**Chicago**

Hog Butcher for the World,  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;   
Stormy, husky, brawling,   
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have  
seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the  
farm boys.  
And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is  
true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.  
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces  
of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton  
hunger.  
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer  
at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say  
to them:  
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing  
so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.  
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job,  
here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little  
soft cities;  
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a  
savage pitted against the wilderness,  
Bareheaded,  
Shoveling,  
Wrecking,  
Planning,  
Building, breaking, rebuilding.  
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white  
teeth,  
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man  
laughs,  
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never  
lost a battle,  
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and  
under his ribs the heart of the people,  
Laughing!  
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth,  
half-naked, sweating, proud be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker,  
Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler  
to the Nation.

**Limited**

I am riding on a limited express, one of the crack trains  
of the nation.  
Hurtling across the prairie into blue haze and dark air go  
fifteen all-steel coaches holding a thousand people.  
(All the coaches shall be scrap and rust and all the men and  
women laughing in the diners and sleepers shall pass to  
ashes.)  
I ask a man in the smoker where he is going and he answers:  
“Omaha.”

**Prayers of Steel**

Lay me on an anvil, О God.  
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.  
Let me pry loose old walls.  
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.  
Lay me on an anvil, О God.

Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike   
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together  
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders   
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue   
nights into white stars.

**Grass**

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.  
Shovel them under and let me work-  
I am the grass; I cover all.  
And pile them high at Gettysburg  
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.  
Shovel them under and let me work.  
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:  
What place is this?  
Where are we now?

I am the grass.  
Let me work.

**Threes**

I was a boy when I heaid three red words  
a thousand Frenchmen died in the streets  
for: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity-I asked  
why men die Jor woкds.

I was older; men with mustaches, sideburns  
lilacs, told me the high golden words are:   
Mother, Home and Heaven-other older men with  
face decorations said: God, Duty, Immortality  
-they sang these threes slow from deep lungs.

Years ticked off their say-so on the great clocks  
of doom and damnation, soup and nuts: meteors flashed  
their say-so: and out of great Russia came three  
dusky syllables workmen took guns and went out to die  
for: Bread, Peace, Land.

And I met a marine of the U.S.A., a leatherneck with  
a girl on his knee for a memory in ports circling the  
earth and he said: tell me how to say three things  
and I always get by-gimme a plate of ham and eggs-  
how much?-and-do you love me, kid?

**Jazz Fantasia**

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjoes, sob on the long  
cool winding saxophones. Go to it, О jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy tin pans, let  
your trombones ooze, and go husha-husha-hush with  
the slippery sand-paper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome tree-tops,  
moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible, cry like  
a racing car, slipping away from a motor-cycle cop,  
bang-bang! you jazzmen, bang altogether drums, traps,  
banjoes, horns, tin cans-make two people fight on  
the top of a stairway and scratch each other's eyes  
in a clinch tumbling down the stairs.  
Can the rough stuff... now a Mississippi steamboat pushes  
up the night river with a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo... and the green  
lanterns calling to the high soft stars... a red moon  
rides on the humps of the low river hills... go to it,  
О jazzmen.

**Anecdote of Hemlock for Two Athenians**

The grizzled Athenian ordered to hemlock,  
Ordered to a drink and lights out,  
Had a friend he never refused anything.

“Let me drink too,” the friend said.  
And the grizzled Athenian answered,  
“I never yet refused you anything.”

“I am short of hemlock enough for two,”  
The head executioner interjected,  
“There must be more silver for more hemlock.”

“Somebody pay this man for the drinks of death,”  
The grizzled Athenian told his friends,  
Who fished out the ready cash wanted.

“Since one cannot die on free cost at Athens,  
Give this man his money,” were the words  
Of the man named Phocion, the grizzled Athenian.

Yes, there are men who know how to die in a grand way.  
There are men who make their finish worth mentioning.