

**Samuel Greenberg**

**Selected Works**

*the poet seeks an earth in himself*

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# Preface

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Samuel Greenberg died of tuberculosis in 1917 at age 23. His childhood was spent in poverty on the Lower East Side of New York City. After leaving school at 14 to begin working, he became ill and spent his final years as a patient in several charity hospitals (in the Bronx, Staten Island, and Queens), where he did most of his writing.

For a description of Greenberg's personal history in his own words, read his autobiographical letter to his brother Daniel, *Between Historical Life*, included in this collection.

Though he wrote for only a handful of years—from 1912 to early 1917—during those years he produced over six hundred poems and other works. The selection here is mostly of works from 1915 and 1916.

## Greenberg and Hart Crane

Hart Crane's poem *Emblems of Conduct*, which Crane's editors at first assumed to be a completely original work, is actually a mosaic of slightly-altered lines taken from six of Greenberg's poems: *Conduct*, *Immortality*, *Perusal*, *The Laureate*, *Daylight*, and *Shadowings*—all included here. Crane never acknowledged Greenberg as the author of the appropriated lines. The connection was not documented until both men were dead.

## Critical Praise

Sam Greenberg was crazy about words, crazy about their sounds and shapes and the magical life of association which they have unto themselves as words. This boy was drunk on words and he poured them forth with a wild, chaotic passion.

James Laughlin, 1939

If you haven't read the poems I recommend them highly. He was certainly one of the finest poetic *characters* I know anything about, and [his] phrases are magnificent—and no critic has ever apparently appreciated either at their real value.

Elizabeth Bishop, in a 1950 letter to Robert Lowell

Long before surrealism became a movement, Greenberg was hypnotizing himself with words in orgies of supersensibility. He did not live long enough to exploit, or even to explore, the borderlands of the subconscious, but he seemed to dwell in a state between incoherence and eloquence, between sheer hallucination and pure vision.

Louis Untermeyer, 1940

Although he published nothing in his lifetime, and has since been the victim of near-total critical neglect, Samuel Bernard Greenberg was the most original and most ravishing poet in the English language in the first decades of this century. . . . Out of the ragbag of his hermetic vagabondage, [he] drew one unheard-of extravagance after another. . . . He steered his own course as freely and implacably as Blake and Emily Dickinson and Lautréamont . . . *Here* is poetry defiantly alive with youth, exuberance, humor, revolt, and delirious love. . . . Never before had words and images enjoyed such exhilarating freedom as they did in the cheap grammar-school pencil tablets of this wayward invalid youngster.

Franklin Rosemont, 1989

This poet, Greenberg, . . . was a Rimbaud in embryo. . . . No grammar, no spelling, and scarcely any form, but a quality that is unspeakably eerie and the most convincing gusto. One little poem is as good as any of the consciously conceived “Pierrots” of Laforgue.

Hart Crane, 1923

Poetry of the twentieth century in the United States could not be complete without the publication of the poems of Samuel Greenberg.

Allen Tate, 1947

## Web Site

Logopoeia maintains the *Samuel Greenberg: American Poet* site at <http://www.logopoeia.com/greenberg/>. The site features more than 140 of Greenberg's poems, facsimiles of two pages from his handwritten manuscripts, and further details about his life and his writings.

## Textual Note

With the exceptions of *Thus Be It Heaven Heavenly*, *Early Ghosts*, *Secrecy*, *The Master's Triumph*, and *Between Historical Life*, all works collected here are transcribed from Greenberg's handwritten manuscripts, and retain Greenberg's original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.



# Poems



## Enigmas

I've been ill amongst my fellow kind  
And yet have borne with me joys  
That few sought its indulgence Bind  
As dreams that press meditation's  
Wanton coys, o'er desired revelation  
Religion's chariot halted for my thought  
Art bowed, showed its infinite tongues  
Of charm, science hailed its width  
Of semetry, doubting conscience  
Concentration, and behave, The beam  
Of Fire from the sun cast mine own  
To slumBer in imagination of spheres  
Under the heavens of moon like shapes  
Mine eyelids shut, I fell into unfelt realms

## **The Glass Bubbles**

The motion of gathering loops of Water  
Must either Burst - or remain in a moment  
The violet colours Through the glass  
Throw up - little swellings that appear  
And spatter - as soon as another strikes  
And is Born - so pure are they of coloured  
Hues that we feel the absent strength of  
its power - when they Begin - they gather  
Like sand on the Beach - each bubble  
Contains a complete eye of water.

