

### The Gilded Cage

The man had been subjected to every kind of shock,  
Ill health, a falling market, earthquakes, storms.  
And yet, somehow, his brain unfolded like a peacock.

Ah, that glimmering, glistening fan took him by surprise:  
Folded, unfolded, stuffed grey and heavy in its case—  
How could it look out once more upon the world with brilliant  
eyes?

Hurricanes have eyes, very still, of course—  
Health, alas, has many views, back and front, like Janus;  
Markets have a passion for the one-eyed patch: too much  
delight, too much remorse.

The perception of perception goes on and on and on—  
I can sit for hours, eyes closed, dreaming in the sun,  
Wondering if there will ever be again a peacock on the lawn.

Yes, mayhem, thoughts of murder in the selfsame brain—  
The light, that subtle artist, keeps working in the deepest  
sources of our sight—  
Relax, relax. Stop holding back the implications of an  
iridescent stain.

Health may be impaired, storms regroup, markets change their  
patches:  
Pavanes abound, and stately homes go down,  
But a bird is roosting in your mind that nothing in the world  
quite matches.

*Charles Edward Eaton*