

The House by the Side of the Road

"He was a friend to man, and lived in a house by the side of the road."

--Homer

There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the place of their self-content;
There are souls, like stars, that dwell apart,
In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneers souls that blaze their paths
Where highways never ran--
But let me live by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by--
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
As good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban;
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

I see from my house by the side of the road,
By the side of the highway of life,
The men who press with the ardor of hope,
The men who are faint with the strife.
But I turn not away from their smiles and tears,
Both parts of an infinite plan--
Let me live in my house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead,
And mountains of wearisome height,
That the road passes on through the long afternoon
And stretches away to the night.
But still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice,
And weep with the strangers that moan,
Nor live in my house by the side of the road
Like a man who dwells alone.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road
Where the race of men go by--
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
Wise, foolish--so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat
Or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in my house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

Sam Walter Foss
American, 1858-1911

Not I--Not anyone else, can travel the road for you,
you must travel it for yourself.

Walt Whitman
American 1819-1892