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POEMS NEW AND OLD

POEMS
NEW AND OLD

by
EDITH SITWELL

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1

TWO POEMS OF THE TIME

FOR OSBERT SITWELL

LULLABY

Though the world has slipped and gone,
Sounds my loud discordant cry
Like the steel birds' song on high:
'Still one thing is left—the Bone.'
Then out danced the Babioun.

She sat in the hollow of the sea—
A socket whence the eye's put out—
She sang to the child a lullaby
(The steel birds' nest was thereabout).

Do, do, do, do—
Thy mother's hied to the vaster race:
The Pterodactyl made its nest
And laid a steel egg in her breast—
Under the Judas-coloured sun.
She'll work no more, nor dance, nor moan,
And I am come to take her place.
Do—do.

There's nothing left but earth's low bed—
(The Pterodactyl fouls its nest);
But steel wings fan thee to thy rest,
And wingless truth and larvae lie

And eyeless hope and handless fear—
All these for thee as toys are spread.
Do—do.

Red is the bed of Poland, Spain,
And thy mother's breast, who has grown wise
In that fouled nest. If she could rise,
Give birth again,

In wolfish pelt she'd hide thy bones
To shield thee from the world's long cold,
And down on all fours shouldst thou crawl
For thus from no height canst thou fall—
Do, do.

She'd give no hands: there's naught to hold
And naught to make: there's dust to sift,
But no food for the hands to lift.
Do, do.

Heed my ragged lullaby.
Fear not living, fear not chance;
All is equal—blindness, sight,
There is no depth, there is no height:
Do, do.

The Judas-coloured sun is gone,
And with the Ape thou art alone—
Do,
Do.

Note.—The phrase 'out-dance the Babioun' occurs in an epigram by Ben Jonson.

2

SERENADE: ANY MAN TO ANY WOMAN

Dark angel who art clear and straight
As cannon shining in the air,
Your blackness doth invade my mind
And thunderous as the armoured wind
That rained on Europe is your hair;

And so I love you till I die—
(Unfaithful I, the cannon's mate):
Forgive my love of such brief span,
But fickle is the flesh of man,
And death's cold puts the passion out.

I'll woo you with a serenade—
The wolfish howls the starving made;
And lies shall be your canopy
To shield you from the freezing sky.

Yet when I clasp you in my arms—
Who are my sleep, the zero hour
That clothes, instead of flesh, my heart,—
You in my heaven have no part,
For you, my mirage broken in flower,

Can never see what dead men know!
Then die with me and be my love:
The grave shall be your shady grove
And in your pleasaunce rivers flow

(To ripen this new Paradise)
From a more universal Flood
Than Noah knew: but yours is blood.

Yet still you will imperfect be
That in my heart like death's chill grows,
—A rainbow shining in the night,
Born of my tears . . . your lips, the bright
Summer-old folly of the rose.

3

THREE EXTRACTS FROM 'GOLD COAST CUSTOMS'

I

.

Now, a thick cloud floating
Low o'er the lake,
Millions of flies
Begin to awake,
With the animation
Of smart conversation:
From Bedlam's madness the thick gadflies
Seek for the broken statue's eyes.

Where the rickety houses
Rock and rot,
Lady Bamburgher airs
That foul plague-spot
Her romantic heart.
From the cannibal mart,
That smart Plague-cart,
Lady Bamburgher rolls where the foul news-sheet
And the shambles for souls are set in the street.

And stuck in front
Of this world-tall Worm,
Stuck in front
Of this world's confession—
Like something rolled
Before a procession,

Is the face, a flimsy wormskin thing
That someone has raked
From the low plague-pit
As a figure-head
For Corruption dead,
And a mask for the universal Worm.

.
And Lady Bamburgher's Shrunken Head,
Slum hovel, is full of the rat-eaten bones
Of a fashionable god that lived not
Ever, but still has bones to rot:
A bloodless and an unborn thing
That cannot wake, yet cannot sleep,
That makes no sound, that cannot weep,
That hears all, bears all, cannot move—
It is buried so deep
Like a shameful thing
In that plague-spot heart, Death's last dust-heap.

.

4

II

Against the Sea-wall are painted signs
'Here for a shilling a sailor dines.'
Each Rag-and-Bone
Is propped up tall
(Lest in death it fall)
Against the Sea-wall.
Their empty mouths are sewed up whole
Lest from hunger they gape and cough up their soul.
The arms of one are stretched out wide . . .
How long, since our Christ was crucified?

Rich man Judas,
Brother Cain,
The rich men are your worms that gain
The air through seething from your brain;
Judas, mouldering in your old
Coffin body, still undying
As the Worm, where you are lying
With no flesh for warmth, but gold
For flesh, for warmth, for sheet,
Now you are fleshless, too, as these
That starve and freeze,
Is your gold hard as Hell's huge polar street,
Is the universal blackness of Hell's day so cold?

.

When, creeping over
The Sailor's street
Where the houses like ratskin
Masks flap, meet
Never across the murdered bone
Of the sailor, the whining overtone
Of dawn sounds, slaves
Rise from their graves,
Where in the corpse-sheet night they lay
Forgetting the mutilating day,
Like the unborn child in its innocent sleep.
Ah Christ, the murdered light must weep—
(Christ that takest away the sin
Of the world, and the rich man's bone-dead grin)
The light must weep
Seeing that sleep
And those slaves rise up in their death-chains, part
The light from the eyes
The hands from the heart,
Since their hearts are flesh for the tall
And sprawling
Reeling appalling
Cannibal mart,
But their hands and head
Are machines to breed
Gold for the old and the greedy Dead.

I have seen the murdered God look through the eyes
Of the drunkard's smirched

Mask as he lurched
O'er the half of my heart that lies in the street
Neath the dancing fleas and the foul news-sheet.

.

Perhaps if I too lie down in the mud,
Beneath tumbrils rolling
And mad skulls galloping
For from their bunches of nerves that dance
And caper among these slums and prance,
Beneath the noise of that hell that rolls
I shall forget the shrunken souls
The eyeless mud squealing 'God is dead*,
Starved men (bags of wind), and the harlot's tread,
The heaven turned into monkey-hide
By Lady Bamburgher's dancing fleas,
Her rotting parties and death-slack ease,
And the dead men drunken
(The only tide)
Blown up and down
And tossed through the town
Over the half of my heart that lies,
Deep down, in this meaner Death with cries.

