

# THE GLEBE

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**T**HE only editorial policy of **THE GLEBE** is that embodied in its declaration of absolute freedom of expression, which makes for a range broad enough to include every temperament from the most radical to the most conservative, the only requisite being that the work should have unmistakable merit. Each issue will be devoted exclusively to one individual, thereby giving him an opportunity to present his work in sufficient bulk to make it possible for the reader to obtain a much more comprehensive grasp of his personality than is afforded him in the restricted spaces allotted by the other magazines. Published monthly, **THE GLEBE** will issue twelve books per year, chosen on their merits alone, since the subscription list does away with the need of catering to the popular demand that confronts every publisher. Thus, **THE GLEBE** can promise the best work of American and foreign authors, known and unknown.

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Editor

**ALFRED KREYMBORG**

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I never found any use for birth or birthdays, dear comrades, till I knew what it was to love:

I could not tell how successful my life is by the number of those who love me: I could only tell that by the number of those I love:

I am victorious only when I have won my love of you from myself: winning your love of me from you is not enough: And so this day though you may not gather me to you I gather you to me, body and spirit:

And so this day I count myself up, not in figures but in love, and say forgiving and jubilant things to my soul about us all.



## I'M SO GLAD I WAS BORN

I'm so glad I was born. It seemed so right for me to come. And some day it will seem just right for me to go. Maybe not just yet but sometime. I don't know whether it matters much which side of mystery God feeds me on. I am fed. Here or there, nowhere or anywhere, I am joyous, a part of things, not to be skipped—an atom but for which the stars would not hold together. That's enough for any sane man to know about himself. Yet that's not all I know about myself. I know God made no mistake making me. Or making you, either. Saint or scoundrel, making anybody. I can see other things put aside for my entrance. The Lord said: Give him a show. So I was piloted to this earth-star. Nobody specially welcomed me. My father and mother were there. And a few others. Some may have been sorry. But luckily I was there and in my baby way welcomed myself. I did not rock in that first cradle and say nothing. Think of the journeys I had lived through and sung through before I got here. Think of gods and men and animals and suns and all sorts of soul stuffs and body stuffs that compounded to produce me. Is it any wonder I am stuck on myself after that? I would not be paying great tribute to what went before or to what is to come after if I did not stand here now in great pride and declare the wonder of my flesh and the wonder of my spirit. I tell you gods are all right. Yes, and the law of gravitation is all right. Yes,

## I'M SO GLAD I WAS BORN

and Beethoven and Socrates and Lincoln were all right. But how about me? Am I not just as much all right? Suppose an impossibility. Suppose I had not been born. Suppose something had sidetracked me. What would have happened to eternity? I don't see how Jesus could have been passed by. Nor do I see how I can be passed by. God had to do it. When the time came for me God had no alternative. You might as well put off to-morrow as put off a man when his day has come. So I got my size and shape. I am as big as anything because nothing big or little could get along without me. I am as beautiful as anything because nothing beautiful could be beautiful without me. Do you call yourself a worm? That's all right if you mean to honor the worm. But if you mean to abase yourself then you are unjust to the worm. I never ask myself: Do you know how little you are? I am always nudging myself in the ribs and asking: Do you realize how big you are? Nor how bad I am. No. But how good I am. Nor how possible it is for me to fail. No. But how impossible it is for me not to succeed. So you see how it is I am glad I was born. You may see how far back my reasons go. You may see how far ahead my reasons go. I have trailed no sable clouds of regret across my past. I drag no obstructing burden of doubt up to the door of the future. I keep all ways open to all life. I have received an inheritance. It crowds me to repletion with riches. It builds on after all traditional builders are done. It is fiery with extra-mortal inspirations. Which all comes with being

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glad I was born. I hear people speak of being born right. Was anybody ever born wrong? I was born incomplete but I was born right. The complete invites the incomplete. I was not put here finished. I was put here on the way. I would be sorry if I thought I was born finished. A man born finished, his task is done. He could retire. That would be the mistake. But the cosmos never errs. The cosmos is process. It is not end. So I'm glad I was born. Glad for the grief. Glad for the joy. Satisfied to struggle. To fall in hell and pick myself up in heaven. Satisfied with the devil in me and the god in me working off their equal debts. I'm glad I was born. I might go on using words forever saying that. Yet my account would only then begin to be paid. I'm so glad I was born.

I'm so glad I was born. And you are one of my reasons for being glad. You were born, too. And I hope you are as glad about me as I am glad about you. I hope you are glad you were born. They say this is a vale of tears. So it is. It is also a vale of laughter. And laughter and tears give life a single purpose. And laughter in tears is glorious. Do you think I try to hide sorrow from myself? It sweetens the sap of the tree. I take sorrow for the uses of joy. I don't let sorrow get away with the field. I don't let the bad increase and crowd out salvation. I'm so glad I was born. There's so much work to do. And I'm glad I was born just this time. If I had been given a choice of all ages I would have chosen just this age. Not old Greece with all its art or old Rome with all its conquests or France in

## I'M SO GLAD I WAS BORN

eighty-nine or America in seventy-six or sixty-one. No age of Pericles for me. No Weimar. No Granada. No Elizabethan era. No age of privileged exceptions. Give me the Bowery and nineteen hundred six. Give me the democratic rule. God anticipated my whim and said: Humor him—it wont hurt. So I came along as well prophesied as anybody. And I know it wont hurt. It will help. Do you suppose I mean nothing? Then if I mean nothing God means nothing and the stars mean nothing and the love in your heart means nothing. I am not in doubt about my power and my style. The earth wont be just the same after I am done. It will be different and better. I am appointed to make it better. So are you. Do you not see that plainly indicated everywhere: So are you? I will not bray a path into history. Nor fill ostentatious offices. Nor be recognized as the supreme master this or that of a profession. But the universe cant spare me. I, too, must mount the cross. The universe needs my mediation. I know I was not produced for nothing. It cost a heap to produce me. I must catch up with an immense ancestral obligation. I must make good for my cosmic bed and board. I have got to prove that the first atom in faraway time knew what it was about when it attracted and repulsed and dreamed towards me. I've got to justify all of my ancestors and I've got to lay my plans so my descendants will justify me. I must pass everything on with something added to it. Music with more music. Painting with more painting. Good books with more good books. All the

## COLLECTS

noble work of man with more noble work of men added. No way turning the tide back. With happiness enough in me to last all the misery out. With light enough in me to last all the misery out. With light enough in me to last all the darkness out. With strength enough in me to last all the weakness out. Sad, too, for those in grief. But gladder, too, for those who are reprieved. Certain that whatever may come no eclipsing harm can come. Certain that no rain-drop in the universe can lose its way. Certain that we are jealously cared for though we do not always see the hand that cares and though that hand is sometimes cruel. When I see how much there is in my life to be glad for I forget that there is anything in my life to be sorry for. I have no quarrel with the barbarous minute the hour is so gentle. With the contrary day the yielding year is so conciliatory. With distorted ages the symmetry of time is so perfect. I do not feel like a waif lost somehow in chaos. I am at home in the midst of order. It seems worthwhile to live in a universe that is making, that has not made, its title. The universe did not do all its work the first day. It said to itself: I'll always leave something over for the workers to do. It said to itself: Traubel will come some day: leave something over for Traubel. It said to itself: Or anybody, everybody, millions of bodies, will come some day: leave something over for them all. The cosmos is left at loose ends here and there. That was just meant for you. Go to work on it. Dont fret and growl. Dont sit down and cry and tell yourself that it's a

## I'M SO GLAD I WAS BORN

rather shameful cosmos anyway and might have been immaculate if it had chosen to. No. Be a cosmos yourself. Be a god or a first assistant or a fourth remove man or somebody and put in a bit of perfection over your own name. Get into the nebulous push somewhere. Drag, shove, pull, lift: do something to add to the active substance of deity. I'm mighty glad so much was left over. I don't want to send in to the celestial court any excuse for default. The lords god may say: We need not worry: our brother is there. The lords god know what they are about. They know their brother can be relied on. They may sleep without bad dreams. Does it ever occur to you to give the overworked gods a rest and get busy yourself? The heart's good will should come out of the heart with gladness on its lips. The song should be glad it got done. It should lift its tones in praise. I am glad I got done. I lift my tones in praise. Creation belongs to gladness. Can anything that is sorry it was born give birth to life that will be glad it is alive? Laughter is the headline and footnote and signature of creation. When the dream to be a man became a man cosmos laughed. It was happy. It had done a creditable job. When a man somewhere lived love's equal and final life with a woman somewhere and a child somewhere flamed from the mutual fire, the sun laughed in kinder beams of light and the starshine smiled over the cradled hope. I go everywhere saying I am glad I was born. It is such an innocent thing to say. It seems so like a child to say it. Yet I never heard you say it. I am waiting to hear you say it. I

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want to hear you say it once. Then I want to hear you say it always. Get in the habit of saying it. So possessed you cant help saying it. No matter who or what says no saying yes yourself. Saying it to yourself when you are alone, saying it to us, saying it in silences, saying it out loud. No: I never heard you say it. I have heard you read the riot act on creation. I have heard you growl like a bear and squeak like a rat. I have heard you tell how bad life is. Not how good life is: no: how bad. How bad a toothache is. Not how good a sound tooth is: no: how bad. There are bleak winds and consuming fires. I have been frostbitten and burned. Why should you make so much the most of misery and so much the least of health? Why should you enter all the charges and none of the credits? Why should you not put in a figure or two on the other side and admit the balance of benefit? What's the use always going down stream? Why not also go up with the flood? I am possessed with gladness. I can see that all the worlds groan and travail in laughter. I can see that the shadow laughs in the sun. I can see that the wrongs laugh in the right. I can see the greeds that destroy laugh in the generousities that save. I can see all that is crooked in the social order laughing itself into all that will be straight in the social order. Over all I prevail: I, too, god by heritage, recreating the forever recreated stars. I, too, adding more gladness to the multiplied gladness of time. I, too, pouring out of my limitless stores limitless streams of rejoicing. I, too, an equal maker and sustainer of undoubted

## I'M SO GLAD I WAS BORN

life. I, too, smiling back order into any chaos. I, too, always merry and rejuvenescent. I who am so glad I was born.

I'm so glad I was born. I like to tell about that. I like to say it to people who want to hear and to people who do not want to hear. I like to tell it to the man who is about to give up. I notice that he begins again. I like to tell it to the musician who thinks his inspiration is all gone. I notice that now he writes the finest songs ever. I like to tell it to the lover who is not loved. I notice that he is afterwards satisfied to love, not crazy to be loved. I like to tell it to the man who is robbed and to the man who robs. I notice that both hear me right for both see that it is better to be robbed than to rob. I like to tell it to the sick. The sick take hope. The sick, too, say: We are glad we were born. Glad to be born even if born to sickness. (Though no one is born to sickness.) And gladness is forever the footway of dreams. I can go to the injustices of the world with my joy. I am not afraid that the injustices can refute my joy. For injustice never can refute justice. My jubilant rhapsodies will prevail. They will go where nothing else will go. They will go where arguments will not go and figures will not go. They will go where logic will not go and law will not go. They will go where the pride of faith will not go and the humility of faith will not go. They will go where the sun will not go and the rains will not go. I say I'm glad I was born. I am good seed for any ground. No soil could be so bad my seed is not good for it. I am good will for any life. No life could be so poor my seed is



## COLLECTS

not rich for it. I am the victorious day that comes after every other day has come and failed. I am the courage that comes after every other resolution has come and failed. I am everything true that comes after everything false has come and failed. I am the conquering work of your brains and your hands that comes after all other work has come and failed. I'm so glad I was born. Glad for the universe. What luck it was to the universe the day I was born. I feel that the universe was full paid all old credits that day. I came. I do not hesitate to tell anybody how magnificent I am. I do not try to divert attention from myself by calling attention to the earth that is so many miles through and the sun that is so many degrees hot. I let the devastators do that. I see how much more than their less I amount to. Earths and suns are only a meager per cent. to the plenty of my exaltation. You cant take earths and suns to your heart. But you can take me to your heart. You cant take your degrees and decorations to your heart. They always fall short of solace and must fall short. But you can take me to your heart. I never fall short. You cant take your position in society to your heart. You cant take your overcapitalized name to your heart. You cant take your riches to your heart. Oh, you cant take your riches, all your thousands, all your houses, all your swell possessions, to your heart: and they cost you much. But you can take me to your heart, you can take my eyes that see and ears that hear to your heart, you can take my announcements of immortal life to your heart: they never default,

## I'M SO GLAD I WAS BORN

never fall short: and they cost you nothing. I guess I have said all I can say about that. I have got so far in my raptures now I have got beyond words. You must get the rest without words. I'm so glad I was born.

And so I have come to sing life: I have come to bring that  
which is hidden to the surface:

And so I have been set apart to deal honestly with man  
and woman and sex and suffer for it:

And so I have been chosen from all the rest as the one who  
can say what the rest think and desire and dare not  
justify:

And so I declare for them: for the discredited dreams: for  
the obscured purposes: declare for them and invite those  
who are angry to take it out of me:

And so I stand about where the most people are and issue  
my challenge and wait for the result:

Feeling back of me holding me up the brave beautiful average  
men and women my comrades who look to me to serve  
them:

Coming into the big world with my little challenge: receiv-  
ing my cues from what is suppressed in others:

Casting my uncompromising nos into the faces of the rulers  
of the earth: defying their fences and their written  
compacts.

## PANKHURST

Pankhurst. The world has been saying that word under its breath and over its breath. You have been saying it. The papers have been saying it. It has been on the lips of professors and agitators. It has been made fun of and been shuddered over. Maybe you have thought it was the name of a woman. So it was. But it was more than that. It was the name of a revolution. As the name of a woman it would mean nothing in particular. As the name of a revolution it becomes prophecy and history. That's why the people who put the woman in jail found that they couldn't put the revolution in jail. And if you cant forcibly feed a woman how much less likely you are to forcibly feed a revolution. That single word of two syllables. It cuts into prejudice like the blade of a knife. A woman's name. Say it over to yourself. At first it may sound commonplace. But keep on. Say it over and over. It will become marching armies. It will become martial music. It will trumpet you to vast victories. Women don't need to say woman now. They only need to say Pankhurst. You tell me I am talking of an arrogant woman only a few feet high who is bent upon destruction. Yes: I am talking of her. She is the gateway through which I pass. But I am also talking of the revolution which is so high no vision can reach its summit. Pankhurst is a dream come true. Pankhurst is an ideal in action. This

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law. She's inveterate. She asserts, she summons, she demands. Yet she's calm. She: the mother incarnate. She's the maternal made revolution. She's sex. Women don't all recognize her. They are dubious. But she proceeds and says nothing. She asks no favors and gives none. She don't apologize. She asks nobody's forgiveness. She makes no palsyng explanations. She goes on and on. Just as gravitation goes on and on. Just as time goes on and on. My eyes never stop with the woman. I pass to that by which she is fortified. Listen to what she says. Do you belittle her message? Return: listen again: weigh her grave confessions. Every word she says is the word of revolution. Don't you think you've been warned enough? Get your impudent property out of the way. That infernal property. It interrupts the vision. But for it we'd go straight to our end. Pankhurst. I heard her speak the other night. It was in a hall. Thousands of people were there. She was on the big stage in the half dark. She spoke to us. The great building disappeared. The woman who spoke and those who were spoken to disappeared. I was left alone with an idea. The pure, the undefiled, idea. Revolution. Are you afraid now? Is the mother in you afraid—or the father? Or is the child in you afraid? Do you shrink back with horror from this issue? You dare to acknowledge mothers. But are you afraid of the maternal? You dare to say woman. But are you afraid to say revolution? Woman is offering no petition. She is not saying her prayers. She is not humbly beseeching anybody

## PANKHURST

for anything. Woman is vehemently afoot full armed marching victoriously across the earth exacting tribute making light of the phantom obstacles that formerly drove her back into the lambpit. If I say Pankhurst I say all of you not one of you. The great auditorium disappeared. I was alone somewhere with an idea. Her phrases are the least of her. Revolution is the most of her. What she was there before my eyes making a speech was as nothing compared with what she became to me in the unseen and the silences. I am awed. The revolution becomes flesh. The revolution becomes woman. She sailed across the ocean in a ship. She put her name on the ship's register. Revolution came in another name. And the registry registered it in another name. Then they didn't want her to land. Some of them. They didn't know her by her real name but even as it was they felt that her ominous entrance promised no good. Revolution waited for revolution. Woman waited for woman. Have you gone about all these years supposing woman wouldn't finally strike her blow? She waited till it was time. The woman's day is here. The man's day, too: for man can have no day without woman nor woman without man. Many of you still tremble. You'd rather she hadn't come. But it had to happen. The revolution was due. You harbored it under disguise. She set it out in the open. You didn't want to acknowledge how big round it was. She refused to hide the fact from itself. You were the disciples of revolt. Or the partners. Or the revolutionary faithfuls. But she was more. She

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was revolution incarnate. She was the godmade woman sent to earth to proclaim the future. There you have it. Not a mere woman. Though a mere woman is no more to be made light of than a mere man or a mere cosmos. Yet not a mere woman. That, surely: then infinitely more than that. Revolution. Pankhurst.

