DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN

A Revolutionary Hymn to the Anthropomorphic God.

God of our sires, Who reigneth so unsteadily,
     Nodding on Thy heavenly throne, impassive to our care,
Worshipful and wonderful, we shall forgive Thee readily,
     If Thou canst shake Thy sloth and give attention to our prayer.

Salt bread of life Thou gav’st when we were sickening,
     Bitter with the sweat and tears Thy mercy had denied;
Fierce was the fire Thou sentest for our quickening,
     Black was the smoke that Thou raisedst for our guide.

Sleek were Thy priests and awful was Thy Trinity,
     Wild were the wars Thou hast smiled at, from on high!
Tyrants and tortures attested Thy divinity,
     Living, we should praise Thee, and worshipping should die!

Long was the night; Thy dream obsessed us wearily;
     Now, half—awakening, we hunger for the day!
Purblind our eyes, but we see Thy presence eerily--
     Stand Thou aloof, Lord, till WE have found the way!

Lo, we are men! Our need hath sought Thee greedily,
     But slack is thy will, and we ask no more of Thee.
If Thou couldst bless, Thou wouldst have done it speedily;
     Unafraid we tweak Thy beard, Thy masters now are we!

So ere the dawn, when tyrants’ chains are fettering,
     This is our word to Thee, a last and scornful prayer,
No more we trust Thy power of any lightest bettering;
     Make Thy load too burdensome for humankind to bear!

Nay, we beseech! O, grant us this vicissitude,
The last screw of anguish, extremity of wrong;
Then, O, Eternal One, have done with Thy soliciude,
Then shall we arise as Men! Despair shall make us strong.