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How Green Was My Valley

By Philip Dunne

I am packing my belongings in the shawl
my mother used to wear to the market,
and I am going from my valley.
And this time I shall never return.
I am leaving behind me
my 50 years of memory.
Memory.
Strange that the mind will forget so much
of what only this moment is passed,
and yet hold clear and bright
the memory of what happened years ago,
of men and women long since dead.
Yet who shall say
what is real and what is not?
Can I believe my friends all gone,
when their voices are still a glory in my ears?
No. And I will stand to say no and no again,
for they remain a living truth within my mind.
There is no fence nor hedge
around time that is gone.
You can go back and have what
you like of it, if you can remember.
So I can close my eyes on my valley
as it is today and it is gone,
and I see it as it was when I was a boy.
Green it was, and possessed
of the plenty of the earth.
In all Wales, there was none so beautiful.
Everything I ever learnt as
a small boy came from my father,
and I never found anything he ever told me
to be wrong or worthless.
The simple lessons he taught me
are as sharp and clear in my mind
as if I had heard them only yesterday.
In those days, the black slag,
the waste of the coal pits,
had only begun to cover the side of our hill,
not yet enough to mar the countryside,
nor blacken the beauty of our village.
For the colliery had only begun to poke
its skinny black fingers through the green.
I can hear even now
the voice of my sister Angharad.

Huw!

Angharad!

Coal miners were my father
and all my brothers, and proud of their trade.

- Gwilym Morgan, three pounds seven.

- Thank you, sir.

Lanto Morgan, three pounds seven.

Ivor Morgan, three pounds seven.

Davy Morgan, two pounds five.

Owen Morgan, two pounds five.

Young Gwilym Morgan, one pound ten.

Someone would strike up a song,
and the valley would ring
with the sound of many voices.

For singing is in my people
as sight is in the eye.

Then came the scrubbing,
out in the back yard.

It was the duty of my sister Angharad
to bring the buckets of hot water and cold,
and I performed what little tasks I could
as my father and brothers
scrubbed the coal dust from their backs.

Most would come off them,
but some would stay for life.

It is the honourable badge of the coal miner,
and I envied it
on my father and grown-up brothers.

Scrub and scrub,

Mr Coal would lie there and laugh at you.

There was always a baron of beef or
a shoulder or leg of lamb before my father.

There was never any talk
while we were eating.

I never met anybody
whose talk was better than good food.

My mother was always on the run,
always the last to start her dinner,
and the first to finish.

For if my father was the head of our house,
my mother was its heart.

After the dishes had been washed,
the box was brought to the table
for the spending money to be handed out.

No one in our valley had ever seen a bank.
We kept our savings on the mantelpiece.
My father used to say
that money was made to be spent,
just as men spend
their strength and brains in earning it,
and as willingly.
But always with a purpose.
Thank you, Dadda.
Out of the house and across the street,
as I had run a hundred times before.
Softly now, for respect for chapel
was the first thing my father taught us.
Then straight to Mrs Tossal the Shop,
for that toffee which you could
chew for hours, it seems to me now.
And even after it had gone down,
you could swallow
and still find the taste of it
hiding behind your tongue.
It is with me now, so many years later.
It makes me think of so much
that was good that is gone.
It was on this afternoon
that I first saw Bron - Bronwyn.
She had come over from the next valley
for her first call on my father and mother.
Is this Gwilym Morgan's house?
You must be Huw.
- Is that you, Bronwyn?
- Yes.
There's lovely you are.
I think I fell in love with Bronwyn then.
Perhaps it is foolish to think a child could
fall in love, but I am the child that was,
and nobody knows how I felt, except only me.
- I'm so proud for Ivor.
- I'm the one to be proud.
You think well of our Ivor?
It seems only a few months
since he was scratching around here
like this one, with his mouth open.
This is Bronwyn, Huw,
who's to be your sister.

We have met already.

Be careful of the basket.

There's shortcake in it.

This is not for you. You will have
your time to come. Run along now.

Bronwyn and Ivor were to be married
by the new preacher, Mr Gruffydd,
who had come from the university at Cardiff.
This was my first sight of him.

Now here's a man won't get drunk,
can't get drunk, shan't get drunk

Here's a man won't get drunk, Peter O'Pea

From my heel to my toe,
from my toe to my knee

I'll walk the line, chalk the line, Peter O'Pea

- Good evening, Mr Morgan.

- Yes, indeed, sir.

- Excuse me.

- Thank you.

Come now, boys. Back to work.

Ivor, find Dai Griffiths and Idris John
and bring them to Mr Evans' office.

- Will we come with you?

- No. This is a matter for the older men.

