

Nearly Wrecked.

Nearly wrecked, nearly reached the time  
Of final ebb, when the seas give out  
And only the rustle of surf on the shore  
Brings the sound of the past; the climb  
Done, and men unmoved by the shout  
Of leaders; touch of the wind too raw  
On cheeks; nearly wrecked, all speech.  
Nearly reached, the time when hills  
Look down in silence on the iron tracks  
And canals and heaps of slag, to teach  
No more surprises, the valleys and the mills  
Like dead men faces down, their backs  
To the light. Nearly done, in heart and limb;  
Faces grotesque, voices squeaking, hips  
Protruding, gawky walks, men made  
From factory-yards, afraid to speak, to skim  
The air with their hands, to open lips  
And sing, afraid to show the flame laid  
At their birth; women afraid to unveil  
Their sex; afraid to cook; knowing no quiet;  
Afraid to look up; afraid of the sky.  
Nearly wrecked, the chance to speak the tale  
God had in mind for us; unknown the riot  
Of the heart; nearly reached, the time to die.