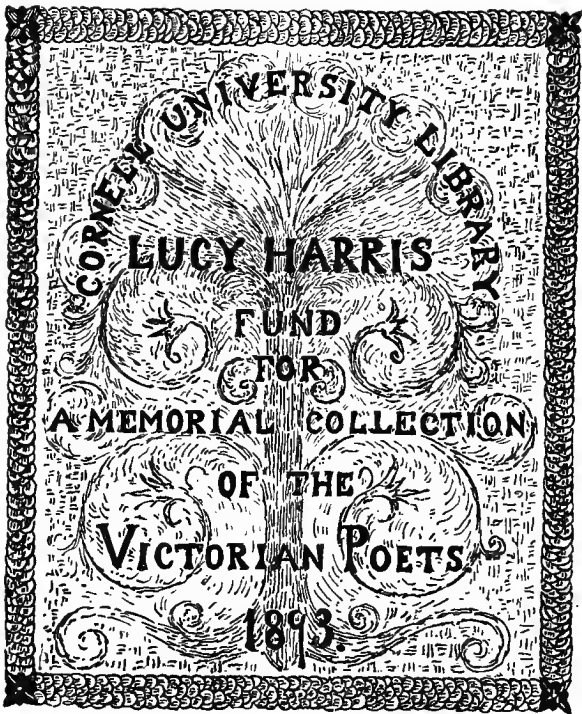


SELECTED POEMS



LAURENCE BINYON



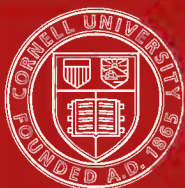
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SELECTED POEMS



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TORONTO

SELECTED
POEMS OF
LAURENCE
BINYON



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TO MY WIFE

**Thunder on the Downs—For the Fallen—To
Women—Fetching the Wounded—Mid-Atlantic
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SELECTED POEMS

SELECTED POEMS

SONG

For Mercy, Courage, Kindness, Mirth,
There is no measure upon earth;
Nay, they wither, root and stem,
If an end be set to them.

Overbrim and overflow
If your own heart you would know.
For the spirit, born to bless,
Lives but in its own excess.

THE LITTLE DANCERS

Lonely, save for a few faint stars, the sky
Dreams; and lonely, below, the little street
Into its gloom retires, secluded and shy.
Scarcely the dumb roar enters this soft retreat;
And all is dark, save where come flooding rays
From a tavern-window; there, to the brisk measure
Of an organ that down in an alley merrily plays

Two children, all alone and no one by,
Holding their tattered frocks, thro' an airy maze
Of motion lightly threaded with nimble feet
Dance sedately; face to face they gaze,
Their eyes shining, grave with a perfect pleasure.

FLAME AND SNOW

The bare branches rose against the grey sky.
Under them, freshly fallen, snow shone to the eye.

Up the hill-slope, over the brow it shone,
Spreading an immaterial beauty to tread upon.

In the elbow of black boughs it clung, nested white,
And smooth below it slept in the solitude of its light.

It was deep to the knee in the hollow; there in a
stump of wood

I struck my bill-hook, warm to the fingers' blood, and
stood,

Pausing, and breathed and listened: all the air
around

Was filled with busy strokes and ringing of clean
sound,

And now and again a crack and a slow rending, to
tell

When a tree heavily tottered and swift with a crash
fell.

I smelt the woody smell of smoke from the fire, now
Beginning to spurt from frayed bracken and torn
bough

In the lee of a drift, fed from our long morning toil
And sending smart to the eyes the smoke in a blue
coil.

I lopped the twigs from a fresh-cut pole and tossed it
aside

To the stakes heaped beyond me, and made a plung-
ing stride,

And gathered twines of bramble and dead hazel sticks
And a faggot of twisted thorn with snow lumped in
the pricks,

And piled the smoulder high. Soon a blaze tore
Up through hissing boughs and shrivelling leaves, from
a core

Of quivering crimson; soon the heat burst and
revelled,

And apparitions of little airy flames dishevelled

Gleamed and vanished, a lost flight as of elfin wings,
Trembling aloft to the wild music that Fire sings

Dancing alive from nothing, lovely and mad. And
still
The snow, pale as a dream, slept on the old hill,
Softly fallen and strange. Which made me more to
glow,
Beauty of young flames, or wonder of young snow?

