

## South downs Way

A charity for those who missed  
Out on their new born child's first kiss  
A child too weak to clench a fist  
Thank you for charities like this...

A group sought out to lend a hand  
To Action Medical Research and  
A forty mile journey was planned  
And so the walk began...

The waves of walkers follow towns  
Of cobbled stone and tarmac down  
To hills six hundred boots will pound  
And flatten down the ground

Midnight hosts no natural light  
Except the moon, crescent of white  
With hikers torches glowing bright  
Cuts through the mist of night

The laughs and chatter which occurred  
In early hours can be heard  
Among the cows and songs of birds  
As jokes and tales transferred

Checkpoint reached, a minutes rest  
They have no chance to make the best  
Of time to get blisters re-dressed  
Continue on their quest

Soles of feet now start to burn  
Walking through the grass and ferns  
From dusk to dawn this night will turn  
How soon, not our concern

Wipe the beads of sweat from eyes  
Stinging like the inner thighs  
Silence killed by suffering sighs  
As dawn cracks through the skys

An aching back can take its toll  
Half way accomplishing our goal  
The breakfast stop, a bacon roll  
Rewards this ruthless stroll

Once again those who remain  
Get to their feet despite more pain  
And suffering they'll feel again  
They set off in the rain

Higher still these hills incline  
The tops of which there is no sign  
Hills so high many resigned  
As wear and tear combine

Spirits lift as checkpoints pass  
No notion of a walk so vast  
As this, the miles of stone, and grass  
Nears to an end at last

With frozen hands we wipe the tears  
From eyes the biting wind has speared  
Pulling hoods up over ears  
The last checkpoint is near

Or so we thought but then instead  
The map it seemed left us mislead  
Because all signposts simply read  
“Southdown's way ahead”

A large D-tour was price to pay  
The small group had walked the wrong  
way  
Last checkpoint reached by them mid-  
day  
Where “seven sisters” lay

Finally cross the finish line  
Kick off the boots from feet they bind  
Let out a gratifying whine  
as I rest my spine

The car ride home, not long at all  
Would seem that way when one would  
fall  
Fast asleep, I was enthralled  
Then straight to bed I crawl!

By David Ford

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