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Author *Turner, W. F.*

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*1921*

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# IN TIME LIKE GLASS

*By the same Author*

The Hunter and other Poems

The Dark Fire

Paris and Helen

*Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd*

# IN TIME LIKE GLASS

by W. y. Turner

*London*  
*Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd*  
1921



*To*  
G.H

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## IN TIME LIKE GLASS

**I**N TIME like glass the stars are set,  
And seeming-fluttering butterflies  
Are fixed fast in Time's glass net  
With mountains and with maids' bright eyes.

Above the cold Cordilleras hung  
The winged eagle and the Moon:  
The gold, snow-throated orchid sprung  
From gloom where peers the dark baboon:

The Himalayas' white, rapt brows;  
The jewel-eyed bear that threads their caves;  
The lush plains' lowing herds of cows;  
That Shadow entering human graves:

All these like stars in Time are set,  
They vanish but can never pass;  
The Sun that with them fades is yet  
Fast-fixed as they in Time like glass.

## THE NAVIGATORS

**I**S A W the bodies of earth's men  
Like wharves thrust in the stream of time  
Whereon cramped navigators climb  
And free themselves in the warm sun:

With outflung arms and shouts of joy  
Those spirits tramped their human planks;  
Then pressing close, reforming ranks,  
They pushed off in the stream again:

Cold darkly rotting lay the wharves,  
Decaying in the stream of time;  
Slow winding silver tracks of slime  
Showed bright where came back none.

MEN FADE LIKE ROCKS

**R**OCK - LIKE the souls of men  
Fade, fade in time.

Falls on worn surfaces,  
Slow chime on chime,

Sense, like a murmuring dew,  
Soft sculpturing rain,  
Or the wind that blows hollowing  
In every lane.

Smooth as the stones that lie  
Dimmed, water-worn,  
Worn of the night and day,  
In sense forlorn,

Rock-like the souls of men  
Fade, fade in time;  
Smoother than river-rain  
Falls chime on chime.

GIRAFFE AND TREE

U P O N a dark ball spun in Time  
Stands a Giraffe beside a Tree:  
Of what immortal stuff can that  
The fading picture be?

So, thought I, standing *by* my love  
Whose hair, a small black flag,  
Broke on the universal air  
With proud and lovely brag:

It waved among the silent hills,  
A wind of shining ebony  
In Time's bright glass, where mirrored clear  
Stood the Giraffe beside a Tree.

WOMAN WALKING ON THE SEASHORE  
TOWARDS HER LOVER

**I**S AW Night striding white-limbed from the sea  
Across the pale, wet sand. The Sun shone still  
Over the yellow fields; translucent trees  
Bathed on the cliffs, dropping deep purple veils  
Upon mauve rocks worn glassy by the tide.  
A fringe of foam blurred softly on the shore  
Whence rose the faint susurrus of the sphere  
That hangs in space, quired by the flocking waves.  
I looked and thought to see the silver Moon  
High on the rocky shoulder of the bay,  
But the bright corn, a sea of greenish gold  
Asleep in the Sun's eye, very slowly heaved;  
And then I knew I looked upon my love  
Who steals like Night into a sunny world  
And dulls the day's bright girdle of stone hills.  
Nearer she came; the Sun went slowly out,  
And all the bright sea shrank into her gaze,  
Wherein I saw the stars untimely stream  
With many shining waters panoplied.  
A black wind blown, her hair untunable  
Fell tumbling from her small, melodious profile:  
And I stood still and longed to hear her voice,  
Shadow of falling water in sunned rocks,  
Sprung from the caves within this hollow world  
Where silver music rings perpetually,  
Lulling the stones crouched in the dim unseen

WOMAN WALKING ON THE SEASHORE

Until they take the shapes of gods and idols,  
And this world's imaged in a sea of blood.  
It was the sea of blood I looked upon  
Wherein those simulacra, Sun and Moon,  
Do rise and set, and there a ghostly tide  
Chimes many a bubbling, too-bright apparition  
On the still cliff of flesh wherefrom we gaze—  
Hallucination of a bell angelical  
In the still air, as though o'er earth's shore rolled  
Silver susurrus of the Moon's bright sphere.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

**T**HE crocodile has lost its skin  
To shoe your feet;  
Crossed, pointed, variegated, arched,  
They let no love dart in;  
And your gloved, armoured hands  
Set the brain burning like a blood-red Sun  
On lawn-smooth lands.

The Moon has lost its light  
To your wan face.  
Night's fishing fleets, the stars,  
Dragged Time for a eon ere they found those eyes.  
Antique fires drowsed in many a waveless gem  
Now on your snowy skin  
Flicker a-  
gen,

Worms pale as skies of milk  
On China's hills  
Filled Time with coloured clouds;  
Draw them about your limbs,  
And you have drawn  
From slumbering sense the lovely snowy hills  
Of milk-white Dawn.

## PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Time carved your voice from water,  
    Its running chime  
Rang cold age-long.  
Trees budded to its tinkling silver stream  
    Ere it grew warm,  
And charmed the souls of men who lay like rocks  
    Buried in calm.

Now in their flesh recumbent,  
    Burning they gaze  
On you gloved, robed, enamelled like a flower,  
    Cool and as unafraid.  
    Your perfect dress  
Preserves your beauty to the burning brain's  
    Far-off caress.

On lawn-smooth lands  
Among neat-bordered and trimmed shapely plants  
    A perfect O,  
A blood-red Sun of wild tumultuous fire  
Hangs o'er the garden where its graven flames  
Smooth, violent, cool, invulnerable as you,  
    As marble, glow.

## LOVE: A DREAM

**O**N a deep mountain lake there sailed a swan,  
Far, far away from any human soul;  
And daily swam with her a speckled trout,  
Who only left her when deep thunder rolled—  
Sinking far down where that swan could not dive,  
So that she tasted bitterest pangs of love,  
And drooped upon the water like to die.  
And when that trout came near with the blue sky  
She brightened over the water like a sail  
Lifted for harbour after a winter gale.  
No solitary ship sailing a land-locked sea  
With her own shadow, and no lonely cloud  
In water moored, abandoned by the wind,  
To substance and to spirit cloven, seemed  
So deeply one as that strange pair I dreamed,  
Among the mountains woven in my mind...

Morning and evening her song filled the hills,  
The shepherds in the lowland heard her cry—  
Sitting like stones among their scattered sheep—  
And stood and gazed into the distant air.  
The mountains, sunk under grey woods of sleep,  
In spring would wake and shake a million leaves,  
Flashing gold signals to the speechless sky,  
Stirring uneasily in their mould-deep beds  
Until the fickle fires crept away  
And Autumn found them cloudier than before,  
Breathed on that shining lake a phantom shore...

