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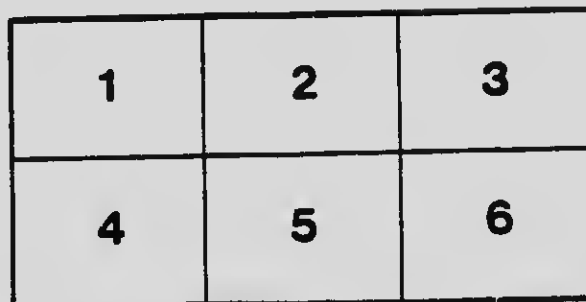
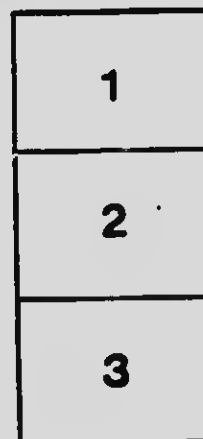
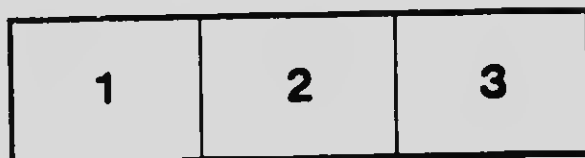
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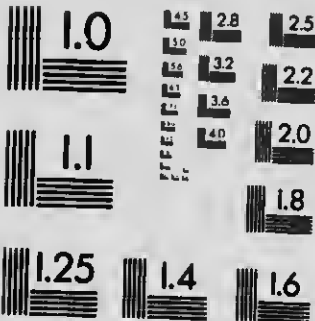
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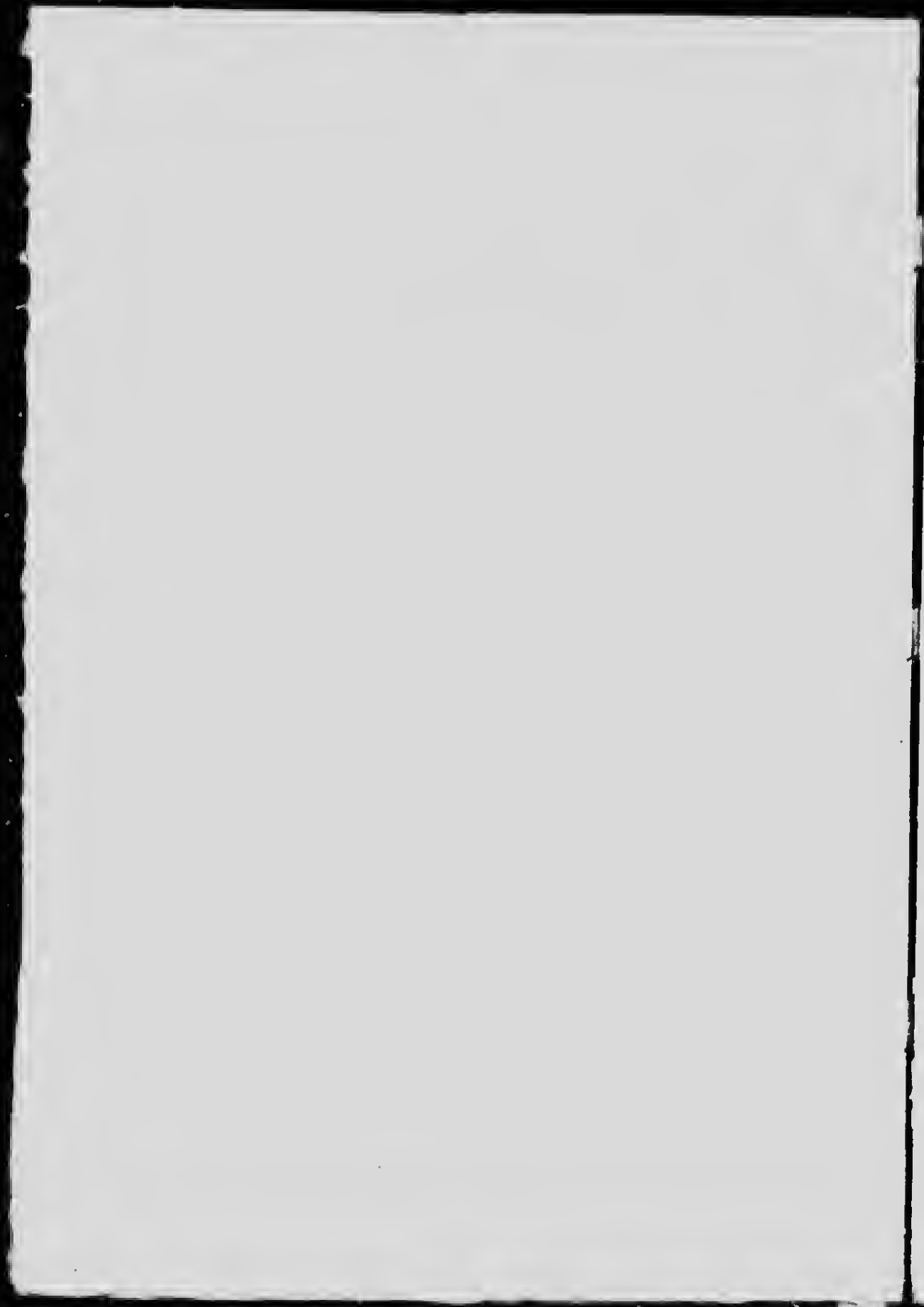
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A  
PAINTER'S HOLIDAY  
*and Other Poems*

