

The Foundations of a Skyscraper

Reed, John, 1887-1920

Ghastly the pit with thousand-candle flares
Sharp as a sword--white, cold and merciless.
Bared to the world, the rock's swart nakedness--
Shadows, and mouths of gloom, like dragon's lairs;
Thunder of drills, stiff spurting plumes of steam,--
Shouts and the dip of cranes, the stench of earth,--
Blinded with sweat, men give a vision birth,
Crawling and dim, men build a dreamer's dream.

Clamor of unknown tongues, and hiss of arc
Clashing and blending; screech of wheel on wheel,-
Naked, a giant's back, tight-muscled, stark,
Glimpse of mighty shoulder, etched in steel.
And over all, above the highest high,
A phantom of fairtowers in the sky.