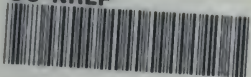


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*POEMS*

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# *P O E M S*

*BY*

*A. BERNARD MIALL*



*JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD,*

*LONDON AND NEW YORK*

*1899*

**GENERAL.**

TO  
W. HUGH CHESSON

*Dittisham, Oct. 22, 1898.*

181416



Many of these verses have appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and in the *Westminster Gazette* and *Budget*; some in the *Speaker*, one in the *Yellow Book*, and one in the *New Saturday*, a paper since defunct. I take this opportunity of acknowledging my thanks to the editors of these journals.



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*BOOK I*

---





---

# POEMS

---

## THE ROSE WITH FOUR PETALS

**T**HIS life is in the likeness of a rose  
Having four petals and a heart of fire ;  
The petals that the wind eternal blows  
Are hope and memory, wisdom and desire.

One petal holds the mingled love and fear  
And imminence of all unknown, to be ;  
The life that goes to death from year to year,  
The lands desired by eyes that cannot see.

One petal holds the wisdom of dead things,  
Dead loves, dead hates, regrets that cannot die,  
The dust of slain desires with broken wings,  
The splendour of deciduous joys gone by.

---

## *The Rose with Four Petals*

---

And one, nepenthe for what might have been,  
The bitterness, the sad imagined sweet,  
Grown dim for sick desires that throng between,  
The land of wandering lusts with weary feet.

One holds the secret of all holy things  
Breathed faintly where the mountain lands are  
steep,  
In one eternal harmony, that sings  
To all except the dead, and men that sleep.

This flower is in the likeness of a cross  
That man is bound upon till he expire.  
One arm, in sorrow of eternal loss,  
Points to the failing of the sunset fire.

One arm is pointed to the Eastern night  
That sends no herald of its coming years  
Save the thick darkness of its ultimate might,  
The veil and limit of its hopes and fears.

The stem is rooted in the silent earth ;  
All things that sleep, undreaming, lie therein ;  
All things that wait, yet may not come to birth ;  
The seed of holiness, the honey of sin.

---

## *The Sea of Death*

---

The stem points up to the ethereal deep  
Where drift the indifferent stars across our  
sight,  
Where, in the austere skies that know not sleep,  
The wind creeps thro' the awful peace of  
night.

This Rose of Life shall live its meed of days  
Till the eternal wind that pitiless blows  
Sweep the four petals down its infinite ways,  
Leaving the heart and fruitage of the rose.

### *THE SEA OF DEATH*

HERE, at the eastern limit of the land  
Fulfilled of night, and the elusive haze,  
Golden, of plain-girt cities, the silent cliff  
Fronts the blue void of immemorial dawn.

How long have I beheld the equal sky,  
Forecasting with expectant heart increase  
Of brighter azure, or the warmer flush  
Of dawn the insistent herald—how long fled  
From all discomfortable ways of men,

---

## *The Sea of Death*

---

Harsh night of cities, cast about with lights  
Of gold extinguishing the foam of stars,  
Harsh voices and harsh footfalls, banishing  
The holy silence of the gracious dark,  
Warm radiance of dwellings, casting forth  
The fearful silence of the drifting stars,  
The questioning stillness of the infinite skies,  
The call to quest in the enticing night ?

Long have I lain, thro' years oblivious  
Of all the backward lands, all ways of men,  
High on the verge of this precipitous cliff,  
Above the silence of the blood-red sea  
Where the white bodies float for evermore ;  
Nor to expectance of mine inward heart  
Has form of cloud or dim increase of light  
Moved in the twilight heavens of the east,  
Nor the wind blown, nor any voice of man  
Or wheeling seafowl ever come : no sound,  
Save the swift crepitant start of stones that fall  
From agelong rest, and with small sullen plunge  
Divide the silence of the sea of blood,  
That from the cliff out to the utter verge  
Where the blue heavens are founded on the sea,  
By stir of wind or wave untroubled lies,



---

## *The Sea of Death*

---

Nor any wind wakes in the space between.

But on the silence of the blood-red sea  
The naked and white bodies wake in death,  
Ascend the dimness of the middle air,  
And hang before me in the blue of night :  
Thereof are faces frozen with all fear,  
Whose tears suffuse the whiteness of their flesh,  
Flesh whitened past the awful hue of death,  
Mouths writhen past the pain of mortal men ;  
White bodies too of women, whose long hair  
Hangs heavy and thick with dropping forth of  
blood,

Continual, dripping in the sea beneath ;  
Therewith are faces blind with mocking eyes,  
And lips of awful warning, muttering  
Horror unspeakable in speech unheard ;  
Therewith are brows blest with an infinite peace,  
A solace and a quiet ineffable.

White hang the bodies over the red sea,  
Beneath the blue seas of the upper air,  
White, but in death awakened, horrible,  
With lips that shriek not, and blind eyes of  
death,

And hair down-dripping to the sinister sea.

Yet, when above the backward lands of men

---

## *The Sea of Death*

---

Slumber and silence gain a passing hold,  
When the skies darken, nor reverberate  
The flash of myriad lights, nor bruit of life,  
Far in the eastern lands of dawn withheld,  
Looms a still figure, slowly quickening  
Like dawn to full perfection beautiful ;  
At whose advent, as one whose life is done  
Sinks with last breath upon his latest bed,  
Sink the white bodies as one dying man,  
The middle air vacating that they held,  
Relapse, and float upon the sea of blood.

In the eastern blue, remote, more beautiful  
Than dawn or dreams or love in any land,  
She, in dark radiance waxing, reigns supreme,  
Her white feet gleaming on the ultimate sea,  
Her brows dividing the high home of stars.  
As one beloved in dreams, and far more fair,  
She stands, girt round with violet garniture  
More soft and strange than is the blue of night,  
Whose dimness is more kind within her eyes ;  
Fair raiment cast about her fairer limbs,  
Whose perfect whiteness yet is white therethro',  
Like foam of twilit seas on windy waves ;  
And her white arms flash in the holy sky,  
White hands put by the shadow of the hair

---

## *The Sea of Death*

---

Fallen across her brows imperial  
And eyes of awful quiet, shining forth  
Beholding only silence and the night.  
Whereat, beholding those white brows of hers,  
Than life more glad and more serene than sleep,  
Beholding her immortal lips whereon  
Love hangs divided with a pitying scorn,  
And mournful pride with graciousness, my heart  
Yearns to the white perfection of her breast,  
Shaking my body with hard hopeless blows,  
Like a thick silver fish caught among nets,  
To leave my body and go forth to her ;  
My lips too yearn to taste the quietness  
Of her hair's shadowy downfall, and my veins,  
Like lovers aching to caress her own,  
Strain with harsh longing through my inner  
flesh.

But she, who, standing grave, inscrutable,  
Beyond the world, dim in dim outer space,  
Waits far beyond the passionate voice of men,  
Scorns them that love her with a sweet, calm  
pride,  
And is not kind to worship. Yet my heart  
Leaps with thick pain and sullen blows, as tho'  
To force my body to the extreme verge,

---

## *The Sea of Death*

---

And hurl me downward in the sea of blood,  
So the slow drift of that corpse-laden tide  
Might carry forth my load of extreme love,  
To leave me at her gracious feet, on shores  
Unseen, unknown, undreamed of : yet I know—  
O heart, be told thereof, persuaded quite,  
And no more fallen in passion!—that her feet  
Are not<sup>d</sup> on any sea, nor any shore,  
But are established in the waste of night,  
Space unattainable. But now my hands,  
The cliff being shorn by gradual decay  
Affording for my elbows no more rest,  
Heavily hang before my wearied eyes,  
Heavy with blood in every vein surcharged,  
And wet with blood about the blackened nails.  
Then my pained eyes behold red sea alone;  
Therein no stars are mirrored, no pale star,  
Nor faint blue flush of the enclosing skies,  
Nor broken nor still image of her form,  
Who stands beyond the verge, inscrutable :  
Only the bodies float with arms outheld,  
Rigid and white and writhen, cruciform,  
With eyes that see not questioning the sky ;  
Also the frail red poppies jutting forth  
From the cliff's face of white, quiver and writhe

---

## *The Sea of Death*

---

To the distempered riot of my blood,  
Like little dusky flames that have no heat,  
And stones released fall turning in the sea,  
And are engulfed by a red shuddering mouth  
That opens, and is not. O, I am fain  
To fall, with such a plunge and tide of blood  
As by expectance or long fear, my heart  
Knows, to be one among the bounden dead,  
To know no more desiring or despair,  
But that dumb fear takes hold on me, whose  
    might

Grips at my heart when out of sullen sea  
Rise the white faces, vacuous and blind,  
Or writhen with a fear unspeakable,  
Yet some are covered with an extreme peace ;  
But which of them I were I know not now,  
Nor anything but fear ; for which these hands  
Grope in the short hard grasses of the verge,  
To pluck my body backward, till mine eyes  
Behold the brow and eyes of my desire.  
Thereto, as though before my questioning  
And perfect worship softened, those grave lips  
Are stirred in quiet speech, that falls upon  
Mine ears long sick with silence, as a dream  
On men of dreamless slumber wearied out :



---

## *The Sea of Death*

---

Falls like the voice of stars and sky and air,  
And, as in dreams, I know that all is well,  
Beyond all speech, all dreaming, well ; and I  
Am fallen in bliss so perfect, that it comes  
As naturally to me as my breath ;  
Whereat I waken in that twilit place,  
And think to walk among the fields of corn  
Or seek a happier sea. Then, as a dream  
To drowsing men is sweet beyond belief,  
Yet, when the dreamer fully wakens, gone,  
Utterly past ; only the great desire  
Of that he knows is joy is left in him  
While the dream hangs behind the gates of sleep,  
So the soft shock of that desired truth  
Scatters the flock of all my wary sense,  
And I awake, and know the truth I heard  
And knew, is gone ; above in bluest sky  
White stars are desolate, in blood-red sea  
White corpses veer upon a stagnant tide.

---

## *The Crucified*

---

### THE CRUCIFIED

**B**Y the sea hang the dead, the crucified.  
They rest ; the years blow by them ; they  
are still.

The years roll past them from the seas of Time,  
The years fashioned without them pass them by,  
The years they know not in Eternity  
Are born in grayness, and are gathered up,  
And swept as clouds along the foamless sea,  
And break behind them into tides of light  
That they may see not ; into rustling rain  
That shall not cool their foreheads or gray lips,  
That lean for ever to the silent sea  
Whereby their ancient crosses are made sure ;  
That no ship ever sailed, nor any wave  
Ruffled, nor cry of bird nor man disturbed ;  
Whereby they rest ; yet are not of the sea,  
Nor of the years, nor anything that is.

Theirs is not pain, nor sorrow ; yet their pain  
Shall live for ever, and shall testify  
The misery of all unfruitful things,  
And all dead sorrow never comforted.

---

## *The Crucified*

---

For roses wither, and the kindly earth  
Receives their petals as the snow-soft ewe  
Her trembling young ; or maidens gather them,  
To shed some treasured sweetness of old scent ;  
The grape is trodden under dancing feet,  
And thereof cometh wine ; the seething corn  
Falls, and is pleasant bread ; the night is born  
Because the sunset lessens from the sky,  
And happy memories follow happiness,  
And weariness grows peace ; yea, all these things  
Being born to die, in dying are fulfilled,  
For they have seed, for they are born in death ;  
And it is good ; but pain shall never die,  
That is a barren stem without a flower,  
That has no fruit, but is already crowned.

The dead sleep on for ever ; on their eyes  
Lies a great weariness, because their eyes  
Never shall see ; their lips, that shall not speak,  
Are hopeless ; and their hands, that long ago  
Strove with the nails in agony, are still,  
And have no strength, for they shall strive no  
more.

Over their bodies lies the weariness  
Of all that shall not be : for these have been.



---

## *The Crucified*

---

The flowers that were their hearts are fall'n to  
dust,

Blossom and evil weed and delicate flower,  
And at their birth their tears and laughter died.  
The winds have lost the echoes of their songs,  
And all their ancient wisdom is as dust ;  
Only, around their brows, the crown of thorns,  
Only the nails immoveable through their limbs,  
Only the cross, the circumstance of pain,  
That lives, and has no power to harm the dead  
That shall not dream, nor wake ; who are wrapped  
in rest

And shall not wake to know it ; who rest not.  
They have forgotten all, and all their joy  
Is dead, and all their pain unsoled yet  
Is no more pain ; but ah ! their endless rest  
Is no repose for these : there are none such.

The flowers that were their hearts have fall'n to  
dust,

And the good seed has flourished, and the earth  
Is fragrant with the fairness of their hearts,  
And shadowed by the coolness of their dreams.  
Therefore, when we are glad of any spring,  
Or any delicate flower or soft song,

---

## *The Crucified*

---

Shall we not say : *Remember now their sleep,*  
*Think of the silent ones whose voices now*  
*Are heard ; they taught us to call fairness fair,*  
*And all the wonder of the earth is theirs.*

Yea, roses fall, and thereof roses spring,  
And all their gladness laughs until to-day ;  
Only the cross decays, only the nails  
Are rusted to the core : only the crown  
Of thorns is a dead thing and out of mind  
For us : and yet these things shall never change.

O vanity of living and of death !  
Their pain is dead, it is clean out of mind,  
They are forgotten, and their gladness lives,  
And sweeps away behind them with the years.

O happiness of living and of death !  
All pain shall die, for this has of itself  
No life, being evil ; and at length shall die.  
Only the roses of our rose-gardens  
Shall gladden days that are not, that shall be  
Made shadowy with the sweetness of their  
dreams  
And ours ; and theirs shall mingle with our own,  
And these be one, and we be one with them.

---

## *The Watcher*

---

### THE WATCHER

HIGH in the silence of embattled towers,  
When night held all the heavens and wet  
earth,

She stood, awaiting the faint flower of day  
In pure chill eastern heavens, where remote  
Light waxed austere through some expectant  
while,

Till the grey river of dawn above the hills  
Drew on a soft similitude of flame  
And rose to utter radiance, and the sun  
Struck on the towers, and those expectant lips.  
Then she that waited, leaning to the east,  
Held her tired mouth forth to the paling sun,  
Whose fresh light lived among her fallen hair,  
And laved her throat and bosom and pure brows  
With softness of sweet colour ; and the day  
Woke shortly at the coming of the sun.

