

ADVENTURES IN THE ARTS

which is once and for all wisdom for the artist, that confidence and trust that for the real artist there is but one agency for the expression of self in terms of beauty, the eye of the imagination, that mystical third somewhere in the mind which transposes all that is legitimate to expression. To Ryder the imagination was the man; he was a poet painter, living ever outside the realm of theory.

He was fond of Corot, and at moments I have thought of him as the heir and successor to some of Corot's haunting graces; but there was all the difference between them that there is between lyric pure and tragic pure. Ryder has for once transcribed all outer semblances by means of a personality unrelated to anything other than itself, an imagination belonging strictly to our soil and specifically to our Eastern geography. In his autographic quality he is certainly our finest genius, the most creative, the most racial. For our genius, at its best, is the genius of the evasive; we are born lovers of the secret element, the mystery in things.

How many of our American painters have given real attention to Ryder? I find him so much the legend among professional artists, this master of arabesque, this first and foremost of our designers, this real creator of pattern, this first of all creators of tragic landscape, whose pictures are sacred to those that revere distinction and power in art. He had in him that finer kind of reverence for the element of beauty which finds all things somehow