

## **Hammill Peter**

### **"Four Pails"**

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Four pails of water and a bagfull of salts.

That is all we are, that is all a man comprises,  
chemicals alone, with no spirit, soul or ghost -  
nothing so bizarre.

No amount of faith disguises

what is true is what we fear the most

Nothing can survive

save the things men leave behind them.

Any other case would be really too absurd -

if thoughts remained alive

surely modern science would find them?

No, the soul is nothing but a word.

All the wonders Man achieves

emerge from cerebral tissue.

Chemical reactions' ebb and surge

form that Thing that is you....

It's a sad philosophy,

but better sad than wrong.

Face the truth instead:

when you're dead you're dead,

when you're gone you're gone...

now she's gone.

Four pails of water and a bagfull of salts.

That is all she was, all my lover represented -

that sounds just as mad as saying she will never die.

Fools may clutch at straws

but truth must not be circumvented:

as the tree falls, so must that tree lie!

Now that sounds so odd...

once I would have preached it brightly.

Now questions appear I rationally can't ignore...

Nothingness or God,

Which of them seems more unlikely?

Once I would have answered clearly,

now I only think I'm nearly sure.

(Chris Judge Smith

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