

**EDWARD  
DOWDEN**

POEMS

# Edward Dowden

## Poems

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*Poems:*

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# Edward Dowden

## Poems

### PREFACE

Goethe says in a little poem<sup>1</sup> that “Poems are stained glass windows”—“*Gedichte sind gemalte Fensterscheiben*”—to be seen aright not from the “market-place” but only from the interior of the church, “*die heilige Kapelle*”: and that “*der Herr Philister*” (equivalent for “indolent Reviewer”) glances at them from without and gets out of temper because he finds them unintelligible from his “market-place” standpoint. This comparison is a pretty conceit, and holds good as a half truth—but not more than a half: for while the artist who paints his “church windows” needs only to make them beautiful from within, the maker of poems must so shape and colour his work that its outer side—the technical, towards the “market-place” of the public—shall have no lack of beauty, though differing from the beauty visible from the spiritual interior.

The old volume of *Edward Dowden's Poems* of 1876, which is now reprinted with additions, has been, to a limited extent, long before the public—seen from the “market-place” by general critics, who, for the most part, approved the outer side of the

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<sup>1</sup> “Sechzehn Parabeln,” *Gedichte*, Leoper's edition (p. 180) of Goethe's *Gedichte*.

“painted windows,” and seen perhaps from within by some few like-minded readers, who, though no definite door was opened into “*die heilige Kapelle*,” somehow entered in.

But a great many people, to whom the author’s prose works are well known, have never even heard that he had written poetry. This is due in a measure to the fact that the published book of poems only got into circulation by its first small edition. Its second edition found a silent apotheosis in flame at a great fire at the publisher’s in London, in which nearly the whole of it perished.

Edward Dowden’s chief work has been as a prose writer. That fact remains—yet it is accidental rather than essential. In the early seventies he felt the urge very strongly towards making verse his vocation in life, and he probably would have yielded to it, but for the necessity to be bread-winner for a much-loved household. Poetry is a ware of small commercial value, as most poets—at least for a long space of their lives—have known, and prose, for even a young writer of promise, held out prospects of bread for immediate eating. Hence to prose he turned, and on that road went his way, and whether the accidental circumstances that determined his course at the parting of the ways wrought loss or gain for our literature, who can say?

But he never wholly abandoned verse, and all through his life, even to the very end, he would fitfully, from time to time, utter in it a part of himself which never found complete issue in prose and which was his most real self.

Perhaps the nearest approaches to his utterance in poetry occurred sometimes in his College lecturing, when in the midst of a written discourse he would interrupt it and stop and liberate his heart in a little rush of words—out of the depths, accompanied by that familiar gesture of his hands which always came to him when emotionally stirred in speaking. Some of his students have told me that they usually found those little extempore bits in a lecture by far the most illuminated and inspiring parts of it, especially as it was then that his voice, always musical in no common degree, vibrated, and acquired a richer tone.

In his prose writings in general he seemed to curb and restrain himself. That he did so was by no means an evil, for the habitual retinence in his style gave to the little rare outbreaks of emotion the quality of charm that we find in a tender flower growing out of a solid stone wall unexpectedly.

Not infrequently a sort of hard irony was employed by him, as restraint on enthusiasm, with occasional loosening of the curb.

In Edward Dowden's soul there seemed to be capacities which might, under other circumstances, have made him more than a minor poet. His was a more than usually rich, sensuous nature. This, combined with absolute purity—the purity not of ice and snow, but of fire. And, superadded, was an unlimited capacity for sternness—that quality which, as salt, acts as preservative of all human ardours. He came from his Maker, fashioned out of the stuff whereof are made saints, patriots, martyrs, and the

great lovers in the world. His work as a scholar never obliterated anything of this in him. By this, his erudition gained richness—the richness of vital blood. It was as no anæmic recluse that he dwelt amongst his book-shelves, and hence no Faust-like weariness of intellectual satiety ever came to him, no sense of being “*beschränkt mit diesem Bücherhauf*” in his surroundings of his library (which latterly had grown to some twenty-four thousand volumes). He lived in company with these in a twofold way, keenly and accurately grasping all their textual details, and at the same time valuing them for the sake, chiefly, of spiritual converse with the writers.

Besides the spiritual converse he gained thus, he found, as a book-lover, a fertile source of recreation in the collecting of literary rarities, old books, MSS. and curiosities. In this he felt the keen zest of a sportsman. This was his shooting on the moors, his fishing in the rivers. No living creature ever lost its life for his amusement, but in this innocuous play he found unfailing pleasure, and many a piece of luck he had with his gun or rod in hitting some rare bird, or landing some big prize of a fish out of old booksellers’ catalogues or the “carts” in the back streets.

His physical nature was fully and strongly developed, and it is out of strong physical instincts that strong spiritual instincts often grow—the boundary line between them being undefined.

His one athletic exercise—swimming—was to him a joy of no common sort. He gave himself to the sea with an eagerness of body, soul and spirit, breasting the bright waters exultingly on

many a summer's day on some West of Ireland or Cornish shore, revelling in the sea's life and in his own.

And akin to that, in the sensuous, spiritual region of the soul, was his feeling for all External Nature, his deep delight in the coming of each new Spring—its blackthorn blossoms, its hazel and willow catkins, its daffodils—and his response, as the year went on in its procession, to the glory of the furze and heather glow and to all Earth's sounds and silences.

And of a like sort was his enjoyment of music which had the depth of a passion.

Very possibly, if his lot had been cast in early Christian or mediæval times, all these impulses towards the joy and beauty of the earth might have been sternly crushed out by the moral forces of his character.

Looking at a picture of St. Jerome one day—not unlike E. D. in feature—I said to him, “There's what *you* would have been if you had lived in those times.” (The saint is depicted there as lean, emaciated and woefully dirty!).

It was well for Edward Dowden that he was laid hold of in his early life by that great non-ascetic soul, William Wordsworth. He was initiated into the inner secret of Wordsworth. He had experience of the Wordsworthian ecstasy—that ecstasy which comes, if at all, straight as a gift from God, and is not to be taught by the teaching of the scribes.

Through kinship a man who is born potentially a poet comes first into relation with poets, and with E. Dowden's sensuousness

of capacities it was natural that he should be in his early years attracted to Keats, to the long, deep, rich dwelling of his verse on the vision and the sounds of Nature. It was not until he had advanced some way towards middle life that he came into vital contact with Shelley. He had felt aloof from him; but the attraction, when once owned, became very powerful, and he yielded to the delight of the swift motion of the Shelleyan utterances.

He always recognized Robert Browning's greatness profoundly, and responded to all his best truths, especially as regards the relation, in love, of Man and Woman, but he never became pledged to an all-round Browning worship; his admiration had no discipleship in it.

For Walt Whitman, with whom a personal friendship, strong on both sides, was formed, he felt the cordial reverence due to the giver of what he reckoned as a gift of immense value. While condemning whatever was unreticent in *Leaves of Grass*, he at the same time saw there the great flood of spirituality available as a force for emancipation of our hearts from pressure of sordidnesses in the world.

It is somewhat remarkable that with all his trend towards the great spiritual and mystical forces in literature he was all along never without a keen appreciation of the writers who brought mundane shrewdness and wisdom. The first book he bought for himself in childhood with the hoarded savings of his pocket-money was *Bacon's Essays*, with which as a small boy he became



very familiar. And all through his life he sought with unflinching pleasure the companionship of Jane Austen again and again. And amongst the books which he himself made, it was perhaps his *Montaigne* that gave him, in the process of making, the delicatest satisfaction—the satisfaction of witnessing and analysing the dexterous play of human intellect and character on low levels.

His attraction to Goethe—very dominant with him in middle life—came, I imagine, from the fact that he saw in that mightiest of the Teutons two diverse qualities in operation—the measureless intellectual spirituality and the vast common-sense of mundane wisdom.

In this attraction there was also the element of the magnetism which draws together opposites—not less forcible than the attraction between affinities.

As regards the moral nature, his own was as far as the North Pole is from the South from that of the great sage of Weimar, whose serenely-wise beneficence contained no potentialities of sainthood, martyrdom or absolute human love. He sought gain from Goethe just *because* of that unlikeness to what was in himself.

At one period of his literary work he was intending to make as his “*opus magnum*” a full study of Goethe’s life and works, and with that intent he carried on a course of reading, and laid in a great equipment of workman’s tools—Goethe books in German, French and English. From this project he was turned aside by a call to write the life of Shelley—a long and difficult task. But he

never lost sight of Goethe. In one of the later years of his life, as recreation in a summer's holiday in Cornwall, he translated the whole of the "West-Eastern Divan" into English verse, and previously, from time to time, isolated essays on Goethe themes appeared amongst his prose writings. And yet it is not unlikely that even if the task of Shelley's biography had not intervened, no complete study, such as he had at first planned, might have been ever accomplished by him on Goethe, for with experience there came to him a growing conviction that his best work in criticism could only be done in dealing with what was written in his mother-tongue.

Some of Edward Dowden's friends, Nationalist and Unionist both, have felt regret that he, the gentle scholar, gave such large share of his energies to the strife of politics, as if force were subtracted thereby from his work in Literature. They are mistaken. The output of energy thus given came back to the giver, reinforcing his prose writing with a mundane vigour and virility, exceeding what it might have had if he had kept himself aloof from the affairs of the nation.

Yet, strangely enough, between his politics and his poetry there was a water-tight wall of separation. Other men, to take scattered instances, Kipling, Wordsworth, Milton, fused in various ways their political feeling and their poetical. This Edward Dowden never attempted. I cannot analyse the "why."

Confining myself to some points which seem left out of sight in most of the admirably appreciative obituary notices in last

April's newspapers, I have tried to say here, in a fragmentary way, a few things about a man of whom many things—ininitely many—might be said without exhausting the total. He was himself at the same time many and one. He had multiform aspects—interests very diverse—and yet life was for him in no wise “patchy and scrappy,” but had unity throughout.

In Shakespeare, whose faithful scholar he was, there are diversities: and yet, do we not image Shakespeare to our minds as one and a whole?

In the volumes now issued by Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons is contained all the verse that the author left available for publication, with the exception of a sequence of a hundred and one lyrics (which by desire is separately published under the somewhat transparent disguise of editorship). That little sequence, named *A Woman's Reliquary*, is his latest work in verse. Much in it re-echoes sounds that can be heard in his old poems of the early seventies.

*E. D. D.*

*September 1913.*

# THE WANDERER

I cast my anchor nowhere (the waves whirled  
My anchor from me); East and West are one  
To me; against no winds are my sails furled;  
—Merely my planet anchors to the Sun.

# THE FOUNTAIN

## (An Introduction To the Sonnets)

Hush, let the fountain murmur dim  
Melodious secrets; stir no limb,  
But lie along the marge and wait,  
Till deep and pregnant as with fate,  
Fine as a star-beam, crystal-clear,  
Each ripple grows upon the ear.  
This is that fountain seldom seen  
By mortal wanderer,—Hippocrene,—  
Where the virgins three times three,  
Thy singing brood, Mnemosyne,  
Loosen'd the girdle, and with grave  
Pure joy their faultless bodies gave  
To sacred pleasure of the wave.  
Listen! the lapsing waters tell  
The urgency uncontrollable  
Which makes the trouble of their breast,  
And bears them onward with no rest  
To ampler skies and some grey plain  
Sad with the tumbling of the main.  
But see, a sidelong eddy slips  
Back into the soft eclipse  
Of day, while careless fate allows,  
Darkling beneath still olive boughs;

Then with chuckle liquid sweet  
Coils within its shy retreat;  
This is mine, no wave of might,  
But pure and live with glimmering light;  
I dare not follow that broad flood  
Of Poesy, whose lustihood  
Nourishes mighty lands, and makes  
Resounding music for their sakes;  
I lie beside the well-head clear  
With musing joy, with tender fear,  
And choose for half a day to lean  
Thus on my elbow where the green  
Margin-grass and silver-white  
Starry buds, the wind's delight,  
Thirsting steer, nor goat-hoof rude  
Of the branch-sundering Satyr brood  
Has ever pashed; now, now, I stoop,  
And in hand-hollow dare to scoop  
This scantling from the delicate stream;  
It lies as quiet as a dream,  
And lustrous in my curvèd hand.  
Were it a crime if this were drain'd  
By lips which met the noonday blue  
Fiery and emptied of its dew?  
Crown me with small white marish-flowers!  
To the good Dæmon, and the Powers  
Of this fair haunt I offer up  
In unprofanèd lily-cup  
Libations; still remains for me

A bird's drink of clear Poesy;  
Yet not as light bird comes and dips  
A pert bill, but with reverent lips  
I drain this slender trembling tide;  
O sweet the coolness at my side,  
And, lying back, to slowly pry  
For spaces of the upper sky  
Radiant 'twixt woven olive leaves;  
And, last, while some fair show deceives  
The closing eyes, to find a sleep  
As full of healing and as deep  
As on toil-worn Odysseus lay  
Surge-swept to his Ionian bay.

# IN THE GALLERIES

## I. THE APOLLO BELVEDERE

Radiance invincible! Is that the brow  
Which gleamed on Python while thy arrow sped?  
Are those the lips for Hyacinthus dead  
That grieved? Wherefore a God indeed art thou:  
For all we toil with ill, and the hours bow  
And break us, and at best when we have bled,  
And are much marred, perchance propitiated  
A little doubtful victory they allow:  
We sorrow, and thenceforth the lip retains  
A shade, and the eyes shine and wonder less.  
O joyous Slayer of evil things! O great  
And splendid Victor! God, whom no soil stains  
Of passion or doubt, of grief or languidness,  
—Even to worship thee I come too late.



## II. THE VENUS OF MELOS

Goddess, or woman nobler than the God,  
No eyes a-gaze upon Ægean seas  
Shifting and circling past their Cyclades  
Saw thee. The Earth, the gracious Earth, wastrod  
First by thy feet, while round thee lay her broad  
Calm harvests, and great kine, and shadowing trees,  
And flowers like queens, and a full year's increase,  
Clusters, ripe berry, and the bursting pod.  
So thy victorious fairness, unallied  
To bitter things or barren, doth bestow  
And not exact; so thou art calm and wise;  
Thy large allurements saves; a man may grow  
Like Plutarch's men by standing at thy side,  
And walk thenceforward with clear-visioned eyes!

# III. ANTINOUS CROWNED AS BACCHUS

(In the British Museum)

Who crowned thy forehead with the ivy wreath  
And clustered berries burdening the hair?  
Who gave thee godhood, and dim rites? Beware  
O beautiful, who breathe'st mortal breath,  
Thou delicate flame great gloom environeth!  
The gods are free, and drink a stainless air,  
And lightly on calm shoulders they upbear  
A weight of joy eternal, nor can Death  
Cast o'er their sleep the shadow of her shrine.  
O thou confessed too mortal by the o'er-fraught  
Crowned forehead, must thy drooped eyes ever see  
The glut of pleasure, those pale lips of thine  
Still suck a bitter-sweet satiety,  
Thy soul descend through cloudy realms of thought?

## IV. LEONARDO'S "MONNA LISA"

Make thyself known, Sibyl, or let despair  
Of knowing thee be absolute; I wait  
Hour-long and waste a soul. What word of fate  
Hides 'twixt the lips which smile and still forbear?  
Secret perfection! Mystery too fair!  
Tangle the sense no more lest I should hate  
Thy delicate tyranny, the inviolate  
Poise of thy folded hands, thy fallen hair.  
Nay, nay,—I wrong thee with rough words; still be  
Serene, victorious, inaccessible;  
Still smile but speak not; lightest irony  
Lurk ever 'neath thine eyelids' shadow; still  
O'ertop our knowledge; Sphinx of Italy  
Allure us and reject us at thy will!

# V. ST LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN

(By Van der Weyden)

It was Luke's will; and she, the mother-maid,  
Would not gainsay; to please him pleased her best;  
See, here she sits with dovelike heart at rest  
Brooding, and smoothest brow; the babe is laid  
On lap and arm, glad for the unarrayed  
And swatheless limbs he stretches; lightly pressed  
By soft maternal fingers the full breast  
Seeks him, while half a sidelong glance is stayed  
By her own bosom and half passes down  
To reach the boy. Through doors and window-frame  
Bright airs flow in; a river tranquilly  
Washes the small, glad Netherlandish town.  
Innocent calm! no token here of shame,  
A pierced heart, sunless heaven, and Calvary.

# ON THE HEIGHTS

Here are the needs of manhood satisfied!  
Sane breath, an amplitude for soul and sense,  
The noonday silence of the summer hills,  
And this embracing solitude; o'er all  
The sky unsearchable, which lays its claim,—  
A large redemption not to be annulled,—  
Upon the heart; and far below, the sea  
Breaking and breaking, smoothly, silently.  
What need I any further? Now once more  
My arrested life begins, and I am man  
Complete with eye, heart, brain, and that within  
Which is the centre and the light of being;  
O dull! who morning after morning chose  
Never to climb these gorse and heather slopes  
Cairn-crowned, but last within one seaward nook  
Wasted my soul on the ambiguous speech  
And slow eye-mesmerism of rolling waves,  
Courting oblivion of the heart. True life  
That was not which possessed me while I lay  
Prone on the perilous edge, mere eye and ear,  
Staring upon the bright monotony,  
Having let slide all force from me, each thought  
Yield to the vision of the gleaming blank,  
Each nerve of motion and of sense grow numb,

Till to the bland persuasion of some breeze,  
Which played across my forehead and my hair,  
The lost volition would efface itself,  
And I was mingled wholly in the sound  
Of tumbling billow and upjetting surge,  
Long reluctance, welter and refluent moan,  
And the reverberating tumultuousness  
'Mid shelf and hollow and angle black with spray.  
Yet under all oblivion there remained  
A sense of some frustration, a pale dream  
Of Nature mocking man, and drawing down,  
As streams draw down the dust of gold, his will,  
His thought and passion to enrich herself  
The insatiable devourer.

Welcome earth,  
My natural heritage! and this soft turf,  
These rocks which no insidious ocean saps,  
But the wide air flows over, and the sun  
Illumines. Take me, Mother, to thy breast,  
Gather me close in tender, sustinent arms,  
Lay bare thy bosom's sweetness and its strength  
That I may drink vigour and joy and love.  
Oh, infinite composure of the hills!  
Thou large simplicity of this fair world,  
Candour and calmness, with no mockery,  
No soft frustration, flattering sigh or smile  
Which masks a tyrannous purpose; and ye Powers  
Of these sky-circled heights, and Presences

Awful and strict, I find you favourable,  
Who seek not to exclude me or to slay,  
Rather accept my being, take me up  
Into your silence and your peace. Therefore  
By him whom ye reject not, gracious Ones,  
Pure vows are made that haply he will be  
Not all unworthy of the world; he casts  
Forth from him, never to resume again,  
Veiled nameless things, frauds of the unfilled heart,  
Fantastic pleasures, delicate sadnesses,  
The lurid, and the curious, and the occult,  
Coward sleights and shifts, the manners of the slave,  
And long unnatural uses of dim life.  
Hence with you! Robes of angels touch these heights  
Blown by pure winds and I lay hold upon them.

Here is a perfect bell of purple heath,  
Made for the sky to gaze at reverently,  
As faultless as itself, and holding light,  
Glad air and silence in its slender dome;  
Small, but a needful moment in the sum  
Of God's full joy—the abyss of ecstasy  
O'er which we hang as the bright bow of foam  
Above the never-filled receptacle  
Hangs seven-hued where the endless cataract leaps.

O now I guess why you have summoned me,  
Headlands and heights, to your companionship;  
Confess that I this day am needful to you!

The heavens were loaded with great light, the winds  
Brought you calm summer from a hundred fields,  
All night the stars had pricked you to desire,  
The imminent joy at its full season flowered,  
There was a consummation, the broad wave  
Topped and fell. And had ye voice for this?  
Sufficient song to unburden the urged breast?  
A pastoral pipe to play? a lyre to touch?  
The brightening glory of the heath and gorse  
Could not appease your passion, nor the cry  
Of this wild bird that flits from bush to bush.  
Me therefore you required, a voice for song,  
A pastoral pipe to play, a lyre to touch,  
I recognize your bliss to find me here;  
The sky at morning when the sunupleaps  
Demands her atom of intense melody,  
Her point of quivering passion and delight,  
And will not let the lark's heart be at ease.  
Take me, the brain with various, subtile fold,  
The breast that knows swift joy, the vocal lips;  
I yield you here the cunning instrument  
Between your knees; now let the plectrum fall!



# “LA RÉVÉLATION PAR LE DÉSERT”

*“Toujours le désert se montre à l’horizon, quand vous prononcez le nom de Jéhovah.”*

*Edgar Quinet.*

Beyond the places haunted by the feet  
Of thoughts and swift desires, and where the eyes  
Of wing’d imaginings are wild, and dreams  
Glide by on noiseless plumes, beyond the dim  
Veiled sisterhood of ever-circling mists,  
Who dip their urns in those enchanted meres  
Where all thought fails, and every ardour dies,  
And through the vapour dead looms a low moon,  
Beyond the fountains of the dawn, beyond  
The white home of the morning star, lies spread  
A desert lifeless, bright, illimitable,  
The world’s confine, o’er which no sighing goes  
From weary winds of Time.

I sat me down  
Upon a red stone flung on the red sand,  
In length as great as some sarcophagus  
Which holds a king, but scribbled with no runes,  
Bald, and unstained by lichen or grey moss.

Save me no living thing in that red land  
Showed under heaven; no furtive lizard slipped,  
No desert weed pushed upward the tough spine  
Or hairy lump, no slow bird was a spot  
Of moving black on the deserted air,  
Or stationary shrilled his tuneless cry;  
No shadow stirr'd, nor luminous haze uprose,  
Quivering against the blanched blue of the marge.  
I sat unbonneted, and my throat baked,  
And my tongue loll'd dogwise. Red sand below,  
And one unlidded eye above—mere God  
Blazing from marge to marge. I did not pray,  
My heart was as a cinder in my breast,  
And with both hands I held my head which throbbed.  
I, who had sought for God, had followed God  
Through the fair world which stings with sharp desire  
For him of whom its hints and whisperings are,  
Its gleams and tingling moments of the night,  
I, who in flower, and wave, and mountain-wind,  
And song of bird, and man's diviner heart  
Had owned the present Deity, yet strove  
For naked access to his inmost shrine,—  
Now found God doubtless, for he filled the heaven  
Like brass, he breathed upon the air like fire.  
But I, a speck 'twixt the strown sand and sky,  
Being yet an atom of pure and living will,  
And perdurable as any God of brass,  
With all my soul, with all my mind and strength  
Hated this God. O, for a little cloud

No bigger than a man's hand on the rim,  
To rise with rain and thunder in its womb,  
And blot God out! But no such cloud would come.  
I felt my brain on fire, heard each pulse tick;  
It was a God to make a man stark mad;  
I rose with neck out-thrust, and nodding head,  
While with dry chaps I could not choose but laugh;  
*Ha, ha, ha, ha*, across the air it rang,  
No sweeter than the barking of a dog,  
Hard as the echo from an iron cliff;  
It must have buffeted the heaven; I ceased,  
I looked to see from the mid sky an arm,  
And one sweep of the scimitar; I stood;  
And when the minute passed with no event,  
No doomsman's stroke, no sundering soul and flesh,  
When silence dropt its heavy fold on fold,  
And God lay yet inert in heaven, or scorn'd  
His rebel antic-sized, grotesque,—I swooned.

