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An Honest Man

11/26 & 12/04/03

I often wonder what
Became of the man
Though I can't remember
His name, and his face
Fades in my memory.
Still alive? Or maybe dead...
At home in his bed?
Or by the conqueror killed
Because of their dread
Of an honest man.

You can arrest corrupts
And stage a huge trial
To trumpet their crimes
And sentence them strict
Teaching the masses
That justice you bring,
So don't kill the crook,
He's worth more alive,
A vivid object lesson
Held before all to see.

But an honest man,
An official at that,
A great real danger
Just by being,
And gives the lie
To your claim,
Only your way
Is all there is.

Village chief, but first
A good and fair man.
His country it was,
Yet let pass my speaking
Only a foreigner's tongue,
Enough English he had
To get our job done.

So when memory nags;
I pray he be blessed
Wherever he is
Though I can't remember
His village's name, but
His unassuming steadiness
Is present in my mind.

~Gerald A. Ney~