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THE DEGRADATION OF LIFE IN AMERICA

now ~~was~~ ~~at~~ home has equalled

The letters and poems of Alva N. Turner strike horror and ecstasy to my mind, a poignancy the writings of no ^{no} ~~other man~~ *butlander* can ~~be~~ equalled. It is death crying out at me from within my own ears as I follow this man's work and story. It is death belabored *in my own marrow* that I shall try to set down in the original words as far as that is possible.

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In America a man ~~willing~~ to take hold of his own intelligence is constantly assailed from without by practiced craftsmen but seldom from within. Antiquity also, ~~is hungry for him~~. The words come full of foreign flavors, alien implications which he cannot bring ^{through} ~~to his~~ touch rain upon his eyes as if it were philosophy aimed at dogs. The words are dead to ~~him~~. They are fit only to annihilate. They will annihilate us if we have no words to take their places. To read ~~a~~ ^{the} ~~writer~~ *foreign* from antiquity or ~~abroad~~ should be a constant chemistry, an unending displacement and replacement of words. The words strike us and we have no defense. We eat death. ~~We have~~ no genius to invent our language.

this
To see death by starvation *is* to be attacked *at home* from within. When Turner brings off a ~~and~~ poem it is morning come suddenly at midnight. *he* seems to be winning against the impossible, ^{he} ~~Turner~~ menaces me with his frailty, with the unsmirched flavor of his uncompromising degeneracy, fine as hair. Here is death, death. It is the purity of his values. He has been to isolated where he lives to have been reached by