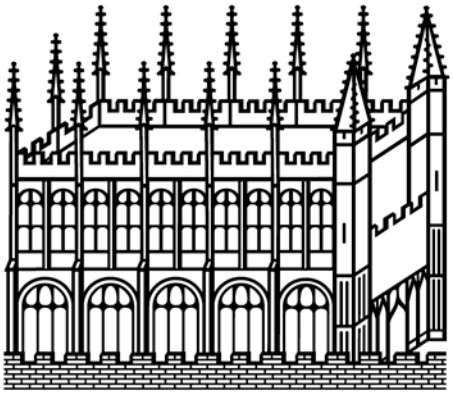


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# THE EARTH FOR SALE

# THE EARTH FOR SALE

POEMS BY

HAROLD MONRO

LONDON
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1928

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## BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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STRANGE MEETINGS (1917). *Third Thousand*
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### PROSE

THE CHRONICLE OF A PILGRIMAGE: Paris to Milan on Foot (1909)
SOME CONTEMPORARY POETS (1920)
ONE DAY AWAKE (Modern Morality) (1922)

## NOTE

Nearly all the following poems have already appeared in various periodicals, English and American. " Midnight Lamentation " has also been included in a selection published by Messrs. Ernest Benn in their Augustan Books of Poetry.

The one called " God of the World " may be described as a diminutive and incomplete outline of an epic to be entitled " Jehovah," planned about fifteen years ago, and since then partly written and rewritten two or three times unsuccessfully.

The division of the book into three parts hardly needs explanation, unless to mention that it is in no way chronological.

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# PART I

## LIVING

Slow bleak awakening from the morning dream
Brings me in contact with the sudden day.
I am alive—this I.
I let my fingers move along my body.
Realisation warns them, and my nerves
Prepare their rapid messages and signals.
While Memory begins recording, coding,
Repeating; all the time Imagination
Mutters: You'll only die.

Here's a new day. O Pendulum move slowly!
My usual clothes are waiting on their peg.
I am alive—this I.
And in a moment Habit, like a crane,
Will bow its neck and dip its pulleyed cable,
Gathering me, my body, and our garment,
And swing me forth, oblivious of my question,
Into the daylight—why?

I think of all the others who awaken,
And wonder if they go to meet the morning
More valiantly than I;
Nor asking of this Day they will be living:
What have I done that I should be alive?

O, can I not forget that I am living?
How shall I reconcile the two conditions:
Living, and yet—to die?

Between the curtains the autumnal sunlight
With lean and yellow finger points me out;
The clock moans: Why? Why? Why?
But suddenly, as if without a reason,
Heart, Brain and Body, and Imagination
All gather in tumultuous joy together,
Running like children down the path of morning
To fields where they can play without a quarrel:
A country I'd forgotten, but remember,
And welcome with a cry.

O cool glad pasture; living tree, tall corn,
Great cliff, or languid sloping sand, cold sea,
Waves; rivers curving: you, eternal flowers,
Give me content, while I can think of you:
Give me your living breath!
Back to your rampart, Death.

## SILENCE BETWEEN

Does not my ghost appear?
My eyes feel over intervening space,
  And I am leaning forward at the strain
Till, now, my fingers nearly touch your face.
  Lean out to me: I'm calling with my brain.

Do you not feel me near?
I'm bending forward on the wind of thought,
  Sailing toward you on the lake of mind.
O share this moment which may not be brought
  Ever to life again, once left behind.

But I can only hear
Far off the beating of your lonely heart,
  While in between us flow the hurrying waves.
A deathly wind is blowing us apart:
  Lovers are not more foreign in their graves.

## GREAT DISTANCE

How can you be so far away?
When I have been in pain before
I've found you standing just outside
My body's door,
In patient silence waiting there,
That I might feel your spirit near.

But now, with every breath I take,
It seems that you have farther gone,
And I become more wide awake,
And more alone.
In all this world there is no light;
No open doorway here to-night.

I lay my body on the bed,
And cross my arms, and think of death,
And think, nine hundred miles away,
You draw calm breath.
At last, imagination through
That distance reaches out to you.

Now you are leaning on your hand,
And staring at an empty book.

You raise your eyes; you understand:
I feel your look
Pierce through me. In this foreign place
You reach me, and I know your face.

I swear that then our hands did touch,
And all my fainting pain is gone;
I know that you did touch my hand.
Each is alone.
Yet loneliness begins to seem
Like sleep, and will become a dream.