## LOVE : A DREAM

And years went by, and never dimmed their love.  
Her plumage shone as bright as winter snow,  
And her bright image when the high stars gleamed  
Still followed that frail shape that steered below,  
Which could not cry, nor utter sounds of love,  
But silent at her feet did ever move.  
There came no herald crying '*Dream no more!*'  
But the Night flew with large and glittering eyes,  
Brushing its purple wing through the dark pines,  
And when the day gleamed on the mirrored hills,  
No Shadow flitted through the water's ghosts,  
For it had passed to some close-shuttered realm.  
Some country fainter and more dim than theirs.  
But on the lake a thing of fading snow  
Glimmered away from that sky-covered world  
Of air-drawn rock and hill and breathing wood,  
Trembling, it stretched its snowy wings to rise,  
Flashing bright shapes upon the calm, blue air,  
Then drooped, and dimly sailed down those bright skies,  
Sailed slowly on, in the cold voiceless hills,  
Singing aloud until the lake did cry  
With quivering mouth up at the empty sky,  
And darkness soft as dew came dropping down...  
Into deep silence climbed the Hunter's Moon.

'THERE CAME A LION INTO THE CAPITOL'

**S**TRANGE spirit with inky hair,  
Tail tufted stiff in rage,  
I saw with sudden stare  
Leap on the printed page.

The stillness of its roar  
From midnight deserts torn  
Clove silence to the core  
Like the blare of a great horn.

I saw the sudden sky;  
Cities in crumbling sand;  
The stars fall wheeling by;  
The lion roaring stand:

The stars fall wheeling by,  
Their silent, silver stain,  
Cold on his glittering eye,  
Cold on his carven mane.

The full-orbed Moon shone down,  
The silence was so loud.  
From jaws wide-open thrown  
His voice hung like a cloud.

Earth shrank to blackest air,  
That spirit stiff in rage  
Into some midnight lair  
Leapt from the printed page.

## THE TOWERS OF TANTALUS

**T**H E Towers of Tantalus I saw  
Above untrodden streets of Time;  
The sunlight and the moonlight shone  
Together on great spars of rime.

Terrestrial lilies were those towers  
In calm sky pools of that dark noon;  
Calm lay on rocks of frozen light  
The shadow of the Sun and Moon.

Still, bright gold chrysanthemums  
Shone in the polished, dim, jade walls.  
And at small windows in still woods  
Hung snow-curved, shining waterfalls.

Those pinnacles, sky-pointed, sang  
A cloud-embroidered song of doom:  
The flowers sang in the halls below—  
Wax sprays of light in ebon gloom.

The waters frozen in the woods  
Were mirrored on the shadowed floors;  
Cold constellations from the sky  
Hung low, dream-captured at the doors.

'Twas music hewn upon the air  
Flashed for a moment through these eyes—  
*I heard the trumpets crumple, and  
I stared once more at transient skies.*

## CLERKS ON HOLIDAY

**T**HE long black trains are stealing from the city  
one by one.

Packed tight in corridors they stand, their holidays  
begun;

Tall, white-faced creatures blinking in the dead un-  
natural light,

Phantoms on to their eyeballs leaping out of the  
flyingnight—

Trees, lamps, stars, gusts of rain, all jumping in the  
brain.

They rattle through the evening air, hats, sticks and  
luggage, all

Unreal as clowns upon their way to some quiet coun-  
try hall;

Their dumb, high, mournful faces dead as flowers  
with moon-white eyes,

When the soft humanising sun has sunk in chilly  
skies,

And vaguely a thin wind frets the trees' dark silhou-  
ettes.

By midnight some are driving down a narrow country  
road,

The thick trees watch on either side the horse and  
his dark load;

The trees come close about the horse, they seem  
to talk together;

## CLERKS ON HOLIDAY

The moon is floating in the sky, light as a white  
owl's feather;  
Quiet jut the village roofs amid the clanging hoofs.

They enter the low farmhouse like men moving in  
a dream

Who see great stars beyond a room, and, in the  
candle-gleam,

They stand beside the window, and their blood's  
spring-reddened tides

Look up in that black world to where, soundless,  
a frail moon rides

In a thin vapour sea of hill and rock and tree.

They know not why they gaze upon the moon with  
troubled blood,

They tremble, for their brains are bright with its  
transparent flood;

Slowly they walk in dark-wreathed woods, like men  
fast bound with spells,

To where the faint immortal cry of travelling water dwells,  
Whose cuckoo voice outsings the noise of mortal things:

The voice of water falling down from leaf and fern  
and stone,

The voice of hidden water on a pilgrimage unknown,  
The tiny voice that calls shut up in miles of solid rock,

As if within this world's stone walls some other world  
should knock,

And press unhurrying by with a strange unhuman cry.

CLERKS ON HOLIDAY

All day they stare among the trees that stand beside  
the pools,  
Hour-long only a leaf will fall, and on mossed boulder  
stools  
They sit and feel the drip of time so infinitely slow  
There is no motion in their minds, nowhere for time  
to flow;  
And from that inner gaze fade years and months  
and days.

The leaves are rustling overhead as they sit bowed  
and still;  
A crooked line of restless ants climbs up a little hill;  
A thrush with head cocked on one side is showing  
one bright eye,  
And sunlight mottling all the ground in silence  
flickers by—  
Deep-sunken in a dream trunks of men and forest  
seem.

The sunlight plays upon their hair and flits from  
place to place;  
The sunlight stirs within their bones and gilds each  
pallid face,  
Bending to falling water and the scent of the coming  
rose;  
And blooming softly through the wood the spring  
wing-footed goes;  
Like flowers strangely bright their faces are alight.

## CLERKS ON HOLIDAY

And thrush and robin, birch and oak, the hot sun's  
dancing rays  
Work their strong magic in the brain, dumb-still  
they sit and gaze;  
And beauty blinds them as they hear spring winds  
sea-hollowing blow;  
Into a far and passionate land with wild starved looks  
they go;  
*Return! no land can give the life youfain would live.*

*Return, return unto your desks, and mount your office stools.  
None shall remain within this quiet that broods round  
forestpools;  
The sun will shine on when you're gone, and still the water  
fall,  
When other faces in the wood shall answer that faint call,  
Shall wander through hot noons followed by slow-paced  
moons!*

And sitting deep within the sun I watched them die  
away,  
I watched their bodies fade like clouds upon a  
summer's day,  
I watched the green boughs waving as in their graves  
they lie,  
Their small white faces crumbling as they stare  
into the sky:  
And O the sky was bright with an ecstasy of light!

## THE FOREST BIRD

**T**HE loveliest things of earth are not  
Her lilies, waterfalls or trees;  
Or clouds that float like still, white stones  
Carved upon azure seas;  
Or snow-white orchids, scarlet-lipped  
In darkness of damp woods,  
In hush of shadowy leaves;  
Or the pale foam that lights the coast  
Of earth on moonless eves.

The moon is lovely, and the sea's  
Bright shadow on the sand;  
The phantom vessel as it glides  
Out from a phantom land;  
And, hung above the shadowed earth,  
Moored in a crystal sky,  
That fleet of phantom lights:  
These are but beauty's fading flags,  
Her perishable delights.

But in transparency of thought  
Out of the branched, dark-foliaged word  
There flits a strange, soft-glimmering light,,  
Shy as a forest bird.

