

Twenty-One

We boys pass dumbly here at a Responsible Gate
On the bleak road of logic and age
No longer tigers leap or chained beasts stamp
 In this Responsible State
For burden there is boredom,
 the battle of propriety to wage.

Something causes rage at nothing, which is where we are.
In endless peers back are dimly glimpsed,
 the hills so high and curved,
The falling, following, milling memories,
 half ajar,
Of safe, small, dangerous adventures,
 pickled and preserved.

Was youth's promise and imagination? The pride is bowed.
What is the reason as night's dark driving rain
Beats iron strength to rust?

Now by silent echoes and internal mirrors each becomes his crowd.
Dare touch a fellow, try to share the pain,
See him crumble into dust.

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