

ON LOAN

"I'LL LET YOU HAVE, FOR A LITTLE TIME-
A CHILD OF MINE," HE SAID-
"FOR YOU TO LOVE THE WHILE HE LIVES
AND MOURN FOR WHEN HE'S DEAD

"IT MAY BE SIX ■OR SEVEN YEARS-
OR TWENTY-TWO OR THREE;
BUT WILL YOU, 'TIL I CALL HIM BACK
TAKE CARE OF HIM FOR ME?

"I'LL BRING HIS CHARMS TO GLADDEN YOU
AND SHOULD HIS STAY BE BRIEF-
YOU'LL HAVE HIS LOVELY MEMORIES
AS SOLACE FOR YOUR GRIEF.

"I CANNOT PROMISE HE WILL STAY
SINCE ALL FROM EARTH RETURN.
BUT THERE ARE LESSONS TAUGHT FROM THERE
I WANT THIS CHILD TO LEARN.

"I'VE LOOKED THE WIDE WORLD OVER
IN MY SEARCH FOR TEACHERS TRUE;
AND FROM THE THRONGS THAT CROWD LIFE'S LANE
I HAVE SELECTED YOU.

"NOW WILL YOU GIVE HIM ALL YOUR LOVE.
NOT THINK THE LABOR VAIN,
NOR HATE ME WHEN I COME
TO TAKE HIM BACK AGAIN?"

I FANCIED THAT I HEARD YOU SAY:
"DEAR LORD, THY WILL BE DONE
FOR ALL THE JOY THY CHILD SHALL BRING
THE RISK OF GRIEF WE'LL RUN.

"WE'LL SHELTER HIM WITH TENDERNESS
WE'LL LOVE HIM WHILE WE MAY,
AND FOR THE HAPPINESS WE'VE KNOWN
WE'LL FOREVER GRATEFUL STAY.

"BUT SHOULD YOUR ANGELS CALL FOR HIM
MUCH SOONER THAN WE'VE PLANNED
WE'LL BRAVE THE BITTER GRIEF THAT COMES
AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND."