstone turned to grey,
And up that chimney wide and dark
The last sweet turf-smoke curled away;

Yet something of old homeliness
Remained about the precincts still -
A green-hedged garden - watercress -
A rose-tree by the window-sill.

Leaning against the white-washed wall,
I dreamed away a sunny hour,
Hearing trees whisper and birds call,
And smelling primroses in flower...

Suddenly by the open door
A women [sic.] stood in the yellow light;
It streamed past her across the floor
And made a shelf of dishes bright.

With happy eyes and rosy cheeks,
Red-shawled and fair, I saw her stand,
Then bend to weed the springing leeks
With her grey knitting in her hand.

Near by, where a small streamlet shone
Through trees, I heard some children shout,
And thought: They daren't play ball upon
The gable-end while she's about!...

Then the dream passed, and as it was
I saw the house - bare, empty, cold;
The garden full of leaves nad moss,
Wild rabbits burrowing in its mould.

But though it seems forsaken, dead,
I know it hides a happier mood -
And sometimes old turf fires shine red
Through twilight's purple quietude.

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