Most lovely and most shy it comes  
From realms of sense unknown,  
And sings of earthly doom,  
Of an immortal happiness  
In the soul's deepening gloom.

## DREAMING

### A SONG OF AFRICA

**I** AM a barbarian out of the sunless forest,  
Where the trees continually growing spread a  
murmuring shadow of thunder  
Over the plains where the sunlight blooms in the  
golden grass.  
And I dream I shall see the sunlight slowly, inexo-  
rably eaten  
By those dark, slow-spreading impis that rise up out  
of the ground,  
Their bushy headdresses shaking as they crowd to  
the edge of the plains.  
  
Lovely are those bare hills where the slender-legged  
antelopes gather;  
Their horns against the horizon in the clear grey  
light of evening:  
And I stand at the edge of the forest, and I see the  
red disc sinking,  
And a million blooms hang drooping, and their  
colours fade from the fields;  
  
And when earth and sky are ashen, I turn back into  
the forest,  
Among the huge trunks walking, a Shadow lost by  
the Sun;  
I am dark in the darkness, solitary, onward moving  
Until I silently enter a tiny circle of firelight.

## DREAMING

There I sit with the Shadows that live in the gloom of  
the forest,  
Eating, gesticulating. Soon we lie down in deep silence  
Rolled in our blankets of darkness,  
But I hold a bright patch of the sky with those hills  
and earth's delicate antlers.

## THE APE

**T**HE trees dream all night on the tops of the hills,  
The ghostly water a dark hollow fills,  
Its long white shadow falling through the trees  
Where the Ape squats silent, his hands on his knees.

The white shadow shines in that small dim mind;  
The Moon travels there; the star-hordes wind  
With pin-head lamps through the dark, dark blue  
Where faint cloud-like thoughts collect and pursue.

The scent of the forest, the rippling streams;  
The butterflies flitting through the shaking tree-  
dreams;  
The twittering of birds, the roar of a lion;  
In the pale morning sky fading Orion.

I see and I hear, I awake in the night,  
And the Asian forests are dark in my sight,  
With slow bright patches on the drifting gloom,  
Where Stars, Sun and Moon soundlessly bloom.

The Sun hangs low, a great dim flower,  
A bloom without stalk; and hour by hour  
The (sharp) cries of birds and the shrieks of the slain  
Are tearing the quiet with bright gashes of pain:

## THE APE

And that Flower bleeds out, wildly staining the sky;  
And the lions roar to see the day-flower die—  
They roar together on the tops of the hills  
While with little pale blossoms the dark sky fills.

In the gloom under heaven, clasping my knees—  
That long white shadow still falling through the trees,  
The lions roaring their music in my brain—  
Alone on that boulder I am sitting once again.

## MAN WITH GIRL

**T**HE sun above the desert sands  
Burns a full orb of gold,  
Cold daylight falls upon our streets,  
Townsmen no Sun behold.

Shy antelopes and tufted trees  
Move by eve's shining pools;  
White faces streaming in dark streets  
Our wind of sunset cools.

The tall giraffe, the moon's bright horn,  
The shining waterfall  
I saw in the bright-limbed animal  
I danced with in the hall.

## THE SEARCH FOR THE NIGHTINGALE

[TO S. S. IN WHOSE GARDEN IN KENT IN 1919 I FIRST  
HEARD THE NIGHTINGALE]

**B**E SID E a stony, shallow stream I sat  
In a deep gully underneath a hill.  
I watched the water trickle down dark moss  
And shake the tiny boughs of maidenhair.  
And billow on the bodies of cold stone.  
And sculptured clear  
Upon the shoulder of that aerial peak  
Stood trees, the fragile skeletons of light,  
High in a bubble blown  
Of visionary stone.

Under that azurine transparent arch  
The hills, the rocks, the trees  
Were still and dreamless as the printed wood  
Black on the snowy page.  
It was the song of some diviner bird  
Than this still country knew;  
The words were twigs of burnt and blackened trees  
From which there trilled a voice,  
Shadowy and faint, as though it were the song  
The water carolled as it flowed along.

Lifting my head, I gazed upon the world,  
Carved in the breathless heat as in a gem,  
And watched the parroquets green-feathered fly  
Through crystal vacancy, and perch in trees  
That glittered in a thin, blue, haze-like dream,

## THE SEARCH FOR THE NIGHTINGALE

And the voice faded, though the water dinned  
Against the stones its dimming memory.

And I ached then

To hear that song burst out upon that scene,  
Startling an earth where it had never been.

And then I came unto an older world.

The woods were damp, the sun

Shone in a watery mist, and soon was gone;

The trees were thick with leaves, heavy and old,

The sky was grey, and blue, and like the sea

Rolling with mists and shadowy veils of foam.

I heard the roaring of an ancient wind

Among the elms and in the tattered pines;

And riding out into a pale lagoon

I saw with gauzy sails a scudding Moon.

'O is it here,' I cried, 'that bird that sings

So that the traveller in his *frenzy* weeps?'

It was the autumn of the year, and leaves

Fell with a dizzying moan, and all the trees

Roared like the sea at my small impotent voice.

And if that bird was there it did not sing;

And I knew not its haunts, or where it went,

But carven stood and raved!

In that old wood that dripped upon my face

Upturned below, pale in its passionate chase.

And years went by, and I grew slowly cold:

I had forgotten what I once had sought.

## THE SEARCH FOR THE NIGHTINGALE

There are no passions that do not grow dim,  
And like a fire imagination sinks  
Into the ashes of the mind's cold grate.  
And if I dreamed, I dreamed of that far land,  
That coast of pearl upon a summer sea,  
Whose frail trees in unruffled amber sleep,  
Gaudy with jewelled birds, whose feathers spray  
Bright founts of colour through the tranquil day.

The hill, the gully and the stony stream  
I had not thought on when this spring I sat  
In a strange room with candles guttering down  
Into the flickering silence. From the Moon  
Among the trees still-wreathed upon the sky  
There came the sudden twittering of a ghost.  
And I stepped out from darkness, and I saw  
The cold pale sky immense, transparent, filled  
With boughs and mountains and wide-shining lakes  
Where stillness, crying in a thin voice, breaks.

It was the voice of that imagined bird.  
I saw the gully and that ancient hill,  
The water trickling down from Paradise  
Shaking the tiny boughs of maidenhair.  
There sat the dreaming boy.  
And O! I wept to see that scene again,  
To read the black print on that snowy page,  
I wept, and all was still.  
No shadow came into that sun-steeped glen,  
No sound of earth, no voice of living men.

## THE SEARCH FOR THE NIGHTINGALE

Was it a dream, or was it that in me  
A god awoke, and gazing on his dream  
Saw that dream rise and gaze into its soul.  
Finding, Narcissus-like, its image there:  
A Song, a transitory Shape on water blown,  
Descending down the bright cascades of Time,  
The shadowiest-flowering, ripple-woven bloom  
As ghostly as still waters' unseen foam  
That lies upon the air, as that song lay  
Within my heart on one far summer day?