From all wide hills and leafy valley roads,  
After the birds had sung a little while  
To the wet earth yet sleeping, flowed the bruit  
Of men fast journeying ; the wind of the day  
Wafted a murmur and clatter of many hooves  
Up to that watcher in the silent towers ;

---

## *The Watcher*

---

With sound of singing in the distant ways,  
And sound of laughter on the awakened hills,  
But yet no song was as the song she knew.  
Men brake out of all woodland ways, and high  
On shadowy hills came darkly from the sun,  
And made the morning flash with burning steel,  
All the hot forenoon journeying by the tower,  
Whereon she watching heard the laugh and song  
And graver speech rise mingled; till her heart  
Grew sick and laboured at the approach of noon,  
For no way came the banner that she knew,  
Also among brown faces on the road  
That face she loved, set with expectant mien,  
That face her heart ached after, and her eyes,  
Was not discerned in all the indifferent throng.  
Also the odour of hot summer grass,  
The kindly breath of the hill-scented wind,  
And flowerful perfume of the cooler ways,  
Mocked her with perfect incense; till the noon  
Struck, and upon the first note of the bell  
Her heart smote thickly on her tender side  
And stayed her hearing with hard muffled blows;  
For then no foot fell on the castle steps,  
Though all wide gates lay open; and the square  
Of shadow where the stairway entered up

---

## *The Watcher*

---

Gave up no sound at all, no sight but black.  
Thereat at noon she turned her weeping face  
Toward the west, and watched with hopeless eyes  
The silent fields that journeyed to the west,  
The golden lands of the departing sun.  
All afternoon, by white and cloudy ways,  
Men hurried westward, bowed in driven dust,  
Shrinking in drifting smoke, and when the sun  
Slowly and with intolerable light  
Pained the near heavens till their life ran out  
In fiery death along the level earth,  
Clouds hurried from the backward east, and  
    wind,  
Sending a herald of confuséd sound,  
Smote on the towers, and, shrieking toward the  
    west,  
Rapt the shrill moan of desolated woods  
And bore it forth in greyness; and the day  
Was drowned in rain, and night came down the  
    wind.  
Then she that watched, with blown hair rained  
    upon  
And garments pressed against her by the wind,  
Cast forth her arms helpless along the walls,  
And sank to kneeling and most bitter tears,

---

## *The Fortunate Islands*

---

Hiding her face from the grey rustling rain.  
Majestic clouds, borne on the urgent air,  
Brought up the night within their nets of rain,  
And darkness darkness overtook. The night  
Was fallen as if day had never been,  
And she, forsaken, abandoned to the rain,  
Covered her eyes, or lifted up her face  
To gaze into the roaring wet abyss  
When the sun vanished, when the day went by,  
Nor turned her to the east, whereto the sun  
Was bounden with his majesties of gold,  
And the unwelcome and incredible day.

### *THE FORTUNATE ISLANDS*

WHEN flushed as a rose's petal the moon  
floats low in the east,  
In a lavender twilight falling, refreshed the  
birds awake,  
Stirring the heart of the silence as night airs  
trouble the lake  
That all the day long lay dreaming, now that  
the heat has ceased,

---

## *The Fortunate Islands*

---

I am sick for a fortunate land, be it west that it  
lie or east,  
Where life is a lovely thing to possess for its  
own fair sake.

I am sick for the dim sweet isle girt round with  
a rainy sea  
Mingled of many colours, flashing or windy or  
white,  
Or still as the face of the maiden you love at  
the fall of night,  
The fortunate far-off isle where the blest un-  
dying be,  
But I think no sail ever sailed or shone on the  
changing sea,  
Tho' the sound thereof and the savour shadow  
me day and night.

But here in the passage of seasons, the watching  
of infinite seas,  
We have seen or have dreamed we beheld the  
islands that know not of change ;  
Crowned with their shadowy trees, past over the  
seas that range,

---

## *The Fortunate Islands*

---

And girded about with a drowsy mist and a  
golden ease,  
Made sweet with the odour of hot thick flowers  
and the drone of bees,  
The islands unchanging endure in the stress of  
the seas that change.

Ah, there in the light of the moon, in the islands  
of all desired,  
The days that are dead are possessed, and the  
days that never will be,  
In the islands at rest like a sleep on the breast  
of the tranquil sea,  
Like a kiss upon shadowy eyes, as a dream falls  
down on the tired,  
The islands of all things dead and the haven of  
all desired,  
Where the dead would ever have been, where  
ever the weary would be.

All the day long there the sunlight, deep in the  
green deep ways,  
Lies with the strenuous silence of one not tired,  
but at peace,



---

## *The Fortunate Islands*

---

And ceases at length as kisses content of their  
answer cease ;

There for delight of the day none numbers the  
passage of days,

None of the folk that wend in the windless whis-  
pering ways,

Till the stars awake in a dream, till the dream  
of their waking cease.

For a magical slumber is woven of music of  
winds breathed o'er

The sigh of the trees abandoned no wind of the  
day has fanned,

And the coolness of odorous dew shed over the  
charméd land,

And the langourous ripple of waves awake on  
a drowséd shore,

While the stars shake low in the sea till the  
hush of the night is o'er,

Till as fair a day as another tread over them  
toward the land.

And these need hardly remember, they need not  
to hope at all,

For the dawn of their skies is the birth of a life  
enduring the day,

---

## *The Fortunate Islands*

---

And whether the sun shall set or endure they  
shall hardly say,  
And the darkness is only peace refashioned  
about dewfall ;  
They reject not the perfect hour at hand for the  
hunger of all,  
The day is utterly theirs, and theirs is the happier  
way.

O slender and white and supple, O heavy and  
sweet of hair,  
With the floating purple of dreams and desire  
for your garniture,  
Were ever your loves less lovely, being for ever  
sure,  
Your days less desirable ever, being for ever  
fair ?  
Is the end attained of desire less dear than  
desiring there,  
Less fair than a last forgetting the knowledge  
that lives endure ?

There do ye weary of pleasure complete or con-  
ceive a desire  
For a thing unknown, untasted, for days that  
tarry or cease ?

---

## *The Fortunate Islands*

---

Shall a twilight ever untroubled fail of familiar  
    peace,  
Or the sun by unfailing splendour veil or de-  
    crease his fire?  
Nay, have ye hearkened, as we, to the voice of  
    a last desire  
For the coast of an ultimate island, a stillness of  
    infinite peace?

We have dreamed that at fall of the dew down-  
    shed in your shrouded land  
Your most quiet hands and happy forth-holding  
    as languidly  
Your tresses lift in the coolness, ye gaze apart  
    to the sea,  
Mournful indeed for us, who know not if we  
    understand,  
But I know no sail ever sailed or shone by the  
    fortunate land,  
Not one of all songs ever lost on the water  
    strayed over the sea.

---

*The Message of Nature*

---

THE MESSAGE OF NATURE

I CAME to thee enraptured, and I found  
Thy wind swift laughter and thy sun a  
smile,  
And all thy thick trees amorous of the air ;  
Even the old leaves rain-rotten on the ground  
Had but to wait a short appointed while  
Again to be alive in thee and fair.

came to thee in anguish, and I found  
Thy wind a lament full of all affright,  
Thy desolated woods a stricken race ;  
And all of thee was born to die : the ground  
Conceived and thrust doomed things into the  
light,  
And flaunted death in every living face.

I came to thee with neither joy nor grief,  
Too wise to hope, too stubborn to despair ;  
I found thee vacant as my own soul was.  
Void of significance flapped every leaf,  
Wind was a mere dull passage of dead air,  
And hills were heaps of earth o'errun with grass.

---

*The Mirror and the Veil*

---

THE MIRROR AND THE VEIL

TO the holy place of the forest  
Laughing I went :  
Over the heart of Nature  
Laughing I bent,  
To see what she hid there,  
But in the happy place  
All that was reflected  
Was my laughing face.

To the strong heart of the forest  
Weeping I went,  
To find of Nature  
The secret of her content ;  
Low in the mournful pool  
In that despairing place  
All I saw reflected  
Was my weeping face.

Neither weeping nor laughing,  
With neither hope nor despair,  
Forth I went to the forest  
To seek a solace there ;

---

## *The Recluse*

---

Dead lay the water  
I was gazing on ;  
My face looked up with neither hate  
Nor love thereon.

Of renunciation  
I took the shadowy veil ;  
I bound it over my face  
And I knew that I should not fail ;  
Down I saw thro' the waters,  
Down to the secret deep,  
Where the soul of Nature broodeth,  
The wisdom that knows not sleep.

### *THE RECLUSE*

**I** WAS impatient of the wrestling seas :  
My heart shall be a valley calm, I said,  
Where salt vexed waters enter to become  
A mirror to the stars that every breeze  
Bade them forget : where ever overhead  
The woods that overhang the woods are dumb,

---

## *The Recluse*

---

But gazing on the tide with fond desire  
Where the gold glories of the sun were hung,  
My heart reluctant strove to hold it back,  
The flood confounding with the heaven's fire,  
Bars I put forth, with rushes green I clung,  
Thick ranks of weed and beds of sullen wrack.

So thus it was, that at my river's mouth  
The keen bright brine exhausted o'er the bar  
Ran slack and halted : pool on stagnant pool  
Now lies that river choked upon the south  
No tides may cleanse, where never hang the  
stars;  
Whose feverous valley never wind may cool.

So thus it is, the slow long-pulséd hours  
Pass with no keeper but a swooning breath  
Of sun-sick waters, and the river lies  
Choked with hot weeds, dry reeds and rotting  
flowers,  
Foul scurf of salt and fetid flats of death,  
And shows no recognition of the skies.

---

## *The Shy Thoughts*

---

### THE SHY THOUGHTS

**I**N the garden of your mind  
All the thoughts that have no voice  
Shiver softly in the wind,  
Brooding with a gentle noise,  
Watching you with wary eyes,  
Gorgeous birds of Paradise :  
Argent-eyed and of soft feather,  
Coloured with all hues together  
Of flowers that open in twilight weather  
On an olden tapestry :  
He that walks the garden ways  
Seeth every bird that sways  
Dimly sidelong from his eye :  
But if he turn,  
With beating heart,  
To mark the magic birds with hues that pulse  
    and burn,—  
Ah ! with a start  
The charm goes by !—  
They rise on rustling frightened wings that but  
    obscure the sky.



---

*In Vino Veritas*

---

IN VINO VERITAS

**I**N the old house, I heard them say,  
A hoard of gold was hid away :  
I set the mouldered house afire.  
The flames red-rustled all the day ;  
At eve, in fuming ashes grey,  
I sought and found my heart's desire.

They said there was a healing well  
In the old garden ; none could tell,  
The weeds were woven and wound so rank.  
In flame the last leaf writhed and fell,  
The last wet stem crackled its knell :  
I found the healing well, and drank.

A truth of old I could not find,  
Forgotten in a careful mind,  
Altho' familiar to my youth ;  
I drank red wine ; the world as wind  
Whirled, and my eyes no more were blind :  
In the thick dark outshone the truth.

---

*Beauty*

---

BEAUTY

WHERE is the Lady Beauty? She is not  
Dead or grown old, tho' few may find  
her now.

Still, in remoteness, with a patient brow,  
She waits among the hills, in what fair spot  
Those know that worship her, they love that bow,  
His is her house that grows a worshipper,  
She is not fled; we have forgotten her.  
She waits for us; 'tis we that have forgot.

Till men shall hunger for her perfect face,  
Shall make of her demesne their dwelling-place,  
She waits, her face fanned by the eternal wind:  
Till men shall flee to her for love or fear,  
For her dear sake hold one another dear,  
And, in her service, shall become her kind.

THE WINDS OF THE CROSSWAYS

WHERE the moon lies low in the lake  
And the stars are mirrored white  
The blind white faces  
Arise in another birth;

---

## *The Winds of the Crossways*

---

They are gathered, they fear and awake,  
They are borne on the shadow of night,  
From the far waste places,  
The desolate ends of the earth;  
And another thing I hear  
Than the hiss of the reeds and heath,  
For a voice is awake in the south  
In a song of a pleasant fire;  
Thro' the lands fulfilled of fear  
And delight, and the odour of death,  
The words of a passionate mouth  
Are borne on the wind of desire.

*O love, let your hands go about my head, your heavy  
hair fall,  
For I would not see the faces, I would not hear the  
call.*

The wide skies are woven  
Of purple and gold in the west;  
They are covered of face and grey  
That walk in the splendid light,  
Where bright ways are cloven  
In clouds that are dark with rest;  
They are wise in the wisdom of day,  
They are worn in the fever of night,

---

## *The Winds of the Crossways*

---

Ah, which of them all rejoices,  
That were, or that have not been?  
They are clad in the glory of kings,  
They are filled with words unsaid ;  
The softest song of their voices  
Is broken with tears between  
In the country of outworn things,  
In the ways of the unborn dead.

*O love, let your hands go about my head, your heavy  
hair fall,  
For I would not see their faces, I would not hear them  
call.*

By the shores of the freshening dawn  
Is a falling of golden light  
Shed over the faces  
That watch for the quickening sun ;  
And these are bitter and drawn  
With dread of the ultimate night,  
And the desolate paths and places  
To tread ere the day be done :  
But these are glad and aglow  
For the smiting of many lyres  
And the tumult of imminent feet  
That approach in the van of the day :

---

## *The Winds of the Crossways*

---

But what if the daybreak grow  
To the glimmer of sullen fires,  
And the songs be no more sweet,  
And the singers pass away ?

*O love, let your hands go about my head, your heavy  
hair fall,  
For I would not see their faces, I would not hear them  
call.*

In the high cold ways  
Of the listening mountain lands,  
Where fields of a virgin snow  
Endure in the sun's embrace,  
Thro' passing of sterile days  
Those tarry with quiet hands,  
That we dared of old to know,  
To speak with them, face to face ;  
In the ways too steep and chill  
For men that are weary or weep  
They dream, and they come not forth,  
They dream, and themselves behold ;  
When the voice of the south is still  
From the hills that may never sleep  
The wind bears out of the north  
Their songs austere and cold.

---

## *The Winds of the Crossways*

---

*O love, let your hands go about my head, your heavy  
hair fall,  
For I cannot see their faces, I dare not hear them call.*

At the crossways four we are born :  
Shall we weary or wander away  
To be lost in a still desire,  
In passion, or vain regret,  
Or in barren hopes and forlorn ?  
Let us live in the passing day,  
That it bring with the morning fire  
Life, till the sun be set.  
I would live in the passing day :  
Ah, make it suffice to me !  
Be the winds' wings waking or furled,  
Be they weary or cruel or kind,  
Let us tarry where way meets way  
That the winds of the ways may be  
Only the winds of the world,  
And the roses we of the wind.

*Ah love ! let your hands go about my head, your heavy  
hair fall,  
Till I hear your quiet breathing, and hear nought else  
at all.*

---

*BOOK II*

---





*THE DEMAND*

**B**E near me, near me always, my Delight !

I must have joy complete, or none :

I am not happy by you, day or night,

For thought how soon my happy hour is done !

For other hearts are other joys ; for me,

Have I one comfort, save with you to be ?

Not one, not one !

Be near me always ! For in vainly trying

To find some little ease away,

I, being young, do sudden fall a-crying

“ How glad a thought ! ” or “ Ah, how kind a  
day ! ”

And turn with happy laughter, so to share

My joy—with whom ? Ah, one who is not there !

Be not away !

---

## *The Challenge*

---

### THE CHALLENGE

SO wholly fair are you,  
That you are far too fair.  
Be to your beauty true,  
Lest I despair.

For if I find a flower  
When winter dawns are late,  
Or live a perfect hour  
In years that are desolate,  
Or tread a quiet path by men untrod,  
Girded by troubled ways of men around,  
Are not these perfect things a meting-rod,  
That all is measured by and wanting found?  
Be true, O sweet, be true,  
For all, because of you,  
Is weighed and wanting found.

Be not so fair, sweet eyes,  
Or, heart, be fairer far,  
O eyes that put her heart to shame,  
That her heart's ways no fairer are,  
Be not so fair, or, being fair, be thou, O heart,  
the same.

---

*Blanche*

---

*BLANCHE*

**G**OD did not make her very wise,  
But carved a strangeness round her mouth ;  
He put her great sorrow in her eyes,  
And softness for men's souls in drouth,  
And on her face, for all to see,  
The seal of awful tragedy.

God did not make her very fair,  
But white and lithe and strange and sweet ;  
A subtle fragrance in her hair,  
A slender swiftness in her feet,  
And in her hands a slow caress :  
God made these for my steadfastness.