Now when the sense returned my lips were wet,  
And cheeks and chin were wet, with a dank dew,  
Acrid and icy, and one shadow huge  
Hung over me blue-black, while all around  
The fierce light glared. O joy, a living thing,  
Emperor of this red domain of sand,  
A giant snake! One fold, one massy wreath  
Arched over me; a man's expanded arms  
Could not embrace the girth of this great lord  
In his least part, and low upon the sand

His small head lay, wrinkled, a flaccid bag,  
Set with two jewels of green fire, the eyes  
That had not slept since making of the world.  
Whence grew I bold to gaze into such eyes?  
Thus gazing each conceived the other's thought,  
Aware how each read each; the Serpent mused,  
"Are all the giants dead, a long time dead,  
Born of the broad-hipped women, grave and tall,  
In whom God's sons poured a celestial seed?  
A long time dead, whose great deeds filled the earth  
With clamour as of beaten shields, all dead,  
And Cush and Canaan, Mizraim and Phut,  
And the boy Nimrod storming through large lands  
Like earthquake through tower'd cities, these depart,  
And what remains? Behold, the elvish thing  
We raised from out his swoon, this now is man.  
The pretty vermin! helpless to conceive  
Of great, pure, simple sin, and vast revolt;  
The world escapes from deluge these new days,  
We build no Babels with the Shinar slime;  
What would this thin-legged grasshopper with us,  
The Dread Ones? Rather let him skip, and chirp  
Hymns in his smooth grass to his novel God,  
'The Father'; here no bland paternity  
He meets, but visible Might blocks the broad sky,  
My great Co-mate, the Ancient. Hence! avoid!  
What wouldst thou prying on our solitude?  
For thee my sly small cousin may suffice,  
And sly small bites about the heart and groin;

Hence to his haunt! Yet ere thou dost depart  
I mark thee with my sign.”

A vibrant tongue  
Had in a moment pricked upon my brow  
The mystic mark of brotherhood, Cain's brand,  
But when I read within his eyes the words  
“Hence” and “avoid,” dim horror seized on me,  
And rising, with both arms stretched forth, and head  
Bowed earthward, and not turning once I ran;  
And what things saw me as I raced by them,  
What hands plucked at my dress, what light wings brushed  
My face, what waters in my hearing seethed,  
I know not, till I reached familiar lands,  
And saw grey clouds slow gathering for the night,  
Above sweet fields, whence the June mowers strolled  
Homewards with girls who chatted down the lane.

Is this the secret lying round the world?  
A Dread One watching with unlidde eye  
Slow century after century from his heaven,  
And that great lord, the worm of the red plain,  
Cold in mid sun, strenuous, untameable,  
Coiling his solitary strength along  
Slow century after century, conscious each  
How in the life of his Arch-enemy  
He lives, how ruin of one confounds the pair,—  
Is this the eternal dual mystery?  
One Source of being, Light, or Love, or Lord,

Whose shadow is the brightness of the world,  
Still let thy dawns and twilights glimmer pure  
In flow perpetual from hill to hill,  
Still bathe us in thy tides of day and night;  
Wash me at will a weed in thy free wave,  
Drenched in the sun and air and surge of Thee.

# THE MORNING STAR

## I

Backward betwixt the gates of steepest heaven,  
Faint from the insupportable advance  
Of light confederate in the East, is driven

The starry chivalry, and helm and lance,  
Which held keen ward upon the shadowy plain,  
Yield to the stress and stern predominance

Of Day; no wanderer morning-moon awane  
Floats through dishevelled clouds, exanimate,  
In disarray, with gaze of weariest pain;

O thou, sole Splendour, sprung to vindicate  
Night's ancient fame, thou in dread strife serene,  
With back-blown locks, joyous yet desperate

Flamest; from whose pure ardour Earth doth win  
High passionate pangs, thou radiant paladin.

## II

Nay; strife must cease in song: far-sent and clear  
Piercing the silence of this summer morn  
I hear thy swan-song rapturous; I hear

Life's ecstasy; sharp cries of flames which burn  
With palpitating joy, intense and pure,  
From altars of the universe, and yearn

In eager spires; and under these the sure  
Strong ecstasy of Death, in phrase too deep  
For thought, too bright for dim investiture.

Of mortal words, and sinking more than sleep  
Down holier places of the soul's delight;  
Cry, through the quickening dawn, to us who creep

'Mid dreams and dews of the dividing night,  
Thou searcher of the darkness and the light.



### III

I seek thee, and thou art not; for the sky  
Has drawn thee in upon her breast to be  
A hidden talisman, while light soars high,

Virtuous to make wide heaven's tranquillity  
More tranquil, and her steadfast truth more true,  
Yea even her overbowed infinity.

Of tenderness, when o'er wet woods the blue  
Shows past white edges of a sundering cloud,  
More infinitely tender. Day is new,

Night ended; how the hills are overflowed  
With spaciousness of splendour, and each tree  
Is touched; only not yet the lark is loud,

Since viewless still o'er city and plain and sea  
Vibrates thy spirit-wingèd ecstasy.

# A CHILD'S NOONDAY SLEEP

Because you sleep, my child, with breathing light  
As heave of the June sea,  
Because your lips soft petals dewy-bright  
Dispart so tenderly;

Because the slumbrous warmth is on your cheek  
Up from the hushed heart sent,  
And in this midmost noon when winds are weak  
No cloud lies more content;

Because nor song of bird, nor lamb's keen call  
May reach you sunken deep,  
Because your lifted arm I thus let fall  
Heavy with perfect sleep;

Because all will is drawn from you, all power,  
And Nature through dark roots  
Will hold and nourish you for one sweet hour  
Amid her flowers and fruits;

Therefore though tempests gather, and the gale  
Through autumn skies will roar,  
Though Earth send up to heaven the ancient wail  
Heard by dead Gods of yore;

Though spectral faiths contend, and for her course  
The soul confused must try,  
While through the whirl of atoms and of force  
Looms an abandoned sky;

Yet, know I, Peace abides, of earth's wild things  
Centre, and ruling thence;  
Behold, a spirit folds her budded wings  
In confident innocence.

# IN THE GARDEN

## I. THE GARDEN

Past the town's clamour is a garden full  
Of loneness and old greenery; at noon  
When birds are hushed, save one dim cushat's croon,  
A ripen'd silence hangs beneath the cool  
Great branches; basking roses dream and drop  
A petal, and dream still; and summer's boon  
Of mellow grasses, to be levelled soon  
By a dew-drenchèd scythe, will hardly stop  
At the uprunning mounds of chestnut trees.  
Still let me muse in this rich haunt by day,  
And know all night in dusky placidness  
It lies beneath the summer, while great ease  
Broods in the leaves, and every light wind's stress  
Lifts a faint odour down the verdurous way.

## II. VISIONS

Here I am slave of visions. When noon heat  
Strikes the red walls, and their environ'd air  
Lies steep'd in sun; when not a creature dare  
Affront the fervour, from my dim retreat  
Where woof of leaves embowers a beechen seat,  
With chin on palm, and wide-set eyes I stare,  
Beyond the liquid quiver and the glare,  
Upon fair shapes that move on silent feet.  
Those Three strait-robed, and speechless as they pass,  
Come often, touch the lute, nor heed me more  
Than birds or shadows heed; that naked child  
Is dove-like Psyche slumbering in deep grass;  
Sleep, sleep,—he heeds thee not, you Sylvan wild  
Munching the russet apple to its core.

### III. AN INTERIOR

The grass around my limbs is deep and sweet;  
Yonder the house has lost its shadow wholly,  
The blinds are dropped, and softly now and slowly  
The day flows in and floats; a calm retreat  
Of tempered light where fair things fair things meet;  
White busts and marble Dian make it holy,  
Within a niche hangs Dürer's Melancholy  
Brooding; and, should you enter, there will greet  
Your sense with vague allurements effluence faint  
Of one magnolia bloom; fair fingers draw  
From the piano Chopin's heart-complaint;  
Alone, white-robed she sits; a fierce macaw  
On the verandah, proud of plume and paint,  
Screams, insolent despot, showing beak and claw.

## IV. THE SINGER

“That was the thrush’s last good-night,” I thought,  
And heard the soft descent of summer rain  
In the drooped garden leaves; but hush! again  
The perfect iterance,—freer than unsought  
Odours of violets dim in woodland ways,  
Deeper than coilèd waters laid a-dream  
Below mossed ledges of a shadowy stream,  
And faultless as blown roses in June days.  
Full-throated singer! art thou thus anew  
Voiceful to hear how round thyself alone  
The enrichèd silence drops for thy delight  
More soft than snow, more sweet than honey-dew?  
Now cease: the last faint western streak is gone,  
Stir not the blissful quiet of the night.

## V. A SUMMER MOON

Queen-moon of this enchanted summer night,  
One virgin slave companioning thee,—I lie  
Vacant to thy possession as this sky  
Conquered and calmed by thy rejoicing might;  
Swim down through my heart's deep, thou dewy bright  
Wanderer of heaven, till thought must faint and die,  
And I am made all thine inseparably,  
Resolved into the dream of thy delight.  
Ah no! the place is common for her feet,  
Not here, not here,—beyond the amber mist,  
And breadths of dusky pine, and shining lawn,  
And unstirred lake, and gleaming belts of wheat,  
She comes upon her Latmos, and has kissed  
The sidelong face of blind Endymion.



## VI. A PEACH

If any sense in mortal dust remains  
When mine has been refined from flower to flower,  
Won from the sun all colours, drunk the shower  
And delicate winy dews, and gained the gains  
Which elves who sleep in airy bells, a-swing  
Through half a summer day, for love bestow,  
Then in some warm old garden let me grow  
To such a perfect, lush, ambrosian thing  
As this. Upon a southward-facing wall  
I bask, and feel my juices dimly fed  
And mellowing, while my bloom comes golden grey:  
Keep the wasps from me! but before I fall  
Pluck me, white fingers, and o'er two ripe-red  
Girl lips O let me richly swoon away!

## VII. EARLY AUTUMN

If while I sit flatter'd by this warm sun  
Death came to me, and kissed my mouth and brow,  
And eyelids which the warm light hovers through,  
I should not count it strange. Being half won  
By hours that with a tender sadness run,  
Who would not softly lean to lips which woo  
In the Earth's grave speech? Nor could it aught undo  
Of Nature's calm observances begun  
Still to be here the idle autumn day.  
Pale leaves would circle down, and lie unstirr'd  
Where'er they fell; the tired wind hither call  
Her gentle fellows; shining beetles stray  
Up their green courts; and only yon shy bird  
A little bolder grow ere evenfall.

## VIII. LATER AUTUMN

This is the year's despair: some wind last night  
Utter'd too soon the irrevocable word,  
And the leaves heard it, and the low clouds heard;  
So a wan morning dawned of sterile light;  
Flowers drooped, or showed a startled face and white;  
The cattle cowered, and one disconsolate bird  
Chirped a weak note; last came this mist and blurred  
The hills, and fed upon the fields like blight.  
Ah, why so swift despair! There yet will be  
Warm noons, the honey'd leavings of the year,  
Hours of rich musing, ripest autumn's core,  
And late-heaped fruit, and falling hedge-berry,  
Blossoms in cottage-crofts, and yet, once more,  
A song, not less than June's, fervent and clear.

# THE HEROINES

## HELENA

(Tenth year of Troy-Siege)

She stood upon the wall of windy Troy,  
And lifted high both arms, and cried aloud  
With no man near:—  
“Troy-town and glory of Greece  
Strive, let the flame aspire, and pride of life  
Glow to white heat! Great lords be strong, rejoice,  
Lament, know victory, know defeat—then die;  
Fair is the living many-coloured play  
Of hates and loves, and fair it is to cease,  
To cease from these and all Earth’s comely things.  
I, Helena, impatient of a couch  
Dim-scented, and dark eyes my face had fed,  
And soft captivity of circling arms,  
Come forth to shed my spirit on you, a wind  
And sunlight of commingling life and death.  
City and tented plain behold who stands  
Betwixt you! Seems she worth a play of swords,

And glad expense of rival hopes and hates?  
Have the Gods given a prize which may content,  
Who set your games afoot,—no fictile vase,  
But a sufficient goblet of great gold,  
Embossed with heroes, filled with perfumed wine?  
How! doubt ye? Thus I draw the robe aside  
And bare the breasts of Helen.

Yesterday

A mortal maiden I beheld, the light  
Tender within her eyes, laying white arms  
Around her sire's mailed breast, and heard her chide  
Because his cheek was blood-splashed,—I beheld  
And did not wish me her. O, not for this  
A God's blood thronged within my mother's veins!  
For no such tender purpose rose the swan  
With ruffled plumes, and hissing in his joy  
Flashed up the stream, and held with heavy wings  
Leda, and curved the neck to reach her lips,  
And stayed, nor left her lightly. It is well  
To have quickened into glory one supreme,  
Swift hour, the century's fiery-hearted bloom,  
Which falls,—to stand a splendour paramount,  
A beacon of high hearts and fates of men,  
A flame blown round by clear, contending winds,  
Which gladden in the contest and wax strong.  
Cities of Greece, fair islands, and Troy town,  
Accept a woman's service; these my hands  
Hold not the distaff, ply not at the loom;

I store from year to year no well-wrought web  
For daughter's dowry; wide the web I make,  
Fine-tissued, costly as the Gods desire,  
Shot with a gleaming woof of lives and deaths,  
Inwrought with colours flowerlike, piteous, strange.  
Oblivion yields before me: ye winged years  
Which make escape from darkness, the red light  
Of a wild dawn upon your plumes, I stand  
The mother of the stars and winds of heaven,  
Your eastern Eos; cry across the storm!  
Through me man's heart grows wider; little town  
Asleep in silent sunshine and smooth air,  
While babe grew man beneath your girdling towers,  
Wake, wonder, lift the eager head alert,  
Snake-like, and swift to strike, while altar-flame  
Rises for plighted faith with neighbour town  
That slept upon the mountain-shelf, and showed  
A small white temple in the morning sun.  
Oh, ever one way tending you keen prows  
Which shear the shadowy waves when stars are faint  
And break with emulous cries unto the dawn,  
I gaze and draw you onward; splendid names  
Lurk in you, and high deeds, and unachieved  
Virtues, and house-o'erwhelming crimes, while life  
Leaps in sharp flame ere all be ashes grey.  
Thus have I willed it ever since the hour  
When that great lord, the one man worshipful,  
Whose hands had haled the fierce Hippolyta  
Lightly from out her throng of martial maids,

Would grace his triumph, strengthen his large joy  
With splendour of the swan-begotten child,  
Nor asked a ten years' siege to make acquist  
Of all her virgin store. No dream that was,—  
The moonlight in the woods, our singing stream,  
Eurotas, the sleek panther at my feet,  
And on my heart a hero's strong right hand.  
O draught of love immortal! Dastard world  
Too poor for great exchange of soul, too poor  
For equal lives made glorious! O too poor  
For Theseus and for Helena!

Yet now

It yields once more a brightness, if no love;  
Around me flash the tides, and in my ears  
A dangerous melody and piercing-clear  
Sing the twin siren-sisters, Death and Life;  
I rise and gird my spirit for the close.

Last night Cassandra cried 'Ruin, ruin, and ruin!'  
I mocked her not, nor disbelieved; the gloom  
Gathers, and twilight takes the unwary world.  
Hold me, ye Gods, a torch across the night,  
With one long flare blown back o'er tower and town,  
Till the last things of Troy complete themselves:  
—Then blackness, and the grey dust of a heart."

# ATALANTA

“Milanion, seven years ago this day  
You overcame me by a golden fraud,  
Traitor, and see I crown your cup with flowers,  
With violets and white sorrel from dim haunts,—  
A fair libation—ask you to what God?  
To Artemis, to Artemis my Queen.

Not by my will did you escape the spear  
Though piteous I might be for your glad life,  
Husband, and for your foolish love: the Gods  
Who heard your vows had care of you: I stooped  
Half toward the beauty of the shining thing  
Through some blind motion of an instant joy,—  
As when our babe reached arms to pluck the moon  
A great, round fruit between dark apple-boughs,—  
And half, marking your wile, to fling away  
Needless advantage, conquer carelessly,  
And pass the goal with one light finger-touch  
Just while you leaned forth the bent body's length  
To reach it. Could I guess I strove with three,  
With Aphrodite, Eros, and the third—  
Milanion? There upon the maple-post  
Your right hand rested: the event had sprung  
Complete from darkness, and possessed the world  
Ere yet conceived: upon the edge of doom



I stood with foot arrested and blind heart,  
Aware of nought save some unmastered fate  
And reddening neck and brow. I heard you cry  
'Judgment, both umpires!' saw you stand erect,  
Panting, and with a face so glad, so great  
It shone through all my dull bewilderment  
A beautiful uncomprehended joy,  
One perfect thing and bright in a strange world.  
But when I looked to see my father shamed,  
A-choke with rage and words of proper scorn,  
He nodded, and the beard upon his breast  
Pulled twice or thrice, well-pleased, and laughed aloud,  
And while the wrinkles gathered round his eyes  
Cried 'Girl, well done! My brother's son retain  
Shrewd head upon your shoulders! Maidens ho!  
A veil for Atalanta, and a zone  
Male fingers may unclasp! Lead home the bride,  
Prepare the nuptial chamber!' At his word  
My life turned round: too great the shame had grown  
With all men leagued to mock me. Could I stay,  
Confront the vulgar gladness of the world  
At high emprise defeated, a free life  
Tethered, light dimmed, a virtue singular  
Subdued to ways of common use and wont?  
Must I become the men's familiar jest,  
The comment of the matron-guild? I turned,  
I sought the woods, sought silence, solitude,  
Green depths divine, where the soft-footed ounce  
Lurks, and the light deer comes and drinks and goes,

Familiar paths in which the mind might gain  
Footing, and haply from a vantage-ground  
Drive this new fate an arm's-length, hand's-breadth off  
A little while, till certitude of sight  
And strength returned.

At evening I went back,  
Walked past the idle groups at gossipry,  
Sought you, and laid my hand upon your wrist,  
Drew you apart, and with no shaken voice  
Spoke, while the swift, hard strokes my heart out-beat  
Seemed growing audible, 'Milanion,  
I am your wife for freedom and fair deeds:  
Choose: am I such an one a man could love?  
What need you? Some soft song to soothe your life,  
Or a clear cry at daybreak?' And I ceased.  
How deemed you that first moment? That the Gods  
Had changed my heart? That I since morn had grown  
Haunter of Aphrodite's golden shrine,  
Had kneeled before the victress, vowed my vow,  
Besought her pardon, 'Aphrodite, grace!  
Accept the rueful Atalanta's gifts,  
Rose wreaths and snow-white doves'?

In the dim woods  
There is a sacred place, a solitude  
Within their solitude, a heart of strength  
Within their strength. The rocks are heaped around  
A goblet of great waters ever fed

By one swift stream which flings itself in air  
With all the madness, mirth and melody  
Of twenty rivulets gathered in the hills  
Where might escapes in gladness. Here the trees  
Strike deeper roots into the heart of earth,  
And hold more high communion with the heavens;  
Here in the hush of noon the silence broods  
More full of vague divinity; the light  
Slow-changing and the shadows as they shift  
Seem characters of some inscrutable law,  
And one who lingers long will almost hope  
The secret of the world may be surprised  
Ere he depart. It is a haunt beloved  
Of Artemis, the echoing rocks have heard  
Her laughter and her lore, and the brown stream  
Flashed, smitten by the splendour of her limbs.  
Hither I came; here turned, and dared confront  
Pursuing thoughts; here held my life at gaze,  
If ruined at least to clear loose wrack away,  
Study its lines of bare dismantlement,  
And shape a strict despair. With fixed hard lips,  
Dry-eyed, I set my face against the stream  
To deal with fate; the play of woven light  
Gleaming and glancing on the rippled flood  
Grew to a tyranny; and one visioned face  
Would glide into the circle of my sight,  
Would glide and pass away, so glad, so great  
The imminent joy it brought seemed charged with fear.  
I rose, and paced from trunk to trunk, brief track

This way and that; at least my will maintained  
Her law upon my limbs; they needs must turn  
At the appointed limit. A keen cry  
Rose from my heart—‘Toils of the world grow strong,  
‘Yield strength, yield strength to rend them to my hands;  
‘Be thou apparent, Queen! in dubious ways  
‘Lo my feet fail; cry down the forest glade,  
‘Pierce with thy voice the tangle and dark boughs,  
‘Call, and I follow thee.’

What things made up  
Memorial for the Presence of the place  
Thenceforth to hold? Only the torrent’s leap  
Endlessly vibrating, monotonous rhythm  
Of the swift footstep pacing to and fro,  
Only a soul’s reiterated cry  
Under the calm, controlling, ancient trees,  
And tutelary ward and watch of heaven  
Felt through steep inlets which the upper airs  
Blew wider.

On the grass at last I lay  
Seized by a peace divine, I know not how;  
Passive, yet never so possessed of power,  
Strong, yet content to feel not use my strength  
Sustained a babe upon the breasts of life  
Yet armed with adult will, a shining spear.  
O strong deliverance of the larger law  
Which strove not with the less! impetuous youth

Caught up in ampler force of womanhood!  
Co-operant ardours of joined lives! the calls  
Of heart to heart in chase of strenuous deeds!  
Virgin and wedded freedom not disjointed,  
And loyal married service to my Queen!

Husband, have lesser gains these seven good years  
Been yours because you chose no gracious maid  
Whose hands had woven in the women's room  
Many fair garments, while her dreaming heart  
Had prescience of the bridal; one whose claims,  
Tender exactions feminine, had pleased  
Fond husband, one whose gentle gifts had pleased,  
Soft playful touches, little amorous words,  
Untutored thoughts that widened up toward yours,  
With trustful homage of uplifted eyes,  
And sweetest sorrows lightly comforted?  
Have we two challenged each the other's heart  
Too highly? Have our joys been all too large,  
No gleaming gems on finger or on neck  
A man may turn and touch caressingly,  
But ampler than this heaven we stand beneath—  
Wide wings of Presences august? Our lives,  
Were it not better they had stood apart  
A little space, letting the sweet sense grow  
Of distance bridged by love? Had that full calm,—  
I may not question since you call it true,—  
Found in some rightness of a woman's will,  
Been gladder through perturbing touch of doubt,

By brief unrest made exquisitely aware  
Of all its dear possession? Have our eyes  
Met with too calm directness—soul to soul  
Turned with the unerroneous long regard,  
Until no stuff remains for dreams to weave,  
Nought but unmeasured faithfulness, clear depths  
Pierced by the sun, and yielding to the eye  
Which searches, yet not fathoms? Did my lips  
Lay on your lips too great a pledge of love  
With awe too rapturous? Teach me how I fail,  
Recount what things your life has missed through me,  
Appease me with new needs; my strength is weak  
Trembling toward perfect service.”

In her eyes  
Tears stood and utterance ceased. Wondering the boy  
Parthenopœus stopped his play and gazed.

