

GEORGE MACDONALD

A BOOK OF STRIFE IN
THE FORM OF THE
DIARY OF AN OLD SOUL

George MacDonald
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of The Diary of an Old Soul**

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DEDICATION

Sweet friends, receive my offering. You will find
Against each worded page a white page set:—
This is the mirror of each friendly mind
Reflecting that. In this book we are met.
Make it, dear hearts, of worth to you indeed:—
Let your white page be ground, my print be seed,
Growing to golden ears, that faith and hope shall feed.

YOUR OLD SOUL

JANUARY

1

LORD, what I once had done with youthful might,
Had I been from the first true to the truth,
Grant me, now old, to do—with better sight,
And humbler heart, if not the brain of youth;
So wilt thou, in thy gentleness and ruth,
Lead back thy old soul, by the path of pain,
Round to his best—young eyes and heart and brain.

2

A dim aurora rises in my east,
Beyond the line of jagged questions hoar,
As if the head of our intombed High Priest
Began to glow behind the unopened door:
Sure the gold wings will soon rise from the gray!—
They rise not. Up I rise, press on the more,
To meet the slow coming of the Master's day.

3

Sometimes I wake, and, lo! I have forgot,
And drifted out upon an ebbing sea!
My soul that was at rest now resteth not,
For I am with myself and not with thee;
Truth seems a blind moon in a glaring morn,
Where nothing is but sick-heart vanity:
Oh, thou who knowest! save thy child forlorn.

4

Death, like high faith, levelling, lifteth all.
When I awake, my daughter and my son,
Grown sister and brother, in my arms shall fall,
Tenfold my girl and boy. Sure every one
Of all the brood to the old wings will run.
Whole-hearted is my worship of the man
From whom my earthly history began.

5

Thy fishes breathe but where thy waters roll;
Thy birds fly but within thy airy sea;
My soul breathes only in thy infinite soul;
I breathe, I think, I love, I live but thee.
Oh breathe, oh think,—O Love, live into me;
Unworthy is my life till all divine,
Till thou see in me only what is thine.

6

Then shall I breathe in sweetest sharing, then
Think in harmonious consort with my kin;
Then shall I love well all my father's men,
Feel one with theirs the life my heart within.
Oh brothers! sisters holy! hearts divine!
Then I shall be all yours, and nothing mine—
To every human heart a mother-twin.

7

I see a child before an empty house,
Knocking and knocking at the closed door;
He wakes dull echoes—but nor man nor mouse,
If he stood knocking there for evermore.—
A mother angel, see! folding each wing,
Soft-walking, crosses straight the empty floor,
And opens to the obstinate praying thing.

8

Were there but some deep, holy spell, whereby
Always I should remember thee—some mode
Of feeling the pure heat-throb momentarily
Of the spirit-fire still uttering this I!—
Lord, see thou to it, take thou remembrance' load:
Only when I bethink me can I cry;
Remember thou, and prick me with love's goad.

9

If to myself—"God sometimes interferes"—
I said, my faith at once would be struck blind.
I see him all in all, the living mind,
Or nowhere in the vacant miles and years.
A love he is that watches and that hears,
Or but a mist fumed up from minds of men,
Whose fear and hope reach out beyond their ken.

10

When I no more can stir my soul to move,
And life is but the ashes of a fire;
When I can but remember that my heart
Once used to live and love, long and aspire,—
Oh, be thou then the first, the one thou art;
Be thou the calling, before all answering love,
And in me wake hope, fear, boundless desire.

11

I thought that I had lost thee; but, behold!
Thou comest to me from the horizon low,
Across the fields outspread of green and gold—
Fair carpet for thy feet to come and go.
Whence I know not, or how to me thou art come!—
Not less my spirit with calm bliss doth glow,
Meeting thee only thus, in nature vague and dumb.

12

Doubt swells and surges, with swelling doubt behind!
My soul in storm is but a tattered sail,
Streaming its ribbons on the torrent gale;
In calm, 'tis but a limp and flapping thing:
Oh! swell it with thy breath; make it a wing,—
To sweep through thee the ocean, with thee the wind
Nor rest until in thee its haven it shall find.

