

**Peter Longden**

**Lighthouse**

They point the way to safer waters in the harboured river mouth,

“It’s good to talk,” they will say to those lost,

For them a safe place is paramount, the finger of their guidance extending sometimes in  
time with the waves

of emotion that washes over them as they try to work out what is affecting them,  
battering their charges, the fishermen in their vessels longing for home comforts after  
days against the elements,

the safety and warmth of a home of substance not from an IKEA discard.

Thankful for the reassuring sight of the red and white finger in the air

rather than the finger that says an emphatic ‘no!’

Once two, now a solitary soldier of safety for those who brave the deep.

Safe themselves for those at station, they are the beacon of security for those in peril,

They know where sanctuary might be but not always a bed to see,

No less for the horn that shouts when visibility obscures,

Or the voice that tells them to move on: “point the way,” they will say to the  
mouth,

Safe inside and protection outside, the light is shelter from a distance as these weary sailors make their way home to the river's mouth,

As others make their homes, a safe place tonight they hope:

No let up until tethered, left alone, or leaving for the next days upon the sea.

The starting subject is a lighthouse that provides safety to those at sea but is also a safe place for those stationed there. This is based on the lighthouse on Portland Bill which I have visited on a family holiday, nearby Weymouth being a popular holiday place for the family, both my wife when in her childhood and later when our children loved visits to the resort.

The interwoven words came second, based on my growing awareness of the increased numbers of homeless people sleeping rough on the streets. This is a slightly turned about view of 'safe places' as often they will not be safe, are an invisible part of daily life as they are ignored by people as they go about their business as well as by Government, though they are only wanting what most in society have – a safe place.