

Is it you?

Whenever I walked through my neighbouring park, I'd often there see an old man
Sat on a bench with a faraway look and an old walking stick in his hand
"Is it you?" he asked when first I approached him slouched and just sitting there
'Of course, I am me!' I smiled to myself 'but he wouldn't know who to be fair'

So, diverting my gaze I just walked on by and left him alone on the seat
But as the days passed and he was still there I saw the fiasco repeat
"Is it you?" he would ask passing young men of a similar stature to me
But they'd all look away and hurry on by pretending they just didn't see

Each time, as he asked, his face lit with hope then dashed by the lack of reply
He huddled back down, clearly dismayed, and I once saw a tear in his eye
This lonely old man, locked in his past, and so needing to find his old friend
Was so touching and tragic I decided at last to do what I could to amend

So, the next time I passed him I decided to see what his quest was really about
"Is it you?" came the question. "Of course!" I replied hiding all trace of my doubt
"Oh, at last!" he exclaimed "I KNEW you'd come by though I'd started to think you were dead"
"Only us left now." I couldn't reply so I sat and just nodded instead

He started to talk about times "we" had shared in both the so-called great wars
Through good times and bad and some even worse, comrades to the end for our cause
"We" had first met as school friends both chasing the hand of the prettiest girl in the class
We'd both lost it seems but "she got really plump" he recalled with a cynical laugh

As his memories unfolded, I wasn't required to utter much more than a word
Yet still he rolled on, his face all aglow, and I wonder if he even heard
"It's SO good to meet after all of this time" he at last said as day turned to dark
And with that, and a wave of farewell, he got up and he started to exit the park

The next time I saw him was just a few days after all of that time we had shared
Expecting his greeting I slowed as I passed but really, he couldn't have cared
With a smile on his face and a glint in his eye he was lost in a world of his own
No doubt still re-living the past he had shared, all the times and the people he'd known

And then on the news they said he had died and been found in a heap on his bench
Without family or friends, he was simply interred and that gave my heart quite a wrench.
But then I recalled all the good friends he'd mentioned as sadly now dead and passed through
And I smile as I think of the chorus he's heard on arrival as they all now shout "Is it you?"