THE DRYAD

What has the ilex heard,
What has the laurel seen,
That the pale edges of their leaves are stirred?
What spirit stole between?
O trees upon your circle of smooth green,
You stir as youths when beauty paces by,
Moving heart and eye
To unuttered praise.
Was it the wind that parted your light boughs,
Some odour to recapture as he strays,
Or some fair virgin shape of human brows
Yet lost to human gaze?
O for that morning of the simple world,
When hollow oak and fount and flowering reed
Were storied each with glimpses of a face
By dropping hair dew-pearled!
Strange eyes that had no heed

Of men, and bodies shy with the firm grace
 Of young fawns flying, yet of human kin,
 Whose hand might lead us, could we only spare
 Doubt and suspicious pride, a world to win,
 Where all that lives would speak with us, now
 dumb

For fear of us. O might I yet win there!
 Wave, boughs, aside! to your fresh glooms I
 come.

But all is lonely here!
 Yet lonelier is the glade
 Than the wood's entrance, and more dark appear
 The hollows of still shade.
 Ah, yet the nymph's white feet have surely stayed
 Beside the spring; how solitary fair
 Shines and trembles there
 White narcissus bloom!
 By lichen'd gray stones, where the glancing
 stream
 Swerves over into green wet mossy gloom,
 Their snowy frail flames on the ripple gleam
 And all the place illumine.

Surely her feet a moment rested here!
 Staying her hand upon a pliant branch,
 She paused, she listened, and then glided on
 Half-turned in lovely fear;

And her young shoulder shone
 Like moonbeams that wet sands, foam-bordered,
 blanch,
 A sight to stay the beating of the breast!
 Alas, but mortal eyes may never know
 That beauty. Hark, what bird above his nest
 So rapturously sings? Ah, thou wilt tell,
 Thou perfect flower, whither her footsteps go,
 And all her thoughts, pure flower, for thou
 know'st well.

White sweetness, richest odours round thee cling.
 Purely thou breathest of voluptuous Spring!
 Thou art so white, because thou dost enclose
 All the advancing splendours of the year;
 And thou hast burned beyond the reddest rose,
 To shine so keenly clear.
 Shadowed within thy radiance I divine
 Frail coral tinges of the anemone,
 Dim blue that clouds upon the columbine,
 And wallflower's glow as of old, fragrant wine,
 And the first tulip's sanguine clarity,
 And pansy's midnight-purple of sole star!
 All these that wander far
 From thee, and wilder glories would assume,
 Ev'n the proud peony of drooping plume,
 Robed like a queen in Tyre,

All to thy lost intensity aspire;
 Toward thee they yearn out of encroaching gloom;
 They are all faltering beams of thy most perfect
 fire!

And she, that only haunts remote green ways,
 Is it an empty freedom she doth praise?
 Doth she, distrustfully averse, despise
 The common sweet of passion, apt to fault?
 And turns she from the hunger in love's eyes
 Pale famine to exalt?
 Oh no, her bosom's maiden hope is still
 A morning dewdrop, imaging complete
 All life, full-stored with every generous thrill;
 No hope less perfect could her body fill,
 Nor she be false to her own heart's rich beat.
 But she is pure because she has not soiled
 Hope with endeavour foiled;
 She not condemns glad love, but with the best
 Enshrines it, lovelier because unpossessed.
 Where is the joy we meant
 In our first love, the joy so swiftly spent?
 It glows for ever in her sacred breast,
 Untamed to languor's ebb, nor by hot passion rent.
 O pure abstaining Priestess of delight,
 That treasurest apart love's sanctity,
 Art thou but vision of an antique dream,

Mated with a song's flight,
With beckoning western gleam
Or first rose fading from an early sky?
Yet we, that are of earth, must seek on earth
Our bodied bliss. Nay, thou hast still thine hour;
And in a girl's life-trusting April mirth,
Or noble boy's clear and victorious eyes,
Thou shinest with the charm and with the power
Of all that wisdom loses to be wise.

TO THE SUMMER NIGHT

A sultry perfume of voluptuous June
Enchants the air still breathing of warm day;
But now the impassioned Night draws over, soon
To fold me, in this high hollow, quite away
From oaken groves beneath and glimmering bay
And valley rock-bestrewn;
From all but shadowy leaves and scented ground
And this intense blue slowly deepening round,
From all but thoughts of beauty and delight
And thee that stealest as with hair unbound
O'er the hushed earth, and lips sighing, enamoured
Night.

Not the fair vestal of the Spring's cold sky,
But flushed from the ancestral East, thy home,
Drowsing the land, thou stirrest joy to a sigh,

Longing to passion and wild thoughts, that roam
 As through those hungering Asian forests come
 Panthers of ardent eye;
 While over worlds wandering extravagant,
 Like some divine and naked Corybant,
 Thou movest; dark woods tremble and suspire;
 And mortal spirits for life's full fountain pant,
 As in content awakes the genius of desire.

