

Poetry

Ficke, Arthur Davison, 1883-1945

I

IT is a little isle amid bleak seas—
An isolate realm of garden, circled round
By importunity of stress and sound,
Devoid of empery to master these.
At most, the memory of its streamsand bees,
Borne to the toiling mariner outward-bound,
Recalls his soul to that delightful ground;
But serves no beacon toward his destinies.
It is a refuge from the stormy days,
Breathing the peace of a remoter world
Where beauty, like the musing dusk of even,
Enfolds the spirit in its silver haze;
While far away, with glittering banners furled,
The west lights fade, and stars come out in heaven.

II

It is a sea-gate, trembling with the blast
Of powers that from the infinite sea-plain roll,
A whelming tide. Upon the waiting soul
As on a fronting rock, thunders the vast
Groundswell; its spray bursts heavenward, and drives past
In fume and sound articulate of the whole
Of ocean's heart, else voiceless; on the shoal
Silent; upon the headland clear at last.
From darkened sea-coasts without stars or sun,
Like trumpet-voices in a holy war,
Utter the heralds tidings of the deep.
And where men slumber, weary and undone,
Visions shall come, incredible hopes from far,—
And with high passion shatter the bonds of sleep.