- Home to your mother.

- But...

Leave it now, Davy.

Well, come.

- Why aren't you washed?

- We were waiting for you.

The cut is only a few shillings.

There will still be plenty for us.

A bit of supper now, is it, girl?

It is because they are not
getting the old price for coal.

- Come and wash now.

- May we speak first, sir?

- Yes.

- They did not give you the real reason.

We've been expecting it since
the ironworks at Dowlais closed down.

What have the ironworks to do with us?

The men from Dowlais will work for any
wage, so all our wages must come down.

And this is only the beginning. Watch now.

They will cut us again and still again, until they have this as empty as their promises.

- A good worker is worth good wages.

- Not while there are three men for every job.

Why should the owners pay more if men will work for less?

Because the owners are not savages.

They are men too, like us.

Men, yes, but not like us.

Would they deal with you just now, sir, when you went to them?

- No.

- Because they have power and we have none.

- How will we get power, then? From the air?

- No. From a union of all the men.

Union, is it? I never thought I'd hear my own sons talking socialist nonsense.

- It's good sense.

- Unless we stand together...

- I've had enough of this talk.

- But, Father, it does...

Come and wash now.

Your good mother will be waiting.

Do you think I'll let them make you stand in the rain and not raise my hands to stop it?

Hush, Davy.

- Who gave you permission to speak?

- It is too important for silence.

- They're trying to punish you because...

- It is not more important than good manners.

But what are we going to do about it?

You'll die of cold when it comes to snow.

Let us stand together

and see how they act then.

Right. The men will come out

if we say the word.

All the pits are ready.

You'll not make me a plank for your politics.

I will not be the excuse for any strike.

But if they do that to the spokesman, what will they try and do to the men?

We will see.

Be silent now. Finish your supper.

- Father...
 - Enough now.
 - But...
 - On with your work.
 - It is not enough.
 - Wait until you have permission to speak.
- I will speak against injustice anywhere,
with permission or without it.
- Not in this house.
 - In this house and outside, sir.
 - Leave the table.
 - I will leave the house.
 - Tell your father you're sorry.
 - I'm not sorry.

I'm with you. We can find lodgings in the village.

Gwilym.

All of you, then?

For the last time, sit down,
finish your supper. I will say no more.

We are not questioning your authority, sir.

But if manners prevent our speaking
the truth, we will be without manners.

Get your clothes and go.

- I'm going with them to look after them.
- Hold your tongue. Get on with your dishes.

Yes, my son, I know you are there.

The men have struck.

What does it mean, Mr Gruffydd?

It means that...

something has gone out of this valley
that may never be replaced.

Home to your father and mother, boy.

They'll need you today.

Twenty-two weeks the men were out
as the strike moved into winter.

It was strange to go out into the street
and find the men there in the daytime.

It had a feeling of fright in it.

And always the mood of the men grew uglier,
as empty bellies and desperation
began to conquer reason.

Any man who was not their friend
became their enemy.

They knew that my father
had opposed the strike,
and now it was they who opposed him.
Huw, there's a meeting of the men
in the hills tonight, is it?
- Yes, Momma.
- You will take me.
No, Momma. It is no place for women.
There is a place for this woman
there tonight... upon my soul.
Wait. Wait till you hear me.
I am Beth Morgan, as you damn well know.
I have come to tell you what I think of you,
because you are talking against my husband.
You're a lot of cowards to go against him.
He would do nothing against you
and he never has, and you know him well.
How you smug-faced hypocrites can sit
in the same chapel with him, I cannot tell.
To say he is with the owners is not
only nonsense, but downright wickedness.
There's one thing more
I've got to say, and it is this.
If harm comes to my Gwilym,
I'll find out the men
and I will kill them with my two hands.
And this I will swear by God Almighty.
Lanto! Help!
Hold on, Momma.
They've heard us. They're coming.
He was awake just now.
He'll do, then. But it's beyond me to say why.
You're breeding horses
in this family, Mr Morgan.
This boy should be in his coffin, for my part.
He's a Morgan then, is it, sir?
He should be fed now, Mrs Ivor.
A little soup...
and some warm smiles.
Horse.
- Good day. Wait, wait, wait.
- Huw was awake just now. He spoke to Bron.
- How long then for the little one?
- It's hard to tell.

