

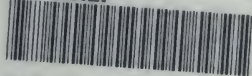
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DREAM-SONGS

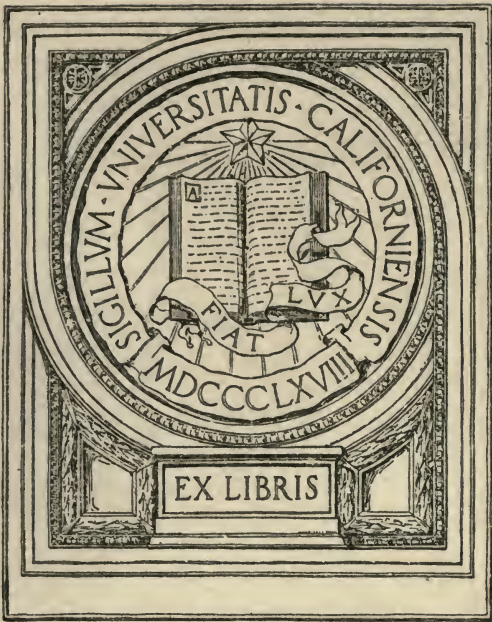
FOR THE

BELOVED

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BY

ELEANOR FARJEON



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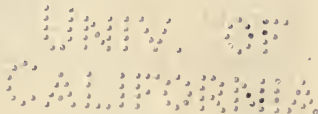
No. 5

DREAM-SONGS
FOR THE BELOVED

BY

ELEANOR FARJEON

(Author of "Pan-Worship")



The Orpheus Press
3, Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, E.C.

SPRING, 1911

By the same Author

PAN-WORSHIP (*a book of verses*), published by
Elkin Mathews, 1908.

2s. 6d. net.

TO YOU
AND ALL

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LIBRARY OF
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TO MY MOTHER

UNUTTERED songs fly round my thoughts like
birds,
And aerially, above an earth of words,
Imagined music on my spirit showers
From azure-feathered throat and golden
tongue.

Most dear, of the many songs I cannot sing
Yours is the bird of heavenliest wing
Whose sunward flight beyond my following
towers
And leaves me with an impotent harp
unstrung.

And yet the shadow of my song for you
Falls on my heart forever as a dew,
Or the dim-breathing soul of evening
flowers
That love the delicate light of stars still
young.

These lesser songs that all who listen may
hear
Shall we call yours for a day, most dear,
most dear?—
Knowing there is one other, only ours,
For ever singing, and for ever unsung.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of the President of the Association for the year 1911. The names are given in alphabetical order of their surnames.

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97. Mr. ...

98. Mr. ...

99. Mr. ...

100. Mr. ...

DREAM-SONGS FOR THE BELOVED

I.

THEY said it was a lone land, a land of many
sorrows,
Grey weeping waters and a strip of golden
sand,
Loss and desolation and the washing out of
footsteps
That dare to tread the narrow golden peril
of the sand.

They said it was a fire-land, a land of flaming
passions,
The sun like a molten rose in burning
sapphire skies,
And never sound nor stir save of hearts that
beat their way there
Like southron birds whose wings seek the
blue of burning skies.

But I have found a still land of neither pain
nor passion,
No loss because no giving there, no gain
since no desire,
And the great silent light of the Belovèd's
spirit brooding
With the soul of all time there, made
empty of desire.

II

EVEN as between the silence of the sea
And rounded silver miracle of the moon
A little dew is drawn upon the night
To dwell there like the image of a cloud :

So from the silence of the darkest hour
The light that is a miracle in my soul
Distils the presence of the Well-Belov'd
And I possess the image in him of God.

III.

I SEEM to walk as a shadow in Love's
shadow,
I seem to have always known what love
might be
And beyond knowledge passed to the great
tranquillity.

I seem to have gained the light without the
longing,
For lo! even as the smoking rose-torch
came
Within my hands, red flame turned smokeless
silver flame.

Now in my dreams I tread an asphodel
meadow
Where move the lovers out of the dreamful
past.
“ Dead lovers, how is it with you ? ”

“ It is well at last,
Sister,” reply their eyes about me thronging,
And all the phantoms of that immortal
flight
Carry their torches still, and all the flames
are white.

IV.

OFTEN, so often, you walk in the cool dim
thoughts of me,

Though you may never know how often
and where,

And a dream like a little lantern unknowing
have given to me—

Between my two hands as I sit I hold it
there

And never will let it again go out of the
hands of me.

For it may be that once you will let me
wander the thoughts of you

By a chance, for a moment, and then you
will see me bear

The fast-held lantern-light of the dream that
was given by you

Since I never will let it go . . . will
you know? will you care

That the light I bear in my hands came out
of the hands of you?

V,

IF by the Messengers of Sleep
I should be told that you had died
I do not think that I would weep.—
For you it only were to glide
Out of the shallows into the deep ;

For me—how could such tidings shake
The thin clear crystal of my dream,
Mine past the breath of the earth to break ?