God did not give to her a heart,  
But there is that within her face  
To make men long to muse apart  
Until they goodness find and grace,  
And think to read and worship there  
All good : yet she is scarcely fair.

---

## *The Burden of Pity*

---

### THE BURDEN OF PITY

WALK straitly in your ways, O sweet,  
I said, for pity of my love.

There was one pathway for your feet,  
One valley in cool hills above,  
A way that I found out for you  
In dreams, because my love was true.

Belovéd, will you think that God  
In His own shape had fashioned man,  
And watched the path His creature trod  
That ended foul, that fair began,  
With great love, though His eyes were dim  
With pity: could you weep for Him?

But I a perfect image wrought  
Of all I would have had you be,  
In likeness of my holiest thought;  
You have grown less than this to me,  
And I more pitiful than God,  
Knowing the way you should have trod.

Yet I will hold your heart as pure  
As I have wished it every day,  
And name your faults the signature  
Of pains that came and passed away;



---

*Forget*

---

And I will love you more, my sweet,  
For every wound on your white feet.

And every stain shall be a mouth  
To sing of what you should have grown  
If winds blew ever from the South,  
If you had never been alone.  
My love, that came too late to aid,  
For pity shall be threefold made.

Yet O, wild rose the wind has flawed,  
But else more fair than all your kind,  
O snowflake on white eyelids thawed  
To leave a falling tear behind,  
O wherefore are you not complete,  
Or, being ruined, wherefore sweet?

*FORGET*

**F**ORGET the silent river and the lights of  
gold,

Forget the dusty trees and the haunted, slum-  
bering town.

---

## *Forget*

---

And, O poor heart, remember the starlight on  
the fold  
Where the sheep lay a-sleeping and the dew  
fell down.

Forget the weary morrow and the day gone by,  
And remember how the daybreak flowers  
above the sea  
Where of old I heard the waters and the peewit's cry,  
Half waking, half asleep, where I fain would  
be.

Forget, forget that in the town behind  
Your first love lies awake, or is weeping yet ;  
Dream that once in wandering in the twilight  
and the wind  
You met her far away, or dream we never  
met.

Forget, forget that she is near and weeping,  
Dream that we are hearkening the foam of  
the sea,  
Lying in the grass where the wind is creeping,  
Singing a low song to my tired love and me.

---

## *A Commonplace Tragedy*

---

Dream her lips are soft with happy laughter,  
Dream her eyes are dim with happy tears,  
Dream, O dream no waking follows after,  
Dream beyond the limit and control of years.

Sleep, O sleep, forget you ever met her ;  
Sweet it were to dream in sleep were she at  
rest ;  
Heart that cannot comfort her or yet forget her,  
Be utterly at peace ; oh, this were best.

### *A COMMONPLACE TRAGEDY*

**B**ECAUSE I found you full of care  
I gave my happy heart,  
And after bore an equal share,  
Perchance the greater part.

There was no use in this, I know,  
Tho' all that I could do,  
For none the happier did you grow,  
But I grew sad as you.

---

## *The Strand*

---

Because no lighter grew your lot,  
No comfort could I see :  
So dull a heart you wanted not,  
And gave it back to me.

It was too sad to bear alone ;  
What should I find to do  
With my poor heart so heavy grown  
But bring it back to you ?

### *THE STRAND*

**T**HE wet wind wanders o'er the street ;  
Along the pavements wet,  
Above, below the shuffling feet,  
The yellow lamps are set.

Dusk in the reaches of the sky,  
Dusk in the quieter ways,  
And as I pass the theatres by  
A golden dusk of haze.



---

## *The Strand*

---

Onward, on the faces go,  
On the unflagging feet ;  
No face among them all I know,  
No step for me to greet.

I saw two lovers meet and kiss,  
A lamp was bright above ;  
Her lips were like the lips I miss,  
Your lips, O girl I love.

I saw two lovers turn away  
And leave the rumbling Strand ;  
As you and I on many a day,  
I saw them hand in hand.

Hand in hand as we, my dear,  
As we shall never go ;  
Along the alley cold and drear  
I heard them laughing low.

I had your heart—but now, but now,  
I would not ask so much ;  
But yet, to kiss your quiet brow,  
And O, to feel your touch.

---

## *The Burden of Loving*

---

The yellow lights of the roaring Strand  
Are dim with more than rain.  
They two were walking hand in hand,  
But when shall we again ?

### THE BURDEN OF LOVING

YOU that I love and have lost, would God  
I could love you anew,  
Would God I could lighten your sorrow, be  
merely glad at your joy ;  
I am haunted by phantom flowers that had blown  
when the skies were blue  
If you had been naught but a maid, if I had  
been naught but a boy.  
But your tears were the whole world's tears,  
tho' yours had been bitter alone,  
And your smile was the mournful token of all  
that was never for me ;  
It was more than your sorrow that fevered my  
nights, for I heard the dead folk moan,  
The comfortless dead underground, and the  
pitiful dead to be.

---

## *Ingratitude*

---

I have learned a wisdom at length—to take the  
day that is here,  
And to drink the whole of the draught—but,  
alas! for it is not joy—  
And the wine is spilt, and I turn to a wish and  
a dream more dear—  
That you were naught but a maid, that I were  
naught but a boy.

### *INGRATITUDE*

HAD I but never heard a word or a song  
Praising the Spring, and she in passing  
along  
Had found me a mourner where Love lay sleep-  
ing,  
Had I not turned to laughter from weeping?  
But as a pilgrim spent on the parchéd grass,  
Who hears that a bountiful lady shortly shall  
pass,  
Gold and food and a gourd of water bearing:  
His heart is cheered and he beholds her nearing,

---

*A Laodicean*

---

And she, disregardful, unladen, passes him by,  
Her beauty such as to hearten a man to die,  
But he with aching throat what she refuses  
Sobs after, and the joy she is he loses :

So Spring this blind inheritance my heart  
Proclaims the bringer of Love, nor knows her  
    apart :

The face that appears not, the lips beyond my  
    kiss

I mourn, and the joy and solace she is I miss.

*A LAODICEAN*

I LOVED you not so long ago,  
    But whether I love to-day  
It were not wise to ask or know  
    By either yea or nay.

And I to-day was glad we met,  
    But whether 't was because  
I loved you once or love you yet,  
    What matter which it was ?

---

*Love the Jailer*

---

Of old our love was more precise,  
Yet I was often sad,  
And so to-day we'll be not nice :  
Loving or no, I'm glad.

*LOVE THE JAILER*

**S**EEN, loved, possessed, familiar, lastly used  
And weary in dim chambers of my heart,  
Your mournful face seeks others set apart,  
Fearing to know a prison in my heart.  
There is nought else, for there was nought  
refused.

I hung the pallid chambers of my heart  
With coloured legends of old fashioning ;  
I set bright pictured loves ; made music sing  
In slow hushed rhythms of my fashioning  
To drown the distant murmur of the mart.

Loved and departed, or by very love  
Veiled, or by passion once made briefly  
dear ;

---

## *Persistency*

---

Shall all loved things at length grow love-  
less here?

I pray thro' loving I am somewhat dear,  
That you may love me yet for sake of love.

### *PERSISTENCY*

**I** DID not sleep: in the dewy morn  
I passed among the shivering corn.

I looked on the heavens full of peace,  
And longed for my foolish love to cease.

So splendid did the sun upstart,  
I thought his joy would break my heart.

I looked on the brooding clouds above,  
And said, "I am weary of my love."

A thrush beyond the waves of wheat  
Sang, "Love a love more sweet."

A seabird called above the sea,  
Crying, "O faint heart, be free!"

---

## *Persistency*

---

In the hot noontide crooned the dove,  
"Turn, turn to a tenderer love."

The lark sang up against the sun,  
"Turn, turn to a lighter one."

All the hot afternoon I lay  
By the white breakers in the bay,

And with the burden of the sea  
I sang with laughter, "I am free."

At eve I heard the night-wind stream  
Over the hills in a drowsy dream.

"At last," I said, "the past is dead,"  
And happy laid upon my bed.

But ah! the surging of the sea  
Sang of a bygone thing to me,

And I awoke and cried at night:  
"I love you, love, with all my might."

---

*The Burden of Constancy*

---

THE BURDEN OF CONSTANCY

I HAVE no cause to love you, yet  
The fear of wronging long regret,  
The wasted years, the words bygone  
That your light feet have trampled on,  
Make my love sure as when we met.

I loved you never with mere lust  
Of eyes or flesh, but love I must  
With all my broken body and soul,  
For you alone can know the whole,  
Who all but shaped my soul from dust.

As men who deem a God has made  
Their lives, and turn to him, afraid,  
You, who have made my life, I love,  
Whom even as God no prayers move,  
Who damned me and are undismayed.

My heart is bare for you to see,  
Yet, having marred, you know not me :  
See, I am but the self of woe,  
And there is nothing else to know,  
No, nothing else that I may be.



---

## *The Burden of Singing*

---

One passion only rules my blood,  
The longing to be understood,  
The last desire of broken lives,  
The ultimate dumb desire, that gives  
My life in keeping to your mood.

### *THE BURDEN OF SINGING*

HERE lived a singer long ago  
Whereof the words are all forgot,  
Except a song I chance to know :  
I pray that you forget it not.

“ Let no man say when I am dead  
That I in song forgot my woe,  
Or say, as happier men have said,  
One joy the singers only know.

“ I sang of laughter, and my eyes  
Wept, for my laughter long had end :  
I sang of tears, and they must rise,  
For sorrow was my chosen friend.

---

*The Burden of Singing*

---

- “ I sang of love, and wept to know  
    How love had bruised with his feet  
My lips that sang ; I sang of woe  
    And added to my load of it.
- “ And if I called a woman fair,  
    I thought of what one’s fairness meant,  
And, if I praised her perfect hair,  
    Shivered at one remembered scent.
- “ He has, that Sorrow comes unto,  
    One road of grey oblivion,  
Where even woe seems hardly true  
    So be he do but wander on,
- “ And live the life of beasts that die,  
    And all that harbours memory shun,  
Fearing to speak, and so did I,  
    Did what I feared, and was undone.
- “ For all I spoke of in my speech  
    I had, or lost, or had it not,  
So, as my lot was evil, each  
    Was bitter, and the sweet forgot.”

---

## *A Prayer*

---

### *A PRAYER*

**F**ORGIVE me, friend, you must,  
That I have called you crueller than fate.  
Cruel was I to trust  
So heavy a life to hands so delicate.

Tho' life be broken quite,  
Forgive me that I chid with bitter tongue  
You, for it was not right  
Thus to chide one so wondering and young.

Forgive me, that at last  
I may forget that I have ever grown  
Bitter, or blindly cast  
My faults at your pure feet, that were my own.

Forgive me, that to shame you  
I said, "This have you done, now this undo."  
O, what was I to blame you,  
That dared not keep my heart, but gave it you?

My heart I gave, and leant  
On your girl's bosom—fool was I and blind!  
I have my punishment:  
You, some reward, since you have made me kind.

---

## *The Burden of Memory*

---

O child, forgive me now  
As I would—ah, that I had aught to pardon!  
My hurt I pray somehow  
The years may heal; my heart, that they may  
    harden.

### *THE BURDEN OF MEMORY*

**B**ELOVED, I was tired of Love  
    That bare upon his wrist a dove  
And came with roses red and bays  
To end the old forgotten days,  
For he took on a sadder wear,  
And on his brow the thorns were bare,  
And he that was so wont to sing  
Had not a single joyous thing,  
For worn by longing for your face  
He dreamed of you in every place,  
And sickened of his dreamy care  
And anger held him, and he bare  
A hooded falcon for his dove.  
Belovéd, I was tired of Love.

---

## *The Burden of Memory*

---

Belovéd, I am tired of Love  
And weary of the skies above,  
Weary of day, weary of night,  
Of love, of living, of delight,  
For in the heart of Love is pain  
That may not turn to joy again,  
For though my head lay on your breast  
By your lingering hands caressed,  
Shadowed in a dreamless night,  
Pain would grow to mar delight.  
For I should think of all the years  
Wherein you gave me only tears,  
Despair and longing and regret,  
That follow and o'ertake me yet,  
The years that I grew weary of  
Till more desirable than love  
Grew peace, the peace that could not live  
Without you, that you would not give.

Belovéd, were we old and gray  
The night were better than the day,  
And fairer than immortal breath  
The rustle of the wings of Death.  
Belovéd, were you ages long  
Shut underground, whereto no song

---

## *The Burden of Memory*

---

Of bird could ever reach, nor wind  
Blow, nor summer days be kind,  
Where all years in darkness passed,  
No thought, no sight, no dream at last,  
No longing for the sky so near,  
But only madness dull and fear,  
So your soul was only woe,  
And woe wherever you might go,  
Think you, if after ages one  
Led you thither to the sun,  
Bidding you see the dancing trees  
And scent the flowers upon the breeze,  
And cry to hear the soaring lark  
You had forgotten in the dark,  
Yea, bade you laugh, and walk, and speak,  
You who were old and grey and weak,  
Bade you, whose soul was only woe,  
And woe wherever you might go,  
Be glad for freedom and the light,  
You would but sicken for the night,  
Wherein you were not grey and weak,  
And had no need to laugh or speak.  
And you would cover up your eyes  
From the cruel splendid skies,  
And if your blood began to beat

---

## *The Burden of Memory*

---

Again, as once when all was sweet,  
Or any joy in you to stir,  
Then joy would be far bitterer  
And far more terrible than pain.  
But how to cast it out again ?  
For now the night were worse than day  
For longing, you would see no way  
Where peace might be ; even so am I  
Afraid of joy, afraid to fly.  
For how shall I of joy be sure,  
Or a disheartened heart endure  
The fire of joy it cannot trust,  
And has not heart to say " I must " ?  
Belovéd, you at last are kind :  
Ah, would that you and I could find  
Without the fear of love, a way  
To find a peace in every day :  
For now in love is never peace,  
For fear his joy should ever cease.

Belovéd, I would hold your hand,  
And wander to a dreaming land,  
Out of the day, out of the sun,  
Where all tranquil nights are one :  
To wander by a desolate shore

---

## *The Burden of Memory*

---

And hear the wind that passes o'er  
The seas unfathomable sway,  
The languid grasses long and grey,  
To tread a way no life has trod,  
Hidden from the eyes of God,  
Where no stars are sown on high  
To watch us always from the sky,  
But an icy moon doth slumber  
O'er the hills there are none may number,  
Deep in the violet heavens dim,  
A pearly phantom round her rim,  
And there along the whispering strand  
We two should wander hand in hand,  
To hear the fall of the surf that sings  
In dreams of unremembered things,  
Or watch for long enchanted years  
The silver foam of magic meres,  
That always murmur to the moon,  
Or hear the doves unwaking croon  
Among the shimmering woods that know  
No light of sun, no fall of snow,  
But the lone echo of the seas :  
And always happy winds of peace  
Then to waters we shall come  
To lie above the charmed foam,



---

## *The Fruit of Travail*

---

My head on your most quiet breast,  
To wait the sure unfailing rest :  
For by the dim sea we shall lie,  
Till even the moon shall fail on high,  
Till nought endure but thoughtless night,  
Far out of memory, out of sight  
Of God or all the watchful eyes  
Of silver set about the skies ;  
There we shall fall asleep at last,  
All passion peace, all kisses past,  
My head on your beloved breast  
Until the eternal shadowy rest,  
When we shall be so full of peace  
That even the sense thereof shall cease.