## **Thus Be It Heaven Heavenly**

In our Bible, the dream of Samuel is death,  
As the clouds consume his form and bare him to Heaven -  
The song from colored birds so lyric and sweet  
We feel ourselves no more, and pray:  
“Thus be it Heaven Heavenly.”  
The tales of Christ and Moses feel sacred through their  
    Godly power  
Of beauty, angels in their discipline kept  
Where the clouds are not on view; we pray:  
“Thus be it Heaven Heavenly!”

## Early Ghosts

When first I beheld  
The sight of self alone,  
Here standing upon a floor -  
A new sensitive throne -  
By dark corners round  
I shaded myself, in hope  
That some light or people  
Would be seen through a grate.  
But by the might of pictures  
Each sighted object looked  
As if my soul was but a fortune -  
To its memory, meaning booked.

## Secrecy

The apparent gale, vaned in winding storms  
Has filled the air with hail and mystic frost  
The peaceful alley through bowing elms revealed  
Pregnant buds, where spring has failed the lewd heart  
Darkness over the ocean's deep was offering moonlight  
Movable, silver, vanishing waves that enrolled  
The wild summer blossom that in sanguine  
Peace bared the ray of gold; until bronze  
Shades of autumn quietly lowered a  
Humble veil upon the ground in preservation -  
Thick clouds that separate over the  
Spotless blue of glazing greys. A simple  
Tint vanishes, as the storm of fusion  
Displays the shocking flood that vapors have gathered

## Conduct

By a peninsula, the painter sat and  
Sketched the uneven vally groves  
The apostle gave alms to the  
Meek, the valcano burst  
In fusive sulphor and hurled  
Rocks and ore into the air  
Heaven's sudden change at  
The drawing tempestious  
Darkening shade of Dense clouded Hues  
The wanderer soon chose  
His spot of rest, they bore the  
Chosen hero upon their shoulders  
Whom they strangly admired - as,  
The Beach tide Summer of people desired,



## Immortality

But only to be memories of spiritual gate  
Leting us feel the difference from the real  
Are not limits the sooth to formulate  
Theories thereof, simply our ruler to feel?  
Basques of statuets of Eruptions long ago,  
Of power in semetry, marvel of thought  
The crafts attempt, showing rare aspiration  
The museums of the ancient fine stones  
For bowels and cups, found Historians  
Sacred adorations, the numismatist hath shown  
But only to be memories of spiritual gate  
Leting us feel, the difference from the real  
Are not limits, the sooth to formulate  
Theories thereof, simply our ruler to feel?,

## Perusal

An age of wisdom sought knowledge to  
Enliven its immortality through scriptures  
Of classics, The scholar apprehends  
Foreign laws of astrology, and strays to  
Original pursuit. The artist never fails  
In attempt of reflection's value  
The astronomer follows closely his  
Trail across heavens width, the apostle  
Reigns o'er the community in conveying  
His thoughtful discipline, through  
Speech, the orator follows the universe  
And refrains the laws of the people.  
From this acquired and creative philosophy,  
The poet sings through Hypocrene's urge solicitously,

## The Laureate

Poet o soul! hast thou within thy wing the raise  
That nature doth disown, with complete color  
The enlightening beat of Heaven's plausible royalty  
As the clouds in their nudity softly sensate  
Uplift the sordid earth from dark slumber  
And deviate spirits mystic wooB  
Creat animations about the hidden angles  
Regulate love, in lofty nobles helm,  
Conquer, but to unconquer self's tomb  
Knight the command of universal thought  
Thou who art the stream of souls flow.  
O Lyre ne'er can'st thou forgive praise  
For joy Hides its stupendous coverings  
The quality of senses creat and overthrow

## Daylight

That from nowhere settles impressions  
Gleam O thou dost aid the muse  
Below, to drain his soulful  
Desire, from the strings of thy  
All power, and sudden claim  
The deep romance of spiritual  
Guide, the never ceasing fluttering  
Bird, of forest and eagle high  
The horizon hues, give vent  
To thousand Lofty thoughts of poetry  
The flowing marble like clouds  
Form incomprehensible molds  
But the lowly eye views this all  
And, From within, peels its classic melancholy folds

## Shadowings

The marble walls held the dim sky shadows  
That were strangely woven in grays  
Silhouette set the scepters roveing  
Into the half mediums of real  
'Lumination, music set qualities  
Above sentiment. the dreamer called  
The orient from illusions feignly proof  
Form but dimly prominent to colour  
The night lamps fought the powerful shade  
Mythology helped the modern life upbraid  
O sunset o golden, thou who tends  
The farthest heavenly width to rest  
From observation, the elegy's lore  
Hath set memory, o'er unmerison's quest,

