

Middleton Place, South Carolina.

Stand I indeed in England? Do I dream?

Those broken steps, those grassy terraces,
Those water-meadows and that ample stream,
Those woods that take the curve of distances,
Those still reflections mirrored in the faint
And milky waters under milky skies

That Constable might paint,
Do they indeed but cheat my heart, my eyes,
With their strange likeness to the thing they seem?

Tricked at each turn by nature's difference
Came Englishmen and cut their English shapes
Out of the virgin forest and the dense

Jangle of branches loaded with wild grapes;
Painting their axis to the river's bend,
Sleepy as Thames. ^{Content} Happy as one who finds

An unexpected friend
In alien lands where blood more closely binds,
Rejoiced they at the forced coincidence.

Look closer; never in an English glade
Flashed scarlet wings, nor grew the northern larch
In onyx pools as here the cypress stood;
Nor flamed the azalea in an English March
Down paths of fallen petals, aisle on aisle;
Nor climbed the tall liana to the sun,

Nor squatted near a pile
Of oranges, their morning labour done,
That group of negroes idle in the shade;

Nor from the branches hang the parasite
Of greybeard moss benitching ancient trees,
Blowing about through idle woods at night
In pointed eddies streaming on the breeze;
Singular ovals of spectral names first,
The unrelated symbol of a spell

Once potent, now forgot;
Some lost mythology of woods where dwell
The shorn and lockless spirits shunning light.

Pensive within its evening of decay
The garden slopes towards the river-reaches;
Deepens the sunset of the southern day
In sombre ilexes and coral peaches.

No England! but a look, an echoing tone
Such as may cross the voice of distant kin,
Caught briefly, swiftly flown,
Different in resemblance, held within
A heart still mindful of the English way.

Greensboro, N. C.
April 11, 1873

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Sissinghurst Castle, Kent, TN17 2AB

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18th July 1983

Dearest Jo,

Looking around for one of Vita's
~~miss~~ to send you as a small
wedding-gift, I came across the
only poem she ever wrote about
the United States. I expect you
have visited Middleton Place. I have.

This is the first letter I have
ever written to you at Carlisle,
and the last ever addressed to you
as Prof. J. T.

Have a happy time, my dear.

Yours ever

Angela