

The Forgotten Threshold eBook

The Forgotten Threshold by Arthur Middleton

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PREFATORY NOTE

Before Arthur Middleton died he gave me this record among others in the belief that it would help to tell me what he had always known in the silences, yet could never in life transmute into the friendly counters of speech. During the last years of his all too brief experience of his friends, more than once he shyly sought to tell what he knew, yet always silence claimed him, and nothing but the wonder of his eyes revealed the dream that consumed his heart. Because beauty claims these words in a deeper knowledge than we had before, I have transcribed this fragment of them here, confident that in these white intuitions of his youth there is a revelation of the Light behind beauty beyond our poor knowledge and still poorer faith. I have omitted only what was most sacred to the privacies of his heart and our affection. He was of the old faith and would have wished had he published these pages to have expressed his entire and passionate loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church in faith and deed, and to have disclaimed any word therein which conflicted with the intimacies of its truth. I can do no more than to echo his wish, and mourn the unhappy chance which took him from us on an April tide, though it befell on the Easter that he loved and at that hour when the flaming symbol of the Divine Sacrifice was setting in the west. So the passion of the sun and tide which reflected his belief witnessed the consummation of his great desire.
—*The editor.*

THE FORGOTTEN THRESHOLD

THE JOURNAL

(N.B.—On the opening pages of the blank book in which this journal is contained there is a short fragment which bears no relation that I can discover to the entries that follow, and I am inclined to believe that it is the beginning of an autobiography which Middleton never continued. In my uncertainty, however, I print it, and accordingly it is transcribed below.—*The editor.*)

Fragment.—I was not more than three years old when the sunlight first made me happy as it stole through the curtains and over the coverlet till it kissed my lips and wrapped me in its warm embrace. Then I would fall asleep again and my dreams, if I dreamed at all, were white and faintly stirred me to a smile. I never tried to catch the sunbeams, for I felt their gold in my heart, nor could they have been nearer than they were, being associated with my mother's watchfulness as she stole in to smile upon my slumbers and claim the second silent unconscious kiss. On Sunday morning they would be freighted with a quiet whiter light, more peaceful and hushed to the feeling of the day, and somehow the peace was guarded with finger on lip throughout the house, so that it was implicit in my nest of images long before reason took note of it or sought to explain it to my consciousness. Once again as a boy of fifteen I knew it with a catch of



delighted and almost tearful surprise when I stroked the breast of a wounded pigeon who found shelter in my room. The world is not as quiet in these days, nor is the hum of traffic in the mart attuned so kindly to the flow of light as when it ran so gently by the bedside of the dreaming boy. ...



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(The journal now follows, written in a small cramped hand, without paragraphing or division. I omit the first few entries as purely personal. Middleton had gone to a group of remote western islands, and these notes are the fruit of his sojourn there.)—*The editor.*

July 5.

Yesterday found me on the island with its silences, and last night the host was red and sacrificial and rode on a thunder cloud. This afternoon the planets go singing through my flesh and my song of praise has widened to the arches of the sun. The sea is moaning slowly on the sand. I stripped to the cool salt air for the first time. ... Walking I found my way out on the long gray dunes.

July 6.

On the dunes today with my mother. My hand swept idly over the soft white sand, shifting the order of many thousands of starry worlds. What a chord of music if one could but hear it in its entirety! As it was, I caught wonderful echoes that would light the beauties of many a sunrise. The silent man reminds me of Synge in his drifting life and the fires glowing in his eyes. Today I saw the-beauty of a flower. ... Some day I shall write a play about the stars. The action will burn in their seedtime and blow on the winds of Fate with all its ironies. ... Tonight in the sitting room I heard in my heart the singing of the sands. It is on the shifting desert, I feel, that we shall discover the secret origin of language. How the infinitely aspiring music must sound tonight along the dunes!

July 7.

The night before last after I retired I felt that lifted feeling physically which represents the beating of the tides. Last night it coalesced with the singing of the sands. At Mass this morning the voices at the Credo thundered out *Et Homo factus est* in a torrent of living sound. At the elevation I saw a thin white flame rise from the uplifted chalice and disappear. It takes a beam of light one hundred and eight years to travel from Arcturus to the earth. Are we similar traveling beams, and is death merely our arrival on another planet which we illumine? Today I read aloud on the cliffs from the glories of Plato's *Phaedrus*.

July 8.

In the morning I wandered onto the dunes leading out toward Wonder Island, but was driven off by the terns who were nesting. ... The billows of the wind today mingled in me with the sands and the tide, so that I experienced from a new angle Landor's "We are what suns and winds and waters make us." ...



July 9.

My life will see much traveling.

July 10.



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Morning on the dunes. A cold clear bath while mists drove over the sands. Returning home, as I came to the deep sand on the road, I perceived the mystery of the resurrection of the body. In death there is no physical decay. The singing planets of the human body merely part to combine in other songs, recurring again in the end to their old disposal and song, exchanging other worlds for their own once more, and recurring to the first motif of the symphony. I was sad this afternoon for the will failed me in my work. Sitting on the sand this morning the singing dunes had attained to the harmony of silence. All at once a little wisp of seaweed—hardly more than a thread—started to beat time upon the sands. And then I knew and saw it to be in its happy beating the pulse that governed the music of the stars. Can the heart conduct the symphony of the body? Tonight the sun set, borne away—a Grail—by angels from the questing Galahad. There was a great silence in my heart as I sat in the crowded room.

July 11.

A day of northeast wind and upward thunder. The joy of the wind was in me, and I lost the sense of space. The air was so buoyant that it was closely kin to the sea. ... Today I succeeded a little better with my will. I had a strange sensation this afternoon, which told me that bare lonely places are the only places to write drama, since there only can we find the pure dynamic forces of life disentangled from the subtle and complicated web of human ambitions and interests. The air was very thin and clear at twilight, but the sun was hidden in the clouds. ...

