

*Ross Winn*

# The Agnostic

1905

Says the Agnostic: "It may be so  
Across the sky God sets his bow  
Of promise, and each day and night  
Gems the Universe with light.

But yet the angel of the darker gloom  
Has cast the shadow of a deeper doom  
Athwart the human heart and brain,  
Whose name is Death, pale priest of pain.

Into this world, like a far flung lance,  
Man is thrust by love, or lust perchance;  
Opens his feeble eyes and utters a cry,  
Nor knows that his end here is to die!

Within its prison of flesh and bone  
The soul dwells apart and alone;  
Flutters for a brief span 'twixt pleasure and pain,  
And, like the snuffed candle, goes out again.

And whence he comes and whither he goes,  
Nobody answers—for nobody knows.  
Like a breath for a moment he blows in suspense,  
And is gone and forgotten in the shadowy hence.

And the scent of the flower of the sweet-smelling rose  
That pleases our senses when the summer wind blows,  
Is less transient and fleeting than the thing we call life,  
That is born out of darkness and survives but by strife.

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June 20, 2012



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Originally appearing in *To-Day*, September 1905.  
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