BY  
BLISS CARMAN



NEW YORK  
PRIVATELY PRINTED  
1911

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FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN

To Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Drake  
15, 16 April, 1911



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## A PAINTER'S HOLIDAY



WE painters sometime  
strangely keep  
These holidays. When life  
runs deep  
And broad and strong  
it comes to make  
Its own bright-colored almanack.  
Impulse and incident divine  
Must find their way through tone and line;  
The throb of color and the dream  
Of beauty, giving art its theme  
From dear life's daily miracle,  
Illumine the artist's life as well.

A bird-note, or a turning leaf,  
The first white fall of snow, a brief  
Wild song from the Anthology,  
A smile, or a girl's kindling eye,—  
And there is worth enough for him  
To make the page of history dim.

Who knows upon what day may come  
The touch of that delirium  
Which lifts plain life to the divine,  
And teaches hand the magic line  
No cunning rule could ever reach,  
Where Soul's necessities find speech?  
None knows how rapture may arrive  
To be our helper and survive  
Through our essay, to help in turn  
All starving eager souls who yearn  
Lightward discouraged and distraught.  
Ah, once art's gleam of glory caught  
And treasured in the heart, how then  
We walk enchanted among men,  
And with the elder gods confer!  
So art is hope's interpreter,  
And with devotion must conspire  
To fan the eternal altar fire.

Wherefore you find me here to-day,  
Not idling the good hours away,  
But picturing a magic hour  
With its replenishment of power.

Conceive a bleak December day,  
The streets all mire, the sky all grey,

And a poor painter trudging home  
Disconsolate, when what should come  
Across his vision, but a line  
On a bold-lettered play-house sign,  
A PERSIAN SUN DANCE.

In he turns.

A step, and there the desert burns  
Purple and splendid; molten gold  
The streamers of the dawn unfold,  
Amber and amethyst uphurled  
Above the far rim of the world;  
The long-held sound of temple bells  
Over the hot sand steals and swells;  
A lazy tom-tom throbs and drones  
In barbarous maddening monotones;  
While sandal incense blue and keen  
Hangs in the air. And then the scene  
Wakes, and out steps, by rhythm released,  
The sorcery of all the East,  
In rose and saffron gossamer,—  
A young light-hearted worshipper  
Who dances up the Sun. She moves  
Like waking woodland flower that loves  
To greet the day. Her lithic brown curve  
Is like a sapling's sway and swerve

Before the spring wind. Her dark hair,  
Framing a face vivid and rare,  
Curled to her throat and then flew wild,  
Like shadows round a radiant child.  
The sunlight from her cymbals played  
About her dancing knees, and made  
A world of rose-lit ecstasy,  
Prophetic of the day to be.