Richer than jewelled Indian realm is thine,
 O stepper from the mountain-tops! for whom
 On viewless branches of the heavenly vine
 The white stars cluster faint or thickly bloom
 Through the sapphire abyss of glowing gloom.
 Press out a magic wine
 For me—I thirst—from that intensest height,
 Where even our keen thought, outsoaring sight,
 Faints and despairs, ay, from some virgin star
 Brim me a cup of that untreasured light
 Lone in a world unreached, abounding, and afar!

Most far is now most dear. Blot out the near!
 Lost is the earth beneath me, lost the day's
 Removed ambition, all that fretful sphere
 Drowned in the dark, and quenched its trivial praise.
 I would behold beyond a mortal's gaze,
 Behold ev'n now, ev'n here,

The beauty strange, the ecstasy extreme,
 Of what should this divine gloom best beseem,
 The bosom of a Goddess, or her hair,
 Invisible and fragrant,—gliding dream,
 Yet near as my heart beating, of such charm aware.

Why have we toiled so patiently to bend
 This bow of arduous life? Unto what mark?
 For what have set to our desire no end,
 Steered to the utmost stormy sea our bark,
 Piercing with eagle thought the frozen dark,
 Been bold and gay to spend
 Our warm blood, hazarded wild odds, and let
 The bright world perish? What far prize to get?
 What thing is this no speech could ever frame,
 Nor hundred creeds ever imprison yet?
 We breathe for it, and die, yet never named its name.

Star-trembling Night, Mother of songs unsung
 And leaves unborn beneath the barren rind,
 Who findest for forbidden hope a tongue,
 Who treasurest most the treasure undivined
 And flowers that banquet but the careless wind;
 To whom all joy is young;
 Prophetess of the fire that one day leaping
 Shall burn the world's corruption, of the sleeping
 Swords that shall strike down tyrants from their
 throne,

Mother of faith, our frail thought onward sweeping,
Breathe nearer, whisper close, spells of the dear unknown.

O of thy fated children number me!
Now while the alien day deep-sunken lies
And only the awakened soul may see,
Far from the lips that flatter or despise,
Foster my fond hope with thy certainties,
From time's subjection free,
That I may woo from some bare branch a flower,
Yea, from this world a beauty and a power
She gives not of herself; sustain me still
Through the harsh day, through every taming hour,
To find thy promise truth, thy secret grace fulfil.

THE STATUES

Tarry a moment, happy feet,
That to the sound of laughter glide!
O glad ones of the evening street,
Behold what forms are at your side!

You conquerors of the toilsome day
Pass by with laughter, labour done;
But these within their durance stay;
Their travail sleeps not with the sun.

They, like dim statues without end,
Their patient attitudes maintain;
Your triumphing bright course attend,
But from your eager ways abstain.

Now, if you chafe in secret thought,
A moment turn from light distress
And see how Fate on these hath wrought,
Who yet so deeply acquiesce.

Behold them, stricken, silent, weak,
The maimed, the mute, the halt, the blind,
Condemned amid defeat to seek
The thing which they shall never find.

They haunt the shadows of your ways
In masks of perishable mould:
Their souls a changing flesh arrays,
But they are changeless from of old.

Their lips repeat an empty call,
But silence wraps their thoughts around.
On them, like snow, the ages fall:
Time muffles all this transient sound.

When Shalmaneser pitched his tent
By Tigris, and his flag unfurled,
And forth his summons proudly sent
Into the new unconquered world;

Or when with spears Cambyses rode
 Through Memphis and her bending slaves,
 Or first the Tyrian gazed abroad
 Upon the bright vast outer waves;

When sages, star-instructed men,
 To the young glory of Babylon
 Foretold no ending; even then
 Innumerable years had flown

Since first the chisel in her hand
 Necessity, the sculptor, took,
 And in her spacious meaning planned
 These forms, and that eternal look;

These foreheads, moulded from afar,
 These soft, unfathomable eyes,
 Gazing from darkness like a star;
 These lips, whose grief is to be wise.

As from the mountain marble rude
 The growing statue rises fair,
 She from immortal patience hewed
 The limbs of ever-young despair.

There is no bliss so new and dear,
 It hath not them far-off allured.
 All things that we have yet to fear
 They have already long endured.

Nor is there any sorrow more
Than hath ere now befallen these
Whose gaze is as an opening door
On wild interminable seas.

O youth, run fast upon thy feet,
With full joy haste thee to be filled,
And out of moments brief and sweet
Thou shalt a power for ages build.

Does thy heart falter? Here, then, seek
What strength is in thy kind! With pain
Immortal bowed, these mortals weak
Gentle and unsubdued remain.

