

Epitaph

February 2020

Water breaking on the shore
I hear the creaking of a door
With heavy heart it falls to me
To leave this goodly company

Em D
C Bm
Am D
C D Em

To any I've cut by word or deed
Or left adrift in hour of need
Whatever solace I've disturbed
I ask your pardon, undeserved

To any I've touched by kind regard
Or made a cheerless hour less hard
To any I have soothed from pain
I ask you pass it on again

For all do tread a twisted way
To shed the darkness of the day
Say this of me when I am gone:
"He sought the fountain in the stone"

Water breaking on the shore
I hear the creaking of a door
The hour comes to meet the call
Then strike the sail and peace to all

I've always loved the epitaph that Yeats asked to have cut in stone on his grave in Drumcliff churchyard, Sligo. Written in 2020, when I was 75, these verses are my equivalent, and what I would like to be remembered by. There are shades here of Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" and also of the most affecting of all passing songs, "The Parting Glass."