Till some bright breath from the Supreme
Keen-singing shatters it awake,
Whether you linger here or there
Still in the groves of trance I lean,
While on the hushed and heavenly air
The moon of your spirit floats serene
And makes my twilight softly fair.

For from the shallows or the deep
Beyond the ports of tranquil death
I know some word of you will creep
Nightly on the mysterious breath
Of the white Messengers of Sleep.

IN LOVE'S HOUSE

Love the God at last has unclouded his
eyes

“Newcomer, what are these things that you
bear unto me?”

“Songs, the flower and fruit of my wondering
heart,
All the creating I have to offer to you.”

“Nothing may be created of you in my house,
Drift your little singing away on the wind.

You cannot hang me about with a music of
sighs,

You cannot deck me with roseal vapours of
song,

Shape sweet words in a garland to circle my
brows

Or make a jewel of speech to be worn in my
bosom.

“ Out of soft rain of tears and glamour of joy
Iris-arcs though you weave for your heart's-
delight,
Bring me no luminous dream of the saffron
and gold,
Bring me no dewes of the emerald flame of
the grass,
Bring me no vanishing fires of the poppy and
rose,
No melting mirage of heavenly hyacinth light,
For I take nothing of colour of those who are
mine.

“ I it is colour my chosen ones, never they me,
I am not theirs to possess, they are mine,
they are mine.

Did you believe I was given to you as a gift,
Something to treasure and care for and handle
and clothe ?

Lo ! it is you are my gift to be treasured and
clothed,

Fashion no garments for me, mine has fallen
on you.

“ How should men colour me ? sing me ?
array me in light ?

How should they think me, conceive me,
endow me with form ?

Mine is the thought, the conception none
other's than mine,
You and the children of men are the birth I
bring forth,
Not within you do I enter, you enter in me.

“All is expressed for you finally here in my
heart.

Struggle no more to express me. My silences
sing.”

DOUBLE BEAUTY

Love of the light compels the lark to sing
And brims his tiny body with a spark ;
The nightingale draws music from a spring
Out of the bosom of the belovèd dark ;
But on man's twofold nature God has breathed
The double soul of beauty like a spell,
And dark in light or light in darkness
sheathed
His spirit still must sing the miracle.

440 B.C.

(Friday, September 24th, 1909)

MORE than my sons that day my fathers were
mighty within me!

Walking the Past alone nothing I found there
unknown.

Time like a whirlwind blew where I stood by
the Tree of the Ages:

Boughs that in years did abound scattered
their burthen aground,

Till in immense liberation divinely austere
and familiar,

Naked of over-ripe fruit, knew I the Stem and
the Root.

Under the hand of the Sculptor, the carver of
visible music,

Felt I an infinite Truth, saw I immutable
Youth.

Out of the marble a sparkle of motion and
delicate gesture
Even as a rose unsheathed blossom-like
started and breathed :

Even as animate light, a tremulous prism,
made captive
Once in an æon whose spark leaps to us out
of the dark.

Swift on a wonderful rapture upswung, the
eternal procession
Joined I by some great right sharing the ages'
delight.

Deathless singing there sounded and there
moved life unarrested,
I was the body and soul, I was the part and
the whole.

I was that boy's fine strength restraining his
quivering charger,
Ay, and the nostril's fire quickened by curbèd
desire.

I was this rhythmic strain of melodic, ineffable
beauty
Maidenly garments reveal singing from
shoulder to heel.

Well I remember how once when my sandal-
latchet was loosened,
While the procession delayed, stooping the
knot I re-made.

Greater and less was I than the flower
divinely unconscious,
Golden Youth flowing by scarce asking
Whither and Why :

I was both seed and fruit of it : I was the
beast sacrificial,
Garlanded ignorance led forth to be glorious
dead :

Also the elders within whose bosoms the
torchlight of duty
Mellowed by Service and Time burned in
aloofness sublime :

More than these things! the thing they
aspired to, the ultimate Godhead,
Like a half-realised dream lifting to clasp the
Supreme,

Crown and star of this Life-Stream endlessly
singing and dancing
Till it attain the Most High, Knowledge and
Wisdom was I !

Pheidias ! under thy hand the unquenchable
spark that Myself is,
Man and his Father and Son, all indissolubly,
one,

After great labour of years at last grew a
visible wonder
Where men a-gaze at the shrine finally know
them divine.

Ay ! though To-morrow become the Wind in
the Tree of the Ages,
Dust of my body to spread wide with the dust
of the dead,

In thy golden procession eternally singing and
dancing,
Let what may be the rest, stand I for ever
expressed.

FOGBOUND

Out of the fog-banks dank and yellow,
As I groped like a soul alone,
The shadow lurched of a drunken fellow,
Blasphemous, ragged, and then was gone.

Swift the shape of a stranger-woman—
Soft-shod maidenhood ? draggled quean ?
Only I know it was something human—
Passed, and was as it had not been.

Claspèd lovers with footfall muffled
Faded by ere I caught their bloom,
Whimpering urchins unmothered shuffled
Up from the desolate murky womb.

