



THE BALLAD OF HOMELESS JACK

You'll pass him in the doorway,
you'll see him in the street,
with a blanket on his shoulders,
second-hand shoes on his feet.

You'll hear him squeeze from his whistle
a tune that's cracked and strange.
You'll see his hat left hopefully
to gather up your change.

Nobody stops to speak to him,
nobody catches his eye,
from the stream of hurrying people
who pass so swiftly by.

With a grubby bundle in his hand
and a charity coat on his back,
you'll meet him all across the land.
His name is Homeless Jack.

Now some say Jack is lazy,
and some say Jack is bad,
and some say Jack's a hopeless case
a junkie, drunkard, mad.

But Jack says he's a human being
not far from me or you.
He sees no point, he has no hope,
so what is Jack to do.

But sit upon his blanket
and let the world walk on
till life at last deserts him
and even dreams are gone?

And maybe as we hurry by
and look the other way,
we know that in the doorway
it could be us one day.

So why not spare for Homeless Jack
a coin, a nod, a grin,
to hold the tide of hopelessness
from coldly creeping in?



Tony Mitton