

On Garret Hostel Bridge

By Aleister Crowley

Here in the evening curl white mists and wreaths in their vapour
All the gray spires of stone, all the immobile towers;
Here in the twilight gloom dim trees and sleepier rivers,
Here where the bridge is thrown over the amber stream.
Chill is the ray that steals from the moon to the stream that whispers
Secret tales of its source, songs of its fountain-head.
Here do I stand in the dusk; like spectres mournfully moving
Wisps of the cloud-wreaths form, dissipate into the mist,
Wrap me in shrouds of gray, chill me and make me shiver,
Not with the Night alone, not with the sound of her wing,
Yet with a sense of something vague and unearthly stalking
(Step after step as I move) me, to annul me, quell
Hope and desire and life, bid light die under my eyelids,
Bid the strong heart despair, quench the desire of Heaven.
So I shudder a little; and my heart goes out to the mountains,
Rock upon rock for a crown, snow like an ermine robe;
Thunder and lightning free fashioned for speech, and seeing,
Pinnacles royal and steep, queen of the arduous breast!
Ye on whose icy bosom, passionate, at the sunrise,
Ye in whose wind-swept hollows, lulled in the moon-rise clear,
Often and oft I struggled, a child with an angry mother,
Often and oft I slept, maid in a lover's arms,
Back to ye, back, wild towers, from this flat and desolate fenland,
Back to ye yet will I flee, swallow on wing to the south;
Move in your purple cloud-banks and leap your far-swelling torrents,
Bathe in the pools below, laugh with the winds above,
Battle and strive and climb in the teeth of the glad wild weather,
Flash on the slopes of ice, dance on the spires of rock,
Run like a glad young panther over the stony highlands,
Shout with the joy of living, race to the rugged cairn,
Feel the breath of your freedom burn in my veins, and Freedom!
Freedom! echoes adown cliff and precipitous ghyll;
Fire and desire and light and youth and passion and freedom
Race in my blood untamed, laugh in my face for love.
Down by the cold gray lake the sun descends from his hunting,
Shadow and silence steal over the frozen fells.
Oh, to be there, my heart! And the vesper bells awaken,
Colleges call their children, Lakeland fades from the sight.
Only the sad slow Cam like a sire with age grown heavy
Wearily moves to the sea, to quicken to life at last.
Blithelier I depart, to a sea of sunnier kindness;

Hours of waiting are past; I re-quicken to love.