13

The idle flapping of the sail is doubt;
Faith swells it full to breast the breasting seas.
Bold, conscience, fast, and rule the ruling helm;
Hell's freezing north no tempest can send out,
But it shall toss thee homeward to thy leas;
Boisterous wave-crest never shall o'erwhelm
Thy sea-float bark as safe as field-borne rooted elm.

14

Sometimes, hard-trying, it seems I cannot pray—
For doubt, and pain, and anger, and all strife.
Yet some poor half-fledged prayer-bird from the nest
May fall, flit, fly, perch—crouch in the bowery breast
Of the large, nation-healing tree of life;—
Moveless there sit through all the burning day,
And on my heart at night a fresh leaf cooling lay.

15

My harvest withers. Health, my means to live—
All things seem rushing straight into the dark.
But the dark still is God. I would not give
The smallest silver-piece to turn the rush
Backward or sideways. Am I not a spark
Of him who is the light?—Fair hope doth flush
My east.—Divine success—Oh, hush and hark!

16

Thy will be done. I yield up everything.
"The life is more than meat"—then more than health;
"The body more than raiment"—then than wealth;
The hairs I made not, thou art numbering.
Thou art my life—I the brook, thou the spring.
Because thine eyes are open, I can see;
Because thou art thyself, 'tis therefore I am me.

17

No sickness can come near to blast my health;
My life depends not upon any meat;
My bread comes not from any human tilth;
No wings will grow upon my changeless wealth;
Wrong cannot touch it, violence or deceit;
Thou art my life, my health, my bank, my barn—
And from all other gods thou plain dost warn.

18

Care thou for mine whom I must leave behind;
Care that they know who 'tis for them takes care;
Thy present patience help them still to bear;
Lord, keep them clearing, growing, heart and mind;
In one thy oneness us together bind;
Last earthly prayer with which to thee I cling—
Grant that, save love, we owe not anything.

19

'Tis well, for unembodied thought a live,
True house to build—of stubble, wood, nor hay;
So, like bees round the flower by which they thrive,
My thoughts are busy with the informing truth,
And as I build, I feed, and grow in youth—
Hoping to stand fresh, clean, and strong, and gay,
When up the east comes dawning His great day.

20

Thy will is truth—'tis therefore fate, the strong.
Would that my will did sweep full swing with thine!
Then harmony with every spheric song,
And conscious power, would give sureness divine.
Who thinks to thread thy great laws' onward throng,
Is as a fly that creeps his foolish way
Athwart an engine's wheels in smooth resistless play.

21

Thou in my heart hast planted, gardener divine,
A scion of the tree of life: it grows;
But not in every wind or weather it blows;
The leaves fall sometimes from the baby tree,
And the life-power seems melting into pine;
Yet still the sap keeps struggling to the shine,
And the unseen root clings cramplike unto thee.

22

Do thou, my God, my spirit's weather control;
And as I do not gloom though the day be dun,
Let me not gloom when earth-born vapours roll
Across the infinite zenith of my soul.
Should sudden brain-frost through the heart's summer run,
Cold, weary, joyless, waste of air and sun,
Thou art my south, my summer-wind, my all, my one.

23

O Life, why dost thou close me up in death?
O Health, why make me inhabit heaviness?—
I ask, yet know: the sum of this distress,
Pang-haunted body, sore-dismayed mind,
Is but the egg that rounds the winged faith;
When that its path into the air shall find,
My heart will follow, high above cold, rain, and wind.

24

I can no more than lift my weary eyes;
Therefore I lift my weary eyes—no more.
But my eyes pull my heart, and that, before
'Tis well awake, knocks where the conscience lies;
Conscience runs quick to the spirit's hidden door:
Straightway, from every sky-ward window, cries
Up to the Father's listening ears arise.

25

Not in my fancy now I search to find thee;
Not in its loftiest forms would shape or bind thee;
I cry to one whom I can never know,
Filling me with an infinite overflow;
Not to a shape that dwells within my heart,
Clothed in perfections love and truth assigned thee,
But to the God thou knowest that thou art.

