

Above all avoid vagueness — abstraction
that as soon as it's made makes an end in itself

that leads to monotony impoverishment
the quest for pedantic academy perfection

the parts enslaved to uniformity
the void that emerges out of the disintegration

of human sensibility suffered when work
is not a labor of love. *Combine the clearness*

of form and firmness of structure with the mystery
that comes with abundance and richness of detail

apparent in natural forms familiar
from association as well as from beauty

the rose the lily the tulip the oak the vine.
A thicket not a park. No lines or objects

which cannot be explained by the structures of the pattern.
Every letter pure in form, severe,

solid, without needless excrescences
or thickening and thinning making it

difficult to read. Recognize
that art requires community to live.

Concern yourself with the products and how they are made
and *the well-being of the people who made them.*

*

From odd-man-out triangular romances
Guenevere Iseult Deirdre

(life unhappily imitating art
years before *The Decay of Lying* came out)

to blood-feud Icelandic sagas,
wolf and bear ethics, Brynhilde.

From *earthly* (*that is* said Pater with Baudelaire
in mind *artificial*) paradise

the utter extinction of all asceticisms
all the goddesses granted suffrage

to Wat Tyler and John Ball feeling
the pinch of land-grab and poorhouse

asking with them *Who when Adam delved
and Eve span was then the gentleman?*

From preRaphaelite middleclass
self-centered antic brotherhood

to revolutionary consciousness:
instinctive social conscience without which

any society is impossible
fraternity the sense of community

not to be achieved but simply acknowledged
liberty and equality yet

to be won: every human being free —
not an anarchy but hand and mind

attendant to that cooperative action
that worthwhile associative effort

which makes real freedom possible;
equality of position — not just condition

or opportunity, such palliatives
that soothe symptoms but don't cure the disease

don't end class-based division of labor
don't end class based on capital

don't abolish poverty market and *that most
dangerous tool of capitalist oppression*

the god-fearing soldier don't liquidate
both class and capital through just

distribution of the means of exchange
a goal not at all impossible

if one would merely for a change see things
from another person's point of view

from each according to her ability
to each according to her need

*

More than the reasonable order of epic
with its linear storytelling logic

plot attitude and sense of an ending
he loved the freedom of desire of romance —

appetites and reason equally human,
capacity for a true conception of a power

to make the past present — less inclined
toward troubadour than bard, less toward lyric

than narrative stance, less the Romanized
aristocratic hierarchical

feudality than gothic democracy
the rise of crafts-gilds to political power

in towns and communes to the north the victory
of artisan over aristocrat and merchant

effective communities of equals where class
and class-privilege have ceased to exist

where alienation — from nature above all —
is replaced with a feeling for the commonwealth

air water land pure the commons
communally owned — that is by no one —

desire educated, eyes for more
than looking at ledgers and bodily needs

people able at last to understand
just what and how little they need

in order to achieve fulfillment and happiness —
news from nowhere news that stays news.

*

*Apart from desire to produce beautiful things
the leading passion of my life he said has been*

*and is hatred of modern civilization
society atomized acquisitive*

the *innate moral baseness* of its ethic
compared to *All for one and one for all.*

The issue not just industrialism but capitalism:
not just machinery but who owns it

and to what end, manufacture to make
not a product but profit for capital

under which *all society rests*
on a gigantic system of usury.

*Organized brotherhood must break the spell
of anarchical plutocracy.*

*As long as labor is a commodity
we cannot live on the earth like honest men.*

Shorter hours higher wages at best
stopgap measures on the path to equality.

*The old order has to be overthrown
by force.* Not merely the bettering of condition

not merely merely reform of current practices
drawing pay in order to draw breath

drawing breath merely to draw pay
but a radical change in relation: the working

useful productive classes equal with
the privileged possessing classes

association in place of competition

equality in place of tyranny

social order and cooperation
instead of individualist all against all

socialism not *laissez-faire*.
The first step: get capital —

credit land railways mines
shipping machinery factories —

into the hands of free communities
living in harmonious federation

governing themselves and their affairs
by free consent for the benefit of all,

food and drink unadulterated
nothing made that is not worth making

every trace of commercial competition
eliminated lest the new order

fail by being sucked back into
the waste stream of capitalist production.

*Free men must lead simple lives
and have simple pleasures. First be free*

*make work pleasurable then learn
to take pleasure in all life's details.*

*

*A wise and great man ungovernable
in our drawing rooms* eulogized Shaw

who had argued with him the politics
of gradualism versus revolution.

Blunt who had had an affair with his estranged
wife the dark troubled beauty of their time

remembered him as *Our greatest man*
who would talk in precisely the same tone

to a pretty woman or journeyman carpenter
attentive as long as she had anything

interesting to tell him and no longer.
To Yeats he was *the happiest of poets*

who knew as Shelley knew that economists
should take their measurements not from life as it is

but from the world made perfect by visions of men
like him, *illuminated from within.*

No man I have known was so well-loved.
People loved him as children are loved.