

I.

A pure and holy light shines thinly down
Towards the thick darkness of the bitter room.
It settles lightly like a heav'nly crown
Around the head of one who sits in gloom.
Then sudden light is sudden in its creed:
All gloom dispelled, Joy smoothly takes her place
Upon her captured captive newly freed,
And manifests herself upon his face.
O heav'nly light, so quiet and so pure,
O unexpected joy of heaven sent,
O Christ, sweet Lamb, effect in us the cure
To wean us from our earthly, captive bent!
 My Lord and Light, shine down upon my heart
 And in your glorious joys let me take part!

II.

Teardrops sparkle—oh, it feels good to cry.
My eyes are full with wet, my heart is full
With I know not what, nor do I know why.
But I am going to cry and thereby pull
My heart and head back to themselves, from whence
They have so often lately fled—all out
In mad circles they grumble, teeth bared, tense.
Why do they taunt me? Why do they so flout
My sense of rationality and right
That I am doubting even my own doubts?
What is this weight, this centrifuge alight
Upon my soul, which stuns me with its clouts?
 It is myself. My soul's own workings here,
 Which so confuse, will soon make all things clear.

III.

I love a word. Oh, any word at all!
I'll bend them Carroll-esquely to my will
Or, whimsically, I'll sometimes let them call
The shots (hear a word there a word). With quill
And feather all a-flutter my words dance.
I love a word. The histories of words
Entice me, lull me like medieval chants.
Philologies and such—they sing like birds!
And when a word has told me all it knows,
I lay it down to rest inside my head
And there it sleeps and simmers, rests and grows,
And spins itself a brilliant, star-like thread.
 And with these threads a tapestry is formed
 By which my heart, for love of words, is warmed.

IV. On Love

Who am I to try this—see here! That I
Should attempt the impossible is odd.
To take pen to paper, words from blank sky,
Aspiring to what others did with laud
But never with success—who do I think
I am, to fathom the unfathomable?
This thing, which others have described with ink
In gallon-measures, now makes my heart full.
But how can I explain, or comprehend,
That which I've just begun to know in part?
Do I presume to think that I could bend
My language in some new, fantastic art?
 At my mere words shall angels and men applaud?
 That glory passes not to me, but God.

V.

I open myself up to you, my friend.
Here and now: We talk. No, more than talking—
We "commune" (a silly word!), we attend
To what each is saying. We are walking
In each other's minds. Now I say a word
You disagree with—here a door is slammed
And we jump back, dismayed, to speak unheard
At this blank wall. The frequency is jammed
From you to me, my friend—Not my friend still?
When we have been so close, and now so far—
It is too odd, that here was aught, is nil.
And so I exit, leave the door ajar.
 Why's there no law of physics to prevent
 Our leaving till we unbend and repent?

VI.

It's hard to say just how he completes me.
Time in, time out, we love and learn to love.
We learn each other's hows and whys, and see
Just how we fit together. Hand and glove
We are not; nor are we puzzle pieces,
Exclusively each other's, found at last!
But love, decided now, never ceases,
Because we will not let it cease. We've cast
Our lots together. Here we are, two souls
Who somehow fit together, somehow make
More sense together than as separate wholes.
As one, we will be difficult to break.
 Intricate bonds we tie, and we design
 Our lives and hearts always to intertwine.

VII.

Twilight dimming into black and we are
Driving home again, our headlights brightening
Each little blade of grass to a dull star,
Real stars cloaked by sky and frozen lightening
(Billboard, road sign, headlights, street lamp). Pressing
Lines and curves and cars are broken up by
Kings of the road: Semis come, processing
Toward some distant throne. And with a slight sigh
We have passed this sleek new car, and that bridge;
An overpass, a clump of trees, and now—
A horrid sight! a frieze on the next ridge:
A yard of cranes that stretch, bend, turn, and bow
 As if to wake next morn to reach and rend
 The world to bits. Machines are no man's friend.

VIII.

We sang it often when I was a child:
"Jesus loves the little children. Red and
Yellow, black and white." Our teachers all smiled
As they led our singing—as if a band
Were proudly endorsing this sentiment.—
We sang along. And yet I was confused.
Red? Yellow? Black? White? I'd never yet met
A child of such colors! People, I mused,
Were pinkish or brown, or shades in between.
So I laughingly added my own hues.
Green and purple! No, they said—kids aren't green.
Well, nor are they red!—But that's what we use.
 Words that mean nothing but make us aware
 Of new ideas—new burdens to bear.

IX.

I am a dancer, as sure as I live.
I know it in my heart and in my bones.
I know it in the music that can give
Such motion to my still limbs with its tones.
Such grace I have in dancing from my soul
I do not else possess. I want to dance
Each bit of life out, animate the whole
Of my existence. But they look askance
At me (or so I think). I am ashamed.
My dancing soul is bare; it seeks cover.
(I want to dance. I whisper the unnamed.
I dance, I muse, I dream, drink, hover.)
 My body's not enough to dance the skeins
 Of life—but I can dance off my soul's chains.