

The Past Was Goodly Once

William Ernest Henley

The Past was goodly once, and yet, when all is said,

The best of it we know is that it's done and dead.

Dwindled and faded quite, perished beyond recall,

Nothing is left at last of what one time was all.

Coming back like a ghost, staring and lingering on,

Never a word it speaks but proves it dead and gone.

Duty and work and joy—these things it cannot give;

And the Present is life, and life is good to live.

Let it lie where it fell, far from the living sun,

The Past that, goodly once, is gone and dead and done.

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