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Author Adelis, Noureddin

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ARROW OF FLAME

Shaft of white flame pointing upward
Eternal beacon, like man's spirit
Which aspires ever higher
Towards freedom . . .



after James Dury -

Arrow of Flame

Candle of spirit —
Bright, sure candle —
The yucca . . .

Like arrow of white perfect flame —
Like sign-post of Heaven —
Bold sign-post, cameo-like, brittle
Against the dark hill side;
Never quite of this earth
Is the yucca . . .

As called forth by some fiat of magic
To mark secret doors of transition —
Link between this world and that —
The yucca bears witness to miracle,
Supreme miracle;
Key to that triumph of Life
Which, rising out of seeming death,
Lives again.

Symbol of Creation's drama
And of that Mind above — beyond —
And through it all
Stands the yucca.

ARROW
OF
FLAME

by

Noureddin Addis

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1946

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VITAL SYMMETRY

I

*Out from the glowing fire-coil —
O Unseen serpent coil
Deep in the Universal Heart,
Heart of creativeness,
Flows all that is visible —
All that is invisible —
Total Being . . .*

*Apart from that ceaseless flow
Space dimensions have no meaning,
Time does not run . . .
There is alone and endlessly
That flowing, pouring, erupting
Into Life and Form . . .*

WIND ETCHED

A picture held in fancy, nothing more,
An image slimly etched against the sky
Of youth's awaking which can never die
From memory. Poised there above the shore
She stood and seemed to gaze through some far door,
Beyond the sea, beyond the wind's wild cry —
A door through which life's hidden treasures lie . . .
She heard the tongues that speak in ocean roar.

Oh, gold and marble girl with hair of spray —
Whose vital symmetry the winds make known,
Are you a spirit come by Heaven's decree? —
Or woman born of woman? You betray
No imperfection as you stand alone
And scan the secret heart of sky and sea.

STRANGELY MAD

When you are near my mind is like a page
Across whose face some flame of magic blew,
Destroying reason — wild delightful rage . . .
Oh, I am strangely mad when I'm with you.

SOUVENIR

It must have been the touch of your slim hand
Which told me that our love had never died . . .
Your touch — and all the dreamless eons spanned
By life's unending chain are swept aside!

NO PATH BETWEEN

What if your dream should call to mine
Across that final wide abyss —
And I should hear, yet see no line —
No path between that world and this.

No muted footfall there — no sense
Of that eternal immanence . . .
Alone the tide of spirit, whence
Our pictured world has genesis.

Confess that birth and death are one
And nothing . . . That oblivion
Conceals no road my feet must run —
No path between that world and this.

IMMORTAL

If you should vanish like a flame
At morning blush,
I'd wait to hear you call my name
At evening hush.

For love is all, and flesh a dream
Of passion born . . .
Unending years of song redeem
Hearts — ageless, torn . . .

Phantoms that bow to death and sleep
Were never truth;
Yet life endures while centuries creep —
Eternal youth!

At dawn you will not vanish quite,
As morning dew;
But live in everlasting light —
Immortal you!

AUTUMNAL

Such love
As autumn brings
Is like a poem . . . Dreams
Which from the dark again put forth
New life . . .

* * * * *

This love's
Autumnal fire
Is but the after-glow
Of springtime joys which in the heart
Live on . . .

* * * * *

A hope —
A memory —
Is this autumnal love —
Of half forgotten pasts that bloom,
And die . . .

* * * * *

Brief is
Autumnal love,
And strong . . . A spent candle
Which blazes in one last mad flame
Then dies . . .

INDELIBLE

My heart,
And the sea sands,
Held imprint when you'd gone.
These two — but now the sands are blank
And mute . . .

FLUENT COSMOS

II

Endless
Flow the ethers —
Pouring themselves ever
Into molds of Omnipotence
And Life . . .

IMPERIAL ISTANBUL

I

STREETS

Streets . . .

Wide streets — crooked, circling,

Endless . . .

Narrow streets —

Burdened with panniered donkeys . . .

Streets which mount like stairways

Up the steep hill side . . .