# EUROPA

“He stood with head erect fronting the herd;  
At the first sight of him I knew the God  
And had no fear. The grass is sweet and long  
Up the east land backed by a pale blue heaven:  
Grey, shining gravel shelves toward the sea  
Which sang and sparkled; between these he stood,  
Beautiful, with imperious head, firm foot,  
And eyes resolved on present victory,  
Which swerved not from the full acquist of joy,  
Calmly triumphant. Did I see at all  
The creamy hide, deep dewlap, little horns,  
Or hear the girls describe them? I beheld  
Zeus, and the law of my completed life.  
Therefore the ravishment of some great calm  
Possessed me, and I could not basely start  
Or scream; if there was terror in my breast  
It was to see the inevitable bliss  
In prone descent from heaven; apart I lived  
Held in some solitude, intense and clear,  
Even while amid the frolic girls I stooped  
And praised the flowers we gathered, they and I,  
Pink-streaked convolvulus the warm sand bears,  
Orchids, dark poppies with the crumpled leaf,  
And reeds and giant rushes from a pond  
Where the blue dragon-fly shimmers and shifts.

All these were notes of music, harmonies  
Fashioned to underlie a resonant song,  
Which sang how no more days of flower-culling  
Little Europa must desire; henceforth  
The large needs of the world resumed her life,  
So her least joy must be no trivial thing,  
But ordered as the motion of the stars,  
Or grand incline of sun-flower to the sun.

By this the God was near; my soul waxed strong,  
And wider orb'd the vision of the world  
As fate drew nigh. He stooped, all gentleness,  
Inviting touches of the tender hands,  
And wore the wreaths they twisted round his horns  
In lordly-playful wise, me all this while  
Summoning by great mandates at my heart,  
Which silenced every less authentic call,  
Away, away, from girlhood, home, sweet friends,  
The daily dictates of my mother's will,  
Agenor's cherishing hand, and all the ways  
Of the calm household. I would fain have felt  
Some ruth to part from these, the tender ties  
Severing with thrills of passion. Can I blame  
My heart for light surrender of things dear,  
And hardness of a little selfish soul?  
Nay: the decree of joy was over me,  
There was the altar, I, the sacrifice  
Foredoomed to life, not death; the victim bound  
Looked for the stroke, the world's one fact for her,



The blissful consummation: straight to this  
Her course had tended from the hour of birth.  
Even till this careless morn of maidenhood  
A sudden splendour changed to life's high noon:  
For this my mother taught me gracious things,  
My father's thoughts had dealt with me, for this  
The least flower blossomed, the least cloud went by,  
All things conspired for this; the glad event  
Summed my full past and held it, as the fruit  
Holds the fair sequence of the bud and flower  
In soft matureness.

Now he bent the knee;  
I never doubted of my part to do,  
Nor lingered idly, since to veil command  
In tender invitation pleased my lord;  
I sat, and round his neck one arm I laid  
Beyond all chance secure. Whether my weight  
Or the soft pressure of the encircling arm  
Quickened in him some unexpected bliss  
I know not, but his flight was one steep rush.  
O uncontrollable and joyous rage!  
O splendour of the multitudinous sea!  
Swift foam about my feet, the eager stroke  
Of the strong swimmer, new sea-creatures brave,  
And uproar of blown conch, and shouting lips  
Under the open heaven; till Crete rose fair  
With steadfast shining peak, and promontories.

Shed not a leaf, O plane-tree, not a leaf,  
Let sacred shadow, and slumbrous sound remain  
Always, where Zeus looked down upon his bride.”

# ANDROMEDA

“This is my joy—that when my soul had wrought  
Her single victory over fate and fear,  
He came, who was deliverance. At the first,  
Though the rough-bearded fellows bruised my wrists  
Holding them backwards while they drove the bolts,  
And stared around my body, workman-like,  
I did not argue nor bewail; but when  
The flash and dip of equal oars had passed,  
And I was left a thing for sky and sea  
To encircle, gaze on, wonder at, not save—  
The clear resolve which I had grasped and held,  
Slipped as a dew-drop slips from some flower-cup  
O’erweighted, and I longed to cry aloud  
One sharp, great cry, and scatter the fixed will,  
In fond self-pity. Have you watched night-long,  
Above a face from which the life recedes,  
And seen death set his seal before the dawn?  
You do not shriek and clasp the hands, but just  
When morning finds the world once more all good  
And ready for wave’s leap and swallow’s flight,  
There comes a drift from undiscovered flowers,  
A drone of sailing bee, a dance of light  
Among the awakened leaves, a touch, a tang,  
A nameless nothing, and the world turns round,  
And the full soul runs over, and tears flow,

And it is seen a piteous thing to die.  
So fared it there with me; the ripple ran  
Crisp to my feet; the tufted sea-pink bloomed  
From a cleft rock, I saw the insects drop  
From blossom into blossom; and the wide  
Intolerable splendour of the sea,  
Calm in a liquid hush of summer morn,  
Girdled me, and no cloud relieved the sky.  
I had refused to drink the proffered wine  
Before they bound me, and my strength was less  
Than needful: yet the cry escaped not, yet  
My purpose had not fallen abroad in ruin;  
Only the perfect knowledge I had won  
Of things which fate decreed deserted me,  
The vision I had held of life and death  
Was blurred by some vague mist of piteousness,  
Nor could I lean upon a steadfast will.  
Therefore I closed both eyes resolved to search  
Backwards across the abysm, and find Death there,  
And hold him with my hand, and scan his face  
By my own choice, and read his strict intent  
On lip and brow,—not hunted to his feet  
And cowering slavewise; ‘Death,’ I whispered, ‘Death,’  
Calling him whom I needed: and he came.

Wherefore record the travail of the soul  
Through darkness to grey light, the cloudy war,  
The austere calm, the bitter victory?  
It seemed that I had mastered fate, and held,

Still with shut eyes, the passion of my heart  
Compressed, and cast the election of my will  
Into that scale made heavy with the woe  
Of all the world, and fair relinquished lives.  
Suddenly the broad sea was vibrated,  
And the air shaken with confused noise  
Not like the steadfast splash and creak of oars,  
And higher on my foot the ripple slid.  
The monster was abroad beneath the sun.  
This therefore was the moment—could my soul  
Sustain her trial? And the soul replied  
A swift, sure ‘Yes’: yet must I look forth once,  
Confront my anguish, nor drop blindly down  
From horror into horror: and I looked—  
O thou deliverance, thou bright victory  
I saw thee, and was saved! The middle air  
Was cleft by thy impatience of revenge,  
Thy zeal to render freedom to things bound:  
The conquest sitting on thy brow, the joy  
Of thy unerring flight became to me  
Nowise mere hope, but full enfranchisement.  
A sculptor of the isles has carved the deed  
Upon a temple’s frieze; the maiden chained  
Lifts one free arm across her eyes to hide  
The terror of the moment, and her head  
Sideways averted writhes the slender neck:  
While with a careless grace in flying curve,  
And glad like Hermes in his aery poise,  
Toward the gaping throat a youth extends

The sword held lightly. When to sacrifice  
I pass at morn with my tall Sthenelos,  
I smile, but do not speak. No! when my gaze  
First met him I was saved; because the world  
Could hold so brave a creature I was free:  
Here one had come with not my father's eyes  
Which darkened to the clamour of the crowd,  
And gave a grieved assent; not with the eyes  
Of anguish-stricken Cassiopeia, dry  
And staring as I passed her to the boat.  
Was not the beauty of his strength and youth  
Warrant for many good things in the world  
Which could not be so poor while nourishing him?  
What faithlessness of heart could countervail  
The witness of that brow? What dastard chains?  
Did he not testify of sovereign powers  
O'ermatching evil, awful charities  
Which save and slay, the terror of clear joy,  
Unquenchable intolerance of ill,  
Order subduing chaos, beauty pledged  
To conquest of all foul deformities?  
And was there need to turn my head aside,  
I, who had one sole thing to do, no more,  
To watch the deed? I know the careless grace  
My Perseus wears in manage of the steed,  
Or shooting the swift disc: not such the mode  
Of that victorious moment of descent  
When the large tranquil might his soul contains  
Was gathered for a swift abolishment

Of proud brute-tyranny. He seemed in air  
A shining spear which hisses in its speed  
And smites through boss and breastplate. Did he see  
Andromeda, who never glanced at her  
But set his face against the evil thing?  
I know not; yet one truth I may not doubt  
How ere the wallowing monster blind and vast  
Turned a white belly to the sun, he stood  
Beside me with some word of comfort strong  
Nourishing the heart like choral harmonies.  
O this was then my joy, that I could give  
A soul not saved from wretched female fright,  
Or anarchy of self-abandoned will,  
But one which had achieved deliverance,  
And wrought with shaping hands among the stuff  
Which fate presented. Had I shrunk from Death?  
Might I not therefore unashamed accept—  
In a calm wonder of unfaltering joy—  
Life, the fair gift he laid before my feet?  
Somewhat a partner of his deed I seemed;  
His equal? Nay, yet upright at his side  
Scarce lower by a head and helmet's height  
Touching my Perseus' shoulder.

He has wrought  
Great deeds. Athena loves to honour him;  
And I have borne him sons. Look, yonder goes  
Lifting the bow, Eleios, the last-born.”

# EURYDICE

“Now must this waste of vain desire have end:  
Fetter these thoughts which traverse to and fro  
The road which has no issue! We are judged.  
O wherefore could I not uphold his heart?  
Why claimed I not some partnership with him  
In the strict test, urging my right of wife?  
How have I let him fall? I, knowing thee  
My Orpheus, bounteous giver of rich gifts,  
Not all inured in practice of the will,  
Worthier than I, yet weaker to sustain  
An inner certitude against the blank  
And silence of the senses; so no more  
My heart helps thine, and henceforth there remains  
No gift to thee from me, who would give all,  
Only the memory of me growing faint  
Until I seem a thing incredible,  
Some high, sweet dream, which was not, nor could be.  
Ay, and in idle fields of asphodel  
Must it not be that I shall fade indeed,  
No memory of me, but myself; these hands  
Ceasing from mastery and use, my thoughts  
Losing distinction in the vague, sweet air,  
The heart’s swift pulses slackening to the sob  
Of the forgetful river, with no deed  
Pre-eminent to dare and to achieve,



No joy for climbing to, no clear resolve  
From which the soul swerves never, no ill thing  
To rid the world of, till I am no more  
Eurydice, and shouldst thou at thy time  
Descend, and hope to find a helpmate here,  
I were grown slavish, like the girls men buy  
Soft-bodied, foolish-faced, luxurious-eyed,  
And meet to be another thing than wife.

Would that it had been thus: when the song ceased  
And laughterless Aidoneus lifted up  
The face, and turned his grave persistent eyes  
Upon the singer, I had forward stepped  
And spoken—‘King! he has wrought well, nor failed,  
Who ever heard divine large song like this,  
Keener than sunbeam, wider than the air,  
And shapely as the mould of faultless fruit?  
And now his heart upon the gale of song  
Soars with wide wing, and he is strong for flight,  
Not strong for treading with the careful foot:  
Grant me the naked trial of the will  
Divested of all colour, scents and song:  
The deed concerns the wife; I claim my share.’  
O then because Persephone was by  
With shadowed eyes when Orpheus sang of flowers,  
He would have yielded. And I stepping forth  
From the clear radiance of the singer’s heights,  
Made calm through vision of his wider truth,  
And strengthened by deep beauty to hold fast

The presences of the invisible things,  
Had led the way. I know how in that mood  
He leans on me as babe on mother's breast,  
Nor could he choose but let his foot descend  
Where mine left lightest pressure; so are passed  
The brute three-visaged, and the flowerless ways,  
Nor have I turned my head; and now behold  
The greyness of remote terrestrial light,  
And I step swifter. Does he follow still?  
O surely since his will embraces mine  
Closer than clinging hand can clasp a hand:  
No need to turn and dull with visible proof  
The certitude that soul relies on soul!  
So speed we to the day; and now we touch  
Warm grass, and drink the Sun. O Earth, O Sun,  
Not you I need, but Orpheus' breast, and weep  
The gladdest tears that ever woman shed,  
And may be weak awhile, and need to know  
The sustenance and comfort of his arms.

Self-foolery of dreams; come bitter truth.  
Yet he has sung at least a perfect song  
While the Gods heard him, and I stood beside  
O not applauding, but at last content,  
Fearless for him, and calm through perfect joy,  
Seeing at length his foot upon the heights  
Of highest song, by me discerned from far,  
Now suddenly attained in confident  
And errorless ascension. Did I ask

The lesser joy, lips' touch and clasping arms,  
Or was not this salvation? For I urged  
Always, in jealous service to his art,  
'Now thou hast told their secrets to the trees  
Of which they muse through lullèd summer nights;  
Thou hast gazed downwards in the formless gulf  
Of the brute-mind, and canst control the will  
Of snake, and brooding panther fiery-eyed,  
And lark in middle heaven: leave these behind!  
And let some careless singer of the fields  
Set to the shallow sound of cymbal-stroke  
The Faun a-dance; some less true-tempered soul,  
Which cannot shape to harmony august  
The splendour and the tumult of the world,  
Inflame to frenzy of delirious rage  
The Mœnad's breast; yea, and the hearts of men,  
Smoke of whose fire upcurls from little roofs,  
Let singers of the wine-cup and the roast,  
The whirling spear, the toy-like chariot-race,  
And bickering counsel of contending kings  
Delight them: leave thou these; sing thou for Gods.'  
And thou hast sung for Gods; and I have heard.

I shall not fade beneath this sunless sky,  
Mixed in the wandering, ineffectual tribe;  
For these have known no moment when the soul  
Stood vindicated, laying sudden hands  
On immortality of joy, and love  
Which sought not, saw not, knew not, could not know

The instruments of sense; I shall not fade.  
Yea, and thy face detains me evermore  
Within the realm of light. Love, wherefore blame  
Thy heart because it sought me? Could the years'  
Whole sum of various fashioned happiness  
Exceed the measure of that eager face  
Importunate and pure, still lit with song,  
Turning from song to comfort of my love,  
And thirsty for my presence? We are saved!  
Yield Heracles, thou brawn and thews of Zeus,  
Yield up thy glory on Thessalian ground,  
Competitor of Death in single strife!  
The lyre methinks outdoes the club and fist,  
And beauty's ingress the outrageous force  
Of tyrant though beneficent; supreme  
This feat remains, a memory shaped for Gods.

Nor canst thou wholly lose me from thy life;  
Still I am with thee; still my hand keeps thine;  
Now I restrain from too intemperate grief  
Being a portion of the thoughts that claim  
Thy service; now I urge with that good pain  
Which wastes and feeds the spirit, a desire  
Unending; now I lurk within thy will  
As vigour; now am gleaming through the world  
As beauty; and if greater thoughts must lay  
Their solemn light on thee, outshining mine,  
And in some far faint-gleaming hour of Hell  
I stand unknown and muffled by the boat

Leaning an eager ear to catch some speech  
Of thee, and if some comer tell aloud  
How Orpheus who had loved Eurydice  
Was summoned by the Gods to fill with joy  
And clamour of celestial song the courts  
Of bright Olympus,—I, with pang of pride  
And pain dissolved in rapture, will return  
Appeased, with sense of conquest stern and high.”

But while she spoke, upon a chestnut trunk  
Fallen from cliffs of Thracian Rhodope  
Sat Orpheus, for he deemed himself alone,  
And sang. But bands of wild-eyed women roamed  
The hills, whom he had passed with calm disdain.  
And now the shrilling Bercynthian pipe  
Sounded, blown horn, and frantic female cries:  
He ceased from song and looked for the event.

# BY THE SEA

## I. THE ASSUMPTION

Why would the open sky not be denied  
Possession of me, when I sat to-day  
Rock-couched, and round my feet the soft slave lay,  
My singing Sea, dark-bosom'd, dusky-eyed?  
She breathed low mystery of song, she sighed,  
And stirred herself, and set lithe limbs to play  
In blandishing serpent-wreaths, and would betray  
An anklet gleaming, or a swaying side.  
Why could she not detain me? Why must I  
Devote myself to the dread Heaven, adore  
The spacious pureness, the large ardour? why  
Sprang forth my heart as though all wanderings  
Had end? To what last bliss did I upsoar  
Beating on indefatigable wings?

## II. THE ARTIST'S WAITING

Tender impatience quickening, quickening;  
O heart within me that art grown a sea,  
How vexed with longing all thy live waves be,  
How broken with desire! A ceaseless wing  
O'er every green sea-ridge goes fluttering,  
And there are cries and long reluctancy,  
Swift ardours, and the clash of waters free,  
Fain for the coming of some perfect Thing.  
Emerge white Wonder, be thou born a Queen!  
Let shine the splendours of thy loveliness  
From the brow's radiance to the equal poise  
Of calm, victorious feet; let thy serene  
Command go forth; replenish with strong joys  
The spaces and the sea-deeps measureless.

### III. COUNSELLORS

Who are chief counsellors of me? Who know  
My heart's desire and every secret thing?  
Three of one fellowship: the encompassing  
Strong Sea, who mindful of Earth's ancient woe  
Still surges on with swift, undaunted flow  
That no sad shore should lack his comforting;  
And next the serene Sky, whether he ring  
With flawless blue a wilderness, or show  
Tranced in the Twilight's arms his fair child-star;  
Third of the three, eldest and lordliest,  
Love, all whose wings are wide above my head,  
Whose eyes are clearer heavens, whose lips have said  
Low words more rare than the quired sea-songs are,—  
O Love, high things and stern thou counselest.



## IV. EVENING

Light ebbs from off the Earth; the fields are strange,  
Dusk, trackless, tenantless; now the mute sky  
Resigns itself to Night and Memory,  
And no wind will yon sunken clouds derange,  
No glory enrapture them; from cot or grange  
The rare voice ceases; one long-breathèd sigh,  
And steeped in summer sleep the world must lie;  
All things are acquiescing in the change.  
Hush! while the vaulted hollow of the night  
Deepens, what voice is this the sea sends forth,  
Disconsolate iterance, a passionless moan?  
Ah! now the Day is gone, and tyrannous Light,  
And the calm presence of fruit-bearing Earth:  
Cry, Sea! it is thy hour; thou art alone.

## V. JOY

Spring-tides of Pleasure in the blood, keen thrill  
Of eager nerves,—but ended as a dream;  
Look! the wind quickens, and the long waves gleam  
Shoreward, and all this deep noon hour will fill  
Each lone sea-cave with mirth immeasurable,  
Huge sport of Ocean's brood; yet eve's red sky  
Fades o'er spent waters, weltering sullenly,  
The dank piled weed, the sand-waste grey and still.  
Sad Pleasure in the moon's control! But Joy  
Is stable; is discovered law; the birth  
Of dreadful light; life's one imperative way;  
The rigour hid in song; flowers' strict employ  
Which turn to meet their sun; the roll of Earth  
Swift and perpetual through the night and day.

## VI. OCEAN

More than bare mountains 'neath a naked sky,  
Or star-enchanted hollows of the night  
When clouds are riven, or the most sacred light  
Of summer dawns, art thou a mystery  
And awe and terror and delight, O sea!  
Our Earth is simple-hearted, sad to-day  
Beneath the hush of snow, next morning gay  
Because west-winds have promised to the lea  
Violets and cuckoo-buds; and sweetly these  
Live innocent lives, each flower in its green field,  
Joying as children in sun, air, and sleep.  
But thou art terrible, with the unrevealed  
Burden of dim lamentful prophecies,  
And thy lone life is passionate and deep.

## VII. NEWS FOR LONDON

Whence may I glean a just return, my friend,  
For tidings of your great world hither borne?  
What garbs of new opinion men have worn  
I wot not, nor what fame world-without-end  
Sprouted last night, nor know I to contend  
For Irving or the Italian; but forlorn  
In this odd angle of the isle from morn  
Till eve, nor sow, nor reap, nor get, nor spend.  
Yet have I heard the sea-gulls scream for glee  
Treading the drenched rock-ridges, and the gale  
Hiss over tremulous heath-bells, while the bee  
Driven sidelong quested low; and I have seen  
The live sea-hollows, and moving mounds grey-green,  
And watched the flying foam-bow flush and fail.

# AMONG THE ROCKS

Never can we be strangers, you and I,  
Nor quite disown our mysteries of kin,  
Grey Sea-rocks, since I sat an hour to-day  
Companion of the Ocean and of you.  
I, sensitive soft flesh a thorn invades,  
The light breath of a rose can win aside,  
Flesh fashioned to be hourly tried and thrill'd,  
Delighted, tortured, to betray whose ward  
The unready heart is ruler, still surprised,  
With emissary flushes swift and false,  
And tremulous to touches of the stars.  
You, spiny ridges of the land, rude backs,  
Clawless and wingless, half-created things,  
Monsters at ease before the sun and sea,  
Untamed, unshrinking, unpersuadable,  
My kindred.

For the wide-delivering womb  
Which casts abroad a mammoth as a man,  
And still conceals the new and better birth,  
Bore me and you. Old parents of the Sphinx  
What words primeval murmured in my ears  
To-day between the lapping of the waves?  
What recognitions flashed and disappeared?

What rare faint touches passed of sympathy  
From you to me, from me to you? What sense  
Of the ancestral things shadowed the heart,  
Cloud-like, and with the pleasure of a cloud.  
Therefore I know from henceforth that the shrill  
Short crying of the sea-lark when his feet  
Touch where the wave slips off the shining sand  
Pierces you; and the wide and luminous air  
Impregnate with sharp sea smells is to you  
A passion and allurements; and the sun  
At mid-day loads your sense with drowsy warmth,  
And in the waver and echo of your caves,  
You cherish memories of the billowy chaunt,  
And ponder its dim prophecy.

And I,—

Lo here I strike upon the granite too,  
Something is here austere and obdurate  
As you are, something rugged and untamed.  
A strength behind the will. I am not all  
The shapely, agile creature named a man,  
So artful, with the quick-conceiving brain,  
Nerve-network, and the hand to grasp and hold,  
Most dexterous of kinds that wage the strife  
Of being through the years. I am not all  
This creature with the various heart, alive  
To curious joys, rare anguish, skilled in shames,  
Prides, hatreds, loves, fears, frauds, the heart which turns  
A sudden venomous asp, the heart which bleeds

The red, great drops of glad self-sacrifice.  
Pierce below these and seek the primal layer!  
Behind Apollo loom the Earth-born Ones,  
Half-god, half-brute; behind this symmetry,  
This versatility of heart and brain  
A strength abides, sustaining thought and love,  
Untamed, unshrinking, unpersuadable,  
At ease before the powers of Earth and Heaven,  
Equal to any, of no younger years,  
Calm as the greatest, haughty as the best,  
Of imprescriptible authority.

Down upon you I sink, and leave myself,  
My vain, frail self, and find repose on you,  
Prime Force, whether amassed through myriad years  
From dear accretions of dead ancestry,  
Or ever welling from the source of things  
In undulation vast and unperceived,  
Down upon you I sink and lose myself!

My child that shouts and races on the sand  
Your cry restores me. Have I been with Pan,  
Kissing the hoofs of his goat-majesty?  
You come, no granite of the nether earth,  
Bright sea-flower rather, shining foam that flies,  
Yet sweet as blossom of our inland fields.

# TO A YEAR

Fly, Year, not backward down blind gulfs of night,  
Thick with the swarm of miscreated things:  
Forth, flying year, through calms and broader light,  
Clear-eyed, strong-bosom'd year, on strenuous wings;  
Bearing a song more high-intoned, more holy  
Than the wild Swan's melodious melancholy,  
More rapturous than the atom lark outflings.

I follow on slow foot and unsubdued:  
Have I not heard thy cry across the wind?  
Not seen thee, Slayer of the serpent brood,—  
Error, and doubt, and death, and anguish blind?  
I follow, I shall know thee by thy plumes  
Flame-tipped, when on that morn of conquered tombs,  
I praise amidst my years the doom assigned.



