

Luke Bradford

Originally published online by The Aesthetic .Directory, November 2020

S A L T

after Ezra Pound

TELL, thou, such that your true self song fall,  
Way's word, when thou with each dire hour  
Hard time bore much.  
Acid ache hast thou held,  
Seen upon that keel many woes' hold,  
When rose that dire tide, when you'd seen many  
Mute dark days pass over that ship  
When she'd spun near high rock. Cold held thee,  
Your feet were numb with snow.  
Cold that iron were; some deep sigh  
Rent your soul; need made  
Thee tire. Lest they ne'er know  
That they live best upon warm land,  
Tell what thou, care worn, upon such cold seas,  
Bore over that dark time, poor soul  
With nary your kin's call;  
Hung with hard snow dust, when hail scur flew,  
Thou felt nary song save that hard tide,  
Each cold wave, when each swan wept,  
When over thee each tern sang,  
Seas' fowl, each call some cold joke,  
Mews' song your only mead.  
Each gale beat upon high rock, then fell upon that ship  
With cold arms; many days that wild hawk wept loud  
With sea's mist upon each wing.  
Nary ally  
Will make glad that soul torn with need.  
This they ne'er know, that with easy life  
Live amid town folk with some busy work,  
Rich, rosy with wine, what thou felt  
Over that salt.  
Dusk fell, snow came from over that pole,  
Then fell upon thee; then hail,  
Corn from that cold. Even then came that  
Deep idea that thou, upon high seas,

That salt wavy roil must trek solo.  
Even late into life, your mind dims with this need  
That thou fare afar, that thou well away from here  
Seek some rare stay.  
Ne'er wilt thou find glad folk upon warm land  
That even that they have what they need, won't want;  
When they that dare, some bold deed take them,  
When they that feel true, some cold king keep them,  
Even then will have that grim lust that they fare upon high seas,  
What ever that lord doth will.  
They won't play some easy tune, won't wear some gold ring,  
Won't rest easy with some fair maid, won't want some glad hour,  
Nary else save that wave lash.  
Even then that need will come upon them that they fare away upon that tide.  
Wood doth grow rich, each plum ripe,  
Each acre fair — land doth fare fast —  
This will dare them, make them bold;  
Each soul will roam, such that each mind  
Will turn onto tide ways he'll trek afar.  
When owls hoot that glum song,  
They sing July, deep with soul ache,  
That acid bath. Town folk ne'er know —  
They that were born rich — what some have done  
When that long trek took them wide.  
Such that your soul leap from your ribs' cage, thou,  
Your mood amid that mere tide,  
Over that orca acre, wide must take thee.  
When warm land held thee, many days she'd come,  
Wild with zeal, that lone bird:  
She'd told thee thou must make that road  
Over high seas; when even then  
Your lord gave unto thee this dead life,  
Tied down with debt, tied down with land, thou knew  
That each man's flag can't long rise  
Save that some dire doom,  
When that man's tide turn, will tear from that mast.  
Long ills, long days, cold iron  
Will rend life from each body.  
Thus, each earl what ever, unto they that will come next —  
Bold with fame amid they that live will brag some last word,  
That he'll work till he'll pass,  
Hate lain upon each foe's head  
With each rare deed,  
Such that each will laud that earl late,  
That he'll reap fame that will last amid Isle folk,  
Sure, ever past, that long life gone,

Glad amid them.  
Days don't last like iron does.  
Thus, this bold pose from they that were rich,  
When doth rise nary king, nary high heir,  
Nary gold gilt lord like they that have gone.  
Even unto that soul most glad,  
Who's seen life from some high seat,  
Will grow pale this rich life, weak this wine!  
Your hour will wane. This void will last.  
Each tomb will hide pain. Your iron will rest.  
Gold ages, then cuts.  
Each soul doth walk into hard wind:  
Each year will harm them, each face will pale.  
They will grow grey, they will moan, they will know each ally gone;  
Even rich, then, they sink into soil;  
Then they can't, they that pass,  
Swig that rich plum wine, can't feel pity,  
Can't move each hand, can't have some bold idea;  
Thus, when they line your tomb with gold, thou,  
Even then, your born kin's bone yard  
Will make eery gems.