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MOTHER AND SON

By DANIEL CORKERY

Patrick Walsh is a man of fire,
His strength is the brute-beast's strength;
In his drink he staggered in the mire
And stretched his body's length.

The ice-cold wind, the moon-cold night
Chilling, must stop his blood,
We watched to see his cheeks go white,
But they blazed like burning wood.

He gestured, laughed, then silent lay
—Asleep? 'twas hard to tell,
But striving to set him on his way,
He cursed our souls to hell.

Into the mire again he rolled,
And helpless we looked on;
Until his mother, witless and old,
Came yearning for her son.

Listening, he rises, makes for home,
Babbling a child's first word,
She answering, "Yes, yes, child, come,
My hawk, my poor wild bird."

The high moon's speckless flood of light
Throws shadows along the wall,
Shifting and strange—his giant's height,
Her encircling wisp-like shawl.

They pass—a gleaming face, a hand,
Or shadowy bronze or stone
Grouped in an archway, then they stand
In the Market Square alone.

Ah! what if these poor souls of night
Bright to each other shine
As figures set within the light
And incense of a shrine?