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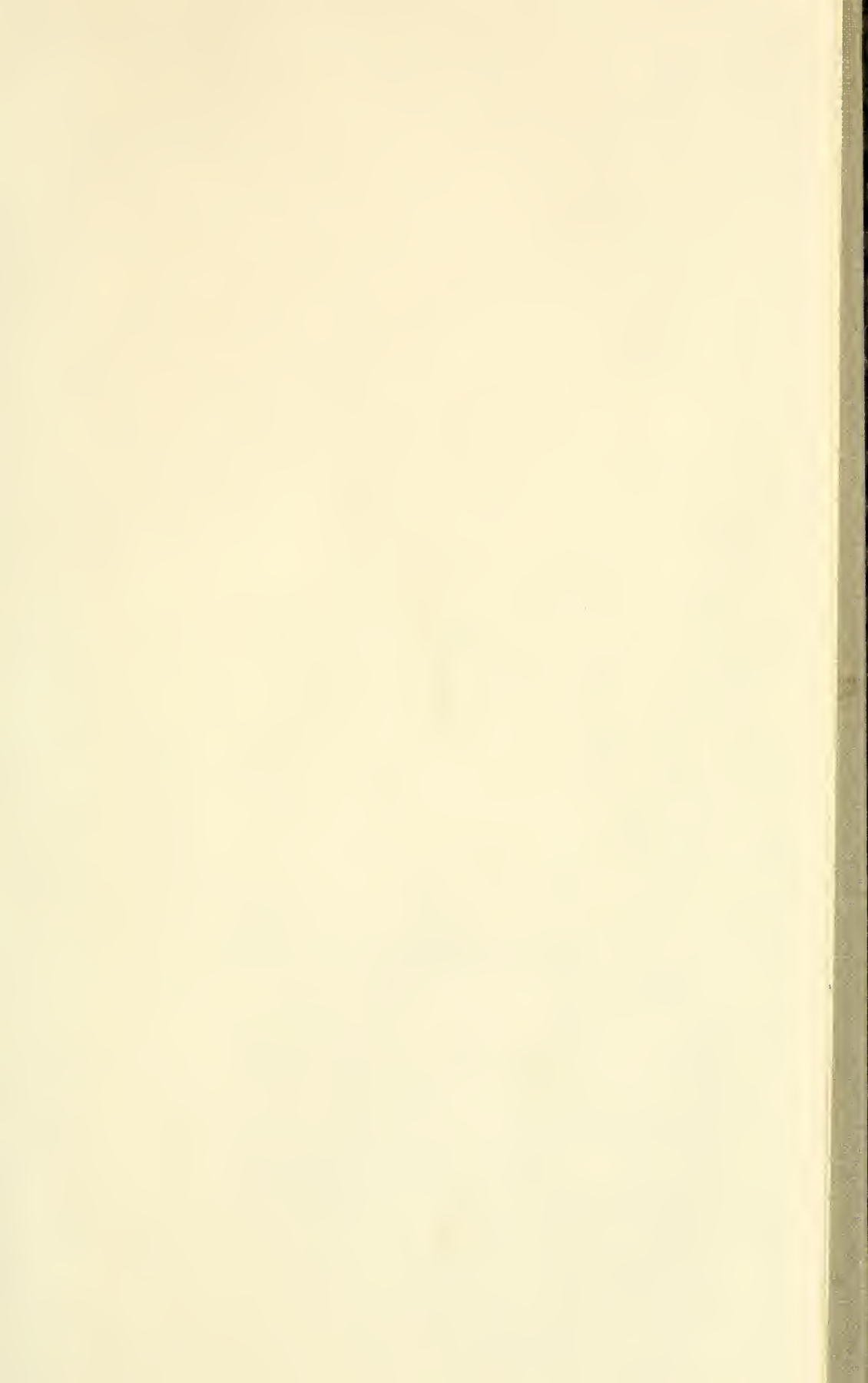
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NANSEN.

A Poem

BY  
REGINALD C. ROBBINS

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## NANSEN.

“Mid ice and night onward and onward: ice,  
Night unresisted heaving on and on  
Though motiveless yet mightily my life  
In passion of the pack; pressing on, on  
From nought through nought: no-progress; passage proved  
Prison; persistence, powerlessness: or Pole  
Or no Pole, equal impotence! In patience  
My soul sees, even in impotence, fulfill'd  
The prophecy that built, equipt, launch'd forth  
Her foresight. Yea; this power, this thrust and stress  
At bend and burst broad, loud below in the bleak,  
My heart holds; comprehends; conclusively  
Bursts beyond, thrusts down, down and bounds above  
In freedom of buoyancy. My ship, my soul  
Are motive; are sun and strength beyond aught here!