26

Not, Lord, because I have done well or ill;
Not that my mind looks up to thee clear-eyed;
Not that it struggles in fast cerements tied;
Not that I need thee daily sorer still;
Not that I wretched, wander from thy will;
Not now for any cause to thee I cry,
But this, that thou art thou, and here am I.

27

Yestereve, Death came, and knocked at my thin door.
I from my window looked: the thing I saw,
The shape uncouth, I had not seen before.
I was disturbed—with fear, in sooth, not awe;
Whereof ashamed, I instantly did rouse
My will to seek thee—only to fear the more:
Alas! I could not find thee in the house.

28

I was like Peter when he began to sink.
To thee a new prayer therefore I have got—
That, when Death comes in earnest to my door,
Thou wouldst thyself go, when the latch doth clink,
And lead him to my room, up to my cot;
Then hold thy child's hand, hold and leave him not,
Till Death has done with him for evermore.

29

Till Death has done with him?—Ah, leave me then!
And Death has done with me, oh, nevermore!
He comes—and goes—to leave me in thy arms,
Nearer thy heart, oh, nearer than before!
To lay thy child, naked, new-born again
Of mother earth, crept free through many harms,
Upon thy bosom—still to the very core.

30

Come to me, Lord: I will not speculate how,
Nor think at which door I would have thee appear,
Nor put off calling till my floors be swept,
But cry, "Come, Lord, come any way, come now."
Doors, windows, I throw wide; my head I bow,
And sit like some one who so long has slept
That he knows nothing till his life draw near.

O Lord, I have been talking to the people;
Thought's wheels have round me whirled a fiery zone,
And the recoil of my words' airy ripple
My heart unheedful has puffed up and blown.
Therefore I cast myself before thee prone:
Lay cool hands on my burning brain, and press
From my weak heart the swelling emptiness.

FEBRUARY

1

I TO myself have neither power nor worth,
Patience nor love, nor anything right good;
My soul is a poor land, plenteous in dearth—
Here blades of grass, there a small herb for food—
A nothing that would be something if it could;
But if obedience, Lord, in me do grow,
I shall one day be better than I know.

2

The worst power of an evil mood is this—
It makes the bastard self seem in the right,
Self, self the end, the goal of human bliss.
But if the Christ-self in us be the might
Of saving God, why should I spend my force
With a dark thing to reason of the light—
Not push it rough aside, and hold obedient course?

3

Back still it comes to this: there was a man
Who said, "I am the truth, the life, the way:"—
Shall I pass on, or shall I stop and hear?—
"Come to the Father but by me none can:"
What then is this?—am I not also one
Of those who live in fatherless dismay?
I stand, I look, I listen, I draw near.

4

My Lord, I find that nothing else will do,
But follow where thou goest, sit at thy feet,
And where I have thee not, still run to meet.
Roses are scentless, hopeless are the morns,
Rest is but weakness, laughter crackling thorns,
If thou, the Truth, do not make them the true:
Thou art my life, O Christ, and nothing else will do.

5

Thou art here—in heaven, I know, but not from here—
Although thy separate self do not appear;
If I could part the light from out the day,
There I should have thee! But thou art too near:
How find thee walking, when thou art the way?
Oh, present Christ! make my eyes keen as stings,
To see thee at their heart, the glory even of things.

6

That thou art nowhere to be found, agree
Wise men, whose eyes are but for surfaces;
Men with eyes opened by the second birth,
To whom the seen, husk of the unseen is,
Descry thee soul of everything on earth.
Who know thy ends, thy means and motions see:
Eyes made for glory soon discover thee.

7

Thou near then, I draw nearer—to thy feet,
And sitting in thy shadow, look out on the shine;
Ready at thy first word to leave my seat—
Not thee: thou goest too. From every clod
Into thy footprint flows the indwelling wine;
And in my daily bread, keen-eyed I greet
Its being's heart, the very body of God.

