



The Barefoot Don

A Tribute to Manfred Max-Neef

By Wayne Visser

He walks the mountains, plains and fields
At home with forests, wolves and birds
He's naked in the power he wields:
The sword of truth; the axe of words

He knows the chill of foreign lands
And sighs the loss of good friends passed
He feels the warmth of welcome hands
And beams the joy of love that lasts

He's felt the ire of dictators
And known the grace of humble kings
He's filled up books and newspapers
And given gifts of voice and wings

He warns of theories, now unmasked
That leave the earth and people cursed
He points the way – we all are tasked
With putting needs and nature first

He says to see, just close your eyes
To hear, be still and feel your heart
Real changes always wear disguise
And grassroots play a hidden part

Then in the quiet hours between
He listens to the tides of Brahms
Or pens and plays a piece he's dreamed
Or rests within his lover's arms

He's just a barefoot 'household' don
Whose feet have trod the sacred round
He counts success by hearts he's won
And handshakes from the underground





Postscript:

Dear Manfred, if you read this ode
You'll know the gratitude I feel
For our chance meeting on the road
And spokes of friendship on life's wheel

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