July 12.

... There was a great silence this evening in the crowded room. Closing my eyes, I raised the upper lids as far as possible without seeing material things, and so saw myself in fearful wonder elevating the host and chalice on high. I know now the inner meaning of “Domine, non sum dignus *ut intres sub tecta mea.*” Under these two arched roofs of the eyes hidden from all light save Light, there is a secret dwelling. ... A day of close-shrouded palling fog—a chrism confirming the strength of beauty.

July 13.

This morning the wind blew through the fields of grass like countless angels in the courts of heaven. Shadow and color and light and movement dancing before the first syllable of the Name. A gull flew down almost to my hand, and the sunlight thundered in my ears. Last night the sea was sadly purifying the earth. I now understand the Washer of the Ford. Majesty lies in darkness, and grief is only the privilege of seeing Majesty. Today on the porch with closed eyes buried in my hands the winds swept over me in a torrent of living light. A symphony is a wonderful symbol. In the first place, it is music. In the second place, it is a name of praise with four syllables. Then it completes a cycle, and returns on a higher plane to the motif with which it began. It is the history of a soul,



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and in its last movement typifies the resurrection of the body, by means of this very return,—a return to the order and disposal in which it was created and which it now reassumes to praise its Creator for all eternity by the harmony of the original Thought. I looked at twilight into the tiny white heart of a flower that grew among the grasses, and out of the heart pulsed the Sacred Body in wounds all glorified, with Hands outstretched conducting the music of the worlds. I know now that the flower was a chalice. The sadness of it cannot die as the Man can, and I know that it is with me ready to be shared. As I write this, there is a mist within my room. I always sleep now like one ready to soar. In the crowded room tonight I felt myself making the movements of swimming, as if the air were water and I an expert swimmer.

July 14.

Views of the unveiled heavens alone forth bring Prophets who cannot sing.

A day of tempestuous wind and rain with all the keen dynamic life of time poised 'mid eternities. The happiest of my days battling with the elements in wonderful silences. At Mass with wonder the shining of the Host. My eyes were veiled from the chalice, but I felt two angels—guarding the acolytes. Again at the Credo the thunder of *Et Homo factus est*. With Shelley in the afternoon and a perilous walk on the cliffs. ... I am gaining in detachment. The desire and passion for solitude grows and I meditate a winter on the islands. How unworthy I am to partake of mysteries! They fill me with fear, for it is hard for the body to live in eternity. In the evening with Gordon Craig. Is he right about masks? A mask is a symbol, but a face may be a sacrament. The Mass, after all, is the supreme dream and drama of the world. Sadness is majesty, as I found the other night, and majesty is always impenetrable, for it is a secret full of awe and mysterious silence. Tonight I see that great drama, whether it be a tragedy or no, must reveal time poised in infinity. Beauty, I think, contains everything save the human will, and it is the ideal of the will to be thus contained and of beauty to be the container. ... In the supreme drama of Gethsemane and Calvary, Christ used the human body as the supreme visible instrument of drama.

July 15.

... Tonight the fog broke through the sunset and scattered gold across the sea. Clouds hung over the cliffs. ... I prayed through the sunset, and won a victory for the will.

July 16.

Last night in the darkness I learned many things. The human will is the unit, the core of flame which binds all elements together. It is sad because it is the force of impact

tearing things from their detached and comfortable places and placing them in new relations. It is the magnet, the summoning voice, our own conscience, the expression of Majesty. It disposes reluctant and conflicting notes in harmony. And we have control of it given into our hands.

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And then, too, I learnt that words are worlds. At every breath, nay, by the slightest thought, we create planets. Pray that they harmonize! They have power. Are they angels? They convey our messages, but their harmony of inter-woven song and meaning was lost at Babel to our ears. Yet by them if our will is strong and we do not fail in deeds we may take our part in the symphony as truly as life itself. And so we must not use them idly. How can anyone dare to tell a lie? One begins to see how God is a Name. I felt before how the secret of language was to be found among the sands. It is because the sands are the nearest and most visible planets we possess. Words are planets. But planets are sands on the shore of eternity. Words are sands. We are little words made flesh, little echoes in the image of the great Word made Flesh. His creation is the complete echo made flesh, His Image and likeness which He contemplates. And so we are in our measure part of the song made flesh, and the little common words that we use are our brothers.

July 17.

The sunset tonight was a glorious crucifixion after the day of clouds. It was human in its beckoning. I cannot find the secret of the moon, but it reminds me of Lionel's phrase, if it be his, "golden mediocrities." Is it the astral embodiment of "They also serve who only stand and wait"? Why is it that the little human beauties of Nature pass me by as entities, and that I seek bare places? Is there a parallel in my personal attitude toward all but those who are specially dear to me? I thought of how I looked down on the city from the mountain in May, and felt the whole city to be my prayer. It had been given into my control for a few minutes, and the only worthy use to which I could put it was to offer it up with a prayer for my people and all the desire of my heart that the prayer would be answered. The half-million souls with all their dreams were under my care then, and their acts were mine. So little are cities, and so little I found my worthiness that I could not hide my tears. Later I crossed to the height looking down on the cemetery, the world was silent save for the flaming heart of the city pulsing below, and reflecting the Flaming Heart above as the sun set. The woodpeckers did not fear me, and I sank slowly and deeply into God. I think that some day I shall know His wounds. I cannot understand why I was delivered from temptation at the moment that the city was put into my hands.

July 18.