Pankhurst. The shadow on the horizon. The black darkness gathering overhead and around. The threatening forefinger of fate. The menace of maternity. The uprising of a sex. The comrade woman challenges the wife woman. It must be resented. We must throw back the waves of the sea. Here is another revolt against property. These people too put people first. How monstrous. To put a woman or a man first. To put a mother first. We must teach mothers their place. And people too: we must teach them their place. The death of a man or a woman: what is that? But burning down a house: that is an attack on civilization. These new women want everything. They treat husbands as if they were no more than men. They treat property as if it was dirt under their feet. They say nothing matters but hearts and love. Well: hearts and love are not bad if you keep them where hearts and love belong. But if you bring hearts and love into politics or economics then you are invading a forbidden sphere. We've got to set back the clock. Time's going too fast. A man said: I dont like it. I asked him: Dont like what? He said: This woman business. I asked: What woman business? He said: Woman in politics. I asked: Dont you think they're capable of poli-

tics? He exclaimed: My God, yes: too capable! I asked: Then why do you kick? He said: Because if they go into politics they'll make this a woman's world and I dont want to live in a woman's world. That's it. When the woman becomes real they dont want to live in a woman's world. Just as profit-believing people don't want to live in a man's world when a real man appears. If this is not a mother's world whose world is it? The man said: I dont want to live in a woman's world. Just as profit-believing people dont want from their own side: We don't want to live in a man's world. Yet if this is not a father's world whose world is it? You dont want the world the women will make it possible for real fathers to live in. You don't want the world the men will make it possible for real mothers to live in. You say: Half a world's a good enough world for me. You say: A whole world's too big for me. Then you hear the reply. Then you see the reply. Words reply. Mobs reply. Conflagration replies. Quarrels, battles, reply. This still water of man's peace has been ruffled by woman's tempest. Things were going on so good. Then these sexless rebels had to come. Just as money says to people in the economic sphere: Things were so serene: then you had to come. Yes, something always has to come. Every time orthodoxy settles itself for a long tenure something has to come. Just as clear days are getting used to themselves stormy days come. We had things arranged just about right. It wasn't ideal. We acknowledge imperfections. But on the whole it was about right. Woman was just about



## COLLECTS

where she ought to be. Labor too was just about where it ought to be. Then something happened. Something always does happen. Labor got to growling. And now woman's got to growling. Woman. Haven't we given woman the choicest tidbits of life? And yet she says no. She says that would be all right if something else was first all right. That something else is her freedom. Is her claim to herself. She says that comes first. Why: that's just what labor is saying. We've got to fight labor. We've got to fight her. It's in fact one quarrel with two wings. And we'll crush them with one answer. We've got to or this world'll go to pot straightaway. If it's got so that a man's got a right to be a man through a woman's right to be a woman. If it's got so that a woman's got a right to be a woman through a man's right to be a man. If that's so then I want to know the reason why. This whole liberty stuff is nonsense. Don't you see how it is? My God! If this keeps up the first thing you know this'll be a liberty world. Look at it honest. Dont you see it yourself? Reason it out in your own mind. Every other consideration will be set aside. Democracy will run homes, business, states, everything. Horrible. This will be a liberty world. And I dont want to live in a liberty world. Pankhurst.

Pankhurst. When I hear you say that word I can tell what you think of yourself. I dont have to ask you for other evidences. Whether you lift your voice or drop it. That tells the whole story. Whether there is any mother in your voice. Whether there is any love in it.

## PANKHURST

You're not dealing here with a person. You're dealing with a race. The person comes and goes. But the new day; it comes and never goes. Now and then the world names a new star. All the glasses are lifted towards the revealed luminary. There's the clamor of those who see it and those who half see it and those who don't see it at all. You can't know Pankhurst by reading the personals in the newspapers. You can't get acquainted with her by taking the stories of her life for what they literally say. She brings all that woman can bring. Then she brings what was before and what is after. If you have the great person theory you'll not understand why she is here and what she has accomplished. But if you have the great race theory the clouds'll wash out of the skies and you'll see the sun. We have long said: Man shall hold no property in man. The women come along now and say: Man shall hold no property in woman. Then I go farther. I go to the end. I say: Man shall hold no property in property. What are you listening for? It's a great voice. Women are not primarily voters. They are women. They are sex. They are mothers. The maternal is speaking up for itself. Votes for women. That's the mere surface of the stream. Souls for women. Bodies for women. That's the far cry. Every woman has a father in her. Every man has a mother in him. That which has been confined. That shall be released. That which has been refused woman. That she demands. That which woman has refused herself. That she will resume. A great flame lit in a vast shadow. That's

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what it all is. This little woman overflowing with calm vehemence: what is she? Just the mother of two daughters? Just the wife of a dead husband? Just a prisoner in British jails? That's the average of her. But that's not the most of her. She reaches out over the earth. She ceases to be a person. She becomes a presence. She who can be measured becomes the immeasurable. My eyes sweep her inspiring horizons. I follow her lead. Let her go where her feet and her wings take her. Down anywhere, up anywhere. Resisted no matter how, welcomed no matter where. Every mile she travels is sacred to a common trust. Dedicated to a universal purpose. Are you skulking? Do you worry the years away with quibbles? Rather that every atom of property should go up in smoke if the people are left. Rather anything than that the soul should pay the bills of property. When men are victims you say: We are saved. When dollars are victims you say: We are ruined. You can brush aside a man or a woman. But you cant alter the will of the fates. You can turn your back to the sunshine. But you cant stand in the way of the sun. You can take the splash of the sea. But you cant stop it from rolling up the shore. You can lock yourself in your house. But you close the rest of us out. When the man comes what has the woman got to say? When the woman comes what has the man got to say? The answer of the man is found in the woman. The answer of the woman is found in the man. The woman has the floor. She asks her pertinent impertinent ques-

## PANKHURST

tions. She asks whys and wherefores. You exhibit your tax receipts in reply. She asks you what you are. You answer by showing her what you have. You think you shine through what you own. Far from that. You can only shine through what you dont own. This little woman has made all your big fortunes look mean. This little idea has made all your big theories look cheap. Everything else always does look insignificant when a real man or woman comes round. When you shook hands with this woman you more than touched the palms of life and death. When you looked into her eyes you read more than the tablets of Sinai. When you heard her speak words you listened to more than the music of waters and winds. When you measured her and weighed her you tested more than the sizes and shapes of starry universes. The woman comes. Oh man: what has the woman in you got to say of it? The man comes. Oh woman: what has the man in you got to say of it? Pankhurst.

I have met men and women and men and women: they are  
all sizes: yet they are all one size:

I have never so far met a man or a woman little enough  
for me to be arrogant with:

I have never so far met a man or a woman big enough for  
me to humble myself to:

Men and women dont seem to me made to be figured upon:  
they are made to be immeasurable:

They dont seem to me made to be accepted or rejected: they  
are made to be my comrades:

We are all so much alike I dont see how we could be  
different:

We are all so different I don't see how we could fail to be  
alike:

A few horizons added to a man's dream: do they make one  
man better than another?

A few inches added to a man's waist: do they make one  
man superior to another?

From way up these are such minor matters: the wave drops  
away in the sea:

From way up our castes and borderlines are such minor  
matters: they lapse away in the soul:

For we are in the end not masters and slaves, not up and  
down: we are only brothers and sisters.

## WHAT IS THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN?

What is the color of your skin? Are you a child of the sun or a child of the snow? Do you come with red in your face? Or is there a shadow across your head? Are you the white child of a black mother or the black child of a white mother? I see your brown red right hand. How warm it feels to me. I look into your glowing equatorial eyes. How like being led to fathers and mothers that is. You bring me north south east west. You guide yourselves to me. You distribute me among yourselves. I am your child no matter how. Your child no matter where. There are seas everywhere. But there is no sea between us. There are interfering miles of space and hours of time. But they dont break us from each other. I was born of my mother and here I am. You were born of your mothers and there you are. The earth was born of the sun. The sun was born of what? I mix up the elements. I come out one place. You come out another place. From the same mother womb. From the same father seed. To the same brother earth. Do you hold a noose over me? Or drop a sword from above as I pass? Or shoot me down in my tracks? Or pass laws of which I'm the victim? Or lock your housedoors when I knock? My credentials are the same as yours: no better than yours. I am the harvest of the same planting: no more than that harvest. Like you I have one life to live on one earth before I pass on. Do I stand on my icy heritage and freeze the heat

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out of your love? Remember the stream: go up with it to its sources: go down with it to the sea. Every atom dancing in the light or clouded by the storm advances and retreats in perfect equity and perfect order. Dear prouds and humbles: by God I'm yours and you're mine. Do you believe that anything can take you from me or take me from you? I meet you. I read about you. I am told all the terrible truths. But everything draws me nearer. Nothing drives me away. If you could be less to me than I am to myself then I would have to be more to myself than I could be to you. That would violate my democracy. That would be setting one thing above another. When I elevate myself with all I am a democrat. When I lift myself above the rest I am a tyrant. Listen to me. You who are reading what I write. Maybe you are black. Maybe you are pink or white or yellow. Maybe you are between or across. All that goes with maybe. But when you are my brother there is no maybe to it. If I could look at any man and not see his mother as my own I'd be false to all motherhood. If I could look at any woman and not see her father as my own I'd be false to all fatherhood. I'm not satisfied with one mother. I want all mothers. Nor with one father. I want all fathers. Nor with my children. I want all children. I'm not satisfied with one color. I want all colors. Nor with one race. I want all races. Nor with one language. I want all languages. My hunger is fiercely universal. I'm not fed till I've eaten at every table. I can only know one woman by knowing all women. I can only know one peo-

## WHAT IS THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN

ple by knowing all peoples. What is the color of my skin? What is the sound to the song? What is the water to the ocean? That's what the rest of me is to my exterior. That's what the substance in me is to my show. That's what my foundations are to my rooftree. There at the bottom we are together. And at the top: there we are together. We begin together and end together. But we are alienated in the journey. When we start out in the morning we say good by. When we meet again at night we ask: How do you do? What wrenched us apart in the struggle of the pilgrimage? Why should those who are friends before and friends again after be enemies while they travel? I say to the other—colored peoples: You have to be my brothers whether you want to or not, thank God. Do they say to me: You have to be my brother whether you want to or not, thank God? What is the color of your soul? What is the color of your skin?

What is the color of your skin? I see. You are a nigger. You are a damned dago. You are the man on the other side of the wall. The man over somewhere. The yellow peril. The ignorant dirty emigrant. The two for a quarter six for a half dollar mill slave. There is a border line between us. There are incomes between us. There is a whole code of manners between us. You are the godforsaken polack. You are the hooknosed jew. You are the monkeyfaced irishman. You are the beerguzzled deutscher. I call you names. I can't see you. You are in the next yard. The stars look just as well from the next yard. But I insist upon the exclusive astronomy



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of my own garden. I smell your stale clothes. I am choked by the aromas of your foul kitchens. Would you like your sister to marry an african? I'm not fussy. I'm only a man. A white man. I don't draw lines ferninst you. I only draw lines in favor of myself. Do you mean to say you think these ignoramuses as good as yourself? Do you tell me that you're no better than the herd? Nonsense. There's the nietzschean word for it. The average man is the herd. The awkward big-fisted loon. The idiot crowd. The people everybody kicks. The folks everybody despises. The men women children you wouldn't invite into your home. I use them. Ride them. Make money off them. But that's all I want of them. Just the robber money. Not the man love. Look at them filing to work tired to start with. Look at them filing back from work like a funeral nearly dead to end with. They're a rum lot. They're worth a hundred cents on the dollar and up in the labor market. They're worth about ten cents on the dollar and under on the social plane. My God! but they're a scabby bunch. It makes me sick to see them. Look at them as they work their treadmill. Don't they give themselves away? Right and left, north and south, look where you choose: they are the slobbering tobaccoey stay-behinds and passbacks of the dump-heap. Every mother's son of 'em useful to me maybe but useless to themselves. Down in their luck, to be sure. But sentenced for life just the same. The jackjohnsons of society. The refuse of birth and death. The clods. The dullards. The heavyfooted and heavyheaded bowlegs and

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knock-knees. The slave asses yoked to an inescapable burden. Who are you that you dont belong? Are you of us few or of their very many? Are you of the interest bearing rent collecting profit class or do you fester in these maggoty bottoms of fate? Stay where you fall no matter how far down you are. Dont try to climb. We shove you all over the cliff again. We throw dust in your eyes. We confuse you in clouds of verbiage. We disarm you. We have laws to make you afraid. We have creeds to make you hopeless. We have poets who kill you with pensive despairs. Do you dare aspire to anything? Stay where you are in your deep mud. There is no above to you. No beyond. No ease. No dreamworld. You were condemned before you were born. You remain condemned while you live. And you will continue condemned when you become the dung in the barnyard at last. A woman heard me expressing my race faith. She asked me: "How would you like to have a grandchild with a black skin?" That was it. That was the whole devilish poisonous story. The entire problem prejudice in a nutshell. She didn't ask: How would you like to have a grandchild with a black soul? That would have meant something. But she wasn't interested in souls. She was interested in skins. How would I like to have a grandchild with a black skin. What is the color of your skin?

What is the color of your skin? Maybe you have a black skin and a white heart. Maybe you have a white skin and a black heart. I dont know. We talk about the yellow peril when we

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think of Asia. And we talk about the brown peril when we think of Italy. And we talk about the black peril when we think of South Carolina. But all of us are afraid to talk of the white peril. I see no perils. My arms reach out to all. I want the Chinaman to possess himself of the earth if he's an earth man. Let him freely pass right and left testing himself and us. Dont put up pennywise barriers built on poundfoolish laws. Rather do anything than stop your fraternities short of the total census of man. Every interfering sea, every contradicting statute, every counterchecking prejudice, every adventure in money-making, that nullifies the international inference is a slap in the face of brotherhood. Damn up the human stream. Then you damn down the soul. The old negro mammy in Georgia asked me as I left: Will you do something for me? I said: Yes, if you'll do something for me? She asked: Will you kiss me good by? I said: Yes—on condition that you kiss me good by. I would only be worthy to take if I was worthy to give. I'd say to all the world: I would only be worthy of loving if I was worthy of being loved. I would only be worthy of being an American if I was worthy of being a Jap. I would only be worthy of serving if I was worthy of being served. I would only cease being a peril if I ceased calling others perilous. How could I be worthy of being a white man if I was too good to be a black man? Ethiopia cries out loud to Scandinavia. India cries out loud to England. All the peoples cry out loud from everywhere to all the peoples. There is no peril in peoples.

## WHAT IS THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN

There is only peril in you and me. There is no peril in anything that brings any of us together. There is only peril in what keeps us or drives us apart. I go with mothers fathers children. I go with birth and death. I go with dreaming and believing. I go with mixing and mating. These are the same everywhere. The same with you black and me white. The same with my skin burnt to fire and the same with your skin frozen to the whiteness of snow. The same with duskies and palefaces. I dont go with maps. With geographies. With diplomacies. With kingdoms and republics. With genius aristocracy pauperism. With success and the main chance. I only go with people. With folks. And with them I go anywhere they go. Into any hell or any heaven. Into any hope or any despair. With people. Where people go I may go too. But where people are refused there I am shut out. The woman asked me: Would you like to have a grandchild with a black skin? She brought her question to the wrong court. She should not have addressed it to me. She should have taken it to God. Would God like to have a grandchild with a black skin? It's as though we asked God: What would you think of yourself if you happened to be black or red? What is the color of your soul? What is the color of your skin?

O you despairers of destiny! O you plunderers of time!  
you make a great noise in the silences:

All that you need to do is to open your eyes: that is the  
secret: look:

You come to me; I cant look for you: I can only say, look:  
I cant give you a free pass to the promised land: I can  
only say look: if you only look you will need no pass:  
O, why do you bury your face in the dust? get up: lift  
yourself high enough to look over your own head:

Everything you love is yours.

