

# The Hermit of Moel yr Ancr

by [Walt Garlington](#) (December 2024)



The Hermit (Il solitario) (John Singer Sargeant, 1908)

The bright round Moon is bathing the open  
Hilltop lea in quiet silver light.  
In the surrounding woods a wolf is howling,  
Sensing the presence of a living being.  
At the crest of the bald hill, Gwyddfarch

Is weeping for his sins, for his kin,  
For all mankind. And now, this night, the Grace  
Of the Holy Ghost descends, deifies,  
Unites with him—flesh and bone and soul—  
A man, throbbing with Divine Life. It flows  
Down the hill, through the air, through the grasses  
And the leaves. The wolf is silent now,  
Only softly breathing beneath the still moon.  
St Gwyddfarch rises from the ground – ‘In the name  
Of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost,’  
Making the sign of the Holy Cross—  
And begins his walk back to his hermit’s cell,  
Singing the Psalms. The creatures now stir  
From their stillness, and follow after him—  
Songbirds, antlered stags, the loping grey wolf—  
Who is full of the Fragrance of Paradise.

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Note: ‘Moel yr Ancr’ is the Welsh rendering of ‘Bald Hill of the Anchorite.’

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