8

Thou wilt interpret life to me, and men,
Art, nature, yea, my own soul's mysteries—
Bringing, truth out, clear-joyous, to my ken,
Fair as the morn trampling the dull night. Then
The lone hill-side shall hear exultant cries;
The joyous see me joy, the weeping weep;
The watching smile, as Death breathes on me his cold
sleep.

9

I search my heart—I search, and find no faith.
Hidden He may be in its many folds—
I see him not revealed in all the world
Duty's firm shape thins to a misty wraith.
No good seems likely. To and fro I am hurled.
I have no stay. Only obedience holds:—
I haste, I rise, I do the thing he saith.

10

Thou wouldst not have thy man crushed back to clay;
It must be, God, thou hast a strength to give
To him that fain would do what thou dost say;
Else how shall any soul repentant live,
Old griefs and new fears hurrying on dismay?
Let pain be what thou wilt, kind and degree,
Only in pain calm thou my heart with thee.

11

I will not shift my ground like Moab's king,
But from this spot whereon I stand, I pray—
From this same barren rock to thee I say,
"Lord, in my commonness, in this very thing
That haunts my soul with folly—through the clay
Of this my pitcher, see the lamp's dim flake;
And hear the blow that would the pitcher break."

12

Be thou the well by which I lie and rest;
Be thou my tree of life, my garden ground;
Be thou my home, my fire, my chamber blest,
My book of wisdom, loved of all the best;
Oh, be my friend, each day still newer found,
As the eternal days and nights go round!
Nay, nay—thou art my God, in whom all loves are bound!

13

Two things at once, thou know'st I cannot think.
When busy with the work thou givest me,
I cannot consciously think then of thee.
Then why, when next thou lookest o'er the brink
Of my horizon, should my spirit shrink,
Reproached and fearful, nor to greet thee run?
Can I be two when I am only one.

14

My soul must unawares have sunk awry.
Some care, poor eagerness, ambition of work,
Some old offence that unforgiving did lurk,
Or some self-gratulation, soft and sly—
Something not thy sweet will, not the good part,
While the home-guard looked out, stirred up the old murk,
And so I gloomed away from thee, my Heart.

15

Therefore I make provision, ere I begin
To do the thing thou givest me to do,
Praying,—Lord, wake me oftener, lest I sin.
Amidst my work, open thine eyes on me,
That I may wake and laugh, and know and see
Then with healed heart afresh catch up the clue,
And singing drop into my work anew.

16

If I should slow diverge, and listless stray
Into some thought, feeling, or dream unright,
O Watcher, my backsliding soul affray;
Let me not perish of the ghastly blight.
Be thou, O Life eternal, in me light;
Then merest approach of selfish or impure
Shall start me up alive, awake, secure.

17

Lord, I have fallen again—a human clod!
Selfish I was, and heedless to offend;
Stood on my rights. Thy own child would not send
Away his shreds of nothing for the whole God!
Wretched, to thee who savest, low I bend:
Give me the power to let my rag-rights go
In the great wind that from thy gulf doth blow.

18

Keep me from wrath, let it seem ever so right:
My wrath will never work thy righteousness.
Up, up the hill, to the whiter than snow-shine,
Help me to climb, and dwell in pardon's light.
I must be pure as thou, or ever less
Than thy design of me—therefore incline
My heart to take men's wrongs as thou tak'st mine.

19

Lord, in thy spirit's hurricane, I pray,
Strip my soul naked—dress it then thy way.
Change for me all my rags to cloth of gold.
Who would not poverty for riches yield?
A hovel sell to buy a treasure-field?
Who would a mess of porridge careful hold
Against the universe's birthright old?

20

Help me to yield my will, in labour even,
Nor toil on toil, greedy of doing, heap—
Fretting I cannot more than me is given;
That with the finest clay my wheel runs slow,
Nor lets the lovely thing the shapely grow;
That memory what thought gives it cannot keep,
And nightly rimes ere morn like cistus-petals go.

21

'Tis—shall thy will be done for me?—or mine,
And I be made a thing not after thine—
My own, and dear in paltriest details?
Shall I be born of God, or of mere man?
Be made like Christ, or on some other plan?—
I let all run:—set thou and trim my sails;
Home then my course, let blow whatever gales.