Snarling, strident streets —

Vibrant with hawkers' cries —

Gashed by yelps of pariah dogs

Fighting for sour garbage . . .

Streets rancid with the fetor

Of harlots' noonday bickerings . . .

Streets baking beneath sun-torrents —

Thick with the hushed footfalls

Of sandalled porters

Whose backs bend to incredible loads . . .

Streets ringing with steel-clash —
Echoing voices of conscripts
Who attest loyalty and devotion
To their imperial prince —
And the one true God . . .
Quiet streets which run gently
Level beneath plane trees . . .
Peaceful —
Mysterious —
Somnolent —
Beside tourmaline lappings of the Bosphorus,
Or dark oily depths of the Golden Horn . . .
Where ladies dream behind barred windows —
Where men plot behind barred doors . . .

Oh, elsewhere —
Streets may or may not
Be individuals . . .
Istanbul's streets
Have souls . . .



SULTAN

On a high hill side —
In a tall garden overlooking the Bosphorus —
In a palace like an artist's dream of Paradise,
Ensubstanced —
Sits a crafty, fearful old man . . .
Surrounded by splendor —
Walled-in by devotion —
Stifled in luxury . . .
His crimson cap is too large for his head —
His beaked nose, too large for his face —
His high position, too great for his soul . . .

An odd figure, Abd-ul-Hamid . . .
Lover of music —
Lover of liberty —
Lord and absolute master of men's lives —
Khan and calife, sultan and shah . . .
Victim, still, of perverse Fate;
Since all he desired most
Life withheld . . .
The meanest of his subjects
Was not more miserable than he —
Branded indelibly forever
"Tyrant" . . .



PEOPLE

Istanbul's old bridge-head . . .
Bridge of the Golden Horn . . .
Shaded sidewalk coffee-stalls . . .
Fragrance of coffee . . .
Hot spicy Orient odors . . .
Thin acrid tang of Persian tobacco —
Tumbeki . . .

Men who speak casually —
Trying to speak casually
Of casual things . . .
Lifting their voices
To beat through the clatter of hooves —
Jangle of bells —
Wiry shriek of horse-cars on rusted tracks . . .

Talk of weather conditions,
Black Sea fishing,
And the price of tobacco
Smuggled past averted eyes
Of pliant officials . . .

Shalvar-clad men who speculate
Heedless of **muezzin's** call —
Wondering about their neighbors
With the old query:
“. . . Can such a one be trusted? . . .”

Is this man a spy —
He of the glib rebel tongue?
Is he a traitor?
If not, why does a known palace agent
Frequent his house of nights? . . .

What matter? . . .
One can but go blindly forward —
Blindly, yet with caution —
When one has thrown off at last
Fear's tattered cloak . . .
When a new manhood — a new world —
Lies ahead . . .

IV

SILENCE

Istanbul . . .
Are all doors closed —
Locked . . . ?
Are all windows guarded —
Barred . . . ?
Are all present
Known . . . ?

Folk whisper . . .
Voices are muted . . .
Shut mouths — eyes, ears, open . . .
Eyes that leap swiftly back —
Forward —
Up —
Down . . .

Ears attuned keenly to catch
Faint sounds . . .
Tongues that speak veiled euphemism . . .
Minds schooled to the understanding

Of strange simile . . .
Names held unspoken — caged
Behind barred lips . . .
Syncopated speech . . .
Meaningful hiatuses . . .
Words marshalling themselves
About silences . . .
Accented silences —
Deep — as tyrant's injustice —
Broad — as the red road
To revolution . . .

ISTANBUL

Last night I slept. And soft hands touched my eyes
With spells from which familiar pictures flowed.
A city doomed; whose slender turrets rode
Like pale carved fingers pointing toward the skies
Above the fleecy moonlit mists which rise
In billowed fantasy upon the bowed
Dark Golden Horn . . . Where moldering episode
Of sultans' tyranny and splendor lies.

Tonight I pray that dream may cross once more
The boundless span of all its moon-drenched space —
That I may see again the Golden Horn,
Istanbul's minarets of marble lace.
While hovers still that fluent cosmos born
Of troubled sleep, let me behold that shore!