His legs were frozen to the bone.
A year, two years, quiet like that.
But I can't promise that he'll ever walk again.
Nature must take her course. Gee up.
Mind your tongue. I think he heard you.
Where is the light
I thought to see in your eye?
Are you afraid, boy?
- You heard what the doctor said?
- Yes, sir.
And you believed it?
Yes, sir.
You want to walk again, don't you?
Yes, sir.
Then you must have faith.
And if you have, you will walk again,
no matter what all the doctors say.
But he said nature must take her course.
Nature is the handmaiden of the Lord.
I remember one or two occasions when
she was given orders to change her course.
- You know your scriptures, boy.
- Yes, sir.
Then you know that what's been
done before can be done again, for you.
Do you believe me, Huw?
- Yes, sir.
- Good.
You will see the first daffodil,
out on the mountain.
- Will you?
- Indeed I will, sir.
Then you will.
I could almost wish
that I were lying there in your place
if it meant reading
this book again for the first time.
Treasure Island.
Mr Gruffydd?
- I couldn't let you go without thanking you.
- It was only my duty, girl.
No. It was more than duty.
Yes. Huw's a fine boy.
And you're a fine family.

You'd better be going in now.

You'll catch your death.

Will you be coming to supper soon?

Yes. Later, when you're finished
with doctors and such.

- I will hurry them away, then.

- Good.

"Squire Trelawney, Dr Livesey,
and the rest of these gentlemen
having asked me to write down the
whole particulars about Treasure Island
from the beginning to the end, keeping
nothing back but the bearings of the island,
and only because there is
still treasure not yet lifted,
I take up my pen in the year of grace 1785,
and go back to the time when
my father kept the 'Admiral Benbow' inn."
All the noble books which have
lived in my mind ever since,
and always I hoped, and kept my faith.
For the first months
my mother was still upstairs,
and we could talk to each other with tappings.

Spring?

There you are, girl.

Easy.

There.

Wait.

It's the old snow got into it.

Gwilym.

There is a wife you have, resting in her bed
and letting strangers care for her family.

There is a wife I have, then.

Go along with you, boy.

Will you say something, Mother?

Go on, say something.

What can I say?

You found plenty to say last time you spoke.

It should be easier now, with friends.

Well...

Well... Come and eat, everyone.

More, is it, boys?

Lanto.

I haven't seen you in chapel lately.

- I have been too busy.

- What business, may I ask?

- Mine.

- Only asking a civil question, I was.

And having a civil answer.

I have been busy with the union.

Unions are the work of the Devil.

You will come to no good end.

At least I am not sitting on it,
talking rubbish in chapel.

- Look here...

- Leave it, or I'll say something to be sorry.

This is a matter that requires airing.

Lanto, why do you think

we at the chapel talk rubbish?

My remark was not aimed at you.

Then aim it.

Very well.

Because you make yourselves out
to be shepherds of the flock,
and yet you allow your sheep
to live in filth and poverty.

And if they try and raise
their voices against it,
you calm them by telling them
their suffering is the will of God.

Sheep, indeed. Are we sheep to be herded
and sheared by a handful of owners?

I was taught man was made
in the image of God, not a sheep.

- Lanto.

- I haven't expressed my views
because I haven't had any wish
to interfere in a family disagreement.

You have my permission to speak.

Very well, then. Here is what I think.

First, have your union.

You need it. Alone, you are weak.

Together, you are strong.

But remember that with strength goes
responsibility, to others and yourselves.

For you cannot conquer injustice
with more injustice,

only with justice, and the help of God.

Are you coming outside

your position in life, Mr Gruffydd?

Your business is spiritual.

My business is anything

between man and the spirit of God.

The deacons shall hear that

you have been preaching socialism.

- Mr Parry...

- Loose the old devil.

- Mr Parry...

- Stop now. He is our guest.

- Beth, a pint of home-brew for Mr Parry.

- I'll give him a clout with the frying pan.

Miss Jenkins. A sweet song. The harp, is it?

Come on, men. Get in here.

Now look, a little song...

Angharad.

Mr Gruffydd, will we always be in your debt?

Now you have made us a family again.

Here. Let me.

Your hands. There's a pity.

No matter.

Have you ever been down the collieries?

- Ten years.

- Ten years?

While I was studying.

- A bit of soap now.

- Don't bother, please.

There's a man for you,

spoiling his good handkerchief.

Look now, you are king in the chapel,

but I will be queen in my own kitchen.

You will be queen wherever you walk.

What does that mean?

I should not have said it.

Why?

I have no right to speak to you so.

Mr Gruffydd?

If the right is mine to give,

you have it.

Then the strike was settled,

with the help of Mr Gruffydd and my father.

Work again, work to wipe out

the memory of idleness and hardship.

The men were happy

going up the hill that morning.

- One and nine.

- One and ten.

But not all of them, for there were
too many now for the jobs open,
and some learned that never again would
there be work for them in their own valley.

It is the same all over South Wales, it is.

