

On a Ruined Farm near the His Master's Voice Gramophone Factory, George Orwell

On a Ruined Farm near the His Master's Voice Gramophone Factory

As I stand at the lichened gate
With warring worlds on either hand –
To left the black and budless trees,
The empty sties, the barns that stand

Like tumbling skeletons – and to right
The factory-towers, white and clear
Like distant, glittering cities seen
From a ship's rail – as I stand here,

I feel, and with a sharper pang,
My mortal sickness; how I give
My heart to weak and stuffless ghosts,
And with the living cannot live.

The acid smoke has soured the fields,
And browned the few and windworn flowers;
But there, where steel and concrete soar
In dizzy, geometric towers –

There, where the tapering cranes sweep round,
And great wheels turn, and trains roar by
Like strong, low-headed brutes of steel –
There is my world, my home; yet why

So alien still? For I can neither
Dwell in that world, nor turn again
To scythe and spade, but only loiter
Among the trees the smoke has slain.

Yet when the trees were young, men still
Could choose their path – the winged soul,
Not cursed with double doubts, could fly,
Arrow-like to a foreseen goal;

And they who planned those soaring towers,
They too have set their spirit free;
To them their glittering world can bring
Faith, and accepted destiny;

But none to me as I stand here
Between two countries, both-ways torn,
And moveless still, like Buridan's donkey
Between the water and the corn.

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THE END