

IN THE STEPS OF SKENDERBEU

The knarled hand stands in front of me
The young twisted face, motionless, stares at me
The gaping wound cries its tears and wets me
All this and more on my shoulders affects me

The burns, they do not stop but contract and torment
The unclosed palate, wide open, defiantly gapes
Fingers, either too many, too little or just stuck together
Walk in off the street, wait their turn and hope

Their faces tell it all, etched, furrowed, leathery
Old beyond their years, shorter than yours or mine
Only wanting what's best, that's why they have walked for hours
Travelled days, with minds focused, eaten little, smiled less

Within minutes, diagnosis, treatment plan, name on list
Hand over heart then thrown towards me with a smile
I reciprocate, shake hands, then another, 160 times
Each heart-shake and smile getting bigger

We walked in the steps of Skenderbeu¹
We stood in the shadows of those who have gone before
We could not even speak their language
Yet we woke the Eagles of Albania²

By Jack McCann, April 05

Footnotes:

¹ *Skenderbeu was a famous Albanian leader who united the Balkans and kept out the Ottoman Turks for 25 years*

² *Two eagles back to back on the Albanian flag and emblem*

SHOELESS

Young, shivering, shoeless mound on the ground
Night after night – covering the pavement
Cardboard instead of linen
A stone for a pillow

A frightened face pokes through a gap
Stares quizzically at the Angel of Mercy
Kneeling at his side, warming his hand
So long since someone noticed and stopped

An empty face with an empty belly with empty dreams
So easy to understand, so hard to take
Each shiver shaking off this world
Till there's no more to shake off

She wanted to buy him shoes, fill his belly
See him smile – that someone cares
This came from deep inside, with each sleepless night
As simple as, something was wrong and had to be put right

Some socks, a scarf helped that night
And daylight brought warmth, new runners and ice-cream
Smiles and happiness can be so easily achieved
Even though they may be fleeting, they are worth the effort

If only everyone was a good Samaritan, even once
No one in this world would want
No one would feel alone
And that would make a difference

By Jack Mc Cann April 05

NOW YOU ARE ONE OF US

To each member of the team.

I have looked into your eyes as tears streamed down your face with compassion
At what or who was before you, from a baby, a child or a man
I have seen the look from your eyes as you worked endlessly with passion
You are not just anyone anymore, but part of a greater plan

I had not chosen you, you offered yourself humbly if you could be of help
And you were irreplaceable, undeniably so, more than fulfilling your role
Which you took on and molded into your very own, showing a new inner self
Either working alone or with others, making up the team as a whole

You even reached new heights which I have never seen before
You touched those hearts which were not used to being touched with kindness
You had their lives in your hands which you preciously cared for like the newborn
You were a beacon of light that others will find hard to outshine

From now on you will be different; you will be at peace with yourself
You will stride out and walk tall, knowing you have made a difference
You will secretly smile at the child that held your hand
And you will shed a tear too at what needs to be done.

By Jack McCann, 8th April 2006.