Father, in Cardiff the men are standing
in line to have bread from the government.

Not for us, eh, lad?

We will have our share of the box
and go, if you please, sir.

- Where will you go?

- America.

- My share too, Owen.

- And mine.

No. Our own.

- We will take no charity.

- Not charity, man. Sense.

No, only our own.

Say nothing of this to your mother.

Let this day be over first.

Never mind saying nothing.

I heard.

America.

My babies.

Shall we have a chapter, my sons?

What shall we have, sir?

Isaiah 55.

Those two gone. This is only the beginning.

Then all of you will go,

one after the other. All of you.

I will never leave you, Momma.

Huw, boy, if you should ever leave me,

I'll be sorry I ever had babies.

Why did you have them?

Indeed to goodness, boy, why?

To keep my hands in water

and my face to the fire, perhaps.

For Mr Ivor Morgan.

From Windsor Castle it is.

"Mr Ivor Morgan is commanded
to appear before Her Maj..."

"Mr Ivor Morgan is commanded to appear
before Her Majesty at Windsor Castle,
with chosen members of his choir, on 14
May between the hours of three and five."
To sing before the Queen.

My son, I never thought
to see this beautiful day.

Idris, Owen, all of you.

Fetch everyone from all the valleys round.
Davy, over to the other collieries.

Invite everyone.

Lanto, down to the Three Bells for beer.
Open house tonight for all who will come.

My sons, you shall have
a sendoff worthy of the Morgans.

Our Heavenly Father, I give thanks
from the heart to live this day.

I give thanks for all I have,
and I do give thanks for this new blessing.

For you are our Father,
but we look to our Queen as our mother.

Comfort her in her troubles, O God,
and let her worries be
not more than she shall bear at her age.

And grant that sweetness
and power and spirit
may be given to these voices
that shall sing at her command.

- Amen.

- Amen.

God save our gracious Queen

Long live our noble Queen

God save our Queen

Send her victorious

Happy and glorious

Gwilym. Owen.

Long to reign over us

God save our Queen

Good morning, Mr Gruffydd.

Angharad is down to the market.

Angharad? I've come for Huw.

For Huw?

- The daffodils are out, Momma.

- Where are your clothes?

Under my pillow.

For these months, ready for today.

Come you, then, and you shall
bring back a posy fit for a queen
for your brave mother.

Indeed I will, sir.

- Almost there, Huw.

- Yes, sir.

- Low bridge there. Watch out.

- It's fun.

- All right?

- Yes, sir.

- All right?

- Yes, sir.

Easy it is, now.

There.

Cwm Rhondda.

You can walk, Huw, if you try.

Come, lad. You can walk.

Huw. Walk.

There's a good lad. Come on.

See?

There's a good old man.

You've been lucky, Huw.

Lucky to suffer, and lucky to
spend these weary months in bed.

For so God has given you a chance
to make spirit within yourself.

And as your father cleans
his lamp to have good light,
so keep clean your spirit, huh?

How, sir?

By prayer, Huw.

And by prayer I don't mean
shouting and mumbling,
and wallowing like a hog
in religious sentiment.

Prayer is only another name
for good, clean, direct thinking.

When you pray, think.

Think well what you're saying.

Make your thoughts into things that are solid,

and in that way
your prayer will have strength.
And that strength will become
a part of you, body, mind and spirit.
And the first duty of these new legs
is to get you to chapel on Sunday.
- Indeed they will, sir.
- There's a good old man again.
Give me your hand.
Come on, now.
Will you please remain in your places?
There's to be a meeting of the deacons.
Meillyn Lewis.
Step forward.
Your sins have found you out.
And now you must pay the price
of all women like you.
You have brought a child into the world
against the commandment.
Prayer is wasted on your sort.
You shall be cast out into the utter darkness
till you have learned your lesson.
Meillyn Lewis, do you admit your sin?
Yes.
Then prepare to suffer your punishment.
Stop it. Leave her alone, you hypocrite.
- Leave it now, Mr Morgan.
- Sit down.
Angharad.
How could you watch them? Cruel old men,
groaning and nodding to hurt her more.
That is not the word of God.
"Go thou and sin no more," Jesus said.
Angharad.
- You know your Bible too well, life too little.
- I know Meillyn Lewis is no worse than I am.
- Angharad.
- What do the deacons know about it?
What do you know about what
could happen to a poor girl when...
when she loves a man so much that even to
lose sight of him for a moment is torture?
- Does it hurt you, Huw?
- Easy, now.

Huw?

Angharad.

I am a man now. Kindly leave the kitchen.

So you're a man now, is it?

Beth. Blasphemy, sacrilege and hypocrisy.