Such mystic beauty might have shown  
In Sardis or in Babylon,  
To bring a satrap to his doom  
Or touch some lad with glory's bloom.  
And now it wrought for me, with sheer  
Enchantment of the dying year,  
Its irresistible reprieve  
From joylessness, on New Year's Eve.

## ON THE PLAZA



NE August day I sat beside  
A café window, open wide  
To let the shower-freshened air  
Blow in across the Plaza, where  
In golden pomp against the dark  
Green leafy background of the Park,  
Saint Gaudens' hero gaunt and grim,  
Rides on with Victory leading him.

The wet black asphalt seemed to hold  
In every hollow pools of gold,  
And clouds of gold and pink and grey  
Were piled up at the end of day  
Far down the cross street, where one tower  
Still glistened from the drenching shower.

A weary white-haired man went by,  
Cooling his forehead gratefully  
After the day's great heat. A girl,  
Her thin white garments in a swirl  
Blown back against her breasts and knees,  
Like a Winged Victory in the breeze,



Alive and modern and superb,  
Crossed from the circle to the curb.

We sat there watching people pass,  
Clinking the ice against the glass  
And talking idly—books or art,  
Or something equally apart  
From the essential stress and strife  
That rudely form and further life,  
Glad of a respite from the heat,  
When down the middle of the street  
Trundling a hurdy-gurdy, gay  
In spite of the dull stifling day,  
Three street musicians came. The man,  
With hair and beard as black as Pan,  
Strolled on one side with lordly grace,  
While a young girl tugged at a trace  
Upon the other. And between  
The shafts there walked a laughing queen,  
Bright as a poppy, strong and free.  
What likelier land than Italy  
Breeds such abandon? Confident  
And rapturous in mere living spent  
Each moment to the utmost, there  
With broad deep chest and kerchiefed hair

With head thrown back, bare throat, and waist  
Supple, heroic, and free-laced,  
Between her two companions walked  
This splendid woman, chaffed and talked,  
Did half the work, made all the cheer  
Of that small company.

No fear  
Of failure in a soul like hers,  
That every moment throbs and stirs  
With merry ardor, virile hope,  
Brave effort, nor in all its scope  
Has room for thought of discontent,  
Each day its own sufficient vent  
And source of happiness.

Without  
A trace of bitterness or doubt  
Of life's true worth, she strode at ease  
Before those empty palaces,  
A simple heiress of the earth  
And all its joys by happy birth,  
Beneficent as breeze or dew,  
And fresh as though the world were new  
And toil and grief were not. How rare  
A personality was there!

## MIRAGE



HERE hangs at last, you see,  
my row  
Of sketches,—all I have to show  
Of one enchanted summer spent  
In sweet laborious content,  
At little 'Sconset by the moors,  
With the sea thundering by its doors,  
Its grassy streets, and gardens gay  
With hollyhocks and salvia.

And here upon the easel yet,  
With the last brush of paint still wet,  
(Showing how inspiration toils,  
Is one where the white surf-line boils  
Along the sand! and the whole sea  
Lifts to the sky, ne just to be  
The wondrous background from whose verge  
Of blue on blue there should emerge  
This miracle.

One day of days  
I strolled the silent path that strays

Between the moorlands and the beach  
From Siasconset, till you reach  
Tom Nevers Head, the lone last land  
That fronts the ocean, lone and grand  
As when the Lord first bade it be  
For a surprise and mystery.  
A sailless sea, a cloudless sky,  
The level lonely moors, and I  
The only soul in all that vast  
Of color made intense to last!  
The small white sea-birds piping near;  
The great soft moor-winds; and the clear  
Bright sun that pales each crest to jade,  
Where gulls glint fishing unafraid.  
Here man the godlike might have gone  
With his deep thought, on that wild dawn  
When the first sun came from the sea,  
Glowing and kindling the world to be,  
While time began and joy had birth,—  
No wilder sweeter spot on earth!