### *THE FRUIT OF TRAVAIL*

**L**ORD, I had known Thy cross, I had worn  
Thy plaited crown,  
I had borne the appointed burden, and I fainted  
for the end,

---

## *The Fruit of Travail*

---

And thus I cried, and crying saw my blood run  
down :

“What fruit shall travail bear unless Thine  
anger mend?”

For I had known a mercy, a thing of mine, not  
thine ;

“The crown shall give me wisdom in the wear-  
ing,” I had said,

“Though my song be but lamenting, yet my  
tears shall be divine,

And my wisdom shall not perish, though my  
pain and I be dead.”

Now that Thy hand is lifted and a peace is come  
to me,

Ah, canst Thou heal the ruin Thy hands have  
made complete ?

This is the end—a bleeding heart, and eyes that  
cannot see,

And a bruised body and soul, and broken hands  
and feet.

Now that Thy hand is lifted, what shall the  
solace be ?

Where is the wisdom learned, the staff that shall  
not break ?

---

## *The Dead Soul*

---

This I have learned—that thought is driven far  
from me :

This is the end—a voice of tears that cannot  
speak.

### *THE DEAD SOUL*

THE sorrow of one beloved,  
The hell of helpless men,  
Came to my soul and crushed it ;  
I could not love her then.

I, never wearied of beauty  
When I was only a boy,  
Cover my face when it passes,  
And turn from the path of joy.

All that is grave I shrink from,  
For truth is a piteous thing,  
And things that are light have often  
A deadly hidden sting.

But only my soul is covered  
In darkness, while my eyes  
Fall upon laughing lovers  
Or wander among the skies.

---

## *Threnody*

---

My mind has not forgotten  
The songs it sang of old ;  
It sings them yet in the darkness  
To a soul that is dead and cold.

And I too in the darkness  
Listen above the grave ;  
The songs are all of the beauty  
And joys that others have.

And all my life I shall hear it,  
The voice of honeyed lies,  
Singing the joy of living  
To the soul that will never rise.

### *THRENODY*

**S**ILENCE has come, and sleep,  
On eyes no more to weep,  
On quiet lips that keep  
All words unsaid ;  
Her rose of days undone  
Gone by is all she won,  
All things in her begun  
Lie dead, lie dead.

---

## *Threnody*

---

She shall not hear again  
The rustle of driven rain  
Athwart the flooded pane  
    In midnight hours,  
Nor hear from her last bed  
The great wind overhead  
Sweep thro' the waifs of dead  
    And scattered flowers.

For her nor day nor night,  
Nor sorrow, nor delight,  
Nor summer, nor the white  
    Pure fields of snow ;  
Nor weariness, nor rest,  
Nor light of east nor west,  
Her dwelling is that best  
    Where all men go.

Who wept shall no more weep,  
Who slept shall ever sleep,  
Past dreaming in the deep  
    Last sleep of all ;  
They hope not, nor regret,  
They meet who never met,  
They part who never yet  
    Went past recall.

---

## *The Stranger*

---

She is at rest, and tho'  
She goes where all men go,  
Nor they nor she shall know,  
Or voice, or touch ;  
Their days are all forgot,  
Sad comfort is their lot,  
Who sleeping know it not ;  
There are now none such.

### *THE STRANGER*

LET me not see your eyes,  
Nay, grant me not a word,  
Lest that my heart be stirred  
That silent lies.

Let be : I, knowing you,  
Must love ; to love were vain.  
Will you for love give pain,  
For roses, rue ?

You have no love to give :  
What should you want with it ?  
Giving, I have no wit  
To happy live.

---

## *The Stranger*

---

Will you unarm me quite ?  
Behold my only hope :  
With Love strongly to cope,  
Put him to flight ;

Lest he, quite undismayed,  
Stow my soul's riches by  
In one frail bark that I  
Cannot unlade ;

And grave with cruel art  
Your print on all my gold,  
Whose wealth were quickly told  
Did you depart.

Ah, go ! lest love and pain  
Make me, who day by day  
Live lightly as I may,  
Grow grave again.

Let be : tired hearts are brittle.  
This were so bitter, too :  
For all my life's love you  
Would care so little.

---

*A Ballad of Light Living*

---

*A BALLAD OF LIGHT LIVING*

**A**H, days of Spring, have pity on us  
For whom all promise is given in vain ;  
When all of the earth is amorous  
For love of the wind and the silver rain,  
Vex not our hearts, grown dull too long  
To laugh for joy when the woods are bright,  
Or dream in hours of twilight song :  
Awake us not whose lives are light.

O, Summer, in thy time of heat,  
When days are only cool at morn,  
And slowly move the wanderer's feet  
Among the quivering floods of corn,  
Pass by all us in thy perfect pride  
Of splendid day and murmuring night,  
Wrapping our hearts in a drowsy tide ;  
Awake us not whose lives are light.

Thou, Autumn, prideful harvester,  
Go by, let be thy maddening wealth,  
Pass in a time of rain and stir  
And wind, or like a thief by stealth,



---

## *A Ballad of Light Living*

---

Pass by us while we haply sleep,  
Or feign by day, or dream by night,  
And send us dreams too slight or deep  
To waken us whose lives are light.

And Winter ! season of the time  
That fell when Spring had marred our years,  
Pass thro' no days of flowerful rime,  
But in a shrieking blast of tears  
Drive thro' thy realm in hate and wrath  
That harm us not whose woes are slight,  
But strew not peace about thy path  
To waken us whose lives are light.

For we are they that have gathered flowers  
To find them fade and the thorns remain ;  
We have watered in futile ways and hours  
Joys that have left us no fruit but pain ;  
We have cast out fear and despair and sorrow,  
Love and laughter and all delight,  
We have set us a watch on the day and the  
morrow,  
Whose hearts are sick and whose lives are  
light.

---

*To One Awakening*

---

L'ENVOI.

Princes, and all who are wise in grief,  
Heed lest the year, by day or night,  
By splendour of star or ripple of leaf  
Awaken ye whose lives are light.

TO ONE AWAKENING

**Y**OU who are gay and brave and young,  
You who dwell your dreams among,  
I would fashion for your sake  
A land where never dreams awake ;  
They who are wise with dreaming eyes  
Awaken, and they are not wise ;  
They who in peace of heart are sure  
Awake to doubt if they be pure ;  
They who are gay, they who are strong  
Awake, and ends their joy of song.  
You who are still and grave and sweet  
Shall light of soul and heavy of feet  
Grow, and hollow be of heart  
If you from your dreams depart.

---

*To One Awakening*

---

Dream, and shun the bitter days !  
For your ways are not their ways,  
For your wisdom is not theirs ;  
Dreams, desires, hopes and prayers,  
All you have of good and fair  
Shall not count as either there ;  
Neither glad nor pure nor wise  
Shall you seem with waking eyes.

Child ! if I could make for you  
A world of dreaming deeps of blue,  
Of forest days of emerald light,  
Of peace and shadow and delight ;  
Of wandering roads where every day  
Sets the wanderer on the way  
To a more fresh and happy peace  
Till day and night and faring cease :  
A faultless pulsing sea of blue,  
A land of scent and song and dew,  
A heaven of stars like dew of fire,  
A heart of ever new desire,—  
This would I make—but ah ! behold,  
This is the earth I know of old,  
Purged of the life you cannot see,  
But shall, despite my love and me :

---

*Elegy*

---

This very earth, just undefiled  
Of all you go to learn, poor child !

You shall forsake your prophecy,  
The world you know, that is to be ;  
You shall adventure forth at last  
To learn your sad forgotten past :  
And how a stranger will you fare,  
And how shall you be happy there ?  
Would I could fashion for your sake  
A land where never dreams awake !

*ELEGY*

**H**USH ye, hush ye, all that are mourning  
The dusky head of Autumn asleep ;  
She in her pride had given ye warning,  
Yea, done on mourning for her slumber deep ;  
Wise is Autumn, a lover discreet,  
Lest her high beauty too familiar grow  
These days of the new waiting shall ye go  
With winter not so sweet,  
Cloked in cloud and with covered head,

---

## *Elegy*

---

Gray-eyed, companionéd,  
With austere wind and white unmurmuring  
snow.

Ye that loved her well that has left us,  
Come where her loitering feet were stayed  
Here, where the slumber that lately bereft us  
Then when she left us, comforted her with  
shade ;

Deep in the silence of sombre pines,  
Wherein her passage and her days went past,  
And all wild things her lovers saw her last ;  
Where fruitless ivy twines  
Among the mosses her gracious feet  
Last trod, and last found sweet,  
Where she the vesture of her pageant cast.

Hush ye, hush ye, O let no singing  
Trouble the groves with her slumber quiet,  
No flute, no viol, no cymbals ringing  
To waken echo winging with a whispering riot  
Thro' vistas holding with her and God  
Silence as joy : the silence that is old  
As the strange light that lit the lifeless wold  
That yet no foot had trod :  
And silence bring ye too for offering,

---

*Elegy*

---

That holy healing thing  
Which is of her, let your full hearts enfold,

Now no longer her that is sleeping  
Mourn or lament ye, she cometh again ;  
Now the songs of the winter weeping  
Sound in the sleeping trouble of weary rain ;  
She that over the hills a-cold  
Cometh is born of this high silence too,  
So shall ye welcome her with love, and rue  
No more your loves untold  
Of her, which love forsworn shall make  
Love one day for her sake  
By broken troth renewed more sweetly true.

Come ! for the one that cometh forget her,  
Think no more upon her forgot,  
With Winter walk as ye had not met her,  
Yea, tho' the sense forget her, the heart shall not ;  
Come with joy, for again ye meet  
With memory awakened yet more kind  
With wingéd eagerness, her face to find  
As wildly, strangely sweet,  
Ah God ! as your first loves shall seem  
Across the Lethean stream,  
The dear lips cool with the eternal wind.

---

*Woodlands*

---

## WOODLANDS

**H**ERE is no solitude : the eyes of Pan  
Watch in the dusky frondage of the ferns,  
But I am fled from solitary man,  
Who to his kin forsaken ne'er returns :  
His kin, that are the still eternal skies,  
The windy hills, the many-meadowed dale,  
The sun-steeped plains, and harvest of the year,  
And night and shadow and light on hill and vale ;  
And all he sees not with his exiled eyes,  
That waits his wisdom and his coming here.

O strong, sweet spirit of the seasoned earth,  
That I might ever in thy beauty dwell !  
To learn not over-mournfully the birth  
Of years, and death of all desirable ;  
Thou canst but lend sweet memories amid strife,  
And bring in time of sighing peaceful breath ;  
For in the world men have but heavy hearts,  
They, scarcely living, have forgotten death,  
And, dying, hardly may remember life,  
And they have parcelled life in little parts.

Memory shall come, and with it weariness,  
And all the woe of a disordered world.

---

## *The Drifting Rain*

---

It will be half a pain, half happiness,  
To know that here the flowers are dew-pearled,  
That here the wild rose has its perfect birth,  
And the bright sunlight trembles on the grass ;  
O, but to lie among the grasses deep,  
Here, where no kindred foot should ever pass—  
O God, to lie against the cool, sweet earth,  
At rest for ever, and to know I sleep !

### *THE DRIFTING RAIN*

**U**NDER the grave unblemished bluff of oaks  
The windy river smokes  
With drifting rain ;  
The grey salt river ebbing to the sea,  
Wrinkled with misery,  
Shivers with pain.  
Down the deep valley of the sombre wood  
The pale grey drifting pillars of lofty rain,  
Like shades of gods that are weary of love and  
pain,  
Sad, mighty spirits that have known all vain  
And pace the seaward flood,



---

## *Wood and Wind*

---

Are fleeing, ah me! are leaving the earth for  
ever,

Fleeing down the valley of the dolorous river,  
Fleeing out for ever to the dim and rainy sea  
Where life, nor love, nor pain of love may be.

Would I could go with them,

Sharing your peace!

Would I could know with them

All vacant seas!

I, who am weary, how weary none knows,

Of regretting a voice that is mute, and the worm  
at the heart of the rose.

### *WOOD AND WIND*

**T**HE autumn leaves were driven by my feet,  
The autumn wind went thro' the hollow  
wood,

Singing a lusty song among the trees.

The old red leaves fled with a rustling fleet

Thro' the reverberating solitude,

Where the wind sang with an imperious ease.

---

*Wood and Wind*

---

Only in shadowy places, where the thick  
Entangled underwoods to no keen breath  
Trembled, and gave the wind no year-long  
growth,

The rotten leaves hung motionless and sick  
From branches never cleansed of festering death,  
In dimness never wakened out of sloth.

My heart lay sick with memories of old,  
Of love and life, each grown a painful thing :  
Too fond was I to wish me rid of them.

My heart was fearful of the winter's cold,  
The desolate days wherein no bird may sing,  
Nor any green quicken on any stem.

“ But now,” I said, “ I will take up my heart  
Out of the shadow of rain-dropping boughs,  
And rest it in the unbroken wind of years,  
And from all lamentable memories part ;  
Cleanse me, O wind of life ! till spring shall rouse  
A softening laughter from the winter's tears.”

“ Art thou so sure,” my heart made answer to  
me,

“ That spring shall come to me with riotous  
green,

---

## *Winter's Joy*

---

Or shall I, casting the dead spring away,  
Thus, by vain hoping, hopelessly undo me?  
How dare I cleanse me for the fate unseen?"  
"Ay me, which fate?" was all that I could say.

### *WINTER'S JOY*

**B**Y wold and holt and valley  
Scampered the scouring breeze,  
No flush was on the heather,  
No leaf was on the trees.

The sea and heaven of winter  
Met in a steeled embrace;  
The wind leapt off the Channel  
And shouted in my face.

Far thro' the seething coppice  
The whispering drift was brown,  
Asway were all the branches,  
And every leaf was down.

---

## *Winter's Joy*

---

But all the trees were shouting,  
And all the hills were sweet ;  
The rascal wind was humming  
A tune to stir my feet.

The wind of time was blowing  
And buffeting my mind ;  
It tore my sad old memories  
And swept them out behind.

And oh, I said, if winter  
Doth not abash the earth,  
If being poor as Adam  
She shows a sturdy mirth,

Take all my thickets harbour,  
O stately blast of Time !  
Bare boughs may chaunt the carol  
Of poverty sublime !

For if in surly winter  
My heart shall dare to sing,  
Fate, thou art all defeated !  
What will it be in spring ?

---

## *Renunciation*

---

### *RENUNCIATION*

THE heavy elm above the roof  
All the autumn days  
Moaned in the wicked wind  
Out upon his ways.

All night and every night  
At falling of the leaf  
I heard the ancient elm-tree  
Sobbing his grief.

All his leaves that were so green  
Withered hung and brown ;  
Every roar the wind gave  
It showered a hundred down.

Every leaf he cherished  
And every leaf must lose ;  
Till the last of all was gone  
His fate he would refuse.

For half his leaves the south-west  
Had rudely torn away  
He mourned, and for the others  
That waited for their day.

---

*Renunciation*

---

All night and every night  
At falling of the leaf  
I heard the ancient elm-tree  
Sobbing for grief.

But on a windy morning  
When frost was on the pane  
And up the eastern heaven  
The moon began to wane

I rose and there beheld him  
Dancing overhead,  
His latest leaf abandoned,  
His last hope dead.

There he stood and whistled,  
Naked as a seed,  
Merrily, merrily,  
Merrily indeed.

