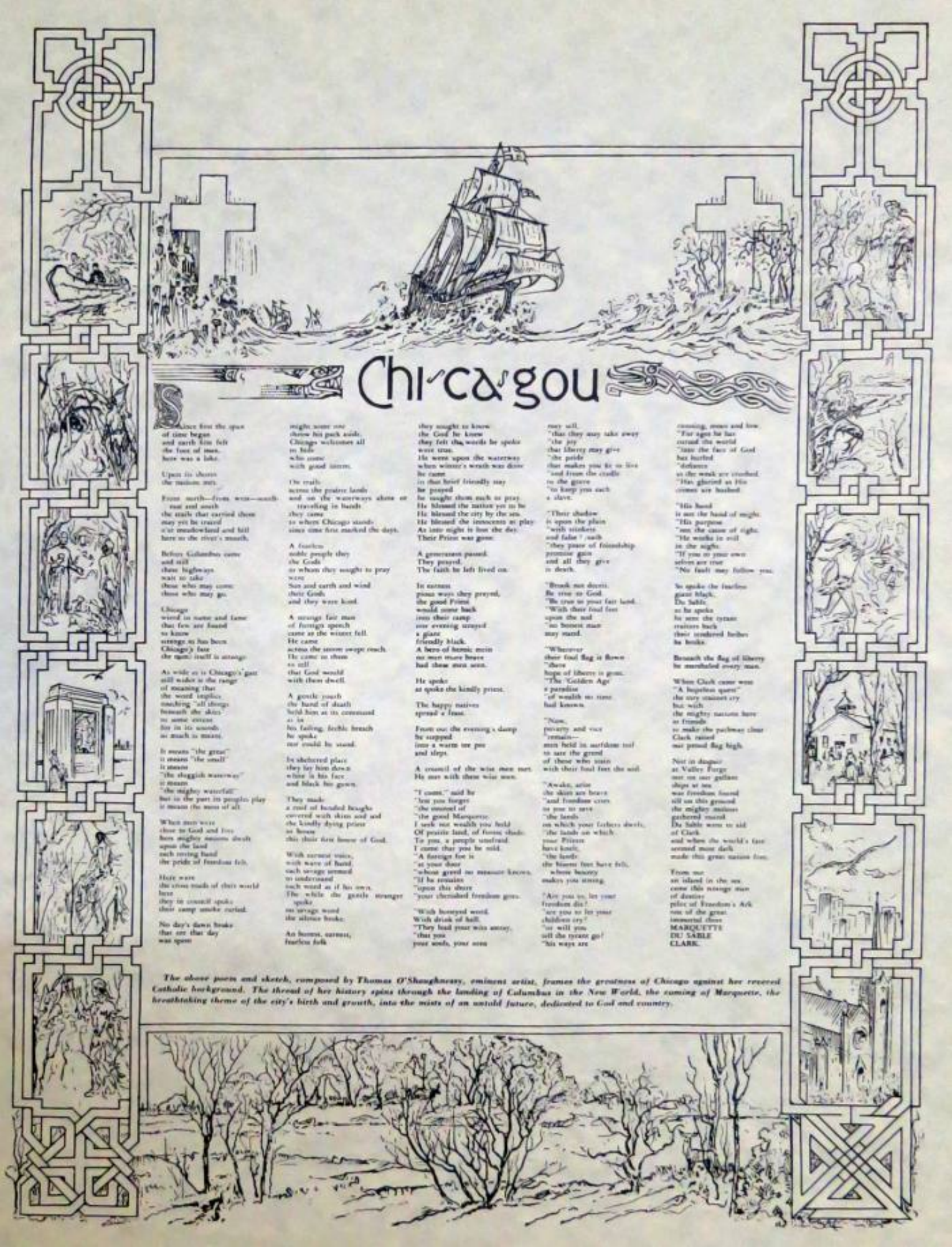

Chicagou

Since first the span
of time began
and earth first felt
the foot of man,
here was a lake.

Upon its shores
the nations met.

From north—from west—south-
east and south
the trails that carried them
may yet be traced
a'st meadowland and hill
here to the river's mouth.

Before Columbus came
and still
these highways
wait to take
those who may come
those who may go.

Chicago
wierd in name and fame
that few are found
to know
strange as has been
Chicago's fate
the name itself is strange.

As wide as is Chicago's gait
still wider is the range
of meaning that
the word implies
reaching "all things
beneath the skies"
to some extent
for in its sounds
as much is meant.

It means "the great"
it means "the small"
it means
"the sluggish waterway"
it means
"the mighty waterfall"
but in the part its peoples play
it means the most of all.

When men were
close to God and free
here mighty nations dwelt
upon the land
each roving band
the pride of freedom felt.