As I sat there and mused, (the v  
We painters waste our time, you say!)  
On the sheer loneliness and strength  
Whence life must spring, there came at length  
Conviction of the helplessness

Of earth alone to ban or bless.  
I saw the huge unhuman sea;  
I heard the drear monotony  
Of the waves beating on the shore  
With heedless futile strife and roar,  
Without a meaning or an aim.  
And then a revelation came,  
In subtle sudden lovely guise,  
Like one of those soft mysteries  
Of Indian jugglers, who evoke  
A flower for you out of smoke.  
I knew sheer beauty without soul  
Could never be perfection's goal,  
Nor satisfy the seeking mind  
With all it longs for and must find  
One day. The lovely things that haunt  
Our senses with an aching want,  
And move our souls, are like the fair  
Lost garments of a soul somewhere.  
Nature is naught, if not the veil  
Of some great good that must prevail  
And break in joy, as woods of spring  
Break into song and blossoming.

But what makes that great goodness start  
Within ourselves? When leaps the heart

With gladness, only then we know  
Why lovely Nature travails so,—  
Why art must persevere and pray  
In her incomparable way.  
In all the world the only worth  
Is human happiness; its dearth  
The darkest ill. Let joyance be,  
And there is God's sufficiency,—  
Such joy as only can abound  
When the heart's comrade has been found.

That was my thought. And then the sea  
Broke in upon my revery  
With clamorous beauty,—the superb  
Eternal noun that takes no verb  
But love. The heaven of dove-like blue  
Bent o'er the azure, round and true  
As magic sphere of crystal glass,  
Where faith sees plain the pageant pass  
Of things unseen. So I beheld  
The sheer sky-arches domed and belled,  
As if the sea were the very floor  
Of heaven where walked the gods of yore  
In Plato's imagery, and I  
Uplifted saw their pomps go by.

The House of space and time grew tense  
As if with rapture's imminence,  
When truth should be at last made clear,  
And the great worth of life appear:  
While I, a worshipper at the shrine,  
For very longing grew divine,  
Borne upward on earth's ecstasy,  
And welcomed by the boundless sky.  
A mighty prescience seemed to brood  
Over that tenuous solitude  
Yearning for form, till it became,  
Vivid as dream and live as flame,  
Through magic art could never match,  
The vision I have tried to catch,—  
All earth's delight and meaning grown  
A lyric presence loved and known.

How otherwise could time evolve  
Young courage, or the high resolve,  
Or gladness to assuage and bless  
The soul's austere great loneliness,  
Than by providing her somehow  
With sympathy of hand and brow,  
And bidding her at last go free,  
Companioned through eternity?

So there appeared before my eyes,  
In a beloved familiar guise,  
A vivid questing human face  
In profile, scanning heaven for grace,  
Up-gazing there against the blue  
With eyes that heaven itself shone through;  
The lips soft-parted, half in prayer,  
Half confident of kindness there;  
A brow like Plato's made for dream  
In some immortal Academe,  
And tender as a happy girl's;  
A full dark head of clustered curls  
Round as an emperor's, where meet  
Repose and ardor, strong and sweet,  
Distilling from a mind unmarred  
The glory of her rapt regard.

So eager Mary might have stood,  
In love's adoring attitude,  
And looked into the angel's eyes  
With faith and fearlessness, all wise  
In soul's unfaltering innocence,  
Sure in her woman's supersense  
Of things only the humble know.  
My vision looks forever so.



In other years when men shall say,  
"What was the painter's meaning, pray?  
Why all this vast of sea and space,  
Just to enframe a woman's face?"  
Here is the pertinent reply,  
"What better use for earth and sky?"

The great archangel passed that way  
Illuming life with mystic ray.  
Not Lippo's self nor Raphael  
Had lovelier realer things to tell  
Than I, beholding far away  
How all the melting rose and gray  
Upon the purple sea-line leaned  
About that head that intervened.

How real was she? Ah, my friend;  
In art the fact and fancy blend  
Past telling. All the painter's task  
Is with the glory. Need we ask  
The tulips breaking through the mould  
To their untamished age of gold,  
Whence their ideals were derived  
That have so gloriously survived?  
Flowers and painters both must give  
The hint they have received, to live,—

Spend without stint the joy and power  
That lurk in each propitious hour,—  
Yet leave the why untold—God's way.

My sketch is all I have to say.

