

Jacksonville, Florida
In training
March 1941

Consummation

*If it be true, that each man
Stands for one brief instant
Silhouetted against the back drop of eternity,
Part of some great plan;
And in one moment each takes his grant
Of stardust, in gloried heraldry;*

*Then all that I my ask,
Is that within this scheme of time,
My summons to that assembled throng,
Brings no dull and tarnished mark,
Hiding fires that will be mind
Only, when that chance is gone.*

*No, give me time to mold each glass,
That in that shaft of blinding light,
While eternal millions gaze,
That one, brief, instant will not pass,
Without my tiny fiery might
Reflecting back, blaze for blaze.*

Jacksonville, Florida
In training,
April, 1941

Above Morning

*This dream, saga of immensities,
Reads only from bottom to top,
Growing in the soul.
Long years of earth cultured
Reality dwindling
As my smallness reaches outstretched
Hands to its inviting size.
Fathoms upwards, some now
Forgotten blue streams out
Beyond only earth-born imagination,
And white cloud wisps,
Like far-flung foam riding
Out the tides above,
Whisper to my eyes:
"Take us for your own.
Build strong bastions
In speed and sound.
Make ramparts for
Moving wings to storm,
Hold from us a million magic dreams.
And when you finish,
Clouds like cotton echoes
Reverberating between earth and eternity
Dampen out the dreams for other ears.
Return, fall away earthward,
Your peace lies inviolate,
Secret to all who will not seek."
Return, fall away earthward,
The song remains,
Forgotten words, remembered harmony.*

Norfolk, VA.
Sept. 1941

“Drunk with the Dreamer’s Wine”

*I can drink the midnight out,
And rise empty, having dined.
For my courage and my doubt
Are a double strand of mind,
And too subtly intertwined.
They are my flesh, they are my bone,
My shame and my foundation stone.
I was born alone, to live alone.*

Norfolk, VA
December, 1941

While Leaving

*Why have you taken my heart from me?
I am not justice nor loyalty.
I am the shape of the weather cock,
That all winds come to and all winds mock,
You are the image of sea-carved stone,
The silent thing that can suffer alone.
The little women are easier,
The easy women make light love,
I will not take your face to the war,
I will not carry your cast off glove.*

U.S.S. Hornet
Late May, 1942

Transition

To this day have been given in perfect normalcy
Twenty four hours, a sunrise, sunset, starlight,
Waking hours and sleep
In all respects men walk quietly, speak as usual,
Draw breath with the same regularity that for every
Minute they have always breathed.
Magazines, poker games and phonograph records;
Carman Cavellero playing "Time on My Hands,"
Each follows in normal or abnormal succession
Exactly as it might have gone at this time
When our clocks read twenty four hours ago.
Somone whistles "Stardust" because years ago
He leaned to like a song and now
Its melody stays with him forever
For this is forever
In the past twenty four hours,
All are facing for the first time,
Despite statements of a few to the contrary,
The magnitude of war.
Far behind us, laurel covers hills in Connecticut,
Morning colored pines sweep the Carolinas,
Virginia sleeps in tradition
The frequency of a multitude
Breathes of greater New York.
Our lives, that still whistle "Stardust"
Go on reading magazines or drinking Coca Colas,
Keep company with the past.
Ahead, just beyond each wave that greets the bow,
A new life begins, newer than any
Can by the coldness of intellect imagine.
A life where nations play at gambling
For the World,
And each player ante's its life blood.

This transition within the space for a clock's run
Is too great to explain itself
In terms of why or how did it happen.
I have heard no one ask these futile questions.
No more than they have asked
"Why is this water so wet," "Why is the sky so far away,"
"Where is the laurel of Connecticut, the bluegrass
Of Tennessee?"
Most probably by the very impossibility

Of finding answers for the unanswerable
Have these hours passed so quietly.
It is unimportant that I know not
Events encompassed by another twenty four hours,
Or that a similar unknown may
Many times again confront me
The importance is in the quiet,
Is in the patience of many men,
Who step for the first time from peace to war.
Yesterday we were veterans of all the life behind,
Today some giant hand wipes clean the slate
And each is born in equal magnificence,
From which he may build o destroy himself.
While in the quietness of this rebirth,
Throughout the ship, some mighty chorus
Feeds itself upon an unseen grandeur
And I hear men, many men, working on and on,
And some greater destiny, rising
Plays Pomp and Circumstance,
As an anthem to the courage and the quiet.