Can't a man smoke

and read a paper on the Sabbath?

Go and blow your nose.

Come in.

Come in.

What under the blazes...

- Good morning, Morgan.

- Good morning, Mr Evans.

- Sit down, sir. Sit down, sir.

- Thank you.

Mr Evans.

The mine owner himself.

Angharad.

- Now to business.

- Yes, sir.

I've come here on

a very delicate mission, Morgan.

- No trouble, sir?

- No. No trouble.

- But it worries me.

- Yes, sir.

I'm here to get your permission

that my son lestyn

may have permission...

- Bless you, Morgan.

- Thank you, sir.

- Now where was I?

- "Permission"?

Yes. That my son lestyn

may have permission,

with your daughter's permission,

to call upon her. There we are.

We are a very proud family, Mr Evans.

Yes, I know. I know, Morgan.

But this is not my doing, Morgan.

It's that young whelp of a...

Mr Evans. Your son has

my permission to speak to me.

Thank you, Morgan.

I'm very much obliged to you.

Yes, sir.

Good old Welsh blood, you know,
and all that sort of thing.

- I'm very much obliged, Morgan.

- Yes, sir.

Beth.

Come, come, come. My shoes. Get my shoes.
You, girl. Get up to your room. Have you
no modesty left in you? Get up there.

Get your hands out...

My shoes. Find the shoes.

Why don't you get your jackets on?

Mr Morgan?

Sit down.

This is my wife, Mrs Morgan.

How do you do?

Mr Morgan, I've come to ask your permission
to speak to your daughter, Angharad.

These are my sons.

Yes. I know them.

God bless you.

You shouldn't be here.

I couldn't spend
another night without knowing.

What has happened? Is anything wrong?

- Wrong?

- You know what I mean.

Why have you changed towards me?

Why am I a stranger now?

Have I done anything?

No.

The blame is mine.

Your mother spoke to me after chapel.

She's happy to think

you'll be having plenty all of your days.

With Iestyn Evans.

- You could do no better.

- I don't want him.

I want you.

Angharad?

I have spent nights too,
trying to think this out.

When I took up this work,

I knew what it meant.
It meant sacrifice and devotion.
It meant making it my whole life to the...
to the exclusion of everything else.
That I was perfectly willing to do.
But to share it with another...
Do you think I will
have you going threadbare,
depending on the charity
of others for your good meals?
Our children growing up in cast-off clothing,
and ourselves thanking God for
parenthood in a house full of bits?
No. I can bear with such a life
for the sake of my work,
but I think I'd start to kill if...
if I saw the white come to your hair
20 years before its time.
Why?
Why would you start to kill?
Are you a man or a saint?
I am no saint. But I have a duty towards you.
Let me do it.
Is there to be no singing for
my daughter's wedding, Dai Bando?
Now then. The bathtub holds 100 gallons.
"A" fills it at the rate of 20 gallons a minute,
and "B" at the rate of ten gallons a minute.
- Got that, Mr Morgan?
- Twenty and ten gallons. Yes, sir.
Now then. "C" is a hole that empties it
at the rate of five gallons a minute.
How long to fill the tub?
There is silly. Trying to fill
a bathtub full of holes, indeed.
A sum it is, girl. A sum.
A problem for the mind.
- For his examination into school.
- That old national school.
'Tis silly they are with their sums. Who
would pour water in a bathtub full of holes?
- Who would think of it? Only a madman.
- It is to see if the boy can calculate.
Figures, nothing else.

How many gallons, and how long.
In a bathtub full of holes.
Now I know why I have such a tribe of sons.
It is you, Beth Morgan, is the cause.
Look you, Mr Gruffydd.
Have you something else?
The decimal point.
The decimal...
The decimal point, then,
and peace to my house.
- Go and scratch.
- Well, it's getting late.
I've got to get along. We'll follow
the decimal point tomorrow night.
- Good night.
- Good night, Mrs Morgan.
Who is there that cannot look back
and remember his first day at a new school?
To go alone the long walk
over the hills to the next valley,
the first of my family to have
the privilege of attending a national school.
So you're the new boy?
- Yes, sir.
- You're late.
Yes, sir.
What a dirty little sweep it is.
Who are your people?
- Where are you from?
- Cwm Rhondda.
Cwm Rhondda?
A little genius from the coal pits.
And they expect me to make
a scholar of it. All right, come in.
Were you brought up in stables?
Well, shut the door.
Your boots are muddy.
They were clean when I left home.
You will address me as "sir",
or I'll put a stick about your back.
- Now sit down here.
- Yes, sir.
Come here, you dirty little sweep.
What have we here?

A pencil box.

Pretty, too.

