

WHITNEY

HELEN HAY

SOME VERSES

Helen Whitney

Some Verses

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Some Verses:

Содержание

SONNETS	7
THE DAYS	7
THE EVERLASTING SNOWS	8
THRONE AND ALTAR	9
EAST AND WEST	10
THE BATTLE	11
WATER AND WINE	12
PITY ME NOT!	13
A DREAM IN FEVER	14
A WOMAN'S PRIDE	15
AGE	16
IN THE MIST	17
ON THE MOUNTAIN'S SLOPE	18
TO THE BELOVED	19
MY BROOK	20
BENEATH THE MOON	21
THE RUBY	22
SPRING AND AUTUMN	23
THE LOST MOMENT	24
THE COMING OF LOVE	25
EVENING AT WASHINGTON	26
LOVE'S KISS	27
THE SCARLET THREAD	28

AUTUMN	29
THE TIDE OF THE HEART	30
POEMS	31
DOES THE PEARL KNOW?	31
IN AUTUMN	33
WAITING FOR DAY	35
THE ANGEL OF INDIFFERENCE	36
DEAR DEAD WOMEN	38
THE GRAVE OF HOPE	40
TREES OF THE WILDERNESS	41
THE LOVE OF THE ROSE	42
IN THE GREEN YEW	43
THE DEAD NIGHT	45
SONG	46
SIGH NOT FOR LOVE	47
AMBITION AND LOVE	48
TO B. D	50
LITTLE SAD FACE	51
EARTH'S TEARS— AND MAN'S	52
I HAVE SEEN WHAT THE SERAPHS HAVE SEEN	53
A LASS FROM THE WOODS	54
WAS THERE ANOTHER SPRING	55
TO DIANE	56
BIRD LOVE— ROSE LOVE	58
THE JOY OF LIFE	59

MIST	60
THE LAST CLOUD	61
SONG	62
IN THE GRAVE	63
THE FLOWERS OF PROSERPINE	65

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Some Verses

To my Father

SONNETS

THE DAYS

A long grim corridor—a sullen bar
Of light athwart the darkness—where no fleet
Pale sunshine spreads for dark his winding sheet
A light, not born of noon nor placid star
Glowes lurid thro' the gloom—while from afar,
Beats marching of innumerable feet.
Is this the place where tragic armies meet?
The throb of terror that presages war?—
I strain to see, then softly on my sight
There falls the vision, manifold they come—
White listless Day chained to her brother Night—
Their hands are shackled and their lips are dumb,
And as they meet the air where each one dies,
They turn and smile at me—with weary eyes.

THE EVERLASTING SNOWS

And shall it be that these undaunted snows
That poise so lightly on the mountains' crest—
A lily laid to cheer its lonely breast—
Shall their chill smile still face the wind, that blows
Across the field whereon no blossom grows,
And light the land where no gay life may rest
Save glowing hasty fingers of the West,
When our two hearts lie cold beneath the rose?
These silver flakes of ancient hoary frost,
Surviving all our joys' supremest powers,
And though the petals of your lips be lost
And gone the summer of your golden head,
This pale eternal growth of winter's flowers
Shall still live on—though our sweet love be dead.

THRONE AND ALTAR

He had a vision of a golden throne
Fronting an altar; both alike were bare,
But o'er the purple of the regal chair
Blazed the device, "I wait for him alone
Who with the world has held his soul his own."
He sadly turned, this height he could not dare.
But—Stay—the text upon the altar there—
"I wait for him who has not made a moan
Howe'er his kind have used his heaven-sent dower.
Fear not, and burn thine incense, lowly heart."
And sudden brightness turns the averted face,
To holy sense of majesty and power—
And a voice:—"Master—this indeed thou art."
Wondrous music trembles thro' the space.

EAST AND WEST

You have not ceased for me. Though stern-browed Fate
Laid our two paths apart; when in the West
She gave you over to the seas, and great
Wide winds of enterprise, and set your breast
Against the suns and shadows of the earth;
Then with a gilded largess, led my ways
Toward the time-worn East, who paints her dearth
With purple vain imaginings; the praise
Of all her languid incense and the pride
Of ancient mysteries and hopeless creeds
Hold for my heart no spell when warm and wide
I see across the blue of Isis' veil
The thunderous breakers of your ocean pale
And glints of prairie sun through river reeds.

