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The Other Night Before

As those of various faiths, and none at all, celebrate the holiday season, it is well to hear again the voice of the Anonymous Poet, he who has known and/or read of sobering wars, including Civil and European bloodbaths. Perpetual war. Perpetual hate. Books that barely penetrate.

He is a tough old master, our Mr. Time,
and the only god he knows;
Yet, he has a quiet patient pride
that prevents his even saying so,
The same that's often only circumspect
when lonely man slays lonely man,
Same that maps anew, age by age,
again to trod the perishable roads.

Tonight I hear him outside chilling
in the snow and freezing rain,
A smallish wisp, in an old green slicker,
a hard blown pulled-down hat;
The ephemeral shape, I see it slipping
in its fine brown leather boots,
But braced on a centuries old companion,
mahogany wood walking cane.

More than once before he's knocked
to show a poet's tinge of wear;
He passes my outstretched hand,
trailing wet upon the floor,
And speaks no word nor sheds his cloth
but stares a doleful telling stare,
That even this cold, cold heart
could be in despair.

Earlier this night on a faraway ridge
he peered down again at enemy lines,
And heard the "Stille Nacht" in one,
from Kinder no longer home,
And from the other, in cockney English,
more of the exact same tone.
With a passing nod he says good night;
his shrug: there are no new signs.

Anonymous Poet

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