

conversation turned to Jeff's dodgy rope – one rope for sale, slightly worn but very useful for short routes. There are many more stories, too many to tell succinctly here, but thanks for allowing me to re-tell those that I have. I hope I have conveyed the attitude and humour with which Jeff approached climbing. It was a privilege to have been Jeff's climbing partner and friend.

A Light on the Hill

I often look for manmade things in remote places. There is something about coming across an old building, a kiln, a cairn, or drovers' meeting point. There is a world of adventure in thinking of those who went before us on a hillside, and the reasons for the great wall they built to nowhere. Hills were used to send important signals of impending danger, attack by strangers, even a first sighting of invasion. Some overlook valleys and villages and some burned a light, visible from a vantage point far down below. People come and go.

A hill with a beacon, a skyline, a sunrise
a place on a map with a name that you know,
that old signal station that worked for a moment
the last time, a long time ago.

A hill the same colour and still the same shape
and still our own people come here,
a new head of party, a new type of worry
new ideas of what's fair.

They change and I change, or we think that we do
and the beacon doesn't shine anymore,
but the rock and the hill that the men put it on
still look down on the valley below.

Robbie Middleton
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