... I bathed on the dunes on Wonder Island. The sun set tonight sacramentally just as it set that night at — when I failed to speak. Never had I felt stronger, but something held me back from telling him how the dearest wish of my life was that he should participate in the Holy Eucharist. The flame was in my hands to lay upon his heart, but something bade me wait. I distrusted it, and asked him to walk with me on the shore. The thunder of the tide and the moon were too strong. Why could I not have told him?

We were silent for hours while his heart lay with the *Titanic*, and even his little daughter was quiet in the room.



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July 19.

The stars are the dust rubbed off from human souls. "Dust unto dust thou shalt return." At the last judgment, they will fly together in an angelic hosting, and clothe once more the souls which moved in them, and our souls will rule their songs. Human suffering is the friction of angels making stars. ... I know now that the end of one's forty days is not complete knowledge, but only a clear indication of the road. The joy is in that, and also the sorrow. It is the direction given to the will, orders to be so carefully obeyed. This is the greatest discovery of all. Words do not reveal it. It is absolutely prosaic, though it is eternal beauty. But what I have written does not reflect it even faintly as it seems to me. Read Hello this afternoon. The freedom of the dunes this morning seemed to extend more than is usual. Later I read from Plato's "Symposium."

July 20.

... The proverbial symbol of impermanence is writing upon sand. What could be more gloriously permanent? To have one's message spelled out by singing planets, to write upon the stars. It is so that our songs have immortality. "Verba scripta manent" takes on a majestic significance. Are not joy and sadness the same? The only difference is one of rapidity. Sadness is made up of the long, slow, majestic chords of the song. It seems to me that when a wheel seems to cease motion, and finally attains a state of motionlessness, it is perhaps merely turning into a terrible speed which we cannot perceive. It is the turning of an hour-glass. When I am dead, I wish only my faults to be chronicled, for these alone have any value for the world. I have dreamt always of cycles of infinities. As a decimal always tends by evolution towards a number, so also we evolve toward an infinity. Yet at that goal another infinity starts, as another infinity starts in numbers,—the symbol of patience after all.

"Unto the man of yearning thought
And aspiration, to do nought
Is in itself almost an act,—
Being chasm-fire and cataract
Of the soul's utter depths unseal'd.
Yet woe to thee if once thou yield
Unto the act of doing nought!"

Read Hello and Elia. I am learning how to see in crowds. These past few days I have succeeded in withdrawing into life for long periods in the midst of a general conversation, yet my absence was not noted in the least. Out of it I hope will develop the ability to be with life always in the tangle and confusion of city circumstance. This afternoon I read *Phaedrus* aloud on a sunny cliff, and in the evening read aloud Keats' "I stood tiptoe" on the green heights in the wind and the rain. Rossetti's lines do not forbid a life of contemplation, but rather encourage it as distinguished from quietism. ... Through the summer I am to see the Crucifixion. How I envy St. Francis the Stigmata!



Even as a little boy I desired them—but I shall never be able perhaps to love passionately enough. The nights that I cried as a little fellow without knowing why, just because I loved, were nearer than I shall ever be again.



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July 21.

At Benediction after Mass today I saw the Wonder in all Humanity with Light surrounding It, and I shook with an awful thunder of sound. ... Today I have been happy to tears, and in the blue afternoon on the cliffs with my mother, I shared “Endymion” and “Epipsychidion.” ... I do not understand why silence is spoken of as a precept. To me it is the living attribute of God. ... How nobly scornful is Sir Aubrey De Vere’s phrase, “witless ecstasies”!

July 22.

Simply a day of hard work. But I was happy in it. In an odd way I felt as I wrote all day on the smooth white paper that I was stroking the sleek breasts of doves. Tonight the steady patter of the rain upon the eaves.

July 23.

A day of hard routine work. ... Tonight in the inky darkness I walked to the postoffice in the thundering wind and rain and surf, and learned how the deeps can praise the Lord. I have always felt the wonder of that psalm.

July 24.

Rose at 4:30 and saw the sun rise a pure and shimmering symbol of the Host above the silver outline of Wonder Island. The day was dumb. A little boy has come whose face is his sacrament. What a song he must sing! I look forward to the morrow as a day of special grace and wonder. ...

July 25.

It is evident to me that music is wrong before a play or during intermissions. But it is necessary until our dramatists provide some other prelude. That prelude must be a beautiful setting of silence for a few moments showing the protagonist under the light of eternity. In the beginning all words contained a spiritual “import,”—were angels. At Babel many fell. Now all our spiritual words are material words grown out of their meanings. When expression becomes passion, it is the passion of creation, clothing itself in images as God does through eternity in the Passion of Creation. This is near the heart of life’s most awful secret, but words conceal it except from experience. For Passion proceeds from Creation as Preservation proceeds from both, though they are all from Eternity in the Unity of the Godhead. All my planets at the contemplation of This are dancing before the throne. The thunderous rhythm of their music is shaking me physically like the engines of a steamer in shallow water. Every atom struggles against the law of cohesion. God loves the beautiful boy. His name is Henry R——. The Greeks, Emerson says, called the world *Cosmos*, Beauty. Reading this on the veranda



this afternoon, I closed my eyes and sank contentedly into life. When I returned the faces were foreign, and even my mother never knew. On the dunes this morning I heard the silence of Eternity on the edge of time. I think it is a pine forest. Babel took away the Word, until It came to earth, and in material form took on supreme Spirit coming from the Father. ...

July 26.



