

Like a rare output of the soul, which time,
Whatever it may take, must leave unharmed.
Or haply the immortal seed yet springs
In unregarded loveliness beside
Some great highway where many pilgrims go,
Seeking the truth, confused within a maze
Of myth and superstition and dead form.

Go forth, my soul, on this adventure brave,
Find this old shadowy garden filled with awe,
Or the great common road, within whose dust
Still blows the flower of peace, and bring it home
To grow within our new-made dooryards here,
Among the roses and the oranges
Between the high Sierras and the sea.
Yet fear not empty-handed to return,
And underneath these azure skies evolve
Out of thy native ground some later creed,
Some teaching not revealed in ancient lore,
Some goodness yet undreamed of, all our own.

This was the hope I pondered, as I went
Along the San Francisco water-front,
To say farewell to a departing friend
For the mysterious Orient onward bound.
The magic East,--China, Japan, Malay,
Saigon, Osaka, Singapore, Hong Kong,
Burmah and India and the tropic seas!
The names rang in my ear, and while I mused
The smell of the East was in my nostrils, rank,
Subtle, suggestive, human,--earth and fire.
The sidewalks, wharves, and warehouses were piled
With far-brought crates and foreign-looking bales,
Sea-chests and boxes of outlandish make,
Spices and fruits and merchandise; the docks
Swarming with dark-skinned men, Kanaka, Jap,
And Chinese coolies round their bowls of rice,
Among the coils of rope and capstan bars.