Shadows on shadows the lone way haunted
Where, one shadow the more, I stole,
Each with a soul I must take for granted—
But how to be aware of the soul ?

Just the shapes of my fellow-creatures,
Dim and fitful as ghosts at dawn,
Lacking the life-pulse, void of features,
Self-encompassed, adrift, withdrawn.

Sisters ! brothers ! remote procession !

I would love and be loved of you,
Give myself for your whole possession,
Take yourselves as my human due :—

But my steps were as yours made noiseless
That none may know how we go and come:—
But you were all created voiceless
Even as I was fashioned dumb.

Each in his fogbound isolation
Who shall know how the other yearns ?
Till some flash of a new Creation
Through this smoke with a clear flame
burns,

And the world is man's for resistless brother-
hood
Of hands grown warm and of shining brows,
And the world is woman's for mighty mother-
hood,
And life is lived in a common house.

THE DANCE-RING

It was the middle of the spring
I saw three girls dance in a ring.

One was golden as the day,
Around her neck bright tresses lay.

One as hazel-nuts was brown
And to her feet her hair fell down.

One was black as midnight sky,
Her locks were like a crown piled high.

“Sweetings, shall I with ye fling?
It is the middle of the spring.”

I heard the three together sing:
“No man shall break our dancing-ring.”

“Sweetings, that ye cannot tell—
Unkind sweetings, fare ye well.”

Then each a mocking kiss did blow :
“Give us presents ere you go.”

“You that the morning-glow outvie
For all my gift shall take a sigh.

“To you that like the ebbing year
In russet go I give a tear.

“With you that seem of night to weave
Your grace a broken heart I leave.”

Then as from them I turned my feet
I listened how they laughèd sweet :

And “Fare you well,” their laughter ran,
“Broken-hearted gentleman.”

But shoulder-over I did call :
“Dance on, ye scornful sweetings all.

“When I am lost in shadows grey
My gifts ye shall not fling away.

“ While still the spring beneath your feet
Flows green your ring shall stand complete.

“ But when the year begins to turn
My gifts to use ye well shall learn.

“ And one shall sigh and one shall weep
And one shall crave eternal sleep.”

*It was the middle of the spring
I saw three girls dance in a ring.*

*One was a yellow rose new-blown,
One as hazel-nuts was brown,
One she wore a midnight crown.*

(My heart is still a-hungering.)

THE HAPPY SHEPHERD

(Old Love-Lilt)

HITHER when I see to stray
Her pink dress
With her flock round it prest
As she were a rose in snow :
Then my heart within my breast
Like a lamb to and fro
On a hill of green doth play
For happiness.

Meward when I hear her sing
And impress
All sweet airs that do flow
Round her head with airs more sweet :
Little songs my heart doth blow,
Gay and glad, half-complete,
Like the snatches piped by spring
For happiness.

POPLARS AT NIGHT

THERE are no trees so eloquent with wind
As poplars in the moon-mist of the dusk
When like a spirit that has slipt the husk
Among their heavenly crests its breath is
thinned.

Their talk is of such high strange mysteries
They must commune in whispers lest weak
men
Ere they are ripe for knowledge snatch again
The secret God has given to the trees.

SONNET

ABOUT the house go terrible winds in flight,
Out of the hiss and wash of sleepless seas
Half-drowning voices scream wild messages
Into the hungry belly of the night,
And icy-breasted clouds conceal the white
Souls of the stars, and in their bosoms freeze
The citadel of the moon, to whom gaunt trees
Stretch desperate arms that seem to pray for
light.

Even so in me the elemental war
Strives fiercely to obliterate the heights,
And while the faint flesh staggers up the
steps
The naked spirit cries upon its star
That somewhere dwells among the eternal
lights
Beyond this dreadful battle of the deeps.

WILD HYACINTH

DELICATE tangle of beauty that flows from the
bowl of the May-green wood

Leading the lingering heart out of love in a
transport to tremulous tears,

When the West wind runs a luminous wave
through your bells and your sensitive spears

It is earth I behold a light with a heavenly
mood :

Blue fires, blue floods, that shimmer and
swim in a haze in the heart of the wood.

I have seen innocent beauty that made my
spirit to laugh aloud

As joy danced over my soul like light that
travels a fine-rippled sea ;

I have seen awfulest beauty that struck into
dumbness the senses of me

As under its folded wings my spirit lay
bowed ;

But you seal no terrible silence, nor chime
the laughter that echoes aloud.

Wonder and worship and gladness and
tenderest grief are for you who dream
Out of the earth like a lost blue cloud from
the azure spheres of sleep,
Where our bodiless souls are the clustering
stars that whirl and revolve and leap
Round the orb of a nameless light in an
endless stream.
Oh beauty! the colour of vision is yours and
you spring from the seeds of dream.

And heaven I know is expressed in you
because you were loved of a God,
You are nourished by tears of celestial dew
because from his hand flew death,
And your quivering singing loveliness was
born of his quivering breath
That sighed its twilight of sorrows into
the sod:
For the heart of the lover you wreathed of
old was the heart of the Singing God.