Here were
the cross roads of their world
here
they in council spoke
their camp smoke curled.

No day's dawn broke
that ere that day
was spent
might some one
throw his pack aside.
Chicago welcomes all
to bide
who come
with good intent.

On trails
across the prairie lands
and on the waterways alone or
traveling in bands
they came
to where Chicago stands
since time first marked the days.

A fearless
noble people they
the Gods
to whom they sought to pray
were
Sun and earth and wind
their Gods
and they were kind.

A strange fair man
of foreign speech
came as the winter fell.
He came
across the storm swept reach.
He came to them
to tell
that God would
with them dwell.

A gentle youth
the hand of death
held him at its command
as in
his failing, feeble breath
he spoke
nor could he stand.

In sheltered place
they lay him down
white is his face
and black his gown.

They made
a roof of bended boughs
covered with skins and and
the kindly dying priest
to house
this their first house of God.

With earnest voice,
with wave of hand,
each savage seemed
to understand
each word as if his own.
The while the gentle stranger
spoke
no savage word
the silence broke.

An honest, earnest,
fearless folk
they sought to know
the God he knew
they felt the words he spoke
were true.
He went upon the waterway
when winter's wrath was done
he came
in that brief friendly stay
he prayed
he taught them each to pray.
He blessed the nation yet to be
He blessed the city by the sea.
He blessed the innocents at play
As into night is lost the day.
Their Priest was gone.

A generation passed.
They prayed.
The faith he left lived on.

In earnest
pious ways they prayed,
the good Priest
would come back
into their camp
one evening strayed
a giant
friendly black.
A hero of heroic mein
no men more brave
had these men seen.

He spoke
as spoke the kindly priest.

The happy natives
spread a feast.

From out the evening's damp
he stepped
into a warm tee pee
and slept.

A council of the wise men met.
He met with these wise men.

"I come," said he
"lest you forget
"the counsel of
"the good Marquette.
I seek not wealth you hold
Of prairie land, of forest shade.
To you, a people unafraid.
I come that you be told.
"A foreign foe is
"at your door
"whose greed no measure knows.
"If he remains
"upon this shore
"your cherished freedom goes.

"With honeyed word.
With drink of hell.
"They lead your wits astray,
"that you
your souls, your sons
may sell.
"that they may take away
"the joy
that liberty may give
"the pride
that makes you fit to live
"and from the cradle
to the grave
"to keep you each
a slave.

"Their shadow
is upon the plain
"with trinkets
and false ? rush
"they pause of friendship
promise gain
and all they give
is death.

"Break not decrit.
Be true to God.
"Be true to your fair land.
"With their foul feet
upon the sod
"no honest man
may stand.

"Wherever
their foul flag is flown
"there
hope of liberty is gone.
"The 'Golden Age'
a paradise
"of wealth no time
had known.

"Now,
poverty and vice
"remain—
men held in surfdom toil
to sate the greed
of those who stain
with their foul feet the soil.

"Awake, arise
the skies are brave
"and freedom cries
to you to save
"the lands
on which your fathers dwelt,
"the lands on which
your Priests
have knelt,
"the lands
the blasts feet have felt,
where beauty
makes you strong.

"Are you to, let your
freedom die?
"are you to let your
children cry?
"or will you
tell the tyrant go?
"his ways are
cunning, mean and low.
"For ages he has
cursed the world
"into the face of God
has hurled
"defiance
as the weak are crushed.
"Has gloried as His
crimes are hushed.

"His hand
is not the hand of might.
"His purpose
"not the cause of right.
"He works in evil
in the night.
"If you to your own
selves are true
"No fault may follow you.

So spoke the fearless
giant black.
Du Sable
as he spoke
he sent the tyrant
traitors back
their tendered bribes
he broke.

Beneath the flag of liberty
he marshaled every man.

When Clark came west
"A hopeless quest"
the very stainest cry
but with
the mighty nations here
as friends
to make the pathway clear
Clark raised
our proud flag high.

Not in despair
at Valley Forge
not on our gallant
ships at sea
was freedom found
till on this ground
the mighty nations
gathered round.
Du Sable went to aid
of Clark
and when the world's fate
seemed most dark
made this great nation free.

From our
an island in the sea
came this strange man
of destiny
pilot of Freedom's Ark
one of the great
immortal three
MARQUETTE
DU SABLE
CLARK.

The above poem and sketch, composed by Thomas O'Shaughnessy, eminent artist, frames the greatness of Chicago against her revered Catholic background. The thread of her history spins through the landing of Columbus in the New World, the coming of Marquette, the breathtaking theme of the city's birth and growth, into the mists of an untold future, dedicated to God and country.