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THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS  
AND OTHER POEMS



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THE  
HOUSE OF THE TITANS  
AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
A. E.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1934

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
BY R. & R CLARK, LIMITED, EDINBURGH

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## TO OSBORN BERGIN

DEAR Osborn, not only because you are my  
friend,

But that you are one of those who learned  
An ancient speech for us, who rediscovered  
Myths, once the scriptures of the northern  
world,

I bring this poem, half dream, half vision,  
to you.

I know, incredulous scholar, you will lift  
Ironic eyebrows as you read the tale.

But being poet yourself you will forgive  
Unto the poet things unpardonable

Done by a scholar. Yet I would defend

My telling of the tale. These myths were  
born

Out of the spirit of man and drew their  
meaning

From that unplumbed profundity. I think

In after ages they will speak to us

With deeper voices and meanings. In one  
age

Men turn to the world about them and forget

Their old descent from heaven. In another  
They storm the heavens with supplication.

Some

Have found the glittering gates to open. I  
Beat many times upon the gates, but was not  
Like those who kept them mightily apart  
Until they entered. Yet from fleeting voices  
And visionary lights a meaning came  
That made my myth contemporary. And  
those

Who read may find titans and king within  
Themselves. And, if they ponder further,  
they may,

Not in my story, but on the shining heights  
Of their own spirit, hear those lordlier voices,  
The ageless shepherds of the starry flocks,  
They whose majestic meditation is  
The music of being; unto those who hear it  
Sweeter than bells upon a darkening plain  
When the dim fleeces move unto the fold.

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

THE day was dead, and in the titans' hall  
The darkness gathered like some monstrous  
    beast

Prowling from pillar unto pillar: yet  
The brazen dais and the golden throne  
Made a fierce twilight flickering with stars  
Far in the depths. And there the sky-born  
    king,

Nuada, now king of earth, sat motionless,  
A fading radiance round his regal brows,  
The sceptre of his waning rule unused,  
His heart darkened, because the god within,  
Slumbering or unremembering, was mute,  
And no more holy fires were litten there.  
Still as the king, and pale and beautiful,  
A slender shape of ivory and gold,  
One white hand on the throne, beside him  
    stood

Armid, the wise child of the healing god.  
The king sat bowed: but she with solemn eyes  
Questioned the gloom where vast and lum-  
    bering shades,

## 4 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

A titan brood, the first-born of the earth,  
Cried with harsh voices and made an uproar  
there

In the king's dun oblivious of the king.  
While Armid gazed upon them came a pain  
That stirred the spirit stillness of her eyes,  
And darkened them with grief. Then came  
her words:

"Tell me our story, god-descended king,  
For we have dwindled down, and from our-  
selves

Have passed away, and have forgotten all."  
And at her calling "God-descended king"  
His head sank lower as if the glorious words  
Had crowned his brow with a too burning  
flame

Or mocked him with vain praise. He  
answered not,

For memory to the sky-born king was but  
The mocking shadow of past magnificence,  
Of starry dynasties slow-fading out,  
The sorrow that bound him to the lord of  
light

He was, ere he had sunken in red clay  
His deity. The immortal phantom had not  
yet

Revealed to him the gentler face it wears,  
The tender shadow of long-vanquished pain  
And brightening wisdom, unto him who nears  
The Land of Promise, who, in the eve of  
time,

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 5

Can look upon his image at the dawn  
And falter not. And as King Nuada sat  
With closed eyes he saw the ancient heavens.  
The thrones of awe, the rainbow shining  
round

The ever-living in their ageless youth,  
And myriads of calm immortal eyes  
That vexed him when he met the wild-beast  
glare

And sullen gloom of the dark nation he ruled,  
For whom self-exiled, irrevocably  
He was outcast among the gods. And then  
The words of Armid came more thronged  
with grief:

"O, you, our star of knowledge, unto you  
We look for light, to you alone. All these  
Fall in that ancient anarchy again  
When sorrowing you put the sceptre by.  
Would not your sorrow shared melt in our  
love?

Or our confederate grief might grow to  
power,  
And shake the gods or demons who decreed  
This darkness for us? Or if the tale forbade  
All hope, there is a sorrowful delight  
In coming to the very end of all,  
The pain which is the utmost life can bear,  
Where dread is done, and only what we know  
Must be endured, and there is peace in pain.  
I would know all, O god-descended king!"  
That tribe of monstrous and misshapen folk

## 6 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Whose clamour overlaid her speech, and  
made  
Its music a low murmur, had grown still  
Far down the hall. And at the close her  
words  
Came clear and purely, mingling with a voice  
And harp that hushed the titans. Ah, that  
voice  
That made the giants' ponderous bulk to  
faint  
And bent the shaggy heads low on great  
hands,  
While over the dark crouching figures  
towered  
Angus the Young, the well-beloved god,  
With proud-tossed golden hair that glittered  
o'er  
The beautiful bare arms that caught the harp,  
And the bright form went swaying as he  
played.  
And there were scarlet birds, a phantom  
throng  
That dashed against the strings, and fled  
away  
In misty flame amid the brooding crowd,  
And vanished; while the coloured dusk grew  
warm  
To the imagination, and was dense  
With dark heart-melting eyes, alluring lips,  
With milk-white bosoms, and with glimmer-  
ing arms

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 7

That drew the soul unto their folding love.  
And the tormented giants groaned and lay  
Prone on the hall, or stretched out hairy arms  
With knotted fingers feeling for the feet  
Of him who played. But the enchanter  
laughed.

The pride of the brute-tamer in his eyes,  
And looked at Armid. She had hidden her  
face

To shut the vision, for he seemed no more  
Before her, but a fleshless creature stalked  
With bony fingers clutching at the strings,  
And all the giant nation lust-consumed  
Were dwindling out. "Is there no hope/<sup>1</sup>  
she cried,

"For them, for us; or must we still forget,  
And have not even memory we were gods,  
And these drop to that lightless anarchy  
From which they rose?" Her tears were  
falling fast,

The gods had learned to weep, the earth's  
first gift.

Her weeping roused at length that stony  
king,

Whose face from its own shadow lifted up  
Was like the white uprising of the moon.

"O, better that remembrance be no more,  
Than we whose feet are tied unto this world  
Should seek in phantasy to climb the thrones  
Where once we sat and ruled the stars, and all  
The solemn cyclic motion of these spheres.

## 8 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

And will the younger gods who took our seats  
Call to us and descend to give us place,  
Us who are feeble, who have lost our bright-  
ness.

Whom only these acknowledge; these alone  
When by our arts we change their heart's  
desires,

Masking their hideous shapes with airy forms,  
With sheeny silver, lustrous pearl, pale gold,  
Out of that glory still within us? No,  
"Twere better that all memory should die."  
"Let it not die," cried Armid, flinging up  
In fountainous motion her white hands and  
arms

That wavered, then went downward, casting  
out

Denial. "Let it not die. Let us still be  
Even in heart-torturing remembrance bound  
To what we were. For that ancestral self  
May wake from out this pitiful dream of ours  
If there should mingle with it gleam or tone  
Of its own natural majesty. I think  
That unremembered world where we were  
born

Is not far from us, yearns for us. Sometimes  
The air grows fragile and a light breaks  
through,

And the tall heaven leans down to touch our  
brows,

And our high kinsmen see us, and they are  
saying

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 9

Of us, 'Soon they will awaken, soon  
Will come to us again.' And for a moment  
We almost mix in their eternity."

Then, kneeling on the dais nigh the throne,  
She cast her arms upon the high king's knees,  
And took his hands, her drooping loveliness  
All shaken with appeal. "Tell me, I fear  
To melt into the blackness of this world,  
To know naught else and yet to hate it still,  
To lose the heavens yet not to be of earth,  
Its natural happiness not mine. O that  
Would be the blackest torture of the soul.

To forget ourselves, not to know, to hate,  
To grow at last like all we hate. To have  
No hope but that the darkness owns. I shall  
Go mad unless you speak and tell me all."

And then the high king told her all the tale,  
Which he alone remembered but in myth  
And symbol. It was so very long ago  
It might be but a dream, and thus it ran.

In the beginning was the boundless Lir  
Within whose being heaven and earth were  
lost,

And Light and Dark cradled together lay,  
And all things were at peace within the fold.  
The hunter with the hunted lay, for each  
Had found the end of battle and of hate  
Was adoration. There fierce things made  
gentle,

And timid things made bold, and small made  
great,

## 10 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Mingled together at the Feast of Age.  
And then the long night closed. The day  
    began  
And out of the immeasurable deep,  
The habitation of eternity.  
Flared the high legions of the Light and  
    Dark,  
Driving their tributary powers to build  
Ethereal realms and dim underworlds.  
And in the overworld from rarest fire  
And starry substances, the builders reared  
Murias, Gorias, Findias and Falias,  
That were like living creatures, and towered  
    and glowed  
And changed with the imagination. In  
    those  
First realms of immortal youth the gods  
Had everywhere their heart's desire. For  
    them  
Cities soared heavenward even at the thought,  
And life was beautiful as it was dreamed,  
For every thought broke into instant light  
Around the burning multitudes of heaven.  
And fluid nature, ever mirroring  
The gods within its glowing glass, was slave  
To them, and held its tyranny far off.  
And there the sorceress writhing in her mists  
Shaped her fierce powers in hateful effigies  
Of heaven and of heaven's shining hosts.  
And there her children fought blind battles.  
    There

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS n

Her stony kings held awful court. And  
there

The only ecstasy life knew was pain,  
And torture was the only sacrifice  
That could propitiate their demon gods.  
Long ages inarticulate with pain  
Passed by before their cry pierced up to  
heaven.