# A SONG OF THE NEW DAY

The tender Sorrows of the twilight leave me,  
And shall I want the fanning of smooth wings?  
Shall I not miss sweet sorrows? Will it grieve me  
To hear no cooing from soft dove-like things?

Let Evening hear them! O wide Dawn uprisen,  
Know me all thine; and ye, whose level flight  
Has pierced the drear hours and the cloudy prison,  
Cry for the pathless spaces and the light!

# SWALLOWS

Wide fields of air left luminous,  
Though now the uplands comprehend  
How the sun's loss is ultimate:  
The silence grows; but still to us  
From yon air-winnowing breasts elate  
The tiny shrieks of glee descend.

Deft wings, each moment is resigned  
Some touch of day, some pulse of light,  
While yet in poised, delicious curve,  
Ecstatic doublings down the wind,  
Light dash and dip and sidelong swerve,  
You try each dainty trick of flight.

Will not your airy glee relent  
At all? The aimless frolic cease?  
Know ye no touch of quelling pain,  
Nor joy's more strict admonishment,  
No tender awe at day-light's wane,  
Ye slaves of delicate caprice?

Hush, once again that cry intense!  
High-venturing spirits have your will!  
Urge the last freak, prolong your glee,

Keen voyagers, while still the immense  
Sea-spaces haunt your memory,  
With zests and pangs ineffable.

Not in the sunshine of old woods  
Ye won your warrant to be gay  
By duteous, sweet observances,  
Who dared through darkening solitudes,  
And 'mid the hiss of alien seas,  
The larger ordinance obey.

# MEMORIALS OF TRAVEL

## I. COACHING

(In Scotland)

Where have I been this perfect summer day,  
—Or *fortnight* is it, since I rose from bed,  
Devour'd that kippered fish, the oatmeal bread,  
And mounted to this box? O bowl away  
Swift stagers through the dusk, I will not say  
“Enough,” nor care where I have been or be,  
Nor know one name of hill, or lake, or lea,  
Or moor, or glen! Were not the clouds at play  
Nameless among the hills, and fair as dreams?  
On such a day we must love things not words,  
And memory take or leave them as they are.  
On such a day! What unimagined streams  
Are in the world, how many haunts of birds,  
What fields and flowers,—and what an evening Star!

## II. IN A MOUNTAIN PASS

(In Scotland)

To what wild blasts of tyrannous harmony  
Uprose these rocky walls, mass threatening mass,  
Dusk, shapeless shapes, around a desolate pass?  
What deep heart of the ancient hills set free  
The passion, the desire, the destiny  
Of this lost stream? Yon clouds that break and form,  
Light vanward squadrons of the joyous storm,  
They gather hither from what untrack'd sea?  
Primeval kindred! here the mind regains  
Its vantage ground against the world; here thought  
Wings up the silent waste of air on broad  
Undaunted pinion; man's imperial pains  
Are ours, and visiting fears, and joy unsought,  
Native resolve, and partnership with God.

# III. THE CASTLE

(In Scotland)

The tenderest ripple touched and touched the shore;  
The tenderest light was in the western sky;—  
Its one soft phrase, closing reluctantly,  
The sea articulated o'er and o'er  
To comfort all tired things; and one might pore,  
Till mere oblivion took the heart and eye,  
On that slow-fading, amber radiancy  
Past the long levels of the ocean-floor.  
A turn,—the castle fronted me, four-square,  
Holding its seaward crag, abrupt, intense  
Against the west, an apparition bold  
Of naked human will; I stood aware,  
With sea and sky, of powers unowned of sense,  
Presences awful, vast, and uncontrolled.

## IV. Αισθητική φαντασία

(In Ireland)

The sound is in my ears of mountain streams!  
I cannot close my lids but some grey rent  
Of wildered rock, some water's clear descent  
In shattering crystal, pine-trees soft as dreams  
Waving perpetually, the sudden gleams  
Of remote sea, a dear surprise of flowers,  
Some grace or wonder of to-day's long hours  
Straightway possesses the moved sense, which teems  
With fantasy unbid. O fair, large day!  
The unpractised sense brings heavings from a sea  
Of life too broad, and yet the billows range,  
The elusive footing glides. Come, Sleep, allay  
The trouble with thy heaviest balms, and change  
These pulsing visions to still Memory.

# V. ON THE SEA-CLIFF

(In Ireland)

Ruins of a church with its miraculous well,  
O'er which the Christ, a squat-limbed dwarf of stone,  
Great-eyed, and huddled on his cross, has known  
The sea-mists and the sunshine, stars that fell  
And stars that rose, fierce winter's chronicle,  
And centuries of dead summers. From his throne  
Fronting the dawn the elf has ruled alone,  
And saved this region fair from pagan hell.  
Turn! June's great joy abroad; each bird, flower, stream  
Loves life, loves love; wide ocean amorously  
Spreads to the sun's embrace; the dulse-weeds sway,  
The glad gulls are afloat. Grey Christ to-day  
Our ban on thee! Rise, let the white breasts gleam,  
Unvanquished Venus of the northern sea!



## VI. ASCETIC NATURE

(In Ireland)

Passion and song, and the adorned hours  
Of floral loveliness, hopes grown most sweet,  
And generous patience in the ripening heat,  
A mother's bosom, a bride's face of flowers  
—Knows Nature aught so fair? Witness ye Powers  
Which rule the virgin heart of this retreat  
To rarer issues, ye who render meet  
Earth, purged and pure, for gracious heavenly dowers!  
The luminous pale lake, the pearl-grey sky,  
The wave that gravely murmurs meek desires,  
The abashed yet lit expectance of the whole,  
—These and their beauty speak of earthly fires  
Long quenched, clear aims, deliberate sanctity,—  
O'er the white forehead lo! the aureole.

## VII. RELICS

(In Switzerland)

What relic of the dear, dead yesterday  
Shall my heart keep? The visionary light  
Of dawn? Alas! it is a thing too bright,  
God does not give such memories away.  
Nor choose I one fair flower of those that sway  
To the chill breathing of the waterfall  
In rocky angles black with scattering spray,  
Fair though no sunbeam lays its coronal  
Of light on their pale brows; nor glacier-gleam  
I choose, nor eve's red glamour; 'twas at noon  
Resting I found this speedwell, while a stream,  
That knew the immemorial inland croon,  
Sang in my ears, and lulled me to a dream  
Of English meadows, and one perfect June.

# VIII. ON THE PIER OF BOULOGNE

(A Reminiscence of 1870)

A venal singer to a thrumming note  
Chanted the civic war-song, that red flower  
Of melody seized in a sudden hour  
By frenzied winds of change, and borne afloat  
A live light in the storm; and now by rote  
To a cold crowd, while vague and sad the tide  
Loomed after sunset and the grey gulls cried,  
The verses quavered from a hireling throat.  
Wherefore should English eyes their right forbear,  
Or droop for smitten France? let the tossed sou,  
Before they turn, be quittance for the stare.  
O Lady, who, clear-voiced, with impulse true  
To lift that cry "*To Arms!*" alone would dare,  
My heart received a golden alms from you!

## IX. DOVER

### (In a Field)

A joy has met me on this English ground  
I looked not for. O gladness, fields still green!  
Listen,—the going of a murmurous sound  
Along the corn; there is not to be seen  
In all the land a single pilèd sheaf  
Or line of grain new-fallen, and not a tree  
Has felt as yet within its lightest leaf  
The year's despair; nay, Summer saves for me  
Her bright, late flowers. O my Summer-time  
Named low as lost, I turn, and find you here—  
Where else but in our blessed English clime  
That lingers o'er the sweet days of the year,  
Days of long dreaming under spacious skies  
Ere melancholy winds of Autumn rise.

# AN AUTUMN SONG

Long Autumn rain;  
White mists which choke the vale, and blot the sides  
Of the bewildered hills; in all the plain  
No field agleam where the gold pageant was,  
And silent o'er a tangle of drenched grass  
The blackbird glides.

In the heart,—fire,  
Fire and clear air and cries of water-springs,  
And large, pure winds; all April's quick desire,  
All June's possession; a most fearless Earth  
Drinking great ardours; and the rapturous birth  
Of wingèd things.

# BURDENS

Are sorrows hard to bear,—the ruin  
Of flowers, the rotting of red fruit,  
A love's decease, a life's undoing,  
And summer slain, and song-birds mute,  
And skies of snow and bitter air?  
These things, you deem, are hard to bear.

But ah, the burden, the delight  
Of dreadful joys! Noon opening wide,  
Golden and great; the gulfs of night,  
Fair deaths, and rent veils cast aside,  
Strong soul to strong soul rendered up,  
And silence filling like a cup.

**SONG**  
**(From “’Tis Pity she’s a  
Queen.”—A.D. 1610.)**

**ACT IV. SCENE 2**

*The Lady Margaret, with Susan and Lucy;  
Lady M. at her embroidery frame, singing*

Girls, when I am gone away,  
On this bosom strew  
Only flowers meek and pale,  
And the yew.

Lay these hands down by my side,  
Let my face be bare;  
Bind a kerchief round the face,  
Smooth my hair.

Let my bier be borne at dawn,  
Summer grows so sweet,  
Deep into the forest green

Where boughs meet.

Then pass away, and let me lie  
One long, warm, sweet day  
There alone with face upturn'd,  
One sweet day.

While the morning light grows broad,  
While noon sleepeth sound,  
While the evening falls and faints,  
While the world goes round.

*Susan.* Whence had you this song, lady?

*L. Mar.* Out of the air;  
From no one an it be not from the wind  
That goes at noonday in the sycamore trees.  
—When said the tardy page he would return?

*Susan.* By twelve, upon this very hour.

*L. Mar.* Look now,  
The sand falls down the glass with even pace,  
The shadows lie like yesterday's. Nothing  
Is wrong with the world. You are a part of it,—  
I stand within a magic circle charm'd  
From reach of anything, shut in from you,  
Leagues from my needle, and this frame I touch,  
Waiting till doomsday come—



[*Knocking heard*] The messenger!  
Quick, I will wait you here, and hold my heart  
Ready for death, or too much ravishment.

[*Exeunt both Girls.*]

How the little sand-hill slides and slides; how many  
Red grains would drop while a man's keen knife drawn  
Across one's heart let the red life out?

*Susan.* [*returning*] Lady!

*L. Mar.* I know it by your eyes. O do not fear  
To tell all punctually: I am carved of stone.

# BY THE WINDOW

Still deep into the West I gazed; the light  
Clear, spiritual, tranquil as a bird  
Wide-winged that soars on the smooth gale and sleeps,  
Was it from sun far-set or moon unrisen?  
Whether from moon, or sun, or angel's face  
It held my heart from motion, stayed my blood,  
Betrayed each rising thought to quiet death  
Along the blind charm'd way to nothingness,  
Lull'd the last nerve that ached. It was a sky  
Made for a man to waste his will upon,  
To be received as wiser than all toil,  
And much more fair. And what was strife of men?  
And what was time?

Then came a certain thing.  
Are intimations for the elected soul  
Dubious, obscure, of unauthentic power  
Since ghostly to the intellectual eye,  
Shapeless to thinking? Nay, but are not we  
Servile to words and an usurping brain,  
Infidels of our own high mysteries,  
Until the senses thicken and lose the world,  
Until the imprisoned soul forgets to see,  
And spreads blind fingers forth to reach the day,

Which once drank light, and fed on angels' food?

It happened swiftly, came and straight was gone.  
One standing on some aery balcony  
And looking down upon a swarming crowd  
Sees one man beckon to him with finger-tip  
While eyes meet eyes; he turns and looks again—  
The man is lost, and the crowd sways and swarms.  
Shall such an one say "Thus 'tis proved a dream,  
And no hand beckoned, no eyes met my own?"  
Neither can I say this. There was a hint,  
A thrill, a summons faint yet absolute,  
Which ran across the West; the sky was touch'd,  
And failed not to respond. Does a hand pass  
Lightly across your hair? you feel it pass  
Not half so heavy as a cobweb's weight,  
Although you never stir; so felt the sky  
Not unaware of the Presence, so my soul  
Scarce less aware. And if I cannot say  
The meaning and monition, words are weak  
Which will not paint the small wing of a moth,  
Nor bear a subtile odour to the brain,  
And much less serve the soul in her large needs.  
I cannot tell the meaning, but a change  
Was wrought in me; it was not the one man  
Who come to the luminous window to gaze forth,  
And who moved back into the darkened room  
With awe upon his heart and tender hope;  
From some deep well of life tears rose; the throng

Of dusty cares, hopes, pleasures, prides fell off,  
And from a sacred solitude I gazed  
Deep, deep into the liquid eyes of Life.

# SUNSETS

Did your eyes watch the mystic sunset splendours  
Through evenings of old summers, slow of parting,—  
Wistful while loveliest gains and fair surrenders  
Hallow'd the West,—till tremulous tears came starting?

Did your soul wing her way on noiseless pinion  
Through lucid fields of air, and penetrated  
With light and silence roam the wide dominion  
Where Day and Dusk embrace,—serene, unmated?

And they are past the shining hours and tender,  
And snows are fallen between, and winds are driven?  
Nay, for I find across your face the splendour,  
And in your wings the central winds of heaven.

They reach me, those lost sunsets. Undivining  
Your own high mysteries you pause and ponder;  
See, in my eyes the vanished light is shining,  
Feel, through what spaces of clear heaven I wander!

# OASIS

Let them go by—the heats, the doubts, the strife;  
I can sit here and care not for them now,  
Dreaming beside the glimmering wave of life  
Once more,—I know not how.

There is a murmur in my heart, I hear  
Faint, O so faint, some air I used to sing;  
It stirs my sense; and odours dim and dear  
The meadow-breezes bring.

Just this way did the quiet twilights fade  
Over the fields and happy homes of men,  
While one bird sang as now, piercing the shade,  
Long since,—I know not when.

# FOREIGN SPEECH

Ah, do not tell me what they mean,  
The tremulous brook, the scarcely stirred  
June leaves, the hum of things unseen,  
This sovran bird.

Do they say things so deep, and rare,  
And perfect? I can only tell  
That they are happy, and can bear  
Such ignorance well;

Feeding on all things said and sung  
From hour to hour in this high wood  
Articulate in a strange, sweet tongue  
Not understood.

# IN THE TWILIGHT

A noise of swarming thoughts,  
A muster of dim cares, a foil'd intent,  
With plots and plans, and counterplans and plots;  
And thus along the city's edges grey  
Unmindful of the darkening autumn day  
With a droop'd head I went.

My face rose,—through what spell?—  
Not hoping anything from twilight dumb:  
One star possessed her heaven. Oh! all grew well  
Because of thee, and thy serene estate:  
Silence ... I let thy beauty make me great;  
What though the black night come.



# THE INNER LIFE

## I. A DISCIPLE

Master, they argued fast concerning Thee,  
Proved what Thou art, denied what Thou art not,  
Till brows were on the fret, and eyes grew hot,  
And lip and chin were thrust out eagerly;  
Then through the temple-door I slipped to free  
My soul from secret ache in solitude,  
And sought this brook, and by the brookside stood  
The world's Light, and the Light and Life of me.  
It is enough, O Master, speak no word!  
The stream speaks, and the endurance of the sky  
Outpasses speech: I seek not to discern  
Even what smiles for me Thy lips have stirred;  
Only in Thy hand still let my hand lie,  
And let the musing soul within me burn.

## II. THEISTS

Who needs God most? That man whose pulses play  
With fullest life-blood; he whose foot dare climb  
To Joy's high limit, solitude sublime  
Under a sky whose splendour sure must slay  
If Godless; he who owns the sovereign sway  
Of that small inner voice and still, what time  
His whole life urges toward one blissful crime,  
And Hell confuses Heaven, and night, the day.  
It is he whose faithfulness of love puts by  
Time's anodyne, and that gross palliative,  
A Stoic pride, and bears all humanly;  
He whose soul grows one long desire to give  
Measureless gifts; ah! let *him* quickly die  
Unless he lift frail hands to God and live.

### III. SEEKING GOD

I said "I will find God," and forth I went  
To seek Him in the clearness of the sky,  
But over me stood unendurably  
Only a pitiless, sapphire firmament  
Ringing the world,—blank splendour; yet intent  
Still to find God, "I will go and seek," said I,  
"His way upon the waters," and drew nigh  
An ocean marge weed-strewn and foam-besprent;  
And the waves dashed on idle sand and stone,  
And very vacant was the long, blue sea;  
But in the evening as I sat alone,  
My window open to the vanishing day,  
Dear God! I could not choose but kneel and pray  
And it sufficed that I was found of Thee.

## IV. DARWINISM IN MORALS

High instincts, dim previsions, sacred fears,  
—Whence issuing? Are they but the brain's amassed  
Tradition, shapings of a barbarous past,  
Remoulded ever by the younger years,  
Mixed with fresh clay, and kneaded with new tears?  
No more? The dead chief's ghost a shadow cast  
Across the roving clan, and thence at last  
Comes God, who in the soul His law uprears?  
Is this the whole? Has not the Future powers  
To match the Past,—attractions, pulsings, tides,  
And voices for purged ears? Is all our light  
The glow of ancient sunsets and lost hours?  
Advance no banners up heaven's eastern sides?  
Trembles the margin with no portent bright?

## V. AWAKENING

With brain o'erworn, with heart a summer clod,  
With eye so practised in each form around,—  
And all forms mean,—to glance above the ground  
Irks it, each day of many days we plod,  
Tongue-tied and deaf, along life's common road.  
But suddenly, we know not how, a sound  
Of living streams, an odour, a flower crowned  
With dew, a lark upspringing from the sod,  
And we awake. O joy and deep amaze!  
Beneath the everlasting hills we stand,  
We hear the voices of the morning seas,  
And earnest prophesyings in the land,  
While from the open heaven leans forth at gaze  
The encompassing great cloud of witnesses.

## VI. FISHERS

We by no shining Galilean lake  
Have toiled, but long and little fruitfully  
In waves of a more old and bitter sea  
Our nets we cast; large winds, that sleep and wake  
Around the feet of Dawn and Sunset, make  
Our spiritual inhuman company,  
And formless shadows of water rise and flee  
All night around us till the morning break.  
Thus our lives wear—shall it be ever thus?  
Some idle day, when least we look for grace,  
Shall we see stand upon the shore indeed  
The visible Master, and the Lord of us,  
And leave our nets, nor question of His creed,  
Following the Christ within a young man's face?

## VII. COMMUNION

Lord, I have knelt and tried to pray to-night,  
But Thy love came upon me like a sleep,  
And all desire died out; upon the deep  
Of Thy mere love I lay, each thought in light  
Dissolving like the sunset clouds, at rest  
Each tremulous wish, and my strength weakness, sweet  
As a sick boy with soon o'erwearied feet  
Finds, yielding him unto his mother's breast  
To weep for weakness there. I could not pray,  
But with closed eyes I felt Thy bosom's love  
Beating toward mine, and then I would not move  
Till of itself the joy should pass away;  
At last my heart found voice,—“Take me, O Lord,  
And do with me according to Thy word.”

## VIII. A SONNET FOR THE TIMES

What! weeping? Had ye your Christ yesterday,  
Close wound in linen, made your own by tears,  
Kisses, and pounds of myrrh, the sepulchre's  
Mere stone most venerable? And now ye say  
"No man hath seen Him, He is borne away  
We wot not where." And so, with many a sigh,  
Watching the linen clothes and napkin lie,  
Ye choose about the grave's sad mouth to stay.  
Blind hearts! Why seek the living amongst the dead?  
Better than carols for the babe new-born  
The shining young men's speech "He is not here;"  
Why question where the feet lay, where the head?  
Come forth; bright o'er the world breaks Easter morn,  
He is arisen, Victor o'er grief and fear.



## IX. EMMAUSWARD

Lord Christ, if Thou art with us and these eyes  
Are holden, while we go sadly and say  
“We hoped it had been He, and now to-day  
Is the third day, and hope within us dies,”  
Bear with us, O our Master, Thou art wise  
And knowest our foolishness; we do not pray  
“Declare Thyself, since weary grows the way  
And faith’s new burden hard upon us lies.”  
Nay, choose Thy time; but ah! whoe’er Thou art  
Leave us not; where have we heard any voice  
Like Thine? Our hearts burn in us as we go;  
Stay with us; break our bread; so, for our part  
Ere darkness falls haply we may rejoice,  
Haply when day has been far spent may know.

## X. A FAREWELL

Thou movest from us; we shall see Thy face  
No more. Ah, look below these troubled eyes,  
This woman's heart in us that faints and dies,  
Trust not our faltering lips, our sad amaze;  
Glance some time downward from Thy golden place,  
And know how we rejoice. It is meet, is wise;  
High tasks are Thine, surrenders, victories,  
Communings pure, mysterious works and ways.  
Leave us: how should we keep Thee in these blown  
Grey fields, or soil with earth a Master's feet?  
Nor deem us comfortless: have we not known  
Thee once, for ever. Friend, the pain is sweet  
Seeing Thy completeness to have grown complete,  
Thy gift it is that we can walk alone.

## XI. DELIVERANCE

I prayed to be delivered, O true God,  
Not from the foes that compass us about,—  
Them I might combat; not from any doubt  
That wrings the soul; not from Thy bitter rod  
Smiting the conscience; not from plagues abroad,  
Nor my strong inward lusts; nor from the rout  
Of worldly men, the scourge, the spit, the flout,  
And the whole dolorous way the Master trod.  
All these would rouse the life that lurks within,  
Would save or slay; these things might be defied  
Or strenuously endured; yea, pressed by sin  
The soul is stung with sudden, visiting gleams;  
Leave these, if Thou but scatter, Lord, I cried,  
The counterfeiting shadows and vain dreams.

## XII. PARADISE LOST

O would you read that Hebrew legend true  
Look deep into the little children's eyes,  
Who walk with naked souls in Paradise,  
And know not shame; who, with miraculous dew  
To keep the garden ever fair and new,  
Want not our sobbing rains in their blue skies.  
Among the trees God moves, and o'er them rise  
All night in deeper heavens great stars to view.  
Ah, how we wept when through the gate we came!  
What boots it to look back? The world is ours,  
Come, we will fare, my brothers, boldly forth;  
Let that dread Angel wave the sword of flame  
Forever idly round relinquished bowers—  
Leave Eden there; we will subdue the earth.

# THE RESTING PLACE

How all things transitory, all things vain  
Desert me! Whither am I sinking slow  
On the prone wing, to what predestined home,  
What peace beyond all peace, what ultimate joy?  
Nay, cease from questioning, care not to know,  
Let bliss dissolve each thought, all function cease,  
Fold close the wing, let the soft-flowing light  
Permeate, and merely once uplift drooped lids  
To mark the world remote, the abandoned shore,  
Fretted with much vain pleasure, futile pain,  
Far, far.

The deepening peace! a dawn of essences  
Awful and incommunicably dear!  
Grace opening into grace, joy quenching joy!  
Thy waves and billows have gone over me  
Blissful and calm, and still the dreams drop off,  
And true things grow more true, and larger orbs  
The strong salvation which has seized my soul.

The stream of the attraction draws me on  
Toward some centre; all will quickly end,  
All be attained. The sweetness of repose  
And this swift motion slay the consciousness

Of being, and bind up the will in sleep.  
Silence and light accept my soul—I touch....  
Is it death's centre or the breast of God?

# NEW HYMNS FOR SOLITUDE

## I

I come to Thee not asking aught; I crave  
No gift of Thine, no grace;  
Yet where the suppliants enter let me have  
Within Thy courts a place.

