

THE FALLEN ANGEL

ELISE AYLEN

Here let me rest a moment,
Here by the endless sea
Where the slow gulls are wheeling
And crying wearily.
Here let me lie unheeding
Low on the windy plain,
Earth unto earth is turning
Dust unto dust again,
Now while the West is burning
Against the darkening night,
And far, bewildering visions
Beat on my aching sight.

Vision and despair
And dream and longing
Beat their vain wings
About my breaking soul,
And old unmeasured sorrow
Wakes once again
In wild remembering pain
Formless, unspoken,
Beyond death and life.

For I have seen the face of God
And sung high songs
With all his glory round me,
Though I now
Lie bruised and wounded
In this weight of clay.

Here in the mystic peace
And break of twilight
Cleft between earth and night,
One narrow space of light
Left clear and bare
As for escaping wings,
In this still moment let me now forget
My stain and darkness
And my nameless sin,
Remembering those bright spirits
And the light that dwelt upon me
In unbroken joy.

There is but one beauty
To my seeking eyes
There is but one comfort
Underneath the skies.

My failing soul has crept through narrow ways
Seeking to slake its anguish
In earth's heavy grief.
I have lain long
Helpless, unknown,
Stricken with knowledge,
Lonely among the bleeding, captive hearts
That look for light
In vain through bitter dark.
All foulness and all passion
Have been mine
To bear and pity.

There is but one heaven
Where the sea-gull cries,
There is but one sorrow
Deeper than my sighs.

The sad ghost of the day
Goes by me moaning
On mothlike wings,
And softly from her veiled
And hidden eyes
Falls a pale gaze of pity
And lightly on the wind
A word is blown
From stilled and wondering lips.

"Turn again dark spirit
From your burdened clay,
Heaven still is bending
Round your mortal way;
Rise again, sad angel,
Still your home is high
Where the clouds are breaking
And the sea-gulls cry;
Where the sun is sinking
And the sea is bright
Leads a road of glory
Homeward to the light."

Slowly in the west
Through golden mists
And mourning purple bands
A light breaks
Deeper than the parting clouds,
Deeper than sea or sky,
Piercing beyond creation.
Slowly the heavens open to my soul
In wondering mercy,
And lifted on a sudden dream of song,
Across the rain-built arc
Of my own tears
I leap to light at last,
Divinely lost.
Light unto light—
The broken ray is one,
And rapt unto itself
Is infinite—
Is joy.