The leaves of black hippopotamus-hide
Black as the mud
Cover the blood
And the rotting world. Do we smell and see

That sick thick smoke from London burning,
Gomorrah turning
Like worms in the grave,
The Bedlam daylight's murderous roar,
Those pillars of fire the drunkard and whore,
Dirty souls boiled in cannibal cookshops to paper
To make into newspapers, flags? . . . They caper
Like gaping apes. Foul fires we see,
For Bedlam awakes to reality.
The drunken burning,
The skin drums galloping,
In their long march still parched for the sky,
The Rotten Alleys where beggars groan
And the beggar and his dog share a bone;
The rich man Cain that hides within
His lumbering palaces where Sin
Through the eyeless holes of Day peers in,
The murdered heart that all night turns
From small machine to shapeless Worm
With hate, and like Gomorrah burns—
These put the eyes of Heaven out,
These raise all Hell's throats to a shout,
These break my heart's walls toppling in,
And like a universal sea
The nations of the Dead crowd in.

.

Gomorrah's fires have washed my blood—
But the fires of God shall wash the mud
Till the skin drums rolling
The slum cries sprawling
And crawling
Are calling
'Burn thou me!'
Though Death has taken
And pig-like shaken
Rooted and tossed
The rags of me.
Yet the time will come
To the heart's dark slum
When the rich man's gold and the rich man's wheat
Will grow in the street, that the starved may eat,—
And the sea of the rich will give up its dead—
And the last blood and fire from my side will be shed.
For the fires of God go marching on.

5

EARLY SPRING

The wooden chalets of the cloud
Hang down their dull blunt ropes to shroud

Red crystal bells upon each bough
(Fruit-buds that whimper). No winds slough

Our faces, furred with cold like red
Furred buds of satyr springs, long dead!

The cold wind creaking in my blood
Seems part of it, as grain of wood;

Among the coarse goat-locks of snow
Mamzelle still drags me to and fro;

Her feet make marks like centaur hoofs
In hairy snow; her cold reproofs

Die, and her strange eyes look oblique
As the slant crystal buds that creak.

If she could think me distant, she
In the snow's goat-locks certainly

Would try to milk those teats, the buds,
Of their warm sticky milk—the cuds

Of strange long-past fruit-hairy springs—
Beginnings of first earthy things!

6

AUBADE

Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again.

Comb your cockscomb-ragged hair,
Jane, Jane, come down the stair.

Each dull blunt wooden stalactite
Of rain creaks, hardened by the light,

Sounding like an overtone
From some lonely world unknown.

But the creaking empty light
Will never harden into sight,

Will never penetrate your brain
With overtones like the blunt rain.

The light would show (if it could harden)
Eternities of kitchen garden,

Cockscomb flowers that none will pluck,
And wooden flowers that 'gin to cluck.

In the kitchen you must light
Flames as staring, red and white,

As carrots or as turnips, shining
Where the cold dawn light lies whining.

Cockscomb hair on the cold wind
Hangs limp, turns the milk's weak mind. . . .
Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again!

ON THE VANITY OF HUMAN ASPIRATIONS

'In the time of King James I, the aged Countess of Desmond met her death, at the age of a hundred and forty years, through falling from an apple-tree.'—*Chronicles of the times.*

In the cold wind, towers grind round,
Turning, turning, on the ground;

In among the plains of corn
Each tower seems a unicorn.

Beneath a sad umbrageous tree
Anne, the goose-girl, could I see—

But the umbrageous tree behind
Ne'er cast a shadow on her mind—

A goose-round breast she had, goose-brains,
And a nose longer than a crane's;

A clarinet sound, cold, forlorn,
Her harsh hair, straight as yellow corn,

And her eyes were round, inane
As the blue pebbles of the rain.

Young Anne, the goose-girl, said to me,
'There's been a sad catastrophe!

The aged Countess still could walk
At a hundred and forty years, could talk,

And every eve in the crystal cool
Would walk by the side of the clear fish-pool.

But to-day when the Countess took her walk
Beneath the apple-trees, from their stalk

The apples fell like the red-gold crown
Of those kings that the Countess had lived down,

And they fell into the crystal pool;
The grandmother fish enjoying the cool—

(Like the bright queens dyed on a playing-card
They seemed as they fanned themselves, flat and hard)—

Floated in long and chequered gowns
And darting, searched for the red-gold crowns

In the Castles drowned long ago
Where the empty years pass weedy-slow

And the water is flat as equality
That reigns over all in the heavenly

State we aspire to, where none can choose
Which is the goose-girl, which is the goose,—

But the Countess climbed up the apple-tree,
Only to see what she could see—

Because to persons of her rank
The usual standpoint is that of the bank!..'

The goose-girl smoothed down her feather-soft
Breast... 'When the Countess came aloft,

King James and his courtiers, dressed in smocks,
Rode by a-hunting the red-gold fox,

And King James, who was giving the view-halloo
Across the corn, too loudly blew,

And the next that happened was—what did I see
But the Countess falPn from the family tree!

Yet King James could only see it was naughty
To aspire to the high at a hundred and forty,

"Though if" (as he said) "she aspired to climb
To Heaven—she certainly has, this time!"

... And Anne, the goose-girl, laughed, ⁶Tee-hee,
It was a sad catastrophe!

8

GREEN GEESE FOR RICHARD JENNING

The trees were hissing like green geese . . .
The words they tried to say were these:

'When the great Queen Claude was dead
They buried her deep in the potting-shed.'

The moon smelt sweet as nutmeg-root
On the ripe peach-trees' leaves and fruit,
And her sandal-wood body leans upright,
To the gardener's fright, through the summer night.

.

The bee-wing'd warm afternoon light roves
Gilding her hair (wooden nutmegs and cloves),
And the gardener plants his seedsman's samples
Where no wild unicorn herd tramples—

In clouds like petting-sheds he pots
The budding planets in leaves cool as grots,

For the great Queen Claude when the light's gilded gaud
Sings Miserere, Gloria, Laud.

But when he passes the potting-shed,
Fawning upon him comes the dead—

Each cupboard's wooden skeleton
Is a towel-horse when the clock strikes one,

And light is high—yet with ghosts it winces
All night 'mid wrinkled tarnished quinces,

When the dark air seems soft down
Of the wandering owl brown.

They know the clock-faced sun and moon
Must wrinkle like the quinces soon

(That once in dark blue grass dew-dabbled
Lay) . . . those ghosts like turkeys gabbled

To the scullion baking the Castle bread—
'The Spirit, too, must be fed, be fed;

Without our flesh we cannot see—
Oh, give us back Stupidity!'...