## WHERE SHE LIVES

We love the room; and it is ours;
But when I came to you to-day,
You were possessed by other powers:
You spoke, but you were far away.

I saw you pale against the wall,
Half hidden in a shaft of light.
I thought I heard a petal fall,
Yet disbelieved both sound and sight.

The traffic on the street roared by:
I trembled in the room alone.
I heard you move, then heard you sigh;
Yet wondered: Is she here, or gone?

Your lips were moved, yet, one by one,
Your words like dropping petals fell.
I whispered: surely, she is gone;
Cried inwardly: I cannot tell.

Room, come to life! Shine phantom wall!
Light, light, become you calm, and keen!

The shadows tremble, and are tall,
And everything is dimly seen.

Put your cold hands, and may they fall,
Loose, gently, on my tortured mind.
Room come to life: shine phantom wall.

## MIDNIGHT LAMENTATION

When you and I go down
Breathless and cold,
Our faces both worn back
To earthly mould,
How lonely we shall be!
What shall we do,
You without me,
I without you?

I cannot bear the thought
You, first, may die,
Nor of how you will weep,
Should I.
We are too much alone;
What can we do
To make our bodies one:
You, me; I, you?

We are most nearly born
Of one same kind;
We have the same delight,
The same true mind.
Must we then part, we part;
Is there no way

To keep a beating heart,
And light of day?

I could now rise and run
Through street on street
To where you are breathing—you,
That we might meet,
And that your living voice
Might sound above
Fear, and we two rejoice
Within our love.

How frail the body is,
And we are made
As only in decay
To lean and fade.
I think too much of death;
There is a gloom
When I can't hear your breath
Calm in some room.

O, but how suddenly
Either may droop;
Countenance be so white,
Body stoop.
Then there may be a place
Where fading flowers

Drop on a lifeless face
Through weeping hours.

Is then nothing safe?
Can we not find
Some everlasting life
In our one mind?
I feel it like disgrace
Only to understand
Your spirit through your word,
Or by your hand.

I cannot find a way
Through love and through;
I cannot reach beyond
Body, to you.
When you or I must go
Down evermore,
There'll be no more to say
—But a locked door.

## THE OCEAN IN LONDON

In London while I slowly wake
At morning I'm amazed to hear
The ocean, seventy miles away,
Below my window roaring, near.

When first I know that heavy sound
I keep my eyelids closely down,
And sniff the brine, and hold all thought
Reined back outside the walls of town.

So I can hardly well believe
That those tremendous billows are
Of iron and steel and wood and glass:
Van, lorry, and gigantic car.

## SLEEPING BY THE SEA

The tall old waves seethe onward to the beach,
With dismal loud explosion boom and fall;
(Their reckless parent wind that follows each
Now nourishes them high, now starves them small).
They range like warriors battering a wall,
Who flood, invincible, gigantic, slow
Until their rising tide at length will reach
Their shattered town's indubitable fall.

But they are only furrows on the sea.
I, anxious bedded listener, stare and ask.
The generations climb Eternity;
The waves devour the shore: each wears a mask,
And each complacently fulfils a task.

The waves burst their cracked water. Their long blow
Furrows my anxious brain as I lie here.
They seem to drench me with their overflow;
But we are brothers, for we are so near
That I might well ignore them: yet I fear.
Their threat becomes terrific through their sound,
I shrink to earth; I burrow into ground.

## TOO NEAR THE SEA

No foam;
A trippling shallow tread;
The pebbles tingle on the beach,
While, disentangled over head
From clouds, the moonlight, carefully spread,
Lays whiter sheets on my white bed.

From haunted sleeplessness, in quivering dread,
I wander through the sea-sound-empty-full
Large sleeping room above that sea. My bed
Felt like a raft; but now there is the pull
Of dreary sea, toward the window drawing,
Of every slight wave with its itch and drag
Upward toward the tall lean windows clawing,
And, sea-bemysteried, my senses flag.
Yesterday and to-morrow will be waves
Breaking in calm succession on to-day.
Earth-life pales down to sea-foam. Flesh behaves
Like sifted ashes.
Cold slow ocean washes
All round, and then it washes me away.

## THE GUEST

Tall, cool and gentle, you are here
To turn the water into wine.
Now, at the ebbing of the year,
Be you the sun we need to shine.

