

..... AND THE DARKNESS DID NOT COMPREHEND

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Europe

Oh goodness, goodness of God!
Europa fled, fled far from primeval fall --
Bound now by the great sea wall,
Landmarked as the West.
Mountain, river, lake, full fashioned
To mirror all
All that from His Hand out-spilled
Upon the creature imaged to Himself.

Pillared Parthenon and Roman dome,
Poor passing years may scar the stone,
But winged Bird has taken flight
Settling sea-board to sea-board,
A Spirit sent -- ah, God, God Himself
Dwells within His firmament.

Gone, gone the Vestal from her home
Gone the marching men of Rome
Caught up with the Vandal and the Hun,
Hammered by the Dove-wings into one
Great people, spire-girded in the sun
Making in sculptured stone and wood,
Ah, God is good, the story of His Son.

Not all would read, not all heed
The winged Bird, brooding, brooding,
Breathing, outpouring Self.
Vain the schools, the cloistered halls,
The cross-crowned, turreted, buttressed walls ...
From ruin, ah goodness of God, are all preserved
By preaching friars from Dominic sprung
Teaching, teaching, leading men,
Forming will and mind, mind and will
Until strong-sinewed once again
The Church of God mid heretic and infidel
Kept Europe as her citadel.

Europe, Europe, did you know
In that very long ago, when Thomas came
An eagle swooping on your thought,
Gathering to himself all that Greek and Arab wrought,
All the heart had sought and caught

Died and lived for from Peter to Augustine
From Boethius to Albert to Bonaventure?
From Rhine and Danube to the Po?
Europe, Europe, did you know
Those things that were for your good?

Europe speaks

Upon that day I did not know
The Spectacle Thou wert and art
Hanging dead against the sky
Love pouring from Thy wounded Heart.

Europe, Europe did not know.
Casting off the seamless robe
Of unity, she wove
Patched garments with her man-made thread,
Her shuttle moving in and out --
From Luther to Robespierre and Danton
From Kant and Hegel to Marx
From reason to revolution.
Oh dark, dark, dark.

Europe, Europe, do you not know ...
Since that very long ago
Thomas has remained
A living flame against the foe?
Thomas at Trent,
Thomas from generation to generation
In book or heart, on tongue, in document?

Europe, Europe, you recalled
The hunted friar, priest expelled,
Warriors needing, you compelled their return ...
So short a time between two wars
To heal your century-opened scars!
Gone the people from the Church,
Man is now terrestrial,
A 'hand' is he in factory town,
'Masses' called, that must be ground
Beneath a heel so bestial ...
O Mother, Mother of God, from realm celestial
Gird the friar in his plight
To free man in this night of new slavery.
Dominic, Dominic, guide your sons
In this great modern movement
To Christianize the temporal.
The worker-priest on water front,

In Paris tenement,
Laboring, suffering, singing, praying,
Shoulder to shoulder, hand on hand
With all who are making the new world Christian.

"For the joy in our children's eyes,
We thank you O Lord.

For the love in their parents' hearts,
For being in our midst when life is hard,
Because our burdens are not as heavy when you are with us,
We thank you, O Lord.

All those we love, the big and the small,
Guard them, O Lord.

Our parents, that they may be long with us,
The young ones preparing for life,
The couples who plan to marry,
All who truly love and are separated,
All who are far away, thinking of home,
All who are sick and in pain,
Our old people who will soon be coming to you,
That all in our house may be ready to serve you,
That after death Your love may reunite us ... GUARD US, LORD." *

America

O Dove, Dove over the waters
O great Bird swooping down upon the land,
The land that is America,
Spread Thy great wings upon our hearts
Bearing the wind-gifts of our God.
Dominic, Dominic, your daughters know
The ebb and flow of human life,
God-given, earth-spent on this our continent.
From north to south, east to west,
Strong and purposeful as cerulean firmament
Beneath the Hand of God,
Thousands of white robed huntresses
Riding, riding on the wings of Truth
Knowing the darkness of our day
Make young womanhood their bounden prey.

* Jacques Loew, C.P., Mission to the Poorest, p. 174

Dominic, Dominic, your friars know
The new man by his own betrayed.

America, America, do you know ...
In that very long ago
Friars met the red-skin, not as foe?
That boldly entering mind and heart
Lyric-toned in song and story
LasCasas brought the Light of glory?

Not so today, no simple heart to enter in
But mind immersed in baubles of its own making,
Seeking in the din of cities, pale relief
From turning, turning, back on self,
Or going out in eye and hand caressingly,
Clutching, clutching ...
Sleek chromium body, swift turning wheels,
Metallic laughter in the star-light,
Body's ease,
O life terrestrial ...
America, America, do you know
Those things that are for your good?
Or must toppling towers make you pray
With Europe whence you came?

Europe and America speak

Until today we did not know
The Spectacle Thou wert and art,
Hanging dead against the sky
Love pouring from Thy wounded Heart.

Until today we did not know
The storied sponge
The vinegar and gall
The pointed spear upon Thy Heart
The Spectacle Thou wert and art
Until today.

We did not know until today
When lightning flashed
Along the way
In worded galaxy,
'Body and soul complete assumed
Mary stands in pure array
Before the throne.'

Mary, lift us upward,
Make us pray
In our olden childhood way.

AVE MARIA

The Orient

O dark, dark, dark ...
O Dove brooding
Over silent oriental, bowing, bowing, as his custom,
Moving in his age-long rhythm,
Gracious as his wonted way is
Passive in the face of danger
Faithful to ancestral bidding.

Millions, millions, century-laden
Down the furrowed land for tilling
Move the plough-share.
Slowly, slowly, in their cities
Draw the rickshaw, make their living,
Loyal to parental stricture, happy in their age-revering

O people of the Orient,
O people long practiced in patient waiting,
Have you not heard the Dove-wing beating, beating
On your hearts?
Silent, slant-eyed oriental
Threatened now by occidental,
Wait, wait longer in your silent suffering,
Fight the menace that engulfs you
O people of the Orient, do you not know
This poisoned limb is not the whole West?

Dominic's sons and daughters have already brought
The cooling draught of Truth to your shores.
Caught in Love's undertones
They are forced to leave you now along.
Alone and not alone,
Europe and America have known
The patience of the Dove's waiting.
O people of the Orient, pray,
Pray in our childhood way,
Come, while Mary leads us to her Son.

Europe, America, and the Orient sneak

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The Spectacle Thou wert and art
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'Body and soul complete assumed
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Before the Throne.'
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Make us pray
In our olden childhood way...

We did not know until today,
Filled with loathing at our ease
We staggered from the beaten way ...
Beyond the brook
Out past the gate
Impelled by Love
Insatiate.

And lo! our world-dimmed eyes
Beheld her there
Her upturned face
All bright with burning prayer.

"My Son, my Son,"
Aloud she prayed,
"Yesterday I saw You laid
Deep in an empty tomb
As once within my very womb
Close to my heart you lay.
But that was yesterday.
Today, today, my risen Son
I played the Mother's and the Lover's part,
Today, today, O Risen One,
Today I held Thee to my heart."

CHRISTUS VINCIT