

The Making of Mankind

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I am not quite sure what is the proper purpose of an inaugural lecture. It is, however, traditional to speak on some aspect of the subject one professes to teach. My particular subject is dental anatomy. It would appear to be somewhat limited in content but in fact ranges from the kind of information required by a dentist in general practice to the interpretation of those fossils of tooth and bone upon which much of our knowledge of evolution, including that of mankind, is based. Within the context of the natural order, teeth are the most reliable guarantees of immortality; the final evidence of our existence upon earth.

From the material evidence of human evolution it is a natural step to the study of the whole complex of cultural, technological and intellectual factors involved in the emergence of mankind. It is this aspect of a vast subject that I would like to discuss on this occasion.

Moreover, I intend to do so in what may appear to be a somewhat unusual manner because I believe that it is right that members of a university should every now and then attempt to break away from stereotyped patterns of behaviour. To try out new methods is the basis of all research and the history of evolution has been a continual process of experimentation on the part of living creatures. A great deal of it ended in failure but the successful species were those that took risks rather than those that were content to adapt themselves too comfortably to a particular environment. If mankind is to survive some of us must avoid the temptation to become suburban dinosaurs! What I am going to attempt is to convey in the form of poetry rather than prose some of the implications of human evolution in its present critical phase.

Poetry is usually considered to be a method of communicating ideas and ideals in an emotional or symbolic manner, but there is a quite respectable tradition of using it to describe events, convey philosophical ideas and even scientific implications. In this, Virgil, Dante and the writer of "The Ould Orange Flute" share a common lineage! Furthermore, both the poet and the scientist are concerned with the accurate manipulation of words, used in their proper order to convey as clearly as possible both simple and highly complex ideas. Mathematics is also a form of poetry – perhaps its most perfect form. It is the poetry of pure science.

Evolution is a journey which began with the origin of the universe and has not yet ended. Man is the first creature capable of looking backwards towards his unknown beginnings and of speculating upon his final destiny. It is part of the purpose of education to inherit and take part in the understanding of the human situation in all its success and failure. Not to do so is to accept the condition of

the barbarian and the typical barbarian of today is the professional or technical expert whose interests are limited within the context of his daily routine.

Let us now proceed upon our journey.

1

Preparation for a journey sends the blood
Sweeping more swiftly towards the expectant brain,
Tidelike the venous deltas swell, the flood
Pours deep between the cells where memory retains
The fading images of long lost days,
Words wake and take old patterns from the past
From catalogues, from passages in books,
From pictures that hung upon the nursery wall,
Or, it would seem, sometimes from nowhere at all;
From dreams, or from gazing upon the sea
Who never came, having missed the train
Or decided not to bother after all.

Where shall we go – Bangor or Blackpool?
Where we have always gone because familiarity
Breeds security – where old friends
Speak a familiar language and every year
Postpones the unwanted moment we must face;
The ultimate fact, the naked word, of death.
Maybe however we could escape with more success
Further afield – perhaps in the desert,
Or among the islands of an unfamiliar sea,
Away from the rain and the mist and the cars
Waiting in queues upon the cluttered roads,
Returning at night from a place we have always known
Yet always failed to find.
It would be good to seek another kind of land,
An empty land where all day long the sun
Could pierce beneath the ageing flesh
And stir the stagnant blood.

But going away involves the journey home
And having gazed upon the great mountains,
And seen the night light shine upon the Nile
Or the Euphrates, and lizards sleeping upon the stones of Troy,
What kind of contentment could we find
Back in our garden where the dead apples lie

Among the leaves that clutter up the grass?

There is another journey that is unavoidable.
Some men look forward to it all their lives,
And doing so find a contentment deeper than life itself.
It is not that they have any knowledge of what lies beyond
The inevitable corruption of the flesh;
Be it extinction or eternity, nevertheless
Whatever purpose there may be lies there,
And nowhere else.
To get there everything must be cast aside,
Flesh stripped from bone and bone to dust dissolving
Until it falls forgotten within the craters of the moon.

What kind of journey is this, away from the sun,
Seeking a greater light beyond the familiar day,
Desiring a darker night where no stars shine,
Beyond memory, beyond hope, beyond the reach
Of all the familiarity of common speech.
A journey without friends, without meaning,
And with no return?

Yet somehow once accepted it becomes devoid of fear,
Without it life would be the meaningless futility
Of mere continuance within the trap of time;
A hundred thousand years of repetition,
Morning and evening, respiration and defecation,
Would add little to the significance of being man,
Or justify the occasional moment of ecstasy,
The passing chance to hold the reins of power.