LONG FORSWORN

Istanbul's cobbled streets are worn . . .
O Pilgrim off the Mecca trail —
Beware of evils long forsworn.

Upon the scented air is borne
A swelling note of nightingale . . .
Istanbul's cobbled streets are worn.

Unknowing, thou, nor less forlorn
Than girl who dreams behind her veil —
Beware of evils long forsworn.

Beyond the lap of Golden Horn
Are sin and crime outside the pale . . .
Istanbul's cobbled streets are worn.

Take deeper thought, O Hadji — scorn
The ways of dark where souls grow stale —
Beware of evils long forsworn.

Go, tread again the stone and thorn
Like Parsifal in search of Grail . . .
Istanbul's cobbled streets are worn —
Beware of evils long forsworn.

SHORES OF FANTASY

Upon the shores where Sfax and Tunis stand
I've wandered, heeding talk beneath the vines
About lost peoples, vanished cultures, shrines
Age-dimmed when lords of Egypt had command.
I've journeyed on to Khiva — Samarcand —
Where tales unfold of royal concubines,
Of Suleyman and Balkis, Ophir's mines
And tragedies played out in sun and sand.

So much of fact and fantasy I hear —
Of conquerors gone down to speechless dust —
How one began by slaying his amir,
Then, heaping crime on crime, was named "The Just
So run the tales of cruelty and fear . . .
And last — of swords that weltered into rust.

PERSIAN GARDEN

Across the canyon where the Oxus flows
There blooms a garden gay with mint and rose;
Though seasons pass, a fragrance lingers on
To stir the heart and melt its stubborn snows.

WANDERLUST

A shelving cliff above the misty swell
Which breaks on Britain's prehistoric shore.
A ship — a youth on fire with stranger lore,
Demonic tales of evils black as hell . . .
Of golden streets and fields of asphodel —
And men who roam the earth . . . His fancies soar;
With longing gaze his hungry eyes explore
The foreign ship which bids the land farewell.

Since you, unnumbered men have known that lure —
O Held — brave son of Britain's kingly breed . . .
And going as you went — their score untold —
Have laid their bones in alien sepulture.
Millennia have passed, and still they heed
The call of Atlan and her gates of gold.

GODDESS IN STONE

Unfeeling rock: Awake to live in light!
From all your pasts, awake! My heart is bare
Before your radiance of sculptured hair
Where softly silk and woman flesh unite.
But yesterday, as down the ages' flight,
Asleep in mother marble — unaware —
You waited these: The stubborn genius flare —
The touch of master hand — the chisel's bite.

Oh, fragile image, freed at last from bonds —
Atomic shackles merging stone with stone
To human craft you owe your Parian birth . . .
Your rising out of chaos corresponds
To man's creation, sentient blood and bone,
Which that first day was lord of all the earth.

THE GHOST SHIP

They say that romance on the sea is dead,
That Jolly Roger rides the breeze no more;
That smoking tankers, liners by the score
Pant through the waters where once pirates bled
And fought again with cutlass and with lead
Against the galleons from Dorado's shore
In battle's lust and frenzy, greed of gore
And gold — to yield the ghost where decks ran red.

One night I left my stateroom for the breeze
That lagged in sullen hush across the deck.
The moon above in silver beauty rode
And lit a lane of white upon the seas —
It lit the ribs above a drifting wreck
And jagged timbers where pale ghost-lights glowed.

BRIDGE OF KINVAT

Tonight my lantern beams awry,
And stars are failing one by one —
While Nasu rages down the sky.

Across the world weird beings ply
On wings of muted unison —
Tonight my lantern beams awry.

Against that host of incubi
I struggle hopeless, long outdone —
While Nasu rages down the sky.

Oh, Valiant! — men who prophesy —
Point out the roads which I must shun!
Tonight my lantern beams awry.

Make plain that sword-edged path which I
Untrained must set my feet to run —
While Nasu rages down the sky.

Through labyrinth ways of dark whereby
I strive to reach the blessed sun —
Tonight my lantern beams awry
While Nasu rages down the sky.

