

AT THE GRAVE OF HENRY WILLIAMSON

Georgeham, Devon

No one has told the story but himself:
the father's stringency, the mother's pale
and futile care; the taut, divided soul
by love and lovelessness broken in half:

a hand now on the tractor, now the pen,
the witty gasconade, the obstinacy,
the fierce and fractious insularity;
pathos with calf and otter, anger with men.

Anchorite in the hut, he called up words
to focus shifting time, the ache of loss:
Flanders and Norfolk, the Burrows and Ox's Cross,
and the giant Opus all things moved towards.

Redress should have been offered long ago.
Now by this simple headstone I reflect
on the sadness and the spite of the neglect
and trust that out of rancour truth will grow.

The end of 'Wuthering Heights' seems to recur:
the 'quiet earth', 'unquiet slumberer',
'benign sky' and 'soft wind', the ancient sun.
Somewhere beyond this place, justice is done.

Ronald Walker