Gaily mother-naked  
Drummed and whistled he ;  
Fearing nought, for all had fallen,  
Lo, he was free !

---

## *Renunciation*

---

Therefore I beseeching  
Turned me unto Fate :  
I have done with hoping  
Tho' I hoped of late,

Naked came I hither,  
Naked will I be ;  
Take away my latest hope,  
Set thou me free !

Once I sought for many a thing ;  
Tho' all of them I got,  
Saving one, for loss of that  
Bitter was my lot !

But if I ask for nothing  
All that I receive  
A rare thing shall seem to me,  
And how should I grieve ?

If it be a rising  
Of clouds up the west,  
If it be the silence  
Of woods at rest,



---

*A Song in Winter*

---

If it be a passing face,  
Or a rosy sail,  
Or a dream in the dawn,  
Joy shall never fail :

The wide skies above me,  
The wide earth below,  
Not a friend to love me,  
Not a face to know,

If I ask for nothing  
All that I shall have  
A rare thing shall seem to me ;  
Yea ; even the grave.

*A SONG IN WINTER*

**B**ETWEEN high hedges dew-besprent  
The road is white with frost ;  
In winds that veer in the heavens clear  
The rook and his cry are tossed.



---

## *A Song in Winter*

---

The day is like a summer dawn,  
    With pale and gentle sun ;  
An Arctic noon, or an afternoon  
    In a land where life is done.

Still and pale are the downs around,  
    Pale and bare to the sky ;  
Pale and still is every hill,  
    But the wind is awake on high.

The morn is merry, the road is hard,  
    And leads a pleasant way ;  
The robin strong he pipes a song  
    Dear to my heart to-day.

For I shall find her high on the down,  
    Warm in the winter wind,  
With her young face fresh in her tresses' mesh,  
    And eyes serene and kind.

So ring to my foot, O frosty road,  
    For merry your echoes are ;  
O robin, sing as tho' it were spring,  
    Or a sweeter season far.

---

*A Song of the West*

---

A SONG OF THE WEST

O SWEET, sweet the tender rain,  
Cool to my hands and face,  
And the wind of the western seas again,  
And the old familiar place.

Over the downs the clouds blow free,  
The wind sings out in the coppice ;  
Down by the tossing foam of the sea  
The sand seethes over the poppies.

O, the joy of the great salt wind,  
And O, the joy of the rain !  
You sing the sweet song to my mind  
I longed to hear again.

O, the joy of the windy sea,  
Mad from the land to the sky ;  
You sing the joy of life to me,  
And O, the grey gull's cry !

But O, for the young girl coming to me,  
Coming to me again,  
Down by the hissing foam of the sea,  
Her brown face wet with the rain !

---

*The Blossom of Love*

---

Her hair is cold as a rainy night,  
Her cheeks are like the berry,  
And the flight of the foam is swift and white,  
Where the seas are mad and merry!

*THE BLOSSOM OF LOVE*

**M**Y heart was withered with a love,  
The love was withering too:  
My heart was but a sorry tree  
For any fruit that grew.

My heart was grown so frail, so weak,  
The flower perhaps had died;  
But I was fain to set my heart  
Under the heavens wide.

Because my love had wrecked my heart,  
I rose in wrath one day,  
And plucked the withered blossom off  
That sucked its blood away.

---

*The Hour*

---

My heart grew straight and fair and strong.  
The bitterest thing came now ;  
One night the blood-red blossom of love  
Burst forth on every bough.

Blood-red, thick and sweet it blew,  
And every flower had breath  
To mock : " O fool, behold your heart  
Is strong enough for death !"

*THE HOUR*

**T**HE air dreams under the roof of the summer  
trees,  
And the odour of leaves of the old year mouldering  
Faints as a sorrow lulled in a golden ease  
In the quiet of inviolate aisles where no voices  
sing,  
Where the leaves know no wind, nor the emerald  
fire a change ;  
There the live silence is stiller than death or  
night,

---

## *The Hour*

---

Securer than peace, and fulfilled of a mystery,  
A slumbering sense of an imminent, old de-  
light,  
Known once and possessed, unremembered, too  
splendid and strange  
For lives that awaken or dream, or for days  
that be.

And I, I am one with the silence; all pleasure,  
all pain  
That are mine in the right of the past and the  
years to be,  
As a garment are shed, as the fashion of fallen  
rain  
That melts, and is not, and is one with the  
molten sea ;  
Here is nought of me now but is born of the  
day and hour,  
As the wave is conceived of the smiting of seas  
and wind,  
That lives till the feet of it shine on an alien  
shore,  
As the kiss of the earth and the summer beget  
the flower

---

*A Wish*

---

That endures till the flight of the lover that  
none shall bind,  
I am changed till the hour be changed, and the  
noon no more.

*A WISH*

O LOVE, that you and I  
Were birds to follow the sun,  
High in the trackless sky  
Till time be done !

O love, that you and I  
Were fish that move in the deep,  
Till the deepest seas be dry,  
And the winds asleep !

For the loves that I love are two,  
That love not me,  
Freedom I love and you  
You who are free.

---

*The Castaway*

---

And one of the loves were bitter,  
But I am the more undone,  
For Fate, lest I should outwit her,  
Made both as one.

And I in fetters was born,  
And you born free,  
And you have nothing but scorn,  
But scorn, for me.

O I would we were winds of the sky,  
Or streams of the deep,  
Till the stars flicker out on high,  
And God be a sleep.

*THE CASTAWAY*

I WAS a falcon jessed by the fowler Fate ;  
Jessed and unflown, you had no eyes for me,  
You rather watched in the heavens delicate  
The lofty flight of rushing birds let free ;  
You had no eyes for me, whose eyes were blind,  
But watched the veering merles high in the  
streaming wind.

---

## *The Castaway*

---

I was a bird encagéd, my song sad,  
My song remembering the lights of spring,  
So of my singing no delight you had,  
But all my music was a fretful thing ;  
You sent your eyes after the spiring lark  
Bewildering with joy the holy morning dark.

I was a salmon trapped among the stakes  
In a thin pool forsaken of the sea,  
You heard the pæan the wild water makes  
Far down the channel of its liberty ;  
You had no eyes for my leaping silver sides,  
But loved the keen dark forms deep in the  
    swerving tides.

How could you know the sun was more to me  
Than to the hawk that has him all the day ?  
That the unbrooked wayfarers of the sea  
Less knew her soul than me a castaway ?  
That love was breaking my enchained heart,  
Love of the world you loved, wherein you lived  
    your part ?

You met me never abreast on the moving sky,  
Or in the cool deep waters of the main,



---

*Then*

---

My broken singing was no tongue whereby  
To gladden you, or say what it was fain,  
Yet say, O sweet, when I am hushed in rest,  
My kinsmen were the chaunting rain, the un-  
reined wind of the west.

*T H E N*

COOL the wind in the poplars tall,  
Making them sway  
In laughter streaming above the wall,  
Ah, so gay !

The clouds were round and white and soft  
All over the sky,  
Dreaming of their own beauty aloft,  
Ah, so high !

Blue the sea with rivers of green,  
With flecks of white ;  
We saw the sails that we had not seen,  
Ah, so bright !

---

*Then*

---

Sweet the grass of the cliff in the sun,  
The hot hard grass ;  
The pink sea-daisies one by one  
Felt the wind pass.

Cool your lips as the shy swift wind,  
Ah ! not more blue  
Were the skies than your eyes were, not more  
kind,  
Ah ! not more true.

Do you remember the surge of the trees,  
The sea like a flower,  
The low red wall and the lovely breeze  
And the perfect hour ?—

When, poor love, and on what a day,  
And by what shore ?—  
A day forgotten and far away,  
To come no more.

---

## *The Heart*

---

### THE HEART

**O**F everything I had or sought  
I was more careless than I had thought.

Therefore one day I drew apart  
And looked in silence on my heart.

“What do you want, O heart?” I said,  
“The touch of a woman that is dead.”

“O foolish heart,” I cried, “be still ;  
Or love you another, if love you will.”

“Nay,” said my heart, “but the woman died  
With lies on her lips, and her tears undried.”

Since then I dare not walk apart,  
And look no more upon my heart.

### LAST WORDS

**S**EAGULLS wheel across the sea,  
Crying all the day,  
Calling, calling back to me  
One that's far away.

---

## *The Revenge*

---

Sister, he may come again  
To find a bolted door,  
And see thro' every dusty pane  
Dust on the naked floor.

If he ask you of me, child,  
With eyes that do not weep,  
Tell him, tell him that I smiled  
When I fell asleep :

Only if his eyes be dim  
Tell him, for my sake,  
That I had forgotten him,  
Lest his heart should break.

### *THE REVENGE*

**T**HE wind flew drumming over the hill,  
Calling the sky to follow,  
Above my head it whistled in  
The hedge along the hollow ;  
There was no man for a mile around  
But I, and the corpse on the ground.

---

## *The Revenge*

---

Above the hidden hillside lane  
The hedge was full of laughter,  
Laughter shook the skeleton boughs,  
Never a tear came after  
For him in the nettles bleeding still,  
Him I had come to kill.

My heart was high, my soul was gay,  
And every care had vanished,  
I marvelled why the sky was grey  
When he from it was banished :  
The world was sweet, for he was dead !  
I laughed in the wind, and fled.

O the rush of the wrack o'er the tossing trees  
And the landward-huddling hedges,  
The lash of the thorns on my hasting knees  
And the swish of the stricken sedges !  
The wind of the north was mad with joy,  
And I, dear God ! was a boy.

---

*In Prison*

---

IN PRISON

I AM half content by day,  
When the sun thro' the grating high  
Slowly makes a golden way  
Curved across the wall, and I  
Feel his warmth invade the wall,  
While I dream of hill and field,  
And the azure over all,  
Over all the trees that yield  
To the breeze that never blows  
Here within my prison cell ;  
I am glad to think on those,  
I remember them so well.

But at fall of night the wind,  
Born of the unfettered sea,  
In the forest close behind  
Struggles for his liberty :  
I can hear him all the night,  
Cursing, hissing, roaring, shaking,  
Raging in his awful fight,  
Till my maddened heart is breaking  
But to hear him struggle so :  
O the glory tho' he fail !

---

## *The Bridal Night*

---

O the splendid forest foe!—  
I am checked by a rusty nail.

All his fever, all his rage,  
All his wildness in my blood,  
Sting and burn as in my cage  
I lie like a log of wood :  
If I scream the walls are dumb,  
If I struggle, rusty chains  
Cut me round the wrist and thumb,  
If I cease my leaping veins  
Rage because they cannot burst,  
Madness will not come, nor age,  
I shall beat my brains out first . . . .

### *THE BRIDAL NIGHT*

#### *The Bride.*

**T**ARRY awhile, the fire is red,  
The dim air sweet  
With bruised reeds we slowly tread  
Under our feet ;

---

## *The Bridal Night*

---

Wait awhile, wait in the gloom,  
No word repeat,  
The conscious silence in the room  
Seems to me meet,  
For now the merry guests are gone  
And we are left alone,  
With none to gaze or look upon  
But the man of stone  
Holding up the mantel high  
With the maiden slim,  
And the shadowy people shy  
On the arras dim.

### *The Bridegroom.*

Nay, they tarry, the maidens fair,  
You to untire,  
With song that seems the soul of the air,  
The soul of desire,  
Combing with combs of gold your hair  
By the red fire,  
Where the bed is wide and white,  
All the hangings green,  
Green with gold, that every night  
You shall lie between.



---

## *The Bridal Night*

---

### *The Ghost.*

The hour is nigh, the bell will ring,  
Prepared is the bed,  
The weary wind shall a bride-song sing  
Over your head.  
Four bare boards for a bed are met  
You shall lie between,  
Four bare boards, but the coverlet  
Soon shall be green  
With shining of sun and rustle of wet  
Fair to be seen.

### *The Bridegroom.*

You are cold, my love, my love, you are cold!

### *The Bride.*

Nay, I am not.  
Take my hands, they are yours to hold;  
See, they are hot.  
Hold them very close and long,  
Never let them go.

### *The Bridegroom.*

Hark, the maidens raise the song,  
Singing high and low!

---

*The Bridal Night*

---

I kiss your hands, your eyes, your hair ;  
Belovéd, go !

*The Bride.*

The ivy taps on the casement there,  
The ivy, say !  
The song is over, or very low ;  
Nay, it has died away.

*The Ghost.*

Mine is the only voice to know  
After to-day.

*The Bridegroom.*

Nay, they are singing loud their rime,  
Singing at the door !

*The Ghost.*

Now the hour is ready to chime,  
Song you shall hear no more.

*The Bride.*

The song is done, or it is not time.

---

## *The Bridal Night*

---

### *The Bridegroom.*

Nay, but the songs implore !  
Love, you are pale, you are cold, you are cold !

### *The Ghost.*

Cold you shall be evermore.  
A ring of gold binds him to you ;  
Rings may be snapt in twain ;  
But we are bound with blood and dew  
Not to be dry again.

### *The Bride.*

Ah God, the dew when love I knew,  
The sweet, the shame, and the pain !

### *The Ghost.*

Ah God, the blood shed out for you  
The night that I was slain !

### *The Bridegroom.*

Nay, what dew, what pain, what shame ?  
What is your speech ?

### *The Bride.*

The night you called me by my name  
Under the beech.

---

## *The Bridal Night*

---

### *The Ghost.*

The night your stealthy brothers came  
Silence to teach.

### *The Bride.*

Let be my hands, let be my hair !  
Nay, I but go  
To look thro' the curtained casement there.

### *The Bridegroom.*

Nay, what to know ?

### *The Bride.*

Because, a maid, I never shall see  
The stars again.

### *The Ghost.*

The stars were changed that night with me,  
When I was slain.

### *The Bridegroom.*

Will you muse ? I will not speak  
Here by the fire.

---

## *The Bridal Night*

---

### *The Ghost.*

Only his heart shall the silence break,  
Mad with desire ;  
But harder yet my heart shall beat  
When you are dead,  
When hands to hands and feet to feet  
We two are wed.

### *The Bride.*

What is the word of blood you speak?

### *The Ghost.*

The word is true.  
A bond is on us, O false and meek,  
Of blood and of dew ;  
Now at the hour the revenge I seek,  
I am here for you.

### *The Bride.*

They said you had gone over sea that day  
When I awoke.  
I thought you had loved and ridden away ;  
Then my heart broke.

---

*The Bridal Night*

---

*The Ghost.*

Ah God, you are true!

*The Bride.*

You are true, my love!

*The Bridegroom.*

O my fair bride,  
Leave the night and the stars thereof,  
Come to my side!

*The Ghost.*

Open the casement you lean above,  
Fling it back wide!

*The Bridegroom.*

Why do you finger the silver ring  
That fastens close  
The latticed casement? O hark, they sing!  
The last hour goes!

*The Bride.*

(The song of death is a sweeter thing,  
I lean to gather a rose.)

---

## *The Bridal Night*

---

### *The Bridegroom.*

Open it not ! Nay, for the air  
Is chill to-night.

### *The Bride.*

(Not so chill as the lodging where  
I shall alight.)  
It is open !

### *The Ghost.*

Sweet, I gather your hair  
In both my hands.  
We go together, my bride, my fair,  
To what far lands ?  
Thy love has freed me, my love, my love,  
I, bound in my bed  
With the cold small worms, and the earth above.

### *The Bridegroom.*

Dead!