22

With thee on board, each sailor is a king
Nor I mere captain of my vessel then,
But heir of earth and heaven, eternal child;
Daring all truth, nor fearing anything;
Mighty in love, the servant of all men;
Resenting nothing, taking rage and blare
Into the Godlike silence of a loving care.

23

I cannot see, my God, a reason why
From morn to night I go not gladsome free;
For, if thou art what my soul thinketh thee,
There is no burden but should lightly lie,
No duty but a joy at heart must be:
Love's perfect will can be nor sore nor small,
For God is light—in him no darkness is at all.

24

'Tis something thus to think, and half to trust—
But, ah! my very heart, God-born, should lie
Spread to the light, clean, clear of mire and rust,
And like a sponge drink the divine sunbeams.
What resolution then, strong, swift, and high!
What pure devotion, or to live or die!
And in my sleep, what true, what perfect dreams!

25

There is a misty twilight of the soul,
A sickly eclipse, low brooding o'er a man,
When the poor brain is as an empty bowl,
And the thought-spirit, weariful and wan,
Turning from that which yet it loves the best,
Sinks moveless, with life-poverty opprest:—
Watch then, O Lord, thy feebly glimmering coal.

26

I cannot think; in me is but a void;
I have felt much, and want to feel no more;
My soul is hungry for some poorer fare—
Some earthly nectar, gold not unalloyed:—
The little child that's happy to the core,
Will leave his mother's lap, run down the stair,
Play with the servants—is his mother annoyed?

27

I would not have it so. Weary and worn,
Why not to thee run straight, and be at rest?
Motherward, with toy new, or garment torn,
The child that late forsook her changeless breast,
Runs to home's heart, the heaven that's heavenliest:
In joy or sorrow, feebleness or might,
Peace or commotion, be thou, Father, my delight.

28

The thing I would say, still comes forth with doubt
And difference:—is it that thou shap'st my ends?
Or is it only the necessity
Of stubborn words, that shift sluggish about,
Warping my thought as it the sentence bends?—
Have thou a part in it, O Lord, and I
Shall say a truth, if not the thing I try.

Gather my broken fragments to a whole,
As these four quarters make a shining day.
Into thy basket, for my golden bowl,
Take up the things that I have cast away
In vice or indolence or unwise play.
Let mine be a merry, all-receiving heart,
But make it a whole, with light in every part.

MARCH

1

THE song birds that come to me night and morn,
Fly oft away and vanish if I sleep,
Nor to my fowling-net will one return:
Is the thing ever ours we cannot keep?—
But their souls go not out into the deep.
What matter if with changed song they come back?
Old strength nor yet fresh beauty shall they lack.

2

Gloriously wasteful, O my Lord, art thou!
Sunset faints after sunset into the night,
Splendorously dying from thy window-sill—
For ever. Sad our poverty doth bow
Before the riches of thy making might:
Sweep from thy space thy systems at thy will—
In thee the sun sets every sunset still.

3

And in the perfect time, O perfect God,
When we are in our home, our natal home,
When joy shall carry every sacred load,
And from its life and peace no heart shall roam,
What if thou make us able to make like thee—
To light with moons, to clothe with greenery,
To hang gold sunsets o'er a rose and purple sea!

4

Then to his neighbour one may call out, "Come!
Brother, come hither—I would show you a thing;"
And lo, a vision of his imagining,
Informed of thought which else had rested dumb,
Before the neighbour's truth-delighted eyes,
In the great æther of existence rise,
And two hearts each to each the closer cling!

5

We make, but thou art the creating core.
Whatever thing I dream, invent, or feel,
Thou art the heart of it, the atmosphere.
Thou art inside all love man ever bore;
Yea, the love itself, whatever thing be dear.
Man calls his dog, he follows at his heel,
Because thou first art love, self-caused, essential, mere.

6

This day be with me, Lord, when I go forth,
Be nearer to me than I am able to ask.
In merriment, in converse, or in task,
Walking the street, listening to men of worth,
Or greeting such as only talk and bask,
Be thy thought still my waiting soul around,
And if He come, I shall be watching found.