HAREBELL AND PANSY

O'er the round throat her little head
Its gay delight upbuoys:

A harebell in the breeze of June
Hath such melodious poise;
And chiming with her heart, my heart
Is only hers and joy's.

But my heart takes a deeper thrill,
Her cheek a rarer bloom,
When the sad mood comes rich as glow
Of pansies dipped in gloom.

By some far shore she wanders—where?
And her eyes fill—for whom?

GO NOW, LOVE!

Go now, Love,
Since staying's joy no longer!
Leave me to prove
If Time can make me stronger!
Nay, look not over thy shoulder so,
Pleading so sweetly to remain,
Where thou workest so much pain:
Look not behind thee, haste and go!

Ah, how should I
Deal to thee such hard measure
As force thee fly
Who broughtest heavenly pleasure?
Take pity, Love, and be kind
To him that could not refuse thee!
Is it not grief enough to lose thee?
Haste, O haste, nor look behind.

THE RAIN WAS ENDING

The rain was ending, and light
Lifting the leaden skies.
It shone upon ceiling and floor
And dazzled a child's eyes.

Pale after fever, a captive
Apart from his schoolfellows,

SELECTED POEMS

He stood at the high room's window
With face to the pane pressed close,

And beheld an immense glory
Flooding with fire the drops
Spilled on miraculous leaves
Of the fresh green lime-tree tops.

Washed gravel glittered red
To a wall, and beyond it nine
Tall limes in the old inn-yard
Rose over the tall inn-sign.

And voices arose from beneath
Of boys from school set free,
Racing and chasing each other
With laughter and games and glee.

To the boy at the high room-window,
Gazing alone and apart,
There came a wish without reason,
A thought that shone through his heart.

I'll choose this moment and keep it,
He said to himself, for a vow,
To remember for ever and ever
As if it were always now.

THE BOWL OF WATER

She is eight years old.
 When she laughs, her eyes laugh;
 Light dances in her eyes;
 She tosses back her long hair
 And with a song replies;
 Then on light feet she darts away
 Tripping, mischievously gay.
 But now into this room of shadow
 Coming slowly with the sun's long ray
 And all the morning on her simple hair,
 O how serious-eyed
 She steps pre-occupied,
 Holding a bowl of water
 Poised in her fingers' care,—
 Water quivering with cool gleams
 And wavering and a-roll
 Within the clear glass bowl
 That brimmed and luminous seems
 A wonder and a shining secrecy,
 As if it were the world's most precious thing,
 So open-clear that all have passed it by.
 Cut stalks of iris lie
 On the bare table, flowers and swelling buds
 Clasped in close curves up to the purple tips

That shall to-morrow burst
And shoot a splendid wing
When they have drawn into their veins the
 spring
Which those young hands, with the drops
 bright on them,
So all intently bring;
Costless felicity,
Living and unbought!
But over me, O flowers
That neither ask nor sigh,
Comes the thought,
How all this world is wanting and athirst!

THE SHYNESS OF BEAUTY

I think of a flower that no eye ever has seen,
 That springs in a solitary air.
Is it no one's joy? It is beautiful as a queen
 Without a kingdom's care.

We have built houses for Beauty, and costly shrines,
 And a throne in all men's view:
But she was far on a hill where the morning shines
 And her steps were lost in the dew.

A PRAYER TO TIME

Move onward, Time, and bring us sooner free
From this self-clouding turmoil where we ply
On others' errands driven continually:
O lead us to our own souls, ere we die!

We toil for that we love not; thou concealest
Our true loves from us; all we thirst to attain
Thou darkly holdest, and alone revealest
A mirror that our sighs for ever stain.

Art thou so jealous of our full delight?
Thou takest our strength, toil, fervour, and sweet
youth;

And when thou hast taken these, thou givest sight
At last to see and to endure the truth.

Thou art too swift to our weak steps; but oh,
To our desire thou movest, Time, how slow!

A DAFFODIL

Pure-throated Flower,
Smelling of Spring,
Shaped beyond art's
Imagining;

Fathomless colour
Breathed as an ether
Of flame and of stillness
Melted together;

Soul of the sun's beam
Changed to fairy
Flesh, so delicate,
Poised and airy!

I think of my own kind,
Hardly winning
A thousand battles
For joy's beginning;

Victory bloody
And with evil shared;
Splendour soiled
And greatness snared;

Truth conceded
Or won by halves;
Pitiful sores
And sorrier salves;

Blind authority
Treading like oxen's heels
All that sees clearest
All that most feels.

But you are absolute
(Follow who can!)
As a commandment
Of God to man.

Straight you spring
And whole you spend,
And fall upon fruitful earth,
Clean to the end.