In time there can be no perfection that will endure.
Everything good, bad or indifferent is swept away;
Ruined temples upon the skyline denote decay
Of ancient civilizations that can never return.
Cleopatra is dead and Caesar can speak no more.
Time calls the players to the stage of life,
After the play is ended comes the dark
And only beyond the night – reality.

2

It has taken uncounted years and a million dying stars
To create humanity,
A species capable of speculation about birth and death,
Time and eternity.
But mankind could never have inherited the earth
Without the death of all that went before
His ultimate emergence.
Evolution is merely creation within the context of time.

Within the substance of the primordial cell
The secret potentialities already existed
Of every creature that on earth would dwell.
Given the opportunities of this particular world,
The ebb and flow of tides, grassland and forest,
Sunlight and shadow, seasons and showers,
Wind upon the waters and the silent night,
Mankind was inevitable.
He was already present
In the beginning.

All life continues within humanity,
Even the most humble creatures,
Bacteria or cell, parasite or butterfly,
Have made their contribution to what Plato taught
And Aristotle in his turn denied.
Behind the conceptual framework
Of kingdom, phylum and individual species,
Life moves majestically with irresistible power
Towards a finality
Beyond our dreams.

Duration is something different from becoming.
To endure it is necessary to escape from change and succession.
And that is only possible in eternity,
Which is another form of existence
That the mind can only inherit,
Once it has been created
Within the matrix of that kind of continuity
Postulated and made possible by evolution.

We seek eternity through faith,
But not the world.
To understand the actuality of existence
It is necessary to reject mere speculation
And turn to facts.
Only by measurement and by experiment
Can natural knowledge increase and satisfy
The intellectual hunger of mankind.

Research is more than observation
Of natural phenomena,
Or isolated events as they occur.
It begins with the calculation of what might result
If things were different.
Supposing an atom should alter its position in the molecular framework
Of a particular gene.
What are the consequences that might arise
In future development?
That is a scientific question.
It is still necessary to find an answer
By the manipulation of an adequate experiment,
And the answer given must be free of all ambiguity
Of procedure and method.

Experiment, observation and event
Are abstractions
Necessary for the making and the understanding
Of scientific concepts.
There are however other experiences.
Watching at evening as the darkness falls
In shades of blue and purple upon a waveless sea;
The sight of towers above the morning mist
In Lombardy
Seen from the windows of a train,
The memory of such moments,
Transcending time and place,
Can only be accepted without question,
As something that is,
When all else fades away.

Thought is the product of brain,
Of cell, of synapse and acetylcholine;

But brain is itself the termination of a process
Originating within a mystery
That hides beyond our reach.
Given the atom, we must accept intelligence.

3

Memory extends the scope of speculation.
Recollection of yesterday creates tomorrow,
Transcending time.
Mankind has initiated the future within his brain,
A future in time, but nevertheless
A foretaste of eternity.
Language implies the possibility
Of a dialogue with God,
And even if in Eden the first conversation
Was not entirely satisfactory,
Something at least had been achieved,
Diplomatic relations were not altogether suspended.

Theologians mistrust natural man
In his ability to reach perfection,
And even with good reason.
Even the tiger and the hyena
Destroy only in order to survive.
They do not experience the satisfaction
Of inflicting pain upon body or mind
For its own sake.
That is a peculiarity reserved
For the lord of creation.

To eliminate such behaviour
Requires drastic surgery
Beyond the unaided power of humanity.
According to the teaching of the Church
It required the Incarnation and the death of God,
Which as an intellectual conception
Appears incomprehensible.
Nevertheless Tertullian accepted the Impossible,
And Augustine invoked the supernatural,
To redeem the pathology of mankind.

Such ideas did not arise
Entirely within the context of Christianity.
Very early humanity sought beyond the actual
For something that could explain the inexplicable,
As Michaelangelo demonstrated when he painted
Upon the Sistine roof the act of creation;
Man reaching out to touch the hand of God.

All men seek simplicity amidst complexity,
But all the great simplicities are based
Upon the accumulation of data.
The restoration of order within the context of the temporal
Is a continual warfare against chaos,
The primordial enemy of creation.
The great geniuses, however, do more
Than codify collections of information
In definitions and formulae,
They correlate adjacent simplicities
And build, behind the scaffolding of time,
A comprehensive picture of the universe,
Incorporating all the wisdom of the past,
Yet leaving place for what is still unknown.