It is the birthday of your word;
And we are gathered. Will you come?
Let not your spirit be a sword,
O luminous delightful lord.

# PART II

## ROMANTIC FOOL

*Romantic fool who cannot speak!*

You are distant like a white cold cloud.
You pasture on the April sky.

I meet you with my head half bowed,
And wonder if you wonder why.
There has not been a single day
My eyes have dared look straight your way,
Or mix themselves with yours in play.

Your beauty fills my flesh with fear:
I flinch, as I have always done,
When loveliness became too near.
You dazzle me with your bright sun.
Supposing I should say a word
Just whispered lowly, as a bird,
While passing, and you smiled—and heard.

O then I fear that I might spring,
Utter some unearthly cry,
But drop my clipped and awkward wing,

Dumb, while you stared, and slowly I
Should have to pass your beauty by,

Becoming, like that bird, I think,
Beady-small, but vision-clear—
The epochs in between a sleep
Devoted to your being near,
Though your known face between my dreams
Is absent always, as it seems,
And I remain through week and week
*Romantic fool who cannot speak.*

## JOURNEY TO RECLAIM A GHOST

Now coming to the street where you had lived,
I trembled in cold fear.
Is it your ghost at that far corner?
Often you will have walked along this pavement.
I think you are not here.

O melancholy houses, ugly, grimy, small,
Two, two and two,
How are you changed! What glory did now fall
This moment over you!

I hesitated, nearly walked away.
Oh can it be the street?
What shall I do if I am doomed to meet
Your ghost to-day?

Suddenly all fearfulness has left me.
Gently I touch the knocker, quickly answered.
Inside the door, the hall,
There are they all:
Your mother and your sisters. No; not you.

We talk; we talk; until your ghost is here,
Enveloping our hearts; on mine too near,
For I had not intended to reply
To your loud knock.
They show your letters. Now what shall I do?
So curious and so keen have I become
Remembering you, and being in your home,
And realizing them and how they love
You, you. I cannot speak or move.
In their small parlour you are found and lost
You terrifying ghost.

How to be gone? How with no awkward stress
To leave you unto them, whom they possess?
Break through the atmosphere, the room,
The hall,
The door, the street and leave them all,
To me like ghosts themselves, in incandescent gloom?

What journey it has been to find your street!
Outside your street again, what shall I do?
Who are you really I have longed to meet?
What atmosphere have I disturbed?

Where may I wait,
Where watch the consequence
Of this adventurous trail of fate,
Or passionate chance?
What do?
Where journey hence
Away from you?

## RUMOUR

Somebody is whispering on the stair.
What are those words half spoken, half drawn back?
Whence are those muffled words, some red, some black?
Who is whispering? Who is there?

Somebody is sneaking up the stair,
His feet approaching every doorway,
Yet never a moment standing anywhere.

Now many whisper close outside some door.
O suddenly push it open wide.
You see: whoever said he heard them, he has lied.

And yet words are left dark like heavy dust
In many rooms, or red on iron like rust:
And who contrives to leave them? Some one must.

In every street, this noisy town of ours
Has stealthy whispering watchers walking round,
Recording all our movements, every sound,
Hissing and shuffling, and they may have found
To-day my name: to-morrow they'll find yours.

## THE DARK STAIRCASE

(*A Fragment*)

Wheel within wheel, mystery within mystery.
Yet we continue our gaunt uncanny pathway,
We three who thought each other one time faithful;
Hysterical, hypochondriacal,
Wordful as only the twentieth century can be,
Swearing under the shadowiness of alcohol
Loud oaths of loyalty never to be kept.

How ever did this argument begin?
I would that I had written it in a diary.
How did we lift this roof upon our heads?

How long shall I remain the gloomy victim
Of quibbles circumambulated round,
Promises exhausted on the lips,
Half-deeds without words, words without any deeds,
Threats and deluding changes of the voice,
Everlasting endless confabulation,
And no true foresight of what the end may not be:
Giving of hand without the feel of heart?

Evening on evening, night along to morning,
Our three hot souls return to argument,

Tormenting each other: weary have I become.
At length cannot you both be a little sorry?
Then, then only, kinship might prosper between us.

Often, when we have been in that room together,
I, returning at length to my own far house
And wondering inwardly, helplessly, inwardly,
Have, in a deep dark microscopic distance,
(And in my mental vision glued myself to them,)
Beheld three people against a lonely background,
The unified reflections of ourselves,
Yet not ourselves. Oh now what are they doing,
Meeting and parting on a turret stair?
One at the top, one at the bottom, one
Or halfway up or halfway down, between them,
Carrying breathless messages to and fro?

