

# Self-Portrait

By Robert Creeley

He wants to be  
a brutal old man,  
an aggressive old man,  
as dull, as brutal  
as the emptiness around him,

He doesn't want compromise,  
nor to be ever nice  
to anyone. Just mean,  
and final in his brutal,  
his total, rejection of it all.

He tried the sweet,  
the gentle, the "oh,  
let's hold hands together"  
and it was awful,  
dull, brutally inconsequential.

Now he'll stand on  
his own dwindling legs.  
His arms, his skin,  
shrink daily. And  
he loves, but hates equally.

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