Newton and Darwin were single minded men
Who carried out magnificently their proper tasks.
Plato, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas,
Karl Marx and Freud, seeking a wider scope,
Stand on a higher plane, and always the poets,
From Homer to Dante and beyond,
Share with the prophets the unattainable heights,
Escaping the limitations of the lower air.

Science, theology and philosophy
Are separate departments of knowledge,
None of them alone is absolute.
What is required is something the ancients knew;
That combination of innocence and wisdom
We have forgotten
Within mythology the known and the unknown
Communicate together and create

An atmosphere where fact and fancy meet,
Making a common space for unlikely stars.
A common home where poet, plumber,
Mathematician, bishop and politician can dwell,
Sharing a common language and a common dream.

All men must die.
Even Cuchulain at the pillar stone
Fed the dark ravens
From his torn flesh.
His name endures
Within the primordial memory
Of an ancient race,
What if he never lived,
His name can never die!

4

Mankind is a single species
In which every individual must contribute
His particular genius if the common good
Is to be attained.
Every individual failure, unless redeemed,
Diminishes the whole.
Every breakdown of communication
Betrays the expectation of Utopia,
The creation of the city of God upon earth
That will see the termination of the temporal.
Time will continue until the nations die
And all the earth is one.

Patriotism however is enough for now.
Immediate problems can only be solved
Within the context of what is possible
At any particular moment.
Ideals divorced from reality destroy themselves
And betray their ultimate ends.
Statesmanship is not a matter of preaching sermons,
But of establishing situations within which problems can be solved
With the widest possible agreement.
Without politics no city is possible,

And without the city
Men must remain barbarians.

Athens was given to us
As a promise and an inspiration
Of what can yet return
In the proper season.
A glimpse of summer,
A single magnificent day,
Withdrawn, but not forgotten.

There have been other indications
Of that which is required
To create the beloved City.
Imperial Rome, the long slow civilizations
Of China and India,
Gothic cathedrals and Renaissance art,
And now the technological revolution;
Establishing the possibility of that material wealth,
Which man as a creature requires
To escape the slavery of his predicament
As a product of nature.

There is always the necessity to set out
Again and again upon new journeys.
We must always be navigators,
Until at last we are ready to undertake
The final journey in which the terminal shore
Remains unknowable,
And where the only guide
May be a falling star.

Movement was granted very early in evolution.
Wind carried spores; in rivers and lakes
Simple creatures sought for food,
And to escape from perilous situations,
That which we call progress is an extension of locomotion
Beyond the environmental limitation of primitive man.
Expanding space no longer leaves us helpless.
Even from within the dimensions of the terrestrial order
We are preparing to set out, not only for Mongolia or Tibet,

But to investigate the secrets of the moon.
All journeys are dangerous and when they become safe
We no longer enjoy them.
It is part of our nature to penetrate the unknown.

Home is no longer here or near,
In village or town.
It lies elsewhere beyond the limitations
Of what we know.
Continually we seek to move from one home to another,
From the present to the hereafter,
From our origin to our ending,
Completing a destiny
Beyond our immediate comprehension.

No journey has any significance
Until it has been completed.
Therefore it is useless to ask or answer
What is the purpose of evolution,
Or what is its possible termination.
All that we can say is that it is part of our situation.
A process in which we are all involved;
A journey without maps,
Through a country we must seek to understand
Only by the fullest possible appreciation
Of what has gone before.

But even the longest journey
Has a beginning and an ending,
And becomes an event rather than a process.
The march of the ten thousand Greeks to their homeland
Is now part of history;
It has ended.
They march no more.

5

Night and day, seed-time and harvest,
The recovery of the forest from the consuming fire,
These in themselves do not prove the reality of resurrection;

The rhythm of tides and of seasons,
The rise and fall of civilizations,
The succession of birth and death,
The cry of a dog in the darkness,
The void of silence behind the sound of rushing waters;
All these prove nothing,
But merely indicate the need for contemplation
As well as action and argument
If we are to penetrate reality.

It is not only the answers that are significant,
But the questions themselves.
Why should we doubt mortality
And the inevitable limitations of the natural order?
Why can we not accept that the journey ends
For every individual,
Continuing for the species
A little longer,
Before the final termination
Of life and lifeless in the common tomb
Of cosmological extinction?

It is irrational to dismiss experiences
That fail to fit the categories of time and space,
Or to decry the architectural wisdom
Of ancient masters.
What is necessary is synthesis,
Not rejection;
A widening of horizons,
Not any limitation
Within the immediately observable;
A return of philosophy
To its proper function
Of answering the questions that arise
Out of the depths of our human condition.