THE BATTLE

The pallid waves caress the paler sand,
Falter and tremble, then reluctant wane,
Fearing advance, yet venturing again.
Grey deep sea waves that never knew the land,
Tired with the tumult, stretch a crooked hand
To win a precious sweet surcease from pain,
But, glancing back upon the mighty main,
Perforce return to swell the strong command.
So fretful Life sees Death's cold sands and fairs
To fling thereon the wearing of her wave,
Yet, turning ere she finds the gloomy shore,
Seeing ahead the idle senseless grave,
Behind—the Kings, the Patriots and the Saints,
She sighing turns to face the fight once more.

WATER AND WINE

I asked for water and they brought me wine;
Wine in a jewelled chalice, where the gold
Gleamed thro' the purple beads, as if unrolled—
One saw the sun-rays of a life-time shine.
So drinking, I forgot my dream divine
Of crystal purity, for in my hold
Were wealth and Fame and Passions manifold
Which with the draught I fancied might be mine.
"Ah, Youth," I said, "Ah, Faith and Love!" I said;
"These are but broken lances in the strife!
What shall remain when all these things are sped?"
Then crashed the dream. I clutched the hand of Fate
Amid the ruins of my shattered life,
And found the Gods had cheated, all too late.

PITY ME NOT!

Cruel and fair! within thy hollowed hand
My heart is lying as a little rose,
So faint and faded, scarce could one suppose
It might look in thine eyes and understand
The song they sing unto a weary land,
Making it radiant, yet because I dare,
To love thee, being weak, lose not thine air
Of passive distance, fateful and most grand.

Pity me not, nor turn away awhile
Till absence's cloud has caught my passion up.
Ah, be not kind! for love's sake, be not kind!
Grant me the tragic deepness of the cup,
And when thine eyes have flashed and made me blind,
Kill me beneath the shadow of thy smile.

A DREAM IN FEVER

A vast screen of unequal downward lines,
An orange purple halo 'round the rain,
Twists from a space whose very size is pain.
Here in this vortex day with night combines
Ruby and Emerald glint their blazing spines;
Closing and smothering, wheels a brazen main,
A shuddering sea of silence; in its train
A Thought—a cry, whose snake—fear trembling twines
Around—above—alive yet uttered not;
But my heart hears—and shrieking dies of dread,
Then soaring breaks its bands and o'er the rim
White winged it rends the dark with jagged blot,
Glimpsing the iris gateway barred ahead,
And, gazing thro', the eyes of cherubim.

A WOMAN'S PRIDE

I will not look for him—I will not hear
My heart's loud beating, as I strain to see
Across the rain forlorn and hopelessly,
Nor starting, think 'tis he that draws so near.
I will forget how tenderly and dear
He might in coming hold his arms to me,
For I will prove what woman's pride can be
When faint love lingers in the darkness drear.
I will not—Ah, but should he come to-night
I think my life might break thro' very bliss,
This little will should so be torn apart
That all my soul might fail in golden light
And let me die—So do I long for this.
Ah, love, thine eyes!—Nay, love—Thy heart, thy heart!

AGE

I have a dream, that somewhere in the days,
Since when a myriad suns have burned and died,
There was a time my soul was not for pride
Of spendthrift youth, the pensioner who pays
Dole for the pain of searching thro' the haze
Where joy lies hidden. As the puff balls ride,
The wandering wind across the Summer's side
So winged my spirit in a golden blaze
Of pure and careless Present—Future naught
But a sad dotard's wail—and I was young,
Who now am old. Now years like flashes seem,
Lambent or grey on the great wall of Thought—
This is a song a poet may have sung—
No proof remains, I have but dreamed a dream.

IN THE MIST

Ah love, my love, upon this alien shore
I lean and watch the pale uneasy ships
Slip thro' the waving mist in strange eclipse,
Like spirits of some time and land of yore.
I did not think my heart could love thee more,
And yet, when lightlier than a swallow dips,
The wind lays ghostly kisses on my lips
I seem to know of love the eternal core.
Here is no throbbing of impassioned breath
To beat upon my cheek, no pulsing heart
Which might be silenced by the touch of Death,
No smile which other smile has softly kissed
Or doting gaze which Time must draw apart,
But spirit's spirit in the trailing mist.