But death had twisted their thin speech
It could not fit the mind's small niche—

Upon the warm blue grass outside,
They realized that they had died.

Only the light from their wooden curls roves
Like the sweet smell of nutmegs and cloves

Buried deep in the potting-shed,
Sighed those green geese, 'Now the Queen is dead'.

9

TWO KITCHEN SONGS

I

The harsh bray and hollow
Of the pot and the pan
Seems Midas defying
The great god Apollo!
The leaves' great golden crowns
Hang on the trees;
The maids in their long gowns
Hunt me through these.
Grand'am, Grand'am,
From the pan I am
Flying . . . country gentlemen
Took flying Psyche for a hen
And aimed at her; then turned a gun
On harmless chicken-me—for fun.
The beggars' dogs howl all together,
Their tails turn to a ragged feather;
Pools, like mirrors hung in garrets,
Show each face as red as a parrot's,
Whistling hair that raises ire
In cocks and hens in the kitchen fire!
Every flame shrieks cockle-doo-doo
(With their cockscombs flaring high too);
The witch's rag-rug takes its flight
Beneath the willows' watery light:

The wells of water seem a-plume—
The old witch sweeps them with her broom—
All are chasing chicken-me....
But Psyche—where, oh where, is she?

II

Grey as a guinea-fowl is the rain
Squawking down from the boughs again.
 'Anne, Anne,
 Go fill the pail,'
Said the old witch who sat on the rail.
'Though there is a hole in the bucket,
Anne, Anne,
It will fill my pocket;
The water-drops when they cross my doors
Will turn to guineas and gold moidores. . . .'
The well-water hops across the floors;
Whimpering, 'Anne' it cries, implores,
And the guinea-fowl-plumaged rain,
Squawking down from the boughs again,
Cried, 'Anne, Anne, go fill the bucket,
There is a hole in the witch's pocket—
And the water-drops like gold moidores,
Obedient girl, will surely be yours.
So, Anne, Anne,
Go fill the pail
Of the old witch who sits on the rail!'

10

SPINNING SONG

The miller's daughter
Combs her hair,
Like flocks of doves
As soft as vair . . .

Oh, how those soft flocks flutter down
Over the empty grassy town.

Like a queen in a crown
Of gold light, she
Sits 'neath the shadows'
Flickering tree—

Till the old dame went the way she came,
Playing bobcherry with a candle-flame.

Now Min the cat
With her white velvet gloves
Watches where sat
The mouse with her loves—

(Old and malicious Mrs. Grundy
Whose washing-day is from Monday to Monday.)

'Not a crumb', said Min,
'To a mouse I'll be giving,

For a mouse must spin
To earn her living.'

So poor Mrs. Mouse and her three cross Aunts
Nibble snow that rustles like gold wheat plants.

And the miller's daughter
Combs her locks,
Like running water
Those dove-soft flocks;

And her mouth is sweet as a honey-flower cold
But her heart is heavy as bags of gold.

The shadow-mice said
&We will line with down
From those doves, our bed
And our slippers and gown,

For everything comes to the shadows at last
If the spinning-wheel Time move slow or fast.'

11

KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR MAID

The five-pointed crude pink tinsel star
Laughed loudly at King Cophetua;

Across the plain that is black as mind
And limitless, it laughed unkind

To see him whitened like a clown
With the moon's flour, come in a golden crown.

The moon shone softer than a peach
Upon the round leaves in its reach;

The dark air sparkled like a sea—
The beggar maid leaned out through a tree

And sighed (that pink flower-spike full of honey),
'Oh, for Love ragged as Time, with no money!'

Then through the black night the gardener's boy
As sunburnt as hay, came whispering, 'Troy

Long ago was as sweet as the honey-chimes
In the flower-bells jangling into rhymes,

And, oh, my heart's sweet as a honey-hive
Because of a wandering maid, and I live

But to tend the pale flower-bells of the skies
That shall drop down their dew on her sleeping eyes.'

12

THE BEAR

Water-green is the flowing pollard
In Drowsytown; a smocked dullard
Sits upon the noodle
Soft and milky grass,—
Clownish-white was that fopdoodle
As he watched the brown bear pass . . .
'Who speaks of Alexander
And General Hercules,
And who speaks of Lysander?
For I am strong as these!
The housekeeper's old rug
Is shabby brown as me,
And if I wished to hug
Those heroes, they would flee—
For always when I show affection
They take the contrary direction.
I passed the barrack square
In nodding Drowsytown,—
Where four-and-twenty soldiers stare
Through slits of windows at the Bear,'
(So he told the clown.)
'Twelve were black as Night the Zambo,
(Black shades playing at dumb crambo!)
Twelve were gilded as the light,
Goggling negro eyes of fright.
There they stood and each mentero,

Striped and pointed, leaned to Zero . . .
Grumbling footsteps of the Bear
Came near . . . they did fade in air,
The window shut and they were gone:
The Brown Bear lumbered on alone.'
So he told the smocked fopdoodle,
White and flapping as the air,
Sprawling on the grass for pillow—
(Milky soft as any noodle)
'Neath the water-green willow
There in Drowsytown
Where one crumpled cottage nods—
Nodding

Nodding

Down.

13

POPULAR SONG

FOR CONSTANT LAMBERT

Lily O'Grady,
Silly and shady,
Longing to be
A lazy lady,
Walked by the cupolas, gables in the
Lake's Georgian stables,
In a fairy tale like the heat intense,
And the mist in the woods when across the fence
The children gathering strawberries
Are changed by the heat into negresses,
Though their fair hair
Shines there
Like gold-haired planets, Calliope, Io,
Pomona, Antiope, Echo, and Clio.
Then Lily O'Grady,
Silly and shady,
Sauntered along like a
Lazy lady:
Beside the waves' haycocks her gown with tucks
Was of satin the colour of shining green ducks,
And her fol-de-rol
Parasol
Was a great gold sun o'er the haycocks shining,
But she was a negress black as the shade
That time on the brightest lady laid.
Then a satyr, dog-haired as trunks of trees,

Began to flatter, began to tease,
And she ran like the nymphs with golden foot
That trampled the strawberry, buttercup root,
In the thick gold dew as bright as the mesh
Of dead Panōpe's golden flesh,
Made from the music whence were born
Memphis and Thebes in the first hot morn,
—And ran, to wake
In the lake,
Where the water-ripples seem hay to rake.
And Charlottine,
Adeline,
Round rose-bubbling Victorine,
And the other fish
Express a wish
For mastic mantles and gowns with a swish;
And bright and slight as the posies
Of buttercups and of roses,
And buds of the wild wood-lilies
They chase her, as frisky as fillies.
The red retriever-haired satyr
Can whine and tease her and flatter,
But Lily O'Grady,
Silly and shady,
In the deep shade is a lazy lady;
Now Pompey's dead, Homer's read,
Heliogabalus lost his head,
And shade is on the brightest wing,
And dust forbids the bird to sing.

