

II-H

But how luminous the fountain! Its sparks seem to aspire to reach the sky!  
And so much energy in those bubbles. A wise man could contemplate his face in them  
With impunity, but fools would surely do better not to approach too close  
Because any intense physical activity like that implies danger for the unwary and  
the uneducated. Great balls of fire!

In my day we used to make "fire designs", ~~XXXX~~ using a saturated solution of  
nitrate of potash.

Then we used to take a smooth stick, and using the solution as ink, draw with  
it on sheets of white tissue paper.

Once it was thoroughly dry, the writing would be invisible.

By means of a spark from a ~~XXX~~ smouldering match ignite the potassium nitrate  
at any part of the drawing,

First laying the paper on a plate or tray in a darkened room.

The fire will smoulder along the line of the invisible drawing until the design  
is complete.

Meanwhile the fire fountain is still smouldering and welling

Casting off a hellish stink and wild fumes of pitch

Acrid as jealousy. And it might be

That flame-writing might be visible right there, in the gaps in the smoke

Without going through the bother of the solution-writing.

A word here and there--"promised" or "beware"--you have to go the long way round  
before you find that the entrance to that side is closed.

The phosphorescent liquid is still <sup>heaving</sup> ~~heaving~~ and boiling, however.

And what if this insane activity were ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ itself a kind of drawing

Of April sidewalks, and young trees bursting into timid leaf

And dogs sniffing hydrants, the fury of spring beginning to back up along their  
veins?

Yonder stand a young boy and a girl leaning against a bicycle.

The iron lamppost next to them ~~XX~~ disappear into the feathery, unborn leaves that  
suffocate its top.

A postman is coming up the walk, a letter held in his outstretched hand.

This is his first day on the new job, and he looks warily around

Alas not seeing the hideous bulldog bearing down on him like sixty, its hellish  
eyes fixed on the seat of his pants, jowls a-slaver.

Nearby a young woman is fixing her stocking. Watching her, a fellow with a hat <sup>chap</sup>

Is about to walk into the path of a speeding ~~JXX~~ hackney cabriolet. The line  
of lampposts

Marches up the street in strict array, but the lamp parts

Are lost in feathery bloom, in which hidden faces can be spotted, for this is  
a puzzle scene.

The sky is white, yet full of outlined stars--it must be night,

Or an early springtime evening, with just a hint of dampness and chill in the air

Memory of winter, hint of the autumn to come,

Yet the lovers congregate anyway, the lights twinkle slowly on.

Cars move steadily along the street.

It is a scene worthy of a poet's pen, yet it is the fire-demon

Who has created it, throwing it up on the dubious surface of a phosphorescent  
fountain

For all the world like a poet. But love can appropriate it,

Use or mis-use it for its own ends. Love is stronger than fire.

The proof of this is that already the heaving, sucking fountain is paling away

Yet the fire-lines of the lovers remain fixed, as if permanently, on the air of the  
lab.