



## The Tholtan

By Mona Douglas

Upon the border of a wood  
I found a small, forsaken house  
Decaying slowly where it stood -  
Some slates blown off, and others loose.

Small window-sockets gaping bare;  
A doorway clear for the sun's grace  
To enter and with the shadows share  
White walls and blackened chimney-place.

Long, long ago the last red spark  
On that black hearthstone turned to grey,  
And up that chimney wide and dark  
The last sweet turf-smoke curled away;

Yet something of old homeliness  
Remained about the precincts still -  
A green-hedged garden - watercress -  
A rose-tree by the window-sill.

Leaning against the white-washed wall,  
I dreamed away a sunny hour,  
Hearing trees whisper and birds call,  
And smelling primroses in flower...

Suddenly by the open door  
A women [sic.] stood in the yellow light;  
It streamed past her across the floor  
And made a shelf of dishes bright.

With happy eyes and rosy cheeks,  
Red-shawled and fair, I saw her stand,  
Then bend to weed the springing leeks  
With her grey knitting in her hand.

Near by, where a small streamlet shone  
Through trees, I heard some children shout,  
And thought: They daren't play ball upon  
The gable-end while she's about!...

Then the dream passed, and as it was  
I saw the house - bare, empty, cold;  
The garden full of leaves nad moss,  
Wild rabbits burrowing in its mould.

But though it seems forsaken, dead,  
I know it hides a happier mood -  
And sometimes old turf fires shine red  
Through twilight's purple quietude.

1956

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