



are tucked up in bed with a good book or better still a good partner, secure under your warm, dry duvet and not in some cold, damp bothy in Scotland or metal hut refuge with a wet floor in the Pyrenees.

ON CLIMBING BEINN DUBHCHRAIG

A quiet pause amid the purple, scented heather,
 where curving interspersions of graceful bracken, feather
 highlighted richness green beneath unsullied skies,
 that spread their cloudless wrap above the eagle's cries.

And there I sat my tiredness by a pristine, crystal pool,
 a liquid mirror unequalled for clear and still reflections,
 and thus recalled the words that 'climbing's for a fool,'
 so said by those in chiding with dearth of hill connections.

But was this cold reality that I could then divine,
 for in that glassy water a face resembling mine
 looked up in brief appraisal then gave a youthful smile,
 and a voice spoke to my heart as I rested yet a while.

"I know you well, my friend, so heed not the voice of others,
 for you have learned perspective and wisdom from the hills.
 the ancient rock writ messages of Earth, old Mother of mothers,
 which brings its own deep peace far from the world's ills."

A ripple stirred the water, and face and waving frond
 were swiftly wind erased, and to Dubhchraig beyond
 I raised two grateful eyes for a hill I'd climb refreshed,
 unburdened by blind critics simplistically enmeshed.

George Philip