

Sonnet: ‘The shepherds almost wonder where they dwell’

The shepherds almost wonder where they dwell
& the old dog for his night journey stares
The path leads somewhere but they cannot tell
& neighbour meets with neighbour unawares
The maiden passes close beside her cow
& wonders on & think her far away
The ploughman goes unseen behind his plough
& seems to loose his horses half the day
The lazy mist creeps on in journey slow
The maidens shout & wonder where they go
So dull & dark are the november days
The lazy mist high up the evening curled
& now the morn quite hides in smokey haze
The place we occupy seems all the world

This poem was probably written in November 1835, when John Clare was living in Northborough. November 1835 is a date written in the same manuscript as this poem, at any rate.

The text was transcribed and edited from the publicly-owned manuscripts in Peterborough Central Library, by Simon Kövesi. It is discussed and analysed at length in Kövesi’s book, [*John Clare: Nature, Criticism and History*](#), Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 100–117.