In that wide palace of the overworld  
Where Nuada was king, the gods sat dumb  
Between the lustrous pillars, on long lines  
Of thrones, that faded, glow by glow, to  
where

The king on high sat aureoled with light.  
And all were silent for that shining air  
That bathed them and was both light and  
sound together,

And made a magic music for the gods,  
The sweet notes trembling of themselves, had  
cried,

Not as its wont, interpreting their joy,  
But as if stricken by some frenzied hand,  
And the wild notes of woe went shrilling on  
And chilled the shuddering gods. So all sat  
mute

Frozen in starlike beauty on their thrones;  
For that they knew the lovely idleness  
Of youth in heaven was over, and ended all  
The entranced hours and foam-gay life.  
And now

## 12 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

The Realm of the Living Heart, no more  
Inviolatè, was stormed by sorrow, and they,  
Who feared no strife with elemental powers,  
Being themselves the masters of the fire,  
Must war with sorrow, a spirit thing, that  
feared

No battlement that cast forth lightnings, but  
Came cowed invisibly past watch and ward.  
And none knew till it keened within the  
heart.

When Nuada within the darkling hall  
Saw all the bowed heads of his sovereignty,  
The stricken children of the mighty Lir,  
He heard a voice within him crying, "Sorrow  
Has come upon you. Rise and war on  
sorrow."

And to his eyes the underworld cast up  
Its nameless horrors 'mid the hall of heaven,  
Dim tyrannies that aped the sway of light,  
And grotesque idols of enormous bulk  
Carved by some gnomie art that never felt  
The spirit thrill of beauty. And he saw  
The altars smoking with the victim's blood,  
Where lips were dumb through hopelessness,  
but yet

From the most inner living heart of these  
A cry went to the heart of all the world,  
And made that wild distracted melody  
That shook the gods. Then Nuada arose,  
A blazing torch of indignation, and called,  
And in his voice rang out such pity and wrath,

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 13

The proud and golden races flashed and  
leaped

Dilated unimaginally for war,  
With dragon-crests of ruby and of gold  
That flamed o'er burning faces and lit eyes,  
Till all the hall was dense with forms of fire.  
The warrior magnificence of heaven,  
That, in a many-coloured torrent, streamed  
From shining courts and from the lawns of  
light

And swayed there to and fro with brandished  
fires

Clenched in uplifted hands. They shouted  
loud,

Responding to the call of the high king.

And Nuada spake thus unto the host:

"This is the ending of the golden age,  
For that we know from ancient prophecy  
That darkness more intense than light has  
grown

To shake the strings that for the mightiest  
Alone have voice. And we must hear them  
breathe

Their melody of anguish age by age  
Until the very heavens are wrecked of joy,  
And we be crushed, as in that tyranny  
Where our dark brother Balor rules the  
gloom,

Save we can overcome that tyranny.

Though we be children of the mighty Lir,  
And though his might be in us to create,

## H THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Yet what is built is only what we dream.  
And so it comes these heavens alone are holy  
Because of things that we imagine there.  
If, by the magic of the mighty Lir,  
Cities spring heavenward even at our thought  
And Hfe is beautiful but as we dream,  
Our grief too shall discolour paradise  
And dim these glittering cities. Ye have  
heard

The Children of the Darkness cry to us.  
And we who are the Children of the Light  
Must answer in the infinite brotherhood.  
Who will go with me to that underworld  
Where Balor for an iron age hath made  
Anguish immutable? Who ventures there  
Must wear the very body of death, and feel  
The very soul of hate gnaw in his heart;  
And can but overcome them so he use  
The tender and fierce fire of spirit alone."  
Out of his wider vision spake the king  
Of that abysmal life that underlay  
The Happy Plains. But they of heaven  
heard

The tale unfearing. When the high king  
called,  
"Who will go with me, warriors of heaven?"  
A foam of glorious faces swayed to him  
Athirst for the heroic enterprise.  
And then the mightiest, rising from their  
thrones,  
Offered each one his own peculiar powers.

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 15

"To earth I give the magic of the mind,"  
Said Manannan, nighest of all to Lir.  
And Dana said, "I shall make beauty there."  
And Angus said, "My birds shall waken  
love."

Ogma, "The might of heaven is mine to give."  
Fintan, "I shall bring memory and hope."  
"And I shall be the vanishing of pain,"  
Said Diancecht. And of the immortals none  
But would lay down his sceptre, and forgo  
The sweetness of his youth on such a quest.  
After long pondering and council sought  
Where the All-Father breathed his oracles,  
Forth fared the heavenly adventurers,  
The chosen of Lir's children, passing from  
The old, perpetual, rejoicing life,  
Where in the lucid being of the gods  
The Mighty Father, shining, made each one  
A mirror of his own infinitudes.  
Then weaving forms of magic power that  
might  
Withstand the elemental energies,  
Upon the mid-world venturing, the gods  
Down the sidereal streams waned far away  
From the ancestral plains and Light of Lights.  
And lastly by aeonian journeyings  
Came unto earth, the desert verge of things,  
Where all the heavens once held within their  
hearts  
Were now without, beyond, and far away.  
And as a spider by the finest thread

## 16 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Hangs from the rafters, so the sky-born hung  
By but the frailest thread of memory from  
The habitations of eternity.

Yet still about them clung a heavenly air,  
The shadow of their ancient nobleness;  
And gods they seemed unto the titan brood,  
Sovereign hitherto on earth. And these,  
All wonderstruck before the heaven-born,  
Were prostrate, and thereafter made them  
kings,

Served them and worked their will, and built  
for them

Cyclopean duns, massy, of bronze or stone,  
The time-defying and unchangeable  
Fabric of earth. And so, because the gods  
Were folk of many arts, and all had drunk  
The Well of Knowledge, every work they  
planned

Was marvellous unto the earth-born tribes  
Suppliant of all that wisdom. For a time  
The heavenly quest seemed won, the face of  
earth

Turned to the skies. But underneath it all  
Some evil sorcery worked on the gods,  
And from them one by one dropped memory.  
So that it came they knew no light but that  
Set in the sky, the bodily form to be  
Themselves. And earth had lost its first  
Impenetrable strangeness and grew dear  
As hearth and home. And they had happi-  
ness

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 17

Moving amid its woods, rivers and hills.  
Only sometimes when gazing on the night.  
Freckled with myriad fires, they sighed and  
knew  
Not why they sighed. Or when the flam-  
ing sun  
Sank drowned in darkness it seemed a secret  
tale  
Was told of their own falling. They thought  
no more  
Of that transfiguration of titan into god  
They had imagined; and half a fable it seemed  
That story of heroic enterprise,  
And then it was forgotten utterly.  
The children of earth grew noble to their eyes,  
And they took brides from them, and through  
the gods  
The titan brood inherited the fires,  
Lights that made starry dreams of pride or  
power.  
And last the being of the gods was changed  
To be but lordlier titan, and their king  
Seemed but a madman dreaming of lost  
worlds.  
Then when the tale was told, with desperate  
eyes  
Armid gazed into the cyclopean dark,  
And to her imagination or spirit sense  
The brazen gloom was quick with livid  
shapes,  
Monstrosities of soul that in themselves

## 18 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Downward and backward prowl unto the  
brute.

And here a ghoul, ice-green, with famished  
eyes

Glared at her where a titan's head had been;  
There apes that gibbered obscenely, mon-  
strous cats

That bristled with cold lights, and snaky  
heads,

And dark implacable eyes of birds of prey  
That burned like evil fires within the gloom.