## Peace

The blue faded purple Horizon mount  
Seemed to bellow the vallies in mists  
Of enriching ensuing divine shadowings  
Where may this be? perhaps unpopulated  
Craggs of stepping rocks, where thought  
Slumbers, inhaled thought, unbearing  
Real earth, that refines, e'en the insects muse  
Royalty defies the haunt they chose  
Therein mingles wild prespective charms  
As immortelle's thorny entangled growth  
Mongst the field of oaks pressing steep  
Twilight's vail, Milky way's fence, the deep  
Lionized eagle hisses o'er this scene  
Birds, wild swans, glide paly o'er a charming stream

## Perfection

The summit where I sat flowed a tide  
Below a hill, that of pure green water  
Filled the lowly place refreshing air  
that weaved the heaven's blue - naught  
to say, sharp luminous light in blowing  
Abnormal holy masses of unsettled dew  
Proud to withhold an earth of lovely quality  
Like their own as messenger of thousand  
Rainbows entangled to regulate, the inner Hue  
When perfectly deceived of, its placid, unspotted  
Surface, seems never to have been  
Cleared, when facing its downward course  
Upon our innocent weak dimed speck like  
Stains, called eyes of this focus so wide and unseen

## Colour Grain

O covering hem, my life to thee  
Refuses to exHalt of such powerful  
Scale, though full of its half plead  
relate its charm's through meditation,  
Mold therein, seeing truth of values  
quaint tonal sprays sensual gray  
Like streams through half shadows  
Or silver reflection's under crystal Brooks  
through clouded mixed dust asorted, as  
Near the equator, moon mingles with  
the Rays of the sun, as shells Between  
Sandy nooks, waves of salt covers stir  
Then glissening from their hidden sides  
Still feigned seekers, shall feel its Brand



## Night

Night! the lute as daylight But dim  
A cloister strangely near a hill  
Rang the evening chimes of prayer  
The shadows of the miniature lamps  
Shaped strange unseen, frightful creatures  
Of horrid ghosts, veiled in pale caps  
The solitude teeming in its hush  
Let the unseen noises of insects clear  
Buzz in their melancholy wivery hum  
Dreams are short, But their Beauties are  
Rare, night is long, causes thought  
Its Freedom, of Fantasie to acquire  
The grey demon clouds covered Heaven  
Which hid the moon, but stars retreating fought

## Odds and Ends

The perfect gauge can irragulate prophecy  
'Pon serious tempo, blame serene ratio  
As strong adHered charm does to love!  
The venus hid midst the repelled poets  
Drilling their brains, in beaten Headaches  
Whistling of a being is course to insects  
As lulling indolence to impression  
Content hath found the bible a waste  
thought has its independence, but  
when displayed, seeks enother, to  
Cover its dignity of creation, for sustainance  
O life! no sacrafice for thee, but thy  
Own wound of repulsive pleasures within  
Through, the deep vallies of glorifieing mirth, my soul  
ray Hence

## Poets

He nither wrote, nor uttered murmer at wonder  
But grew 'pon his rich riegning lofty desire,  
And hung the earth, pon each fadeing fancy  
Pressing nothing, that he noble can Lyre,  
But can afterward use, when beauty  
Doth hinder, its pregnant aptonized lore  
He sat as an extricable prisoner bound  
To essence, that he sought to emancipate  
Kept pounding an envil of generation core  
And exchanged his soul a thousand ways  
At the rate of centuries unfelt round  
As though cloud repeats cloud through days  
Or nocturnal heavens beaten lights  
That mock the day, from suspence of Hights

## The Holy Ghost

a Dark scarlet robe - covered the Body  
As he layed near in a monastery Cellar Door  
Holy spirit of death - swayed o'er him,  
A plaintive seen skull features sunk  
That Frightens the life - in the witness  
The gauzy jet Black veil - in the grey Shadowed  
doorlight. The extinguished form lay in dignity  
Against. the wall. and the low and High coners  
In shadows were ghastly adhered, around the pillars  
Of Iron, Placid skeleton, - thrown to the cold sand  
Bottom, Forgotten and unrecognizeable were he lay  
At Midnight, strange - we often share the unexplained  
wonder.