ON THE MOUNTAIN'S SLOPE

High on the mountain's slope I pause and turn—
Over my head, by the rough crag-points high,
Seems rent and torn the tender hovering sky,
Till almost—thro'—I see a Heaven-spark burn;
Then downward to the sleeping world I yearn
Whose eyes so heavy droop they may not try
To catch the higher gleam—and live thereby—
Youth passes graveward—and they never learn.
Then faint with brooding o'er a careless earth
I turn to Nature and her broad warm breast,
Strive for a friendship with her sun-burnt mirth,
Teach my sad soul to catch her cadence deep,
Dream that in her absorbed my heart must rest;
But Nature smiles, and turns once more in sleep.

TO THE BELOVED

Beloved, when the tides of life run low
As sobbing echoes of a dead refrain,
And I may sit and watch the silent rain
And muse upon the fulness of my woe,
Then is my burden lighter, for I know
The roses of my heart shall bloom again
The fairer for this plenitude of pain,
And Summer shall forget the chilly snow.
But when life calls me to its revels gay
And I must face the world's wide-gazing eyes
Nor find sweet rest by night or peace by day,
E'en seems your love, where I would turn for aid,
As distant as the blue in sunny skies;
Then am I very lonely and afraid.

MY BROOK

Earth holds no sweeter secret anywhere
Than this my brook, that lisps along the green
Of mossy channels, where slim birch trees lean
Like tall pale ladies whose delicious hair
Lures and invites the kiss of wanton air.
The smooth soft grasses, delicate between
The rougher stalks, by waifs alone are seen,
Shy things that live in sweet seclusion there.
And is it still the same, and do these eyes
Of every silver ripple meet the trees
That bend above like guarding emerald skies?
I turn—who read the city's beggared book
And hear across the moan of many seas
The whisper and the laughter of my brook.

BENEATH THE MOON

Give me thy hand, Beloved! Here where still
The night wind hovers 'neath the pallid moon
Give me this fleeting moment; all too soon
The listless day will break upon the hill;
This last sweet night is mine. The tremulous thrill
Upon thy lips is all the precious boon
I begged of Heaven, the garish sun of noon
Is theirs—the rest—mine is this moment's will.
Our love could never be the love of day.
I have not claimed the welcome of thy lips;
No touch save fluttering hand, and for the pay
I gave my minstrelsy of sea and sky.
Once more thine eyes! Now sun-stained finger tips,
Send through the hush of dawn a glad good-bye.

THE RUBY

Ah—she was fair, this daughter of a queen!
Jewels upon her breast's soft fall of snow,
Jewels—in golden hair—and fierce aglow,
The gem of pride upon her brow serene!
Sleeping soft moonstone, emerald's baleful green,
A single sapphire, singing soft and low
Of wars for beauty's sake in years ago,
And flaming opal—wed with tourmaline.
Yet was there one great stone she might not wear,
And so her eyes were weary, and her mouth
Curved in the listless line of vain desire.
No diamond pure was hers the right to bear,
But—crimson poison petal of the South—
The ruby shone in deep unholy fire.

SPRING AND AUTUMN

The painted World has laid her jewels down,
Let fall the pinchbeck hair about her face
And croons a love song. In a far-off place
Where she was strutting in her silken gown
She met the Youth. His face was young and brown.
"Good day to you," she cried, the frosty lace
About her shoulders trembled. Ah—disgrace!
He turned, and left her weeping in the town.
She smiles not any more, her heart disdains
The wind's rough courting, loud and indiscreet.
Her tears dissolve the earth in ceaseless rains
And though her searching steps be light and fleet
Through frowning city or soft country lanes,
Now never more may Spring and Autumn meet.

THE LOST MOMENT

This moment I so careless threw away,
Tossed to the ages, with a spendthrift hand,
Little I recked the labour that had planned
This flash eternal of a Summer day;
Æons of sequent toil had passed to pay
Wealth to the freighted instant. Slow and grand
Wavers a solemn dirge across the land,
One soul, in my lost moment, found a way
To throw the mock to Time, and call him slave.
And I—a pauper still—gaze wise at last
To all the grey horizon line of nought.
But from the heart I deemed an empty grave
Gleams forth like spark my precious gem of past
Shrined in the setting of a deathless thought.