But yet more terrible unto her heart

The conflagration heaven had made on earth  
Breathing ethereal fire into red clay,

Revealing beauty invisible before,

The fairy star that glimmered o'er white  
brows,

The lights that danced upon the airy limbs,  
The bloom and shadow as of delicate flowers  
That flickered over the sweet breasts, and  
dazzled

The titans with strange graces. And, be-  
cause

The body cannot clasp the phantom glow,  
The soul wrought wantonness and unnam-  
able

Defilement upon spirit. Armid saw

The beauty of the sky-maidens violated

By the passionate imagination, and she reeled  
Sick with the horror, stretching out blind  
hands,

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 19

For it was Angus by his song had kindled  
Desire so high that the sky-maidens only  
Could satisfy the god-created lust.  
Then she groped outward for the mighty  
    gates,  
And stood there trembling like a moth. The  
    night,  
Black-framed between the pillar-posts of  
    bronze,  
Glowed like a fiery furnace of blue flame,  
With heavens that lost themselves in their  
    own depths,  
Rumouring their own infinitudes,  
Fainting and faltering in their speech, for  
    light,  
Though swiftest of all things, ere it has found  
A resting-place or hamlet in the gloom  
The worlds it spake of have long ceased to be.  
As inaccessible as those dim lights  
The heavens from which the gods had fallen  
    so far,  
From infinite to pigmy. Armid beat  
Upon her breast at her own impotence.  
Then the pure daughter of Diancecht  
Felt a fierce heat invade her, and she saw  
A titan with his red and bestial eyes  
Fixed on her beauty. The divine maid  
    shuddered  
Through all her virgin being in premonition  
Of martyrdom through long ages to be,  
Of beauty bowed to sorrow, overborne

## 20 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

By the unleashed brute in the titan heart.  
And the divine maid, maddened by her fears,  
Raced the dark lawn and onward to the  
    beach,  
When the cold waters stayed her, and she  
    paused,  
Holding her heart that fluttered like a bird  
At the long peril of the night in time.  
And then at last she sat upon a stone  
Gazing into the night, and heard the roar  
Of undistinguishable waters, until  
Upon the far horizon glowed a star,  
A star that rose where the late sun had set,  
A light dilating that came swiftly to her,  
And there were flutterings within the light  
As of celestial plumes fanning the air.  
And in the brightness there were fiery  
    creatures,  
A winged horse, and o'er the rider's brow  
A sunrise blazed. The winged courser came,  
Trampling the glittering billows, and be-  
    fore it  
The light flared on, revealing the wild surges,  
That had been before invisible, leaping up  
In shadowy shining, and, like hurrying clouds,  
Beaten by the storm of light unto the shore,  
Where the thick smoke of foam rolled on the  
    sands  
And broke, frothing with stars. Armid  
    arose  
Her head bowed unto the glory of light,

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 21

And when she lifted it the winged creature  
Had flown, but a tall warrior, its rider,  
Stood by her, a pillar of flame, his eyes so  
still

They might have watched only eternities.  
She heard a voice that seemed soundless, that  
spoke

To the spirit ear: "Tell the high king a  
champion

Out of the Land of Promise comes to him."  
And with no word the daughter of Diancecht  
As one in trance, not moved by her own  
will,

Walked to the great gateway. Unterrified  
She passed that titan who had frightened her,  
And came to the high king and told her tale.  
But he, obscured within himself, said only,  
"What mightier warrior was there in heaven  
Than Ogma? Now he leads the giants in  
war.

Tell thou that champion to fly his winged  
horse,

Swift as its frantic plumes may carry, before  
The sorcery overcome him and he forgets.<sup>1</sup>

Then Armid came again to him who stood,  
A stillness in flame, unseen by any eye  
But hers, and spoke as the high king had said.  
That voice again spoke to her spirit ear:

"I am an enchanter. Say this to the high  
king."

So Armid spake to Nuada, but he:

## 22 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

"Who had more enchantments than Dana,  
who made

The primal forms of beauty for the gods?

Now upon brute imaginings she casts

Her glamour. What need have we for  
enchanters!"

So to the heavenly wizard Armid brought

The king's denial: and he to her said, "Go

To the high king, and say a poet waits

Upon his threshold.<sup>11</sup> And at this the king

Spoke more disdainfully: "Have we not  
Angus,

The poet whose song could recreate in us

The ancientness before the worlds, where  
we,

Lost in each other's being, found a honey

Hoarded for us we could not find in time,

A song we hear no more? For now that poet

Praises beauty that is but redness of clay.

And the mad winging of his fiery birds

Kindles the torment of infinite desire

For shapes so fleeting they are hardly born

Ere they are crumbled. Say unto that poet

There are too dark shadows about us for  
song.<sup>11</sup>

Once more came Armid, as one in trance,  
unto

That heavenly poet forbidden song, who said,

"I know the story of things past. I know

The tale of things to be." And to the king

She came as bidden by the master of time

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 23

And spoke. But the king said, "Was not  
Fintan  
Historian and prophet! Now his history  
runs  
Backward to the abyss. His prophecies  
Tell only of worlds lightless and frozen,  
where we  
Shall have for cairn the glaciers over us.  
We need no prophet." And the maiden told  
Unto that seer what the high king had said.  
And he who came from out a timeless world  
Spoke to her: "I am a healer." And once  
more  
She stood before the throne. But Nuada  
cried,  
"A healer too! Have we not Diancecht!  
What need have we for another god to tend  
The blighted in mind or body, who are  
leprous  
With evil living, so that desire may be  
Fierce as before. That is no labour for  
gods."  
And then, forbidden healing, that lordly one  
Spoke unto Armid: "Go thou to the high king  
And say I am a shepherd. I have wisdom  
To guide the starry flocks." And on swift  
feet  
As if that shepherd of stars had guided her,  
She passed the reeling titans and stood before  
The throne, and spoke even as the shepherd  
said.

## 24 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

But Nuada answered: "Had not the Son of  
Lir  
All wisdom! Through him those who had  
only  
Blind strength have grown crafty to conspire  
Even against the gods. Say to that one  
It is easier to rule the heavens than the earth."  
And at this last denial the wise one said,  
"Ask the high king has he in that dark house  
One who is master of so many arts."  
And at this saying the high king sat upright  
As if a star had lighted the abyss  
Of memory, and it had recreated  
An ancient glory. And he cried to Armid,  
"Bring unto me that master of many arts."  
And Armid went more swiftly, wondering  
If he who had been so many times denied  
Still waited. In her imagination of him  
He was not single but innumerable,  
And all the stars and heavens were dan-  
cing in  
Her thoughts that bowed before him. But  
when she  
Passed through the gateway into the night  
that one  
Who would not be denied still waited there.  
Once more she looked into the ageless eyes,  
And spoke the high king's words, and led  
the way  
Through the great gateway to the brazen  
gloom.

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 25

While Nuada was sunken in himself  
A clamour of giant voices filled the hall,  
The fierce titans disputing, and the darkness  
Shook as at night the mountain valleys shake  
When dragon and mad colossi roar from their  
caves.

And the king woke and cried out terribly,  
Smiting the echoing gong, "*It is not fitting*  
For slaves to brawl in presence of their king.<sup>1</sup>  
And at his words the titans crouching were  
mute.

For when the high king willed they must  
obey,

His will burning like fire, and it had power  
To slay or to create. Then Armid came  
And with her came the master of many arts.  
And it may be because she had spoken with  
gods

And was raised above herself, to the sky-  
maiden

The titans, so fearful before, now seemed  
remote

As the far stars had been to her sadness.  
None

But the high king and Armid saw the god.  
The daughter of Diancecht then sat apart  
With bowed head in the shadow of the throne,  
And heard voices above her of great beings,  
And saw a circle of the shining ones  
In the dark radiance under shuttered eyes.  
She heard first the voice of the high king

## 26 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Who spoke as one who was awaking from  
sleep

Unto the heavenly visitor: "Why hast thou,  
Riding the horse of dawn, come to this place,  
To us forgotten in heaven? For it must  
Be but a legend of its dawn, the story  
Of those rebel against its joy, who thought  
To overcome the anarchs of the abyss  
And were themselves overcome. If thou  
Hast from pity come to help us, fly.

There were immortals shining as thou art,  
And now they know not who they are, or  
from

What heaven they fell. It may be that I too  
Shall grow like these who have forgotten all,  
Be darkened, nor know of any other world."  
And he who came from the ancestral light  
Said: "Thou art indeed darkened to dream  
Of these that any had been gods. Thou only  
Art real, these, but shadows of immortals.  
Since thou art darkened I will enter thee  
Giving my light to see the unfallen lights.  
Thou shalt hear voices speaking from thy  
own depths,

And know to what evocation they will answer  
And dwell with thee even in this dark house."  
And while he spoke the thick and evil gloom  
Was paling within the titans<sup>1</sup> hall, and earth  
Grew shadowy thin, then dropped away. A  
light

Dawned through the darkness like a fiery sun

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 27

Risen within the world. The crouching titans  
Gave place unto a lordlier company  
Of the star-crested Ever-Living Ones,  
With eyes of ageless ecstasy, and faces  
Holy, compassionate, inexorable,  
With voices speaking the law of their high  
being  
Unto the king. And, in an air that was  
Both music and light together, the poet of  
heaven,  
A brightness within the light, came singing  
to him  
As if his song rose from the sun of life:  
"O, see our sun is dawning for us, ever  
dawning  
With ever-youthful and exulting voices.  
Your sun is but a smoky shadow: ours  
The ruddy and eternal glow. Your fire  
Is far away, but ours within our hearts  
Is ever living, and through wood and wave  
Is ever dawning on adoring eyes.  
Do you not know me? I am the All-Father's  
voice.  
Until the twilight of the ages comes  
I sing the deathless union between all things.  
My birds from crystal-fiery plumage shed  
The Light of Lights. Their kisses wake the  
love  
That never dies and leads through death  
to me.  
I am in every love. But when they cling

## 28 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Unto the hands, the lips, the eyes, my song  
Is silent. I fly and vanish and return not  
Till the red flutterings of the heart are still.  
I live in every love, but it is lightless  
Until they know the love they seek through  
me

Is not the single but the innumerable joy:  
Until desire has made them pass away  
From their own selves for ever, and they  
cry

To the All-Father to give to them his death,  
The dark rapture where they are lost in him.  
I am known only to self-forgetfulness.  
My love shall be in thine when love is sacri-  
fice.<sup>11</sup>

And then most pitying, most inexorable,  
As from a shoreless sea of wisdom came  
The voice of unappeasable law, so still  
It seemed to waver between life and death:  
"Do not turn from me. Think on me long  
and long.

