

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-58574-4 - Almond in Peterhouse and Other Poems  
 Franklin Kidd  
 Excerpt  
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## WORDS ARE WEAK THINGS

For the people words are weak things.  
 Brother, would that we could  
 Comprehend the ultimate depth  
 Of minds so many and so unconfined,  
 So hidden;  
 Living and growing over the years,  
 Amassing  
 So many million loves and fears.

For the people words are weak things.  
 Their faces, as of the seaways  
 Roughened by emotion in endless passage,  
 Are but the surface of an ocean  
 Where currents move, and tides.

For the people words are weak things.  
 Ten thousand million times  
 Ten thousand million  
 Brain cells—the vehicle  
 Of that unnamed, unnameable—  
 Not in themselves,  
 But through the miracle  
 Of their communion far and near.

For the people words are weak things.  
 Brother, shall it be said  
 That we in isolation  
 Heart from heart  
 Can ever have a part,  
 In Earth's salvation?

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## JUST SUPPOSE

Just suppose  
That you are altogether wrong,  
That what you reason out from cause effect  
In looking backwards, law,  
Is not the only train that runs on rails.

Just suppose  
That something more than reason governs ends,  
Something more terrible  
For good or evil.

These are those forms  
That meet us in the mist,  
Coming from lands ahead,  
And touch us,  
Whispering  
'Action'.

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## A SOUL TO BIRTH

This body full of eyes,  
This million-mouthed automaton, myself,  
Burning with appetites, prehensile and alight  
To eat and solve, down to its elements,  
The very clay—yet some time shall see whole!  
'It might be', 'It should be', yea 'It must be', do conspire  
To regiment and force the wilful lusts and turn  
Synoptic gaze on one unfolding view.

And what are these compulsions that pursue  
And integrate the multitude of wills  
To give them worth—  
But those three Graces of our Lord the King?  
Whom, haply meeting, I myself shall fling  
Into Hell's fire, this million-mouthed automaton  
Thereby to bring  
In pain a soul to birth.

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## SECRET PASSAGE

I do not want to die, do you?  
But die you will, and so shall I;  
And maybe stand to gain thereby.  
Yet once you did, or nearly did,  
When nothing worth there seemed to live for.  
And then you knew you could not rid  
Yourself of self by that escape door;  
Yes then you knew  
That self and God are one, not two,  
And love the secret passage through.

## BEAUTY GROWS

Beauty grows! It's not a thing  
Man can by his endeavour bring.  
His mind must wait on sun and shower  
To bring to birth the immortal hour  
When from dark death unfolds the flower  
That makes the angels sing.

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## GRIEF

Let there be torn away  
This dark deceptive curtain of despair.  
The heavy air encumbers, and in grief  
Our energies decay.  
    Then shall appear  
Realities more clear on hillsides far away,  
While round us near  
Dear lost familiar things  
Resume their shape,  
From which for long no man did e'er escape.

## FEBRUARY 1948

The purple light of evening  
Through the bare black bones of trees;  
Wind in the heaven blowing  
A gale far away on the seas;  
Dusk, and the breathing of cattle;  
Warm, the damp air of the West;  
Earth, the great living mother  
Holding us close to her breast.

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## HOMES

In homes not made with hands we live,  
Which seldom solid comfort give.  
They will not keep the weather out;  
The draughts run through them, in and out,  
The wicked squeak, the good man shivers,  
The monkey man for ever gibbers.  
God give his grace to us poor livers  
In such cold homes to live.

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### THE OUT-OF-BALANCE

The well-balanced, in perfect health,  
Flow smoothly, feeling no problem,  
Are, to all intents and purpose, dead.

Time is the out-of-balance,  
Generating the opening forces,  
The expanding flower.

So we pass out of death into life  
To know no ceasing.

Oh, poor soul, seeking rest,  
To feel and to think is your burden—

As a boat upon a boundless water  
Rides the out-of-balance on a deep of peace—  
The Peace of God which passeth understanding.

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## FORMATIONS, FORMULATIONS

Formations, Formulations,  
By Force of Matter  
Have no validity  
For mind and spirit.

The generative power of these  
Is of their very nature,  
Sine qua non, and cannot be contained.

So it is curious  
That Mind—yea Spirit also—  
By force of Matter  
Would compel conclusions  
And achieve  
An End.



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## FAIR CREATURE

Fair creature, I would see your face  
Ever changing, ever new;  
Flowering field of God's sweet grace,  
In a mortal moment you,  
In a mortal moment mine.  
Petals light of hair and cheek,  
Beauty knowing no eclipse,  
Ever there for all who seek,  
Star-bright eyes and laughing lips,  
Flash of look and turn of feature  
Cut for ever out of Time,  
In a mortal moment you,  
In a mortal moment mine.

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## LET IT SUFFICE

In a morning of March  
Here am I,  
In this warm town of old association  
And young endeavour of mind and body,  
Cambridge.  
It might be you.

What want we  
(And that other man, also,  
Elsewhere)  
Growing and flowering in our glory and wholeness  
With monstrous imaginings?  
Universalism? Totalitarianism?

Do we seek to live on stars, we who live on the earth?  
Or do we seek to inhabit molecules?

Are we not little,  
So little that nothing can measure our littleness,  
Yet so great that we encompass eternity?

Let it suffice,  
That I am here  
In this warm town of old association and adventure,  
Cambridge,  
This morning of March that ever is.