## On Studies

The etude of the soul - is in regard to truth of Daily life  
The Bent to relief - the wakeing mind -  
Shakes all in sciences, and is as raw as Nature  
But the trembling treasure, revealments, lend us  
The power - as daylight does, that repeats  
As we concentrate, we accumulatae theories  
By infinite varieties - through - spiritual insight  
The ease through research, are like moon and Piano  
The training of animals Direct a moral  
In Discovery - we find - Who last prays:

## The Master's Triumph

I sat upon a rock, viewing Nature wide. Ere my plant  
In secret hides this wild peace, our thought must bid;  
We curious selves lie fathoms underneath, though  
Holy discipline and wisdom's joy cannot shake the placid heart.  
Disdain to climb, as tender as death—and time thus vanished,  
Our angel's breath is felt—vision of our orbs through aimless rest.  
The trembling heart has its limits divine, through light of man  
Bares to fact and this heaven of grains, at last a sunshine  
Sending its remains, silently doth ever toil, heaves an ocean,  
As thy mind refuses to accept impression to satisfy;  
In our fast travels and seeming blossom ne'er prove we by  
Such mystic worth o'erhangs the might of powers disabled and shorn.  
A voice exclaimed: "Love! wither wend we, O tiny children?"  
This thrown door, eternally born, and germ home to be content with  
May be a mark of century conduct, so brilliantly formed,  
Lasts but within a poet's reach, in Nature's conquest left here,  
Assuming danger and infinite silence through earthly fear—too pure  
To feel asunder, sharing with starlike specks at night this uncertain  
force of wonder.

Behold all this jagged beauty; I bare the test alone of perfection too  
imperfect.

The choir spirit in order weaves its own gauge in the song of life.  
O detail! must thou trail endless, as fables of yore forever create  
Harmonies, while we breathe broad and simple? We pray to this  
Abandoned universe; that critic looms high in chaos, whether it  
contains

Sensual or divine restriction . . . Or perhaps the infinite charm is  
cursed.

## **And this great human rebellion**

And this great human rebellion, has it's scattered laureates - sparks,  
That kindle the flame to repeat my brother will cause the perfumed  
    love more clear  
And seek heavenly envy. In spite the selfish heart limits perhaps  
    weave the better birth  
We then easily blend a lodge, which can pray upon the universe of  
    charm  
And share the impulse of progress, this vital grain must plead  
    thousand-fold  
Live in us, as the blowing sea breeze! Through an angel gate,  
The ecliptic change found me under a leafless Oak.  
The cast shadowings of branches like madusa's skull  
There in on looking leveled my talent to flood the mind in abstract  
    ecstasy,  
The gallant spurtive land and heaven with the numberless diamond  
    circle, gives joy hither,  
Whether the banner contains power to plenty the soul,  
This humble chip in our reverence doth limit it's whole.



# Prose



## Between Historical Life

(Greenberg's autobiography)

Dear Daniel:

1. The blunt and unclearing skies have covered an open fair weather. It reminds me of the postcard you sent which was somewhat artistic. In its care and pure appreciation for good conduct it gave a tinge of joyous flattery. To tell you that proof is better than question is fine certainty. Your question contained a strong desire of careless love; even *that* can't escape in this manner of heavenly faring like under tree and rock, building and yard, schoolhouse and playground, where I occupied a spirit with the rest of my companions in the streets of New York.

Vienna is a dim symphony, so this note can halt even the strength of memory; although I have practiced poetry and art, they cannot assist me in the rare movements about the Austrian capital, for you know how young I was at the time of departing hence. . . . Some slight agreeable adventures when Adolf took me to the forest: the fantasy of ghost stories overwhelmed my conscience. They left me alone in the woods but returned to find me crying in utter despair of fear, "Morris!"

2. Who thought my reverence was high enough for Emperor Franz Joseph in the hof of Kaiser and Koenigliche? I tipped my cap suddenly as the carriage of the King and his men passed by—but the faint smile of the Kaiser Franz Joseph is still clear and distinctly felt by me in this anxious affair of waiting to see him roll by as we deeply hide in gentle honor.

Vienna seems a big city when we recall the railings and squares, such as the Prater. That gives a little touch to the realism of my present belief. I can yet feel the clean streets, the finest ways of the

languid German accent of politeness, the post where the historical memories loom—oh yes—bicycle-riding boulevards and the long way to the school gate. The classrooms are perhaps improved. Since I can see but weakly through nature, I behold a boys' assembly with a teacher, as in the U.S., at the head of the room, fairly large enough for us. But the light and working of the furniture were not so agreeable—as if you were living in a room made of panels.

3. Here I may inspect a personal relic. The tale that father told afterward about the Vienna rolls that the bakery messenger left on the sill was a spark of fine comfort to me and sad enjoyment:

till the moving from a place to the Josephine Gasse,  
and the birth of our beloved delicate Celia  
was a curious shout about the bird in the olive pond  
who brings babies back and forth,  
until I was sick of childish, unreal, wondering disgust.

My nose was plaintive, of unusually large play, a sight for those who wished to wipe it when the nostrils relieved tears.

There was a house that had windows facing the open street in which we lived: the holy family of embroiderers. We were somewhat acquainted with a gang of stray alley Arabs, but they were unfit for moral speech—used to shout our names from a street off the main passing street, in that alley like a street. They sat on logs which were prepared for telegraph purposes. This often was mingled with the bravery of stealing apples from stands near grocery shops; it led to our dignity a hate and we soon reformed, omitting their acquaintance.

