

Thoughts and Visions

by

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Gratia Spettel, one of my high school English teachers, who first told me about précis writing.

“These fragments I have shored against my ruins.” — Eliot, “The Waste Land”

“Quis leget haec?” — Lucilius (180-103 bc)

“And therefore surely in this work attempts will exceed performances; it being composed by snatches of time...And therefore also, perhaps it hath not found that regular and constant stile, those infallible experiments and those assured determinations, which the subject sometime requireth, and might be expected from others, whose quiet doors and unmolested hours afford no such distractions.” — Browne, Sir Thomas, “To the Reader” in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or, Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*, 1646.

“Often when I was wrestling with obstacles of every kind, when my physical and mental strength alike were running low and it was hard for me to persevere in the path on which I had set my feet, a secret feeling within me whispered, ‘There are so few happy and contented people here below; sorrow and anxiety pursue them everywhere; perhaps your work may, some day, become a spring from which the careworn may draw a few moments’ rest and refreshment.’” — Haydn, Joseph, quoted in Storr, Anthony, *Music of the Mind*, The Free Press, N.Y., 1992, p. 117.