

I Must Come Back

I dread the break when I shall die—
Not from my human friends, for they
 Are shifting shadows such as I
 And soon must follow me away—
But from my earth that still must swing
 From day to dusk, from dark to dawn,
Slow shimmering on from spring to spring
 Through all the years when I am gone.

How many loving clouds will fold
 The piney peaks in tender mist,
What sunsets turn the sky to gold
 And distant plains to amethyst,
What sparkling winter days will loose
 The chuckle of the chickadee
Among the silent, snowy spruce—
 And I shall not be here to see!

An old street dweller's soul may call
 For that fair City of No Night,
Boxed in a four-square echoing wall
 Of jasper, beryl and chrysolite,
But I should wish the endless song
 Of crashing choirs were just the lark,
And close light-weary eyes and long
 For starry, summer-scented dark.

No, when the waning heartbeat fails
 I ask no heaven but leave to wend,
Unseen but seeing, my old trails,
With deathless years to comprehend,
 My Earth, the loveliness of you,
 From all your gorgeous zodiac
Down to a glistening drop of dew.
I must come back! I must come back!

Badger Clark