

I Stood Musing in a Black World . . .

By Stephen Crane

I stood musing in a black world,
Not knowing where to direct my feet.
And I saw the quick stream of men
Pouring ceaselessly,
Filled with eager faces,
A torrent of desire.
I called to them,
“Where do you go? What do you see?”
A thousand voices called to me.
A thousand fingers pointed.
“Look! Look! There!”

I know not of it.
But, lo! in the far sky shone a radiance
Ineffable, divine,—
A vision painted upon a pall;
And sometimes it was,
And sometimes it was not.
I hesitated.
Then from the stream
Came roaring voices,
Impatient:
“Look! Look! There!”

So again I saw,
And leaped, unhesitant,
And struggled and fumed
With outspread clutching fingers.
The hard hills tore my flesh;
The ways bit my feet.
At last I looked again.

No radiance in the far sky,
Ineffable, divine;
No vision painted upon a pall;
And always my eyes ached for the light.
Then I cried in despair,
“I see nothing! Oh, where do I go?”
The torrent turned again its faces:
“Look! Look! There!”

And at the blindness of my spirit
They screamed,
“Fool! Fool! Fool!”