THICKENED CADENCE

III

*Somehow the winds had clotted, shutting tight
Their subtile doors to hide away the past —
An emptiness where then and now unite
To fuse again as newer worlds are cast.*

A YEAR IS BORN

Weary the Old Year waits —
Weary and wasted beneath his robe of impotence.
Motionless halts the declining sun,
As — on her everlasting race —
The earth swings nearest to the Pole Star.
From circle to circle
There is night . . .

From their caverns —
From their palaces,
Men look on in doubt — in awe —
Unsure men, who ask:
Shall the eternal miracle again be wrought?

Across the fire-swept zodiac
"A god is dying" tells a soundless voice . . .
Ra dies—the Sun-God—and henceforth none may live—
Frost demons and the Lords of Ice shall rule
From chill center far beyond Pluto's orbit —
Across the edges of space . . .

Three days pass —
The sun moves slowly northward . . .
Omnipotence has answered men and gods,
Saying: "There is no death — no death . . ."
Ever reborn is the Sun-God —
Ever reborn is the Year . . .

There is life alone —
And joy to all that lives . . .

HOUSE BESIDE THE ROAD

Where is the singer? Where, his song?
The lamps are dimmed, the tides are low.
That thread of life, a fragile thong,
Has parted under velvet blow.
In fields where alien flowers grow —
His steps unheard on path or park —
He finds the quiet gods bestow . . .
The house beside the road is dark.

Within that vast and silent throng
A stranger moves; his tread is slow —
His features bear no trace of wrong —
His eyes are lit with inward glow.
O Singer: What portfolio
Have you of sage or hierarch?
What signature of peace? — although
The house beside the road is dark.

And thus we say that art is long —
That life is short — that all this show

Is like the empty beat of gong
Or like a footprint in the snow.
There is no way for us to go
Save by that port where all embark —
Like wearied seamen, row on row . . .
The house beside the road is dark.

The song remains. The singer — no!
A voice now stilled — a fallen lark —
Whose melodies forever flow . . .
The house beside the road is dark.

COSMOGONY

The circle of the earth — so wide
When viewed by mortal eyes —
Itself is but a speck beneath
The circle of the skies.

A whirling void of less than dust
Sown through the drift of space;
Like flecks of gold upon a beam
Which lights a shadowed place.

The misty whole drives on and on
Towards some far, endless shore.
Caught up in frantic devil-dance
To sweep for evermore.

Not up, not down — not in or out —
No fancy, and no fact!
Life **is** — and things are not at all
But dreams which interact.

The cosmos' goal is yet to be
Made known to mind of man;
It marks the onward endless flow
Of God's eternal plan.

AD ASTRA

Baptized in blood and festering in fear
The epochs swiftly come and swiftly go,
And, scene by scene, create a nightmare show —
With war alone to measure man's career.

* * * * *

An epoch ends: disorder blots the name
Humanity . . . A sickness born of sins
Millennia old has burst into a flame
Of hate and death: another age begins.

* * * * *

Archaic, lordly fire — primeval breath —
Alone command the source of life and death.
In conflagration born — in warfare slain —
Like Phoenix, dying, man shall live again.

THERE IS PEACE

Silent are the streets,
Stone silent and empty;
There is peace . . .

Incredibly lifeless, incredibly unreal,
Torn streets that worm slowly past jagged wall-
remnants —
Past towers which hang impossibly
Against startled skies . . .
Spires which throw out mad tentacles
Seeking — longing for the security of foundations
Melted suddenly away . . .

Out of that unbelievable desolation
Rises a sense of throbbing, deep and thickly muted.
This is not silence —
Or, is it more than silence?
Hearing, the ears of the flesh wait on edge,
Keen for words unspoken, sounds which have no
releasing;
While physical sense ears are as ever deaf
To this, the unheard — unhearable . . .
This, which is the apotheosis of silence —
The quiet which transcends all quiet.

Silent are the streets —
Ghost silent as yew-draped aisles at midnight
Parting the forests of pale phallic shafts.
Silence — and noon, and emptiness . . .
High noon of sun-bake and air-streams coldly
 populous —
Of quick, dense ethers, of chilling spine marrow,
With blood and bone suddenly aware of new secrecies . . .
Aware of steel-shod tread — phantoms that were —
Of the soundless echo of hearts yesterday beating . . .
Now — there is silence —
There is peace . . .