## YOU WRITERS

You writers who are trying to write. You artists anywhere who are trying for art. You who may be successful but have not arrived. You who hold yourselves in a class apart and play the game of temperament. You fools, liars, ornamenters, hypocrites, prostitutes, of words. You who wouldn't sell your bodies but who sell your souls. You who have taken to the street for profit. You who hunger for flattery and thirst for fame. You betrayers of the people. You who put words on yourselves as chains. You who are goods to the highest bidder. All of you. I have something to say to you. You may have said it to yourself. But I'm going to say it anyhow. Both for your good and mine. Something serious. Something that goes to the root. I'll talk right out. For somehow you who might be are not. You to whom a trust is given have betrayed it. I believe in the sacredness of the word. I want words to be gods, paradises, service. I want words to live. I want words to be creators. Some writers are so vital they cant say and or the or but without thrilling you. There are some writers so dead they cant say immortality without a funeral. I want the living word. How can I get it? By using words instead of being used by words. By speaking out of my heart instead of out of books. By not trying to write. By living. Some authors write as if they never had been born. They say: I did my best. I say: Rather your worst. When you talk to me face

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to face you are worth every minute. When you talk to me on paper in a book you are a waste of time. What happens to a man in the period between what he feels and what he does? What catastrophe occurs? Why does he go to smash in the process? He is so alive in what he humanly and so dead in what he professionally says. What is the poison that comes between? Money? Prestige? Or is it some false principle of art? Do your words, do your colors, do your tones, take you away from rather than towards your inspiration? You try too hard. You shouldn't try at all. An artist's sketches are wonderful. His finished canvases are commonplace. His sketches are impromptu. His paintings are designed. He did the sketches. The paintings did him. He didn't try in the sketches. He was all try in the paintings. You writers who are trying to write. Are you trying to live? I admit your display. I admit your phrases. But you? Do I admit you? Yes. But not the you you get into your books. My words belong where my heart is. I am not willing to feel one thing and write another. Let me be the servant of my emotions. Down below all my words is all my life. Rooted in the soil. Established in the unalterable laws. Dedicated to the supreme inferences. If my words dont say that they lie about me. I am the fact the words are supposed to report. If they dont express me I go unrepresented. I dont try to be anything. I just let myself be whatever results. It would be as bad for me to force myself to be something as for me to force myself not to be something. There are

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so many artists and there is so little art. There are so many writers and there is so little writing. There is so much painting and there are so few pictures. We are overclothed. Our wardrobe is rich. We are jeweled. We are placed on thrones. But what are we anyhow? We are humbug kings. We are fraud citizens. What we are not we are. What we are we are not. The same thing which makes some men look for social prestige makes an author look for literary prestige. We give up the same things for it. We lie and duck and play sycophant for it. We fool people. We make black white and white black. We trifle away serious things. And we are serious over trifles. All for what? In order to appear to be what we are not. We are masqueraders. Words are the tools of our burglary. Words are the cant of our religion. Words are the sophistry of our law. Words are the fog we lose our way in. We'd be safe if it wasn't for words. Words are our peril. Words are the obstacles in the way. If you want to be understood dont talk. Whatever you have to say, dont trust it to words. Try not to try. Cut loose. Throw the reins on their necks. I see many books. And yet there is only one book. I see the broad highway and the countless journeyers. Where are they all going? The girl looks at herself in the glass. She wants to be pretty. A little paint and powder is added here and there. A few words are added here and there. It's all the same thing. You bribe, steal, seduce. You make use of words not for the purpose of being true but for the purpose of being beautiful.



## COLLECTS

Show: that's what you want. Distinction: that's what you want. To be considered clever. To be a best seller. To go into many editions. To be invited to lecture in colleges. To be asked to write for the magazines. To be in demand. That's what you use words for. So as to be listed in the literary four hundred. So as to be set apart somehow. You want to be extraordinary. It has got so the writer stands above and condescends. He don't stand below and look up. He regards the people as pawns. He'll use them in the game. But he won't concede their equality. He plans for so much a year. He figures at receptions. The colleges give him titles. He dont want to be average. He wants to be exceptional. So he tries to write. He gives his writing little pulls and twists so as to adjust it to the market. He takes words off here and puts words on there because he wants his disguise to be complete and impressive. Go look at the books in libraries. They are the endless roster of the dead. Most men bury themselves in books. Only occasionally does a man resurrect himself in a book. He makes his writing the parade. It marches with brass bands. Everybody knows it's coming. And everybody knows of it after it's gone. But nothing can make it live. Active as it seems to be it's still a burial. You who have tried so hard and have not succeeded may yet learn that he only succeeds who dont try at all. When you try—that means that you're up against it. When you've got to engineer. When you've got to watch your ps and qs. When you're afraid you'll not know how to turn a sudden corner. Then

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you're no use. Then you're firing in the air. You're to discover how to win without caring whether you win or lose. You're to find out that you'll arrive without worrying over the process. He is surest who dont ask for pledges. Words are a fatality. You writers who are trying to write.

You writers who are trying to write. You who'd do anything rather than be thought of no importance. You who'd murder the language or rape it or rob it or do anything to it rather than not make your point. You: what have I to say to you? Just what I have been saying. Go on with your dance. Get what you can out of the disgraceful scramble. Poke your heads into the slop trough. Let me paraphrase the man who advised his boy to get money. Make books. Honestly if you can. But make books. Try for points. If you cant make them on the square make them on the foul. Try to write. Dont try to think. Dont try to love. Dont try to serve. Try to write. Get a reputaion. Never mind your character. Do everything you can to convince everybody that you are what you know you are not. A man has to make a living. Therefore he has to do what he has to do to get it. So you have to be notorious. Therefore you have to do what you have to do to get notoriety. If you have to murder your mother to get success murder your mother. What's one mother to one success? If you have to starve children in factories to get success starve children. What are a few children out of so many? You are the spokesman of life and death. You can be hired for so

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much per to aid and abet the orthodoxies. Sell your soul. What is one soul, even if it's your soul, to one success? Your words. You can turn them into nugget values. You can set a high figure on them. And you can hypnotize the purchaser. Not a word without pay. This is a world and a time of bargain and sale. Make the world pay. Watch the market. See what it wants. Give it that. Try to conform. Try to write not your soul's words or your heart's words but trade's words. Give the verbal stock market all the preferences. Everybody else sells whatever he can. You have words. Words are your only treasure. Why shouldn't you sell words? And you will sell the words that are according to fashion not the words that are according to truth. Just as the rhyming lilted poets write the words not of faith but of formula. If the issue is between the rules and the exception the rule has to go. Write book words. And write pretty words. Even if the ugly word says more than the pretty word choose the pretty word. Be an artist. Work for the art result. Whatever you do, don't work for the human result. Keep your eye on alphabets and words and sentences. Don't let your eye wander off to life. If you give your spirit any liberties it's liable to play the bull in the china shop and smash your fine wares into a tragic litter. You want to know whether I'd seriously advise such treason. I say yes. Why not? You are an artist. You are not a man. You want me to price you by art standards. You don't want me to price you by human standards. The art standard might just as well be crooked as

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straight. It might just as well be a whore as a woman. It might just as well grovel and snuff and wallow as aspire and soar. The crook says: Dont judge me by the human standards. He wants to be judged by the crook standards. And from the crook standards why shouldn't a crook be a crook? The writer says: Dont judge me by the human standards. He wants to be judged by the writer standards. And from the writer standard why shouldn't a writer be a writer? Artist or crook. Crook or artist. It's the same. People think it wrong to steal money. But they dont think it wrong to steal words. The only word that belongs to the writer is the word that belongs where it's put. If it dont belong there then it's stolen. It's far worse to play false with words than to play false with money. Money? The next dollar may purify the money account. Words? Words may be prostituted forever. But dont let that discourage you. Make good even if you have to make bad. I cant see any other way out for you. Let the worst in you do its best for you. Dont be too squeamish. Remember that it's all dirty business anyway. Every step you take is a surrender. Down, down, into bottomless confusions you sink yourself. You haven't grown into art. You have built yourself into art. You haven't written out of people and life. You have written out of scholars and books. You have committed in words all the felonies of the calendar. But because they are words you haven't felt guilty. You say: They are only words. Why should a man be expected to be scrupulous with words? You might as well say

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of love: Love is only love. And you might as well ask: Why should a man be expected to be scrupulous with love? If the right word pays use it. But if it's more profitable to use the wrong word, use that. You express every horror of the white slave traffic. But what shall we say of the word slave traffic? There are houses of bondage. And there are books of bondage. Writers say words. But only a writer rare among writers says the word. Who is the criminal? The man who steals goods or the man who violates a thought. What are you doing with words? Giving them to life or giving them to death? Making them counterfeit or keeping them genuine? Not trying to get life from words? But rather giving life to words? You merchants in words. You traders of dreams. You who are always trying for art but who never try for love. You who always estheticise with the elect but refuse to fraternize with the crowd. You who go the way the wind blows. You who yield to art the tribute of life instead of exacting for life the tribute of art. You who are the climbers. You who would give up your souls for a phrase. You who would rather write a pretty sentence. You who would rather have a style. You who would rather be classified with the intellectuals. You who whatever you are beg, borrow or steal your way into eminence. You distorters of scripture. You criminals of words. You parricides of gospels. You executioners of discovery. You smotherers of freedom. You writers who are trying to write.

You writers who are trying to write. Stop try-

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ing to write. Then you can write. Live. Let the writing take care of itself. Trust yourselves to moods. Trust yourselves to words. Trust yourselves to what may happen. Then something worth while will turn up. The man who argues about his sins is sick. The artist who argues about his technique is sick. That accounts for all the dead books. A man who's busy telling a story is spending no time wondering how his English is. I wouldn't advise you to study to be an artist? No. I'd rather have you study not to be an artist. If you'll only let yourself alone your art will come. And if you'll only let your art alone your life will come. In that perfect result your spirit will triumph. But if you interfere with the fine balance either way you'll nullify the victory. Sometimes when I see all the liars of the world I wish all the books might have remained unwritten. But sometimes when I read a great book I see how even all the little books are excused. The man who tries to live generally dies. But the man who is indifferent to life becomes immortal. The super man is the man who's superior to life or death. The super book is the book that's superior to technique. The super merchant is the merchant who's superior to buying and selling. Super writing is the writing that's superior to authorship. You are not to be curious about writing. You are to just write. You are not to be curious about the reward. You are to just take what comes. If you're prosperous you're to ask: What's wrong with me? And if you're a failure you're to ask: Do I deserve such honor? You are not to say:

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I'll put a book into my life. You're to say: I'll put a life into my book. You are not to produce a work of art. You are to produce a work of life. You may have to give up your best adjectives. Or maybe your largest nouns. Or maybe a virile verb or two. To get what? To get life. You've got to give up everything to get life. The whole language if necessary. The whole fabric of delicate grace. All the flowers of speech. All the rhymes and lilt. All the niceties of manner and the assurances of routine. They must all go. All effort must go. You've not only got to be free of the alphabet. And not only free of the traditions. And not only free of the cliques. But you've got to be free of effort. You've got to cease trying. You've got to get where you have stopped caring or not caring. My call is for indifference. I say you are not to go round humble about what you don't do and proud about what you do do. Life don't call for arguers and hairsplitters. Do what you can't help doing. Refuse to do what you can help doing. Ease up on your nerves and your ambitions. Desire is richest in the absence of desire. A man's lungs don't ask any questions. They just breathe. His feet walk. His eyes open and shut. Shall a man's art do less? Shall it consume itself in quibbles? Shall it dress itself according to the mode? Or shall it stay in rags? You can't have both things. So which will you have? You can't advance and retreat at the same time. So which will you do? Can you imagine yourself neither alive nor dead? Can you see yourself neither anxious nor not anxious? Can you conceive of yourself as staking all and stak-

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ing nothing on the survival of a book? No man can become an artist short of that. No artist can become a man short of that. Nirvana to technique. Oblivion to rules and traditions. Letting the soul retreat to nebula every time it wishes to advance to creation. Starting all over again with every word. Making every word again the first word. Are you to refrain from scheming? Yes. You are to let the waters flow unto their normal levels. You are to let the law take its course. The law of words. The law of books. A man may get into the way of looking too much into himself. A book may have a man's fault. It too may brood too much. Most every book that ever tried to be a book has gone bankrupt. And most every book that didn't worry whether it was a book or not has won a place in the human circle. It's an awful thing for a man to want to be good. It's as awful as for a man to want to be bad. It's an awful thing for a man's style to want to be a book. It's as awful for a man's book to want to be a style. It's terrible to want to be the worst man in the world. But it's far more terrible to want to be the best man in the world. You writers who try: you must keep on trying till you get beyond trying. The man who tries: he may sell out: he may go into the market with his equity. But the man who's got past trying: he's unshakably defiant. You fraud rhymers. You humbug versifiers. You dictionary hunters. You users of crooked words for straight. You professors and poets. I call on you to stop trying. I don't want to hear any more of your claims. I only want to hear of your love. I



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dont want you to waste your time naming yourselves. I dont care what you are called. I am only interested in what you are. You make me sick trying to be clever. Now make me well not trying to be dull. I'm as tired seeing you try to write as I'd be seeing you trying not to write. I want you to quit. I want you to get where you couldn't sell if there was a buyer and where no one else could buy if there was a seller. I want to see you who have been in verbal bond set spirit free. I want to see you who have given up all the life you know for words willing to give up every word you know for life. You writers who are trying to write.

Every seed counts in the harvest:

In the harvests of orchards and fields: in the harvests of  
bodies and souls:

In the harvests of the topless years: in the harvests of the  
bottomless spaces:

In the harvests of cruelty and war: in the harvests of fires  
and frosts:

In the harvests we win in our love: in the harvests we lose  
in our hate:

In the harvests that are swept into graves: in the harvests  
that finish before they begin:

There is no better or worse in the harvests: all counts for  
all in all:

Every seed counts in the harvest.

## ALL THE ENGINEERS PERISHED

All the engineers perished. The ship went down. Some were saved. Some were lost. The rich were mostly saved. The poor were mostly lost. But the engineers: they all drowned. They all stuck to their posts. Not one of them lived to tell how the rest died. They had no chance to tell the world about each other. How heroic they were. How they nonchalantly smoked their pipes as they stood waist deep in water. How they cracked jokes to the last. They just stayed below. They took their medicine. They may have squealed. God knows. But they didn't run. They kept the lights burning as long as their hearts kept beating. Who has told their story? Let me tell it. While you are busy with the somebodies let me speak of the nobodies. While you are celebrating the people with names let me celebrate the people who have no names. While you are trying to estimate how much money went down in the cabin let me try to figure how much manhood went down in the engine room. While you are counting up the gods who are not men let me count up the men who are gods. It may be easy to die with the band playing and the world looking on. But to die in the stillness with no one looking on may be a bit more solemn. I'm not against dying. Dying has its points. Dying may be the surest way to life. Nor am I against living. Living too has things to be said for it. Living may be the noblest way to death. But I want to say things

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about these men and boys I never saw. I want to say things about all the men and boys I have never seen. The world over, everywhere, yellow or black or white; the men and boys. I want to call the attention of forgetful people to the crowd. The crowd itself forgets the crowd. It was sad to have the crew die. It was sad to have the steerage bunch die locked in a hole. But that wasn't half as sad as to have the crowd on shore more curious about the millionaires who died than about the paupers who died. I'm not drawing lines on heroes. I'm not worrying about heroes anyway. I'm thinking of people. My heart is drawn to people. It don't hurt what they wear. Let them wear velvet or canvas. Do you suppose I care whether they're bad or good? Rich or poor, they're people. Every man belongs somewhere in the crowd. Do you suppose I care whether he's at the top or the bottom? When the boat went to pot people went with it. Some because they had to. Some because they chose to. I can't separate the heroes from the cowards. So I accept them all as people. When I read of the fifty engineers that perished I felt as if fifty gods had been snuffed out. People talk of a man or two or of a few dozen men as if their death was only a soso bit of news. To me dying seems sense enough. I can see how we might get used to dying and enjoy it. But we shouldn't waste people. Our civilization is jealous of property and prodigal of people. I can't see such waste with equanimity. I want to save people. There's such use for people. They are so precious. They are our brothers. I want my broth-

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ers. I dont like you to drown them cruelly in the sea. I dont want you to destroy them in railroad disasters. I hate your wars. They rob me of my people. What do I care about your balance in bank? One man's life is worth all balances in bank. Even a mean man's life? Yes. Any man's life. I pass the derelicts on the street. They are thrown aside. They have no right in the stream. If they raise a protest they are called to order. The police tell them to move on. And the priests do too. And the statesmen. The stores and the factories say move on. There's no place for them to rest. They're hounded across the earth. So the engineers perished. No one said much about it. They took the engineers for granted. Did they take anyone else for granted? They always take the poor for granted. They expect them to be heroes. And they expect them to die without a growl. If they growl they are in a panic. If they say: You die too, they are ungrateful. If they refuse to die they are set down for cowards. Or maybe killed. They do die. They are sacrificed everywhere. They give up their lives for everybody and for each other. Trainmen. Sailors. Soldiers. They are all set up to be shot at or starved. The women who scrub the floors. The mothers who wash our clothes. They die for us. These engineers died for us. Fifty-three of them. Gods who kept a world moving. Gods who stood by the law. Laborers keep our world going. They're always dying for us. Dying for everybody. With no decoration. No medals or shoulder straps. Their names dont get into the papers. They get no

## ALL THE ENGINEERS PERISHED

hero badges. Poems are not written to them. No one says: He died like a gentleman. No. Laborers are so busy dying like men they have no time to die like gentlemen. They just get a little line or two when the time comes. All the engineers perished. That sort of a line. Just a statistical record without adjectives. Just a farewell without gunfire. Just a shrug of the shoulders. Three hundred nobodies were buried in a mine. Three hundred mere men. Three hundred dirty Italians perhaps. Three hundred nobodies the slaves of one somebody. Were they heroes? No one cares. No one even asks. The world is not curious. They take care of the world. Like the gods. They do everything. They are the providence of all alike loafers and workers. But they remain anonymous. They live a little while and die for good. They are not names. They are numbers. It's not John this or Stephen that or William the other. It's twelve men. The story don't list them. The story says: Twenty died. The next day the story says: Two more have died of their wounds. Nobodies. Died to save you and me. And yet they are despised. Not buried in consecrated ground. Though consecrating the ground they are buried in. Or the sea. The nondescript atoms of destiny. Lost in the cosmic shuffle. My brothers. My lovers. Given to the sea when it was not hungry and asked nothing. My darling comrades. Stolen from me when I had a right to them. I tried not to see the big letters in the paper. But it was too plain to be avoided. All the gods of the machine went down. All the engineers perished.