The wisdom of past ages
Must be continually available.
Merely to appreciate the most recent additions
Of scientific discovery,
In ignorance of what has already been revealed,
Is to neglect the foundations.

The intellectual history of mankind
Is another aspect
Of the unfinished journey
To the unknown destination.

Education, the passing of knowledge
From generation to generation,
Is the essential communication
Without which progress would be impossible.
Mere accumulation of information
Would by itself in the end
Destroy wisdom.
In every generation there must be available
Opportunities for mediation,
A setting aside for those who appreciate silence;
Adequate facilities to escape
The continual chatter
Of canteen and market place,
The distraction of meaningless words.

We must discover the purpose of language
Not only to communicate,
But to formulate ideas,
Words being the instruments we use,
Or misuse, in creating order and form
Out of the shapeless substance
Of intuition and dream.
The making of a sentence is a work of art,
That carries not only information,
But implications that escape
The obvious meaning of the isolated fact.

Zinjanthropus, Pithecanthropus and Neanderthal man,
How can we divide humanity
From prehumanity?
When does the night end and the day begin?
Where does the Amazon become the sea?
Behind the voiceless masks of fossil skulls
What a long struggle to articulate
The appropriate word?
How long did Adam sleep
Waiting for Eve?

6

All men are born equal.
Meaningless platitude or fundamental truth?
What is the value of physical deformity
Or of mental disorder
Within the natural order?
The species that cannot find a niche
In which to multiply has no future,
The wounded tiger no destiny but to die.

The equality of man would seem to imply
Some supernatural implication of personality
Beyond the meaningless multiplicity
Within the ant heap and the teeming sea.
Increase and multiply,
That is the command of nature
From galaxy to amoeba and beyond.
Only in such obedience could life evolve
Against the continual pressure to return
Back to the quietude of empty space
And disintegrating stars.

Mankind however has reached the crises point;
The freedom to decide his destiny,
To select the proper means,
Not only to survive and overcome
The imperfections of his body but of his mind,
Using his intelligence to devise
An enduring situation which could avoid
The suicide of war and lack of food
To feed the generations yet unborn.

Art, necessity and technological skill,
Went to the making of palaeolithic instruments
Of wood and stone,
And even the most magnificent of Picasso's bulls
Could meet its rival in the sunless caves
Of Altamira and the Font-de-Gaume.

Augustus Caesar on a Roman coin
Marks where imperial legions held the Rhine
Against the dark confusion of the Nordic tribes,
Until the time was ready for them to find,
Within the broken City,
The indestructible foundations of another world.
And even as Europe grappled with the night
Of barbarian confusion, in the east
The glorious image of Byzantium stone
In gold, in cloth of gold and glittering bronze!

Progress is never constant.
Perfection is always partial and incomplete,
And liable to be destroyed, as chaos continually returns
To desecrate the Acropolis and tear down
The stones of Carthage and Jerusalem.
Even in our time the nations prepare for war,
From which nothing can survive
Of city or town or any habitable place
Amidst the scattered fragments of a broken world.

There is no answer in despair,
Nor any comfort in a futile hope
That dare not face the dark depths that hide
Within the mind and pride of natural man.
That which we must escape lies in ourselves,
The ultimate conflict between heaven and hell,
Creation and destruction, darkness and light,
Depends upon the ability to eliminate
Fanatical fury and self-regarding pride.

Henceforth we must decide, not once but continually
In every generation, to avoid the inherited madness
That accepts and then condones
The crazy logic of war and concentration camp,
The massacre of children,
The terrible rooms
Where men are driven mad
By fear and pain.
Nor must we forget that these things are done

In the name of virtue and of Christendom!

This is no easy task.
Mere knowledge in itself will never solve
The problem inherent in the very depth of our being;
The use of evil means to defend or make possible
The perfect society we all desire.
With the chimpanzee and the gorilla ended
The innocence of the creature created
Within the natural order.
They have no responsibility for what we may do.
What is required is something deeper still
Even than justice and the rule of law.
These in themselves have never been able to resist
The return to the jungle when the trumpets call.

7

Civilization is the accumulation
Of technological knowledge,
As well as the assimilation of ideas,
Regarding the universe and the nature of man.
The men who invented the telescope and the microscope,
The builders of roads and of aqueducts,
The makers of pots and of pans and of automobiles,
Do not always receive the credit they deserve
In establishing the world we take so much for granted.

