

Grand Canyon

I am the Grand Canyon,

My other names are Beethoven and Wagner,

Immortal as Sorrow, deathless as Love.

My solitudes are limned in muted symphonies,

My silences are organ-toned,

And the stars above my head are jeweled fingers of the Night

That touch octaves of the winds that sing my threnodies.

I am a dissonance of aeons crashing their epochs

In countless Iliads of eternity.

I am the wild music of the Valkyries,

Halted in the Heavens and hushed into stone.

I am the symphony Egmont played on flutes of granite.

I am an untold tragedy of the ages:

I am a deep wound in the breast of Lincoln, seen through the mist of years.

My twilight is the morning of the Gods:

I was Before and shall be After.

I am the sequestered haunts of Zarathustra,

And the flaming words of his high priest Nietzsche

Chilled to stone in the frozen horror of his pitiless benedictions.

I spanned the arc of the fallen angels,

And the outstretched wings of Lucifer in their flight from Paradise.

I hold no ending of life and no beginning of death,

My joys and sorrows are immutable and eternal:

Within my marble halls

Belshazzar still revels in his fleshy feasts,

While through my moonlit passes

The battered hosts of Ghengis Khan are forever retreating.

I am a voice that keeps repeating "There is a God."

I am the cradle of all superstitions;

Atheism never reared her unbelieving head

Amidst my whisper-haunted sanctuaries.

I am ten thousand cathedrals rolled into one

Awaiting the coming of some dim Pagan Zeus

To summon humanity to its last eternal Valhalla.

My winding balustrades ascend far away into the Past;

My cyclopean pillars are holding up the towers of the Present;

My Golgothian cornices frown upon the Future.

I am the Apollo of all earthly dominions;

The Sun is my looking glass, and the far off Niagaras are my laughter.

I am a greater world fashioned by some greater God:

The phantasmagor of some mad Angelo eclipsing Dante in stone.

I am a lost continent, cathedral-gaunted, ruin-enchanted, untenanted.

I am the wonder world of the people who live in the Stars,

My invisible inhabitants once lived in the Moon.

I am the Grand Canyon.

- By Alfred Bryan