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COLLECTED POEMS OF
LAURENCE BINYON

COLLECTED
POEMS OF
LAURENCE
BINYON

LYRICAL POEMS

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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TO
MY WIFE

PREFACE

OF the contents of these two volumes I cannot in candour use the fond phrase consecrated to such occasions, "all that the author cares to preserve" (as if that were in a poet's power!) for they include, in fact, poems that the author would take no pains to keep alive. And he would have indulged in more liberal omissions, had he not felt how idle it is to forestall the inscrutable choosings of Time, and reflected that what is born to wither will fade soon enough without any help from its author, and that what has in it seeds of life will survive the frostiest patronage. Apart, then, from eight or nine plays in verse, these volumes contain, with some omissions, the poems I have published up to the year 1928. The translations from Dante are for the most part more recent, and, except for the selection published in Messrs. Ernest Benn's sixpenny series of "Augustan Poets" are here printed for the first time.

Thanks are due to Messrs. Elkin Mathews and Marrot, to Messrs. Heinemann, and to Messrs. Constable, for permission to reprint from volumes published by them; also to Messrs. Ernest Benn, in respect of the Dante translations.

L. B.

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LYRICAL POEMS

BOOK I

(1887-1897)

IN CARISSIMAM MEMORIAM

A. S. P.

To whom but thee, my youth to dedicate,
My youth, which these few leaves have sought to
 save,
Should I now come, although I come too late,
Alas! and can but lay them on thy grave?

To whom but thee? From thee, I know, they stole
Their happier music, all their finer part:
O could they breathe but something of thy soul,
Something of thine incomparable heart!

What was there lovely, that thou didst not love?
What troubled spirit could ever grasp thy hand,
Nor know what answering springs within thee strove
To soothe his wound; to feel, to understand?

Too much hadst thou of pain, and fret, and care;
Yet surely thou wast meant for joy: to whom
Life, that had given thee days so hard to bear,
Could still yield moments of so rare a bloom.

That longing in me, which can never sleep,
To live my own life, to be bravely free,
What is that longing, but the passion deep,
The sweet endeavour, to be true to thee?

Still in my mind the solemn morning shines;
Still with me, all too clearly pictured, dwell
The day, the hour, with all their mournful signs,
When we bade thee, O friend of friends, farewell.

Austerely fair, the vast cathedral, filled
With February sunshine, marbles old,
Pillar on pillar, arch on arch revealed:
The light, the stillness, on my grief took hold;

Hushed within those gray walls, that could not
change,
Where kneeling sorrow heavenly comfort hears;
Appeased by their eternal strength, that, strange
Itself to pain, permitted human tears.

There that worn heart, those arms in longing
strained
Beyond, beyond, toward the unknown shore,
Entered repose, their long-loved peace attained.
Sweetly she sleeps. O shall we wish her more?

I climbed the high tower, up steep stairs of stone,
Under the clear sun plains without a wave,
Various and busy, in the morning shone:
The world about me, but below, thy grave.

White flowers marked it. Now, my flowers' poor
grace
I bring, to bloom or fade; I little care,
Ah, let them fade, and die in that dear place!
It is enough, if they have faded there.

AN APRIL DAY

Breezes strongly rushing, when the North-West stirs,
Prophesying Summer to the shaken firs;
Blowing brows of forest, where soft airs are free,
Crowned with heavenly glimpses of the shining sea;
Buds and breaking blossoms, that sunny April yields;
Ferns and fairy grasses, the children of the fields;
In the fragrant hedges' hollow brambled gloom
Pure primroses paling into perfect bloom;
Round the elms' rough stature, climbing dark and high,
Ivy-fringes trembling against a golden sky;
Woods and windy ridges darkening in the glow;
The rosy sunset bathing all the vale below;
Violet banks forsaken in the fading light;
Starry sadness filling the quiet eyes of night;
Dew on all things drooping for the summer rains;
Dewy daisies folding in the lonely lanes.

TESTAMENTUM AMORIS

I cannot raise my eyelids up from sleep,
But I am visited with thoughts of you;
Slumber has no refreshment half so deep
As the sweet morn, that wakes my heart anew.

I cannot put away life's trivial care,
But you straightway steal on me with delight;
My purest moments are your mirror fair;
My deepest thought finds you the truth most bright

You are the lovely regent of my mind,
The constant sky to my unresting sea;
Yet, since 'tis you that rule me, I but find
A finer freedom in such tyranny.

Were the world's anxious kingdoms governed so,
Lost were their wrongs, and vanished half their woe.

PINE TREES

Down through the heart of the dim woods
The laden, jolting waggons come.
Tall pines, chained together,
They carry; stems straight and bare,
Now no more in their own solitudes
With proud heads to rock and hum;
Now at the will of men to fare
Away from their brethren, their forest friends
In the still woods; through wild weather
Alone to endure to the world's ends:
Soon to feel the power of the North
Careering over dark waves' foam;
Soon to exchange the steady earth
For heaving decks; the scents of their home,
Honeyed wild-thyme, gorse and heather,
For the sting of the spray, the bitter air.

PRESENT AND FUTURE

Look, as a mother bending o'er her boy,
The sleeping boy that in her bosom lies,
Gazes upon him in a trance of joy
With earnest, infinitely tender eyes,
Lost in her deep love, and aware of nought,
Earth and the sunlight, men and trees and skies
Quite faded out from her impassioned thought;
Yet knows one day it will be otherwise,
When, laid alone within the narrow tomb,
Death leaves her none to love; but in youth's bloom,
Or grown to manhood and to strength, her son
Over the same earth that has closed on her
Rejoicing wanders on,
And strikes fresh tracks of thronged and fruitful life,
Nor frets at the sweet need for change and strife,
With eager mind and glowing heart astir
In ardour ever to pursue
Passions and actions, and adventures new:

So is the Present Age,
So strives she for that Age to come, her child.
Which knows not yet the pain, the sacrifice,
She for its sake endures; it knows not yet,
But must one day, the battles it must wage.
And she, if it within its sleep have smiled,
Is happy in her woes: no vain regret
Saps the sad strength with which she labours still
For that imagined bliss she shall not see,
So dear, so deeply hoped-for though it be.
And ever with unconquerable will,
Bearing her burden, toward one distant star
She moves in her desire; and though with pain
She labour, and the goal she dreams be far,
Proud is she in her passionate soul to know
That from her tears, her very sorrows grow
The joy, the hope, the peace of future men

YOUTH

When life begins anew,
And Youth, from gathering flowers,
From vague delights, rapt musings, twilight hours,
Turns restless, seeking some great deed to do,
To sum his fostered dreams; when that fresh
 birth
Unveils the real, the thronged and spacious Earth,
And he awakes to those more ample skies,
By other aims and by new powers possessed:
How deeply, then, his breast
Is filled with pangs of longing! how his eyes
Drink in the enchanted prospect! Fair it lies
Before him, with its plains expanding vast,
Peopled with visions, and enriched with dreams;
Dim cities, ancient forests, winding streams,
Places resounding in the famous past,
A kingdom ready to his hand!
How like a bride Life seems to stand

In welcome, and with festal robes arrayed!
He feels her loveliness pervade
And pierce him with inexplicable sweetness;
And, in her smiles delighting, and the fires
Of his own pulses, passionate soul!
Measure his strength by his desires,
And the wide future by their fleetness,
As his thought leaps to the long-distant goal.

So eagerly across that unknown span
Of years he gazes: what, to him,
Are bounds and barriers, tales of Destiny,
Death, and the fabled impotence of man?
Already, in his marching dream,
Men at his sun-like coming seem
As with an inspiration stirred, and he
To kindle with new thoughts degenerate nations,
In sordid cares immersed so long;
Thrilled with ethereal exultations
And a victorious expectancy,
Even such as swelled the breasts of Bacchus' throng,
When that triumphal burst of joy was hurled
Upon the wondering world;
When from the storied, sacred East afar,
Down Indian gorges clothed in green,
With flower-reined tigers and with ivory car
He came, the youthful god;
Beautiful Bacchus, ivy-crowned, his hair
Blown on the wind, and flushed limbs bare,
And lips apart, and radiant eyes,
And ears that caught the coming melodies,
As wave on wave of revellers swept abroad;
Wreathed with vine-leaves, shouting, trampling on-
wards,
With tossed timbrel and gay tambourine,

Alas! the disenchanting years have rolled
On hearts and minds becoming cold:
Mirth is gone from us; and the world is old.

O bright new-comer, filled with thoughts of joy,
Joy to be thine amid these pleasant plains,
Know'st thou not, child, what surely coming pains
Await thee, for that eager heart's annoy?
Misunderstanding, disappointment, tears,
Wronged love, spoiled nope, mistrust and ageing
fears,
Eternal longing for one perfect friend,
And unavailing wishes without end?
Thou proud and pure of spirit, how must thou bear
To have thine infinite hates and loves confined,
Schooled, and despised? How keep unquenched
and free
Mid others' commerce and economy
Such ample visions, oft in alien air
Tamed to the measure of the common kind?
How hard for thee, swept on, for ever hurled
From hour to hour, bewildered and forlorn,
To move with clear eyes and with steps secure,
To keep the light within, fitly to scorn
These all too possible and easy goals,
Trivial ambitions of soon-sated souls.
And, patient in thy purpose, to endure
The pity and the wisdom of the world.

Vain, vain such warning to those happy ears!
Disturb not their delight! By unkind powers
Doomed to keep pace with the relentless Hours,
He, too, ere long, shall feel Earth's glory change;
Familiar names shall take an accent strange,
A deeper meaning, a more human tone;
No more passed by, unheeded or unknown,
The things that then shall be beheld through tears.

Yet, O just Nature, thou
Who, if men's hearts be hard, art always mild;
O fields and streams, and places undefiled,
Let your sweet airs be ever on his brow,
Remember still your child.

Thou too, O human world, if old desires.
If thoughts, not alien once, can move thee now.
Teach him not yet that idly he aspires
Where thou hast failed; not soon let it be plain,
That all who seek in thee for nobler fires,
For generous passion, spend their hopes in vain:
Lest that insidious Fate, foe of mankind,
Who ever waits upon our weakness, try
With whispers his unnerved and faltering mind,
Palsy his powers; for she has spells to dry,
Like the March blast, his blood, turn flesh to stone,
And, conjuring action with necessity,
Freeze the quick will, and make him all her own.

Come, then, as ever, like the Wind at morning!
Joyous, O Youth, in the aged world renew
Freshness to feel the eternities around it,
Rain, stars, and clouds, light and the sacred dew.
The strong sun shines above thee:
That strength, that radiance bring!
If Winter come to Winter,
When shall men hope for Spring?

THE EVENING TAKES ME FROM YOUR SIDE

The evening takes me from your side;
The darkness creeps into my breast.
Swift clouds across the dim heavens glide.
And fill me with their vague unrest.

I wander sad, and know not why:
The lighted streets perplex my brain.
I wish for wings, that I might fly
From sound and glare, to you again.

TINTAGEL

Low is laid Arthur's head,
Unknown earth above him mounded;
By him sleep his splendid knights,
With whose names the world resounded.
Ruined glories! flown delights,
Sunk 'mid rumours of old wars!
Where they revelled, deep they sleep
By the wild Atlantic shores.

On Tintagel's fortified walls,
Proudly built, the loud sea scorning,
Pale the moving moonlight falls;
Through their rents the wind goes mourning.
See ye, Knights, your ancient home.
Chafed and spoiled and fallen asunder?
Hear ye now, as then of old,
Waters rolled, and wrath of foam,
Where the waves beneath your graves
Snow themselves abroad in thunder?

O SUMMER SUN!

O summer sun, O moving trees!
O cheerful human noise, O busy glittering street!
What hour shall Fate in all the future find,
Or what delights, ever to equal these:
Only to taste the warmth, the light, the wind,
Only to be alive, and feel that life is sweet?

NAME, THAT MAKES MY HEART BEAT

Name, that makes my heart beat,
Heard by chance in the throng'd street,
How delighted I turn to greet
The vision adored, the vision rare,
That surely should be where thou art spoken!

Alas, alas! it is not there:
Only hurrying faces stare,
Hard faces, in cold surprise,
Amazed at the joy that out of my eyes
Shines expectant, and then dies
Disappointed, the sweet spell broken!

NIGHTFALL

Sweet after labour, soft and whispering night
Blows on dark fields and fragrant country here:
Here there is sleep, to weary limbs delight;
The world is far away, the stars are near.

The world is far away: but there, I know,
Night comes to few unanxious, happy eyes;
And cities, with their restless streets aglow,
Lamps upon lamps, outface the enkindled skies.

London lies there; an endless fiery maze,
Thronged with her millions, sleepless, vast, alone;
The stars are pale above her, where her gaze
Lights the wide heavens and makes the night her own

There the hot wind blows over no dark fields:
Brief, hard-won rest despotic labours give:
Sleep, to how many spent-out spirits, yields
Life's only sweetness, to forget they live!

O WORLD, BE NOBLER

O World, be nobler, for her sake!
If she but knew thee, what thou art,
What wrongs are borne, what deeds are done
In thee, beneath thy daily sun,

Know'st thou not that her tender heart,
For pain and very shame, would break?
O World, be nobler, for her sake!

KENNACK SANDS

On Kennack Sands the sun
Shines, and the fresh wind blows,
Moulding pale banks anew,
Where the sea-holly grows.
Waters softly blue
And exquisitely clear
Meet the o'er-arching sky;
O'er them the breezes run.
There may'st thou idly lie,
And still find new delights,
Watching the gulls' white fli
Above that lonely place;
Listen, nor ever hear
A single human sound
To spoil the free, profound,
Aerial quietness.
But when thou'rt gone, the night
On Kennack comes; and soon,
Lovely beyond dreams,
Arises the round moon;
In whose trembling light
The rough splendour gleams
Of the crested sea.
Ah, could'st thou there then be!
But mortal ears can hear not
What those pale sands hear then;
Sounds not of mortal birth,
Laughter, and dance, and mirth,
Of the golden-haired sea-fairies,
Mermaidens and mermen.

AN OLD ANSWER

Ask me not, Dear, what thing it is
That makes me love you so;
What graces, what sweet qualities,
That from your spirit flow:
For I have but this old reply,
That you are you, that I am I.

My heart leaps when you look on me,
And thrills to hear your voice.
Lies, then, in these the mystery
That makes my soul rejoice?
I only know, I love you true;
Since I am I, and you are you.

THE AUTUMN CROCUS

In the high woods that crest our hills,
Upon a steep, rough slope of forest ground,
Where few flowers grow, sweet blooms to-day I found
Of the Autumn Crocus, blowing pale and fair.
Dim falls the sunlight there;
And a mild fragrance the lone thicket fills.

Languidly curved, the long white stems
Their purple flowers' gold treasure scarce display:
Lost were their leaves since in the distant spring,
Their February sisters showed so gay.
Roses of June, ye too have followed fleet!
Forsaken now, and shaded as by thought,
As by the human shade of thought and dreams,
They bloom 'mid the dark wood, whose air has wrought
With what soft nights and mornings of still dew!
Into their slender petals that clear hue,
Like paleness in fresh cheeks; a thing
On earth, I vowed, ne'er grew
More delicately pure, more shyly sweet.

Child of the pensive autumn woods!
So lovely, though thou dwell obscure and lone,
And though thy flush and gaiety be gone;
Say, among flowers of the sad, human mind,
Where shall I ever find
So rare a grace? in what shy solitudes?

THE WOUND

I have too happy been.
Some sad Fate envies me.
An arrow she, unseen,
Has fitted to her bow,
And smiling grim, I know,
Let the drawn shaft leap free.

Deep in my side it pierced:
With sudden pain I shook,
And gazed around, the accurst
Perfidious foe to espy.
Lo, only thou art nigh,
With sweet and troubled look!

O CRUDELIS AMOR!

It was Spring, the sweet Spring, when first I met with
Love.
Suddenly I raised my eyes; and he stood there.
He was so beautiful, I could not look elsewhere.
For joy I could not speak; I gazed but could not
move;
But all my body trembled, as he spoke and stole,
With his voice's wonder, my surrendered soul.
Ah, why was there none nigh, to whisper me,
Beware?

GO NOW, LOVE

Go now, Love,
Since staying's joy no longer!
Leave me to prove
If Time can make me stronger!
Nay, look not over thy shoulder so,
Pleading so sweetly to remain,
Where thou workest so much pain:
Look not behind thee, haste and go!

Ah, how should I
Deal to thee such hard measure,
As force thee fly,
Who broughtest heavenly pleasure?
Take pity, Love, and be kind
To him that could not refuse thee!
Is it not grief enough to lose thee?
Haste, O haste, nor look behind!

THE LAST EVENING

Over sea the sun in a mystery of light
Burns across the waters, on the blown spray glancing:
Luminously crested, wave behind wave advancing
Pours its rushing foam with low continual roar.
The wide sands around us, flashing wet and bright,
Mirror cliffs suffused with clearest warmth serene,
Rosy earth, gray rocks, and grass of greenest green;
We two pace together the solitary shore.

A sadness and a joy are mingled in the air;
From the dying day a voice, / *go and come back never*,
From the waves an answering shout, *We rush, we*
 break for ever,
Wake in my heart echoes that conflicting swell.

Now on the last evening, now we are aware
Of something in our souls that will not say, 'Tis
ended.

In our parting looks are thoughts eternal blended:
See, our hands are joined; we cannot say farewell!

AS I WALKED THROUGH LONDON

As I walked through London,
The fresh wound burning in my breast,
As I walked through London,
Longing to have forgotten, to harden my heart, and
to rest,

A sudden consolation, a softening light
Touched me: the streets alive and bright,
With hundreds each way thronging, on their tide
Received me, a drop in the stream, unmarked, un-
known.

And to my heart I cried:

Here can thy trouble find shelter, thy wound be eased!

For see, not thou alone.

But thousands, each with his smart,

Deep-hidden, perchance, but felt in the core of the heart!

And as to a sick man's feverish veins

The full sponge warmly pressed,

Relieves with its burning the burning of forehead and
hands,

So, I, to my aching breast,

Gathered the griefs of those thousands, and made
them my own;

My bitterest pains

Merged in a tenderer sorrow, assuaged and appeased.

NOT EVEN LOVE

Dear child, thou know'st, I blame not thee;

Thou too, I know, hast shared the smart.

Neither did wrong; 'twas only she,

Nature, that moulded us apart.

But not to have sinned, in Nature's eyes
I find a brittle plea to trust:
She punishes the just unwise
More hardly than the wise unjust.

She placed our souls, like Heaven's lone spheres,
In separate paths, no power can move:
O truth too heart-breaking for tears!
Not even Love, not even Love!

THE DISOBEDIENT HEART

Stern Power, whose heavy hand I feel,
Whose infinite, world-urging force,
Nor silent pain nor strong appeal
Persuades from its imperious course,

Idly I strive with thee; 'tis thou
Rul'st in this world of thwarted will!
To thine omnipotence I bow;
And dare to disobey thee still.

FIRST DAY OF WINTER

Like the bloom on a grape is the evening air
And a first faint frost the wind has bound.
Yet the fear of his breath avails to scare
The withered leaves on the cold ground.

For they huddle and whisper in phantom throngs,
I hear them beneath the branches bare:
We danced with the Wind, we sang his songs;
Now he pursues us, we know not where.

THE CONVALESCENT

O strange, O sweetly warm
Falls the sunshine on my cheek.
I taste the cordial North;
In the pines I hear him speak.
A new, a tender charm
Is in my life begun,
To joy that opens forth
As the sunflower to the sun.

Winds that with moving light
Wash heaven, and drive the showers!
Ferns uncurling free,
Wet heads of nodding flowers!
O clouds, loftily bright,
That build your domes in the blue,
Is the world new-made for me?
Is it I that am born anew?

My weak steps prove in thee,
Earth, a strength more stable.
Limbs, that fever shook,
Thy wholesome airs enable.
Life by both hands raises me
To stand firm on my feet:
Into her eyes I look
And find, to trust her, sweet.

THE CHESTNUT

Who enters here, beneath this guardian shade,
Feels over him a tender sky of leaves
Dearer than heaven: at once his eye receives
Strange quiet: fathomless as water swayed
Above far-sunken ships, this luminous height
Of dimness interposed

Against the hot sun-beams
Opens, a world uncertain of cool dreams
And blurs of shadow and spots of sleepy light
With ever greener quiet charmed and closed.

Yet in the soft-hung leaves a splendour lies,
As though not from the far-off noon it came
But in themselves a green indwelling flame
Were prisoned. Here unanswered mysteries
Content me, and of peace I want not more,
But feed on thoughts that end
In a sweet pause of mind,
As if from my own being back resigned
To the universal essence of Earth's core,
Where over me the saps of life ascend.

WHEN OLD WOUNDS BLEED AGAIN

When old wounds bleed again
In the silence of the night,
And mixt with sweet delight
Wells up the stream of pain,
Is it less hard to endure
That when the sword struck first
So keen, with edge so sure?
Was that wild hour the worst?

O then a too strong smart
O'erwhelmed the senses' power.
Now in some tranquil hour
When, fortified, the heart
Is capable at ease
Of sorrow, now returns
By exquisite degrees
Pain, and in silence burns.

Is this still woe forlorn
Less than that fierce despair?
Perhaps 'tis worse to bear
Because 'tis easier borne.

MONTENEGRO

Coiled in shadow, the serpent seas
Engirdle perilous hills sublime:
By tortuous, steep degrees
Toward the morn I climb.

Before me the mountain soaring vast
Secludes the bright east; cold the air
Descends from ridges, massed
In peaks, snowily fair.

But pale in the northern distance blushes
On sparkling ranges a light austere;
Tingeing the shade, it flushes
Edge and barrier sheer.

Cattaro roofs and Cattaro quay
Grow faint and delicate; ships that ride
On the dense blue slumbering sea
Dwindle; on either side

From mirroring gulfs the mountains bare
Are mapped to the heaven, strange as a dream;
The Adriatic afar
Trembles, a molten gleam:

Till the sun salutes me, met with him
On the naked summit; closed behind.
That vision of countries dim
Pales and fades from the mind.

Now drinking the eager lofty air,
The spirit leaps, as the eyes behold
Valleys severely fair,
Freedom's fortress of old.

Young, stern soldiers in rich attire,
Haughtily moving with silent pace
And eyes of a tranquil fire;
Sons of a tameless race;

Aged mothers, bowed with toil,
Old men, bearded and gray, are here.
Plants of a stubborn soil
That knows not the seed of fear.

O Mountain, mother of men, that bearest
Heroes; foster-mother of fame!
I hail thee; well thou wearest
Thy dark, invincible name.

Thou plantest the footstep firm, and the heart
In the breast strengthenest, hardy to try
Peril, and play its part
With full, unwavering eye.

At mighty breasts of the ancient hills
Nourished, thy sons in their veins yet keep
The force that feeds and fills
Torrents, to dance and leap.

Trees that with clenched root possess
Their rocky beds, oak and pine,
Alone thou endurest; nor less
Permittest in children of thine.

DOWN IN A SHADED GARDEN

Down in a shaded garden
I laid upon earth my head:
The deep trees murmured, darkly fresh,
Over my bed;
I looked through living leaves to the sky,
Odours and songs were quivering nigh;
The warm grass touched my cheek as I lay
And care from me was far away.
As a child to its mother, to Earth I drew;
I felt her true.

Of Life, sweet Life, enamoured,
I closed my eyes, to feel
The sweetness pierce to the inmost veins
And the whole heart steal;
Sacred Life, more sweet and fair
Than all her children of earth and air,
Fountain dearer than joy in the breast,
In the blue I adored, in the grass I caressed:
Then Earth, my mother, leaned to my ear,
And spoke me clear.

To thee the rose her odour,
Her glory dedicates;
And thee the pink's sweet-budded fringe
Of snow awaits.
For thee is the sprinkled fire of the broom,
For thee the azalea burns her bloom;
O child, does thy heart not tell thee how
Thy joy is answered from every bough?
In the throat of the bird, in the sap of the tree,
Tis all for thee!

Stricken with joy and wonder
I raised my eyes around,
And saw what mystery flowered for me
In that enchanted ground!
The roses, the roses, rich-entwined,
Heavy with love to me inclined;
Yearning up from the dusk of death
They trembled toward me with living breath.
O none that loved me is dead, I knew,
And each is true.

ILLUMINATION

Is it joy, or is it peace,
Senses' magical release,
That triumphant swells my heart

Where I walk the fields apart?
Miracle of morning new!
Meadows dabbled fresh in dew;
Straight-stemmed woods that darkly still
Stand upon the rounded hill,
Where the silver saplings gleam
On the edges of a dream;
Mists that in faint fleeces blur
All the frayed plumes of the fir,
And that whiten the fresh green
Of the bosomed field between,
Melted ever more and more
By the level beams that pour
Sparkling through the sleepy, rare,
Delicately coloured air;
Flowers that wake from peace to peace;
Subtle-scented loneliness;
World that drenches through and through
A stillness exquisite as dew;
Ploughman ploughing nigh at hand
Along the open hazy land,
Calm as though a part of those
Brown furrows over which he goes:—
O what fount is it in me
All this solitude sets free?
Far from miseries, that dart
Pangs of pity at the heart,
Far from prisoning tasks that hide
The vision true of freedom wide,
Through a melting curtain clear
The stir of spring I see and hear:
Softly the young beams surprise
My own spirit's mysteries,
And my still thought, scarce aware,
Mingles into radiant air.
Now my eyes I cast around
On an unsubstantial ground:
As I gaze, I seem to grow
Into Earth, her longing know,
Feel the swelling of the bud

Quicken warm within my blood;
And the grasses shooting higher
Are a wave of my desire.
Deep and deeper sinks my mind
To a charm intense resigned.
Deep into the grain of things
Dissolved with its imaginings.

Now the ploughman ploughs, as he
Furrowed lines of destiny:
Now the oak his shadow due
Claims as if from earth it grew,
Not by casual beams of day
Given, and then stolen away.
I too from Time's ample womb
Summon my appointed doom,
And conjure the hours to bring
Each its rapture, each its sting.
In a vista long appears
The close-peopled street of years.
There the hands that I shall clasp
Are stretched out, my own to grasp.
Ready in my heart the throe
Burns for each awaiting woe.
Sorrow with her silent spade
Graves for unborn hopes hath made.
Joy about me glides her arm
Ignorant of grief and harm,
Like a child that only knows
Where 'tis loved and thither goes.
Onward on the path begun
I perceive my footsteps run,
Yet backward stretching all I find
In the mirror of my mind;
In a hundred sleeps behold
My own face becoming old;
And inaudibly drawn near
Death has whispered in my ear.

FIRST DAY OF SUMMER

Sweetest of all delights are the vainest, merest;
Hours when breath is joy, for the breathing's sake.
Summer awoke this morning, and early awake
I rose refreshed, and gladly my eyes saluted
The entering beam of the sun that laughed his
 clearest.

I too laughed for pleasure, and vowed straightway
To stream and sun the flower of an idle day,
With summer sweetly enjoyed and friends well suited.

Merry were we, as stepping aboard we laid
The shaven oars in order; merry the leap
Of the oar, that grasped the water and stirred from
 sleep

A wave, to tremble past us in foamy rings.
With rhyming fall, and with bright returning blade
Impetuous music urges the rippling keel;
Softly our necks the flow of the breezes feel;
And blue, and thronged with birds, the morning
 sings.

And lo, the elms, in a day re clothed and gleaming
In delicate youth, above us stir their leaves.
The eye, to naked winter used, receives
A magic pleasure: and still the shore we follow
Winding in flowery meadows; freshly streaming
The river meets us ever from fields unknown;
As light we travel his curving mirror lone,
No longer I envy you, O frolic swallow.

Till moored at noon by shadowy turf, and ended
Awhile that pleasant toil, what relish keen
At ease to lie amid flowers, with rustling green
O'er shaded; there, reclined by a bubbling pool,
The rushing weir in murmur and foam blended,
Entrancing ear and eye, caresses the brain
With smooth perpetual sound, the lulling strain
Of water weariless poured and glittering cool.

O then, refreshed, in the level light serene
Our boat re-entering, her prow homeward turned,
How soft we glided; soft, as evening burned
Through drooping leaves, our liquid furrow stirred
The dim green heights of the elm, reflected green
In shadowy water; at last the dreaming shore
From its own enchanted mirror we know no more;
Softly we glided downward, and spoke no word.

Nor took we land, till the West in a blush was dying,
And over the twilit meadow we loitered home.
Even now in my ear is rushing the constant foam.
And the dappled stream is alight with the wind's
 laughter,
As I taste, in the cool of the darkness dreamily lying,
The sun yet warm upon limbs that sweetly ache;
Drowsed deliciously, still I linger awake,
Only to keep my delight, and to look not after.

THE OAK

Splendours of sunset burned upon the ground,
As from the lane's deep shade
Emerging, a warm grassy plat we found
Skirting the forest glade,
And in the midst a solitary oak.
No sound the bright and haunting stillness broke
As we beheld the wonder of this tree,
His shadowy core invaded thick by rays
That kindled the rough trunk, and ardently
Made burn the massy branches, thrusting higher
And wider their strong foliage, knotted sprays
Of tawny and bronze leaves defined in fire.

Silence possessed us pausing, and our eyes
Stayed wondering to behold
In that illumined solitude arise
Those fiery branches old.

It seemed a mighty apparition brought
From far to trouble us; planted beyond thought
And budding calm into a time not ours.
Then, then smote full upon our inmost heart
Its mortal weakness: without bound and vast
Our longing, but our scope brief as the flowers,
That in a season perish and are past.

THE ENEMY

Would'st thou this monster, that we name the world,
Who round the envied tree of blissful fruit
Lies like a dragon curled
In jealous watch, our venture to dispute;
Would'st thou that she were smoothly negligent,
By any pleader bent,
A tender judge, to tears and pity prone,
She that on love defeated builds her throne,
The spoiler strong, sanguine with our despairs,
She that the traitor in us holds in fee,
Rich with our woes, with our fears cruel, she
Whose easy wisdom the sad heart ensnares?

Rather rejoice that this immortal foe
To truceless war our ardour challenges.
She hath her task to do,
Her maw to fill, her rages to appease;
Nor less because the noble rebel claims
Exemption from her shames,
Is of her native harshness justified.
Sharp be our swords, trebly our armour tried,
Our hearts enduring and relentless be
To look her 'twixt the eyes as conquering men
And take her worst of wounds, For then, O then,
If we can bear our freedom, we are free.

PRICKING THORNS

My spirit to-day that sprang
To meet the laughing morn
Is clouded and forlorn
And chafes with hidden pang.
For teasing care and fret
Stifle her sweet desire
And with small dust beset
Her eager fire.

Not so my darkened breast
Deep in its depth was stirred
When Sorrow, the dusky bird,
With me prepared her nest.
I on her wing would rise
And over city and sea
Voyage with gazing eyes
Mournful, yet free.

Then from these pricking thorns
I pluck an omen bright!
Since most their trivial spite
The soul indignant scorns,
With joy vast as despair
Alone she mates, I know;
And, born to an ample air,
Claims a great foe.

THE DRIFTWOOD GATHERERS

Along the deep shelve of the abandoned shore
Bowed, with slow pace and careful eyes that keep
The track they travel, move an aged pair.
The full voice of the Atlantic holds the air
In turbulent uproar:
The sad South over desolation blows,
The clouds in wild race never sleep.

But they the shaken snows
Of trampling breakers heed not, nor the hiss
Of quarrelling foam-curves hurried up the strand,
To fade upon the darkened, glistening sand:
Skirting that fretful line, they from amid
The matted shells and seaweed heedfully
Glean their poor treasure hid,
The scattered driftwood, fragments bleached and dry.

Implacable ocean, in whose ear
Even at this instant, cries come uselessly
From mouths that the salt wave and gripping fear
Together choke, far in the lonely storm,
Where mighty ships, conquered and battling, drown;
He to this powerless pair their simple store
Permits, refraining: fearing not his frown
They his expended rages hold in fee;
And them his violent armies wound no more
Than the pale poppy on the neglected shore.

But now as evening closes, they begin
Their homeward path, bordered with heath and pine,
And see afar their cottage roof and wall
White under red leaves of the October vine;
Till glad and tired they win
The door, and let their cherished burden fall,
Then on the swept stones make their happy fire.
Soon a flame leaps, and in the wavering gloom
The dim wall smiles, and every nook of home
Invites them warm in welcoming attire.
The ripe gourd basks his jovial yellow girth;
Rosily burnished gleam the onion strings
Above; the pottage simmers in low mirth,
And in an earthen brazier chestnuts crack,
But each is busy now, that nothing lack.
And she in snatches sings
Old songs, and he with chiding feigned the while
Chides her, and meets her answer with a smile.
At last, when all is done to their desire,
They sup: the low lamp kindles their old cheeks

And features moulded in the cast of Earth,
Their infinite companion: she but speaks
Simply to them, in few words; death and birth,
Winter and summer, rain and frost and sun;
Nor they a care beyond the task invent.
Enough, if day provide their need; day done,
They by each other's side sleep, well content.

THE VOICES OF OCEAN

All the night the voices of ocean around my sleep
Their murmuring undulation sleepless kept.
Rocked in a dream I slept,
Till drawn from trances deep
At the invocation of morning calling strong,
I felt through sanguine eyelids light suffuse
My brain, and woke to a wonder of glad hues,
And over the trembling choir of birds that throng
Among the tamarisk and the glittering dews
I heard, O sea, thy song.

A charm has lured my feet, and I to the beach come
down,
The bright abandoned beach, the curving strand,
And stripping upon the sand
I meet the salt spray o'er my body blown,
Embracing swift the jubilant waves that send
Their triumphing surges shouting to the shores
around,
Until in a rushing splendour senses drowned
The solid earth forgetting, haste to spend
Their ever-fresh delight in the glory of swift sound
And the thunder without end.

But now from the wave withdrawn in indolent ease
Again desire upsprings to know thy heart.
I pace by the foam apart
Or linger in shadow shy, removed from any breeze.

Come, thou hast more to tell, thou hast not done,
I will be patient, all day lying in wait to hear
Upon the warm rock ledges hearkening near,
Of all thy thousand tones to lose not one,
While the shattered surf blows o'er me, leaping clear
To the seaward-journeying sun. -

Radiant, hurrying delight of crests that dance and
advance,
Careless, arrogant legions, tossing their milky manes;
How the wet light leaps and rains
From shivered plumes that melt in a lightning
glance
And splendour of airy tresses backward blown!
What shouts of exultation, laughter sweet,
Wail of vanishing hosts and sighs of defeat,
Irresistible menace and anguished moan;
A thousand voices mingle in triumph and retreat:
But tell me, O sea, thine own!

Surely to happy mirth thou woorest my desire;
Willing is my heart with thy young waves to roam,
Lightly tripping foam,
Ever laughing nearer, ever dancing higher.
Sweeter than all glory, where the spirit wills
With heart outpoured in song triumphant as the tide,
With eager, open heart, ever to ride and ride!
Yet now at height of joy what tumult fills
Thy rushing strength? A sudden gloom invades thy
pride
Resisted, an anger thrills.

Mutinous indignation that heavy Fate defies,
The ignorant rocks that set their sullen jaws,
In thy white flames that never pause
Rebelliously upleaping, my own heart I recognise.
I see the world's embattled towers uplift their height,
The wise, distrusting faces of them that trample
truth;
I see the bodies slain of hopeless hoping youth;

And dark my heart upswells to the vainly echoing
fight,
Cries of the helpless, tears of idle ruth,
And the wrong I cannot right.

Melancholy, to thee must I my vows resign?
The bitterness of my spirit give away
To the bitter broken spray?
O down-drawn sighing streams, with you repine?
Cover me, heavy waters, that I may hide my face
In darkness, nor behold the ruined flowers I sowed
Desolately forsaken that so sweetly glowed.
Defeated too am I, and languish in my place,
And still as glory fades, I bear a heavier load,
And the desert spreads apace.

Figures of sorrow now in my remembrance stand,
I see the face of her that her children ask for bread—
She turns away her head:
The face of him that all day toils on a stony land;
Women that ere the morning to their woe awake;
And him that sightless hears the murmur gaily
streams,
Knocking weary the pavement that opens not for him.
O loud bewailing waves, you tremble as you break,
And you lift your dirges wild as you vanish into
dream
For these and for my sake.

But hark! what voice emerges from the lamenting
choir?
Surely Love is speaking! My heart trembles to hear.
Now no more I fear,
I cast my grief behind, I have but one desire;
To give my soul entire, nor to count any cost,
To pour my heart in passionate unreason sweet,
To follow and to follow with ever faithful feet
The steps adored of Love, whatever peril crossed,
With bliss or woe extreme my longing to complete,
In love divinely lost.

Sea, was this thy errand? Ah, but hush;
Again the wild lament, again the strife!
And now in mirth of life
Thy gleeful waters all overriding rush.
O have I heard at last? For now thy voices call
Mingled and sounding clear in a mighty voice as one.
In my heart they mingle that rejecteth none;
Sorrow that no longer shall my head appal,
Love, my sweetest joy; pain that I fear to shun;
I need, I need them all.

THE RENEWAL

No more of sorrow, the world's old distress,
Nor war of thronging spirits numberless,
Immortal ardours in brief days confined,
No more the languid fever of mankind
To-day I sing: 'tis no melodious pain
Cries in me: a full note, a rapturous strain
My voice adventures. Tremblest thou, my heart,
Because so eagerly the bliss would start
Up from thy fountains? O be near to me,
Thou that upliftest, thou that sett'st me free!

Out of the dim vault and the dying hues
Of Autumn, that for every wanderer strews
On silent paths the perishing pale leaves,
Fallen, like thoughts the heart no more believes,
From blackened branches to the frozen ground:
Out of the multitudinous dim sound
Of millions, to each other all unknown,
Warring together on the alien stone
Of streets unnumbered; where with drooping head
Prisoners pass, by unseen tyrants led
And with inaudible manacles oppressed,
Where he who listens cannot ever rest
For hearing in his heart the cry of men,
His brothers, from their lamentable den;

Out of all these I come to this sweet waste
Of woods and waters, and the odour taste
Of pines in sunshine hearkening to the roar
Of ocean on his solitary shore;
Lone beaches, where the yellow poppy blows
Unplucked, and where the wind for ever flows
Over the heathy desert; where the sea
Sparkles afar into infinity;
And the cleared spirit, tasting all things clean,
Rejoices, as if grief had never been;
Where thou, to whom the birds and the waves sing,
By some enchantment hast restored the Spring.

As when a dear hand touches on the hair
And thrills away the heaviness of care,
Till the world changes and through a window bright
The upleaping spirit gazes in delight,
Over my brain I feel a calming hand;
I look upon sweet earth and understand:
I hear the loud wind laughing through the trees;
The nimble air my limbs encourages,
And I upraise my songs afresh begun,
A palinode to the triumphant sun.

But thou, from whom into my soul to-day
Enters a quivering glory, ray on ray,
O by thine eyes a sister of the Spring,
Striking a core of sweetness in each thing
Thou look'st on, till it blossoms! By thy voice,
Soul of all souls created to rejoice!
Thou that with native overbrimming sense
Takest the light of Beauty's effluence,
As from the morning, in May's festal prime,
The young green leaves of the swift-budded lime;
That drawest all glad things, they know not why,
By some dear magnet of felicity;
And mournful spirits from their yoke of pain.
Enchantest, till they lift their necks again,
And looking in thy bright and gentle eyes
To thee devote their dearest enterprise;

Thou whose brave heart could its own pain consume
And turn to deeper tenderness; in whom
Looks, thoughts, and motions, speech and mien
persuade,
Immortal Joy hath his own mansion made:
How shall my too full heart, my stammering tongue,
Render thee half the song which thou hast sung
Into my being, by no web of words
Hindered, and fluid as the note of birds?
Or tell what magic of sweet air is shed
On me, so radiantly comforted?
I need each beam of the young sun; I need
Each draught of the pure wind, whereon to feed
My joy; each sparkle of the dew that shines
Under your branches, dark, sun-drunken pines,
All voices, motions of the unwearied sea;
But most, O tender spirit, I need thee,
For thou to this dumb beauty art the tone
It fain would render; all that is thine own
Of wayward and most human and most sweet
Mingling, until the music be complete:
Thine accents, O adorable and dear,
Command me to rejoice and have no fear;
Out of remembrance wash the soil of pain
And medicine me to my own self again.

Muse of my quickened verse, I am as he
Who, striving in the vast up-swollen sea,
Lifted a moment on a wave, describes
Unrolling suddenly the boundless skies.
Now is mere breathing joy; and all that strife
Confused and darkling, that we miscall life,
Is as a cloak, cast off in the warm spring.
Thus to possess the sunlight, is a thing
Worth more than our ambitions; more than ease
Wrung from the despot labour, the stale lees
Of youthful bliss: more than the plotting mind
Can ever compass, or the heart can find
In wisest books or multitude of friends.
For this it is that brings us to the lap

Of bounteous Earth, and fills us with her sap
And early laughter; melts the petty ends
Of daily striving into boundless air,
Revealing to the soul what it can dare:
Frees and enriches thousandfold; and steep
This trembling self in universal deeps;
Lends it the patience of the eternal hills
To bear, no more in solitude, its ills.
And with all fervours of the world inspires
Its re-awakened and divine desires.
This is it that can find the deepest root
In us, and urge unto the fairest fruit,
Persuading the shut soul, that hid in night,
To crowd its blissful leaves into the light,
And shed, upon the lost, immortal seeds:
Kindles into a forge of fiery deeds
The smouldering heart, and closes the long wound
Of gentle spirits by rough time untuned;
And, O more precious even yet than this,
Empowers our weakness to support in bliss
The immensity of love, to love in vain
Yet still to hunger for that priceless pain;
To love without a bound, to set no end
To our long love, never aside to bend
In loving, but pour forth in living streams
Our hearts, as the full morn his quenchless beams.

He that this light hath tasted, asks no more
Dim questions answerless, that have so sore
Perplexed our thinking: in his bosom flow
Springs of all knowledge he hath need to know.
Nor vaunts he the secure philosophy
Self-throned, that would so easily untie
The knot of this hard world: and judging straight
Pronounce its essence and declare its fate.
How should the universal heart be known
To him that can so hardly read his own?
For where is he that can the inmost speak
Of his own being? Words are blind and weak,
Perplexing phantoms, dim as smoke to fire,

Mocking our tears, and torturing our desire,
When soul with soul would mingle: even Love
Never availed yet, howsoe'er he strove,
But, like the moon, to yield one radiant part
To the dark longing of the embracing heart.
And Earth, shall her vast secret open lie
Before the brief gaze of mortality?
Yet wayward and self-wise, no sooner stept
Into the world, and a few troubles wept,
A few unripe joys garnered, a few sins
Experienced, the impetuous mind begins
Its hasty wisdom; the world's griefs and joys
Holds in a balance, and essays to poise.
O persevering folly! never sleep
Must weigh the lids of that soul who would reap
This mystery; deserts vast must she explore,
Many far towns, many an unguessed shore,
And those deep regions search, more desolate far,
Where lives are herded, ignorant what they are,
And scarcely disentangling joy from woe;
Their being must she put on, if she would know
Humanity; most private bliss invade,
And with extremest terror be afraid,
Blank quiet and fierce rages apprehend.
Nor less into the leaping air ascend
Of flame-like spirits, and enamoured veins
Feel pulse in her; to exquisitest pains
Surrender. Then must her fleet impulse find
A way into the solitary mind
Of creatures, that in thousand thousand forms
Dumb life inspires and a brief sunshine warms;
And into the blind springs of sap and seed
Empty her passion, helpless with their need,
Torn with their hunger, thirsting with their thirst;
And deeper, whither eye hath never pierced,
Search out, amid the unsleeping stir that fills
Caves of old ocean and the rooted hills,
Whether indeed these streams of being flow
From inmost joy or a great core of woe.
Not until then is her wide errand sped,

Nor even so the supreme verdict said.
For far into the outer night must fare
The uncompleted spirit, that to dare
Has but begun: now her commissioned bark
She must adventure on an ocean dark,
Illumined only by the driving foam
Of stars imprisoned in the invisible home
Each of his circle; age be lost in age
Ere she accomplish half her pilgrimage;
Nor till the last of those uncounted spheres
Its incommunicable joys and tears
Yield up to her, shall she at length return
And homeward heavy with the message burn,
And to her wonder-waiting peers rehearse
The mighty meaning of the Universe.

O lovely Joy! and sweet Necessity,
That wakes, empowers, and impassions me,
It is enough that this illumined hour
I feel my own life open like a flower
Within me. Whether the worlds ache or no,
Wearing a bright mask over breasts of woe,
I have no need to learn; I only gaze
Into thine eyes, dear spirit, that dost upraise
My spirit; thy bright eyes, that never cease
To thrill me with soft moon-like beams of peace.
I look in them as into Earth's own eyes;
Faith instantly my longing fortifies;
And now I think no single day has hours,
Nor year has days, nor life has years, for powers
Of joy sufficing; for the things begun
And waiting to be seen and felt and done.
O give me all thy pains, let them be mine,
And keep alone beloved delight for thine!
I have a flame within me shall transmute
All to an ash, that shall bear flower and fruit,
While thou look'st on me, while from thee there flows
The invisible strength that in my spirit grows,
Until like Spring, the blissful prodigal,
It burns as it were capable of all

That ever could be reached, enjoyed, or won,
Or known, or suffered, underneath the sun.

But O why tarry we in language vain
And speak thus dimly of delight and pain?
Those human words have fallen out of sense,
Drunk up into intenser elements,
As colours perish into perfect light.
Now in the visitation of swift sight
That makes me for this happy moment wise
Beyond all wisdom of philosophies,
I feel even through this transitory flesh
The pang of my creation dart afresh;
The bonds of thought fall off, and I am free;
There is no longer grief nor joy for me,
But one infinity of life that flows
From the deep ocean-heart that no man knows
Out into these unnumbered semblances
Of earth and air, mountains and beasts and trees,
One timeless flood which drives the circling star
In furthest heaven, and whose weak waves we are,
Mortal and broken oft in sobbing foam,
Yet ever children of that central home,
Our Peace, that even as we flee, we find;
The Road that is before us and behind,
By which we travel from ourselves, in sleep
Or waking, toward a self more vast and deep.

O could my voice but sound to all the earth
And bring thy tidings, radiant One, to birth
In hearts of men! How would they cast away
The shroud that wraps them from the spacious day,
Burst the strong meshes they themselves have spun
Of idle cares, and step into the sun,
And see, and feel, and dedicate no more
Their travail to some far imagined shore,
Some dreamed-of goal beyond life's eager sphere,
For lo! at every hour the goal is here;
And as the dark woods tremble to the morn,
That shoots into their dewy depths forlorn

Along the wind's path bright victorious rays,
And in all branches the birds lift their praise.
So should they sing, rejoicing to be free,
As I, beloved Muse, rejoice in thee.

FEBRUARY MORNING

Peacefully fresh, O February morn,
Thy winds come to me: quiet the light slants
Through silver-bosomed clouds, that slowly borne
Across the wide heath, endlessly advance.

Now 'tis that pause before the leaping Spring,
When over all things waiting comes a hush;
And shyly, listen! the one vocal thing,
Over his dewy notes lingers the thrush.

Now life, with all her hindering riddles, seems
Simple as its green budding to the tree.
Awhile the Fates forbear, and to my dreams.
Sheltered awhile from truth, relinquish me.

In haven and at anchor rides my heart,
And broods upon its swelling joys apart,

MAY EVENING

So late the rustling shower was heard;
Yet now the aery west is still.
The wet leaves flash, and lightly stirred
Great drops out of the lilac spill.
Peacefully blown, the ashen clouds
Uncurtain height on height of sky.
Here, as I wander, beauty crowds
In freshness keen upon my eye.

Now the shorn turf a glowing green
Takes in the massy cedar shade;
And through the poplar's trembling screen
Fires of the evening blush and fade.
Each way my marvelling senses feel
Swift odour, light, and luminous hue
Of leaf and flower upon them steal:
The songs of birds pierce my heart through.

The tulip clear, like yellow flame,
Burns upward from the gloomy mould:
As though for passion forth they came,
Red hearts of peonies unfold:
And perfumes tender, sweet, intense
Enter me, delicate as a blade.
The lilac odour wounds my sense,
Of the rich rose I am afraid.

SEPARATION

We parted at golden dawn.
I feasted my last on her eyes,
And journeyed, journeyed alone:
Mountains and cities and skies

Hurried with cruel pace,
Endless and swift as the years,
From the light, from the sun, from her face,
My heart full of darkness and tears.

In a day, in a night have flown
Ages on ages fleet.
At dawn I wander alone
In a strange, in a silent street.

O love, far off in the clime
Of our joy, remember, and bend
From that early glory of Time
To me at his desolate end.

FEARS OF LOVE

Love grasps my heart in a net
Like the strong roots of a flower;
So surely his root is set
In my spirit, to hold me with power.
Yet to-night, O forgive me, Dear!
I am troubled, my heart trembles.
There flutters within me a fear
That Love in vain dissembles.

O is it that even our trust,
So strongly planted,
How steadfast soever, must
By its own fear be haunted?
As the heart must beat in the breast
If the pulse to its life be true,
Love must tremble and throb in his nest
To be sure of his life-blood anew?

THE VISION OF AUGUSTINE AND MONICA

Mother, because thine eyes are sealed in sleep,
And thy cheeks pale, and thy lips cold, and deep
In silence plunged, so fathomlessly still
Thou liest, and relaxest all thy will,
Is it indeed thy spirit that is flown?
And gazing on thy face, am I alone?
O wake and tell me it is false: I fear;
And yet my heart persuades me thou art near
With living love. I cannot weep nor wail,
Nor feel thee taken from me; the tears fail
Within me, and my lips their moan reject.
Nay, as I watch, each instant I expect
Thine eyes will shine upon me unaware
And thy lips softly part, and to thy hair
Laying one hand, like those who come from dreams

So bright, that the dim morning only seems,
Thou wilt stretch forth the other into mine,
And to thy tender gaze thy love resign.
And speak, as thou wast wont, in thy low voice
Words wise and gentle, and my heart rejoice
With comfort poured into a trusted ear.
Mother, thou hearest? Surely thou dost hear,
Though thy tired eyes, blissfully closed, defer
The heavy world, the weight of human lot.
A change has fallen, and yet I know not what.
The deep communion of thy calm enfolds
My spirit also, and suspended holds
Lament, that knows not why to weep, yet yearns
For something missed, a fear it dimly learns.

And yet time has not touched us: the full glow
Salutes us, even as when five eves ago,
By this same window, over the same seas,
With thoughts of home brought by the shadowy
breeze
From regions dearer than these golden skies,
We looked, and the same glory filled our eyes.
Even so the sun transfiguring the land
Upon the outstretched waters and bright sand
Reclined: the same faint odours floated sweet
From the green garden flowering at our feet.
Silent we gazed, and the serene large air
Appeased our thoughts; the burden that they bare
Departed: marvelling at our own release
We greeted wave and ray as kindred. Peace
Descended then, and touched us; and we knew
Our joy, attired in light, and felt it true.
Dust of the journey, the hot din of Rome
Fell from us: with an aspect kind, like home,
The silent and interminable sea
Our longing matched with his immensity:
We followed the far sails that, one by one,
Were drawn into the huge and burning sun;
And our souls set to freedom; and they cast
Away the soiled remembrance of things past,

And to the things before, with radiant speed,
Ran on as eager as a captive freed,
Far to the last horizon's utmost bound,
Onward and onward, and no limit found.

Then thou rememberest how regarding long
This lovely earth, an inward vision strong
O'ercame us, till terrestrial beauty took
An insubstantial seeming, the far look
Of regions known in dream. Forsaking fear
We rose together to that ampler sphere,
Where the sun burns, and in his train the moon
And myriad stars upon the darkness strewn
Illumine earth: on splendour past access
Of fleshly eye, revolving weariless,
We gazed; yet even as we gazed, the pang
Of the eternal touched us: then we sprang
From those bright circles, and each boundary passed
Of sense, and into liberty at last,
To our own souls we came, the haunted place
Of thought, companionless as ancient space,
Her lonely mirror; and uplifted thence
Sighed upward to the eternal Effluence
Of life, the intense glory that imbues
With far-off sheddings of its radiant hues
Mortality; that from the trees calls forth
Young leaves, and flowers from the untended earth;
And from the heart of man, joy and despair,
Rapture and adoration, the dim prayer
Of troubled lips, tears and ecstatic throes,
And fearful love unfolding like the rose,
And hymns of peace: whose everlasting power
Draws up ten thousand spirits every hour,
As the bright vapour from ten thousand streams,
Back to their home of homes, where thou with beams
Of living joy, O Sun of humankind,
Feedest the fainting and world-wounded mind,
And from remembrance burnest out all fear.
Sustained a moment in that self-same sphere
By wings of ecstasy, we hung, we drew

Into our trembling souls the very hue
Of Paradise, permitted the dear breath
Of truth; us also ignorance of death
Made mighty, and joy beyond the need of peace.
We of the certain light of blessedness
A moment tasted: then, since even desire
Perishes of its own exceeding fire,
Sighing our spirits failed, and fell away,
And sank into the tinge of alien day
Unwillingly, to memory and the weight
Of hope on the unsure heart, to armed fate,
And prisoning time, and to the obscuring sound
Of human words, O even to the ground!

