IF WE SHOULD MEET OUR INNOCENCE

Alice Mackenzie Swain

If we should meet our innocence again
at midday on a strange deserted road,
would we destroy it as we did before, 
terrified by its beauty, and distraught
by the white heat of its consuming flame?
Or would we walk with it a little while,
trying to charm it with dark subtle words
or using devious blandishments to beguile
it into shapes, less awesome and accusing?
Would we corrode it slowly till it flaked
away into a staining pile of rust,
then wonder why no water ever slaked
our conscience-fever of its murder thirst?
Or would we slay, all swift and unbelieving
That any act of ours could be accursed?