And which of us can be which, and how did I,
Or carnally, or psychologically
Embroiled (I know not which) or when become
A unit in this trio? Are we playing
To some huge audience; or are we alone,
Without spectator, unimaginably . . .?

## THE TERRIBLE DOOR

Too long outside your door I have shivered.
You open it? I will not stay.
I'm haunted by your ashen beauty.
Take back your hand. I have gone away.

Don't talk, but move to that near corner.
I loathe the long cold shadow here.
We will stand a moment in the lamplight,
Until I watch you hard and near.

Happy release! Good-bye for ever!
Here at the corner we say good-bye.
But if you want me, if you do need me,
Who waits, at the terrible door, but I?

## STREET FIGHT

From prehistoric distance, beyond clocks,
Fear radiates to life
And thrills into the elbows of two men.
Fear drives imagination to renew
Their prehistoric interrupted throttle.

The street turns out and runs about,
And windows rise, and women scream;
Their husbands grunt, or scratch and hunt
Their heads, but cannot trace the dream.

Meanwhile those:
They rush; they close:
flick, flap, bang, bang, blood, sweat, stars, moon,
push, roar, rush, hold, part, bang, grind, swoon,
O slow, O swift, O now—But soon,

How soon the heavy policeman rolls in sight,
And barges slowly through that little crowd,
And lays his large hands calmly on those shoulders.
Now all will be exactly as it should be,
And everybody quietly go to bed.

Occasional spectator,
Do not you think it was very entertaining?
You, standing behind your vast round belly,
With your truss, your operation scar,
Your hairless head, your horn-rimmed eyes,
Your varicose veins,
Neuritis, neurasthenia, rheumatism,
Flat-foot walking, awkward straining of sinews,
Over the whole of your body
The slowly advancing pains of approaching death,
What comes into your mind when two men fight?

## HOLY MATRIMONY

I

It was a fatal trick to play upon him.
With lusty life all pointing to one aim,
And his whole body watchful:
She at the moment came.

Could he resist? Could she? That one blue glance
Was not her own: oh, a far stronger power
Than hers shone at him through her
And fixed their mating hour.

II

Words, hardly needed, then were spoken,
All having only one intent.
They walked like children staring downward,
With body toward body bent.

Now all the others mumble darkly,
Wonder and enviously stare.
There is a glowing in the household:
Desire will dwell a moment here.

But older eyes gleam coldly on them;
Stiffer bodies step between.
Now while the preparations start
They must be cleanly kept apart:
So has the custom always been.

" You cannot kneel before the altar
Until we've trimmed the lamp for you.
Meanwhile you may a little woo;
We've much to do:
We'll bake and sew and watch you sidelong,
And make your wedding bed for you."

III

But he and she
They hear, they stare,
And they are asking:
Who are we?

They cling and cry:
What have we done?
Through us what ceremonial
Is begun?

The dark doors close
Upon the sky.
They shall be locked within
Till they do die.

IV

O prison church! O warder-priest!
Now they who used to walk the wind of freedom
Are living in your gloomy house of stone;
And they and it are growing older;
She is becoming every day less fair.
The more together, they are more alone:
They pile the fire and yet the hearth is colder.

## NATURAL HISTORY

The vixen woman,
Long gone away,
Came to haunt me
Yesterday.

I sit and faint
Through year on year.
Was it yesterday
I thought her dear?

Is hate then love?
Can love be hate?
Can they both rule
In equal state?

Young, young she was,
And young was I.
We cried: Love! Come!
Love heard our cry.

Her whom I loved
I loathe to-day:
The vixen woman
Who came my way.

What was the time?
Which was the street
In which I thought you
Tame and sweet?

Now that again
I see your eyes
I do forget
I have grown wise.

Your argument
Has claim and poise,
But there's a vixen
In your voice.

Nightmare! O hard
To understand!—
She tried to give me
Her bright hand.

I sit and faint
Through year on year.
Was it yesterday
I thought her dear?

## THE EMPTY HOUSE

We were not wrong, believing that it cared;
When we had watched it gradually bared
Of furniture, I, going back alone,
Heard all its rafters moan.

It had become accustomed to our tread,
Our voices even, and the life we led.
I would wonder when I woke at night to hear
Its heart beating mysteriously near.