The flame that fledged to that remotest height
Our spirits winged upon impassioned flight,
Sped us no more; but yet the usurping press
Of mortal hours their wonted heaviness
Relaxed, and on our rapture lightly leaned.
Now, as we gazed, a glory intervened:
We saw, yet saw not: our thoughts lingered, where
The rays yet pierced them of celestial air;
And with hearts hushed, as children that have learned
The meaning of some fear or joy, we turned
To one another, and spoke softly, and drew
Sighs, when that light smote on our thoughts anew.

O could the tumult of the senses sleep,
We murmured then: the mutinous body keep
Due pace, and this surrounding bath of light,
And these unwearying waves of day and night,
Following in beauty, the bright death and birth
Of suns, the sweet apparel of the earth,
Awhile be dimmed: could but the moon forgo
Her splendour, and the winds forget to blow,
Ocean no more his troubling water heave,
And air its many-coloured web unweave,
Could but those visions pale that with affright
Pierce us, or unapproachable delight,
And all disturbing charm that at our eyes

Darts arrows, and for ever laughs and flies;
Could all be hushed, and memory turn her face,
And hope her low flute silence for a space,
And the soul slip the clinging leash of thought,
And cast the raiment she herself hath wrought,
And, as a flower springs upward unaware,
Naked ascend into the eternal air:
While he, who all this lovely warp of earth
With pomp of time inweaves, and still from birth
Moves his creation to death's other door,
If he through perishable mouths no more
Should speak: not dimly through the veil of sense
Reported, nor conjectured influence
Of stars, nor through the thunder, nor by dream,
Nor by whatever of prophetic theme
Angel or man melodiously hath sung,
But utter very words of his own tongue,
And hold communion with the mind he made,
As with the light such things as know not shade,
O were not this the joy of joy to win,
And Paradise indeed to enter in?

I too, I too, in my own feverish youth
That light desired; and fainted after truth,
Unripe in fervour: in a misty morn
Of passion and unrestful ferment borne
Hither and thither, many uncertain flames
Did I pursue, and stumbled among shames,
And wandered where my own rash spirit drove,
Misleading to sad joys. In love with Love,
I looked in many faces, searching him,
And passionately embraced with phantoms dim,
Nor knew what my heart hungered for. But thou,
Who understandest, who beginnest now
In glory visible to fill mine eyes,
Thou that obscure desire didst authorise,
And by degrees unto itself disclose.
O by that beam how momentary shows
The world: 'tis but the bush that burns with thee:
And I the sandals of mortality

Long to put off, and with these chains have done,
That bind me, and fly homeward to the sun.

Mother, but thou? O what a pang is this
That wounds me? Mother, of what cup of bliss
Hast thou partaken, that I may not taste?
O could I penetrate thy peace, and haste
Thither where thou art gone! For now in vain
My heart swells with unconquerable pain.
My desolation now too well I know.
I cannot come where my soul chafes to go,
But lay my wet cheek down to thine, and feel
Thy cold cheek desolate my heart, and steal
Peace and delight away. Dost thou not move,
Thou that wert used to weep sad tears of love
For me that grieved thee? Now thou weep'st no more.
But I with all the hurt I caused thee sore,
Weep all thy tears afresh. The door is closed
Upon me fast, and darkness interposed!
Now terrible thy calm seems, and this peace
Of night dismays me, longing for release
That will not visit me. On earth and skies
The hush of slumber falls, on thy closed eyes,
My mother, on the shore and on the sea;
All things the night appeases, but not me.

THE PINE WOODS OF GRIJO

Our voices break on a stillness bright and strange
Of early morning. Pines upon either hand
People the sunshine: deep as eye can range,
Their lofty throngs in a darkling order stand.

Our sandy path, new-washed with rains of night,
Already is dry: but dewily shine its banks.
And cool, the shadows asleep upon stems upright.
Unevenly dapple the silent, endless ranks.

The shadows, they lie so lightly, I think if a wind
Blew hither, his breath would lift them, as all sad
cares
Are lifted, blown from the cleared and eager mind,
That now unbidden its native pleasure dares.

O pines of ardent branches, that plume with green
The delicate blue of morning, and softly house
The warm light poured from a splendour half
unseen;
O forest still and scented, hear my vows!

My body is warm to my heart, and I rejoice.
I clothe myself with the light, as ye are clad:
As ye breathe forth your perfume, I my voice
Will utter in morning freshness, alert and glad.

As the thistledown melts in the air, of very lightness,
Is scattered the web that trouble has vainly spun;
And my spirit arising bold, and bathed in brightness,
Hymns the excellent, sweet, victorious sun.

CARVALHOS

Earth, I love thee well;
And well dost thou requite me.
I have no tongue to tell
How this day thou hast thrilled
With wonder, to delight me,
My heart, intensely stilled.

On the white-walled knoll I stand
And feel beneath me glowing
The noon-hushed, lovely land:
Hills beyond hills, and few
Far towns a faint crest showing
Faint in the rounding blue.

Blue sea and radiant sky,
Blue sky and mountain marry;
And the mind, raised up on high,
Onward and onward springs;
Where'er she choose to tarry,
On every side are wings.

To the sun the sun-bathed pines
Their strength and sweetness render.
From where the far foam shines
Like the rim of a dazzling shield,
All fervent things and tender
Life, joy, and perfume yield.

Me, too, with mastering charm
From husks of dead days freeing,
The sun draws up, to be warm
And to bloom in this sweet hour;
The stem of all my being
Waited to bear this flower.

DOURO

The dripping of the boughs in silence heard
Softly; the low note of some lingering bird
Amid the weeping vapour; the chill fall
Of solitary evening upon all
That stirs and hopes and apprehends and grieves,
With pining odours of the ruined leaves
Have like a dew distilled upon my heart
The air of death: but now recoiling start
Longing and keen remembrance out of sighs;
And forward the desiring spirit flies
Toward the wild peace of that illumined shore,
Which, left behind her, yet still shines before;
To Douro, rushing through the mighty hills.
Now his great stream with fancied splendour fills

Even this brooding twilight; a swift ghost,
Journeying forever to the glimmering coast,
Where his majestic voice is heard afar.
Exulting dim upon that ocean bar.
O Douro, gliding by dark woods, and fleet
Beneath thy shadowy rocks in the noon heat,
How my heart faints to follow after thee
On one true course to my deep destined sea!
To take no care of dimness or sunshine,
Urged ever by an inward way divine,
Nor falter in this heavy gloom that brings
So thick upon me lamentable things
Of earth, and hinders the swift spirit's wings,
And clouds the steadfast vision that sustains
Alone the trembling heart amid perpetual pains,

Dear friend, who thirstest, even as I, to be
Heir and possessor of sweet liberty,
Once more in memory let us pluck the hour
That bloomed so perfect, and renew the power
Of joy within our wondering breasts, to feel
That freshness of eternal things, and heal
All our unhappy thoughts in those pure rays.
Not yet the last of these delightful days
Into the dark unwillingly has flown,
And thou and I upon a hill o'ergrown,
That indolently shadows Douro stream,
Together watch the wonderful clear dream
Of evening. Under the dark shore of pines
Noiselessly running, the wide water shines.
Curving afar, from where the mountains lift
Their burning heads, through many a forest rift
The River comes, scenting the spaces free
In this broad channel, of his welcoming sea.
No more by silent precipices hewn
Out of the night, murmuring a lonely tune
To craggy Fregeneda; nor where shines
Regoa, throned among her purple vines,
Impetuously seeking valleys new;
But smoothing his broad mirror to the hue

And peace of heaven, unhasting now he flows
And with the sky unfathomably glows,
Even as on yonder shore the woods receive
In their empurpled bosoms the warm eve.
As when a lover gazes tenderly
Upon his loved one, and, as tender, she
Hushes her heart, her joy to realize,
So hushed, so lovely, so contented lies
Earth, by that earnest-gazing glory blest.
But on this hither bank that fervent West
Is hidden behind us, and the stems around
Spring shadowy from the bare and darkling ground,
Only a single pine out of the shade
Emerges, in what splendour soft arrayed!
Magical clearness, warming to the sight
As to the touch it would be: plumed with light,
Motionless upward the tree soars and burns.
But now the dew upon the freshened ferns
In the dim hollow gather, and cool scent
Of herbage with the pine's pure odour blent,
And voices of the villagers below
As home, with music, up the stream they row,
Greet us descending; every blossom sleeps,
And bluer and more blue the evening steeps
Water and fragrant grass and the straight stems
In tender mystery. Down a path that hems
The hollow, to our waiting boat we come.
Pale purple flames shining amid the gloom
Signal the autumn crocus: look, afar,
Betwixt the tree-tops, the first-ventured star!
Soon gliding homeward under shadowy shores
And deepened sky, to the repeated oars'
Strong chime we hasten. Now along pale sand
Our ripple leaps in silver; now the land,
High over the swift water darkly massed,
Echoes our falling blades as we go past;
Until, enthroned upon her hills divine,
The city nears us: lights begin to shine
Scarce from the stars distinguished, so the gloom
Has mingled earth and sky; more steeply loom

The banks on either side, at intervals
Tufted with trees, or crowned with winding walls;
And now at last the river opens large,
Filled with the city's murmur; from his marge,
Slope over slope, the glimmering terraces
Rise, and their scattered lamps' bright images
Cast on the wavering water; and we hear
The sound of soft bells, and cries faint or near
From the dim wharves, or anchored ships, whose spars
Entangle in dark meshes the white stars.
And pale smoke rising blue on the blue air
Sleeps in a thin cloud under heights that bear
Towers and roofs lofty against the west,
Where yet a clearness lingers. Now the breast
Of Douro heaves, foreboding whither bound
His currents hasten, and with joyous sound,
As though the encountering brine new pulses gave,
Lifts, to outrace our speed, his buoyant wave.
For, hearken, up the peaceful evening borne
Out of the wide sea-gates, low thunders warn
Of Ocean beating with his sleepless surge
Along the wild sand-marges: the deep dirge
Of mariners, that wakes the widow's ear
At night, far inland, terrible and near.
Fainter, this eve, he murmurs than as oft
His troubled music: here, by distance soft,
The abrupt volley, the sharp shattering roar,
And seethe of foam flung tumbling up the shore,
Mingle in one wide rumour, that all round
Is heard afar, robing the air with sound.
Deep in my heart I hear it. The still night
Deepens, as we ascend the homeward height,
And loud or low, in following intervals,
Over the hills the sound unwearied falls;
And as upon my bed my heavy eyes
Close up, the drowsing mind re-occupies.

O what a vision floats into my sleep!
As a night-shutting flower, my senses keep
The live day's lingering odours and warm hues,

That thought and motion with themselves transfuse
Till sound and light and perfume are but one,
Mingled in fires of the embracing sun.
Yet still I am aware of Ocean stirred
Far off, and like a grave rejoicing heard.
Am I awake, or in consenting dreams
Pour thither all my thought's tumultuous streams?
His voice, to meet them, a deep answer sends:
My soul, to listen, her light wing suspends,
And, pillowed upon undulating sound,
For all desire hath satisfaction found.
He calls her thither, where the winds uncage
Vast longing, that the unsounded seas assuage.
Breeze after breeze her winged pinnacle bears
Over the living water, that prepares
Still widening mystery: she her speed the more
Urges, exulting to have lost the shore,
Supported by the joy that sets her free,
Delighted mistress of her destiny,
Fills the wide night with beating of her wing,
And is content, for ever voyaging
By timeless courses, over worlds unknown,
Lifted and lost, abounding and alone.

NATURE

Because out of corruption burns the rose,
And to corruption lovely cheeks descend;
Because with her right hand she heals the woes
Her left hand wrought, loth nor to wound nor
mend;

I praise indifferent Nature, affable
To all philosophies, of each unknown;
Though in my listening ear she leans to tell
Some private word, as if for me alone.

Still, like an artist, she her meaning hides,
Silent, while thousand tongues proclaim it clear;
Ungrudging, her large feast for all provides;
Tender, exultant, savage, blithe, austere,

In each man's hand she sets its proper tool,
For the wise, wisdom, folly for the fool.

BOOK II

(1897-1903)

TRISTRAM'S END

I

Tristram lies sick to death;
Dulled is his kingly eye,
Listless his famed right arm: earth-weary breath
Hath force alone to sigh
The one name that re-kindles life's low flame,
Isoult!—And thou, fair moon of Tristram's eve,
Who with that many-remembered name didst take
A glory for the sake
Of her who shone the sole light of his days and deeds,
Thou canst no more relieve
This heart that inly bleeds
With all thy love, with all thy tender lore,
No, nor thy white hands soothe him any more.
Still, the day long, she hears
Kind words that are more sharp to her than spears.
Ah, loved he more, he had not been so kind!
And still with pricking tears
She watches him, and still must seem resigned;
Though well she knows what face his eyes require,
And jealous pangs, like coiled snakes in her mind,
Cling tighter, as that voice more earnestly
Asks heavy with desire

From out that passionate past which is not hers,
"Sweet wife, is there no sail upon the sea?"

Tenderest hearts by pain grow oft the bitterest,
And haste to wound the thing they love the best.
At evening, at sun-set, to Tristram's bed
News on her lips she brings!
She comes with eyes bright in divining dread,
Hardening her anguished heart she bends above his
head.

"O Tristram!"—How her low voice strangely rings!—
"There comes a ship, ah, rise not, turn not pale.
I know not what this means, it is a sail
Black, black as night!" She shot her word, and
fled.

But Tristram cried
With a great cry, and rose upon his side.
"It cannot be, it cannot, shall not be!
I will not die until mine own eyes see."
Despair, more strong than hope, lifts his weak
limbs;

He stands and draws deep effort from his breath,
He trembles, his gaze swims,
He gropes his steps in pain,
Nigh fainting, till he gain
Salt air and brightness from the outer door
That opens on the cliff-built bastion floor
And the wide ocean gleaming far beneath.
He gazes, his lips part,
And all the blood pours back upon his heart.

Close thine eyes, Tristram, lest joy blind thee quite!
So swift a splendour burns away thy doubt.
Nay, Tristram, gaze, gaze, lest bright Truth go out
Ere she hath briefly shone.
White, dazzling white,
A sail swells onward, filling all his sight
With snowy light!
As on a gull's sure wing the ship comes on;
She towers upon the wave, she speeds for home.

Tristram on either doorpost must sustain
His arms for strength to gaze his fill again.
She shivers off the wind; the shining foam
Bursts from her pitching prow.
The sail drops as she nears,
Poised on the joyous swell; and Tristram sees
The mariners upon the deck; he hears
Their eager cries: the breeze
Blows a blue cloak; and now
Like magic brought to his divining ears,
A voice, that empties all the earth and sky,
Comes clear across the water, "It is I!"

Isoult is come! Victorious saints above,
Who suffered anguish ere to bliss you died,
Have pity on him whom Love so sore hath tried,
Who sinned yet greatly suffered for his love.
That dear renounced love when now he sees,
Heavy with joy, he sinks upon his knees.
O had she wings to lift her to his side!
But she is far below
Where the spray breaks upon the rusted rail
And rock-hewn steps, and there
Stands gazing up, and lo!
Tristram, how faint and pale!
A pity overcomes her like despair.
How shall her strength avail
To conquer that steep stair,
Dark, terrible, and ignorant as Time,
Up which her feet must climb
To Tristram? His outstretching arms are fain
To help her, yet are helpless; and his pain
Is hers, and her pain Tristram's; with long sighs
She mounts, then halts again,
Till she have drawn strength from his love-dimmed
eyes:
But when that wasted face anew she sees,
Despair anew subdues her knees:
She fails, yet still she mounts by sad degrees,
With all her soul into her gaze upcast,

Until at last, at last . . .
What tears are like the wondering tears
Of that entranced embrace,
When out of desolate and divided years
Face meets beloved face?
What cry most exquisite of grief or bliss
The too full heart shall tell,
When the new-recovered kiss
Is the kiss of last farewell?

II

Isoult

O Tristram, is this true?
Is it thou I see
With my own eyes, clasp in my arms? I knew,
I knew that this must be.
Thou couldst not suffer so,
And I not feel the smart,
Far, far away. But oh,
How pale, my love, thou art!

Tristram

'Tis I, Isoult, 'tis I
That thee enfold.
I have seen thee, my own life, and yet I die.
O for my strength of old!
O that thy love could heal
This wound that conquers me!
But the night is come, I feel,
And the last sun set for me.

Isoult

Tristram, 'twas I that healed thy hurt,
That old, fierce wound of Morolt's poisoned sword
Stricken to death, pale, pale as now thou wert:

Yet was thy strength restored.
Have I forgot my skill?
This wound shall yet be healed.
Love shall be master still,
And Death again shall yield!

Tristram

Isoult, if Time could bring me back
That eve, that first eve, and that Irish shore,
Then should I fear not, no nor nothing lack,
And life were mine once more.
But now too late thou art come;
Too long we have dwelt apart;
I have pined in an alien home:
This new joy bursts my heart.

Isoult

Hark, Tristram, to the breaking sea!
So sounded the dim waves, at such an hour
On such an eve, when thy voice came to me
First in my father's tower.
I heard thy sad harp from the shore beneath,
It stirred my soul from sleep.
Then it was bliss to breathe;
But now, but now, I weep.

Tristram

Shipwrecked, without hope, without friend, alone
On a strange shore, stricken with pang on pang,
I stood sad-hearted by that tower unknown,
Yet soon for joy I sang.
For could I see thee and on death believe?
Ah, glad would I die to attain
The beat of my heart, that eve,
And the song in my mouth again!

Isoult

Young was I then and fair,
Thou too wast fair and young;
How comely the brown hair
Down on thy shoulder hung!
O Tristram, all grows dark as then it grew,
But still I see thee on that surge-beat shore;
Thou earnest, and all was new
And changed for evermore.

Tristram

Isoult, dost thou regret?
Behold my wasted cheek.
With salt tears it is wet,
My arms how faint, how weak!
And thou, since that far day, what hast thou seen
Save strife, and tears, and failure, and dismay?
Had that hour never been,
Peace had been thine, this day.

Isoult

Look, Tristram, in my eyes!
My own love, I could feed
Life well with miseries
So thou wert mine indeed.
Proud were the tears I wept;
That day, that hour I bless.
Nor would for peace accept
One single pain the less.

Tristram

Isoult, my heart is rent.
What pangs our bliss hath bought!
Only joy we meant,
Yet woe and wrong we have wrought.

I vowed a vow in the dark,
And thee, who wert mine, I gave
For a word's sake, to King Mark!
Words, words have digged our grave.

Isolt

Tristram, despite thy love,
King Mark had yet thine oath.
Ah, surely thy heart strove
How to be true to both.
Blame not thyself! for woe
'Twixt us was doomed to be.
One only thing I know;
Thou hast been true to me.

Tristram

Accurst be still that day,
When lightly I vowed the king
Whatever he might pray
Home to his hands I'd bring!
Thee, thee he asked! And I
Who never feared man's sword,
Yielded my life to a lie,
To save the truth of a word.

Isolt

Think not of that day, think
Of the day when our lips desired,
Unknowing, that cup to drink!
The cup with a charm was fired
From thee to beguile my love:
But now in my soul it shall burn
For ever, nor turn, nor remove,
Till the sun in his course shall turn.

Tristram

Or ever that draught we drank,
Thy heart, Isoult, was mine,
My heart was thine. I thank
God's grace, no wizard wine,
No stealth of a drop distilled
By a spell in the night, no art,
No charm, could have ever filled
With aught but thee my heart.

Isoult

When last we said farewell,
Remember how we dreamed
Wild love to have learned to quell;
Our hearts grown wise we deemed.
Tender, parted friends
We vowed to be; but the will
Of Love meant other ends.
Words fool us, Tristram, still.

Tristram

Not now, Isoult, not now!
I am thine while I have breath.
Words part us not, nor vow—
No, nor King Mark, but death.
I hold thee to my breast.
Our sins, our woes are past;
Thy lips were the first I prest,
Thou art mine, thou art mine at the last!

Isoult

O Tristram, all grows old,
Enfold me closer yet!
The night grows vast and cold,
And the dew on thy hair falls wet.

And never shall Time rebuild
The places of our delight;
Those towers and gardens are filled
With emptiness now, and night!

Tristram

Isoult, let it all be a dream,
The days and the deeds, let them be
As the bough that I cast on the stream
And that lived but to bring thee to me;
As the leaves that I broke from the bough
To float by thy window, and say
That I waited thy coming—O now
Thou art come, let the world be as they!

Isoult

How dark is the strong waves' sound!
Tristram, they fill me with fear!
We two are but spent waves, drowned
In the coming of year upon year.
Long dead are our friends and our foes,
Old Rual, Brangian, all
That helped us, or wrought us woes;
And we, the last, we fall.

Tristram

God and his great saints guard
True friends that loved us well,
And all false foes be barred
In the fiery gates of hell.
But broken be all those towers,
And sunken be all those ships!
Shut out those old, dead hours;
Life, life, is on thy lips!

Isoult

Tristram, my soul is afraid!

Tristram

Isoult, Isoult, thy kiss!
To sorrow though I was made,
I die in bliss, in bliss.

Isoult

Tristram, my heart must break.
O leave me not in the grave
Of the dark world! Me too take!
Save me, O Tristram, save!

III

Calm, calm the moving waters all the night
On to that shore roll slow,
Fade into foam against the cliff's dim height,
And fall in a soft thunder, and upsurge
For ever out of unexhausted might,
Lifting their voice below
Tuned to no human dirge;
Nor from their majesty of music bend
To wail for beauty's end
Or towering spirit's most fiery overthrow;
Nor tarrieth the dawn, though she unveil
To weeping eyes their woe,
The dawn that doth not know
What the dark night hath wrought,
And over the far wave comes pacing pale,
Of all that she reveals regarding nought.—
But ere the dawn there comes a faltering tread;
Isoult, the young wife, stealing from her bed,
Sleepless with dread,
Creeps by still wall and blinded corridor,
Till from afar the salt scent of the air
Blows on her brow; and now
In that pale space beyond the open door
What mute, clasped shadow dulls her to despair

By keen degrees aware
That with the dawn her widowhood is there?

Is it wild envy or remorseful fear
Transfixes her young heart, unused to woe,
Crying to meet wrath, hatred, any foe,
Not silence drear!
Not to be vanquished so
By silence on the lips that were so dear!
Ah, sharpest stab! it is another face
That leans to Tristram's piteous embrace,
Another face she knows not, yet knows well,
Whose hands are clasped about his helpless head,
Propping it where it fell
In a vain tenderness,
But dead,—her great dream-hated rival dead,
Invulnerably dead,
Dead as her love, and cold,
And on her heart a grief heavy as stone is rolled.
She bows down, stricken in accusing pain,
And love, long-baffled, surges back again
Over her heart; she wails a shuddering cry,
While the tears blindly rain,
"I, I have killed him, I that loved him, I
That for his dear sake had been glad to die.
I loved him not enough, I could not keep
His heart, and yet I loved him, O how deep!
I cannot touch him. Will none set him free
From those, those other arms and give him me?
Alas, I may not vex him from that sleep.
He is thine in the end, thou proud one, he is thine,
Not mine, not mine!
I loved him not enough, I could not hold
My tongue from stabbing, and forsook him there.
I had not any care
To keep him from the darkness and the cold.
O all my wretched servants, where were ye?
Hath none in my house tended him but she?
Where are ye now? Can ye not hear my call?
Come hither, laggards all!

Nay, hush not so affrighted, nor so stare
Upon your lord; 'tis he!
Put out your torches, for the dawn grows clear.
And set me out within the hall a bier,
And wedding robes, the costliest that are
In all my house, prepare,
And lay upon the silks these princely dead,
And bid the sailors take that funeral bed
And set it in the ship, and put to sea,
And north to Cornwall steer.
Farewell, my lord, thy home is far from here.
Farewell, my great love, dead and doubly dear!
Carry him hence, proud queen, for he is thine,
Not mine, not mine, not mine!"

Within Tintagel walls King Mark awaits his queen.
The south wind blows, surely she comes to-day!
No light hath his eye seen
Since she is gone, no pleasure; he grows gray;
His knights apart make merry and wassail,
With dice and chessboard, hound at knee, they play;
But he sits solitary all the day,
Thinking of what hath been.
And now through all the castle rings a wail;
The king arises; all his knights are dumb;
The queen, the queen is come.
Not as she came of old,
Sweeping with gesture proud
To meet her wronged lord, royally arrayed,
And music ushered her, and tongues were stayed,
And all hearts beat, her beauty to behold;
But mute she comes and cold,
Borne on a bier, apparelled in a shroud,
Daisies about her sprinkled; and now bowed
Is her lord's head; and hushing upon all
Thoughts of sorrow fall,
As the snow softly, without any word;
And every breast is stirred
With wonder in its weeping;
For by her sleeping side,

In that long sleep no morning shall divide,
Is Tristram sleeping;
Tristram who wept farewell, and fled, and swore
That he would clasp his dear love never more,
And sailed far over sea
Far from his bliss and shame,
And dreamed to die at peace in Brittany
And to uncloud at last the glory of his name.
Yet lo, with fingers clasping both are come,
Come again home
In all men's sight, as when of old they came,
And Tristram led Isoult, another's bride,
True to his vow, but to his heart untrue,
And silver trumpets blew
To greet them stepping o'er the flower-strewn floor,
And King Mark smiled upon them, and men cried
On Tristram's name anew,
Tristram, the king's strong champion and great pride.

Silently gazing long
On them that wrought him wrong,
Still stands the stricken king, and to his eyes
Such tears as old men weep, yet shed not, rise:
Lifting his head at last, as from a trance, he sighs.
"Beautiful ever, O Isoult, wast thou,
And beautiful art thou now,
Though never again shall I, reproaching thee,
Make thy proud head more beautiful to me;
But this is the last reproach, and this the last
Forgiveness that thou hast.
Lost is the lost, Isoult, and past the past!
O Tristram, no more shalt thou need to hide
Thy thought from my thought, sitting at my side,
Nor need to wrestle sore
With thy great love and with thy fixed oath,
For now Death leaves thee loyal unto both,
Even as thou wouldst have been, for evermore.
Now, after all thy pain, thy brow looks glad;
But I lack all things that I ever had,
My wife, my friend, yea, even my jealous rage;

And empty is the house of my old age.
Behold, I have laboured all my days to part
These two, that were the dearest to my heart.
Isoult, I would have fenced thee from men's sight,
My treasure, that I found so very fair,
The treasure I had taken with a snare:
To keep thee mine, this was my life's delight.
And now the end is come, alone I stand,
And the hand that lies in thine is not my hand."

THE DRYAD

What has the ilex heard,
What has the laurel seen,
That the pale edges of their leaves are stirred?
What spirit stole between?
O trees upon your circle of smooth green,
You stir as youths when beauty paces by,
Moving heart and eye
To unuttered praise.
Was it the wind that parted your light boughs,
Some odour to recapture as he strays,
Or some fair virgin shape of human brows
Yet lost to human gaze?

O for that morning of the simple world,
When hollow oak and fount and flowering reed
Were storied each with glimpses of a face
By dropping hair dew-pearled!
Strange eyes that had no heed
Of men, and bodies shy with the firm grace
Of young fawns flying, yet of human kin,
Whose hand might lead us, could we only spare
Doubt and suspicious pride, a world to win,
Where all that lives would speak with us, now dumb
For fear of us. O might I yet win there!
Wave, boughs, aside! to your fresh glooms I come.

But all is lonely here!
Yet lonelier is the glade
Than the wood's entrance, and more dark appear
The hollows of still shade.
Ah, yet the nymph's white feet have surely stayed
Beside the spring; how solitary fair
Shines and trembles there
White narcissus bloom!
By lichen'd gray stones, where the glancing stream
Swerves over into green wet mossy gloom,
Their snowy frail flames on the ripple gleam
And all the place illumine.

Surely her feet a moment rested here!
Staying her hand upon a pliant branch,
She paused, she listened, and then glided on
Half-turned in lovely fear;
And her young shoulder shone
Like moonbeams that wet sands, foam-bordered,
 blanch,
A sight to stay the beating of the breast!
Alas, but mortal eyes may never know
That beauty. Hark, what bird above his nest
So rapturously sings? Ah, thou wilt tell,
Thou perfect flower, whither her footsteps go,
And all her thoughts, pure flower, for thou know'st
 well.

White sweetness, richest odours round thee cling.
Purely thou breathe'st of voluptuous Spring!
Thou art so white, because thou dost enclose
All the advancing splendours of the year;
And thou hast burned beyond the reddest rose,
To shine so keenly clear.
Shadowed within thy radiance I divine
Frail coral tinges of the anemone,
Dim blue that clouds upon the columbine,
And wallflower's glow as of old, fragrant wine,
And the first tulip's sanguine clarity,
And pansy's midnight-purple of sole star!

All these that wander far
From thee, and wilder glories would assume,
Ev'n the proud peony of drooping plume,
Robed like a queen in Tyre,
All to thy lost intensity aspire;
Toward thee they yearn out of encroaching gloom;
They are all faltering beams of thy most perfect fire!

And she, that only haunts remote green ways,
Is it an empty freedom she doth praise?
Doth she, distrustfully averse, despise
The common sweet of passion, apt to fault?
And turns she from the hunger in love's eyes
Pale famine to exalt?

Oh no, her bosom's maiden hope is still
A morning dewdrop, imaging complete
All life, full-stored with every generous thrill;
No hope less perfect could her body fill,
Nor she be false to her own heart's rich beat.
But she is pure because she hath not soiled
Hope with endeavour foiled;
She not condemns glad love, but with the best
Enshrines it, lovelier because unpossessed.
Where is the joy we meant
In our first love, the joy so swiftly spent?
It glows for ever in her sacred breast,
Untamed to languor's ebb, nor by hot passion rent.

O pure abstaining Priestess of delight,
That treasurest apart love's sanctity,
Art thou but vision of an antique dream,
Mated with a song's flight,
With beckoning western gleam
Or first rose fading from an early sky?
Yet we, that are of earth, must seek on earth
Our bodied bliss. Nay, thou hast still thine hour;
And in a girl's life-trusting April mirth,
Or noble boy's clear and victorious eyes,
Thou shinest with the charm and with the power
Of all that wisdom loses to be wise.

AMASIS

I

"O King Amasis, hail!
News from thy friend, the King Polycrates!
My oars have never rested on the seas
From Samos, nor on land my horse's hoofs,
Till I might tell my tale."
Sais, the sacred city, basked her roofs
And gardens whispering in the western light;
Men thronged abroad to taste the coming cool of
night:
Only the palace closed
Unechoing courts, where by the lake reposed,
Wide-eyed, the enthroned shapes of Memphian
deities;
And King Amasis in the cloistered shade,
That guards them, of a giant colonnade,
Paced musing; there he pondered mysteries
That are the veils of truth;
For mid those gods of grave, ignoring smile
Large auguries he spelled,
Forgot the spears, the tumults of his youth,
And strangled Apries, and the reddened Nile.
Now turning, he beheld,
Half in a golden shadow and half touched with flame,
The white-robed stranger from the Grecian isle,
And heard pronounced his name.

II

"Welcome from Samos, friend!
Good news, I think, thou bearest in thy mien,"
The king spoke welcoming with voice serene.
"How is it with Polycrates, thy lord?
Peace on his name attend!
Would he were here in Egypt, and his sword
Could sheathe, and we at god-like ease discourse
Of counsel no ignoble needs enforce,

And take august regale
Of wisdom from the Powers whose purpose cannot
fail.

I, too, O man of Samos, bred to war,
Passed youth, passed manhood, in a life of blood;
But many victories bring the heart no certain good.
Would that he too might tease his fate no more,
And I might see his face
In presence of my land's ancestral Powers,—
See, from their countenance, what a grandeur beams!
Thou know'st I love thy race;
Bright wits vp have, skill in adventurous schemes;
But deeper life is ours:
Fed by these springs, your strength might bless the
world. But lo!
The light begins to fade from the high towers.
Thy errand let me know."

III

"Thus saith Polycrates:
The counsel which thou wrotest me is well;
For, seeing how full crops my granaries swell,
How all winds waft me to prosperity,
How I gain all with ease,
And my raised banner pledges victory,
Thou didst advise me cast away what most
Brought pleasure to my eyes and seemed of rarest
cost.
And after heavy thought
I chose the ring which Theodorus wrought,
My famous emerald, where young Phaethon
Shoots headlong with pale limbs through glowing air,
While green waves from beneath toss white drops to
his hair.
A long time, very loth, I gazed thereon;
For this cause, thought I, men most envy me;
I took a ship, and fifty beating oars
Bore me far out to sea:
I stood upon the poop—but wherefore tell

What now is rumoured round all Asian shores?
Say only I did well,
Who the world's envy treasured yet in deep waves
drowned.
Homeward I came, and mourned within my doors
Three days, nor solace found."

IV

Amasis without word
Listens, dark-browed: the Samian speaks anew:
"Let not the king this thing so deeply rue;
Truly the gem was of imperial price,
Nay even, men averred,
Coveted more than wealthy satrapies,
Nor twenty talents could its loss redeem:
Yet hear! the Gods are more benignant than men
dream.
Thus saith my lord: The moon
Not once had waned, when as I sat at noon
Within my palace court above the Lydian bay,
They led before me with much wondering noise
A fisherman; between two staggering boys
Slung heavily a fish he brought, that day
Caught in his bursting net,
A royal fish for royal destiny!
I marvelled; but amaze broke deeper yet
To recognize Heaven's hand,
When from its cloven belly (surely high
In that large grace I stand)
Dazzled my eyes with light, my heart with joy, the
ring
Restored!—Why rendest thou thy robe, and why
Lamentest thou, O king?"

V

"O lamentable news!"
Amasis cried; "now have the Gods indeed
Doom on thy head, Polycrates, decreed!"

I feared already, when I heard thy joy
Must need stoop down to choose
For sacrifice, loss of a shining toy,
Searching the suburbs only of content,
Not thy heart's home: what God this blindness on
thee sent?

Gone was thy ring; yet how
Was thy soul cleared, or thou more greatly thou?
Were vain things vainer, or the dear more dear?
Hast thou, bent gazing o'er thy child asleep,
Thoughts springing, tender as new leaves? Deep,
deep,

Deep as thy inmost hope, as thy most sacred fear,
Thou shouldst have sought the pain
That changes earth's wide aspect in an hour,
Heaved by abysmal throes!

Ah, then our pleasant refuges are vain;
Yet, thrilled, the soul assembles all her power,
And cleared by peril glows,
Seeing immortal hosts arrayed upon her side!
Blind man, the scornful Gods thy offering slight:
My fears are certified."

VI

Swift are the thoughts of fear.
But Fate at will rides swifter far; and lo!
Even as Amasis bows to boded woe,
Even as his robe, with a sad cry, he rends,
The accomplishment is here.
The sun that from the Egyptian plain descends,
Blessing with holier shade
Those strange gods dreaming throned by the vast
colonnade,
Bums o'er the northern sea,
Firing the peak of Asian Mycale,
Firing a cross raised on the mountain side!
Polycrates the Fortunate hangs there:
The false Oroetes hath him in a snare;
Now with his quivering limbs his soul is crucified;

And in his last hour first
He tastes the extremity of loss; he burns
With ecstasy of thirst;
Nought recks he even of his dearest now,
Moaning for breath; no pity he discerns
On the dark Persian's brow:
Grave on his milk-white horse, in silks of Sidon
shawled,
The Satrap smiles, and on his finger turns
The all-envied emerald.

THE BACCHANAL OF ALEXANDER

"Alexander, returning from his Indian Conquests, having with infinite difficulty brought his army through the salt deserts of Gedrosia, arrived in the pleasant country of the Garmanians. Some authors tell us, that reclining with his friends upon two chariots chained together, and having his ears entertained by the most delicious music, he led his army through Carmania, the soldiers following him with dances and garlands, in emulation of the ancient Bacchanals of Dionysus."—ARRIAN.

1

A wondrous rumour fills and stirs
The wide Carmanian Vale;
On leafy hills the sunburnt vintagers
Stand listening; silent is the echoing flail
Upon the threshing-floors:
Girls in the orchards one another hail
Over their golden stores.
"Leave the dewy apples hanging flushed,
Ripe to drop
In our baskets! Leave the heavy grapes uncrushed,
Leave the darkened figs, a half-pulled crop,
Olive-boughs by staves unbeaten, come,
All our hills be hushed!
For a Conqueror, nay a God,
Comes into our land this day,

From the Eastern desert dumb,
That no mortal ever trod:
Come we down to meet him on his way!"

From reddening vineyards steeped in sun,
Trees that with riches droop,
Down the green upland men and maidens run
Or under the low leaves with laughter stoop.
But now they pause, they hear
Far trampling sounds; and many a soft-eyed troop
Murmurs a wondering fear.
"Wherefore hast thou summoned us afar,
Voice so proud?
Who are ye that so imperious are?
Is it he to whom all India bowed,
Bacchus, and the great host that pursue
Triumphing, his car;
Whom our fathers long foretold?
O if it be he, the God indeed,
May his power our vines endue
With prosperity fourfold.
Bring we all ripe offerings for his need!"

Slowly along the vine-robed vale move on,
Like those that walk in dream,
The ranks of Macedon.
O much-proved men, why doubt ye truth so sweet?
This is that fair Carmania, that did seem
So far to gain, yet now is at your feet.
Tis no Circean magic greenly crowds
This vale of elms, the laden vines uprearing,
The small flowers in the grass, the illumined clouds,
Trembling streams with rushes lined,
All in strangeness reappearing
Like a blue morn to the blind!
Worn feet go happy, and parched throats may laugh,
Or blissful cold drops from dipt helmets quaff;
Dear comrades, flinging spears down, stand embraced
And heap this rich oblivion on the waste
Of torment whence they came;

That land of salt sand vaulted o'er with flame,
That furnace, which for sixty days they pierced,
Wrapt in a hot slow cloud of pricking grains,
On ever crumbling mounds, through endless plains,
And ravening hands scooped fire, not water, for their
thirst.

Streams of Carmania, never have ye seen
Such mirrored rapture of strong limbs unclad,
Lips pressing, lover-like, delicious green
Oi leaves, or breaking into laughter mad;
Out-wearied ranks, that couched in gloom serene,
Let idle memory toy
With torment past whose pangs enrich the gust of
joy.

II

O peerless Alexander! Still
From his kindling words they glow.
Like a straight shaft to a bow
Is their strength unto his will.
He hath done what no man ever dared:
That fierce desert, where great Cyrus lost
All save seven of his unnumbered host,
Where the proud Semiramis despaired,
He hath brought his thousands through.
Vainly, vainly Wind and Fire
Stormed against the way of his desire:
They at last their tamer knew.
O'er mile-broad rivers, like young brooks, he stept,
Walls of unconquered cities overleapt.
And now Earth yields, for storm and strife and heat,
Her greenest valley to his feet

But lo! the soft Carmanian folk,
Round these warriors gathering nigh,
Down the slopes with murmur shy
The benignant God invoke.
While they stand in wonder and in doubt,
Comes a throng in leaves their heads arraying,
Some on pipes and some on tabors playing,

"Bacchus, Bacchus is our king," they shout,
"Magic mirth into our blood he pours;
Join us, strangers, in our feast!
All our parching toil hath ceased.
Give us of your fruitful valley's stores!"
Apples they heap on shields in golden domes,
And spearpoints bear the dripping honeycombs.
"Our Bacchus bids you to his joy," they sing;
"Lo, where he comes, the king!"

Two massy ivory cars, together bound,
Roll through the parting throng;
A whole uprooted vine enwreathes them round;
Long tendrils over the gold axles trail,
While jubilant pipe and chanted song
The cars' oncoming hail.
By the dark bunches idle helms and greaves
Are hung, and swords that on Hydaspes shone;
Heroic shoulders gleam betwixt the leaves!
There sits reclined on rugs of Susa spread,
Throned amid his Seven of Macedon,
Alexander! his victorious head
Bound with ivy and pale autumn flowers.
Ah, what a sunny redolence of showers
The wind wafts round him from this promised land!
Over Hephaestion's neck is laid one hand,
Lightly the other holds a spear; but now
No passion fires his eye, nor deep thought knots his
brow.
Like his own Pella breathes this upland air;
A joy-born beauty flushes up his face,
O'ersmoothing old fell rages, to replace
Youth in lost lines most indolently fair.
Remembrance is at peace, desire forgone,
And those winged brows their watchful menace ease
In languor proud as a storm-sailing swan
New lighted on a mere from the wild seas.
Beat, thrilling drums, beat low, and pipes sound on,
While his full soul doth gaze
From this the topmost hour of all his glorious days.

III

The shy Carmanians awed
Gaze on that sun-like head.
"Is it he," they murmur, "who led
The mirth of the vineyard abroad?
Surely none else may bear
So regal a beauty; yet why
On us turns not his eye?
We have heard that he loves not care,
But the dance and idle glee
Of the laughing Satyr tribe.
Could toil those brows inscribe?
Is it he? is it surely he?
Are these the revellers of his train?
Yet surely these have passed through fire, through
 pain!
Can the Gods also suffer throes,
Nor crave to conquer, but repose?"
The king uplifts his bowl.
Peucestas stoops, pours in
From a brown fawn's swelling skin
The ripe grape's rosy soul.
"Pledge us," he cries, and smiles,
"Lord of Nysa, to-day!
Have we not toiled our way
To a valley of the Blessed Isles?
Drink of a richer boon
Than the water we brought thee to taste
In the fiery Gedrosian waste
When we halted our host at noon,
And thou in the sight of all didst spill
Those longed-for drops on the darkened sand,—O
 fill,
Remembering how our hearts drank wine
From thy refusing deed divine."

What hath the king so stirred?
What grief of a great desire
Stung by that spoken word?

Sudden as storm his thoughts tumultuous run
Back into peril, Indus, Issus, Tyre,
And the famed gates of Babylon yet unwon.
Far, far those mighty days in glory tower!
A valley keeps him, while the great peaks call.
O for that supreme exultant hour,
When alone, Achilles-like, he sprang
'Mid the astonished Indians o'er the wall,
And a hundred arrows round him rang!
O Alexander, all these thousands own
Thy pleasure, but thy throes were thine alone.
Dulled is the joy that hath no need to dare;
Match thy great self, and breed another heir
To those high deeds, from which thy kindled fame
Runs, as the world's hope runs from youth to youth
 aflake.
Climb, climb again to those lone eagle skies,
Where ocean's unadventured circle bends
And dragon ignorance girdles the world's ends!—
As fire leaps up a tower, that thought leaps to his eyes.
"Off, Mcenad mummary," he cries; his brow
Strips of its garland with indignant hands,
Starts up, and plants his ringing spear; and now
Soul-flushed through radiant limbs, a man trans-
 figured stands.
With joy the marvelling Carmanians bow,
From their long doubting freed:
"It is the God," they cry, "the enraptured God
 indeed!"

ASOKA

I

Gentle as fine rain falling from the night,
The first beams from the Indian moon at full
Steal through the boughs, and brighter and more
 bright

Glide like a breath, a fragrance visible.
Asoka round him sees
The gloom ebb into glories half-espied
Of glimmering bowers through wavering traceries:
Pale as a rose by magical degrees
Opening, the air breaks into beauty wide,
And yields a mystic sweet;
And shapes of leaves shadow the pathway side
Around Asoka's feet.

O happy prince! From his own court he steals;
Weary of words is he, weary of throngs.
How this wide ecstasy of stillness heals
His heart of flatteries and the tale of wrongs!
Unseen he climbs the hill,
Unheard he brushes with his cloak the dew,
While the young moonbeams every hollow fill
With hovering flowers, so gradual and so still
As if a joy brimmed where that radiance grew,
Discovering pale gold
Of spikenard balls and champak buds that new
Upon the air unfold.

He gains the ridge. Wide open rolls the night!
Airs from an infinite horizon blow
Down holy Ganges, floating vast and bright
Through old Magadha's forests. Far below
He hears the cool wave fret
On rocky islands; soft as moths asleep
Come moonlit sails; there on a parapet
Of ruined marble, where the moss gleams wet
And from black cedars a lone peacock cries,
Uncloaking rests Asoka, bathing deep
In silence, and his eyes
Of his own realm the wondrous prospect reap;
At last aloud he sighs.

II

"How ennobling it is to taste
Of the breath of a living power!
The shepherd boy on the waste
Whose converse, hour by hour,
Is alone with the stars and the sun,
His days are glorified!
And the steersman floating on
Down this great Ganges tide,
He is blest to be companion of the might
Of waters and unwearied winds that run
With him, by day, by night:
He knows not whence they come, but they his path
provide.

"But O more noble far
From the heart of power to proceed
As the beam flows forth from the star,
As the flower unfolds on the reed.
It is not we that are strong
But the cause, the divine desire,
The longing wherewith we long.
O flame far-springing from the eternal fire,
Feed, feed upon my heart till thou consume
These bonds that do me wrong
Of time and chance and doom,
And I into thy radiance grow and glow entire!

"For he who his own strength trusts,
And by violence hungers to tame
Men and the earth to his lusts,
Though mighty, he falls in shame;
As a great fell tiger, whose sound
The small beasts quake to hear,
When he stretches his throat to the shuddering
ground
And roars for blood; yet a trembling deer
Brings him at last to his end.
In a winter torrent falls his murderous bound!

His raging claws the unheeding waters rend;
Down crags they toss him sheer,
With sheep ignobly drowned,
And his fierce heart is burst with fury of its fear.

III

"Not so ye deal,
Immortal Powers, with him
Who in his weak hour hath made haste to kneel
Where your divine springs out of mystery brim,
And carries thence through the world's uproar rude
A clear-eyed fortitude;
As the poor diver on the Arabian strand
From the scorched rocky ledges plunging deep,
Glides down the rough dark brine with questing hand
Until he feels upleap
Founts of fresh water, and his goatskin swells
And bears him upward on those buoyant wells
Back with a cool boon for his thirsting land.

"I also thirst,
O living springs, for you:
Would that I might drink now, as when at first
Life shone about me glorious and all true,
And I abounded in your strength indeed,
Which now I sorely need,
You have not failed, 'tis I! Yet this abhorred
Necessity to hate and to despise—
'Twas not for this my youthful longing soared,
Not thus would I grow wise!
Keep my heart tender still, that still is set
To love without foreboding or regret,
Even as this tender moonlight is outpoured.

"Now now, even now,
Sleep doth the sad world take
To peace it knows not. Radiant Sleep, wilt thou
Unveil thy wonder for me too, who wake?
O my soul melts into immensity,

And yet 'tis I, 'tis I!
A wave upon a silent ocean, thrilled
Up from its deepest deeps without a sound,
Without a shore to break on, or a bound.
Until the world be filled.
O mystery of peace, O more profound
Than pain or joy, upbuey me on thy power!
Stay, stay, adored hour,
I am lost, I am found again:
My soul is as a fountain springing in the rain."

—Long, long upon that cedarn-shadowed height
Musing, Asoka mingled with the night.
At last the moon sank o'er the forest wide.
Within his soul those fountains welled no more,
Yet breathed a balm still, fresh as fallen dew:
The mist coiled upward over Ganges shore;
And he arose and sighed,
And gathered his cloak round him, and anew
Threaded the deep woods to his palace door.

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

I

Dear is the newly won,
But O far dearer the for ever lost!
He that at utmost cost
His utmost deed hath done
The lost one to recover, and in vain,
What shall his heart, his anguished heart, sustain?
Not the warm and youthful sun,
Flowers breathing on the bough,
Nor a voice, nor music now—
Touches of joy, more hard to bear than pain!
These charm not where he is, but only there
Where she is gone, who took with her delight,

Peace, and all things fair,
And left the whole world bare.
And O, what far well's fountain shall requite
Him who hath drunk so deeply of despair?

Orpheus on a stone-strewn slope
High amid the hills of Thrace
Sets to the bleak North his face.
He a traveller from hope,—
As a bird whose mate is stricken
Flies and flies o'er ocean foam
Nor endures to seek a home,—
Seeks a land where no leaves quicken,
Where from gorges to the plain
Iron-tongued the torrent roars
Into troubled streams that strain
Eddying under barren shores;
Where thronged ridges darkly rise,
Shouldering the storms that sweep
Through the winter-loaded skies,
When far up in heavens asleep
For an hour the clouds uncloze:—
Throned in peace beyond the bourne
Of their moving vapours torn,
Glimmer the majestic snows,
Whence an eagle slowly sails
O'er the solitary vales.
Such to Orpheus' pilgrim eyes
The unreached far mountains rise.
"Come," he groans, "you storms, and scourge me,
Dull these inward pangs that urge me
Ever into new despair.
Make my flesh endure as steel,
Let me now the utmost feel,
Bring me news of things that bear—
Frozen torrents, naked trees
That abjure the summer's breeze,—
Keen upon this body fall!
O let me feel your fiercest sting or feel no more at
all!"

His hand, half-conscious, straying
Over the well-loved lyre,
Strikes; frail notes obeying
Sadly in air expire.
Wingless they falter forth,
As the pale large plumes of snow
From the dim cloud-curdling North,
Unwilling and soft and slow.
That fall on the hands and the hair
Of Orpheus unheeded, and die,
As out of his heart's despair
He speaks to his lyre: "Ah, why
Would I stir thee from silence now,
When silence is far the best?
As of old I touch thee, but thou
Unwillingly answerest.
Ah, marvellous once was thy power
In the marvellous days of old!
I touched thee, and all hearts heard,
And the snake had no thought to devour,
And the shy fawn stayed and was bold,
And the panther crept near in desire;
And the toppling Symplegades hung
To hearken thy strings as I sung,
And Argo glanced through like a bird,
Like a swallow, to hear thee, my lyre!
And the soul of the dragon was stirred,
Till his vast coil slowly stooped
From the tree where the Fleece glimmered gold,
And his ageless eyelids drooped,
And his strength sank, fold by fold;
And only the dim leaves heard,
As we stept o'er his coils that were cold.
Mighty wast thou indeed;
But O, in my utmost need,
My heart thou couldst not quell,
My heart that loved too well!
I turned on the brink of the light;
Her hand hung fast in my own;
I was sure as a God in my might;

I gazed; she grew pale, she was flown.
Then the dawn turned back to the night,
And I stood in the world alone.
Eurydice, could I have loved thee less,
I had won thee lightly again.
My great joy wrought my wretchedness,
And thee, whom I love, I have slain."

II

What lights are these that dance.
Like fire-flies clustering on the dusk hillside,
Mingle and then divide,
Swerve and again advance,
Peopling the shadows thick, till Rhodope
Seems rocking all her towering pines in glee?
Maenads of exultant glance,
Thracian maidens, Thracian dames,
Toss these perilous fair flames.
Soon their full tresses roll from neck to knee,
Swift as a dark shower in the sunset poured;
Soon panting bosoms from rent robes shine bare!
Thoughts leap in accord,
Bright as an unsheathed sword,
Tumultuously free, and mad to dare;
And loud they cry on Bacchus, their wild lord.

O can cheeks of white and red,
Lips that love made tremble often,
Eyes an infant's tears can soften,
Alter with a change so dread?
Yea, a deep fire craving fuel,
Like the dungeoned fires of Earth,
Pants from secrecy for birth,
Careless if its way be cruel.
While from tempest faint they stand,
Orpheus 'mid their riot strays,
Silent halts with listless hand
And with sorrow-sunken gaze.

"Who is this?" in wrath they cry,
"Spectre sprung to mock our glee!
Woe to this pale face, for he
Joins our mirth or he shall die!"—
Singer, touch thy magic lyre!
Thou couldst stay them soft and still,
Tamed and gentle, to thy will.
Ah, in grief is no desire.
Grief in stony bonds hath bound him,
And these bright forms that surround him
With high torches menacing
And light spears in restless ring,
Seem his own thoughts raging, seem
Furies of embodied dream,
Furies whom 'tis vain to flee.
Alas, he hath for shield and sword
Only one defenceless word,
"Eurydice, Eurydice!"
To piercing wound and branding flame
He answers with that piteous name
The world now echoes back alone.
"Eurydice!" his soul flies forth in that beloved moan.

Alas, that the hand should deflower
The treasure the heart loves best,
That the will of an alien power
Should blindly the soul have possest!
Proudly our own great woe
We accomplish, and laugh to have done.
Then strength passes from us; we know,
And we hide our heads from the sun.
Behold, as the dawn-flushed air
Glimmers on peak and vale,
To the pines on the upland bare
Come shadowy forms and pale;
Stealing, maiden and mother,
By single paths of dread,
And wondering each at the other
Bend over the piteous dead,
And touching those rent limbs, cry,

With kisses kneeling low,
In sad affrighted moan,
"It was not I!" "Nor I!"
What evil God blinded us so
To wound our beloved, our delight?
For our dancing thou hadst not a song,
And now we have none for thy wrong.
Though thy lyre could charm honey from stone,
Yet we pitied not thee, our delight!
Nay, thee who couldst heal us alone
In our grief, at whose magical boon
Peace brooded a dove o'er our pain,
And our hearts with the sun and the moon
Were at peace, that shall be not again,
Nor our hope with the spring be in tune;
Thee, thee, even thee, have we slain!
Woe for the world, woe!
In cherishing fair snow
Let us bury thee whom we marred,
With the lyre that our flame hath charred.
Gentle wast thou as a flower,
But careless as thunder were we;
And our tears, that should be as a shower
To raise and to foster thee,
Drop vainly, and past is our power
With that blindness and fury and glee.
Yea, the solace we wanted not then in our mirth
From our helpless sorrow is taken;
And for ever untuned is the beautiful earth.
And the home of our hearts is forsaken.