Man has been defined as the maker of instruments,
Those extensions of the hand and brain
Enabling him to master and administrate
For his purposes the resources of the earth,
From primeval forest to the dark depths of sea.
Such power is dangerous as well as fruitful,
It is easier to create a desert than a garden.

The ancient Egyptians who irrigated the dead lands
With the life giving waters of the flooding Nile
Were more than engineers. They were the makers
Of the continuing foundations upon which civilization

Could consolidate its gains for hundreds of generations;
Where temples and cities and establishments of learning
Provided the framework for further advancement,
Outlasting the rise and fall of dynasty and empire,
The wisdom of sages and the folly of kings.

It is in this manner that man has created
A unique environment that is his alone,
His ability to move forward depends upon whether
He can continue to construct rather than destroy.
Again we return to the heart of the problem,
The age long conflict between good and evil,
The taming of the mythological monsters
That haunt our dreams.

The psychological analysis of human motivation
Does not flatter either intellect or ego.
Most of our aims are persistently directed
Towards the satisfaction of purely personal ends,
Which are not usually either respectable
Or flattering to our self regard.
Nevertheless it was the power of instinct and passion
That enabled our predecessors to overcome the hostility
Of nature and the hunger of other creatures.
The meek could not inhabit the earth
In the days of the dinosaur.

The artist and the poet inherit a unique occupation
Of increasing importance for the future of man.
The diagnosis of society in any circumstance
Depends upon the insight of those who, by the manipulation of words,
Or adequate visual images, can both penetrate and demonstrate
The hidden powers that direct and regulate
The desires and purposes
Of each succeeding age.

We can in future turn to the computer
For the accumulation of data and the working of machines,
Leaving to men the opportunity to specialize
In the directing of society towards particular ends.
What is important is not so much the requisite knowledge

As the right decision before and not after
The inevitable crises,
As the declension of digits towards zero
Throws its deep shadow
Upon a sunlit world.

What will remain when twenty thousand generations
Have repeated the pattern of November skies?
Will the uttermost islands of the world rejoice
An the reality of Athens return to earth again,
Not only in one place, but everywhere
Men gather together
To discuss the daily regulation of public order,
And question with Socrates the fundamental problems
Of the nature of duty, of destiny, and the implications
Of the most recent discoveries?
That is a possibility, but from our knowledge of history
Unlikely, unless we can attain a higher wisdom,
Otherwise we can expect nothing more
Than a handful of scattered teeth and a bundle of broken bones
To demonstrate the ultimate judgement of creation
On the folly of mankind.

8

Between conception and corruption
Life lies tight or slack before the breaking point.
The descending axe gleams in the bright light
Before it cuts the block.
All men are incidents
Beneath the icy stars.
Out of space there comes an old, cold wind,
Darker than death,
More ancient than all our days,
Parting the light to let the darkness fall
On all our history.

Certainly we exist,
More certainly we must die,
Elsewise we must accept nonentity.
The dark hard stones that lie,

Along the shoreline of a winter sea,
Will still endure
When all our bones are dust
And all our tombs lie open to the sky.

No man yet has looked upon the earth
Accepting all.
No man has gazed upon the sun
Desiring darkness.
No man has walked the market place
In love with death,
Unmoved by pity
Or untouched by pain.
That which makes possible
What acceptance we can give
Lies not in repetition
But in the hope of change,
The ability to escape
The circumference of life.

A garden in Thessalonica or in Babylon
Half lit by moonlight
Is something we have created
Among the stones of older civilizations.
Within such places
And in a certain manner,
We can redeem our future
From mere futility.
Such acts of creation,
Within the context of corruption,
Are more than defiance
Of our ultimate extermination.
They are the symbols, inadequate and incomplete,
Of the hope that has always existed
Since ancient hunters
Incised on broken bones,
After a long days toil,
Memories and dreams.

Rebellion against circumstances
Has destroyed not only the empires
Of forgotten tyrants;

It has established new civilizations,
And every such creation,
In spite of continual disappointments,
Renews the hope of the ultimate Utopia.
Nevertheless there lies within our nature,
Not only the urge to be remembered,
Or to build again and again new cities
Upon ancient foundations,
But to inherit the enduring kingdom
Beyond the unyielding power
Of death's dark dynasty.