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I wish I could raise a singing altar of planets by some great sacrifice. My fingers drummed upon the sands this morning a crude and simple rhythm. I thought of its influence in displacing planets, and of the almost infinite musical variations that were set in motion, and then I compared my crude thrumming with the majestic thunders of the sea, and realized the insupportable beauty of absolute music. A dog talks by smell. There are vibrations of smell, as well as of sound or of heat or of light. And the blind reveal vibration of touch, the holiest of the senses. We talk now by sound, but are learning to talk by heat and light. When shall we learn to talk by smell and touch? Flowers, too, talk by smell. There is nothing but vibration in the image of God, for *life is nothing more than the trembling of his beauty*. The awful speed of Truth hardens into fact. Words must not say more.

A dog taught me this,—Prince, the companion of the silent man. One should be a priest when he marries two ideas. In any one of the planets within the singing tissue of my flesh are Dantes and St. Francis. Creation requires of us infinite crucifixions which we shall never be able to consummate alone. When I lie on my breasts on the sand and bury my face in my hands, all Nature receives me as a human bridegroom, and I sink through time to eternity *creating* space around me, that widens and narrows to the reaches of immortality. It is always on the sands that I find the friendliest depths, or in the snow drift of cold planets upon a winter day or else within in the terrible energy of my body, as my heart beats time to the universal spherical rhythm. Think of the literal meaning of “universal!” Tonight in the silence I read *Prometheus Bound*. I love the grace of the boy’s eyes. I pray to be guarded from the pride of humility.

July 27.

[Illustration: Circle with a cross through it.]

... It was a day of silences. I traced this figure idly on the sand today, and suddenly understood the symbolism of the scarab. But did the Egyptians anticipate the Redemption? As men are impressed by the face of the world, so is the world impressed by their faces. The face, as mirror of the soul, shines forth with electricity and makes an impression on life, altering the song of those it acts upon as the violin sound alters the formation of sands resting on a tightened drum. By what ancient intuition does the Latin word “malum” mean both “apple” and “evil”? Music creates substance through the speed of gaiety, and God in His Creation is a cosmic humorist. (Cosmic means beautiful.) To distinguish between fascination and sympathy is a counsel of perfection for critics which has its spiritual analogies. ... Angels ran in hosts through the grasses.

July 28.

“His soul’s most secret thought,
Eternal Light declares.”



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I read Lionel's poems on the cliffs, and almost discovered the secret of the blue. Today for the first time I realized the remoteness of these islands, and it was a great joy. It was a golden day of sunshine on the cliffs with blue cloudless sky over quiet waters. Life is turning inward to the heart of silence, and out of it will come the beauty of my dream if life is willing.

July 29.

... I met a man today who knew beauty. He was a French country lawyer. ... The sunset tonight revealed all the sadness of the Burning Babe. I failed today.

July 30.

Another sadder failure of the will. Yet beauty came in the evening. The love of man, far more the love of God, is God in heaven descended upon earth, eternity made time in beauty, "majestic instancy," the Word made Flesh. The soul is the pool wherein God and we see our images, and Heaven will be the mutual contemplation of our souls. So that human love is the adoration of God in human flesh, and therein may the beloved be seen as the image of God in time. The praise of Our Lady should then be the praise of God. Was this Patmore's secret? Or Dante's and Petrarch's? "My lady was desired in the high heaven." ... I see now how in Heaven there is no marriage or giving in marriage. Far flowing ramparts of a starry world! The *flammanitia moenia mundi* of Lucretius. To contemplate Beauty FACE TO FACE! What a wonderful proof of the beauty of our souls. Twin mirrors of a single singing thought, the face of man looking into the Face of God, soul mingling with Soul in immortal music, bathed in the cool wind of Our Lady's eyes. Today I lost a nation in the cycle of my soul. What is the blood but the history of my planets as engraved upon the constellations of my flesh? It is the book of the angel of judgment for the first syllable of my song, as the emotions, the intellect, and, alas, the will, for the second, third, and fourth. The flesh is the ebb tide from God, as the emotions are the flood. The intellect is the second ebb, and in the will pray God that it may be flood! The other is Hell....

July 31.

... A victory for the will this morning. ... Tomorrow is the first of August, and I shall enter upon my forty days. The ringing in my ears is the ringing of my fleshly stars "toned all in Time." I have commenced an anthology of high imaginings more worthy than a book of essays of that title I have loved and desired to use for years,—*Flame and Dew*. If rightly done, it may do poetry one of the greatest of services by assisting it to praise Beauty on many lips in naked Light. I wish to consecrate my work on it to that end. Today I have been influenced by Frederick Tennyson, Traherne, and Patmore. In agony lies the highest music. The key is struck by circumstance, Time's organist, and the stars tremble with music. For the full thundering silence of Absolute Beauty a Divine Agony was necessary, so that all Heaven and



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its choirs and Hell trembled in the majesty of this *stricken* Doom. Death is the final chord, the passage of our full song from time to the silence of eternity. Sleep next to death is the most terrible life that soul and body knows. It is the center of the wheel radiating high powers to the circumference. The speed there is terrific, so fast that it hardens, again that "majestic instancy." The tiniest flame is the friction of conflicting "universes." Beauty is alike the center and circumference of infinity, the silent wheel of omnipresent omnipotence, wherein all thoughts are not timed but eternal. From eternity we were nothing: to eternity we are Beauty's image. Is it strange that in sleep we are often given sight?

August 1.

Art is the exhibition of life in the light of eternity. I can conceive of no other adequate critical formula. This applies to painting, sculpture, literature and music. Such too is the art of life,—the exhibition to God and man of life in the light of eternity. I have been startled to find a kinship between Wordsworth and Millet. I found it today in a stooped old man who was traveling the roads with a walking stick and a heavy bundle of driftwood. He was worthy of a great painter or a great poet. By the sign of the cross one draws a magic circle round the soul which evil may not penetrate. It places one "in the name." On the seashore one should lie parallel with the waves facing inland. Then only may one advance onward with their prayer.