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All the engineers perished. All the coal miners were choked to death. All the children took sick in the factories. All the girls in stores fainted and had to be sent home. While you've been looking for heroes I've been looking for women and men. Women and men are good enough for me. Being a man or a woman is far harder than being a hero. I can find you heroes but they are growing scarce. The heroes are not improving any. But the men and women are improving all the time. The heroes are on top. They dance on the roofs of the world. But the men and women are the foundations. They are not heroes. They are men and women. When things happen they are of course scared. All brave people are scared in danger. Only the cowards have no fear. Only the blind and deaf and loveless are heroes. A man has a right to be scared. And a woman. That don't mean that they run or do anything shameful or ridiculous. It only means that they know what they're up against. But they stay where they belong. They take care of things. Of this world. They remain in the shadows. Work on horror-struck in the darkness. Face death trying to beg off in the dead of the night. The men and women. Who are you who build on men and women? Who put your palaces on their backs? Who make them carry your burdens? Who suck them dry? You are heroes. You strut in spectacular places. You are heroes. But you rob them while they sleep. You are heroes. But you hit them in the back. You are heroes. But you lock them in the steerage and let them drown in a box. Yes, you lock them in

## ALL THE ENGINEERS PERISHED

the steerage. You have made the labor world a steerage. You have locked all the laborers in. They live and die without hope. They are jailed in your profits. Your incomes turn the key in the door. How can they get out? Your world is for the cabins. There are no boats for the steerage. The boats are for those who live without working not for those who work without living. No poor man has a right to live. Existing should satisfy him. This is not a world of live and let live. It's a world of live and let die. The heroes own the world that the people make. It takes time to be a hero. People have no time. They must work. How could the heroes be heroes if the people stopped working? So the people are not heroes. They're only men and women. They dont ornament the world. They just feed it. They just nurse it along through its sicknesses. They just do everything. Men and women are the ground the heroes walk over. They are the treasure all the incomes are drawn from. They are the ragtag and bobtail who are everything and count for nothing. The heroes got the band playing. No band plays for men and women. A princess in England had a baby. Parliament was about to congratulate her. Keir Hardie said: Yes, do it. But he also said: Let's condole with the widows and childrens of the miners who were blown to death to-day. Hardie had no taste. They all told him so. The papers told him so. And the em pees. And the priests of the church. And scholars in colleges. They agreed that Hardie had no sense of decorum. For they were congratulating a hero. A



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princess mother. But he was only condoling with men and women. What do a hundred mere men miners amount to compared with one titled baby hero? This world is not made for men and women. It's made for heroes. It's true it's made by men and women. But that's no matter. Making a world is one thing. I can see that. Letting the fellow who didn't make it possess himself of it. Dont you see that's another thing? Resisting his invasion would be treason. Every man can see that too. Dont you see it? If you fight for what dont belong to you you are a hero. If you fight for what does belong to you you are a coward. How could a bricklayer be a hero? Why, the very word is against it. Bricklayer. How could such a word describe a hero? But gentleman. Ah! that's a word now. That's the real thing. It's natural for a gentleman to be a hero. But no man could accomplish such a distinction. A man would first have to become a gentleman before he could in turn become a hero. So the men have given it up. And the women. They take a back seat. They retire before the grandeur of an impossible reputation. They just keep on doing what they have always done. They keep on working and dying. They go down in ships. They starve. They get maimed by machinery. They look heavy and stunned. They are stubborn. They make good in their jobs. But they are never mistaken for heroes. No one points them out on the street for heroes. They bob along like ordinary atoms. Like ordinary sunlight. Like ordinary air and water. They are not visited by the

## ALL THE ENGINEERS PERISHED

great or asked to serve on committees. They just stay ordinary. They just remain like ordinary food and shelter. Like ordinary love and hate. Like ordinary gods. And after a while they perish. They all perish. Like the engineers. Doing last what they did first. Keeping their appointments. They die ordinary just as they lived ordinary. Not even aspiring to be heroes. Not referred to as honorable misses and misters anybody at all. Not spoken of as though a man or a woman was dead. Spoken of as if a number was wiped off the slate. These men and women who perish being only men and women. Just as the engineers who perished were only engineers.

All the engineers perished. Did you ever meet a hero? I have met heroes. But they never wore medals or labels. Did you ever meet a martyr who was conscious of martyrdom? I have met martyrs. But they never knew who they were. And I never told them. Heroes dont hunt for you. You have to hunt for them. The hero is not the sun. The hero is an atom in the sun. If light was conscious of being light it would cease to be light. I know countless heroes. But they never say anything about heroism. Life is not heroism. Life is life. One man has more life than another man. He is not better than other men. He is only more alive. He weighs more. He looks farther. But he is no hero. A man is affronted if you call him a hero. He would rather just be a man. I think of a certain man. He was nonchalantly the most effective man I ever met. Was he a hero? He never went anywhere the-

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atrically to do anything. He just stayed where he was and acted his part. The engineers just stayed where they were and acted their part. As the simplest workman does. As the scavengers do. Just acted their part. Can a god do more? Should a man do less? I don't say there are no heroes. I say they are countless. You see the hero in the exception. I see the hero in the rule. My hero never flourishes a whip. I see him serving. Let my hero stop serving and he abdicates. Don't believe anything the hero tells you about himself. Sure things don't insist on their reality. Every man has his place. Do you call a man a hero for staying in his place? If I heard anybody call me a hero I'd begin to suspect myself. I'd take my size and shape over again. I'd go forty days into the wilderness. I'd bury myself in the slums. I'd want to get away. To be where I'd escape the measurer. I see the heroes everywhere. But I see no hero. I see people in their places everywhere. Often most beautifully in hideous places. Often most hideously in beautiful places. Like the engineers they all serve. Like the engineers they will all finally perish. Like the engineers they will all reappear somewhere again. Heroes? The heroes work underground and overhead unheralded and unseen. The heroes make our shoes. They work in the trenches. They nurse babies. They take care of the world. They make it dirty. And they clean it up. They are its crowd. They are the mobs. They are the herd. They are the mass. They are all always called by all names but their real names. They are called dangerous. But if it was not for

## ALL THE ENGINEERS PERISHED

them nobody would be safe. They are called ugly. But if it was not for them nobody would be graceful. They are called stupid. But if it was not for them nobody would be enlightened. They are the eclipsed, the obscured, the submerged. But if it was not for them nobody would be a genius. And you sometimes speak of them as cowards. But if it was not for them nobody would be brave. You repeat it often enough as a matter of course that if it was not for the light there would be no shadow. Let me say it once for all the other way. That if it was not for the shadow there would be no light. I'm glad. I look everywhere. I discover no hero. I look everywhere. I never fail to discover heroes. All the engineers perished.

I dont know what it is: I dont know where it leads me: I  
go on and on:

Whether along the common road or into the wilderness, I  
follow: I go on and on:

The days are as mysterious as the nights: and the years:  
they baffle me: I go on and on:

Something persuades me: something I like the feel of: it is  
veiled but sure: I go on and on:

I dont know what it is: I dont know where it leads me:  
I go on and on.

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

What are you doing for the cause? Not for yourself. For all. Not to keep yourself going. To keep the race going. What are you doing for to-morrow that you didn't do yesterday for to-day? I dont say for what cause. I say for any cause. I dont ask you what you are doing with tasks I might set you. I ask what you are doing with tasks that you yourself set. I know what you do in eating and working at your trade and sleeping at night. You do that in order not to die. Everybody does that. I ask you what you are doing in order to live. I know what you say. I read what you write. I have heard your promises. But this is not enough. This hardly tells me what I want to learn. I know what you do with what you have to do. I want to know what you do with what you dont have to do. I can see how your pay may make you think. I want to know how you make your pay think. In short, I know what you do as a slave. What I want to find out is what you do as a master. Did I say master? Yes. Master of yourself. I never feel like accusing anybody. Like sitting in judgment on anybody. Down in my heart I acknowledge the last compassion. Rather anything than that I should forget your priority. Every man somehow belongs first to himself. Do I say that? Yes. Then I say something more. He also belongs first to the race. He stands for personality. There he's for himself. He stands for service and progress. There he stands for the

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race. I cant interpret his moods or his impulses. I can guess them. But their interior purport is beyond the reach of my vision. That is why I ask: What are you doing for the cause? And that is why I say: I shall not say what cause. The cause has done everything for you. What are you doing for it? In all the past it has been doing something for you. Now you have come. You have inherited its accumulations. What are you doing for it? I hear you say you dont see what you've got to be thankful for. I dont charge you with ingratitude. I only ask whether you are grateful. I dont even say you should do anything for the cause. I only remind you of what the cause has done for you. I dont ask you whether you have done your duty. I only ask you whether you feel that you have a duty. I'm not presenting a bill to you. I only ask whether you owe a bill. The cause has run an account with you. Do you run an account with the cause? Again you ask: What cause? And again I say: I wont name the cause. That which is the holy of holies to you. That is your cause. That which you say must come before what you put into your belly and on your back. That is your cause. That which demands sacrifice. That which insists upon its initial sanctity. That which persuades you more than anything else. That is the cause. I dont suggest the cause to you. You suggest it to me. Therefore I have the right to ask you that question which your own confession leads up to. You dont have to answer to me for it. You have to answer to your life for it. There's no appeal from the cause. It's the

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last court. It says the closing word. What can you say when you have defaulted? When you have done nothing for the cause? When you have simply existed and not lived? No man owes anything to a world to which he cant feel related. If you are an alien. If you are a cosmic vagrant. If you are lost. If you think of yourself as debris. Then you are not responsible. Then I dont wonder that you deny your heritage. But if in any rapt moment of inspiration you but once catch the face between the clouds you are from that time the servant of the eternal. Then there's no excuse for pettifogging. Then you can no longer disavow your responsibility. What are you doing for the cause? For the beyond? For the next step? Are you giving up anything for it? Or are you asking it to give up something for you? Do you pray to it for favors? Do you want cash down? Or are you willing your grandchildren should collect? Do you sell the cause like you sell goods? And if it's profitable do you bless it? And if it's profitless do you curse it? When I ask: What have you done for the cause? I dont refer to anything that you've had visible pay for. I refer to something that there'll never be any visible pay for. The cause is always in the darkness ahead. It's always the path unbroken. It's always the rough of fate. It's always the veil. Always the curtain. Always the shrouding mystery. Do you serve it for pay or work for it with love? Do you want to get life from it or do you give life to get it? One man says God. Another man says Cause. Any name might be any other



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name so it means the same thing. When I see what you do or dont do I know whether you are only a border on the earth or whether the earth is your home. I know whether you are a brother among comrades or a chance acquaintance among enemies. What are you doing for the cause?

You are doing nothing for the cause. You are making a living. But you are not making life. You are personal. You have not surcharged yourself with the general inspirations. Your motive is profit not service. You want to get ahead no matter how. You dont want to stay behind no matter why. Let anybody suffer. You mean to rejoice. You dont make way for the world. The world makes way for you. Service is not master. Profit is master. Downing someone else. Making good because someone else makes bad. That is your code. Staying alive no matter who goes dead. Sponging on life. Loafing on others. Taking anything you can any way you can get it. Accepting none of the odium of the cause. Shrinking from anathema. Avoiding unpopular opinions. Letting anyone do the work of progress. You doing nothing. That's the code. Others queer themselves for an idea. Do you? Anything but that. You pat them on the back. But you sneak the price. You encourage them to go on. But you dont go on with them. You scab on the revolution. They put up their lives. You put up nothing. They die that you may live. You live that they may die. It's bad enough to scab on the body. But it's infinitely worse to scab on the soul. You are strike breakers. You undersell. Just as you undertalk. Just

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING—

as you underspend. Just as you underact. You hear the cause defamed and say nothing. When the battle is on you are nowhere to be found. You dont even carry water. You scab on your brother. You scab on your age. You are the revolutionist gone to wood. There's no flower on your stem. You let the others do the fighting. But you claim your share of the spoils. You say: These theories will be all right some time. But that some time will never be your time. My ears know your voice. I can tell when you are around though you say nothing. Little as you know it, I follow you through all the intricacies of your psychic retreats. Do you think you can cover your tracks? Right or left, up or down, in or out, across or around: wherever you go I tally you. Every step you take is within my horizon. Do you resent my inevitable attendance? You say: I mean the same thing you do. And you say: I am with you, only not so fast. You say: You can count on me, too, but not too soon. You say: You can depend upon my good will, but not too far. You've always some reason for holding back. Some reason for not putting up money or service. Some reason for withholding your confession. Somebody is always too violent for you. Too extreme. Too exacting. Too inevitable. You want at the same time to be and not to be. You let other men queer themselves for you. You see them lose their reputations. You know they put their livings in the scale for the cause. But you dont raise a finger to help them. You hug your poor life as if it was rich. You husband your prostituted

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treasure as if it was righteous. You let them work for all while you work for yourself. You are the master scab. You are the scab left over after all the other scabs have been beaten. And you not only scab on your contemporaries. You scab on your grandchildren. You scab on the future. You are sold out. You are pinkertoned. You have betrayed the crowd. You are one thing when you think and another thing when you live. You are one thing in what the world knows you for and another thing in what you know yourself for. You are the shot from the rear. Our enemies challenge us face to face. But you knife us in the dark. You are the margin of faithless revolution. You are the interior force which flings us into the clutches of reaction. I meet you every day I live. You pat me on the back. You congratulate me. You do everything but avow me. You are half a revolutionist minus a whole revolutionist. You dont scab the labor market. You scab civilization. You scab the army on the march. You create the panic of battle. You put the poison in the soup. You take all and give nothing. You beg what you cant borrow. You borrow what you dont want to steal. You steal what you dont mean to work for. You are the scab of the revolution. You do nothing for the cause.

What are you doing for the cause? You do everything for the cause. You work for the cause as the sun sheds light. You dont hunt places in which to hide yourself away. You hunt the open and there face the world. You dont wait to hear someone else say the word first.