7

What if, writing, I always seem to leave
Some better thing, or better way, behind,
Why should I therefore fret at all, or grieve!
The worse I drop, that I the better find;
The best is only in thy perfect mind.
Fallen threads I will not search for—I will weave.
Who makes the mill-wheel backward strike to grind!

8

Be with me, Lord. Keep me beyond all prayers:
For more than all my prayers my need of thee,
And thou beyond all need, all unknown cares;
What the heart's dear imagination dares,
Thou dost transcend in measureless majesty
All prayers in one—my God, be unto me
Thy own eternal self, absolutely.

9

Where should the unknown treasures of the truth
Lie, but there whence the truth comes out the most—
In the Son of man, folded in love and ruth?
Fair shore we see, fair ocean; but behind
Lie infinite reaches bathing many a coast—
The human thought of the eternal mind,
Pulsed by a living tide, blown by a living wind.

10

Thou, healthful Father, art the Ancient of Days,
And Jesus is the eternal youth of thee.
Our old age is the scorching of the bush
By life's indwelling, incorruptible blaze.
O Life, burn at this feeble shell of me,
Till I the sore singed garment off shall push,
Flap out my Psyche wings, and to thee rush.

11

But shall I then rush to thee like a dart?
Or lie long hours æonian yet betwixt
This hunger in me, and the Father's heart?—
It shall be good, how ever, and not ill;
Of things and thoughts even now thou art my next;
Sole neighbour, and no space between, thou art—
And yet art drawing nearer, nearer still.

12

Therefore, my brothers, therefore, sisters dear,
However I, troubled or selfish, fail
In tenderness, or grace, or service clear,
I every moment draw to you more near;
God in us from our hearts veil after veil
Keeps lifting, till we see with his own sight,
And all together run in unity's delight.

13

I love thee, Lord, for very greed of love—
Not of the precious streams that towards me move,
But of the indwelling, outgoing, fountain store.
Than mine, oh, many an ignorant heart loves more!
Therefore the more, with Mary at thy feet,
I must sit worshipping—that, in my core,
Thy words may fan to a flame the low primeval heat.

14

Oh my beloved, gone to heaven from me!
I would be rich in love to heap you with love;
I long to love you, sweet ones, perfectly—
Like God, who sees no spanning vault above,
No earth below, and feels no circling air—
Infinitely, no boundary anywhere.
I am a beast until I love as God doth love.

15

Ah, say not, 'tis but perfect self I want
But if it were, that self is fit to live
Whose perfectness is still itself to scant,
Which never longs to have, but still to give.
A self I must have, or not be at all:
Love, give me a self self-giving—or let me fall
To endless darkness back, and free me from life's thrall.

16

"Back," said I! Whither back? How to the dark?
From no dark came I, but the depths of light;
From the sun-heart I came, of love a spark:
What should I do but love with all my might?
To die of love severe and pure and stark,
Were scarcely loss; to lord a loveless height—
That were a living death, damnation's positive night.

17

But love is life. To die of love is then
The only pass to higher life than this.
All love is death to loving, living men;
All deaths are leaps across clefts to the abyss.
Our life is the broken current, Lord, of thine,
Flashing from morn to morn with conscious shine—
Then first by willing death self-made, then life divine.

18

I love you, my sweet children, who are gone
Into another mansion; but I know
I love you not as I shall love you yet.
I love you, sweet dead children; there are none
In the land to which ye vanished to go,
Whose hearts more truly on your hearts are set—
Yet should I die of grief to love you only so.

19

"I am but as a beast before thee, Lord."—
Great poet-king, I thank thee for the word.—
Leave not thy son half-made in beastly guise—
Less than a man, with more than human cries—
An unshaped thing in which thyself cries out!
Finish me, Father; now I am but a doubt;
Oh! make thy moaning thing for joy to leap and shout.

20

Let my soul talk to thee in ordered words,
O king of kings, O lord of only lords!—
When I am thinking thee within my heart,
From the broken reflex be not far apart.
The troubled water, dim with upstirred soil,
Makes not the image which it yet can spoil:—
Come nearer, Lord, and smooth the wrinkled coil.