My hands, my heart contain no offering;  
Thy name I would not bless  
With lips untouched by altar-fire; I bring  
Only my weariness.

These are the children, frequent in Thy home;  
Grant, Lord, to each his share;  
Then turn, and merely gaze on me, who come  
To lay my spirit bare.

## II

Yet one more step—no flight  
The weary soul can bear—  
Into a whiter light,  
Into a hush more rare.

Take me, I am all Thine,  
Thine now, not seeking Thee,—  
Hid in the secret shrine,  
Lost in the shoreless sea.

Grant to the prostrate soul  
Prostration new and sweet,  
Make weak the weak, control  
Thy creature at Thy feet.

Passive I lie: shine down,  
Pierce through the will with straight  
Swift beams, one after one,  
Divide, disintegrate,

Free me from self,—resume  
My place, and be Thou there;  
Yet also keep me. Come  
Thou Saviour and Thou Slayer!



### III

Nothing remains to say to Thee, O Lord,  
I am confessed,  
All my lips' empty crying Thou hast heard,  
My unrest, my rest.  
Why wait I any longer? Thou dost stay,  
And therefore, Lord, I would not go away.

Let me be at Thy feet a little space,  
Forget me here;  
I will not touch Thy hand, nor seek Thy face,  
Only be near,  
And this hour let Thy nearness feed the heart,  
And when Thou goest I also will depart.

Then when Thou seekest Thy way, and I, mine  
Let the World be  
Not wide and cold after this cherishing shrine  
Illum'd by Thee,  
Nay, but worth worship, fair, a radiant star,  
Tender and strong as Thy chief angels are.

Yet bid me not go forth: I cannot now  
Take hold on joy,  
Nor sing the swift, glad song, nor bind my brow;  
Her wise employ

Be mine, the silent woman at Thy knee  
In the low room in little Bethany.

## IV

Ah, that sharp thrill through all my frame!  
And yet once more! Withstand  
I can no longer; in Thy name  
I yield me to Thy hand.

Such pangs were in the soul unborn,  
The fear, the joy were such,  
When first it felt in that keen morn  
A dread, creating touch.

Maker of man, Thy pressure sure  
This grosser stuff must quell;  
The spirit faints, yet will endure,  
Subdue, control, compel.

The Potter's finger shaping me....  
Praise, praise! the clay curves up  
Not for dishonour, though it be  
God's least adorned cup.

## V

Sins grew a heavy load and cold,  
And pressed me to the dust;  
“Whither,” I cried, “can this be rolled  
Ere I behold the Just?”

But now I claim them for my own;  
Thy face I needs must find;  
Lo! thus I wrought, yea, I alone,  
Not weak, beguiled, or blind.

See my full arms, my heaped-up shame,  
An evil load I bring:  
Thou, God, art a consuming flame,  
Accept the hateful thing.

Pronounce the dread condemning word,  
I stand in blessed fear;  
Dear is Thy cleansing wrath, O Lord,  
The fire that burns is dear.

## VI

I found Thee in my heart, O Lord,  
As in some secret shrine;  
I knelt, I waited for Thy word,  
I joyed to name Thee mine.

I feared to give myself away  
To that or this; beside  
Thy altar on my face I lay,  
And in strong need I cried.

Those hours are past. Thou art not mine,  
And therefore I rejoice,  
I wait within no holy shrine,  
I faint not for the voice.

In Thee we live; and every wind  
Of heaven is Thine; blown free  
To west, to east, the God unshrined  
Is still discovering me.

# IN THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE

In the Dean's porch a nest of clay  
With five small tenants may be seen,  
Five solemn faces, each as wise  
As though its owner were a Dean;

Five downy fledglings in a row,  
Packed close, as in the antique pew  
The school-girls are whose foreheads clear  
At the *Venite* shine on you.

Day after day the swallows sit  
With scarce a stir, with scarce a sound,  
But dreaming and digesting much  
They grow thus wise and soft and round.

They watch the Canons come to dine,  
And hear the mullion-bars across,  
Over the fragrant fruit and wine  
Deep talk of rood-screen and reredos.

Her hands with field-flowers drench'd, a child  
Leaps past in wind-blown dress and hair,  
The swallows turn their heads askew—  
Five judges deem that she is fair.

Prelusive touches sound within,  
Straightway they recognize the sign,  
And, blandly nodding, they approve  
The minuet of Rubinstein.

They mark the cousins' schoolboy talk,  
(Male birds flown wide from minster bell),  
And blink at each broad term of art,  
Binomial or bicycle.

Ah! downy young ones, soft and warm,  
Doth such a stillness mask from sight  
Such swiftness? can such peace conceal  
Passion and ecstasy of flight?

Yet somewhere 'mid your Eastern suns,  
Under a white Greek architrave  
At morn, or when the shaft of fire  
Lies large upon the Indian wave,

A sense of something dear gone-by  
Will stir, strange longings thrill the heart  
For a small world embowered and close,  
Of which ye some time were a part.

The dew-drench'd flowers, the child's glad eyes  
Your joy unhuman shall control,  
And in your wings a light and wind

Shall move from the Maestro's soul.



# FIRST LOVE

My long first year of perfect love,  
My deep new dream of joy;  
She was a little chubby girl,  
I was a chubby boy.

I wore a crimson frock, white drawers,  
A belt, a crown was on it;  
She wore some angel's kind of dress  
And such a tiny bonnet,

Old-fashioned, but the soft brown hair  
Would never keep its place;  
A little maid with violet eyes,  
And sunshine in her face.

O my child-queen, in those lost days  
How sweet was daily living!  
How humble and how proud I grew,  
How rich by merely giving!

She went to school, the parlour-maid  
Slow stepping to her trot;  
That parlour-maid, ah, did she feel  
How lofty was her lot!

Across the road I saw her lift  
My Queen, and with a sigh  
I envied Raleigh; my new coat  
Was hung a peg too high.

A hoard of never-given gifts  
I cherished,—priceless pelf;  
'Twas two whole days ere I devour'd  
That peppermint myself.

In Church I only prayed for her—  
“O God bless Lucy Hill;”  
Child, may His angels keep their arms  
Ever around you still.

But when the hymn came round, with heart  
That feared some heart's surprising  
Its secret sweet, I climb'd the seat  
'Mid rustling and uprising;

And there against her mother's arm  
The sleeping child was leaning,  
While far away the hymn went on,  
The music and the meaning.

Oh I have loved with more of pain  
Since then, with more of passion,  
Loved with the aching in my love

After our grown-up fashion;

Yet could I almost be content

To lose here at your feet

A year or two, you murmuring elm,

To dream a dream so sweet.

# THE SECRET OF THE UNIVERSE: AN ODE

*(By a Western Spinning Dervish)*

I spin, I spin, around, around,  
And close my eyes,  
And let the bile arise  
From the sacred region of the soul's Profound;  
Then gaze upon the world; how strange! how new!  
The earth and heaven are one,  
The horizon-line is gone,  
The sky how green! the land how fair and blue!  
Perplexing items fade from my large view,  
And thought which vexed me with its false and true  
Is swallowed up in Intuition; this,  
This is the sole true mode  
Of reaching God,  
And gaining the universal synthesis  
Which makes All—One; while fools with peering eyes  
Dissect, divide, and vainly analyse.  
So round, and round, and round again!  
How the whole globe swells within my brain,  
The stars inside my lids appear,  
The murmur of the spheres I hear  
Throbbing and beating in each ear;

Right in my navel I can feel  
The centre of the world's great wheel.  
Ah peace divine, bliss dear and deep,  
No stay, no stop,  
Like any top  
Whirling with swiftest speed, I sleep.  
O ye devout ones round me coming,  
Listen! I think that I am humming;  
No utterance of the servile mind  
With poor chop-logic rules agreeing  
Here shall ye find,  
But inarticulate burr of man's unsundered being.  
Ah, could we but devise some plan,  
Some patent jack by which a man  
Might hold himself ever in harmony  
With the great Whole, and spin perpetually,  
As all things spin  
Without, within,  
As Time spins off into Eternity,  
And Space into the inane Immensity,  
And the Finite into God's Infinity,  
Spin, spin, spin, spin.

# BEAU RIVAGE HOTEL

## SATURDAY EVENING

Below there's a brumming and strumming  
And twiddling and fiddling amain,  
And sweeping of muslins and laughter,  
And pattering of luminous rain.

Fair England, resplendent Columbia,  
Gaul, Teuton,—how precious a smother!  
But the happiest is brisk little Polly  
To galop with only her brother.

And up to the fourth étage landing,  
Come the violins' passionate cries,  
Where the pale femme-de-chambre is sitting  
With sleep in her beautiful eyes.

**IN A JUNE NIGHT**  
*(A Study in the manner  
of Robert Browning)*

**I**

See, the door opens of this alcove,  
Here we are now in the cool night air  
Out of the heat and smother; above  
The stars are a wonder, alive and fair,  
It is a perfect night,—your hand,—  
Down these steps and we reach the garden,  
An odorous, dim, enchanted land,  
With the dusk stone-god for only warden.

## II

Was I not right to bring you here?  
We might have seen slip the hours within  
Till God's new day in the East were clear,  
And His silence abashed the dancers' din,  
Then each have gone away, the pain  
And longing greatened, not satisfied,  
By a hand's slight touch or a glance's gain,—  
And now we are standing side by side!



### III

Come to the garden's end,—not so,  
Not by the grass, it would drench your feet;  
See, here is a path where the trees o'ergrow  
And the fireflies flicker; but, my sweet,  
Lean on me now, for one cannot see  
Here where the great leaves lie unfurled  
To take the whole soul and the mystery  
Of a summer night poured out for the world.

## IV

Into the open air once more!  
Yonder's the edge of the garden-wall  
Where we may sit and talk,—deplore  
This half-hour lost from so bright a ball,  
Or praise my partner with the eyes  
And the raven hair, or the other one  
With her flaxen curls, and slow replies  
As near asleep in the Tuscan sun.

## V

Hush! do you hear on the beach's cirque  
Just below, though the lake is dim,  
How the little ripples do their work,  
Fall and faint on the pebbled rim,  
So they say what they want, and then  
Break at the marge's feet and die;  
It is so different with us men  
Who never can once speak perfectly.

## VI

Yet hear me,—trust that they mean indeed  
Oh, so much more than the words will say  
Or shall it be 'twixt us two agreed  
That all we might spend a night and day  
In striving to put in a word or thought,  
Which were then from ourselves a thing apart,  
Shall be just believed and quite forgot,  
When my heart is felt against your heart.

## VII

Ah, but that will not tell you all,  
How I am yours not thus alone,  
To find how your pulses rise and fall,  
And winning you wholly be your own,  
But yours to be humble, could you grow  
The Queen that you are, remote and proud,  
And I with only a life to throw  
Where the others' flowers for your feet were strowed.

## VIII

Well, you have faults too! I can blame  
If you choose: this hand is not so white  
Or round as a little one that came  
On my shoulder once or twice to-night  
Like a soft white dove. Envy her now!  
And when you talked to that padded thing  
And I passed you leisurely by, your brow  
Was cold, not a flush nor fluttering.

## IX

Such foolish talk! while that one star still  
Dwells o'er the mountain's margin-line  
Till the dawn takes all; one may drink one's fill  
Of such quiet; there's a whisper fine  
In the leaves a-tremble, and now 'tis dumb;  
We have lived long years, love, you and I,  
And the heart grows faint; your lips, then: come,—  
It were not so very hard to die.

# FROM APRIL TO OCTOBER

## I. BEAUTY

The beauty of the world, the loveliness  
Of woodland pools, which doves have coo'd to sleep,  
Dreaming the noontide through beneath the deep  
Of heaven; the radiant blue's benign caress  
When April clouds are rifted; buds that bless  
Each little nook and bower, where the leaves keep  
Dew and light shadow, and quick lizards peep  
For sunshine,—these, and the ancient stars no less,  
And the sea's mystery of dusk and bright  
Are but the curious characters that lie,  
Priestess of Beauty, in thy robe of light.  
Ah, where, divine One, is thy veiled retreat,  
That I may creep to it and clasp thy feet,  
And gaze in thy pure face though I should die?



## II. TWO INFINITIES

A lonely way, and as I went my eyes  
Could not unfasten from the Spring's sweet things,  
Lush-sprouted grass, and all that climbs and clings  
In loose, deep hedges, where the primrose lies  
In her own fairness, buried blooms surprise  
The plunderer bee and stop his murmurings,  
And the glad flutter of a finch's wings  
Outstartle small blue-speckled butterflies.  
Blissfully did one speedwell plot beguile  
My whole heart long; I loved each separate flower,  
Kneeling. I looked up suddenly—Dear God!  
There stretched the shining plain for many a mile,  
The mountains rose with what invincible power!  
And how the sky was fathomless and broad!

### III. THE DAWN

The Dawn,—O silence and wise mystery!  
Was it a dream, the murmurous room, the glitter,  
The tinkling songs, the dance, and that fair sitter  
I talk'd æsthetics to so rapturously?  
Sweet Heaven, thy silentness and purity,  
Thy sister-words of blame, not railings bitter,  
With these great quiet leaves, and the light twitter  
Of small birds wakening in the greenery,  
And one stream stepping quickly on its way  
So well it knows the glad work it must do,  
Reclaim a wayward heart scarce answering true  
To that sweet strain of hours that closes May;  
How the pale marge quickens with pulsings new,  
O welcome to thy world thou fair, great day!

## IV. THE SKYLARK

There drops our lark into his secret nest!  
All is felt silence and the broad blue sky;  
Come, the incessant rain of melody  
Is over; now earth's quietudes invest,  
In cool and shadowy limit, that wild breast  
Which trembled forth the sudden ecstasy  
Till raptures came too swift, and song must die  
Since midmost deeps of heaven grew manifest.  
My poet of the garden-walk last night  
Sang in rich leisure, ceased and sang again,  
Of pleasure in green leaves, of odours given  
By flowers at dusk, and many a dim delight;  
The finer joy was thine keen-edged with pain,  
Soarer! alone with thy own heart and heaven.

## V. THE MILL-RACE

“Only a mill-race,” said they, and went by,  
But we were wiser, spoke no word, and stayed;  
It was a place to make the heart afraid  
With so much beauty, lest the after sigh,  
When one had drunk its sweetness utterly,  
Should leave the spirit faint; a living shade  
From beechen branches o’er the water played  
To unweave that spell through which the conquering sky  
Subdues the sweet will of each summer stream;  
So this ran freshlier through the swaying weeds.  
I gazed until the whole was as a dream,  
Nor should have waked or wondered had I seen  
Some smooth-limbed wood-nymph glance across the green,  
Or Naiad lift a head amongst the reeds.

## VI. IN THE WOOD

A place where Una might have fallen asleep  
Assured of quiet dreams, a place to make  
Sad eyes bright with strange tears; a little lake  
In the green heart of a wood; the crystal deep  
Of heaven so wide if there should chance to stray  
Into that stainless field some thin cloud-flake,  
When not a breeze the trance of noon dare break,  
About the middle it must melt away.  
Lilies upon the water in their leaves,  
Stirr'd by faint ripples that go curving on  
To little reedy coves; a stream that grieves  
To the fine grasses and wild flowers around;  
And we two in a golden silence bound,  
Not a line read of rich *Endymion*.

## VII. THE PAUSE OF EVENING

Nightward on dimmest wing in Twilight's train  
The grey hours floated smoothly, lingeringly;  
A solemn wonder was the western sky  
Rich with the slow forsaking sunset-stain,  
Barred by long violet cloud; hillside and plain  
The feet of Night had touched; a wind's low sigh  
Told of whole pleasure lapsed,—then rustled by  
With soft subsidence in the rippling grain.  
Why in dark dews, unready to depart,  
Did Evening pause and ponder, nor perceive  
Star follow star into the central blue?  
What secret was the burden of her heart?  
What grave, sweet memory grew she loath to leave?  
What finer sense, no morrow may renew?

## VIII. IN JULY

Why do I make no poems? Good my friend  
Now is there silence through the summer woods,  
In whose green depths and lawny solitudes  
The light is dreaming; voicings clear ascend  
Now from no hollow where glad rivulets wend,  
But murmurings low of inarticulate moods,  
Softer than stir of unfledged cushat broods,  
Breathe, till o'erdröwsed the heavy flower-heads bend.  
Now sleep the crystal and heart-charmèd waves  
Round white, sunstricken rocks the noontide long,  
Or 'mid the coolness of dim lighted caves  
Sway in a trance of vague deliciousness;  
And I,—I am too deep in joy's excess  
For the imperfect impulse of a song.

## IX. IN SEPTEMBER

Spring scarce had greener fields to show than these  
Of mid September; through the still warm noon  
The rivulets ripple forth a gladder tune  
Than ever in the summer; from the trees  
Dusk-green, and murmuring inward melodies,  
No leaf drops yet; only our evenings swoon  
In pallid skies more suddenly, and the moon  
Finds motionless white mists out on the leas.  
Dear chance it were in some rough wood-god's lair  
A month hence, gazing on the last bright field,  
To sink o'er-drowsed, and dream that wild-flowers blew  
Around my head and feet silently there,  
Till Spring's glad choir adown the valley pealed,  
And violets trembled in the morning dew.



## X. IN THE WINDOW

A still grey evening: Autumn in the sky,  
And Autumn on the hills and the sad wold;  
No congregated towers of pearl and gold  
In the vaporous West, no fiend limned duskily,  
No angel whose reared trump must soon be loud,  
Nor mountains which some pale green lake enfold  
Nor islands in an ocean glacial-cold;  
Hardly indeed a noticeable cloud.  
Yet here I lingered, all my will asleep,  
Gazing an hour with neither joy nor pain,  
No noontday trance in midsummer more deep;  
And wake with a vague yearning in the dim,  
Blind room, my heart scarce able to restrain  
The idle tears that tremble to the brim.

## XI. AN AUTUMN MORNING

O what a morn is this for us who knew  
The large, blue, summer mornings, heaven let down  
Upon the earth for men to drink, the crown  
Of perfect human living, when we grew  
Great-hearted like the Gods! Come, we will strew  
White ashes on our hair, nor strive to drown  
In faint hymn to the year's fulfilled renown  
The sterile grief which is the season's due.  
Lightly above the vine-rows of rich hills  
Where the brown peasant girls move amid grapes  
The swallow glances; let him cry for glee!  
But yon pale mist diffused 'twixt paler shapes,—  
Once sovereign trees,—my spirit also fills,  
And an east-wind comes moaning from the sea.

# SEA VOICES

Was it a lullaby the Sea went singing  
About my feet, some old-world monotone,  
Filled full of secret memories, and bringing  
Not hope to sting the heart, but peace alone,  
Sleep and the certitude of sleep to be  
Wiser henceforth than all philosophy?

Truth! did we seek for truth with eye and brain  
Through days so many and wasted with desire?  
Listen, the same long gulping voice again:  
Tired limbs lie slack as sands are, eyes that tire  
Close gently, close forever, twilight grey  
Receives you, tenderer than the glaring day.

[He sleeps, and after an interval awakes.]

Ah terror, ah delight! A sudden cry,  
Anguish, or hope, or triumph. Awake, arise,—  
The winds awake! Is ocean's lullaby  
This clarion-call? Her kiss, the spray that flies  
Salt to the lip and cheek? Her motion light  
Of nursing breasts, this swift pursuit and flight?

O wild sea-voices! Victory and defeat,

But ever deathless passion and unrest,  
White wings upon the wind and flying feet,  
Disdain and wrath, a reared and hissing crest,  
The imperious urge, and last, a whole life spent  
In bliss of one supreme abandonment.

# ABOARD THE “SEA-SWALLOW”

The gloom of the sea-fronting cliffs  
Lay on the water, violet-dark,  
The pennon drooped, the sail fell in,  
And slowly moved our bark.

A golden day; the summer dreamed  
In heaven and on the whispering sea,  
Within our hearts the summer dreamed;  
The hours had ceased to be.

Then rose the girls with bonnets loosed,  
And shining tresses lightly blown,  
Alice and Adela, and sang  
A song of Mendelssohn.

O sweet, and sad, and wildly clear,  
Through summer air it sinks and swells,  
Wild with a measureless desire,  
And sad with all farewells.

# SEA-SIGHING

This is the burden of the Sea,  
Loss, failure, sorrows manifold;  
Yet something though the voice sound free  
Remains untold.

Listen! that secret sigh again  
Kept very low, a whole heart's waste;  
What means this inwardness of pain?  
This sob repressed?

Some ancient sin, some supreme wrong,  
Some huge attempt God brought to nought,  
All over while the world was young,  
And ne'er forgot?

Those lips, which open wide and cry,  
Weak as pale flowers or trembling birds,  
Are proud, and fixed immutably  
Against such words.

Confession from that burdened soul  
No ghostly counsellor may win;  
Could such as we receive its whole  
Passion and sin?

In this high presence priest or king,  
Prophet or singer of the earth,  
With yon cast sea-weed were a thing  
Of equal worth.

# IN THE MOUNTAINS

Fatigued of heart, and owning how the world  
Is strong, too strong for will of mine, my steps  
Through the tall pines I led, to reach that spur  
Which strikes from off the mountain toward the West.  
I hoped to lull a fretted heart to sleep,  
And in the place of definite thought a sense  
Possessed me, dim and sweet, of Motherhood,  
The breasts of Nature, warmth, and soothing hands,  
And tender, inarticulate nursing-words  
Slow uttered o'er tired eyes.

But suddenly  
Rude waking! Suddenly the rocks, the trees  
Stood up in rangèd power, rigid, erect,  
And all cried out on me "Away with him!  
Away! He is not of us, has no part  
In ours or us! Traitor, away with him!"  
And the birds shrilled it "Traitor," and the flowers  
Stared up at me with small, hard, insolent eyes.  
But I, who had been weak, was weak no more,  
Nor shrank at all, but with deliberate step  
Moved on, and with both hands waved off the throng,  
And feared them not, nor sent defiance back.  
Thus, till the pine-glooms fell away, and goats



Went tinkling and no herd-boy near; glad airs  
With sunshine in them moved angelical  
Upon the solitary heights; the sky  
Held not a cloud from marge to marge; and now  
Westward the sun was treading, calm and free.  
I lay upon the grass, and how an hour  
Went past I know not. When again time was,  
The sun had fallen, and congregated clouds,  
A vision of great glories, held the West,  
And through them, and beyond, the hyaline  
Led the charm'd spirit through infinite spaces on.  
I think of all the men upon this earth  
The sight was mine alone; it for my soul,  
My soul for it, until all seeing died.  
Where did I live transfigured? through what times  
Of heaven's great year? What sudden need of me  
For sacrifice on altar, or for priest,  
For soldier at the rampart, cup-bearer  
At feasts of God, rapt singer in the joy  
Of consonant praise, doom'd rebel for the fires?  
—I know not, but somewhere some part I held,  
Nor fail'd when summoned.

When the body took  
Its guest once more the clouds were massy-grey,  
The event was ended; yet a certain thing  
Abode with me, which still eludes its name,  
Yet lies within my heart like some great word  
A mage has taught, and he who heard it once

Cannot pronounce, and never may forget.  
But this I dare record,—when all was past,  
And once again I turned to seek the vale,  
And moved adown the slippery pine-wood path,  
In the dimness every pine tree bowed to me  
With duteous service, and the rocks lay couched  
Like armèd followers round, and one bird sang  
The song I chose, and heavy fragrance came  
From unseen flowers, and all things were aware  
One passed who had been called and consecrate.

