

Martin Robertson

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité

Liberty.

That's difficult already.

All are (should be) born free?

Give absolute freedom to a newborn baby,
it dies.

And so, *mutatis mutandis*, through our lives.

The natural good state is anarchy

—would be, if human nature let it be,

but humanness can only be itself

by acceptance of a bond.

Yet, inevitably and eagerly

we strive towards that absolute, beyond
our reach, Freedom, a star.

Equality.

That's more difficult still

if not impossible

—rather, meaningless.

All are (should be) born equal?

All are born different.

Difference,

the good *sine qua non* of humanness,

cannot be tailored to equality,

except that we are equally human, and

much human inequality

both in kind and degree

is wicked and unnecessary.

Though not so strong

a light as Freedom, this too burns among
our guiding stars.

Fraternity.
That at least (at last) is easy.
Not easy to make work (we are all human)
but easy to agree necessity of.
All are born sib.
Brothers and sisters quarrel
but learn (have to learn) to make it up;
learn blood (thicker than water)
is not for spilling;
learn mutual love.
This is the bond
which limits Liberty,
the give-and-take
more real than Equality.
This indeed is another burning star
brightest of all, but a nearer flame too:
fire on the hearth,
torch in the hand,
glow in the heart.