Carved in the azure air white peacocks fly,  
Their fanning wings stir not the crystal trees,  
Bright parrots fade through dimming turquoise days,  
And music scrolls its lightning calm and bright  
On the pale sky where thunder cannot come.  
Into that world no ship has ever sailed,  
No seaman gazing with hand-shaded eyes  
Has ever seen its shore whiten the waves.  
But to that land the Nightingale has flown,  
Leaving bright treasure on this calm air blown.

## STARS

**W**HEN all the world stands heaped in silent hills  
About the dying Sun, I hear the stars  
Start singing, as soldiers sing in far-off wars  
When each man's thought the distant homeland fills.  
I watch them trembling draw, as the nightingale trills,  
Out of their skyey country, and the gleam  
Of their strange gaze, bending o'er men that dream  
Knee-bent in sleep, shines in earth's myriad rills;  
These sing faint songs amongst the grass and fern  
Of some far land that has been lost to them,  
And under sombre boughs those Captives pale,  
Linked like jewels on Evening's ebon urn,  
The dark earth's quivering waters nightlong gem,  
Till from the world faint ghosts, at dawn, they sail.

TENT, MY DEAREST TENT

**M**Y SOUL is like a wandering Arab  
Who solitary brings  
His house among the desert stars  
On hill or plain, by palm or brook  
And mid the loneliness of ways  
Thus to his comfort sings:

*Among the Universe's winds  
Tent, my dearest tent  
Thou dost house a quiet breath,  
A soft breath, a little breath—  
A leaf upon the tree  
Making a quiet lament.*

*Leaf, thou art a rib of wind  
Thou trembles through the sky  
Glimmering in a grosser dress  
A dress of flesh a body—  
O Universal gale of life  
Thy fluttering tent am I.*

*And, light of Moon and Sun,  
Thou, Foliage and Snows,  
Fading upon this star where I  
Were else dark, pitched in dark—  
Bright fabric of my walky  
That in the darkness blows!*

**TENT, MY DEAREST TENT**

*Amidst the wilderness of Space  
Thy glimmer may be spent  
But there are other lights that burn  
Mid other hills and other snows,  
And somewhere once more shall be pitched  
Tent, my dearest Tent!*

My soul is like a wandering Arab  
Who crossing hill and plain  
Under night's glittering suns shall place  
His tent of life, his fluttering sign;  
And when Dawn rises on the world  
It shall have gone again.

## MARRIAGE

**T**HE SUN sank in the thunderous sky of the town,  
And I rose in the glittering hall and strode through  
the people  
And went to my room, and laid me down with a Spirit—  
There was lightning out in the land beyond my window.  
Black was the night where lay that shining Spirit,  
That slim, white, glimmering body, my soul's companion;  
And the trees and rocks and waters and hills around me  
Stood black and mournful in flashes about my bed.  
And the trees drooping around, and all the rocks and  
waters,  
The gloom-hung hills, the carven and frenzied silences  
Then worshipped that glimmering body, that white  
cascade  
That shone in my dark-hung cavern dug out of the sky.  
And I wondered how long ere the bolt should fall and  
destroy us,  
Ere we should go out like the spurt of a match in the  
darkness  
Having one glimpse of that wild and passionate country,  
Those woods and ravines dark-graven by summer light-  
ning;  
And I stared at the wall and the little distant window.  
The world shrivelled up to a low and far horizon,  
To a few bare hills in a sudden flash of lightning,  
And the glimmering Spirit I kissed in the gloom beside me.

## DEATH

**W**HEN I am dead, a few poor souls shall grieve  
As I have grieved for my brother long ago.  
Scarce did my eyes grow dim,  
I had forgotten him;  
I was far-off hearing the spring winds blow.  
And many summers burned  
When, though still reeling with my eyes aflame,  
I heard that faded name  
Whispered one Spring amid the hurrying world  
From which, years gone, he turned.

I looked up at my window and I saw  
The trees, thin spectres sucked forth by the moon.  
The air was very still  
Above a distant hill;  
It was the hour of night's full silver noon.  
'O art thou there, my brother?' my soul cried;  
And all the pale stars down bright rivers wept,  
As my heart sadly crept  
About the empty hills, bathed in that light  
That lapped him when he died.

Ah, it was cold, so cold; do I not know  
How dead my heart on that remembered day!  
Clear in a rar-away place  
I see his delicate face  
Just as he called me from my solitary play,  
Giving into my hand a tiny tree—

## DEATH

We planted it in the dark blossomless ground,  
Gravely without a sound;  
Then back I went, and left him standing by  
His birthday gift to me.

In that far land perchance it quietly grows  
Drinking the rain, making a pleasant shade;  
Birds in its branches fly  
Out of the fathomless sky  
Where worlds of circling light arise and fade.  
Blindly it quivers in the bright flood of day,  
Or drowned in multitudinous sheets of rain  
Glooms o'er the dark-veiled plain—  
Buried below, the ghost that's in his bones  
Dreams in the sodden clay.

And while he faded, drunk with beauty's eyes,  
I kissed bright girls, and laughed deep in dumb trees  
That stared fixt in the air  
Like madmen in despair,  
Gaped up from earth with the escaping breeze.  
I saw earth's exaltation slowly creep  
Out of their myriad sky-embracing veins.  
I laughed along the lanes,  
Meeting Death riding in from hollow seas  
Through black-wreathed woods asleep.

I laughed, I swaggered on the cold, hard ground—  
Through the grey air trembled a falling wave—  
'Thou'rt pale, O Death!' I cried,  
Mocking him in my pride;

## DEATH

And, passing, I dreamed not of that lonely grave,  
But of leaf-maidens whose pale, moon-like hands  
Above the tree-foam waved in the icy air,  
Sweeping with shining hair  
Through the green-tinted sky, one moment fled  
Out of immortal lands.

One windless Autumn night the Moon came out  
In a still sea of cloud, a field of snow;  
In darkness shaped of trees  
I sank upon my knees,  
And watched her shining from the small wood below.  
Faintly Death flickered in an owl's far cry.  
We floated, soundless, in the great gulf of space,  
Her light upon my face—  
Immortal, shining, in that dark wood I knelt,  
And knew I could not die.

*And knew I could not die*—O Death, didst thou  
Heed my vain glory, standing pale by thy dead?  
There is a spirit who grieves  
Amid earth's dying leaves;  
Was't thou that wept beside my brother's bed?  
For I did never mourn nor heed at all  
Him passing on his temporal elmwood bier;  
I never shed a tear:  
The drooping sky spread grey-winged through my soul  
While stones and earth did fall.

## DEATH

That sound rings down the years—I hear it yet—  
All earthly life's a winding funeral,—  
    And though I never wept,  
    But into the dark coach stept,  
Dreaming by night to answer the blood's sweet call.  
She who stood there high-breasted, with small, wise lips,  
And gave me wine to drink and bread to eat,  
    Has not more steadfast feet,  
But fades from my arms as fade from mariners' eyes  
    The sea's most beauteous ships.