AUTUMN MOONRISE

Lamp that risest lone
From thy secret place,
Like a sleeper's face,
Charged with thoughts unknown,

Strange thoughts, unexpressed
In thy brightening beam.
Strangeness more than dream
Upon earth e'er guessed!

Strange thou gleam'st as some
Eastern marble old,
Scrawled with runes that hold
Histories, yet are dumb.

But thy viewless hand
Out of whelming night
Waves the woods to light,
Summons up the land!

Sea, that merged in sky;
To its far bound shines;
And thy touch defines
Our infinity.

Now the murmuring coast
Glistens; rocks are there;
And what most was bare
Thou enrichest most.

Far through granite caves
Diving glide thy beams,
Till the dark roof gleams
Laced with hovering waves,

O'er the white walls glide,
Through the lattice creep,
Where the lovers sleep,
Bridegroom by his bride.

Soft their wakened eyes
From a deep bliss gaze

On those marvellous rays
New from Paradise.

In the self-same hour,
Whitening Russian plains,
On sad exile trains
Thou hast also power.

No more kindly gloom
Veils from them despair:
Near and clear and bare
They behold their doom.

Bowed, they see their own
Shadows on the snow,
And the way they go,
Endlessly alone:

Aching, chained, footsore,
Through the waste they wind.
All their joy behind,
Nought but grief before.

O thou sleeper's face
Whence hast thou this gift
So much to uplift,
And so much to abase?

Lovers' happier dream,
Exiles' heavier pain,
Thou on each dost rain
Beam on radiant beam!

Changed in thy control,
Though no leaf hath stirred,
Though no breath was heard,
Lie both world and soul.

THE BELFRY OF BRUGES

Keen comes the dizzy air
In one tumultuous breath.
The tower to heaven lies bare;
Dumb stir the streets beneath.

Immeasurable sky
Domes upward from the dim
Round land, the astonished eye
Supposes the world's rim.

And through the sea of space
Winds drive the furious cloud
Silent in endless race;
And the tower rocks aloud.

Mine eye now wanders wide,
My thought now quickens keen,
O cities, far descried,
What ravage have you seen

Of an enkindled world?
Homes blazing and hearths bare;
Of hosts tyrannic hurled
On pale ranks of despair,

Who fed with warm proud blood
The cause unquenchable,
For which your heroes stood,
For which our Sidney fell;

Sidney, whose starry fame,
Mirrored in noble song,
Shines, all our sloth to shame,
And arms us against wrong;

Bright star, that seems to burn
Over yon English shore,

Whither my feet return,
And my thoughts run before;

Run with this rumour brought
By the wild wind's alarms,
Dark sounds with battle fraught,
Menace of distant arms.

O menace harsh, but vain!
For what can peril do
But search our souls again
To sift and find the true?

Prove if the sap of old
Shoots yet from the old seed,
If faith be still unsold,
If truth be truth indeed?

Welcome the blast that shakes
The wall wherein we have lain
Slumbering, our heart awakes
And rends the prison chain.

Turn we from prosperous toys
And the dull name of ease;
Rather than tarnished joys
Face we the angry seas!

Or, if old age infirm
Be in our veins congealed,
Bow we to Time, our term
Fulfilled, and proudly yield.

Not each to each we are made,
Not each to each we fall,
But every true part played
Quickens the heart of all

That feeds and moves and fires
The many-peopled lands,
And in our languor tires
But in our strength expands.

For forward-gazing eyes
Fate shall no terror keep,
She in our own breast lies:
Now let her wake from sleep!

TO THE SUMMER NIGHT

A sultry perfume of voluptuous June
Enchants the air still breathing of warm day;
But now the impassioned Night draws over, soon
To fold me, in this high hollow, quite away
From oaken groves beneath and glimmering bay
And valley rock-bestrewn;
From all but shadowy leaves and scented ground
And this intense blue slowly deepening round,
From all but thoughts of beauty and delight
And thee that stealest as with hair unbound
O'er the hushed earth, and lips sighing, enamoured
Night.

Not the fair vestal of the Spring's cold sky,
But flushed from the ancestral East, thy home,
Drowsing the land, thou stirrest joy to a sigh,
Longing to passion and wild thoughts, that roam
As through those hungering Asian forests come
Panthers of ardent eye;
While over worlds wandering extravagant,
Like some divine and naked Corybant,
Thou movest; dark woods tremble and suspire;
And mortal spirits for life's full fountain pant,
As in content awakes the genius of desire.

Richer than jewelled Indian realm is thine,
O stepper from the mountain-tops! for whom
On viewless branches of the heavenly vine
The white stars cluster faint or thickly bloom
Through the sapphire abyss of glowing gloom.
Press out a magic wine
For me—I thirst—from that intensest height,
Where even our keen thought, outsoaring sight,
Faints and despairs, ay, from some virgin star
Brim me a cup of that untreasured light
Lone in a world unreached, abounding, and afar!

Most far is now most dear. Blot out the near!
Lost is the earth beneath me, lost the day's
Removed ambition, all that fretful sphere
Drowned in the dark, and quenched its trivial praise,
I would behold beyond a mortal's gaze,
Behold ev'n now, ev'n here,
The beauty strange, the ecstasy extreme,
Of what should this divine gloom best beseem,
The bosom of a Goddess, or her hair,
Invisible and fragrant—gliding dream,
Yet near as my heart beating, of such charm aware

Why have we toiled so patiently to bend
This bow of arduous life? Unto what mark?
For what have set to our desire no end,
Steered to the utmost stormy sea our bark,
Piercing with eagle thought the frozen dark,
Been bold and gay to spend
Our warm blood, hazarded wild odds, and let
The bright world perish? What far prize to get?
What thing is this no speech could ever frame,
Nor hundred creeds ever imprison yet?
We breathe for it, and die, yet never named its name.

Star-trembling Night, Mother of songs unsung
And leaves unborn beneath the barren rind,
Who findest for forbidden hope a tongue,

Who treasurest most the treasure undivined
And flowers that banquet but the careless wind;
To whom all joy is young;
Prophetess of the fire that one day leaping
Shall burn the world's corruption, of the sleeping
Swords that shall strike down tyrants from their
throne,
Mother of faith, our frail thought onward sweeping,
Breathe nearer, whisper close, spells of the dear un-
known.

O of thy fated children number me!
Now while the alien day deep-sunken lies
And only the awakened soul may see,
Far from the lips that flatter or despise,
Foster my fond hope with thy certainties,
From time's subjection free,
That I may woo from some bare branch a flower,
Yea, from this world a beauty and a power
She gives not of herself; sustain me still
Through the harsh day, through every taming hour,
To find thy promise truth, thy secret grace fulfil.

THE SNOWS OF SPRING

O wailing gust, what hast thou brought with thee,
What sting of desolation? But an hour,
And brave was every shy new-opened flower
Smiling in sun beneath a budding tree.
Now over black hills the skies stoop and lour;
Now on this lonely upland the shrill blast
Thrusts under brown dead crumpled leaves to find
Soft primroses that were unfolding fast;
Now the fair Spring cries through the shuddering
wood
Lamenting for her darlings to the wind
That ravishes their youth with laughter rude.

The whole air darkens, sweeping up in storm.
What breath is this of what far power that slays?
What God in blank and towering cloud arrays
His muffled, else intolerable form?
What beautiful Medusa's frozen gaze?
Lo, out of gloom the first flakes floating pale,
Lost like a dreamer's thoughts! They shall lie deep
To-morrow on green shoot, on petal frail
And living branches borne down in despair
By the mere weight of that soft-nesting sleep,
Though all the earth look still and white and fair.

Phantasmal and extreme as some blind plain
Upon the far side of the moon, unknown
Deep Polar solitudes of ice enthrone
In the white night of mountain and moraine
The power of that cold Sleep that dwells alone,
Absolute in remotest idleness.
Yet from his fancied lips the freezing breath
Wandering about the world's warm wilderness
Has drifted on the north wind even hither
These gently whispering syllables of death
Among-the English flowers, our Spring to wither.

Not only the brief tender flowers, ah me!
Suffer such desolation, but we too
Who boast our godlike liberty to do
Whate'er we will, and range all climes, ev'n we
Must still abide its coming and our rue.
It breathes in viewless winds and gently falls
Over our spirits, till desire grown sere,
Faith frozen into words, custom like walls
Of stone imprison us, and we acquiesce.
More than the raging elements to fear
Is snow-soft death that comes like a caress.

Life lives for ever: Death of her knows naught.
Our souls through radiant mystery are led,
Clothed in fresh raiment as the old is shed.
But Death the unchanging has no aim, no thought,

Deaf, blind, indifferent, feeds not yet is fed,
Moves not yet crushes, is not rent yet rends:
For as from icebergs killing airs are blown,
His cold sleep to our life-warm ardour sends
Frost wreathing round us delicate as rime,
Making most real what should be dream alone
To the free spirit, the gnawing tooth of time.

Who shall escape, since death and life inweave
Their threads so subtly? Yet may truth be wooed
In our own natures, shaken off the brood
Of thoughts not ours, beliefs our lips believe
But our hearts own not,—alien fortitude.
These are of death; and with his realm conspire
Faint souls that drowse in ignorance unjust,
That with the world corrupt their true desire,
And dully hate and stagnantly despise.
Already they begin to die, to rust;
But those that love are always young and wise.

O Love, my Love, the dear light of whose eyes
Shines on the world to show me all things new,
Falsehood the falser and the true more true,'
And tenfold precious all my soul must prize,
Since from our life's core love so deeply grew,
O let us cleave fast to the heavenly powers
That brought us this, whose unseen spirit flows
Pure as the wind and sensitive as flowers.
They are with us! Let the storm-gathering night
Cover the bleak earth with these whirling snows,
Our hands are joined, our hearts are brimmed with
light.

A VISION OF RESURRECTION

The Genius of an hour that fading day
Resigned to wide-haired Night's impending brow
Stole me apart, I knew not where nor how,
And from my sense ravished the world away.

Rose in my view a visionary ground,
A rugged plain, beneath uncoloured skies.
There slowly in the midst without a sound
Upheaved a motion as of birth. I gazed,
When lo! a head, with upcast empty eyes
And semblance of dead shoulders' majesties,
Whose fleshless arms a marble breast upraised.

But even as this emerged, nor yet was free,
Behold it ripen into bloom and form,
The shrunk limbs round and into colour warm,
The hair spring new as leaves upon a tree,
And curl like small flames round the forehead fair.
At last the eyelids open wide: it seems
A glorious-statured youth that wakens there,
Casting his eyes in wonder down, to feel
This body that with clear blood newly teems,
How perfect, yet still heavy as from dreams,
And over it the ancient beauty steal.

O lost in musing recollection sweet,
What summoning cry thine age-long slumber stirred?
In that profound grave has thy cold ear heard
From heaven the mailed Archangel call, whose feet
Stand planted in the stream of stars, and whose
Time-shattering trump hath pealed to the world's
core?
Yet still doth thy averted head refuse
To lift its eyes up; still thy spread hands lean
On earth, while pensive thou surveyest o'er
This radiant shape that all thy sorrows bore,
Strong now as if no pain had ever been.

What thoughts begin to glide upon thy brain,
And part thy lips with sighs? Is it some fear
'Mid flattering heavenly airs approaching near
This strange unproven peace to entertain?
Musing, "O rebel flesh, in my hard need
How often didst thou fail me! I know well
How thou didst make me suffer toil and bleed,

At once my prison and my enemy.
Dear body, I fear thee yet: dark rages dwell
Within thee: how shalt thou in peace excel?
How learn to bear perfect felicity?"

Nay, rather that fond wonder in thy look
Is wonder to have lost the thoughts that maim,
The wounds of evilly-invented shame
And fear that each sweet impulse overtook.
Now thou art free, and all thy being whole,
Perceivest in that peril-haunted earth
The fair and primal gestures of thy soul,
And knowest how all thy full completion fed,
The urging hungers, the sun-sweetened mirth;
Yea, finding even in those furies worth,
Which lacking, hardly art thou perfected.

What trees are these whose dim young branches rise
Above thee? Springing waters freshen sweet
New tender green for thee to pace and greet
The growing of the dawn of Paradise.
Thou gazest round thee with a listening face,
Harkening perhaps to some far-floating song
Unheard of men. Ah, go not ere thy grace,
O glorified, of me be thoroughly learned!
But as I prayed in supplication strong
The vision faded, and the world, whose wrong
Mocks holy beauty and our desire, returned.

QUEEN VENUS

Queen Venus on a day of cloud
Forsook heaven's argent palaces,
Beneath the roofing vapours bowed
And sought a promontory loud
Far in the utmost seas.

There to a caverned shore she made retreat,
Where granite shoulders of the mountain slant
Down to wet ledges that the waters beat,
Haunted of gull and diving cormorant.
Her garment was of green that deeply glowed;
One foot beneath its fluttering border showed,
As on a rocky solitary seat,
Sitting with both hands clasped about her knee,
She gazed unmoving over restless sea,
Heard not the wild birds scream and circling soar
Up the black cliffs and round their craggy tops,
But watched the full waves towering toward the
shore,
Heaved up and ever falling in dumb roar,
And snowed into a thousand stormy drops.
Gardens of sultry Paphos, far away
Your doves among the strewn rose-petals play!
But doves nor roses please her heart to-day,
Who, child of ocean, comes to taste once more
The sting and splendour of the ocean spray.

Out of the cold mist curling,
The waters onward hurling,
As if a wizard driving
A myriad rebel spirits swept them thither,
Mounting, despairing, crying, and ever striving,
Swell toward her feet and in a moment wither.
But idly in the wells of Venus' eyes
Those perishing proud glories fall and rise.
Like to a mirror where have come and gone
Faces of pain and passion, nor have left
Of all the abandoned story of their sighs
An image more than where a moonbeam shone,
She sees, she hearkens, but of thought bereft;
Her gaze holds neither pity, fear, nor wonder:
Yet in the exultation and the thunder
Of those waves moving as to music rolled,
Wherein their briefness is a tone half-told,
A spirit lives that doth her spirit claim;
Then she remembers how she also came

From deep-moved waters tossing and uptorn,
And 'mid such bitter idle foam was born
The serene charm that sets the world aflame.

THE BELFRY

Dark is the stair, and humid the old walls
Wherein it winds, on worn stones, up the tower.
Only by loophole chinks at intervals
Pierces the late glow of this August hour.

Two truant children climb the stairway dark,
With joined hands, half in glee and half in fear,
The boy mounts brisk, the girl hangs back to hark
If the gruff sexton their light footstep hear.

Dazzled at last they gain the belfry-room.
Barred rays through shutters hover across the floor
Dancing in dust; so fresh they come from gloom
That breathless they pause wondering at the door.

How hushed it is! What smell of timbers old
From cobwebbed beams! The warm light here and
there
Edging a darkness, sleeps in pools of gold,
Or weaves fantastic shadows through the air.

How motionless the huge bell! Straight and stiff.
Ropes through the floor rise to the rafters dim.
The shadowy round of metal hangs, as if
No force could ever lift its gleamy rim.

A chad's awe, a child's wonder, who shall trace
What dumb thoughts on its waxen softness write
In such a spell-brimmed, time-forgotten place,
Bright in that strangeness of approaching night?

As these two gaze, their fingers tighter press;
For suddenly the slow bell upward heaves
Its vast mouth, the cords quiver at the stress,
And ere the heart prepare, the ear receives

Full on its delicate sense the plangent stroke
Of violent, iron, reverberating sound.
As if the tower in all its stones awoke,
Deep echoes tremble, again in clangour drowned,

That starts without a whirl of frightened wings
And holds these young hearts shaken, hushed, and
thrilled,
Like frail reeds in a rushing stream, like strings
Of music, or like trees with tempest filled,

And rolls in wide waves out o'er the lone land,
Tone following tone toward the far-setting sun,
Till where in fields long-shadowed reapers stand
Bowed heads look up, and lo, the day is done.

LOOK NOT TOO DEEP

Look not too deep in my heart,
My beloved; nay, lean not too near
From the shores of thy peace, lest thou start
From the midst of thy sweet thoughts to hear
The sound of waters of pain,
Blindly knocking and thronging,
The waters of heavy longing,
That deep in my heart has lain.

Sleeplessly circle the waves
Far under, and dumbly resound
In throats of the sea-filled caves,
Where daylight wholly is drowned,

Where frail fair shells are scattered
And broken in random foam,
With weeds that have found no home,
And drift-wood of ships long shattered.

But I would, my belov'd, that for thee,
Who bring'st me a sky all blue,
My spirit were stilled as a sea
That the fires of the noon warm through,
When the waves have forgotten their sighs
And from shore unto shore are at rest,
As my whole soul bathes and is blest
In the peace of thy beautiful eyes.

HAREBELL AND PANSY

O'er the round throat her little head
Its gay delight upbuoys:
A harebell in the breeze of June
Hath such melodious poise;
And chiming with her heart, my heart
Is only hers and joy's.

But my heart takes a deeper thrill,
Her cheek a rarer bloom,
When the sad mood comes rich as glow
Of pansies dipped in gloom.
By some far shore she wanders—where?
And her eyes fill—for whom?

GRIEF

Grief is like a child,
Led with relentless hand
By a strange nurse, whose face
Seems never to have smiled,

Whose onward gaze severe
Slackens not, nor her pace,
Nor that child's faltering fear
Stoops she to understand.

So strides the world, while grief
Unwilling is borne on,
With ever lingering mind,
Through the strange days, alone.
Oh, like a fluttering leaf
On the ways of the strong wind,
Or pebbles helpless thrown
By night on a wild strand,
Lost are the thoughts of grief,
That none can understand!

LAMENT

Fall now, my cold thoughts, frozen fall
My sad thoughts, over my heart,
To be the tender burial
Of sweetness and of smart.

Fall soft as the snow, when all men sleep,
On copse and on bank forlorn,
That tenderly buries, yet buries deep
Frail violets, freshly born.

SURSUM COR!

Lament no more, my heart, lament no more,
Though all these clouds have covered up the light,
And thou, so far from shore,
Art baffled in mid flight;
Still proudly as in joy through sorrow soar!
As the wild swan,

Voyaging over dark and rising seas,
Into the stormy air adventures on
With wide unfaltering wings, the way he bore
When blue the water laughed beneath the breeze
And morning round the radiant beaches shone.
So thou through all this pain
Endure, my heart, whither thy course was bound;
Though never may the longed-for goal be found,
Thy steadfast will maintain.
Thou must not fail, for nothing yet hath failed
Which was to thee most dear and most adored;
Still glorious is Love, thy only lord,
Truth still is true, and sweetness still is sweet:
The high stars have not changed, nor the sun paled.
Still warmly, O my heart, and bravely beat,
Remember not how lovely was delight,
How piteous is pain,
Keep, keep thy passionate flight,
Nor find thy voyage vain,
Yea, till thou break, my heart, all meaner quest
disdain.

EUROPE, MDCCCCI

TO NAPOLEON

Soars still thy spirit, Child of Fire?
Dost hear the camps of Europe hum?
On eagle wings dost hover nigher
At the far rolling of the drum?
To see the harvest thou hast sown
Smilest thou now, Napoleon?

Long had the world in blinded mirth
Or suffering patience dreamed content,
When lo! like thunder over earth
Thy challenge pealed, the skies were rent:
Thy terrible youth rose up alone
Against the old world on its throne.

With shuddering then the peoples gazed,
And such a stupor bound them dumb
As those fierce Colchian ranks amazed
Who saw the youthful Jason come,
And challenging the War God's name
Step forth, his fiery yoke to tame.

He took those dread bulls by the horn,
Harnessed their fury to his will,
And in the furrow swiftly torn
The dragon's teeth abroad did spill:
When lo! behind his trampling heel
The furrow flowered into steel!

A spear, a plume, a warrior sprung—
Arm'd gods in wrath by hundreds; he
Faced all, and full amidst them flung
His magic helmet: instantly
Their swords upon themselves they drew,
And shouting each the other slew.

But no Medean spell was thine,
Napoleon, nor anointed charm;
Thy will was as a fate divine
To wavering men who watched thine arm
Drive on through Europe old thy plough.
The harvest ripens even now!

Time's purple flauntings, king and crown,
Old custom's tall and idle weeds,
Were tossed aside and trampled down,
While thou didst scatter fiery seeds,
That in the gendering lap of earth
Prepared a new world's Titan birth.

Then in thy path from underground,
Where long benumbed in trance they froze,
The Nations, giant forms unbound,
Slow to their aching stature rose;
And through their wintry veins again
Slow flushed the streams of life in pain.

Thy thunder, O Napoleon, passed,
But these whom thou hadst stirred to life,
On them the imperious doom was cast
Of inextinguishable strife.
For peace they longed, but blood and tears
Still blinded the tempestuous years.

A hundred years have flown, and still
For peace they pine; peace tarries yet.
These groaning armies Europe fill,
And war's red planet hath not set.
O mockery of peace, that gnaws
Their hearts for so abhorred a cause!

Is peace so easy? Nay, the names
That are most dear and most divine
To men, are like the heavenly flames
That farthest from possession shine.
Peace, love, truth, freedom, unto these
The way is through the storming seas.

Ye wakened nations, now no more
You battle for a monarch's whim;
The cause is now in your heart's core,
Your soul must strive through every limb;
They who with all their soul contend
Bear more, but to a nobler end.

Be patient in your strife! And thou,
O England, dearer than the rest;
England, with proud looks on thy brow,
England, with trouble at thy breast,
Seek on in patient fortitude
Strong peace, most worthy to be wooed.

Take up thy task, O nobly born!
With both hands grasp thy destiny.
Easy is ignorance, easy scorn,
And fluent pride, unworthy thee.
Grand rolls the planet of thy fate:
Be thy just passions also great!

Turn from the sweet lure of content,
Rise up among the beds of ease;
Be all thy will as a bow bent,
Thy sure on-coming like thy seas.
Purge clear within thy deep desires
To be our burning altar-fires!

Then welcome peril, so it bring
Thy true soul leaping into light;
A glory for our mouths to sing
And for our deeds to match in might,
Till thou at last our hope enthrone,
And make indeed thy peace our own.

UMBRIA

Deep Italian day with a wide-washed splendour fills
Umbria green with valleys, blue with a hundred hills.
Dim in the south Soracte, a far rock faint as a cloud
Rumours Rome, that of old spoke over earth, "Thou
art mine!"

Mountain shouldering mountain circles us forest-
browed

Heaped upon each horizon in fair uneven line;
And white as on builded altars tipped with a vestal
flame

City on city afar from the thrones of the mountains
shine.

Kindling, for us that name them, many a memoried
fame,

Out of the murmuring ages, flushing the heart like
wine.

Pilgrim-desired Assisi is there; Spoleto proud
With Rome's imperial arches, with hanging woods
divine:

Monte Falco hovers above the hazy vale
Of sweet Clitumnus loitering under poplars pale;
O'er Foligno, Trevi clings upon Apennine.

And over this Umbrian earth—from where with
bright snow spread
Towers abrupt Leonessa, huge, like a dragon's chine,
To western Ammiata's mist-apparelled head,
Ammiata, that sailors watch on wide Tyrrhenian
waves,—
Lie in the jealous gloom of cold and secret shrine
Or Gorgon-sculptured chamber hewn in old rock
caves,
Hiding their dreams from the light, the austere
Etruscan dead.
O lone forests of oak and little cyclamens red
Flowering under shadowy silent boughs benign!
Streams that wander beneath us over a pebbly bed!
Hedges of dewy hawthorn and wild woodbine!
Now as the eastern ranges flush and the high air chills
Blurring meadowy vale, blackening heaths of pine,
Now as in distant Todi, loftily-towered—a sign
To wearying travellers—lights o'er hollow Tiber
gleam,
Now our voices are stilled and our eyes are given to
a dream,
As night, upbringing o'er us the ancient stars anew,
Stars that triumphing Caesar and tender Francis knew,
With fancied voices mild, august, immortal, fills
Umbria dim with valleys, dark with a hundred hills.

S. FRANCESCO DEL DESERTO

Peace in smooth summer hour
Paces the seas awhile;
But Peace has built her tower
Upon this chosen isle,

Scarcely a ripple stirs
In this lone shore's recess,
Scarcely a motion blurs
The mirrored cypresses

Ranked on a crumbling wall,
O'er slopes of flowery grass;
Where their long shadows fall,
Butterflies gleam and pass.

The idle sunshine sleeps
Before a porch; within.
Cool the white cloister keeps
Peace that has always been.

Beyond, a tangled plot
Of garden and tall trees,
Soothing its fragrance hot
In freshness from the seas.

There young monks slowly pace
With seldom-lifted eyes,
With world-unwritten face,
Not mournful yet nor wise.

Have they in this fair fold
Lost the fierce world in truth?
Or must the storms of old
Still shake the heart of youth?

Far in blue northern haze
The vast Alps glimmer pale,
Faint through the slumbrous blaze
Comes the white sea-gull's wail.

A DREAM

Behold an endless evening over land
That lapped in vast vales rises up afar
Into the frozen mountains; evening brimmed
With silence, so miraculously clear
That crevices in peaks of distant stone
And rust-red boughs of cedars, at the foot

Of those remote and voiceless waterfalls,
Which down the black steep of lone gorges plunge,
Are shaped distinct unto the wondering eye;
And the mind, seeing, notes not how 'tis fair,
But throned in languor has already summ'd
All the vain journey thither. Not a sound
Near by; no motion lifts a single leaf,
Nor stirs one cold stalk of the sappy spurge
And powdery hemlock, nor 'mid clustered reeds
The peeping heads of certain dim blue flowers
Mirrored in water idle as themselves.
And she that sits upon the bank, whose head
Droops toward her shoulder, whose full lips are
closed,
And whose wide eyes seem vacant, yet contain
Profound remembrance sunken like a wreck
Beneath gray seas, is she of this entranced
And glimmering land the sole inhabitant?

WORDS

Words, breathing words, full-murmuring syllables!
How you enrich the thoughts that dwell in you
With far-brought perfume, that no meaning tells
Yet stirs the mind to flower in thoughts anew!

Sometimes how lulling like the rain's soft veil,
Then vivid as the pressure of a hand,
Now filled with fair surmises like a sail
Before the blue coast of some foreign land.

O words, you live and therefore you can die,
Ill-yoked, imprisoned, tamed in a dull task!
So callous tongues may use you, but not I,
Who for your grace, a wooing lover, ask.

Dead things may kill; and you being dead entomb
The frozen thought that once you clothed in bloom

A PRAYER TO TIME

Move onward, Time, and bring us sooner free
From this self-clouding turmoil where we ply
On others' errands driven continually:
O lead us to our own souls, ere we die!

We toil for that we love not; thou concealest
Our true loves from us; all we thirst to attain
Thou darkly boldest, and alone revealest
A mirror that our sighs for ever stain.

Art thou so jealous of our full delight?
Thou takest our strength, toil, fervour, and sweet
youth;
And when thou hast taken these, thou givest sight
At last to see and to endure the truth,

Thou art too swift to our weak steps; but oh,
To our desire thou movest. Time, how slow!

BOOK III

(1903-1913)

THE OFFERING

O love, in whose heart-murmured name
Is charm against life's endless wrong,
Since all the untuned world became
In you a song!

I bring not only all I wrought
Into the faltering words of speech,
I dedicate the song I sought
Yet could not reach,

Nay, all that passionately fired
My heart with hope for ever new
Of unattained, but deep-desired
Beauty, to you.

SIRMIONE

Give me your hand, Beloved! I cannot see;
So close from shadowy-branching tree to tree
Dark leaves hang over us. How vast and still
Night sleeps! and yet a murmur, a low thrill,
Sighed out of mystery, steals slowly near,
Solitary as longing or as fear,

Through the faint foliage, stirring it, and shy
Amid the stillness, ere it tremble by,
Touches us on the cheek and on the brow
Light as a dew-dript finger! Listen now,
Tis not alone the hushings of the bough,
But on the slabbed rock-beaches far beneath
Listen, the liquid breath
Of the vast lake that rustles up all round
Whispering for ever! Soon shall we be where
The trees end, and the promontory bare
Breathes all that wide and water-wandering air
Which shall our foreheads and our lips delight,
Blown darkly through the breadth and depth and
height
Of soft, immense, and solitary Night.

Where is the Day,
Bright as a dream, that on this same cliff-way
Fretted light shadows on old olive stems
By whose gray, riven roots like scarlet gems
The little poppies burned? Where those clear hues
Of water, melted to diviner blues
In the deep distance of each radiant bay,
But close beneath us, past the narrowed edge
Of shadow from sheer crag and jutting ledge,
Shallowing upon the low reef into gold,
A ripple of keen light for ever rolled
Up to the frail reed sighing on the shore?
Where are those mountains far-enthroned and hoar
Above the glittering water's slumbrous heat,
With old blanched towns sprinkled about their feet,
Lifting majestic shoulders, that each side
Of that steep misty northern chasm divide,
Where, ambushed in the dim gulf ere they leap,
Wild spirits of the Wind and Thunder sleep?

Tis flown, that many-coloured dream is flown,
And with the heart of Night we are alone.
This is the verge. The promontory ends.
Now the dim branches cover us no more.

Abrupt the path descends:
But here will we sit, high above the shore,
Here, where we know what wild flowered bushes cloak
Old ruined walls, and crumbling arches choke
With mounded earth, though buried from our eyes
In dark now, as beneath dark centuries
The marble-towered magnificence of Rome,
From whose hot dust the passionate poet fled
Hither, and laid his head
Where these same waters laughed him welcome
home!

It is all dark; but how the air breathes free!
Beloved, lean to me!
Feel how the stillness like a bath desired
With happy pressure heals our senses tired;
And drink the keen sweet fragrance from the grass
And wafts from hidden flowers that come and pass,—
None here but we, and we have left behind
The world, and cares confined,
All with the daylight drowned
In darkness on this height of utmost ground,
Where under us the sighing waters cease
And over us are only stars and peace.

O Love, Love, Love, look up! Let your head lean
Back on my shoulder. Ah, I feel the keen
Indrawing of your breath, and your heart beat
Under my own, and sighing through you sweet
The wonder of the Night that widely broods
Over us with her glittering multitudes.
Oh, in Night's garden has a fountain sprung
That over old earth showers forever young
A fairy splendour of still-dropping spray?
Or in mad rapture has enamoured May
Through the warm dusk mounted like wine, and
towered
And in far spaces infinitely flowered,
Breaking the deep heaven into milky bloom?
So beautiful in this most tender gloom

Ten thousand thousand stars through height on
height

Burn over us, how breathless and how bright!
Some wild, some fevered, some august and large,
Royal and blazing like a hero's targe,
Some faint and secret, from abysses brought,
Lone as an incommunicable thought—
They throng, they reign, they droop, they bloom,
they glow

Upon our gaze, and as we gaze they grow
In patience and in glory, till the mind
Is brimmed and to all other being blind;
They hang, they fall towards us, spears of fire,
Piercing us through with joy and with desire.

Ah me, Beloved, comes an alien gust,
A sudden cold thought, blowing bitter dust
Upon this rapture. They are dead, all dead!
'Tis but the beauty of Medusa's head
Gleaming on us in icy masks, that stare
From everlasting winter blind and bare;
They have no answer for our hearts that yearn,
They have no joy in burning, only burn
Upon their senseless motion.

Ah, no, no!

Can you not feel the warm truth overflow?
Light to light answers, even as heart to heart,
And by their shining we in them have part.
Lo, the same light that in the tiniest spark
Makes momentary beauty from the dark,
The light that blesses warm earth and inweaves
A million colours in young flowers and leaves,
That our sick thoughts and melancholy eyes
Confounds with magical simplicities,
Yea, that by dawn's beginning shall unfold
Wide glimmering waters, and to glory mould
Frore peaks, wild torrents in the vales between.
And golden mists on lawns of living green,
'Tis the same light that now above us showers
These star-drops, white and fair as falling flowers;

And silent rings a cry from star to sun,
Through all the worlds. Light, life and love are
one!

Hush your heart now, Beloved, hush to sink
Your thought down, deep as the still mind can think,
Then climb as high as boldest thought can climb!
Were these dark heavens the unfathomed gulfs of
Time,

So might we see bright peopling spirits star
The memoriless ages, burning far,
Splendid or faint, tempestuous or serene,
All quick and fiery spirits that have been,
From whose immortal ecstasies and pains
Drops of red life run sanguine in our veins;
Who lived and loved, and prodigally spent
Their strength, their prayers, upon one pure intent,
In whom no deed was willed, no lonely thought
Attempered and to sword-blade keenness brought,
But it has helped us, even us, for whom
They shine in glory from the ages' gloom.
But oh, it is not only these I see:
Look up, behold unnumbered hosts to be!
What shall we do for them, whose hope endears
Futurity's dark wilderness of years?
Heroes, that shall adventure and attain
What broke our wills in passion and in pain;
Sages, to find all that we vainly seek,
Poets, to utter all we cannot speak!
And they at last shall into strong towers build
The stones we bled to gather, the unfulfilled
House of our dream; what was but fable sung,
Or indignation on a prophet's tongue,
Made form and hue of life's own tissue, wrought
Into the rich reality of thought.
And women, ah, what majesty of fate
Is theirs, for whom the little is made great,
The tender strong; far-off they also wait
The glory of their burden. Love, what deep
Of mystery unfolds! Let your heart leap!

Lo, at your bosom all the world to come,
A child! It waits, it watches, it is dumb,
Yet hearkens and desires; the vision grows
Before us, and behind us overflows,
Mingling, as throng on throng of stars overhead,
One undivided host, the mighty dead,
The mightier unborn! Time is rent away;
There is no morrow, no, nor yesterday,
Nor here, nor there, nor sleeping nor awaking;
But, like full waters into ocean breaking,
Lost at this moment in our heart's high beating
The boundless tides of either world are meeting;
And by the love-cry in my heart that rings,
And by the answer in your heart that sings,
We feel, at once exulting and afraid,
Near to the glowing of the Hand that made
And out of earth) with divine fire instinct,
Moulded us for each other's need, and linked
Our brief breath with the eternal will. That

light.
Shall kindle, in the dulling world's despite,
The inmost of our spirits, burning through
The shadow of all we suffer, dream and do,
As surely as mine eyes, new facultied
In vision to the estranging day denied,
Still shall behold, when this fair night is fled,
All the stars shine round your beloved head.

GLORIOUSHEART

Swift and straight as homing dove,
Heedless, so its flight be flown,
All the full stream of thy love,
Love that knows no mortal bounding,
Pours, is emptied for its own,
Glorious Heart,
Great and loyal and abounding!

Over stormy waters eager
Lifted like a breasting prow,
Though the winds and waves beleaguer,
To one star thy true course guiding
Onward, ever onward, thou,
Glorious Heart,
Steerest, hoping, well confiding.

When thy strength within thee faints,
When to grief the way is hard,
All thy heroes and thy saints,
Lo, with strong hands arming for thee,
Hold thy tenderness in guard,
Glorious Heart,
They that bore thy pains before thee.

Like a flag that, battle-girt,
Keeps its ardent colours high,
Knows not either hate or hurt,
Nay, nor fear nor thought of turning,
Flag for which men leap to die,
Glorious Heart,
I adore thy beauty burning.

THE CRUCIBLE

Because thou earnest, Love, to break
The strong mould of this world in two,
And of the senseless fragments take
And in thy mighty music make
A world more wondrous and more true,
Now my soul hath taken wings,
Newly bathed in light intense,
And purging off the film of sense,
Of its native glory sings.
And that inward vision, turning
Pomps of earth to vapour brief,

Sees as in a furnace burning
Time, a swiftly shrivelled leaf:
Sees the fortified city fall
To a mound of nameless wall,
Shrining temple, columned porch,
Life-bought gems, and royal gold,
Shake like ashes from a torch;
Palaces, world-envied thrones,
Crumble down to dust as old
And idle as Behemoth's bones
On a frozen mountain-top.
I see the very mountains drop,
Wasting with their weight of stones
Swifter than a torrent slides,
Melted like the crimson cloud
Vanishing about their sides
When the morn has burst his shroud,

Love, Love, because thou didst destroy
So much, and madest so much vain,
I know what lives and shall remain,
I see amid Time's gorgeous wane
The dawn and promise of my joy.
O lift me thither, lift me higher!
I am not save in this desire,
Lost and living, fire in fire.

THE CLUE

Life from sunned peak, witched wood, and flowery dell
A hundred ways the eager spirit woos,
To roam, to dream, to conquer, to rebel:
Yet in its ear a voice cries ever, Choose!

So many ways, yet only one shall find;
So many joys, yet only one shall bless;
So many creeds, yet to each pilgrim mind
One road to the divine forgetfulness.

Tongues talk of truth: but truth is only found
Where the heart runs to be out-poured utterly,
Like streams whose home is in their motion, bound
To follow one faith and in that be free.

O Love, since I have found one truth so true,
Let me lose all, to lose my loss in you.

MOTHER AND CHILD

By old blanched fibres of gaunt ivy bound,
The hollow crag towers under noon's blue height.
Ribbed ledges, lizard-haunted crannies white,
Cushioned with stone-crop and with moss em-
browned,
Cool that clear shadow from the outer glare
Above a grassy mound,
Where she that sits, muses with lips apart
And eyes dream-filled beneath the abundant hair
And lets the thoughts flower idly from her heart.

Thoughts of a mother! For her child amid
Light blossoms that a brook's cold ripple fledged,
Wind-shaken at the shadow's glowing edge,
Plays with a child's intentness; now half-hid,
And now those gay curls caught in frolic sun
Toss to the breeze unbid.
And through the thoughts of her who watches shine
With quiverings of felicity that run
Through all her being, as through water wine.

Her thoughts flow out to the stream's endless tune.
Ah, what full sea could all that hope contain?
Then apprehensions vivid like a pain
Wing after, swift as through this airy noon
The swallow skims and flashes past recall
But O returns how soon,

Back in a heart's beat! So her fears have sped
Far as the last loss—homing out of all
The deep horizon to that golden head.

The Child, amid the blossom, nothing recks.
His eyes a flame-winged dragon-fly pursue
Over stirred heads of mint and borage blue
In warm and humming air; on slender necks
Marsh-flowers peep toward him over juicy rush,
And the wild parsley flecks
With powdery pale bloom stalks his bare feet bruise,
And hot herb-odours mingle where they crush
Deep in the green growth and the matted ooze.

How smoothly clear along his ankle slips
The water, gliding to the pebbled cool!
He laughs with those young ripples of the pool.
Then the wind lifts a long spray's leafy tips,
And dashes him with drops of twinkling fire
As in the stream it dips,
Where over shadows bright with wavering mesh
Bramble and thorn and apple-scented brier
Their roots and low leaves thirstily refresh.

His mother calls. Now over thymy sod
The boy comes, yet he lingers; the flowers keep
His feet among them, clustering fair and deep.
Red crane's-bill shakes its seed; milk-campions nod,
By the rough sorrel little pansies hide;
Slim spikes of golden-rod
Above the honeyed purple clover flame;
And, where the sheltered dew has scarcely dried,
Cling worts, close-leaved, each with its own wild
name.

What secret purpose infinitely wrought,
Each in its lovely kind and character,
These breathing creatures in the light astir,
Articulating new an endless thought
That still with some last difference must refine
The likeness it had sought?

Some bloom to mateless glory will unfold,
A grace undreamed some airy tendril twine,
Some leaf be veined with unimagined gold

Thee, too, Child, with life budding in thy face
And quickening thy sweet senses, O thee too,
For whom the old earth maketh herself all new,
Each hour compels with unreturning pace
From the vague twilight being that keeps thee kin
To all the unconscious race,
Compels thee onward; for thy spirit apart
The habitation is prepared within;
The separate mind, the solitary heart.

It is a prison the slow days shall build,
When, disentwining from the world around,
Thou shalt at last gaze out of eyes unbound
On alien earth, with other purpose filled,—
Thou with the burden of identity,
Thou separately willed,
And feel at last the difference thine own
Mid thy companions, saying, "This is I,
I, and none other in the world's mind alone."

Even now thine eyes are lifted from the flowers,
And the sky fills them: boundless and all pure,
Regions afar to thrilling silence lure.
Ah, how to charm the fret of future hours
Shall to thy mind come as from wells of light
And time-forgetting powers.
Words large and blue and liquid as the sky;
The absolution of the infinite,
And sea-like murmur of eternity!

Shalt thou not long then, when the dark hours wring
Thy heart with pangs of mortal loss and doom,
That old unsevered being to resume
With its kind ignorance, relinquishing
This self that is so exquisitely made
For sorrow; time's dull sting

To lose, and the sharp anguish, and the wrong;
Into life's universal glow to fade,
And all thy weakness in that whole make strong?

Yet O thou heart so surely doomed to bleed,
Thou out of boundless and unshaped desire
Compacted essence single and entire,
Rejoice! In thee Earth doth herself exceed,
O tarrier among flowers, of thee the unplumbed
Infinites have need;
Or how shall all that dumbness speak, and how
Those wandering blind energies be summed
As in a star? Rejoice that thou art thou!

Mighty the powers that desolate and kill,
Armies of waste and winter: and alone
Thou comest against them in the might of one
World-challenging and world-accusing will.
Yet mightier thou that canst thy might refrain,
The world's want to fulfil,
Thy soul disprison from time's mortal hour,
To pardon and pity changing that old pain,
And in thy heart the eternal Love let flower.

All faith inhabits in thy Mother's eyes,
Yet she already hath all thy pangs foreknown
And in thy separation felt her own.
Far from her feet follow thy destinies!
There is no step she hath not trod before.
Her loss she glorifies
To spend on thee her all; and to defend
The divine hope which in her womb she bore,
Those arms of love wide as the earth extend.

CHATEAU GAILLARD

Shattered tower and desolated keep
Darken; far below the river shines

Under cliffs that round the twilight sweep,
Rock-rough headlands on the sky's confines
Couch asleep.

Silence breathes; the air colours; dewy smell
Freshens keener from the grass; a hush
Deepens on some distant evening bell.
Burning out of heaven the solemn flush
Spins a spell:

Sharpens every shadowy edge of stone;
Notches gaps abrupt; drains pale the light;
Blackens gulfs of fosse, where mounds enthrone
What were towers. The ruin to soft night
Looms alone.

Lo, it lives! Now like a terrible thought
Seems it. A man's strength, how frail beside
Yonder strength! Could hands of flesh have wrought
Such a thing? Mere ashes they that cried,
They that fought,

Where the little poppy spots with red
Crumbling bastions; dust of centuries, all
Those strong feet that over heaps of dead
Leapt, and hands that furious clutched the wall,
Breasts that bled.

Yet a presence, yet a power is here,
In the darkening silence slowly felt,
Silence that is naked and is near.
Into cloud those battle rages melt;
But a fear

Strikes from where these pressing stones conspire
Toward a purpose past the strength of each,
As a man's deeds knit by one desire,
As a great verse out of casual speech
Forged in fire.

Stones no longer, having filled their place!
Nay, though tumbled, torn, and cast aside,
Touched with glory Time cannot deface:
In such wreck, Man, scarred and glorified,
Builds his race,

Lion-Heart, thou buildest not in vain,
Lion-Heart, that in our own blood still
Beatest: rent but royal over Seine
This the embattled proud child of thy will
Shall remain!

A HYMN OF LOVE

O hush, sweet birds, that linger in lonely song!
Hold in your evening fragrance, wet May-bloom!
But drooping branches and leaves that greenly
throng,
Darken and cover me over in tenderer gloom.
As a water-lily unclosing on some shy pool,
Filled with rain, upon tremulous water lying,
With joy afraid to speak, yet fain to be sighing
Its riches out, my heart is full, too full.

Votaries that have veiled their secret shrine
In veils of incense falteringly that rise,
And stealing in milky clouds of wavering line
Round soaring pillars hang like adoring sighs,
They watch the smoke ascending soft as thought,
Till wide in the fragrant dimness peace is shed,
And out of their perfect vision the world is fled,
Because the heart sees pure when the eye sees not.

I too will veil my joy that is too divine
For my heart to comprehend or tongue to speak.
The whole earth is my temple, and Love the shrine
That all the hearts of the world worship and seek.

But the incense cloud I burn to veil my bliss
Is woven of air and waters and living sun,
Colour and odour and music and light made one.
Come down, O night, and take from me all but this!

I dreamed of wonders strange in a strange air;
But this my joy, my dream, my wonder, is near
As grass to the earth, that clings so close and fair,
Nourished by all it nourishes. O most dear,
I dreamed of beauty pacing enchanted ground,
But you with beauty over my waiting soul,
As the blood steals over the cheek at a heart-throb,
stole!
In the beating of my heart I have known you, I
have found.

Incredulous world, be far, and tongues profane!
For now in my spirit there burns a steadfast faith.
No longer I fear you, earth's sad bondage vain,
Nor prison walls of Time, nor the gates of Death.
For the marvel that was most marvellous is most
true;
To the music that moves the universe moves my
heart,
And the song of the starry worlds I sing apart
In the night and shadow and stillness, Love, for you.

AT EVENING

Fly home, my thoughts, that fretting
In alien words all day,
Have longed for the sun's setting
And wished all words away.
Fly home to her that knows you,
And in her heart repose you.

Fly home, my thoughts, and flutter
Like doves to gentle hands.

You need no lips to utter
What her heart well understands.
Her heart will open to you:
From far, my thoughts, she knew you.

Breathe out your breath, like roses,
About her loosened hair;
Soothe each eyelid that closes
With tender murmured prayer;
Your happy vigil keeping
Over her sacred sleeping.

Fly home, my thought's devotion,
Fly fast and there abide.
A barren senseless ocean
Is all the world beside.
Your home is only there, where she
Shrines all the world's desire for me.

THE TUNNEL

Sitting with strangers in the hurrying train,
We spoke not to each other. Golden May
Flooded those warm fields greener from the rain,
Then sudden darkness stole it all away.

Her face was gone; but on the dark I framed
Its features, to my fancy's utmost height,
And with love's utmost fondness, never named,
Painted the image of my life's delight.

But lo! a gleam the window's edge outlined,
And beautifully dawning through the gloom,
She came back, O how much more than my mind
Had pictured, triumphing in breath and bloom!

Then I, ashamed, gave thanks with joy; I knew
That my best dream was bettered by the true.

AN HOUR

Together by bright water
We sat, my love and I.
Light as a skimming swallow
The perfect hour went by
With words like ripples breaking
On full thoughts softly waking;
With thoughts so dear and shy
That no word dared to follow.

Down by that sunny water
The spring's sweet voice we heard.
The wind, the leaves' young lover,
My love's hair gently stirred.
An hour ago we parted;
I wander heavy-hearted.
Heavily, like a wounded bird,
The day lags, night draws over.

UNDER A FLOWERING TREE

Under a flowering Tree
I sat with my dearest Love.
Night flowered in stars above
And the heart was a-flower in me.

DREAM-COME-TRUE

Within the eyes of Dream-Come-True
Shine the old dreams of my youth.
Ere they faded, ere they grew
Distant, they were born anew
In her truth.

Within the heart of Dream-Come-True
Lies my life, a folded bud.
All that is to hope and do,
Joy and triumph, toil and rue,
Skies of thunder, skies of blue,
Pulse in pulses of her blood.
O may the fountain leap in flood,
The young shoot branch in leafy wood,
Blest in promise through and through
By the dear thoughts of Dream-Come-True.

THE TIE

Coloured like Atlantic wave
To whose curve the bright air gave
Splendour, and the unfathomed blue
Mystery of nameless hue;
If to others you but shine
As a plait of silken twine,
In your rich threads live for me
Chosen hours of Cicely.
Here her fingers have inwrought
Fancies of her changing thought,
Sometimes smooth as running stream,
Sudden now in wayward gleam,
Reverie at some instant broken
(Look, the pretty gap that's token):
Dear to me because you came
Not mechanically tame
But with impulses anew
Quickened, as the colour grew,
Out of laughter or surprise
Shining from her lifted eyes,
Hovering fears without a cause
Soothed in some enchanted pause,
Or those silences that sing
When happy thoughts go wandering.
Here her forehead earnest bent
O'er her busy hands' intent,

And the wavering threads reply
With a frolic mutiny.
O in you she wrought so much
As my fingers thrill to touch.
Round my neck, a blue charm, lie
Breathing thoughts of Cicely.

RICORDI

Of a tower, of a tower, white
In the warm Italian night,
Of a tower that shines and springs
I dream, and of our delight.

Of doves, of a hundred wings
Sweeping in sound that sings
Past our faces, and wide
Returning in tremulous rings:

Of a window on Arno side,
Sun-warm when the rain has dried
On the roofs, and from far below
The clear street-cries are cried:

Of a certain court we know,
And love's and sorrow's throe
In marbles of mighty limb,
And the beat of our hearts aglow:

Of water whispering dim
To a porphyry basin's rim;
Of flowers on a windy wall
Richly tossing, I dream.

And of white towns nestling small
Upon Apennine, with a tall
Tower in the sunset air
Sounding soft vesper-call:

And of golden morning bare
On Lucca roofs, and fair
Blue hills, and scent that shook
From blossoming chestnuts, where

Red ramparts overlook
Hot meadow and leafy nook,
And girls with laughing cries
Beat clothes in a glittering brook:

And of magic-built skies
Upon still lagoons; and wise
Padua's pillared street
In the charm of a day that dies:

Of olive-shade in the heat
And a lone, cool, rocky seat
On an island beach, and bright
Fresh ripples about our feet;

Of mountains in vast moon-light,
Of rivers' rushing flight,
Of gardens of green retreat
I dream, and of our delight.

VENICE

White clouds that rose clouds chase
Till the sky laughs round, blue and bare;
Sunbeams that quivering waves out-race
To sparkle kisses on a marble stair;
Indolent water that images
Slender-pillared palaces,
Or glides in shadow and sun, where, over
Walls that leaning crumble red,
Milky blossom and fresh leaf hover,
Or glitters in endless morning spread,
Far and faint for dazzling miles
To lonely towers and cypress isles,

Where phantom mountains hang on high
Along the mist of northern sky:
O Love, what idle tale is told
That these are glories famed and old?
For to-day I know it is all in you,
This vision, bathed in magic blue,
My sea that girdles me round and round
With winding arms in deeps profound,
And bears our thoughts like golden sails
To be lost where the far verge gleams and pales,
My sky that over the mountains brings
The stars, and gives us wondrous wings,
My dawn that pierces the secret night
To the central heart of burning light
And thousand-coloured flames and flowers
In radiant palaces, domes and towers!
A marvel born of sky and sea,
'Tis all in you, that have given it me.

FOREST SILENCE

Where she reclines
In a rock's cup,
Smooth, tawny-mossed,
Under tall pines,
Her eyes look up,
Her gaze is lost.

Pine-plumes, sea-gray,
When air sings through
The rust-red stems,
Wave slowly, fray
The liquid blue
To flashing gems.

A lizard's haste
Rustles dead leaves;

A light cone drops;
Else this sweet waste
No sound receives
But stirred tree-tops.

A thrill of air
From far slow draws
Its long caress,
Sighed out nowhere;
Then noon at pause
Drinks silentness.

But she; what waft
Of perfume brought
Her musing stirs?
What pure keen draught
Of wine-like thought
Even now is hers?

Her eyes dream dreams;
Coiled foot stirs not,
Nor idle hand.
Spell-drowsed she seems,
Hushed in some plot
Of faery land.

Yet soft, with such
Light lingerings felt
As when boughs part
Again to touch,
Spring, meet and melt
Within her heart

Hope, wish, and prayer,
And memory warm
From far hours, all
Newly aware
Of sudden charm
And wistful call.

Out of lost years
Earth's mystery,
Strange with its pain,
Holy with fears,
Touches her, shy
As breeze, as rain,

And this rich hour
With feeling fills
Too full to hold
Its wealth—a flower
That trembling spills
Seed-spice of gold.

LOVE'S PORTRAIT

Out of the day-glare, out of all uproar,
Hurrying in ways disquieted, bring me
To silence, and earth's ancient peace restore,
That with profounder vision I may see.
In dew-baptizing dimness let me lose
Tired thoughts; dispeople the world-haunted mind,
With burning of interior fire refined;
Cleanse all my sense: then, Love, mine eyes unclose.

Let it be dawn, and such low light increase,
As when from darkness pure the hills emerge;
And solemn foliage trembles through its peace
As with an ecstasy; and round the verge
Of solitary coppices cold flowers
Freshen upon their clustered stalks; and where
Wafts of wild odour sweeten the blue air,
Drenched mosses dimly sparkle on old towers.

So, for my spirit, let the light be slow
And tender as among those dawning trees,
That on this vision of my heart may grow
The beloved form by delicate degrees,

The desired form that Earth was waiting for,
Her last completion and felicity,
Who through the dewy hush comes, and for me
Sings a new meaning into all Time's lore.

Just-dinted temples, cheek and brow and hair—
Ah, never curve that wind breathed over snow
Could match what the divine hand moulded there,
Or in her lips, where life's own colours glow,
Or in the throat, the sweet well of her speech;
Yet all forgotten, when those eyelids raise
The beam of eyes that hold me in their gaze
Clear with a tenderness no words can reach.