THE COMING OF LOVE

I dreamed that love came, as the oak trees grow,
By the chance dropping of a tiny seed;
And then from moon to moon with steady speed,
Tho' torn by winds and chilled with heedless snow,
The sap of pulsing life would upward flow,
'Till in its might the heavens themselves could read
Portents of power that they must learn to heed.
This was my dream—the waking proved not so—
For love came like a flower, and grew apace;
I saw it blossom tenderly and frail
Till the dear Spring had run its eager race,
Then the rough wind tossed wide the petals red;
The seeds fell far in soil beyond my pale.
I know not, now, if love be lost, or dead.

EVENING AT WASHINGTON

The purple stretches of the evening sky
Lean to the fair white city waiting here,
Flecking with gold the marble's lifted tier,
Down the blue marsh where crows to Southward fly.
Flanked by dim ramparts, where the tide dreams by,
High from the city's heart, a lifted spear,
In its straight splendour makes the heavens seem near,
Symbol of man-made force that shall not die.
To the tall crest we gaze in self-command,
Assured the world's our own and we may dare
To raise our Babel thro' forbidden aisles
And hold the skirt of knowledge in our hand,
Great in our moment, spurn the world's despair;
While Heaven looks down through calm unmeasured miles.

LOVE'S KISS

Kiss me but once—and in that space supreme
My whole dark life shall quiver to an end,
Sweet Death shall see my heart and comprehend
That life is crowned—and in an endless gleam
Will fix the colour of the dying stream
That Life and Death may meet as friend with friend
An endless immortality to blend;
Kiss me but once, and so shall end my dream.
And then Love heard me and bestowed his kiss,
And straight I cried to Death: I will not die!
Earth is so fair when one remembers this;
Life is but just begun! Ah, come not yet!
The very world smiles up to kiss the sky
And in the grave one may forget—forget.

THE SCARLET THREAD

The sun rose dimly thro' the pallid rain,
Dear Heart—and have we strength to face the day?
The times and life alike are old and grey,
All worn with long monotonies of pain.
Lo—we are working out the curse of Cain,
Who never felt the fire of passion's sway.
Ah—show us crimson in some tragic way
That we may live!—Fate laughed in her disdain.
A thread of scarlet clashed upon mine eyes
Hung for a moment and was swept behind,
And blankly I beheld the hopeless skies
For day by contrast now is grimmest night—
Remembering light as do the newly blind
I pray for death to hide the bitter sight.

AUTUMN

The ruddy banners of the Autumn leaves
Toss out a challenge to the waiting snows,
Where Winter stalks from o'er the mountain rows;
This fiery blaze his onward march receives,
A mock defence his coward heart believes,
And turns him sulking to his moated close.
Now Man the confidence of Nature knows,
And feels the mighty heart that loves and grieves.
Not as in rude young March or hoyden June,
Hard in their beauty, laughing thro' their days;
Their fine indifference is out of tune.
In the dark paths we tread in hope and fear
Look we to Autumn and her gracious ways,
The great last swan-song of the dying year.

THE TIDE OF THE HEART

Love, when you leave me, as with moon-bent tide
The glad waves leave the beaches of my heart;
Slowly and indolently they depart
Ripple by ripple, till the light has died
And left the naked sands forlorn to bide
The sea's return. No might of human power
Can fill the empty waste, nor take one hour
From that long durance in Earth's prison wide.
But when you come again, and hold your hands
Dear hands, outstretched to take me, then, the waves,
They turn, full flooded on the fainting sands,
And all the dimpled hollows smile again,
And brimmed with life, the deep mysterious caves
Forget the distant night of lonely pain.

POEMS

DOES THE PEARL KNOW?

Does the pearl know, that in its shade and sheen
The dreamy rose, and tender wavering green,
Are hid the hearts of all the ranging seas—
That Beauty weeps for gifts as fair as these?
Does it desire aught else when its rare blush
Reflects Aurora in the morning's hush,
Encircling all perfection can bestow—
Does the pearl know?

Does the bird know, when thro' the waking dawn
He soaring sees below the silvered lawn,
And weary men who wait to watch the day
Steal o'er the heights where he may wheel and stray?
Can he conceive his fee divine to share,
As a free joyous peer with sun and air,
And pity the sad things that creep below—
Does the bird know?