**“THE TOP OF A HILL  
CALLED *CLEAR*”**  
*(In sight of the Celestial City)*

And all my days led on to this! the days  
Of pallid light, of springs no sun would warm,  
Of chilling rain autumnal, which decays  
High woods while veering south the quick wings swarm,  
The days of hot desire, of broken dreaming,  
Mechanic toil, poor pride that was but seeming,  
And bleeding feet, and sun-smit flowerless ways.

Below me spreads a sea of tranquil light,  
No blue cloud thunder-laden, but pure air  
Shot through and through with sunshine; from this height  
A man might cast himself in joy's despair,  
And find unhop'd, to bear him lest he fall,  
Swift succouring wings, and hands angelical,  
And circling of soft eyes, and foreheads bright.

Under me light, and light is o'er my head,  
And awful heaven and heaven to left and right;  
In all His worlds this spot unvisited  
God kept, save by the winging of keen light,  
And the dread gaze of stars, and morning's wan

Virginity, for me a living man,  
Living, not borne among the enfranchised dead.

New life,—not death! No glow the senses cast  
Across the spirit, no pleasure shoots o'er me  
Its scattering flaw, no words may I hold fast  
Here, where God's breath streams inexhaustibly;  
But conquest stern is mine, a will made sane,  
Life's vision wide and calm, a supreme pain,  
An absolute joy; and love the first and last.

# THE INITIATION

Under the flaming wings of cherubim  
I moved toward that high altar. O, the hour!  
And the light waxed intenser, and the dim  
Low edges of the hills and the grey sea  
Were caught and captur'd by the present Power,  
My sureties and my witnesses to be.

Then the light drew me in. Ah, perfect pain!  
Ah, infinite moment of accomplishment!  
Thou terror of pure joy, with neither wane  
Nor waxing, but long silence and sharp air  
As womb-forsaking babes breathe. Hush! the event  
Let him who wrought Love's marvellous things declare.

Shall I who fear'd not joy, fear grief at all?  
I on whose mouth Life laid his sudden lips  
Tremble at Death's weak kiss, and not recall  
That sundering from the flesh, the flight from time,  
The judgments stern, the clear apocalypse,  
The lightnings, and the Presences sublime.

How came I back to earth? I know not how,  
Nor what hands led me, nor what words were said.  
Now all things are made mine,—joy, sorrow; now

I know my purpose deep, and can refrain;  
I walk among the living not the dead;  
My sight is purged; I love and pity men.

# RENUNCIANTS

Seems not our breathing light?  
Sound not our voices free?  
Bid to Life's festal bright  
No gladder guests there be.

Ah, stranger, lay aside  
Cold prudence! I divine  
The secret you would hide,  
And you conjecture mine.

You too have temperate eyes,  
Have put your heart to school,  
Are proved. I recognize  
A brother of the rule.

I knew it by your lip,  
A something when you smiled,  
Which meant "close scholarship,  
A master of the guild."

Well, and how good is life,  
Good to be born, have breath,  
The calms good and the strife,  
Good life, and perfect death.

Come, for the dancers wheel,  
Join we the pleasant din,  
—Comrade, it serves to feel  
The sackcloth next the skin.



# **SPEAKERS TO GOD**

## **First Speaker**

Eastward I went and Westward, North and South,  
And the wind blew me from deep zone to zone;  
Many strong women did I love; my mouth  
I gave for kisses, rose, and straight was gone.

I fought with heroes; there was joyous play  
Of swords; my cities rose in every land;  
Then forth I fared. O God, thou knowest, I lay  
Ever within the hollow of thy hand.

## **Second Speaker**

I am borne out to thee upon the wave,  
And the land lessens; cry nor speech I hear,  
Nought but the leaping waters and the brave  
Pure winds commingling. O the joy, the fear!

Alone with thee; sky's rim and ocean's rim

Touch, overhead the clear immensity  
Is merely God; no eyes of seraphim  
Gaze in ... O God, Thou also art the sea!

### **Third Speaker**

Thus it shall be a lifetime,—ne'er to meet;  
A trackless land divides us lone and long;  
Others, who seek Him, find, run swift to greet  
Their Friend, approach the bridegroom's door with song.

I stand, nor dare affirm I see or hear;  
How should I dream, when strict is my employ?  
Yet if some time, far hence, thou drawest near  
Shall there be any joy like to our joy?

# POESIA

## *(To a Painter)*

Paint her with robe and girdle laid aside,  
Without a jewel upon her; you must hide  
By sleight of artist from the gazer's view  
No whit of her fair body; calm and true  
Her eyes must meet our passion, as aware  
The world is beautiful, and she being fair  
A part of it. She needs be no more pure  
Than a dove is, nor could one well endure  
More faultlessness than of a sovran rose,  
Reserved, yet liberal to each breeze that blows.  
Let her be all revealed, nor therefore less  
A mystery of unsearchable loveliness;  
There must be no discoveries to be made,  
Save as a noonday sky with not a shade  
Or floating cloud of Summer to the eye  
Which drinks its light admits discovery.  
Did common raiment hide her could we know  
How hopeless were the rash attempt to throw  
Sideways the veil which guards her womanhood?  
Therefore her sacred vesture must elude  
All mortal touch, and let her welcome well  
Each corner, being still unapproachable.  
Plant firm on Earth her feet, as though her own

Its harvests were, and, for she would be known  
Fearless not fugitive, interpose no bar  
'Twixt us and her, Love's radiant avatar,  
No more to be possessed than sunsets are.

# MUSICIANS

I know the harps whereon the Angels play,  
While in God's listening face they gaze intent,  
Are these frail hearts,—yours, mine; and gently they,  
Leaning a warm breast toward the instrument,  
And prelude among the tremulous wires,  
First draw forth dreams of song, unfledged desires,  
Nameless regrets, sweet hopes which will not stay.

But when the passionate sense of heavenly things  
Possesses the musician, and his lips  
Part glowing, and the shadow of his wings  
Grows golden, and fire streams from finger-tips,  
And he is mighty, and his heart-throbs thicken,  
And quick intolerable pulses quicken,  
How his hand lords it in among the strings!

Ah the keen crying of the wires! the pain  
Of restless music yearning to out-break  
And shed its sweetness utterly, the rain  
Of heavenly laughters, threats obscure which shake  
The spirit, trampling tumults which dismay,  
The fateful pause, the fiat summoning day,  
The faultless flower of light which will not wane.

How wrought with you the awful lord of song?  
What thirst of God hath he appeased? What bliss  
Raised to clear ecstasy? O tender and strong  
The eager melodist who leaned o'er this  
Live heart of mine, who leans above it now:  
The stern pure eyes! the ample, radiant brow!  
Pluck boldly, Master, the good strain prolong.

# MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

## A DAY OF DEFECTION

This day among the days will never stand,  
Carven and clear, a shape of fair delight,  
With singing lips, and gaze of innocent might,  
Crown'd queenwise, or the lyre within her hand,  
And firm feet making conquest of a land  
Heavy with fruitage; nay, from all men's sight  
Drop far, cold sun, and let remorseful Night  
Cloke the shamed forehead, and the bosom's brand.  
Could but the hammer rive, the thunder-stone  
Flung forth from heaven on some victorious morn  
Grind it to dust! Slave, must I always see  
Thy beauty soil'd? Must shining days foregone  
Admit thee peer, and wondering new-born  
To-morrow meet thy dull eyes' infamy?

# SONG AND SILENCE

While Sorrow sat beside me many a day,  
I,—with head turned from her, and yet aware  
How her eyes' light was on my brow and hair,  
The light which bites and blights our gold to grey,—  
Still sang, and swift winds bore my songs away  
Full of sweet sounds, as of a lute-player  
Who sees fresh colours, breathes the ripe soft air,  
And hears the cuckoo shout in dells of May,  
Being filled with ease and indolent of heart.  
So sang I, Sorrow near me: chide me not,  
O Joy, for silence now! Hereafter wise,  
Large song may come, life blossoming in art,  
From this new fate; but leave me, thou long sought,  
To gaze awhile into those perfect eyes.



# LOVE-TOKENS

I wear around my forehead evermore,  
The circlet of your praise, pure gold; and how  
I walk forth crown'd, the approving angels know,  
And see how I am meeker than before  
Being thus proud. For roses my full store,  
Upon a cheek where flowers will scanty blow,  
Is your lips' one immortal touch, and lo!  
All shame deserts my blood to the heart's core.  
Dare I display love's choicest gift—this scar  
Still sanguine-hued? Here ran your sudden brand  
Sheer through the starting flesh, and let abroad  
A traitor's life; your wrathful eyes afar,  
Had doom'd him first. Ah, gracious, valiant hand  
Which drew me bleeding to the feet of God!

# A DREAM

I dreamed I went to seek for her whose sight  
Is sunshine to my soul; and in my dream  
I found her not; then sank the latest beam  
Of day in the rich west; upswam the Night  
With sliding dews, and still I searched in vain,  
Through thickest glooms of garden-alleys quaint,  
On moonlit lawns, by glimmering lakes where faint  
The ripples brake and died, and brake again.  
Then said I, "At God's inner court of light  
I will beg for her;" straightway toward the same  
I went, and lo! upon the altar-stair,  
She knelt with face uplifted, and soft hair  
Fallen upon shoulders purely gowned in white  
And on her parted lips I read my name.

# MICHELANGELESQUE

Shaping thy life what if the stubborn stuff  
Grudge to inform itself through each dull part  
With the soul's high invention, and thy art  
Seem a defeated thing, and earth rebuff  
Heaven's splendour, choosing darkness,—leave the rough  
Brute-parts unhewn. Toilest thou for the mart  
Or for the temple? Does the God see start  
Quick beauty from the block, it is enough.  
The spirit, foiled elsewhere, presses to the mouth,  
Disparts the lips, lives on the lighted brow,  
Fills the wide nostrils, flings the imperious chin  
Out proudly. Now behold! the lyric youth,  
The wrestler stooping in the act to win,  
Pythian Apollo with the vengeful bow.

# LIFE'S GAIN

“Now having gained Life’s gain, how hold it fast?  
The harder task! because the world is still  
The world, and days creep slow, and wear the will,  
And Custom, gendering in the heart’s blind waste,  
Brings forth a wingèd mist, which with no haste  
Upcircling the steep air, and charged with ill,  
Blots all our shining heights adorable,  
And leaves slain Faith, slain Hope, slain Love the last.”  
O shallow lore of life! He who hath won  
Life’s gain doth hold nought fast, who could hold all,  
Holden himself of strong, immortal Powers.  
The stars accept him; for his sake the Sun  
Hath sworn in heaven an oath memorial;  
Around his feet stoop the obsequious Hours.

# COMPENSATION

You shake your head and talk of evil days:  
My friend, I learn'd ere I had told twelve years  
That truth of yours,—how irrepressible tears  
Surprise us, and strength fails, and pride betrays,  
And sorrows lurk for us in all the ways  
Of joyous living. But now to front my fears  
I set a counter-truth which comes and cheers  
Our after-life, when, temperate, the heart weighs  
Evil with good. Do never smiles surprise  
Sad lips? Did the glad violets blow last spring  
In no new haunts? Or are the heavens not fair  
After drench'd days of June, when all the air  
Grows fragrant, and the rival thrushes sing,  
Until stars gather into twilight skies?

# TO A CHILD DEAD AS SOON AS BORN

A little wrath was on thy forehead, Boy,  
Being thus defeated; the resolvèd will  
Which death could not subdue, was threatening still  
From lip and brow. I know that it was joy  
No casual misadventure might destroy  
To have lived, and fought and died. Therefore I kill  
The pang for thee, unknown; nor count it ill  
That thou hast entered swiftly on employ  
Where Life would plant a warder keen and pure.  
I thought to see a little piteous clay  
The grave had need of, pale from light obscure  
Of embryo dreams; thy face was as the day  
Smit on by storm. Palms for my child, and bay!  
Thus far thou hast done well, true son: endure.

# BROTHER DEATH

When thou would'st have me go with thee, O Death,  
Over the utmost verge, to the dim place,  
Practise upon me with no amorous grace  
Of fawning lips, and words of delicate breath,  
And curious music thy lute uttereth;  
Nor think for me there must be sought-out ways  
Of cloud and terror; have we many days  
Sojourned together, and is this thy faith?  
Nay, be there plainness 'twixt us; come to me  
Even as thou art, O brother of my soul;  
Hold thy hand out and I will place mine there;  
I trust thy mouth's inscrutable irony,  
And dare to lay my forehead where the whole  
Shadow lies deep of thy purpureal hair.

# THE MAGE

When I shall sing my songs the world will hear,  
—Which hears not these,—I shall be white with age,  
My beard on breast great as befits a mage  
So skilled; but song is young, and in no drear  
Tome-crammed, lamp-litten chamber shall mine fear  
To pine ascetic. Where the woods are deep,  
Thick leaves for arras, in a noonday sleep  
Of breeze and bloom, gaze, but my art revere!  
There I will sit, and score rare wisardry  
In characters vermilion, azure, gold,  
With bird, starred flower, and peering dragon-fly  
Limned in the lines; and secrets shall be told  
Of greatest Pan, and lives of wood-nymphs shy,  
Blabbed by my goat-foot servitor overbold.



# WISE PASSIVENESS

Think you I choose or that or this to sing?  
I lie as patient as yon wealthy stream  
Dreaming among green fields its summer dream,  
Which takes whate'er the gracious hours will bring  
Into its quiet bosom; not a thing  
Too common, since perhaps you see it there  
Who else had never seen it, though as fair  
As on the world's first morn; a fluttering  
Of idle butterflies; or the deft seeds  
Blown from a thistle-head; a silver dove  
As faultlessly; or the large, yearning eyes  
Of pale Narcissus; or beside the reeds  
A shepherd seeking lilies for his love,  
And evermore the all-encircling skies.

# THE SINGER'S PLEA

Why do I sing? I know not why, my friend;  
The ancient rivers, rivers of renown,  
A royal largess to the sea roll down,  
And on those liberal highways nations send  
Their tributes to the world,—stored corn and wine,  
Gold-dust, the wealth of pearls, and orient spar,  
And myrrh, and ivory, and cinnabar,  
And dyes to make a presence-chamber shine.  
But in the woodlands, where the wild-flowers are,  
The rivulets, they must have their innocent will  
Who all the summer hours are singing still,  
The birds care for them, and sometimes a star,  
And should a tired child rest beside the stream  
Sweet memories would slide into his dream.

# THE TRESPASSER

*Trespassers will be prosecuted,—so*  
Announced the inhospitable notice-board;  
But silver-clear as any lady's word  
*Come in, in, in, come in,* now rich and low,  
Now with tumultuous palpitating flow,  
I swear by ring of Canace I heard.  
“Sure,” said I, “this is no brown-breasted bird,  
But some fair princess, lost an age ago  
Through stepdame's cursed spell, till the saints brought her  
Who but myself, the knight foredoomed of grace.”  
Alas! poor knight, in all that cockney place  
You found no magic, save one radiant sight,  
The huge, obstreperous house-keeper's granddaughter,  
A child with eyes of pure ethereal light.

# RITUALISM

This is high ritual and a holy day;  
I think from Palestrina the wind chooses  
That movement in the firs; one sits and muses  
In hushed heart-vacancy made meek to pray;  
Listen! the birds are choristers with gay  
Clear voices infantine, and with good will  
Each acolyte flower has swung his thurible,  
Censing to left and right these aisles of May.  
For congregation, see! real sheep most clean,  
And I—what am I, worshipper or priest?  
At least all these I dare absolve from sin,  
Ay, dare ascend to where the splendours shine  
Of yon steep mountain-altar, and the feast  
Is holy, God Himself being bread and wine.

# PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

I, who lie warming here by your good fire,  
Was once Prometheus and elsewhere have lain;  
Ah, still in dreams they come,—the sudden chain,  
The swooping birds, the silence, the desire  
Of pitying, powerless eyes, the night, and higher  
The keen stars; (if you please I fill again  
The bowl, Silenus)—; yet 'twas common pain  
Their beaks' mad rooting; O, but they would tire,  
And one go circling o'er the misty vast  
On great, free wings, and one sit, head out-bent,  
Poised for the plunge; then 'twas I crushed the cry  
“Zeus, Zeus, I kiss your feet, and learn at last  
The baseness of this crude self-government  
Matched with glad impulse and blind liberty.”

# KING MOB

Dismiss, O sweet King Mob, your foot-lickers!  
When you held court last night I too was there  
To listen, and in truth well nigh despair  
O'ercame me when I saw your greedy ears  
Drink such gross poison. I could weep hot tears  
To think how three drugged words avail to keep  
A waking people still on the edge of sleep,  
And lose the world a right good score of years.  
I love you too, big Anarch, lately born,  
Half beast, yet with a stupid heart of man,  
And since I love, would God that I could warn  
Work out the beast as shortly as you can,  
Till which time oath of mine shall ne'er be sworn,  
Nor knee be bent to you, King Caliban.

# THE MODERN ELIJAH

What went ye forth to see? a shaken reed?—  
Ye throngers of the Parthenon last night.  
Prophet, yea more than prophet, we agreed;  
No John a' Desert with the girdle tight,  
And locusts and wild honey for his need,  
Before the dreadful day appears in sight  
Urging one word to make the conscience bleed,  
But an obese John Smith, “a shining light”  
(Our chairman felt), “an honour to his creed.”  
O by the gas, when buns and tea had wrought  
Upon our hearts, how grew the Future bright,—  
The Press, the Institutes, Advance of Thought,  
And People's Books, till every mother's son  
Can prove there is a God, or there is none.

# DAVID AND MICHAL

## (2 Samuel vi. 16)

*But then you don't mean really what you say—*  
To hear this from the sweetest little lips,  
O'er which each pretty word daintily trips  
Like small birds hopping down a garden way,  
When I had given my soul full scope to play  
For once before her in the Orphic style  
Caught from three several volumes of Carlyle,  
And undivulged before this very day!  
O young men of our earnest school confess  
How it is deeply, darkly tragical  
To find the feminine souls we would adore  
So full of sense, so versed in worldly lore,  
So deaf to the Eternal Silences,  
So unbelieving, so conventional.



# WINDLE-STRAWS

## I

Under grey clouds some birds will dare to sing,  
No wild exultant chants, but soft and low;  
Under grey clouds the young leaves seek the spring,  
And lurking violets blow.  
And waves make idle music on the strand,  
And inland streams have lucky words to say,  
And children's voices sound across the land  
Although the clouds be grey.

## II

Only maidenhood and youth,  
Only eyes that are most fair,  
And the pureness of a mouth,  
And the grace of golden hair,  
Yet beside her we grow wise,  
And we breathe a finer air.

Words low-utter'd, simple-sweet,—  
Yet, nor songs of morning birds,  
Nor soft whisperings of the wheat  
More than such clear-hearted words  
Make us wait, and love, and listen,  
Stir more mellow heart accords.

Only maiden-motions light,  
Only smiles that sweetly go,  
Girlish laughter pure and bright,  
And a footfall like the snow,  
What in these should make us wise?  
What should bid the blossom blow?

Child! on thee God's angels wait,  
'Tis their robes that wave and part,  
Make this summer air elate,  
Fresh and fragrant, and thou art

But a simple child indeed,  
One dare cherish to the heart.

### III

Were life to last for ever, love,  
We might go hand in hand,  
And pause and pull the flowers that blow  
In all the idle land,  
And we might lie in sunny fields  
And while the hours away  
With fallings-out and fallings-in  
For half a summer day.

But since we two must sever, love,  
Since some dim hour we part,  
I have no time to give thee much  
But quickly take my heart,  
“For ever thine,” and “thine my love,”—  
O Death may come apace,  
What more of love could life bestow,  
Dearest, than this embrace.

## IV

Now drops in the abyss a day of life:  
I count my twelve hours' gain;—  
Tired senses? vain desires? a baffled strife,  
Vexed heart and beating brain?

Ten pages traversed by a languid eye?  
—Nay, but one moment's space  
I gazed into the soul of the blue sky;  
Rare day! O day of grace!

## V

She kissed me on the forehead,  
She spoke not any word,  
The silence flowed between us,  
And I nor spoke nor stirred.

So hopeless for my sake it was,  
So full of ruth, so sweet,  
My whole heart rose and blessed her,  
—Then died before her feet.

## VI

Nay, more! yet more, for my lips are fain;  
No cups for a babe; I ask the whole  
Deep draught that a God could hardly drain,  
—Wine of your soul.

Pour! for the goblet is great I bring,  
Not worthless, rough with youths at strife,  
And men that toil and women that sing,  
—It is all my life.

## VII

Look forward with those steadfast eyes  
O Pilot of our star!  
It sweeps through rains and driving snows,  
Strong Angel, gaze afar!

Seest thou a zone of golden air?  
Hearest thou the March-winds ring?  
Or is thy heart prophetic yet  
With stirrings of the Spring?



## VIII

Words for my song like sighing of dim seas,  
Words with no thought in them,—a piping reed,  
An infant's cry, a moan low-uttered,—these  
Are all the words I need.

Others have song for broad-winged winds that pass,  
For stars and sun, for standing men around;  
I put my mouth low down into the grass,  
And whisper to the ground.

**HERE END THE POEMS WHICH WERE  
FIRST PUBLISHED IN A VOLUME IN 1876**

# MISCELLANEOUS POEMS OF LATER DATES

## AT THE OAR

I dare not lift a glance to you, yet stay  
Ye Gracious Ones, still save me, hovering near;  
If music live upon mine inward ear,  
I know ye lean bright brow to brow, and say  
Your secret things; if rippling breezes play  
Cool on my cheeks, it is those robes ye wear  
That wave, and shadowy fragrance of your hair  
Drifted, the fierce noon fervour to allay,  
Fierce fervour, ceaseless stroke, small speed, and I  
Find grim contentment in the servile mood;  
But should I gaze in yon untrammelled sky  
Once, or behold your dewy eyes, my blood  
Would madden, and I should fling with one free cry  
My body headlong in the whelming flood.

# THE DIVINING ROD

Here some time flowed my springs and sent a cry  
Of joy before them up the shining air,  
While morn was new, and heaven all blue and bare;  
Here dipped the swallow to a tenderer sky,  
And o'er my flowers lean'd some pure mystery  
Of liquid eyes and golden-glimmering hair;  
For which now, drouth and death, a bright despair,  
Shards, choking slag, the world's dust small and dry.  
Yet turn not hence thy faithful foot, O thou,  
Diviner of my buried life; pace round,  
Poising the hazel-wand; believe and wait,  
Listen and lean; ah, listen! even now  
Stirrings and murmurings of the underground  
Prelude the flash and outbreak of my fate.

# SALOME

(*By Henri Regnault*)

Fair sword of doom, and bright with martyr blood,  
Thee Regnault saw not as mine eyes have seen;  
No Judith of the Faubourg, mænad-queen,  
Pale on her tumbril-throne, when the live flood  
Foams through revolted Paris, unwithstood,  
Is of thy kin. Blossom and bud between,  
Clear-brow'd Salome, with her silk head's sheen,  
Lips where a linnet might have pecked for food,  
Pure curves of neck, and dimpling hand aloft,  
Moved like a wave at sunrise. Herod said—  
“A boon for maiden freshness! Ask of me  
What toy may please, though half my Galilee;”  
And with beseeching eyes, and bird-speech soft,  
She fluted: “Give me here John Baptist's head.”