Some silken shred, whose fair embroidery throbbed
Once on a queen's young breast; a mirror dimmed
That has held how much beauty, and all robbed!
One bright tress from a head that poets hymned;
A rent flag that warm blood was spent for: sighs,
Faith, love, have made these fragrant, and sweet pain
Quickens its pangs upon our pulse again,
Charmed at a touch out of old histories.

But thou, whence com'st thou, bringing in thy face
More than all these are charged with? Not faint
myrrh
Of embalmed bliss, dead passion's written trace,
Half-faded; but triumphant and astir
Life tinges the cheek's change and the lips' red.
Thy deep compassions, thy long hopes and fears,
Thy joys, thine indignations, and thy tears,
To enrich these, what stormy hearts have bled!

For thine unknown sake, how has life's dear breath
Been cherished past despair: how, lifted fierce
In exultation, has love smiled at death,
For one hope hazarding the universe!
What wisdom has been spelled from sorrow's book,
What anguish in the patient will immured,
What bliss made perfect, what delight abjured,
That in these eyes thine eyes at last might look!

O mystery! out of ravin, strife, and wrong,
Thou comest, Time's last sweetness in the flower,
Life's hope and want, my never-ended song!
Futurity is folded in this hour
With all fruition; joy, and loss and smart;
And death, and birth; the wooed, the feared, the
 unknown;
And there our lives, mid earth's vast undertone,
Are beatings of one deep and mighty heart.

LOVE OF MY LOVE

O Love of my Love, O blue,
Blue sky that over me bends!
The height and the light are you,
And I the lark that ascends,
Trembling ascends and soars,
A heart that pants, a throat
That throbs, a song that pours
The heart out as it sings.
Lo, the dumb world falls remote,
But higher, brighter, the golden height!
Oh, I faint upon my wings!
Lift me, Love, beyond their flight,
Lift me, lose me in the light.

LITTLE HANDS

Soft little hands that stray and clutch,
Like fern-fronds curl and uncurl bold,
While baby faces lie in such
Close sleep as flowers at night that fold,
What is it you would clasp and hold,
Wandering outstretched with wilful touch?
O fingers small of shell-tipped rose,
How should you know you hold so much?

Two full hearts beating you enclose,
Hopes, fears, prayers, longings, joys and woes—
All yours to hold, O little hands!
More, more than wisdom understands
And love, love only knows.

BAB-LOCK-HYTHER

In the time of wild roses
As up Thames we travelled
Where 'mid water-weeds ravelled
The lily uncloses,

To his old shores the river
A new song was singing,
And young shoots were springing
On old roots for ever.

Dog-daisies were dancing,
And flags flamed in cluster,
On the dark stream a lustre
Now blurred and now glancing,

A tall reed down-weighing,
The sedge-warbler fluttered;
One sweet note he uttered,
Then left it soft-swaying.

By the bank's sandy hollow
My dipt oars went beating,
And past our bows fleeting
Blue-backed shone the swallow.

High woods, heron-haunted,
Rose, changed, as we rounded
Old hills greenly mounded,
To meadows enchanted;

A dream ever moulded
Afresh for our wonder,
Still opening asunder
For the stream many-folded;

Till sunset was rimming
The West with pale flushes;
Behind the black rushes
The last light was dimming;

And the lonely stream, hiding
Shy birds, grew more lonely,
And with us was only
The noise of our gliding,

In cloud of gray weather
The evening o'erdarkened.
In the stillness we hearkened;
Our hearts sang together.

A DAY THAT IS BOUNDLESS AS YOUTH

A day that is boundless as youth
And gay with delight to be born,
Where the waves flash and glide over sands
In their pure image rippled and worn;
Where laughter is young on the air
As the race of young feet patters light!
Linked shadows run dancing before
In the midst of the infinite light!
On a violet horizon asleep
One milky sail glimmers afar;
And our spirits are free of the world
With nothing to bind or to bar;
With no thought but the thoughts of a child;
O golden the day and the hour!
The strong sea is charmed from his rage,
And the waste is more fair than a flower.

A WINTER SONG

Now December darkens _
Over Autumn dead.
The frozen earth now hearkens
For the last leaf to be shed.
Above gray grass the branches bare
Melt, faint ghosts, in misty air,
Like despair.

O the nearer, deeper
In my heart, remembering
My Love's kiss and how her eyes
Blessed me like enchanted skies,
Is the joy that with the spring
Shall waken Earth the sleeper.

A SPRING SONG

Not yet a bough to bud may dare
On the naked tree.
Yet happy leaves in the bough prepare,
And could I see
Far as a soaring bird, I know
Where young in sheen
The willow, swaying soft and slow,
Laughs gold and green.

O in the winter's waste to build
A tower of song!
My Love should enter when she willed
That tower strong
And climb, and see beyond the bare
Dark branches' dearth
Spring shaking out her golden hair,
Smile up the earth.

BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS AND THE PLAIN

Between the mountains and the plain
We leaned upon a rampart old;
Beneath, branch-blossoms trembled white;
Far-off a dusky fringe of rain
Brushed low along a sky of gold,
Where earth spread lost in endless light.

The mountains in their glory rose,
Peak thronging peak; cloud-shadows mapped
The purpling brown with milky blue;
Removed, austere, shone rarer snows
Above dark ridges vapour-wrapped—
Afar shone, Love, for me and you.

Sky-seeking mountains, boundless plain!
Old walls, and April-blossomed trees!
Of ever-young, world-ancient power,
The height, the space, was your refrain.
In us, us too, eternities
Made of that moment a white flower.

A PICTURE SEEN IN A DREAM

I saw the Goddess of the Evening pause
Between two mountain pillars. Tall as they
Appeared her stature, and her outstretched hands
Laid on those luminous cold summits, hung
Touching, and lingered. Earth was at her feet.
Her head inclined: then the slow weight of hair,
In distant hue like a waved pine-forest
Upon a mountain, down one shoulder fell.
She gazed, and there were stars within her eyes;
Not like those lights in heaven which know not what
They shine upon; but like far human hopes,
That rise beyond the end of thwarting day

In deep hearts, wronged with waste and toil, they
rose;
And while beneath her from the darkening world
A vapour and a murmur silently
Floated, there came into those gazing eyes,
What should have been, were she a mortal, tears.

THE CRUSADER

Effigy mailed and mighty beneath thy mail
That liest asleep with hand upon carved sword-hilt
As ready to waken and strong to stand and hail
Death, where hosts are shaken and hot life spilt;
Here in the pillared peace thy fathers built
On English ground, amid guardian trees, though rent
This eve with gusts that yellowing boughs dishevel
And over this chantry roof make shuddering revel—
With lips of stone thou smilest; art thou content?

Still burns thy soul for battle as then, when first,
Tost upon shipboard, far thine eyes descried
The hills of the land of longing? Still dost thirst
To leap on the Paynim armies and break their pride,
For God smote in thee, God was upon thy side?
Still flame the spears through dust and blood and roar?
Still ridest slaying, filled with holy rages,
Glorying even now to hear through Time's lost ages
Thy deeds yet thundering like sea-surf on shore?

Or dost thou rather, a soul made great and mild,
Behold it all as a clashing of swords by night
Warring to save but an empty grave exiled,—
Not there, not thus, to reach the abiding Light.
The City of God shines always fair and white,
By alien hosts impossible to be won;
For how should the pure be pure if these could soil it,
Or the holy holy, and ravage of this world spoil it?
A thousand storms pass from us, but not the sun.

Thou smilest mute: but I in the gloom that hearken
To loud wild gusts that, rioting blindly, tear
Soft leaves and scatter them over fields that darken,
I feel in my heart the wound of Earth's despair.
So torn from youth is trampled the innocent prayer;
So loveliest things find soonest enemies; so
Desire that kindled the shaping mind to fashion
Our hope afresh, pours infinite out its passion,
And the world it has striven for breaks it with blow
on blow.

The fool, in his multitude mighty, exults to maim
Greatness; heroes under the world's slow wheel
Fall; the timorous how they seek to tame
Tongues that fear not, hearts that burn and feel!
Slaves conspire to enslave; and, last appeal,
The deaf have power, the blind authority; yea,
They blind the seer, lest they too see his vision,
And all their works be turned to a God's derision;
Beholding this, who would cry not, Up and slay!

O yet my faith is fixt, that the best is chosen,
And truth by joy is kissed as certain good,
And love, even love, though a million hearts be
frozen,
Love, weak, and shamed, and tortured, is under-
stood.
Yea, powers are with us when we are most with-
stood.
Not vainly the soul in beauty and hope confides;
And if it were not so, then had thought no haven,
Nor the brave heart wisdom nor warrant above the
craven:
Mid all these woes the City of God abides.

But O to win there, far, how far, it seems!
And often, as thou, O pilgrim knight, I long
For a land remote, and to be where perfect dreams
Of the soul are acts as natural as a song
In a singer's mouth, and joy need fear no wrong.

And, tossing upon my restless thoughts, I vow
My heart away from a world that would undo me.
Then lo, in a hush some voice divine thrills through
me,
"O heart of little faith, seek here, seek now!"

Yes, here and now! But how to attain, when fierce
In power and pain Time and the World oppose?
With what shall the soul be weaponed, her way to
pierce
To her one desire through many embattled foes?
Must all in a waste of strife and of hatred close?
Shall love unfriended hide, and longing droop,
And all our strength be poured in a conflict sterile,
For the world's hard conquest youth's dear hope
imperil,
And the soul to an alien use ignobly stoop?

Thou knowest, Crusader; O thy smile knows all.
Love takes no sword to battle, for Love is flame,
Itself a sword, upon whose edge falsehoods fall;
A peace that troubles, a joy that puts to shame.
Though the soul be at war for ever, she burns to an
aim,
The world has none! We are wronged, but endure;
we bleed,
But conquer; hatred is idle as vain compliance:
We know not Time, who have made the great
affiance.
To die for that we live for is life indeed.

I WANT A THOUSAND THINGS

I want a thousand things to-night;
The bonds of earth are strict and strong;
Yet glory were a vain delight
Did you not sing within my song.

Hungers, despairs, and victories,
All the world's glories and alarms,
Forget their wound and find their prize
But on your lips, but in your arms.

SECRET PEACE

O my peace, O well
So deep no thought could sound it,
Whence arose thy spell
When in my heart I found it?

Like a coral isle
That long silent grew
From deepest deeps, the while
Slept or stormed the blue,

Emerging to enfold
Peace answering the skies,
And ringed with rock, where rolled
All day the white surge cries,

Till from isles unknown
Far on spicy air
Seeds in secret blown
Sprang to beauty there.

O my love, my sky,
That with soft breath broughtest
Bloom that cannot die,
Of my life thou wroughtest

Such an isle that rings
A peace within so dear,
Howe'er the strong world flings,
Without, his surges drear,

To my heart, whose core
Thy love in joy entrances,
Like music the world's baffled roar
Only this peace enhances.

THE ANNIVERSARY

In misty blue the lark is heard
Above the silent homes of men;
The bright-eyed thrush, the little wren,
The yellow-billed sweet-voiced blackbird
Mid sallow blossoms blond as curd
Or silver oak boughs, carolling
With happy throat from tree to tree,
Sing into light this morn of spring
That sang my dear love home to me.

Be starry, buds of clustered white,
Around the dark waves of her hair!
The young fresh glory you prepare
Is like my ever-fresh delight
When she comes shining on my sight
With meeting eyes, with such a cheek
As colours fair like flushing tips
Of shoots, and music ere she speak
Lies in the wonder of her lips.

Airs of the morning, breathe about
Keen faint scents of the wild wood-side
From thickets where primroses hide
Mid the brown leaves of winter's rout.
Chestnut and willow, beacon out
For joy of her, from far and nigh,
Your English green on English hills:
Above her head, song-ouivering sky,
And at her feet, the daffodils

Because she breathed, the world was more,
And breath a finer soul to use,
And life held lovelier hopes to choose:
But O to-day my heart brims o'er,
Earth glows as from a kindled core,
Like shadows of diviner things
Are hill and cloud and flower and tree—
A splendour that is hers and spring's,—
The day my love came home to me.

HIDE ME IN YOUR HEART

Hide me in your heart, Love,
None but we can know
How with every heart-beat
Love could grow and grow

Till the seed that branched abroad,
How, we could not guess,
Holds us in the shadow
Of its boughs that bless;

And the stars and mountains,
Earth and chanting sea
Seem a mighty music
Sung to you and me;

Time-forgotten meaning,
Poured for us apart.
Murmured out of all the world
To our secret heart.

Hide within my heart, Love.
Never may I know
My heart's beat from your heart's beat,
No, nor throe from throe!

DAY'S END

When I am weary, thronged with the cares of the
vain day
That tease as harsh winds tease the unresting autumn
boughs,
I still my mind at evening and put all else away
But the image of my Love, where all my hopes I
house.

The thoughts of her fall gently as the gentleness of
snow.
That after storm makes smoothness in the ways that
are rough;
White with a hush of beauty over my heart they grow
To the peace of which my heart can never hold
enough.

WILD PEACE

Blue noon shines o'er the sea;
Waves break starry on the sand;
Lights and sounds and scents come free
On the radiant air of the land.
I am filled with the melody of waves
That take my heart onward in tune;
My heart follows yearning after, and craves
No other delight nor boon.

They enfold the earth in desire
With a closer and closer kiss;
From life into life they expire,
In dying their birth and their bliss.
I am melted in them, I am filled
With the passion in peace they have found.
Even so would my spirit in peace be thrilled,
So be lost in a love without bound.

Peace is no tame dove
To be caught and caged in the breast,
No, nor untamable Love
In a moment lightly possest.
Peace is wide and wild,
And Love without master as the sea;
He is soft in his ways as a little child,
Yet is mightier far than we.

PARTING AND MEETING

When we are parted, the world ails,
Life wants, the pulse of it falls slack;
The wind stings, and the clouds roll black;
Wishes fly far as absent sails;
And in the mind old mournful tales
Murmur, and toss an echo back.
In all things fair is found some lack.
Light cares grow heavy, and pleasure stales.

But when from far in the thronged street
Our eyes each other leap to find,
O when at last our arms enwind,
And on our lips our longings meet,
The world glows new with each heart-beat,
Love is come home, Life is enshrined.

LIBERATION

Deep in these thoughts, more tender than a sky
Whose light ebbs far as in futurity,
Deep, deeper yet my blessed spirit steep,
Singing of you still; you and only you
Gave me to breathe and touch and taste, all true,
Love from the utmost height and deepest deep
In my own heart, as all that summer knows
Of glory and perfume hides in one shut rose.

You and you only gave me, Dearest, this,
A pressure of the hand, a silent kiss,
And all is well; the hurt, the pain-pricks healed;
And rapt and hushed, as from some green recess
Into a golden solitariness,
All ours, we look; and suddenly revealed
Is all that we in our desire might be,
Winged and immortal, fretting to be free.

Then in that large, appeasing air we grow
Near to Love's greatness, and our hearts outflow.
We are as those who traffic with the sea;
Washed from our liberated spirits is all
That the feared world made stagnant, pent or small,
For love has touched us with his majesty:
We grow beyond the bounds of time and pain,
Then in one heart-beat wondering meet again.

FLOWER AND VOICE

Tremulous out of that long darkness, how
Wast thou, O blossom, made
Upon the wintry bough?
What drew thee to appear,
Like a thought in the mind,
Ignorant, unafraid,
And perfect?—Yet the wind
Blew on thee how sharp! how drear
The drops fell from the sudden-clouded spring!

Those delicate rare petals, all storm-thrilled,
Shone into recollection, when my ear
From a half-opened door was filled
With a voice singing; floating up to sing
A song, long ago from a heart's darkness born
And upon young lips born again;
A voice, flowering clear
In beauty stolen from the world of pain.

Ah, not to-night of beauty I thought,
Yet beautiful beyond all hope's desire,
O wonderful, more wonderful to me
Than any miracle of beauty wrought
Was my Love's voice, saying beside the fire,
Where she leaned by my knee,
Dear, broken words; words of no art,
And yet in them was all my want, I found;
Life has no more to give than that sweet sound
Breaking and melting deep in my heart's heart.

VIOLETS

Violets, in what pleasant earth you grew
I know not, nor what heavenly moisture stole
To tincture in your petals such dim blue
As seems a pure June midnight's scented soul:

But on her bosom when you breathed so sweet,
You were as lovely words to thoughts that rose
So deep in us, no language could complete
Their sense, nor half their tenderness uncloze.

Love in such thoughts forever freshly flowers.
They neither ask nor answer, only give
Their charm up to the kind and unkind hours,
Born of that beauty in whose light we live,

Whose grace is past all probing of our wit
And sweetens even the hand that bruises it.

THE DARK GARDEN

When your head leans back slowly, and gazing eyes
Muse earnest upon mine and starry swim
With depths unfathomed that still well and rise,
And the words fail, and sight with love grows dim,

Whence comes that almost sadness, almost wound
Of joy, whose thoughts sink like the wearied flight
Of birds on seas, lost in love's deeps profound,
Inscrutable as odours blown through night?

We know not: and we know not whence love rose
Pouring its beauty over us, as the moon
On this dim garden rises, and none knows
Where she was wandering, those blind nights of June,

Hush, hush, the mystery of life is here:
Our sacred joy kisses our sacred fear.

SOLITUDE

The stag that lifted up his kingly head
Upon the silent mountains, and from far
Beneath him heard the confident harsh cry
Of men invading his old solitudes,
Then bounding over the rough slopes has climbed
By dancing brooks remoter ranges, thick
With forests moaning in the cloudy winds
Of desolate November, nor has stayed
Till on the utmost craggy ledge, among
Wet boughs, with antlers dripping from the mist
And with sweat-darkened, quivering coat he snuffs
Wide-nostrilled the wild air, where motionless
He stands at last; what shudder as of joy
Deeply to breathe that native loneliness
Possesses him! From reddened oaks around
Lost leaves are torn innumerable and whirled,
Fast as from hearts of men their fearful hopes.
Into the drizzling gulf; he hears beyond
From cliffs that dimly tower in abrupt
Strange precipices, the world-ancient roar
Of headlong torrents: now the vapour rolls
Blank over all, now rending it a gust
Reveals by golden glimpses the pale stream

Poured in a trembling pillar, at whose foot
The snowy seethe shoots forward and recoils
For one tumultuous moment, then again
Arches into one pure unfretted wave
And sends a voice in splendour down the gorge.

A PRAYER

O Thou who seekest me
Through the day's heartless hurry and uproar,
Who followest me to my thought's farthest shore—
Nay, who art gone before—
Sustain me, O sustain
The heart that seeks for thee,
The world is filled with rendings and with pain,
But thou with peace; with peace though wronged so
sore
By our despair, blind wrath, and blind disdain.
And thou hast made it dear
To hope against the wrongs of every hour,
And given to hope the power
And passion to prevail;
The heart, for all its fear,
Putting forth delicate, shy flower on flower
Against the hard world's hail.
O might my love, that in one heart has found
Such hope to cherish, and such joy to sound,
O might it grow through days that chafe and bound
And our true souls from one another screen,
Till in its clear profound
Part of thy peace were seen.

DAWN BY THE SEA

Beautiful, cold, freshness of light reveals
The black masts, mirrored with their shadowy spars,

The hill-gloom and the sleeping wharf, and steals
Up magical faint heights of fading stars.

I hear the waves, on the long shingle thrown,
Slowly draw backward, plunge, and never cease.
Against that sea-sound me earth-stillness lone
Builds vaster in the early light's increase.

O falling blind waves, in my heart you break;
Outcast and far from my own self I seem,
With alien sense in a strange air awake,
The body and projection of a dream.

Turn back, pale Dawn, or bring that light to me
Which yesterday was lost beyond the sea.

WANDERERS

O there are wanderers over wave and strand
Invisible and secret, everywhere
Moving thro' light and night from land to land,
Swifter than bird or cloud upon the air.

Wild Longings, from divided bosoms rent,
Rush home, and Sighs crushed from the pain of years
Far o'er their quarry hover Hates intent;
Wing to and fro world-wandering great Fears.

Pities like dew, Thoughts on their lonely road
Glide, and dark forms of spiritual Desire;
Yea, all that from its house of flesh the goad
Of terrible Love drives out in mist and fire.

Ah, souls of men and women, where is home,
That in a want, a prayer, a cry, you roam?

MILTON

AN ODE

Soul of England, dost thou sleep,
Lulled or dulled, thy mighty youth forgotten?
Of the world's wine hast thou drunk too deep?
Hast thou sown more than thy hands can reap?
Turn again thine ear
To that song severe
In thine hour of storm and war begotten!

Here in towered London's throng,
In her streets, with Time's new murmur seething,
Milton pacing mused his haughty song;
Here he sleeps out feud, fret, and wrong.
Nay, that spirit august
Tramples death's low dust,
Still for us is kindled, burning, breathing.

He, on whose earth-darkened sight
Rose horizons of the empyrean
And the ordered spheres' unhasting flight;
He who saw, where round the heart of Light
Seraphs ardent-eyed
Flamed in circle wide,
Quiring music of their solemn paean,

When through space a trouble ran
(Like a flush on serene skies arisen)
That from this dim spot of earth began—
Rumour of the world's new marvel, Man,
From whose heart-beat sped
Hope, hazard, and dread
Past earth's borders to hell's fiery prison:

He who saw the Anarch's hate
Tower, winged for woe; the serpent charming
Eve in her imperilled bower; the Gate
Barred, and those two forms that desolate

Mid the radiant spheres
Wept first human tears;
Earlier war in heaven and angels arming: '

He who, like his Samson, bowed,
Toiling, hardly-tasked and night-enfolded,
Steered his proud course to one purpose vowed,
As an eagle beats through hailing cloud
Strong-winged and alone,
Seeking skies unknown:
He whose verse, majestically moulded,

Moves like armed and bannered host
Streaming irresistible, or abounding
River in a land's remoteness lost,
Poured from solitary peaks of frost,
And far histories brings
Of old realms and kings,
With high fates of fallen Man resounding:

This is England's voice that rang
Over Europe; this the soul unshaken
That from darkness a great splendour sang,
Beauty mightier for the cost and pang;
Of our blood and name
Risen, our spirits to claim,
To enlarge, to summon, to awaken.

A PRELUDE AT EVENING

My spirit was like the lonely air
Before night,
Like hovering cloud that's melted there
In the late light,
When slow the vast earth-shadows reach
To the last flush.
And the wandering silences have each
Their own hush.

Did the green grass about me glimmer,
Or trees tower?
Not softer to my sense, nor dimmer,
The obscure power
Of all the world's wide trouble, fought
In the heart's recess:
My heart was solitude, my thought
Emptiness,

But through my spirit that seemed, unfilled,
Alone to float,
A sudden dewy sweetness thrilled;
A low note!
And then a loud note, rippling full
To a still pause:
The liquid silence was a pool
That a breeze flaws.

It throbbed again, how lonely clear!
A song that seemed
Sprung beyond memory or fear,
A voice dreamed
In a land that no man ever found;
And who knows
What shook those lingering drops of sound
At the rich close?

Ah, where were you, passion and grief
Of the world's wrong?
What had you to do with a trembling leaf
And a bird's song,
And spaces calm with coming of night.
And the fresh gloom
Of shadowy trees, and smelt delight
Of hidden bloom?

Yet O, in me that song had part
Because of you!
It drank of the very blood of the heart
It quivered through

Because of the tears of joy, and the cost
Of a joy's, breath,
Measureless thoughts of a dearness lost,
Hope, and death.

Strangeness of longing, beauty, pain!
I was aware
Of all your secret, soft as rain,
In the dim air.
For Life it was that sang aloud
To the lone dew,
Brave in the night and sweet in the cloud:
My heart knew.

MALHAM COVE

I

There is threat in the wind, and a murmur
of water that swells
Swift in the hollow: about me
a shadow is thrown;
For above is no valley sequestered
in shy, green dells,
But abrupt, sky-closing, a wall
and a vastness of stone.
Did the rock split asunder with ages?
or suddenly smote
The hand of a God on the mountain?
for under the face
Of the imminent height, at the humid
and cold rock-base,
From out of the dungeoned recesses,
the cavernous throat,
Disimprisoned there bursts, not a rill,
not a trickle of spray,
But broad in its gushing and full
and sweeping apace
A river arisen that dances
in laughter away

II

Built aloof; imscaleable;
towering stark
To the fugitive cloud and the blue,
O Soul of the Rock!
Silent, remote as the moon,
that will'st not to hark
To the cry of the lamb on the precipice
lost from the flock;
If thou suffer the pine in thy cranny
that dizzily clings
Small-seen as a fern, or a thicket
of obstinate thorn,
'Tis disdain that neglects them, O rather
a scorning of scorn,
Unheedful of them as of those
irresistible springs
Gushing out from beneath thee, unheard
as the cry of the bird
That skims from the shadow and hovers
a flashing of wings
Mid the flush and the greening of April,—
thou standest unstirred

III

As a desert uplifted, a desert
where bones rot and bleach,
As a barrenness knowing not change
nor date nor event,
As a strength without speech, without motion,
yet stronger than speech;
A bulk without feature, a winter
offeree long spent;
And neither is hope, nor terror,
nor weakness there,
But a pressure and weight of oblivion
where no man is known,
Nor feature from feature distinguished
but all overthrown;

Like the rampart of Time that confronts us
enormous and bare,
Immuring the dream and the vision
whereby we have breath;
Like Night and the end of the light
to them that despair:
I stand in thy shadow and fear thee.
thou greatness of Death!

IV

Come away, come away! There is light
in the water that glides;
Come away with the water that hastes
from the heart of the hills,
A sinuous ripple that sings
and that nowhere abides,
But broken, a murmuring sparkle,
on ledges and sills
Of the rock, as it swerves, carries in it
a wavering fire,
Like a thought, like a joy, that no barrier
stays from its flight,
Or a dance of young children that carol
their heart of delight;
For it calls to the bud to burst open,
the blade to thrust higher;
To my heart, to my heart, it is calling
"O follow! for here
Is thine own spirit, quick and enamoured
of love and of light;
O follow my swiftness and stay not
in shadows of fear!"

V

On beds in the valley, on sunny
half-islanded banks,
Where roots are athirst and refreshed
and saplings grow bold

Bowing their youth to the breezes
in quivering ranks,
Primroses, a cluster of softness
and fragrance, unfold;
And the fairy anemone, shaking
her blossoms agleam—
They are kisses of light as they tremble
to touch and to part—
Is flushed, ah! how faint, as with fire
from the innermost heart
Of a world in whose veins is a laughter
as clear as the stream:
And the music upholds me, enchants me,
and borne like a wave,
I am melted, I flow, I am nought
but a hope and a dream,
And in me is the youth of the flowers,
and grief in her grave.

VI

Sudden a gust flings a shadow!
and shivering, the black
Driven leaves at the roots of the oak-tree
are whirled up and lost
Like the wild thoughts of fear into darkness,
and strong boughs crack,
And a gloom rushes down with a wailing,
and out of it tossed
Pale snow is outshaken, and hail
drops icily keen
On young leaf and dead; and awakened
in tree-tops aloud
Is the roar of the storm that has gathered
the hills in a shroud
Until naught of the towering rock
but in glimmers is seen,
A vision unfeatured, a phantom
of terrible birth:—

Is it thou that appearest, a presence
divined in the cloud,
Thy ribs and thy knees and thy breasts,
O Titaness Earth?

VII

Is it thine, the great voice that confuses
the winds and the floods
In a meaningless cry as of madmen,
a blindness of wrath,
Smiting the bosses of oak
and the virginal buds,
Negligent where thou hast beaten
thy desolate swath?
O thou, who hast armed as for battle
thy creatures wild
With fierceness of claw and of fang,
of hoof and of horn,
From thee, even thee, from thy heart-beat
was man, too, born
With flesh like a flower defenceless?
is he thy child?
In whose eyes are wonder and trouble,
who strikes, yet the wrong
He has done he turns from again
and with sorrow is torn:
How shall his heart be as thine
or in thy way strong?

VIII

For who that is born of a woman
has known not the hour
When the spirit within him is daunted
and this world comes
As an army against him, a terror
of alien power,
And fate, too vast to be borne,
his courage benumbs?

Lost he seems as a child
upon mountains alone.
Who has longed not then with longing
for a strength past pain
To endure the rending of sorrow
that makes hope vain,
To be kneaded in iron and stubborned
in armour of stone?
That hour when the heavens are shaken
within the mind,
And the world is an enemy armed,
have I not known?
For the strength of the stony mountain
have I not pined?

IX

But lo! on a sudden, with sighing
the storm ends now
In a radiant relenting: golden
the light reappears
With a glory of drops that are dancing
on leaf and on bough;
And a music, a wandering music
returns to my ears.
From the primrose is breathing a freshness,
and wild, shy smells
From the moss, where the snowflake is melted
to dazzling dew,
And the voice of the birds on the banks
is uplifted anew
To the carolling voice of the river
that onward swells.
Onward away, where the buds
gleam white on the tree!
The rain and the gloom are forgotten
in heaven's young blue;
And my heart flows out with the river,
the river with me.

X

In a trance, in'a trance I listen;
 and into my soul,
As it draws far back to a stillness
 darkly stored
With infinite sound gather
 and gradual roll
The voices of all the torrents
 on earth outpoured.
"We tarry not, rest not, sleep not,"
 aloud they cry,
"We are swift as the hours that crumble
 thy strength into dust;
We build thee no home, nor a fortress
 wherein to trust;
But in us is the sound of dominion
 falling from high,
And the kings of the world dethroned
 and towers laid bare.
We move, we are ever beyond;
 we change, we die;
We laugh, we live; to follow
 wilt thou, too, dare?"

XI

How shall I not go with you,
 O waters swift?
Too long in yesterday's self
 I tarry, and keep
The dust of the world about me.
 Uplift, uplift,
Lose me, a wave in the waves
 that laugh and leap!
Lo, into uttermost time
 my thoughts I send:
And because in my heart is a flowing
 no hour can bind,
Because through the wrongs of the world
 looking forth and behind,

I find for my thought not a close,
for my soul not an end.
With you will I follow, nor crave
the strength of the strong
Nor a fortress of time to enshield me
from storms that rend.
This is life, this is home, to be poured
as a stream, as a song.

ELEGY

The little waves fall in the wintry light
On idle sands along the bitter shore.
The piling clouds are all a pale suspended flight;
They tarry and are moved no more.

Thin rushes tremble about the naked dune;
A hovering sail sinks down the utmost sea;
With wreckage and old foam the unending sands are
strewn;
And the waves heap their dumbness over me.

This is the earth that lasts beyond our dreams
Of time, and rushing onward without rest,
Deludes us with her trancing silences, yet teems
Fiercely, and burns within her breast,

Insatiate of youth, this old, old Earth,
Who uses our spent ashes for her need,
Shaping the delicate marvel of her youngest birth,
And still she kindles a new seed.

Intent on the unborn creature of her thought
And busy in the waste: O even here,
Though masked as in a calm of dumb frustration,
naught
Stays her, no pang nor any fear,

But subtly, with a touch invisible,
She is changing and compelling; and me too,
Me too, upon the secret stream of that deep will
She moves to a destiny ever new,

And yet this hour my spirit hides its face,
And, backward turned, sighs out an idle pain
For the remembered paths these feet may not retrace
And the hours that cannot come again.

O hours of heavenly madness in delight
That felt the swiftness and the throb of wings,
That stole the burning soul of naked summer night
And the moons of the perfumed springs,

Not now to you my longing stretches hands,
But to lost hours, that had no fruit, no seed.
Like fading of low light beyond forgotten lands,
They have passed and are dead indeed.

And once, for once, unrecking Earth, you seem
With me to linger and to acquiesce,
To share the desolation of my doubt and dream,
And to ponder upon barrenness.

The wind lulls on the waste, and has no will.
The foiled tides hush and falter at their bound,
A little sand is blown, then all again is still;
And the clouds hang their silence around,

With such an absence felt in the lone skies,
Suppression of such tears, profoundly sprung
In long-remembering looks of unconvancing eyes,
As when the old bury the young.

THE MIRROR

I

Where is all the beauty that hath been?
Where the bloom?

Dust on boundless wind? Grass dropt into fire?
Shall Earth boast at last of all her teeming womb,
All that suffered, all that triumphed to inspire
Life in perfect mould and speech, the proud mind's
 lamp serene—
Nothing? Space be starry in tremendous choir—
For whom?

In this deserted chamber, as the evening falls,
Silent curtains move no fold;
Long has ebb'd the floor's pale gold;
Shadows deepen down the silent walls.
The air is mute as dreams beneath a sleeper's face,
Distant, undivined;
But every hovering shadow seems to hold
Want untold.
The look of things forsaken, each in its own place,
Memories without home in any mind,
Idle, rich neglect and perfume old—
Over these the glimmer of the twilight fades;
Infinite human solitude invades
Forms relinquished, hues resigned.

O little mirror, round and clear,
In solemn-coloured shadow lying
Cold as the moon, pale as a tear,
With spiritual silver beam replying,
Indifferently to all things as to one;
Beauty's relic and oblivion,
But void, void, void! Desolate as a cave
Abandoned even of the breaking wave,
A home of youth and mirth, when all its guests are
 gone!
As I touch thee in the silence here,
Where thou liest alone, apart,
Through the silence of my heart
Thou flashest elfin flames of fear.

Like a thought of lost delight,
Like love-sweetness, like despair,

Come faint spices of the night
Floating on the darkened air.
The air is tender with the sense of dew,
Is tranced, is dim, is heavy, as if there hung
Within the tinges of its shadowy hue
Ghosts of lost flowers, with all their petals young,
And the young beauty they made incense to.

O forlorn mirror, is there nothing thine?
The cup is emptied of its fragrant wine,
The dress is vacant of the breathing form,
And thou that gleam'st
All absence of what once moved gracious, white and
warm
In thy clear wells, or luminously mused,
O little mirror long disused,
Laid in this empty bower's recess,
Thou thyself seem'st
The soul and mystery of emptiness.

Yet if I should raise thee now,
As once and oft, thou knowest how,
Hand and slim wrist, smooth as a flower-stem, raised
Thy silent radiance, and with intent brow
Eyes within thee gazed
Seeking thine oracle,
Shall not from these pellucid secrecies appear
Not I, nor any shape of this dim room,
But all that in thy cave of lambent gloom
Hath dwelt and still may dwell,
Ambushed like visions bound in sleeping memory's
cell;
All that thy brightness buries as the sea
Tossed bones and crusted gold: had I the key,
Might'st thou not open depths, might'st thou not
yield,
Wonder of wonders! what since time began
Was never yet revealed,
The unmapped, unmeasured, secret heart of man?

Half-shut eyes voluptuously
Lightening, as the bosom swells and glows;
Smile to smile flowering from an ardent thought:
O what moments didst thou deify
With the promise of life crushed to wine
Redder than the cheek's triumphant rose!
—But from deeper places hast thou brought
Nothing? Are not other answers thine?

Hast thou not heard, hast thou not seen,
Hast thou not shown, hast thou not found
Shames unwhispered, terrors bound,
Earthquake pangs of aghast surmise,
When with itself the heart has been
Face to face in an hour profound?
Out of thee what ghosts shall rise,
Shapes and gestures, and accusing eyes!
World-flattered faces in midnights of pain;
Faces defaced by tiger-lusts insane;
Faces appalled before a self unguessed;
Ashaming dawns on faces fallen and dispossessed!
O what glimpses hast thou flashed in dread,
With what hauntings wast thou visited,
Apparitions of a soul made bare
Shuddering at the thing it looked on there!
But thou art stainless, though the heart has bled,
Thou art silent as the air
Or the wave that closes smooth above the drowner's
head.

No man hath seen his soul
Save for a glimpse in the night
Brief as an ember of coal
Blown for an instant bright.
To see his own soul as it is,
Eternity must enter him
With the torches of Seraphim
That have shone to the last abyss.
Mirror, couldst thou show the spirit this,

Then within this narrow room
Were the Judgment and the Doom.
For by so much as its own self it knew,
Searched by that burning vision through and through
To the innermost of where it crouched and hid
Amid the husks of the mean deeds it did,
Amid the shadow of all it shunned, the quest
It turned from, and in palterings acquiesced,
To the uttermost of what its eager passion
Caught of the glory springing to re-fashion
Hope and the world, and great with pity saw
Life darkly wrestling with the angel, Law—
By such a measure, molten in that fire,
Should the soul mete itself on God's desire,
Suffer at last all wisdom, and endure
The beam and vision of a thought all-pure.
O were not this to taste Heaven's dawn, or dwell,
Because of knowledge, in the pains of Hell?

II

Where is all the wailing, all the want
That sorrow tore
From Love's bleeding breast? Extinguished quite?
Shall the wide-winged glory of hope extravagant,
Shall the laughter, shall the song that sprang to soar
Fall, and no ear hearken, and their falling flight
Echoless waste walls of adamant
Ignore?

Draw wide the curtain! Fabulous, remote
Night is come.
Over Earth's lost bosom fragrant breathings float
Into glimmering heights of gloom,
But upon the solitary verge extreme
Steals a beam.
Hushed and sudden, ere the eye could note,
Lo, the moon is there!

Innocence of splendour, gazing bare,
Drenches leaves in quiet, thought in dream.

Is it Earth's pale mirror lifted lone
For an answer to her million sighs?
Can that far Tranquillity atone
In the gaze of those unnumbered eyes
For the pang and for the moan,
For the heart's dim burial and long dirge,
Luring, as she lures the mutinous sea-surge,
To her will of peace this human tide?

From a charmed shadow on the shorn hill-side
Hand-in-hand lovers through the trees emerge,
And pause; their very souls are glorified,
Their feet tread airy on immaterial ground,
With marvelling gaze they feel
That well of spiritual light o'erflow
The listening hush, and steal
Fear and trouble, as though
The world were one vast music of ethereal sound
And they a stillness in the midst of it.
Peace, peace and pity! pardon, pity, peace,
Passing all mortal wit!
O truth long-sought and magically found,
O wonder and release!
O secret of the world long-hidden in day's dust!
They bathe their hearts in that sweet dew, their hands
Thrill clasping in a touch that understands
Nothing magnificent but a divine surrender
Absolving and august.
To distances immersed and tender
Unfolds this vale of struggle hard and pent,
Region of unwon ravishment
In unadventured lands,
A place of leaves and lonely light and leafy scent
Storied like that old forest of the perilous Fleece.

Sorceress of million nights!
Hast thou charmed indeed the brew,
When the stealth of perverse rites—

Mouths that mutter, hands that strew,—
Love tormented and malign,
Flushed with terror like a maddening wine,
Sought another's rue?
Hecate of the cross-roads, hast thou hearkened
To the sailing witch's mew
And the felon raven's croak
When the shuddering winds were darkened
And the leaves rushed from the withered oak?
Ah, not these foul toys would I invoke!
O for some supreme enchanting spell,
Voice of a God crying aloud,
Felt and feared on Earth's heart-strings,
To conjure and to compel
Like a spectre from th'e shroud
Or like incense-dust that springs
Into fire and fragrant cloud,
Out of thy blind caves and cold recesses,
Out of that blank mirror's desert beam
All the unnumbered longings and wild prayers,
Infinite heart-broken tendernesses,
Indignations and despairs
That from man's long wound of passion stream,
Sucked like vapour, like a mist of tears
Into that imagined peace, that ecstasy!
O surely, surely, thou hast wrought thy part
In every secret and tempestuous heart,
Thou that hast gleamed on thousand battle-crimsoned
spears,
Thou that wast radiant on Gethsemane!

She has seen not, she has heard not.
Hearts have leapt for her, but she has stirred not.
Pity she has made, but none has had,
Though her magic mingles with Earth's want
And the trouble of Earth's tender sons,
Thunder of the builded Babylons,
Music of the dreaming poet's chant,
Venture of the steering argosies,
With a light as of divine fulfilment clad

Breathing in for ever syllables of peace.
Peace, is it peace? Yet Earth, dark Earth,
Mother, O Mother, thou that nourishest
In the blind patience of thy teeming breast
Hope without end; who drivest life to birth,
Yet numberest not our dear and sacred dead,
Unheeding of our anguish and lost cries
So thou mayst build beyond us, in our stead,
A race enriched with all for which we bled,
Of haughtier stature and of kinglier eyes;
Thou of whose vast desire strong realms of old,
The dynasty of empires, were but waves
That towered and crashed into their splendid graves,
For thine unresting hunger to remould
Yet mightier, O insatiable! Doth fear
Not shake thee, Mother, seest thou not ev'n here
In that cold mirror's answer what shall steep
Thee also in oblivion? Thou shalt keep
Of all the fruit of thy most fiery spring,
Stored riches of thy sleepless trafficking,
And proud perfection thou hast travailed for,
Nothing! The beauty that thy body bore
Fresh and exulting (Mother, dost not weep?)
Laughter of streams, young flowers, and starry seas,
Pillar and palace, heaven-faced images
That man has wrought, his tossing heart to ease,
Nothing! To cloud shall vanish the deed done;
The bannered victory, the wrong borne alone,
Nothing! and thou be desolate and none
To feel thy desolation: emptiness,
Night within night, immense and issueless,
Till as a breath upon the mirror dies,
Fades the last smoke of thy long sacrifice.

Out of the deeps, trembling, the soul
Cries through night to the silent pole:
"I that am want, I that am grief,
I that am love, I that am mirth,
I that am fear, I that am fire,
Though thou clothe me in beauty brief,

Though I have worn thy sweet attire,
I, thy endless sorrow, Earth,
Dwell in the glory of God's desire,
That kneads for ever in the flesh
Of man, to make his spirit afresh,
A marvel more than all thy wandering seas,
And mightier than thy caverned mysteries,
Nor stays nor sleeps, but world on world transfuses
Melted ever to diviner uses,
Through infinite swift changes burning,
Itself the end, no end discerning,
Till all the universe be wrought
Into its far perfecting thought.
Then this mind of cloud and rue
Shall in eternal mind be new,
Mirror of God, pure and alone,
See and be seen, know and be known."

TO TIME

Time, Time, who choosest
All in the end well;
Who severely refusest
Fames upon trumpets blown
Loud for a day, and alone
Makest truth to excel:

Shadow of God, slowly
Gathering words, long
Scorned, to make them holy,
And deeds like stars bright
That none perceived in the light,
Lifting the weak to be strong:

Shall I not praise thee,
Thou just judge? Yet O
What so long stays thee?

Why must thy feet halt,
While our tears grow salt
And our old hopes go!

Beauty is throned at last;
Truth rings falsehood's knell;
But our strength, our joy is past
While our hearts wait thee:
Time, Time, I hate thee,
Hate thee, and rebel.

THE TIGER-LILY

What wouldst thou with me? By what spell
My spirit allure, absorb,- compel?
The last long beam that thou didst drink
Is buried now on evening's brink.
The garden's leafy alleys lone,
With shadowy stem and mossy stone,
Intangibly seem now to dress
Colour and odour motionless.
A stealing darkness breathes around,
As if it rose out of the ground,
And tingeing into it soft gold
Ebbs, and the dewy green glooms cold,
And dim boughs into black retire.
But thou, seven-throated Flower of Fire,
Sombring all the shadows near thee,
Dost still, as if the night did fear thee,
Glory amid the failing hues
And this invading dusk refuse,
And breathing out thy languid spice
My spirit to thine own entice.

Warm wafts that linger touch my cheek.
What is it in me thou wouldst seek?
Thou meltest all my thoughts away
As leaf on leaf is mingled grey

In shadow on shadow, past discerning.
O cold to touch, to vision burning,
What power is in thee so to change
And my familiar sense estrange?
Thou seemest born within a mind
That has no ken of human kind;
Remote from quick heart, curious brain,
Feeling in joy, thinking in pain,
Remote as beauty of sleeping snow
Is from a flame's wild shredded glow;
Remote from mirth, anger or care,
Or the deep wound and want of prayer,
Yet like some word of splendid speech
Beyond our human hearing's reach,
Whose meaning, could its sound be known,
Might earth's imprisoned secret own
That binds as with a viewless thread
This throbbing heart of joy and dread
With tremblings of the wayside grass
And pillars of the mountain pass
And circling of the stars extreme
In boundless heights of heaven.

I dream
My dark heart into earth, I heap
My spirit over with cold sleep,
Resign my senses, one by one,
To glooms that never saw the sun,
Fade from this self to what behind
Earth's myriad shapes is urging blind,
Am emptied of man's name, become
A blankness, as the mountain dumb,
If so I may attain to win
The secret thou art rooted in.

Can life renounce not life? Must still
The inexorably moving will
Seek and make rankle the dulled sting
Of essence? Must the desert spring
Revive, and the forgotten seed
Be drawn again by its old need

Through blind beginnings of a sense,
And dark desire of difference,
And fear, and hope that feeds on fear,
To its own destined character?
I cannot lose nor abdicate
The separateness of my state,
Nor thou, that out of burial drawn
Through the black earth didst shoot and dawn
Tender and small and green, and mount
In air, a springing, silent fount,
Until the cold bud, sheathed so long,
Slow swelled and burst like sudden song
Into the sun's delight, and naught
Of costliest tissue ever wrought,
Fragrant and in rare colours dyed,
For the white body of a bride
Or king's anointing feast, could so
Enrich the noon or inly glow
To lose the sweetly-kindled sense
In mystery of magnificence.

Was there no cost to make thee fair?
Did no far-off long pains prepare
Those clustered curves of incense-breath?
Did nothing suffer unto death
To poise thee in thy glory? Came
No tinge upon thy coloured flame
From sighs? Was there no bosom bled
That thou mightest be perfected—
As, serving some taskmaster's doom
A brown slave patient at the loom
Toils, weaving his fine web of gold,
More precious than his race, to fold
In soft attire an idle queen,
When long his own thin hands have been
Dust, but in all their toil arrayed
She through her pillared palace-shade
Glowes flower-like, and her young gaze has
No thought of any deep *Alas!*
Threaded into the sumptuous vest

That lies upon her perfumed breast;
Or as at crimsoned eve on high
Some dying warrior turns his eye
Where, lifted over spear and sword
Among the loud victorious horde,
A golden trophy gleams with blood
That from his own spent body flowed,
And trumpets sound across the sand
To sunset in a conquered land?

O thou wast from life's weltering ore
Breathed by enchanting mind before
Man was in his own shape. Far, far
Thou seemest as the evening star!
Yet movest me like that lone light
Fetched through the ages of the night
Into this breathing garden-close;
Or like the things that no man knows
In a child's eyes; or like, for one
Watching a seaward-sinking sun,
Beyond cold wastes of water pale
The dim communion of a sail.
Ah! though I know not what thou art.
Yet in the fastness of my heart
How shall I tell what lies unwrought
Into the figured films of thought,
Uncoloured yet by sharp or sweet,
Or what forge of transforming heat
Threatens this world of use and fact
Wherewith the busy brain is packed?
Thou art of me, O Flower of Flame,
What is not uttered, has no name,
The springing of a want unmated,
A joy no fallen hour has dated.
Some of my mystery thou holdest,
Secretly, splendidly unfoldest.

THE BOWL OF WATER

She is eight years old.
When she laughs, her eyes laugh;
Light dances in her eyes;
She tosses back her long hair
And with a song replies;
Then on light feet she darts away
Tripping, mischievously gay.
But now into this room of shadow
Coming slowly with the sun's long ray
And all the morning on her simple hair,
O how serious-eyed
She steps pre-occupied,
Holding a bowl of water
Poised in her fingers' care,—
Water quivering with cool gleams
And wavering and a-roll
Within the clear glass bowl,
That brimmed and luminous seems
A wonder and a shining secrecy,
As if it were the world's most precious thing,
So open-clear that all have passed it by.
Cut stalks of iris lie
On the bare table, flowers and swelling buds
Clasped in close curves up to the purple tips
That shall to-morrow burst
And shoot a splendid wing,
When they have drawn into their veins the spring
Which those young hands, with the drops bright on
 them,
So all intently bring;
Costless felicity,
Living and unbought!
And over me, O flowers
That neither ask nor sigh,
Comes the thought,
How all this world is wanting and athirst!

FERRYHINKSEY

Beyond the ferry water
That fast and silent flowed,
She turned, she gazed a moment,
Then took her onward road

Between the winding willows
To a city white with spires:
It seemed a path of pilgrims
To the home of earth's desires.

Blue shade of golden branches
Spread for her journeying,
Till he that lingered lost her
Among the leaves of Spring.

IN THE FOREST

The beeches towering high
Greenly cloud the sky.
The shadows all are green
With living sun unseen.
O wonderful the sound
Of green leaves all around,
When nothing yet is heard
Of windy branches stirred
But wavering lights alone
Innumerably blown
Come trembling, and then cease
Upon a trembling peace.
What breathed in it? A sigh?
Or something yet more shy
Of speech? A spirit-kiss?
A waft of fairy bliss
That seeks for voice on our
Lips, there to find its flower
In some sweet syllable?

O Love, I cannot tell;
But light brims in your eyes
And makes divine replies.

THE FOREST PINE

A hundred autumns fallen in fire
To dust and mould
Have faded from their perished gold
To throne thee higher,
O Titan pine, that soarest straight
From ground to sky without a mate,
Like one desire.

Dark is the hollow as a cup
Of shadow immense,
Of daylight-daunting dimness, whence
Thou springest up
Far into light, to take thy fill
Of splendour, solitary in still
Magnificence.

Leaves of the low brake hide a stir
Of small soft things:
Life, busy in flit of secret wings
And slinking fur,
Pricks buried seeds that upward thrust,
And green through germinating dust
Triumphant stings.

But thou, that seemest earth to scorn
And air to claim,
With all thy plummy spire aflame
And crest upborne
In the blue air, so far, so high,
As if the silence of the sky
About thee came,

Thou hidest all the sappy stream
That in thee swells;
Motionless fibre nothing tells:
And thou dost seem
To tower in glorious ignorance
Of earth's small stir and chafe, a trance,
A soaring dream!

And in a trance thou holdest me
With bated will;
And I am still, as thou art still,
My spirit free,
My body charm-dissolved to naught
But the vibration of a thought,
If thought could be.

O hush! within the blood is felt
An airy fear,
A faltering; and the heart can hear
The silence melt
To something frailer than a sound
Borne from the wide horizon's bound
To the inward ear.

Slowly, ah! slowly, a hush begins,
A trembling, where
Those branches sleep on golden air,
And gradual wins
A voice, a music, a long surge,
Sweet as a song, sad as a dirge,
Sighed out like prayer!

The singer knows not what he sings.
A lonely sound
Comes trembling through him from profound
Aerial springs.
The songs, the sighs, the world exiled,
Seek him and in his heart-throbs wild
Still their wild wings.

FIDE ET LITERIS

(WRITTEN FOR THE FOURTH CENTENARY OF
ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL)

When the long-clouded spirit of Europe drew
Life from Greek springs, frost could no longer bind,
And old truth shone like fresh dawn on the blind,
Our Founder sowed his pregnant seed: he knew
No crabbed rule but rather chose a clue
That should emband us of our historied kind
Comrades, and keep in us a morning mind,
Since to the wise Learning is always New.

In Faith and Letters he enshrined his light;
Faith, the divine adventure that holds on
Through this world's forest into worlds unknown,
And Letters, that since speech on earth began
As one unended sentence burning write
The hope, the triumph, and the tears of Man.

THE TRAM

(IN THE MIDLANDS)

I

A grinding swerve, a hissing spurt,
And then a droning through the dirt!
The tram glides on its wonted way
Of everyday, of everyday.
Past every corner still the same
Squat houses huddle, meanly serried,
An image of the mute and maim
With life behind their windows buried;
Blank windows staring under slate
That presses on them desolate
As eyes bereft of brows, and drips
On puddled, flowerless garden strips.

Is it evening, noon or morn?
Is it Autumn, is it Spring?
Nothing tells but the forlorn
Rain that is over everything.
A rain that seems too slow to fall
And drifts, an immaterial pall
Of wetness in the air; it leaves
A dismal glistening on the eaves,
And grimed upon the pavement lies,
For the dirt is in the very skies.

Like without, and like within!
Dull bodies clatter out and in,
And the bell clangs, as they subside
On the long seat, and on we glide,
Defensive creatures, all askance
At one another! Small eyes lance
Suspicion; fingers tighten close
On baskets; thin lips will not lose
A word too much, and skirts draw shy
From any touch too neighbourly.
And now a bald-head, grossly quaking
And lurching round for elbow space,
Sets a black-beaded bonnet shaking
Above a pinched averted face
Or stiffly-bastioned heaving bust
That virtuously expands distrust.

And all the fluttered narrow looks
Appear like little painful books
Of soiled accounts, where bargains keep
Their cherished tale of capture cheap.
For life is all a cheapening,
And the rain is over everything,
And there is neither mirth nor woe.
Who made it so, who made it so?

II

As I muse, as I muse,
Numbed at heart, with eyelids leaden,

Stupefying senses lose
All but sounds and sights that deaden;
Glassy gaze and shuffled feet,
Humid glide of the endless street
Passing by with rank on rank
Of dripping roofs and windows blank,
Till one dull motion drones the brain
Out of meaning, out of time,
And the blood beats to a chime
As of bells with mouth inane.