STORM ABOVE

My mind rebelled. Beyond the wind's frontier
There hung a darkened winding-sheet of haze
Which hid the tortured earth, while down the ways
Of sky led lurid veinings, tier on tier.
And then before my eyes the pass grew clear
Between our northern hills. The yesterdays
Had gone with roll of thunder, lightning blaze —
And peace had come to put an end to fear.

So — as in man — the inner cosmos thus
Makes known the hidden law of its design.
Retells how life in flame and breath was born;
How worlds became through ordered impetus.
And back of suns, beyond the fiery trine,
Yet broods that vast unknown which stars adorn.

AWAKENING

All night I lay; saw many a sudden shape —
That came and went as psychic doors swung wide —
Of disillusioned ghosts so weary-eyed
With Passion, War — and Death, the last escape.
Then as I watched one came to stare agape
At me... He asked my help in peace to guide
The heart of man away from fratricide,
To human concepts — not of beast or ape.

Let us not dream, I told him, birds will sing
More sweetly when that future morning comes —
Or blossoms then surpass the old in hue . . .
All such remain; yet grateful every spring
Our pulses swell and throb like beat of drums,
And urges, dormant long, return to view.

SURVIVAL

That we four should be friends — our lonely roads
Approach and move, though briefly, parallel —
Could only be absurd. For heaven and hell
Are still less far apart than were our codes.
Divided thus no common episodes
Were ours of grief and joy — no prison cell,
No palace tower; our meeting was farewell . . .
And then the emptiness which death forebodes.

A lone objective drew — one only goal —
A picture held within undying flame . . .
Alone we kept the vision it revealed —
Now utterly alone, since three gave toll
To death, my heart has never lost its claim;
My hand yet holds the weapon spirit steeled.

IS LIFE A DREAM?

Is life a dream? —

A wakening breath? — a brief perfume? —

Is life a dream?

As down this pictured strait of doom

We, driven, float on shadowed stream

To dramatize some master scheme —

Is life a dream?

WIND OF DESTINY

O Wind of Destiny! How great the joy
Of men who see, and seeing understand
That gift of power you hold within your hand,
To separate the truth from false alloy!
The foe respects you, Wind — who scorn to toy
With ills; but drive them, rather, free the land;
You undermine their castles built on sand . . .
Oh, quick to act are you — and so, destroy.

So — whether Lat, or Bel, or calf of gold —
The gods who ruled but yesterday go down,
Without a tear to mark their having gone.
As characters we stage their brief renown
Against some scene of ancient Babylon —
An empty pomp to point a tale retold.

HORSEMEN OF DOOM

They are so more than phantom — than conceit —
These ghosts who come and go the darkness through,
Nor cease with day . . . Predestined, eerie crew —
They move in thickened cadence down the street —
They carry doom on muffled equine feet . . .
The fated four who keep this rendezvous:
A white, then ebon horse — one red in hue;
Pale amber last, as moon on ripened wheat.

Such specters are but shadowed drama parts,
Outpicturing of hates and fears we've known.
They stand for war, destruction — all unblest,
Unhallowed ills which lurk in human hearts,
Which conjure plagues in shape of flesh and bone . . .
A pallid horse — the sum of all the rest.

OBSERVATORY HILL

They eat and drink as gods, who tarry here
Below the peaks where men of science gaze
Against a dome of fire whose sparks outblaze
Imaginings devised by sage or seer.
A place of dream — of hills abrupt and sheer —
Of slender towers which surmount the haze . . .
Slim shafts of magic probing Saturn's ways,
Or emptiness of some unlighted sphere.

So dares the will of man interrogate
Arcana sealed from him by long decree —
Invite whatever curse the Cosmic Man
Has woven into warp and woof of Fate —
And challenge sun, moon, stars—the Heavenly three —
Or stretch an arm to hold Aldebaran.

LIVING FIRE

Think not that she is dead, that unto earth
Was rendered back that mystery of flame
And ice of her — nor that she overcame
Man's latter foe. The world's of little worth
If **Being**, held in pawn to scheme of birth
And death, were forced to wear their robe of shame.
Her coming had no burden save God's name —
She went, on frigid lips a trace of mirth.