O to be pure
As a single sense,
Keen as scorn,
As love intense,

To live in the light,
And to die in a deed
That is faith's Amen
And has sown its seed!

NOTHING IS ENOUGH

Nothing is enough!
No, though our all be spent—
Heart's extremest love,
Spirit's whole intent,
All that nerve can feel,
All that brain invent,—
Still beyond appeal
Will Divine Desire
Yet more excellent
Precious cost require
Of this mortal stuff,—
Never be content
Till ourselves be fire.
Nothing is enough!

TRISTRAM'S END

I

Tristram lies sick to death;
Dulled is his kingly eye,
Listless his famed right arm: earth-weary breath
Has force alone to sigh
The one name that re-kindles life's low flame,
Isoult!—And thou, fair moon of Tristram's eve,
Who with that many-remembered name didst take
A glory for the sake

Of her who shone the sole light of his days and deeds,
 Thou canst no more relieve
 This heart that inly bleeds
 With all thy love, with all thy tender lore,
 No, nor thy white hands soothe him any more.

Still, the day long, she hears
 Kind words that are more sharp to her than spears.
 Ah, loved he more, he had not been so kind!
 And still with pricking tears
 She watches him, and still must seem resigned;
 Though well she knows what face his eyes require,
 And jealous pangs, like coiled snakes in her mind,
 Cling tighter, as that voice more earnestly
 Asks heavy with desire
 From out that passionate past which is not hers,
 "Sweet wife, is there no sail upon the sea?"

Tenderest hearts by pain grow oft the bitterest,
 And haste to wound the thing they love the best.
 At evening, at sun-set, to Tristram's bed
 News on her lips she brings!
 She comes with eyes bright in divining dread,
 Hardening her anguished heart she bends above his
 head.

"O Tristram!"—How her low voice strangely
 rings!—

"There comes a ship, ah, rise not, turn not pale.

I know not what this means, it is a sail
 Black, black as night!" She shot her word, and fled.

But Tristram cried
 With a great cry, and rose upon his side.
 "It cannot be, it cannot, shall not be!
 I will not die until mine own eyes see."
 Despair, more strong than hope, lifts his weak limbs;
 He stands and draws deep effort from his breath,
 He trembles, his gaze swims,
 He gropes his steps in pain,
 Nigh fainting, till he gain
 Salt air and brightness from the outer door
 That opens on the cliff-built bastion floor
 And the wide ocean gleaming far beneath.
 He gazes, his lips part,
 And all the blood pours back upon his heart.

Close thine eyes, Tristram, lest joy blind thee quite!
 So swift a splendour burns away thy doubt.
 Nay, Tristram, gaze, gaze, lest bright Truth go out
 Ere she hath briefly shone.
 White, dazzling white,
 A sail swells onward, filling all his sight
 With snowy light!
 As on a gull's sure wing the ship comes on;
 She towers upon the wave, she speeds for home.

Tristram on either doorpost must sustain

His arms for strength to gaze his fill again.
 She shivers off the wind; the shining foam
 Bursts from her pitching prow,
 The sail drops as she nears,
 Poised on the joyous swell; and Tristram sees
 The mariners upon the deck; he hears
 Their eager cries; the breeze
 Blows a blue cloak; and now
 Like magic brought to his divining ears,
 A voice, that empties all the earth and sky,
 Comes clear across the water, "It is I!"

Isoult is come! Victorious saints above,
 Who suffered anguish ere to bliss you died,
 Have pity on him whom Love so sore hath tried,
 Who sinned yet greatly suffered for his love.
 That dear renouncèd love when now he sees,
 Heavy with joy, he sinks upon his knees.
 O had she wings to lift her to his side!
 But she is far below
 Where the spray breaks upon the rusted rail
 And rock-hewn steps, and there
 Stands gazing up, and lo!
 Tristram, how faint and pale!
 A pity overcomes her like despair.
 How shall her strength avail
 To conquer that steep stair,
 Dark, terrible, and ignorant as Time,

Up which her feet must climb
 To Tristram? His outstretching arms are fain
 To help her, yet are helpless; and his pain
 Is hers, and her pain Tristram's; with long sighs
 She mounts, then halts again,
 Till she have drawn strength from his love-dimmed
 eyes:

But when that wasted face anew she sees,
 Despair anew subdues her knees:

She fails, yet still she mounts by sad degrees,
 With all her soul into her gaze upcast,
 Until at last, at last . . .

What tears are like the wondering tears
 Of that entranced embrace,
 When out of desolate and divided years
 Face meets beloved face?

What cry most exquisite of grief or bliss
 The too full heart shall tell,
 When the new-recovered kiss
 Is the kiss of last farewell?

