

earthquake perhaps, and we would need to use a helicopter. But no, the plane began to roar, and then, bucking and bouncing, it sped down the runway. We soared out into the immense space of the valley below, and gradually left paradise, a mountaineers' paradise, behind us.

To Dream of Mountains

I wrote this poem at 2 o'clock in the morning on board a ship while we were discharging cargo in Piraeus. The thought suddenly struck me that normal people were all tucked up in bed and in that moment I couldn't understand why it had been necessary for us to decide to add an extra night shift in order to "expedite" our departure the following day.

Escaping from the clatter of the decks for a cup of coffee, my mind drifted beautifully to the high mountains. Over coffee I scribbled these words in my log book. In later working life and probably along with many of you, I could do this equally well sitting at my desk in Aberdeen !!

To sit and dream of mountain slopes,
but my mind must work, not ponder,
must work mid clattering hooks and chains
and think of mundane matter

The words they use, "to expedite"
mean now that we must rush,
not as a rocky stream can do,
in peace, the mountain hushed

But work, make profit, loose our minds,
in a cause that's far and distant,
work round the clock, no time to sleep,
work on, insist, be insistent

Here time means work,
I know it's not
but none have time
to listen

Robbie Middleton
Piraeus 1974