And now a monstrous ark it seems
That's hurried with the speed of dreams
Through streets of ages! On it drives
Among unnumbered years and lives.
And now the sound grows like a surging,
As if this speed a host were urging,
And in the sound are voices coming
Thick, and tumultuous music drumming;
And savage odours are astir
Of forest leaves and hidden fur,
And naked limbs of hunters glide
And warriors in the great sun ride,
And mutinous-nostrilled horses champing
With restless necks are strongly stamping.
The Roman purple passes proud
Like an eagle through a cloud.
Lo, knights-at-arms with pennons dancing
To death's adventure gay advancing,
And here a queen that is a bride
Crimson-robed and lonely-eyed,
And there a pilgrim's dusty feet
Faring to the heavenly city;
And now an idle beggar singing
How the sun and wind are sweet
A wayside song, a wanderer's ditty:
And still around, out of the ground,
The armies of the dead are springing;
And with unearthly speed and number
Compelled like those that walk in slumber

They follow, follow! And at my ear
An imp that squats with demon leer
Is screaming. See the Triumph go!
See for whom the trumpets blow!
The prophesied, that goes before us!
This is he, Time's crown and wonder
That has the very stars for plunder;
This is he, the Promethean,
(Hark the ever-rolling paean
With a wilderness of apes for chorus!)
Who fetched from heaven the stormy fire
To serve and toil for his desire,
And plumbed the globe, and spoiled old Earth
Of all the secrets of her birth;
See him, throned triumphant there,
Like a toad, with glassy stare;
Eyes, and sees not; ears, and hears not!
Heart, and hopes not; soul, and fears not!

III

A boy with a bunch of primroses!
He sits uneasy, flushed of cheek,
With wandering eyes and does not speak:
His hands are hot; the flowers are his.

But Spring, O Spring is in the world.
And to the woods my fancy flying
Sees all the little fronds uncurled,
Where still the dead brown bracken's lying
And a thousand thousand shining drops
Are on the young leaves of the copse.
The spurge has all his green cups filled—
A gust will shake and brim them over—
From trembling oats the rain is spilled;
I smell the sweetness of the clover.
Long pods of tendrilled vetch are thirsting,
White flowers on the thorn are bursting;
Twigs redden on the sapling oaks
Above the grass that shoots and soaks;

The streams flow silent, full and fast;
The cuckoo's cry is heard at last;
In forky boughs and leafy shade
There's busyness for every wing;
And sweet through stalk and root and blade
Run juices of the wine of Spring.
But the primrose perfume, faint and rare
Is like a sigh of Spring forsaken.
O shy soft beauty, torn and taken!
O delicate bruised tissue fair!
You are like the eyes of an outcast fond,
Or a face seen at a prison-grate:
For Beauty's but a vagabond
And knows no home and has no mate.
Alas! what dungeon walls we rear,
For our possession, round us here!
We make a castle of defence
Out of the dullness of our sense;
Possess our burrow like the mole;
And with the blundering hands of chance
Grow cruel in our ignorance.
What is another's springing soul
That I should seek to force and bind it?
To catch my gain where it has tripped,
To thrust it down when it has slipped,
To stupefy and dumb and blind it,
Fortress my virtue with its failing,
And kindle courage at its quailing?
What is another's thought, that I
Should wish it mine in effigy?
Ah! we that grasp and bind and tame,
It is ourselves, ourselves we maim;
We maim the world. The very Spring
Stops all mute and will not sing,
The sapless branches will not quicken,
The cells of secret honey sicken,
Giant brambles writhe and twist
About the trees in poisonous mist.
The spider fattens; flies oppress,
And the buds are blackened promises,

Nothing stirs, but the leaf is shed,
And all the world of wonder's dead!
O for the touch that shall awake!
O for the word that shall renew!
And all this crust of sense shall break
And the world of wonder pierce us through;
The scales be fallen from a sight
Ravished with fountains of delight,
And the sad dullness of our scorn
Be like remembered night at morn:
Then we shall feel what we have made
Of one another, and be afraid.

TOWERS OF ITALY

Never were towers so fair, so bold,
Passionately springing, arrogant towers!
Nor air so blue over roofs so old,
Nor on ancient walls so rare a gold,
When I found my love among the flowers.

O mighty Spirits, never to be stilled,
Whose glorious works concluded seem,
Yet in whom is a glory unfulfilled,
And still for us you build, you build,
What have you told her out of your dream?

She comes from shadow of streets below,
And surely, O Spirits, you were there,
Pacing among the shadows; lo,
In her eyes is a light, on her face a glow,
As she comes through a golden air.

Do you feel, do you breathe and throb again
In her bosom's beat and shining eyes,—
As an old chant heavy with world-old pain
Is lifted afresh in a splendid strain
On young lips, up to the skies?

My love is fair as a voice that sings,
In a scented garden of joyous flowers.
Do the old walls keep their buried things?
Yet the air is astir as with throbbing of wings
And heaven with the springing of the towers.

The hills lift a loneliness around;
But my love has a light about her head;
And as if they uttered names renowned,
Bells from the towers to the silences resound—
Voices of the youth of the dead!

VIGIL

In the hollow of pale night upon the moor
The silence blows a perfume: O but hark!
A sound is in the bosom of the dark,
Breathed like a secret from the glimmering shore;
A vigil of unearthly sound, the sea
That never slumbers and begins anew,
And melts into our hearts amid the dew,
Murmuring on the moor to you and me.

Out of a silence dateless as the old earth,
Before ear heard or ever voice could frame
Speech, or the human dearness of a name,
To glorify man's longing or his mirth,
Ere ever any place was historied
For hearts that sever yet their own home keep,
That sound comes immemorial like sleep
Fresh, with the morning in dark softness hid.

O Love, O Love, were we not there, we too,
In far nights and wild silences? Were we
Not part of this old secret of the sea?
For O your kiss, thrilling my body through,
Touches me from eternity, as if I
And you were of the things before Time came
To measure men's desire and loss and shame,
And no use disenchant this mystery.

THE PORCH OF STARS

As in a porch of stars we stand; the night
Throbs through us, O Love, with its worlds of light,
And mingles us in glory of one breath,
One infinite ignorance of Time and Death.
Behold, I am dyed in you, and you in me;
We are the colours of infinity,
We are two flames that are one flame,
We are but Love, and have no name.
But did we part, O Love, if we could part,
The very blood were taken from my heart,
Time and Death would ride the night
Then, and ended were all light,
The stream of stars would fall like stone
And heaven's utmost height be darkened,
And we be lost, like dust that's blown,
Like a cry, where none has hearkened.

THE PROMISE

What wonder of what hope do you enfold,
Whose eyes are all filled with futurity?
What shape of more than beauty would you mould
With desire's strength out of the dim to-be?

Your bosom is the haunt of holy fears.
Shadows are all about you, whispering
Deep words and glorious names from the full years;
But like the stars in heaven your pulses sing

Of a voice sweeter than all tones yet heard;
Of a heart richer than the summer's store;
Of earth awakened from old bonds and spurred
To run a new race for her conqueror.

You wait, with thoughts all glowing, like the Night;
And in you buds the flower, the marvel, Light.

A MOTHER'S SONG

Over fast-closed baby eyes
In the garden's golden air
Blossom-white the butterflies
Hover, hurry, part and pair,
Sudden shinings, flown nowhere!
Blue, above, the unbounded skies!

Little one, O downy head,
O fingers clasping, shaped and small,
Laid in soft nest of your bed,
How the trees are Titan-tall
Over you that slumber, all
Ignorant of hope and dread!

O so small, and all around
Life so vast works wonders new.
Yet to you is set no bound
What you shall desire and do,
Find and fashion and hold true;
Deeps you hold no thought can sound:

You are sought by powers unknown;
On your trembling heart-strings play
Airs unheard, O little one!
Whisperings of far away,
Music made of day and day—
Lands of promise, all your own!

Wide as heaven the secrecies
You enfold: ev'n now, ev'n here,
You presage infinities,
While above in hope, in fear,
My white wishes, far and near,
Hover like the butterflies.

ONE YEAR OLD

Is it we that are wise, is it we,
Who have bought with a price of grief
A wisdom seldom free
From scorn or disbelief,
Who find this world fulfil
An end that is not our will,
Who toil with the light in our eyes
Showing us scarce begun
The things we meant to have done,
Is it we, is it we, that are wise?

Or O, is it you, is it you,
That have yet no language of ours,
But whose eyes are a laughter blue
As of light slipping under the showers,
Whose carol, sweeter than words,
Trills clear as an April bird's,
Or a dancing brook on the hill,—
Blithe springs of a confidence
That bubbles, we know not whence,
And has no knowledge of ill?

Lo, our desires have gone
Like ships to a future far
And vanished in mist alone
By no befriending star.
But all to you is a wonder
Fresh as the sky, whereunder
Life moves to pledge delight;
You need no hope to bear
The day through the day's care;
Your joys are all in sight.

You want not a word to tell
What lies beyond our guess
And springs like a sparkling well
In a lovely speechlessness.

And we that have shaped with art
Language of mind and of mart,
We have never yet found speech
For the heart's blood deepest stirred:
Something is flown with a word
Or is buried beneath our reach.

Our speech is spun from the pain
Of thought and heavy with years,
And dyed with an ancient stain
From passion and blood and tears.
But O, I vow, when I hear
Your wordless carol clear,
I would cast this speech that endures
As a sorry old patchwork coat,
Could I but re-fill my throat
With the liquid joy in yours.

BECAUSE THOU ART NEAREST

Because thou art nearest
To the mystery of the fire
That is Earth's and the soul's
And the body's desire,
Whereof we were made
As a song out of sound,
Trembling together
And together enwound,
O frailer, more fading
The hope and the lure
That are not where thou art:—
They fade nor endure,
But in thee is the secret,
The star, and the fire,
Ever nearer and dearer,
My joy, my desire.

SEVEN YEARS

Seven years have flown like seven days,
Like seven days of shining weather,
Since we, forsaking single ways,
Trode earth and faced the skies together.
The old is new, the new is old,
And who shall reckon, one or seven,
The years that Time has never told?
He numbers not the days of Heaven.

SORROW

Woe to him that has not known the woe of man,
Who has not felt within him burning all the want
Of desolated bosoms, since the world began;
Felt, as his own, the burden of the fears that daunt;
Who has not eaten failure's bitter bread, and been
Among those ghosts of hope that haunt the day, un-
seen.

Only when we are hurt with all the hurt untold,—
In us the thirst, the hunger, and ours the helpless
hands,
The palsied effort vain, the darkness and the cold,—
Then, only then, the Spirit knows and understands,
And finds in every sigh breathed out beneath the sun
The human heart that makes us infinitely one.

IN MEMORY

Home from the wounds of Earth and wasting Time
The marvel of her beauty and morning prime
She has taken, glorious with the dew of youth
Still on her thoughts, those thoughts that from her
eyes

Gleamed still or splendid, unafraid of truth;
All her white passion, all the secrecies
Of wild, sweet fire that her heart guarded, all
Her heart's young rose, ere yet one leaf could fade
or fall!

She that was made like a song nobly wrought
In fine, fair mould of movement, speech and thought,
With glory of hair about the buoyant head;—
In breaking voices we her beauty tell:
But she is radiant, she is perfected,
Where our long hopes far from our sorrows dwell,
A song unended, but a song so sweet,
No tongue of mortal dares its melody complete.

PAST AND FUTURE

Past is the past! But no, it is not past,
In us, in us, it quickens, wants, aspires;
And on our hearts the unknown dead have cast
The hunger and the thirst of their desires.

Unknown the pangs, the peace we too prepare!
What shakes this bosom shall reverberate
Through ages unconceived: in that deep lair
The unguessed, unhoped, undreaded issues wait.

Our pregnant acts are all unprophesied.
We dream sublime conclusions; destine, plan,
Build and unbuild; yet turn no jot aside
The something infinite that moves in Man.

We write The End where fate has scarce begun;
And no man knows the thing that he has done.

THUNDER ON THE DOWNS

Wide earth, wide heaven, and in the summer air
Silence! The summit of the Down is bare
Between the climbing crests of wood; but those
Great sea-winds, wont, when the wet South-West
blows,

To rock tall beeches and strong oaks aloud
And strew torn leaves upon the streaming cloud,
To-day are idle, slumbering far aloof.
Under the solemn height and gorgeous roof
Of cloud-built sky, all earth is indolent.
Wandering hum of bees and thymy scent
Of the short turf enrich pure loneliness;
Scarcely an airy topmost-twining tress
Of bryony quivers where the thorn it wreathes;
Hot fragrance from the honeysuckle breathes,
And sweet the rose floats on the arching briar's
Green fountain, sprayed with delicate frail fires.
For clumps of thicket, dark beneath the blaze
Of the high westering sun, beset the ways
Of smooth grass narrowing where the slope runs
steep

Down to green woods, and glowing shadows keep
A freshness round the mossy roots, and cool
The light that sleeps as in a chequered pool
Of golden air. O woods, I love you well,
I love the flowers you hide, your ferny smell;
But here is sweeter solitude, for here
My heart breathes heavenly space; the sky is near
To thought, with heights that fathomlessly glow;
And the eye wanders the wide land below.

And this is England! June's undarkened green
Gleams on far woods; and in the vales between
Gray hamlets, older than the trees that shade
Their ripening meadows, are in quiet laid,
Themselves a part of the warm, fruitful ground.
The little hills of England rise around;
The little streams that wander from them shine

And with their names remembered names entwine
Of old renown and honour, fields of blood
High causes fought on, stubborn hardihood
For freedom spent, and songs, our noblest pride,
That in the heart of England never died,
And burning still make splendour of our tongue.
Glories enacted, spoken, suffered, sung,
You lie emblazoned on this land now sleeping;
And southward, over leagues of forest sweeping
White on the verge glistens the famous sea,
That English wave, on which so haughtily
Towered her sails, and one sail homeward bore
Past capes of silently lamenting shore
Victory's dearest dead. O shores of home,
Since by the vanished watch-fire shields of Rome
Dinted this upland turf, what hearts have ached
To see you far away, what eyes have waked
Ere dawn to watch those cliffs of long desire
One after one rise in their voiceless choir
Out of the twilight over the rough blue
Like music! . . .

But now heavy gleams imbrue
The inland air. Breathless the valleys hold
Their colours in a veil of sultry gold
With mingled shadows that have ceased to crawl;
For far in heaven is thunder! Over all
A single cloud in slow magnificence
Climbs like a mountain, gradual and immense,
With awful head unstirring, and moved on
Against the zenith, towers above the sun.
And still it thickens luminous fold on fold
Of fatal colour, ominously scrolled
And fleeced with fire; above the sun it towers
Like some vast thought quickening a world not
ours
Remote in the waste blue, as if behind
Its rim were splendour that could smite us blind,
So doom-piled and intense it crests heaven's height
And mounting makes a menace of the light.

A menace! Yes, for when light comes, we fear.
Light that may touch, as the pure angel-spear,
Us to ourselves, make visible, make start
The apparition of the very heart
And mystery of our thoughts, awaked from under
The mask of cheating habit, and to thunder
Bare in a moment of white fire what we
Have feared and fled, our own reality.

And if a lightning now were loosed in flame
Out of the darkness of the cloud to claim
Thy heart, O England, how wouldst thou be known
In that hour? How to the quick core be shown
And seen? What cry should from thy very soul
Answer the judgment of that thunder-roll?

I hear a voice arraign thee. "Where is now
The exaltation that once lit thy brow?
Thou countest all thy ocean-sundered lands,
Thou heapest up the labours of thy hands,
Thou seest all thy ships upon the seas.
But in thine own heart mean idolatries
Usurp devotion, choke thee and annul
Noble excess of spirit, and make dull
Thine eyes, enfleshed with much dominion.
Art thou so great and is the glory gone?
Do these bespeak thy freedom who deflower
Time, and make barren every senseless hour,
Who from themselves hurry, like men afraid
Lest what they are be to themselves betrayed?
Or those who in their huddled thousands sweat
To buy the sleep that helps them to forget?—
Life lies unused, life with its loveliness!
While the cry ravens still, "Possess, Possess!"
And there is no possession. All the lust
Of gainful man is quieted in dust;
His faith, his fear, his joy, his doom he owns,
No more: the rest is parcelled with his bones,
Save what the imagination of his heart
Can to the labour of his hands impart,

Making stones serve his spirit's desire, and breathe.
But thou, what dost thou to the world bequeathe.
Who gatherest riches in a waste of mind
Unto what end, O confidently blind,
Forgetful of the things that grow not old
And alone live and are not bought or sold?"

Speaks that voice truth? Is it for this that great
And tender spirits suffered scorn and hate,
Loved to the utmost, poured themselves, gave all
Nor counted cost, spirits imperial?
Where are they now, they that our memory guard
Among the nations? Shall I say enstarred
And throned aloof? No, not from heavens of thought
Watching our muddled brief procession, not
Judges sublime above us, without share
In our thronged ways of struggle, hope, despair,
But in our blood, our dreams, our deeds they stir,
Strive on our lips for language, shame and spur
The sluggard in us, out of darkness come
Like summoned champions when the world is dumb;
Within our hearts they wait with all they gave:
Woe to us, woe, if we become their grave!
It shall not be. Darken thy pall, and trail,
Thunder of heaven, above the valleys pale!
Another England in my vision glows.
And she is armed within; at last she knows
Herself, and what to her own soul belongs.
Mid the world's irremediable wrongs
She keeps her faith; and nothing of her name
Or of her handiwork but doth proclaim
Her purpose. Her own soul hath made her free,
Not circumstance; she knows no victory
Save of the mind: in her is nothing done,
No wrong, no shame, no glory of any one,
But is the cause of all and each, a thing
Felt like a fire to kindle and to sting
The proud blood of a nation. On her brows
Is hope; her body doth her spirit house
Express and eloquent, not dumb and frore;

And her voice echoes over sea and shore.
And all the lands and isles that are her own
In choric interchange and antiphon
Answer, as fancy hears in yonder cloud
From vale to vale repeated low and loud
The still-suspended thunder.

Hearts of Youth,
High-beating, ardent, quick in hope and ruth
And noble anger, O wherever now
You dedicate your uncorrupted vow
To be an energy of Light, a sword
Of the ever-living Will, amid abhorred
Din of the reeking street and populous den
Where under the great stars blind lusts of men
War on each other, or escaped to hills
Where peace the solitary evening fills,
Or far remote on other soils of earth
Keeping the dearness of your fathers' hearth
On vast plains of the West, or Austral strands
Of the warm under-world, or storied lands
Of the orient sun, or over ocean ways
Stemming the wave through blue or stormy days,
Wherever, as the circling light slopes round,
On human lips is heard an English sound,
O scattered, silent, hidden, and unknown,
Be lifted up, for you are not alone!
High-beating hearts, to your deep vows be true!
Live out your dreams, for England lives in you.

BOOK IV

(1914-1920)

THE FOURTH OF AUGUST

Now in thy splendour go before us,
Spirit of England, ardent-eyed,
Enkindle this dear earth that bore us,
In the hour of peril purified.

The cares we hugged drop out of vision,
Our hearts with deeper thoughts dilate.
We step from days of sour division
Into the grandeur of our fate.

For us the glorious dead have striven,
They battled that we might be free.
We to their living cause are given;
We arm for men that are to be.

Among the nations nobliest chartered,
England recalls her heritage.
In her is that which is not bartered,
Which force can neither quell nor cage.

For her immortal stars are burning
With her the hope that's never done.
The seed that's in the Spring's returning,
The very flower that seeks the sun.

She fights the force that feeds desire on
Dreams of a prey to seize and kill,
The barren creed of blood and iron,
Vampire of Europe's wasted will. . .

Endure, O Earth! and thou, awaken,
Purged by this dreadful winnowing-fan,
O wronged, untameable, unshaken
Soul of divinely suffering man.

STRANGE FRUIT

This year the grain is heavy-ripe;
The apple shows a ruddier stripe;
Never berries so profuse
Blackened with so sweet a juice
On brambly hedges, summer-dyed.
The yellow leaves begin to glide;
But Earth in careless lap-ful treasures
Pledge of over-brimming measures,
As if some rich unwonted zest
Stirred prodigal within her breast.
And now, while plenty's left uncared,
The fruit unplucked, the sickle spared,
Where men go forth to waste and spill,
Toiling to burn, destroy and kill,
Lo, also side by side with these
Beast-hungers, ravening miseries,
The heart of man has brought to birth
Splendours richer than his earth.
Now in the thunder-hour of fate
Each one is kinder to his mate;
The surly smile; the hard forbear;
There's help and hope for all to share;
And sudden visions of goodwill
Transcending all the scope of ill
Like a glory of rare weather
Link us in common light together,

A clearness of the cleansing sun,
Where none's alone and all are one;
And touching each a priceless pain
We find our own true hearts again.
No more the easy masks deceive:
We give, we dare, and we believe.

A NEW IDOL

Magnificent the Beast! Look in the eyes
Of the fell tiger towering on his prey,
Beautiful in his power to pounce and slay
And effortless in action. He denies
All but himself. He gloats on his weak prize,
Roaring the anger of wild breath at bay,
Blank anger like an element whose way
Is mere annihilation! Terrible eyes!

But there is one more to be feared, who can
Escape the prison of his own wrath; whose will
Lives beyond life; who smiles with quiet lips;
Most terrible because most tender, Man,—
Not only uncowed but irresistible
When the cause fires him to the finger-tips.

TO THE BELGIANS

O race that Caesar knew,
That won stern Roman praise,
What land not envies you
The laurel of these days?

You built your cities rich
Around each towered hall,—
Without, the statued niche,
Within, the pictured wall.

Your ship-thronged wharves, your marts
With gorgeous Venice vied.
Peace and her famous arts
Were yours: though tide on tide

Of Europe's battle scourged
Black field and reddened soil.
From blood and smoke emerged
Peace and her fruitful toil.

Yet when the challenge rang,
"The War-Lord comes; give room!"
Fearless to arms you sprang
Against the odds of doom.

Like your own Damien
Who sought that lepers' isle
To die a simple man
For men with tranquil smile,

So strong in faith you dared
Defy the giant, scorn
Ignobly to be spared,
Though trampled, spoiled, and torn.

And in your faith arose
And smote, and smote again,
Till those astonished foes
Reeled from their mounds of slain,

The faith that the free soul,
Untaught by force to quail,
Through fire and dirge and dole
Prevails and shall prevail.

Still for your frontier stands
The host that knew no dread,
Your little, stubborn land's
Nameless, immortal dead.

TO WOMEN

Your hearts are lifted up, your hearts
That have foreknown the utter price.
Your hearts burn upward like a flame
Of splendour and of sacrifice.

For you, you too, to battle go,
Not with the marching drums and cheers
But in the watch of solitude
And through the boundless night of fears.

Swift, swifter than those hawks of war,
Those threatening wings that pulse the air,
Far as the vanward ranks are set,
You are gone before them, you are there!

And not a shot comes blind with death
And not a stab of steel is pressed
Home, but invisibly it tore
And entered first a woman's breast.

Amid the thunder of the guns,
The lightnings of the lance and sword
Your hope, your dread, your throbbing pride,
Your infinite passion is outpoured

From hearts that are as one high heart
Withholding naught from doom and bale
Burningly offered up,—to bleed,
To bear, to break, but not to fail!

FOR THE FALLEN

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.

Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were
young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds un-
counted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow
old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are
known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our dark-
ness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

ODE FOR SEPTEMBER

I

On that long day when England held her breath,
Suddenly gripped at heart
And called to choose her part
Between her loyal soul and luring sophistries,
We watched the wide, green-bosomed land beneath
Driven and tumultuous skies;
We watched the volley of white shower after shower
Desolate with fierce drops the fallen flower;
And still the rain's retreat
Drew glory on its track,
And still, when all was darkness and defeat,
Upon dissolving cloud the bow of peace shone back.
So in our hearts was alternating beat,
With very dread elate;
And Earth dyed all her day in colours of our fate

II

But oh, how faint the image we foretold
In fancies of our fear
Now that the truth is here!
And we awake from dream yet think it still a dream.
It bursts our thoughts with more than thought can
hold;
And more than human seem
These agonies of conflict; Elements
At war! yet not with vast indifference
Casually crushing; nay,
It is as if were hurled
Lightnings that murdered, seeking out their prey;
As if an earthquake shook to chaos half the world,
Equal in purpose as in power to slay;
And thunder stunned our ears
Streaming in rain of blood on torrents that are
tears,

III

Around a planet rolls the drum's alarm.
Far where the summer smiles
Upon the utmost isles,
Danger is treading silent as a fever-breath.
Now in the North the secret waters arm;
Under the wave is Death:
They fight in the very air, the virgin air,
Hovering on fierce wings to the onset: there
Nations to battle stream;
Earth smokes and cities burn;
Heaven thickens in a storm of shells that scream;
The long lines shattering break, turn and again
return;
And still across a continent they teem,
Moving in myriads; more
Than ranks of flesh and blood, but soul with soul at
war!

IV

All the hells are awake: the old serpents hiss
From dungeons of the mind;
Fury of hate born blind,
Madness and lust, despairs and treacheries unclean;
They shudder up from man's most dark abyss.
But there are heavens serene
That answer strength with strength; they stand
secure;
They arm us from within, and we endure.
Now are the brave more brave,
Now is the cause more dear,
The more the tempests of the darkness rave
As, when the sun goes down, the shining stars are
clear.
Radiant the spirit rushes to the grave.
Glorious it is to live
In such an hour, but life is lovelier yet to give.

V

Alas! \yhat comfort for the uncomforted,
 Who knew no cause, nor sought
 Glory or gain? they are taught,
 Homeless in homes that burn, what human hearts
 can bear.

The children stumble over their dear dead,
 Wandering they know not where.
 And there is one who simply fights, obeys,
 Tramps, till he loses count of nights and days,
 Tired, mired in dust and sweat,
 Far from his own hearth-stone;
 A common man of common earth, and yet
 The battle-winner he, a man of no renown,
 Where "food for cannon" pays a nation's debt.
 This is Earth's hero, whom
 The pride of Empire tosses careless to his doom.

VI

Now will we speak, while we have eyes for tears
 And fibres to be wrung
 And in our mouths a tongue.
 We will bear wrongs untold but will not only bear;
 Not only bear, but build through striving years
 The answer of our prayer,
 That whosoever has the noble name
 Of man, shall not be yoked to alien shame;
 That life shall be indeed
 Life, not permitted breath
 Of spirits wrenched and forced to others' need,
 Robbed of their nature's joy and free alone in death.
 The world shall travail in that cause, shall bleed,
 But deep in hope it dwells
 Until the morning break which the long night fore-
 tells.

VII

O children filled with your own airy glee
 Or with a grief that comes

So swift, so strange, it numbs,
If on your growing youth this page of terror bite,
Harden not then your senses, feel and be
The promise of the light,
O heirs of Man, keep in your hearts not less
The divine torrents of his tenderness!
'Tis ever war: but rust
Grows on the sword; the tale
Of earth is strewn with empires heaped in dust
Because they dreamed that force should punish and
prevail.
The will to kindness lives beyond their lust,
Their grandeurs are undone:
Deep in man's suffering soul are all his victories
won.

THE ANVIL

Burned from the ore's rejected dross
The iron whitens in the heat.
With plangent strokes of pain and loss
The hammers on the iron beat.
Searched by the fire, through death and dole
We feel the iron in our soul.

O dreadful Forge! if torn and bruised
The heart, more urgent comes our cry
Not to be spared but to be used,
Brain, sinew and spirit, before we die.
Beat out the iron, edge it keen,
And shape us to the end we mean!

THE HEALERS

In a vision of the night I saw them,
In the battles of the night.
'Mid the roar and the reeling shadows of blood
They were moving like light,

Light of the reason, guarded
Tense within the will,
As a lantern under a tossing of boughs
Burns steady and still.

With scrutiny calm, and with fingers
Patient as swift
They bind up the hurts and the pain-writhen
Bodies uplift,

Untired and defenceless; around them
With shrieks in its breath
Bursts stark from the terrible horizon
Impersonal death;

But they take not their courage from anger
That blinds the hot being;
They take not their pity from weakness;
Tender, yet seeing;

Feeling, yet nerved to the uttermost;
Keen, like steel;
Yet the wounds of the mind they are stricken with,
Who shall heal?

They endure to have eyes of the watcher
In hell, and not swerve
For an hour from the faith that they follow,
The light that they serve.

Man true to man, to his kindness
That overflows all,
To his spirit erect in the thunder
When all his forts fall,—

This light, in the tiger-mad welter
They serve and they save.
What song shall be worthy to sing of them—
Braver than the brave?

THE ZEPPELIN

Guns! far and near,
Quick, sudden, angry,
They startle the still street.
Upturned faces appear,
Doors open on darkness,
There is a hurrying of feet,

And whirled athwart gloom
White fingers of alarm
Point at last there
Where illumined and dumb
A shape suspended
Hovers, a demon of the starry air!

Strange and cold as a dream
Of sinister fancy,
It charms like a snake,
Poised deadly in the gleam,
While bright explosions
Leap up to it and break.

Is it terror you seek
To exult in? Know then
Hearts are here
That the plunging beak
Of night-winged Havoc
Strikes not with fear

So much as it strings
To a deep elation
And a quivering pride
That at last the hour brings
For them too the danger
Of those who died,

Of those who yet fight
Spending for each of us
Their glorious blood

In the foreign night,—
That now we are neared to them
Thank we God.

ORPHANS OF FLANDERS

Where is the land that fathered, nourished, poured
The sap of a strong race into your veins,
Land of wide tilth, of farms and granaries stored,
Of old towers chiming over peaceful plains?

It is become a vision, barred away
Like light in cloud, a memory and belief.
On those lost plains the Glory of yesterday
Builds her dark towers for the bells of Grief.

It is become a splendour-circled name
For all the world; a torch against the skies
Bums on that blood-spot, the unpardoned shame
Of them that conquered: but your homeless eyes

See rather some brown pond by a white wall,
Red cattle crowding in the rutty lane,
A garden where the hollyhocks were tall
In the Augusts that shall never be again.

There your thoughts cling as the long-thrusting root
Clings in the ground; your orphaned hearts are
there.

O mates of sunburnt earth, your love is mute
But strong like thirst and deeper than despair.

You have endured what pity can but grope
To feel: into that darkness enters none,
We have but hands to help; yours is the hope
Whose courage rises silent with the sun.

THE ENGLISH GRAVES

The rains of yesterday are flown,
And light is on the farthest hills;
The homeliest rough grass by the stone
To radiance thrills;

And the wet bank above the ditch,
Trailing its thorny bramble, shows
Soft apparitions, clustered rich,
Of the pure primrose.

The shining stillness breathes, vibrates
From simple earth to lonely sky,
A hinted wonder that awaits
The heart's reply.

O lovely life! the chaffinch sings
High on the hazel, near and clear.
Sharp to the heart's blood, sweetness springs
In the morning here.

But my heart goes with the young cloud
That voyages the April light
Southward, across the beaches loud
And cliffs of white

To fields of France, far fields that spread
Beyond the tumbling of the waves,
And touches as with shadowy tread
The English graves.

There too is Earth that never weeps,
The unrepining Earth, that holds
The secret of a thousand sleeps
And there unfolds

Flowers of sweet ignorance on the slope
Where strong arms dropped and blood choked
 breath.
Earth that forgets all things but hope
And smiles on death.

They poured their spirits out in pride,
They throbbed away the price of years:
Now that dear ground is glorified
With dreams, with tears.

A flower there is sown, to bud
And bloom beyond our loss and smart—
Noble France, at its root is blood
From England's heart.

FETCHING THE WOUNDED

At the road's end glimmer the station lights;
How small beneath the immense hollow of Night's
Lonely and living silence! Air that raced
And tingled on the eyelids as we faced
The long road stretched between the poplars flying
To the dark behind us, shuddering and sighing
With phantom foliage, lapses into hush.
Magical supersession! The loud rush
Swims into quiet: midnight reassumes
Its solitude; there's nothing but great glooms,
Blurred stars; whispering gusts; the hum of wires.
And swerving leftwards upon noiseless tires
We glide over the grass that smells of dew.
A wave of wonder bathes my body through!
For there in the headlamps' gloom-surrounded beam
Tall flowers spring before us, like a dream,
Each luminous little green leaf intimate
And motionless, distinct and delicate
With powdery white bloom fresh upon the stem,
As if that clear beam had created them

Out of the darkness. Never so intense
I felt the pang of beauty's innocence,
Earthly and yet unearthly.

A sudden call!

We leap to ground, and I forget it all.
Each hurries on his errand; lanterns swing;
Dark shapes cross and re-cross the rails; we bring
Stretchers, and pile and number them; and heap
The blankets ready. Then we wait and keep
A listening ear. Nothing comes yet; all's still.
Only soft gusts upon the wires blow shrill
Fitfully, with a gentle spot of rain.
Then, ere one knows it, the long gradual train
Creeps quietly in and slowly stops. No sound
But a few voices' interchange. Around
Is the immense night-stillness, the expanse
Of faint stars over all the wounds of France.

Now stale odour of blood mingles with keen
Pure smell of grass and dew. Now lantern-sheen
Falls on brown faces opening patient eyes
And lips of gentle answers, where each lies
Supine upon his stretcher, black of beard
Or with young cheeks; on caps and tunics smeared
And stained, white bandages round foot or head
Or arm, discoloured here and there with red.
Sons of all corners of wide France; from Lille,
Douay, the land beneath the invader's heel,
Champagne, Touraine, the fisher-villages
Of Brittany, the valleyed Pyrenees,
Blue coasts of the South, old Paris streets, Argonne
Of ever smouldering battle, that anon
Leaps furious, brothered them in arms. They fell
In the trenched forest scarred with reeking shell.
Now strange the sound comes round them in the
night
Of English Voices. By, the wavering light
Quickly we have borne them, one by one, to the
air,
And sweating in the dark lift up with care,

Tense-sinewed, each to his place. The cars at last
Complete their burden: slowly, and then fast
We glide away.

And the dim round of sky,
Infinite and silent, broods unseeingly
Over the shadowy uplands rolling black
Into far woods, and the long road we track
Bordered with apparitions, as we pass,
Of trembling poplars and lamp-whitened grass,
A brief procession flitting like a thought
Through a brain drowsing iato slumber; nought
But we awake in the solitude immense!
But hurting the vague dumbness of my sense
Are fancies wandering the night: there steals
Into my heart, like something that one feels
In darkness, the still presence of far homes
Lost in deep country, and in little rooms
The vacant bed. I touch the world of pain
That is so silent. Then I see again
Only those infinitely patient faces
In the lantern beam, beneath the night's vast spaces,
Amid the shadows and the scented dew;
And those illumined flowers, springing anew
In freshness like a smile of secrecy
From the gloom-buried earth, return to me.
The village sleeps; blank walls, and windows barred.
But lights are moving in the hushed courtyard
As we glide up to the open door. The Chief
Gives every man his order, prompt and brief.
We carry up our wounded, one by one.
The first cock crows: the morrow is begun.

THE EBB OF WAR

In the seven-times taken and re-taken town
Peace! The mind stops; sense argues against sense.
The August sun is ghostly in the street

As if the Silence of a thousand years
Were its familiar. All is as it was
At the instant of the shattering: flat-thrown walls;
Dislocated rafters; lintels blown awry
And toppling over; what were windows, mere
Gapings on mounds of dust and shapelessness;
Charred posts caught in a bramble of twisted iron;
Wires sagging tangled across the street; the black
Skeleton of a vine, wrenched from the old house
It clung to; a limp bell-pull; here and there
Little printed papers pasted on the wall.
It is like a madness crumpled up in stone,
Laughterless, tearless, meaningless; a frenzy
Stilled, like at ebb the shingle in sea-caves ,
Where the imagined weight of water swung
Its senseless crash with pebbles in myriads churned
By the random seethe. But here was flesh and blood,
Seeing eyes, feeling nerves; memoried minds
With the habit of the picture of these fields
And the white roads crossing the wide green plain,
All vanished! One could fancy the very fields
Were memory's projection, phantoms! All
Silent! The stone is hot to the touching hand.
Footsteps come strange to the sense. In the sloped
churchyard,
Where the tower shows the blue through its great
rents,
Shadow falls over pitiful wrecked graves,
And on the gravel a bare-headed boy,
Hands in his pockets, with large absent eyes,
Whistles the Marseillaise: To Arms, To Arms!
There is no other sound in the bright air.
It is as if they heard under the grass,
The dead men of the Marne, and their thin voice
Used those young lips to sing it from their graves,
The song that sang a nation into arms.
And far away to the listening ear in the silence
Like remote thunder throb the guns of France.

MID ATLANTIC

If this were all!—A dream of dread
Ran through me; I watched the waves that tied
Pale-crested out of hollows black,
The hungry lift of helpless waves,
A million million tossing graves,
A wilderness without a track
Beneath the barren moon:
If this were all!
The stars of night remotely strewn
Looked on that restless heave and fall.
I seemed with them to watch this old
Bright planet through the ages rolled,
Self-tortured, burning splendours vain,
And fevered with its greeds insane,
And with the blood of peoples red;
I watched it, grown an ember cold,
Join in the dancing of the dead.

The chilly half-moon sank; the sound
Of naked surges roared around,
And through my heart the darkness poured
Surges as of a sea unshored.
O somewhere far and lost from light
Blind Europe battled in the night!
Then sudden through the darkness came
The vision of a child,
A child with feet as light as flame
Who ran across the bitter waves,
Across the tumbling of the graves—
With arms stretched out he smiled.
I drank the wine of life again,
I breathed among my brother men,
I felt the human fire.
I knew that I must serve the will
Of beauty and love and wisdom still;
Though all my hopes were overthrown,
Though universes turned to stone,

I have my being in this alone
And die in that desire.

ON BOARD THE "LUSITANIA,"
DECEMBER, 1914

GALLIPOLI

Isles of the Aegean, Troy, and waters of Hellespont!
You we have known from of old,
Since boyhood stammering glorious Greek was en-
tranced
In the tale that Homer told.
There scornful Achilles towered and flamed through
the battle,
Defying the gods; and there
Hector armed, and Andromache proudly held up
his boy to him,
Knowing not yet despair.

We beheld them as presences moving beautiful and
swift
In the radiant morning of Time,
Far from reality, far from dullness of daily doing
And from cities of fog and grime;—
Unattainable day-dream, heroes, gods and goddesses
Matched in splendour of war,
Days of a vanished world, days of a grandeur
perished,
Days that should bloom no more.

But now shall our boyhood learn to tell a new tale,
And a new song shall be sung,
And the sound of it shall praise not magnificence of
old time
But the glory and the greatness of the young.
Deeds of this our own day, marvellous deeds of our
own blood;
Sons that their sires excel,

Lightly going into peril and taking death by the
hand;—

Of these they shall sing, they shall tell,

How in ships sailing the famed Mediterranean
From armed banks of Nile,
Men from far homes in sunny Austral Dominions
And the misty mother-isle,
Met in the great cause, joined in the vast adventure,,
Saw first in April skies
Beyond storied islands, Gallipoli's promontory
Impreguably ridged, arise.

And how from the belly of the black ship, driven
beneath

Towering scarp and scaur
Hailing hidden rages of fire in terrible gusts
On the murdered space of shore,
Into the water they leapt, they rushed and across
the beach,
With impetuous shout, all
Inspired beyond men, climbed and were over the
crest
As a flame leaps over a wall.

Not all the gods in heaven's miraculous panoply
Could have hindered or stayed them, so
Irresistibly came they, scaled the unscaleable and
sprang
To stab the astonished foe,
Marvellous doers of deeds, lifted past our imagining
To a world where death is nought!
As spirit against spirit, as a liberated element,
As fire in flesh they fought,

Now to the old twilight and pale legendary glories,
By our own youth outdone,
Those shores recede; not there, but in memory ever-
lasting
The immortal heights were won.

Of them that triumphed, of them that fell, there is
only now
Silence, and sleep, and fame,
And in night's immensity far on that promontory's
altar
An invisibly burning flame.

THE DISTANT GUNS

Negligently the cart-track descends into the valley;
The drench of the rain has passed and the clover
breathes;
Scents are abroad; in the valley a mist whitens
Along the hidden river, where the evening smiles.
The trees are asleep, their shadows are longer and
longer,
Melting blue in the tender twilight; above,
In a pallor, barred with lilac and ashen cloud,
Delicate as a spirit the young moon brightens,
And distant a bell intones the hour of peace,
Where roofs of the village, gray and red, cluster
In leafy dimness.. Peace, old as the world!
The crickets shrilling in the high wet grass,
And gnats, clouding upon the frail wild roses,
Murmur of you: but hark! like a shudder upon the
air,
Ominous and alien, knocking on the farther hills
As with airy hammers, the ghosts of terrible sound,—
Guns! From afar they are knocking on human
hearts
Everywhere over the silent evening country,
Knocking with fear and dark presentiment. Only
The moon's beauty, where no life nor joy is,
Brightening softly and knowing nothing, has peace.

MEN OF VERDUN

There are five men in the moonlight
That by their shadows stand:
Three hobble humped on crutches,
And two lack each a hand.

Frogs somewhere near the roadside
Chorus a chant absorbed;
But a hush breathes out of the dream-light
That far in heaven is orbéd.

It is gentle as sleep falling
And wide as thought can span,
The ancient peace and wonder
That brims the heart of man.

Beyond the hills it shines now
On no peace but the dead,
On reek of trenches thunder-shocked,
Tense fury of wills in wrestle locked,
A chaos crumbled red!

The five men in the moonlight
Ghat, joke, or gaze apart.
They talk of days and comrades;
But each one hides his heart.

They wear clean cap and tunic,
As when they went to war.
A gleam comes where the medal's pinned:
But they will fight no more.

The shadows, maimed and antic,
Gesture and shape distort,
Like mockery of a demon dumb
Out of the hell-din whence they come
That dogs them for his sport.

But as if dead men were risen
And stood before me there
With a terrible flame about them blown
In beams of spectral air,

I see them, men transfigured
As in a dream, dilate
Fabulous with the Titan-throb
Of battling Europe's fate;

For history's hushed before them,
And legend flames afresh.
Verdun, the name of thunder,
Is written on their flesh.

LA PATRIE

Through storm-blown gloom the subtle light persists;
Shapes of tumultuous, ghostly cloud appear,
Trailing a dark shower from hill-drenching mists:
Dawn, desolate in its majesty, is here.

But ere the wayside trees show leaf and form
Invisible larks in all the air around
Ripple their songs up through the gloom and storm,
As if the baulked light had won wings of sound!

A wounded soldier on his stretcher waits
His turn for the ambulance, by the glimmering rails;
He is wrapped in a rough brown blanket, like his
mates:
Over him the dawn broadens, the cloud pales.

Muscular, swart, bearded, and quite still,
He lies, too tired to think, to wonder. Drops

From a leaf fall by him. For spent nerve and will
The world of shattering and stunned effort stops.

He feels the air, song-thrilled and fresh and dim
And close about him smells the rainy soil.
It is ever-living Earth recovers him,
Friend and companion of old, fruitful toil.

He is patient with her patience. Hurt, he takes
Strength from her rooted, still tenacities.
The will to heal, that secretly re-makes,
Like slumber, holds his dark, contented eyes.

For she, though—never reckoning of the cost—
Full germs of all profusion she prepares,
Knows tragic hours, too, parching famine, frost,
And wreck; and in her children's hurt she shares.

Build what we may, house us in lofty mind's
Palaces, wean the fine-wrought spirit apart,
Earth touches where the fibre throbs, and winds
The threads about us of her infinite heart.

And some dear ground with its own changing sky,
As if it were our feeling flesh, is wrought
Into the very body's dignity
And private colour of least conscious thought.

O when that loud invader buiued and bruised
This ordered land's old kindness, with brute blows
Shamed and befouled and plundered and abused,
Was it not Earth that in her soldier rose

And armed him, terrible and simple? He
Takes his wound, mute as Earth is, yet as strong.—
The funeral clouds trail, wet wind shakes the tree,
But all the wild air of the dawn is song.

LATREGY, 1916

GOING WEST

Just as I came
Into the empty, westward-facing room,
A sudden gust blew wide
The tall window; at once
A shock of sudden light, vibrating like a flame,
Entered, as if it were the wind's bright spirit
Stealing to me upon some secret quest.
The wonder of the West
Burst open: under dark and rushing cloud
That rained illumined drops, it glorified
Each corner where so dazzlingly it struck:
The shadows cowered, the brilliance overflowed.
As suddenly, all faded.
Wet, wild air blew in
At the idly-swinging door
Stormily crumpled fallen shreds of leaves,
Dried scarlet and burnt yellow and ashy brown:
They fluttered in like fears and blew across the floor
And I, to the heart invaded,
Felt as that wild light palpitated through me
And died in a moment down,
Exalted by a visionary fear
That from the light more than the shadow fell;
A divination of splendid spirits near,
Of glorious parting and of great farewell.

THE BEREAVED

We grudged not those that were dearer than all we
possessed,
Lovers, brothers, sons.
Our hearts were full, and out of a full heart
We gave our beloved ones.

Because we loved, we gave. In the hardest hour
When at last—so much unsaid

In the eyes—they went, simply, with tender smile,
Our hearts to the end they read.

They to their deeds! To things that their soul hated,
And yet to splendours won
From smoking hell by the spirit that moved in them:
But we to endure alone.

Their hearts rested on ours; their homing thoughts
Met ours in the still of the night.
We ached with the ache of the long waiting, and
throbbed
With the throbs of the surging fight.

O had we failed them, then were we desolate now
And separated indeed.
What should have comforted, what should have
helped us then
In the time of our bitter need!

But now, though sorrow be ever fresh, sorrow
Is tender as love; it knows
That of love it was born, and Love with the shining
eyes
The hard way chose.

And out of deeps eternal, night and day,
A strength our sorrow frees,
Flooding us, full as the tide up the rivers flows
From the depth of the silent seas;

A strength that is mightier far than we, yet a strength
Whereof our spirit is breath,
Hope of the world, that is strange to hazard and
fear,
To the wounds of Time, and Death.

MORN LIKE A THOUSAND SHINING SPEARS

Morn like a thousand shining spears
Terrible in the East appears.
O hide me, leaves of lovely gloom.
Where the young Dreams like lilies bloom!

What is this music that I lose
Now, in a world of fading clues?
What wonders from beyond the seas
And wild Arabian fragrances?

In vain I turn me back to where
Stars made a palace of the air.
In vain I hide my face away
From the too bright invading Day.

That which is come requires of me
My utter truth and mystery.
Return, you dreams, return to Night:
My lover is the armed Light.

THE NEW WORLD

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Now is the time of the splendour of Youth and Death.
The spirit of man grows grander than men knew.
The unbearable burden is borne, the impossible
done;
Though harder is yet to do
Before this agony end, and that be won
We seek through blinding battle, in choking breath,—
The New World, seen in vision! Land of lands,
In the midst of storms that desolate and divide,
In the hour of the breaking heart, O far-descried,
You build our courage, you hold up our hands.

Men of America, you that march to-day
Through roaring London, supple and lean of limb,
Glimpsed in the crowd I saw you, and in your eye
Something alert and grim,
As knowing on what stern call you march away
To the wrestle of nations; saw your heads held high
And, that same moment, far in a glittering beam
High over old and storied Westminster
The Stars and Stripes with England's flag astir,
Sisterly twined and proud on the air astream.

Men of America, what do you see? Is it old
Towers of fame and grandeur time-resigned?
The frost of custom's backward-gazing thought?
Seek closer! You shall find
Miracles hour by hour in silence wrought;
Births, and awakenings; dyings never tolled;
Invisible crumble and fall of prison-bars.
O, wheresoever his home, new or decayed,
Man is older than all the things he has made
And yet the youngest spirit beneath the stars.

Rock-cradled, white, and soaring out of the sea,
I behold again the fabulous city arise,
Manhattan! Queen of thronged and restless bays
And of daring ships is she.
O lands beyond, that into the sunset gaze,
Limitless, teeming continent of surmise!
I drink again that diamond air, I thrill
To the lure of a wonder more than the wondrous
past,
And see before me ages yet more vast
Rising, to challenge heart and mind and will.

What sailed they out to seek, who of old came
To that bare earth and wild, unhistoried coast?
Not gold, nor granaries, nay, nor a halcyon ease
For the weary and tempest-tost:
The unshaken soul they sought, possessed in peace
What seek we now, and hazard all on the aim?

In the heart of man is the undiscovered earth
Whose hope's our compass; sweet with glorious
passion
Of men's good-will; a world to forge and fashion
Worthy the things we have seen and brought to birth.

Taps of the Drum! Now once again they beat:
And the answer comes; a continent arms. Dread,
Pity, and Grief, there is no escape. The call
Is the call of the risen Dead.
Terrible year of the nations' trampling feet!
An angel has blown his trumpet over all
From the ends of the earth, from East to uttermost
West,
Because of the soul of man, that shall not fail,
That will not make refusal, or turn, or quail,
No, nor for all calamity, stay its quest.

And here, here too, is the New World, born of pain
In destiny-spelling hours. The old world breaks
Its mould, and life runs fierce and fluid, a stream
That floods, dissolves, re-makes.
Each pregnant moment, charged to its extreme,
Quickens unending future, and all's vain
But the onward mind, that dares the oncoming years
And takes their storm, a master. Life shall then
Transfigure Time with yet more marvellous men.
Hail to the sunrise! Hail to the Pioneers!

THE SOWER

(EASTERN FRANCE)

Familiar, year by year, to the creaking wain
Is the long road's level ridge above the plain.
To-day a battery comes with horses and guns
On the straight road, that under the poplars runs,
At leisurely pace, the guns with mouths declined,
Harness merrily ringing, and dust behind.

Makers of widows, makers of orphans, they
Pass to their burial business, alert and gay.

But down in the field, where sun has the furrow
dried,

Is a man who walks in the furrow with even stride.
At every step, with elbow jerked across,
He scatters seed in a quick, deliberate toss,
The immemorial gesture of Man confiding
To Earth, that restores tenfold in a season's gliding.
He is grave and patient, sowing his children's bread:
He treads the kindly furrow, nor turns his head.

STONEHENGE

Gaunt on the cloudy plain
Stand the great Stones,
Dwarfed in the vast reach
Of a sky that owns

All the measure of earth
Within its cloud-hung cave.
Dumb stands the Circle
As on a God's grave.

But clattering with horses
Up from the valley,
With horses and horsemen
At a trot, gaily

Dragging the limbered guns,
Youth comes riding,—
Easy sits, mettlesome
Horses bestriding.

Fast come the twinkling hoofs,
Light wheels and guns,

Invading the upland,
And sweep past the Stones.

Giant those shapes now
Over them tower,—
Time's dark stature
Over Youth's fleet hour.

Ribs of dismemoried Earth,
Guard what you may!
The Immortals also
Pass, nor stay.

GUNS AT THE FRONT

Man, simple and brave, easily confiding,
Giving his all, glad of the sun's sweetness,
Heeding little of pitiful incompleteness,
Mending life with laughter and cheerful chiding,

Where is he?—I see him not, but I hear
Sounds, charged with nothing but death and maim-
ing;
Earth and sky empty of all but flaming
Bursts, and shocks that stun the waiting ear;

Monsters roaring aloud with hideous vastness,
Nothing, Nothing, Nothing! And man that made
them
Mightier far than himself, has stooped, and obeyed
them,
Schooled his mind to endure its own aghastness,

Serving death, destruction, and things inert,—
He the soarer, free of heavens to roam in,
He whose heart has a world of light to home in,
Confounding day with darkness, flesh with dirt.

Oh, dear indeed the cause that so can prove him,
Pitilessly self-tested! If no cause beacons
Beyond this chaos, better he bled unreckoned,
With his own monsters bellowing madness above him.

THE WITNESSES

I

Lads in the loose blue,
Crutched, with limping feet,
With bandaged arm, that roam
To-day the bustling street,

You humble us with your gaze,
Calm, confiding, clear;
You humble us with a smile
That says nothing but cheer.

Our souls are scarred with you!
Yet, though we suffered all
You have suffered, all were vain
To atone, or to recall

The robbed future, or build
The maimed body again
Whole, or ever efface
What men have done to men.

II

Each body of straight youth,
Strong, shapely, and marred,
Shines as out of a cloud
Of storm and splintered shard,

Of chaos, torture, blood,
Fire, thunder, and stench:

And the savage shattering noise
Of churned and shaken trench

Echoes through myriad hearts
In the dumb lands behind;—
Silent wailing, and bitter
Tears of the world's mind!

You stand upon each threshold
Without complaint.—What pen
Dares to write half the deeds
That men have done to men?

III

Must we be humbled more?
Peace, whose olive seems
A tree of hope and heaven,
Of answered prayers and dreams,

Peace has her own hid wounds;
She also grinds and maims.
And must we bear and share
Those old continued shames?

Not only the body's waste
But the mind's captivities—
Crippled, sore, and starved—
The ignorant victories

Of the visionless, who serve
No cause, and fight no foe!
Is a cruelty less sure
Because its ways are slow?

Now we have eyes to see.
Shall we not use them then?
These bright wounds witness
What men may do to men.

I AM HERE, AND YOU

I am here, and you;
The sun blesses us through
Leaves made of light.
The air is in your hair;
You hold a flower.

O worlds, that roll through night,
O Time, O terrible year,
Where surges of fury and fear
Rave, to us you gave
This island-hour.

DARK WIND

In the middle of the night, waking, I was aware
Of the Wind like one riding through black wastes
of the air,
Moodily riding, ever faster, he recked not where.