II

Isoult

O Tristram, is this true?
 Is it thou I see
 With my own eyes, clasp in my arms? I knew,
 I knew that this must be.

Thou couldst not suffer so,
 And I not feel the smart,
 Far, far away. But oh,
 How pale, my love, thou art!

Tristram

'Tis I, Isoult, 'tis I
 That thee enfold.
 I have seen thee, my own life, and yet I die.
 O for my strength of old!
 O that thy love could heal
 This wound that conquers me!
 But the night is come, I feel,
 And the last sun set for me.

Isoult

Tristram, 'twas I that healed thy hurt,
 That old, fierce wound of Morolt's poisoned sword.
 Stricken to death, pale, pale as now thou wert:
 Yet was thy strength restored.
 Have I forgot my skill?
 This wound shall yet be healed.
 Love shall be master still,
 And Death again shall yield!

Tristram

Isoult, if Time could bring me back
 That eve, that first eve, and that Irish shore,

Then should I fear not, no nor nothing lack,
 And life were mine once more.
 But now too late thou art come;
 Too long we have dwelt apart;
 I have pined in an alien home:
 This new joy bursts my heart.

Isolt

Hark, Tristram, to the breaking sea!
 So sounded the dim waves, at such an hour
 On such an eve, when thy voice came to me
 First in my father's tower.
 I heard thy sad harp from the shore beneath,
 It stirred my soul from sleep.
 Then it was bliss to breathe;
 But now, but now, I weep.

Tristram

Shipwrecked, without hope, without friend, alone
 On a strange shore, stricken with pang on pang,
 I stood sad-hearted by that tower unknown,
 Yet soon for joy I sang.
 For could I see thee and on death believe?
 Ah, glad would I die to attain
 The beat of my heart, that eve,
 And the song in my mouth again!

Isolt

Young was I then and fair,
 Thou too wast fair and young;

How comely the brown hair
 Down on thy shoulder hung!
 O Tristram, all grows dark as then it grew,
 But still I see thee on that surge-beat shore;
 Thou camest, and all was new
 And changed for evermore.

Tristram

Isolt, dost thou regret?
 Behold my wasted cheek,
 With salt tears it is wet,
 My arms how faint, how weak!
 And thou, since that far day, what hast thou seen
 Save strife, and tears, and failure, and dismay?
 Had that hour never been,
 Peace had been thine, this day.

Isolt

Look, Tristram, in my eyes!
 My own love, I could feed
 Life well with miseries
 So thou wert mine indeed.
 Proud were the tears I wept;
 That day, that hour I bless,
 Nor would for peace accept
 One single pain the less.

Tristram

Isolt, my heart is rent.
 What pangs our bliss hath bought!

Only joy we meant,
 Yet woe and wrong we have wrought.
 I vowed a vow in the dark,
 And thee, who wert mine, I gave
 For a word's sake, to King Mark!
 Words, words have digged our grave.

Isolt

Tristram, despite thy love,
 King Mark had yet thine oath.
 Ah, surely thy heart strove
 How to be true to both.
 Blame not thyself! for woe
 'Twixt us was doomed to be.
 One only thing I know;
 Thou hast been true to me.

Tristram

Accurst be still that day,
 When lightly I vowed the king
 Whatever he might pray
 Home to his hands I'd bring!
 Thee, thee he asked! And I
 Who never feared man's sword,
 Yielded my life to a lie,
 To save the truth of a word.

Isoult

Think not of that day, think
 Of the day when our lips desired,
 Unknowing, that cup to drink!
 The cup with a charm was fired
 From thee to beguile my love:
 But now in my soul it shall burn
 For ever, nor turn, nor remove,
 Till the sun in his course shall turn.

Tristram

Or ever that draught we drank,
 Thy heart, Isoult, was mine,
 My heart was thine. I thank
 God's grace, no wizard wine,
 No stealth of a drop distilled
 By a spell in the night, no art,
 No charm, could have ever filled
 With aught but thee my heart.

Isoult

When last we said farewell,
 Remember how we dreamed
 Wild love to have learned to quell;
 Our hearts grown wise we deemed.

Tender, parted friends
 We vowed to be; but the will
 Of Love meant other ends.
 Words fool us, Tristram, still.

Tristram

Not now, Isoult, not now!
 I am thine while I have breath.
 Words part us not, nor vow—
 No, nor King Mark, but death.
 I hold thee to my breast.
 Our sins, our woes are past;
 Thy lips were the first I prest,
 Thou art mine, thou art mine at the last!

Isoult

O Tristram, all grows old,
 Enfold me closer yet!
 The night grows vast and cold,
 And the dew on thy hair falls wet.
 And never shall Time rebuild
 The places of our delight;
 Those towers and gardens are filled
 With emptiness now, and night!