You broke my pencil box.

Mervyn, stop it. You'll hurt him.

I fell on the mountain.

Did you win, Huw?

No.

Lanto.

- Fetch Dai Bando.

- Dai Bando, is it?

- Are you willing to go to school tomorrow?

- Yes, sir.

Good. You shall get a penny for every mark
on your face, sixpence for a bloody nose,
a shilling for a black eye,
two shillings for a broken nose.

Gwilym. Stop it. Fight again,
and when you come home, not a look
will you get from me, not a word.

Break your own nose, then. Break my heart
every time you go out of the house.

- A boy must fight, Beth.

- Fight?

Fight? Another beating like that,
he will walk home dead.

Beating? He's had no beating.

A hiding, yes, but no beating.

Give the boy time, it will be he
that's giving the beating, is it?

Dai Bando. Come into the house.

- Good evening, Mrs Morgan.

- Leave off your hat.

Dai Bando is going to teach you to box, Huw.

To fight first. Too many call themselves
boxers who are not even fighters.

- Boxing is an art, is it?

- It is, it is.

Go along with you, girl.

A cup of tea for the men.

- Tea?

- Tea?

No tea, Mrs Morgan.

In training, he is.

A glass of beer, if you please.

Baths full of holes.

And now prizefighters.

So our little coal miner has been indulging in his favourite sport again?

- Mr Phillips, make a back. Make a back.

- I refuse, sir.

Mr Wells, make a back.

Here. Put this in between your teeth.

Bite it hard.

Well, the scholar.

- Huw, lad.

- Well, I will go to my death.

- Did you get that in school?

- He has cut you to the bone. Who was it?

- Mr Jonas, is it?

- We'll have a word with Mr Jonas.

- No.

- And why not?

- I broke the rule when I fought.

- There is no rule for that.

- But he warned me.

- Rubbish, boy. I'll...

Hush, Davy.

This is Huw's affair. He shall decide.

Say the word, lad, and we will have the bones hot from his flesh.

No. Leave him alone.

I think our baby brother is becoming quite a man.

These denominations are used in measuring distances and...

- Yes?

- Right.

- Good morning, Mr...

- Jonas.

Mr Jonas. We have come to the right place indeed.

What can I do for you?

A man is never too old to learn, is it, Mr Jonas?

- No.

- I was in school myself once.

- But no great one for knowledge.

- Look here, what do you want?

Knowledge.

How would you go about taking
the measurement of a stick, Mr Jonas?

- By its length, of course.

- And how would you measure a man
who would use a stick on a boy
one third his size?

- Tell us.

- Now, you are good in the use of a stick.
But boxing is my subject, to the rules laid
down by the good Marquess of Queensberry.
God rest his soul.

And happy I am to pass on
my knowledge to you.

Mr Mottshill. Mr Mottshill.

All right, get him into position, now.

Look, to make a good boxer,
you must have a good right hand.

You see?

Now, that is how you will punish your man,
with a right and a left.

And put your soul into it, with...

The gentleman is talking to you.

- Raise him up.

- Come, come, come. Up, up, up.

Position again.

Could I have your attention, boys and girls?

I am not accustomed to speaking in public...

- Only public houses.

- But this...

Never use. It's against the rules.

Break a man's nose. Now the...

- I'm afraid he will never make a boxer.

- No aptitude for knowledge.

Mr Gruffydd.

Ivor... fell under a tram, lower level.

Ivor!

- We have our first grandson, Gwil.

- Well, give one and take the other.

Tell that to that girl up there.

She will answer you.

- Hist now, Beth. Do not kindle the wrath.

- To hell with the wrath.

And I'm saying it plain to be heard.

'Tis good. With honours, then.
Our son is a scholar.
What is it, Huw? I can't make sense with it.
- Latin, it is.
- Latin, is it?
Why not good Welsh, or even English?
- It is the fashion.
- Fashion.
Frenchies, decimal points,
and bathtubs full of holes.
My poor Huw. They've stuffed
your head with Latin, then?
- Beth, my old beauty, you. A black eye, is it?
- Go ahead, shout. Wake up the baby, then.
There is beautiful.
The image of my father, he is.
What bloody nonsense.
Now then, Huw. What will it be?
To Cardiff to school, then the university
to be a lawyer, is it, or a doctor?
Dr Huw Morgan. Well, Uncle Huw,
that will be something special.
Yes, indeed, with a lovely horse and trap,
and a good black suit and a shirt with starch.
There is good, my little one.
Now, a glass of buttermilk for you,
with all your knowledge.
Yes, Mother. And some of Bron's shortcake.
And my shortcake is
to be fed to the pigs, is it?
No. Only I finished yours yesterday,
and today is shortcake day with Bron.
I'm sorry, Huw.
Only currant bread I made today.
Nobody to eat it now.
Mother. I am lonely without him.
I put his boots and clothes ready every night,
but they are there still in the morning.
There is lonely I am.
Gwil, I will have Bron
here to live if she will come.
Not Bron.
One mistress in the house.
Now, Huw, what will it be?

