

Faust Walks Out on Easter Morning

Royal Opera House Covent Garden, 'Scene from Goethe's Faust' by Edward Henry Corbould, 1852

By Edward Curtin Theme: History

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"All things transient are but a parable" Goethe. Faust

These books are killing me he thought. The sun has risen, the bells toll eight. I've tried to learn before it's late. I woke to feel I could not breathe So took both dog and my leave.

Been talking loud for hours now To no one but the clanging sound Of whether I should go or stay To hear the lightning have its say.

"Where," it asks, "was I before I flashed across the coming day?"

Now that the sun has risen,
The lightning calls me on a mission
To shout at authors close to me
That living is a message riven
Far beyond your reach, my friends,
Neatly stretched beside my pens,
Sitting shelved and self-assured,

Giving off a stately sense, a hint That he who probed your print Is wise, has learned from you. We both know it isn't true.

"Where," the lightning asked again, "was I Before I flashed across the darkening blue?"

So I came to the place Where the lady lay waiting Under the weeping sky. Who are you looking for? The gardener asked the lady at the tomb. But she too could not recognize the living Man, the fierce voice speaking Those breathtakingly lovely words: Do not cling to me. Do not cling. Let go And tell the others That you will not find your truth Living among the dead, Images and words Woven subtly down the page. For you, dead letters.

So on and on I walked, asking, Where was I before that room Where answers were my tomb And where I wondered day and night Before I wandered lost in fright?

"Where was I," the lightning sighed, Before I flashed across the sky?"

Do not cling to me was his reply.

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Edward Curtin is a prominent author, researcher and sociologist based in Western Massachusetts. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG).

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