

BEANS

Aldis, Mary, 1872-1949

Today I saw a lunatic sorting beans.
Long, loose, unkempt, with toes turned in,
He sat upon a bench by a brick wall
And worked and worked.

His shifting eyes
Concealed his mighty plan;
His lips murmured ahead;
His white and narrow hand
Seized prettily each separate bean
From off the pile
And hurried it to place.

I watched him for an hour,
Maybe two.
Finally, the last bean on,
He set his pattern in the sun;
And with a little touch now here, now there,
He stole away and hid.

Soon other lunatics came wandering by,
Jostling to look.
One stared, one laughed,
One peered again;
One said that he could do
A darned sight better out of smoke;
One thrust a kick
And all the beans went scattering about.

But one came back
And looked down gravely
On the worker picking up his beans.
"Brother!" he said,
And fell to helping him.