

## WILLIAM MARION REEDY.

By Edgar Lee Masters.

He sits before you silent as Buddha,  
And then you say,  
This man is Rabelais,  
And while you wonder what his stock is,  
English or Irish, you behold his eyes  
As big and brown as those desirable crockies  
With which as boys we used to play.  
And then you see the spherical light that lies  
Just under the iris coloring,  
Before which everything  
Becomes as plain as day.

If you have noticed the rolling jowls  
And the face that speaks its chief  
Delight in beer and roast beef,  
Before you have seen his eyes, you see  
A man of fleshy jollity,  
Like the friars of old in gowns and cowls.  
And when the speaks from an orotund depth that  
growls  
In a humorous way like Fielding or Smollett,  
That turns in a trice to Robert La Follette,  
Or retraces to Thales of Crete,  
And touches upon Descartes coming back  
Through the intellectual Zodiac,  
That's something of a feat.  
And you see that the eyes are really the man.  
For the thought of him proliferates  
This way over to Hindostan  
And that way descanting on Yeats.

With a word on Plato's Symposium,  
And a little glimpse of Theocritus,  
Or something of Bruno's martyrdom,  
Or what St. Thomas Aquinas meant  
By a certain line obscure to us.  
And then he'll take up Horace's odes  
Or the Roman civilization;  
Or a few of the Illiad's episodes,  
Or the Greek deterioration.  
Or skip to a word on the plasmic jelly  
Which Benjamin Moore and others think  
Is the origin of life. Then Shelley  
Comes in for a look of understanding.  
Or he'll tell you about the orientation  
Of the ancient dream of Zion,  
Or what's the matter with Bryan.  
And while the porter is bringing a drink,  
Something into his fancy skips,  
And he talks about the Apocalypse,  
Or a painter or writer now unknown,  
In France or Germany, who will soon  
Have fame of him through the whole earth blown.

It's not so hard a thing to be wise  
In the lore of books:—  
It's a different thing to be all eyes,  
Like a lighthouse which revolves and looks  
Over the land out to sea;  
And a lighthouse is what he seems to me!  
Sitting like Buddha spiritually cool,  
Young as the light of the sun is young,  
And taking the even with the odd  
As a matter of course, and the path he's trod  
As a path that was good enough,

With a sort of transcendental sense  
Whose hatred is less than indifference,  
And a gift of wisdom in love,  
And who can say as he classifies  
Men and ages with his eyes  
With cool detachment; this is dung;  
And that poor fellow is just a fool,  
And, say what you will, death is a rod;

But I see a light that shines and shines,  
And I rather think it's God!

—From The Phoenix.

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