# WATERSHED

Now on life's crest we breathe the temperate air;  
Turn either way; the parted paths o'erlook;  
Dear, we shall never bid the Sphinx despair,  
Nor read in Sibyl's book.

The blue bends o'er us; good are Night and Day;  
Some blissful influence from the starry Seven  
Thrilled us ere youth took wing; wherefore essay  
The vain assault on heaven?

And what great Word Life's singing lips pronounce,  
And what intends the sealing kiss of Death,  
It skills us not; yet we accept, renounce,  
And draw this tranquil breath.

Enough, one thing we know, haply anon  
All truths; yet no truths better or more clear  
Than that your hand holds my hand; wherefore on!  
The downward pathway, Dear!

# THE GUEST

Rude is the dwelling, low the door,  
No chamber this where men may feast,  
I strew clean rushes on the floor,  
Set wide my window to the East.

I can but set my little room  
In order, then gaze forth and wait;  
I know not if the Guest will come,  
Who holds aloft his starry state.

# MORITURUS

Lord, when my hour to part is come,  
And all the powers of being sink,  
When eyes are filmed, and lips are dumb,  
And scarce I hang upon the brink.

Grant me but this—in that strange light  
Or blind amid confused alarms,  
One moment's strength to stand upright  
And cast myself into Thy arms.

# ALONE

This is the shore of God's lone love, which stirs  
And heaves to some majestic tidal law;  
And bright the illimitable horizons' awe;  
God's love; yet all my soul cries out for hers.



# FAME

My arches crumble; that bright dome I flung  
Heavenward in pride decays; yet all unmoved  
One column soars, and, graven in sacred tongue,  
Endure the victor words—"This man was loved."

# WHERE WERT THOU?

Where wert Thou, Master, 'mid that rain of tears,  
When grey the waste before me stretched and wide,  
And when with boundless silence ached mine ears?  
“Child, I was at thy side.”

Where wert Thou when I trod the obscure wood,  
And one lone cry of sorrow was the wind,  
And drop by heavy drop failed my heart's blood?  
“Before thee and behind.”

Where wert Thou when I fell and lay alone  
Faithless and hopeless, yet through one dear smart  
Not loveless quite, making my empty moan?  
“Son, I was in thy heart.”

# A WISH

Could I roll off two heavy years  
That lie on me like lead;  
And see you past their cloudy tears,  
Nor dream that you are dead.

I would not touch your lips, your hair,  
Your breast, that once were mine;  
Ah! not for me in Faith's despair  
Love's sacramental wine.

Find you I must for only this  
In some new earth or heaven,  
To bare my sorry heart, and kiss  
Your feet and be forgiven.

# THE GIFT

“Now I draw near: alone, apart  
I stood, nor deemed I should require  
Such access, till my musing heart  
Suddenly kindled to desire.

No farther from Thee than Thy feet!  
No less a sight than all Thy face!  
Nay, touch me where the heart doth beat,  
Breathe where the throbbing brain hath place.

Yield me the best, the unnamed good,  
The gift which most shall prove me near,  
Thy wine for drink, Thy fruit for food,  
Thy tokens of the nail, the spear!”

Such cry was mine: I lifted up  
My face from treacherous speech to cease,  
Daring to take the bitter cup,  
But ah! Thy perfect gift was peace.

Quiet deliverance from all need,  
A little space of boundless rest,  
To live within the Light indeed  
To lean upon the Master’s breast.

# RECOVERY

I joy to know I shall rejoice again  
Borne upward on the good tide of the world,  
Shall mark the cowslip tossed, the fern uncurl'd  
And hear the enraptured lark high o'er my pain,  
And o'er green graves; and I shall love the wane  
Of sea-charm'd sunsets with all winds upfur'd,  
And that great gale adown whose stream are whirl'd,  
Pale autumn dreams, dead hopes, and broodings vain.  
Nor do I fear that I shall faintlier bless  
The joy of youth and maid, or the gold hair  
Of a wild-hearted child; then, none the less,  
Instant within my shrine, no man aware,  
Feed on a living sorrow's sacredness,  
And lean my forehead on this altar-stair.

# IF IT MIGHT BE

If it might be, I would not have my leaves  
Drop in autumnal stillness one by one,  
Like these pale fluttering waifs that heap sad sheaves  
Through mere inertia trembling, tottering down.

Better one roaring day, one wrestling night,  
The dark musician's fiercer harmony,  
And then abandoned bareness, or the light  
Of strange discovered skies, if it might be.

# WINTER NOONTIDE

I go forth now, but not to fill my lap  
With violets and white sorrel of the wood;  
This is a winter noon; and I may hap  
Upon a few dry sticks, and fire is good.

A quickening shrewdness edges the fore wind;  
Some things stand clear in this dismantled hour  
Which deep-leaved June had hidden; earth is kind,  
The heaven is wide, and fire shall be my flower.

# THE POOL

A wood obscure in this man's haunt of love,  
And midmost in the wood where leaves fall sere,  
A pool unplumbed; no winds these waters move,  
Gathered as in a vase from year to year.

And he has thought that he himself lies drowned,  
Wan-faced where the pale water glimmereth,  
And that the voiceless man who paces round  
The brink, nor sheds a tear now, is his wraith.



# THE DESIRE TO GIVE

They who would comfort guess not the main grief—  
Not that her hand is never on my hair,  
Her lips upon my brow; the time is brief  
At longest, and I grow inured to bear.

All that was ever mine I have and hold;  
But that I cannot give by day or night  
My poor gift which was dear to her of old,  
And poorly given—that loss is infinite.

# A BEECH-TREE IN WINTER

Now in the frozen gloom I trace thy girth,  
Broad beech, that with lit leaves upon a day  
When heaven was wide and down the meadow May  
Moved bride-like, touched my forehead in sweet mirth,  
And blissful secrets told of the deep Earth,  
Low in mine ear; wherefore this eve I lay  
My hand thus close till stirrings faint bewray  
Thy piteous secrets of the days of dearth,  
Silence! yet to my heart from thine has passed  
Divine contentment; it is well with thee;  
Still let the stars slide o'er thee whispering fate,  
The might be in thee of the shouldering blast,  
Still let fire-fingered snow thy tiremaid be,  
Still bearing springtime in thy bosom wait.

# JUDGMENT

I stand for judgment; vain the will  
To judge myself, O Lord!  
I cannot sunder good from ill  
With a dividing sword.

How should I know myself aright,  
Who would by Thee be known?  
Let me stand naked in Thy sight;  
Thy doom shall be my own.

Slay in me that which would be slain!  
Thy justice be my grace!  
If aught survive the joy, the pain,  
Still must it seek Thy face.

# DÜRER'S "MELENCHOLIA"

The bow of promise, this lost flaring star,  
Terror and hope are in mid-heaven; but She,  
The mighty-wing'd crown'd Lady Melancholy,  
Heeds not. O to what vision'd goal afar  
Does her thought bear those steadfast eyes which are  
A torch in darkness? There nor shore nor sea,  
Nor ebbing Time vexes Eternity,  
Where that lone thought outsoars the mortal bar.  
Tools of the brain—the globe, the cube—no more  
She deals with; in her hand the compass stays;  
Nor those, industrious genius, of her lore  
Student and scribe, thou gravest of the fays,  
Expect this secret to enlarge thy store;  
She moves through incommunicable ways.

## MILLET'S "THE SOWER"

Son of the Earth, brave flinger of the seed,  
Strider of furrows, copesmate of the morn,  
Which, stirr'd with quickenings now of day unborn,  
Approves the mystery of thy fruitful deed;  
Thou, young in hope and old as man's first need,  
Through all the hours that laugh, the hours that mourn,  
Hold'st to one strenuous faith, by time unworn,  
Sure of the miracle—that the clod will breed.  
Dark is this upland, pallid still the sky,  
And man, rude bonds slave of the glebe, goes forth  
To labour; serf, yet genius of the soil,  
Great his abettors—a confederacy  
Of mightiest Powers, old laws of heaven and earth,  
Foresight and Faith, and ever-during Toil.

# AT MULLION (CORNWALL)

## Sunday

Where the blue dome is infinite,  
And choral voices of the sea  
Chaunt the high lauds, or meek, as now,  
Intone their ancient litany;

Where through his ritual pomp still moves  
The Sun in robe pontifical,  
Whose only creed is catholic light,  
Whose benediction is for all;

I enter with glad face uplift,  
Asperged on brow and brain and heart;  
I am confessed, absolved, illumed,  
Receive my blessing and depart.

# THE WINNOWER TO THE WINDS

*(From Joachim de Bellay)*

To yon light troop, who fly  
On wing that hurries by  
The wide world over,  
And with soft sibilance  
Bid every shadow dance  
Of the glad cover.

These violets I consign  
Lilies and sops-in-wine  
Roses, all yours,  
These roses vermeil-tinctured  
Their graces new-uncinctured  
And gilly-flowers.

So with your gentle breath  
Blow on the plain beneath  
Through my grange blow,  
What time I swink and strain,  
Winnowing my golden grain  
In noontide's glow.

# EMERSON

Memnon the Yankee! bare to every star,  
But silent till one vibrant shaft of light  
Strikes; then a voice thrilling, oracular,  
And clear harmonies through the infinite.



# **SENT TO AN AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY**

'Twixt us through gleam and gloom in glorious play  
League-long the leonine billows ramp and roll,  
The same maturing sun illumes our day,  
Ripens our blood—the sun of Shakespeare's soul.

# NOCTURNE

Ere sleep upheaves me on one glassy billow  
To drift me down the deep,  
I lie with easeful head upon my pillow,  
Letting the minutes creep.

Until Time's pulse is stayed and all earth's riot  
Fades in a limit white,  
While over me curve fragrant wings of quiet  
Tender and great as Night.

Then I gaze up. Divine, descending slumber  
Thine access yet forbear,  
Though vow I proffer none, nor blessings number,  
Nor breathe a wordless prayer.

A Presence is within me and above me,  
That takes me for its own,  
A Motherhood, a bosom prompt to love me,  
I know it and am known.

So softly I roll back the Spirit's portals;  
O be the entrance wide!  
Silence and light from home of my Immortals  
Flow in, a tranquil tide.

Calming, assuaging, cleansing, freshening, freeing,  
It floods each inlet deep;  
Now pass thou wave of Light, ebb thought and being!  
Come thou dark wave of sleep!

# THE WHIRLIGIG

Glee at the cottage-doors to-day!  
Small hearts with joy are big;  
The merchant chanced to come our way  
Who vends the whirligig.

You know the marvel-stick of deal,  
And, where the top should taper,  
Pinned lightly, the ecstatic wheel,  
Flaunting its purple paper.

Raptures a halfpenny each; and see  
The liberal-bosomed mother  
Faltering; they tug her skirts the three,  
(Ah, soon will come another!)

Away they start! Swift, swifter fly  
The buzzing, whirring chips,  
O eyes grown great! O gleesome cry  
From daubed, cherubic lips!

I as companion of my walk  
Had chosen a soul heroic  
(So much I love superior talk)  
An Emperor and a Stoic.

The cowslip tossed; upsoared the lark;  
Our choice was to recline us  
Against an elm-bole, I and Mark  
Aurelius Antoninus.

Pale victory lightened on his brow,  
Grieved conquest wrung from pain;  
Of Nature's course he spake, and how  
Man should sustain, abstain.

Physician of the soul, he spake  
Of simples that allay  
The blood, and how the nerves that ache  
Freeze under ethic spray.

I turned; perhaps his touch of pride  
Moved me, a garb he wore;  
I saw those children eager-eyed,  
And Rome's pale Emperor.

"You miss," I said, "born Nature's rule,  
Her statutes unrepealed,  
You would remove us from the school,  
And from the playing-field.

And if our griefs be vain, our joys  
Vainer, all's in the plan;  
For what are we but gamesome boys?  
Through these we grow to man.

I to my hornbook now give heed,  
Now hear my playmates call,  
Will 'chase the rolling circles speed,  
And urge the flying ball.'

Joys, pains, hopes, fears,—a mingled heap,  
Grant me, nor Prince nor prig!  
I want, sad Emperor, rosy sleep,  
Leave me my whirligig."

In haste I spoke; such gusty talk  
Oft wrongs these lips of mine;  
Under grey clouds some day I'll walk  
Again with Antonine.

# PARADISE LOST AND FOUND

Eve, to tell truth, was not deceived;  
The snake's word seemed to tally  
With something she herself conceived,  
Sick of her happy valley.

The place amused her for a bit,  
(Some think 'twas half a day)  
Then came, alas! a desperate fit  
Of neurasthenia.

She tired of lions bland and grand,  
She tired of thornless roses,  
She felt she could no longer stand  
Her Adam's courtly glozes.

His "graceful consort," "spouse adored,"  
His amorous-pious lectures;  
She found herself supremely bored,  
If one may risk conjectures.

"Would he but scold for once!" sighed she,  
"*De haut en bas* caressings,  
Qualified by astronomy,  
Prove scarce unmingled blessings."

She strolled; fine gentlemen in wings  
Would deftly light and stop her;  
She looked demure; half-missed her “things,”  
Half feared ’twas not quite proper.

They asked for Adam, always him,  
Each affable Archangel,  
Nor heeded charms of neck or limb,  
Big with their stale evangel.

They dined; her cookery instinct stirred;  
A dinner grew a dream,  
Not berries cold, eternal curd,  
And everlasting cream.

Boon fruit was hers, but tame in sooth;  
One thought her soul would grapple—  
To get her little ivory tooth  
Deep in some wicked apple.

So, when that sinuous cavalier  
Spired near the tree of evil,  
The woman hasted to draw near;  
Such luck!—the genuine devil!

And Satan, who to man had lied,  
Man ever prone to palter,  
The franker course with woman tried,  
Assured she would not falter.



He spoke of freedom and its pains,  
Of passion and its sorrow,  
Of sacrifice, and nobler gains  
Wrung from a dark to-morrow.

He did not shirk the names of death,  
Worn heart, a night of tears—  
If here the woman caught her breath,  
She dared to face her fears.

Perhaps he touched on pretty needs,  
Named frill, flounce, furbelow,  
Perhaps referred to sable weeds,  
And dignity in woe.

Glowed like two rose-leaves both ear-lobes,  
White grew her lips and set,  
The sly snake picturing small white robes,  
A roseate bassinet.

He smiled; then squarely told the curse,  
Birth-pang, a lord and master;  
She hung her head—"It might be worse,  
It seems no huge disaster."

She mused—"A sin's a sin at most;  
Life's joy outweighs my sentence;  
What of my man, who now can boast

A virtue so portentous?

Best for him too! Sweat, workman's groan  
And death which makes us even;  
I want a sinner of my own,  
Who finds my breast his heaven."

Our General Mother, which is true  
This tale, or that old story,  
Tradition's *fable convenue*  
Fashioned for Jahveh's glory?

# AFTER METASTASIO

If seeking me she ask "What hap  
Befel him? Whither is he fled,  
My friend, my poor unhappy friend?"  
Then softly answer "He is dead."

Yet no! May never pang so keen  
Be hers, and I the giver! Say,  
If word be spoken, this alone,  
"Weeping for you he went his way."

# THE CORN-CRAKE

## I

Here let the bliss of summer and her night  
Be on my heart as wide and pure as heaven;  
Now while o'er earth the tide of young delight  
Brim to the full, calm'd by the wizard Seven,  
And their high mistress, yon enchanted Moon;  
The air is faint, yet fresh as primrose buds,  
And dim with weft of honey-colour'd beams,  
A bride-robe for the new espousèd June,  
Who lies white-limbed among her flowers, nor dreams,  
Such a divine content her being floods.

## II

Awake, awake! The silence hath a voice;  
Not thine, thou heart of fire, palpitating  
Until all griefs change countenance and rejoice,  
And all joys ache o'er-ripe since thou dost sing,  
Not thine this voice of the dry meadow-lands,  
Harsh iteration! note untuneable!

Which shears the breathing quiet with a blade  
Of ragged edge! Say, wilt thou ne'er be still  
Crier in June's high progress, whose commands  
Upon no heedless drowzed heart are laid?

### III

Nay, cease not till thy breast disquieted  
Hath won a term of ease; the dewy grass  
Trackless at morn betrays not thy swift tread,  
And through smooth-closing air thy call-notes pass,  
To faint on yon soft-bosom'd pastoral steep  
Thee bird the Night accepts; and I, through thee,  
Reach to embalmèd hearts of summers dead,  
Feel round my feet old, inland meadows deep,  
And bow o'er flowers that not a leaf have shed,  
Nor once have heard moan of an alien sea.

### IV

Even while I muse thy halting-place doth shift,  
Now nearer, now more distant—I have seen  
When April, through her shining hair adrift,  
Gleams a farewell, and elms are fledged with green,  
The voiceful, wandering envoy of the Spring;

Thee, never; though the mower's scythe hath dashed  
Thy nest aside, but thou hast sped askant,  
Viewless; then last we lose thee, and thy wing  
Brushes Nilotic maize and thou dost chaunt  
Haply all night to stony ears of Pasht.

## V

Ah, now an end to thy inveterate tale!  
The silence melts from the mid spheres of heaven;  
Enough! before this peace has time to fail  
From out my soul, or yon white cloud has driven  
Up the moon's path I turn, and I will rest  
Once more with summer in my heart. Farewell!  
Shut are the wild-rose cups; no moth's awirr;  
My room will be moon-silvered from the west  
For one more hour; thy note shall be a burr  
To tease out thought and catch the slumbrous spell.

# IN THE CATHEDRAL

The altar-lights burn low, the incense-fume  
Sickens: O listen, how the priestly prayer  
Runs as a fenland stream; a dim despair  
Hails through their chaunt of praise, who here inhumed  
A clay-cold Faith within its carven tomb.  
But come thou forth into the vital air  
Keen, dark, and pure! grave Night is no betrayer,  
And if perchance some faint cold star illumed  
Her brow of mystery, shall we walk forlorn?  
An altar of the natural rock may rise  
Somewhere for men who seek; there may be borne  
On the night-wind authentic prophecies:  
If not, let this—to breathe sane breath—suffice,  
Till in yon East, mayhap, the dark be worn.

# EDGAR ALLAN POE

*(Read at the Centenary Celebration,  
University of Virginia, 19th Jan. 1909)*

Seeker for Eldorado, magic land,  
Whose gold is beauty fine-spun, amber-clear,  
O'er what Moon-mountains, down what Valley of fear  
By what love waters fringed with pallid sand,  
Did thy foot falter? Say what airs have fanned  
Thy fervid brow, blown from no terrene sphere,  
What rustling wings, what echoes thrilled thine ear  
From mighty tombs whose brazen ports expand?  
Seeker, who never quite attained, yet caught,  
Moulded and fashioned, as by strictest law  
The rainbow'd moon-mist and the flying gleam  
To mortal loveliness, for pity and awe,  
To us what carven dreams thy hand has brought  
Dreams with the serried logic of a dream.



# DEUS ABSCONDITUS

Since Thou dost clothe Thyself to-day in cloud,  
Lord God in heaven, and no voice low or loud  
Proclaims Thee,—see, I turn me to the Earth,  
Its wisdom and its sorrow and its mirth,  
Thy Earth perchance, but sure my very own,  
And precious to me grows the clod, the stone,  
A voiceless moor's brooding monotony,  
A keen star quivering through the sunset dye,  
Young wrinkled beech leaves, saturate with light,  
The arching wave's suspended malachite;  
I turn to men, Thy sons perchance, but sure  
My brethren, and no face shall be too poor  
To yield me some unquestionable gain  
Of wonder, laughter, loathing, pity, pain,  
Some dog-like craving caught in human eyes,  
Some new-waked spirit's April ecstasies;  
These will not fail nor foil me; while I live  
There will be actual truck in take and give,  
But Thou hast foiled me; therefore undistraught,  
I cease from seeking what will not be sought,  
Or sought, will not be found through joy or fear,  
If still Thou claimst me, seek me. I am here.

# SUBLIMINAL

Door, little door,  
Shadowed door in the innermost room of my heart,  
I lean and listen, withdrawn from the stir and apart,  
For a word of the wordless love.

And still you hide,  
Yourself of me, who are more than myself, within,  
And I wait if perchance a whisper I may win  
From my soul on the other side.

What do I catch  
Afloat on the air, for something is said or done?  
Are there two who speak—my soul and the nameless One?  
Little door, could I lift the latch.

Sigh for some want  
Measureless sigh of desire, or a speechless prayer?  
Rustle of robe of a priest at sacrifice there  
Benediction or far-heard chaunt?

Could we but meet,  
Myself and my hidden self in a still amaze!  
But the tramp of men comes up, and the roll of drays,  
And a woman's cry from the street!

# LOUISA SHORE

(*Author of "Hannibal, a Drama"*)

Who dared to pluck the sleeve of Hannibal,  
And hale him from the shades? Who bade the man,  
Indomitable of brain, return to plan  
A vast revenge and vowed? Wild clarions call;  
Dusk faces flame; the turreted brute-wall  
Moves, tramples, overwhelms; van clashes van;  
Roman, Numidian, Carthaginian;  
And griefs are here, unbowed, imperial.  
Who caught the world's fierce tides? An English girl.  
Shy dreamer 'neath fledged elm and apple-bloom,  
With Livy or Polybius on her knee,  
Whose dreams were light as dew and pure as pearl,—  
Yet poignant-witted; thew'd for thought; girl-groom  
Sped to her Lord across the Midland Sea.

# FLOWERS FROM THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

Thanks spoken under rainy skies,  
And tossed by March winds of the North,  
And faint ere they can find your eyes,  
Pale thanks are mine and poor in worth,

Matched with your gift of dews and light,  
Quick heart-beats of the Southern spring,  
Provençal flowers, pearl-pure, blood-bright,  
Which heard the Mid-sea murmuring.

Listen! a lark in Irish air,  
A silver spray of ecstasy!  
O wind of March blow wide and bear  
This song of home as thanks for me.

Nay, but yourself find thanks more meet;  
Blossoms like these which drank the sky  
Strew in some shadowy alcove-seat,  
And lay your violin where they lie;

Leave them; but with the first star rise,  
And bring the bow, and poise at rest  
The enchanted wood. Ah, shrill sweet cries!

A prisoned heart is in its breast.

# TO HESTER

*(At the Piano)*

So ends your fingers' fine intrigue!  
The netted guile! Nor yonder sat he  
In pump and frill who made the gigue,  
Your Neapolitan Scarlatti.

The twilight yields you to me; strange!  
My dainty sprite, a most rare vision!  
Well, is it not a wise exchange,  
Live maid for ghost of dead musician?

Yet gently let the shadows troop  
To darkness; lightly lie the dust on  
Damon and Chloe, hose and hoop,  
My bevy of the days Augustan.

What led my fancy down the track,  
Through century-silent, shadowy mazes?  
Perhaps that foolish bric-à-brac  
Your pseudo-classic shelf that graces.

Or haply something I divined,  
While on your face I stayed a dweller,  
Of that fair ancestress—unsigned—

It pleases you to name a Kneller;

And still your fingers ran the keys,  
Through quaint encounter, pretty wrangle  
Light laughter, interspace of ease,  
Fine turn, and softly-severed tangle,

Gigue, minuet, rondo, ritornelle—  
Quaint jars with rose-leaf memories scented,  
Stored with glad sound, when life went well,  
Ere melancholy was invented,

When pleasure ran, a rippling tide,  
And Phillida with Phyllis carolled,  
Ere Werther yet for Lotte sighed,  
Or English maids adored Childe Harold;

Ere music shook the central heart,  
Or soared to spheral heights inhuman,  
Ere Titans stormed the heaven of art,  
Let by the hammer-welder, Schumann.