Distantly out of the Era of Gold that dims
the glass of to-day
You shine in the shape of the beautiful boy
the Great Ones adored and destroyed :

The wind in a passion of longing arose from
his jealous unsatisfied void

And the sun came down in a passion of
worship to play—

And the soul of the form their passions made
dust is the flower of the world to-day.

Oh measureless beauty conceived of the
sorrow and love of the Lord of Light!

Oh swift brief beauty that died before your
Spring accomplished its prime!

Divinest death for you, the divinely-beloved,
was it less than sublime?—

Oh, rather than die by my enemy's hand
in the night,

I would die by the hand of my lover-God at
play in a splendour of light!

NEVER-KNOWN

O NEVER-KNOWN, it may be Never-to-Know,
You are the murmur of colour in the East
When upon twilit clouds faint ghosts of sunset
Sigh from the Western rose-gardens.

Or the thin rippled tune
Of imperceptible Æolian harps
Swept by a wind out of the misty sphere
Just higher than the summit of the soul—
Music half-heard, song uncontainable.

Or you are violets whispering in the dark.

You are unshapen in the eyes of me,
But in my breast I carry all the breath
And sound and colour of you, Never-Known,
It may be Never-to-Know.

REVOLT

I WILL go riding, riding ! away from the cities
of men !

Into the heart of freedom I will hurl
myself with the free !

I will race on the sun-swept mountains, I will
dive through the rock-hewn glen,

I will cleave between hills billowing green
like the surge of the sea !

*(Never shalt thou go riding ! but live as man says
man must,*

*Or if thou flee to the open thou shalt find thy
spirit to fail,*

*And shrink as thou treadest the levels where the
path has been beaten in dust*

*From the glory that thrills the heaven-high
hills, and the dark of the vale.)*

I will go sailing, sailing ! on waters that leave
no track,

I will follow the path of the sunglow to the
ultimate line of light,

I will plunge where the ocean-giants upcurl
their hollows of black,

I will take the way of the wind-blown spray
in the dread of the night !

*(Never shalt thou go sailing ! but still in the
cities of men*

*Thou shalt spin thy thread of existence in a
pattern not thine own,*

*Or lost on the desolate waters thy heart shall
sicken again,*

*For what man bears his burden who dares be
adrift and alone ?)*

I will go flying, flying ! and scale the steeps
of the air

To play with lightning and gather a cloud
from the molten noon,

I will find the source of the streams of the
sun to lave my feet and my hair,

And stoop to drink at the brimming brink of
the wells of the moon !

*(Never shalt thou go flying ! but stay in thy age-
long bond*

*And stifle the starting pinions that scorn the
way of the feet,*

*Or if thy wild young folly still dreams to compass
what lies beyond*

*When thou clasp a cloud thou shalt find it thy
shroud and thy winding-sheet.)*

SILENCE

WORDS and the body always have been much
pain to me,
Little fetters and drags on immensities
Never to be defined. I am done with these.
Meanings of silence suddenly all grow plain
to me.

Something still may sing like a joyous flute
in me
Out of the life that dares to be voiced aloud,
But speech no more shall swathe like a
burial-shroud
Things unencompassable now eloquent-mute
in me.

MY KNOWLEDGE IS—

My knowledge is, that I am one
That never will behold the sun,
But only on his image look
As a veiled thing that scarcely stirs
Under the silent pool-waters,
Or tossed beneath a restless brook,
Blurred light from blinding glory spun.

That I shall never feel the sweep
Of pinions from my shoulders leap,
Golden and beautiful and strong
To whirl me higher than heaven and all
Its stars, till there is nothing else
But a great glitter of air, and song
Out of the mouths of a wheeling throng
Which has found, and chants like a triumph-
call,
The Miracle of miracles.

Only, a little dead-gold feather
Came drooping once through the misty
weather

Into my hands, all frayed and fine ;
And underneath my breast as it clings
Whenever I feel it feebly stirred
My soul imagines a blaze of wings,
They are of neither angel nor bird,
That at the sun's bright passionate springs
Beat up a splendour constantly
And make wherever they flash and fly
A fiery wind in the over-ether.

Mirage and shadows, these are mine.

THE LAST WEEK IN SEPTEMBER

CHILD'S VISION

I SAW a man, an old, *old* man,
The oldest man I ever did see—
Well! I am very nearly five,
And he was *twice* as old as me.

His eyes were much too old for sight,
His ears were much too old to hear,
His beard it was all tangled and white,
His old hands shook with a sort of fear.

He had a kind of twiggy broom
As though he had a room to mind,
Yet he was not in any room
But all among the blowy wind.

I saw him stoop to gather things—
He had not very far to stoop—
Leaves that had scattered like the wings
Of dead moths flying in a troop,

And little broken sticks beside
Where flowers and berries used to hang—
I wonder where the music died
Of all the birds that in them sang?—

There were some feathers on the ground,
And silky dried-up curls of flow'rs,
And he went stooping round and round
And gathering these things for hours.

