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Plamínek naděje, 1918

The light is failing over the sea : an opaque
Glow in the water and in the sand. The wind
Carries with it a low moan from the figures
Gathered on the shore. Their voices founder

On the air, seeming to join with the passing
Of the tide, the soft movement of the earth.
It may be a litany and it may be a song.
A follower stands, arms open, head inclined,

As if in supplication. He watches the sands
Dance as the wind works through them, and
The meaningless motion of a woman who sobs
At his feet. He is still. He sees his inheritance.

Someone has placed a glass lamp in a recess
Of the sand, and the flame moves gently as if
Submerged, casting slow shapes before it.
At a distance, more figures, more dim lights.

They have gathered to watch Komenský die.
Hours since they took him up from his bed,
At the bidding of his frail voice. Hours since
They sat his shrouded body at the summit of
A small prospect, in his death's chair of cane.

He wished to look upon the darkling sea.
His figure is black against it and as crooked
As the blade of a scythe, his face obscure

Where he nods upon oblivion. The followers
Train upon the idea of his thought. His body
Shudders insignificantly : it seems to them
That a lesser light falls from his bent form.