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HALE SHORE and LIGHTHOUSE

One lone lighthouse stands at the river's edge, where low cliffs of crumbling earth slither down to the muddy sand below. This is where the vast emptiness of the sky meets the Mersey where it slides in a wide swooping curve towards the city which lurks out of sight round the corner, before drifting slowly on to the sea.

This is where song-larks rise into the towering air above the slope of the fields, where wild rabbits scurry from hidden burrows, where reed warblers sway on the stems of tall grass.

This is where the giant gangling frame of the Childe of Hale may have come, may never have come at all, to peer out at those hills which are jewelled now with the windows of the chemical works which sit like palaces of glittering silence across the dull water on the opposite side.

This is where the grey geese gather, swooping and squawking, their tail feathers rattling a metallic warning as they crash land on the meadow flats to peck and to harry, then raise their long necks, ignoring the clumsy roar of planes taking off, to peer at the world which is *their* world: this solitude where one lone heron patrols the wind-swept shore.