I stood and watched and asked him why,
But still he groped about the mold
And never made the least reply
Because his ears were much too old.

He got his broom and swept and swept
A pile as round as any cup—
If I'd been *littler* I'd have wept
To see him sweeping summer up.

But I just stood and watched him there,
And presently he didn't sweep,
When there was nothing anywhere
But summer lying in a heap.

And then the old man found a light
And stooped above the darling mound,
And little dancing flames grew bright . . .
He burned up summer on the ground!

But oh! there was the sweetest smell—
And yet the smell was sorry too—
Much sweeter than I ever could tell,
Of all the things I ever knew.

You could smell *every* kind of tree
And *every* kind of flower there is,
And wet weeds rather like the sea—
And something else as well as this.

It was—I don't know what it was!—
The sweetest, sorriest smell of all.
It crept in smoke-rings over the grass,
And hung, and would not rise or fall.

I think the old man must have known
What smell it was, but would not say.
He shuffled slowly off alone
When summer all was burned away.

One day when I'm a very old man
Perhaps I'll be as wise as he
But I am not quite five, you know,
And he was *twice* as old as me.

MAN'S VISION

It was the longest August
And the weariest September
That ever I remember,
That ever I remember !

All the tedious summer
I toiled among the city
Where nothing fresh and sweet was
Or cool or kind or pretty.

Empty all the streets were,
Every house was lonely,
Nothing human moved there
Saving me, me only.

I saw little white things,
Things with dreadful faces—
No, they were not children
In the empty places.

Haggard, haggard tired things
Crossed my gaze and froze it—
Men and women never
Looked so, and God knows it.

Somewhere, men and women—
All the children, somewhere !
If I asked the heavens
The heavens only dumb were.

Oh, the city pave-stones,
Common, hard and dusty,
Like ignoble grave-stones
Of high hopes gone rusty.

Oh, the arid, breathless
Days devoid of rumour.
Oh, the tedious, deathless,
Hateful, humdrum summer

I walked out with a leaden brain
And a heart half-wild—
And suddenly I saw
A Child.

She had brown hands and brown bare knees
And a glorious golden skin
And eyes overlaid with sun on the sea
And laughter's heart within.

She stamped along the pavement
With hard and happy feet,
I was not done with gazing
Till she out-raced the street.

A Child! One Child! But next day,
Oh, next day there were *two* !
And half-a-score to follow,
And so the legion grew.

Children! Children! Children!
Come straight from where God is,
All the ocean's rhythm
Rocking in their bodies,

All the sea-scent, field-scent
Blowing from their tresses,
In their glad free glances
All that Earth expresses,

Sun-kissed, wind-kissed,
Rain-kissed bands,
Sand-yellow, sturdy legs,
Flower-dabbled hands,

Eyes so shining, such loud voices,
Such hard, happy feet!
Holiday-homing children
Flowing through the street.

Laughter's heart beat in
The last week of September—
The sweetest I remember!
The sweetest I remember!

NEW LIGHT

WHAT light was in me once unguarded was
And any wind could blow it any way,
A flame in tatters, with all moods for laws,
Wildest at midnight, pallidest by day.

A fire too tossed for comfort to the cold,
A gleam too blurred for guidance to the
dark,
Shifting caprice of red and blue and gold
Flickering wanly from the troubled spark ;

And other times a curl of azure smoke,
Like the last puff of incense that is seen
To vanish from the brazier, rose to cloak
The light until I feared it never had been.

But now the crystal-clear white globe of peace
Has closed my spirit in, that it may burn
Steadily to the stars, and henceforth cease
The wandering way of any wind to turn.

DEDICATION

My body having encountered with a soul,
Be it my body's care to cherish whole
The thing it holds in trust, nor once deny
Ears to receive its faintest ghostly cry,
Nor count the large advantage of the hour
Aught in the scale beside the tiniest flower
Breathed of the spirit, nor make dim its eyes
To simple truths with things the world names
wise.

Knowing too well my body's great unworth
Such essence to contain and clothe with earth,
I dare not be unworthier than I must
Lest this my soul be clogged with this my
dust,

And that wherefor I owe most gratitude
Shall in the end the caging clay elude,
More soiled and more despoiled, more dragged
and sad

Than was the thing from God my body had.

Even as flame consumes its husk of coal
The self must be consumèd by the soul
Till liberate from ash it leaps again,
Light seeking light, beyond the vision of men,
All that is counted I being cast adrift
Before the universe in me can lift
Up to its level of divinity :
Since therefore it has once befallen me
Wondrously for a little space to be
The vessel to whose charge the highest is
given,
Pure as I may I'll render it to heaven.

MORNING-VISION

A SEA that shimmers on the brink of light,
Emerging over shadow-boundaries
Silverly on a sleeping silver shore :
Phantom-land still, still silent mystery,
Strewn with wan visions of the fading moon,
Whereon the wave that wakens barely breathes.