Though I am justice and implacable,  
And nothing can escape me, no least erring,  
Yet am I also mercy and forgiveness.  
The pain I give is healing and guidance. It  
draws

The marred in body and mind, the lost and  
strayed

Back unto life, and to the path that leads  
Unto their high inevitable destiny  
Of beauty and delight. In those who mourn

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 29

Their well-beloved dead I am the secret  
Sweetness they find in sorrow, coming to  
know

That all was heavenly guided. And that  
wisdom

Is absolution for their sins, and they  
Join in the cavalcade of starry minds.

Know that all wisdom bides in joy or pain.  
When the mysterious river runs in channels  
Made clear by the pure spirit, its name is

joy-  
But when the soul is thickened and dark the  
stream

Breaks through and rends till all is purified  
By the sweet water. Those who know me  
thus

Find joy in pain. They even press the spear  
For swifter absolution into the heart.

I shall be with thee when thy will, no more  
Rebel, shall know that I am justice, and cry  
'Hail unto thee! and hail! and hail for ever I'<sup>1</sup>  
Although I come to thee as death, or strike  
At love that is more even to thee than life.

Yield to me and thou art my conqueror.  
There is no other god than me to fear."

So spake the ancestral voice of Diancecht,  
And after that dread wisdom came the voice  
Of Dana, mother of all and comforter:

"I am the tender voice calling away,  
Whispering between the beatings of the  
heart,

## 30 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

And inaccessible in dewy eyes  
I dwell, and all unkissed on lovely lips.  
Lingering between white breasts inviolate,  
And fleeting ever from the passionate touch,  
I shine afar till men may not divine  
Whether it is the stars or the beloved  
They follow with rapt spirit. And I weave  
My spells at evening, folding with dim caress,  
Aerial arms and twilight-dropping hair,  
The lonely wanderer by wood or shore,  
Till, filled with some vast tenderness, he  
yields,

Feeling in dreams for the dear mother heart  
He knew ere he forsook the starry way,  
And clings there pillowed far above the  
smoke

And the dim murmur from the duns of men.  
I can enchant the rocks and trees, and fill  
The dumb brown lips of earth with mystery,  
Make them reveal or hide the god; myself  
Mother of all, but without hands to heal,  
Too vast and vague, they know me not, but  
yet

I am the heartbreak over fallen things,  
The sudden gentleness that stays the blow,  
And I am in the kiss that foemen give  
Pausing in battle, and in the tears that fall  
Over the vanquished foe. And in the highest  
Among the Danaan gods I am the last  
Council of pity in their hearts when they  
Met justice from a thousand starry thrones.

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 31

My heart shall be in thine when thine for-  
gives/

After the voice of ancient beauty had died  
The voice of Ogma, the master of the fires:  
"Though I have might to roll the stars  
through heaven.

And all the gods are suppliant of my power,  
And what they do is portion of my strength,  
I was made master by the All-Father only  
Because I was the gentlest of the gods.

And, though I make fierce war upon the  
anarchs,

My myrmidons are frail and delicate things.  
I hide within a blossom and its still beauty  
Becomes mighty as a star and none may  
touch it.

I can stay the march of armies by a child.  
When I look through its eyes the passionate  
hand

Falls, and the soul in awful penitence  
Hides in itself. And with a twilight air  
I can make anchorites of kings. I overcome  
Fierce things by gentleness. And my allies  
Against the thunder of congregated powers  
Are silences in heaven, the light in valleys,  
The smoke above the roof, the quiet hearth,  
The well-beloved things that come to be  
Images of peace in the All-Father's being.  
No sentinel can stay them, and they make  
Traitors to glory and pride. And so I gather  
Invincible armies that can invade

## 32 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

The secret places of the spirit, until  
Even the comets and mad meteors,  
The lions of the wilderness of space,  
Who roam with fiery manes, the potentates  
Of air and earth, rulers of thrones and powers,  
Melted within themselves give fealty,  
And build together till the dream of life  
Mirrors the All-Father's being, and that  
Can know itself in us as we in him.

When thou art of thine own will defenceless  
As the fragile flickering moth or trembling  
grass,

I shall be champion for thee. Thou shalt  
find

Invisible legions breathing love for thee  
Through the dark clay, or from the murmur-  
ing air,

And by the margin of the deep. And when  
Thy spirit becomes so gentle it could pass  
Into another spirit and leave no wound,  
I will give unto thee this star to lead."

Then came the voice of Fintan, the master of  
time:

"I am all knowledge, all that was or is  
Or ever shall be glows and breathes in me  
In an eternal present. Even the gods  
Departing from me are lost within them-  
selves,

And slave to the enchantment that divides  
Has-been from yet-to-come and far from  
near.

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 33

So they forget themselves and dwindle down  
From their full orbit. And they come to be  
Frail sparks that wander in the immensity  
Of their own primal being, moving ever  
Unto horizons that for ever recede.  
Yet am I always with them. I abide  
Steadfast, the still innumerable light,  
Between the vanished and the coming wave.  
And yet they know me not. Incessant voices  
In every beating of the heart will call  
Away from me. For one will cry to them,  
'O hurry, hurry to the golden age.'  
And yet another voice appeals, 'O come.  
A treasure lies in the rich wilderness.  
There is the fountain of youth.<sup>1</sup> Others will  
cry:  
'Go not.' 'Thy love is dying.' 'Thy friend  
is false.'  
'Thine enemy derides thee.' 'That tyrant  
crush.<sup>1</sup>  
'Let us be conqueror,' or 'All is lost!<sup>1</sup>  
Though they fly from me it is me they seek,  
Nor know that I am in their every breath.  
When unto these loud voices thy heart is  
blind,  
And hope and fear are dead, and thou art  
still  
Amid the battle thunder, and desire not  
Sceptre nor crown. Then I shall be with thee  
And melt for thee the heavens into one light,  
And shepherd the long aeons into one fold

## 34 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

With all dead beauty and beauty yet unborn,  
And enemies made lovers, and dread mon-  
sters

Become gentle and spirit things. Desiring  
nothing

I will give thee all." And last of these  
Immortal voices spake the Son of Lir:

"I am the shepherd of the starry flocks,  
The wisdom of the gods. And it is mine  
To plan for every spirit, even the worm  
And tiny gnat, their path through winding  
cycles

Until they glow with uncreated light  
And blaze with power. And those who sat  
on thrones

And shone like gods at dawn of the great day  
I bring to the abyss where they are dimmed,  
But not for their abasing. Those who  
know

The heavens only are but slaves of light,  
Mirrors of majesties they are not, shining  
In beauty given to them, not their own,  
Nor born from their own valour. For to be  
True gods, self-moving, they must grow to  
power

Warring in chaos with anarchs. It was I  
Who broke thy trance upon the Happy Plains,  
Revealing to thee the underworld. And yet  
It was thy will made thee heroical

And rebel to that joy. All the high gods  
Have made the sacrifice of heaven, and worn

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 35

Dark clay around their light; and in the abyss  
Have known unnumbered sorrows, and the  
joy

Of every creature, and come to myriad wisdom,

A honey harvested from many lives.

And so the primal vision is for them

Transfigured into being. For thy first

Heroical will to conquer thou must conceive

Thyself as spirit to all nature, and

All life that breathes within it to be thy own.

When thou canst beat upon its myriad gates

Crying, 'It is thyself that comes,' all gates

Will open for thee; and the love that dwells

In hate will burst its dungeon, and fly to thee

As children fly to a beloved breast.

High majesties shall be melted unto thee,

The dragons of the waste be gentle, and

The slave with thee be fearless and a king

In his own heart, and the dumb mind have

voice,

And every spirit reveal the wonder concealed

In its own depths. And when thou knowest all

Thou shalt be counsellor with the high gods

Who pass remembering through the nights

and days

Of the All-Father, and at the Feast of Age

Be with them when they plan for the new

dawn

## 36 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Glories beyond all ever known. When thou  
Shalt pray, not for thyself, but for those others,  
I will give thee the wisdom of eternity."