14

BY THE LAKE

Across the thick and the pastel snow
Two people go. ... 'And do you remember
When last we wandered this shore?' . . . 'Ah no!
For it is cold-hearted December.'
'Dead, the leaves that like asses' ears hung on the trees
When last we wandered and squandered joy here;
Now Midas your husband will listen for these
Whispers—these tears for joy's bier.'
And as they walk, they seem tall pagodas;
And all the ropes let down from the cloud
Ring the hard cold bell-buds upon the trees—codas
Of overtones, ecstasies, grown for love's shroud.

15

THE DRUM

(THE NARRATIVE OF THE DEMON OF TEDWORTH)

In his tall senatorial
Black and manorial
House where decoy-duck
Dust doth clack—
Clatter and quack
To a shadow black,—
Said the musty Justice Mompesson
'What is that dark stark beating drum
That we hear rolling like the sea?'
'It is a beggar with a pass
Signed by you.'⁶ 'I signed not one.'
They took the ragged drum that we
Once heard rolling like the sea;
In the house of the Justice it must lie
And usher in Eternity.

• • • • •

Is it black night?
Black as Hecate howls a star
Wolfishly, and whined
The wind from very far.

In the pomp of the Mompesson house is one
Candle that lolls like the midnight sun,
Or the coral comb of a cock;... it rocks. ...

Only the goatish snow's locks
Watch the candles lit by fright
One by one through the black night.

Through the kitchen there runs a hare—
Whinnying, whines like grass, the air;
It passes; now is standing there
A lovely lady . . . see her eyes—
Black angels in a heavenly place,
Her shady locks and her dangerous grace.

'I thought I saw the wicked old witch in
The richest gallipot in the kitchen!'
A lolloping galloping candle confesses.
'Outside in the passage are wildernesses
Of darkness rustling like witches' dresses.'

Out go the candles one by one
Hearing the rolling of a drum!

What is the march we hear groan
As the hooped sound of a drum marched on
With a pang like darkness, with a clang
Blacker than an orang-outang?
'Heliogabalus is alone,—
Only his bones to play upon!'

The mocking money in the pockets
Then turned black ... now caws

The fire . . . outside, one scratched the door
As with iron claws,—

Scratching under the children's bed
And up the trembling stairs . . . 'Long dead'
Moaned the water black as crape.
Over the snow the wintry moon
Limp as henbane, or herb paris,
Spotted the bare trees; and soon

Whinnying, neighed the maned blue wind
Turning the burning milk to snow,
Whining it shied down the corridor—
Over the floor I heard it go
Where the drum rolls up the stair, nor tarries.

16

FROM 'FAÇADE'
FOR SACHEVERELL SITWELL

DARK SONG

The fire was furry as a bear
And the flames purr. . . .
The brown bear rambles in his chain*
Captive to cruel men
Through the dark and hairy wood . . .
The maid sighed, 'All my blood
Is animal. They thought I sat
Like a household cat;
But through the dark woods rambled I . . .
Oh, if my blood would die!"
The fire had a bear's fur
It heard and knew .. .
The dark earth furry as a bear,
Grumbled too!

* This line and the two following lines came into my mind through hearing a song of Stravinski's. I do not know its name and I only heard it once; hut it contained lines rather like these.

17

TRIO FOR TWO CATS AND A TROMBONE

Long steel grass—
The white soldiers pass—
The light is braying like an ass.
See
The tall Spanish jade
With hair black as nightshade
Worn as a cockade!
Flee
Her eyes' gasconade
And her gown's parade
(As stiff as a brigade).
Tee-hee!
The hard and braying light
Is zebra'd black and white
It will take away the slight
And free,
Tinge of the mouth-organ sound,
(Oyster-stall notes) oozing round
Her flounces as they sweep the ground.
The
Trumpet and the drum
And the martial cornet come
To make the people dumb—
But we
Won't wait for sly-foot night
(Moonlight, watered milk-white, bright)

To make clear the declaration
Of our Paphian vocation,
Beside the castanetted sea,
Where stalks II Capitaneo
Swaggart braggadocio
Sword and moustachio—
He
Is green as a cassada
And his hair is an armada.
To the jade 'Come kiss me harder'
He called across the battlements as she
Heard our voices thin and shrill
As the steely grasses' thrill,
Or the sound of the onycha
When the phoca has the pica
In the palace of the Queen Chinee!

18

FOUR IN THE MORNING

Cried the navy-blue ghost
Of Mr. Belaker
The allegro negro cocktail-shaker:
'Why did the cock crow,
Why am I lost,
Down the endless road to Infinity toss'd?
The tropical leaves are whispering white
As water; I race the wind in my flight.
The white lace houses are carried away
By the tide; far out they float and sway.
White is the nursemaid on the parade.
Is she real, as she flirts with me unafraid?
Such honeyed imbecility lies
In the eternal July skies
As in her giggling curls. In swirls
The houses fade, and drop in pearls.
I raced through the leaves as white as water . . .
Ghostly, flowed over the nursemaid, caught her,
Left her ... edging the far-off sand
Is the foam of the sirens' Metropole and Grand,
And along the parade I am blown and lost,
Down the endless road to Infinity toss'd.
The guinea-fowl plumaged houses sleep ...
On one, I saw the lone grass weep,
Where only the whimpering greyhound wind
Chased me, raced me, for what it could find'.

And there in the black and furry boughs
How slowly, coldly, old Time grows,
Where the pigeons smelling of gingerbread,
And the spectacled owls so deeply read,
And the sweet ring-doves of curded milk,
Watch the Infanta's gown of silk
In the ghost-room tall where the governante
Gesticulates lente, and walks andante.
'Madam, Princesses must be obedient;
For a medicine now becomes expedient,—
Of five ingredients,—a diapente,'
Said the governante, fading lente . . .
In at the window then looked he,
The navy-blue ghost of Mr. Belaker,
The allegro negro cocktail-shaker,—
And his flattened face like the moon saw she,—
Rhinoceros-black (a flowing sea!).