Which gathering soon its sweet surrendering
dreams
Offers them to the yet invisible fire
That sends its fore-glow from below the rim,
Till they aspire in little golden vapours
And flicker to the pure and passionless skies,
The colour of pale melted sapphires—so
These driftings of the ocean's moon-trance
mount,
And through the morning, briefly luminous,
Waver, and cease, above a brightening tide.

Then lo ! the swift shrill flight of sudden gulls,
Up-circling whiteness sprayed against the blue,
The sweep of silver breasts and wheeling wings
That flash across the newly-risen sun
And cleaving through the dazzle of the day
Vanish like light dissolved in greater light
Or music drowned in heavenlier music.

UNDERWORLD

HERE lie I in the underworld of trees,
Over my head I have a wave of leaves
Through whose loose shimmering weave of
mysteries
The rays of heaven come in yellow sheaves

Till every leaf is like an amber lamp
Lit at the very source of golden light ;
The netted green has drawn the sun's own
stamp
And myriad tiny suns are in my sight,

While such a radiant harmony, on wings
I hear but see not, seems my world to throng
I could believe the only voice that sings
Is of the leafage sparkling into song.

To-day within my soul I may contain
As much melodic light as one fine leaf
Receives from heaven and gives out again
Into an underworld grown dim with grief.

A SONG

It means so little to you
To sing a note as you pass,
To smile your thanks to the day
For donning its cloudless blue
And then to go your way,
And leave behind in the grass
The print of your little shoe
Or a petal dropt from your rose
And your touch on the vine that grows
Over my cottage door :
It is nothing at all to you.

But to me, it is alms to the poor,
And the light of day to the blind,
And hope to the desolate ;
Though you never have once glanced through
The window where, half-defined,
Half-hidden, I watch and wait—
For it means so little to you.

EARTH AND THE WORLD

SKIES that smile and slumber overspread with
peace,
Quiet shores divinely hushed by kissing seas,
Corn-meads like the Mother's breast swelling
and at ease,
All these hold me, fold me, that was not born
of these.

*I was born of the city's din
Where the World winds out and in
The endless ways man's hands do spin,
And men and women strive and sin
To win—I know not what to win.*

Silver feet of twilight stepping from the East,
Golden wings of morning pointing to the South,
Globèd noon that half a-swoon
Discontains its ecstasy, spills its ineffable feast,
And flings about the shining air invisibly a
wreath,
Scent of pine and flower and brine
Sweet and sweeter than the breath
Of the Belovèd's mouth.

*O but O the city's mood
Restlessly divides my blood
Until the greater half doth crave
All at once to plunge and lave
Underneath the murky wave
And commingle with the flood :
And my brow desires the crown
Of the chimney-smoke-wreaths brown,
And my foot upon the pave
Aches to tramp it up and down
To the discord of the town.*

Sunk in this large retirement where God's
presence flows
And I can add no drop to His seas, no speck
to His skies,
I might yield myself to His shadow for ever
on my eyes
And the vision of Him for ever at peace in my
peaceful soul,
Till one still-breathing dusk when the West
was a golden rose
I might float out on the tides and over the
Brim
To Him :—
And consummate the whole.

*O but to touch the Brim
And never have sought to swim !*

Out here God says all, does all. But there in
the city's hum
Units, whereof I am, have their thing to do
and say.
My individual note I would sing ere I go the
Way.
Finite was I created. The Infinite strikes me
dumb.

O changeless earth! O changeful world! I
will arise!
Here stands the immutable Is. Yonder the
Might Be lies.
What Is I cannot achieve, what Might Be
perhaps I can
If but to my finite powers the Infinite give
the nod:
All's possible here to God, all's possible there
to Man,
And I was born in the city, I am Man, I am
not God.

THE MAID'S IDYLL

I.

NIGHT was warm and still,
Moon a dusky red,
Crickets chirped all up the hill,
And I wished me dead.

“ For what use alive to be
And never live ? ” I said,
Lifting arms to let free
The plaits about my head.

“ Have parents kind enow,
Lack nor roof nor bread,
Day goes I scarce know how
Till day be sped,

“ Each drags by so like to each
Weighted with lead,
Always something needing speech
In my soul unsaid,

“Something in my soul unsung,
Something unfed—
Must be eased while still I'm young
And unwitherèd.”

Crickets chirruped strangely shrill,
Smooth lay my bed,
Moon was hot upon the hill,
And I wished me dead.

II.

OVER garden and garth and meadow
Lo! I see a slipping shadow
Swift as any swallow—
Hist, strange shadow! I'll up and follow.

Neither meadow nor garth nor garden
Has in the sweet close nights its warden :
Oh, yet now I doubt me!
Eyes and whispers do seem about me.

Yet though the stars high-strewn, a litter
Of lights that shake for fear as they glitter,
All be lamps of danger—
I will speak with you, shadow-stranger!

III.

