

## OUT THERE

by Kevin Grant

### First Class Certificate Primary School Eisteddfod 1966

Out there it was dark... A profound silence had settled over the usually bustling city. It was dark, but it was noon. It was not just quiet, it was forbidding, eerie. It was as if there was a hum in the air. A hum which mounted and mounted, yet did not expend itself and threatened to engulf everything, everyone... And it was dark.

On a bare outcrop, three crosses pointed accusingly at the dark, foreboding sky. There was little movement. Most of the scoffers which had thronged the spot earlier that day had slunk away. Only the Roman contingent and the faithful few remained. Here, however, there was true silence - a peace such as in the vortex of a storm. The three figures were quiet despite their agonising pain which was etched across their faces. Yet the middle One displayed only what one could call compassion. He grimaced as a spasm of pain passed, but the silence remained unbroken.

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"

The words sounded, quietly, yet impellingly, through the emptiness of the unloving world, almost echoing, so vast was the silence. God had separated part of Himself from Himself, and made the supreme sacrifice for the supreme evil.

The haggard Figure hauled Itself up with a huge, shivering effort on the cruel spikes. The almost imperceptible noise of metal grinding on bone padded by sinew reached the ears of the weeping women below. He drew a long shuddering breath. He tasted the warm salty mixture of His own blood and sweat.

He held Himself up despite the excruciating skewers of pain which shot up His arms and at His heart. He swallowed.

"I thirst."

Again the quiet, resonant, but impelling voice. It was the first time He had spoken something for Himself. One of the four legionnaires stirred and, putting a sponge dipped in vinegar on a hyssop reed, passed it up to him. He drank. Still the silence reigned.

Hours passed in an endless succession of arduous efforts to retrieve a shuddering breath. Then the torn, emaciated body hung heavily on the slivers of forged iron. The efforts slowly became more and more infrequent, the breath longer and more shuddering.

At mid-afternoon the middle Figure suddenly relaxed completely as if dead. He hung there for a full unbreathing minute. Then came the supreme effort... He raised Himself high and in the quiet, yet ringing voice, cried:

"It is finished! Into Thy hands I commit My spirit."

And it was finished.

As the figure slumped forward, the silent hum shattered. The earth shook as does an angry man. Screams, rumbles, deep murmurs grew to a crescendo like the percussion of an orchestra.

Then silence! God had died for man.

It was dark out there.

**Word Count: 457**