

Maestro at a Valley Festival *

(for John M Lewis of Llandaff)

*the title of his book, published in 2014

Home has more hills than smiles.
Someone took the rolling green
and turned it into dark dust, to paint
the sinews of a miner – cut and cut
the warm echoes of the valleys.
Rain fills the skies and washes cold,
softens dreams that never grow old,
but die young and are celebrated
with a thousand voices, rich as
the hiding sun.

He left his miner's home – searching
for a real future beyond the past –
caught the threadbare London train
but somehow alighted in Worcester,
where the silent swans told him
he might make a home – a home
that would never quite refresh
his blood, still pulsing down the valley,
where she had been leaning
on the diminished wall, one last time.

He would go back,
but it would never be the same.

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