**Pastorale**

**MARY ALICE KESSLER**

**CHORUS:**
We chant of an age
A trim, nervous Time
Squared into precise line,
Sheer mathematics, a flawless steel claw.
This is the time of soaring monuments
This is the time of formulae pyramids
This is the time of shining mechanism
This age is dwarfing its sire.

**THE MAN:**
a b— a square, but what equals the cold stars freezing a blanket of silver, tight upon the hills? We have forgotten, forgotten the night and the joy of stopping and watching the rich, velvety, heavy, sensuous, glorious field of darkness, and crystal goblets of stars.

**CHORUS:**
Venus is sixty-seven million miles away from the sun, the light from a distance constellation is seen by man 125,000 light years after it was shed. We have proof, scientific calculations and expensive telescopes. We have proof that the moon is like the earth. We have proof that fire is chemical reaction. We have proof that a line has one dimension-length. We have proof . . .

**THE MAN:**
Have you proved why the sun lies down like a tired old man at night and goes to sleep, or why the trembling, bright birch leaves rattle a soft song in the cold dawn, or why the hills blaze up into bonfires in the autumnal clearness, or the stars look pink and orange and blue all at the same time? Oh, no, don't speak your rock and bone words to me. I ask—where has the beauty gone? You could not see it as blind, deaf men. The smoke of your engines is a terrible fog. Why may I not see the charm of the dance, the jewel notes of song, the matched wings of oil paint, the little things that took great care and hours?

**CHORUS:**
Oh, listen to our song. Ha, we're proud of our toothpaste ads, boogie woogie, raw liver art, synthetics, neon signs, automatic gears, cannibal dances, uninhibited poetry. There's no time to worry about your beauty. We've got our own words for it. “Hot steel and throbbing cornets, smoke-crowned bolts of trains, low-slung blues voices, a symphony of grating, panting honrs. Bravo!”

**THE MAN:**
I am of an age of tubercular, frightened poetry, an age built on toothpaste and cold cream and hard, brittle rocks. I am on the back of a ranting age that paints portraits in fifteen minutes and pours lumps of blaring notes and rackety drumbeats down the throats of the parched listeners. A sharp, pointed, gigantic corporation of cross-fire melody and rush.

**CHORUS:**
Well, we like it. Go back to the good ole days. You're in the way. We're progressing — going ahead — pressing buttons.

**THE MAN:**
Press a button and there's a skyscraper — a swaying line of silver in the early morning mist? Press a
button and the roar of the man-sea crashes in a frothy tide over the soft, lost land? Throw a switch and the face of the moustains and full-throat-ed rivers disintegrates, crumbles? Stack the pyramids so high that the clouds are strangled, dazzle the sun with shimmering rockets, claw at the entrails of the hills—soar, soar, soar? The age is a jungle. The jungle is filled with them. "Visionaries!" Yes, I suppose . . . . but I can see them lost in the web of this jungle. They can't wait. They're afraid of a new Time; and it is coming. By the infinite hours and seconds — it is coming. A great, frightened quiet is coming to outswell the smashed notes and lacerated canvas and grotesque figures. The slam of the age's door will fade away. Then I can set and watch a moon-blue evening and the ice fingers of the tree limbs. Perhaps I'll even hear a fur-lined quatrain or a soft brush stroke. I might have time to walk in the snow.

Rhyme For A Volume Of W. H. Hudson

ALLYN WOOD

The speckled adder was his friend
(World, unbend! World, unbend!)
He loved the pampas-without-end,
His purple land; the Orinoco;
The Amazonian Matto Grosso—
Which are rather far from Soho.
Yet Gulf Stream turns to pekos-blend
And London had him in the end.