

Martin Robertson

Prayer to Truth

You who are manifest in reason and faith,
mathematical symbol, artist's vision—Truth,
compel the twisting mind and (what is harder)
the twisting heart.

See that in earthquake now and blinding storm
the spirit's eye keeps clear, its footing firm,
and tune its ear, too negligent in peace,
to hear the still, small voice.

Having insufficiently rendered unto peace
the power and glory she would have shared with us,
no choice is left us but to render war
all glory and all power.

War is a pit of horror; and defeat
by these might sink us even deeper. Yet,
losing or winning, keep us from the pit
of a complacent hate.

Let not our knowing our cause the better be
condition in us of complacency,
the certainty the other side is evil
our compact with the devil.

Let us detest aggression, pity pain,
but recognise vengeance for a cardinal sin;
honour all bravery, but not pretend
that war is grand.

Make us remember that if this war is won
the good we claim to do waits to begin;
or lost, an acreage to our hands is laid
heavier if not so wide.

Those who must die, let not the spectres of
the lost and missed torment, nor those who live
haunt as cold ghosts the memory of the dead
but warmly help and guide.

Flash on our groping a recurring vision
of possible pattern laid through the confusion.
Truth, find us strength to make our ways confirm
and not deface its form.