

The following was written after an ascent of the Old Man of Coniston one October. In May of the same year I'd been up Harter Fell, Dunnerdale, and had diaried about the conifer afforestation: "... the upper height limit of this planting seems to have been revised downwards, and above the living trees now are hundreds, maybe thousands, of felled ones, just left to rot. The scene is one of devastation on a scale not unlike the quarries on the Old Man. The hill will recover, and will eventually absorb this litter, but it will take more like hundreds than tens of years. Harter Fell's punishment, for being of commercial value to man, is therefore not so harsh as the Old Man's."

Words and Mountains

(or, a Conservationist's Sonnet)

By Graham Ball

Over these mountains words have poured like rain,
Running in torrents of euphoria
Down to a sea of guide books, memoirs, verse,
Tomes more numerous than the tops themselves.

Like the sun, painters and photographers
Have turned their warm regard upon the fells,
To frame and file a million times or more
Some stunning moment in a day soon done.

We who make supplication to the hills,
Coming to them in love and reverence,
Know they remain unmoved by our poor art.

Yet moved they might be, if we did not try,
For other men would their destruction seek
Should we forget to sing their frequent praise.