Does the heart know, when filled to utter brim,
The least quick throb, a sacrificial hymn
To a great god who scorns the frown of Jove

That here it finds the awful power of love?
Think you the new-born babe in first wise sleep
Fathoms the gift the heavens have bade him keep
Yet if this be—if all these things are so—
Does the heart know?

IN AUTUMN

The gold-red leaves have burned
To their last great glow, and died
And underfoot
By the strong oak's root
They are seized by the angry wind and spurned
And into a common grave have turned
For Summer—warm and wide.

A year must a sapling wage
Its life with the sun and rain,
Then its tender youth
Without reck or ruth
Is frozen and beaten to harsh old age
By a stroke of Nature mother's rage
And the sturdy fight seems vain.

It wails to the oak o'erhead
As the coffin-cold wraps round
"The end of life
Is toil and strife
And the secret of being, I have found
Is a seed in the wind and a log on the ground.
I hope I will soon be dead."

"Peace little struggler—sleep"—

And the great oak croons a song,
"Death is but night
And a cradle white
For one dark space may the shadows creep,
Then Spring will rise from her dungeon keep
And life wake, wise and strong.

WAITING FOR DAY

Sweet Lady Night is paling white.
Why lags her Lord and Master?
She weeping, lays her jewels off—
Ah—may he not come faster.

But hush—the tender rosy blush
Her beauty fair adorning
Her love steps o'er the mountain's rim,
They kiss—and here's the morning.

THE ANGEL OF INDIFFERENCE

A Man once loved a Woman, in the days of old,
Our bond is the strongest in the world, they said—
The Angels up above
Are jealous of our love,
Perhaps they are wishing we were dead, overhead.

So they loved for a Time and the passing of a Time,
And the Angel of Indifference, smiling down, saw their fire,
And he covered for a space
With his sombre wings his face,
That they twain might have of love all desire, without tire.

But love's perfect joy within them burned at last to a flame
Till they longed for a breeze that would gently cool the heart.
For absence! cooling snow
They sighed apart and low,
Tho' they murmured still their love, hand and heart loth to
part.

But at length they prayed together to the calm Angel—pale,
Ah—we yearn, scorched and weary, for the peace of thy
breast.
For that land where love seems
But the shadow of dreams,
Where all sleep in the silver of the West, give us rest.

And he heard, and he bore them to the cool grey heights,
Where all men may drift and himself alone stands fast,
And gave them for their token
The peace of dreams unbroken
Where their souls, his faithful vassals, rest at last, from the
past.

DEAR DEAD WOMEN

The winds have chilled the loving odorous South,
All wan and grey she seeks a place to die,
Her tossing hair, her pleading passionate mouth,
Pity that things so fair in death must lie;
But Winter holds and kills her with a sigh.
One kiss he lays upon her lips so proud,
Shuts the blue eyes and winds her sombre shroud.

I walk between the narrow way of yew.
The glowing amaranth droops upon its stalk,
The shivering birds are timorous and few,
And waifs of Summer strew th' untended walk;
With vague sweet forms I seem to pass and talk.
The ladies of those days in Summer's prime
Whose smiles prevailed not for the frown of Time.

Their little tripping feet reluctant turned
Down the dark paths they had not known before;
Behind them all the glow of living burned,
But they must enter thro' the gloomy door,
And leave behind the loves that plead no more,
The dear frivolity of wiles and ways
They neither need nor know in these grim days.

Here in their garden's close I spend no tear,

No smile—too rare the heights for such display.
But on the frosted hedges' lifted spear
And with my head a little bowed, I lay
A pale camelia, proud and cold as they
Who wait beneath their ashen pall of snow—
Perhaps the fair dead dames will see and know.

THE GRAVE OF HOPE

There's a wild little gnome in the wood
Who sings as he digs a grave
Of Hope that soars and Hope that flies
And Hope that sings her wings, and lies
In peace where the willows wave.

And he croons in the pauses of toil,
A shivering song of Fears,
The lean black shades of Hope so fair
Who weave her nets with her golden hair
And harry her down the years.

And he knows she will perish at last,
He has carved her name on the stone
While the trees draw near and forget to sleep,
And the little leaves bend their heads and weep,
For Hope that must die alone.

TREES OF THE WILDERNESS

The great bleak trees stand up against the sky
Lifting their naked arms in ceaseless prayer
To the unpitying heavens, that they might die,
Rather than drag their weary lives out there.