## THE CHRISTMAS STRANGER



YOU wonder how I ever drew  
That "Galilean Workman"—who  
The model could have been  
to give  
My work the charm that makes it live,  
That gracious yet compelling mien  
So full of power and poise, that keen  
Yet calm unfathomable gaze  
Of one who looks upon the maze  
Of human folly and still sees  
More than our mere infirmities,  
With lips that almost smile.

My friend,  
I painted that at one year's end,  
Long ago now. The swirling snow  
Down from the sky, up from below,  
Smothered my window with strange light  
That morning in a world all white.

I came from battling with the storm  
Into the studio all warm,

All welcome with its atmosphere  
Of patient beauty, work and cheer.  
Built up the fire; and turned once more  
To seek the one thing striven for  
So mightily by all our tribe,  
The magic no one can describe,  
The final touch and miracle  
Of beauty saying, "All is well."  
I had a sense of quiet peace,  
Seclusion, respite and release,  
At being snow-bound for a day,  
With interruptions shut away.

Hardly had I begun to paint,  
In that full mood of unrestraint  
So typical of Christmas Eve,  
When some one silently took leave  
To turn the latch and enter.

There,  
With his serene though wistful air,  
As if too modest to assume  
My need of him (although the room  
Was radiant with his manliness  
And quietude of proud address),

Fronting the world in all men's sight  
From his uncompromising height  
And bearing of sweet dignity,  
He stood at pause regarding me—  
A foreign model, as I thought,  
Seeking employment, till I caught  
The brow's repose, the eye's command,  
The mouth's compassion. Then the hand  
Was laid upon the bowing breast,  
The Orient's way, the head depressed  
To honor me; while all my heart  
Went out to him, alone, apart,  
And far above the mortal men  
My sight had looked upon till then.

Speechless I was before him there.  
And then the glorious head, the hair  
A mass of wavy coppery gold,  
Was lifted up. My hand took hold  
Of the chair-back instinctively,  
As the clear eyes were turned on me.

Then with a diction pure and fine  
And statelier than yours or mine,  
And in a rhythmical clear voice  
I heard him saying: "Friend, rejoice!

The time is drawing near—the hour  
When love, intelligence and power  
Shall be made one, as once they were  
In the beginning, when the stir  
Of will took thought, and for the sake  
Of beauty bade the world awake.

“Is the time long, and do the years  
Outwear thy patience? Are there tears  
Beneath the proud triumphant strain  
Of art, the struggle to attain?  
Does doubt at moments blur away  
The light within the lamp of clay?”

“O workman, conscious of the hint  
Of glory in the line and tint,  
And searching for the truth, take heart;  
The haunting secret of thy art  
Shall be made clear, and thou shalt know  
How earth was fashioned long ago—  
How all the wheeling stars were made  
And their appointed orbits laid,  
How space was bridged and time was spanned,  
And power was harnessed to command,  
Till form emerged from measured space,  
And rhythm was born of time—the trace

Of mind upon eternity—  
And power (a tide within a sea)  
Became within its ordered grooves  
Not only that which lives and moves,  
But that which cares and understands.

“Behold the work of thine own hands—  
Is it not so therein? First springs  
From vague unmarked imaginings  
The sweet desire; then sudden thought  
In some strange secret fire is caught  
And kindled; and there stands new-born  
Thy fresh ideal, dear as mom  
And tender as the evening. Then  
Remains the godlike task of men,  
To realize that fair design  
In sound, in color or in line,  
Till what was dreamed of good and true  
Takes on the guise of beauty too,  
As faith compels and means afford.  
This is thy passion and reward.

“So is the world renewed at length  
In wisdom, holiness and strength;  
The vision of the perfect good  
Imposed upon the void and crude;

And the benign creative will  
Slowly ascendant over ill,  
Accomplishing the sweep and plan  
Of the development of man.

“No hue upon thy palette’s rim  
But leads the mind’s eye up to Him,  
The godlike One who is to be  
The Crown and Lord of destiny.  
No line upon the canvas laid  
But shall declare how, unafraid,  
Adventuring the bold and new,  
Thy spirit dared bid hope come true,  
Aspiring to supreme success—  
The saving power of loveliness.