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING—

You say it. You dont ask anybody to try the water to see if it's cold. You try it. And you dont care if it is cold. You're as ready to spend your last as your first cent. Some people are always wondering what other people will give them. Some people are always wondering what they'll give other people. But the lover dont argue about himself. He loves. Nor do givers argue about themselves. They give. They are niagaras of benefaction. They dont know it themselves. They have to be reminded of it. Nothing so surprises a great man as the idea that he amounts to anything. Nothing so startles the generous man as the idea that he is liberal. Nothing seems so impossible to the hero as the idea that he is courageous. My heart has no shall I or shall I not. I am not allowed to play any yes and no game with myself. Listen to what I say. Down in me where I'm deepest there's no hissing snake's-nest of alternatives. Run your knives clear through me and I wouldn't do but the one thing. Every drop of my blood flows the one way. Down over that steep cliff goes all my love, which is all my life. I never spend a minute trying to find out what my duty is. There is no duty. I'm just driven. There is no duty. I just keep on. When I say cause I say sun and stars and earth and air and food. I say love and those I love. I say that which makes life and is made by life. If I hesitated an instant there would be no cause again. There would be only empty space and hourless time. If I drew back one inch order would revert to chaos. That which is not worth all is worth

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nothing. If I said I'll see I'd be lost. If the tides said they'd see. If the storm said it'd see. If yesterday said to to-morrow that it'd see. If birth said to being born that it'd see. If dying said to death it'd see. If Etna's fires said they'd see. If the ices of the north said they'd see. If a fragment of an atom said it'd see. It'd be the same as if I'd say I'll see when my name is called. If I left it to my purse to see. If I left it to my properties to see. If I left it to my prospects or my privileges to see. Then I'd not see at all. I'd be stone blind. If I said that the cry of the scab is the voice of God. If I said that the chorus of the dollars is the psalm of paradise. If I said that the prayer of apology is the savior of souls. Then I'd not hear at all. I'd be stone deaf. What are you doing for the cause? Do I want you to be a fool for the cause? Yes. That's the only way you can be wise for yourself. Do I want you to give up facts for dreams? Yes. That's the only way you can turn dreams into facts. Do I want you to give everything to the poor? Yes. That's the only way you can become rich to the crowd. I dont want you to put your hand into your pocket and take it out empty. I dont want you to put thought into your brain and take it out empty. I dont want you to put love ino your heart and take it out empty. I don't want you to say to the cause: I'll think it dont want you to say to the cause: I'll think it out over night. I dont want you to say: I may help some but dont expect too much of me. I dont want you to say: I'll ask my wife or my husband or my father or my mother or somebody. I

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING—

dont even want you to ask your own spirit. I want you to act. I want you to answer before the question is put. I want you to spring before the challenge is issued. I want you to warm up before the fire is lit. Do I want you to go out cold nights when you might stay home and be comfortable? Yes. More than that. Do I want you to take your fortune in your hands and go do something impossible? Yes. More than that. Do I want you to choose misery maybe in place of joy? Yes. More than that. Do I want you to stake your life on the issue? Yes. More than that. I want you to do more than all that. I want you to do more than debate and quarrel and wonder and waver even if you decide right in the end. I want you to go on as if you had nothing to do with proceeding: I want you to surrender as if you had nothing to do with yielding. I dont want you to wait till you are called. I want you to call. Whenever anything goes short: I want you to step into the gap. I dont want you to ask: How can I? I want you to say: I couldn't do anything else. What are you doing for the cause?

They talk about the rock of ages: there is no rock of ages:  
there are only the people:

If I build on the people I build true for always: if I build  
on myself I build on the shifting sand:

There is no rock of ages: there is only the human heart:  
there is only love:

If I build on the heart, on love, I build for always: if I build  
on the body, on hate, I build on the shifting sand.

## I CLAIM EVERYTHING

I claim everything for the people. And everything is not too much. The individual has got to learn to say: I am the people. And the people have got to learn to say: We are the individual. Everything springs from the people. Everything goes back to the people. I'm not interested in suns. I'm interested in people. Mountains and moons and trees have no meaning to me until they are peopled. Your philosophies and dreams are insignificant till they are peopled. I know nothing but people. I comprehend nothing but people. If you sing a song I hear people in it. If you paint a picture I see people in it. If I didn't hear the people or see the people I might as well be deaf and blind. If you tell me there are so many rivers in a country or so many acres of ground and ask me: What do you think of that? I say: I dont think of that: I only think of people. If you name the great men to me and ask: What do you make of them? I answer: I make nothing of them: I make everything of the people. If you ask me: What do you read in the book? I reply: I read the people in the book. I am at home where people are. I am alien where people are not. There's no use trying to get me to approve of anything that dont include the people. That which dont include the people is empty. Just as a man's heart if it does not include the people is void. I am drunk with the crowd. I am bathed in the mass. I give myself to the common stream. I dont want to be



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found somewhere off alone. I want to be lost somewhere off alone. I want to be lost somewhere in the crowd. I never feel so pinioned as when I'm alone. I never feel so free as when I'm in the crowd. The crowd is my father and mother. My eyes are not enthralled by sunsets and seastorms. I want people: only people. Let me have people and I'm happy. Deny me people and I'm defeated. Rich as a man's soul may be in its own right a man's soul is incomputably richer in the people's right. Every time I wander from the people I feel as if I am choosing a vacuum for my inheritance. Dont you see how it is? I draw all my checks on the people. My personal signature is not valid. I have no account with myself. I can never overdraw my account with the people. You say: God said: Let there be light. I say: The people say: Let there be light. You talk about inferior people and superior people. I see no superior people and no inferior people. I see only people. When I say people I dont say good and bad. No: nor geniuses nor fools. No: nor the saved and the damned. No. When I say people I only mean people. I dont mean whites or blacks or Hindus or Americans. I mean people. If I say that the world belongs to people I don't mean a few owning for all or all owning for a few but all owning for all. If I say the people are divine I dont mean divine people. No. I only mean people. The people are divine but there are no divine people. So when I say I claim everything for the people I dont mean everything with exceptions. I mean everything without exception. I

## I CLAIM EVERYTHING—

dont owe the good people as separated from the bad people. I owe both. And I owe the bad people more than I owe the good people. For the good people have been good for themselves. And the bad people have been bad for me. I claim everything for the people because the people are everything. I make no claims for the green grass and earthquakes and shipwrecks and arts and the will of the majority. Such incidents are secondary. My claims are all for the people. After you give me the people I have everything else. But if you refuse me the people then I have nothing at all. If your theories dont give me the people. Or your governments. Or your sciences. Or your vast cities. Or anything you build or pride yourselves upon. If they dont give me the people they are a fraud against which I revolt. But if they give me the people then I return you a receipt in full. I want people. I'm willing to go without anything. Without what you poorly call riches. Without what you weakly call power. Without what you obscurely call distinction. I'm willing to go without all that if you'll only give me people. Any people. The rough and tumble average. The nonchalant non-elect. The noisy quiet brutal kind crowd. Though I am dashed to death against its rocky shores I surrender myself without equivocation to the furious sea. Everything is not too much. I claim everything for the people.

You claim nothing for the people. Nothing is not too little for the people. You lock your doors to keep the people out. You lock your heart to keep yourself in. You say dollars. I say peo-

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ple. You say kings and Presidents. I say people. You say the sculpture of Greece, the paintings of Italy, the music of Germany. I say people. You say: But for them. I say: But for these. You point out a few figures lost in the distance. I direct you to the crowd at your elbow. You say one and another. You say somebody. I say all. You say fame. Intermediaries. Middlemen. Interpreters. I say people. You are eminent for a while by reason of what you take. But I say no one can be eminent for good except by reason of what he gives. You think the people need saviors. I say the saviors need people. The people make money for you. You spend money for the people. The people make so that you may have. You don't make so that people may have. You give me leaders. I give you people. You say the leaders lead. I say the leaders follow. That the people lead. Leaders would be useless without people. People would still be people without leaders. You say brain should be paid extra. I say nothing should be paid extra. That pay should not be for talent but for need. What a man needs. That should be his pay. What a man contains. That should be what he gives. A witty man said: The more I see of men the more I think of dogs. I will say that in another way. The more I see of those you call the somebodies the more I think of those you call the nobodies. We live in an age of saviors. I am looking for an age of people. The saviors are multitudinous. The priest takes your soul. He's going to save your soul. The plutocrat takes your body. He's going to save your

## I CLAIM EVERYTHING—

body. You see, they're going to save you by destroying you not by fortifying you. So they seize the pictures to save art. And the operas and symphonies to save music. You are to be saved by being denied everything. If they gave you anything you'd be lost. They are safe from luxury no matter how much they have. You are in peril of luxury no matter how little you have. They fool you with their paraphernalia. You are awed not by their brains but by what they tell you of their brains. You take their word for it. You should take your life for it. You are willing they should enjoy for you. Should travel for you. Should eat and drink for you. Should play games for you. What have you for yourself? Resignation. Remember that text which has been immemorially the solace of the robber. The poor you have with you always. You must have the poor with you always because you must have the rich with you always. Who would save the poor if the rich didn't? And if the poor were not saved what would become of the rich? The great you have with you always. You must have the little with you always because you must have the big with you always. It wouldn't do to wipe out the distinctions. To fill in the gap. That chasm is kept impassable by the hand of providence. You cant live for yourselves. Someone must live for you. You cant live for yourself. You who dig in ditches. You who work in mills. Harry Thaw must live for you. You who eat at lunch counters. You cant live for yourself. The fellow who dines at the St. Regis: he must live for you. Every time you try

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to live for yourself some savior interferes to live for you. You've got to keep yourself thin to keep him fat. There's no other way to sustain the delicate balances of destiny. The church will live for your soul. The state will live for your body. You find all the saviors waiting to live for you. Insisting on living for you. Refusing to let you live for yourself. Taxing you to death to crown themselves for life. You have thought of the saviors dying that you might live. Think again. And you will see yourself dying that the saviors may live. My life is the people's life. I no more die for the people than the people die for me. Look the saviors straight in the face. Defy them. Refute them by an appeal to your own treasure. Every time by an appeal to your own treasure. Every time you save yourself you destroy a savior. Do you want to be saved by another? Better be damned by yourself than saved by another. What is the price of salvation? Your body and soul are the price. You are to give up everything. That is the price. Not give up everything to all. No. That would be a fair price. Give up everything to the saviors. That is the price. That is the pirate fee. What is the price of salvation? Your alleys and gutters and prostitutes and factories and premature death are the price. At every doorway stands a savior. He charges you for going in. He charges you for coming out. Profit is a savior. You pay its toll. Rent is a savior. You pay its toll. Interest is a savior. You pay its toll. What is left after you have settled with the saviors? The saviors are left. But nothing is left of you. Nothing is

## I CLAIM EVERYTHING—

not too little for the saviors. You claim nothing for the people.

I claim everything for the people. And everything is not too much. What do the people claim for themselves? So far they have claimed little. They have let the saviors give them religions. They have let the saviors give them economics. They have stood aside to let the saviors pass. Instead of making the saviors stand aside to let the people pass. The saviors have given them religions which were blasphemies. The saviors have given them economies which were robberies. The saviors have been. The people are to be. The people are next. Now the people will give the saviors religions which are reverent. And they will give the saviors economies which are justice. The saviors used to succeed. Now you may notice that the saviors fail. The saviors only succeed when the people fail. When the people succeed the saviors fail. Saviors belong with kings and owners and bosses. When the people at last object to being ruled or owned or bossed the saviors will disappear with the saved. The mendicant and the millionaire are symptoms of the same disease. The savior and the saved are symptoms of the same disease. The superior person and the inferior person are symptoms of the same disease. The capitalist and the laborer are symptoms of the same disease. They require only one treatment. You cant get one without the other. You cant ride yourself of one without the other. The people dont need saviors because they dont need to be saved. You cant save people for the same reason that you cant damn people. The

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people are people. That's the answer to all the saviors. The people are themselves enough answer. People intoxicate me. My eyes see people. (I dont acknowledge things.) Look for, find, abandon themselves, to people. Dont acknowledge saviors. Reach out to, are reached out from, people. Everywhere I meet the threatening saviors. Do you shrink in the mire till you can borrow wings to take you to heaven? I know the black in the people. But the black in the people is not the people. Even the white in the people is not the people. The hate or love in a man is not the man. The man is the man. The people are the people. It's stupid to say that. It's like saying a cloud is a cloud. It's like saying a star is a star. But what else can be said? Time and space are time and space. Can you damn or save time and space? The people are the people. Can you damn or save the people? You might as well tax the skies as tax a man. As well assume to save the sun for pay as save the people for pay. As well pretend to be the necessary middleman between Jupiter and the moon as between people and pople. I make the whole claim because I have the whole faith. And everything is not too much. I claim everything for the people.

I see what you see all around: the half lives lived: the  
cruel quarrels of brothers:

I see what you see: haven't I lived where the fight is thickest?

But I would have no hope of peace if I could not say: I  
guess it's all about love:

Just as a man with a woman and their child are just about  
love:

Just as passion is just about love and consecration is just  
about love:

Just so the brute is just about love and the man into whom  
he emerges is just about love:

I would miss the main point if I missed that: if I could  
see hell and not see heaven, I would miss the main point:

I guess it's all about love: I don't know what it's all about  
but I guess it's all about love.



## TO LEAVE NO DOOR UNOPENED

To leave no door unopened. To pass freely in and out. To leave no heart unopened. To leave no life unopened. To get everything between out of the way. To make it possible for desire to reach across the gap. That is your business and mine. That is what we owe ourselves and each other. To make light of boundary lines. To efface barriers. To abolish toll-gates. All civilization is the opening of doors. All art is the opening of doors. And science. It, too, is the opening of doors. We have been out of sight of each other. Too many of us sit in perpetual executive session. Most of us exclude. We dont include. We close ourselves in somewhere. We look down and up but we dont look face to face. Not because we dont trust others. Rather because we dont trust ourselves. We think the trouble is with them. The trouble is with us. We withdraw. We get away. Crawl into holes. Into incomes and fames. Crawl into them and draw the covers over. We dont welcome life. We shrink from it. We never keep open house. We live in prisons and we are our own jailers. We are not trying to live as big as we can but as little as we can. What are we after? You: what are you after? And I: what am I after? I say we must step out and around and over and under and across. We must do all we can to discredit what holds us down and keeps us in. It is not life but death for us to shrink from the alternatives of liberty. I give a free

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pass to the universe. For day and night. For always. For the suns and stars to walk in any time. For the seasons to come and go as they choose. That is, I declare myself wide open. I take all the shutters down. I put all the doors back on their hinges as far as they will go. I throw all keys away. Then I invite the world in. I say to the world: Possess yourself of me. I say to the world: I dont want to deny you anything. I want the world to take me at my word. And you, my brother: I want you to take me at my word. If life is a monastery then I choose death. If life is asceticism then I choose death. If life is classes and superiors and owners then I choose death. If life is a stockade. If life is the sacrifice of all to a few. If life is being blind and deaf and dumb. If life is living back of a high wall. If life is this sort of thing then I choose death. The path of life is not to the grave but to the cradle. The signal, the symbol, of life is not division but unity. What is the use of living if you cant be alive? Why should I hide in a hole when I should be a rover? Why should I keep myself out of the main currents of experience? Man from the start has been breaking loose from the drag of the dust. He has sometimes resorted to violent means to his end. He has dashed thrones to the earth and killed tyrants. He has gone to war. He has robbed his neighbor. He has so far not called his brother by his right name. He has lived inside himself. But that's only half a life. You live a whole life only when you live inside others as well as inside yourself. But with all his pausings and writhings

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he has helped himself along towards deliverance. For there is only one deliverance. The deliverance of a man to his brother. The unimpeded approach of one man to another. All time, all space, are for that. That is what time and space are. That is what civilization is. Getting acquainted. That is civilization. Mercilessly wiping out the last atom between. So that there is not only nothing to climb over but nothing to stumble over in passing to and fro. That is what it was and is and must hereafter all be for. Life. Art. Everything. It must all be for that. To get armies and navies and properties from between. If it was not all for that then it would all be for nothing. If it left that unachieved then it would leave life unachieved. If it is right for anything to remain between then I see no reason why everything you please should not remain between. Do you see a door anywhere? Throw it open wide. Do you see an interfering income or ambition anywhere? Throw it open wide. I do not say: Be gentle in doing it. I say: Throw it open: dont wait a minute: throw it open.

To leave no door unopened. Is there any short cut from a man to himself? Every time you shut a door you shut it on yourself. When you close one out you are one time shut in. When you close the people out you are millions of times shut in. You cant shut out without shutting in. Every dollar you lay away against others is laid away against yourself. The barrier you set up against the world. It's as hard for you to get over it as for the world to get over it. It's like hating somebody. You may do him some harm.