'I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE'

When

Don

Pasquito arrived at the seaside
 Where the donkey's hide tide brayed, he
 Saw the banditto Jo in a black cape
 Whose slack shape waved like the sea —
 Thetis wrote a treatise noting wheat is silver like the
 sea; the lovely cheat is sweet as foam; Erotis
 notices that she

Will

Steal

The

Wheat-king's luggage, like Babel
 Before the League of Nations grew —
 So Jo put the luggage and the label
 In the pocket of Flo the Kangaroo.
 Through trees like rich hotels that bode
 Of dreamless ease fled she,
 Carrying the load and goading the road
 Through the marine scene to the sea.
⁴Don Pasquito, the road is eloping
 With your luggage, though heavy and large;
 You must follow and leave your moping
 Bride to my guidance and charge!

When

Don

**Pasquito returned from the road's end,
Where vanilla-coloured ladies ride
From Sevilla, his mantilla'd bride and young friend
Were forgetting their mentor and guide.
For the lady and her friend from Le Touquet
In the very shady trees upon the sand
Were plucking a white satin bouquet
Of foam, while the sand's brassy band
Blared in the wind. Don Pasquito
Hid where the leaves drip with sweet. . .
But a word stung him like a mosquito . . .
For what they hear, they repeat!**

20

THE OCTOGENARIAN

The octogenarian
Leaned from his window,
To the valerian
Growing below
Said⁶My nightcap
Is only the gap
In the trembling thorn
Where the mild unicorn
With the little Infanta
Danced the lavolta
(Clapping hands: molto
Lent⁹ eleganta).'
The man with the lanthorn
Peers high and low;
No more
Than a snore
As he walks to and fro. . . .
Il Dottore the stoic
Culls silver herb
Beneath the superb
Vast moon azoic.

21

THE WIND'S BASTINADO

The wind's bastinado
Whipt on the calico
Skin of the Macaroon
And the black Picaroon
Beneath the galloon
Of the midnight sky.
Came the great Soldan
In his sedan
Floating his fan—
Saw what the sly
Shadow's cocoon
In the barracoon
Held. Out they fly.

⁶This melon,
Sir Mammon,
Comes out of Babylon:
Buy for a patacoon—
Sir, you must buy!"
Said II Magnifico
Pulling a fico—
With a stoccado
And a gambado,
Making a wry
Face: "This corraceous
Round orchidaceous
Laceous porraceous

Fruit is a lie!
It is my friend King Pharaoh's head
That nodding blew out of the Pyramid. .. '
. .. The tree's small corinths
Were hard as jacinths,
For it is winter and cold winds sigh ..,
No nightingale
In her farthingale
Of bunched leaves let her singing die.

SONGS FROM 'THE SLEEPING BEAUTY'

FOR OSBERT SITWELL

THE GOVERNANTE'S SONG

'Look not on the infinite wave,
 Dream not of the siren cave,
 Nor hear the cold wind in the tree
 Sigh of worlds we cannot see.

(She sings)

The hot muscatelle
 Siesta time fell,
 And the Spanish belle
 Looked out through her shutters.

Under the eglantine
 Thorny and lean
 A shadow was playing a mandoline, mutters

Only this: 'Wave
 Your fan , . . siren cave
 Never was cold as the wind from the grave.*

The governante
 Came walking andante,—
 Sailed like a brigantine, black of brow.

And the falconette
Who danced a ballette
Sang on the pretty, the brunette bough:

"The ambassade
Of shadows invade
Death's most ultimate, peaceful shade. . . .
Lovely lady, where are you now?"

.

23

REYNARD-HAIREDMALINN

Where reynard-haired Malinn
Walks by rock and cave,
The Sun, a Chinese mandarin,
Came dripping from the wave.

'Your hair seems like the sunrise
O'er Persia and Cathay—
A rose-red music strange and dim
As th' embalmed smile of seraphim,'

He said to her by the white wave
In the water-pallid day;
(A forest of white coral boughs
Seemed the delicate sea-spray):

'In envy of your brighter hair,—
Since, Madam, we must quarrel,—
I've changed the cold flower-lovely spray
To branches of white coral;

And when, white muslin madam, you
Coquette with the bright wind,
I shall be but thin rose-dust;
He will be cold, unkind.'

The flowers that bud like rain and dream
On thin boughs water-clear,
Fade away like a lovely music
Nobody will hear,

And Eolus and Boreas
Brood among those boughs,
Like hermits haunting the dark caves
None but the wise man knows.

But Malinn's reynard-coloured hair,
Amid the world grown sere
Still seemed the Javanese sunrise
Whose wandering music will surprise
Into cold bird-chattering cries
The Emperor of China
Lying on his bier.

THE SOLDAN'S SONG

When green as a river was the barley,
Green as a river the rye,
I waded deep and began to parley
With a youth whom I heard sigh.
'I seek', said he, 'a lovely lady,
A nymph as bright as a queen,
Like a tree that drips with pearls her shady
Locks of hair were seen;
And all the rivers became her flocks
Though their wool you cannot shear,
Because of the love of her flowing locks.
The kingly sun like a swain
Came strong, unheeding of her scorn,
Wading in deeps where she has lain,
Sleeping upon her river lawn
And chasing her starry satyr train.
She fled, and changed into a tree,—
That lovely fair-haired lady. . .
And now I seek through the sere summer
Where no trees are shady!

SONG OF THE MAN FROM A FAR COUNTRY

Rose and Alice,
Oh, the pretty lassies,
With their mouths like a calice
And their hair a golden palace—
Through my heart like a lovely wind they blow.

Though I am black and not comely,
Though I am black as the darkest trees,
I have swarms of gold that will fly like honey-bees,
By the rivers of the sun I will feed my words
Until they skip like those fleeced lambs
The waterfalls, and the rivers (horned rams);
Then for all my darkness I shall be
The peacefulness of a lovely tree—
A tree wherein the golden birds
Are singing in the darkest branches, oh!

