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## Vantage

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Cloud-flaunting hill where lavic cones now burn  
 Sea-buried once shall feel the watery shroud  
 Once more, so body back to dust. But where  
 In daisied fields or fiery-dappled sky  
 Shall go the transient-and-eternal fair  
 Divorcéd one, unknown and knowing I,  
 (O lonely soul that will not be compost  
 For fecund earth!) the lost and homeless ghost?

## VANTAGE

He had seen travelogues depicting the  
 Picturesque villages, marvelled at quaint  
 Costumes, viewed an Oroscau panorama  
 Whose real and fabulous conjoin in paint.

And he had heard one, wiser than many,  
 Say, "It is a strange and terrible land;  
 Not for the half-hearted." But the frenzy  
 Of departure was in him. So he planned

A sojourn, mapping an itinerary  
 To include the latitudes of Whence and Why.  
 After that brash incredible journey  
 He stared at the implacable vast sky

As once might one of Cortez' baser men  
 Who came, mazed in cold greed of scrutiny,  
 And compromised with fear. Could he not then  
 Cull some truth from this gaudy pageantry—

Rash fables hatched to gull poor traveling  
 Fools? Or was truth adamant in mountains,  
 Trapped in rock-sealed strata with the deathling  
 Fossils of old Time? Such were the questions

Troubling him who looked beyond a landscape  
 Toward history's mirage. The mango's taste  
 Exotic on his tongue, a dancer's shape,  
 Maguey green-armored in a desert waste

Were gloss and comment, program-notes to read  
Curiously after the event. But now,  
Cogitating the swift allegoried  
Show, he remembered that absolute bough

Whose fruit is brittle in mortality,  
And found the play authentic: the villain  
Genealogically sound; homely,  
And familiar, as original sin.

LACUSTRINE THOUGHTS

I

It was there. And we had seen it. Beyond  
The circling swan it rose, mammiform and  
Opulent. No one could ever dream that  
Green harbor . . . that lush-breasted promise of

Repose. Yet suddenly it was not. And  
We saw only bits of inverted sky  
Strewn in the fractured lake. And the swan swam  
In proud orbits — wide as despair . . . as doom.

II

That day we did not see any islands.  
There was nothing — only gray water and  
A solitary swan. The sun laid down  
Its gold highway for night to enter on.

But we, mazed in a sullen latitude,  
Could not descry one patch of green, one brash  
Intimation of islands burgeoning  
Out of the fertile word. Lost . . . lost . . . betrayed

By what was and what would be—we heard earth's  
Ancient anguish—Time's stale proleptic sigh.