“Would He who made the water wine  
Deny employment such as thine  
Its word of praise, and not commend  
Thy art’s endeavor to transcend  
The here and now with something more  
Than ever was accounted for  
By rule and learning? Take thou heed,  
And in the hour of thy soul’s need,  
Despair not! Only set more high  
Above the day’s idolatry



Thy shining mark, then wait unmoved  
Until events thy faith have proved;  
And the round world shall bless thy name,  
Seeing at last thy only aim  
Was but to feed its multitude  
With truth, with beauty and with good,  
The water and bread and wine of life.

“Is not thy longing and thy strife  
To mold the plastic medium  
To form and rhythm, endow the dumb  
Material with speech, awake  
The spirit in the clay, and make  
The soul within the color sing  
For rapture like the birds of spring?  
Does not the music-master fill  
The silence with desire and will,  
And give to vague and wandering sound  
Order, significance and bound?  
And what is that but to give soul  
To substance, reason and control  
To formless chaos, taking part  
In the illimitable art  
Whose Spirit moved upon the face  
Of the great waters under space,

And shed the darkness from the light,  
And far from near, and depth from height,  
And false from true, and good from ill,  
With limits set for them to fill?

“Let glory go, care not for gain!  
Thy great reward shall still remain—  
The good for which thy toiling days  
Were given without heed of praise,  
Thy intimate and splendid thought  
Made actual in beauty fraught  
With joy, with passion, and with power.  
Not in some far predicted hour,  
But even now thy heart shall know  
The wells of gladness. To bestow  
On beauty all the benefit  
Of being, all thy skill and wit,  
Thy purpose and thy endless pains,  
Is thy great task. One thing remains—  
Thou knowest—one and only one,  
Without which all were left undone:  
Love. Hast thou freely given with all  
Thy life's endeavor beyond recall  
Thy love each day? For love must be  
Poured out and spent ungrudgingly.

To give thy work a soul—the fire  
Of understanding and desire  
And loveliness—to help the end  
And purpose of creation's trend.  
Else were all effort vain, and thou  
Wert judged and sentenced even now  
By thine own heart's tribunal.

“Yea,

The difficult and ancient way  
To beauty lies through urge and stress  
Where knowledge walks with love. Unless  
Great Love arise and take thy hand  
In that unknown and doubtful land,  
Not all thy cunning can avail  
To read the signs and keep the trail;  
Not love of self and self's employ,  
But the untarnished seraph's joy  
In serving others with the best  
Hand can achieve or brain attest.  
I charge thee in this world, above  
All other things, destroy not love!  
For life must spring from life, and soul  
Be given sustenance of soul.  
And knowing love with toil, thine eyes  
This day shall see love's Paradise.

Wilt thou not also follow me?"

His smile was like the April sea,  
His presence like the hills at dawn.  
And then in silence he was gone.

What think you—with that mental twist,—  
A madman or an optimist?  
At all events there stands to-day  
My "Galilean." Say your say;  
But life took on a change, believe,  
That memorable Christmas Eve.

## THE MIRACLE



PEAKING of art, and how  
we need  
To give our lives up to succeed  
Even a little; it is more

Than that, I fancy. Many pour  
Their lives out freely and yet reach  
No point they aim for. You may teach,  
And they will learn quickly enough—  
Take every hint, however gruff  
Or casual, draw, study, toil  
Like very diggers of the soil,  
Yet never once achieve that touch  
Which looks so little, means so much,  
And comes but by the grace of God,  
When all is said. Yes, it is odd,  
How one may strive, yet miss the mark.

The incommunicable spark!  
That is the only phrase that tells  
The truth about the charm which dwells  
In mastery, which is not bought,  
Nor had by any taking thought:

A gift, inheritance, or dower,  
A true possession, yet a power  
To cultivate at will and use  
Or not, as freely as we choose.  
It matters not in having it,  
Assured and adequate and fit,  
Whether you're Rafael or Keats,  
Beethoven with his music sheets,  
Or the young lad who drew that thing  
Behind the easel there. What swing,  
What quiet sorcery of line,  
So sure, so final, and so fine,  
To win and satisfy regard!  
It is so easy--and so hard.  
The Word, as true as when it came  
To Moses from the bush of flame!

