

Beauty's Noon

You stand between me and the dazzling day
No wonder I confuse you with the sun
The halo of whose wide-diffracted ray
Cloud-burnishes the face it glances on
Which by the subtle optics of the skin
Blood-quickenened shines as if lit from within

Singing I press on up the forest fells
The enlivening shade renews the enlivening sun
Beneath the sheltering trees my song now swells
In notes like wood flowers from the green light spun
As sky unfolds again in every glade
To grassy sighs the shy melodies fade

As the trees thin so my illusion dies
No crafted spell-song can win me the grail
My alchemy is merely fear's disguise
And not of mine alone I must unveil
Surrender to free choice soft steps direct
To approach smile listen talk and...and connect?

The downward slope too yields reward to those
Who go without regret nor grudge to fall
Will there be one to halve with me its woes
Help and be helped up onward me enthrall
Or if alone I once look back will I
See you alone fire-haloed on the sky?

Joy gnaws me in the thin air's cold
Surmise hums in my buoyant blood
Through fear's cruel smiles my eyes unfold
Crowds stretched below me as a flood
Distant the rush of hungry eyes
They think they seek to drown in mine
To beauty born the peaks that rise
Beyond their envy aquiline

I hear them sighing up the slope
Waves of desire batter my ears
The gentle violent in hope
Despairing as it disappears
I do not ask it is my right
Not to be seen as charmed divine
Nor as unwilling dumb flesh-delight
I am not heaven's not earth's but mine

A smile I give each suppliant face
From beauty's time-bound light-wide store
For beauty gives more joy in grace
And given joy returns the more
But there's no promise in a smile
Looks can divide but lips must cleave
Say not I glory in the trial
As much mine as your cause to grieve

Shall I turn to the south at last
Watch their backs shrink who sought my face
Shiver in shadows eastward cast
Down lonely flanks of fading grace
Or is there yet a hand for mine
A voice that calling to me thrills
At last the heart for which I shine
The one to walk with from the hills?

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