THROUGH GILDED TRELLISES

"Through gilded trellises
 Of the heat, Dolores,
 Inez, Manuccia,
 Isabel, Lucia,
 Mock Time that flies.
 "Lovely bird, will you stay and sing,
 Flirting your sheened wing,—
 Peck with your beak, and cling
 To our balconies?"
 They flirt their fans, flaunting—
 "O silence enchanting
 As music!" then slanting
 Their eyes,
 Like gilded or emerald grapes,
 They take mantillas, capes,
 Hiding their simian shapes.
 Sighs
 Each lady, "Our spadille
 Is done." ... "Dance the quadrille
 From Hell's towers to Seville;
 Surprise
 Their siesta," Dolores
 Said. Through gilded trellises
 Of the heat, spangles
 Pelt down through the tangles
 Of bell-flowers; each dangles

Her castanets, shutters
Fall while the heat mutters,
With sounds like a mandoline
Or tinkled tambourine....
Ladies, Time dies!

27

THE MAUVE SUMMER RAIN

The mauve summer rain
Is falling again—
It soaks through the eaves
And the ladies' sleeves—
It soaks through the leaves

That like silver fish fall
In the fountains, recall
Afternoons when I
Was a child small and shy
In the palace. . . . Fish lie

On the grass with lives darkling.
Our laughter falls sparkling
As the mauve raindrops bright
When they fall through the light
With the briefest delight.
The pavilions float
On the lake like a boat....
Mauve rains from trees fall
Like wistaria flowers ... all
My life is like this
And drifts into nothingness!

The strange ladies sigh
'The autumn is nigh', ...

The King bows and mutters. . . .
His eyelids seem shutters
Of a palace pavilion
Deserted a million

Echoing years ago.
Oh, but the rain falls slow.

TWO ELEGIES

THE LITTLE GHOST WHO DIED FOR LOVE

FOR ALLANAH HARPER

Deborah Churchill, born in 1678, was hanged in 1708 for shielding her lover in a duel. His opponent was killed, her lover fled to Holland, and she was hanged in his stead, according to the law of the time. The chronicle said, 'Though she died at peace with God, this malefactor could never understand the justice of her sentence, to the last moment of her life.'

'Fear not, O maidens, shivering
As bunches of the dew-drenched leaves
In the calm moonlight... it is the cold sends quivering
My voice, a little nightingale that grieves.

Now Time beats not, and dead Love is forgotten . . .
The spirit too is dead and dank and rotten,

And I forget the moment when I ran
Between my lover and the sworded man—

Blinded with terror lest I lose his heart.
The sworded man dropped, and I saw depart

Love and my lover and my life ... he fled
And I was strung and hung upon the tree.
It is so cold now that my heart is dead
And drops through time ... night is too dark to see

Him still. . . But it is spring; upon the fruit-boughs
of your lips,
Young maids, the dew like India's splendour drips.
Pass by among the strawberry beds, and pluck the
berries
Cooled by the silver moon; pluck boughs of cherries

That seem the lovely lucent coral bough
(From streams of starry milk those branches grow)
That Cassopeia feeds with her faint light,
Like Ethiopia ever jewelled bright.

Those lovely cherries do enclose
Deep in their sweet hearts the silver snows,

And the small budding flowers upon the trees
Are filled with sweetness like the bags of bees.

Forget my fate . . . but I, a moonlight ghost,
Creep down the strawberry paths and seek the lost

World, the apothecary at the Fair.
I, Deborah, in my long cloak of brown
Like the small nightingale that dances down
The cherried boughs, creep to the doctor's bare
Booth ... cold as ivy in the air,

And, where I stand, the brown and ragged light
Holds something still beyond, hid from my sight.

Once, plumaged like the sea, his swanskin head
Had wintry white quills .. . "Hearken to the Dead . . .
I was a nightingale, but now I croak
Like some dark harpy hidden in night's cloak,
Upon the walls; among the Dead, am quick;
Oh, give me medicine, for the world is sick;
Not medicines, planet-spotted like fritillaries
For country sins and old stupidities,
Nor potions you may give a country maid
When she is lovesick . . . love in earth is laid.
Grown dead and rotten" ... so I sank me down,
Poor Deborah in my long cloak of brown.
Though cockcrow marches, crying of false dawns,
Shall bury my dark voice, yet still it mourns
Among the ruins,—for it is not I
But this old world, is sick and soon must die!"

THE HEART AND THE HAMBONE

To PAVEL TCHELITCHEW

A Girl Speaks:

Here in this great house in the barrack square,
The plump and heart-shaped flames all stare
Like silver empty hearts in wayside shrines.
No flame warms ever, shines,
Nor may I ever tire.

Outside, the dust of all the dead,
Thick on the ground is spread
Covering the tinsel flowers
And pretty dove-quick hours,

O dust of all the dead, my heart has known
That terrible Gehenna of the bone
Deserted by the flesh,—with Death alone!

Could we foretell the worm within the heart,
That holds the households and the parks of heaven,
Could we foretell that land was only earth,
Would it be worth the pain of death and birth,
Would it be worth the soul from body riven?

For here, my sight, my sun, my sense,
In my gown white as innocence,

I walked with you. Ah, that my sun
Loved my heart less than carrion!

Alas! I dreamed that the bare heart could feed
One who with Death's corruption loved to breed,—
This Dead, who fell, that he might satisfy
The hungry grave's blind need—

That Venus stinking of the Worm!
Deep in the grave, no passions storm:
The worm's a pallid thing to kiss;
She is the hungering grave that is

Not filled, that is not satisfied!
Not all the sunken Dead that lies
Corrupt there, chills her luxuries.

And fleet, and volatile her kiss,
For all the grave's eternities!
And soon another Dead shall slake
Her passion, till that dust, too, break.

Like little pigeons small dove-breasted flowers,
Were cooing of far-off bird-footed showers,
My coral neck was pink as any rose
Or like the sweet pink honey-wax that grows,
Or the fresh coral beams of clear moonlight,
Where leaves like small doves flutter from our sight.

Beneath the twisted rose-boughs of the heat
Our shadows walked like little foreigners,
Like small unhappy children dressed in mourning,
Then by the waterfalls we saw the Clown,
As tall as Heaven's golden town,
And in his hands, a Heart, and a Hambone
Pursued by loving vermin; but deserted, lone,
The Heart cried to my own:

The Heart speaks:

Young girl, you dance and laugh to see,
The thing that I have come to be.
Oh, once this heart was like your own.
Go, pray that yours may turn to stone.

This is the murdered heart of one
Who bore and loved an only son.
For him, I worked away mine eyes,
My starved breast could not still his cries.

My little lamb, of milk bereft...
My heart was all that I had left.
Ah, could I give thee this for food,
My lamb, thou knowest that I would.

