DEPARTURE AND RETURN

In the room that walls the world nobody saw
His slow-stepped passage through the dark door,
On which habitually all backs are turned.
Nobody knew when he was there no more.
And indeed, to him it seemed stark perilous,
Seemed that he moved by inches, if at all;
But he did go, the distance being less
Than that divides the body from the soul.
And when he came again into that room,
Though no one asked to know where he had gone,
He was not to himself nor they to him
Still self-estranged, but one and one and one.

J. S. MOOKEY

OLD MAN'S LAMENT

Dark head behind the window curtain
Red shutters beneath a sloping roof
Speechless tiles, awkward turrets
Tonight you are the loose soil of my lifeless coast.
Tonight you engulf with darkness
The knotted tree trunks of my gloomy roads.
Tonight you turn in my mind without respite
And glow in my blood like heated coals.

O delicate-faced gypsy
Noble willow of my marshy roads
Forever standing immune and innocent
In the blue and white doorways of my thoughts.
Forever standing there.