

# In the Past

By Trumbull Stickney

There lies a somnolent lake  
Under a noiseless sky,  
Where never the mornings break  
Nor the evenings die.

Mad flakes of colour  
Whirl on its even face  
Iridescent and streaked with pallour;  
And, warding the silent place,


The rocks rise sheer and gray  
From the sedgeless brink to the sky  
Dull-lit with the light of pale half-day  
Thro' a void space and dry.

And the hours lag dead in the air  
With a sense of coming eternity  
To the heart of the lonely boatman there:  
That boatman am I,

I, in my lonely boat,  
A waif on the somnolent lake,  
Watching the colours creep and float  
With the sinuous track of a snake.

Now I lean o'er the side  
And lazy shades in the water see,  
Lapped in the sweep of a sluggish tide  
Crawled in from the living sea;

And next I fix mine eyes,  
So long that the heart declines,  
On the changeless face of the open skies  
Where no star shines;



And now to the rocks I turn,  
To the rocks, around  
That lie like walls of a circling sun  
Wherein lie bound

The waters that feel my powerless strength  
And meet my homeless oar  
Labouring over their ashen length  
Never to find a shore.

But the gleam still skims  
At times on the somnolent lake,  
And a light there is that swims  
With the whirl of a snake;

And tho' dead be the hours i' the air,  
And dayless the sky,  
The heart is alive of the boatman there:  
That boatman am I.