

Danny O'Keefe

"Ghosts Of The Ascent"

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"Rob Hall breaks up on the satellite phone
Near the highest point on Earth.
His life will soon be over,
He knows now what it's worth.

To the woman who carries his unborn child,
He speaks with the softest touch.
"I love you. Sleep well, my sweetheart.
Please don't worry too much."

The life he loves more than his own
Has a voice he will never hear.
It's midnight now on the mountain,
Very cold, and clear.

Shortly before time slips away,
In a fade of reverie,
Climbs a shadow from out of the mist.
It is George Leigh Mallory.

There are many, who will follow
The paths where once we went.
Some of them too will falter.
Ghosts of the ascent.

We have left our lives behind us
To cling to our mother's breast
Here at the height of ice and snow
They call Mount Everest.

Why did we brave this dangerous plain,
Most will never dare?
Mallory's voice, a chrysaline chime,
Replies, "Because it's there."

We all step upon the summit

When half our climb is through
With a maddened exhilaration,
Known to precious few.

Of love and courage, much is said.

But it's wisdom here that saves.
And all who have forgotten
Rest in lonely, icy graves.

Gone, where all the others,
In their desperate plummets went.
Embraced by Chomolungma,
Ghosts of the ascent.

Ghosts of the ascent.

The greed of conquest,
Is the most dangerous drug of all.
It leads us to imagined heights,
From which we can only fall.

Rob Hall thinks of his unborn child,
Right before the end.
As Mallory reaches out his hand,
"You're one of us now, my friend."

And the idea that they failed,
I fear is one they would resent.
Climbing ever towards Heaven,
Ghosts of the ascent.

Ghosts of the ascent.

Oh, God is the greatest magician,
With a magic so perfectly rare.
As to pluck us out of infinity
And to vanish us into thin air.

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