I will go down the colliery with you, sir.

Have sense, boy.

The colliery is no place for you.

Why not try for a respectable job?

Respectable? Are you and his brothers
a lot of old jailbirds, then?

Leave it now, Beth.

I only want the best for the boy.

If he is as good a man as you
and his brothers, I will rest happy.

I am thinking of the boy's future.

It was different in our day.

There was good money and fair play
for all. But Huw is a scholar.

Why take brains down a coal mine?

I would rather, sir.

All right.

Decide for yourself.

But blame yourself if you are wrong.

The colliery, sir.

- All right, the colliery it is.

- Good.

- Where are you going?

- To get drunk.

Bron?

- I am going down the colliery.

- The colliery, is it?

The old coal will be shaking in its seam.

Bron...

Bron.

Would you have me to live
in this house, and have my wages?

- Your home is with your mother.

- It was she who sent me.

- From pity.

- No, from sense.

If you put clothes night and morning,
let them be my clothes.

- Good old man.

- Yes or no, Bron?

- Yes.

- Good.

Good. I will get my bed.

- So it is a man now, is it?

- And could I carry such a man?

Lanto! No.

Five shillings.

Seven and tuppence.

- Move along.

- Thank you, sir.

Three shillings.

Two and nine.

One pound two.

Two pounds ten.

Discharged, Morgan.

Move along.

Two pound ten.

Discharged, Morgan.

One pound ten.

And so it came to lanto and Davy,
the best workers in the colliery,
but too highly paid to compete
with poorer, more desperate men.

- Will you read us a chapter, Father?

- Yes, my son.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

"He maketh me

to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters."

"He restoreth my soul:

He leadeth me in the paths

of righteousness for his name's sake."

"Yea, though I walk through

the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: For thou art with me."

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

"Thou preparest a table before me

in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil."

"My cup runneth over."

One line to Owen and Gwil,

down to Cape Town to Angharad.

Over here to Canada to lanto,

and down here to Davy in New Zealand.

And you are the star,

shining on them from this house,

all the way across the continents and oceans.

All the way?

How far am I shining then, if you can
put it all on a little piece of paper?

Now, a map it is, my old beauty. A picture
of the world to show you where they are.

I know where they are, without any old maps,
or scratches, or spiders, or pencils.

They are in the house.

Then Angharad came back
from Cape Town without her husband.

She did not come to us,
but stayed at the big Evans house.

Her house, on top of the hill.

- To see Mrs Evans, please.

- Who is it?

Huw Morgan.

Her brother, is it?

Come in.

Huw.

Mrs Nicholas,
will you bring some tea, please?

Sit down, Huw.

There is grown you are.

- And changed.

- You too.

I look ill and ought to take care of myself.

Everyone coming in the house says so,
so you say it too, and let us finish with it.

But tell me all the news.

How is...

How are all the boys
and girls we used to know?

Well...

The Jenkins girls are married.

Maldwyn Hughes has gone to be a doctor.

Rhys Howell is in a solicitor's office,
and is sending home ten shillings a week.

And Mr Gruffydd...

is still first up and last to bed.

How is he, Huw?

Not as he was.

Is he ill?

Inside.

In his eyes and in his voice.

Like you.

Please go home, Huw.

- I'm sorry.

- Now then, Mrs Evans. Tea, is it?

Leave it, Mrs Nicholas. I will pour.

Well.

I always did the pouring
for Mr lestyn's poor mother.

- I will pour.

- Yes, Mrs Evans.

A new mistress is like new sheets.

Yes. A little bit stiff,
but washing's to come.

Why do you have her here?

37 years with the family.

Or so she tells me 60 times a day.

- Have some tea, Huw.

- You don't want me to go?

No. No, Huw.

I'm sorry for being nasty.

Please stay.

Huw. I tried to tell Mother, but...

Not for me to say.

Only the housekeeper I am.

37 years in the family,
and living to curse the day.

It will not surprise me any day to see
the old master rise from his grave.

'Tis only the gravestone
holding him down, I will swear.

Then what is it, Mrs Nicholas?

Divorce.

Divorce.

Saying nothing, I am.

But that is what is in her mind.

She is here without her husband, is it?

And why? It is because

she is in love with this preacher.