The windows rattled aloud: a door clashed and
sprang;
And the ear in fear waited to feel the inert clang
Strike the shaken darkness, a cruelty and a pang.

I was hurt with pity of things that have no will of
their own,
Lifted in lives of others and cast on bruising stone:
I feared the Wind, coming a power from worlds
unknown.

It was like a great ship now, abandoned, her crew
dead,
Driving in gulfs of sky; it staggered above and sped;
I lay in the deeps and heard it rushing over my head.

And the helpless shaking of window and door's
desolate rebound
Seemed like tossing and lifting of bodies lost and
drowned
In the huge indifferent swell, in the waters' wander-
ing sound.

HUNGER

I come among the peoples like a shadow.
I sit down by each man's side.

None sees me, but they look on one another,
And know that I am there.

My silence is like the silence of the tide
That buries the playground of children;

Like the deepening of frost in the slow night,
When birds are dead in the morning.

Armies trample, invade, destroy,
With guns roaring from earth and air.

I am more terrible than armies,
I am more feared than the cannon.

Kings and chancellors give commands;
I give no command to any;

But I am listened to more than kings
And more than passionate orators.

I unswear words, and undo deeds.
Naked things know me.

I am first and last to be felt of the living.
I am Hunger.

STRIKE STONE ON STEEL

Strike stone on steel,
Fire replies.
Strike men that feel,
The answer is in their eyes.

Powers that are willed to break
The spirit in limbs of pain,
See what spirit you wake!
Strike, and strike again!

You hammer sparks to a flame,
And the flame scorches your hand.
You have given the feeble an aim,
You have made the sick to stand.

You shape by stroke on stroke
Man mightier than he knew;
And the fire your hammer woke
Is a life that is death to you.

SPRING HAS LEAPT INTO SUMMER

Spring has leapt into Summer.
A glory has gone from the green.
The flush of the poplar has sobered out,
The flame in the leaf of the lime is dulled:
But I am thinking of the young men
Whose faces are no more seen.

Where is the pure blossom
That fell and refused to grow old?
The clustered radiance, perfumed whiteness,
Silent singing of joy in the blue?
—I am thinking of the young men
Whose splendour is under the mould.

Youth, the wonder of the world,
Opened-eyed at an opened door,
When the world is as honey in the flower, and as
 wine
To the heart, and as music newly begun!
O the young men, the myriads of the young men,
Whose beauty returns no more!

Spring will come, when the Earth remembers,
In sun-bursts after the rain,
And the leaf be fresh and lovely on the bough,
And the myriad shining blossom be born:
But I shall be thinking of the young men
Whose eyes will not shine on us again.

THE ENGLISH YOUTH

There is a dimness fallen on old fames.
Our hearts are solemnized with dearer names
Than Time is bright with: we have not heard alone,
Or read of it in books; it is our own
Eyes that have seen this wonder; like a song,
It is in our mouths for ever. There was wrong
Done, and the world shamed. Honour blew the
 call;
And each one's answer was as natural
And quiet as the needle's to the pole.
Who gave must give himself entire and whole.
So, books were shut; and young dreams shaken out
In cold air; dear ambitions done without,
And a stark duty shouldered. And yet they
Who now must narrow to their arduous day
Did not forget their nurture, nor the kind
Muses of earth, nor joys of eager mind,—
Graced in their comradeship, and prizing more
Life's beauty, and all the sweetness at the core,
Because of that loathed business they were set
To do and finish. It was the world's debt,

Claiming all: but they knew, and would not wince
From that exaction on their flesh; and since
They did not seek for glory, our hearts add
A more than glory to that hope they had
And gloriously and terribly achieved.

O histories of old time, half-believed,
None needs to wrong the modesty of truth
In matching with your legend England's youth!
But all renown that fearless arms could win
For proud adventuring wondrous Paladin
Is glimmering laurel now: Romance, that was
The coloured air of a forgotten cause
About the heads of heroes dead and bright,
Shines home. We are accompanied with light
Because of youth among us; and the name
Of man is touched with an ethereal flame;
There is a newness in the world begun,
A difference in the setting of the sun.

OXFORD IN WAR-TIME

What alters you, familiar lawn and tower,
Arched alley, and garden green to the gray wall
With crumbling crevice and the old wine-red flower,
Solitary in summer sun? for all

Is like a dream: I tread on dreams! No stir
Of footsteps, voices, laughter! Even the chime
Of many-remembered bells is lonelier
In this neglected ghostliness of Time.

What stealing touch of separation numb
Absents you? Yet my heart springs up to adore
The shrining of your soul, that is become
Nearer and oh, far dearer than before.

It is as if I looked on the still face
Of a Mother, musing where she sits alone.
She is with her sons, she is not in this place;
She is gone out into far lands unknown.

Because that filled horizon occupies
Her heart with mute prayer and divining fear,
Therefore her hands so calm lie, and her eyes
See nothing; and men wonder at her here:

But far in France; on the torn Flanders plain;
By Sinai; in the Macedonian snows;
The fly-plagued sands of Tigris, heat and rain;
On wandering water, where the black squall blows

Less danger than the bright wave ambushes,
She bears it out. All the long day she bears
And the sudden hour of instant challenges
To act, that searches all men, no man spares.

She is with her sons, leaving a virtue gone
Out of her sacred places: what she bred
Lives other life than this, that sits alone,
Though still in dream starrily visited!

For O in youth she lives, not in her age!
Her soul is with the springtime and the young;
And she absents her from the learned page,
Studious of high histories yet unsung,

More passionately prized than wisdom's book
Because her own. Her faith is in those eyes
That clear into the gape of hell can look,
Putting to proof ancient philosophies

Such as the virgin Muses would rehearse
Beside the silvery, swallow-haunted stream,
Under the gray towers. But immortal verse
Is now exchanged for its immortal theme—

Victory; proud loss; and the enduring mind;
Youth, that has passed all praises, and has won
More than renown, being that which faith divined,
Reality more radiant than the sun.

She gave, she gives, more than all anchored days
Of dedicated lore, of storied art;
And she resigns her beauty to men's gaze
To mask the riches of her bleeding heart.

KITCHENER

This is the man who, sole in Britain, sole
In Europe, by profounder instinct knew
The strength of Britain; and that strength he drew
Slow into act, upshouldering the whole
Vast weight of effort. Eyes full on the goal
Saw nothing less; he held his single clue,
Heedless of obstacle; intent to do
His one task forthright with unshaken soul.

This is the man whom, dead, the meanest match
With their own stature; rive tongue, and grow brave
On the imperfection fools have wit to espy.
His silence towers the grander for their cry,
Troubling his fame no more than yelp and scratch
Of jackal could disturb that ocean-grave.

THE TEST

Naked reality, and menace near
As fire to scorching flesh, shall not affright
The spirit that sees, with danger-sharpened sight,
What it must save or die for; not the mere
Name, but the thing, now doubly, trebly dear,
Freedom; the breath those hands would choke; the
light

They would put out; the clean air they would
 blight,
Making earth rank with hate, and greed, and fear.

Now no man's loss is private: all share all.
Oh, each of us a soldier stands to-day,
Put to the proof and summoned to the call;
One will, one faith, one peril. Hearts, be high,
Most in the hour that's darkest! Come what may,
The soul in us is found, and shall not die,

YPRES

She was a city of patience; of proud name,
Dimmed by neglecting Time; of beauty and loss;
Of acquiescence in the creeping moss.
But on a sudden fierce destruction came
Tigerishly pouncing: thunderbolt and flame
Showered on her streets, to shatter them and toss
Her ancient towers to ashes. Riven across,
She rose, dead, into never-dying fame.

White against heavens of storm, a ghost, she is known
To the world's ends. The myriads of the brave
Sleep round her. Desolately glorified,
She, moon-like, draws her own far-moving tide
Of sorrow and memory; toward her, each alone,
Glide the dark Dreams that seek an English grave.

THE ARRAS ROAD

I

The early night falls on the plain
In cloud and desolating rain.
I see no more, but feel around
The ruined earth, the wounded ground.

There in the dark, on either side
The road, are all the brave who died.
I think not on the battles won;
I think on those whose day is done.

Heaped mud, blear pools, old rusted wire.
Cover their youth and young desire.
Near me they sleep, and they to me
Are dearer than their victory.

II

Where now are they who once had peace
Here, and the fruitful tilth's increase?
Shattered is all their hands had made,
And the orchards where their children played.

But night, that brings the darkness, brings
The heart back to its dearest things.
I feel old footsteps plodding slow
On ways that they were used to know.

And from my own land, past the strait,
From homes that no more news await,
Absenting thoughts come hither flying
To the unknown earth where Love is lying.

There are no stars to-night, but who
Knows what far eyes of lovers true
In star-like vigil, each alone
Are watching now above their own?

III

England and France unconscious tryst
Keep in this void of shadowy mist
By phantom Vimy, and mounds that tell
Of ghostliness that was Gavrelle.

The rain comes wildly down to drench
Disfeatured ridge, deserted trench.
Guns in the night, far, far away
Thud on the front beyond Cambrai.

But here the night is holy, and here
I will remember, and draw near,
And for a space, till night be speeded,
Be with the beauty of the dead.

AN INCIDENT AT CAMBRAI

In a by-street, blocked with rubble
And any-way-tumbled stones,
Between the upstanding house-fronts'
Naked and scorched bones,

Chinese workmen were clearing
The ruins, dusty and arid.
Dust whitened the motley coats,
Where each his burden carried.

Silent they glided, all
Save one, who passed me by
With berry-brown high-boned cheeks
And strange Eastern eye.

And he sang in his outland tongue
Among those ruins drear
A high, sad, half-choked ditty
That no one heeded to hear.

Was it love, was it grief, that made
For long-dead lips that song?
The desolation of Han
Or the Never-Ending Wrong?

The Rising Sun and the Setting,
They have seen this all as a scroll
Blood-smeared, that the endless years
For the fame of men unroll.

It was come from the ends of the earth
And of Time in his ruin gray,
That song,—the one human sound
In the silence of Cambrai.

OCTOBER, 1918

THE UNRETURNING SPRING

A leaf on the gray sand-path
Fallen, and fair with rime!
A yellow leaf, a scarlet leaf,
And a green leaf ere its time.

Days rolled in blood, days torn,
Days innocent, days burnt black,
What is it the wind is sighing
As the leaves float, swift or slack?

The year's pale spectre is crying
For beauty invisibly shed,
For the things that never were told
And were killed in the minds of the dead.

PEACE

I

Lovely word flying like a bird across the narrow seas,
When winter is over and songs are in the skies,
Peace, with the colour of the dawn upon the name
of her,
A music to the ears, a wonder to the eyes;

Peace, bringing husband back to wife and son to
mother soon,
And lover to his love, and friend to friend,
Peace, so long awaited and hardly yet believed in,
The answer of faith, enduring to the end;
Tears are in our joy, because the heavy night is
gone from us
And morning brings the prisoner's release.
How shall we sing her beauty and her blessedness,
Saying at last to one another, *Peace*?

II

Guns that boomed from shore to shore
And smote the heart with distant dread
Speak no more.
The terror that bestrode the air,
That under ocean kept his lair,
Now is fled.

III

I see, as on a misty morn
When a great ship towering glides
To anchor, out of battle borne,
And looms above her dented sides,—
Burning through the mist at last
The sun flames on her splintered mast
And the torn flag that from it floats,
And cheering from a thousand throats
Bursts from her splendour and her scars,—
So I see our England come,
Come at last from all her wars
Proudly home.

IV

Now let us praise the dead that are with us to-day
Who fought and fell before the morning shone,
Happy and brave, an innumerable company;
This day is theirs, the day their deeds have won

Glory to them, and from our hearts a thanksgiving
la humbleness and awe and joy and pride.
We will not say that their place shall know no more
of them,
We will not say that they have passed and died:
They are the living, they that bought this hour for us
And spilt their blood to make the world afresh.
One with us, one with our children and their heritage,
They live and move, a spirit in the flesh.

V

With innocence of flowers and grass and dew
Earth covers up her shame, her wounds, her rue.
She pardons and remits; she gives her grace,
Where men had none, and leu so foul a trace.
Peace of the earth, peace of the sky, begins
To sweeten and to cleanse our strifes and sins,
The furious thunderings die away and cease.
But what is won, unless the soul win peace?

VI

Not with folding of the hands,
Not with evening fallen wide
Over waste and weary lands,
Peace is come; but as a bride.
It is the trumpets of the dawn that ring;
It is the sunrise that is challenging.

VII

Lovely word, flying like a light across the happy
Land,
When the buds break and all the earth is changed,
Bringing back the sailor from his watch upon the
perilled seas,
Rejoining shores long severed and estranged,

Peace, like the Spring, that makes the torrent dance
afresh
And bursts the bough with sap of beauty pent,
Flower from our hearts into passionate recovery
Of all the mind lost in that banishment.
Come to us mighty as a young and glad deliverer
From wrong's old canker and out-dated lease,
Then will we sing thee in thy triumph and thy
majesty,
Then from our throes shall be prepared our peace.

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD HENRY POWELL
2ND LIEUT., CINQUE PORTS BATTALION,
ROYAL SUSSEX REGIMENT

Strong, loyal-souled, full-hearted, blithely brave,
Only remembering love knows all he gave:
Beautiful be the stars above his grave.

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CALDERON

Wisdom and Valour, Faith,
Justice,—the lofty names
Of virtue's quest and prize,—
What is each but a cold wraith
Until it lives in a man
And looks thro' a man's eyes?

On Chivalry as I muse,
The spirit so high and clear
It cannot soil with aught
It meets of foul misuse;
It turns wherever burns
The flame of a brave thought;

And wheresoever the moan
Of the helpless and betrayed
Calls, from near or far,
It replies as to its own
Need, and is armed and goes
Straight to its sure pole-star;—

No legendary knight
Renowned in an ancient cause
I warm my thought upon.
There comes to the mind's sight
One whom I knew, whose hand
Grasped mine: George Calderon.

Him now as of old I see
Carrying his head with an air
Courteous and virile,
With the charm of a nature free,
Daring, resourceful, prompt,
In his frank and witty smile.

By Oxford towers and streams
Who shone among us all
In body and brain so bold?
Who shaped so firm his themes
Crystal-hard in debate?
And who hid a heart less cold?

Lover of strange tongues,
Whether in snowy Russia,
Or tropic island bowers
Listening to the songs
Of the soft-eyed islanders,
Crowned with Tahitian flowers,

A maker of friends he went.
Yet who divined him wholly
Or his secret chivalries?—
Was all that accomplishment,
Wit, alertness, grace,
But a kind of blithe disguise?

Restless in curious thought
And subtle exploring mind,
He mixt his modern vein
With a strain remotely brought
From an older blood than ours,
Proud loyalties of Spain.

Was it the soul of a sword?
For a bright sword leapt from sheath
Upon that August day
When war's full thunder stored
Over Europe, suddenly crashed,
And a choice upon each man lay.

Others had left their youth
In the taming years; and some
Doubted; some made moan.
To meet the peril of truth
With aught but a gay courage
Was not for Calderon.

Wounded from France he came.
His spirit halted not;
In that long battle afar,
Fruitless in all but fame,
Athos and Ida saw
Where sank his gallant star.

O well could I set my mood
To a mournful falling measure
For a friend dear and dead!
And well could memory brood
Singing of youth's delight
And lost adventure fled.

But that so fearless friend
With his victorious smile
My mourning mood has chid.
He went to the very end;
He counted not the cost;
What he believed, he did.

WINGLESS VICTORY

I

Victory! Was that proud word once so dear?
Are difficulty, patience, effort hard
As danger's edge, disputing yard by yard
The adversary without and the mind's fear,
Are these our only angels? friends austere
That find our hidden greatness out, and guard
From the weak hour's betrayal faith unmarred!
For look! how we seem fall'n from what we were

Worms feed upon the bodies of the brave
Who bled for us: but we bewildered see
Viler worms gnaw the things they died to save.
Old clouds of doubt and weariness oppress.
Happy the dead, we cry, not now to be
In the day of this dissolving littleness!

II

O you dear Dead, pardon! For not resigned,
We see, though humbled, half our purpose bent
And our hope blurred, like men in banishment.
Giants amid a blank mist groping blind,
The nations ache. And old greeds unconfined
Possess men, sick at battle's blood hot-spent
Yet sleek and busy and righteously content
To wage war, safe and secret, on their kind.

If all were simple as the way of hate!
But we must reap where others sowed the seed
In time long past, of folly and pride and greed;
Confused with names, idols and politics;
Though over all earth, where we think a State,
There are but men and women; only these.

III

Victory, winged, has flown far off again.
She is in the soul, she travels with the light.

We see her on the distant mountain height
Desired, but she has left us in the plain,
Left us awhile, to chafe and to complain,
Yet keep our wills, in this dark time's despite,
Like those that went up to the horrible fight
Beneath their burdens, plodding in the rain.

Courage! The same stuff that so greatly bore
And greatly did, is here, for gods to find,
And the dear human cause in the heart's core.
Be the task always harder than we know,
And victory further, yet in pain we grow.
The vision is before us, not behind.

A DAFFODIL

Pure-throated Flower,
Smelling of Spring,
Shaped beyond art's
Imagining;

Fathomless colour,
Breathed as an ether
Of flame and of stillness
Melted together;

Soul of the sun's beam
Changed to fairy
Flesh, so delicate,
Poised and airy!

I think of my own kind,
Hardly winning
A thousand battles
For joy's beginning;

Victory bloody
And with evil shared,
Splendour soiled
And greatness snared;

Truth conceded
Or won by halves,
'Pitiful sores
And sorrier salves;

Blind authority
Treading like oxen's heels
All that sees clearest,
All that most feels.

But you are absolute
(Follow who can!)
As a commandment
Of God to man.

Straight you spring
And whole you spend,
And fall upon fruitful earth,
Clean to the end.

O to be pure
As a single sense,
Keen as scorn,
As love intense,

To live in the light,
And to die in a deed
That is faith's Amen
And has sown its seed!

THE SECRET

I

I lay upon my bed in the great night:
The sense of my body drowsed;
But a clearness yet lingered in the spirit,
By soft obscurity housed.

As an inn to a traveller on a long road,
Happy sleep appeared.
I should come there, to the room of waiting dreams,
In the time that slowly neared;

But still amid memory's wane fancy delighted,
Like wings in the afterglow
Dipping to the freshness of the waves of living,
To recover from long-ago

A touch or a voice, then soaring aloft and afar
The free world to range.
At last, on the brink of the dark, by subtle degrees
Came a chilling and a change.

Solitude sank to my marrow and pierced my veins.
Though I roam and though I learn
All the wonder of earth and of men, it is here
In the end I must return,

To the something alone that in each of us breathes
and sleeps,
Profound, isolate, still,
And must brave the giant world, and from hour to
hour
Must prove its own will;

To this self, unexcused and unglorified, drawn
From its fond shadows, and bare,
Wherein no man that has been, none that is or shall be,
Shares, or can ever share.

And it tingled through me how all use and disguise
Hide nothing: none
Avails to shield, neither pleader nor protector,
But the truth of myself alone.

And the days that have made me, have I not made
them also?
Are they not drops of my blood?

What have I done with them? Flower they still
within me,
Or lie, trodden in the mud?

Why for god-like freedom an irreplaceable Here,
An irrevocable Now?
They were heavy like strong chains about my bosom,
Like hard bonds upon my brow.

The moments oozing out of the silence seemed
From my very heart lost
In the stream of the worlds: I felt them hot like tears
And of more than riches' cost.

Yet what was it alien in me stood and rebelled
And cried, Nevertheless
My passion is mine, my strength and my frailty; I
am not
Thrall unto Time's duress!

Then suddenly rose before me, older than all,
Night of the soft speech,
With murmur of tender winds, yet terrible with stars
Beyond fancy's reach;

Without foundation, without summit, without
Haven or refuge, Night
Palpitating with stars that dizzy thought and desire
In their unimagined flight,

O these most terrible! vast surmises, touching
The pulse of a fear unknown,
Where all experience breaks like a frail bubble,
And the soul is left alone,

Alone and abandoned of all familiar uses,—
Itself the only place
It knows,—a question winged, barbed and burning
In the answerless frost of Space.

I was afraid; but my heart throbbed faster, fiercer.
I trembled, but cried anew:
I am strange to you, O Stars! O Night, I am your
exile,
I have no portion in you.

Though you shall array your silences against me,
I know you and defy.
Though I be but a moth in an abyss of ages,
This at least is not yours; it is I.

II

O blessed be the touch of thought
That marries moments from afar,
That finds the thing it had not sought,
And smells a spice no treasure bought,
And learns what never sages taught,
And sees this earth a dazzling star!

As in the sheen of a lamp unseen,
The lamp of memory shrouded long,
There sprang before me, sweet as song,
The vision of a branch of bloom,
A swaying branch of blossom scented;
And in that bloom amid the gloom
My heart was luminously tented.

III

A score of years was melted, and I was young
And the world young with me,
When in innocence of delight I laid me down
Beneath a certain tree.

The breathing splendour of that remembered May
Had yet seven days to spill
In fragrant showers of fairy white and red
And in notes from the blackbird's bill,

When I laid me down on a bank by the water's edge:
In the glowing shadow I lay.
My very body was drenched in a speechless joy
Whose cause I could not say.

The sky was poured in singing rivers of blue;
The ripple danced in sight;
Close to the marge was a coloured pebble; it burned
Amid kisses of liquid light.

Like a hurry of little flames the tremble of gleams
Shivered up through the leaves and was gone.
Like a shaking of heavenly bells was the sound of the
leaves
In the tower of branches blown.

And odours wandering each from its honeyed haunt
Over the air stole,
Like memories out of a world before the world,
Seeking the private soul.

But I knew not where my soul was: in that hour
Neither time nor place it knew!
It was trembling high in the topmost blossom that
drank
Of the glory of airy blue;

It was dark in the root that sucked of the plenteous
earth;
It was lovely flames of fire;
It was water that murmured round and around the
world;
It was poured in the sun's desire.

Not the bird, but the bird's bright, wayward swift-
ness;
Not the flowers in magic throng,
But the shooting, the breathing and the perfumed
breaking;
Not the singer it was, but the song.

I touched the flesh of my body, and it was strange.
It seemed that my spirit knew
It was I no more; yet the earth and the sky answered
And cried aloud, It is you!

Then into my blood the word of my being thrilled,
(Not a nerve but aware)—It is I!
Yet I could not tell my thought from the green of the
grass,
My bliss from the blue of the sky

Overbrimmed, overflowing, I rose like one who has
drunk
Of a radiance keener than wine.
I stood on the marvellous earth, and felt my blood
As the stream of a power divine.

• • • • • •
Laughter of children afar on the air came to me
And touched me softly home.
There were tears in me like trembling dew; I knew
not
Where they had stolen from.

Who is not my brother, and who is not my sister?
O wonder of human eyes,
Have I passed you by, nor perceived how luminous
in you
All infinity lies?

Love opened my eyes and opened my ears; not one,
But his soul is as mine is to me!
I heard like a ripple around the world breaking
The voices of children in glee;

I saw the beauty, secret as starlit wells,
Treasured in the bosoms of the old.

I heard like the whisper of leaf to leaf in the night-
wind
Hopes that the tongue never told.

Was it the grass that quivered about me? I felt
Not that, but the hearts beating
Close to my own, unnumbered as blades of the grass,
And the dead in the quick heart meeting;

And I knew the dreams of wandering sorrow and joy
Breathed in the sleep of the night
From the other side of the earth, that for me was
glowing
To the round horizon's light;

The earth that moves through the light and the dark
for ever,
As a dancer moves among
The maze of her sister stars, with a silent speed
In a dance that is always young:

And the heart of my body knew that it shared in all;
It was there, not alone nor afraid.
It throbbed in the life that can never be destroyed,
In the things Time never made.

FOR MERCY, COURAGE, KINDNESS, MIRTH

For Mercy, Courage, Kindness, Mirth,
There is no measure upon earth.
Nay, they wither, root and stem,
If an end be set to them.

Overbrim and overflow
If your own heart you would know.
For the spirit, born to bless,
Lives but in its own excess.

WIND AT MIDNIGHT

Naked night; black elms, pallid and streaming sky! '
Alone with the passion of the Wind,
In a hollow of stormy sound lost and alone am I,
On beaten earth a lost, unmated mind,
Marvelling at the stars, few, strange, and bright,
That all this dark assault of surging air,
Wrenching the rooted wood, hunting the cloud of
 night,
As if it would tear all and nothing spare,
Leaves supreme in the height.

Against what laws, what laws, what powers invisible,
Unsought yet always found,
Cries this dumb passion, strains this wrestle of wild
 will,
With tiger-leaps that seem to shake the ground?
Is it the baffled, homeless, rebel wind's crying
Or storm from a profounder passion wrung?
Ah, heart of man, is it you, the old powers defying,
By far desires and terrible beauty stung,
Broken on laws unseen, in a starry world dying
Ignorant, tameless, young?

SURRENDER

Pale was the early day,
Fog-white the winter air,
When up a hill-side bare,
Roughened with rimy grass,
I took my thoughtless way.

As my feet strayed uphill
I felt the blank cloud float
Past, and bedew my coat.
At unawares I found
A gate, and there stood still.

And on a sudden behold,
Above, the virgin blue,
Blue, bathing my heart through!
A shock of blueness bright
Pierced with an eye of gold.

And there uprising tall
From mist to warm sapphire,
Straight up like windless fire,
A poplar stood alone,
White, dream-fresh, virginal.

Rime robed her, pure as snow.
O white was never white
As this which thrilled my sight.
I stood still in the mist,
Dazzled, entranced, aglow.

For in a dazzling drift
The rime rained down, it gleamed,
It shivered soft, it streamed,
Radiant as tears of joy
When the heart gives all its gift.

Alone in the still, still air
To the divine lone height
Of blue this poplar white
Like virgin ecstasy
Stript all her beauty bare.

NOTHING IS ENOUGH

Nothing is enough!
No, though our all be spent—
Heart's extremest love,
Spirit's whole intent,
All that nerve can feel,
All that brain invent,—

Still beyond appeal
Will Divine Desire
Yet more excellent
Precious cost require
Of this mortal stuff,—
Never be content
Till ourselves be fire.
Nothing is enough!

BEAUTY

I think of a flower that no eye ever has seen,
That springs in a solitary air.
Is it no one's joy? It is beautiful as a queen
Without a kingdom's care.

We have built houses for Beauty, and costly shrines,
And a throne in all men's view:
But she was far on a hill where the morning shines
And her steps were lost in the dew.

PAIN

Find me out a fortress, find
Such a mind within the mind
As can gather to its source
All of life's inveterate force,
Find the hard and secret cell
In my body's citadel,
Iron-ribbed from suck and drain
Of the clutching monster, Pain—
Pain, the formless alien will
That seeks me out, that strives to drill
Through shielding thought and barricade
Of all the strength my will has made;

That singles me and searches through
The sharp sense I am narrowed to;
*And ever as the bond I strain
Thrusts me home to flesh again,
Estranging me from earth, to be
One fierce throb of identity!
Yet there's fibre in the mind
I shall find, I shall find,
To resist and to defy
All the world that is not I.

TREES ARE FOR LOVERS

Trees are for lovers.
A spirit has led them
Where the young boughs meet
And the green light hovers,
And shadowy winds blow sweet.
Trees spring to heaven!
So their hearts would spring,
So would they outpour
All the heart discovers
Of its own wild treasure
Into speech, and sing
Like the tree from its core
Sweet words beyond measure
Like leaves in the sun
Dancing every one
And weaving a fairy
Cave of quivering rays
And of shadows starry
Where those lovers, drowned
Each in the other's gaze,
Lose all time, abound
In their perfect giving;
Give and never tire
Of their fulness, still
In the fresh leaves living

One full song unsated
Of the flower Desire
And Delight the fruit;
Love, that's mated.

THE MEETING

Faces of blank decorum, and bald heads
And the drone of a voice saying what none denies;

Words like cobwebs, scarcely stirred by a breath,
Loosely hanging, gray in an unswept corner;

Thoughts belonging to nobody, like old coats
Cheaply borrowed out of a dead man's wardrobe.

Over his spectacles looks the Chairman, blandly
Solemn, exacting attention, nodding approval

I look on the floor and ponder the shaven planks,—
Tall trees once, tossing aloft in the wild air;

I watch the sun that falls upon oaken carvings,
A gentle beam from millions of miles away:

Hands and a chisel carved them,—at night the lips
Of the carver blew the dust from his work and smiled.

The chairs, so silent under the ponderous flesh,—
Pleasure shaped them out of a brain's designing.

The brass of the chandelier, the molten metal
Streamed in the mould, conspired to friendly uses.

I feel the spring of the trees and their old rejoicing,
The touch of the warmth of hands that felt for beauty.

Near and neighbourly are those shapes about me,
Taking the light sweetly and saying nothing.

Why is a voice, the only human assertion,
Farther away than the suns of the astronomers?

HOME-COMING

From the howl of the wind
As I opened the door
And entered, the firelight
Was soft on the floor.

Mute each in their places
Were table and chair,
The white wall, the shadows,
Awaiting me there.

All was strange on a sudden!
From the stillness a spell,
A fear or a fancy,
Across my heart fell.

Were they waiting another
To sit by the hearth?
Was it I saw them newly,
A stranger on earth?

THE AUGUST WEEDS

I wandered between woods
On a grassy down, when still
Clouds hung after rain
Over hollow and hill;

The blossom-time was over,
The singing throats dumb,
And the year's coloured ripeness
Not yet come.

And all at unawares,
Surprising the stray sight,
Ran straight into my heart
Like a beam, delight.

Negligent weeds ravelled
The green edge of the copse,
Whitely, dimly, sparkling
With a million drops.

And sudden fartcy feigned
What strange beauty would pass
Did but a shiver of wind
Tremble through the grass,

Shaking the poised, round drops
Spilled and softly rolled
A-glitter from the ragwort's
Roughened gold;

From the rusted scarlet
Of tall sorrel seed,
And fretted tufts, frost-gray,
Of the silver-weed,

And from purple-downed thistle
Towering dewy over
Yellow-cupped spurge
And the drenched, sweet clover.

But all were motionless:
Not one breath shed
Those little pale pearls
That an elf might thread

Under a fading moon
By an old thorn-tree
For the witching throat
Of Nimue.

SEEKING AND FINDING

Thinking of shores that I shall never see,
And things that I would know but am forbid
By Time and briefness, treasures locked from me
In unknown tongue or human bosom hid,

Knowing how unsure is all my knowledge, doled
To sloven memory and to cheated sense,
And to what majesty of stars I hold
My little candle of experience

In the vast night, in the untravelled night,
I sigh and seek. And there is answer none
But in the silence that sure pressure slight
Of your heart beating close beside my own.

O Love, Love, where in you is any bound?
Fool I to seek, who have infinitely found.

REMINISCENCE

The rain was ending, and light
Lifting the leaden skies.
It shone upon ceiling and floor
And dazzled a child's eyes.

Pale after fever, a captive
Apart from his schoolfellows,
He stood at the high room's window
With face to the pane pressed close,

And beheld an immense glory
Flooding with fire the drops
Spilled on miraculous leaves
Of the fresh green lime-tree tops.

Washed gravel glittered red
To a wall, and beyond it nine
Tall limes in the old inn yard
Rose over the tall inn sign.

And voices arose from beneath
Of boys from school set free,
Racing and chasing each other
With laughter and games and glee.

To the boy at the high room-window,
Gazing alone and apart,
There came a wish without reason,
A thought that shone through his heart.

I'll choose this moment and keep it,
He said to himself, for a vow,
To remember for ever and ever
As if it were always now.

ANGERED REASON

Angered Reason walked with me
A street so squat, unshapen, bald,
So blear-windowed and grimy-walled,
So dismal-doored, it seemed to be

The abortion of a mind that had
Nor wit nor will to make, but left
Its impotence in image, reft
Of even the means of seeming glad.

And there, like never-ripened fruit,
Unsunned and starved, were human lives
In joyless, neighbour-dreading hives
Of care, with half their senses mute.

It pressed on me, that patient street,
It hurt me that it housed my kind:
It was so abject and resigned
And so deformed, I hated it.

The stars that flowered above grew bright;
The evening filled with wondrous blue;
The lampshine glistened in the dew;
The gliding trams were ships of light.

And through my rebel heart there ran
The want of things not bought or sold;
The spirit free to make and mould;
The naked glory of a man.

And fevered I began to build
A city, like the body, worth
The natural happiness of earth,
And with this folk its streets I filled,

No more from widest joy exiled
Nor helpless in a caging net.
Suddenly by a lamp I met
A woman carrying her child.

I stopped the building of my dream:
For there was all the future's book
Written in that enfolding look,
And there the never-ending theme,

And there the builder of the strong
City of men's desire; but there
Also the shadow of the snare
And the corruption and the wrong.

Ah, now I doubted of my thought
That could so easily perfect
Wishes in dream, and raise the wrecked,
And make all noble as it wrought.

Those mother's eyes, absorbed, unknown,
Had made my vision wan and thin.
There was a harder world to win
From flesh and blood than wood and stone.

O now of those, life's prisoners, none,
Soiled, soured, or hardened, but had speech
To me of secret wonder; each
Was once so wonderful to one!

Yet she that bears the pang, and hears
' The first young cry and stills its want,
And can with her vast hope enchant
The promise of betraying years,—

Who should have beauty's best but she
To whom a son is griven? That street
Of life's denial and defeat
Stood in my mind, accusing me.

THE THINGS THAT GROW

It was nothing but a little neglected garden,
Laurel-screened, and hushed in a hot stillness;
An old pear-tree, and flowers mingled with weeds.
Yet as I came to it all unawares, it seemed
Charged with mystery; and I stopped, intruding,
Fearful of hurting that so absorbed stillness.
For I was tingling with the wind's salty splendour,
And still my senses moved with the keel's buoyance
Out on the water, where strong light was shivered
Into a dance dazzling as drops of flame.
The rocking radiance and the winged sail's lifting
And the noise of the rush of the water left behind
Sang to my body of movement, victory, joy.
But here the light was asleep, and green, green
In a veined leaf it glowed among the shadows.
A hollyhock rose to the sun and bathed its flowers

Luminously clustered in the unmoving air;
A butterfly lazily winked its gorgeous wings;
Marigolds burned intently amid the grass;
The ripening pears hung each with a rounded
shadow:
All beyond was drowned in the indolent blueness;
And at my feet, like a word of an unknown tongue,
Was the midnight-dark bloom of the delicate pansy.
Suddenly these things awed my heart, as if here
In perishing blossom and springing shoot were a
power
Greater than shipwrecking winds and all wild waters.

THE NIGHT WALK

The night wind over the great downs
Streams along the sky.
In the solitude of the hill-side
There is only you and I.

The night wind leaps and rushes
Black in the trees that cry
As if their travail echoed
The world's eternal *why*?

Clouds have buried the old moon.
The sunk light cowers shy.
In a world of stumbling and darkness
There is only you and I.

DOING AND MAKING

I am weary of doing and dating
The day with the thing to be done,
This painful self translating
To a language not my own.

Give me to fashion a thing;
Give me to shape and to mould;
I have found out the song I can sing,
I am happy, delivered, and bold.

THE BATHER

Water, frolic water!
Drops in the dazzle of noon, drops divinely cold,
Radiant down naked breast, down arm and thigh
You run to my feet, shaken to shining grass,
Betwixt the green blades, liquid gems, you lie.
Water, careless water!
Little miraculous mirrors
Globing the glory of earth and sky,
Lazy drops, vanishing in the sun's hot kisses,
Drops caressingly rolled,
You glide and suddenly fall like a falling star,
Like a throb of delight you die.
The pool beneath me glows
In its own gloom asleep,
Water, secret water!
But all its quivering sparkles, a fairy mesh,
Are showered about my sun-delighted flesh.
And I wonder at the beauty of water,
Simple and swift and shy,
A slumber and escape,
Anywhither yielding,
A never-recovered shape,
Laughter and loss in an instant's gleam to the eye!
Water, vivid water!
I feel the cool drops run
Down me in the sun;
And suddenly thrilling near
In the stillness of noon is a vision of water swung
In waves heavy and huge
Out of a chaos shaped into shapes of fear

Heedless of human cry,
Drowning, ruining, endlessly crashed and return-
ing,—
A power, a terror! O cold, dancing drops,
Is it the kiss of a danger in delight
That makes you glow on the body of a man
And the heart of a man reply?

A GLIMPSE OF TIME

In the shadow of a broken house,
Down a deserted street,
Propt walls, cold hearths, and phantom stairs,
And the silence of dead feet—
Locked wildly in one another's arms
I saw two lovers meet.

And over that hearthless house aghast
Rose from the mind's abyss
Lost stars and ruined, peering moons,
Worlds overshadowing this,—
Time's stony palace crumbled down
Before that instant kiss.

BEFORE SLEEP COMES

Where do you float from, visions that shine ere sleep
Subdues with leaden law
The dancing fires of the brain?—In a shadowy land,
As a king from a tower I saw.

There came startled gazelles, beautifully leaping,
Delicate-hoofed: they were gone,
And the red pomegranate showered its petalled
bloom
On the glittering stream alone.

I saw the dust on an Indian plain, and a grove
Where pilgrims went in white:
I saw the mountains, throned upon purple air,
Remote in sculptured light.

And I saw the broadening beams of the early sun
On the pale Pacific melt,
And naked fishermen, idly rocked in a boat;
Their briny nets I smelt.

I saw amid Asian deserts a bed of reeds,
And a heron slowly rose
To the cloud from wild reeds blown by a wind that
came
From a land no man yet knows.

And I watched a tall ship gliding out of the mist
By a snow-seamed iron cape.
The smoky wraiths clung round her, but on she
stemmed,
Self-willed, a wing-bright shape.

Then all fell dark. Yet still in a trance elate,
And strange to myself I lay.
Here was the black, soft stillness: but where was I?
Far away, far away.

NUMBERS

Trefoil and Quatrefoil!
What shaped those destinied small silent leaves
Or numbered them under the soil?
I lift my dazzled sight
From grass to sky,
From humming and hot perfume
To scorching, quivering light,—
Empty blue!—Why,

As I bury my face afresh
In a sunshot vivid gloom—
Minute infinity's mesh,
Where spearing side by side
Smooth stalk and furred uplift
Their luminous green secrets from the grass,
Tower to a bud and delicately divide—
Do I think of the things unthought
Before man was?

Bodiless Numbers!
When there was none to explore
Your winding labyrinths occult,
None to delve your ore
Of strange virtue, or do
Your magical business, you
Were there, never old nor new,
Veined in the world and alive:
Before the planets, Seven;
Before these fingers, Five!

You that are globed and single,
Crystal virgins, and you that part,
Melt, and again mingle!
We have hoisted sail in the night
On the oceans that you chart:
Dark winds carry us onward, on;
But you are there before us, silent Answers,
Beyond the bounds of the sun.
You body yourselves in the stars, inscrutable dancers,
Native where we are none,

O inhuman Numbers!
All things change and glide,
Corrupt and crumble, suffer wreck and decay,
But, oostinate dark Integrities, you abide,
And obey but them who obey.
All things else are dyed
In the colours of man's desire:
But you no bribe nor prayer

Avails to soften or sway.
Nothing of me you share,
Yet I cannot think you away.
And if I seek to escape you, still you are there,
Stronger than caging pillars of iron,
Not to be passed, in an air
Where human wish and word
Fall like a frozen bird.

Music asleep
In pulses of sound, in the waves!
Hidden runes rubbed bright!
Dizzy ladders of thought in the night!
Are you masters or slaves—
Subtlest of man's slaves—•
Shadowy Numbers?
In a vision I saw
Old vulture Time, feeding
On the flesh of the world; I saw
The home of our use outdated—
Seasons of fruiting and seeding
Withered, and hunger and thirst
Dead, with all they fed on:
Till at last, when Time was sated,
Only you persisted,
Daedal Numbers, sole and same,
Invisible skeleton frame
Of the peopled earth we tread on—
Last, as first.

Because naught can avail
To wound or to tarnish you;
Because you are neither sold nor bought,
Because you have not the power to fail
But live beyond our furthest thought,
Strange Numbers, of infinite clue,
Beyond fear, beyond ruth,
You strengthen also me
To be in my own truth.

THE TWO DESIRES

What is the spirit's desire,
Sprung, springing, singing,
Fountain-fresh, rainbowed over with lights that
awaken

The inner dishevelled crystal, starrily shaken
To sevenfold changes of fire?
Youth in its wonder aflower,
Up to the sun swinging,
A March daffodil, braves the bright wind's cold—
Sensitive silken softness, yet how bold
Against the cold snow-flurry and sleet shower!
Because it seeks—what mark
Beyond the tower of the lark
Who sees the dawn from the dark?
Only itself to unfold,
Expand, outpour, be told,
All, all to utter,—
Delicate thought's moth-flutter,
And hope's proud-sweeping voyage of wings sky-
reaping;
To soar and to explore
In the midst of this mind-soiling
Earth-medley, and flesh-toiling
Cares, betrayal, and pain's returning sting;
Still to spring, still to sing,
Flame and flower of the mind,
Seeking bliss in this,—
Itself, itself to find.

What is the spirit's desire?
—Comes Experience after,
Experience and Comparison, mockers old.
Trail of a tarnishing cloud is heavily rolled,
And, harsher than shadow or cold,
Pitiless light searches the shallows of laughter
For terrible truth in the world rock-seated.
Yet not because shadow-fearing or world-defeated
But natively in its own unprompted sort,

Because of desire profounder than desire,
O now where aims the spirit? Higher, higher
Than ever flight up-earned it! Now that aim
Is a greatness greater than hero's name and fame,
A beauty passionate more than flesh can support,
Divine greatness, divine beauty, a pain
Appeasing all pains; flying not blight or bruise,
But seeking its own afar-conceived resort,
The spirit is only fain
Itself to lose,
Lose, lose.

WALNUT-LEAF SCENT

In the high leaves of a walnut,
On the very topmost boughs,
A boy that climbed the branching bole
His cradled limbs would house.

On the airy bed that rocked him
Long, idle hours he'd lie
Alone with white clouds sailing
The warm blue of the sky.

I remember not what his dreams were;
But the scent of a leaf's enough
To house me higher than those high boughs
In a youth he knew not of,

In a light that no day brings now
But none can spoil or smutch,
A magic that I felt not then
And only now I touch.

COMMERCIAL

Gross, with protruding ears,
Sleek hair, brisk glance, fleshy and yet alert,
Red, full, and satisfied,
Cased in obtuseness confident not to be hurt,

He sits at a little table
In the crowded, congenial glare and noise, jingling
Coins in his pocket; sips
His glass, with hard eye impudently singling

A woman here and there:—
Women and men, they are all priced in his thought,
All commodities staked
In the market, sooner or later sold and bought,

"Were I he," you are thinking,
You with the dreamer's forehead and pure eyes,
"What should I lose?—All,
All that is worth the striving for, all my prize;

"All the truth of me, all
Life that is wonder, pity and fear, requiring
Utter joy, utter pain,
From the heart that the infinite hurts with deep
desiring.

"Why is it I am not he?
Chance? The grace of God? The mystery's plan?
He, too, is human stuff,
A kneading of the old, brotherly slime of man.

"Am I a lover of men,
And turn abhorring as from fat slug or snake?
Lives obstinate in me too
Something the power of angels could not unmake?"

O self-questioner! None
Unlocks your answer. Steadily look, nor flinch.
This belongs to your kind,
And knows its aim, and fails not itself at a pinch.

It is here in the world and works,
Not done with yet.—Up, then, let the test be tried!
Dare your uttermost, be
Completely, and of your own, like him, be justified.

THE TAMARISK HEDGE

I know that there are slumbrous woods beyond
On islands of white marges, where the tide
Floods upward, blue as a kingfisher's wing,
And sails, like wishes of a reverie,
Shine to the wind that fills them, far inland.
I know that there are harbours in the hills
Amid those verdurous, smooth bosom-folds,
Found by the idle sunbeams for their sleep.
But it contents me to see nothing more
Than liquid blue of the invisible wind
Flowing and glowing through the tamarisk
That waves upon this wild deserted' bank;
And I lie warm on the short, sandy turf
Lulled in bright noise of the returning sea.
O plummy Tamarisk, tossing your green hair
In the wind's radiant stream, as if I had lent
Your fibres all my senses of delight,
Why does it so enchant me to have nothing,
And drink long draughts of sky where nothing is,
And tremble to the glory of an hour
That passes out of nothing into nothing?

SHABBY HOUSE-WALL

Shabby house-wall
Of bricks once yellow,
Dingied with city grime,
Dusty and fallow,

The high sun, glorying
In clear gold, edges
Your crumbled mortar's
Luminous ledges.

You glow with a touch
From the pure sky.

And suddenly all
Is new to the eye.

I see you as labour's
Rough fruit and homely,
Raised morning by morning
To an order comely;

Labour of hands long dead,
Living, when all's at rest.
After the dark has come
And the light gone West.

EVENING RAIN

What is lovelier than rain that lingers
Falling through the western light?
The light that's red between my fingers
Bathes infinite heaven's remotest height.

Whither will the cloud its darkness carry
Whose trembling drops about me spill?
Two worlds, of shadow and splendour, marry:
I stand between them rapt and still.

ON THE HILLS

Drinking wide, sunny wind,
Hand within hand,
We look from hill to hill
Of our own land.

Hand within hand, we remember
Without speech,
And hour upon hour comes about us;
We number them each.

O little far clouds that swim
In the round of blue,
Are you bringing those hours again,
Shining in you?

You melt into air, drop on earth,
Sucked up in the light,
And again you appear, in the blue
You are born, you are bright,

As those hours live in us, nay beyond;
When we die, they shall still
Lift our hearts up, as now we uplift
Our hearts on the hill.

THE HOUSE THAT WAS

Of the old house, only a few, crumbled
Courses of brick, smothered in nettle and dock,
Or a shaped stone lying mossy where it tumbled!
Sprawling bramble and saucy thistle mock
What once was fire-lit floor and private charm,
Whence, seen in a windowed picture, were hills
fading
At night, and all was memory-coloured and warm,
And voices talked, secure of the wind's invading.

Of the old garden, only a stray shining
Of daffodil flames among April's cuckoo-flowers
Or clustered aconite, mixt with weeds entwining!
But, dark and lofty, a royal cedar towers
By homelier thorns; and whether the rain drifts
Or sun scorches, he holds the downs in ken,
The western vales; his branchy tiers he lifts,
Older than many a generation of men.

AWAKENING

Out of first sleep as they awoke
The moon had stolen upon her face.
It seemed that they had opened eyes
New on another world and place.

The eyes of each the other sought
Wondering; no sound was in the night.
On them the very soul of peace
Gazed in that spiritual light.

Beyond the reign of hurt and pain,
Beyond the boundaries of death,
Each seemed with their awaking sighs
To breathe at last their native breath.

FLAME AND SNOW

The bare branches rose against the gray sky.
Under them, freshly fallen, snow shone to the eye.

Up the hill-slope, over the brow it shone,
Spreading an immaterial beauty to tread upon.

In the elbow of black boughs it clung, nested white,
And smooth below it slept in the solitude of its light.

It was deep to the knee in the hollow; there in a
stump of wood
I struck my bill-hook, warm to the fingers' blood,
and stood,

Pausing, and breathed and listened: all the air
around
Was filled with busy strokes and ringing of clean
sound,

And now and again a crack and a slow rending,
to tell
When a tree heavily tottered and swift with a crash
fell.

I smelt the woody smell of smoke from the fire, now
Beginning to spurt from frayed bracken and torn
bough

In the lee of a drift, fed from our long morning toil
And sending smart to the eyes the smoke in a blue
coil.

I lopped the twigs from a fresh-cut pole and tossed
it aside
To the stakes heaped beyond me, and made a plung-
ing stride,

And gathered twines of bramble and dead hazel sticks
And a faggot of twisted thorn with snow lumped in
the pricks,

And piled the smoulder high. Soon a blaze tore
Up through hissing boughs and shrivelling leaves,
from a core

Of quivering crimson; soon the heat burst and
revelled,
And apparitions of little airy flames dishevelled

Gleamed and vanished, a lost flight as of elfin wings,
Trembling aloft to the wild music that Fire sings

Dancing alive from nothing, lovely and mad. And
still
The snow, pale as a dream, slept on the old hill,

Softly fallen and strange. Which made me more to
glow,
Beauty of young flames, or wonder of young snow?

COMPANIONS

The bread that's broken when we eat together
Tastes sweet. A sunbeam stealing to your hand
Seems as if spilled from something brimming over
Within me, wanting no word, or itself
The word I wanted! Find we not our own
Language in winds, fresh from a golden place,
When breasting the high down at last we turn
To each other, bright with rapturous escape,
And the hills sing together, like our hearts,
Lost in the light! Between us, as we walk
Green roadsides, under homely hedgerow elms
Of summer leaf, silences are as water
Smooth for the sail and shining to the verge,
But intimate as a hand's touch when we pace
Long crowded pavements amber-lamped in dusk
That holds its dark breath over the gay talk,
Bright eyes, and grief buried in moving sound.
There is a secret colour that has dyed
The world within our hearts: none knows it else,
No more than that which thickens the flushed light
Deep in the foxglove's honey-throat; it is there
In the midst of light speech and forgetfulness,
In the empty house of absence, where the walls
Echo other voices; it is in the midst
Of the unsaid fears the mind plots forts against,
In the dragging thought and drizzle of blank care,
The daily doing of what must be done;
Then suddenly it glows and bathes us like the sun.

OUR TREE HAS FLOWERS

We have planted a tree,
And behold, it has flowers.
How lovely their joy!
Yet they know not of ours,

Who have shared in dull cares
And the sharpness of pain
Yet feel in our kisses
The first kiss again,

And with hand clasped in hand
We turn and we see
The sweet laughing flowers
On our own fair tree.

NAKED

Pride is the untrue mask,
Shame is a cloak that clings,
Tenderness oft is a trammelling veil
Because of truth that stings.

O to be stript, and to use
All one's soul entire!
To be seen in the light, to be known for one's own,
To abound in the beauty of desire!

As the young man casts his clothes,
And, freed to the living air,
Runs down the radiant ocean-sands
With singing body bare.

THE MOMENT

Lose me, full, full moment,
Like a ripple round,
Widening into worlds
Beyond earth's bound.

I was walking a gray road
Dulled to an old aimr

Now I seek nothing,
Now I have no name.

How came you to me,
Opening timeless skies
Like a heaven within me
That is all sunrise?

SILENCES IN THE MIND

Silences in the mind, the haunting Silences,
Silences daunting,
Chill as a cavern's air, immuring hollow gloom
Yet inly luring
Like springs that ooze there, glidings from the stone:
What strange, dark tidings
You brim with! First, the doubted certainties,
Then fancies routed
By a spectral whisper from unstable worlds
That turns to fable
Accepted hope and fever of desires;
A whispered Never,
Out of a vapour clothing from afar
All things in Nothing.

THE THISTLE

In a patch of baked earth
At the crumbled cliff's brink.
Where the parching of August
Has cracked a long chink,

Against the blue void
Of still sea and sky
Stands single a thistle,
Tall, tarnished, and dry.

Frayed leaves, spotted brown,
Head hoary and torn,
Was ever a weed
Upon earth so forlorn,

So solemnly gazed on
By the sun in his sheen
That prints' in long shadow
Its raggedness lean?

From the sky comes no laughter.
From earth not a moan.
Erect stands the thistle,
Its seeds abroad blown.

MY BOAT SWINGS OUT AND BACK

My boat swings out and back,
Moored among mint and rush.
The river's ruffled speed
Laughs in the white wind's track.
My idle fingers crush
A crinkled, scented reed.

Who needs his fate provoke?
A spirit in all things flows,
And I with them flow too,
Content to eye long boughs
Of silvering willow stroke
Slowly the summer blue.

THE LURE

The long road lures across the hill,
Divides the brown fields and the green,
And curves, and dips, and climbing still
Gleams over *into* lands unseen.

I think what valleys far more fair
Than ours, the road runs on to meet.
'The light falls wild and happy there.
What shadowy doubt delays my feet?

Oh, one day, one day, I shall go
Whither the road runs out of sight,
And find, whatever winds may blow,
An inn at falling of the night.

THE APPLE BOUGHS

Round apples, burning upon the apple boughs,
As the evening flush withdraws,
Perfect and satiate, earth's completed vows,
In a stillness nothing flaws,

You burn in the branching golden green, you float
In humid blue immersed,
Strange as if gleaming out of an air remote
Where unknown tongues conversed.

Coloured and orb'd by the hours, in motionless poise,
You are timed, and rounded, and still:
But in me is the want that springs, creates, destroys,
The want no hours fulfil.

Stirred but a wing, stole but a tremor of light
From the cloud, and my heart were aware
That its will is to be with the spirit whose joy is
flight;
I have tasted a timeless air.

Spiritual laughter promises all things free,
The heart has a heaven to spend.
Where the mind imagines its own, perfection to me
Is a prison, a date, and an end.

