

“The Road to the Bow”

James D. Corrothers

EVER and ever anon,
After the black storm, the eternal, beauteous bow!
Brother, to rosy-painted mists that arch beyond,
Blithely I go.

My brows men laureled and my lyre
Twined with immortal ivy for one little rippling song;
My “House of Golden Leaves” they praised and “passionate fire”—
But, Friend, the way is long!

Onward and onward, up! away!
Though Fear flaunt all his banners in my face,
And my feet stumble, lo! the Orphean Day!
Forward by God’s grace!

These signs are still before me: “Fear,”
“Danger,” “Unprecedented,” and I hear black “No”
Still thundering, and “Churl.” Good Friend, I rest me here—
Then to the glittering bow!

Loometh and cometh Hate in wrath,
Mailed Wrong, swart Servitude and Shame with bitter rue,
Nathless a Negro poet’s feet must tread the path
The winged god knew.

Thus, my true Brother, dream-led, I
Forefend the anathema, following the span.
I hold my head as proudly high
As any man.