BROWN boy, brown boy,
What do you here
In the orchard all in rags
At midnight very near?
*Brown boy, I never saw
Eyes so clear.*

Brown boy, brown boy,
Bare are your feet—
Say I fetched the watch-dog out
Could they run fleet?
*Brown boy, I never heard
Voice so sweet.*

Brown boy, brown boy,
Where's your alarm?
Say I fetched my mother out
Sure you'd come to harm!
*Brown boy, I never felt
Hands so warm.*

Brown boy, brown boy,
Stealing's very wrong!
If I fetched my father out
Your skin weren't worth a song.
*Brown boy, I never knew
Hearts beat so strong.*

IV.

HE said, three apples I came to steal,
Red and russet and golden peel,
For I've walked the day and never a meal.

Give me, he said, your russet hair
Once for my lips, and it's little I care
Though your apples rot as they ripen there.

Twice to save me, he said, from sin,
Give me your beautiful golden skin
That I may kiss it from forehead to chin.

Nay, and lest hunger still gnaw, he said,
Give me, belovèd, your mouth's dear red:
Though I starve in the dawn I will still be
fed.

WHAT'S the road you travel
 " Sand, chalk, and gravel,
 Green grass and paving-stone,
 Always alone.

" Hard and easy faring,
 Freedom unsparing,
 Where ant has crept or bird flown
 To me is known.

" The sun's way, the rain's way,
 Joy's way and pain's way,
 As many ways as wind has blown
 All are my own."

*

Love, the future why weigh?
 Your way is my way,
 Neither grass nor city stone
 Walk more alone.

Will not bitter faring
 Better by sharing?
 Every pain you've ever known
 I'll make my own,

Beside you free of care foot,
 Hungry and barefoot,
 Glad, gay, great-hearted grown,
 And never alone!

VI.

I KNOW not whether I would laugh or weep,
Whether great sorrow or great gladness fill
me,
Only that life has suddenly grown deep,
And from their dim and dreamful caverns
springing
The golden-eyed imaginings of sleep
Like glorious birds given full freedom sweep
The world about our heads with strange wild
singing
Though it do kill me,
Boy, I will love you, only so you will me . . .

VII.

SUPPOSE no other night is like to this ?
Suppose the coming light
Rives lance-like from the heart even of this
 night
Its mysteries ?

You have put sudden bloom upon my soul,
And you have made to lift
My wingless spirit that did faintly drift
And saw no goal :

Have made me know the dazzle of a star
Crowns all this common earth
Which is a planet shooting light from birth
As yonder are.

These things, this bright new wisdom, could
 be given
Only of you to me :
The virtue's God's alone, who bade it be,
To unmake heaven :

So if you, sole destroyer, being sole giver,
Go ere you try your pow'rs,
All this may still be infinitely ours
To guard for ever.

VIII.

Is morning in the sky ?
Is not the moon still high ?

A little wing of light
Flutters against the night.

You scarce have seen my face,
Your own's a shadowed place,

But your voice I still will know
In a million years or so,

Say Welcome to your breath
In some abyss of death,

Meet in the black eclipse
Of unborn worlds your lips,

Or know by its thrilling pain
This pulse of your heart again.

The moon is very low,
Soon all this grey will glow—

Go now, before the red,
And do not turn your head.

WÊLAND AND THE SWAN-GIRLS

THREE white swans flew in the sky
 (Are you heeding, Wêland-Smith ?)
Three white swans flew in the sky
Till they did a blue lake spy,
Then the three to earth did fly
And they laid their plumage by.
 (Are you watchful, Wêland-Smith ?)

When they stood of plumage bare
 (What's your eye say, Wêland-Smith ?)
When they stood of plumage bare
Three white maidens rose up there.
Earthly maids have not such rare
Rose-flushed limbs, such yellow hair,
Earthly maids are not so fair—
 (What's your heart say, Wêland-Smith ?)

These three maidens did begin
 (What the ending, Wêland-Smith ?)
These three maidens did begin
By the lakeside flax to spin,
And a low-hummed song did win

Thro' their threads all fine and thin,
Stealing, flashing out and in.

(Was it magic, Wêland-Smith?)

When the golden flax was spun

(Threads of fate for Wêland-Smith!)

When the golden flax was spun:

“Sisters,” said the youngest one,

“See the ripples of the sun

Spinning where the waters run!

Let's unravel them till none

Rests to mock what we have done.”

(Tense with hope lay Wêland-Smith.)

From the blue lake's flowery brim

(Still your breathing, Wêland-Smith!)

From the sweet lake's flowering brim

These three maids did dive and swim.

Oh, the flash of pearly limb

Visioned through the waters dim!

(Steal your moment, Wêland-Smith!)

Said the youngest Valkyr-Maid

(Did she hear you, Wêland-Smith?)

Said the youngest Valkyr-Maid:

“Sisters, I am grown afraid!

Three men hide within the shade—

Quick! before we be betrayed!”

(Quicker yet was Wêland-Smith.)

Three men stood upon the bank
 (Egil, Slagfinn, Wêland-Smith)
Three men stood upon the bank,
In their hands the plumage lank.
“What prank’s this?” the youngest drank
Breath to ask that triple rank.
Wêland said: “This is no prank.”
 (Strong and grave was Wêland-Smith.)