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But you do yourself worse harm. Your hate could not stick to him. But it sticks to you. The hater always wears the scars of hate. You cant have yourself unless you have others. The penalty of being exclusive is exclusion. You feed only one light. If you put that light out for me you put it out for yourself. I know you think you can go it alone. But you cant. You may stand very firm. But you are on the common ground. There is no other ground. You may breathe in the air off your housetop. But you breathe the common air. There is no other air. Nothing will work if it is set up to separate individuals or peoples. It may last for awhile. But it cant be perpetuated. That which is not rooted in the people cannot survive in the person. You cant alienate your life. You can kill yourself. But you cant alienate yourself. You may do it through an income. You may do it through an art. You may do it through ambition. It makes no difference how. But you are from then on dead. You may still hang around. But you are dead. For no man can live only in his own few feet and pounds of mortal flesh. He needs a world to live in. To live in a world means to live the life of that world. Not monkeyishly. Not as a slave. No. But within the horizon of its ideals and sympathies. Living the world's life in your own way. Giving the world's life your identity. But living it. Not trying to break with it. Not using property or fame or anything as a pretext for isolation. Our institutions and systems are arbitrary checks put upon the spirit. Even seats of learning. Even

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exhibitions of pictures. The artist is used as a check upon art. That is, upon life. He is put in the way instead of leading the way. You cant steer a world into your back yard. But you can steer your back yard into a world. You say man cant live by bread alone. No. He cant. He must live by love. He cant live in himself alone. He can only live in the crowd. How can you pass from yourself to yourself again? With all the money between. With the power between. With the pride between. With the ambition between. How can you? How can you hope to live a true life in such a false relation? How can you expect to lead a seeing life in such a blind contingency? You are all closed out as well as closed in. It cant matter which side of the door you are on. It is equally fatal either side of that door. Worse, if worse either side, on the inside than the outside. It is better to be closed out than to close out. It is better to be a pauper outside than a millionaire inside. I would rather die in the life of the crowd than live in the death of myself. You are in on the ground floor. The ground floor is hell. Dont you feel the flames lick and bite at you? I cant put anything between myself and others. It is perfidy. It is as if I sold the people out. Any personal wish. Any individual instinct. Anything. Any interrupting item however innocent is a crime. That is why our proud profits are ignoble. That is why the professional successes are cluttering debris. That is why nothing but absolute abandon will signify in the last count. We dont want to be hid away in holes. Our fortunes hide us away

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in holes. Our eminences hide us away. Getting ahead of competitors hides us away. I get a little more money than the next man. Then I hide away from him. Then I hide him away from me. A private victory is not integration. It is dissolution. Social wealth stands for the open door. Personal acquisition stands for the frowning wall. I indict the systems because they drive men apart. Every institution created for a caste sits with closed doors. It thinks itself the custodian of a treasure. It is only the trustee of an assumption. For it always closes out infinitely more than it closes in. I indict the systems because they close their creators in. Because they make themselves useless. Because they are arrayed against the mob. There's only one good side to the mob. That's the inside. The mob. All. There's only one good side to it. Nothing is so little as a big thing in a jail. Nothing is so big as a little thing free out of doors. Our civilization is a big thing. But it's in jail. We've got to get it out of doors. That is, you've put our civilization in vaults and used it for the few against the crowd. We've got to level the vaults. We've got to get our civilization out of doors. We've got to hand it around. Open all the doors. Let everybody in. Yes, even the derelicts. Hand civilization around. Let everybody help himself. That's crazy? So it is. But nothing in this world ever got its growth till it was crazy. No man ever did anything to push things along beyond till he began to be called a fool and a suspect and was avoided by his friends. Throw everything wide open. Dont worry about the

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weather. The weather with love in it wont hurt whatever it is. Your job, my job, is this: To leave no door unopened.

To leave no door unopened. Do you know what that means? It means to leave no heart unopened. To leave no income unopened. To leave no book or picture or song unopened. It is a challenge. You are to trust yourself to love not to a lock. You are to trust yourself to people not to yourself. You are to trust yourself to the whole not to a part. You will no longer trust yourself to your dollars. You will no longer fasten yourself in. You will no longer worry to-night wondering about to-morrow morning or worry to-morrow morning wondering about sundown. You have great evidences. The vast properties. The cities and the farms. The railroads and the telegraphs. The sure and the counterfeit. They are immense. They cant be counted up. But there are better evidences. You dont quote them. You sneer at them or you pass them by. The people. They are better evidences. The love of the people. The idealism of the people. The revolt of the people. They are better evidences. After all your buildings are set on the ground. Your riches are hidden dead in vaults. But the people are vital and flowing. People make houses. But have houses ever made people? I have seen houses so large they became aware of their littleness. I have seen people so modest they became aware of their immeasurability. We have made our towns ruthless. They are not fit to live in. We expect people to live in them without love. We can live nowhere without

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love. It may be necessary to sweep half our world away in the interest of the other half. It may be necessary to stampede all values. To abrogate all treaties. To repeal all laws. To annul all respectabilities. All in the interest of life. We have to open all doors. No plea can resist this purpose. As sure as the sun comes up this will come up. You have planned your world. But you have left love out. You want everything protected. Especially property. Property. I say take all your protectives off property. I say put all your protectives on people. If no one owns no one will steal. If all own all will be fed. Every time you write a deed a door is closed. Every time you repudiate possession a door is opened. If you take down your shutters you will find it is day. Matters have gone on farther than you suppose. Farther towards love. Give them a show. Forget that you are a proprietor and remember that you are a man. Forget that you own anything and remember that you are something. I dont advise you to destroy your properties. I only say: Take your name off them. How much better it looks not to be a boss or a superior. How much more like opening doors. How much more like fraternity. We cant have a world of brothers as long as any door is closed any where against any body. Nor while any piece of land or goods or any power of man's arms or brains is closed against any body. This has got to be made a wide open world. I dont care where profits go. Nor where privileges. Nor what becomes of the elect. Nor whether anyone ever paints a picture again or preaches of



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beauty. I dont care. I am first of all interested in men and women. I want to know first of all what becomes of men and women. If men and women get what belongs to them the graces will take care of themselves. But if the ornaments are put first then they are discredited and must be dethroned. What we will do with the esthetic will depend first and last of all upon what we do with men and women. I want every door opened as far as it will go. And every heart. And every fortune. And every opportunity. And every vista. I dont want anybody standing anywhere asking anyone: Where's your ticket? As if the sun before shining should ask: Where's your ticket? Or the air we breathe: Where's your ticket? All have made what the few have. Yet the few ask: Where's your ticket? As if love should ask: Where's your ticket? There is no ticket. There is the open way. There is no ticket. There is the eager willing impulse. There is no ticket. There is the unhesitating sacrifice and consecration. There is no ticket. There are only fields on which we share the harvest. There is no ticket. There is the commune. There is no ticket. There are only people. When you push through no one asks: Where are you going? Everybody says: Walk right in. When you look for what you want no one asks: Will you pay cash down for it or shall I charge it? Everyone says: Help yourself. You say: People never will work in your world. I say: People who get too little so hard will not stop work because they are to get enough so easy. Everywhere we go now everything is closed and everybody is asked:

## TO LEAVE NO DOOR UNOPENED

Where's your ticket? Everywhere we go then everything will be wide open and everybody will be told: Make yourself at home. We are to continue on and on till the last outcast becomes the first citizen. Till this generation of exiles becomes the next generation of comrades. To leave no door unopened.

When you hear of a ship going down at sea do you say:  
That is the conclusion?

When you see one man do a mean thing to another man do  
you say: That is the conclusion?

When you see systems substituted for souls do you say:  
That is the conclusion?

I love the people: I never see the enemy of the people as  
the conclusion:

There is something more to come: after the shadow light is  
to come:

When you fall down, when you are only half a man, I say  
there is something more to come:

Why, dear comrade—after half a man a whole man is to  
come: out of you, too, is to come:

For the conclusion of a man is only in the perfection of a  
man: nothing else is a conclusion:

For the conclusion of sex is only in the perfection of sex:  
nothing else is a conclusion:

And you may be sure that after all the black has come that  
can come white will follow:

And you may be sure that after all the journeys down hill  
you will find your way to the crest again.

## HAVE YOU SOLD YOUR SOUL?

Have you sold your soul for dirt? And what have you sold your body for? Have you given away what you are for what you can get? Have you traded off your body for your soul or your soul for your body? Or have you gone on taking both with you on equal terms? You may think you have profited when you have lost. You may believe you are a victor when you are defeated. I have no quarrel with the earth. But dirt can never take the place of a man. Nor can a man's living ever take the place of a man's life. What a man does may be successful. And what a man is may be a failure. Any one thing in the place of any other thing is a failure. If we want a man goods wont do. If we want love money wont do. If we want faith comfort wont do. If we want beauty falsehood wont do. You are all talking about making your way. Making your way to what? It all depends on that. To what? A man may make his way. He may cut a tremendous figure. He may outpace everyone and invite envy and admiration. He may do all that and still be dead. And then he may do all that is the opposite of that. He may be the most lamented man in his crowd. He may do and be all that and still be alive. It's always harder to know what to do with too much than with too little. I readily get used to reverses. But I can never quite accommodate myself to a triumph. When things go against me I always have myself left in my own favor. But when things go for

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me I always have myself asking me questions I cant answer. My body and my soul are imperative. I cant make light of their demands. Let me sell them out: then what happens? Dirt begets dirt. Reach outside yourself for something that is only to be found inside yourself: then what happens? Every grain of sand that gets where it dont belong interrupts the revolution of the planets. Down the sunbeam dances the anarchic atom. Have you sold your soul for dirt? Sold your soul for something not itself? Sold your soul to the alien? I do not accuse you. I ask you a question. I do not say you do wrong. I ask you why you do not do right. I do not say you are outside the fold. I invite you inside the fold. I have no wish to make you a good man or a bad man. I want you to come into what you were born for. I want you to step out of the way of the universe and to step into the way of yourself. Do not confuse my values. I am no despiser of the body. I am no enemy of markets. You may sell your soul for dirt. Sell sermons as easily as sell goods. I see the best in the house of Man and the worst in the house of God. I do not charge. I persuade. I build no fires to burn anybody up. I only build fires to light the way. Have you betrayed yourself with thirty pieces of silver? Have you sold yourself? Have you permitted yourself to be sold? Are you exposed for sale on the bargain counters? You are consigned to yourself in trust. Have you betrayed your trust? The world is consigned to itself in trust. Has it betrayed its trust? Have you sold your soul for dirt? You may have bought souls.

## HAVE YOU SOLD YOUR SOUL—

That means that you have sold your soul for dirt. You have no right to buy or sell. As long as buying and selling lasts you cant help selling your soul for dirt. Nothing can purify the way as long as one man exacts toll of another man. Everything should be everywhere. Everybody should help himself. We live in the age of bought and sold. We are about to pass into the age of help yourself. I ask you who walk the streets: Have you sold your soul for dirt? I ask the world of all which includes the world of one: Have you sold your soul for dirt? Have you sold your soul for manners, forms, titles, incomes, prestige, position? for anything you put into your belly or on your back? for anything which makes you superior to anybody else? for anything which puts the way you do a thing above what you are doing? for anything in laws or economics or books or arts which serves as a weapon with which to club the innocent? for anything over ground or under, any sneaking device of profit, which subjects others to your advancement? Have you sold your soul for dirt?

You have sold your soul for dirt. You have conformed. You have said one and two make four after all the rest. You suspected that one and two make three. But you did not like to say so. You have obeyed the thing around you rather than the thing in you. Votes, interests, profits, privileges, stand for you in place of the soul. You surrender to a job. You are enslaved to something that was made yesterday. You have sold your soul for dirt. You can only buy it back with soul. The time will come when we will

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sell our dirt for soul. I know what it means to try that now. It means poverty and banishment. The devil take the hindmost, they say. The devil will. Or the god will. When you see all the poor. When you see all those who rob and are robbed. When you see the devastation the profit system leaves in its wake. When you see all the confusions of sex. When you see prostitution. Then you know that something has been sold for dirt. What has been sold. Our civilization. You and I. The man you sell has not been sold. The man who sells has been sold. The victim of per cents has not been sold. The victor has been sold. The hand that draws the knife is the murdered as well as the murderer. Your genius may be your dirt. The thing you do best. The possession you are most proud of. The public applause. Your friends. Your family. Your heredity. They may be your dirt. Even if you sell yourself for your best loved you sell yourself for dirt. Love can do no harm. But lovers may sell love for dirt. Anything that's in the way of the spirit is dirt. You make goods. But if your goods are slave goods they are dirt. You have no right to make your talent a club with which to batter down the inefficient. You say every man should be paid according to his talent. I say that's exactly what they should not be paid according to. A man's talent may be his best weapon of injustice. Talent is the coward's weapon. You may be born a king. You may be born a genius. It's as bad to use a crown of brains as to use a crown of gold to exploit the humble. Using what you were born with to such an end

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is the final cowardice. We use laws. We use forms. We use social position. Anything within reach. It's the blow in the dark. It's the lie on the lip. It's the giant taking advantage of the pigmy. You see a little farther. That is your dirt. Your arm is a little longer. You hear a little more. You move a little quicker. That is your dirt. All the inequities come by such a route. All the gloating palaces and the snarling huts. All the laughing luxuries and the weeping wants. They come by that route. My best suit of clothes. It comes that way. Less and more comes by that process. Do you pride yourself on your faculty? Rather do anything else. Even your faculty may be a tyrant toll-gatherer. Down every mountain steep tumble your horrified inferiors. Time and space recognize no large and small, no above and below, no served and servant. A man has a little better or a little worse thinking machine. But better or worse are not to time and space what they are to words. Evil begins when man begins. Tyranny begins when one man has more heartbeats than another man. When dirt gets on top. Brains are a whip. You use that whip over others. You make that whip into statutes, mandates, wage-scales. You make everything else second to it. You may have got so far that you are horrified when a man makes a dollar an agent of oppression. You have still to go on till you are horrified when a man makes his talent an agent of oppression. The king sits on a throne. The picture hangs in the gallery. The book is on the shelf of the library. The music is sung



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in the great hall. The play goes on in the theater. The game is won or lost in the vast stadium. Do they circumscribe us? Or do they free us? Are they burdens to carry? Or are they wings to fly with? Are they for the pleasure of a few? Or are they for the joy of all? Money may free. Brains may enslave. Money may be the gentle savior. Brains may be the brutal damner of bodies and souls. You have sold your soul for dirt if you have used it for the production of anything but soul. Whether in the market or in the academy. Whether in play or work. Whether in the midst of your family or abroad in the crowd. You have sold your soul for dirt. Whether in making money or staying poor. Whether in the most exquisite beauty of an art or the most hideous ugliness of a brothel. You have sold your soul for dirt. Babies at the breasts of mothers are sold for dirt. Fathers who have cared for children are sold for dirt. Poems, laces, anything, may be sold for dirt. Anything that gets in the way of life. That is sold for dirt. Religion, churches, policies of states and industries, are sold for dirt. Sex. Idealism. The marriage bed. Dreams. They are sold for dirt. Souls are the dearest things in a cheap world. The house you live in. The cup of water you hand to the famished. Benefaction. Hospitals for disease. The very kindnesses of social rectitude. The excuse-mes and thank-yous of the polite and the amiable. The bowings and scrapings of parlors. They are sold for dirt. Nothing can pay for souls but souls. But you take dirt in pay for souls. Every time

## HAVE YOU SOLD YOUR SOUL—

you get in the way of life you accept dirt as a settlement for souls. The nights of dalliance. The hours of love. The perfumed bower. The groves of arcadian ecstasy. They are sold for dirt. All. All. You have sold your soul for dirt.

Have you sold your soul for dirt? Have you given up that which is priceless for a price? Have you ripped off your wings and asked: What's the use of flying? Have you postponed next year? Have you said: I'd like to be myself but cant? Or have you said: It's all very well to talk? Have you always been putting yourself off? Saying: To-morrow will do for me? That to-morrow after all the to-morrows that never comes? Have you planned to sell your body for fifty years and then live beyond bargain and sale? Or your soul? The cry comes to you out of your own deeps. It wears no disguise. It's you yourself asking questions of yourself. Have you sold your soul for dirt? In every act of injustice you sell yourself. When you turn your back on some body. When you steal a man's wages and call it profit. When you make it harder for some one to live in order to make it easier for yourself to live. When you call white black and up down. When you become respectable at some one else's expense. When you put the show of good manners above the fact of bad heart. Then you have sold yourself for dirt. When you corner anything. Even virtue. When you corner pictures or books or curios. When you corner ideas. When you jealously corner your dreams. When you eat too much while others eat too little.

