

## GOING WESTWARDS

*I go westwards in the Desert  
with my shame on my shoulders,  
that I was made a laughing-stock  
since I was as my people were.*

*Love and the greater error,  
deceiving honour spoiled me,  
with a film of weakness on my vision,  
squinting at mankind's extremity.*

*Far from me the Island  
when the moon rises on Quattara,  
far from me the Pine Headland  
when the morning ruddiness is on the Desert.*

*Camus Alba is far from me  
and so is the bondage of Europe,  
far from me in the North-West  
the most beautiful grey-blue eyes.*

*Far from me the Island  
and every loved image in Scotland,  
there is a foreign sand in History  
spoiling the machines of the mind.*

*Far from me Belsen and Dachau,  
Roi 'erdam, the Clyde and Prague,  
and Dimitrov before a court  
hitting fear with the thump of his laugh.*

*Guernica itself is very far  
from the innocent corpses of the Nazis  
who are lying in the gravel  
and in the khaki sand of the Desert.*

*There is no rancour in my heart  
against the hardy soldiers of the Enemy,  
but the kinship that there is among  
men in prison on a tidal rock*

*waiting for the sea flowing  
and making cold the warm stone;  
and the coldness of life  
in the hot sun of the Desert.*

*But this is the struggle not to be avoided,  
the sore extreme of human-kind,  
and though I do not hate Rommel's army  
the brain's eye is not squinting.*

*And be what was as it was,  
I am of the big men of Braes,  
of the heroic Raasay MacLeods,  
of the sharp-sword Mathesons of Lochalsh;  
and the men of my name — who were braver  
when their ruinous pride was kindled?*