---

*BOOK III*

---



*THE ESCAPE FROM FATE*

WAS it our cowardice, that we in terror  
Fled from the truth, our fate and ourselves  
refused?

Who dreamed the merciful error,  
The solace abused,  
Sought for its wages irrevocable despair,  
And trapped men refuged as a beast in its lair?

Why were we cursed with speech, why ever given  
The power of weaving the fatal veil of words  
No man of men has riven,  
Tho' with a hundred swords  
Of love, entreaty, shame, delight, and fire,  
That shattered, he has sought to free his soul's  
desire?

Speech is in vain, and silence. Only hearken,  
You never shall hear in quiet my soul outreach

---

## *The Escape from Fate*

---

Free of the shadows that darken  
Of sight, of speech;  
We have fled the truth, and given ourselves  
the lie,  
And the lie is awake in the silence, and shall  
not die.

The end is near, and we in going lightly  
Are cheated of the final peace of doom,  
The peace of men that nightly  
Clamoured and wept in gloom  
Till pity could weep no more, till fear was dumb,  
And death in mercy before itself was come.

Now in the last fierce hours beyond remanding  
Vainly we seek for pity, in vain for love;  
In vain, in vain demanding  
From the calm heavens above  
A passing hour of mercy; to none but the grave  
This solace is granted, whose purchase we dared  
not brave.

We shudder, and fear one another; in fear we  
wonder  
If each is the thing that seems; and yet each  
soul,

---

## *The Farewell*

---

Wiser than we, thereunder  
Suspects the whole,  
And yearns to the fellow it cannot see or hail ;  
For the words and the wisdom that come to us  
lightly, fail.

### THE FAREWELL

**O** SAD and light and sweet,  
O friend whom we must lose,  
It is a little thing to-day  
Thou dost my love refuse.

For when I by thee sit,  
Tho' there be many there,  
An urgent siren-dreadful call  
Haunts the familiar air.

It is thy soul that goes  
So soon to the strange place,  
Thy soul that thou in fear hast hid  
And wilt not see its face :



---

## *The Farewell*

---

That dare not go alone  
Unloved, unknown by thee,  
That calleth in a dreadful fear  
My soul to go from me :

Wiser than thou, it rends  
My body and soul in twain ;  
I dare not meet thee now, my friend,  
Nor hear that call again :

Lest my fond soul too soon  
Answer this piteous dread,  
Lest I should haunt thy helpless life  
Helpless, till thou wert dead.

Love where thou wilt : I go.  
That fearful wooing I  
Dare not to dare : until I first  
Meet thee unveiled, good-bye.

For, when thou goest forth,  
Out of the tides of space  
Thy cry will find me ; I shall come,  
O friend ! And see thy face.

---

*In Alienation*

---

IN ALIENATION

**I**N the dark summer heat  
The plane leaves beat,  
Flapping overhead in the trees of the square ;  
The city is asleep ;  
Dim night has fallen as deep  
Over the desert streets as in the starlit air.

I stand beneath her chamber : the gáunt hóuse  
Gríns blánk in every window : is she there ?  
The lamp under the leafage throws up the wall  
A sickly yellow glare, and over it all  
Flit hundreds of shadows of leaves, each like a  
gnawing mouse  
In a feverish dream, a mouse out of the night  
Come with a thousand others to gnaw the old  
house away :  
Over the house flickers the light  
The sinister shadows dance and flicker away.

High up in silent air,  
Beloved, are you there ?  
If there you be, my sweet,  
Why is the ghostly street

---

*In Alienation*

---

Full of the fear of death  
To me beneath ?  
And if you be not there  
But far, I know not where,  
What means this pain  
As though we had met again ?

Will nothing break the horrible silence ? Hush !  
The sound of my heart will wake the sleeping  
square !  
And then at every window, dead and black,  
A face will flatten, O, faces everywhere,  
White, or grey, or sick with a yellow flush,  
In dread of the fearful darkness awake at their  
back,  
Will glare, and mutter, and gibber at me, and  
leer,  
The faces of all the dead that live in the square  
Blindly glaring at me, with hate unexpressed,  
Because I have broken their rest !

Ah God ! there was peace in the night ! but now  
there is none,  
Nor ever shall be, I think, to a naked soul.



---

*In Alienation*

---

There is peace in the sun, when all is bare to  
the light,  
When light covers up the world, and hides the  
whole  
Of the things that are out in the dark, the unseen  
fears,  
And the love that for very terror is void of tears.

Your window is open, belovéd : O, high overhead  
Do you slumber or wake, with darkness over your  
face,  
Or does the silence cover a desolate bed,  
Or does a stranger slumber perchance in your  
place ?  
Nay, but it ever was so ! I knew not, I,  
If the soul that I loved were indeed in your body  
sweet,  
Or far and unmet, and out of the reach of cry  
Or prayer, or of love : and here in the phantom  
street,  
Here my belovéd's window I wait below,  
But if she be here I know not, I shall not know.

Nay, in the ghostly gloom  
The window of her room

---

## *A Light Ending*

---

Looms dumbly open to a vacant sky :  
No sound, no sound,  
Dead houses all around  
Rise void of meaning : nothing lives but I.  
Only along the street  
The lamp-lit leaves beat.

### *A LIGHT ENDING*

**T**HERE was a man who loved beyond his  
heart

A woman there was little use to woo,  
For sorrowing had been her childhood's part,  
And her girl's part was death and sorrow too :  
So he went forth to buy oblivion  
With loveless kisses pitiful and wine,  
But he grew weary of his revelling,  
For always to his heart a voice would sing  
The tale of dreams that he must hear alone,  
Yet aye her fingers in his dream would twine.

He came to her he loved beyond his dreams,  
And held his face against her breast, and wept.

---

## *A Light Ending*

---

But she was weary of pity that ever seems  
Too weak to comfort, having never slept.  
“Vex me no more with tears, poor lover of  
mine,”

She said, “I am weary of a love too deep;  
Let my few days be filled with laughter now,  
Lest thought, if any hour wax tired or slow,  
Seize on my soul: I will pour the last red wine  
In careful heedlessness: thereafter, sleep.”

She would have none of sorrow, save her own;  
His she would none of; his he could not hide,  
So he went hopelessly alone, alone,  
Treading the bitter ways where none abide  
For long, or madness takes them, or they die;  
And so do many, but some pass away  
Into a barren land of thirsty fields,  
That no rain falls upon, that no fruit yields,  
And he beheld most foul insanity  
Crouch in the twilight of the unnatural day.

So awful fear fell on him, and he fled,  
And brake into the land of hopeless men  
That walk with weary faces grey like lead,  
And whoso speaks they answer not again

---

## *A Light Ending*

---

Save by a shuddering silence, or by tears.  
And he would fain have heard some speech at  
last :

“ Who bears such woe, and is not mad,” he said,  
“ Tell me his secret, or I am but dead.”

And so he waited, trembling with the fears  
Of that most bitter country he had passed.

“ We will have none of thee, poor friend,” they  
said,

“ Pitiful brother, vex us not with grief ;  
Our lives and hearts forgotten lie and dead,  
Our dreams gone past like any autumn leaf ;  
Thou art so newly from the lands of life,  
Thy sorrow is too clamouring and mad :  
We dare not look upon despair or fears,  
For we dare only watch, with envying tears,  
Those who have never met with woe or strife,  
Those who have not forgotten to be glad.”

He came to her he loved and said : “ Behold,  
Take all the love I bear your weeping eyes,  
And all the happy love I bare of old,  
And all such tenderness no service buys :  
Cast them away, and I will say no word ;

---

## *A Light Ending*

---

I think you shall not know I am not glad.  
If you be pitiful, forget, and say :  
'This love, this life, this heart I cast away,  
Lest by their sorrow my poor heart be stirred,  
And pity that which once no pity had.' "

She cast them forth, his love and life and heart,  
Cast all things forth except his lips and hands,  
And she was glad of him, who dwelt apart  
In ghastly haunted ways of ruinous lands,  
Even while his lips were fastened on her own.  
He spoke no word of sorrow ; all the while  
She, like a child in fear of a harsh voice,  
Would put the future from her, and rejoice,  
Making each day of hers a day alone ;  
She was half happy : he would sometimes smile.

Her broken heart was full of dreams outworn,  
And he had only learned of life how sweet  
That might have been which now must be for-  
lorn ;  
And he was calm, however his heart beat,  
Lest he crying out with pity, she should know  
How pitiful she were ; and she would keep  
Within the limit of the passing day ;

---

## *The Voice at Night*

---

His arms would hold her all the painful way,  
Till all days grew indifferent and slow,  
Till the last day, of her eternal sleep.

“And now,” he said, “she is at rest, at peace,  
She is asleep in the last sleep of all.

“O God,” he said, “that sleep shall never cease,  
No solace come to her, nor love at all!

O, she was never happy! now her tears

Shall never be atoned for: by her side

Even my love for her she cannot know.”

He heard her life, born to be tortured, go

Sobbing along the infinity of years,

Till madness came, and by his hand he died.

### *THE VOICE AT NIGHT*

THREE days you had been dead;

The doom Death spoke three years ago

Had fallen on that so unwilling head,

And you must go.

Each day, dreadful and sweet, of those dead years

I knew you dead: dried up were all my tears.

---

## *The Voice at Night*

---

In the close night I lay  
And waited for the dawn, that was not near.  
I heard a tree asway  
On a far hill ; but else a silence clear  
Filled all the valley, making that low noise  
A strange and fearful voice,  
Intolerably lonely as the white low stars  
That thro' fantastic bars  
Of orchard branches, or in blackness dead  
Glittering, and full of solitude unsaid,  
Shone thro' the casement open to the night  
As on my bed I waited for the light.

O, it was then, was then,  
When life was like a dream and knew no tears,  
Unreal, void of all the things to men  
Desirable, and all the perished years :  
When the lone tree gave o'er,  
Over the sea of silence, beyond the shore,  
A silent cry, as tho' the heavens spoke,  
Fluttered upon my heart, that woke,  
And body and soul were aching toward the cry  
Imperious, that filled the eternal sky.

I knew you ! tho' I said not Here, nor There.  
As happier lovers do

---

## *The Voice at Night*

---

I felt your presence, tho' it may be you  
Were gone more far  
Than is the furthest star.  
Only your cry kept on,  
That I too should be gone.

Ah, it was you indeed!  
And you had need of me, such utter need!  
Was it, on some strange shore  
You broke upon the life none understands,  
The still and awful joy, to you not sweet,  
Tho' yours for evermore,  
And found, poor child! the splendour cold and  
    high  
Of what all alien sky?—  
And held toward me those piteous girlish hands,  
In longing for a poor familiar kiss?  
Ah! was it this?

Or was it, when the last brief sleep was done,  
You knew your spirit and mine were one  
Past the last ruin of the last cold sun?  
And you alone must wait  
Long years without the unresponsive gate  
That shall not open till it let both in



---

## *The Voice at Night*

---

Who only may begin  
The new strange life together—ah! as one  
For ever, tho' the ways of stars be run?

Or was it in that hour when you awoke  
To gaze with other eyes, a new light broke,  
So that my soul you knew, made wise  
With the last wisdom of your final skies,  
And your soul spoke?  
Ah! then you knew  
(O could I think it!) all my love for you,  
And you must love me. Was it love  
Calling to me, from whence, beside, above?

Ah, you had need, have need of me!  
Yea, and the veil of lies  
Is rent, and utterly your sight is wise,  
And yet, your voice that cries!  
Is there none dead before you, none at all  
To comfort you with silence, that you call  
Thro' night, thro' day, out of the life of death  
With sweet and awful voice, that makes life's  
breath  
Come chill, and with dear dreadful pain  
Forth from my body divides my soul again?

---

*A Dream of One Dead*

---

Belovéd, look. Now first  
I bow my neck beneath the once accurst,  
Accepted yoke : under the goad of Fate  
Abide my time, for all at last is well.  
Chide not the hours ! nor with presumptuous  
thirst  
Urge me to drag Him onward, tho' I tell  
The minutes of the years wherethro' we wait.

*A DREAM OF ONE DEAD*

**L**AST night I had a dream : I woke  
Out of most happy dark,  
And I was walking in a city street  
By a poor waste iron-bounded park ;  
Sadly I went, and spoke  
To one whose feet  
Were weak against the wind that swept along  
And crashed a windy song  
Thro' the sere poplars overhead that showered  
On us their leaves deflowered,  
Their pattering leaves deflowered.  
I know not what we said : but she,

---

## *The Revolt*

---

(She who is dead)

Caught with one thin hand at her hat,  
And laughed at me,  
Because the wind would have his mastery,  
And she was wilful too : we laughed at that.  
Man knows, such little things  
Have stings.

### *THE REVOLT*

**I** WOKE in my cold bed,  
And heard the great wind pass  
Thro' bare elms overhead,  
And the rain on the sodden grass  
Pelting all the night.  
The wind had veered to the right,  
And the voice of the driven rain  
Leapt on the flooded pane.

It was not the moan of the wind  
Nor the sobbing voice of the rain  
That troubled so my mind  
That I could not sleep again,

---

## *The Revolt*

---

But the thought of a day of old  
When the woods were wet and cold,  
When she and I in the light  
Of the fire dreamed at night.

When I have tried to think  
How her lips used to smile  
When I would sit and drink  
Her beauty in the while,  
It was quite gone from me,  
But now I seemed to see,  
And heard her very voice—  
Alas, not to rejoice!

And in my pulsing eyes  
Swift looks of her dear face,  
As the red fire would rise  
In that forsaken place,  
Would mock me horribly,  
And there came over me  
A hopeless passion hot  
For her who now is not.

And as I longed for her  
I bit my wrists, and said:

---

## *The Revolt*

---

“ God, shall I taste this fear  
Again, that I thought dead ?  
That fear of every day  
To live with her away ?  
How did I bear that pain  
I cannot bear again ? ”

Then the wind moaned on high,  
And I turned in my bed ;  
I could not scream or cry,  
But hard I beat my head  
Upon my pillow cold ;  
I moaned, and tried to hold  
My brows with fingers tense  
As tho' to dull their sense.

The wind about the house  
Cried like a voice at last,  
And off my burning brows  
I took my hands, and cast  
My body on the floor,  
And cried out o'er and o'er,  
“ O love that I loved so,  
I shall go mad, I know ! ”

---

## *The Revolt*

---

I could not hear the sleet,  
Nor wind, nor sound at all,  
But heard my pulses beat  
Pitiless, rhythmical,  
Like swift blows on my brain,  
And I sprang up again ;  
I saw dim shape on shape  
And horrid mouths agape.

I could no darkness see,  
But grey shapes eddied nigh  
That glided up to me  
And passed my shoulders by.  
They rose up in the gloom  
And filled the reeling room.  
Quickly the lamp I lit,  
And I sat down by it.

I called out in my fear :  
" O love, come back from death !"  
Distantly I could hear  
The wind and my quick breath  
Above the echoing pain  
Swift throbbing in my brain.  
" Come back, O speak," I said,  
" Or else I shall go mad."

---

## *The Revolt*

---

I opened then the chest  
Where the small desk was laid  
With all her letters prest.  
So much was I afraid  
Away I dared not look,  
Yet my whole body shook;  
I moaned in helpless fear  
Of all that I must bear.

I took her letters out,  
O words of one long dead!  
I spread them all about  
Upon my quiet bed,  
The scent she favoured hung  
About them all; I flung  
My arms upon the bed,  
And on them hid my head.

