

HYPOTHESIS

(a life-sentence. . .)

If there be nought but nought, for aught we know,
 and sky though filled with stars, still starkly void,
 an emptiness with many a universe,
 where planets spin round scintillating suns,
 themselves but satellites of greater spheres
 which well may wheel around some whirling hub
 so huge as brings the musing mind to halt
 before its wondering wits' bewilderment,
 like proud Columbus, fearing pride's downfall
 over the rim of reason, brink of brain,
 into the height's, the depth's, the breadth's abyss,
 proving infirm the very firmament;

if there be nought but nought, for aught we know,
 and earth but hotly steaming hinterland
 which cooled its broths with breath of wakening winds,
 in which elixirs, by strange alchemy,
 still unexplained, nay inexplicable,
 spurted a pulse of spontaneity,
 then thrust of life begun began to throb,
 feeding its fertile, futile protoplasts
 which swirled or swam in metamorphoses,
 adopting their adapted difference,
 till from the shallows of some silted shore,
 from scrabbling fins to scrambling feet of strength,
 at length life rose upright to march as man;

If there be nought but nought, for aught we know,
 and Man mere cosmic, comic accident,
 as million years amassed their billion cells,
 whence grew this great, self-gratifying ape
 no chosen creature, rather child of chance,
 surviving by succeeding selfishness,
 his legacy, inherited, bequeathed,
 wayfarers, wandering through a waste of time,
 grown not by grace but by consuming greed,
 survivors as the fitter in the fight
 of brain with brawn for mastery, and yet
 race against time for such a transient tribe,
 who, though life's latest if not last resort,
 but wait while nature wonders whither next;

if there be nought but nought, for aught we know,
 and all men's prayers, voiced to their various gods,
 or various God as seen by various Man,
 are only mocking monologues which mime,
 by soundless echoes in the emptiness
 of silent sky, those sane soliloquies,
 distorted by its storm-tossed turbulence,
 to seem responses from the heights of heaven,
 though silence still unbroken, give the lie
 to all the claims of holy men to hear
 wonders that speak within and not without
 the heads they carry high amongst the clouds,
 who, loath to deem their gods both deaf and dumb,
 find faith in evidence not seen, not heard,
 and out of make-believe make their belief;

if there be nought but nought, for aught we know,
 and this be true, this premiss, yet unproved,
 that everywhere be nowhere in the end,
 that everything be nothing after all
 then life would seem a sad and shameful sham,
 man mortified in his mortality,
 a mockery that makes him meaningless;
 and he, despite his prowess and his pride,
 whom some claim universally unique,
 made in the image of his many-a-god,
 must be no more, if there be nought but nought,
 than some belatedly mutated ape
 who differs in degree but not in kind
 from kith and kin still in the family tree,
 while he, descendant, knows he comes to earth,
 ashes to ashes, dust again to dust,
 forgetting, and forgotten, and forgone,
 whose only hope, hope against hope must be,
 that there be more than nought, for aught we know. . .

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