



from “I am”

*The Asylum, Northampton*

I am; yet what I am none cares or knows;  
My friends forsake me like a memory lost;  
I am the self-consumer of my woes:  
They rise and vanish in oblivious host,  
Like shades in love and death's oblivion lost;  
And yet I am, and live with shadows tost  
  
Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,  
Into the living sea of waking dreams,  
Where there is neither sense of life nor joys,  
But the vast shipwreck of my life's esteems ...

*John Clare (1793-1864)*

*John Clare was the son of a farm labourer, He spent much of the last part of his life in psychiatric hospital.*

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