

Beggar Boy

I'm on a train to Siliguri, in North Eastern India
I'm feeling good about myself, I'm reading the Deli Lama
Something about compassion when someone taps me on the arm
Dark eyes, dirty clothes, insistent persistent charm

*This beggar boy, this beggar boy
There's several million beggar boys
But this one's got his eye on me
This insistent beggar boy*

Man with uniform and a gun asks me where I've come from
I tell him from Materate, Gunman is satisfied
He pats me kindly on the shoulder, it seems that I'm ok
Not like this beggar boy with his unrelenting gaze

Chorus

The beggar boys done this before, he knows the ropes on this train
He taps again he adds a sigh to ensure I feel his pain
His Holiness says kindness is what this world needs
But the beggar boys moved on as I pretend to read

Chorus

I still think about that beggar boy and wonder how he's done
The life that he's been given is not an easy one
And I ponder how much difference it would make to this young man
To stop reading the Dali Lama and drop a rupee in his hand

Chorus

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Having just been to a very Tibetan part of India (Darjeeling), I found myself on a train reading a book by the Dalai Lama when a young beggar kid approaches me for money. I ignore him, but he persists for quite some, while I debated inside my head about whether to give him anything. Finally, after considerable effort, he leaves empty handed. It is only then that I notice the title of the new chapter I had just opened; 'Compassion and Loving Kindness'! Perhaps the song is penance. The train sound at the start of this track was of that actual train trip, recorded on my mini-disc player.