August 2.

It is absolutely true that only music may shape woods and fountains and the beauty of souls, for it is the only medium of expression which is pure. Pure music is the true white magic, as black magic is music mixed with clay by human hands. Naked Beauty alone may mix music with clay in Its own image and likeness. Even poetry fails save in so far as it echoes the pure natural truths of music. And all creation may flow from a flute if the player breathes a prayer. Some day we shall have the great opera of the Incarnation and Redemption. It is the ideal goal of music, and so of all art. But it demands the poet, the painter, and the sculptor, too, for its actors shall be immortal statues and a living chorus singing the passion of the race against the supreme dawn and the supreme sunset. But its greatest moments will be silence. Christ and His Mother will live this silence in the glory of transfigured stone, and the drama will be played in the open with the stars above as orchestra, to which the human music will be but a beautiful echo. To this Wagner and Craig point the way. I read Patmore's *Two Infinities* today with bewilderment and emphatic disagreement. It seems absolutely lacking in vision, provincial, almost challenging Creation. And yet it is essentially true. Christ was a man of golden mediocrities. He speaks of the lilies of the field, but never of stars or of planets. And St. Francis perhaps hints



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at the solution. To him brother Wind and brother Fire and brother Worm are alike and equal, for he sees them in the light of infinity. But all are wonderful, and we must not sneer at the stars. ... Today writing as a means of expression has seemed to be absolutely futile. Silence is the only active way of praise that I can find, provided that it informs some daily action. My will won again today. Horizons are wonderful. S—— told me that Lionel invited him into his Oxford rooms one evening at sunset and led him to a seat from which nothing lower than the horizon was to be seen. “There,” he said, “nothing matters that is below that line.” You see he knew that our souls in their beauty are always above it.

August 3.

To watch a grass-blade tapping will teach you wonderful music—the language of the wind. The sunlight running through my flesh in-flames the song of the will. I lost myself tonight in the crowded silences. Joy stays with me now, and if I can only join it to sorrow, the will can then sing simply and freely a continuous song. The turning of the tide is soon to come, and my homesickness for G——ville is transforming itself into a different nostalgia. My planets are rising in song like little candle flames. I wish I possessed their humility. Within me tonight are quiet moonlit waters very full and rich with silent promises of rest.

August 4.

At Mass today Mr. C—— showed a fine courtesy serving with the high humility of a punctilious gentleman. ... Today I saw the body of Christ, “infinite riches in a little room.” The human body of Christ in its passion is the sum of all our bodies, and it is this truth to which pantheism in its blindness dimly beckons. The saints and pure poets and those who have died for friends are the image of the Sacred Heart, and in them at moments of pure *reflection* there is naked light and the vision which is insupportable. Hence in the greatest saints the stigmata. All God’s lonely ones are the reflections of His pain when they attain to sanctity. And holy priests are the reflections of His Hands. Little children and saints may look into His Eyes and see their own. And repentant sinners may reflect His Feet in their tears. All the births and lives of the earth go to form His Human Body, which is vast as Eternity and radiating with Light from all points and inward to the Heart of Light. To some saints it has been permitted to be the spouse of this body and soul. Magic is white or black. White magic is the offspring of spiritual marriage and is a sacrament. Black magic is the offspring of unauthorized spiritual contacts. My frame tonight is possessed by angels dancing before the throne in a fearfully rapid rhythm. The secret of spiritual achievement is unremitting labor urged without ceasing by a fearful joy. No drama is more vast than that of the crucifixion, and yet I have seen it all in the heart of a strawberry blossom with wounds all glorified in an ecstasy of living trembling light, and heard the beating of His Sacred Heart while

universe called out to universe in the anguish of His surrender and all the stars died into the Light of Eternity. The tide has turned.



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August 5.

Today looking into a narrow dome I saw the seeded planets banded by circles of light whereon they turned. And color changed into silence at the bidding of the central suns. And these were the eyes of happy innocence wherein all others died to the Living Light, God being in them by their childishness. The tide turned yesterday, and today I have spent entirely in eternity surrounded by a host of fair-winged Possibilities, God's angels to humanity. Death is glorified by their passage from the future to the past, and we respond by plunging our lights into the Light wherein it dies. *Abt Vogler* is the musical philosophy of it all. At my first symphony concert as a little boy, I saw the face of the dying Christ through the wall, and in it the music of the seventh Symphony sang through the naked eyes calling me inward to the Sacred Heart. This morning and noon at table I smiled at white horizons and in the evening I swam through the Host on my future wings. We love earth, air, fire, and water now, but the eternal joy of swimming through the Light of God and reflecting His Light in song and silence is the infinity of all poets' dreams incarnate in the awful speed of Absolute Music. It is the privilege of laughing into the Eyes of God, those Eyes before which the angels veil their faces. It is the privilege of smelling the blossom of the Living Rose, of tasting and consuming forever the Body and Blood, of touching the Sacred Knees, and of hearing the Divinity who is Music. Priests and poets shall swim in the song of his heart, and those who have died for friends will reflect its resolving rhythm. How I pity Blake his pride, though he was preserved from the pride of humility. God will let me see more of Him in this life than Blake did, though it is of the most trifling significance to anticipate eternity in poor time, the crippled heir of original sin. Since it is to be, I wish with all my blood that my will were worthier.

August 6.

A day of happy drudgery reading proofs. I rode through them in the winds of eternity. That is the secret of it all,—to teach us joy. The human symbol of it is a martyr's ecstasy, which is in no way sensuous or voluptuous since it has completely forgotten the body. The Sacred Heart is the Mystical Rose spreading its petals over the Cross of Time. In *Flame and Dew* is the first application of an idea and belief that the day will come when anthologies will be books containing the wisdom of the poets on special sciences, such as the science of childhood, the science of love, the science of death, and the science of silence.

