

AD NATURAM

O Nature thou art lovely, and thy realm
Doth hold sweet forms of beauty passing fair,
Yet have I sought thee while the fleeting hours
Entwined the daily arches of the year,
And naught found I but frail inconstancy;
For treading quickly on thy brief delights
Thought with her shining splendor barred the way
Of darkly dreaming on thy meaner shapes;
Lo, she in snowy truthfulness doth lead
To things divine that live eternally!

Full often have I seen thy fragrant face
Bathed in the dew of April's flowing tears,
Or in the meadows met thy sunny glance
When June in roses led the Spring away;
Thee have I sought where rich the vintage ran
From grapes that clustered purple on the vine,
And trees in fruitfulness bowed low beneath
The golden breath of Autumn's mellow kiss.
O I have heard the lark at early dawn
In liquid notes of airy minstrelsy,
Sing at the eastern lattice of the day
Till wakeful Morn in blushing wonderment
Her starry curtains sweetly drew aside;
And I have plucked the lily of the wood
Whose slender gracefulness did capture hold
My heart for one brief moment, then again,
Fraught with the sorrow of a bitter pain,
The dreamings of my soul dissolved in tears!

Thus did I seek thee in my younger years;
Thus ever in the season's circling ring
Like music did thy beauties fade away
Upon the aching silence of my heart.
O Nature, though thou art most beautiful,
My spirit could not find repose in thee,
That made immortal, seeks the infinite:
For lo, Eternal Wisdom did not form
Thy lesser meanings to be adequate
To the eternal voicings of my soul;
But from thy imperfections, I might rise
To fuller knowldge of the need of Him
That gave me birth to immortality.

—Bro. Gregory Herold, O. P.