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When you dedicate any of the sources of life to anything but the common privilege. Then you have sold your soul for dirt. If your love stops with your family. If you can love your own children and not love the children of others. If you hog anything in flesh or spirit. You have sold your soul for dirt. You have called upon all men to listen. You are for sale. Come here. Listen. Here's a man for sale. What will you give for him? He is for sale cheap. For he can be paid for in the basest coin. He can be bought for the dirt under your bootsole. You can buy him for a house or bonds or goods in a store or things made in a factory. You can buy him for a crop off a farm. You can buy him for the clothes he wears and the food he puts into his belly. He ought to be dear beyond anyone's ability to buy him. But almost anybody can buy him. He puts such a mean price on himself. He will bargain himself off for almost anything that will furnish his keep. Have you met that man? Do you know his name? Can you give me his initials? Does he live round the corner? Or maybe in your own house? Or do you wake up nights and say to yourself: He's in this bed? Maybe you tell me he's as good as he can be under the circumstances. I dont see why any man should expect to be a man under the circumstances. Light is not darkness under the circumstances. Death is not life under the circumstances. Right is not wrong under the circumstances. Every man has to adjust the circumstances to himself. Dont tell me a man always has to adjust himself to the circumstances. A man's circumstance

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is his dirt. I am too familiar with your underlying assets to assent to this overlying result. Do I expect you to fight? Am I asking too much? Yes, fight. No: I am only asking enough. I see nothing preposterous in asking a man to be what he is. In asking beauty to be beautiful. In asking a song to sing. In asking gentleness to be gentle. In asking generosity to give. In asking the cloud to rain. In asking water to run down hill. In asking the fulfilment of life. What do I ask you for? For the fulfilment of life—that's all. I decline to call your wars and your exploitations and your greeds the fulfilment of life. They are rather the fulfilment of death. I decline to call the barbarism we call civilization the fulfilment of life. I decline to call the love we call marriage the fulfilment of life. I decline to call the pride we call art. Or the austerity we call science. Or the hypocrisy we call religion. I decline to call them the fulfilment of life. They are the fulfilment of death. I decline to call the hells the fulfilment of life. The hells of theology. The hells of profit and loss. The hells of owners and owned. The hells of poor and rich. The hells of those who have everything and those who have nothing. The hells of those who make everything the writ of the tax gatherer. I decline to call them the fulfilment of life. They are the fulfilment of death. I acknowledge your institutions. I do not dismiss property. I put dreams and people above all the lauded majesty of learning and possessions. No man is so little but his head is higher than your Oxfords and Harvards. No man is so degraded but he outshines the luster

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of bonds and trade. You say a man must make a living. I say no. That is already made for him here or somewhere. What a man must make is life. To make a living leaves us dirt still. To make life gives us wings. We want everybody to get out of the way of life. The world. The crowd. You. I. We must get out of the way of life. If the superman gets in the way of the underman he is in the way of life. He has sold his soul for dirt. Would I destroy civilization? Yes—if I could help civilization by doing so. Have you sold your soul for dirt? Have you traded down instead of up? I am pulling down the monuments. The great men. The masters. The leaders and superiors. The geniuses and the marvels. I shake them down in a common ruin. In order to rebuild greatness. In order to bring out of all what so far has been all brought out of some. I turn all values upside down. I turn all ideals and instrumentalities upside down. In order that man may come up. Now man is below all the rest. Then all the rest will be below man. Now the soul is the means and what it produces the end. Then what is produced will be the means. The soul will be the end. I would demolish everything if necessary to save everything. Have you sold your soul for dirt?

And then I hear your voice raised above all the uncertainties  
of itself: your voice: it sings:

Comrades: we must hold together: if we let go of each  
other for an instant the stars will drop out of the sky,

The power of the heart is resistless if it lifts with an infinite  
hope,

The power of the eye is unmeasured if it looks with endless  
expectation:

And then I hear your voice offer everything, withdraw noth-  
ing: for cause or not for cause:

You do not question us: you love us: you do not doubt us:  
you love us:

You do not bring scales to see what we weigh: you bring  
love to see what we live.

## · WHEN I LOOK INTO THE FACES

When I look into the faces of men and women. When I go to men and women without distrust. When I put men and women before goods. When I even put them before their passions. Even put them before their parts. The whole before its parts. When I do this I find myself somehow at once in touch with men and women. I no longer make too much or too little of their good and bad. I no longer pause with ephemeral details. I no longer miss seeing man in observing men. I no longer go grieved to my work. My feet are lighter. My heart is gay. My brain is cleared from all eclipses. My dreams become possible. My insanest rhapsodies are understood. To go among men and women as one of them instead of above or below them. To know people for comrades. To see no one so mean he could not be a brother. To see no one so great he could withdraw from communion. To fraternize on an equality without question with the crowd. To ask no questions. To go without question. To pass among men and women for one who loves. Throwing off all veils. Going without disguises. Without disguises of virtue as well as disguises of clothes. To meet their suspicion with faith. Not to be turned against men by the injustice of men. Here I stand. No man triumphs in being loved. We only triumph in loving. Nor in being believed in. We only triumph in believing. And if I acquiesce in men and women I will acquiesce in them even in the face of truth. I will

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say yes when you accuse them but I will continue to love them. I will not deny the facts. But I will live above the facts. I will not say there is no dirt. But I will say there is more than dirt. I do not need figures for my affirmation. I only need men and women. Clean and corrupt men and women. Strong and frail men and women. I know all that is said about the evasions of human nature. And I acknowledge the defaults of human nature. It makes its fathomless descents. But I see no fall from which it cant lift itself victoriously. I am not afraid of the impenetrable nights. For there was daylight before and there will be daylight again and the darkness itself is created by a sunbeam. When I look at a man and a woman I see what is back of them and I see what is ahead. I am not thrown off the scent of glory by the trail of a serpent. I am not worried by the treacheries of the flesh. I do not spend time trying to disprove the shadows. I only insist upon the light. I am always aware of the crowd. I am aware of one only because I am aware of all. I always come back to myself enriched. If I feel out of touch with myself I get in touch with the crowd. That keys me right again. The harmonies are restored. The men and women on the streets. They do not even look at me. Yet I am full of them and they are full of me. They are not aunts and uncles and cousins and fathers and mothers. They are the godstuff out of which the death and resurrection of the stars is effected. They are unmakers and makers. They are the divined and they are diviners. If I know men and women I do not



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need gods. If I know gods I do need men and women. I say to every man or woman I pass: You are my other self. For I know that nothing could tear us apart. I know that you can no more separate men from each other, or women, or women from men, than you can take an atom off the crust of the earth and toss it into nothingness. And so I love to go among men and women. Love to throw myself upon the convincing mercies of my anonymous pilgrimage. Choosing not to figure up my totals in so many enemies and so many friends but in so many brothers. In the last calculations refusing to calculate. Casting myself into the sea and taking my chances. Into the seething whirling surging reluctant hospitable mass. Preferring sin with all than virtue alone. Not always being pleased but always being loyal. Sure in the end that I could go nowhere ruling others out of heaven. Sure in the end that I am entitled to nothing which the crowd does not confer. So that when I meet you whoever you are I take off my hat to you. Loving you is a way I have of thanking myself that you exist. Trusting you is a way I have of congratulating myself upon your inheritance. For we are joint heirs, all of us, or there is no heir. And we are joint villains or there is no villain. And joint saviors and gods or there are no saviors and gods. All of us. Men and women. All of us. Though we dont see each other, joint for saved or damned anyway. I am closer to everybody than anybody thinks. And everybody is closer to me. And though we may appear to be nonchalant and unconcerned about each other the bond is

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still unseverable. There is nothing anyone can do to cut him off from me. And nothing I can do to rid the crowd of its responsibility. I look curiously at you as you pass. You are not beautiful or ugly to me. You are not rich or poor or well-dressed or in rags. You are my brothers. When I look into the faces of saints and scoundrels I see only men and women. Always. Always. And when I look into the faces of men and women I see only gods and their companion gods. Always. Always.

When I look into the faces of men and women. When I see what they might do and dont do. When I see their hypocrisies and degeneracies. When I see how far down they go after what is not worth going for at all. When I see that they walk in darkness when they could as easily walk in light. When I see their brutal warfares and their corrupting commences and their wit-proud arts. Then I wonder. Then my wonder is multiplied by wonder and is dismayed. Then things crowd and choke my spirit. Then I see what the despairers mean when they say man is not worth his flesh. Then I am like someone thrown into a threatening sea. Then I cry for help. The stars pale and disappear. The compass no longer points north. Love becomes only another word for hate. Working seems as useless as loafing. When I see the crowd robbed and awed by the few. When I see the few robbed and awed by the crowd. When I see nothing fitting with nothing the world over. Trade not fitting with justice. Art not fitting wih life. No one man fitting with another man. No man fitting with

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the crowd and the crowd fitting with no man. Your to-day and my to-day not fitting with our yesterdays or our to-morrows. This life not fitting with any life that has been or is to be. Children not fitting with parents and parents not fitting with children. Bodies not fitting with souls and souls not fitting with bodies. What we do not fitting with what we wish to do. Ambition not fitting with performance. Lovers not fitting with loving. Wives not fitting with husbands. Everywhere, everywhere, the inglorious travesty. Our religions not fitting with the gods. Our states not fitting with the people. The mortal moment not fitting with immortal time. Things, souls, tendencies, distraught. When I see that I too withdraw and make less of life. I too retire from my proud boast. I too humble myself before the shaming fact. I too confess my sins. I too charge a big bill up against my ardent faith. I too feel myself enclosed by falsifying conclusions. I too measure myself and weigh myself by what is trivial and puny. I too walk around less sure of myself. Yes, less sure of you. Less sure of all. Less sure of my dreams. Less sure of the very feet I walk on and the very wings by which I soar. Less sure of the picture you paint. Less sure of the song you sing. Less sure of my own passionate words of encouragement and revelation. Less sure. Less sure. Not giving up the great hope. But less sure. Not giving up the food I eat but less sure that it feeds me. Not giving up my certainties but less sure that they are certain. Not breaking finally with you O love but less sure that even you O love

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are quite so potent as I have thought. Not turning my back on my darling comrades the crowd but not as sure as I have been that my smiling face conveys any message to them. When I see that men cant live with each other without hate. That they cant trade with each other without robbery. That they cant grow big with power without growing little with pride. That they are not satisfied with self rule. That they must rule each other. When I see that men would rather be prosperous and have all poor than be poor and have all prosperous. Then I am lost. Then I am lost. I do not know my way. The sun goes out. My heart goes out. All the beautiful results I was so confident of go out. Love goes out. O, love goes out. Holy final love: it, too, goes out. Goes out like an unreturning tide. I am left alone. Left trying to touch something I can hold on to. Something left of all the wreckage which I can hold on to. Some remnant of joy. Some glint of vision. Some splinter. Some saving strand. Reaching for some hand to lift me above the whirling maddened departing stream. When I see man going back on man. When I see goods and incomes and rulership going back on man it means nothing to me. But when I see man going back on man it means all to me. Then I am prostrate. Then my voice is stopped. I can say nothing. I drift. God knows where to. I drift. It dont seem as if anything was left to do. As if the fight was worth keeping up. As if being loyal was more important than being traitorous. When man goes back on man. I who was so

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unshakably sure. I who now am shaken. When man goes back on man.

When I look into the faces of men and women. After the eclipses and the disfigurements. After the enmities and the degradations. After going into all the hells. After making all the admissions. After being swept away in the rages of the tyrant passions. Then suddenly the shining sun breaks through. Then suddenly the earth is flooded with light. Then I am restored. I who was cast down am lifted up. I who wondered so much over the weakness of men and women wonder now over the irresistible strength of men and women. Then things are explained. Then evil is explained in the good. Hate is explained in love. That which men and women did not do is explained in what they are capable of doing. Grief is explained in rapture. The greeds are explained in generosity. For I see at last that a man and a woman are not explained in what they do but in what they lead to. What a man and woman do is too often ghastly. But somehow what they lead to is always beautiful. I had looked into the faces of men and women and it was night there. Now the sun is up. Now the faces are radiant. I know that when a man and a woman rob or hate night is there. And I know that when they serve and love the day has come. And I know that a man and a woman containing love and justice will someday through whatever contagions of animosity and crime become loving and just. I go about in this midday of the spirit. In the streets. Everywhere. Where men and women are. And I see men and women as they

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do not see themselves. I tell them things they do not tell themselves. I lift them up to planes to which they do not lift themselves. For the sun is up in my world. And when the sun is up in the world the world is flushed with insight. When the sun is up in your world you too will know. But until then you will doubt or deny. When the sun is up in the world there is light enough to go round. Light enough to account for all the darkness. Good enough to account for all the evil. Sweet enough to account for all the sour. Life enough to account for all the death. Now the sun is up in my world. And as you pass before me, as I loaf about among you, unrecognized, you men and women, you are as plain to me as my own thumb. I don't need to argue with myself about you. For there's infinite light in my world. Light to penetrate you through and through. Light to challenge all hideousness and to disperse all contaminations. If I did not think better of you, men and women, than you do of yourselves, I would give you up, O men and women. But my world accounts for you. Accounts for the beast in you by the man in you. Accounts for your moral surrenders by your spiritual victories. If my world did not light you enough to light you to justice and joy then my light might as well be darkness. If it did not light the crowd enough to light it to the man or light the man enough to light him to the crowd it might as well be darkness. If it did not light the effaced scholars enough to light them to life again it might as well be darkness. If it did not throw itself full into your faces, O men and women, and disclose

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you to yourselves, and disclose love to itself, and disclose the vast peoples to themselves, and disclose all the mistakes to themselves, and disclose all the dividing creeds and industries to themselves: oh! if my light did not disclose everything to itself so that it might light everything farther to its ineffable consequence, then it might as well be darkness. O, it might as well be darkness. But my light is competent. It is enough for everywhere and enough for all. It lights everything to itself. It lights the man to the woman and the woman to the man and the few to many and many to all and all to the one again. My light might as well be darkness if it fails to light everything to itself and all to everything in the storm and calm of its masterful plenty. When I look into the faces of men and women.

Do you know what it means to say love? to be always and only saying love every day every where?

You think it's easy to say love but hard to say hate: I say no: love is hardest of all to say:

For sometimes you must say love with a knife: sometimes with the cruelest word you know:

Saying love is not saying soft things sweetly to make your lover comfortable: far from that:

Saying love is often to say things that cut and rend: things that may even destroy: do you hear?



## LOVING IS THE ONLY LIFE

Loving is the only life. Living must give us time for life. It is not enough to fill your lungs with air. You must fill your lungs with life. The heart must not only beat. It must beat the dance of life. It is not important to live so many years. It is important to live so much life. You have dollars. But have you life? You write something. People admire you. You are famous for some reason or other. That is all very great. But there is something beyond. Life is beyond. Eating and sleeping is not life. Love alone is life. You are brilliant. You perform in the center of the stage. But that is not life. Lending money at percents. Making profits. Getting a house full of decorations. That is not life. A man may have all that and more and be stone dead. I pass you on the street. You look empty. You are hungry. You ache and strain for something. What is it you yet need? You who have so much. You who seem to have all the world. You to whose door all ships seem to sail and into whose treasury all cargoes seem to be unloaded. You cast upon me such a vacant look. You have not found out that your wealth is not life. You have not consciously said that to yourself. But your body has found it out. Your soul has found it out. You have power. You can draw a big check. You are admitted anywhere. You are welcome to interrupt the world at its devotions. Nobody would think of closing you out. The state, the church, open

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when you appear, before you say a word. Yet you cast that empty look upon me when we pass. That telltale look. That look that means more than your riches. That look of infinite self pity. You have the key to all locks. But you are helpless before that which having no lock needs no key. You are alive. But you do not possess life. You are your own master. But that is not enough. There is something beyond. After being your own master you must know how to become your own slave. You can live in the senses. In the gratification of the passions. In the accumulation of temporal properties. But living is not life. So many in so many generations have been fooled. They have got what they reached for. But they have found that what they reached for was not what they desired. When a man is greedy. When he seems willing to do anything to get goods. Then life seems to say to him: Here's what you want: now what are you going to do with it? You are filled to the brim. What are you going to do with it? You run over with success. What are you going to do with it? You are known everywhere you go. The instant your name is mentioned everybody knows who you are. What are you going to do with it? This is living. But this is not life. You are a conqueror. You are a maker of laws. You rule people. What you say goes. Those who hate fear you. Those who love despise you. You are an arrogant force upon whose will for fair or foul the formal living of the world depends. You have reached deepest into the dirt. You have reached highest into the blue ether. Yet you look at me as if you who seem

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to have all after all have nothing. You have not discovered that living is not life. You have not seen that far. But you have discovered that something is the matter with you. That something is the matter with the crown you wear. That a diadem does not make a king. That living does not make life. That sometimes the more a man contains the less he contains. That somehow one dream is worth a thousand facts. That one cipher is worth more than a thousand figures one. A man may find that out too late. He often leaves it to his children to find it out for him. And a race often finds it out too late. A dazzling generation of strutters and pirates finds it out too late. It often leaves it to posterity to find it out. That's where you are and I am to-day. We have done wonders. But we have not done enough. We have still to find ourselves out. We have done wonders. You and I. Our countries. Your country. Germany, England, Canada, America. Our countries. Any countries. They have still to find themselves out. To find out that living is not life. To find out that the church and the state are not life. That priesthoods and plutocracies are not life. That love alone is life. That love which means brotherhood all around and justice going with it all around. That that love alone is life. That is why our civilization bulging at the belt is still so empty. That is why our governments bragging so vastly about their omnipotence are still so helpless that they can only maintain themselves with armies and navies. Like our systems. Which can only maintain themselves by robbery. They have found

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much. But they have not found out themselves. They know how to live. But they have not found life. For life is only found with love. The way of life is the way of love. Not the way of living but the way of life. Not the way of living, which is bound to come to an end, but the way of life, which is necessarily interminable. That way of life which is the way of love.