August 7.



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Imagination being Eternal Life, it shows the blind instinct of language that the word should mean the creation of images. Imagination is the instrument of God's creation in his own *image* and likeness. Today I came to Petrarch and Dante—the mystics of the supreme elements. To contrast their serenity with Blake's wrath shows the whiter heights. All height is inward through narrow circles to the Central Fire of Silent Love from which the angels shrink in spiral messages of inspiring flame, and toward which humanity aspires in narrowing and advancing circles of expiring flesh. But depth is outward to the hearts of men. Sirius sings to my living stars tonight its light in the music of the ancient winds, telling me of the crucifixion in burning colors of a dying world. Why am I unworthy of an equal death? The blood runs toward it in a passion of harmony. The day is near when my morning stars shall sing their lives out together in praise of their Creator, though it is futile to measure it in terms of time. One is not curious of time if one lives in eternity. Death is then only the fulfilment of our operative desires. I wish that I were one of the tears of God. Joy is for those of *good will*.

August 8.

I met one of Wordsworth's old men today gathering faggots on the shore. "I have been to all places and cities and I found no one happy on the world, and now I wish me to be dead." ... Tonight I bowed in silence under the vault of stars. To be holy is to lose the knowledge of good and evil through "clinging Heaven by the hems." To refuse evil is to refuse the apple (*malum*) of the Tree of Knowledge. There is no possibility of finding the ideal unless we look passionately for nothing but the beauty of souls, seeing therein God's image and refusing to perceive the clouds of evil. Circles lead to Heaven, but straight lines to Hell. Straight lines are the tangents that "err" from the sphere of the ideal. Miss C—— told me about a little boy who was visiting Italy with his mother. He fell down hill, and stopped before a roadside crucifix. And then he forgot his fall. They found him crying as if his heart would break, and he told them that it was because he was so sorry for that sad Man whom everybody had made suffer so. The angels drop seed into our souls which make them invisible to other men, and we also may plant seed with modesty and humility. It is God's fernseed to mortals. How strange it is that we measure time by moons, cold satellites, and thus the symbol of death. But after all time is the dark night of the soul. I realized for the first time today that I was born in December, the month of creation, when the flame turns in upon itself in the hard cold earth and gives birth to high hopes whose fulfilment are in eternity. It is the month of Christmas on that account. I have begun to perceive what awful wings my thoughts have, and know that they are given them by God through me

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to carry them humbly into the most secret circle of the Sacred Breast. We must do the labor of God with human hands, yet the Labor of God is the Creation of Beauty. As the vegetable kingdom renews its life once a year through time and so preserves its secret, our souls must renew themselves in infinite recurrence through eternity. Our life differs only in ardor which is speed. The greatest speed lies in submission, for submission is the greatest strength. At high moments it is Atlas supporting the earth. At the supreme moment, it becomes the mystery of the Redemption.

August 9.

Singing through the universal stars that were woven into His Flesh, I saw the Son of God tonight glorified in the joy of a living Smile. And all the angels bowed laughing toward Him and clapped and danced before His Name, though the sum of their song was silence. And then every living star was scourged by the sins of men, and died into the darkness, saying "Thy Will be done," and it was morning with the Eucharist in the sky. Only Redemption trembled through the air. The stars are the eternal reflections of God's patience, for they endure His Human Passion, since together they form the shadow of the Word made Flesh. They are the singing echo in time of God's speechless patience, as we are destined to be if we conquer our wills. But patience is suffering, and Alpha must submit to the yoke of Omega. Since God is the Alpha and Omega he caused the Incarnation and Passion. THE IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE IS THE PASSIONATE REDEMPTION OF THE WILL. This is life's darkest secret, *unless* we live in the Eucharist. We are to be the silent reflections of speechless patience in the still waters of eternity. The evil came when Lucifer stole fire from heaven and brought it down to men. Conquer fire, and we conquer the will. Then heaven is ours. My body and blood ache with my prayer for it.

August 10.

The angels weave what God creates, according to their functions. His archangels are the weavers of time, and all the others of material nature, uninformed by a soul. This is a branch of the heavenly song. To weave God's image is the function of the saints and of all those on earth. It is the wonder of incarnate Music that saved the world, Absolute Silence born into Sound, and dying with all Sound into Silence. The archangels are God's messengers of life and death, for they control the days. But they are sent from Him to His Image, and our weaving is made out of their materials as we adapt them to our song. All outer powers and forces are brought us by the angels, and among the dearest to God's heart are his flame-winged Possibilities that hover on the borderline between today and tomorrow, Time and Eternity. They alone may not enter time unless we beckon them. The starry heaven is the heaven of the body; the crystal sphere, of the intellect; and the empyrean, of the pure soul. We may live in the starry heaven in this life, if God gives us the grace. But it is



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then a heaven of desire. But the weaving of the angels is the whole philosophy of nature. Their music explains its sympathies and sorrows, its deaths and resurrections, and above all its solemn silences of night and noon. And the song of their weaving becomes nature's love of wisdom, that is to say, adoration of the Word. The saints are the only complete philosophers. The object of asceticism is generally misunderstood, particularly in one phase of its endeavors,—to forget the body. The truth of the matter is that the flesh and blood in their highest song toward which we should strive are so occupied with praising God that they completely lack self-consciousness, and do not distract the intellect or the will. God is with them in naked purity. It is His simplest and dearest starry music. He demands that our life should be a programme of infinite proportions. And yet I wonder if a saint can ever be both a great prophet and a great apostle. I do not believe a great prophet can be tender enough to persuade. That is why prophets are scorned or ignored by their generation. Gentleness is the absolute breath of music, which alone can penetrate the soul or even the material body of nature. The supreme gentleness of St. Francis of Assisi made the birds listen to his music, for his breath ran dancing in a cool breeze through all their singing stars. We need a St. Francis at present burningly. Is it possible to form a religious order of the poets? Here is an ideal. But it must be Franciscan: a gown, a girdle, and sandals, poverty, chastity, and obedience. Where is the wise man to obey? I can believe that jewels are potent for good or evil, since they are condensed flame and a secret word lies hidden in each of their hearts. A day of tempestuous wind and rain.