Like living fire the broken crests of tide
Give hint of gems that lie beneath the sea —
So she, mysterious stranger, gently blown
Down earth's cold pathway, thus has testified
With dream-lit eyes and smile of witchery
To that transcendent land which is her own.

P R A L A Y A

It seemed that all had ended, that the night
Hung motionless, annihilating space.
Whatever lived was lost in dark embrace
Of Chaos. Gone were stars and sun — the Might
Which ruled the Cosmos, moved each satellite.
Of all the firmament was left no trace;
The Primal Egg wherein began the race
Of beasts, of men, and gods, had vanished quite.

So pass the heavens, the earth, and all that vast
And visioned emptiness which lies beyond.
So end the great illusions — Birth and Death.
Still less than dream, the unremembered past —
Still more than hope, the unforgotten bond
Which molds new worlds on Brahm's outflowing Breath.

WITHOUT BONDS

No veil of secrecy confines my heart —
No furtive eagerness which shuns the day.
It moves in sunlit realms without display,
As gently as a shade on shadowed chart;
Yet quickly straight and true as flies a dart
To strike men down — reveal their flesh of clay . . .
My love is constant, pure — a crystal ray
Which beams unending though all else depart.

Yet there are men who walk a bigot's path —
Who flout this joy as passion's imprint, born
Of forebears common both to man and brute . . .
This sacred pain which fears no aftermath —
This holy madness — let them lift to scorn;
For **it**, and **life**, are **one** — and **Absolute!**

SOMEONE DREAMED

My dream is like a Cereus in bloom,
Unfolding petalled gems upon the night —
Unfolding robes of jade and chrysolite —
Where none can see, or penetrate the gloom.
An inner world of yours and mine for whom
It glows with secret fires of anchorite —
A meeting-place where all the hours are white
As woven cloth upon Creation's loom.

And none can say our hidden world may not
Throw off the shadows which obscure its face —
Emerge from darkness, stand alive, redeemed,
Magnificently true — a holy spot . . .
No precious thing endures but first took place
In some creator's vision . . . Someone dreamed!

WINGED SPIRITS

IV

*O*n ways
Of unseeing
Come sudden presences,
To bear us witness of that land
Beyond . . .

WHAT MORNING BREAKS?

O Watcher standing guard between
The year that was — the year to come —
What morning breaks in your demesne?

Were years of war alone a scene
In maniac's delirium —
O Watcher standing guard between?

You men who lie beneath the green
Who wait the thunder-beat of drum —
What morning breaks in your demesne?

While under blue and tourmaline
We find that sleep of martyrdom —
O Watcher standing guard between.

And you, who saw the crimson sheen
Of seas that wash while life grows numb —
What morning breaks in your demesne?

For past is past. The slate is clean.
Arrives the glad millennium?
O Watcher standing guard between —
What morning breaks in your demesne?

HISTORY

Voices —
Muted and dry —
Suspiring up to beat
With pregnant quiet on deaf ears
In vain . . .

REDWOODS

Sturdy

Are the redwoods —

Deathless, denying time . . .

Like blades of living grace they point

Skyward . . .

IN AUTUMN

In autumn when the moon is high
I wake and listen, half in dream,
For ghostly feet along the stream
Where shades of red men grope and sigh,
Upon the wind a night-bird's cry . . .
Within my room where shadows teem
In autumn when the moon is high
I wake and listen, half in dream.

The legends tell of paths that lie
Against the river's silver gleam —
Which echo tread of men who seem
Alone revealed to human eye
In autumn when the moon is high.

M I S T S

Mists . . .
Winged mists glide in,
Over the sea,
Over the land —
Hiding all under billowed softness —
Merging in one gentle gray-plumed softness,
Threatening —
Terrible . . .

Mists . . .
Where surf and shore meet,
Blend and are lost —
Muffled in the stealth
Of the low-winged roll
Of mists . . .
Treacherous —
False
Mists . . .

