

THE INHERITANCE

O TO walk one morning very early,
To walk through England while the people
sleep,
In the windy hour that scatters the wet
Bright seed of dying stars on grass and sheep,

When darkness has turned like a sable moth
To show its underwing of lucent blue
And the still moon has spent her mystery
Of motherhood on owls no longer true;

To walk through England, then, and see, large-eyed,
The sacramental of her history,
A tapestry the magian angels weave
On her cool sky, of her mountains' frailty

And of the absence of the sleeping folk
Who build her otherwise, who breathe on her
And have breathed, they and their forefathers,
A foetid frankincense distilled of myrrh;

To see the holy abbeys climb again,
With radiant glass and marvellous towers,
Towards the heaven of man's destiny
And star their gothic shadows with wild-flowers,

To watch the little towns of humble roofs
Huddle like children near their nursing streams
And contemplate, with wrinkled streets and doors,
Their crimson banners marching into dreams.

EGERTON CLARKE.