

THE SEAT IN THE SESSION

(In memoriam – Kevin Bailey)

The seat in the session is empty;
Kevin's wandering around for the craic,
But the flute and the whistle
Are still on the table,
So you feel that sometime he'll be back.

He'll be blethering to folk who've just met him –
He's a man who made blethering an art –
And they'll feel that they've known him for ages
For he's touched something deep in their heart.
Or maybe he's out with a baler,
Or someone needs help with their sheep,
Or he's calling a ceilidh in some village hall,
Making do with an hour of sleep.

The seat in the session is empty
And nobody knows where he's bound,
But the flute and the whistle
Are still on the table
So you know that somehow he's around.

He's maybe gone over to Corsock,
Or up to Auld Reekie or Ayr,
Or crossed by the boat from Cairnryan
To Drumshambo or Tubber or Clare.
And there's folk that he's having to visit,
But you're welcome to join if you can:
As he drives across Ireland - a half-set's
Being danced in the back of the van.

The seat in the session is empty,
Though there's still a few hours before day,
And the flute and the whistle
Are still on the table,
And there's tunes that he still has to play.

Perhaps someone is having a crisis
In need of a friend and some space,
So he's out there walking beside them
And keeping in step with their pace –
Meandering up Auchengibbet
And wandering down by the Doon,
Or coming from Moniaive over the hill
With the black ice reflecting the moon.

The seat in the session is empty -
He's maybe gone out on his bike,
But the flute and the whistle
Are still on the table:
That's Kevin – you know what he's like.

A life-force has travelled among us –
Though he left us a half-life too soon –
For whom Physics was more than a subject
And music much more than a tune.
His gravity pulled us together,
His energy rarely ran low:
He'll be playing a virtual session now
With Johnny, Mick, Gwennie and Joe.

Though seat in the session is empty,
And all we can see is the gloom,
And the flute and the whistle
Are silent,
Yet listen – he still fills the room.

Martin Marroni

