

Zeitschrift: Der Kreis : eine Monatsschrift = Le Cercle : revue mensuelle
Band: 24 (1956)
Heft: 5

Artikel: Hate
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-569300>

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When Ernest turned back to the room, it seemed curiously empty, as if something full and rich and powerful had gone out of it leaving an echo. Everything had changed. An uncorked wine bottle stood on the table, its neck trimmed with red foil. Here and there were stained coffee cups; the vase of flowers had been upset. Rumpled towels lay strewn on tables and chairs. The rich intactness and isolation of the room had been torn apart. How hollow and mocking the beautiful objects on shelf and mantel seemed now. They drew together, conspiringly. They held off, they mocked him.

On the carpet was a dark wet stain where Dave had stood, drying himself.

Impulsively Ernest went to the window. Down below, far below, apart from him, was the tall shadowy figure of the person he had known. His thoughts moved with him down the empty street.

Hate

*My enemy came nigh;
And I
Stared fiercely in his face:
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,
And stern I watched him from a narrowed
eye:*

*Then, as I turned away,
My enemy,
That bitter heart, and savage, said to me:*

*Some day, when this is past;
When all the arrows that we have are cast;
We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find a story to relate:
It may seem to us, then, a mystery
That we could hate each other —
Thus said he; and did not turn away;
Waiting to hear what I might have to say!*

*But I fled quickly: fearing, if I stayed,
I might have kissed him, as I would a maid.*

*from Collected Poems,
by James Stephens, MacMillan, 1954.*