

BOREAL QUEST

by Karlis Rusa

Cold and dark and bleak
 dawn my Northern days;
 truly the soul would grow weak
 had I not seen beyond the haze
 enshrouding the mountains that rise
 before and above me—
 veiling a land of surprise,
 savage and lovely.

(For my dreams once brought me sight
 of citadels there, and never-thawed gardens;
 on battlements stood silent wardens
 and in the deep skies was a blue-flashing light.)

In the abode of ever-winter, 'mid hyaline splendor,
 frozen sits the pale Queen on her throne, far from tender,
 deaf to the winds that whistle forlornly the icy turrets among,
 deaf to crystal-chimes that tinkle in septentrional song.

(The rigidly leaning watchers I shall pass
 and softly mount frosted stairways to doors hanging open forever;
 and completely my heart I shall sever
 from dusky Southland memories, for I shall be where the snow-
 clouds mass . . .
 and the piping wind as music will be
 in the hall where moveless sits She.)

Unknown, unreal is this land whither I turn,
 but having attained it, at the Queen's feet I shall learn
 to love the coldness, the whiteness, the wild keening wind—
 be one with them, forgetting all I have suffered or sinned.

Yet still through boundless fields of snow I must plow;
 deep into my spirit the teeth of the North sink now!