Tristram

Isoult, let it all be a dream,
 The days and the deeds, let them be

As the bough that I cast on the stream
 And that lived but to bring thee to me;
 As the leaves that I broke from the bough
 To float by thy window, and say
 That I waited thy coming—O now
 Thou art come, let the world be as they!

Isolt

How dark is the strong waves' sound!
 Tristram, they fill me with fear!
 We two are but spent waves, drowned
 In the coming of year upon year.
 Long dead are our friends and our foes,
 Old Rual, Brangian, all
 That helped us, or wrought us woes;
 And we, the last, we fall.

Tristram

God and his great saints guard
 True friends that loved us well,
 And all false foes be barred
 In the fiery gates of hell.
 But broken be all those towers,
 And sunken be all those ships!
 Shut out those old, dead hours;
 Life, life, is on thy lips!

Isolt

Tristram, my soul is afraid!

Tristram

Isolt, Isolt, thy kiss!
To sorrow though I was made,
I die in bliss, in bliss.

Isolt

Tristram, my heart must break.
O leave me not in the grave
Of the dark world! Me too take!
Save me, O Tristram, save!

III

Calm, calm the moving waters all the night
On to that shore roll slow,
Fade into foam against the cliff's dim height,
And fall in a soft thunder, and upsurge
For ever out of unexhausted might,
Lifting their voice below
Tuned to no human dirge;
Nor from their majesty of music bend
To wail for beauty's end
Or towering spirit's most fiery overthrow;

Nor tarrieth the dawn, though she unveil
 To weeping eyes their woe,
 The dawn that doth not know
 What the dark night hath wrought,
 And over the far wave comes pacing pale,
 Of all that she reveals regarding nought.—
 But ere the dawn there comes a faltering tread;
 Isoult, the young wife, stealing from her bed,
 Sleepless with dread,
 Creeps by still wall and blinded corridor,
 Till from afar the salt scent of the air
 Blows on her brow; and now
 In that pale space beyond the open door
 What mute, clasped shadow dulls her to despair
 By keen degrees aware
 That with the dawn her widowhood is there?

Is it wild envy or remorseful fear
 Transfixes her young heart, unused to woe,
 Crying to meet wrath, hatred, any foe,
 Not silence drear!
 Not to be vanquished so
 By silence on the lips that were so dear!
 Ah, sharpest stab! it is another face
 That leans to Tristram's piteous embrace,
 Another face she knows not, yet knows well,
 Whose hands are clasped about his helpless head,

Propping it where it fell
 In a vain tenderness,
 But dead,—her great dream-hated rival dead,
 Invulnerably dead,
 Dead as her love, and cold,
 And on her heart a grief heavy as stone is rolled.
 She bows down, stricken in accusing pain,
 And love, long-baffled, surges back again
 Over her heart; she wails a shuddering cry,
 While the tears blindly rain,
 "I, I have killed him, I that loved him, I
 That for his dear sake had been glad to die.
 I loved him not enough, I could not keep
 His heart, and yet I loved him, O how deep!
 I cannot touch him. Will none set him free
 From those, those other arms and give him me?
 Alas, I may not vex him from that sleep.
 He is thine in the end, thou proud one, he is thine,
 Not mine, not mine!
 I loved him not enough, I could not hold
 My tongue from stabbing, and forsook him there.
 I had not any care
 To keep him from the darkness and the cold.
 O all my wretched servants, where were ye?
 Hath none in my house tended him but she?
 Where are ye now? Can ye not hear my call?
 Come hither, laggards all!

Nay, hush not so affrighted, nor so stare
 Upon your lord; 'tis he!
 Put out your torches, for the dawn grows clear.
 And set me out within the hall a bier,
 And wedding robes, the costliest that are
 In all my house, prepare,
 And lay upon the silks these princely dead,
 And bid the sailors take that funeral bed
 And set it in the ship, and put to sea,
 And north to Cornwall steer.
 Farewell, my lord, thy home is far from here.
 Farewell, my great love, dead and doubly dear!
 Carry him hence, proud queen, for he is thine,
 Not mine, not mine, not mine!"