The master of many arts was heard no more.  
The heaven-descended voices died in deeps  
Of the king's being. The starry shining  
shapes

Through which the lords had utterance van-  
ished. But

Before the tide of darkness had returned,  
And by their mingled light of vision, he saw  
Within the titan heart, and felt its beating  
As he were one with it; and all the wonder  
And awe at the sky visitors; the beauty  
Unimaginable on earth before;

And last, desire to hold, to own, to be:  
The tumult of unappeasable desire  
For loveliness that is of spirit alone  
Eluding the titan arm, leaving to it  
Only the primal clay; the titan trust  
In strength, the error oft repeated, and  
The brute despair and the descent to hells  
Earth had not known before the spirit came.  
Until from pain and fiery penitence  
And brooding, and self-pity that came to be  
All-pitiful, slowly the titan heart  
Found in its depths the magian mind that  
can

Grow what it dreams on. And through its  
worship came  
Transfigurations, and the adoring heart

## THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS 37

Passed from itself; its ancient sorrows grown  
To be its blessings, its agonies become  
Its joys, the titan darkness to blaze with stars,  
And the high powers that only yield them-  
selves

To gentleness, awaiting its perfecting to give  
Sovereignty over all the elements.

As one who reaps the harvest of ages at once  
He saw the titan thought invade the world,  
Run through its veins, until the silence broke  
With revelation; and the earth became  
A mother speaking to her children, giving  
The wisdom of her heavenly ways; her  
dawns,

Her noons, her twilights magical with love;  
Life breathing life, no longer solitary.

Its every breathing quick with multitude:

The infinite above them with its lights

From its majestic remoteness bent

With voices and meanings from the vast, and  
earth

Casting its robe of darkness to reassume

Its ancient garment of light; and in divine

Companionship waiting the tremor that runs

Throughout the spheres when the All-Father  
calls

His children homeward; and the high  
grandees,

The very noblest in the universe,

Princes of stars, and solar kings, and rulers

Of constellations and of galaxies,

## 38 THE HOUSE OF THE TITANS

Are bowed in awe, and put aside their sceptres,  
As humble as the least of creeping things  
Before the mystery of the All-Father,  
The illimitable, whom none had ever known  
Though lost within him at the Feast of Age,  
So the high king, rapt in his vision, dreamed  
Of that great hostel at the end of time  
Where all the cycles sleep; and came at last  
To open his eyes upon the brazen gloom  
To know the labour before him, and to hear  
The titans raving madly in the hall.

## LOST TALISMAN

THOSE images of beauty  
That once I did despise,  
Now in my age I cherish  
And clutch with miser's eyes.  
Even for one frail blossom  
I will make sacrifice.

Once there were other treasures  
I had, O strange to say,  
Made dim those magic blossoms  
And I cast them away.  
I cast beauty from me  
As a god child might in play.

O what was in the being  
Of boyhood that could make  
Beauty seem but a glimmer  
That followed in the wake  
Of some proud sails set sunward  
On some enchanted lake?

## COMFORT

THE skies were dim and vast and deep  
Above the vale of rest.  
They seemed to rock the stars to sleep  
Beyond the mountain's crest.

I sought for graves I had mourned, but found  
The roads were blind. The grave,  
Even of love, heart-lost, was drowned  
Under time's brimming wave.

Huddled beneath the wheeling sky,  
Strange was my comfort there:  
That stars and stones and love and I  
Drew to one sepulchre.

## A MOUNTAIN TARN

THE pool glowed to a magic cauldron  
O'er which I bent alone.  
The sun burned fiercely on the waters,  
The setting sun :  
A madness of fire: around it  
A dark glory of stone.

O mystic fire!  
Stillness of earth and air!  
That burning silence I  
For an instant share.  
In the crystal of quiet I gaze  
And the god is there.

Within that loneliness  
What multitude!  
In the silence what ancient promise  
Again renewed!  
Then the wonder goes from the stones,  
The lake and the shadowy wood.

## WOOD WAYS

THUS did the laughing king, the magic-maker,

Draw me into the wind-glittering wood  
By an enchantment of blown boughs and  
lights,

And faint and myriad Bickerings within  
The many-pillared palace of leaves. The air,  
A flying girl, flame-limbed, before me runs  
Sprinkling the dark with jewels. Eyes are  
dizzy

With sudden colour. O, the hyacinths!  
I fall on knees watching the laughing king  
Hide stars in wild blossoms. On moss I lie,  
My eyes are shuttered but the earth is airy,  
Dense to the body, to the spirit most clear.  
O, it was so in the golden age. Men lived  
In the bright fire, in air, in earth. They knew  
Only the being of the laughing king  
And had no name for themselves. A night  
Of many million years breaks now to dawn.  
As the numbed limb quickening to life be-  
comes

Once more the body we knew, so the whole  
star  
Quickens within me. Why was the spirit  
numb  
In a little dust? I glow to the full orb.  
Upon its burnished uplands what shining  
dancers,  
With what unfallen beauty, what wild inno-  
cence  
Make visible the laughter of their king!  
By what fleet witchery of limb the inaudible  
Becomes music to the eye, joy in the heart!  
What secret lies behind the lovely light?  
What lovelier darkness, from which spirit-  
clear  
Voices call to me, "O, come home, come  
home!"

## DISTRACTION

I LAPSE from her sweet play. Although  
My heart had hardly beat  
For a dream instant, the wild child  
Stamps with imperious feet.

Wind-quickened shook the forest boughs;  
Green glitterings died and came;  
O'er her young stormy beauty broke  
Ripples of shade and flame.

I wake, my lovely child, I wake;  
I fly thy slave to be.  
Forgive, O voices from the deep,  
Yet come again to me.

## TIME SPIRITS

I DO not chide them that they fly the wood,  
Hill, river, lake, remote and endless shore,  
Nor pluck jewels of words out of the light,  
But seek their song under those cliffs of stone  
And stone-grey air that reels dizzy with mist.  
They think if they but watch their world they  
will

Be master of it, their speech recall to-day  
Unto to-morrow. They do not know that  
time

Forgets its hours, its days, its years and all  
But that which has some touch of the time-  
less on it.

We do not care to know of Plato's town  
By what light arts, what trick of life, men  
made

The colour of their days. But we remember  
One who by airy labours found a way  
From earth to heaven, and looked upon a sea,  
Shoreless, of beauty, and told of it in words  
Dipt in its shining. I have no blame that  
they

Forget the aristocracy of speech, and use  
Slang of the town, and have no age in their  
thought.

And think as children might do if their world  
Were newly born, and god or sage had never  
Dropt star or lantern into our abyss:

Or look on frailty, seeing the skimming  
dancers

With lightness of feet lighten the leaden  
heart,

Jetting gay fire into the fireless mind.

They might look upon transience all day long

Yet be in company of the gods, could they

But know the Master of the Ceremony,

Cry with Aratus, "Full of Zeus the city:

Full of Zeus the harbour; and full of Zeus

Are all the ways of men," the vision that  
makes

All lights be torches in the mystery,

All speech be part of the soliloquy,

Or endless canticle, all holy, sung

By Him who is poet both of heaven and earth.

## TWO MAGICS

HAVE they the same enchantment, these children straying  
In streets where electric moonlight and scintillating rose  
Shed blooms on the ashen air, as those other children  
Crouched in trance under hedgerows where hawthorn thickens its snows;

Or those others, who under a real moon and stars  
Move to deeper wonder in themselves, who are still,  
Who touch each other but gently, lest they break the magic  
That makes them one with it on the night-shadowy hill.

## DEFEAT

How easily defeated! A fleet grace of limb  
Swept by; dark eyes that dared him follow  
where they led:

And all the heavens had dwindled to one star  
for him,

And the great deep lay hollow, lightless,  
blind and dead.

Sadly the over-shadowing forms of might  
depart.

His eyes with longing no more search the  
mystic sea.

With one alone he lingers murmuring heart  
to heart,

"One infinite, thy love, is life enough for me."

