

through transforming experience — through conversion. And you meet others who have only the exterior semblance of these things, who are “birthright members,” but who have never been re-born. They are usually drearily solemn. If you are one of them, as I commonly am, you probably pass some profitable moments reflecting that in secular, as in religious, conversion, “the Lord helps them that help themselves.” You may realize, too, that genuine conversion in its broadest and deepest sense, — not a multiplicity of laws and creeds, of leagues and organizations, but just growing up, — is the only thing that really makes the world go round.

For secular conversion is, after all, one with the more liberal view of religious conversion. If it means the permanent set of a man’s life in one direction, it does not mean by this a silly optimism, or the abandonment of doubts and perplexities, or the refusal to listen (these are the earmarks of childishness and senility), but a toughened spiritual fibre, an eagerness to play his part, to join without condescension or fear in “that game of chance to which we all sit down, the hanger-back not least.”

NARROW

Dull, lined-up days have narrowed her
So have these elms this street
An arm, swung out, would strike each tree;
A jest, her hedged timidity.
But trees and days, in narrowing,
Have formed a colonnade,
And where were storms and heat,
One finds now calm and shade.
— *Violet Alleyn Storey*



EBB TIDE

DOWN within the cove lie old ships, gray ships,
Mastless, sparless, moored, or beached and dry,
Wistful in their patient, hopeless longing,
Waiting for the hour when the tide runs high.

Rusted are their bolts and warped their planking;
Weatherbeaten, stained and scarred, are stern and side;
Still they seem to dream there in the lapping ripples,
Musing on the thrill of their first flood tide;

Dreaming of the days when, lee-rails foaming,
Water white at bows and stretching blue away,
Manned by vanished skippers, broad men, brown men,
Proud and trim they burgeoned out beyond the bay;

Dreaming of the Banks; of racing back to harbor
Driven by the west wind, drenched by stinging foam,
Carrying full canvas, loaded to the gunwales,
Straining, staggering — the first ships home!

Dreaming of the voyages dreary, bitter,
Battered by the storm-winds, ending in defeat
As they warped to docks, with flags half-masted,
'Mid the cries of women wailing in the street. . . .

How they must be yearning, those old ships, gray ships,
Midst the splash of oars and motor-dories' hum,
Thrilling to the touch of wavelets playing —
Waiting for a flood tide nevermore to come!

— *Harold Willard Gleason*