

## OXFORD BY CATS LIGHT

*'I am writing in what is called Cats Light.'*

—Disraeli, *Letters*.

**T**HE grey dusk and the lemon lights,  
The soft approach of winter nights,  
(When shades get loose, they say, again  
And Cerberus is off his chain)  
Give back in sound if not in show  
The Oxford that I used to know,  
Years back, when destiny was kind.

The crooning kettle and the wind,  
Within, without, make ceaseless song,  
And down the valley trip along  
Trucks shunting where the railroad runs  
That was our sum of progress once,  
When all the world's mad urgency,  
That now goes through us, passed us by.

Dusk, gentle heiress of harsh day,  
Hath put our hurrying crowds away  
And loosed the soft and nimble feet  
Of shadowy cats on square and street,  
A race primeval whose life's aim,  
To-day and yesterday the same  
As it will be to-morrow, draws  
Stature from this sub-lustrous pause,  
This glimmering interlude in time.  
Theirs is the creed that rules my rhyme  
And keeps my own life safe and fast  
From idol and iconoclast,  
The simple creed whose evidence  
Resolves the weltering things of sense  
To (what they are, no more, no less)  
A hearthstone and a wilderness,  
Theirs to enjoy and mine to tend.

## *Blackfriars*

By day I scarce can see my end;  
So throngs the world upon my heart,  
The sweet words of my well-conned part  
Well-nigh desert me. But at nights,  
The grey dusk and the lemon lights  
(When shades get loose, they say, again  
And Cerberus is off his chain)  
Lave me with longing to renew  
The ancient loveliness : to hew  
Wood that one hearth may flower in flame  
And one small plot of earth to tame  
Back into paradisal bowers—  
A wilderness a-fire with flowers.

HELEN PARRY EDEN.