Thro' starless nights the untold hours wear on,
All awful phantom shapes affright the wood—
And morning light but brings th' unwinking sun,
To torture with its glare their solitude.

In those grim wilds no sweet-voiced bird will sing,
No flowers will bloom within those trackless lands,
Nor is there trace of any living thing,
Save those gaunt giants, holding up their hands.

And when they fall, still round the unknown spot
Howls the rough wind, till in the common ground
They end the life which is—and yet is not,—
A riddle where no meaning shall be found.

THE LOVE OF THE ROSE

Trilled forth the Nightingale
In sweetest sleep of day—
Unto his love, the rose,
Ah golden heart, unclose!
For love, my fairest rose, will last for aye.

So, thro' the waning night
She learned to wear her crown;
Yielded her heart's sweet strife
And found that love was life
Set to the time the dear bird lilted down.

But when the morning came
The red sun burned above;
Hid are the night birds all,
Flower petals fade and fall;
The rose is dead—and what became of love!

IN THE GREEN YEW

The wind is howling in angry pain,
Ah me, and I cannot rest;
On such a night home is best,
Why does she stand in the same old place
With the smile of smiles on her cold white face
And call me thro' the rain?

Ah—the Wind has died from the Fear of her smile—
And I creep quite still—
On over the hill,
To where she stands 'mid the scented yew
And where I now am standing too,
And she sees me all the while.

A little green snake curls thro' her hair—
The scent of the yew is strong and sweet—
Her eyes have drawn me to her feet,
And I lie along on the drenching ground
And worship—and watch the snake curl round,
His tongue shoots thro' the air.

Now—slowly she takes her eyes from me,
And I dream and wait,
Till in shades of hate
My love of her smile has faded quite

And I spring to kill her, there in the night—
But only the yew I see.

THE DEAD NIGHT

The strong brave Night is dead. Its endless deeps
Of patient tenderness, the moon-bright still
When every silver lake and purple hill
Hold wise unfathomed converse with the steeps
Of starry heaven, are past. All nature weeps
And draws the veiling grey of morning mist
Upon the lips that Night's last clouds have kist—
The Night that watched so well the world who sleeps.
The Night is dead—Alas—and pallid Day
is but the corpse laid out in cold array,
The white sad emblem of the heart we knew.
Through half-closed lids the eyes shine palely blue;
The gleaming grave clothes cover all the rest.
So cruel still lies now the air's sweet breast
And trees and hills fold down calm hands and eyes,
That none may guess their secret mysteries.

SONG

Softly sighs the gracious wind—
Dash of rose, in deeps of sky,
Love is fair and love is kind,—
Singing free—I passed him by.

Shredded clouds are whirled in air,
Winter stalks adown the gale
Tossing wide Love's golden hair—
Cease the singing—Love grows pale.

Howls the grey sky to the sea—
Loose the storm-dogs from their bed.
Turned I back—and woe is me—
I must die—for Love is dead.

SIGH NOT FOR LOVE

Sigh not for love, the ways of love are dark!
Sweet Child—hold up the hollow of your hand
And catch the sparks that flutter from the stars!
See how the late sky spreads in flushing bars!
They are dead roses from your own dear land
Tossed high by kindly breezes: lean, and hark,
And you shall know how morning glads her lark!
The timid Dawn, herself a little child
Casts up shy eyes in loving worship—dear,
Is it not yet enough? the Spring is here
And would you weep for Winter's tempest wild
Sigh not for love, the ways of love are dark!

AMBITION AND LOVE

Sweet, in the golden morning of my days,
With young tempestuous joy I reared my head
To gaze adown the splendid sunlit ways
Where all the fires of fame burned glory red,
I recked not where the sounding arches led,
Save at the end I gain my august bays.

But as of old, when through the patient night,
Fair losing or fair gaining, till the morn,
Great Israel strove to break the angel's might,
Till spent and failing, in his heavenly scorn,
Th' immortal wrestler touched the earthly born,
Striking him powerless, winning thus the fight.

So did false Fortune, when I strove and fought,
Smiling 'neath half-closed eyelids, when seemed won,
For a brief hour, the beckoning goal I sought—
Then with frustrating touch dimmed all my sun
Blotted the work and faith so brave begun;
But what I gained was none too dearly bought.