Sometimes the gift may lie unguessed  
For years, until a spring is pressed,  
And a door opens in the walls  
Of being, and its master calls.  
That's genius. But how find the key  
To that unworldly treasury;  
How reach the room and light the fire  
Which kindles not at our desire,

For all our effort? I know one  
Instance, to show what may be done  
By way of setting genius free  
To prove its own divinity—  
One way to startle and arouse  
The sleeping angel that we house.

Love laughs at locksmiths, as we say.  
You may be sure he knows the way  
Into the garden of the heart  
Where all the springs of greatness start—  
Sorrow and pity and remorse  
And many-colored joy. Of course  
The story is not meant for those  
Who spend a lifetime on the pose  
Of living. You who paint and carve  
And sing and dance and play—and starve  
In art's great service every day  
Will understand me when I say,  
Knowledge and skill are not enough  
Ever to take the place of love;  
That hands and brains may strive and die  
In their own dwarfed fatuity,  
Unless they learn what love must know,  
And follow where it bids them go.

Unless the dauntless soul take part  
In all their toil, there is no art,  
No life, no wizardry, no power,  
Only contrivance—like a flower  
Of paper, every curve and hue,  
Texture and hair, exact and true,  
But lifeless. Did God ever lay  
Color and shape upon the clay,  
And not bestow the soul as well?  
Is there an atom or a cell  
Unvibrant in the universe?  
Is beauty impotent or worse?  
How came the substance and the plan  
Into accord to make up man?  
Was there no energy, no will,  
No joy to throb, no love to thrill?

You say the world was made from naught  
But plastic matter and pure thought.  
I cannot think so. You supply  
The What and How. I ask the Why.  
There must have been desire, control,  
And gladness,—attributes of soul.  
There must be caring where there's mind;  
There must be both at once behind



All beauty. That's the mystery,  
Yet reason, in this world for me.  
And that is why all art must fail  
That has no love,—all life grow stale  
And ineffectual and old,  
Why hope goes out, why faith turns cold,  
Why joy expires and strength is wrecked,  
And evil walks the world unchecked.  
Like fools we cast out love, then crave  
The happy radiance he gave.

To put the heart into the work,  
Is the one law we may not shirk  
Nor alter, standing near to Him  
Who framed the stars and bade them swim,  
Who set the music of the sea  
To sound his rhythm continually,  
Whose painting of the sunrise glows  
With tints of daffodil and rose  
Along the silent dark, and thrills  
The blue-green-purple of the hills,  
Whose word called chaos up to norm,  
And gave it motion, rhythm and form,  
Beauty and purpose and design.

The soul in colour and in line

Convinces me, who daily use  
Experience of tones and hues,  
(As it must you who know the trick  
Of Music's great arithmetic)  
There is a mind which lurks below  
These pomps of Nature which we know,  
Nor a mind merely, but a heart  
Which beats its loving into art.  
I bow to the eternal Skill,  
The great Artificer, whose will  
Sustains the world. All you who make  
Experiment for beauty's sake,  
With shape, with colour, or with sound,  
Confess if you have ever found  
The hidden magic which must give  
Your work the touch to make it live,  
In anything but love! Ah, there  
The secrets of divine despair  
Reside, the triumph and the dream,  
The fairy call, the silver gleam,  
The joy, the sorrow and the hope,  
The plan, the splendor, and the scope,  
Which soul must capture and impart,  
To lend her new-created art  
Its ravishment,—and man may share  
In God's serene employment there.

I charge you in his name, fling down  
Your paints and brushes, and discrown  
Your Victory, unless your soul  
Has felt what love is,—as a coal  
Revives and kindles in the breath  
Which gives it life instead of death,  
Or as a leaf caught up and swirled  
Before a wind across the world,  
That pure great wind which sweeps away  
Sorrow, perplexity, dismay,  
And leaves its deathless trace behind  
In the enchantment of the mind.

