

To Immortal Bloom

Text by Conrad Aiken, edited by Bob Becker

The first note, simple; the second note, distinct;
The third note, harsh; the fourth, an innuendo;
The fifth, a humble triad; and the sixth –
Suddenly – is the chord of chords, that breaks
The evening; and from evening calls the angel,
One voice divinely singing.

So the twilight
Deepens the hour from rose to purple; so
One bell-note is the death-note, and completes
The half-remembered with the soon-forgotten.
The threes and fives compute our day; we move
To doom with all things moving.

It is this instant when hell and heaven
Arch in a chord of glory over madness;
The world's a rose which comes this night to flower:
This evening is its light. And it is we,
Who, with our harmonies and discords, woven
Of myriad things forgotten and remembered,
Urge the vast twilight to immortal bloom.

Clear Things May Not Be Seen

Text by Conrad Aiken, selected and edited by Bob Becker

To the wild night which everywhere awaits you
and the deep darkness full of sounds
to the deep terror in which shines for a moment
a single light, far off, which is suddenly quenched
this is the meaning for which you seek a phrase
this is your phrase.

Into the gulf between bellsound and waiting and bellsound and then
the unfilled silence which sets a term to time
into the void the opening of the eye
into the eye the entrance of wild light
and the slow forgetting of the night
the dreams shifted from left to right
the hand moved
the cloud broken by the sun
the light broken by rain
the sea broken by pouring water

into that nameless space
while the hand yet is still
let the division come
let the pure separation come

let the division come
in this serene bewilderment this leaving
of the half known for the half known
before there is conceiving or believing
or with self knowledge the eyes are done
or the hands remember each other
while yet our south and north are sleeping
let us both stay and go forth,
let this be our home, our keeping.

Twilight is spacious, near things in it seem far,
And distant things seem near.
Now in the green west hangs a yellow star.
And now across old waters you may hear
The profound gloom of bells among still trees,
Like a rolling of huge boulders beneath seas.

Now, unless persuaded by searching music
Which suddenly opens the portals of the mind,
We guess no angels,
And are contented to be blind.
Let us blow silver horns in the twilight,
And lift our hearts to the yellow star in the green,
To find perhaps, if, while the dew is rising,
Clear things may not be seen.