The trees and hills of earth were once as close  
As my own brother: they are becoming dreams  
    And shadows in my eyes;  
    More dimly lies  
Guaya deep in my soul; the coast line gleams  
Faintly along the darkling crystalline seas:  
Glimmering and lovely still, 'twill one day go;  
    The surging dark will flow  
    Over my hopes and joys, and blot out all  
Earth's hills and skies and trees.

I shall look up one night and see the Moon  
For the last time shining above the hills.  
    And thou, silent, wilt ride  
    Over the dark hillside.  
    'Twill be perchance the time of daffodils—  
*'How come those bright immortals in the woods?  
Their joy being young, didst thou not drag them all  
Into dark graves ere Fall?'*

## DEATH

Shall Life flash leaping at me as I go  
To thy deep solitudes!

There is a figure with a down-turned torch  
Carved on a pillar in an olden time,  
A calm and lovely boy  
Who comes not to destroy,  
But to lead age back to its golden prime.  
Thus did an antique sculptor draw thee, Death,  
With smooth and beauteous brow, and faint sweet  
smile  
Not haggard, gaunt and vile;  
And thou perhaps art thus, to whom men may,  
Unvexed, give up their breath.

But in my soul thou sittest like a Dream  
Among earth's mountains by her dim-coloured seas,  
A wild unearthly Shape  
In thy dark-glimmering cape  
Piping a tune of wavering melodies.  
Thou sittest, ay, thou sittest at the feast  
Of my brief life, among earth's bright-wreathed  
flowers  
Staining the dancing hours  
With sombre gleams, until, abrupt, thou risest,  
And all, at once, is ceased.

LOVERS ACROSS THE SEA

**D**ESOLATE of all young lovers sleeps the land,  
And there is silence in earth's woods and halls.  
The bugle of war faintly in dreamland calls,  
And maidens into the moonlight wave a hand  
From high rooms gazing where their lovers stand  
In the far South. The garden's budding pinks  
Sway softly in their souls, swift downward sinks  
Their fragrant clothing, their limbs by soft airs fanned  
Pale, foam-like, gleam upon the summer wind;  
Their bright hair in the moonlight glimmering spray,  
As warrior after warrior sinks to die,  
The red blood billowing from the darkening mind,  
And in the night's faint-starred and tranquil sky  
The same white Moon suddenly black mid-way.

## MAIDENS

**T**HERE is a hunger in their small white limbs,  
It is the beauty of the world they seek;  
They shall have children gazing on great stars  
That melt within their bodies. They shall speak  
Of rivers, woods and oceans of the world,  
Babbling soft words of love on that man's lips  
Who from their nakedness all safety strips.

Naked, defenceless in a wild ravening world,  
Clamouring to rape their beauty ere they die,  
They clasp frail hands, fashioned so delicately  
That men go mad to see bared beauty lie  
On the dark cloths of earth like trees and streams  
That are a dark, bright budding ecstasy,  
Souls in the calm deep air upleaping free.

And I have fled from them by night and day,  
From dark trees bending high against the Moon,  
From streams that shone like spirits seeking flesh  
To clothe their bright desires. At summer's noon  
Bewitched by spirit-babblings I have stolen  
To watch one leap among the ferns and grass,  
A naked soul, shining and clear as glass.

And these white nymphs of human progeny  
Ache for the darkness soft against their flesh;  
Their pale limbs in their secret chambers gleam  
And make with stars and streams a glimmering mesh  
Of bright enchantment. Slowly sinks the world

## MAIDENS

Beneath the spell of beauty; naked lies  
Earth's tortured spirit spread against the skies.

All grief and joy and fear of bright-edged swords  
And fountains of red blood among quiet stars  
Leap in their flesh, as in snow countries fires  
Glimmer among pale hills; the trees' dark bars  
Styck black with death fret the ethereaT flame  
Dug from the bowels of earth. The dusty lanes  
Ache for the kiss of gentle-greeting rains.

Soft as rain falling should their lovers come  
And touch their hands and gaze into their eyes  
That will not see the Moon stand round and still,  
Nor the white Owl motionless as it flies;  
For this is love, a hollow, shining dream  
Of crystal trees, and faces cold and small  
That do not sigh, or kiss, or speak at all.

## LOVE

**A**RE the pale bodies of these maidens  
Wisps of the smoke of life  
Burning in my brain.

Blown across the green fields of Spring  
From the smouldering fires of Winter?  
For I am a heap of dead generations  
Smouldering in the sun.

I am pale as a candle-flame in the sunlight,  
My body is as white as wax.  
I am dim as a wave falling from a cliff of light,  
A soundless invisible flame,  
And those wisps of smoke wandering in the daylight  
Are the bodies of slender girls,  
Incense of earth's imagination.

It is blown among the walls of cities,  
It floats curled along the streets  
As though where earth touched invisible clouds  
On the clear pavements their bright skirts fluttered,  
A snowy border of the clear day;  
The earth dark as a still wood garden  
About the feet of February snowdrops.

Desire darkens like a trellis abandoned by the rose;  
A winter sun is shining;  
The passing clouds trail their cold shadows  
Drooping a festoon of ghostly blooms.

## LOVE

Where is the rose that is vanished?  
Neither morning nor yet the evening  
Looks upon her face.

I lie at the foot of the trellis,  
Earth smouldering slowly in the sun.  
Behold the framework of dead imagination  
And a thin faint haze in the landscape,  
Life, smoking subtly in the brain!  
Black and myriad the dead sticks of desire,  
And the Void bloomless upon the trellis!

Out of the darkness, under the mantling sky,  
Dawn has brought forth a pale clump of blossom.  
Through all outspread imagination  
A slender fire is creeping,  
Green fires trailing on the cold black sky,  
White maidens of earth leap dancing,  
For the Rose has come again upon the trellis.

## MOON-MUSIC

**M**ARVELLOUSLY bright the bosom of the  
maiden

Wading across the world's dark river;  
Insects over dew-pools wave their antennae  
Slowly in the starlight. Cascading quiver  
The Moon's thin waterfalls, the voices of the nightingales  
In a cold Moon landscape hung above the forests.

Whither is she going, the bright Moon-maiden?

O'er her river-girdled body the stars are dark,  
Hears she the music from tiny throats crying,  
Drawn like herself in earth's ghostly barque;  
Drawn through the Universe, silently spinning,  
Maiden and river, and the Moon's waterfalls?

The Moon draws the voices, the shadows of the waters,  
To the tops of the forests revolving 'mid the stars,  
Spinning so fast that all again is solid,  
The tree-trunks standing earth's cold iron bars,  
Standing still in the Moon, in the trembling voices—  
The nightingales, the waterfalls, the Maid river-girdled.

The Maiden in the river has stopped singing.

Lifting her arms in the middle of the stream!  
Cold is its scenery, cold the trajectory  
Of bright-haired comets in the Maid's wheeled dream.  
And the insects' antennae and the voices of the nightingales  
Thinly in the starlight wave upon the water.

## MOON-MUSIC

Clouds faint and shadowy pass across the river.

The Maiden has vanished, the nightingales are still;  
The brightness that girdled her has faded from the water>

The trees' black ecstasy is blotted from each hill;  
In the Moon's mountains the waterfalls are darkened,  
Wrapped in grey vapour the earth rushes onward.

