

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 outward 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.