

RESURRECTION

(Written on Good Friday, 1939)

My faith is dead.
It's finished, ended.
No feeling, purpose left.
A useless thing, it is,
Pale, lifeless,
No power to stir
As once it did.
To make of life
A time of song and laughter.
Song--laughter? ~~yes, yes~~
Yes, and cruel heart-breaking work!
But all for nothing--
All in vain it was.
What's come from it?
What's left but ruins of great hopes?
Hopes for a new world and new life for all.
We called it Life Abundant.
But--it's all dead now--and better so.

Well, I buried faith.
And planted flowers on its grave.
It once had been so beautiful,
But now--well, now it's finished.
That much is sure.
Sad? Yes, of course,
But at least no more to trouble me.
Its joy was mixed with too much pain.
The dead are better buried after all.
And then forgotten,--if can be.

I've better things to do
Than gaze upon the dead.
I'll seek for beauty, joy,
Without its aid.
Unburdened, one can run,
Or fly perhaps,
Leave far behind these scenes
Of grief, of work.
Find love, perhaps find peace.
Yes, faith like that is worthless,
Better none at all.
And anyhow it's dead.
It's buried even!
I'll think no more about it.
It's dead, I tell you.

Outside the rain falls,
Cold and endless.
Its patter on my window but recalls,
My nights of sorrow and of hopes defeated.
The chill wind grips my heart.
I huddle numbly by the cheerless fire.
There is no use to weep, to work,
To ~~strive~~ fight for better things.
The rain beats ceaselessly upon the window pane.
The dead are better so.
But I--I have to live.

What hope can sunshine bring
To a cold drenched earth?
Can the dead rise?
And yet--its warmth creeps through my soul.
But oh, its glare makes ruins seem more desolate.
I'd rather close my eyes than look
Upon the sight of wasted years.
Indeed, I've pitifully little left!
I'll seek for other things,
For joy, for beauty, selfish ease,
Let the old world be.
It's useless anyhow to spend my strength.

Cold rains, warm suns.
Day follows day.
The processes of life are slow.
God's way, I guess.
Those ruins in the sunshine,
How clear they seem.
How easy now to understand!

See here, --here, I built too flimsily.
A weak foundation there--not deep enough.
A bad mistake in that ambitious arch.
But look--look here, that part remains,
And a little over there.
And this--why this was really good.
It stands as ~~firmly~~/firmly
As the day I did it.
Perhaps I could build better
Now I've looked at ruins.
I'm sure I could!

This sudden swelling in my heart?
What does it mean?
This call to work? To built anew?
To share again the pain of toil?
To dream again the old, old dream
Of a new world and life abundant?
Is faith perhaps reborn?
Revived to stronger life?

I cannot bear it,
Life suddenly has grown so sweet,
So full of meaning, purpose, Joy!

Nanking, April 7, 1939