“Passion and patience of the universe,  
Doom'd to this dead, eternal ice and night!  
From nought through nought and nowhere any end;  
No bourne to passage, strength to patience none;  
Motive to life nor any life save death:  
Moon, and these myriad stars moon-dead to-be! —  
Yet: what of this that knows, that wills an end,  
This God-I-Am: for-whom, through-whom, in-whom  
Alone are ice and night and any thing:  
This strength-of-suffering, power of life-through-death;  
Prophet, transcendence of the darkness here?  
Something, through uttermost of ice and night,  
Will that I question fact; unfelt before  
Somewhat essential beyond ice or night  
Questions the doom; demands, if there be life  
In-me and through-me, how may death persist,  
Ice and night so entomb earth's truth-to-be?  
World ceases not, though I cease or not-cess!  
What of world's soul that comprehends; concludes  
Together nought with nought; proves passage, bourne;  
Chaos yet cosmos, sentient-systeming:  
Moon-dearth but sensible by strength of sun;  
Strength endless, being criterion of end?

Of energy-potential kinetized  
 Toward equilibrium: equilibrium  
 But nothingness, no-force, non-end inane.  
 Moon, nought save shown in sloth of swooning sun.  
 And if, in such dissemination, 'soul'  
 (Nice nerve-vibration) over and beyond  
 The grosser substance chemical gain growth  
 And power organic over and beyond  
 The less-organic; stands the law the same:  
 Such and such from the nebula to now  
 Mere evolution of the nerve from vague  
 Chaos through energy kinetic, sun  
 And star and sphere on sphere, through molten mass,  
 Rock-metal, vegetation, sinew'd flesh  
 To man's brain: and from now back, back to night,  
 Cold crystalline benumbing up of nerve  
 In cosmical pulsation: now from man  
 Back to chill'd coalescence organless,  
 Lifeless conglomeration: ice and night!—  
 Ha! the stars stab, the bellowing below  
 Mocks to the marrow! Unto ice and night  
 Dedicate nerve's destruction! Now, to-night  
 (What of the years of the world if years yield nought?)  
 Now, to-night end all; headlong to the doom  
 Dash on the blank pack's bosom: far below  
 Beat brain out: end the agony! In name  
 Of Kelvin, Huxley, now, to-night I leap:  
 Anticipate, make mine the doom of all!—

" Mine? Mine the doom of all! I hesitate:  
 Hold breath; breathe deep this agony of air:  
 Make it my blood and feel it mine! I am!  
 Life is what means it to be one of these!—  
 Alive; I-am; nebula, nerve or night;  
 Necessitating future still as past  
 More and more, past as future, each in each!  
 World ceases not: nor I cease. World I am!—  
 And it is new, this union: yet by will  
 To end all proved, made perfect endlessly  
 In intellectual action: Christ-with-Kant!—  
 Faith for the facts! Feel faith and find fact truth!

"This logic of life-origin, this law  
 Of link'd necessity? Can link by link  
 Interminably link'd explain one life?  
 Mere mutuality, one molecule  
 Save as the mutual mean identity:  
 My-life, or molecule, an union'd world?  
 Ay; in such sort: if just this self of mine —  
 God-mechanician to their made machine,  
 Else unmechanic mere nonentity! —  
 Hypothesized yet unexplain'd remain  
 (Hardly residuum, scarce for fact beyond)  
 Still for true source, being synthesis, of these,  
 Conscience and explanation, linkage, law —  
 (Sunlike to shrinkage of moon soulless else!) —  
 Not cause, yet all-causation; through and through  
 Immanence and intelligence of all  
 Else lawless, linkless, unionless, inane:  
 Self-ideality of each through each;  
 Each for-itself forselfness even as I,  
 Identified in me as selfhood all:  
 The molecule-in-man, man-molecule;  
 Native reality: and only so  
 Real at all, molecule or man, for-me:  
 Past, future, none less instant, self-for-self,  
 Real union, sentience each; though yet for-me  
 Polar, unmeaning save as union'd now.  
 Ay; that I am, I am: all else in-me  
 (As I in-them, through-them, by mutual proof —  
 How else, conceived empirics-error, save  
 World's self-assertion, countervail'd to mine,  
 Insofarforth show Self neutrality?)  
 Through-me make mutuality of self  
 Distinct, determinate, dividual  
 Yet individual universally.  
 All that I am, I am: this world-of-mine;  
 This universe: alive by saviorship,  
 (Monad or motive) Christhood-vicarage!  
 Development-proved-world-dissipation proves  
 By world-retort a false criterion,  
 Half-standard contradictory: proves worth  
 Of absolute process, progress-regressive  
 In pure polarity self-reconciled

