

The Coffin Road
By Roderick Manson

Kilry

The inconsiderate guest
came late last night:
in the terminal moment
he outstayed his welcome
and left a mess of flesh
that once was loved
and now had to be cleared.

Loanhead

It is not the wind,
ice-sculpting the shroud of snow
that makes us shiver

but the passage.

Way Cairn

Bread of Life;
Water of Life;
The Word is Rest.

Broom Hill

We come no closer to heaven
than this
and,
as the long descent of men
begins,
weight shifts
from shoulders
to hearts
that do not beat
as once they did.

Muirland

Snow-skin flakes
from heather hands
that grasp
from every Circle.

Do we descend thus far?

River Isla

At the end of the journey
a crossing
to some other side
unseen.

Glenisla Kirk

The jarring of life
ends
in silence
and stone.

Grave

A wooden oubliette
is lowered
into earth
that wraps remembrance
below that transient stone
that graves a name
in time
when all who know have passed

leaving only The Mercy.

Epilogue – The Bearers

They mourned the passing
and the crossing.

They journey back,
relieved of burdens,
rejoicing -

north winds
cold-driving
to fires.