Or, when, arriving through the empty hall,
And feeling for the light, to catch the fall
Of shadows, where the ghostly rabble flies,
Frightened by human eyes.

(Ghosts are like instincts, little occupied
With time, and free of knowledge where they died.
They haunt, not having found the force to go,
Old houses they may know.)

Was it the mean desertion of a friend?
For all the time we plotted for the move
I thought the old house hearing: in the end
We nearly could not go because of love.

Toward the summer evening yesterday
What could I do but wander out that way?
And, looking at the house, what should I see,
From my own window staring back at me,

But my own image, definite and cold,
An early ghost, terrifyingly bold,
Haunting my former life, and making seem
My present body no more than a dream.

From that first moment many years ago
When first it did receive us, we by slow
Intent and movement modified the line
Of its design

So to receive our character and be
Friend to our various personality,
Gradually so to take us and to hold
Our furniture and form our outer mould,

That every angle slightly gave its place,
And even corners made a little space,
And open walls took shadow. But we are gone,
Except that I do haunt it still alone.

Unendingly imagination pries
Through every chink; the hand of memory tries
All darkened doors; the voice of habit falls
Along the empty walls.

And the strange dream lives on of those dead men
Who builded it together bit by bit,
And the forgotten people who since then
Were born in it, or lived and died in it.

# PART III

# GOD OF THE WORLD

## I

In the beginning there were raging voices,
Fierce cries of all the gods in tumultuous rivalry,
Pitting and girding the nations; limited though
And trimmed, and only a portion of the earth
Was bitten by the cruel fire of rival godhead.
That roar still rings through the world as an echoing
echo.
Their large names yet do roll on the tongues of men.
For, each to each, " Here is my chosen people "
Thundered, and every little horde of humanity,
Having created its god, blinked and obeyed him.

That dwindled thunder reaches deafened ears.
We quiver but we will not lose our bearing.
Still the dust of their war blows into our eyes;
And the frightened hordes lift unexpected wails.
For even to-day old Zeus, ruined among his marble,
Or an older god, new named, might thunder upon Je-
hovah,
Though wheezy they would sound and pale would be
their voices:

They would not quarrel like gods; their lightning would
crackle damply.
But most of them are ghosts, or now they slumber
Deep in house of dust, or there are some who doze
In their own homesteads by their ancient fires
(Although they like and listen to their worship)
Nor dream of conquest nor of large possession,
Nor bargain through their envoys, nor send forth
Sombre missions, armed, nor covet heathen lands.
These dwell among their people—only not Jehovah.

II

Where dwell you now, Jehovah, many fabled,
Lord of the burning bush and of the mountain,
Explorer of the desert in your ark,
Devourer of your first-born, unbeloved?
You did not long endure your promised land,
Huge patriarch, but prepared a heavenly town,
A new Jerusalem, a celestial city.

It pleased you that your prophets should moan for you
On earth; your kings and judges and popes should rule
Vicariously, while you reclined in heaven.
O ancient Covenanter, bargain maker,
You will not claim to be father of Jesus?
Was it then you who feared that valiant angel

Satan, and drove him in disgrace from heaven?
By what gate does that wrinkled Peter snooze?
Your heavenly town, it may have many mansions:
What suburb has it large enough for Booth?
Or if you ever reigned there, did you leave
When General Booth arrived? Are you now on earth
Trying to reconcile your worldly kingdom,
(O Rock of Ages, O mighty Lord of War)
A bearded Semite heavily bejewelled,
Bemotored and beyachted and bemansioned?
It may be that you travel from continent
To continent, promoting your great wars,
On your little world,
Your revolutions and your market movements,
Inhabiting a hundred millionaires,
A thousand bediamonded matronly bosomed concubines;
War lords are your archangels, O Jehovah,
Or do you only hairdress; organgrind; beg?

But (if you ever reigned in heaven) there
The trumpets slowly fall, the pavements crack,
Your throne tilts over; now the Seraphim
Turn grey and listless; all the wings are furled,
And one by one sweet angels, unemployed,
Have innocently fallen fast asleep.

## DREAM EXHIBITION OF A FINAL WORLD

The murky curtains roll apart. A gigantic Proscenium.
Dawn.
The purple lips of the Siren begin to twitch.
Eastward, a giant arc-light reflects through my dream
Glaringly, into a forest of chimneys.
Heavy upon my chest the large gorilla squats,
Holding, loosely, my throat.

