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To Death (A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning)

Brother Adelbert

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Bible today? Even the clergy should read their Bible every day."

When he said "clergy," he turned with his sign so that he could look up to where the small man was standing.

Neither man made any sign that they saw each other. As the tall man walked towards Sixth Avenue, the man at the bench kept his attention on him until he could no longer see him. Then he walked slowly up the remaining steps to the library entrance. Before touching the door to go in, he stopped.

His needs were physical needs, but not food. He let his feet turn, and walked down. He couldn't spend any time in the library this afternoon, nor did he wish to take a walk in the street, or in the park, or along the river.

Some inner voice told him that he would never feel invigorated until he reached his own apartment, and could take off his black clothes, and stepped under the shower. That might help him, would be a sign that the world he knew and lived in was still carrying on.

To Death

(A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning)

By Brother Adelbert

There lie the smoking fields, the gaunt woods, charred
 And choked with demolition where the hand
 Of Fire stripped from them every sheathing band
 Of glory, leaving skeletons with sard
 Smoke rising from stalk brash and seared shard.
 And then He said to me: At your command
 Shall these stalks live, O son of man, and stand
 Forth clothed with leaves and fruit for your regard?
 Only the Vine remains, with long root deep
 Sunk in an ocean of ash; but the fruit of the Vine,
 Touched, tingles the brain like a knife on the teeth;
 Yet the pity of Fire is in this, to make me keep
 Five wits at arm's length while I drink the wine
 Lethal to Death, for whom I wove this wreath.