August 11.

Today I found myself progressing slowly to a triumphant rhythm round the circumference of a vast musical plane. The celestial earth is flat but progresses upwards to its central point, the cone of aspiration and song. And then I remembered the vision of St. Frances of Rome wherein she saw the Supreme Godhead as a vast Circle of Light in the midst of which was a Pillar, the Cone of Redemption and Silence. Death is the point of meeting. Perhaps the Zodiac is the merry-go-round of the stars. A second day of tempest. The great message of future poetry will be to proclaim that nature is the expression of man, rather than man of nature, and thus to reveal the essential nobility of man as the image of God rather than the image of nature. Suns and winds and waters are what we make them. Pantheism confuses the image of the image with the face. Nature is the mirror of man as man is the mirror of God. Nay more, nature is the mirror in time of man's eternity, as man is the image in time and eternity of God. It is for this reason that the stars are the open book of the future, though they are not to be read by men aloud. Astrology is forbidden because it violates the precept of silence, which



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is the courtesy we pay as gentlemen to God. We may only read the stars in little children's eyes, wherein their future is concealed. The breast of Mary is the fountain of the stars, and round it fly the seraphim in flaming adoration of the blessed womb. Her eyes are God's dew, wherein the secret of His Light is whispered by the thrones. I felt through the morning His human Presence graciously walking the roads, and I was resting on His left Arm that brought me to His Heart, the country wherein the dreams of my will are born.

August 12.

I have been sick today. Rain and tempest, but God was on the wind, and I am happy.

August 13.

Still ill. Rain and fog with intermittent sunshine. But I am as happy as I have ever been.

August 14.

Still ill. Fog in the morning breaking into a wonderful pearl day of summer haze. Our bodily senses are instruments in our orchestra.

August 15.

Today I sank into Beauty several times in the sunlight.

August 16.

Read through the last proofs and on the dunes with my mother in the afternoon I lived in the light of God. The sun I caused to smile and I wrapped myself in the blue of the Virgin's sky. I found myself causing a shower twice by failing in humility. But the laughing Light of God's eyes in my soul is eternal, and when I submit it controls the tides of my body and mind. Tonight a woodpecker alighted on Father K——'s shoulder and stayed with him nearby. The Brahmin may attain to the shadow of the first syllable of the Word. He does not believe that there are others. *Om* is simply the symbol of inward breath, inspiration. I heard myself today very near to the Heart of Silence, whose systole and diastole is the ebb and flow of Love from Eternity to Eternity. Time is the sound of silence and is dead to all eternity. It is the only beautiful death that the angels do not mourn, for in the death of Time is the Redemption of the World. It takes the circle of eternity to unite the four points of the cross, and a crucifixion to unite two parallel lines.

August 17.



Out of the summer I am weaving the pattern web of the future in threads of desire. Every resurrection of a body is the last judgment of infinite planets, which fly to or flee from the human song of God's first syllable. Yet those that flee may be purchased by an infinite Redemption. This opens a terrible possibility of mercy. Is God continually becoming man for the love of His image? This is the joyful secret of God's sad fourth syllable. I clothe it in words to guard it from my intellect. Infinite incarnations prove time an illusion, since they make it eternity. God's Sacred Heart is the silent ocean beyond the universe. It reflects. The Incarnation is its flood. The Host tonight was more white than shining silver in a lonely pearl sky. It was Absolute Music unveiled to the human eye. Tonight I stood out for long alone with



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the stars, and watched a thunderstorm come over the sea. We must guard our dreams and intuitions not only from the intellects of others but most of all from our own. Yet our faith must be precisely bounded, although this boundary is to be none other than the infinite succession of points where time and eternity meet and bow down before God. This morning I saw His Beauty in a daisy. ... I do not believe that God will reveal His mysteries if we seek to know them, without inflicting a penalty. The way of knowledge is the way of silent patience, which lies quietly dreaming of Love till the flood washes it with Living Light.

August 18.

Every time we look into another's soul we may enter Paradise. There is an indescribable grace in the air this first day of prescient autumn. The summer has taught me the secret of loneliness and the infinite way of satisfying its desire. To be alone with God we must be intimate with the beauty in the eyes of every face, and yet absolutely detached save from one's family and friend. Life's ideal is to see the end in the beginning, and act the road between. This is no other than the eternal life of the Alpha and Omega. But the essence of it in time is that the whole tide of humanity should ebb and flow in our breast. It requires a crucifixion to drink in all its saltness. I found the dunes beyond the lagoon this morning and sank into God in the wind of the sunlit blue. When I returned, the people were coming from Church. Tonight the Host was quivering gold, and as I write the planets are ringing in my ears. I pray that at the end I may come to the Heart of Eternal Silence.

August 19.

On the dunes this morning toward Wonder Island ... Eternity is infinite speed. Time is the dragwheel, nothing more. Hence the significance of "when eternity reaffirms the conception of an hour." Flame is the symbol of time as dew is the symbol of eternity. They meet in Christ and through Him in the human race. The moon properly loved is the kindness of time, as the sun is the reflected love of Eternity made Flesh in the Host on the altar. ... Tonight I desire only silence to love.

