

Building

I watched them tear a building down;
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a mighty heave and lusty yell,
They swung a beam and a side wall fell.

I said to the foremen, "Are these men as skilled
As the men you'd hire if you had to build?"
He gave a laugh and said, "No indeed!
Just a common laborer is all I need.
And I can wreck in a day of two
What it took the builder a year to do."

And I thought to myself as I went my way,
"Just which of these roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with skill and care
Building others up by the rule and square,
Or am I a wrecker as I walk the town
Content with the labor of tearing down?"

- The authorship of this
poem...or some variation of
it...is simultaneously attributed
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