

[Home](#)

[Winter/Spring 2011](#)

[Autumn/Winter 2011](#)

[Summer 2010](#)

[Spring 2010](#)

[Winter 2010](#)

[Autumn 2009](#)

[Summer 2009](#)

[Spring 2009](#)

[Autumn 2008](#)

[Summer 2008](#)

[Spring/Summer 2008](#)

[Winter/Spring 2008](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Contact](#)

Three Poems

by Robert Blake Truscott

Postcard From North Street, Fowey 12/25/1925



--pic. of Joan, 1925 --Joan's letter to Charles

I miss you, Charles;
Mother cannot handle
life alone.

And I'm no use.
I paint pictures of Fowey,
sell one now and then,
and on these days when it snows,
I think of the cold distance
between us.

It is for us to bear witness,
I suppose.

Do you miss *me*?
This portrait, I'm afraid,

is all I can send
you right now with this legend
in my hand:

You will have a family in America
a son for each season,
a wife faithful as Earth.
But yours will be
the warm world: always,
the cold star of morning
turning into the love
the evening brings.

Your sons will paint
your portrait
by the light of those stars,
through the universe of night
between us now:
mad, heroic,
full of words.

Just in time,
your daughter will give you
what you fear to lose.

Oh, never mind me,
I'm a silly, jealous Sis
who wants her Charlie home again
this Christmas
to hold close,
to hug and hug alive,

instead of this snow,
which disappears
in Fowey, below my window,
traceless
into the harbor sea.

Arriving in America

Steerage, Steiglitz, page. 47

Old children,
Marthe, the island's
lined with hemlocks
and marble.

People pick up their bags
all around me, not knowing
the nature of Paradise.

Ferries come in and out
at all hours
to go to the Island
with the thousand stairs.

In London, Karl said
“In America, you must have something
to sell; old men will drown.”

I have clothes.
I can dress people
into anything:

Beggars into gentlemen,
the ignorant become scholars;
Thieves may apparel as priests.

We used to joke
in the orphanage, Marthe,

*"Needle and thread,
needle and thread,
put them together
and bury the dead."*

Karl said beware the Stairs;
ferries go back with the weak;
no one here knows
the Law,

the steady unleaving
of fatal trees,

Oh, they wait, Marthe,
don't we know ourselves

the ferries,
the stairs,

the Law.

The Window

H. Lenau looks out at Hell's Kitchen , NYC
1888,NY from a photo of
the Great Blizzard by Steiglitz

Those black umbrellas
are a dream.

I'll stay safe inside today
and watch:

The maple on the avenue
is covered in velvet marble,
bloom of white.

Lord forefend,
I may fall out this window
if I keep looking through
too long.

Is it spring?
Will nothing come of nothing?
No, I've changed
my mind to snow.

I will go down in time
to the Great Blizzard
to take that trolley
out to City Island,

covering all the other places
with these

indelible, pale vocables
my history on my way:
This morning,
those black umbrellas
look too real.

Robert Blake Truscott has appeared in more than 40 journals, including *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Nimrod*, *The Mississippi Review*, *Sou'wester*, *The Greenfield Review*, *The California Quarterly*, and *The Literary Review*, as well as several anthologies, such as *In The West of Ireland* and *The Hampden-Sydney Review Anthology*. Truscott is published in a number of educational texts published by the Research Education Association, and he was the poetry editor for more than a decade with *Stone Country* before that journal ceased publication. He is a graduate of the Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars and currently teaches writing as a distance learning instructor and as an instructional designer for Colorado Technical University, and Regis University. Mr. Truscott was the Assistant Director and Writing Specialist for The Douglass/Cook College writing Center at Rutgers University for seven years, and was a Senior Communications Consultant for SWG Consulting in New York City for 15 years. He is currently married and lives in Colorado in the shadow of Pikes Peak.

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