I thrust my mouth hard down  
On sheets her hand had pressed;  
Poor letters creased and brown,  
Long carried in my breast!  
Yet still a lingering scent  
Clung to them all, and went  
Like fire thro' every vein.  
I could not speak for pain.

---

## *The Revolt*

---

My body all was grown  
One heart that beat and beat.  
I could not even moan,  
Grown numb with pain complete.  
Frail ribbons round them tied  
Brushed my hot face, and cried  
How long ago fell there  
The sweetness of her hair.

I kissed one folded sheet,  
And opened it, and read.  
I know how my heart beat  
When yet she was not dead  
To see her writing, now  
How could I read it, how  
Her handwriting behold  
When she was dead and cold?

Then I was sick with fear  
Because these had such power  
To pain me every year,  
To torture me each hour.  
“O, shall I not be free  
Dead girl,” I said, “from thee?”  
I shrank, yet pressed my face  
Much harder on the place.



---

## *The Revolt*

---

Then suddenly I knew  
I should go mad or die.  
I shuddered, and I threw  
My head back ; not a cry  
Broke from me, and I took  
Each letter, all the book  
Of those few years we had—  
And still I was not mad.

I gathered them and bound  
The ribbons over them ;  
I found a glove, and found  
A kerchief with a hem  
Of silk her fingers sewed.  
I took them all—a load  
Heavier than death or fate,  
And thrust them in the grate.

I held a light to them,  
And watched them flame and burn,  
Letters and silk and hem.  
I could not move or turn,  
But said “ Now shall not I  
Be free—this is a lie :  
Only I know I must  
Have nothing left but dust.”

---

## *The Revolt*

---

The wind in the chimney roared :  
The letters in a blaze  
Sent up their flame, and poured  
Their heat upon my face.  
Only when they were burned  
I staggered up and turned,  
Now utterly bereft ;  
Nothing of her was left.

Between the bars the ash  
Was red, the windows grey.  
The sodden elms awash  
Moaned for the birth of day.  
O come not, day! Yet O,  
Night, wilt thou never go?  
O day and night and year,  
I shall go mad with fear !

---

*BOOK IV*

---



*WIND OF THE WEST*

THE long grey river sleeps,  
The stars are thick above,  
Only the west wind weeps  
Like a soul sick for love.

Over the woodland ridge  
It sweeps on weary wings,  
And round the lonely bridge  
Whispers forgotten things.

Rest on your weary wings,  
O hush, wind of the west,  
Your song of outworn things  
That will not let me rest.

---

*Penumbra*

---

*PENUMBRA*

THE far indifferent blue of night  
Broods on the marshes, faintly green,  
Veiled in the soft ambiguous light  
Of evening vapour whitely cool,  
Dreaming over the slumbering pool,  
Wrapping the rushes in between,  
The rushes rustling through the night.

Night is brooding over the sky  
And in the heart of the shrouded lake ;  
The bat quivers in silence by ;  
The sound of frogs jars and is still,  
Elusive, like a faery mill ;  
And hesitating stars awake  
Dimly about a dreaming sky.

*THE NIGHT WIND*

WHEN I came forth of the wood  
The western night was green,  
Over the night of the trees  
Where I had been.

---

## *The Night Wind*

---

All along the clearing  
Black with hissing ling  
The white ruts were sandy,  
Dimly glimmering.

Out of the eastern blue,  
Where golden Jupiter swung,  
A cold wind was blowing,  
A cold song it sung.

But all among the bushes  
Lurking in the dale  
The hot air of the daytime  
Lingered thro' the vale.

And as the wind grew colder  
Every brooding pool  
Of hot earth-scented air  
Was ruffled by the cool.

So as I went walking  
Struck in wafted bands,  
The hot sweet air and the cold air  
Across my face and hands.

---

*After Rain*

---

AFTER RAIN

NO more the raindrops fall,  
But pattering thro' the leaves  
Flash and are musical  
About the cottage eaves.

Now clouds of argent snows  
That sail the fresher sky  
Blaze in the leafage close  
That rocks above my eye.

The sparrows chirping fight  
Thro' many a heavy tree  
Afire with emerald light  
And shake the rain on me.

Plaints of the brooding dove  
From many an orchard sound;  
A star of white above  
The sea-gull swerves around.

Far on the wooded height  
Whispers the questing wind,  
Who stoopeth not his flight  
But leaves the vale behind.



---

## *After Rain*

---

Between ambrosial trees  
Deep down the river looms ;  
Glossy and green as these,  
More full of richer glooms.

Between the mirrored shows  
Of woods on either hand  
The sharp sea-water flows  
For miles and miles inland.

Between the hanging woods  
Of either splendid side,  
Wherein the wood-dove broods  
And is not satisfied,

Far, by the otter's lair,  
Under the summer sky,  
Under the oaks, I hear  
The porpoise plunge and sigh :

Then charméd silence laves  
The river's every reach,  
Till the wide-ringéd waves  
Lisp on the languid beach.

---

## *August*

---

### AUGUST

I WANDERED where the pine-trees made  
A faultless house of sun and shade ;  
The pines were red thro' many a glade ;  
A russet carpet there was laid.

By still gold pools of the sun's light  
The red trunks of the pines were bright :  
I saw wood-pigeons wheeling white,  
And heard them throbbing out of sight.

The lacing pine-boughs were not proof  
To hot light shed thro' all their roof ;  
The place was all a woven woof  
Of drifting sun and shadow aloof.

The noonday stillness held its peace,  
But high in all the scented trees  
Its breath would shortly sigh and cease,  
As if half weary of great ease.

I was most happy there to lie,  
To see small havens of blue sky  
In the dark roof of pine-boughs high,  
And watch the small birds flutter by.

---

## *August*

---

The wide space of my woodland house  
Was roofed with interwoven boughs ;  
The rich air could but hardly rouse  
Their silence, yet it reached my brows.

Of yesterday I did not think,  
My chain of days was link by link  
Unwoven quite : I did not shrink  
From coming bitterness to drink.

I saw the little midges dart  
Thro' shade and into sunlight start ;  
The day's great stillness was my heart,  
Of the sweet summer I was part.

And when the sun had fallen low  
That place was all a wondrous glow,  
Like trees of fire the pines arow,  
Like a soft flame the air did flow.

I nothing knew at all but peace,  
Faint sorrow that the day must cease,  
Tho' when the red sun went, the breeze  
Sighed softly with my greater ease.

---

## *The Circular Saw*

---

Still on the fragrant earth I lay ;  
I felt the little ants at play  
Upon my hands ; but when the day  
Was done, I dreaming came away.

### THE CIRCULAR SAW

**B**ECAUSE the high long dreary London wall  
Vexed us, when we came to the open gate  
Idly we turned aside, and suddenly stopped,  
With eyes enchanted, with voices ready to call  
One to the other for wonder : " Wait, O wait ! "  
Deep in a covered alley the hot sun dropped,  
Slant, fierce, and mellow, between high stacks  
Of yellow timber sweet : an alley where  
Brown-muscled men bore upon balks of pine  
Urging them on to the saw, where they severed  
like wax,  
With a rising muffled scream, a triumphant blare,  
Thrilling the throat and the bosom, and rich as  
a wine  
The scent of the spouting sawdust invaded the  
place,

---

## *The Circular Saw*

---

The soul of the magical forest, resinous, sweet,  
Subtly invaded the desolate, sordid street.

But O the wonder! for all the o'ershadowed  
space

Was quick with the floating dust, a haze there  
grew,

A haze green-golden, full of the fire of the sun;  
From a fountain of creamy fire that o'erbrimmed  
it with gold

It gushed, in a lift of eddies, so shot through  
With the further gloom that shadow and light  
in one,

Like the ghost of a glorious opal famous of old,  
Like the deeps of a flickering ocean of sombre  
green,

Curled and eddied, melted and licked and lapped,  
Enwrapping the phantom workers, their faces  
bright

In the liquid light so marvellously entrapped,  
In the odorous whirling water imprisoned be-  
tween

The resinous piles, a hive of fantastic light,  
Dancing within itself and over the ground,  
While ever the screaming, rending, blaring saw  
spun round.

---

## *The Circular Saw*

---

“ The sea ! ” we cried, “ the sea, deep under the  
sea ! ”

(And beyond, at a shadowy wharf, a vessel there  
lay

With spars aslant, like a wreck of an olden day ; )  
Not strange had it seemed if out of the further  
gloom

A gentle, cumbersome beast had begun to loom  
In air—nay, it was water—poised, pushing about  
The flickering bottom with meditative snout,  
Till he lit on the thing enchanted come down in  
the sea,

The shrieking shapen bulk with the voice of a  
storm,

The wrestling creatures possessed, of unpiscine  
form,

And the flapping snapping belt, like a devilish  
weed ;

Till, gazing a moment, with wise and shallow  
eyes,

His body shuddered, his great tail with speed  
Swung, and he oared his lithe precipitate way  
Back to the further gloom, in fluttered surprise,  
To the kind accustomed regions of lesser day.  
But we gazed on in amaze at a scene so fair,

---

## *The Laughter of Summer*

---

Bathing our sense in the flood of the golden-  
green

Warm wavering colour, and said not it was air,  
Till a patient horse drew a laden waggon  
between,

Till, drunk with the wine of the forest, come  
forth from the sea

To the thin and comfortless air of the city, we  
Left the wide gate, and under the dreary wall  
Passed thro' the clattering street where the  
hawkers call.

### *THE LAUGHTER OF SUMMER*

**A**LL day the pine-forest lay still  
From hill to hidden hill.

Faintly under the sea-blue sky  
The delicate meshes of black were pushed, put by,  
By a breath of the outer air, too faint to sigh,  
And the forest again lay still.

Only the stir of a bird on a brittle bough  
Broke the warm silence, silent now

---

## *The Laughter of Summer*

---

Till after the noon was high ;  
Then, in the dreamless blue, the enlacéd sky,  
Rose a white cloud in the west, and floated by,  
Soft and full and pure and high,  
With a milky haze behind  
It wandered in a lofty wind.

Then, far away,  
I heard a low-breathed sigh  
Of many trees asway  
Under the sky :  
So, to a vale asleep,  
When the hush of night is deep,  
The sea that wakes alone  
Softly doth moan.  
Then over all the wood, above, around,  
A slow mysterious sound  
Spread thro' the air ;  
About an ancient house  
At night the wind may rouse  
Such voices when the fire is red and boughs are  
bare.

Then one by one  
The trees that all the day



---

## *The Laughter of Summer*

---

Were drowsy with the sun  
Put sleep away ;  
The pine I lay beneath  
Shook all its rustling wreath  
Of shadowy wealth above  
As tho' by stealth,  
And one by one the trees  
Sighed as for perfect ease  
Or perfect love.

So thro' the forest, one by one,  
Under the prevalent summer sun  
The trees awoke ;  
Now near, now far away  
A stately pine asway  
The silence of the day  
Joyfully broke ;  
Until the distant breathing,  
All the sky and earth enwreathing,  
Surging thro' the forest drew,  
Thro' the drowsy vistas nearer,  
And the magic music clearer  
Ever grew,  
Till before the enraptured wave  
All the lofty listeners gave,

---

## *The Laughter of Summer*

---

And behind me and around me and above the  
pæan flew.

Now the world was all in motion,  
All the stately trunks asway,  
Dancing with a grave devotion  
To the rapture of the day,  
All their tossing crowns above  
Soft with laughter, glad with love ;  
All the rippling wood was dancing  
And the seas of sunlight glancing  
Hither, thither, on the ground,  
And the music all entrancing  
With a cool and hushing sound  
Revelled thro' the awakened shadows, all the  
velvet ways around.

Ah! said I, the hidden god  
All the holy morning trod  
In the brooding ways remote  
Where the only song afloat  
Was the song of the drowsy dove,  
In the hot thick boughs above :  
She was singing all alone,  
All alone under the sky,

---

## *The Laughter of Summer*

---

Because none other doth intone  
Her song of peace alone ;  
None other could sing and cross the prevalent  
hour  
With music of harsh delight or turbulent power ;  
And he, the lord of the wood,  
Beheld how all was good,  
Throughout the velvet-silent russet ways  
Full of rich odour, and splashed with lights  
ablaze  
Spilt on the floor moss-flowered, as fire on the  
slender trees,  
And over all an irresistible peace,  
That said in its own heart, it ever had been  
And never should cease ;  
And yet in a sweetness of wonder beheld its  
own heart,  
As one who discovers the dawn with new-found  
eyes  
By love's lips kissed, in a hushed surprise ;  
There did he tarry, there joy apart,  
Until the peace of the morning, like wine in his  
heart,  
Forsook its own self as the flower forsaketh the  
bud,

---

## *The Laughter of Summer*

---

Brimmed over and thrilled for joy of the perfect  
wood ;  
Ah, joy too great to bear,  
Too sweet, with none to share !  
For then with a swift desire, sweet laughter into  
the air  
Himself he cast, O into the trees and the sky,  
And into the cloud serene, meditative on high,  
Into the proud shy hearts of the still ecstatic  
trees,  
Into that reverent and most delighted breeze,—  
Ah! and with what caress,  
Out of the sea-blue sky,  
Came he back to the thick hushed forest, with  
the wind's feet,  
And hovered a moment in quiet, and found all  
sweet,  
And, with a sigh,  
Abandoned himself to the abandoning trees, and  
searched the most secluded ways and shy !  
Fawning, caressing, danced the abandoned trees,  
And he in their hearts, and in the delighted  
breeze,  
For now the joy too sweet to bear  
With none at all to share

---

## *The Rain*

---

All the flickering forest knoweth, all the streaming  
    odorous air,  
And his holy secret rapture  
All things do share,  
And lead a magic dance  
Whom his laughter doth entrance,  
It is chanted in a pæan through the enraptured  
    world around.  
Ah, behold his lordly rapture  
That his creatures do recapture,  
That for love has taken to it earthly raiment,  
    caught, and found!

### *THE RAIN*

**A**LL the green of the garden is chill,  
    All the grey of the sky is still,  
And across the window, down to the lawn  
The patient glittering rain is drawn,  
Darkly falling all over the sky,  
Falling, falling in shadowy threads,  
White as it passes the poplars by  
In glittering phantom threads,

---

## *The Rain*

---

Straight and long it falls from on high,  
On the flowers, on their forsaken heads ;  
Plashing the moss-green tiles of the houses  
With multitudinous cold grey fingers,  
And ever rouses  
That patient, weary song,  
Which, all the morning long,  
Continually drowsing like the sea,  
Became its very song to me ;  
The song that lingers  
Through the dull afternoon, yet brings to me  
No salt, no life, no savour of the sea.

The birds are hushed in the trees  
That sang in the rain of dawn,  
And all the sodden lawn  
Lies empty, and the still wet leaves around  
Mutter their charm of unremitting sound,  
That, as the sullen sky  
Droops like a net to hold a soul to ground,  
So, with its patient and continual drone,  
Weaves a dull spell to prison up the sense,  
Till I can conjure me to call my own  
No summer's rapture, April's innocence  
Of memoried song ;

---

## *The Rain*

---

But all a long life long,  
So mutters the rain,  
Plashing the leaves, crackling upon the pane,  
I have sat at a window open high  
Half on a garden, half on the sky ;  
And the green garden one  
That never heard a song or saw the sun,  
And the grey sky  
One that has never seen a cloud sail by.