The pulley-sinewed God of Earth whose arm is like a
crane
Now will lever the cable to open the lip of the Siren.
She mutters; her great head is wobbling:
Then her cry
Rattles her throat, before rising through pouted mouth
To a whistle, a warble, a wild full blast and a shriek;
Now a screech as her cheeks puff out; and it gashes the
light.
Her hair in the wind of her howl is frayed on the sky.

Early dreaming-time has guttered away.
She dwindles. Her lips, her eyes are closing.
The light of morning hangs in ribbons, bulging.

Now the charabancs marshalled in regiments with hooter roaring
Thunder around the earth, round the Great Exhibition.
Aeroplanes flood the sky writing the news, and heaven
Films to the world, and winks. Within the electric proscenium
There shall be dawn every day, imitated;
Whatever the season, beautiful, artificial,
Such as the Worker loves, bright like a picture postcard.

The exhibition was planned to endure through final humanity.
(Hefty gorilla, lift your claws from my throat,
Lurking ancestor phantom of final world,
Pranked in a purple Top-hat.)

II

The Gate is rare and precious,
Built of granite, the last to be quarried on earth,
Guarded by armies of negroes pranked in helmets of scarlet.
Not far within are kept, in golden cages,
Small broods, diminishing, of those old beasts:
Last lion of earth, last tiger, rhinoceros, buffalo;
In marble tank the last large whale of ocean.
Honoured: each has a lecturer talking
Glibly of habit and haunt, day and night, day and night.
Here is a tiny forest, reared by an old-world expert,
Fanned, that it whisper well, by regulated zephyrs;

Near to which in a cage on wheels, lined with satin and moss,
To be moved at his mood, and filled with mechanical birds,
There lives, walking up and down, in tweed, with a stick of rarest ash-plant,
Murmuring, making a note, or sipping beer from a tankard,
(Gloated upon by the crowd),
Rarer than lion, or granite, the last, last, Nature Poet.

Beyond is the last great valley (Charabanc, Charabanc, roaring!)
Here are the old cascades,
Warranted still in their ancient courses,
Guaranteed to be haunted yet by the spirit of beauty,
Mumbling mysteriously far within their barb-wire encircled enclosures;
And every train-and-villa-girdled mountain
Is crowned with proud hotels.

There stands the last cathedral. Out beyond,
The free and vast asylum of beliefs
(Encooped are they in one gigantic cold enclosure)
Folds all the faithful. They may build therein
Church, Meeting House, Synagogue, Mosque, or Chapel.
Dreamy cranes are waiting without to lift within that arid space,

Complete, ready for use, direct from the factory,
Chapel, church, or cathedral, of corrugated iron.
Under the pulpit where preaches the Pope Himself
Latest American upstart may roar; here Salvation Army
Mass bands. Here rules, at length, the Spirit of Freedom.
For nobody fights any more about any religion.
Nobody troubles the clock-work heart of the God,
Lest cog, chain, piston, crank of the great machine
Should waver to hear or argue, or break, like a heart.

III

But, oh! the Mob is roaring! Here is mob roaring!
Armies (here it is different), armies, howling revenge.
The narrow, enormous arena where rules the downturned thumb.
Charabanc massed. Epsom. Telescope, Nero! Nero!
Tank! Bomb! Tank! Bomb! Every Terminus ending here!
Beautiful hail of blood. Millions killed in a minute.
War final, War! Never a shortage of bodies.
Watch the game, heroes! Hurrying clouds of corpses!
(Only a Magnate need gnash his teeth at Another.)
" Card of the War, sir? No seats left.
One in the upper circle. Only a thousand guineas."
Here is the final Circus, here is the final . . .

IV

Gorilla clutching my heart!
Shall I waken at all from the last Exhibition?
Will there be forest again, and sunrise and cornfield,
this morning,
Farmhouse, haystack, flowers in the garden,
Protective, patient tree, that leans over the roof,
Near the trembling dimpering sea, where the long sand
is hot,
And the slow tide rises and falls.
Breezes play lightly through meadows in long, dwindling,
sunsets.
You bathe your limbs, you talk slowly; birds are all
friendly?

V

Nightmare of future earth, again must I try
To build you. How can you be vaguely constructed,
Torment of dream,
Threatening to conquer: what are you like?

