

Peter Hammill, Edge Of The Road

The lady was in waiting
for whatever story might unfold
anticipating that somehow base metal would turn into gold
yeh, she was always looking for a brighter spot,
eager to tap into the motherlode
at the edge of the road.

A world of separation,
treasuring each pleasure and each pain
distance is arching between them,
a rainbow, no gold in the frame
until the boy with a smile like forget-me-nots
will finally come in from the rain.
But he's out there still:
in the hourglass a sandstorm has stripped his sails,
only wanting to fill up his pockets
with the dust of all the bygone trails.
Someday he'll make his way home.
But will the man of the moment finally make himself known
and lay down his load
at the edge of the road?

The woman was in waiting
less in expectation than in hope;
maybe he'd come to his senses in a little while
if she just paid out plaits of flaxen rope.
But he never will,
in his heart there's the murmur of an alien disease,
waking up to the chill of the knowledge
that his travel's brought him to his knees.
Nowhere is safe from all harm;
so will the man of her memory fall finally into her arms
(will the man of her memory be charmed?)
before he explodes
at the edge of the road?

All is suddenly abandon,
all his planned accommodation failed,
all his actions and reactions are random,
hot on the scent of a stone-cold trail.
And though she burns a candle to his memory
all of her patience was bound to fail
for he's out there still
with a thousand-mile stare falling on his face,
chasing after a thrill
that'll take him out beyond all sense of time and place.
Head on into the unknown,
here's the man chasing mystery finally missing his own.
But that's how it goes
at the edge of the road.
There's a cutting edge to the road
at the end of the road,
at the edge of the road.