

A Star in a Stoneboat For Lincoln MacVeagh*

Never tell me that not one star of all
That slip from heaven at night and softly fall
Has been picked up with stones to build a wall.

Some laborer found one faded and stone-cold,
And saving that its weight suggested gold
And tugged it from his first too certain hold,

He noticed nothing in it to remark.
He was not used to handling stars thrown dark
And lifeless from an interrupted arc.

He did not recognize in that smooth coal
The one thing palpable besides the soul
To penetrate the air in which we roll.

He did not see how like a flying thing
It brooded ant eggs, and bad one large wing,
One not so large for flying in a ring,

And a long Bird of Paradise's tail
(Though these when not in use to fly and trail
It drew back in its body like a snail);

Nor know that be might move it from the spot —
The harm was done: from having been star-shot
The very nature of the soil was hot

And burning to yield flowers instead of grain,
Flowers fanned and not put out by all the rain