The Welcome of the Town

Far deeper than the welcome of the crowd
My heart throbs forth its welcome in each beat;
Not in the exuberant salvos ringing loud,
But from affection’s silent, holy seat.
To you my children ranged o’er land and foam
I’ve sent my call, I welcome you back home.

And you were mine in childhood’s golden days,
Mine by the law of place and parent right,
I sorrowed when you went your separate ways,
The while you followed Fortune’s flitting light.
While in your places other forms appeared,
Deep in my heart each wanderer’s name was seared.

Now transient children greet you in delight,—
Mere wards they are in quickly passing years,—
My greetings fall with heart-strings growing tight
With quivering voice and eyes be-dewed with tears,
For I’m the eternal spirit of the town,
Spawned in its earliest hopes of high renown.

A mid the noisy tumult mounting fast,
Throw off the mantled years and quietly steal
Once more within the Spirit of the Past,
And in communion with me you shall feel
The warmth of all the faith and hope you had,
When you were merry maid and happy lad.

—E. L. K.