

# Peter Hammill, The Mousetrap (Caught In)

After all is said and done,  
not very much will have been either way:  
I'm a chronicler of action,  
I'm an actor in the play.  
I know the lines I have to speak,  
I know that I won't ever quit, corpse, or dry,  
but the performance gets so pointless  
and the days just drift on by.

Every time that I go to turn the pages of the calendar  
in the third act of this twenty-ninth year of the show  
I'm aware of the latest leading lady and get mad at her...  
it's perfunctory, but why she'll never know.

When I began I had my hopes,  
believed that I could be a leading light of the stage,  
but now I've stunned myself to silence,  
exhausted all my inner rage,  
extinguished all my joy and violence,  
trapped all my feelings in a cage.

And every time that I go to turn the pages of the calendar  
I can see that I'm not really going anywhere;  
all these years I have skirted round experience like a scavenger.  
Can I really feel? I wonder if I dare?  
At the end of the run, will there be anyone who cares?  
And behind the actor's pose, heaven knows  
if there's anyone left in there.