## EARTH AT NIGHT

**T**HROUGH pale bright seas the  
dark hull earth

Floats with her outlined hills.

The Moon a blossom on her spars,

The Clouds her billowing sails.

What crystal Wind rolls her along.

What chains that silver bloom

Above her mountain masts so high

Where blows no storm or calm?

Dark hull and silver lamp move not,

Rocks cut in that still wind;

*Moon-blossom*, and *Shadow set with gems*

To us who stand between.

A wind, unglittering, holds the stars

In music cold and keen,

Revolving spheres around us wheel,

Locked in a crystal scene.

## LIGHT AND DARKNESS

**I**N starlight and in dewlight I stood still  
Below earth's window where  
She drew her garments off. Lightly they fell  
Without a sound, soft clouds around her feet,  
    Until she stood quite bare,  
Still as the Moon without; and the quick air  
    Eddied about.

Silent she stood in that soft robe of blue,  
Blushing that Night and all the stars should gaze  
Upon her naked and unfenced from life.  
She shivered with delight that myriad eyes  
Of worm and beetle, bird and woodland beast  
    In lust pursue  
Her beauty in a multiform disguise.

Praying that they  
Might keep their power and flash their secret light  
    Into the dark recesses of the earth,  
    She felt the bright  
Rays of the stars invade her virgin brain,  
And her limbs with the falling leaves decay  
    In silence dyed.

Pale in the stain  
Of starlight steeping steadily each leaf and bloom,  
The garden drifted through transparent time.  
    Still she stood there,

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

A marble cloud among the clouds of light,  
Bright from that blossom on earth's outlined hills, the moon;  
Till, watching from below, I saw her wane,  
Snow in dark sudden rain.

The garden was stark blotted out from sight,  
The darkness dropping down  
Destroyed that cold clear world, but soon I heard,  
Above me hugely hung,  
A solitary tree gulping the steady rain—  
As though a Giant dark-handed had come in,  
And closed up Heaven's light.

## MULTITUDES

**W**HERE there are many multitudes in the  
darkness of the city  
That has stamped out the daisies' light,  
There is no joy on the faces of the houses,  
No flowers or plumage bright,  
But a drab multitude or dun-hued sparrows  
Hopping mid the People who pass—  
Their shadows flickering on the narrow paths,  
Shadows of the city's grass.

In the sunshine heavy, intense, and dark,  
Faint, unerrene in the night,  
Under the fields of treeless stars,  
In the thin sifting rain of light,  
Where clouds, reclining, with great carved limbs,  
Above the city gaze—  
Vast, stone-hewed Gods that fled to the sky,  
Held fast in night's cold blaze.

The heads of the old in the street-aisled town,  
Are images chipped and blurred,  
The tide that flowed through their hardening limbs  
Now is shrunken and sleeps unstirred,  
Leaving a shadow on memory's walls—  
Imagination's haunting stain,  
Where the tiny billow of vanishing life  
Leaps up and leaps in vain.

### MULTITUDES

Multitudes of tulips in boxes standing,  
    Glazed and smooth and bright;  
Multitudes of windows framed and shining,  
    In the sun's warm, western light;  
Multitudes of voices softer falling  
    On the pavements and the walls—  
The lonely star-serenading winds  
    Without the city's halls.

SORROWING FOR CHILDHOOD DEPARTED

**W**HO is there among us who has found the key  
Of the treasure that is locked in the hearts of men?  
Only the poet lonely in his chamber  
Or the man remembering his childhood again.

Hearing gay voices, my heart is hollow,  
An empty room with bright colours on the walls;  
The speech of my brother is no more than a traffic  
That remote and coldly on my dull brain falls.

I am deaf to the song in the speech of my fellows,  
I have outwitted my childhood's desires;  
And where have I travelled that to the far horizon  
Dead in the landscape are earth's bright fires?

Didst thou ever murder, Macbeth, thy sorrow,  
Didst thou ever murder thy soul's young joy,  
Thou hadst never flinched from the life of another,  
Thou hadst but with laughter stol'n from him a toy!

Would that a Spirit had stolen from me  
The glittering baubles of my cunning mind,  
And left me the sweet forest of my wondering childhood,  
Its transparent water in tall trees enshrined.

Then was I happy. Love was my companion;  
I was in communion with star and stream;  
With bird and with flower I was linked in rapture,  
We stared at each other—the valley's dream.

SORROWING FOR CHILDHOOD DEPARTED

Out of the mountains we were carven,  
Birds and flowers, stream, rock and child—  
O but I belong there! I am torn from my body,  
In that far-away forest it lies exiled!

There falls the water transparently shining,  
Hangs there a flower that blooms in my eyes.  
Long have I been ready! let me go thither,  
And unloosen my limbs to those dream-coloured skies.

O that it were possible! but that land has vanished;  
The magic of that valley has crumbled away;  
Bright crowds are there only, the mind's cold idola;  
And my footprints on the dead ground startle the day.

A LOVE-SONG

**T**HE beautiful, delicate bright gazelle  
That bounds upon Night's hills  
Has not more lovely, silken limbs  
Than she who my heart fills.

But though this loveliness I lose  
When I shall lie with her,  
I do but pass that Image on  
For new eyes to discover.

## THE DANCER

**T**HE young girl dancing lifts her face  
Passive among the drooping flowers;  
The jazz band clatters sticks and bones  
In a bright rhythm through the hours.

The men in black conduct her round;  
With small sensations they are blind:  
Thus Saturn's Moons revolve embraced  
And through the cosmos wind.

But Saturn has not that strange look  
Unhappy, still, and far away,  
As though upon the face of Night  
Lay the bright wreck of day.

## MAROONED

CLOUD-SHIPS drifting near me pass  
Dragging ghost-anchors on the grass,  
Laden with snow and ice and gold.  
Their crews, abstractions faint and old,  
Postured against the violet air  
In act of drinking or of song,  
I saw, lying upon a hill  
In Summer's bowl clear, huge and still.

Deep-drowned, knee-bent I lie and gaze  
On keels that shade celestial bays:  
No bronze-cut waves, no rippling swell  
Stirs where the crews' carved faces dwell  
Upon some siren-land of song  
Their eyes as sightless statues stare  
All treasury of mortal care  
Abandoned as they sail along.

When day sank in the Western sky  
No breast among them heaved a sigh;  
But as I looked I saw a glaze  
Of gold upon their raptured gaze;  
And all those billowing sails of snow  
In stillness carved no longer blow  
Each stiffship motionless as its crew.

### MAROONED

All marble and becalmed they lay  
Gigantic in the gulf of day.  
Then out of space a chill wind flew  
And in the sky cold empty air  
Startled my strained eyes everywhere.  
Those ships and mariners had gone.  
Stunned like a bright-fleshed Angel thrown,  
On the dark earth I sprawled alone.

## DYING GENERATIONS

**L**ISTEN to the surfing tide  
Escaping through a thousand stones;  
The still dim stars its pallor hide  
In their pale hands, sitting beside  
The thin fire of the tide.