What should I do without the wind ?  
I, so weary all the day,  
Grew, I think, half dazed of mind,  
Yet did not wish the rain away ;  
I did not murmur of the rain,  
It seemed so vain  
To think the eternal rain could cease  
Its dreary, maddening peace ;  
But as it plashed upon the mournful trees  
There came a languid breeze,  
Cold as the breath of deathly rain  
It came, and died, and rose again :  
And all the poplars nodded slowly, swinging  
With a rhythmic, stately motion,  
Slowly rocking, sternly singing,

---

## *White Fire*

---

Strong with life and light with laughter, full of  
clamour and commotion ;  
So the awakening trees  
Surged before the breeze,  
Laughing through the strong embraces of the  
wind that left the ocean.

### *WHITE FIRE*

**B**Y night as the moon went over the edge of  
the earth

The slack sea-water out of the troubled sea  
Entered the sombre valley ; the thrush's mirth  
Rang over a mile of water clearly to me :  
He was hidden deep in a dewy wood  
On a mirrored hill o'erhanging the glossy flood.

The thrush gave over ; the grey of the sky  
o'ercast

Grew utter night ; such night on the waters now  
Scarce the inverted woods appeared in the flood ;  
at last

The wind was risen, shaking from many a bough



---

## *White Fire*

---

Down-dripping dew in music upon the night  
Of flower and fern that dreamed of the summer  
light.

Swiftly out of the east from a dip of the hill  
Flowed the cool air of the starless heavens deep,  
But yet the glassy face of the flood lay still,  
The peace preserving of most equal sleep ;  
Only a sudden ripple on the languid weed  
Salt-smelling, hissed on the shore, and the ear  
gave heed.

And the eye went blindly after the ear—and lo !  
White fire in the flood ! the ripples of milky  
flame

Whispered enchanted ashore in a holy glow,  
Till the border of bubbling surf was a thing  
without name,  
A lace of stars blown by a magic wind,  
A heaven too careless of splendour for life to  
bind.

I trod on the wrack of the dim shore, salt and  
sweet ;  
At every step the utter dark of the beach

---

## *The Snow*

---

In a silver galaxy blazed ; if under my feet,  
Or far as the mind of a mortal never can reach,  
The eye could say not : I dreamed that I was  
a god,  
And thousands of stars were born to die as I  
trod.

### THE SNOW

**A**LL the windless winter day  
The plain lay still ;  
I heard a horse a mile away  
Cantering over a frozen hill.  
Not a bird, not a beast was seen,  
But only a ruffled crow,  
Huddling his feathers or turning his head  
Drowsily to and fro ;  
The world was dead,  
The heavens were grey,  
And even the meadows were hardly green.

But lately arose a wind in icy flight ;  
We thought it had carried away the sky at night

---

## *The Snow*

---

To show us the dazzling moon :  
But no! idly it lifted the hoary straws  
Hung on the hedges, and the frozen grass  
And rank enriméd meadow-rushes felt it pass,  
Whistling a fitful tune  
With doleful pause ;  
Until the wind, although the lofty sky  
Went by, brought up a new grey sky  
And this and that so high they seemed in their  
    passage asleep,  
Till, down the division deep,  
The fluttering snow adventured, late in the after-  
    noon.

All was grey as on we strode  
The hard swift-echoing road,  
Keeping a lusty pace ;  
Then, when the light grew sullen, we felt the  
    familiar brush,  
Forgotten, softer than rain to the face,  
And lo! uplooking, the vault immense was  
    a-flush  
Where all had been grey, with a sickly yellowish  
    glare,  
Where, sailing downward, loosely sinking in air,

---

## *The Snow*

---

Like a million feathers a-flutter, shadowy, slow,  
Floated and fell in a down-insistent flight, the  
snow.

And the wind having done what it listed, wan-  
dered away,  
To be felt no more, neither heard ;  
And a veil came falling over the failing day,  
Dropping incessantly downward, unpierced, un-  
stirred,  
Like a myriad threads of ethereal wool enwound  
Perpetually, from the heavens to the ground,  
As though the meadows, out of the frozen cloud,  
Were weaving a deathly shroud.

On by the whitening hedges  
On the road that rang like metal  
We strode, and heard in the sedges  
The soft snow settle ;  
Like a nation of icy ghosts of white moths flying  
Brushing for ever our faces, flew in a steady fall  
The slow soft-settling flakes more thickly lying,  
And ere the fall of the night had covered all ;  
All sound was over ; our quick steps were soft,  
And thicker the flakes, unreeling the skies aloft,

---

## *The Snow*

---

Gently whirling as they were falling, floating  
down in a lazy swirl,  
Till all the night was drift of white, all the world  
a shower a-whirl.

With lashes blinking, with lips the snow-flakes  
drinking,  
Nothing we saw but the white downward-floating  
night,  
Seeming to strive through the earth to take its  
flight,  
With a steady soft commotion, in a maze of  
downward motion,  
As though in a phantom ocean were sinking,  
sinking,  
White flowers of winter's birth, blown over-sea  
in a gust of mirth,  
Strewn by a tempest far overhead, to drift down  
in the water dead.  
But, ere we knew it, a shadow on either side  
Of high barns uplooming told of the village  
nigh,  
And quickly we reached the inn, and waited  
outside  
Lifting our brows to the full down-sailing sky.

---

## *The Snow*

---

With faces the flakes refreshed as they thawed  
    aglow  
We met the lonely downfall, whitely coating  
Meadow and road and roof with its gentle float-  
    ing,  
Gable and eave and thatch, railing, sill, and  
    latch,  
With high imponderous ridges of fragile snow ;  
Loosely lying on every twig, till the slenderest  
    one was big,  
And the blackest white, and the laurel-shrubs  
Set by the door in their frozen tubs  
Grow each like a snow-clad hill.  
And lo ! the night we thought so still  
Is full of a whisper hushed, a word unsaid,  
A greeting the snow has brought from the skies  
    of the dead.

Lightly floating on high, falling soft and loose,  
Dark in the vault of the sky the flakes as they  
    slowly sail  
Down to the ground, pale, as though their fate  
    to refuse :  
But yet the insistent shower falls and falls,  
On meadow, on road, on roof, on walls,

---

## *The Snow*

---

Falls, floats, and falls ;  
All through the air, all through the sky,  
Below, on high, and everywhere  
Now, and as here,  
And every moment following as this ;  
And each flake settles with a soft hushed hiss ;  
The world is full of the rustle of falling snow.

Sée ! dáy fádeth as though the snow  
Brought all the white of the heavens to lay it  
low

And left the heavens dark.

Now all the ways are white ; the snow all night  
Will fall perpetually, unhurried, light,  
August, and in its icy solitude  
Content, and leave no path unstrewed.  
Come ! for the day is over, the windows glow  
Through the unreeling downfall of the snow  
Wound like a smoky web across—yet hark !  
Hush ! on all roads, on meadow, on roof, on tree,  
The secret whisper of the mystery.

---

*Night in Autumn*

---

NIGHT IN AUTUMN

THE wind has risen to-night ;  
The trees above me roar ; I stand alone  
In the seething darkness of the wood : no light  
Shines from her room : inhuman the night has  
grown,  
A night of only blackness, rage, and death,  
Whose voice, with desolate breath,  
Laments along the woods, and from the sea  
Complains incessantly.

O surging, baffled voice of the wind,  
Be still, be still that I may call to her,  
Still, as to hear the fall of an autumn leaf !  
In silence breathed below the o'ershadowing  
house  
Her whispered name should rouse  
No echo, but only her :  
Be still, O voice of everlasting grief,  
O voice of troubled earth and empty sky,  
Be still, go by !

Be still, be still,  
O, passing down the night



---

## *Night in Autumn*

---

Let utter silence fall on wood and hill  
Like sleep from love ; let all be silent quite,  
That I, alone in this great solitude,  
May verily know how good  
Her nearness is ; she in her chamber high,  
With happy sleep upon as gracious eyes,  
Waked by the sudden quiet of the sky  
Perchance would rise  
To marvel at the silence of the night,  
And hear the lone sea murmur out of sight.  
Perchance then I would call to her, and she  
Look down on me.

Wind, wind, if she loved me not,  
I would bid you fill your song with bitter grief,  
With melancholy cries of love forgot,  
And shudder with despair by every tossing leaf ;  
I would bid you from the limits of the sea  
Gather your moan, and through the wailing land  
Plunge like a wandering soul, lost and mad with  
despair ;  
I would bid you with your desolation cover me,  
Surging up with terror upon every hand,  
And with your clamour of tormented air  
Drown my voice quite, lest in my agony

---

## *Night in Autumn*

---

Its lamentable sound should madden me,  
And I should sob among the driven leaves,  
Among the driven leaves as lost as I ;  
I would bid you sweep about her shadowy eaves,  
Singing the loneliness of all the sky,  
Singing to her the anguish of my passion  
In what imperious fashion  
She could not choose but understand, while I  
Low in the leaves that whirl should lie,  
My aching body stricken through with love.  
Knowing my love and I to be no more  
To her than the fall of the foam along the shore  
Or the accustomed wind of the skies above.

O, but she loves me, loves me, triumphing wind !  
Therefore break into her maiden sleep,  
Then, to her amazed mind  
You, filling all the ways of the heavens deep,  
Shall sing to her for me !  
Sweep from the verge of the heaving desolate sea,  
Shout through the forest, exult along the sky,  
And sing your song on high !  
Go tell her how my blood in all my veins  
Sings and exults, as through the o'erwhelméd  
    plains

---

## *The Wind*

---

You masterfully rush : impetuous as your breath,  
Ensured, irrevocable and fast as death,  
Tell her my love is : O, vast voice of night,  
Tell her my love is wild and swift as you,  
Sweep on, my bidding do !  
Possess her enraptured heart, O fill her with  
    ecstasy, tell  
How I love, as none may utter but you, yêa,  
    wîldly wéll  
Sing, O song of ecstatic triumph, exulting delight !

### *THE WIND*

**O** MOON-ENCHANTED night !  
    O night of the revelling wind, and the  
    laughing light  
Flooding the ether, high and inviolate,  
Behind whose mysteries reticent wait  
Stars unseen for the wonder of the moon :  
O swift imperious tune !  
O wild incessant song, thrilling the surging trees,  
With an echo rapt from the foam of enchanted  
    seas,

---

## *The Wind*

---

Rejoice, O night, and silver moon, rejoice,  
In the magical hours that endure while the sun  
    is away,  
When the earth wears a light eye never conceived  
    by day,  
And the wind has a stranger voice.

Vaguely, indefinitely green and gray  
The spectral meadows roll away, away,  
And heave as a glimmering sea under the windy  
    sky.

Tossing, tossing on high  
Shiver the trees, dancing and mad with joy,  
Dancing, dancing to the song of the wind en-  
    trancing  
The heart of the night and my heart, my heart  
    with joy!

Well sings the wind, O a song for leaping  
    blood,  
A song of the joy of life, and the splendour of  
    love!

The brave wind shouts in the flickering ways of  
    the wood,  
He splashes with mad glad hands the boughs of  
    the trees above,

---

## *The Wind*

---

And high in the upper air  
Sweeps through the heavens bare,  
Flows, majestic, out of the western blue,  
And riots in lands where the peace of the night  
is new.

No peace is here to-night !  
O away with peace, for this is a night of delight !  
My soul is away with the revelling joy of the  
wind,  
The wind and I are one abandoned kind,  
My heart is strange with the glamour of the  
moon,  
My heart is laughing like the foam of the sea,  
That seethes to the wind, at one with its tune,  
At one with the heart in me.

Shine, silver moon, blow, shouting wind,  
Sweep, laughing flood, across the untroubled sky !  
Lo, the woods heave, the summer leaves are  
whirled  
Like birds in terrible fright across the light  
Of the icy moon, and the wind behind  
Catches them, mingles them, hurls them on high !  
Lo, how the leaves are whirled !

---

## *The Wind*

---

Whirl my old years away, O enraptured wind!  
Let them be clean forgotten, blown out of mind!  
Then shall I hear you sing:

“Awake, O mortal, awake to the magical earth,  
Awake, O harp, to the hands of the laughing  
wind,

O, a proud life is before you! the infinite skies,  
The seas and the sun and the earth to delight  
your eyes,

And I to sing to your heart,  
Till you go to the darkness who came of the  
darkness at birth

With a song of its peace in your heart:  
Yea, as a harp in the hands of the harper cries,  
Sing ye for joy under my laughing skies.”

O swift imperious song! my uplifted heart  
Sings, and whom shall I sing to, indifferent wind?  
Not now to you, singing your infinite song!  
Go, mighty wind, and call to her I love,  
Call her out in the rioting, moon-enchanted night,  
Sing to her, stoop to her, sweeping wildly above:  
O, set her heart a-dancing like the shivering light  
of delight

Shaken on the tresses of the singing trees—

---

## *The Wind*

---

Have you beheld her, have you caressed her,  
O wind ?

Her heart is deep as your own, O sing to her  
heart !

Moon, do you shine on her ; moon, do you see  
her face ?

Kiss her eyes, kiss her lips, for they have your  
magical grace,

And breathe through the tangle of her fallen  
hair, O wind,

And set her feet a-dancing, and the sweet blood  
of her heart !

Bring her to me, O call her hither, wind of the  
west !

Charm her to me with a charm, O moon of the  
sky !

Set her white spirit laughing with this your  
mystical laughter,

O, set her singing, that I may follow after

When I hear her voice in the voice of the wind  
caressed,

Rapt and caressed as he riots the woodlands by :

Bring her to me with laughter on her mouth,

Bring her to me with laughter in her eyes,

---

## *The Wind*

---

And a light on her face from the magical moon  
in the south,  
And caught in her hair the coolness of all the  
skies :  
Bring her to me with fallen hair afloat  
Over her singing throat.

Lo, in the heaving boughs the moon, a silver  
fiery tear,  
Sweeps and flashes and rocks as I run by ways  
that rustle and shake,  
And a sound of enraptured weeping and of tear-  
ful laughter make :  
Call hither the girl I love, O west wind, bring her  
here !  
Whirl her old years away, O majestic wind,  
Let them be all forgotten, blown out of mind !  
Sing then, wind, imperious, laughing, sweet and  
strong,  
Sing then, wind, and this shall be your song :  
"Awake, O lovers, awake, awake to the magical  
night !  
Awake, O harps, to my fingers of delight !  
O, a proud life is before you ; the infinite skies,



---

## *The Wind*

---

The sun and the hills and the seas to delight  
your eyes,  
As you wander, wander through the immortal  
earth  
To the silence of infinite sleep from the silence  
of birth,  
With the ancient joy of the ancient earth for  
your part,  
O driven leaves of the wind, be glad, be merry  
at heart !”



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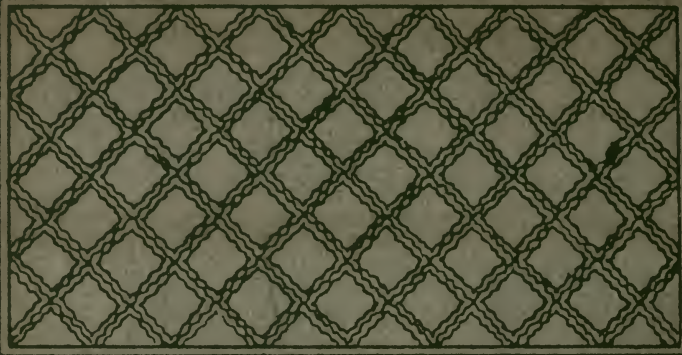


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**POEMS BY A. B. MIALL**