Loving is the only life. But we are warned. Too much love may mean too little life. Putting love in place of power may be like putting disease in place of health. Love. But dont love too much. Put a little love into trade. But keep lots of cruelty there to balance it. Be decent. But dont be too decent. Always keep some villainy in reserve. Dont rob too much. But still rob enough to keep the world indignant. If we had no victims we would have nobody to get mad at the victors. If we had no bad the good would be too easy. If a man was not obliged to fight for his life his death would be painless. There must be some poison in every dish. There must be some alloy in every deed. If we all loved hate would possess us. We need hate to keep love straight. We need treason to balance loyalty. You must be very careful so as not to be too considerate. You must spice your generosity. Put some greed into it. Make the smooth rough. Add some bitter to the sweet. A world of love would lack contrast. Would be without color. We need the persecutor. Men would go soft without the tyrant. The bully will qualify the man. So you need not be so conscience stricken when you have done some mean thing. But for

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that mean thing the stars might fall out of their places. Think of it. Your arm is omnipotence. Your crime is salvation. You starve the widow and the orphan. Too much love would make love itself monotonous. Therefore, corner wheat. Therefore, collect your rents. Therefore, live on money someone else has to work for. Therefore, rejoice in the purchased judgments of courts. Therefore, shine. No matter whom you obscure, shine. Get what you can in any way you can get it. We could not live in a heaven. Mix some hell with every heaven. Heaven is saved by the hell in it. Does the idea of love make you shudder? I am accused of an iniquity. My love notion is a fallacy. It will take all the flush out of the cheeks of the world. It will leave us without a cause. When a man achieves love that is the end of him. There is no beyond. So with the social body. When it has achieved love it is dead. There is nothing to continue with. Motive is killed. Impetus is gone. After we have accomplished love we have no reason for being. All having been done there is nothing to do. The perfect state will have to react towards imperfection. Love must pray to be saved from love. They say to me: You are dragging your earth the way of death. I am charged with preaching love at the expense of life. Life could not stand love. It would break down under the strain. It would cease, vanish, lapse away. Love requires its foil. My world, my love's paradise, my fool eden, without its adams and eves and apples and temptations, would blast all harvests and reduce the fertilities of contrast to desert sand.

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They say to me: Keep your hands off. Let the wrongs alone. Let the people suffer. Let the shadows thicken. I say: Loving is the only life. But you object. Institutions object. The church objects. The state. The piracies. They all object. They say: Loving is the only death. Love and you will live. That is what I have said. Love and you will die. That is what you have said. What you say. Love will produce a race of weaklings. Lovers cant fight. Lovers cant resist. Lovers cant say no. Lovers can only surrender. Therefore, your percents are the guarantee of life. Therefore, your injustices are what save society from disintegration. Hating is the spice of life. I have said: Rather go without life than go without love. You say: Love is only the fringe of the garment: we must have life. That is, we must have life no matter what becomes of love. I say: We must have love whatever becomes of life. You dissent. Love only leads life into a pit. Love will not do for every day. It must have its seasons. It must be reserved for special occasions. A little love will keep. Much love will destroy. That is why our systems are built on cruelties. Their barbarisms are preservative. Rein your love in. Love will take all the virility out of the social order. If you are a lover, go slow. If you wish the race well, take a second guess. It may be wiser to wish it ill. You say: Every thing must be done to preserve the race. I say: Only one kind of a race is worth preserving. I hear it said that a race of lovers is as dangerous as a race of haters. I say: There is a love beyond both love and hate.

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Loving is the only life. Love closes no doors. It throws everything wide open. Houses and hearts. We go from love to more love. To say love is to say no more than that things get along together. To look at the stars and say love is only to say that the stars obey the law of life. To look at the body of a woman as a man and say love is only to say that the flesh obeys the law of life. To look at a dream. To write a poem. To make a shoe. To build a bridge. To walk out in the fresh air. To defy tyrants. To do such things and to say love is only to say that whatever we do we obey the law of life. This does not mean always giving up. It means never giving up. It does not mean making concessions. It means demanding concessions. Love is not less rigorous. Love is more rigorous. Love does not stop half way up. It goes to the top. And it finds that every top has another top. And so love never is satisfied with what it has done. It always finds something else to do. To look at the bud and say love is only to prophecy the flower. To look at the wave and say love is only to call attention to the sea. To laugh in cloudy weather and say love is only another verification of the sun. To face the people who think they are your enemies and say love is only to make it plainer that you can't be stirred from the truth. To look at life and say love is to establish immortality. To look at what is hidden or doubtful and say love is only to open the eyes of the blind. To look at profits and say love is only to lead the way to the commune. How can we escape love? Love is the only life. To bask in the daylight and say love is only to lead to the

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sun. You look at men. You say men are your brothers. Is that as if we said: Now let us all melt away in each other? To say brother is only to say law. To say brother is only to say that we have discovered a consequence as well as a cause. To say that love will leave nothing to be done is as if one said the loyalty of a planet to its orbit leaves nothing to be done. Love is not an end. It is only a beginning. We begin to live when we begin to love. And as long as we continue to love we will continue to begin. Love is not the violation of law. It is the observance of law. Life derives its joint and sinew from love. Love is getting along together. Whether between earths or people, getting along together. Why should getting along together be worse than getting along apart? Why should we suspect that worlds that are loyal to their foundations are less likely to resist the northwind than worlds that are built upon quicksands? To say no love is to say no life. For being alive is not life. Simply going about your business, simply making money, simply eating and drinking, even if you are a whole animal, is not life. To hold back love supposing it may go too far is like holding back life supposing there may be too much life. We will achieve all that love may see. Then love will see more. We will go with love to complete love. Then we will go farther. Eternally farther. As with life. Living life into the remotest distances only to recognize unceasing farther obligations. There will always be more to do than ever has been done. There will always be more life coming than ever has arrived. There



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will always be more love needed than ever can be expressed. To fear that love may love too much is to fear that life may live too much. Love is the law of life. To fear love is to fear life. Loving is the only life because living together is the only life. Because being together is inevitable. Oceans and hills and people: being together. Rain and the seed and the soil: being together. Black and white and red: being together. A man, a woman, child: being together. Love is being together. The lake, the house on the shore, the hermit: being together. Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow: being together. Love gets the obstructions out of the way of life. Gives living time for life. Gets the wars out of the way. Gets the poverties and the properties out of the way. Gives the harvest a chance to mature. Makes the ascent possible. Clears the way for the pauseless procession. For all forever. Loving is the only life.

I am just a feeler sent out ahead maybe to try the earth  
for new days:

I am just a leaf of grass sent up early through the soil  
to see if the others could live if they followed:

I am just a man who sticks his head out at the front door  
to see for the folks how cold the night is:

I am just a migrate due from the south when the spring  
breaks:

I am just a light thrown on a puzzling pathway to give the  
rest a chance to travel without stumbling too often:

I am just that: given a little room, a narrow margin, in  
which to play this simple part:

Willing, when called, when my term is spent, to have my  
credit cancelled:

I, who, borrowing myself, signing for myself, cheerfully pay  
my note:

Why shouldn't I give all back, and more?

## KEEP YOUR FACE TO THE SUN

Keep your face to the sun. As the day goes down let your cheer go up. The reminiscence of the light will last through the darkness. Do not lean upon what you absorb. Depend upon what you bestow. Meet the sufficient noonglare with a haughtier illumination. Do not reject sorrow. Do not shut your door in its face. Invite it in. Make it feel at home. The heart in which sorrow is an alien misses its most sacred tenant. You will not make sorrow the master of the house. But you will include sorrow among your guests. The purport of the house is joy. The purport of the house is health. The earth may pass into a cloud. But the purport of the earth is not the cloud. Things go wrong. But the purport of things is right. You see injustices. You see victims. You see shipwrecks. But the purport of experience is righteousness, deliverance, salvation. No matter which way I look I keep the sun in my face. Just as though looking into hell I keep heaven in my face. Just as though looking at cruelty I keep kindness in my face. Just as though looking at the struggle I keep the victory in my face. I am haunted with presences which arm me with peace. There is evil. We cant explain it. But there is good, too. And we cant explain good. I do not wait for the universe to explain itself. For love to argue its case. Maybe the universe cant be explained. Maybe love cant be argued about. Why should I put question marks into the sky in place of

## KEEP YOUR FACE TO THE SUN

stars? It is my main buisness to live. To live nearest the best life I can discover. To live nearest the natural laws. To live nearest people. Not to ask for preferences. Not to expect odds. To live. To spread power. To confer exhilaration. To let the sun shine out of my face. For enough reasons or for no reason at all to let the sun shine. Taking the sun for granted. Taking the best for granted even in the face of the worst. Not being afraid that when the clock runs down it can never be started again. Expecting surpluses but being satisfied with shortages. Taking fame if it comes and humbling myself with it. Not reaching out for honors which do not belong to me. Letting the honors go or stay. Keeping sacred counsel with my own soul. Letting the returns take care of themselves. Shedding the light. Not sneaking about the earth as if life had to be hid away or enjoyed in the dark. Not snarling at men as if they had to be barked into kennels. Not going among men with discounts. Going among men with premiums. Adding a little to everything I come near to or look at. A little more love. A little more justice. A little more loyalty. A little more resolution. I have no logic for my joy. But I have joy for it. Or for my affection for you. But I have you for it. Or for my devotion to the great cause. But I have the great cause for it. I can cite no justifications. But I can cite my comrades. I cite myself. I cite you. I cite the books I read. I cite the struggle against money. They are enough. They are sun enough for me. They explain enough. Love explains enough though it

## COLLECTS

don't explain at all. The cause explains enough though it don't explain at all. And the abounding light: it too explains enough. The vast interstreaming dazzle of noontime: it explains nothing but it explains enough. I who question so much am silent. I who doubt so much accept. I who love so much do not ask for pay. Keep your face to the sun. A greater sun may shine in your face.

Keep your face to the sun. No matter what comes between keep your face to the sun. When your salary comes between. When the contempt of your enemies and the fear of your friends come between. When ruin comes between. No matter what may come between. Keep your face to the sun. You will be driven and warned. You will be despised and tempted. You will be misunderstood. You will be summoned into courts of public prejudice. You will be asked the questions of reaction and disease. But you will keep your face to the sun. Though the sun goes in behind a cloud will keep your face to the sun. Though the sun fails to get into your picture will keep your picture to the sun. When you take an office and the office is between. When you have ambitions that come between. When cowardice comes between. When praise comes between. When even the love of your dearest comrade comes between. You will keep your face to the sun. I do not promise you fruit without the seed of the fruit. You will plant. And much that you plant may come to nothing in the ground. Though it may come to much in your heart. You will pour out property. Give the last cent. Go

## KEEP YOUR FACE TO THE SUN

stripped, utterly shorn, into the contest. But you will keep your face to the sun. Yes: you will despair. You will say you dont see why you should keep up the fight. You will want to sell your birthright. You will grudge men success. You will travel where no eye can chart the way. You will taste the bitterest defeat. You will be jealous and cruel. Your brute self will stand between you and the sun. Yet you will always stand with your face to the sun. I do not suppose anything malign comes to any man which may not just as well come to you. That no disappointment can come. That no tragedy can come. That you too may lose fortunes. May lose more than fortunes. May lose hope. May lose relation with the cosmos. That you too may be cut adrift from the crowd. May be crushed by the law. May have your trust violated. May be deceived. May read the promises of faith backward. May challenge justice. May go in for the abolition of brotherhood. May fool the prophets. Things do go wrong in life though life itself never goes wrong. Events do conspire against the plans of men. But they do not conspire against men. We have to take all into account. All the momentary repulses. We often ride a very roundabout course to victory. A course through disappointment. A course through direct losses. A course over bad roads. Encountering the devious motives of our companions. Do you keep your face to the sun? No matter which way you go you may keep your face to the sun. East or west or north or south or up or down or across it is all the same. You may keep

## COLLECTS

your face to the sun. Your face shining with a light all its own. Your face baffling all rivalries of solar glory. You who ride to death may ride to life. You may turn your back to the sun. But the sun never turns its back to you. You may turn your back to the soul. The soul never turns its back to you. You may scorn the sentiment of man. You may make light of the romance of lovers. You may look with disdain upon the ignorant and the stupid. You may take care of yourself at the expense of others. You may postpone or destroy the impulse to give. Your life may be a life of seizure and appropriation. May ride shod rough over the crowd. May accept every advantage of position. Every advantage of culture. Not acquiescing in the general liberties. Flourishing your gifts like clubs. Demanding awe and worship. Quoting your money or your genius as evidence of your superiority. Standing aside when the people invite you to serve. Pulling back when the people try to go on. Being satisfied with your surplus when the people have too little to eat and too little to wear. This may be your burden. This may be your bloodred sin. This may be your rack. You may shrink from the sun. Your face may turn the other way. May prefer the darkness of possession to the light of atonement. Your eyes may be weak. May not be able to stand the sunbeams. May take no sun in and have no sun to give out. Your eyes may endure tyranny but not endure freedom. May endure seeing labor suffer but not endure seeing labor enfranchised. May endure their inheritance but

## KEEP YOUR FACE TO THE SUN

not endure their vista. This is the tragedy of the pilgrim. He passes across the earth. The path is often dark and uncertain. Often he has to feel, because he cannot see, his way through. Then he is driven back upon his conclusions. What are his conclusions? Conclusions of triumph or conclusions of disaster? Conclusions for one or conclusions for all? Conclusions of property or conclusions of the soul? In the eclipse of reason all depends upon the conclusions. In the disappearance of all you have seen all depends upon the appearance of what you have not seen. What are your conclusions? When all resource gives out. When the road seems to end. When faculty and vision have lost the impulse of appeal. Then all depends upon the conclusion. The conclusion to abandon all gobetweens and trust yourself to the soul. The conclusion to refuse all preferments and trust yourself to the people. The conclusion to face the sun even if it blind you. The conclusion to meet sun with sun. The splendid sun sufficing for the love of the body with the sun more splendid sufficing for the love of the spirit.

Keep your face to the sun. I love you, O sun. But I too am a sun. Sometimes I think I light you: that you dont light me. That I each day rekindle your expiring fires. That if I did not come up in the morning you would not come up. That you do not appear at the horizon greeting the world. That I appear. That you do not cross the heavens glorifying your unrivalled passage and sanctifying your retrospect with the matchless twilight. That I cross the heavens.



## COLLECTS

That all the majesty and the wonder inheres to me. That I do not depend upon you. That you depend upon me. That Persia did not worship you. That Persia worshipped me. That after all you are only the form while I am the substance. That you might be blotted out. That no harm would come to man. But that if I was blotted out the fate of man would be sealed in annihilation. That I have ejected you from the heavens and assumed your place. That you no longer rule, godstrong on a celestial throne. That I rule, man-potent in the hum of the common street. That the farms and the orchards do not look to you for fructification. That they look to me. That all harvests are my harvests. Harvests of fields as well as harvests of hearts. Harvests of justice as well as harvests of things. Harvests of ideals as well as harvests of deeds. That the supreme life is not there with you in the orbits of the heavens. That they are here with me in the twists and turns of alleys and pikes. I see now O sun that it is important to be a sun but that it is more important to be a man. That it is right to shine like a sun but that it is more than right to shine like a lover. That everything whatever seen or unseen is great and awes me. But that there is something neither seen nor unseen that stirs me to mightier results. That it is no mistake to make much of your genial flame: that you give life without question and cannot be denied your pay. That it is still less a mistake to make more of my precedent endowments: that they give ampler life without question and cannot be denied their pay. The

## KEEP YOUR FACE TO THE SUN

pay of the sun is the pay of the crops. Is the pay of houses. Is the pay of dividends. Is the pay of profit and loss. The pay of my dreams is the pay of love. Is the pay of men and women and children. Is the pay of immortality. I too O sun get down on my knees to you. I too O sun stand erect honoring you. I too O sun gather with the crowds acknowledging your first causes. I too O sun let no rival shame my tribute. I too O sun call you God. And you, O sun, do you realizing yourself admit me? You too O sun: do you get down on your knees honoring me? Do you O sun gathering with the stars and the wheat and the factories acknowledge my first causes? Do you O sun bringing tribute do as much for me as any other and more? Do you O sun call me God? I have said of you O sun: you feed my body. Do you say of me O sun: you feed my soul? I have said to my darling comrades the lands and seas over gasping for life: Keep your face to the sun. I have said to them: No matter what happens, no matter for barbarism and murder, no matter for robbery and starvation, no matter for yawning perditions, keep your face to the sun. And I say to you O sun subtracting no atom from the sum of your illimitability: Keep your face to me. Comrades: Come: assemble yourselves about me. The first word shall be the last word and the last word the first word again: Keep your face to the sun.

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