

Dylan Thomas

"Over Sir John's Hill"

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Over Sir John's hill,
The hawk on fire hangs still;
In a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk, he pulls to his
Claws
And gallows, up the rays of his eyes the small birds of
The bay
And the shrill child's play
Wars
Of the sparrows and such who swansing, dusk, in
Wrangling hedges.
And blithely they squawk
To fiery tyburn over the wrestle of elms until
The flash the noosed hawk
Crashes, and slowly the fishing holy stalking heron
In the river Towy below bows his tilted headstone.

Flash, and the plumes crack,
And a black cap of jack-
Daws Sir John's just hill dons, and again the gulled
Birds hare
To the hawk on fire, the halter height, over Towy's
Fins,
In a whack of wind.
There
Where the elegiac fisherbird stabs and paddles
In the pebbly dab-filled
Shallow and sedge, and 'dilly dilly, ' calls the loft
Hawk,
'Come and be killed, '
I open the leaves of the water at a passage
Of psalms and shadows among the pincer'd
sandcrabs
Prancing

And read, in a shell
Death clear as a bouy's bell:
All praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be
Sung,
When his viperish fuse hangs looped with flames under
The brand
Wing, and blest shall

Young
Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck, 'dilly
Dilly,
Come let us die.'
We grieve as the blithe birds, never again, leave
Shingle and elm,
The heron and I,
I young Aesop fabling to the near night by the dingle
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distant

Crystal harbour vale
Where the sea cobbles sail,
And wharves of water where the walls dance and the
White cranes stilt.
It is the heron and I, under judging Sir John's elmed
Hill, tell-tale the knelled
Guilt
Of the led-astray birds whom God, for their breast of
Whistles,
Have Mercy on,
God in his whirlwind silence save, who marks the
Sparrows hail,
For their souls' song.
Now the heron grieves in the weeded verge. Through
Windows
Of dusk and water I see the tilting whispering

Heron, mirrored, go,
As the snapt feathers snow,
Fishing in the tear of the Towy. Only a hoot owl
Hollows, a grassblade blown in cupped hands, in the
Looted elms
And no green cocks or hens
Shout
Now on Sir John's hill. The heron, ankling the scaly
Lowlands of the waves,
Makes all the music; and I who hear the tune of the
Slow,
Wear-willow river, grave,
Before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-
Shaken
Stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds
Sailing.

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