

THOU THAT HEAREST PRAYER!

BY HELEN COALE CREW.

NO unknown God art Thou!
Nay, sweet and familiar in the days of my childhood;
A warm hand in dark and empty places;
A touch of healing on the wounded heart of youth.
Like as a father, Thou,
And I was comforted of Thee in my weeping.
Now that I have upreached to the stature of a man,
Behold, Thou hast stooped to the stature of a man out of Thy God-
head.

Thy feet beside mine in the grass of the woodways,
Thy footsteps with mine in the dust of the highways,
As the feet of a brother.
Thy breathing is near and warm as the breath of the flocks in the
pasture.

I may turn and laugh with Thee when I will,
As the pool laughs, crimpling in the wind,
For the joy of laughter is Thine, and Thou hast the grace of tears.

I feel Thee in the swarming of the grassblades,
The myriad, green-tongued fire of April.
I hear Thee in the golden flood of noontide
That beats and breaks in a shining wave upon earth's bosom.
I see Thee where the Pleiads broider the heaven's edge,
At twilight, when the sheep are folded from the chilling mists
That roll along the orchard floor before the feet of the new-born
night.

Thy beauty is a sharp savor upon my lips at the unspeakable, sea-
cold mystery of the dawn.
When the garden quickens and brings forth roses,

Then art Thou, O Ancient of Days, as lovely as Apollo at morning,
As bright as Balder when spring ripples into the meadows!
But in dim city-ways, in all the deep-worn paths of pain and fear
and sin;

By blackened hearths, in trampled wheatfields, in ruined sanctuaries,
in red trenches;

There art Thou terrible as an army with banners, and I am over-
whelmed by Thy merciless justice.

I cannot understand.

But as Thou hast forgiven me, so forgive I Thee.

Ah, and when Death lifts the veil of his tenderness;

When Birth is bright-terrible in its majesty;

When a child laughs;

When my young love, my darling, flame-souled and heaven-eyed,

Comes through the dusk shyly to me waiting;

Then earth reels and heaven shatters into a thousand lights,

Throbbing, pulsing.

It is Thou! It is Thou revealed!

Thou that hearest prayer!

Thou unto Whom all flesh shall come!