**Speak** *by Gareth A Roberts*

*(with acknowledgement to* The Fold of the Bards *in* The Book of Taliesin*)*

It is a fit time to go to the drinking

with the skilful men, about art,

and a hundred knots,

the custom of the country,

the shepherd of the districts,

support of gates –

like going without a foot into battle…

or going home without a tongue,

not knowing the proper speech of stones;

to stir at the cauldron

for its fleetest drops,

labouring a year at the blending;

and the years’ flame kindled.

I have shifted shapes for you:

flesh of the river, bone of the sky.

In the dirt I made myself a seed

for your scratching

that you may bear and bare and birth me:

your radiant brow. I am the bastard

that cannot be loved, lord or killed;

a foundling condemned

forever to be found

in the mouths of rivers

and the sea’s tongue… a tongue

to cause loquacious bards a hindrance:

a cell, a cleft, a restoration

and depository of song. I am a literary man.

I love the high trees

that afford a protection above,

and a bard that composes

without earning anger.

I am the flower that grows the night,

a mountain beneath your road.

I am pot holes, a tile loosed

and opening roofs to rain

and my voice. I am what is

behind the trees,

behind the light, crowing,

where high places bring

the arduous path.