Shall it be thus? Two battleships for feet.
Two Eiffel Towers for legs, for your thin arms,
Two cranes that, either, lift ten thousand tons;
Your ribs long spans of bridges, your cold heart
Big Ben; your liver, clogged with bile, your guts, infirm,
Cluttered with refuse; your large belching stomach
Bulging with factories you have gulpingly swallowed;
All regulated by your clockwork heart?
But when at last I come to try your face,
I can see nothing, though your purple Siren
(So, Dream) can stroke it with arthritic hand.

You are held together by millions of wires and cables.
Could I alone cut one, one, the whole would fall apart.

VI

Now the moment is here to throw the gaunt gorilla
(Clutching my heart and making my dream)
Shivering with apish calls across the room.
He tumbles along the wainscot, becomes a shadow
Made by my lord, the Sun, the real
Redeemer, transmitter, transfuser, creator, giver, Re-
ceiver.

I rise at the open window; see real trees,
Real fields, real men, real dogs, real—Oh, the Chara-
banc,
Real; and there's the new, tall, factory chimney,
Real: and there, his cart-load real with bricks
The sawdust jerry-builder trolleys along the road,
Real. And how shall I finally murder the vaunting go-
rilla?
How can I ever succeed in protecting life, life, from the
dream?

## THE EARTH FOR SALE

How perilous life will become on earth
When the great breed of man has covered all.
The world, that was too large, will be too small.
Deserts and mountains will have been explored,
Valleys swarmed through; and our prolific breed,
Exceeding death ten million times by birth,
Will halt (bewildered, bored),
And then may droop and dwindle like an autumn weed.

How shall we meet that moment when we know
There is no room to grow;
We, conscious, and with lonely startled eyes
Glaring upon ourselves, and with no Lord
To pray to: judged, without appeal,
What shall we feel?
He, being withdrawn, no supplicating cries
Will call Him back. He'll speak no farther word.

Can special vision be required to see
What few pale centuries will take us there,
Where, at the barrier of the future, we
Shall stand condemned, in serried ranks, and stare
At Nothing—fearing Something may appear?

The Earth is covered with large auction boards,
And all her lands are reckoned up for sale.
The spaces that are now called virgin soil
Will soon be bought, and covered with great breed
Of human seed;
And, when the driven hordes
Cry " Food! "—but find no more for any toil,
Fear, fear will strike all eyes and faces pale.
Then no one more will speak,
But, rising from a murmur to a wail,
One voice, for all, will, like a Siren, shriek.

II

Is there no pledge to make at once with Earth
While yet we have not murdered all her trees;
Before it is too late for oath or pledge;
While yet man may be happy in his birth—
Before we have to fall upon our knees,
Clinging for safety to her farthest edge?

It is not very noble that we kill
Her lions and tigers, all. Is that our reign?—
Then let us build ourselves on earth again.
What is the human will?

Is it so clearly better than the ant's?
And is our life more holy than the plants ' ?
They do fulfil their purpose every year,
And bring no pain, nor fear.

III

Woe to that miserable last mankind;
And, when I think of that, I have a dread
I may awake on earth, again, to find
Myself, among it, living, oh, not dead.

IV

I had been thinking of that final Earth.
Then I remembered she herself would lick
Her own lithe body clean, and from her girth
Wipe any vermin that might cling too thick.

Damned! Damned! Apparent conqueror to-day—
Oh, evanescent sway!
O drunken lust!
O swarming dust!

Man makes himself believe he has a claim
To plant bright flags on every hill he swarms;
But in the end, and in his own wild name,
And for the better prospect of his fame,
Whether it be a person or a race,
Earth, with a smiling face,
Will hold and smother him in her large arms.

## UNANSWERED QUESTION

Shall you and I leave everything behind,
Go westward walking,
Never again be conscious of the mind,
But walking, talking
Of flowers and birds and clouds, with no routine,
Not wonder ever again what consciousness may mean?

Shall you and I go eastward in grave thought
And inward prying,
Be conscious, introspective, haggard, caught
Sighing and whying;
With all clear mind and valuable breath
Expended on cold doubts about eventual death?

Will you and I, submitting to the wind,
Go northward roaring?
That may be one good way to leave behind
The too trim harbour mooring:
Partake some great campaign, some large experience,
some
Worthy extensive excuse for returning glorious home.

Can you and I go southward without blame
Into the region we love,
Fading without desire for famous name,
Or calculated move?
Can we in sunlight, both contentedly,
Live without ambition, gazing at blue sea?

