Each in His Place

Alice Mose
Some words I read and hear, 
Through the tasks and amazements, 
Ring in the attentive ear. 
Each master has a meaning 
But the meanings clash. 
The student wanting to be fair 
To the sincere speakers 
Finds ten commandments and a thousand spare. 
None wishes to be a naive savage 
Or, serenely mad, a superman 
Who stares from his cold peaks; 
But framed with flesh his voice 
Can say no more, though sometimes less, 
Than his experience or divination speaks.

Since you would take it 
With you if you left it, 
Stay in your ivory academe. 
Some must keep the streets 
And some the centuries clean.

Some must rub the past 
And classify the worm 
While the living build 
And have what good may come.

The dust that was is safe 
Further to scrutinize. 
None but a comrade gives 
Our future dust advice.

Alice Mose