THE EYES OF YOUTH

Time buys no wisdom like the eyes of youth,
Though youth itself be blinded with delight,
As a buoyant swimmer by the bursting spray
Of the resplendent surge, and know not yet
The marvel of its own heart's vision, blurred
By lovely follies dancing in the sun.
I heard a skylark scaling the spring air
As slow I climbed the misty, rough hill-side.
He poured the wordless wonder of his joy
Into the empty sky: was never word
Of human language held a joy so pure;
But it was I who knew it! Though my feet
Stayed on the plodded earth and in the mist,
Yet I could breathe, float, mount and sing with him,
The unwearable singer; I could bathe
In the beyond of blue, and know the round
Of sea beneath me, and the sun above.
He gave of what he knew not, soaring throat!

HOLIDAY

Through Ebblesborne and Broad-Chalke
The narrow river runs,
Dimples with dark November rains,
Flashes in April suns.

But give me days of rosy June
And on warm grass to lie
And watch, bright over long green weed,
Quick water wimple by.

Blue swallows, arrowing up and down,
Cool trout that glide and dart,
Lend me their happy bodies
For the fancies of my heart.

But you, clear stream, that murmur
One music all day long,
•I wish my idle fancy
Sang half so sweet a song.

ADVERSARIES

Who are these that meet
At random in the street?
Adversaries! Yet they
Make no sign nor stay.
Neither he nor she
Knows what those Powers be
That bodied in them go
Among the peopled flow,
One toward the dusk and one
Toward the Western sun.

Secret eyes turn to her,
And bosoms throb astir,
As if a perfume blew
And made the evening new.
Lissom with budding breast,
She steps toward the bright West,
An airy-footed shape!
Above the neck's young nape
Springs wonderful her hair.
The round throat lifts in air
The flower that is her head.
Her lips are Peril's red;
Her eyes a shy surprise,
Shedding soft cruelties.

Of what will was she wrought,
Vivid, without a thought?
Fragrance of all that's young
And delicately sprung

Is round her like a lure
Voluptuously pure;—
Eternal soul of sense.
The moment's quintessence!
Of what will was she made,
With those fine lashes laid
Upon her bloom? She comes
From the wild Earth, that hums
With summer in the mead,
Glutting the flower-cups' greed
Of sunlight; ill to tame
As Hunger, Thirst or Flame.

But he that's striding East
Regards not her the least.
His thought is far away.
Circling the end of day.
Though young, the restless mind,
Moulding the flesh, has signed
His features; and his gaze,
Absented in retreat
From all this human street,
Holds musings that begin
To sharpen cheek and chin.
What speculation now
Beneath that ardent brow
Braves what it sees?—Among
Blind worlds, this planet swung
Like an old toy, a spark
In the gigantic dark,
A mote of dust alive,
Where millions meanly strive—
For what?

 If Thought alone
Keeps man upon his throne
Of courage, to outface
The Gorgon mask of Space,
What wills it with this house
Of flesh, that loves to drowse

And take the hours of sense
For sweetness and defence,—
Of flesh that is but clay
For Thought to sift away
Like powder of idle sand
Within the crumbling hand?

Two Cruelties are these,
And two Defiances.
Yet though they be apart
As East and West, the heart
Of man is twined in each.
Of them he makes his speech,
His torment and delight,
His songs, his tears, his height
Of wisdom, his despair.
Though both his being tear,
He knows not which to choose
Nor which he'd harder lose.

THE SEVEN ISLES

I dream of western waters, and of the Seven Isles,
And of mornings when they appear
Flowering out of the mist on a sea of smiles,
Warm and familiar and near.

Then O how changed! fugitive, faint, remote;
In another world than ours,
Vanishing apparitions, they seemed to float;
Shadows of shadowy powers.

Effaced, at last, as if they had never been!
Drowned in the empty bay.
On solitary water was nothing to be seen
But a sail, pale on the gray.

And I wonder, O Isles, reappearing and lost without
sign
In the solitude of the seas,
Are the songs of the Immortals more divine
Or their magical silences?

THE FULL HEART

If I could sing the song of her
Who makes my heart to sing;
If I could catch the words to match
Its secret blossoming;

My song should be a heaven of sound
Thrilled through a single note,—
The world of light that's infinite
In one flower's honey-throat!

A fountain diamonded in air,
Earth-blessing dew at night,
A dancing child, flames lovely-wild,
Should not so much delight.

But where I most have theme to boast
I stammer in my speech;
The full heart shames my faltering art
With music past its reach.

THE CATHEDRAL PORCH

Towering, towering up to the noon-blaze,
Up to the hot blue, up to blinding gold,
Pillar and pinnacle, arch and corbel, scrolled,
Flowered and tendrilled, soar, aspire and raise
The giant porch, with kings and prophets old
High in their niches, like one shout of praise,
From earth to heaven.—In shadow of the door

Cringeing, a beggar stands;
He holds out abject hands;
His lips for pity and alms mechanically implore.

Splendour of air and the bright splintered beam
Carve all afresh in strong reverberate glow
As if even now the passionate master-blow
Struck from the stone the shapes of beauty's dream.
Can a mere hand ever have fashioned so
Desire's adventure, god-like force, supreme
Sky-scaling joy?—The beggar's toneless drone
Comes from his laughterless
Accepted wretchedness
As from a long-dried well, where off-cast clutter's
thrown.

Prophet and saint and kingly king, whose eyes,
Flashing authority, gaze and awe, you came
From wombs of flesh, though now enthroned in fame.
A mother heard the helpless wailing cries
Of voices that have won the world's acclaim
By wisdom, suffering, truth. August you rise
Above this wreck, by whom the children run
Careless with dancing limb,
And laugh, and mock at him;
And beggar, children, towering porch are equal in
the sun.

From the opened door bursts upon glorious wings
Music: the shadowy silence moves with sound
That overflows and rolls returning round.
As if to itself, the pillared grandeur sings
Of deeper than all thought has ever found,
Of richer than the heart's imaginings,
Of higher than all hope has dared to see.
Like comment of a crow,
Dulled, reiterate, slow,
The human plaint croaks answer: Vanity! look on
me!

Who made the stark unfeatured quarry-block
Live in those song-like pillars? And who smote
The ancient silence into note on note
Melodious as the river from the rock?
Out of the heart of man such splendours float
As make his vileness and his misery mock
The prisoned soul: which shall bespeak him more,
Grandeur of stone and sound,
Or fawning abject, bound
To his abasement, close as to a dungeon floor?

Sunken eyes, craving hands, defeated shape,
Whom to look on so humbles, you appear
But as the avoided husk, shrivelled and sere,
Cast by the spirit that springs up to escape
To its own reality and radiance there
For ever fresh as young bloom on a grape,
Triumphing to be human, yet to win
An amplitude beyond
Dull care and fancy fond,
And breathe the light that man was born to glory in

Yet littleness, and envy, and obscure pain
Were mortised into that magnificence!
Trading his wretchedness for pity's pence,
Though this poor ruin from the depth complain,
Slave to his self-lamenting impotence,
Nor can his proud humanity regain;
O Wonder of Man, in his indignity,
Forfeit, disgrace, and rue,
Shares he not still in you?
Did not man sink so low, could he aspire so high?

UNSATED MEMORY

Emerging from deep sleep my eyes unseal
To a pursuing strangeness. O to be
Where but a moment past I was, though where

The place, the time I know not, only feel
Far from this banished and so shrunken me,
Struck conscious to the alien dawn's blank peer!

Between two worlds, homeless, I doubt of both,
Knowing only that I seemed possessing realms
And now have nothing In this glimmering cave
Of daylight, whither I return so loath,
The emptiness of silence overwhelms;—
Still, vision-haunted, like the blind, I crave.

For splendour beats along my blood in gleams
As of a skyey largeness closed and lost,
That memory torments itself to clutch,
Hungering unsated for that light of dreams
Pursued down shadowy paths that foil, exhaust,
And lose me in a cloud I cannot touch.

Fixed as in frost the motionless dim shape
Of each accustomed thing about my bed
Is like an enmity at watch for stale
Habit to repossess me past escape.
In the dead light all seems apart and dead,
Yet menaces. The ticked hour is my jail.

Yet I had sense as of a forge whose blast
Could fuse this stark world into glorious flow
Of young power streaming irresistible,
And I, dilated, roamed a region vast,
Feasting in vision, with a soul aglow,
And Time a steed to pace or race at will.

Where is that world that I am fallen from?
Look, as a sea-weed left at ebb to pine
Hueless and shrunken, that had liberty
To wander sparkle-fresh in its own foam,
Trailing its rosy hair in the long brine,
So am I cast up; from what haunted sea?

An ocean of the mind, without access
Save in the labyrinths of sleep, a main
Deep with the memory of all memories,
Thoughts, and imaginations numberless
That ever lodged in the brief-living brain,
Washing our sun-lit ignorance: was it this?

Then miserable I, that have but sucked
Dull ooziings, vanished into vaporous dew,
From springs that custom closes like a stone
And leaden fear and clayey doubt obstruct.
Heir of the earth's youth and of all it knew,
What am I but a vessel charged with oblivion?

Ah, surely I was rather native there
Where all desires were lovely, and the power
Of Time irrevocably creeping sure
Was uncreated, than in this numb air
Of mapped days and of hour pursuing hour,
Endless impediment and forfeiture,

O we go shrouded from ourselves, and hide
The soul from its own splendour, and encrust
The virgin sense with thinking. Then some chance
Moment reveals us: we are deified,
Feeling and seeing; gold gleams from the rust;
And, marvelling at our lost inheritance,

We breathe the air of beauty; we regale
The mind with innocence; joy has no stint;
And we are chartered for the world's wide sea,
Reason the rudder, not the sky-filled sail.—
Still clings about us some imputing hint
Of strangeness, even in self-captivity.

Before me comes a vision of the old,
With dear experience sunken in their eyes
And furrowed on their faces; scarce a spark
Betrays the quick fire that once made them bold.
All their strength's only for that enterprise
Which takes them soon into the engulfing dark.

I think of old ships stranded, how they stir
The mind to see their beauty in its decay.
For they, unmemoried and mute, have been
Companions of the wild winds without fear,
And carried far adventure, who shall say
Into what glories we have never seen?

THE WOOD'S ENTRY

So old is the wood, so old,
Old as Fear.
Wrinkled roots; great stems; hushed leaves;
No sound near.

Shadows retreat into shadow,
Deepening, crossed.
Burning light singles a low leaf, a bough.
Far within, lost.

GOBLINS

The night is holy and haunted,
Asleep in a vale of June.
Stillness and earth-smell mingle
With the beams' unearthly boon.—
Yet a terror is fallen upon me
From the other side of the moon.

If it be Truth that's hidden
Upon that other side,
Unseen, unguessed of any,
Waiting to be descried? . . .
Without shadow or footstep,
Goblins by me glide.

The mellow moon, entrancing
An English meadow here.
Silvers the old farm roofs below
And dewy grasses near.
But the world her far side faces?
I think of it, and fear.

If not man's ancient terror,
Bribed with long sacrifice,
If not old ignorance, whose hope
Would truth to itself entice—
If REASON be the goblin
That thrills my blood to ice?

The bean-blossom is breathing
From fields in glimmer spread;
A rose hangs black on the amber air . . .
But I am lured and led
To an outer vast apartness
Beyond man's hope or dread.

I look down upon me and mine
As with translated eyes,
My struggle in rapture and anguish
But noted like a fly's,
My world at stake, my heaven and hell
Small as a beetle's prize.

• • • • •
Busy in deep-sea dungeons,
Great mouths of fishes blind;
Blind wheel of planet on planet
In gulfs no thought can find;
The proud black stare of a falcon,
Without a thought behind,

Possess me, dispossess me:
They mock me not, they are.
The worlds are all a web that's hung

Beyond conception far,
That a gorged and hairy spider
Spins in the central star.

Ferocity of begetting;
Prowling hunger's maw,
Fury of teeth and hot-spilt blood,
Cold pounce and tearing claw.
Laughterless lust, the swarm and spawn
That one another gnaw;

A race to death, a frenzy
Rushing into the night,
A rage of life, a riot,
Seen in a moment's light,
And Death the wild pursuer
Close on that fever-flight!

I see it all in vision,
I see with murdered sense
Of neither good nor evil,
Nor make a fool's pretence.
I share, I too, that hunted
And horrible innocence.

• • • • •
Cruelty's matched with courage.
Not that a power should thrive
Which twists its poison-tendrils
In all that is alive;
Nor that with those fell doings
My fate be to connive;

Not this the ulterior terror
That has the goblin grin,
But that the ignorant stare of space
Be the end as the origin,—
This glorious palace of the mind
A cave that tumbles in,
And reason mocked by reason
Be all the goal to win.

INITIATION

The wind has fal'n asleep; the bough that tost
Is quiet; the warm sun's gone; the wide light
Sinks and is almost lost;
Yet the April day glows on within my mind
Happy as the white buds in the blue air,
A thousand buds that shone on waves of wind.
Now evening leads me wooingly apart.
The young wood draws me down these shelving ways
Deeper, as if it drew me to its heart.

What stills my spirit? What awaits me here?
So motionless the budded hazels spring,
So shadowy and so near!
My feet make not a sound upon this moss,—
Greenest gloom, scented with cold primroses.
A ripple, shy as almost to be mute,
Secretly wanders among further trees;
Else the clear evening brims with loneliness,
With stillness luminous and absolute.

The pause between sunset and moonrise
Exhales a strangeness. It melts out in dream
The experience of the wise,
This purity of sharpened sweet spring smells
Comes like a memory lost since I was born.
My own heart changes into mystery!
There is some presence nears through all these spells
Out of the darkened bosom of the earth:
Not I the leaf, but the leaf touches me.

Who seeks me? What shy lover, whose approach
Makes spiritual the white flowers on the thorn?
Who seems to breathe up round me,—perfume
strange!—
June and its bloom unborn?
Shy as a virgin passion is the spring!
I could have Time cease now, so there should live
This blossom in the stillness of my heart,—

Earth's earth, yet immaterial as a sense
Enriched to understand, love, hope, forgive.

Now, now, if ever, could the spirit catch,
Beyond the ear's range, thrills of airy sound.
I tremble, as at the lifting of a latch.

Am I not found?

This magical clear moment in the dusk
Is like a crystal dewy-brimming bowl
Imperilled upon lifting hands: I dread
The breathing of the shadow that shall spill
This wonder, and with it my very soul.

A dead bough cracks under my foot. The charm
Breaks; I am I now, in a gloom aware
Of furtive, flitting wing, and hunted eyes,
And furry feet a-scare.

Fear, it is fear exiles us each apart;
We are all bound and prisoned in our fear;
From the dark shadow of our own selves we flee.
Ah, but that moment, open-eyed, erect,
I had stept out of all fear, and was free.

How sweet it was in youth's shy giving-time
Finding the sudden friend, whose thoughts ran out
With yours in natural chime;
Who knew, before speech, what the lips would tell!
No need to excuse, to hide or to defend
From him, in whom your dearest thought shone new
And not a fancy stirred for him in vain.
So was it, as with a so perfect friend,
In that rare moment I have lost again.

But lo, a whiteness risen beyond the hill:
The moon-dawn! A late bird sings somewhere; hark
The long, low, loitering trill!
Like water-drops it falls into the dark.
The earth-sweetness holds me in its fragrant mesh.

Oh, though I know that I am bound afar,
Yet, where the grass is, there I also grew.
Blood knows more jthan the brain. Am I perhaps
Most true to earth when I seem most untrue?

THE CHILDREN DANCING

Away, sad thoughts, and teasing
Perplexities, away!
Let other blood go freezing,
We will be wise and gay.
For here is all heart-easing,
An ecstasy at play.

The children dancing, dancing,
Light upon happy feet,
Both eye and heart entrancing
Mingle, escape and meet;
Come joyous-eyed advancing
Or floatingly retreat.

Now slow, now swifter treading
Their paces timed and true,
An instant poised, then threading
A maze of printless clue,
Their motions smoothly wedding
To melody anew,

They sway in chime, and scatter
In looping circles; they
Are Music's airy matter,
And their feet move, the way
The raindrops shine and patter
On tossing flowers in May.

As if those flowers were singing
For joy of the clean air,
As if you saw them springing
To dance the breeze, so fair

The lissom bodies swinging,
So light the flung-back hair.

And through the mind enchanted
A happy river goes
By its own young carol haunted
And bringing where it flows
What all the world has wanted
And who in this world knows?

THE WHARF ON THAMES-SIDE: WINTER DAWN

Day begins cold and misty on soiled snow
That frost has ridged and crusted. Sound of steps
Comes, then a shape emerges from the mist
Without haste, trudging tracks the feet know well,
With his breath white upon the air before him,
To old work. Over the river hangs a crane
At the wharf's edge. Scarved, wheezing, buttoned
up,

The stubble-bearded crane-man eyes the tide
Ruckling against moored barges under the bridge,
Considers the blank moon, the obstinate frost,
Swings arms and beats them on his breast for warmth,
And to his engine-cabin disappears.
Full, fast, impetuous the tide floods up Thames,
And the solitary morning steals abroad
Over a million roofs, intensely still
And distant in a dark sleep.

For whose joy
Was it, the February moon all night
Beamed silence, like the healing of all noise,
And beauty, like compassion, upon mean
Litter of energy and trading toil,—
Cinder-heaps, sacks, tarpaulins, and stale straw;
Empty and full trucks; rails; and rows of carts,
Shafts tilted backwards; musty railway-arch,

Dingy brick wall, huddled slate roofs? It shone
On the clean snow and the fouled; touches of light,
Mysterious as a dreamer's smile! For whom
Rose before dawn the spiritual pale mist,
When imperceptibly the hue of the air
Was altered, and the dwindled baamless moon
Looked like an exiled ghost; till opposite
The vapour flushed to airy rose, and dawn
Made the first long faint shadows?

Now the smoke
Begins to go up from those chimnied roofs
Across the water. Trains with hissing speed
And frosty flashes cross the shaken bridge,
Filled each with faces, eager and uneager,
Tired and fresh, young and old; bound for the desk,
The stool, the counter—threads in the roaring loom
Of London. What thoughts have they in their eyes
That idly fall on the familiar river
This passive moment before toil usurps
Hand and brain? Each a separate-memored world
Of scheme and fancy, of dreads and urgent hopes,
Hungers and solaces! But which keeps not
A private corner deep in heart or mind
Where dwells what no one else knows? And they pass
Nameless, in thousands, with their mysteries, by us.

Slowly the city is waking in all its streets,
But dark, impetuous, silent, full, up Thames
The tide comes, like a lover to his own;
Comes like a lover, as if it sought to pour
Secrets to its listener, of vast night, and the old
Bright moon-lit oceans; of wild breaths of brine;
Of tall ships that it swung to an anchorage
In the misty dawn, and wanderers far away
On the outer seas among adventurous isles
Whose names are homely here. As if the blood
Of this our race poured back upon its heart,
Drawn by that moon of pale farewell, it comes
Brimming and buoyant, with an eager ripple
Against the black-stemmed barges, and swift swirl

Of sucking eddies by stone piers, and sound
Like laughter along the grimed wall of the wharf.

A great horse, tugging at a truck, stamps hoofs
Upon the frozen ground. A man beside him
Shouts or is silent. Labourers here and there
Deliberately, in habit's motion, take
Each his work: from the barges lighter-men
Call, and the crane moves, rattling in its iron.
It is plain day.

Still the up-streaming tide
Pours its swift secret, and the fading moon
Lingers aloft. But now the wakened wharf,
Stirred from its numbness, the bright rails, the trucks
With snow upon them, and the hoisting crane,
Are touched with all the difference of mankind;
And the river whispering out of the travelled seas
Of foreign ships and countries, comes to them
With a familiar usage; each appears
As a faculty of the morning, that begins
Once more the inter-threaded toil of men.

THE DREAM HOUSE

Often we talk of the house that we will build
For airier and less jostled days than these
We chafe in, and send Fancy roaming wide
Down western valleys with a choosing eye
To hover upon this nook or on that,
And let the mind, like fingers pressing clay,
Shape and reshape the mould of an old desire,
Spur jogging Time, conjure slow years to days,
Until tall trees, like those far fabled walls,
Rise visibly to the mind's music. Here
We scoop a terrace under hanging woods
Upon the generous slope of a green hill
That gazes over alluring distances;

Listen to our merry children at their play,
And see the shadow lengthen from our roof
On plots of garden. Fancy, busy still,
Sows colours for the seasons in those plots,
And matches or contrasts the chosen leaves
That are to shade our saunters; the clean boughs
Of aromatic walnut; the wild crab
With, after snows of blossom, fiery fruit;
And beeches of a grander race beyond them
Withdrawing into uninvaded wood;
But, farther down, our orchard falls to where
The stream makes a live murmur all day long.
Man is a builder born: not for the shell
That makes him armour against stripping wind
And frost and darkness; for befriending roof
And walls to sally from, a bread-getter.
No, but as out of mere unmeaning sound
And the wild silence he has made himself
Marvellous words and the order of sweet speech,
Breathing and singing syllables, that move
Out of the caverns of his heart like waves
Into the world beyond discovery; so
Builds he, projecting memory and strong hope
And dear and dark experience into stone
And the warm earth he digs in and reshapes,
Dyeing them human, and with a subtle touch
Discovering far kinships in the sky
And the altering season, till the very cloud
Brings its own shadow as to familiar haunts,
And the sun rests as on a place it sought.
Earth also as with a soft step unperceived
Draws from her ancient silence nearer him,
Sending wild birds to nest beneath his eaves
Or to shake songs about him as he walks,—
Shy friends, the airy playmates of his joy.
Caesars may hoist their towers and heave their walls
Into a stark magnificence, impose
The aggrandised image of themselves, as trumpets
Shattering stillness. We'll not envy them,
While there's a garden to companion us

And earth to meet us with her gentle moss
Upon our own walls. They may entertain
Prodigally a thousand guests unpleased;
But we have always one guest that is ever
Lovely and gracious and acceptable,
Light.

As I lay upon a hill-top's turf
I watched the wide light filling the round air
And I was filled with its felicity.
O the carriage of the light among the corn
When the glory of the wind dishevels it!
How it filters into the dim domes of trees
Spilt down their green height, shadows dropping
gold!
How beautiful its way upon the hills
At morning and at evening, when the blades
Of grass blow luminous, every little blade!
How the flowers drink it, happy to the roots!
This lovely guest is ours to lodge; and we
Will build for it escapes and entrances
And corners to waylay the early beam
And keep its last of lingering: here to accept
Its royalty of fullness; there to catch
In dusky cool one lustre on the floor
Doubling itself in echoed radiances
Mellow as an old golden wine, on wall
And ceiling: oh, how gentle a touch it has
On choice books, and smooth-burnished wood, in
such
Human captivity! When the winds roar over,
What sudden splendours toss into our peace
With reappearing victories! O the glory
Of morning through a doorway on the hair,
Neck, arms, young movements of a laughing child!
O mystery of brightness when we wake
In the night-hush and see upon the blind
The trembling of the shadow of a tree
Kissed by the moon, that from the buried light
Wooes ghostliness of beauty, and receives
And whispers it to all the world asleep.

Whatever it be made of, this dreamed home
Upon a hill, I know not in what vale,
Shall be a little palace for the light
To stray and sleep in and be blest for it.
So thought I: then I thought, O my dear Love,
Surely I am that house, and you the light.

WESTWARD

I found my Love among the fern. She slept.
My shadow stole across her, as I stepped
More lightly and slowly, seeing her pillowed so
In the short-turfed and shelving green hollow
Upon a cushion of wild thyme, amid
Tall bracken-tufts that, roughly luminous, hid
Her hair in amber shadow. Then I stopped.
The light was in the West: the wind had dropped;
A burning fragrance breathed out of the ground,
And the sea-murmur rose remote around.
But my Love slept. My very heart was singing
With the sweet swarm of winged thoughts it was
bringing:
And she lay there, with the just heaving breast,
So still. As a lark drops down to its nest,
I sank beside her, waiting for those eyes
To complete earth with light that nowhere lies
But in their depths for me, and carry home
The flight of my full spirit.

I had come
From wandering wide beaches far beneath
This airy height of summer-scented heath.
I was alone, and the shore solitary,
And the sea glittered infinite and starry
As on the sands I paced, that dazzling wet
Shone round, until the tumbled rocks they met
At the gaunt cliff's root; silvery runnels, ted
From oozy levels draining to their bed,

Wound flashing between smoothly furrowed slabs
Which the sky coloured; there the youngling crabs
Had scrawled a trail, and weeds, dull-rose and green.
Lay by their shadows, where old foam had been,
Crusted with shells. A mist of finest spray
Blew from the western glory, and in the bay
The ever-streaming surges gleamed and roared
Like a rejoicing Power for ever poured
For the mere splendour of its motion: salt
The air came to the nostril; and the vault
Of heaven had burnt its colours into one
Unfathomable clearness, that the sun
Was soul of, as it journeyed down the West
And in the leaping waters made each crest
A moment of live fire. I breathed the immense
And shining silence. It was to my sense
Like youth, that's all horizon, and misgives
Nothing, and in the unbounded moment lives,
And names not hope yet among things endured
And unamended, being so assured
Of its desire and the long day, and so
Ignorant of that swift Night, saying No.

Ah, why should peace and liberty most bring
Into the heart that loves them most the sting
Of Time's oppression, and the thwarting thorns,
The loss, the want, the many clouded morns?
O for deliverance! To untwist the bond
Of circumstance; to breathe the blest Beyond
Where we would be; to incarnate clean and true
All we were born and dedicated to!
O Love, how often have we shared that sigh!
To me beside that boundless sea and sky
Intolerably came my briefness; all
The undone things. Why into hearts so small
Were crammed these hungering immensities,
Thrust each day back to a prison that denies
Their native satisfaction?

I cast me down
On a great slope of rock that, ribbed and brown,

Was cloven at the top; and in between
The hollowed ledges I could lightly lean
And see the deep cup of a pool; it held
Its limpid leaving of the surge that swelled,
A tide since, over that sea-buried reef.
A round pool, deeply clear beyond belief,
Rough with minute white shells about its rim,
Its crystal in the shadow gleamed how dim
And small! while in my eye the homeless main,
Its brine was of, a splendid restless plain
Of water, spread a path for any keel
To take, the round world over, and to feel
Pressures of every wind, and haven far
Where it should choose, mirroring mast and spar
In sultry smooth lagoon, or under pines
Snow-plumed on iron fiord, or where lines
Of ships at a famed port with traffic hum
And chimes of foreign bells to sailors come,
And strange towers over crowded wharfs look high.
—Ah! such a drop of casual life was I,
At evening left: my simple, scanted, raw
Experience but the sipping of a straw
Snatched from me soon! I lifted up my gaze
Into the west and the spray-misted blaze
Where the sun gloried, and his glittering track
Allured me on and on.

Then I looked back.
All was changed. Something had transfigured each
Of those hard cliffs that thrust into the beach
Their bouldered ramparts. Every narrow seam
Brimmed with the opposite light, and the warm
gleam
Found out small clusters of sea-pink, and many
A samphire-tuft in its uneven cranny,
And bloomed a burning orange on the stain
Of lichen, and dissembled rosy grain
On the rock's blackness. At the summit showed
A gemmy green, where the grass patches glowed
Between those jutting crags. The air was hush;
And the shore quivered with a phantom flush

Of molten colours on far-shining sand.
All was as warm to sight as to the hand,
Distinct yet insubstantial, as if what
The eye saw had been created by a thought
Intenser than its vision. Memory played
A music in the mind, and Time delayed
To whisper names forgotten; I saw no more
The sculpture of those rocks, that vivid shore;
But far-off hours arose before me there
Beautiful in a bright unearthly air.
Memory touched her stops, and one by one
They came, each with its own shadow and sun
And its peculiar perfume: each a part
Of the quick blood and pulsing of my heart.
I carried riches; I was as a king,
Clothed in a more than royal apparelling,
Because of glories in the mind, and light
In eyes I knew, and the unended flight
Of thought, and friendship warmer than the sun,
And dateless joy, and hope shared, and things
done
With all the soul's strength, and still precious pain

Youth, O sweet, careless Youth, flooding the vein
With easy blood, what time the body knows
Scarce that it is, so brimmingly life glows
Within it, and its motions are like words
Born happy on the lips, and like the birds
On April-blossomed boughs rich fancies throng
The mind's exuberance and spill in song,
I think my heart back into all the bloom
And feel it fresh. As one that enters home,
I am there: the shyness, and the secret flame
Of ecstasy that knew not any name,
The wild heart-eating fevers, the young tears,
The absorbed soul, the trouble, and the fears
Wide as the night, the joy without a thought
Meeting the morning,—Time has never taught
My heart to lose them. Still I smell that rose
Of so inscrutable sweetness; and still glows

The glory of the wonder when I first
Heard the enchanted poets, and they burst
In song upon my spirit, as if before
No one had ever passed that magic door,
But for me, first in all the world, they sang.
Sweetest of all things, Youth, sweet in the pang
As in the pleasure, you are in me yet,
Changed as the grape to wine: could I forget,
Then were this hand dust. In those yesterdays
Memory happy and familiar strays,
Exploring hours that, long in shadow lain,
Come effortlessly all distinct again,
As in my light boat I would track the banks
Of narrow streams that rippled past the ranks
Of yellow-flowered reeds, and knew not where
They led me, for no human sound was there,
But the shy wings were near me, and I to them,
And the wild earth was round me as in a dream
And I was melted into it. I can hear,
Lost in the green, bright silence, where I steer
Beneath gold shadows wavering on my arm
The water saying over its low charm
Among the reeds, and, dreading to disturb
The mirror of the blossomed willow-herb,
Drink it into my heart. O idle hours,
Floating with motion like the summer towers
Of cloud in the blue noon, I have not drained
Your fullness yet, for all that care has rained
Upon defeated days of dark sundown,
Like burial of all beauty and all renown,
When the spirit sits within its fortalice
And watches mute.

One simple, passionate kiss
Can alter earth for ever. Out of what
Imagination, or what far forethought
Of Time, came Love in beauty new and strange
With eyes of light, my earth and sky to change
And bring me vision of a promised land,
As if long-sunken centuries had planned
The meeting of our lips? From far we came

To one another, ere we had a name.
Wonderful shape, white ecstasy, the cup
That God with living wine has so filled up!
O body made like music, like a word
Syllabled in spontaneous accord;
Quick-sensed with apprehension; capable
Of extreme joy, of pangs far-piercing; full
Of divine wants, like a wave moving through
The passionate and transparent soul of you;
O mystery and power, charged with unknown
Futurities; a lovely flame that's blown
In the wind of life, and sister'd to all fire
That has in it the peril of all desire;
Dearer than breath, what are you made of, whence
Come you? I know not; the eluded sense
Only replies, "To name her is to tell
The very name of Love." It is to spell
A language more profound than tongue can use,
Written in the heart's blood of the world; to lose
All that is worth the losing, and to trust
In spite of withered leaf and charnel dust.

Who knows his own beginning? Hour from hour
Is born; in secret buds, and breaks to flower
Within us. Nothing we have ever been,
Nothing we have endured, nothing we have seen,—
Ay, and before we came into this light,
Were sacrificial hopes, and exquisite
Fears, and the jealous patience of the womb,
And throes of self-consuming martyrdom,
Imprinted on the fibre of our flesh,—
Nothing is ended, but is made afresh
Into a subtler potency; the eyes
See a more wondrous earth, the senses prize
More, its more pregnant meaning; and we go
To enrich a world beyond us, overflow
Into a mind of what thoughts who can tell?

O Love, we draw from an unfathomed well.
Where are the June nights that made heaven a whole

Blue jewel, throbbing through the very soul?
Where is the dizzying bloom and the perfume—
Earth-ecstasy, sighed up to starry gloom,
That in the touching lips' ineffable
Communion, was a spirit and a spell
As if we had found within ourselves a being
More infinite than any shown to seeing?
Where is the beauty that stole thought away
And moved to tears some one remembered day?
Where is the laughter some sweet chance would start,
To leave its summer warmth about the heart?
Where are the places we shall see no more?
Are they not powers to haunt us at the core
Of feeling, and evoke the eternal Now,
Like music, out of nothing? Nay, I vow,
Most perishable, most immortal tastes;
And the frail flame, that touches us and hastes
Into the dark, endures more than the build
Of proudest fortress. We are found and filled;
And it suffices. For we pass among
Grandeurs, and from a grandeur we are sprung,
Marvellous in our destiny, and know
Man is most man meeting a giant foe,
Whether overcoming or defeated. We,
Who hear, like moving rumour of the sea
And march of ocean waves, the human sound
About us, filled with meaning more profound;
Who know what hearts beat by us, and have shared
In all the mighty martyr names have dared;
Who feel all earth beneath the stars, the race
Of rivers, and the mountains in their place,
Faculties of our being; and have a mind
Dyed in the ardent story of our kind;
We in our briefness, in our storm and ache,
Our loves magnificent in hearts that break,
We, all our bonds and bounds exceeding, ay,
Burning a loftier flame because we die,
We at Time's outpost, we the thrust spear-head
Against the opposing darkness of the dead,
We are the world's adventure! We speed on,

Stay not, but westward travel with the sun,
Westward into the splendour that takes all,
And carry far into the great light's fall
That infinite memory of the world we bear
Within our spirits, burning and aware.

Wake, Love, awake!—Her eyes shone into mine
That moment. In the air was light divine,
Sinking and yet suspended still, to hold
Rocks, ocean, heaven, within one bath of gold.
But in the soul that met me from those eyes,
Impassioning the beauty of the skies,
Was my completion. Earth, as newly made
Ev'n to the smallest shape of green grass-blade,
Lived; and the thrilled, bright silence sang to me;
For in the hush I heard the boundless sea.

FROM THE CHINESE

A flower, or the ghost of a flower!
Mist, or the soul of it, felt
In the secret night's mid hour,
Lost on the morning air!
Who shall recover it,—beauty born to melt
As the apparition of blossom brief and shy,
As the cloud in the sky that vanishes, who knows
where?

THE COCKATOO: FROM THE CHINESE

A present from tropical Annam,
A bird with a human speech,
A gloriously plumed cockatoo
Rosy as the flower of a peach!
And they did what they also do
To the learned, the witty, the sage;—
Got a cage with the stoutest of bars
And shut it up fast in the cage.

FROM GOETHE

Peace is perfect over
All the hills.

Scarce wilt thou discover
A breath, so still's
Every tree.

The woods are silent; birds have hushed their song.
Wait but thou; ere long
Peace comes to thee.

BOOK V

(1920-1928)

THE SIRENS

AN ODE

PRELUDE

I remember a night of my youth, I remember a night
Soundless!

The earth and the sea were a shadow, but over me
opened

Heaven into uttermost heaven, and height into height
Boundless

With stars, with stars, with stars.

I remember the dew on my face, I remember the
mingled

Homely smell of grass and unearthly beauty

Out of the ends of the air and the unsealed darkness

Poured in a rain, in a river,

Into my marrow,—thro' all the veins of delight

Poured into me.

O the divine solitude, the intoxicating silence!

I was a spirit unregioned, worthy of them;

I, even I, was a creature of infinite flight,

Born to be free.

In the midst of the worlds, as they moved, I moved
with them all,

A sense and a joy; I was hidden, and yet they were
nigh;

For they came to me as lovers,
Those stars from on high.

Thus as my whole soul drank of the star-thrilled
air,

I felt more than heard, like a whisper
Invading me out of immensity, hinted, haunting
Sound

Of waves, of waves, of waves.

And I felt in the blood of my flesh to the roots of my
hair,

That it sought me, a mind in the muteness:

In the midst of the worlds I trembled,

I in the night a mortal

Found!

What was I? What was I? Nothing

But a Moment, aware

Of the ruins of Time!

Yet a memory of memories awaking, I marvelled
from where,

Out of shadows unshapen within me, and dust under
dust,

From burial of realms and of ages, and darkness astir

In the roots of the hungering forest, the ancientest
lair,

Rose to claim

This my body, the sap of its veins and its secret to
share;

To emerge with the star-watching eyes of the ven-
turer, Man.

And my body was brimmed with its meaning; it
knew whence it came,

For I was the word on Earth's lips

That she needed to name.

But tell me, I cried, O whispering, troubling waves,

Tell me, O journeying wildernesses of stars,

Why do you near me and choose me? Whither would
you lure me,

The earth-child?

To be brimmed with desire overflowing the bounds
of the world,
To be wingless and stretched on a longing that bound-
lessly craves,
Who has known not this, in the bloom of a midnight
marvelling
Earth-exiled?

But thus to be sought from afar by phantom waves,
In the still of the night to be neared by stooping stars,
As if all immensity sought for a home in the mind
At its core,
This draws my dark being up from its secret caves,
And the flesh is no longer a home, nor can comfort-
ing Earth
Shelter me more.
I am known to the Unknown; chosen, charmed, en-
dangered:
I flow to a music ocean-wild and starry,
And feel within me, for this mortality's answer,
Sea without shore.

I. THE VICTORIES

Masters of the known and found,
Singers of a world completed,
All to a time and end ordained,
Powers foredestined to their bound
And truth immutably contained,
A dominion mapped and meted,—
Like as in Egyptian noon
Gods of granite throned august
Gaze on old realms round them strewn
Far as the horizon dust,—
All beneath that searching sky
Gathered into wisdom's eye!
Prophets of the found and known,
Chanters of the Laws unchanging,
Comes not an hour that undoes all
With a whispered homelessness,

With a sudden touch estranging?
Certainties you deemed your own,
Housing with a friendly wall.
Glide into a doubt and guess
Swift as when, the low light going,
Darkness on the wind comes flowing
Out of nothing; and surmise,
Dream, desire, are frontierless;
And the unroofed mind has skies
To breathe of, where a rumour sings
Of other mind and vaster things
Wooed to wilder destinies.
Thought throbs: there a power entices
(Like, on a wonder-night, all June
In a draught of stolen spices)
Not to stay, not to stay,
But to embark for the outer dark.
Only charms the untrodden way,
Only the unspelt secret rune.

Conqueror with foot superb
Planted on the last step won,
Whom the trumpet-mouths proclaim
Destiny's accepted son,
Robed in a resounding name,
What profounder pangs disturb
Something that's unquarried yet
In the deep soul? All the gain
Weighs but as an ashy grain
In the world those pangs beget.
Fierce fruitions but betray
And deliver to the hard
Hope of things unhazarded.
Where that world is, who shall say?
Under western evening starred
Black waves tempt to far-away
Visioned walls or a wide shore,
Lands the only-coveted,
Gleaming as they gleamed before
Alexander's dying eyes

In the tent at Babylon.
Dumb his soldiers streamed beside him,
Dumb'd with grief that only saw
The pillar of the world undone.
Nor guessed what potent visions gnaw
The unsated mind with cruelties,—
Ramparts where Time's jealous spies,
Sentinelled afar, deride him,
Mocking all that passion willed
With the frustrate and the unfulfilled.
O the inexorable Lure
Spur to the demon hearts of men!
Ravening Genghis, hot Timour,
And the empire-storming Saracen,
Fate's infuriate charioteers,
Fly from a whisper in their ears
(Earth before them, Time behind)
Whispering, "Haste, ere blood be chill
Storm and scatter, work your will!"
Hunters hunted in the mind,
Hunting what they cannot name,
Thunder over earth, to find
Nothing. Though the harvest black
Be reaped in rue and curse and wrong,
There's a thing they cannot tame.
Still they keep their torrent-track,
Maddened by a shadowy song
Sung beyond the reach of sense.
What song is this which wastes the worth
Of human things, and distastes earth,
And fevers with magnificence
Of swiftness, trampling, ruin-crowned,
Toward a goal that none has found?
Is it the song the Adventurer stole
Body-bound upon the mast
For the enchantment of his soul?
Over farthest foam of waves
That are sailors' restless graves,
He heard exulting as he passed
Perilous voices challenging

The mortal heart of him, and fear
Became a glory, so to hear
Secure as an immortal, sing
The Sirens.

I. 2

Whither is she gone, wing'd by the evening airs,
Yon sail that draws the last of light afar,
On the sea-verge alone, despising other cares
Than her own errand and her guiding star?
She leaves the safe land, leaves the roofs, and the
 long roads
Travelling the hills to end for each at his own hearth.
She leaves the silence under slowly-darkening elms,
The friendly human voices, smell of dew and dust,
And generations of men asleep in the old earth.
Between two solitudes she glides and fades,
And round us falls the darkness she invades.

Waters empty and outcast, O barren waters!
What have your wastes to do
With the earth-treader, the earth-tiller; this frail
Body of man; the sower, whom the green shoot
 gladdens;
Hewer of trees; the builder, who houses him from
 the bleak winds,
And whom awaits at last long peace beneath the grass
In soil his fathers knew?
What shall he hope for from your careless desolation,
Lion-indolence, or cold roar of your risen wrath?
What sows he in your furrows, or what fruit gathers
But hazard, loss, and his own hard courage? . . .
Yon sail goes like a spirit seeking you.

I heard a trumpet from beyond the moon,
Piercing ice-blue gulfs of air,
Cry down the secret waters of the world,
Under the far sea-streams, to summon there
The foundered ships, the splendid ships, the lost ships.

In their ribb'd ruin and age-long sleep they heard,
Where each had found her shadowy burial-bed,
Clutched in blind reef, shoal-choked or shingle-
bound;

Heard from betraying isles and capes of dread
In corners of all oceans, where the light
Gropes faltering over their spilt merchandize:
And shapes at last were stirred
On glimmerless abysses' oozy floors
Known to the dark fins only and drowned eyes;—
Sunk out of memory, they that glided forth
Bound from cold rivers to the tropic shores,
Or questing up the white gloom of the North,
Or shattered in the glory of old wars,
The laden ships, the gallant ships, the lost ships!

I saw them clouding up over the verge,
Ghosts that arose out of an unknown grave,
Strange to the buoyant seas that young they rode
upon

And strange to the idle glitter of the wave.
Magically re-built, rigged and manned,
They stole in their slow beauty toward the land.
Mariners, O mariners!

I heard a voice cry; Home, come home!
Here is the rain-fresh earth; leaf-changing seasons;
here

Spring the flowers; and here, older than memory,
peace

Tastes on the air sweet as honey in the honey-comb.
Smells not the hearth-smoke better than spices of
India?

Are not children's kisses dearer than ivory and pearls?
And sleep in the hill kinder than nameless water
And the cold, wandering foam?

Dear are the names of home, I heard a far voice
answer,

Pleasant the tilled valley, the flocks and farms; and
sweet

The hum in cities of men, and words of our own kin.

But we have tasted wild fruit, listened to strange
music;
And all shores of the earth are but as doors of an
inn;
We knocked at the doors, and slept; to arise at dawn
and go.
We spilt blood for gold, trafficked in costly cargoes,
But knew in the end it was not these we sailed to win;
Only a wider sea; room for the winds to blow,
And a world to wander in.

I. 3

O divine summits and O unascended solitudes!
O alone soaring over care and stain!
Who without wing shall set foot upon your pinnacles?
Or who your spaciousness of light attain?
Flames in the dawn-cold, towering incredible,
When else the earth is shadow-drowned and prone,
Veiled and unveiled by the misty-footed winds that
guard
Bright chasm and black gulf round a thunder-throne,
Realmed with a vision beyond reaches of mortality, —
Thither some splendour in the mind aspires,
Sharing the terror of your dark, tumultuous sister-
hood,
Silent in glory as of chanting choirs.
Changing and changeless, O far-illuminated Presences
In apparition from some world august,
Up from this flesh have you drawn us, as in ecstasy
That thirsts to elude this forfeiture of dust.
Even on your last heights man has set his perilous
foot,
And mid the void as on some dazzling shore
Stands in the vast air, stricken and insatiate,
Wingless, a spirit craving wings to soar.

Now at last voyaging a fabulous dominion
Surpassing all the measures of his kind,
He, a free rider of the undulating silence^

Has in himself begotten a new mind;
Made him a companion of the winds of Heaven,
•travelling

Unpaven streets of cloudy golden snows,
Piercing forlorn mist, cold though it encompass him
Like a dead mind that nothing sees or knows,
Vacant, a cavern fleecy and immaterial,
A soundless vapour that he pulses through,
Suddenly emerging, and swims into the sun again
And steers his path up toward the topless blue;—
Towers in the frosty flame-apparelled mystery
Of brain-intoxicating sharp sapphire
Round him and above him, throbbing in the midst
of it,
A daring, a defiance, a desire!

Mote in the hollow vast, drowned amid the vivid
light,

Invading far and far the virgin sky,
Charioting with beats of fire the fiery-beating heart
of man

(O heart of flesh, O force of dread!) on high!
Careless of death is he, riding in the eagle's ways
Above the peak and storm, so dear a sting
Drives him unresting to strive beyond the boundaries
Of his condition, being so brief a thing,
Being a creature perishable and passionate,
To drink the bright wine, danger, and to woo
Life on the invisible edge of airy precipices,
A lover, else to his own faith untrue,
Giving the glory of youth for flower of sacrifice
Upon the untried way that he must tread,
So that he savour the breath of life to the utter-
most,

Breath only sweet when all is hazarded.
Is it that, moving in a rapture of deliverance
From chains of time and paths of dust and stone,
Serving a spirit of swiftness irresistible,
He makes his pilgrimage, alone, alone,
Seeking a privacy of boundlessness, abandoning

A self surpassed, yet other worlds to dare?
Nay, in that element hailing his predestinate
World, and exulting to be native there?

1.4

Hymn the Finders! Hymn the bold
Trusters of Earth, those patient ones,
That listen to the subtle words
Of Silence in the streams and stones;
Ponderers of the secret-souled
Bodies quick with ignorant being;
Followers of the clues that thread
Differences and accords;
Wooers of what powers agreeing
May the hands of man bestead;
Seers who have turned aside
From the greeds that ask and ache
Blinded to all else beside,—
Letting the clear spirit take
Truth from vision open-eyed.
Breaks the bud for him that sees
In a world of promises.

Hymn the breaker of the dark,
Hymn the finder of the flame,
Troubler of the essential spark
Lurking in the withered pith
Or from stony prison freed,
Friend and fury, holy need
And fierce destroyer, hard to tame,
Risen, a God to wrestle with!
Hymn the bender of the wheel,
Mother of the shapes of speed!
Hymn the launcher of the keel
Carrying thought's arrow-aim
Beyond the sundown,—sowing seed
Of man on coasts untrod before,
To widen memory's haunted shore
And add the nearness of a name.

Far-descended old desire!
That stirred in swarming forest-ages,
Pibwled by fear whose stealthy eye
Watched from glooms, where hunger-rages
Ravened; see at last the Hand
Emerging human, stretched to try
Shapes of things with wondering pleasure,
When its strength forgets to kill;
Tempted on to understand,
Serving ways of secret will,—
Fit and fashion, poise and measure.
Hymn the hand that builds the wall
And spans the river, and arches over
Man the worshipper and lover
Song-like stone; the hand so strong
To strike, yet in whose touch is all
Life's mystery that woos from things
Their strength, as music from the strings,—
Touch of the mind that seeks behind
The world for the befriending Mind.

Hymn the openers of the gates!
Hymn the changers of the fates!
Hymn the seekers! them that saw,
Past the seeming starry roof
Of human earth, in mazy plan
Bright eternities of law;
Them that neared those orbs to man,
Unafraid, and put to proof
Divination's ancient scheme;
Stept into the timeless stream,
Star-like spirits among the stars!
Hymn the seekers! Chosen souls,
Grapnel'd in the very marrow
By a thought that night and day
Draws them whither their unknown
Mighty lover far away
Beckons them to the frore Poles
Or new meridians; like to him
Who climbed in Panama the tree,

And splendour of untravelled sea
Smote him like a glorious arrow:
Never shall he rest again
Till he sail that virgin main!
Or like him who quietly
Sitting in his Polar tent
Found so great a way to die;
Hope-forsaken, famine-spent,
Wrote his words of faith and cheer
Till the pen dropt from the hand
That wrote them.

Hymn the lost, who never
Found, but kept high heart to steer
Onward toward the mark they meant,
Sailing out of sight of land.
Wail not them, nor lost endeavour,
For they heard what tranced the ear,
Filled the exulting soul, the song
Pale and prudent mortals fear,
Song of those who, out of Time,
Sing the heights the immortals climb,
The Sirens.

II. PENUMBRA

Hearken to the hammers, endlessly hammering,
The din of wheels, the drone of wheels, the furnaces
Panting, where Man as in a demon-palace toils
To forge the giant creatures of his brain.
He has banished the spring and the innocence* of
leaves
From the blackened waste he has made; the infected
sky
Glooms with a sun aghast, and the murk of the night
Is peopled with tall names like spirits insane.

He strips himself to the heat, not of the jovial sun,
But of the scorch of furnaces; with naked breast
Sweating beneath the iron and blear glass, amid
The hammers' hammering and the wheels' roar.

Not with grapes of October trodden underfoot
Spurting juices of ripeness in runnels, his vats
Brim, but with gushes flickered-over and blinding,
Unshapcn spilth and blaze of molten ore.

With a finger he lifts the weight of mountain-sides
Poised; the metal mass he shears red-hot in a trice;
He has given to the animate iron thews of force,
A Titan's pulse, and breath of fiery draught.
Monsters mightier far than himself he creates
To swim storming seas, and to mount in miles of air,
To deride Space and the old opposition of Time:
Their speed is like strong drink that he has quaffed.

He has the tamed lightning to do his bidding, draws
Energies out of the veins of earth; he is armed
From all elements, woven as in a magic web;
He has stolen seeds of Death, wherewith to fight.
He holds fabled terrors of the ancient gods in his
hand—

In a handful of dust, earthquake and pestilence;
He exults to destroy, to obliterate, to be
Lord of the powers of the engulfing night.

Deafened with the hammers, inebriate with the sound
Of the powers he has raised out of their jealous lair,
He has fever within him, he becomes dizzy,
And craves, and knows not whither he is bound.
Shall he attain god-like felicity of ease.
Supreme articulate voice of nature's striving,
Or builds he a vast prison for himself, a slave
With iron of his own strong forging crowned?

Insatiable of ransacked worlds, and exulting
Furiously in feet-supplanting speed, the proud-eyed
Victor, he who has come so far, so far, looks forth
To achieve the eluded glory of his goal.
What solitude is this that suddenly he enters?
Voices of earth no more with anchoring kindness call.

The fevered hammers throb; but deep within he
knows
The desert he has made in his own soul.

O where is now the dew-dropt radiance of morning,
That sistered with him leafing tree and rippling stream,
When simple of heart in the sun with a free body
He accepted all the boundaries of his mind?
Full of fears he was then, shadowed with helpless need
To propitiate Powers that threatened each footstep.
Has he escaped from those old terrors, to be prey
Of fears more terrible because less blind?

11.2

Ah, did men feign you once, triumphant Sirens,
Omnipotent in your lure
On a far spice-island over legendary surges
Singing, and divine you with the famished eyes of
mariners,
Listen in a trance to your voices, but listen
In a dream secure?

Lost amid strange and hungry waters
They fabled the storm-worn sailor stung
By a vision of arms outstretched at the end of the
world,—
Eternal woman, wonderful, with a bosom
Heaved as with love, and with warm, white eyelids
Over eyes cruel and young.
From those voluptuous throats, magical throats,
As out of a coral-lipped, an ivory-coloured
Dazzling flower, tormenting sweetness floats,
Sweetness of voices, odour of strange, strange longing
Felt on the flesh like trail of perfumed hair,
In sound that stole like soft arms round the soul
Drawn thither and inescapably aware
Of nothing but the extreme ache to press
Lips on those lips, that thirst to suck the breath,
The heart's blood, into theirs, till eyes grow dull,

Till lips be lips no longer, and only a skull
Roll from your feast of death,
Osated Sirens!

But what if it be that fond perfidious Voices
With different music lure
Even us who have cast far from us the fables of old?
If the pride of our quest undo us, and they enchant
us
Simple as those lost mariners, but no longer
In dream secure?

If not with sorcery of song in a scarlet mouth
And with eyes of desire
You ensnare the easy senses and perishing flesh,
But with spiritual lure you hunger to entice us
Beyond the borders of knowledge, O evilly enamoured,
O terrible choir?
If shadowy at the end of time you wait,
Wooing subtly the while Man's spirit, tempted
On ever more extravagant quest, and bait
His blood with charm of secrecy and peril,
Ay, and waylay the longings of his mind,
Yielding by dear degrees what he exults to seize,
Until he glows to seem the unconfined
Master of earth, the world's sole will, but only
That you may taste his glory, spent and shared,
Before you press upon his lips the last
Kiss of annihilation, and he be cast
Into the void prepared.
Malignant Sirens!

11.3

"Whither, Whither?" I heard a crying
That asked of Night, and there was none replying,
"Whither, into what land of change and wrack,
Into what time out-racing thought and will,
With feet borne onward and mind beaten back

Over an earth that our lost loves has buried,
Against a dark wind blowing chill,
Whither are we driven, whither hurried?

"Lovely vales of our youth, where haunted
Peace of the ripening years, and hope that vaunted
Its strength so rooted in earth's purposes
That children's children should possess peace there!
O sunny vales, and corn, and guardian trees,
Shut off by the blind rain's down-dropping curtain,—
Vanished, as if they never were,
And doubt alone were certain!

"Heaven we feigned in a time perfecting
Our missed design, and beauty of our neglecting.
There should we live completed in an age
Wise from our loss and rich with all our spoil,
A race redeeming its lost heritage,
Not by vain fears checked, nor by vain hopes cheated.
—If that heaven fade, and futureless we toil,
And battle already defeated?