## THE DARK LADY

O, NO, I was not wanton with that man.  
But to his imaginations, yes. I made  
Myself a hundred natures. It is writ.  
My myriad girlhood, in that printed page.  
Or was it I? Did I but play the part  
His magic plotted for me? Did he know  
That his imaginations lived in me  
And swayed me to be one of their own kind,  
To act the bawd for whom an emperor  
Might cast his world away: or it might be  
A maid to whom the world had never come.  
All-innocent upon a fairy isle?  
Yet at the court of the great queen I had  
But one disdainful face, however many  
Wild hearts might beat within me: and high  
    lords  
And admirals, who had wrecked Armadas,  
    were  
Wrecked on a flinty look. O, I remember.  
My heart swoons to think upon that hour,  
When a young learned gentleman, his head  
Dizzy with gaudy words that had caught fire

From sun and moon, importuned me to know  
The latest prince of speech. And I was  
swept,  
Half laughing and half scornful, to my fate.  
Yet I had not been one hour in the room  
Ere I was lit by many torches, and  
Knew, being in that humble lodging-house,  
That I had come unto a lordlier court  
Than the great queen's, a court where kings  
and princes  
Robeless could awe by their own majesty,  
Or, being bare to the spirit, seemed as low  
As if they had not legions at their call.  
And there were elves that frolicked in his  
thought,  
And giddy knaves whose very sins seemed  
rooted  
In a wild nature, and might win them heaven  
To make laughter for angels. I knew a man  
Who held these very knaves had much to  
teach us  
As the apostles: and we would lose less  
Missing the queen of the dawn out of the  
myths,  
Juno, with grave eyes under heavenly brows  
And proud, starred peacocks, than if his  
rascal Jack  
Had never lived in story. Not at once  
Did I know all. No man will ever know  
The mystery of his being, of multitudes  
Within one spirit. Yet I knew from the first

That they were with him, incorporeal real,  
Taking immortal bodies from sweet sounds,  
Leaping into our thought as the gay moon,  
A slippery dancer, reels from wave to wave.  
He had hardly spoken ere a spirit of his  
Had flashed within me, and I had made  
answer

Out of its nature. He turned upon me eyes  
So wonder-wise, so humorous-kind, that I  
Was melted from my art of dignity  
And became once more the laughing girl who  
ran

Under her father's elms, who knew no rank  
But life; jesting with folly; with her wit  
Pelting both lords and grooms. O, the  
sweet play,

When all the delicate spirit's aflame, and  
points

With its own fire the airy rapier, nor knows  
In that obscurity of delight the end  
That it desires, the point in the other's breast.  
For we are both half fearing and half faining  
The exquisite anguish of our pierced heart.  
So flashed our speech. The first of many  
times.

I had not more easily as a small child  
Told my heart stories than I could to him  
Tell everything in thought, as if he were  
An ampler, wiser heart-nurse to myself.  
And though I was all love I shrank from that,  
The mating of lips and body, lest having all

I should have less than love; in the king's  
bed

Be absent from his court. And when I was  
Within myself, the angels of wisdom and love  
Held passionate council in me. I was rent  
By images of love and by their martyrdoms,  
For I had buried many an image deep  
In the heart's doubt what would be noble  
to do.

And for there was that warfare in me the girl  
Was ripened to full woman. I looked back  
Upon the woman I had been before  
As she upon her childhood. I was, I think,  
The only creature that by flesh and blood  
Entered the court of his spirit: and all others  
Came through some crystal mystic gate unto  
The throne of his heart as vassals might, and  
left

Not tribute of pearl, ivory or gold  
But breathed their very spirits into him  
That he would dress as emperors and clowns,  
Play one against another. I do believe  
The mighty dead from unimagined homes  
Dreamed back their greatness and their  
frailty,

The very lion-front that awed the world,  
Shaking it by the thunder of words that fell  
From the imperious heaven of the high will.  
And how could it be other? We are not gods  
To create life, and only what is given us  
Order and rule. I know it, I, that was

A glowing mirror to him, would sometimes,  
Ere he had spoken, find living in myself  
His latest imagination, the very trick  
Of its mad mood, and hear it afterwards  
Dressed in the actor's body cry on a stage.  
If it was so with me, might he not be  
A hostel for all life? For some design,  
I know not what. Perhaps that we who play  
Upon our surfaces might pry more deep  
In our rich mystery, the way be pointed  
That life must travel. I thought it so, that he  
Was magicked by the gods for their design,  
And I was handmaid to it. O how frail  
The instruments the gods must use in us!  
There came to the queen's court their master-  
piece,  
A boy that stayed the breath, all glow and fire,  
Unflawed, so airy ivory of limb  
He might have leaped from an archangel's  
dream.  
And was it destiny that two such wonders  
Of soul and body should meet, be to each  
other  
Mystery and enchantment: beau/ty that had  
No soul but beauty itself: and the wise soul,  
Baffled in reading where there Was not mind,  
Fell into dreaming, and at last/was stayed  
On the body's miracle. And I grew sick  
Seeing the dawn of an unnatural love,  
The kind that marred the Grecian genius, and  
closed

The nobleness of mind that had begun  
With Homer's tale. I cried upon myself  
As all corrupt to so misread the eyes  
That rested on the boy, or the sweet words.  
But when I knew that I had not misread,  
O, what heart-shaking, what deep fountains  
of scorn

Or pity broke out like madness. I lay awake  
Buffeted by fierce winds from heaven and hell,  
Searching the blackness of my night for God.  
And knew not whether God or devil coun-  
selled,

Self-love, or love that crucifies itself,  
Or ftnguish of long-stemmed desire to have  
What passes from it. But I thought to stay  
That love unnatural lest his spirit's walls  
Should\thicken, and there be a solitude  
In that high court. And I used every art  
Of heart and body and gave the body to him,  
And had \no joy in giving. The holy fires  
Whereof t\he Elohim compounded us  
If they glow not to one pure breathing, but  
Are all disordered, war in us and burn us  
By hurt of beauty or love, or wisdom cries,  
A mourner in the thick of erring delight.  
And he to whom I was no mystery,  
But a dear friend, stayed not his heart on me,  
For that infinitude of his wide mind,  
Searching ever for the undiscovered heart,  
Wandered away ffrom me unto that one  
Beautiful, baleful i^nd uncharted star

## THE DAR]

Of boyhood. I knew my sacrifice was vain  
And a new madness shook me, making me  
All pitiless, with a mad woman's will  
To win her way even if soul be lost.  
And all affections in me, made bitter, changed  
In dark reverse unto their opposites.

I was as one who hears an angel sing  
To a sweet lute, then turns to her dark angel  
To sing the same song to the trembling strings,  
And pure and holy are made poisonous.  
When we are maddened, and the goblins  
in us

Riot in incredible loves and hates,  
I do not know if god or demon guides  
The storm while we are blinded. I was not  
The same although I moved to the same  
end.

For now I was all hopeless in love, yet played  
With all my woman's art upon the boy,  
Meeting him in palace chambers or  
In garden alleys. I was I know not what  
Unconquered and rich wonder to his youth  
That had won all easily before, but now  
Met but a lovely mockery when he prayed;  
And the unravished beauty was to him,  
As with that other, the sole star of the heart.  
And so I drew him, half forgetting at times  
My purpose, for he was a masterpiece  
Of heaven, and how sweet to play with, till  
My purpose and some wildness in my blood  
Conspired together. I yielded to him, became

A mistress unto two, one godlike in mind  
And one, the outer image of a god.  
And in intoxication of conquest the boy  
Wore all a victor's airs with me until  
Even rumour had no further secrets to tell.  
And then at last one day I met the other  
And he had known, and never was there face  
So ravaged, and my heart in every beat  
Let rain a drop all fiery red. There was  
I know not what wild pity in my eyes,  
And the god knows that at no other time  
Was I so lost from myself, so terribly his.  
Yet at his anguished words I wore the air  
Of one bred in the gay court of the world  
Above the ceremony by which the herd  
Order their ways, one who took carelessly  
This love or that, and knew no obligation  
But to win fuel to keep high one's fire.  
He could not read me, my heart-aching  
humour—

For I was not then in his heart that never  
Misread, but only an apparition to his eyes—  
When I likened myself to him, the myriad-  
minded  
Who gathered knaves and heroes with like  
love  
To snatch the inmost secret of them, so I,  
Seeking as rich a wisdom, must, being woman,  
Who win only by the body, search the soul  
At its full tide in the completeness of love,  
When, to the vigilant spirit, it is quick

With all it is. And I had not yet won  
Spirits enough to be a mate for him  
Learned in so many hearts. He threw at me  
A single word. I, who had masked my soul  
As the proud queen of harlots to deceive,  
Was yet angered he should be credulous,  
And all that was still virginal in me,  
And all my passion he should be deceived,  
Cried furiously in bitter and wild speech  
That spurned him. When god and devil  
through one voice  
Cry the same words they scorch with double  
fire.

And he, the mighty seer, looked for a moment  
Upon me as if spirit and sense in him  
Were sundered. With no other word he  
went.

He saw me never again. Yet I was victor  
Slaying the unnatural with the natural love.  
And I do think for all my bruised heart  
I was more happy than he. I can but guess  
From that he made the bitter Troilus speak  
Of Cressid in how many blazing fires  
His anger burned me. Still I dreamed of  
that

Rich court so many coloured once. But  
now,  
O, what dark travellers scourged to that dark  
house

Brought as unto the nether sovereignty  
Tribute of raving madness, guilt and fear,

Unto that one whose fearful artistry  
With pigments of midnight, eclipse and fire  
Could make them visible for ever. And yet  
I think that I, who had vanished from his  
eyes,

Was still within him. For he, who painted  
me

In many scarlet dyes, came ere the end  
To breathe forgiveness. I had once im-  
agined

For his delight myself to be a maid  
Bred on a fairy isle who knew not man,  
And I played for him with what innocence  
The maid would greet a lover who came to  
her.