Yet lovely was the summer light
Those days ... I feel it through this night.
Once Judas had a childish kiss,
And still his mother knows but this.

He grew to manhood. Then one came,
False-hearted as Hell's blackest shame
To steal my child from me, and thrust
The soul I loved down to the dust.

Her hungry wicked lips were red
As that dark blood my son's hand shed;
Her eyes were black as Hell's own night;
Her ice-cold breast was winter-white.

I had put by a little gold
To bury me when I was cold.
That fanged wanton kiss to buy,
My son's love willed that I should die.

The gold was hid beneath my bed,—
So little, and my weary head
Was all the guard it had. They lie
So quiet and still who soon must die.

He stole to kill me while I slept,
The little son who never wept,
But that I kissed his tears away
So fast, his weeping seemed but play.

So light his footfall. Yet I heard
Its echo in my heart and stirred
From out my weary sleep to see
My child's face bending over me.

The wicked knife flashed serpent-wise,
Yet I saw nothing but his eyes
And heard one little word he said,
Go echoing down among the Dead.

.

They say the Dead may never dream.
But yet I heard my pierced heart scream
His name within the dark. They lie
Who say the Dead can ever die.

For in the grave I may not sleep,
For dreaming that I hear him weep.
And in the dark, my dead hands grope
In search of him. O barren hope!

I cannot draw his head to rest,
Deep down upon my wounded breast:
He gave the breast that fed him well
To suckle the small worms of Hell.

The little wicked thoughts that fed
Upon the weary helpless Dead,
They whispered o'er my broken heart,—
They struck their fangs deep in the smart.

'The child she bore with bloody sweat
And agony has paid his debt.
Through that bleak face the stark winds play,
The crows have chased his soul away—

His body is a blackened rag
Upon the tree—a monstrous flag,'
Thus one worm to the other saith;
Those slow mean servitors of Death,

They chuckling, said: 'Your soul grown blind
With anguish, is the shrieking wind
That blows the flame that never dies
About his empty lidless eyes.'

I tore them from my heart, I said:
'The life-blood that my son's hand shed—
That from my broken heart outburst,
I'd give again to quench his thirst.

He did no sin. But cold blind earth
The body was that gave him birth.
All mine, all mine the sin. The love
I bore him was not deep enough.'

.

The Girl speaks:

O crumbling heart, I too, I too have known
The terrible Gehenna of the bone
Deserted by the flesh.... I too have wept
Through centuries like the deserted bone
To all the? dust of all the Dead to fill
That place. ... It would not be the dust I loved.

For underneath the lime-tree's golden town
Of Heaven, where he stood, the tattered Clown
Holding the screaming Heart and the Hambone,
You saw the Clown's thick hambone, life-pink carrion,
That Venus perfuming the summer air.
Old pigs, starved dogs, and long worms of the grave
Were rooting at it, nosing at it there.
Then you, my sun, left me and ran to it
Through pigs, dogs, grave-worms' ramparted tall waves.

.

I know that I must soon have the long pang
Of grave-worms in the heart. . . You are so changed,
How shall I know you from the other long
Anguishing grave-worms? I can but foretell
The worm where once the kiss clung, and that last less
chasm-deep farewell.

30

FROM FIVE VARIATIONS ON A THEME

EXTRACT FROM 'METAMORPHOSIS'

The coral-cold snow seemed the Parthenon,
Huge peristyle of temples that are gone,
And dark as Asia, now, is Beauty's daughter
The rose, once clear as music o'er deep water.

Now the full moon her fire and light doth spill
On turkey-plumaged leaves and window-sill,
And strawberries among the beavers' wool,
(So grass seemed where that ruined temple's cool
Shade fell). When first the dew with golden foot
Makes tremble every leaf and strawberry root

The rainbow gives those berries light above,
The dark rose gives them all her secret love,
Until those coral tears of the rich light
Hold roses, rubies, rainbows for the sight.

My ancient shadow nods a turbaned head;
One candle through thick leaves throws a gold thread;
The dark green country temple of the snows
Hides porphyry bones of nymphs whence grew the rose,
And dark green dog-haired leaves of strawberries,
All marked with maps of unknown lands and seas.

But Time, a heavy ghost, groans through thick leaves,
Time is a weary bell which ever grieves:

It is not Death which is the skeleton—
But Time; Death merely strikes the hour of one,
Night's creeping end ere light begins again.
O Death has never worm for heart and brain
Like that which Time conceives to fill his grave,
Devouring the last faith, the word love gave,
Changing the light in eyes to heavy tears,
Changing the beat in heart to empty years
Wherein we listen for that little sound
Of footsteps that come never to our ground.
How terrible these winter nights must be
To the deserted Dead ... if we could see
The eternal anguish of the skeleton,
So fleshless even the dog leaves it alone,
Atridae-like devouring its own blood
With hopeless love beneath the earth's blind hood:
For warmth, the rags of flesh about the bone
Devoured by black disastrous dreams, alone
The worm is their companion, vast years
Pile mountain-high above, and the last tears
Freeze to gigantic polar nights of ice
Around the heart through crumbling centuries.
O Dead, your heart is gone, it cannot weep!
From decency the skeleton must sleep;

O heart, shrink out of sight, you have no flesh
For love or dog or worm to court afresh,
Only your youthful smile is mirrored lone
In that eternity, the skeleton.
For never come they now, nor comes the hour
When your lips spoke, and winter broke in flower,
The Parthenon was built by your dead kiss.
What should they seek, now you are changed to this
Vast craggy bulk, strong as the prophet's rock?
No grief tore waters from that stone to mock
Death's immobility, and changed to stone
Those eyelids see one sight and one alone.
What do they see? Some lost and childish kiss
In summers ere they knew that love was this,—
The terrible Gehenna of the bone
Deserted by the flesh, tears changed to stone?
Or do they blame us that we walk this earth,
Who are more dead than they, nor seek rebirth
Nor change? The snowflake's six-rayed star can see
Rock-crystal's cold six-rayed eternity,—
Thus light grief melts in craggy waterfalls;
But mine melts never, though the last spring calls:
The polar night's huge boulder hath rolled this
My heart, my Sisyphus, in the abyss.

Do the Dead know the nights wherein we grope
From our more terrible abyss of hope
To soft despair? The nights when creeping Fear
Crumples our hearts, knowing when age appear,

Our sun, our love, will leave us more alone
Than the black mouldering rags about the bone?