I have no wreath to lay before your feet;
There shines no future, and the past is dead;
But you have heard me, and I love you—Sweet.
The low sun crowns with gold your gracious head,

The heavy lilies nod upon their bed—
I look at you, and find my life complete.

TO B. D

Broad browed beneath a cloud of dusky hair
Her eyes are midnight seas that never sleep
But see beyond the dull world's heavy air
The mystery of ages buried deep.

The faint sweet shadows trembling round her mouth
Lighten with youth and love the Sphinx's face.
And as she moves, a soft wind from the South
Floating, flower-laden seems—so sweet her grace.

Aloof she stands, from idle mirth and tears
And keeps the white sails of her spirit furled,
Altho' a girl, pure from the stain of years,
An ancient Egypt, smiling at the world.

LITTLE SAD FACE

Little sad face, come close, so close to mine,
See through these eyes the sweetness of the day,
Feel how the sunbeams dance in Summer's wine,
Hold fast my hands and let our pulse combine
And with my steps dance down the happy way;
For youth is love and love is light and gay,
Little sad face.

Little sad heart, come close, so close to mine,
And know the utmost limits of the will
Of all the worlds, till soft thy heart divine
A joy which can encompass grief like thine;
Hide in my breast, and let faint pulses thrill,
For youth is love, and love is great and still,
Little sad heart.

Little sad soul, which ne'er can come to mine,
So great in loneliness of grey despair,
There is not one whose spirit may entwine
With thee—the world looks on without a sign;
Go—hide thy face within thy tossing hair,
Thyself veil close with smiles, for none will care,
Little sad soul.

EARTH'S TEARS— AND MAN'S

These slanting lines of hoary rain
Are as my grizzled hair;
The face of earth is old with pain
As mine—with dull despair.

And yet, one sun will gild the air,
Earth's tears were not in vain:
No smile can ease mine eyes of care
Or make me young again!

I HAVE SEEN WHAT THE SERAPHS HAVE SEEN

I have seen what the seraphs have seen
As they gaze thro' the limitless air—
Thro' the wind and the clouds to the lean
Pale face of the moon, and the bare
Bright flame of the sun, unaware,
I have seen what the seraphs have seen!

Thro' the limitless spaces of air
The brave mists that waver and wane
Are patient and pallid and fair.
I have fathomed the pride and the pain
Of the snows and compassionate rain
Thro' the limitless spaces of air.

I have known them, the brave mists that wane
And the glory and peace of the skies.
Where all strife and impatience are vain
And ahush are all passionate sighs,
For I gazed in the deeps of Love's eyes,
And I know what no seraphs shall gain!

A LASS FROM THE WOODS

A lass from the woods
With a leaf in her hair!
And the rain of the night
And the wind of the morn,
They both quivered right;
For my spirit forlorn
In a garment of white
And a laugh newly born
Sprang in maddest of moods
Like a blossom in air
To the kiss of the sun
And the curl of the breeze,
Caught the cobwebs begun
In the hush of the trees
All my beatings were one
With the swirl of the seas.
Dead the creature that broods
In a tangle of care;
There's a lass from the woods
With a leaf in her hair.

WAS THERE ANOTHER SPRING

Was there another Spring than this?
I half remember through the haze
Of glimmering nights and golden days,
A broken pinioned birdling's note,
An angry sky, a sea-wrecked boat,
A wandering through rain-beaten ways!
Lean closer, love—I have thy kiss!
Was there another Spring than this?

TO DIANE

The ruddy poppies bend and bow
Diane! do you remember?
The sun you knew shines proudly now
The lake still lists the breezes' vow;
Your towers are fairer for their stains,
Each stone you smiled upon remains.
Sing low, where is Diane?
Diane do you remember?

I come to find you through the years—
Diane! do you remember?
For none may rule my love's soft fears.
The ladies now are not your peers,
I seek you thro' your tarnished halls,
Pale sorrow on my spirit falls
High, low—where is Diane?
Diane do you remember?

I crush the poppies where I tread—
Diane! do you remember?
Your flower of life—so bright, so red—
She does not hear—Diane is dead.
I pace the sunny bowers alone
Where nought of her remains but stone.
Sing low—where is Diane?

Diane does not remember.