And at the last he had fondled in his thought  
My tender fantasy, and made himself  
An enchanter with spirits at his command  
And they had loved each other. So I think  
That he had come to know himself and me.  
O, why are we not certain of our fate!

There was another dread enchanter im-  
agined

A circle in the kingdom of the dead,  
Where sinful lovers, who are blown about  
In an eternal storm, cling to each other.  
I thought that I, even on that stormy air,  
Would have eternal joy were I the one  
To whom his hands clung in the eternal  
shade.

And brooding on that poet's tale I dreamt

That I was so blown about with one  
Who held to me, but when I saw his face  
It was not the face I loved, but was the face  
Beautiful, mad, hopeless, of that boy.  
And I awoke. I had been weeping in sleep  
And all my pillow was a wetness of tears.

## EARTH SPIRIT

O DARK holy magic,  
To steal out at dawn,  
To dip face and feet in grasses  
The dew trembles on,  
Ere its might of spirit healing  
Be broken by the dawn.

O to reel drunken  
On the heady dew,  
To know again the virgin wonder  
That boyhood knew,  
While words run to music, giving voices  
To the voiceless dew.

They will make, those dawn-wandering  
Lights and airs,  
The bowed worshipping spirit  
To shine like theirs,  
They will give to thy lips an aeolian  
Music like theirs.

## THE IRON AGE DEPARTS

THEY touched each other with wondering  
hands. No sultry fire  
Stained the sweet crystal of spirit. They  
looked in each other's eyes  
But saw there only the innocence of the  
wise,  
No hiding beast. Had it flown, the dragon  
of desire?  
Oh, what heroes, what strong immortal,  
overcame  
That ancient evil? Again they were virginal,  
Light and air made music as before the Fall.  
Feet danced, hearts were airy, thoughts gay  
—gay as flame.  
They ran to each other: "Are they indeed  
over, the long,  
Unlit, black ages, crucifixions, agonies?"  
They forgave unforgivable sins. All these  
Old hates changed laughing into loves. All  
ancient wrong  
Was heavenly justice. They were drawn  
**into a fold**

## 62 THE IRON AGE DEPARTS

Where all things were in league. Even the  
stars drew nigh.  
A marvellous sweetness breathed. Was it  
from earth or sky?  
How came the heart to be melted? Was it  
the Age of Gold,  
Fabulous, unhopèd for, the sabbatical aeon  
of time,  
Returned, not to rest in. No, but to hasten  
away,  
For deeps within them called, divine dark  
deeps, where they  
Beheld the fathers of being beckoning them  
to climb  
To sit on thrones starry with the Ancestral  
Lights.  
The wars of time were ended, the gates of the  
heart unbarred.  
A vastness flooded their being, a vastness  
myriad-starred.  
The soul remembered its youth. Oh, in  
what deeps, what heights!  
Then time turned on itself, yet the vision  
seemed so true  
The heart ached to be prophet, to run through  
the streets and cry  
"It is coming!—O, it is coming! The  
Golden Age is nigh!  
See what star-glimmering citadels rise in the  
blue!

THE IRON AGE DEPARTS 63

What faces ancient with youth and wisdom  
watch from the towers.  
For us who strayed, who were lost, who rise  
again from the dead.  
For us, prodigals, the tables of heaven are  
spread;  
From earth to heaven of heavens. All that  
glory is ours!"  
And then the dragon croak of the city smote  
on my ears,  
Harsh with the screech of wheels, the rasp  
of brakes. And I  
Was again in the iron time. An unassail-  
able sky  
Above, and darkness before us for blind un-  
countable years.

## KARMA

ALL that was harsh or sweet  
To me was brought  
Through some affinity  
With soul or sense or thought.  
I complain not nor wonder.  
Just was my lot.

I ask the wise to say  
Why are we heir  
To the wonder of the sky,  
The shining there.  
What justice gave to me  
This star-enchanted air?

Is there still in us  
A heaven-descended ray  
Of that which built the palaces  
Of night and day?  
Do our first works, sun, moon, and  
stars,  
Shine on our clay?

O, how my heart leaps up!  
It can laugh. It could fly.  
Even in dream being knit  
To that majesty!  
Though long passed from our glory,  
I can sing! I could fly!

## AN IDLE REVERIE

SHE passed by, shadowing the shining waters,  
Noble and naiad-like her image, purpled  
Against the sunblaze. As she wandered on  
The old heart-sickness for beauty came upon  
me,

Because that imagination of her I had  
Might shine on heaven or earth, be inter-  
linked

With those pure, grave-eyed, immortal dawn-  
maidens

And glow unfading by them. It might be  
The light of some long night in time; that  
beauty

Bowed to such sorrow that the soul beholding  
From its transfiguring anguish must be born  
Pure flame, as if it had known for itself

Of cross, of passion and the martyr's pyre.

And as from flowers that are invisible

Fragrance is blown, so from the vanished  
image

Fancies came thick, heart-troubling, honey-  
rich.

And I had woven my own enchantment then  
And become slave to it. But remembrance  
came.

There had been nothing seen, nothing at all  
But a radiant shadow in a blur of light.

Was it all self-begotten fantasy?

O agony of uncomprehended being

That I might never know why those divine  
Dawn-maidens with so pure a lustre dwelt

For an instant within me. Or why I  
dreamed

A martyrdom of innocent heroic youth;

Why an heart-aching love. O did her spirit

Carry in secret all its history,

Its starry dynasties from heaven to earth?

Was it whispered into my spirit in passing?

Did I imagine all from my own depths?

Is there a summit of being where the spirit,

An undraped fire, flashes its fire within

All other spirits, withholding nothing? Are

Our secret exaltations, ecstasies,

The loves more intimate than earth has given,

The martyrdoms as dark as Calvary,

Are they all born in that intensity

Of innumerable, interlinked being?

Is it because there nothing is withheld

And we are made richer by dream than life,

Our deepest love is given unto beauty

We have never seen, to lips we have never

Kissed nor heard in confession of love?

O might it be that in those reveries

The moralist calls idle, there is wisdom  
More precious than their virtue distils for us!  
Our imaginations may be but flakes of fire  
That drift upon us from the burning clouds  
About a being that knows the innermost beat  
Of every heart. Was it from that exhaustless  
Secret well the soul of Shakespeare drew  
To give us creatures that are not of himself?  
O could our idleness grow to such virtue!  
Our lonely reverie break into multitude!  
How unwavering the will, how stern the heart.  
To receive unbroken all that revelation,  
The being of many risen within our own!  
I tremble, fearful at the first glowing of  
The magic-lovely, dragon-haunted air,  
Where all beauty is shadowed by its demon,  
And we are at once blessed and betrayed.  
O child, who set my thoughts flying so far,  
The ripples from thy passing feet have spread,  
Not dying away, but gathering power to cast  
Me heavenward, dizzy on their foam of light,  
To beat at blazing gates, to cry on the Inner-  
most  
To know why I am so shaken by a shadow:  
Not even a face seen, no heart-troubling eyes,  
Only some wonder I imagined dwelling  
In a radiant shadow in a blur of light.

## FIRST LOVE

WHAT treasure would we not have poured  
At the white feet, when love had power,  
If beauty that we had adored  
Were tender to us for an hour.

I pass these burning memories. I  
Run on to find a child who lay  
On the warm earth, made tender by  
A love breathed up from the dark clay.

How can I win that love again?  
All I could bring to earth it owns,  
What sacrifice must be, what pain  
To be in league with these grey stones I

## INCARNATION

THOU slender of limb; thou lightness;  
Wild grace that flies  
Over the shining sand  
Under cloud-brilliant skies:  
What beauty flies within thee,  
Sped from what skies?

Thee for an instant  
The god possesses,  
Is joy in thy fleet limbs,  
Gay feet and flying tresses.  
His lovely thought of thee the artist  
Delights in and caresses.

Thou shalt remember hereafter  
Through sorrowful years  
That wonder of all thy moments,  
And pine for through tears.  
This moment that shall be for thee  
A fountain of tears.

## INNOCENCE

How could she know, that child who thought  
So lovely pure the tale I told.  
Within what obscene pits were wrought  
The ores to make her fairy gold?

How could she know through what dire  
    strife,  
From what dark martyrdoms, there spring  
The resurrection and the life,  
The glow within the psyche's wing?

## CABARET

THE wave of life breaks there in froth,  
A golden turbulence; and there  
Proud boys, their thoughts gilded and gay,  
Dance with their women light as air.

What Thought digs wide the pit of space?  
What Will keeps the fierce stars apart?  
What Titans build the dancing floor  
For this soft indolence of heart?

While magic trifles, lips and eyes,  
Catch at me through the wandering glow,  
My heart feels moving in its deeps  
The Great Deep's tidal under-tow.

## MUSEUM

WHY sit I here communing  
With shapes of the dead mind,  
The outworn perfect beauty,  
The gods we left behind?