4. Well, dear Daniel, it is unfortunate to write in bed. I can yet feel the music and the dingy room with music copies laden, where Clementi and Czerny were so sweetly chanted and practiced until late in the night; an oaken piano and many people shuffling here and there in warm cozy corners. As of Beethoven flame they sang and watched you perform. Candles and low divans and carpets gave a glow of life and cheer to such environment, which is as much out of habit nowadays as dictation.

I have rested from writing at the end of “dictation.” The plain fact is I like to steal a bit of personal instinct from some unusual feeling like talent or gift and terms of such meanings that may lead me to some deeper insight as to what justice the soul can demand; so in this retreat I see a sunset,

a bloody ruby glass of flat diamond mystery  
underneath a fleece of fair purples,  
and pale, placid yellow gold  
clouded in the rounding of a horizon  
of great fool-cast of illumination  
resting unknown, cerulean,  
between spattered, archaic, dead blue hues.

5. After our ways and cares at that time when life grew to its height, a dispersal or a waver of happy opinion of the riches in the west brought to a conclusion a large amount of stuff that had to be sold—and nice things we lost and almost for nothing gave away.

Daniel, that theater of toys was your masterpiece in life’s youth. Adolf was appointed to lead the show, a real comedy; and the end was we were a bit confused as to the price of dealing and selling the pantomimic amusement. However, the notion was auctioned and the \$50.00 was an addition to our fund for travel—fifty dull dollars.

Well, we gathered our things as well as we could and sent our great man, the old soul of peace (God knows what purity he was then—and is now!), to the United States of America. Here I may be mistaken: Jacob Greenberg was capable of mastering his own independence. And he sailed before we did and took no money from the family. But we disposed of the house articles later and sailed with mother only; who is the heroine of life’s care and great insight of love to me.

6. It really is amusing to request information through advanced classic lore. Education seems never to give enough! So it is the plight of unrelieved wisdom and cure of character. I still can say that I wear an air for a tear, or a tear for a mirror, enjoy content and continue doing so.

On the trip across the ocean there was little for me to see, for I was too ill to stir on my feet. I know that Daniel ate more fish and cabbage than any of us on the steamer—not a bad name for a ship—*Lake Ontario*. And so we departed—from the old world to the new.

But still my eye sows back to the east of marvel and justice of natural honor; so it returns to my point of sentiment and fancy. Of the friends you had, some were artists, some were of excellent families, etc. However, we seem a bit doubtful as to my age to depict adventures abroad, again must admit premature occurrence.

How about the landing on the shores of Columbia?

Well, it seems I must stop; my bed is being placed in open air for night's rest.

7. From the miniature of writing thoughts that have and will give brighter resource to my mind and perhaps leave a stronger phase of pleasing attitude:—It was morning; a chill hung in an airy altitude, but soon after the hot and silent beverage I turned my gaze upon this regarded medium which perhaps *may show*. A good deal in this showing desire rests with me. Thus ends certain dislikes and graces which contained the source of expression in early childhood.

The arrival of the ship *Late Ontario* was very careless. In its entering the port, the dinner below the deck seems to have been neglected. As we arrived, the mere serving of coffee or cocoa by a colored man was a bit late; and mother, who was of quick insight, noticed that we were disregarded—especially I, who stood on one end instead of the middle. Well, it was a peculiar moment. Both Morris and I had sailor suits of bright and cheerful aspect. At the tumult in landing shipments, we were all in the midst of drinking coffee and cocoa. Passing under the Brooklyn Bridge was almost fatal. Adolf, who slept near me on a large casing or wooden box, suddenly fell off. The reason was soon enough discovered: a father of vapors shared the river of light through its opening way . . . and perhaps many more were hurt upon the boat.

We did not stay too long and were soon landed, examined, thoroughly questioned. Mother had her hair unloosed while I had my mouth examined, and so forth with the rest.

8. Quality answers for quality. In my development through manners and unguided ways of youth I found slow progress in meeting the people who would lead me to the proper swing and crest that would bring the true harmony within and without: there is no complaint.

Soon enough I was admitted into the public school by some difficult detailed event. Both father and mother anxiously endeavored to make rare conclusion of the excellence I showed in the European classes, with papers of the immigration and the health certificate shown to principal and teacher, who gladly appeared to accept foreign characters.

