

I Weep

George W. Coffin

WHY do I weep?
Why do my
tears well
over the brim

and splash in dark patches on my shirt?

Let me tell you why I weep. Let me tell
you why tears flood my eyes and shower
on my breast.

I have seen the distant town, clothed
in radiant morning sunlight as I stood
upon the throne of a hill. And I could
not fly.

I have heard a voice in the calm
starry night whisper, "You are my love
forever." And I could not love with all
the power I desired.

For one brief moment I felt the hand
of God in mine. And I could not hold
it there.

The waves thundered upon the reef
in a rhythm that I could not play.

The majesty of a mighty forest was
near to me and I could not sing.

The delicate features of a fragile
face appeared before my eyes. And I
could not paint.

All the joy and sadness which are
life, youth and age, love and hate, the
scorching brass sun and cool of the night,
the mighty waters and the motherly
earth, all these passed before me and I
did not have the words with which to
write.

And when I was alone, wordless,
speechless, without a song, and unloved,
I wanted death. And I could not die.

And so I weep. I weep for the
beauty which has passed me by and which
I could not capture by some ingenious
skill or craft for other men to know—for
other men who have no wish to know,
for they have sold their hearts for con-

crete and stone, they have bartered their sheets.

eyes for wheat and oil, their ears were

the price of mighty metal monsters that

scream and shriek at their deaf masters.

They have given love over into bondage

for long columns of tabulated figures in

black and red on large white ledger

I cannot speak or sing or play or

paint or write or die. They cannot hear

or see or love or live.

I am a fool who can only weep. They

cannot.

Crescendo

Mary Alice Kessler

I heard a horn crunch on the air

And a piece of laughter whistled behind a building,

An old newspaper scratched the curb stone

And a faint horse hoof ticked up 72nd Street.

I listened hard for the moaning child cry of police whistles,

The click of the traffic light, the scraping crippled foot,

I listened, and soon each disjointed sound

Each murmur of horn melted into the great stir,

And its infant pulse began to pound with the great one

To such a climax of roar, twang, beep, swish

That my ears throbbed and my heart beat with the throb,

Throb, throb, throb of this city.