BIRD LOVE— ROSE LOVE

If you were but a rose—dear love—
And I your bird, with dip of wing
To tell a promise of the Spring
And with a golden swift caress
My happy careless love confess,
No pain such gentle vows could bring,
No tears should stay my flight above,
If you were but a rose—dear love.

Bird-love, rose-love, to last the day
Why shall not we whose hearts are light
Put by the coming of the night,
Catch glints of rapture from the sky,
The scents that swing where lilies lie,
And ring them to a garland white
To ease the pain of life away?
Bird-love, rose-love, to last the day!

THE JOY OF LIFE

Her hair was twined with vine leaves thro' the gold,
The leopard skin about her shoulders flung
Showed gleams of her as marble—fair and cold;
I breathed not—listening to the song she sung.

Hither and thither thro' the solemn world,
Glory of purple, passionate blazing red
Glints thro' the gloom, and thro' the grey is swirled—
Ah! but the leaves twined sweet about her head.

"Heedless—men pass me in their search for life,
Hunting for altars to their souls' fine fires,
Crying the sun or joy of toil and strife
And know not that 'tis I—their heart desires.

They dream not that the sheen on peacock's breast,
The haze and perfume of a Summer's day,
The silver stealing o'er the twilight West
Are joys more rich than all the world's display."

MIST

Mist on the sea; like a great bird's pendulous wing,
Broken and hushed; it trails on the face of the main,
Down comes the sun, a red shot from a merciful sling
Burning its heart with swift death as an end to the pain.

THE LAST CLOUD

A red rose cloud upon the evening sky,
A gallant cloud which dies in foremost fight,
Too proud for prisons of triumphant night.
Knowing no pause, no strain of changing years,
Its little hour too short for dreams or tears,
The faithful sun its first and latest light—
Who would not so be glad to fight and die!
A red rose cloud upon the evening sky.

SONG

Love is a broken lily,
A pale and crownless rose
With golden heart made chilly
By traitor touch of snows.
So sleep my heart—lie sleeping
Nor open weary eyes,
For waking is but weeping
And Sleep is Paradise.

Love is a cadence trailing
Where broken music falls,
A hapless shadow sailing
Across deserted walls.
So still my heart lie sleeping
Till love's hot sun be set,
For waking is but weeping.
Asleep—sad eyes forget.

IN THE GRAVE

Dear Love—do you wake in that land where my waking is done?

Do you bare your brave head to the winds and the clouds and the sun?

And is Summer aflame?

Or has the night fallen to sleep on earth's wonderful breast,
And with it, all joys, save but you, who are dearest and best,
Wakeful—sighing my name?

Sometimes as I sleep, the sweet rain flickers over my head,
And smiling, I dream of the tears that your sorrow has shed;
Then I sigh and awake.

For the dreams of the grave are the dreams that have died in the morn,

And their ghosts alone haunt the cold earth where their maker was born,

For a woman's sweet sake.

Perhaps you are singing—and winding the garlands of May;
Not mine be the hand to withhold you the golden to-day,
Or give you pause to your song.

Perhaps the sweet blossoms may charm the grave's pestilent breath.

Ah! life is so short; so forget and be glad, dear—for death
Is so terribly long.

THE FLOWERS OF PROSERPINE

The jewels of the sun are not more rare
Than these that lie upon my lurid halls.
The perfume kiss upon the drowsy air
Is sweet as Spring can hold within her walls.
The spell which night may cast upon her thralls
Is mine; the length of all this gloomy land
Knows no more sun than falls from my white hand.

My wealth great kings have prayed for—in their pride,
Bowing before me. Nay—I hate the place.
I am no queen at heart—my laughter died
That I might wear my crown with regal grace
The very flowers which smile on my sad face
I am afraid of. See! they are the worst
Of all my fears; so fair—yet black accurst.

The languid passion-poppy sways and dips
To show the black heart bursting into flame.
The crimson evil of a satyr's lips
A sneering nodding finger-post of shame;
A thousand other flowers without a name
Huddle all trembling in the dusk behind
Like hunted ghosts, whose eyes are white and blind.

The grass is not the grass that overhead

Cooled my bare feet with daisies' purest snows;
But thick pale blades, like fingers of the dead
Thrust from forgotten graves upon their foes.
Ah—horrid soil! for everything that grows
In this confine but mocks in wicked scorn
The fairness of the land where I was born.