Evolving, mind from matter, most from least.  
 Law, from the nucleus to now, but time  
 Of self's maturing: ever to mature:  
 Even in the space-dissemination, time's  
 Ingathering of momentum; human mind  
 O'er mental-nebula progressive still  
 In mutual-internality of lore,  
 Even as o'er physical man the molecule  
 Nebular stood, still stands preëminent  
 In property-material of force  
 Extern, displacement substantive; alike  
 Materio-mental, least and most: one Soul  
 Erst nebular, now nebular-humane;  
 Ubiquitous, being all-self-spatialized;  
 Eternal, being all-temporality:  
 Mine erst, mine now, mine still eternally;  
 By perpetuity-through-passingness  
 (This perfectness of process) nebula  
 To now, yet now by being but nebular  
 (Past and to-come but poles of permanence):  
 Eternally my universe humane! —  
 Is it, world-mutuality may end?  
 Yet mutual how, save well aware through each,  
 Alive each molecule—that may not end,  
 Being each for-self criterion of end,  
 World-mutuality in-self alone? —  
 Ice and night, 'ice' and 'night' (man's metaphor  
 For end-unmeaning, dead) but humanly;  
 Ice yet for-ice, night yet for-night, humane  
 In selfhood nebular-molecular:  
 Moon yet for-moon as sun for-sun, one world —  
 (Transcending metaphor) each molecule! —  
 Union'd, processional unendingly —  
 Soul not above, beyond; but immanent  
 Self-reference, intelligence through all!

"Lo! for behalf of such as scarce may speak,  
 Lo! for life's ice and night, life laughs at loss:  
 Takes truth from lightning of the blank below:  
 Spurns space-dissemination: in despite  
 Turns law to law's impassion'd intellect  
 Proved in performance of my ship, my soul

Their prophecy, foresighted impotence!  
 Lo! proved in the patience under pressure, power  
 Of passive Pole-persistence (extreme  
 Passion of logic push'd to point), behold  
 Motived preëminence of manhood-plan  
 O'er potency less-mental; o'er the bleak  
 Ice and night I for vicar proving world  
 Processive, though pulsation'd: I by proof  
 Lifting the lost to life's intelligence;  
 Fact-science to philosophy by faith.  
 What of the equilibrium, inane  
 Frosting of nerve to nothingness? By pace  
 Equal, if opposite, above, beyond  
 The physical degeneration steps  
 The 'psychic' subtlety: nor moon nor star  
 Shows soul-futurity, save star or moon  
 In spirit equal-born!—And I north, north  
 Push, overpower, soul-overweight their world  
 Of space-passivity; their extreme verge  
 Of sphere yet union'd Pole through zone, yet proved  
 Axial, self-orbited—being but motived more  
 Pass on the lamp of light, cramp boundaries,  
 Burst and break down the barriers (limit proved  
 Barrier but by bursting); limitless  
 Lead on the more-than-human mind-to-come  
 In conquest of physic's frigidity;  
 More and more conquer'd, spurn'd beyond, the more  
 Frosted in deadness of new ice and night.—  
 Ay; and in conquest more and more shall world  
 (Or human or some supra-human nerve,  
 Some more-than-nerve) by reconciling more  
 More comprehend, include and lift to light  
 The 'deadness' and the 'darkness'; more and more  
 Shall time to-come, immanent-now, make now  
 An explanation and intelligence  
 By selfhood.—As my selfhood, savior now  
 Springs forth in fire abroad, auroral, vast  
 From stiffening of this Christhood on the cross  
 Stark aloft! From the vicarage complete  
 (Torment of stars or mockery of moon;  
 This intellectual agony made mine);  
 Eternal principle of every end—



Christ for the ice and night, redeeming these! —  
For whom alone meaning or end may be:  
World-saviorship that shall not end! —

“I rave?”

Drunk with the drench of drouth, of death? I freeze? —  
Ha! the skies scoff! I still am doom'd in dream:  
Man, with the dead-eternal ice and night.”



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