

Idle Thoughts

The Long Goodbye

THE village church stands brave against the storm,
While flailing rain beats fury on the door,
A door of oak and iron – it's the norm –
But can its Norman archway take much more?

Inside, meanwhile, the pilgrim parish prays –
A shrivelled core, its heyday long since gone,
Top-dressed by heads in silvers, whites and greys.
There's no one here who's under sixty-one.

And walking-sticks abound, and walking-frames –
The frail but faithful, here with their support.
They crumble, like their church, and soon their names
Will be forgotten, as they come to naught.

Above their heads, the roof is far from good.
The gutter's said to be in disarray.
And by the gate, the paint on rotting wood
Proclaims a saint, but not survival's way.

The future's hard, and yet not hard to see.
Old stones and mortar, now well past their prime,
Will yet outlast old bones and surely be
Still crumbling when frail flock has had its time.