But if your spirit once has known  
A welling rapture of its own,  
A wildness or an ecstasy  
Which gave it power, and set it free,  
And made this doubtful life appear  
Lovely, beneficent, and clear,  
Then only can you comprehend  
The source, the meaning, and the trend  
Of wonder in this world of ours,  
And reach to God with all your powers  
Through art's august simplicity,  
In the one way which still is three.

If ever once there came to you  
The vision that makes all things new,  
The glory that makes all things good,  
Then have you seen and understood  
How fair the truth is. Not till then  
Have you the touch to solace men.

But, for my instance: On our floor  
A German singing-master's door  
Was next to mine, when studios  
Could hardly smother ah's and oh's,  
As they do now. Besides, in spring  
We used to let our transoms swing.  
Unbent but grayish, somewhat old  
Behind his spectacles of gold,  
And rather worn the man was now,  
With the unvanquished smile and brow  
Which come to artists having wives,  
Yet loving beauty all their lives.

Among his pupils there was one,  
With pretty wavy hair like spun  
Fine yellow gold, who came to sing—  
A well-made, well-kept little thing,  
With her tan gloves and long tan coat,  
Soft tie and collar at her throat,

And music-roll in hand,—the kind  
To keep that poise and peace of mind  
Where safety and contentment dwell.  
It seems she had a heart as well.

She was his marvel and despair.  
She had so confident an air,  
Such clear, full, faultless certainty  
Of power and ease, one wondered why  
That ringing glorious voice of gold,  
For all its splendor, left one cold;  
And why she never had acquired  
The shivering rapture he desired.  
Talking of her, he used to say,  
“Ah, vell, perhaps some day—some day!”

NOW, ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES,  
BRINGER OF KNOWLEDGE, if you please.

I used to leave my door swung wide  
To glimpse her passing, eager-eyed.  
One day in April she appeared,  
As lovely as the sky just cleared,  
And fresh as jonquils. One could tell  
By nod and footstep all was well

In her bright world, with golden spring  
In town. Then she began to sing;  
Softly at first; and then more strong,  
Where the notes vibrate and prolong;  
And then, as if she had forgot  
All fear, and earth and time were not,  
In one great lyric ecstasy  
Daring and passionate and free,  
Opening her throat against the tune,  
Sang like a thrush in early June.

I never heard such rapture. All  
Of love was in its dying fall,  
The faith, the triumph, and the pride,  
For which the world has lived and died  
These countless years; the joyous fire,  
Courage, magnificence, desire,  
Pity, unfathomable grief,  
And pain and sadness, and relief.  
All this enchantment warm and wild,  
Out of the heart of one mere child!

I put my brush aside and stopped  
My painting, while the music dropped  
Into the silence word by word,  
As softly as a throbbing bird

Drops to the waiting nest, content  
That all its rapture should be spent.  
I drew a breath. "At last!" I cried,  
"At last her Heaven has been descried!"

She always left at four; and so,  
When presently I heard her go,  
I sat down in my window seat  
To follow Jonquils down the street,  
As usual. When, standing there  
I saw a handsome lad, whose air  
Told plainly he was glad to wait  
For someone. I considered Fate  
Was much too good to him. Why blame?  
When I was young I did the same.

And then I saw Miss Jonquils trip  
Across the way to him, and slip  
Her gloved, confiding, little hand  
Under his grey-tweed arm, and stand  
Nestling it there a minute, lost  
In plans, no doubt, before they crossed  
The Avenue and disappeared.  
They were my drama. If I feared  
How it might end, I called it YOUTH,  
OF DREAMS OF ECSTASY AND TRUTH.

No doubt they had another name  
To call it by. 'Tis all the same.  
I loved them both. I turned away,  
And there was no more work that day.  
Well, who could work upon the Feast  
Of Ver:ial Joy? Not I, at least.

Leaving my room, with one day more  
Dropped out of time, I heard the door  
Of the old teacher's studio  
Clatter; and he came out to go  
His cheerless pensive way uptown.  
I offered him, as we went down  
The steps together, (he, so good  
And fine in his old fortitude!)  
Congratulations on the way  
His favorite had sung that day.  
He smiled his slow, sweet smile: "MEIN GOTT,  
Dot vas a miracle, hei? Vhat?"  
I told him I believed so too.

With reservations, so I do.



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