Mists
Which hover like huge gray birds —
Like winged spirits of oblivion —
Above the meeting-place

Of land and sea . . .
Mists that mute men's voices,
Breakers that drown cries . . .
Men in small craft,
Battling —
Fighting against the sea —
The darkness . . .

Men who cry out feebly
Against the cushioning of mists —
Against the low-pitched throat of sea —
Hollow voices, beaten — smothered —
Calling —
Crying . . .
Impotent
Through gray soft violence of sea
And mists . . .

HEAVEN IS HERE

Yuccas . . .

Tall yuccas —

Straight and strong —

Floating above in pale spear-heads,

Beacons of white, windless flame . . .

Slimly they press, like candles —

Huge dream candles —

Upward . . .

Curiously delicate are yuccas —

Delicate, yet like steel —

As some tapestry of transcendental weaving

After sunset has crimsoned far hill tops —

Lighting all, revealing all —

Then faded . . .

Yuccas which hold the long ghost lights,

Rising above the lilac haze of evening,

Lifting, pointing

Skyward . . .

And when shadows waver and pause —

When night's alchemy

Turns sunset glow to velvet purple —

Heaven is here and now!

MIST HUNGER

Today my eyes have seen the world grow small;
Have watched the softly cruel mouths of mist
That swallowed up the sea, the land, they kissed.
I've stood alone within a circled wall
Which narrowed close and closer like a pall
Of iridescent gray and amethyst —
Till, blotting out the line where breakers hissed,
It seemed to hold the universe in thrall.

So vanish our illusions when the frost
And cold of winter sere the summer leaf —
So fade the shapes dividing day and night.
The world goes by; we do not call it lost,
Or know regret because its time was brief —
We know but this: the noonday sun was bright!

DARK LABYRINTHS

V

Within dark labyrinths, and fathomless,
Each nation guards a secret Minotaur —
A monster which by devious metaphor
Is pictured ever clad in angel dress.
A presence rank with credos which oppress,
Evoking dreams of battle, might in war —
A hero's glory, pomp of conqueror —
And many a bondman born to acquiesce.

*We ask, O Heaven, an Ariadne's thread . . .
A lightning-flash to thrust aside the gloom.
Unmask the foe—reveal his noisome lair . . .
Make known to us the task which lies ahead . . .
Let Theseus' blade leap forth! Then—stroke of
doom:
And men . . . who walk upright in Freedom's air!*

A WORLD TO BUILD

The pilot's hand had fallen. Yesterday
Came bitter news of nation's orphanhood —
A shaft of pain — a flash when reason stood
Inert, defeated, like a beast at bay.
Grotesque and endless under skies of gray
The future loomed. Our minds became as wood
At loss of one whose will was ever good . . .
A sun had set; it left a golden ray.

Yet burns our zeal though cold that highest heart
And mute the voice which spoke for all our age:
There is no rest until all men are free.
We pause a breath in grief to draw apart,
To hail that last eternal pilgrimage —
We have a world to build on world's debris.

WAR — AND THEN?

Hungry are the vultures —
Athirst, those soaring avid ones —
Winging — winging — winging —
Alert . . .

Alert, too, are the jackals —
They slink, follow, cower:
“When all are dead,” they seem to say
Through slavering lips —
“After the kill . . .
After — after . . .”

Ha — naked claws!
Ho — talons bared for blood!

The day of ravening has come —
Wild ravening . . .
The Day — the world-wide DAY is here . . .
Day of the loosing of greeds, of hates —
The pouncing, the devouring —
And the sating of old hungers,
Long whetted . . .

When greed-dulled eyes,
Blunted and dark-glowing with age-old lusts
Choose the road ahead . . .
When lusts too long repressed,
Too long fed and over-fed on their own offal —
Lusts ripened and decaying
Sit the saddle . . .

Yes, "After —" — the skies echo it — and "After —"
When this day has passed, and its evening —
When another day has come —
Shall this day, too, be a day of the vulture? —
Of the jackal?

Or — shall it wake to the rising
Of a new sun? . . .