"Words of beauty, words of assuaging
Majesty saw we on high above time's raging
Inscribed as over some vast porch serene;
PARDON: the heart flowed out on tides of peace.
JUSTICE: the soiled soul hasted to be clean.
One word we feared not, dreamed not, named not
even,
THE END.—If All utterly cease;
Earth, Time, Desire, Hell, Heaven?"

Titan spirit of god-like stature;
Star-measurer, holder of deep clues of nature;
Maker, but half-aware of what he makes,
Of what the extravagant flame in him devours,
And what unshaken Vastness he awakes,—
Toiled in the terrible webs his mind invented,
And caught in flame that twists and towers,
Man strives with himself tormented.

Born for ever to move, the Dancer
Of dark Creation's dream, its destined answer,—
Joy were those limbs created to express!
Now like one darkly stumbling, while his brain
Puzzles each motion with too anxious stress,
Under the glory of stars that move unhalting
He burns with the old need onward still to strain,
Mis-timed, way-lost, defaulting.

11.4

Hearken to the eternal lovers rejoicing!
A sunrise in their hearts, a music in their veins,
Their bodies make sweet singing to one another;
They bathe in beams from one another's eyes.
They rejoice to belong to the Eternal Delight
Upon whose universe of buoyance they are launched,
That questions not of its way nor of its haven
But is both way and haven where it hies.

They marvel to be born in a new element,
To meet like streams as they go chiming to the sea,
To move like flames that touch and tremble; and
marvelling
They look back on the voided shell they quit.
Dawn within dawn, light within light, unfolds for
them
The secret of the world, that flowing overflows
The sun and the moon and the farthest of the stars,
And it abounds in them, and they in it.

Beautiful are their fears as the shy-footed fawns
Safe only in wildness from the old hunter, Time,
To be assured in shadow of the heart's solitude,
Where joy finds joy that never Time records.
They have made virgin words of that soiled alphabet
Wherewith have been written histories of sorrow,
Labour and long defeat, and proud and vain conquest;
And all their lore is those sufficing words.

Magnificent they match the music of a name
Against abhorred Silence and terrors of the abyss,
The trust of a smile against all-ignoring Night,
And one low voice against Oblivion's greed.
Difference drew them to the enamoured wrestle,
Chosen, inevitable dear antagonists;
They cry one to the other; "Alone I was not I,"
"O lovely danger!" and "O my angel need!"

"Because thy sweetness is so troubling and so sharp,
Full of blood-thrilling strangeness, unexplored peril,
Never to be possessed, always to be desired,
Thou unknown world, I will dare all for thee."
"Though in a moment thou hast made me to forget
All that I was and had, triumphing I hold thee;
To thy darkness of strength I give and commit me;
Here is thy world, O sail upon my sea!"

As the East that quickens and flushes to the height
Answering the ardour of the West, and as a rose
Quivers on the western cloud before the dayspring,
Divided as the East and West they are:
But upon ways invisible to mortal sense
Moves their bright union, where was created new
Love's wondrous world; from the darkness it emerges;
It is their Evening and their Morning Star.

Out of the hollows of unpenetrated Night
From afar calls to them, though they have known it
not,
A voice that is theirs, yet is not theirs, a new voice
Never yet heard, yet older than all things;
Laughter of a child's voice, sweeter than any sound
On the earth or in the air, voice of eternal joy,
Victorious over the bowed wisdom of mortals,
A well beyond the world, that springs and sings.

III. THE UNDISCOVERED WORLD

O in a living stream to bathe
That runs its course from spring to sea!
And O to cast this aching mesh
Of iron bands that starkly swathe
Limbs that labour, neck to knee!
To feel the wind upon the flesh,
Wind that was before man was,
Blowing out of blue divine;
Feel the feet on morning grass
Lightly firm, and body bare
Over-showered with beams so fine
As cleanse the very heart of care!
Sages, had you found but this
For the mind, so it could use
What the body knows of bliss
When all thought it loves to lose
Merely poising in the sun.
Sure of powers a-spring within it
Rippling out to leap and run,—
Like for memory's waiting ear
Silence, ere the music win it:—
When unreasoned joy alone
Brims the body, itself its own
Infinity unquestioning;
Careless, Life is O so near,
Death a legendary thing,
Breath and blood like bells that ring;—•
Sages, had you art to find
Such a glory for the mind,
Not with eyes that are too wise
But the lover's wonder-vision
Seeing far and seeing near
As within one radiant sphere
All things living, joined and whole,
Bloomed with light of Paradise;
Sages, then—but who has taught
Such an end for labouring thought,
Such a nakedness of soul;—

What but probing, doubting, and division?
Hark, on iron iron's endless clamour!
The hours, the hours, drive swifter than we strain'—
Earth changes not, but who has changed us,
As if a Fury with a shadowy hammer
Nailed the nails into the fiery brain?
Who has estranged us?

What dark enemy within
Makes of Earth an enemy?
Is it not he who sought of old
Secrets of her wealth to win,
Hot with greed and overbold,
Aching to possess her? he,
Searching labyrinthine veins,
Thirsted for yet rarer gains,
And through patient nights perused
Each divided element,
Curious of that pregnant dust
Which with intent hand he bruised;
Crucibled in fire the grains
That should subtly be cajoled
In the end to yield his lust
Feasts of gold—a continent
Molten into dazzling gold!
(Were not heard the Sirens then
Deriding the poor dreams of men?)
Nay, but he would scrutinize
Even Night's deep-ordered scheme,
And spell his own proud destinies
In scripture of the starry stream.
Coveting what power those skies
Might enthrone, he sought a charm
That should warp them and should woo
To his use, and by such aid
To disimperil of one harm
This brief body, would undo
A universe. And he arrayed
In a constellated robe
His heaven-projected effigy,

Because his spirit was afraid
Of its nakedness, nor dared
Terrors of the truth to probe;
Rather chose itself to ensky
In a dream. But no night bared
To him her grandeur, swerved no spheres
To the wrench of human fears.
Earth and Night to crave of lust
Yield but fruitlessness and dust;
Dust to lust, to greed a weed!
Mockers rise from those forgotten years:
"This is he, the self-dupe, still the same
Vaunter of a world of his defiling!
Claiming heavens, with only will to maim.
Who is this to own an earth's empire,
In whose blood is mud, and this aviling
Squalor of desire?"

Lo, with feet on fiery ashes
Earth's foiled master casts his eyes
Round his world-abode. Time's heir.
Freed by blood of martyrs, wise
With myriad lives of thought and care,
Into Doubt's dim future gropes,
Black with omen, lit with flashes!
Lo, beneath his heaven of hopes
Falling palaces of dream,
Proudly pillared; regions wreckt,
Peopled with stray flames that seem
Hot greeds from his burning brain
And the very earth infect.
Lo, like bodies for his fear
Shadowy shapes of force insane
Menacing in murk appear,
Primed with energy to kill,—
Engines of his intellect,
Incarnations of his will!
Those old siren-songs of air
Change into a song abhorred,
Chanting softly, Revel, Lord!

Triumph, Master! This you sought!
This your own proud hands have wrought 1
Now the lover's loathing taste
Comes on him for what he burned
So imperiously to clutch.
Where is now the bliss embraced,
Where the conquest? At a touch
All's to desolation turned.
Is it he, or Earth, betrays?
She that seemed to sting him on
To possession, once possessed,
Dispossesses him. Her breast
Stony grows, and hard her gaze.
—Yet, oh, could she again be wooed
In her own, her chosen ways,
Shall she not transform her mood,
Glorify with truth his quest,
Give, as lovers give, entire
Body to body, mind to mind,
Ay, and more than these can find,—
Spirit to spirit? Beauty of Desire,
Beauty beyond possession still is breathing,
Beauty in us defaced!
O secret spring eternal, muddied here,
Soiled and sunken, troubled into seething!
Torrent of Desire, by greed and fear
Spilled into waste!

III. 2

Be still! Wash out this dull roar from the ear
That fevers Time; be emptied the hot brain
Of clamorous, intricately-teasing toil
Let spiritual Silence brim again
The mind's well to a mirror virgin-clear;
All these invented cares smoothe and uncoil.

Contemplate Silence; the wild Silence, ere
Music or word was; waste, unshapen sound;

Crying of wind; moaning of sea; stammer of storm;
Gropings as for a being nowhere found;
Mateless desires, frustrated throbs of air,
Without home, without form.

They sought a lodge in haunted flesh, they sought
The inward tingling sense's touched accord;
To be delivered, to be born perfect
On shapes of lips, a breathed, a living word,
A flower that seeds its riches, thought from thought,
Incarnate sound, mysterious and elect.

Contemplate Silence! The unwithered womb
Of all music infinite as desire;
All words, releasing tears and bliss; all song,
That wins at last a universe for choir,
And there the enlarged spirit has full room,
There its desires and its delights belong.

All speech, all song, all music still unborn,
Waits there for its futurity of mind
To become human; yet it holds some tone
Drawn from a something vaster than mankind,
As from profounder heart-strings torn,
And yet complete in man alone;

As if behind him travailing, the whole
Dark world were seeking in this eloquent flesh
Some other self, and sighing here to be
Born afresh, born afresh;
To win a world yet undiscovered in the soul:
"O Voice," it cries, "utter; O Hands, deliver me!"

With such a dark quest in desirous eyes,
From the ancient East, as through a silent gate
In the mind's city and labyrinth of thought,
Those Magian Kings, of knowledge satiate,
Of riches satiate, and forlornly wise,
Down desert gorges brought

Gifts for the Unknown: nay, but Earth from far
In yearning sent them, her ambassadors.
Rocks opened veins of gold, trees oozed their blood-,
Spices sighed, gems burned up from cavern-floors,
The very Night had made Desire a star,
That over against them, strange and certain, stood;

And thither laden with Earth's hope and want,
Her symbol'd sighs and riches of her pain,
Down separate passes of the mountain streaming
Wound onward each amid his marvelling train,
Those sages drawn from towers of midnight haunt
By their prophetic dreaming;

And trumpet thrilled to trumpet thro' the night,
And torches told of glistening strange attire,
Where met those three kings on one errand led.
What image shaped they of the World's Desire,
What presence throned in majesty and might,
As they went musing, deep in hope and dread,

And under vast cope of the wheeling skies
Found but a naked child, a child new-born?
Wisdom resigned the crown of her enthroning;
All her impassioned question was forsworn:
In wonder she saw all things with new eyes.
Then, there were songs of joy; now, sound of a world
groaning.

111.3

Mystery of Dawn, ere yet the glory streams
Risen over earth, and pauses in that hush
When far, as from an ecstasy, clouds flush,
And hills lift up their pureness into dreams
Of light that not yet colours the cold flower,
And the earth-clasping, heaven-desiring tree
Trembles in virginal expectancy—
What breath of the unknown Power
Is this that, spirit to spirit, as with a spousal kiss

Comes seeking us, even us, through shadow and dew,—

•Seeking in this soiled flesh what undiscovered world
Beyond tears, beyond bliss, beyond wisdom, beyond
Time? what recaptured harmony of earth and
heaven?

What world made new?

A world so strange, the spirit thrills to flame,
Transfigured in a wonder of release!

A world so near, it has no other name
Than light and breath! Where lost we, then, this
peace?

Wanting what charm to cleanse

Our eyes? To see; is this the last of gifts.

That, as the scales drop, the heart so uplifts?

O world where no possession is of men's,

Where the will rages not with fever to destroy

Differing wills, or warp another life to its use,

But each lives in the light of its own joy!

In one wide vision all have share, and we in all,

Infinitely companioned with the stars, the dust,

Beasts of the field, and stones, and flowers that fall!

This body that we use seems in that air

Marvellous; secret from ourselves; a power

Without which were no speech, nor deed done any-
where,

Nor could thought range and tower,

Nor seed be sown for the unborn time to reap;

Whose natural motion was ordained to be

Beautiful as a wave out of a sea

Boundless as mind asleep;

So passionately shaped, in every part perfect,

Universes are wounded in its abasement,

Crying from stone to star;

The unimagined height, the immeasurable deep,

Hungers, abysses, heavens, millions of ghosts from far

Meet in this body born to laugh and weep.

Weep; not for the endured, ancestral ill,
Perils and plagues, that ambush all our ways,
Time's injury, and pain's deep-wandered maze;
These need not eyes to see, but only flesh to feel.
But of the eternal vision to partake,
And see what we have done, and what refused,
To what accepted blindness we grow used,
And what marred shapes of one another make,
This is to weep such tears as no flesh-throes have
cost,
Weep for our loves, our loves, that we ourselves have
slain,
The powers of loveliness that we have left forlorn.
Eyes we had and saw not, ears and we did not hear!
Ah, when the heart, full-visioned, breaks in shame
and pain,
Then is the world's hope born.

The cry of desolation turns to praise.
If falsehood first enchant the eager mind,
And if desire be cruel, being blind,
Each by its own infirmity betrays,
And some profounder, more imperious need
Drives through all smart, whatever world to lose,
The pure vision to choose,
And tho' Truth kill, there in the end be freed.
Open, open, gates of deliverance, open!
See, liberated spirits, see, victorious ones,
For testimony of us from homes of glory shine,
Vindicators of this brief flesh, they mingle us,—
Soiled and despoiled,—with beauty and with felicity,
And sting us from afar with the Divine.

Hands of men stretched out in so dark a craving!
Baffled heart, clouded vision; filled with ache
To know you have maimed the world you sought to
make
Your instrument and minister, enslaving
Powers of earth and air—Hands that have wrought
So glorious things, the thoughts of joy to house!

Heart that has pulsed so ardent for its vow's
Accomplishment,—O heart so hardly taught!
,O stretched-out hands! of you Eternity has need.
Give but your sacred passion and your shaping art,
The hunger of Eternity is there,—
Barren else, barren: chaos and a wilderness
Of feud and everlasting greed devouring greed,
The unshapen dream's despair!

Spirit of Man, dear spirit, sore oppress
With self-estrangement, and mis-cnoosing will,
And all satiety of gainful skill,—
Possession that was never yet possessed,—
You that have been so great a lover, giving
In innocency all for sacrifice;
Whom neither Time nor earth's regions suffice—
You too are sought, where still your dream is living.
Over the secret oceans of uncharted mind
Who knows what voyagers, what sails invisibly
Press on, for all the lost, the foundered hopes untrue?
Who knows, through ignorant mists and storm upon
that sea
What Lover, what unweariable Adventurer,
Makes still his quest of you?

O world that is within us, yet must still
Out of the eternal mystery be wooed
Ere it be ours and, breathing in the blood,
Live in its beauty, as the miracle
Of the divine colour of flowers in night
Was not, and is not of themselves alone
Nor of the dawn-beam, but of both made one,—
A marriage-mystery of earth and light!
O undiscovered world that all about us lies
When spirit to Spirit surrenders, and like young Love
sees
Heaven with human eyes!
World of radiant morning! Joy's untravelled region!
Why lies it solitary? and O why tarry we?
Why daily wander out from Paradise?

111.4

World-besieging Storm, from horizon heaped and,
menacing

Rear up the walls of thunder, till they tower
Shattering over earth, and from heart to heart re-
verberate,

Lancing that bright fear through the ruin-shower!
Revel, Winds, severing the bough of leafy promises
With rages from returning chaos sent!

Mockers and Destroyers, come; here is Man, pre-
destinate

To all your arrows at his bosom bent.

Strip him of his splendours, of his conquests and
dominions,

His secure boast to be earth's lord enthroned,
Humble him: he stands forth greater in his nakedness
Than in the wealth and safety that he owned.

He that has so loved peril in all experience,

He that has gone with Sorrow all her way,

Will not now refuse or shrink; prove him to the
innermost,

With worse than worst confront him: come what
may,

Lo, you awake, O Trumpets of Calamity,

Some fragment of old Darkness in his breast;

Lo, to him fraternal is the stony and the terrible
place:

His stricken Genius out of deeps unguessed

Rises up, grappling his reality to reality,

And still the secret in himself explores,

Bound beyond fear, the discovered and discoverer,

And in his own soul touches farthest shores.

Though he be stript of all, Powers from far replenish
him,

Powers of the streaming worlds that through him
stream.

O throbbing heart, O lifted arms, O tenderness,

O only capable of grief supreme!

O earth for ever mingled with unearthliness

Because the eternal with the brief is twined!
Wonder of breath that is momentary and tremulous
Suffices him who breathes eternal mind.
Vision that dawns beyond knowledge shall deliver
him
From all that flattered, threatened, foiled, betrayed.
Lo, having nothing, he is free of all the universe,
And where light is, he enters unafraid.

THE IDOLS

AN ODE

Luce intellettuale, piena d' amore

PRELUDE

Lo, the spirit of a pulsing star within a stone
Born of earth, sprung from night!
Prisoned with the profound fires of the light
That lives like all the tongues of eloquence
Locked in a speech unknown!
The crystal, cold and hard as innocence,
Immures the flame; and yet as if it knew
Raptures or pangs it could not but betray,
As if the light could feel changes of blood and breath
And all-but-human quiverings of the sense,
Throbs of a sudden rose, a frosty blue,
Shoot thrilling in its ray,
Like the far longings of the intellect
Restless in clouding clay.

Who has confined the Light? Who has held it a slave,
Sold and bought, bought and sold?
Who has made of it a mystery to be doled,
Or trophy, to awe with legendary fire,
Where regal banners wave?
And still into the dark it sends Desire.
In the heart's darkness it sows cruelties.
The bright jewel becomes a beacon to the vile,

A lodestar to corruption, envy's own:
Soiled with blood, fought for, clutched at; this
world's prize,
Captive Authority. Oh, the star is stone
To all that outward sight,
Yet still, like truth that none has ever used,
Lives lost in its own light.

Troubled I fly. O let me wander again at will
(Far from cries, far from these
Hard blindnesses and frozen certainties!)
Where life proceeds in vastness unaware
And stirs profound and still:
Where leafing thoughts at shy touch of the air
Tremble, and gleams come seeking to be mine,
Or dart, like suddenly remembered youth,
Like the ache of love, a light, lost, found, and lost
again.
Surely in the dusk some messenger was there!
But, haunted in the heart, I thirst, I pine.—
Oh, how can truth be truth
Except I taste it close and sweet and sharp
As an apple to the tooth?

1.1

On a starr'd, a still mid-night
Lost I halted, lost I gazed about.
Great shapes of trees branched black into the sky:
There was no way but wandered into doubt;
There was no light
In the uncertain desert of dim air
But such as told me of all that was not I,—
Of powers absorbed, intent, and active without sound,
That rooted in their unimagined might,
Over me there ignoring towered and spread.
Homeless in my humanity, and drowned
In a dark world, I listened, all aware;
And that world drew me.
The shadowy crossing of the boughs above my head

Enmeshed me as with undecipherable spells:
The silence laid invisible hands upon my heart,
And the Night knew me.

She put not forth her full power, well I knew:
She only toyed
With reason, used to sunshine flatteries,
The praise of happy senses, trusted true,
And smile of stable Earth's affirming ease.
Yet even in this her ante-room I felt,
Near me, that void
Without foundation, roof, or bound, or end,
Where the eyes fast from their food, the heavenly
light,
The untallied senses falter, being denied,
The mind into itself is pressed, is penned,
Even memoried glories of experience melt
Into one mapless, eyeless, elemental Night.
It was so near
That like a swimmer toiled in a full-streaming tide
Drawing him unawares down the unsounded seas,
My soul sank into fear.

O for one far beam of the absenting sun!
O for a voice to assure me, and to release
Out of this clutching silence! There is none:
Shadow on shadow, and stillness on stillness
Enclose me, and fasten round.
Is this a world which Day never has known?
A world made only of doubt and dream and dread?
Is this the interior Night of the dark human soul,
And the immaterial blackness branching from the
ground
A fearful forest that itself has sown
Against the stars to tower,—
Stars that dispense their faint uncertain dole
Of light, that darkness may the more abound?
Whither am I come? Where have my wandered feet
Brought me on circling steps, led by what furtive
power?

Alas! in this dumb gloom wherein my spirit gropes
Only myself I meet.

Only myself; but in what strange image
Encountered and phantasmally surprised!
This thing of stealth that rises from the shrouds of
sleep,

I know it, I with shuddering guess presage
An enemy,—the native of the night
That in me was disguised.

Hollow-echoing caverns where blind rivers creep
With soundless motion; ice-cold, sudden breath
Of climbing cloud, at whose abstracting touch
The upholding rock seems baseless as the mist;
Black silence in the eagle's captive stare
Empty of all but the baulked lust of death,
Could not oppress so much.

Even that which in the dark brain says "I am"
Desperate in its faltering to persist,
Flickers like an expiring lamp's last leap of flame
To leave me I know not where.

Let not the beautiful world perish and cease!
My heart cries, freezing in its secret cells.
Let me not be extinguished in the abyss,
Losing the blessed touch and taste of things,
Earth's heaven of hues and smells!
I am so far from worlds where any fountain springs,
Sunken into this placeless dungeon-dream,
That holds me without wall, or roof, or door.
The light is only legend: I begin
To give away my being like a stream
Wandering among unshapen shapes, that spin
A world of unintelligible dread;
And this world seeks me for its own!
All's dissolved, nothing has meaning more.
Each moment heaps an age of time above my head.
It is the very Mind of Darkness I am in,
Lost, and alone, alone!

1.2

The Forests of the Night awaken blind in heat
'Of black stupor; and stirring in its deep retreat,
I hear the heart of Darkness slowly beat and beat.

As if Earth, shrouded dense in gloom,
Shuddered in her guilty womb;
As if a power from under earth
Would bring some monstrous spirit to birth;
As if a spirit ran pursued
And sobbing through the shadowy wood;
Ghostly throbs of sound begin
To circle from the distance in,
A phantom beating, dulled, remote,
With madness in its fever-note.

I know not what about me or what above me
oppresses
The suffocating air; but fear within me guesses
A peopling of the caverned glooms, miasma-cold
recesses.

Leaves depending still, still,
Bronzed to blackness, spill
Dead light from a sinking moon,
Wholly to be sunken soon,
Wandering down a desert coast
At the horizon's end, a lost
Eternal exile from the Day,
Whence she stole a perished ray
That falls from off those fingered fronds,
Black as vipers, cold as bronze.

O is it from my heart or from the darkness round,
The far reverberation, the dull throb of sound,
A pulse, a fearful pulse, in air or underground?

Closer, quicker, through the heat
Drones, insists, the incessant beat.

Round in shuddering circle comes
Beat on frenzied beat of drums,
Nearer in from every side
Thudding, madly multiplied,
To seize the heart and blind the brain
With a monotone insane.
Terrible, terrible in continuance,
It holds me fastened in a trance.

O for a spirit that is not mine, to bear
This weight of the unfathomable night!
O for a spirit of more than mortal might
To take upon him this my load
Of infinitely wide world-quivering fear!
O for a Demon or a God
In saving presence to appear!

What is it that my eyes amid the gloom divine
There in the furtive filterings of the ghastr moon-
shine?

What bodies sway and cry and to the ground incline?

The fear that held me falls apart,
But leaves a horror in my heart.
Stony, stony, of blank stone,
Fixt on that secret altar-throne,
Inhuman human Shape, with hands on knees,
With remote stare that nothing, nothing sees,
Yet is a magnet to a thousand eyes,
A thousand forms that crouch, scenting the scent of
blood,
Beat breasts and writhe before you with ejected
cries,—
Unbrothered beast, abominable God!
Who made you, and shaped you into more than
breath
Can give a will to? What power drove the hand
With terror strong as lust, to shape you there
Immovable as Death,
And carve the rock of darkness in the mind
To horrible resemblance of my kind?

Lost Light, sunken Light!
From what I am, save me!
,The fever-beat of sound is in my veins.
I breathe the black, blood-smelling air.
The ecstasy of fear, the blind throb in the breast,
I share it, I must share.
It is not I, I cry;
Yet it is I.
These are the powers that crave me;
This is the full dominion of the Night.

The victims, ah, the victims shriek and die:
And on them the eternal Idol stares.
But they have made him incense of their prayers,
Voluptuously have knelt before their own
Black terror, bodied into stone.
Not the expiring cry
So lacerates my mind, while without end
Through ages up the altar-fumes ascend,
And fading into shadow, from their bodies rent,
Stream spirits without number to conceive,—
But this, O victims, this, that you consent,
That you believe!

They were all human. My heart falters: how
That infinite bond refuse?
Like last reverberations of a bell
That in their ebb and last expiry tell
Of stupefying clamour, when it heaved
And shook its tower to the foundation,—now
Whispers out of the dark accuse, accuse:
I have consented, I have believed.

I. 3

There is singing of brooks in the shadow, and high in
a stainless
Solitude of the East
Ineffable colour ascends like a spirit awaking:
Slowly Earth is released.

It is dawn, it is dawn, the light is budding and
breaking.

Earth is released, flowing out from the void of the
darkness
Into body and bloom;
Flowing out from the nameless immensity, night,
where she waited
Myriad forms to resume,
Gloriously moulded, as if in her freshness created.

The lineaments of the hills, serene in their order,
Arise, and the trees
With their motionless fountains of foliage, perfect in
slumber;
And by lovely degrees
The blades of the grass re-appear, minute without
number.

The rounded rock glistens and warms, where the
water slips by it,
Familiar of old.
The tree stretches up to the air its intimate branches
Bathing in gold;
And the dew-dazzle colours in fire the lichen it
blanches.

Each is seen in its beauty of difference, deeply com-
panioned,
Leaf, root, and the stone,
And drawn by the light from their dream in earth's
prison, emerging
Distinct in their own
Form, from the formless a million natures are urging.

I see them, I know them, I name them, I share in
their being;
I am not betrayed:
I feel in my fibre the touch of a spirit that knows me;

For this was I made;
In a world of delight and of wonder my senses enclose
me.

Whence come they, the water-brooks? Out of the
mountainous darkness,
Where no life is seen,
From caverns of night are they come, but because
of their springing
Meadows laugh to be green;
And hearing the voice of their carol, the children
go singing.

The children go singing, they read in the books of
the Light
Things hidden from the sage.
Unschool'd are their bodies, that run like a ripple
and fear not
Coming of grief and age:
The sighs of the night, the doubt in the shadow, they
hear not.

Lo, single mid grasses a flower upspringing before
me
In delicate poise
Takes the light like a kiss from an innocent mouth,
as it quivers
Confiding its joys
To the air, and my heart from its prison of self it
delivers.

I stand in the dew and the radiance, my shadow
behind me,
Lost out of thought.
The bright beams ascend, and ascending, from earth
they uncover
The secret they sought.
Enter me; make me afresh, O Light, my lover!

I. 4

Why are these beams so twined with sweetness **and**,
with pain,
Injury and anger, fear, and all desire,
Whose purity should stream through pulse and brain
Not thickened in dull fume or frayed with fire
But absolute and whole
Into the central soul
Disclouded from those lures and all their train,
Knowing what is and is not; white and bare
As the bathed body quit of day's disguise?
But the only truth is coloured with the secret stain
Of our mortality, that unaware
Infects the farthest vision of the eyes
And region of invisible thought: Vain, vain
That throbbing search! The Light
Is more profound, more secret than the Night.

Who has built an airy mansion for the unresting mind
To inhabit and rejoicing contemplate,—
A many-pillared universe, designed
In order clear, complete and intricate,
Intelligible wonder, not
Too vast to hold man's lot,—
But he has waked on some malignant morn to find
The certainty, too certain to be true,
Distasted' and that palace only a maze
Wherein he wanders and is still confined.
The pillars of it fallen, and no clue,
But through the ruin penetrates a blaze
Of glory beyond glory and of light behind
The light: and the strength fails in him; he knows
Himself lost in a world that overflows.

Yet no power stills the ache or stops the springing
need.
The dark creative spiritual Desire
Seizes upon his heart which holds that seed
And straightway, till the last of breath expire,

Like tool upon the wheel
Sharpened the more to feel,
He counts all else waste,—honour, wealth, a weed:
The burden of the beauty is too great,
The eternal mystery in the heart a wound,
Until his vision in the end be freed,
Until he has spent his all to incarnate
An airy spirit upon earthly ground,—
Forms for a God to dwell in and exceed
This fading flesh. Alas! from godlike shapes
Some yet diviner essence still escapes.

O that the form which once kindled to ecstasy
The rapt gazer, and freed him, should become
A cold thing to appraise with leisure's eye,
A beauty disinherited and dumb!
Whither is the spirit flown
From the forsaken stone
That seemed our sunken selves to deify?
O that the thought, the word, which into the heart
leapt
Pregnant with light and troubling even to tears,
Should fade and wither, should grow old and dry,
By repetition dulled upon the ears
Like cheapened courtesies the lips accept,
And falsehood, custom cares not to deny;
A scumm'd and stirless pool, a frozen rut,
A path deserted, a door shut.

But that the life should be less living than the dead,
This is the worst; that perfect form and word
Should perish of perfection, yet be fed
With incense still, and duteously adored;
A name prostrate the throng
The presence moved among
Unrecognized; neglected and forsaken bled!
Time's treachery sleeks and glozes to our use
The bright eternal bareness: dearer grows
To mortals what is mortal, comforted
Mid alteration rather to keep truce

With the ancestral darkness than oppose
Too arduous scrutiny: by dreams we are led
Content: to pleasure us, our truth decays.
The God departs, the Idol stays.

11.i

I have heard voices under the early stars
Where, among hills, the cold roads glimmer white,—
Voices of shadows passing, each to the other,
Clear in the airy stillness
Call their familiar greeting and Good-night.

Were they not come as guests to a remembered room,
Those words, surrounded by the befriending silence?
But words, ah, words—who can tell what they are
made of,
Or how inscrutably shaped to colour and bloom?
Sharp odours they breathe, and bitter and sweet and
strong,
Born from exultation, endurance, and desire;
Flying from mind to mind, to bud a thought again,
Spring, and in endless birth their wizard power
prolong.

There was a voice on a sun-shafted stair
That sang; I heard it singing:
The very trees seemed listening to their roots
Out in the sunshine, and like drops in light
The words rained on the grasses greenly springing.

Ah, lovely living words, what have we done to you?
Each infant thought a soul exulting to be born
Into a body, a breath breathed from the lips, a
word
Dancing, tingling, pulsing, a body fresh as dew!
Once in the bonds of use manacled and confined
How have we made you labour, thinned from beauty
and strength,

Dulled with our dullness, starved to the apathy of a
serf,
Outcast in streets, abandoned foundlings of the mind!

Yet once, in stillness of night's stillest hour,
Words from the page I read
Rose like a spirit to embrace my spirit.
Their radiant secret shook me: earth was new;
And I throbbed, like one wakened from the dead.

O swift words, words like flames, proud as a victor's
eye,
Words armed and terrible, storming the heart, send-
ing
Waves of love, and fear, and accusation over
Peoples,—kindling, changing! Alas, but can you die,
Hardened to wither round the thought wherein you
grew?
Become as the blind leading with slow shuffle the
blind,
Heavy like senseless stones the savage kneels before?
O shamed, O victim words, what have we done to
you?

II. 2

The Presses are awake. Under the midnight cloud,
Mid labyrinthine silence of the spectral streets,
Sound upon darkness beats,
A pulse, quivering aloud
Insanely, as if a fever throbbed in stone,
As if a demon plied in palpitating gloom
The hurry of his loom
To weave that tissue, white for an instant, then
Populated with words, shadows of thought and act,
Death, birth, fear, madness, joy, disaster, packed
Headlong into a medley, a monotone
Indifferently echoing alike
Laughter and the moan of men!

In the avaricious gloom a secret Ear
Sucks with a whirlpool greed out of the skies
Words, voiceless words, drawn in from far and near,
Bubble-blown rumour, whisperings like spies,
The knife-stab in the night, the fall of thrones,
Alarm of nations like a beating bell,
Jubilant feat, and misery grey,
Caught from all corners of the air pell-mell
In a voice that no man owns,
That a multitude of brazen masks shall shout
To the multitudes of Day.

The few stars, solitary in heights of night
Thieved by the cloud, shine and are dimmed again,
Though none puts out their light.
So solitary in the heart is pain,
Solitary the Dream,
Solitary the Vow, solitary the Deed!
There is no room for these
In that invisible cloud, woven of things that seem,
Sure of accepting softness and the greed
That it shall cling to and make cheaply wise,—
An all-uniting web of lies and of half-lies
And lying silences.

Into my ear, remote, remote, is blown
Out of the darkness and across the seas
Sound of a forest falling, young bodies of trees
One by one falling prone,
To be tamed to a helpless tissue, and to feed
The insatiate Presses' need.
Oh, did they spring to scent the blue silence of air
And sway slow to the wind, launching the light-
winged birds?
Ghosts only are there,
The ghosts of trees that shoot no fresh leaf any
more
But, drones of darkness, in the midnight bear
Black myriads of words.

Invisibly the night thickens with words that glide
Driven thronging on blind errands, soon to fall
Into a million minds, and glorified
To be their momentary oracle,
Glitter, and then—they are like the innumerable
 snow
Chance-timed, indifferent, random, swift and slow
That falls to a stillness out of whirling flurry;
And workers heavy-eyed
That under the chill cloud of morning hurry,
Muffled against the shiver in the blood,
Soil it at every stride,
Till each articulate crystal whiteness is confused,
And where the moment's wonder shone is mud,
Trodden, stale, and used.

113

Hewn and heavy, of granite hewn
Heavy and hard, the walls ascend
Bare, without measure to the eye:
Indifferent to night or noon,
Over pavement they impend.
Locked, impassive, huge, the Door
Stands caverned in the midst: on high,
Ruled and squared, the lintel stone
Bears the carved Janitor,
Justice, blind upon her throne.
Her no praying hands implore:
To her bound eyes no eyes plead.
Reason's idol, calm she sits,
Weighing only the gross deed,
Scrupulous with mind unsoiled
Not to know the thoughts that bleed
In the dumb soul, fluttering, beating
Hither, thither in its cage
Of ancestral ignorance toiled,
Rushing blinded into rage
And its own desire defeating.

Behind the door, within the wall
Locked, they sit, the numbered ones,
Secret from each other, all
Lost to name, like spectres passed
From the region of the sun's
Changeful glory on young limbs
Free to dance and free to leap.
From the acted thought they fast:
Them a roof of silence dims.
The midnight stars move over them;
They move not; but ruled times they keep
With the shadows on the floor.
They are mortised in a scheme,
Where the walls and fastened door,
Built of words that are become
Stones, are like their spirits dumb.

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In ripened rustle of the corn
The wind becomes a flowing flame;
As swift it curves and slow relents
The body of a wave is born.
It passes—whither? No one knows;
But in the vision that consents
It is the beauty it became.
The wind blows and the spirit blows,
No moment ever yet the same,
And fresher than a sparkling spring
The unrepeatd beauty flows;
And in the child that claps his hands
To see the daisy on the green,
And in the young man where he stands
Poised for the naked plunge; and in
The invisible bursting of the bud,
The leafing of the bough, that sends
Lightness like laughter through the blood
Of dancing girls, its wave is seen;
It flows and sings and never ends!
And flowers, trembling heavenly hues
In a lonely mountain place,

And chiming water's liquid curve,
The torrent's white, rock-ruffled race
Fr[^]eed for splendour of its swerve,
And clouds that steal the solemn blues
Of noon, unregioned in their trace,
Or, ghostly travellers, invade
The mountains they dissolve in dream;
And mazes of the stars that fade
At dawn, still moving, lost in light;—
All, all the threads of music bind
Together in the visioned mind:
Eternity has imaged them.

O lovely is their secret Law
Timing all their motions true.
They know it not, yet they obey
Without thought and without awe,
Of that fountain unaware
Which they spring from and renew,
Finding out their missioned way,
Everywhere, oh, everywhere!
It is wild as a wild rose
And fearful as the weltering wave.
It is courage to the brave,
Wisdom to the eye that knows.
But we have bound it as with cords,
We have built it into stone,
All its motions frozen stark
Round a hidden human moan.
We have made it old and dark
Out of maiming thought and fears,
And the things our fears forbid,
Out of self-hurt and of rue.
We have built it into words,
And the words are stones! We did
What we could not help but do,—
We, the eternal Prisoners.

Break the word and free the thought!
Break the thought and free the thing!

But who in any net has caught
The wind, or in a sieve the spring?
As soon shall he dissever these,
Through which the life-blood single streams
From germ unknown to fruit unguessed,
Nourished with wonder and with dreams,
In its deep essence unpossessed
And smiling out of mysteries.
The flower is in the bud, the bud
Within the seed, beneath the ground.
But all is flowing of one flood
That is not seen, that is not bound.

This palace-prison of the mind
How in the youthful morn it glows!
Its windows flarne with angel-light,
Auroral flushes of the rose,
And all the airs of heaven invite
With miracle of breathing blue
And shifting glory of sun and showers
To ecstasy and song,—and who
Remembers how therein confined
In sunken cells are captive powers,
Powers that a jailer fetters close
With chains of the invisible hours,
To one another hardly known
In furtive glimpse, and each alone?
O marvel of the world, O bright
And luminous palace, built to hold
The light of heaven within its walls
Precious with glory as of gold,
Why comes the night, why comes the night,
When, as about it the sky falls
Filled with the dark, it seems to stand
A dark tower in a lonely land!

11.4

In the wonder of dreams on a wave of the sky buoyed
My body was the body of a wish, the word of a
thought

Uttered whole from a throb of the heart in a cry's
delight.

Never bird out of Africa beating a golden void,
Shifting the coloured regions that Spring has caught,
Pursued the desire of its being in flight
Happier: Time an idle ruin gleamed
Where vision flamed or flowered or streamed.

Slow, slow the mind gropes back to curb and term
Of this strange world; to Time that's used, and all
The enclosing, age-descended ritual,
The invisible garment, cobweb-fine and firm,
Wherein the limbs move to the ancestral call,
And hands repeat what dead hands did before,
And the mind lingers as behind a door.
The hinted glory of liberty is fled,
And in its stead
Is only the shadow of Man's ancient nurse,
Dear Custom, at whose knees he learnt the ways
Of his uncounted tribe, schooled to rehearse
Cruelty and folly, and, ere he comprehend,
Make these his virtue, so to earn her praise.

Massive as mountain to his childish gaze
Is that unmoved authority of power,
His fibre trembles to offend.
And slow as the Earth is in her seasons, she
Befriends and punishes like sun and shower;
Well-used to tears and the heart-broken hour,
Smoulder of mutiny and anger, tamed in the end,
Indulgent of a laughter brief as those,
For all come back at night-fall to her knee,
When the old shadows descend.
With mutter upon her lips, with eyes half blind,
Buried mysteries she knows.
With dark fountains of ignorance in her mind,
How wise she seems, amassed in ancient certitudes!
Her silences, how comfortably kind!
The human slowly grows
Inhuman, where she broods.

And if a solitary spirit would wrest
His wrongs away from what so closely cleaves,
And break into the world that he believes,
Betrayers from within, crying Traitor! seek
To pull him back, securely weak,
In passiveness: he sucked it from her breast.

O away and away and afar from this alien home,
Where spirits are woven together in words of fear,
Released into innocence let me have being and
breath!

But is it alone by mercy of dreams that I roam,
Liberated to joy's essential sphere,
In an antechamber of birth or beyond death?
All flushes around me and then dissolves away.
The heavenly dawning closes gray.

II. 5

Once, only once, never again, never,
The idle curve my hand traces in air,
The first flush on the cloud, lost in the morning's
height,
Meeting of the eyes and tremble of delight,
Before the heart is aware
Gone! to return, never again, never!

Futurity flows toward me, all things come
Smooth-flowing, and ere this pulse beat they are
bound

In fixity that no repenting power can free;
They are with Egypt and with Nineveh,
Cold as a grave in the ground;
And still, undated, all things toward me come.

Why is all strange? Why do I not grow used?
The ripple upon the stream that nothing stays,
The bough above, in glory of warm light waving
slow,
Trouble me, enchant me, as with the stream I flow

Lost into the endless days.
Why is all strange? Why do I not grow used?

Eternity! Where heard I that still word?
Like one that, moving through a foreign street,
Has felt upon him bent from far some earnest look,
Yet sees not whence, and feigns that he mistook,
I marvel at my own heart-beat.
Eternity! how learnt I that far word?

111i

Not for pity and pardon, for Judgment now I cry!
To be seen, that I may see; known, that I may know,
For this I cry.
Dwelling among dear images dream-created,
Flattered or daunted by a deluding mirror
That is not I,—
O to taste the light as my body tastes the air,
Let fall defence, cast off the obstinately excusing
Pleas, and myself be my only vindication!
Nothing but this in the end can satisfy.

Why does this desire pursue me and so possess me?
Is not breath sweet, and the young smile of the
morning?
Yet inly to know
That I am bound in a net of minutes and of hours,
Inheriting bondages of habit, and fear,
And ancient woe;
To be rooted so deep in lost ages of time,
With tendrils of hope and want and frail repining,
The ignorant accomplice of purposes abhorred:
This thought is my companion and my foe,

Sometimes to fly to some remoteness of the air
To perceive with different senses, a new body,
I pine and ache;
As on this bed of self, whereon I am bound, I toss

Day and night, filled with ineffectual longing
That bond to break.

O yet, enslaved, I know not to what I am enslaved:
Only this husk and shard of what I am, this fond
Dreamer of dreams, eater and drinker of untruth,
This only I know, and this cannot forsake.

Wondrous glories crowd into the eye's treasure-
chamber,

Wondrous harmonies linger in the ear's recesses,
Stored for delight.

But beyond the ear's compass what modulations fine
Tremble, and what marvels unapprehended sparkle
Beyond the sight!

Oh, and beyond the mind's capacity of conceiving,
Much less of measuring, amplitudes of wisdom,
Fit to sustain eternal serenity and courage,
While we go clouded, faltering, finite!

Were I stationed in the sun, to behold the worlds
Not nightly in declension but in dance triumphant
And timeless rolled;

Had I the vision, closed to the eye's horizon,
Labyrinths of an unimagined minuteness
In the mind to hold;

Could I attain the greatest and assume the least,
Shrink to be a blade of the innumerable grass.
Soar eagle-winged amid the altitudes of noontide,
Then might I measure, and what I am behold.

But rained over with riches of hours and moments,
Meshing me as a lily, thick with honeyed light,
The drunken bee;

Intoxicated with wild sweetnesses of sense,
Fullness of the opened heart, glory of earth, and
beauty

Enamouring me,—

Roofed in a den I am, a poor captive rather
Who sits in fetters eyeing the barred, the precious
blue,

Where *high* in the envied air a cloud lingers in light
And wings fly whither they desire to be.

Lying in the night I hear from graves unnumbered,
Under stars that have seen all history passing,
The indignant cry:

Must we only in effigy and phantom be remembered,
Malignly obscured or mocked with gilded pretences,
Wherefrom we fly?

Will none unwind these cerements? none lift up from
us

This load of false praise and false fortune's betrayal?
Let us be known in nakedness of our nature!
Deliver us from dominion of the lie!

As if they wandered in deserts and groped in caves,
I hear the exclaiming of disenchanted spirits
In bitter lament

Beholding the barren things for which they wasted
The world, the pitiable causes whereon their breath
And blood were spent!

Was this the Light, this little candle at noon? This
loathed

Cruelty, the righteousness for which they thirsted,
Sacrificing to invisible idols of the mind?

They see. But who hears? This world is content.

Perfect Experience! Is not the mind worthy
This, when for glimpses only and shining fragments
The martyrs bled?

Majesty and splendour of overcoming vision,
Vision all-judging, certain and universal,
Not this I dread,

But to remain banished into a parcelled being,
Eternized in all these faculties of error!

Better a perfect oblivion in Earth's vastness,
By that eternal ignorance comforted.

Yet does my heart not cease from its supplication,
Yet I remember and cannot be satisfied,

By Time oppressed.
And, as if summoned and drawn whither I know not,
Clinging into earth with strong fibres of nature,
In dark unrest
I burn like a seed that in burial forgotten
Pushes its hope up, growing in blind affiance
Toward the light shining over an unconceived world,
There to be lost, illumined and released.

III. 2

In my dream there was a Door.
Dark on my musing path it stood
Before me, and straightway I knew
(The certainty ran through my blood)
That, did I open and pass through,
I should know all for evermore.
Those slow hinges, and that weight
Relenting on them, would unroll
The hidden map of all my fate
And all the world and the world's soul.

Who has trembled not at doors?
Motionless, they shake the heart.
Hope and menace on them hang:
They are the closed lips' counterpart
Wherein the sentence is concealed
For leaping joy or lancing pang.
Ah, what answer will they yield?
Will it be barren as the shores
That endless waves beat, like a knell
Slowly repeated to Time's end?
Or will it be the ineffable
Still radiance that shall all amend,
Melting out Time's ancient stain?
Will they open on sunrise
Everlasting, or will they
Close upon the light again,
Like eyelids closing over eyes
That see for the last time the day?

Is it not by such ancient dread
Inspired,—the warning doubt of what
Our prospering spirits has full-fed
With certainties by hope begot—
That on his progress proud we raise
For the returning conqueror
The arch, the immaterial door,
So he may pass, amid the blaze
And loud acclaim at glory's height,
Beneath a shadow of the night.
Where the hinted powers take toll
Of what is mortal in the soul?

O Door, like sealed fatal decree,
Image of death, image of birth,
Ever uncertain certainty!
O silence as of silent earth,
O silence into substance built,
O night projected into day,
O still unspoken Yea or Nay,
O brimming vessel still unspilt,
O end that meets us on the way!
What lies behind your blank accost?
Is it the treasure we have lost
And laboured wearily to recover?
Or something that we never knew,—
Another mind with other measures
Laughing to scorn our pangs and pleasures?
Is it at last the only true,
The unknown Love, the unknown Lover?

With all my soul at earnest gaze
Fixed upon that silent Door,
I stretched my hand the latch to raise,
I lifted up my hand, and then
Some power forbade me, and I forbore.

In the changes of my dream
I was borne to a far place

Empty and wide, and all a-gleam
With sunlit quivering of the grass.
There rose before me, vast and blind,
A towered prison, walled and old;
It seemed a prison-house so great
It could have held all human-kind.
In the midst there was a gate.
And as I dreamed my dream, behold
I saw the prisoners released.
The gates rolled back; and forth they came
Stumbling in the light that smote
Full on them from the dazzling East.
Like knives it stabbed them; like a flame
It seared them; with their hands they hid
Their faces, or as if by rote
Stretched out vain arms, to touch and feel
Familiar walls closing around;
Then, lacking fetters, halted lame
Waiting to do what they were bid.
Their helpless motions made as though
They would run back, or fall, or kneel
Or hide themselves beneath the ground.
This way and that they looked to go.
O never may I see again
Such looks of blank and empty pain!
They were looks of men betrayed
And of their naked souls afraid.
But some there were, a few, that stood
And stretched their arms up to the sun,
As if the light streamed through their bloody
As if their breath was now begun;
As if their spirits till then had slept,
As if they never yet had known
The world of life that was their own.
These it was, not those, who wept.
Was it for pity of all that sad
Throng, or the extreme joy they had?
O that on earth I could have sight
Of those faces, and that light!

I am laid within a place of summer leaves.
 Solid boles mount through foliage out of sight.
 No shadow lacks some intimacy of light,
 No penetrating radiance but receives
 Shadowy immersion. Dream
 Is on me, is on the hushed, the thronged and drowsing
 glow.
 Even the thoughts emerging from the mind,
 Like voices in a sleeping city, seem
 Reproved. This is old Earth, so old and kind,
 That she is lenient in her overflow
 To all things human. Why, why tease the sense
 For a hope to a fear unmated?
 Why rend the rich seam of experience?
 Why toss upon thoughts frustrated?

Each way appears a closing avenue,
 Leading, among warm scents, I know not where.
 But Whither is to the idle mind no care,
 For always there is fragrance of some clue
 Neglected, that might guide
 As in a trance the veiled soul to its unknown peace:
 Peace such as comes like lips laid upon lips,
 A brimmed oblivion of all else beside;
 Like anchorage to tempest-blinded ships
 When the thwart waves resign, and the winds cease.
 Earth with warm arms embrace me, and let me
 feel,
 Feel only, a wonder working,
 Until the tender and still sense reveal
 The secrets round me lurking.

Now might you come back, old divinities,
 Earth-born, from cradling green and lost recess,
 Serene in your unclouded nakedness,
 To enrich the mirror of my musing eyes.
 As fruit on the rough bough
 Globes itself, the last golden glory of the tree,

Smooth from wild earth the human image rose;
And what diviner shape should hear the vow ' '
Of mortals, or what else their secret knows,
Though past the ache of our mortality?
Shall I not sacrifice unrest and fume
On an altar here secluded?
Let the vext mind re-open like a bloom
Upon which the light has brooded?

Delay me from the sight that only sees!—
Frost of a dawn disclosing the world bare.
And, stript of splendour, all things as they are,
When stiffened grasses and stark branches freeze
And the mind shrinks apart
With all the living colours famished out of it.
O kindly mediation, interpose
Images of those forms that hold the heart,
Warm, wondrous forms whereinto the world flows
To bloom and to perfect them: O admit
Certitude to obscurity awhile,
As cloud in the light suspended.
Gracious is Earth; not far her secret smile:
And here is the soul befriended.

Only such sorrow as lingered in the gaze
Of Proserpine, returning from the dark,
Such tears as filled her, listening to the lark
And looking on the flower that springs and sways,—
All humanized for her
As even the shadows were, when she was throned in
 night;
No more than these, to enhance the glowing day
Shall enter where the green leaves are astir!
Shall I not be sufficed, and charm away
Perplexities to soft and shadowy flight?
Shall I not now—O whence is this breath come
Of Time in a stealing chillness?
Why cries my heart out? Why are all things dumb,
And strange, strange the stillness?

111.4

Whisper to me, whisper! I have listened and have
not heard.

Whisper to me, you leaves; have you not more to say?

Now at the ebb of the low evening ray

Whisper some word left over from the day.

The one word, the lost word!—

So I cried; and then was stilled.

For suddenly, unsought, unwilling,

I knew not how, I knew not whence,

There came a lightening of the sense;

I found an answer from within,

That made me to the stars akin ;

My pulse obeyed the lovely Law;

With ears I heard, with eyes I saw;

And one leaf, veined with green, indwelling light

Seemed the world's secret and absorbed me quite.

Eternity through a moment

Sparkled; I could not turn away my sight.

What thing, long contemplated, alters not

Its seeming substance, as the deepening mind

By contemplation passes out of thought,

Immenser worlds to find?

The Mother as she clasps her infant boy,

Bent over him with the deep looks of joy,

Becomes her own hope; oh, she stays

Not with the idol of her gaze,

But she is gone beyond her farthest prayer

And Time's last injury, to meet him there.

All that distracts him from her bosom now,—

White butterflies, a waving bough—

Presages the usurping world: she grows

To something more than fear and hope forebode,

Wide as the sky. He goes

Out of her heart's possession;

Yet in her arms he lies, that stranger and that God.

Free on its wings the mind can hover, worlds away,

To where the vast Atlantic stream

Dwindles to a watery gleam,
And like a star in bright noonday
The body's home is lost.
The mind can tell me that these mossed
Gray boulders in green shadow deep,
Appearing sunk and socketed in sleep,
Beneath their image of repose
Are all a dizzy motion whirled,
A streaming dust our sight so gross
Confuses to a solid world.
Never mortal eye has seen
Those minim motes, no thought can lodge between,
So restless in their secret fever
They dance invisibly for ever.
Alone the soul has knowledge of release;
Only in the soul is stillness,
Poised to receive a universe in peace.

Only in the soul is stillness! I remember an hour,—
It was the May-month and wild throats were singing
From bough to bough that breathed in bud and
 flower,
And the full grass was springing
Beneath an old gray tower—
I remember those blue, scented airs,
And how I came at unawares
Beside the daisied border of a mead
Upon a pool so magically clear,
It made each coloured pebble and furry weed
And star-grained sand within its depth appear
Like things of Paradise, unearthly bright;—
No surface seemed to intervene
Fairy floor and eye between,
Save for a traceless quivering of the light,
Gentle as breathing sleep, where stole
Up from its pregnant darkness
The living spring, as private as the soul.

Love from its inward well, a secret wonder, arising
Clear as the trembling water-spring,

A spirit that knows not anything,
Simple in the world and nought despising,
•Changes all it meets,—the stone
Becomes a gem, the weed a rose;
But oh, within itself it grows
By all it touches, all it makes its own.
Vast and multitudinous, a Power
To act, to iindle and to dower
In pain's and fear's despite
With glory of unending light.
O fountain in my heart, I feel you now
Full and resistless, so I nothing scorn.
How could I lose you, how
Ever for an hour forget you?
This is the world whereinto I was born.

Why did I tread long roads, seeking, seeking in vain?
Why did I make lament of the dark night?
Why crouch with images of old affright?
Eternal Moment, hold me again, again,
Bathe me in wells of light!
It is now and it is here
The something beyond all things dear,
The miracle that has no name!
When I am not, then I am:
Having nothing, I have all.
It was my hands that built my prison-wall,
It was my thought that did my thought confine,
It was my heart refrained my heart from love.
Now I am stilled as in a gaze divine,
Now I flow upward from my secret well,
Now I behold what spirit I am of.
The Body is the Word; nothing divides
This blood and breath from thought ineffable.
Hold me, Eternal Moment!
The Idols fade: the God abides.

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