

TABLES

Ficke, Arthur Davison, 1883-1945

Once the altar was sacred;
But now, I think, it is the table.
For across tables
Go the words, the looks, the blinding flashes of thought
That are truly the race's history.
Fellow-lovers and fellow-poets
Lean their arms on these white surfaces,
And bending forward oblivious above the scattered silver,
Enkindle each other's souls.
I have never got from a pulpit
What I have got from tables.
I have never been so stirred in the greenwood
As at these curious urban trysting-places.
Nor do I think that heaven itself
Will wholly answer to my need
Unless in obscure streets and squares and avenues
And purlieus outlying the Pillared Place
There are little cafés
Where across tables
Blessed angels whisper wonderful and incredible secrets to one another.