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The Mercurial Wheel

Geoffrey Nutter
THE MERCURIAL WHEEL

One type of perpetual motion machine is the mercurial wheel. Below two turning pivots, water flows into a cistern, where it shimmers, clear and still, but the series of bevels and spirals keep turning. This machine, however, is imaginary. It works very well in the realm where the red flower of opium is carved in stone or jet above the gatehouse, a harbinger, perhaps for argonauts, of things to come. Do you think scalding emeralds count as money in that town? That could be. That could be. But more than likely friends and friends of friends will see them flowing down a channel, past a birdbath overflowing with green and moss-covered water in the overgrown grass, past Garibaldi, bearded on his plinth of marble. Does he sheath or unsheathe the curving saber? It is both, and neither. And as the melody coming from the music box is only a suggestion, it too is mercurial, with no discernible use. Now let us read a poem…