

## In Excelsis

*Amy Lowell, 1922*

You—you—

Your shadow is sunlight on a plate of silver;  
Your footsteps, the seeding-place of lilies;  
Your hands moving, a chime of bells across a windless air.

The movement of your hands is the long, golden running of light from a rising sun;  
It is the hopping of birds upon a garden-path.

As the perfume of jonquils, you come forth in the morning.  
Young horses are not more sudden than your thoughts,  
Your words are bees about a pear-tree,  
Your fancies are the gold-and-black striped wasps buzzing among red apples.  
I drink your lips,  
I eat the whiteness of your hands and feet.  
My mouth is open,  
As a new jar I am empty and open.  
Like white water are you who fill the cup of my mouth,  
Like a brook of water thronged with lilies.

You are frozen as the clouds,  
You are far and sweet as the high clouds.  
I dare reach to you,  
I dare touch the rim of your brightness.  
I leap beyond the winds,  
I cry and shout,  
For my throat is keen as a sword  
Sharpened on a hone of ivory.  
My throat sings the joy of my eyes,  
The rushing gladness of my love.

How has the rainbow fallen upon my heart?  
How have I snared the seas to lie in my fingers  
And caught the sky to be a cover for my head?  
How have you come to dwell with me,  
Compassing me with the four circles of your mystic lightness,  
So that I say "Glory! Glory!" and bow before you  
As to a shrine?

Do I tease myself that morning is morning and a day after?  
Do I think the air a condescension,  
The earth a politeness,  
Heaven a boon deserving thanks?  
So you—air—earth—heaven—  
I do not thank you,  
I take you,  
I live.  
And those things which I say in consequence  
Are rubies mortised in a gate of stone.