They sit in the dark sky for ever.  
Holding to earth's hearth-flowering tide  
The palms of their pale hands;  
A frail, reflected eventide  
Sparkles and dwindles in the sands.

A myriad Buddhas in the sky  
At prayer with pale, uplifted hands  
When the Sun died:  
The crying, myriad-peopled sands  
Quiver and vanish in the tide.

## BUPHAGA

**I** DREAMED that I was walking down the streets  
Of an old town. Softly as blood beats,  
Along curved secret ways my footsteps went.  
The day was still but clear, and green trees bent  
Over the walls, their shadows drawn on stone  
With that ethereal softness sometimes blown  
By faint pure winds on water. Countries snow-stilled,  
Heaped in the sky that same soft brightness filled  
Where high carved peaks bloomed in stiff clouds of light.  
Beyond the roofs bright-ranged they filled my sight.

In street-pools lay  
Pale wind-flowers, china-blue, bits of the day  
That shone above, solid and clear and deep.  
'Twas but an hour from dawn, and fresh from sleep  
The very stones gazed with dream-seeing eyes  
Upon me as I passed. The houses all  
Were shuttered still, although I caught the fall  
Of voices in a garden—they are, thought I,  
Two girls beneath a bough who to the sky  
Swing in dawn's dreamfulness deliciously,  
Putting dark feet against the ivory  
Of heaven above the tree-tops. Softly I sang  
Bright dreamy songs that clear and silvery rang  
Patterned upon the calm like fretted stains  
On chalcedony, or the faint branching veins  
Of trees in smooth steel water. But my heart  
Was flowering in a desert. At the song's start

## BUPHAGA

Those other voices stilled, a hush came down  
That filled the street like snow. The little town  
Seemed like a star that's fallen on a hill  
Solid but noiseless. Not a murmuring tree  
Rustled its leaves. And so, fantastically,  
I hurried underjutting roofs; and no  
Wind came, my garments to out-blow.

At the town's edge,  
Its stones uprising from a slow river's sedge,  
A massive building lay, its garden space  
High-walled, not to be spied upon by any face  
That wandered underneath the Moon or Sun.  
And there I heard a sweet-voiced tale begun;  
Locked out I lay upon the grass and heard  
A low, clear-tinkling voice like a caged bird  
That with bright magic garlanded the air,  
And though when it began the scene was fair  
That my eyes held imagined, yet it grew  
Ever more dark, and other voices drew  
About it, voices emptier, and cold.  
Until as on earth's hills a disc of gold  
Enters, came warmth unimaged, and I lay,  
With cold fear in my heart. Yet the bright day  
Was tranquil, and no cloud by me was seen  
Hung in the sky to dim the meadow's green.

THE VOICE:

In the blue sky the sun's a fount of gold  
Bubbling invisibly into the air;  
The sightless stones are wonderfully bright-eyed;

## BUPHAGA

The trees are fragments earth-torn from night's dreams,  
Sprinkled with crystal rain that fell from stars  
Jarred in their circumambulatory trance  
In the dark airy halls beyond this world.  
Much brighter sings the river than at noon,  
For then its shrill and silver babbling falls  
Into the mellow mournfulness of age,  
And all its shining coils are filmed and dim,  
Its flashing body dulled, and heavily lying  
Upon its bed by banks of withered grass.  
Small bell-mouthed trumpets blown by hidden lips  
Below the soil, now break upon the air  
In carven tones, purer than scrolls of wax  
Or linen hoods of nuns in chapel vaults;  
The grass is white, milk-white our ancient walls;  
The pure soft morning's like a pearl fished up  
Out of a sea at sunrise, with the Moon  
A heavenly sloop, low in the light-washed sky.

The drifting fishers by the pearl-grey shore,  
Cast up from space by the transparent calm,  
Emerge with dripping masts;  
The Moon has sailed, they push their oars and glide  
Into the pale gold Eastern mists, and find  
The dawn's great Topaz on the water's rim,  
And when they see it, gaily rise and sing!

### SECOND VOICE:

At dawn I feel there is a bell in space,  
That with a quivering tongue tolls music forth

## BUPHAGA

From its high tower on seas of glimmering pearl,  
Greeting the cold blush of the morning sky  
With a cold azure clangour of delight!

THE VOICE:

The trees that drip are prisoners of the earth,  
And can but lift their branches to the sky.  
They stand like fountains chained by winter frosts  
Breathing a cold bright glory, frail as smoke  
Or breath of cattle on the dewy grass.  
But we are *free, free*, yet we wither here  
In these black gowns, as dead as trees in winter  
Fenced in white walls of everlasting peace!

SECOND VOICE I

I found a toad one day beneath a stone,  
And he was golden-mottled, velvet-dark,  
With a great emerald eye. I shrieked with fear.  
And ran back with delight, he was so lovely.  
At last, trembling, I stooped to touch his side:  
Ugh! he was cold! I never shall forget  
The shock it was to find a thing so bright  
Colder than my cell's walls. Next day he'd gone.  
I should have placed him in a little box,  
And kept him just to gaze on...

THE VOICE:

The sunset's gold, and that is all we see  
Of the great glory there must be in life.  
Here in this garden we can watch it dip  
Beyond those western mountains whose high peaks  
Are more remote than any hills of dream.

## BUPHAGA

For in the dead of night, and fast asleep,  
There are no boundaries to my travelling soul,  
No vale or hillside but I wander there,  
And pluck its flowers, and wave delighted hands  
Above its tranquil streams, and those white fans  
Startle gold shadows in the crystal waters,  
Faint undulations in the rippling tide  
Of that frail blushing glory on the hills  
That creeps at evening from the fading sky,  
And steals down all the rivers. Softly it sings  
In many a dark wood carolling on a bough,  
A tiny ghost of that departed sun.  
And such a ghost I heard, once wandering here—  
Out of my bed arisen an hour ere dawn—  
Stealing between the shadow-shapes of trees.  
So still it was I scarcely dared to breathe.  
It seemed to me that life lay all around  
Loud crying from a million million throats.  
Though 'twas so silent, I could almost hear  
The star fires crackling in the dark of heaven.  
Then suddenly I heard a voice that came—  
Thinner than crying drakes that die at dusk—  
Up from the stone beneath my feet, and I  
Heard without hearing, in tranquillity  
Deeper than evening's calm, this lonely song:

Weary I wait until the rising Sun  
Shall reach me where I lie,  
And then shall I

## BUPHAGA

Burn with sharp sweetness the pale-scented grass;  
And marigolds upright  
Shall droop their proud fair heads, until I see  
Their faces bright  
Clouded with that slow-passing panoply  
Of great star-dimming light.  
But naked, I, unblinking, shall gaze back,  
And dumbly shout, unheard,  
As loud as dark-groved bird  
Whom, wood-entomb'd, Dawn's pale splinter  
finds.  
And on night's brink—  
When icy winds do weep, and hidden in leaves  
Silent they shrink—  
I shall cry out once more to ghostly stars,  
And pale dews drink.