Though here all gods are gathered  
The wonder has not grown.  
The gods speak to us only  
From their own natural throne.

Not here, but in wild places  
Where wind and water reel  
In ecstasy, light-stricken.  
The gods may there reveal

The forms that hold the sceptre,  
Brows bright with more than gold;  
All that through lips of wonder  
The sibyls breathed of old.

## FOUNTAINS

THAT wild rose blossom  
In sunlight or moonlight,  
A fountain of its own beauty,  
From hollow to height  
Casts up its winged airy petals—  
Transfigured light.

It shapes its delicate images  
In light that all may see,  
East, west, on height, in hollow,  
Wherever eyes may be,  
The vain lovely prodigal  
Will give itself to thee.

O'er every bloom a nimbus  
Of its own beauty rayed.  
None by another's glory  
Was cast into the shade.  
It seemed the hollow of heaven  
For each alone was made.

Wonder! wonder! wonder!  
I saw in vision there  
Myriads of fairy fountains  
That cast upon the air  
Their foam of phantom blossoms.  
Upon the mystic air.

What could that light so laden  
Be but the thought of One  
That to the heaven of heavens  
Can in an instant run.  
Bearing that myriad beauty  
Wider than moon or sun 1

## THE RIVER

THERE below me on the hillside where the  
glaring lantern burned  
O what gay good-nights were shouted as the  
children homeward turned,  
Running on the mountain ridges where the  
dizzy lantern made  
Monstrous moths upon the midnight, flaring  
wings of light and shade.  
Soon the merry voices faintly died upon the  
distant ridge,  
And the giant moth had dwindled to the  
flicker of a midge,  
And its light was lost amid the village lights  
of earth and sky.  
Then a vast and silent river seemed to roll  
and pass me by.  
On its tide the gay fleet-footed boys and girls  
were borne afar  
To the port where sweep the golden galleons  
of sun and star,  
With their merchandise of monarchs, glitter-  
ing legions, tumult, flame,

And the heaven-assailing spirit and the clod  
without a fame,  
In the anchorage of silence drop and vanish.  
As I lay  
All but the desireless spirit seemed to roll and  
pass away.  
And that spirit whispered to me: Time is but  
desire: its waves  
Hurry onward on their flowing only those  
who are its slaves.  
As I lay upon the hillside, I, whom love had  
lost and fled,  
Knew I could be lost for ever and was  
strangely comforted.  
Then that high desireless spirit in the still-  
ness came more nigh,  
Breathed within me for an instant, for an  
instant it was I.  
For an instant I was nameless and unto my-  
self unknown,  
Nor knew I what looked on creation from that  
mountain seat alone.

## EROS

How grave this night are earth and air!  
The darkness hides under its fleece  
The sombre stones 'mid which I lie  
In their profundity of peace.

Above my savage couch I see,  
Dark glowing through what endless heights,  
The secret majesties of space,  
Its still innumerable lights!

More ancient than all human love,  
There lies between these things and me  
Love, that through many a birth and death,  
Shall grow as vast as that wide sea.

## TWO VOICES

### BODY SPEAKS

THE world wanders away from me.  
Beauty and love are clouds gone by.  
Heart is bereft of melody.  
This that is left: O, is it I?

Why should a gorgeous cloth be spun  
Bedecked with gem-like eye and wing.  
Emblems of soul, as robe for one  
That is, disrobed, so pale a thing?

Now all the coloured winds are gone  
Heart has not strength even to mourn.  
All's numb but eyes that stare upon  
The dust to which they shall return.

### SOUL WAKES

So, when sweet temple voices tire,  
Will some one of a baser throng  
From sleepy fingers steal the lyre  
And drone to it so vile a song.

## WHAT HOME

O, HOW I wreaked my childhood's spite  
When I first dwindled to this day,  
Thinking on my lost wonder world  
That was so very far away.

And now my heart has come to rest,  
Or the green earth has homelier grown.  
Its children creep into my heart,  
Woodland and water, hill and stone.

When I return to walk amid  
The thrones of light, O shall I dream  
Of the lost earth, a cloudy hill,  
A shadowy vale, a flickering stream!

## UNDERTONES

BENEATH those sweet contented voices  
A lovelier discontent,  
All unknown to the gay singers  
From hidden voices went.

Hardly a breath, almost inaudible,  
A tone from distant spheres,  
That wrought within me that enchantment  
And stayed my listening ears.

Was it the buried spirit in them beating  
Its love-fettered wings,  
Prisoner within the heart and weeping  
For what immortal things?

## GROWTH

IT is half an indignity and half a delight  
To know in age that I am but a child  
Kept in a nursery. And yet we must  
Be children of a king, pardoned so oft  
Our passion fits, immodesties and noise,  
Washed clean and dressed in shining raiment.

Here

In this wide palace of air my spirit glows  
With the gold and silver that it looks upon  
As if it had never paddled in the mire.  
Some majesty it must be ordered this  
Transfiguration, the drapery of light  
That I might come fitly unto the feast.  
And this deep music of being in me, how  
Could it be played upon my jangled strings  
But by a master to whom the broken heart,  
The listless will, the self-despisings, are  
But notes that in the spirit melody  
Had lost their sister notes, and sounding these  
All breathe together in one melting chord.  
O, what profundity, what gentleness  
In power, to take what's base or fearful and

To find its place in beauty. I begin  
To guess the infinite wisdom of the king,  
And to what stature we must grow to come  
To our inheritance, how airy delicate  
The fingers holding the sceptre, and how  
    deep  
Must be the vision in brows that wear the  
    crown.  
For with what calm the princes of the stars  
Carry the madness of battle on their orbs,  
And yet the multitudinous agony  
Must be theirs also. Are not the hands that  
    strike  
The stricken heart, within their sovereignty?  
I sigh to think of all the toil to be  
Ere we, who cry out at a prick of the thumb,  
Can in the inexorable cavalcade  
Ride on the power. And yet there is a joy  
In contemplating the heroic gods,  
The labour of the high, unshakable ones  
In whom the king has trust. For have we  
    not  
An infant spark of that which in the gods  
Can pierce both heaven and brothel with its  
    light  
And be seduced neither by love nor hate,  
But with the secret wisdom of their king  
Weaving the richness of the universe  
Into the least of things. So in our dark  
Are breathings from the stars: no ear but  
    there

The majesty whispers itself: there's no ex-  
alted

Thought but the king gave unto it its light.  
Dazed by excess of riches we do not know  
That we are heaped with gifts from all the  
gods,

Microcosmos unconscious of itself.

And with this wisdom childhood ends, and all  
Its songs are sung. I know a door has closed  
Behind me and I can never again with joy  
Live in that house. The arts that once were  
sweet

Would now be bitter in using. For not  
death

Which brings us back to life can take away  
Age from the spirit. When again I try  
To learn the starry alphabet of life  
All I have passed through will be emptiness,  
And only that have power which draws me to  
The circle of wisdom. O, that I might be  
A nameless vagrant without home, who yet  
Could cry to the winds "Brother" as they  
pass,

And nod back at the stars, and so adore  
The visible beauty that I may pass into  
All that I contemplate, and feel the trees  
Growing within me, men live, winds blow,  
seas roll

In the inner glory. Being so myriad I  
Might forget I had a self and let the fullness  
Be counsellor unto me, and move as those

Born of the spirit, its messengers, whose ways  
Are undecipherable as the winds,  
And come at last after long tutelage  
Nigh to the circle of wisdom, to those who  
shine  
In ageless beauty and with smokeless light.

TO ONE WHO WANTED A  
PHILOSOPHY FROM ME

You tell me of my songs you cannot fit  
Their thought together, so contrary the  
lights.

I cannot help you to the sense of it.

We rise and fall, have many days and nights,  
Make songs in both; and when we are in  
our pit

Gaze back in wonder at our own endless  
heights.

## THE SPELL

Now as I lean to whisper  
To earth the last farewells.  
The sly witch lays upon me  
The subtlest of her spells:

Beauty that was not for me.  
The love that was denied,  
Their high disdainful sweetness  
Now melted from their pride:

They run to me in vision,  
All promise in their gaze.  
All earth's heart-choking magic,  
Madness of nights and days.

"These gifts are in my treasure,  
Though fleeting be the breath;  
Here only to wild giving  
Is love made fire by death.

"This spell I put upon thee  
Must in thy being burn,  
Till from the Heavenly City  
To me thou shalt return."

## A FAREWELL

I LOOK on wood and hill and sky,  
Yet without any tears  
To the warm earth I bid good-bye  
For what unnumbered years.

So many times my spirit went  
This dark transfiguring way,  
Nor ever knew what dying meant,  
Deep night or a new day.

So many times it went and came,  
Deeper than thought it knows  
Unto what majesty of flame  
In what wide heaven it goes.

***Print*** printed in Great Britain by R. & R Clark Limited, Edinburgh. ***Edinburgh.***





