

THIS WIND

This wind, though violent,
Should not be thought malevolent;
It does what winds by nature do.
It does not *intend* to roil the dust;
It has no *plan* to push a churning wall
Of Kansas soil against our Texas town,
Blotting the sun, inventing unnatural noonday night.
It only does what such winds do:
It heaves behind a broad front, unknowing;
It's the dust, not this chilly wind, that is rolling.
Had that dust not lain so loose on the ground,
This wind would be clear.

A shame that crops uproot and chickens choke,
But don't imagine a mind behind this wind.
There is no heart filled with hate
For slight Miss Sloan, who suffocates
In the swelling specter's thin embrace;
It merely does what such winds do.
It heaves and moans till it goes limp,
And then rolls over, gasps, and dies.
Then it is out of her hair.
(Though the dust will hang for days.)

And we?
We do whatever folks do
When the dust covers them
As the dust is certain to.

But the wind?
The wind is clear.

**EACH TIME A FUNERAL
(An Unspoken Dialogue)**

I go down weighted
Like a deep-sea diver
Each time a funeral is called for.

“Help us to know the one we cherished,
“Help us to feel all we once held,
“Help us to see what might remain,”
Their heavy hearts require.
“This is why we brought you,
“Outfitted as you are.
“We are not suited for this.
“You go down and bring up
“Our fortunes.”

But they *have* gone down, I see.
They’ve gone down before me, Unsited,
Shoulders sagging,
Knees nearly buckling,
To reveal with wet eyes the wealth
To which I attach the lines:
 “*This*, the Lord giveth;
 “*This*, the Lord receiveth;
 “*Yet this*, the Lord leaveth with you.”
I attach the lines,
Haul the treasure to the surface,
And open up the chest.
 “Blessed be the Name of the Lord.
 “Let us pray:”

En Route To Another Interment, I Wonder

Have I waded into the world too far?
Old friends can’t see me from the shore.
Only memory now can reach
The scenes of laughter on the beach;
My eyes are far too wet and blurred.
And wind-borne shouts are garbled word!
Have others gone in up the coast?
Or farther down? Are any lost?
But I must tend to things or drown
In this thirsty tide that drags me down.

Averse to Say Goodbye

1. And have I loved this world too much?
Is that why I so grieve?
My fam'ly, friends, my hopes and dreams
I lay aside and leave.

The field and sea and mountain snow,
The desert flower and wood –
You made them, O Creator God,
Declaring them all good.

2. Then how can I, with only hints
Of what may lie beyond,
Not be averse to say goodbye
To joys that I have known?

Of course, I'll go where you may call;
I've long since made that choice.
And through the years, my dearest Friend,
I've learned to trust your voice.

3. And I expect to see you there,
Who, like me, walked this world,
Full knowing both its joys and pains,
Yet from its bosom hurled.

And when we share that heav'n prepared
For joyous, warm embrace,
Might it be Earth without the sin
Where all see face to face?

If At Last We Slip

And if at last we slip the bonds
Of narrow thoughts and proud decrees,
We shall have grasped the frightening wands
That jolt us free of such as these.

First we act on Faith and find
Sad Wisdom lights our days.
Now Hope leaves blurry Fear behind,
And Love emerges through the glaze

Of eyes that once were fixed on gold,
And Joy makes the weakest bold.