

# Do Not!

By Stevie Smith

Do not despair of man, and do not scold him,  
Who are you that you should so lightly hold him?  
Are you not also a man, and in your heart  
Are there not warlike thoughts and fear and smart?  
Are you not also afraid and in fear cruel,  
Do you not think of yourself as usual,  
Faint for ambition, desire to be loved,  
Prick at a virtuous thought by beauty moved?  
You love your wife, you hold your children dear,  
Then say not that Man is vile, but say they are.  
But they are not. So is your judgement shown  
Presumptuous, false, quite vain, merely your own  
Sadness for failed ambition set outside,  
Made a philosophy of, prinked, beautified  
In noble dress and into the world sent out  
To run with the ill it most pretends to rout.  
Oh know your own heart, that heart's not wholly evil,  
And from the particular judge the general,  
If judge you must, but with compassion see life,  
Or else, of yourself despairing, flee strife.

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