21

O Lord, when I do think of my departed,
I think of thee who art the death of parting;
Of him who crying Father breathed his last,
Then radiant from the sepulchre upstarted.—
Even then, I think, thy hands and feet kept smarting:
With us the bitterness of death is past,
But by the feet he still doth hold us fast.

22

Therefore our hands thy feet do hold as fast.
We pray not to be spared the sorest pang,
But only—be thou with us to the last.
Let not our heart be troubled at the clang
Of hammer and nails, nor dread the spear's keen fang,
Nor the ghaſt sickening that comes of pain,
Nor yet the laſt clutch of the baniſhed brain.

23

Lord, pity us: we have no making power;
Then give us making will, adopting thine.
Make, make, and make us; temper, and refine.
Be in us patience—neither to start nor cower.
Christ, if thou be not with us—not by sign,
But presence, actual as the wounds that bleed—
We shall not bear it, but shall die indeed.

24

O Christ, have pity on all men when they come
Unto the border haunted of dismay;
When that they know not draweth very near—
The other thing, the opposite of day,
Formless and ghastly, sick, and gaping-dumb,
Before which even love doth lose his cheer:
O radiant Christ, remember then thy fear.

25

Be by me, Lord, this day. Thou know'st I mean—
Lord, make me mind thee. I herewith forestall
My own forgetfulness, when I stoop to glean
The corn of earth—which yet thy hand lets fall.
Be for me then against myself. Oh lean
Over me then when I invert my cup;
Take me, if by the hair, and lift me up.

26

Lord of essential life, help me to die.
To will to die is one with highest life,
The mightiest act that to Will's hand doth lie—
Born of God's essence, and of man's hard strife:
God, give me strength my evil self to kill,
And die into the heaven of thy pure will.—
Then shall this body's death be very tolerable.

27

As to our mothers came help in our birth—
Not lost in lifing us, but saved and blest—
Self bearing self, although right sorely prest,
Shall nothing lose, but die and be at rest
In life eternal, beyond all care and dearth.
God-born then truly, a man does no more ill,
Perfectly loves, and has whate'er he will.

28

As our dear animals do suffer less
Because their pain spreads neither right nor left,
Lost in oblivion and foresightlessness—
Our suffering sore by faith shall be bereft
Of all dismay, and every weak excess.
His presence shall be better in our pain,
Than even self-absence to the weaker brain.

29

"Father, let this cup pass." He prayed—was heard.
What cup was it that passed away from him?
Sure not the death-cup, now filled to the brim!
There was no quailing in the awful word;
He still was king of kings, of lords the lord:—
He feared lest, in the suffering waste and grim,
His faith might grow too faint and sickly dim.

30

Thy mind, my master, I will dare explore;
What we are told, that we are meant to know.
Into thy soul I search yet more and more,
Led by the lamp of my desire and woe.
If thee, my Lord, I may not understand,
I am a wanderer in a houseless land,
A weeping thirst by hot winds ever fanned.

Therefore I look again—and think I see
That, when at last he did cry out, "My God,
Why hast thou me forsaken?" straight man's rod
Was turned aside; for, that same moment, he
Cried "Father!" and gave up will and breath and spirit
Into his hands whose all he did inherit—
Delivered, glorified eternally.

APRIL

1

LORD, I do choose the higher than my will.
I would be handled by thy nursing arms
After thy will, not my infant alarms.
Hurt me thou wilt—but then more loving still,
If more can be and less, in love's perfect zone!
My fancy shrinks from least of all thy harms,
But do thy will with me—I am thine own.

2

Some things wilt thou not one day turn to dreams?
Some dreams wilt thou not one day turn to fact?
The thing that painful, more than should be, seems,
Shall not thy sliding years with them retract—
Shall fair realities not counteract?
The thing that was well dreamed of bliss and joy—
Wilt thou not breathe thy life into the toy?

3

I have had dreams of absolute delight,
Beyond all waking bliss—only of grass,
Flowers, wind, a peak, a limb of marble white;

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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