Preacher, I said. Mr Gruffydd, it is.

But Mr Gruffydd has not been near the house.

What difference is that, girl?

Get on with your work.

We will not say a word, Mrs Nicholas.

No.

You're a filthy liar!

- Let up!

- Let me at him!

Liar!

As the slag had spread over my valley,
so now a blackness spread
over the minds of its people.
For the first time in my memory,
our front door was shut tight in the daytime.

Dad-da?

Well, Huw?

Trouble with the Philistines, is it?

Huw, what is it now? Look at your hands.

Evan John.

He... he said things
about Angharad and Mr Gruffydd.

Children too.

You were right, my son.

- I will be back for breakfast.

- You will not go to chapel?

No.

And if they do this thing,
I will never set foot
in the chapel again as long as I live.
I will have the sheets warm on your bed.

- There is an old beauty you are.

- Go and scratch, boy.

What is this about the chapel, Mother?

Tonight, after the service.

A deacons' meeting over Angharad.

Angharad? But she has done nothing.

Nothing is enough for people
who have minds like cesspools.

Huw, my little one.

I hope when you're grown,
their tongues will be slower to hurt.

- Will Angharad have to be at the meeting?

- No. None of us will be there.

But the disgrace will not stay away.

I will go, Mother.

This is the last time I will talk in this chapel.

I am leaving the valley with regret
toward those who have helped me here,
and who have let me help them.

But...

for the rest of you,
those of you who have only proved
that I have wasted my time among you,
I have only this to say.
There is not one among you
who has had the courage
to come to me and accuse me of wrongdoing.
And yet, by any standard,
if there has been a sin,
I am the one who
should be branded the sinner.
Will anyone raise his voice
here now to accuse me?
No.
You're cowards, too, as well as hypocrites.
But I don't blame you.
The fault is mine as much as yours.
The idle tongues,
the poverty of mind which you have shown,
mean that I have failed to reach most
of you with the lesson I was given to teach.
Huw?
I thought when I was a young man
that I would conquer the world, with truth.
I thought I would lead an army
greater than Alexander ever dreamed of.
Not to conquer nations,
but to liberate mankind.
- Yes, sir.
- With truth.
With the golden sound of the Word.
But only a few of them heard.
Only a few of you understood.
The rest of you
put on black and sat in chapel.
Why do you come here?
Why do you dress your hypocrisy in black
and parade before your God on Sunday?
From love? No. For you've shown
that your hearts are too withered
to receive the love of your divine Father.
I know why you've come.
I've seen it in your faces Sunday after
Sunday as I've stood here before you.

Fear has brought you here.
Horrible, superstitious fear.
Fear of divine retribution.
A bolt of fire from the skies,
the vengeance of the Lord,
and the justice of God.
But you have forgotten the love of Jesus.
You disregard his sacrifice.
Death. Fear.
Flames, horror, and black clothes.
Hold your meeting, then.
But know if you do this in the name
of God, and in the house of God,
you blaspheme against him and his Word.
Wait. There is a meeting, Master Morgan.
Well, Huw.
- I'm glad you've come.
- Thank you, sir.
Is there anything I can do?
Indeed there is.
You can do me a great service.
This watch.
My father gave it to me
when I entered the ministry.
It's marked time we've both loved.
- Take it.
- No, sir.
A service, I said you'd be doing me.
No need for us to shake hands.
We will live in the minds of each other.
Mr Gruffydd, won't you
see Angharad before you go?
She wants you to.
No.
If I were to see her again,
I couldn't find the strength to leave her.
Goodbye, Huw.
And there's a good old man you are.
What is it now? Fire, or flood, or what?
A cave-in, they are saying.
- Take me up there.
- What good in the darkness of a mine?
Your eyes are no good in daylight
from the blows you've taken in the ring.

I can still swing a pick deeper than any man.

Take me up there.

Men. Men. Women.

Those of you with relatives.

Let them to the pit.

- Gwilym Morgan?

- Not yet, sir.

Mr Gruffydd? On the lower level, he was.

- My father?

- Not yet, Mrs Evans.

Angharad...

Who is for Gwilym Morgan and the others?

I for one. He is the blood of my heart.

Come, Cyfartha.

'Tis a coward I am.

But I will hold your coat.

Dadda!

Dadda!

Dadda!

Huw, lad.

Dadda!

- Dadda!

- Huw.

Mr Gruffydd!

There's a good old man you are.

He came to me just now.

Ivor was with him.

He spoke to me,

and told me of the glory he had seen.

Look.

Men like my father cannot die.

They are with me still,

real in memory as they were in flesh,

loving and beloved for ever.

How green was my valley then.