Age shrinks our hearts to ape-like dust. .. that ape
Looks through the eyes where all death's chasms gape

Between ourself and what we used to be.
My soul, my Lazarus, know you not me?

Am I so changed by Time's appalling night?
'Tis but my bone that cannot stand upright,

That leans as if it thirsted . . . for what spring,
The ape's bent skeleton foreshadowing,

With head bent from the light, its only kiss?
Do the Dead know that metamorphosis,

When the appalling lion-claws of age
With talons tear the cheek and heart, yet rage

For life devours the bone, a tigerish fire?
But quenched in the vast empire of the mire

These craters cry not to the eternal bone:
The Dead may hide the changing skeleton.

So quench the light, my Lazarus, nor see
The thing we are, the thing that we might be. ...

31

ROMANCE

FOR REE GORER

She grew within his heart as the flushed rose
In the green heat of the long summer grows
Deep in the sorrowful heaven of her leaves.
And this song only is the sound that grieves
When the gold-fingered wind from the green veins
Of the rich rose deflowers her amber blood,
The sharp green rains.

Such is the song, grown from a sleepy head,
Of lovers in a country paradise.
You shall not find it where a song-bird flies,
Nor from the sound that in a bird-throat grieves,
Its chart lies not in maps on strawberry leaves.

Green were the pomp and pleasure of the shade
Wherein they dwelt; like country temples green
The huge leaves bear a dark-mosaic'd sheen
Like gold on forest temples richly laid.

And swan-skin leaves of cherries seem a cloud
Where coral tears of the rich light fall loud
In that smooth darkness; the gourds dark as caves
Hold thick gold honey for their fountain waves,

Figs dark and wrinkled as Silenus hold
Rubies and garnets, and the melons cold

Waves like a fountain; falling on the grass
The apples boom like sharp green summer rain.

But Time drifts by as the long-plumaged winds
And the dark swans whose plumes seem weeping leaves
In the shade's deepest splendour—these drift by.
And sometimes he would turn to her and sigh:

'The bright swans leave the wave ... so leave not me.
With Aethiopsea, smooth Afiropē
Amid the pomp and splendour of the shade
Their rich and leafy plumes a lulling music made.

Dark are their plumes, and dark the airs that grew
Amid those weeping leaves.
Plantations of the East drop precious dew
That ripened by the light, rich leaves perspire,
Such are the drops that from the bright swans' feathers
flew.

Come then, my pomp and pleasure of the shade,
Most lovely cloud that the hot sun made black
As dark-leaved swans.

Come then, O precious cloud,
Lean to my heart. No shade of some rich tree
Shall pour such splendour as your heart to me.'

So these two lovers dreamed the time away
Beside smooth waters like the honey waves

In the ripe melons that are dark as caves;
Eternity seemed but a summer day.

And they forgot, seeing the Asian train
Of waves upon the glittering wide sea main
And rich gold waves from fountain caverns run,
That all the splendour of the eastern sun,

And many a rose-shaped heart must lie beneath
The maps on strawberry leaves dark green as snows,
With amber dust that was a nymph or rose—

And worlds more vast lie ruined by sad Time
That is the conqueror of our green clime.

For even the beasts eschew the shrunken heart
That dieth of itself, small deaths devour—
Or that worm mightier than death's—the small
corroding hour.

How ancient is the Worm, companionless
As the black dust of Venus? Dulled to this
And loathed as the Worm, she is alone
Though all the morbid suns lay in her kiss.

How old, the small undying snake that wreathes
Round lips and eyes, now that the kiss has gone?
In that last night, when we, too, are alone
We have, for love that seemed eternity

The old unchanging memory of the bone—
That porphyry whence grew the summer rose.

Most ancient is the Worm—more old than night
Or the first music heard among the trees
And the unknown horizons' harmonies
Where the huge suns come freshened. Shrunken and cold
Is he, like Venus blackened, noseless, old.

Yet all immensities lie in his strong
Embrace, horizons that no sight hath known,
The veins whose sea had heard the siren song
And worlds that grew from an immortal kiss.

And still their love amid this green world grieves,
'The gold light drips like myrrh upon the leaves
And fills with gold those chambers of the South
That were your eyes, that honeycomb your mouth.

And now the undying Worm makes no great stir,
His tight embrace chills not our luxuries
Though the last light perfumes our bones like myrrh
And Time's beat dies.

Come, with your kiss renew
The day till all the old worlds die like dew.

When the green century of summer rains
Lay on the leaves, then like the rose I wept.
For I had dwelt in sorrow as the rose

In the deep heaven of her leaves lies close.
Then you, my gardener, with green fingers stroked my
leaves
Till all the gold drops turned to honey. Grieves
This empire of green shade when honeyed rains
And amber blood flush all the sharp green veins
Of the rich rose?

So doth my rose-shaped heart
Feel the first flush of summer; love's first smart
Seemed no more sorrowful than the deep tears
The rose wept in that green and honeyed clime.

The green rains drip like the slow beat of Time
That grows within the amber blood, green veins
Of the rich rose, and in the rose-shaped heart—
Changing the amber flesh to a clay wall.
Then comes the endless cold
At last, that is the Zero, mighty, old,
Huge as the heart, but than the worm more small—
Our final structure, the heart's ragged dress
That rose from Nothing, fell to Nothingness.

For the vast universal Night shall cover
The earth from Pole to Pole, and like a lover
Invade your heart that changed into iny stone,
And I your Sisyphus. We two shall lie
Like those within the grave's eternity
And dream our arms hold the horizons deep
Where the strong suns come freshened from deep seas,

The continents beyond discoveries,
Eternal youth, and the god's wisdom, sleep.

How should I dream that I must wake alone
With a void coffin of sad flesh and bone—
You, with the small undying serpent's kiss,
You, the dull rumour of the dust's renown—
The polar night, a boulder rolling down
My heart, your Sisyphus, to that abyss
Where is nor light, nor dark, nor soul, nor heart to
eat—
Only the dust of all the dead, the sound of passing feet.'

So winter fell, the heart shaped like the rose
Beneath the mountain of oblivion lies
With all death's nations and the centuries.
And this song ending fades like the shrill snows,

Dim as the languid moon's vast fading light
That scatters sparkles faint and dim and chill
Upon the wide leaves round my window-sill
Like Aethiopaea ever jewelled bright. . .

So fading from the branches the snow sang
With a strange perfume, a melodious twang
As if a rose should change into a ghost—
A ghost turn to a perfume on the leaves.