August 20.

On the dunes toward Wonder Island this morning I lost space and walked upon the blue ringing a cycle of stars in either hand. But I felt no sense of distance and the seed of the sands blew on the wind which carried me. It taught me how to walk softly through life, and coming home I had the sand in my hair. I know now what clouds are, softer than the breasts of doves. God's flying sorrows are the sandals of the soul. They make us His angels, Mercuries of Light. The sun has not bled for many a night, but has slowly descended in silver splendor, always a second dawn with its fresh, keen, cool

surprises. Today was the grace of last night's desire. The wonder of it this morning was my complete surrender, the assurance with which I moved on the singing skies as my native element. I



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know that only the appearances remained, as in the Eucharist after the Consecration we seem to see the bread and wine. Life was the poise of infinity, and I knew of no horizon, for I could look down upon the dawn. It came two weeks ago Sunday in my heart. I see the mystery of the Resurrection in its beauty, and why white lilies are its deepest symbol. How can there be a prison or a cage? Every twilight is a white horizon. The gulls know that and the sea tonight has lost its sorrow.

August 21.

By sailboat to P—— and G—— with the silent man, returning with the stars. Their hosting was like the flocking of wild geese, and they followed St. Francis of Assisi as a leader, the captain of the morning stars. In the silence I heard the operation of the divine mathematics.

I loved those Chaldean seers to whom God talked directly and wrote His message upon the stars. I lay prone on the deck looking upwards and fell into the Divine Ocean slowly. The moon rode serenely to the southwest, and humanity was with me in the boat. Navigators are now the only men left wise enough to follow the stars. The sunpath was Jacob's ladder, and the Aran islanders know its secret when they see Tir-n'an-Og in the west on calm sunset evenings. The sea had my trust, eternal through yesterday's experience, and I believe that if faith and good works required it of me, I could walk softly over it. If the soul is to control the body, surely spiritual gravity should be able to overcome material gravity. Certainly it would take more than the sea to quench my flame, if God made me worthy.

August 22.

I looked down from great heights today on all the little smiling intimacies. They are like happy babies to me, and my speech should play with them, if I can ever become worthy of their simplicity. The rhythm of all music is the systole and diastole of the Sacred Heart, which is the ebb and flow of an infinite ocean. This is the meaning, I think, of the old Gaelic rune, *Ri tragadh s'ri lionadh, mar a bha, mar a tha, mar a bhitheas gu bragh ri traghadh s'ri lionadh*. (The ebb and the flow, as it was, as it is, as it ever shall be, the ebb and the flow.) The resolute gaze of the soul toward this in love constitutes prayer in its only form. It shows blood to be the most rich and beautiful of human things, and its salt waves purify the flesh, as the salt waves of Gethsemane and Calvary redeemed the soul and its singing stars.

August 23.

My life so far has been a word, and not a deed. But the world was not redeemed until the Word BECAME FLESH—AND DWELT AMONGST US. Mary S—— met us on the



roads today and said, "I hope that we'll be meeting in Heaven, we seem to meet so often now." I sleep at night in a cruciform position adoring beauty with every faculty save my will, the most necessary of all.

August 24.

In the open today amid a hurricane of wind ... I walked with a childish old man with a pleasant soul. The wind brought meteor showers of beauty to the body. It rained grace in the sky of noon.



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I could carry overflowing happiness now even to New York. Today reminded me of the sunlight on the roar of Broadway. God is on the wind tonight, and is beating down my will with his wings.

August 25.

I lay through a night of tempestuous wind with the open window at my head. I awoke and saw myself face to face in my weakness. It rained all day. ... I can hardly bear my love today. It is a terrific dynamo of silence. But it will be very long before I shall fulfill my worthiness. If one could always remember that he is a saviour, and carry humanity with him, his will would be inflexible and every act an exulting humility. All nature is but a mantle which the wind of my spirit disposes in folds about me, and humanity is the chalice in which I may communicate with God,—a chalice woven of our singing flesh and heart and brain and will, wherein the will is its depth, the Atlas which bears the Sacred Body and Blood when it is given to us.

August 26.

Sorrow has come at last. Full moon, and life is at the flood. The precept of all adversity is of course that the ebb tide of fortune is our flood toward God. Even the lamp tonight is singing in the room.

August 27.

The experience still turns inward to the heart of life. I now see the core of it. It burns, of course, but think of the wheel it carries. A few days ago I was on the circumference. Now I have found the center. A day of rain and wind and exterior disturbances. But I have found my cenacle.

August 28.

A victory for the will. ... It is strange that every vital lesson that experience teaches can never be expressed in words. The past few days have taught me more than the rest of the summer. There will always be a secrecy of the soul, and what this contains constitutes God's image and likeness. Life sings tonight in every atom its marvelous chemistry of change and prophecy. Nature knows no elegies, since it may never triumph over aught but dust. But the highest dream is less worthy than the simplest deed, and we must forget the knowledge of good and evil. I would exchange all the knowledge I have gained for the grace to perform the slightest act of St. Francis. God has made our opportunity infinite by giving us an eternal standard of values,—that is all.

August 29.

I am afraid to write further for fear that I shall soon become self-conscious. ... It is strange that the will did not come home to me as a complete experience before. I



simply had the foreboding of it. This summer on the 9th of August I heard the Fourth Syllable in its awfulness for the first time, and understood the mystery of the Redemption. The time has now come to close this book, for the record is complete, and may not be reopened until I redeem my will.

They departed into their own country another way.