

## The Ancient Way

“Accept, O God,” said Abraham.  
“My son instead of ram or lamb.  
At Thy command I’ve brought my knife  
To sacrifice young Isaac’s life.”  
God smiled. “’Tis well, good Abraham!  
But this time I will take the ram.”

In many a kindlier era since,  
This tale has made boys’s fathers wince . . .  
Yet when the God of War feels gory,  
Even today, do fathers falter?  
No — like old Abraham in the story  
They lay their sons upon the altar.

Clarence Day, *After All*, 1936, Alfred A. Knopf