By the fancy problems and abnormal cheer of the large display of classroom and polished desks, I soon was a contender to a chair of philosophy and science. Ah, I can clearly remember the letters of the alphabet written upon the blackboard and being told to make a copy of it to take home and rehearse. Here I soon became acquainted with girls as well as male companions, who were willing to assist me in school lessons at home, but it never occurred to me that they were anxious to follow friendship in secret service through fairyland development. My route to the academy of class 1A in the street of Suffolk, School 160, was soon a cozy environment. Early morning before the opening of the gates we obtained a delicious breakfast from a candy stand—a penny a cake, and a cup of cocoa adding two pennies . . . eh—good omens.

9. In the handsome path of 1901 and 1907 I was a reaper of hard fact and geographical bliss; a whole world of purity and history was given to me to take home and examine at my interest. It was an unusual thanks-given material that served as an unconscious guide in my spiritual labors.

There were many who wished that we stay away from school, for the very day of fairness itself was enough to educate a lizard. At certain times it was indeed very tempting, and I made an hour in the morning a king's absence from his throne. My step was really not dangerous; all I cared for was to indulge in the liberties of the national sports that the boys create between classes. Well, much to my disappointment I was always alone—alone.

But as soon as I was told that school was over!—an unusual pride in the exercise of ball games took place in the mud of the gutter, where I was a constant menace to the shopkeeper and passer-by—and almost led to arrest, this wild stupid desire of play, at which I was a rank phantom of grace and easy applicant. Yet 'tis not a loss; the immortal assistance is still at large. The very game is an unusual sport, like wisdom, and seems to give me great truth when I lose myself from life.

10. The transfer of scholarship was very sensitive to me. I often even disliked to be promoted in a new room merely because it was a new room.

Strangeness was becoming an awe of interest in watching women in pretty gowns with men on the streets. I sometimes would be influenced to fight another boy of my physique, or lured to show my exposing talents with a pair of leather workers ivory sticks and create a rhythm that negroes and Indians would highly demand.

Well, I was not so old during the time of the Roosevelt election. My task was to sell posters:—"I told you so"; also wickedly filed my way through Chinatown. I have not a clever memory to describe the little adventure. It is a fact that Japan and China were a mist of wild fear to me. The feeling of the earthly care became so dull, all that was the East Side history became a laurel of use to keep me from abnormal craze.

11. I'm still in school. Christmas was a very beautiful observance of kindness. Visitors came from all parts of the city to give little gifts. The children were delighted to return their ways toward the teacher's care and make amends by buying silk kerchiefs in neat wrapped bouquets and ribboned parcels; and so bended a curious circle which became a tame class the following day.

Once more my night has come to finish this informational page. A bed of rare gift, unknown to me as never joyless, will try to keep the pretty thoughts from escaping unnoticed, so that we shall decide in real life where the judge of compensation lies.



Happy in an absent state of mind I gave vent to copying Lincoln and Washington statues, which was soon noticed by the schoolmaster, who said I should go to drawing academy and gave me a name: Cooper Union. I never was anywhere from home to dome!

I return to tell that conditions changed, and I was promoted to higher honors, which was in a street called Attorney near Rivington. There I kept learning arithmetic, spelling, reading, and the teacher was very anxious to have me draw Lincoln.

12. The mornings lead to fatal inspiration. It is thought that gives memory the charm of desire.

Here I may say I still devour peaceful askance for desire's notice. The picture that gave me fame among my street companions was a water color drawing of a ballplayer in his uniform.

Since then nothing more occurred regarding the opinion of art, but I kept on receiving the courtship of social entertainment from fellow men of the dime novel nobility.

There grew a curious zealous appetite for the Boy of '76: a hero who never fails in his attempts, nor finds his way safe in all battles, but still creates wonderful results with pure clean ladies kissing him for his earnest cheer.

Many secrets and deep meditations as to how my money should be accumulated for books gave me a greed of retiring selfish impulse and amusement. There was an instant or a happening between business hours which was deeply offending—O this keeping life in daily appreciation of financial necessity, that kept me from my reading— perhaps was a friend although felt keenly as an enemy! My father, who needed certain materials for working purposes in the line of embroidery, gave me a path into his secrets of buying fine bullion and silver thread. That alone was feignedly encouraging to drive me away from my novel interest, but I felt angry. So did father, and I had to go away to relieve kindness and reason.

I soon was a victim to other insults because of these sloppy books and sloppy thoughts for which were no mortal judges of enjoyment and protected influence from natural dangers. I was often with

Morris, a brother of luck and ambition, who took pleasure in the frantic chase for compositions toward classic melody and rhythm, chanted rare music which would keep me like a moth near a lamp to the piano he played. He never liked such books.