BROKEN TOYS

You've played all day — you've broken many toys —
Your little hands are reddened now and torn
With playing savage games. Your eyes are worn
And blackened pits of hate and fear, where joys
Were meant to live. Volcanic fury, noise —
And all the hopes your surging hearts have borne —
Have weltered down beneath a weight of scorn . . .
Acclaim no longer waits him who destroys.

Put up your playthings now; the day is past.
You've done your work as men and children must —
Allured by tinsel gods, the boom of drum,
And all the wizardry of earth's bombast . . .
Put up your toys — abandon them to rust;
You cannot use them when tomorrows come!

NEW CHAINS

So must they forge new chains, these gods of tin
To bind again the slaves who do their wills?
Our ancient gyves relax as time fulfills
Her alchemy. Their links are wearing thin,
Consumed by tears and sweat and blood wherein
Is born a dream of fruitful, sun-tipped hills
And men set free from usurpation's ills.
Old tyranny is dead. Shall new begin?

For long, too long, the pliant neck of man
Has bent beneath the yoke of brazen greed;
A birthright spoiled, a heritage possessed
By grasping hands, by venal souls which ban
The mighty law of brotherhood with creed
Of **have**, and **hold**, and — **devil take the rest!**

IS THIS THE KING?

Is it with him this ancient earthy mold
Has summed up its creations? — painful tale
Of sin and sorrow bringing forth a frail
And cringing slave about whom perils fold,
And called it **man** . . . In language still more bold
Creation's Lord named him whose lips grow pale —
Who shrinks from crash of thunder, roar of gale . . .
Is this the king whose coming worlds foretold?

There are no chains can bind the soul of man,
Nor fetters thrall the life which God made free.
As boldly as if carved on Heaven's arched span —
The kingdom of the heart may never be
Enslaved . . . — in words of gold since time began
Stands graven the promise of man's destiny.

WIDE IS MY COUNTRY

Wide is my country —
Wide, busy, fruitful . . .

A forthright, alert land —
Spaced and implemented
Abundantly . . .

Across the broad sweep of America
Sounds the music of industry,
Like brazen thunder of gong —
Like aspen leaves
Aquiver in the hush
Of the wind's stilling . . .

As a hive —
As a honey-farm massed with hives —
At the high tide
Of the clover's blooming . . .

Its streets throng with men —
Men who whisper through tense lips —
Men with projects, plans —

Ready to burst with secret knowledges . . .
Men who: "If I had my say —
If things were in my hands —
If they'd only listen to me —
I could . . . I might . . .
Oh, well —"

Men and women who labor endlessly —
Endless days . . .
Week upon week, month upon month.
Weary folk whose dogged purpose
Transcends weariness . . .
Patriots no less than those who offer up life
In war's fiery immolation.
Patriots whose skilled hands,
Whose sword-edged thinking,
Build, create, assemble —
Build, create, assemble —
Arm, implement, and sustain
Our forces dedicated to liberty!

Loving peace endures this land of ours —
Land of our fathers — my own land!
Thus we make war
That we may have
Peace!

SHORES OF SACRIFICE

Again he came to me — it was not dream —
His face all pinched in mask of deathly white.
"I paid the price . . ." he said — yet so polite,
So gentle was his speech, it did not seem
To bear reproach — ". . . at Tarawa . . ." A stream
Of pictures flowed to banish sleep outright,
To leave me spent and brooding through the night
On shores of sacrifice where shadows teem.

In living or in death they sanctify —
Who — giving all, have shielded us from fear —
Our flesh, our blood, our bone . . . Undying ones!
If we forget, then it is we who die . . .
Nor can we halt the march of their career
Heroic down the interval of suns.

NIGHT

Beneath her haloed crest of steel and stone
Whose gleaming turrets hurl the night aside
The city never sleeps. Till dawn her wide
Unbending ways give back a monotone —
The weary plod of men who walk alone.
She asks no questions, sparing thus their pride;
What have they else, whose lives are crucified?
What else? — At night the city is their own.

A day shall dawn — that newer day — not made
By spinning globe on gravitation's chain.
A sun shall rise which is not doomed to set
Behind the city's towers; nor brightness fade . . .
And bondmen, freed, shall walk in their domain
And there shall be no fear, and no regret.

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