Egil lifted up his hand,
 (Not as yet stirred Wêland-Smith)
Egil-Archer raised his hand,
Slagfinn only looked command,
And their maidens came to land,
And the four passed down the strand.
 (Patient still was Wêland-Smith.)

Then the youngest of the brood,
 (Ay, and fairest, Wêland-Smith!)
Then the fairest of the brood
Spoke to him from where she stood:
“Brown young Smith, your eyes are good—
Spare my immortal maidenhood.”
But the swan-girl’s melting mood
All the stronglier swayed and wooed
Every impulse of his blood
Till desire was at full flood—
 (’Ware of drowning, Wêland-Smith!)

“ What reck I of prayer and plea ? ”

(So made answer Wêland-Smith.)

“ What reck I of prayer and plea ?

By this plumage held in fee,

Swan-girl, you belong to me,

Swan-girl, you shall follow me,

Ay, and be true wife to me.”

(Warm of voice was Wêland-Smith.)

“ Render me my white swan-wings ! ”

(Still she strove with Wêland-Smith.)

“ Render me my white swan-wings

And I'll teach you cunning things

From the craft-wise fount that springs

Where iron Thor his hammer swings.

Smith, when your red anvil sings,

Fashioning you magic rings,

Swords for hero-happenings,

Crowns more meet for gods than kings—

You'll not grudge my white swan-wings.”

(Plied she thuswise Wêland-Smith.)

“ What reck I of promises ? ”

(So made answer Wêland-Smith.)

“ What reck I of promises ?

When I need such things as these

You shall teach me, if I please,

Wife of mine, upon your knees.

Mine you are beyond release.”

(Firm of voice was Wêland-Smith.)

“ Back I take all promise and pray'r ! ”

(Proudly faced she Wêland-Smith.)

“ Back I take all promise and pray'r !

Hear, you worm of earth ! that dare

With base cunning seek to snare

Me, a Valkyr of the air :

Such as I are slow to spare

Who our god-given rights impair—

Render me my plumage fair

Lest I blast you standing there ! ”

(Fiercely faced she Wêland-Smith.)

“ What reck I of passion and pride ? ”

(So made answer Wêland-Smith.)

“ What reck I of passion and pride ?

Witless woman-words fly wide.

Woman, you are Wêland's bride,

'Shall come meekly to his side,

And he will not be denied.”

(Stern of voice was Wêland-Smith.)

Thro' the lake the swan-girl white,

(Ah, be gentle, Wêland-Smith !)

Thro' the lake the swan-girl white

Slipped, and came with footfall light

Till beside him in full sight

Stood she beautiful and bright,

Saying with neither fear nor spite :

“ I am here for your delight.”

(So she greeted Wêland-Smith.)

“ Nay, but hear me ere we go,
 (As I love you, Wêland-Smith !)
Nay, but hear me ere we go
Hence to lay my godhead low
Since my lord will have it so.
Weigh the balance, lord, and know
That if we twain wedded show
All your streams of fate do flow
Henceforth from the tides of woe—
 (Woe, O woe to Wêland-Smith !)

“ Full seven years you shall me hold,
 (Seven years' bliss for Wêland-Smith !)
Full seven years you shall me hold.
When the seventh year is told,
Like a parchment read and scrolled—
Ah, but, lord, inscribed in gold !—
That we may no more unfold
 (Only think on, Wêland-Smith),

“ I shall know a strange unrest,
 (Dread the eighth year, Wêland-Smith !)
I shall know a strange unrest,
Be of old desires possessed,
Passionate to ride the crest
Of the storm, North, South, East, West—
Ay, and by your strong arm pressed
Win no sleep more on your breast.
 (Sound tho' *you* sleep, Wêland-Smith.)

“ In the ninth year I shall hear,
 (Will you hear, too, Wêland-Smith ?)
In the ninth year I shall hear
Iron Thor’s thunder very near
Like a summons in my ear—
I shall leap for helm and spear
And shall pass in the ninth year !
Wêland ! woe for Wêland ! drear
Stands his future all too clear,
Yet I may not read it here.
Cast me from you, lord, with fear !
 (I have warned you, Wêland-Smith.)”

“ What reck I of hurt and harm ? ”
 (Sweet of voice was Wêland-Smith.)

“ What reck I of hurt and harm ?
I hold you by a seven-years’ charm,
My bride and my belovèd, warm
Within the hollow of my arm ! ”

*(Go seven years happy, Wêland-Smith,
But Fate shall not be striven with.)*

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THIS series of books is being produced in connection with *Orpheus*, a quarterly magazine of mystical art. The magazine contains pictures, poems, articles and stories. At present (April, 1911) fourteen numbers have appeared, but the first three issues are out of print. Subscription (post free), 4/8 per annum.

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LONDON :
WOMEN'S PRINTING SOCIETY, LTD., BRICK ST.
PICCADILLY.