13. Well, still in a close term—to add a sentence of redeemed or unredeemed life

The beauty of kindness in our household was at its height, even as a noble stirs in a castle of embellishments:

Plush of red, plush of green  
And spangle brilliancy glimmering here and there,  
As the sea sand and a summer,  
Shining silver light destroying love and thought,  
But bringing sober lust into the hearts of dreamy temper.

We often found our father laboring over a frame of gold—a real act so easily remembered—some working maidens at his side; and perhaps even our mother took part in the exquisite handling of thread and stitch. Some pure Hebrew atmosphere gathered between our doors. Rabbi and priest, negro and Greek, such fathoms of character sprang up between the embroidery tasks. Such were the emblems of far and wide doings that have passed through our environment. There were some great things produced during the time on the East Side with the workings of gold and silver lining, which were given to churches of the finest temples.

So, with an empty head full of no aim, I wandered here and there, from one window of toys to another, but nothing was so deeply set as the leisure crave, or perhaps unresisting helplessness that gave me an upward gaze to become independent.

Yet school meant nothing to me, not even when I heard the piano at its wild, sonorous display.

We had beautiful visitors, since the lessons which Daniel taught to pretty ladies became a languid familiarity and friendly concerts at home. This raised curiosity and a pleasant thrill that I might become a listener to the music they performed.

Singing and dancing, weddings and masquerades, card-playing neighbors, landlords, holidays vanishing like food on a plate.

14. It does me good to begin digging and adjusting past charms of action. The nights at home were in some respects comfortable. There were often discussions with artists, which brought Daniel into the painting habit. We closely watched him perform near a big canvas, which was being carefully prepared and often observed as a piece of talented labor. We thought the same way—bought canvas and brushes and began smearing, although I did not begin to care for fine arts until later. Morris, whose pearly fingers exhibited rare eyesight, gave me an example of artistic insight.

Do you remember, O Daniel of name and nation, the concert you gave in a hall—a hall which educated the public of east New York in general discipline? The concert was a healthy one, but I came near not seeing it performed. The day was a pleasant one and even street babies wanted to know if I was your brother: a stroke of precious flint here and now which gave me an absorbed countenance and perhaps leads to this memory of present script. The nocturnal eve was a dreary one when the hour of dress and bustle carried your first charm to the stage of this country. But even this honor fled!

15. Life was now a spongy condition. Our mother gradually became ill: ear trouble, germ trouble, nose trouble, skull trouble—death trouble resulted and the family buried her somewhere on Long Island, where a cemetery called Washington was the grave for many poor victims, as our unpraised love was settled. We returned to a cafe near the doom place, where gathered a party of thirty or more, ate cheese and eggs with a schooner of beer and coffee. The rituals of the Jewish religion demand that one remain seated for seven days upon the floor. Well, we sat on soft cushions (the angels of wealth!). Thus ended a sorrowful, meaningless jubilee in an empty, beautiful world, with scarce a flower knowing joy.

It grew lonesome and cold in the last place of the Suffolk Street apartment. A large one it was, I remember. All became numb and poor and soon the vast poverty settled and someone auctioned us out.

16. In the street of Suffolk, corner of Grand, we lived for ten years. The poverty and insult of life cannot find sufficient words on paper; it was a struggle for decency for which we were usually gifted, but which soon drew to a conclusion. Fact seemed to be too earnest with our delicate household of nice parlor antiques.

We were a record-breaker to the moving man as the hour came which cannot be forgotten, the most dismal of happenings in my life—furniture and rats, filthy kitchen and ugly corner room that I occupied during the night.

We got ready to depart, watching the bags of silver plates, gilded cups, rare pillows, mattresses. We woke in a dreary, cold web: sleeping-cave of rats and cabbage, sawdust floor—smelling sulphur fumes in an empty musical tomb.

Father, who left the home to see our things made ready to leave, was deeply sorrowed over many ways and often mentioned our mother's name—what she would think of this predicament. However, we got past with a moving van.

We must tip our hats to a Russian gentleman whom we called Ike Mass. Ike Mass was a mystic to me. I often felt his goodness to an extraordinary degree. All there was to do was to see the articles properly handled and safely removed into the new place of living. The street was Rutgers Square, and another religion prayed.

17. In Rutgers Street was something regarding me. The mornings were as the mornings of school days—walking from Rutgers Street along a street called Division up to Chambers Square to a shop of leather workers or traveling bag makers; there I worked for over a year and a half.

The picture of sadness and unyielding perseverance led to my doing things between times of labor. Often I would sit and draw from rare postcards, which were then obtained or bought at the Metropolitan Museum. Brother Morris did a great deal of thinking in the musical world and often through that freedom managed to see my attention upon the prints, which set on me an absorbed silence and assiduity. He also showed me how to get in it proper grace of delineation. It soon came to a decision that he would take me to a friend who practices and teaches pupils in painting old masters.