Ah, well, we sigh beneath the load,  
We sing our pain, our pride, our passion,  
And Weltschmerz is the modern mode,  
But sweet seventeen is still a fashion.

Let be a while the Infinite,  
Those chords with tremulous fervour laden,

Where Chopin's fire and dew unite—  
I choose instead one mortal maiden.

Let sorrow rave, and sadness fret,  
And all our century's ailments pester,  
I am not quite despairful yet—  
There, at the keyboard, sits a Hester.



# UNUTTERED

Song that is pent in me,  
Song that is aching,  
Ne'er to escape from me,  
Sleeping or waking,

Down aspice! the dust of me,  
Blown the world over  
A century hence  
Will envenom a lover.

His red lips grow vocal,  
His great word is new,  
And the world knows my secret,  
Is dreaming of you.

# IMITATED FROM J. SOULARY'S "LE FOSSOYEUR"

For every child new-born God brings to birth  
A little grave-digger, deft at his trade,  
Who 'neath his master's feet still voids the earth,  
There where one day the man's dark plunge is made.

Do you know yours? Hideous perhaps is he,  
You shudder seeing the workman at his task;  
Such gracious looks commend who waits on me  
I yield whole-hearted, nor for quarter ask.

A child rose-white, sweet-lipped, my steps he presses  
On to the pit with coaxings and caresses,  
Lovelier assassin none could choose to have.  
Rogue, hast thou done? Let's haste. The hour comes quick,  
Give with a kiss the last stroke of the pick,  
And gently lay me in my flowery grave.

# IMITATED FROM GOETHE'S "GANYMEDE"

As with splendour of morning  
Around me thou flamest,  
O Spring time, my lover,  
With a thousand delights and desires;  
To my heart comes thronging  
The sacred sense  
Of thy glow everlasting,  
O infinite beauty!

Would I might seize thee  
In these my arms!

Ah! on thy bosom  
I lie sore yearning;  
Thy flowers, thy grasses,  
Press close to my heart;  
Fresh breeze of the morn  
Thy coolest the burning  
Thirst of my breast.  
With love the nightingale  
Calls to me from the misty valley!

I come, I am coming!

Whither? Ah, whither?  
Upward! Upward the urge is!  
Lower the clouds come drifting,  
They stoop to the longing of love.  
For me! for me!  
Borne in the lap of you  
Upwards!  
Embracing, embraced!  
Upwards, even to the bosom  
Of thee all-loving, my Father!

# WITH A COPY OF MY “POEMS”

My slender, wondering Nautilus,  
Sunk in the ooze—a thing how frail!—  
Because you choose to have it thus  
Through wavering waters luminous  
Rises once more, sets up the sail;

It trembles to the sun, has fear  
Of life, that knew no fear of death:  
Ah! may kind Ariel, hovering near,  
Speed the toy onward with his breath!

**PROLOGUE TO MAURICE  
GEROTHWOHL'S VERSION  
OF VIGNY'S "CHATTERTON"**  
*(March 1909)*

Not yet to life inured, the Muse's son,  
Born to be lord of visions, Chatterton,  
A youth, nor yet the master of his dream,  
Poor, proud, o'erwrought, perplex'd in the extreme  
By poetry, his demon, and by love—  
Powers of the deep below, the height above—  
Ringed by a world with dreams and love at strife,  
Rejects in fiery spleen the gift of life.

Condemn, but pity!  
In the South, they say,  
Boys in their sportive mood affect a play;  
The brands aglow they fashion in a ring,  
Then in the ardent cirque a scorpion fling;  
Crouched motionless the creature lies, until  
Urged by the fire you see him throb and thrill,  
Whereon the laughter peals! Anon, he'll shape  
Right on the flames his course to make escape,  
And backward draws o'erpowered. Fresh shouts of glee!  
Next round the circle curving timorously

He seeks impossible exit; now, once more,  
Quailing, and in the centre as before,  
He shrinks despairing; lest, he knows his part,  
Turns on himself, grown bold, his poisoned dart,  
And on the instant dies. O then at height  
We hear the cries uproarious of delight!  
Doubtless the wretch on mortal crime was bent,  
Doubtless the boys were good and innocent.

Play not, O world of men, the savage boy,  
Make not the poet, quickener of earth's joy,  
Your scorpion! Hardly once a hundred years  
Compact of spirit and fire and dew, appears  
He through whose song the spheral harmonies  
Vibrate in mortal hearing. Nay, be wise,  
For your own joy, and see he lacks not bread,  
If ye but wreathe the white brows of the dead,  
'Tis ye yourselves are disinherited.

## A SONG

When did such moons upheave?  
When were such pure dawns born?  
Yet fly morn into eve,  
Fly eve into morn.

Lily and iris blooms,  
Blooms of the orchard close,  
Pass—for she comes, she comes,  
Your sovereign, the rose.

Lark, that is heart of the height,  
Thrush, that is voice of the vale,  
Cease, it is nearing, the night  
Of the nightingale.

Hasten great noon that glows,  
Night, when the swift stars pale,  
Hasten noon of the rose,  
Night of the nightingale.



**THE DROPS OF NECTAR. 1789**  
*Imitated from Goethe's*  
**“Die Nektartropfen”**

When Minerva, granting graces  
To her darling, her Prometheus,  
Brought a brimming bowl of nectar  
To the underworld from heaven  
To rejoice his race of mortals,  
And to quicken in their bosom  
Of all gracious arts the impulse,  
Fearing Jupiter should see her,  
With a rapid foot she hastened,  
And the golden bowl was shaken,  
And there fell some slender sprinklings  
On the verdurous plain below her.

Whereupon the bees grew busy  
With the same in eager sucking.  
Came the butterfly as eager  
Some small drop to gather also.  
Even the spider, the unshapely,  
Hither crept and sucked with gusto.  
Happy are they to have tasted,  
They and other delicate creatures,

For they share henceforth with mortals  
Art, of all earth's joys the fairest.

# AMOR AS LANDSCAPE-PAINTER

*Imitated from Goethe's*

**“Amor als Landschaftsmaler”**

On a point of rock I sat one morning,  
Gazed with fixèd eyes upon the vapour,  
Like a sheet of solid grey outspreading  
Did it cover all in plain and mountain.

By my side meanwhile a boy had placed him,  
And he spake. “Good friend, how can'st thou calmly  
Stare upon the void grey sheet before thee?  
Hast thou then for painting and for modelling  
All desire, it seemeth, lost for ever?”

On the child I looked, and thought in secret,  
“Would the little lad then play the Master?”

“If thou wouldst be ever sad and idle,”  
Spake the boy, “no thing of skill can follow.  
Look! I'll paint you straight a little picture,  
Teach you how to paint a pretty picture.”

And thereon forth stretched he his forefinger,  
Which was rosy even as a rose blossom,

To the ample canvas strained before him  
Set to work at sketching with his finger.  
There on high a glorious sun he painted,  
Which mine eyes with its effulgence dazzled,  
And the fringe of clouds he made it golden.  
Through the clouds he let press forth the sunbeams,  
Then the tree-tops delicate, light, he painted,  
Late refreshed and quickened. Over the hillrange  
Hill behind hill folded, for a background.  
Nor were waters wanting. There below them  
He the river limned, so true to Nature,  
That it seemed to sparkle in the sunbeams,  
That against its banks it seemed to murmur.

And there stood beside the river flowers,  
And their colours glowed upon the meadow,  
Gold and an enamel green and purple;  
As if all were emerald and carbuncle.  
Pure and clear above he limned the heaven,  
And the azure mountains far and further,  
So that I, new-born and all enraptured,  
Gazed on now the painter, now the picture.

“I have given thee proof, perhaps,” so spake he,  
“That this handicraft I’ve comprehended  
But the hardest part is yet to follow.”

Then and with his finger-tip he outlined,  
Using utmost care beside the thicket,

At the point where from earth's gleaming surface  
Was the sun cast back in all its radiance—  
Outlined there the loveliest of maidens,  
Fair of form, now clad in richest raiment,  
Brown her hair and 'neath it cheeks the freshest  
And the cheeks were of the self-same colour  
As the pretty finger that had drawn them.

“O my boy,” I cried, “declare what master  
Did receive thee in his school as pupil,  
That so swiftly and so true to Nature  
Thou with skill beginn'st and well completest?”

But while yet I spake a breeze uprises.  
And behold, it sets astir the summits,  
Curleth every wave upon the river,  
Puffs the veil out of the charming maiden.  
And, what me the astonished, more astonished,  
Now the maiden's foot is put in motion,  
She advances, and to the place draws nearer,  
Where I sit beside the cunning Master.

Now when all things, all things are in motion,  
Trees and river, flowers and veil outblowing,  
And the slender foot of her the fairest,  
Think you I upon my rock stayed seated,  
Speechless as a rock and as immobile?

# THE WANDERER

*Imitated from Goethe's "Der Wanderer"*

## Wanderer

God's grace be thine, young woman  
And his, the boy who sucks  
That breast of thine.  
Here let me on the craggy scar,  
In shade of the great elm,  
My knapsack fling from me  
And rest me by thy side.

## Woman

What business urges thee  
Now in the heat of day  
Along this dusty path?  
Bringest thou some city merchandise  
Into the country round?  
Thou smilest, stranger,  
At this my question.

## **Wanderer**

No city merchandise I bring,  
Cool now the evening grows,  
Show me the rills  
Whence thou dost drink,  
My good young woman.

## **Woman**

Here, up the rocky path,  
Go onward. Through the shrubs  
The path runs by the cot  
Wherein I dwell,  
On to the rills  
From whence I drink.

## **Wanderer**

Traces of ordering human hands

Betwixt the underwood.  
These stones *thou* hast not so disposed,  
Nature—thou rich dispensatress.

## Woman

Yet further up.

## Wanderer

With moss o'erlaid, an architrave!  
I recognize thee, plastic spirit,  
Thou hast impressed thy seal upon the stone.

## Woman

Further yet, stranger.



## **Wanderer**

Lo, an inscription whereupon I tread,  
But all illegible,  
Worn out by wayfarers are ye,  
Which should show forth your Master's piety,  
Unto a thousand children's children.

## **Woman**

In wonder, stranger, dost thou gaze  
Upon these stones?  
Up yonder round my cot  
Are many such.

## **Wanderer**

Up yonder?

## **Woman**

Leftwards directly  
On through the underwood,  
Here!

## **Wanderer**

Ye Muses! and ye Graces!

## **Woman**

That is my cottage.

## **Wanderer**

The fragments of a temple!

## Woman

Here onwards on one side  
The rivulet flows  
From whence I drink.

## Wanderer

Glowing, then hoverest  
Above thy sepulchre,  
Genius! Over thee  
Is tumbled in a heap  
Thy masterpiece,  
O thou undying one!

## Woman

Wait till I bring the vessel  
That thou mayst drink.

## Wanderer

Ivy hath clad around  
Thy slender form divine.  
How do ye upward strive  
From out the wreck,  
Twin columns!  
And thou, the solitary sister there,  
How do ye,  
With sombre moss upon your sacred heads,  
Gaze in majestic mourning down  
Upon these scattered fragments  
There at your feet,  
Your kith and kin!  
Where lie the shadows of the bramble bush,  
Concealed by wrack and earth,  
And the long grass wavers above.  
Nature dost thou then so hold in price  
Thy masterpiece's masterpiece?  
Dost thou, regardless, shatter thus  
Thy sanctuary?  
Dost thou sow the thistles therein?

## Woman

How the boy sleeps!  
Wouldst thou within the cottage rest,  
Stranger? Wouldst here  
Rather than 'neath the open heavens bide?  
Now it is cool. Here, take the boy.  
Let me go draw the water.  
Sleep, darling, sleep!

## Wanderer

Sweet is thy rest.  
How, bathed in heavenly healthiness,  
Restful he breathes!  
Thou, born above the relics  
Of a most sacred past,  
Upon thee may its spirit rest.  
He whom it environeth  
Will in the consciousness of power divine  
Each day enjoy.  
Seedling so rich expand,  
The shining spring's  
Resplendent ornament,

In presence of thy fellows shine,  
And when the flower-sheathe fades and falls  
May from thy bosom rise  
The abounding fruit,  
And ripening, front the sun.

## **Woman**

God bless him—and ever still he sleeps.  
Nought have I with this water clear  
Except a piece of bread to offer thee.

## **Wanderer**

I give thee thanks.  
How gloriously all blooms around  
And groweth green!

## **Woman**

My husband soon

Home from the fields  
Returns. Stay, stay, O man,  
And eat with us thy evening bread.

## **Wanderer**

Here do ye dwell?

## **Woman**

There, between yonder walls,  
The cot. My father builded it  
Of brick, and of the wreckage stones.  
Here do we dwell.  
He gave me to a husbandman,  
And in our arms he died—  
Sweetheart—and hast thou slept?  
How bright he is—and wants to play.  
My rogue!

## Wanderer

O Nature! everlastingly conceiving.  
Each one thou bearest for the joy of life,  
All of thy babes thou hast endowed  
Lovingly with a heritage—a Name.  
High on the cornice doth the swallow build,  
Of what an ornament she hides  
All unaware.  
The caterpillar round the golden bough  
Spins her a winter quarters for her young.  
Thus dost thou patch in 'twixt the august  
Fragments of bygone time  
For needs of thine—for thy own needs  
A hut. O men—  
Rejoicing over graves.  
Farewell, thou happy wife.

## Woman

Thou wilt not stay?



## **Wanderer**

God keep you safe  
And bless your boy.

## **Woman**

A happy wayfaring!

## **Wanderer**

Where doth the pathway lead me  
Over the mountain there?

## **Woman**

To Cuma.

## Wanderer

How far is it hence?

## Woman

'Tis three good miles.

## Wanderer

Farewell!

O Nature! guide my way,  
The stranger's travel-track  
Which over graves  
Of sacred times foregone  
I still pursue.

Me to some covert guide,  
Sheltered against the north,  
And where from noontide's glare  
A poplar grove protects.  
And when at eve I turn

Home to the hut,  
Made golden with the sun's last beam,  
Grant that such wife may welcome me,  
The boy upon her arm.

# IMITATED FROM GOETHE'S "ALEXIS AND DORA"

Ah, without stop or stay the ship still momentarily presses  
On through the foaming deep, further and further from shore.  
Far-traced the furrow is cut by the keel, and in it the dolphins  
Bounding follow as though prey were before them in flight.  
All betokens a fortunate voyage; light-hearted the shipman  
Gently handles the sail that takes on it labour for all.  
Forward as pennon and streamer presses the voyager's spirit,  
One alone by the mast stands reverted and sad.  
Mountains already blue he sees departing, he sees them  
Sink in the sea, while sinks every joy from his gaze.  
Also for thee has vanished the ship that bears thy Alexis,  
Robs thee, O Dora, of friend, robs thee of, ah! the betrothed.  
Thou, too, gazest in vain after me. Our hearts are still beating  
For one another, but ah! on one another no more.  
Single moment wherein I have lived, thou weigh'st in the  
balance  
More than all days erewhile coldly squandered by me.  
Ah, in that moment alone, the last, arose in my bosom  
Life unhop'd for in thee, come down as a gift from the Gods.  
Now in vain dost thou with thy light make glorious the æther,  
Thy all-illuminating day—Phœbus, by me is abhorred.  
Back on myself I return, and fain would I there in the silence  
Live o'er again the time when daily to me she appeared.

Was it possible beauty to see and never to feel it?  
Did not the heavenly charm work on thy dullness of soul?  
Blame not thyself, poor heart, so the poet proposes a riddle,  
Artfully wrought into words oft to the ear of the crowd,  
The network of images, lovely and strange, is a joy to the  
hearer,  
Yet still there lacketh the word affirming the sense of the  
whole.

Is it at last disclosed, then every spirit is gladdened,  
And in the verse perceives meaning of twofold delight.  
Ah, why so late, O love, dost thou unbind from my forehead  
Wrappings that darkened my eyes—why too late dost  
unbind?

Long time the freighted bark delayed for favouring breezes,  
Fair at last rose the wind pressing off-shore to the sea.  
Idle seasons of youth and idle dreams of the future  
Ye have departed—for me only remaineth the hour;  
Yes, it remains the gladness remaining for me; Dora, I hold  
thee.

Hope to my gaze presents, Dora, thy image alone.  
Often on thy way to the temple I saw thee gay-decked and  
decorous,  
Stepped the good mother beside, all ceremonious and grave.  
Quick-footed wert thou and eager, bearing thy fruit to the  
market,  
Quitting the well, thy head how daringly balanced the jar;  
There, lo! thy throat was shown, thy neck more fair than all  
others,  
Fairer than others were shown the poise and play of thy limbs.

Offtime I held me in fear for the totter and crash of the pitcher,

Yet upright ever it stood, there where the kerchief was pleached.

Fairest neighbour, yes, my wont it was to behold thee,

As we behold the stars, as we contemplate the moon.

In them rejoicing, while never once in the tranquil bosom,

Even in shadow of thought stirs the desire to possess.

Thus did ye pass, my years. But twenty paces asunder

Our dwellings, thine and mine, nor once on thy threshold I trod.

Now the hideous deep divides us! Ye lie to the heavens,

Billows! your lordly blue to me is the colour of night.

Already was everything in motion. A boy came running

Swift to my father's house, calling me down to the shore.

"The sail is already hoisted; it flaps in the wind," so spake he.

"Weighed with a lusty cheer the anchor parts from the sand.

Come, Alexis! O come!" And gravely, in token of blessing,

Laid my good father his hand on the clustering curls of the son.

Careful the mother reached me a bundle newly made ready;

"Come back happy!" they cried. "Come back happy and rich."

So out of doors, the bundle under my arm, did I fling me,

And at the wall below, there by the garden gate,

Saw thee stand; thou smiledst upon me and spake'st. "Alexis,

Yonder clamouring folk, are these thy comrades aboard?

Distant shores thou visitest now and merchandise precious

Thou dost deal in, and jewels for the wealthy city dames.

Wilt thou not bring me also one little light chain? I would buy it

Thankfully. I have wished so oft to adorn me with this.”

Holding my own I stood and asked, in the way of a merchant,  
First of the form, the weight exact, of the order thou gavest.  
Modest in truth was the price thou assignedst. While gazing upon thee,

Neck and shoulders I saw worthy the jewels of our queen.  
Louder sounded the cry from the ship. Then saidest thou kindly,

“Some of the garden fruit take thou with thee on thy way.

Take the ripest oranges—take white figs. The sea yields  
Never a fruit at all. Nor doth every country give fruits.”

Thereon I stepped within; the fruit thou busily broughtest,  
There in the gathered robe bearing a burden all gold.

Often I pleaded, “see this is enough,” and ever another  
And fairer fruit down dropped, lightly touched, to thy hand.

Then at the last to the bower thou camest. There was a basket,  
And the myrtle in bloom bent over thee, over me.

Skilfully didst thou begin to arrange the fruit and in silence.

First the orange, that lies heavy a globe of gold,

Then the tenderer fig, which slightest pressure will injure,  
And with myrtle o’erlaid, fair adorned was the gift.

But I lifted it not. I stood, we looked one another

Full in the eyes. When straight the sight of my eyes waxed dim.

Thy bosom I felt on my own! and now my arm encircled  
The stately neck, whereon thousandfold kisses I showered.  
Sank thy head on my shoulder—by tender arms enfolded

As with a chain was he the man whom thou hast made blest.  
The hands of Love I felt, he drew us with might together,  
And thrice from a cloudless sky it thundered; and now there  
flowed

Tears from my eyes, down streaming, weeping wert thou. I  
wept,

And through sorrow and joy the world seemed to pass from  
our sense.

Ever more urgent their shoreward cry; but thither to bear me  
My feet refused: I cried, "Dora, and art thou not mine?"

"For ever," thou gently saidst. And thereon it seemed that our  
tears,

As by some breath divine, gently were blown from our eyes.  
Nearer the cry "Alexis!" Then peered the boy, as he sought  
me,

In through the garden gate. How the basket he eyed.

How he constrained me. How I pressed thee once more by  
the hand.

How arrived I aboard? I know as one drunken I seemed.

Even so my companions took me to be; they bore with one  
ailing,

And already in haze of distance the city grew dim.

"For ever," Dora, thy whisper was. In my ear it echoes

Even with the thunder of Zeus. There stood she by his throne,  
She, his daughter, the Goddess of Love, and beside her the  
Graces.

So by the Gods confirmed this our union abides.

O then haste thee, our bark, with the favouring winds behind  
thee.



Labour, thou lusty keel, sunder the foaming flood!  
Bring me to that strange haven; that so for me may the  
goldsmith

In his workshop anon fashion the heavenly pledge.

Ay, in truth, the chainlet shall grow to a chain, O Dora.

Nine times loosely wound shall it encircle thy neck.

Further, jewels most manifold will I procure for thee; golden  
Bracelets also. My gifts richly shall deck thy hand.

There shall the ruby contend with the emerald; loveliest  
sapphire

Matched against jacinth shall stand, while with a setting of  
gold

Every gem may be held in a perfect union of beauty.

O what joy for the lover to grace with jewel and gold the  
beloved.

If pearls I view, my thought is of thee; there rises before me  
With every ring the shape slender and fair of thy hand.

I will barter and buy, and out of them all the fairest

Thou shalt choose. I devote all my lading to thee.

But not jewel and gem alone shall thy lover procure thee.

What a housewife would choose, that will he bring with him  
too.

Coverlets delicate, woollen and purple, hemmed to make  
ready

A couch that grateful and soft fondly shall welcome the pair.

Lengths of the finest linen. Thou sittest and sewest and  
clothest

Me therein and thyself, and haply also a third.

Visions of hope delude my heart. Allay, O Divine Ones,

Flames of resistless desire wildly at work in my breast,  
And yet I fain would recall delights that are bitter,  
When care to me draws near, hideous, cold and unmoved.  
Not the Erinnyes torch nor the baying of hounds infernal  
Strikes such terror in him, the culprit in realms of despair,  
As that phantom unmoved in me who shows me the fair one  
Far away. Open stands even now the garden gate,  
And another, not I, draws near—for him fruits are falling,  
And for him, too, the fig strengthening honey retains.  
Him too doth she draw to the bower. Does he follow? O  
sightless

Make me, O Gods! destroy the vision of memory in me.  
Yes—a maiden is she—she who gives herself straight to one  
lover,  
She to another who woes as speedily turns her around.  
Laugh not, O Zeus, this time, at an oath audaciously broken—  
Thunder more fiercely! strike! yet hold back thy lightning  
shaft.

Send on my trace the sagging clouds. In gloom as of night-  
time

Let thy bright lightning-flash strike this ill-fated mast.  
Scatter the planks around and give to the raging waters  
This my merchandise. Give me to the dolphins a prey.  
Now ye Muses enough! In vain is your effort to image  
How in a heart that loves alternate sorrow and joy.  
Nor are ye able to heal those wounds which Love has  
inflicted,  
Yet their assuagement comes, Gracious Ones, only from you.

Editor's Note.—The four Goethe translations with which this volume closes are taken from rough jottings, hardly more than *protoplasm*.

They much need re-handling, which they cannot now receive. Many lines are, as verse, defective for the ear ... yet some contain sufficient beauty, as well as fidelity, in translation to justify, perhaps, their preservation as fragments of unfinished work.

This does not apply to the other translations which were left by E. D. in fair MS. as completed.