Lakeside Lines To A Skeptic

Clarence A. Amann

St. John Fisher College
Lakeside Lines To A Skeptic

Cover Page Footnote

This poem is available in The Angle: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1970/iss1/19
Lakeside Lines To A Skeptic

These four water-sprites
of mine
will not be taught
tragedy
by me,
yet---
Laughing and scrapping and flashing
in the sun-flecked splash spray,
they think life is joy
mostly...
and I'll
not teach them
otherwise:
"the essential evil"
"the ultimate absurdity"
your dour philosophers
of gloom,
too young old,
would have them learn
soon,
quickly...
They know,
these harpies' bleat
and talon tuck,
how to cry
when there's a need,
when some thing of value
is lost:
a toy
a friend
a victory,
and the tears come
easily
but go too
quickly...
O, I could persuade them
to hear the sad-eyed Sibyls
and cultivate a callousness,
"a tragic view"
and learn to weep
more soundly,
profoundly,
for the growing less
of flashing splashing,
for the dimming sun
on cool waters

neath blue skies
white-fleeced
with softening jet-streaks...
with the growing more
of rain and pain
and mud-sloshing
hikes to nowhere...

Somehow
I can't teach them
that yet,
mainly I guess
because
I haven't learned it
yet
myself
who's cried some
too
for leaden crosses
larger losses
than toys
or friends
or victories...
Yet
I can teach them
what dour philosophers
of desperation
loud or silent
never seem to learn
themselves:
that joy comes
but rarely unbidden,
more faithfully
enduringly
with seeking it
purely
in trivia
mostly,
and with wrenching
myopic eyes away
from selfish fears
that, sycophant
upon the soul,
clamor for attention
totally
till all the
nothing things
of life

prevail...

These nut-brown naiads,
gamboling elves,
would not give
the latter leave
now
in the rainbow froth
of white-caps
laughter sprayed
to the warm wind,
even if their
trusted Father told them...
And all he’ll tell them
ever
is what he knows,
that given manly will
and somewhere
a lake shining
a faithful sun
and kids’ faces
water-flecked and laughing,
they’ll never
need to!

Clarence A. Amann