The afternoon was sunny and warm, anxious weather. Morris and I were on an elevated train—but how my heart fluttered in pure fear of meeting classic masters of rare ability! We rang a bell on Park Avenue near 93rd Street: Frances Keller. But said Morris, “Mrs. Keller has a daughter you will go mad over. Such pure and brave character is seldom met in the world of painting.”

Soon enough I was admitted into an apartment of pictures which hung about the wall—copies of Corot and Titian, etc.

18. A worker and a student laid bare the manner of introduction, where I took my lessons in paintings during evenings and practised the technique of brush and palette handling—also temperamental qualities and freedom of touch.

But I began to understand wise pleasure’s curation through the observing quantity from a natural secrecy. But it is all known; the truth is, you must sit and work out your own idea of feeling and grace of finish. It is not the discipline that decides artistic genius, for that is a thing in real existence, a fact of self-character. I thought well on my own stupid behalf. I soon gave it up, for I was too poor to assist in this abnormal creative formulation; there were other beautiful things to learn, even friendship and reading.

“Concentration of study in the science of various inventions, astronomy, surgery, dentistry, floor sweeping; and stick to the habit of the quality that would shine for you until the end of your life.” Thus spoke Diane, the teacher of art at the Park Avenue studio. “Keep up a heart for the marvel of expression and self-realization wherever you will stay. It will recuperate any bad memory to cheer.” And it really seemed to be the fact, as we believed it to be in our self will of grace and nature. I often paid many personal visits to her, and found her to be a powerful miniature absorber to a religious conscience and to pay attention to instant care of aesthetic sentiment, relieving doubt.

19. I’ll whisper a prayer, for it is time to retire—not yet from the place of writing—only a little hint to tell me the last of my foreign culture and present satisfaction in pain and rest.

My vocabulary has a great memory for foolish bliss, rather poor in careful selection and of grammatic assistance unguided. I did punish a philosophy of the Herbert Spencer style but then a feeling for poetic insight began to accumulate. I wrote anywhere, read merely to gain letters for the sake of rhyme, rewrote books, recited in a furnished room all alone, as fast as the life of an epicurean in a tower of scientific perseverance. Indeed no foolish path, but it was not public preparation. It was a self-gathering of natural prevention in the ways of life's action.

However, many things of importance have passed my mind—composition as well as poetic attempts. My teacher was drawing my temper to a perfection of height to do. Many a time my strolls were between the room I had and Diane's studio. It soon was old in hours of love; everything became silent and familiar. I often met friends that knew my instructor, and we went together to see her to whom everybody was a spectacle of beauty and a model.

One day in a greeting at the museum, Mrs. Keller, who copied there—who is still copying—told us that Madame Diane had died.

20. After a sorrowful trail to find refuge in the art of music, I understood its proper detail and the power of practise; we cannot forget the visits to the Opera House of the Metropolitan. I know we liked it better than life! However, inspiration did not linger (it comes to whom it calls for), so I began writing plays, thinking to get to some rare operatic conclusion or real acquirement in the Bohemian circle of divine composition.

The days were dreary and poor. Sickness closed in with its careful teeth, and I landed in the nearest insane bureau on an island for a year. Then things were calmer and my mind grew to be what it was, stupid and wanting to labor at the old shop of traveling bag making.

And it happened again that the old story of weakness returned. I was taken to the hospital of descending charity, where things became a careful selection through sanitation and rest. Where was school? O what I would give for the knowledge of grammatic truth! But I saw that science is perfection as long as the world exists. I sat down and wrote a paragraph of sonnets under the title of "Apology"

and a play called “Alma”; they were nonsense to real literature of careful justice. This little world of my own makes biography important to handle.

So I continued with the spirit of fine arts, writing to friends once in a while, also feeling delighted to indulge silence.

21. My last effort to reply: certain events which have occurred during the year of 1916 were satisfactory to me but not to those who missed me.

Pianists and artists were now becoming too dull, and I sat down to find the very core of my boring opinion, finding a name for a play in which I can interpose my finest illusion of philosophy and presence of mind from my point of view only. It soon came to me to choose a fancy simplicity called “Capablanka”—well, not so deep as it is shallow—chosen in a melancholy stupor of fame and fortune and lofty peace and hope!

My self-want became intuitive, a wild desire to understand the talent of natural taste. I soon found Daniel listening to me with faint interest, but dear for helping me to live; he has often visited me in my rare, lonely days, which thought became a vague rest to be any kind of contender in this world of joy and familiar manifestations.

Art has mended my insane danger feelings, owing to the memory of writing things which is not common to thought in real life of action. I must say I possess the peace of love which robs me from pain and existence.

