

Scenes of the Mind, Aldous Huxley

Scenes of the Mind

I have run where festival was loud  
With drum and brass among the crowd  
Of panic revellers, whose cries  
Affront the quiet of the skies;  
Whose dancing lights contract the deep  
Infinity of night and sleep  
To a narrow turmoil of troubled fire.  
And I have found my heart's desire  
In beechen caverns that autumn fills  
With the blue shadowiness of distant hills;  
Whose luminous grey pillars bear  
The stooping sky: calm is the air,  
Nor any sound is heard to mar  
That crystal silence—as from far,  
Far off a man may see  
The busy world all utterly  
Hushed as an old memorial scene.  
Long evenings I have sat and been  
Strangely content, while in my hands  
I held a wealth of coloured strands,  
Shimmering plaits of silk and skeins  
Of soft bright wool. Each colour drains  
New life at the lamp's round pool of gold;  
Each sinks again when I withhold  
The quickening radiance, to a wan  
And shadowy oblivion  
Of what it was. And in my mind  
Beauty or sudden love has shined  
And wakened colour in what was dead  
And turned to gold the sullen lead  
Of mean desires and everyday's  
Poor thoughts and customary ways.  
Sometimes in lands where mountains throw  
Their silent spell on all below,  
Drawing a magic circle wide  
About their feet on every side,  
Robbed of all speech and thought and act,  
I have seen God in the cataract.  
In falling water and in flame,  
Never at rest, yet still the same,  
God shows himself. And I have known  
The swift fire frozen into stone,  
And water frozen changelessly  
Into the death of gems. And I  
Long sitting by the thunderous mill  
Have seen the headlong wheel made still,  
And in the silence that ensued  
Have known the endless solitude  
Of being dead and utterly nought.  
Inhabitant of mine own thought,  
I look abroad, and all I see  
Is my creation, made for me:  
Along my thread of life are pearled  
The moments that make up the world.

The end