The silence never trembled. I stood still  
Down in the garden, motionless as stone,  
My face upturned to stars, my lips half-open  
As if that song had passed out with my breath,  
And was my spirit leaving my cold body,  
Sighed up from earth and under star-blue skies  
A moon-lit wave of lava, petrified.

### SECOND VOICE:

I do not know, what other life you seek.  
In this quiet garden all is beautiful,  
And I am glad to be safe harboured here,  
For there's a hidden cruelty in the sky.. .

## BUPHAGA

### THE VOICE:

I have no fear of cruelty: I would live,  
And see my blood phantasy my white hands,  
And stain my linen with dark, silent shrieks,  
Rather than sit immaculate and sing—  
A frosty angel cloud-carved from the sky—  
Calm, stainless songs of snow in heavenly streets,  
Archangels blowing clarion harmony  
With faces like those marble cherubs who  
Gaze from the corners of our father's tomb.

### SECOND VOICE:

There is a pale rapt beauty on their brows  
That I do long for. Jesu, give me peace  
To dig such holiness from my weak flesh  
As looking on Thou shalt incline Thy Face—  
Howe'er so far away—with loveliness  
Benign and calm, Thou shining on my soul  
As the Moon shines on the pale pools of earth!

### THE VOICE:

The dreams of virgins are both ice and fire.  
It may be that these starry frosts of thine—  
Like those at morning found upon the trees  
When a night's snow has stolen away the wind  
And left a sepulchre of shining boughs—  
Do pierce the soul with brighter agony,  
And light more sparkling tracks within the mind  
Than mid-day suns that beat upon the heart,  
And bleed in wild cloud-jungles of the sky,  
Dissolving dawn's white wraiths to woods of gloom

## BUPHAGA

Where hidden waters curve upon the boughs  
In great green billows, and on crowded stems  
The earth's sun-seeking myriads twist their souls;  
Frail angels from the moss they sing to God,  
Lifting a weight of prayer towards the sky  
To burst into a sudden clap of bloom,  
Hanging faint heads after wild-coloured cries;  
While round about prowl darker things than these,  
Who also praise God ravening through the world.

In green foam and in silver streams  
The nightingales now sing,  
And many souls are wandering by  
The frail, white boughs of spring  
Who from my dreaming thrust a hand  
Under cold, milk-pale skies  
To catch the shining song they hear  
Ere in dream-dark it dies.

In dream-dark die earth's jaguars,  
Eagles and spotted deer;  
The crested birds who from great flowers  
Upon the silence peer:  
The blossoms of a far-off world  
In the night sky gather;  
They shall all walk down with me  
In the dark earth together.

### SECOND VOICE:

The songs you sing, Moryrria, fill my mind  
With meaning strange as music that disturbs  
The soul desiring peace and to know God.

BUPHAGA

MORYRRIA:

Wilt thou know God, seated upon a stone,  
Thy face bent o'er a lily? In what book  
Hath God appeared Who made the green-eyed toad  
That sits in meadows (while the flock of stars  
Creeps from the sky) as thou sittest at thy window—  
His eyes the same great field of far-off fires  
Which pale and redden in the invisible wind?  
From what deep pool of mud did he creep up  
Out of the bowels of earth to see the sky,  
To gaze as thou dost gaze? It is the earth itself  
That from deep concentration lifts its soul,  
And from that meadow and your window looks.  
And there is something that looks up in me,  
But cannot find what it would gaze upon.

SECOND VOICE :

You frighten me, Moryrria . . .

MORYRRIA:

Open your white-paged book in the green woods.  
Your calm face will bring peace to the green boughs,  
Who 'll flutter round that bright tranquillity  
That comes among them, whence they cannot know.  
Nor do I know what brought you, sister, here,  
Into this world of turbulence and lust,  
A white cascade among wild rocks and trees.

SECOND VOICE:

The Reverend Mother comes-but, look! Moryrria !  
*I thought I saw the Sun shout, huge and gold*  
*Among the pigmy stars: BEHOLD, BUPHAGA!*

BUPHAGA

PRIORESS:

This creature, daughter, has been sent to thee  
From thy lost brother, who in heathen lands  
Fought for the souls of men mid things like these.  
But I do fear—for it is marvellous gold,  
And hues of sunset sparkle on its body—  
Now that thou hast this morsel of the Sun,  
It shall entice thy mind to earthly lusts,  
Strange fornications of thy maiden spirit  
That is so apt to crucify the flesh  
In wild embracing of the cold night stars.  
I fear a fire will eat into this garden  
That has been lit by the pale purified Orb  
Amid our northern mountains. And the Moon,  
That Christlike treads our calm, seraphic hills,  
Will no more hang upon our garden harps  
Bright harmony of still, transparent sound—  
As though the angels carved on Heaven's walls  
In contemplation had down-dropped their gaze  
To this dark earth\_\_\_\_

MORYRRIA:

Art thou my brother's soul, or art thou Life  
That I have waited for these empty years ?  
Out of the black abysses of dead Time  
Thou art come hither, barred with the golden Sun,  
Voiced with a million, million forest leaves  
Shadow-like falling through the dateless past  
Where great mossed trunks fade like the wings  
of evening,

## BUPHAGA

Passing at twilight into eternity.  
Male moths like devil's faces fluttering come  
Floating from hell, making no sound at all  
Mid silent-shrieking flowers dragged of Fby night  
Suddenly from all fearful-gazing eyes.  
I hear the jubilation of cold streams  
When the gold ghosts of tigers, walking, pale,  
With heads uplifted gaze on their embryo stars—  
Those milky beasts that haunt the desert skies,  
And then descend to drink the evening water  
In wandering streams ...

\* \* \* \* \*

That voice went falling on,  
As falls the sea's voice from the traveller, gone  
Some miles inland, who sees the motionless hills  
And clouds hung silent in the sky. Sound fills  
The still wide valley with no audible cry  
From bright waves painted cold in memory.  
I gazed in dream upon the swelling ground  
That undulated softly to the sea,  
Against those dark walls foaming noiselessly.  
And there was not a sound in earth or sky:  
No bird rose up out of the trees to fly,  
Dwindling through space upon a noiseless wing  
And in departing hope of renewal bring.  
But all around seemed a stiffpainted scene,  
Air-ambered butterflies hung 'twixt bushes green,  
Insects' antennae moved not, nor their great eyes  
In grass as still as the bright fadeless skies.

## BUPHAGA

Birds stood on rocks, fish gazed from wave-still  
coigns—

Earth on itself protruding from its own loins.  
But Earth was not, for Earth had entered in  
That secret spiritual garden. The awful din  
Of astronomic emptiness swung round  
My naked soul. But not a tangible sound  
Flew to the drums of my corporeal ear  
Bent, listening....

And I looked up and found that it was even,  
Pale stars were clustered dimly in the heaven.  
I heard no voices, walking to the sea  
Quivering upon earth's coast, soundlessly.  
And in a boat I stole, without wind, away  
From the dead shore where that great Convent lay.

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IN  
TIME  
LIKE  
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