The Dancing Beggar of London

I saw him first at Leicester Square then two nights later at Piccadilly; tonight he’s at King’s Cross. He dances to his tamborine, feet tapping and shuffling, a ghostly harlequin scuffling over worn stones.

Hands drop coins into his sack—stones tossed down an ancient well where no water waits nor circles move.

His is the dance of death: flesh hanging like moss on limbs of ashen trees, bare legs and bony arms spread out absurdly akimbo, muddy eyes looking toward heaven—a comic Christ upon a cross.

At Chekhov’s play, where actors move with grace and speak their lines with skill upon a well set stage, I cannot brush his eyes from my seeing nor shake his tapping from my ears. "Dear sisters, if we live a little longer, perhaps we will come to know why . . . ."

—Robert A. Rees

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