9

Extension of temporal existence
Is not the answer.
Triumph lies not in the abolition
Of the ancient enemy,
But in the resurrection of the individual
Within the context of eternity.
To spend an evening by a starlit sea,
And trace the shadows up the mountain side
As morning dawns,
Betrays our acceptance of mortality.
Mozart by candlelight or ancient battlefields,
The dance of molecules and the birth of stars,
Defy corruption.
We inherit grandeur but deny our greatness;
We seek the kingdom but betray our hope,
Returning again and again
To destroy in hatred all that common good
We know to be necessary,
Yet continually deny.

Such behaviour however is inevitable
Until desire is purged of mediocrity
Of purpose and act.
Only by the continual destruction of the imperfect,
Even when it is the best we can imagine,
Or create, can we attain
The ultimate perfection we desire.
Death is not to be destroyed,

But to be made acceptable.
Pain is not to be abolished,
But to be mastered.
Desire is not to be put aside,
But to be fulfilled
In mutual ecstasy.
The city is not to be burned down,
But built in such a manner as to endure
The consuming fire.

Purgatory is essential
Not only to make acceptable the fact of death,
But as part of the experience
Of our common existence.
Only by kindling of fire within our bones
Can we eliminate the putrefaction of the flesh,
The slum, the concentration camp,
The evils of the capitalist system,
All blood stained pedestals
Upon which we have established
Our most respectable memorials.

Troy has been destroyed,
Not once but many times,
And Sodom and Gomorrah,
And in their downfall
Innumerable works of art
Have been lost forever.
But that was necessary.
The onslaught of the barbarian
Or the wrath of the Lord,
Is the judgement upon civilizations
That have outgrown their purpose.

The great artist is always liable
To destroy his creations,
Which most of us would gladly accept
As worthy of honour;
And every scientist must ruthlessly reject
The work of a lifetime
Before the final condemnation
Of the unaccepted fact.

Politicians must manipulate circumstances
Not towards any absolute perfection
Which is unobtainable,
But towards what is likely to be accepted
By the immediate multitude.
Nevertheless they must have a sense of direction;
Leadership implies some appreciation
Of the final destination.

Theologians also have a responsibility
Of a different kind.
Virtue must be upheld
And truth defended.
But in a manner appropriate
To their proper dignity,
Not as the means to the comfortable life
Or the individual satisfaction
Of self-regarding men.
They must always remember
That truth is more terrible than death,
And virtue, if fully accepted,
Involves the suicide of self.
These are not instruments to be used
Without careful consideration.

There are occasions and situations
Requiring compromise,
And occasions and situations
Requiring ruthlessness
Of action and thought.
Those who are builders are not always virtuous,
And those who destroy are not always guilty.
The worst form of idolatry
Is to worship that which has been established
Upon the stupidity of our ancestors.

10

What we have received from past generations
Must be continually adapted to present situations.
The rose that grew in the hedgerows of yesterday
Must be transplanted in the garden of today
If it is to inherit tomorrow.
Those who undertook the building of cities
Hung up their swords upon the nearest tree,
Which continued to stand within the market place.
Cathedral and Counting House and Public Convenience,
University, Palace and Houses of Parliament,
Museum, Art Gallery and Home for Retired Prostitutes,
All these are essential
And worthy of the protection of the sword.

It is necessary to pray for peace
And to prepare for war.
The meek who will inherit the earth
Are not weak.
They are strong with the terrible strength
Of those who destroy what others have established,
In order to return to the desert,
And rebuild again, upon firmer foundations,
Another Athens and another Rome.
The dream is more enduring than the fact.

Within the trap of time
The leopard continually destroys the lamb
Because it must.
The tapeworm and the virus
Have equal rights to live
Within the intestine and the brain
Of philosopher and saint.
And, while we must seek their elimination,
Redemption involves them also,
But only within humanity
Resides the power either to accept,
Or reject, on behalf of creation,
The ultimate earth,
The final attainment
Of the actuated dream.

Saint Francis did more
Than speak with bird and beast.
He justified the Middle Ages.
For his sake we can forgive
Those who betrayed Byzantium.
Justinian's great church endures;
What matter if Christendom
No longer holds the crown,
Miracle enough if the vast dome
Still stands in all its glory
In that sacred place,
Where Europe ends and where hope began
The great millenium.

When the sun grows small and cold
And all the sky grows dark,
Who will remember the summer flowers?
But who can remember now
The primordial garden?
Already we ghave grown old
And all our ancient innocence destroyed.
Only a new morning
And a new earth,
Can overcome
The inevitable ending
Of all our days
The promise remains,
Heaven and earth must pass away
Before the consumation of this age.
Before Jerusalem is built upon Jerusalem,
A city established among the stars,
More splendid than the sun.

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