Within Tintagel walls King Mark awaits his queen.
 The south wind blows, surely she comes to-day!
 No light hath his eye seen
 Since she is gone, no pleasure; he grows gray;
 His knights apart make merry and wassail,
 With dice and chessboard, hound at knee, they play;
 But he sits solitary all the day,
 Thinking of what hath been.
 And now through all the castle rings a wail;
 The king arises; all his knights are dumb;
 The queen, the queen is come.
 Not as she came of old,

Sweeping with gesture proud
 To meet her wronged lord, royally arrayed,
 And music ushered her, and tongues were stayed,
 And all hearts beat, her beauty to behold;
 But mute she comes and cold,
 Borne on a bier, apparelled in a shroud,
 Daisies about her sprinkled; and now bowed
 Is her lord's head; and hushing upon all
 Thoughts of sorrow fall,
 As the snow softly, without any word;
 And every breast is stirred
 With wonder in its weeping;
 For by her sleeping side,
 In that long sleep no morning shall divide,
 Is Tristram sleeping;
 Tristram who wept farewell, and fled, and swore
 That he would clasp his dear love never more,
 And sailed far over sea
 Far from his bliss and shame,
 And dreamed to die at peace in Brittany
 And to uncloud at last the glory of his name.
 Yet lo, with fingers clasping both are come,
 Come again home
 In all men's sight, as when of old they came,
 And Tristram led Isolt, another's bride,
 True to his vow, but to his heart untrue,
 And silver trumpets blew

To greet them stepping o'er the flower-strewn floor,
 And King Mark smiled upon them, and men cried
 On Tristram's name anew,
 Tristram, the king's strong champion and great pride.

Silently gazing long
 On them that wrought him wrong,
 Still stands the stricken king, and to his eyes
 Such tears as old men weep, yet shed not, rise:
 Lifting his head at last, as from a trance, he sighs.
 "Beautiful ever, O Isolt, wast thou,
 And beautiful art thou now,
 Though never again shall I, reproaching thee,
 Make thy proud head more beautiful to me;
 But this is the last reproach, and this the last
 Forgiveness that thou hast.
 Lost is the lost, Isolt, and past the past!
 O Tristram, no more shalt thou need to hide
 Thy thought from my thought, sitting at my side,
 Nor need to wrestle sore
 With thy great love and with thy fixèd oath,
 For now Death leaves thee loyal unto both,
 Even as thou wouldst have been, for evermore.
 Now, after all thy pain, thy brow looks glad;
 But I lack all things that I ever had,
 My wife, my friend, yea, even my jealous rage;

SELECTED POEMS

And empty is the house of my old age.
Behold, I have laboured all my days to part
These two, that were the dearest to my heart.
Isoult, I would have fenced thee from men's sight,
My treasure, that I found so very fair,
The treasure I had taken with a snare:
To keep thee mine, this was my life's delight.
And now the end is come, alone I stand,
And the hand that lies in thine is not my hand."

GRIEF

Grief is like a child,
Led with relentless hand
By a strange nurse, whose face
Seems never to have smiled,
Whose onward gaze severe
Slackens not, nor her pace,
Nor that child's faltering fear
Stoops she to understand.

So strides the world, while grief
Unwilling is borne on,
With ever lingering mind,
Through the strange days, alone.
Oh, like a fluttering leaf
On the ways of the strong wind,

Or pebbles helpless thrown
By night on a wild strand,
Lost are the thoughts of grief,
That none can understand!

LAMENT

Fall now, my cold thoughts, frozen fall
My sad thoughts, over my heart,
To be the tender burial
Of sweetness and of smart.

Fall soft as the snow, when all men sleep,
On copse and on bank forlorn,
That tenderly buries, yet buries deep
Frail violets, freshly born.

SURSUM COR!

Lament no more, my heart, lament no more,
Though all these clouds have covered up the light,
And thou, so far from shore,
Art baffled in mid flight;
Still proudly as in joy through sorrow soar!
As the wild swan,
Voyaging over dark and rising seas,
Into the stormy air adventures on

With wide unfaltering wings, the way he bore
 When blue the water laughed beneath the breeze
 And morning round the radiant beaches shone.
 So thou through all this pain
 Endure, my heart, whither thy course was bound ;
 Though never may the longed-for goal be found,
 Thy steadfast will maintain.
 Thou must not fail, for nothing yet hath failed
 Which was to thee most dear and most adored ;
 Still glorious is Love, thy only lord,
 Truth still is true, and sweetness still is sweet :
 The high stars have not changed, nor the sun paled.
 Still warmly, O my heart, and bravely beat.
 Remember not how lovely was delight,
 How piteous is pain,
 Keep, keep thy passionate flight,
 Nor find thy voyage vain,
 Yea, till thou break, my heart, all meaner quest
 disdain.

A WOMAN

O you that facing the mirror darkly bright
 In the shadowed corner, loiter shyly fond,
 To ask of your own sad eyes a comfort slight
 Before you brave the pathless world beyond ;
 Not first to-night invades your spirit this wild
 Despair, when loneliness stabs you ! Turned, your face

Trembles, and soft hesitation makes you a child,
 The child you were in some far, forgotten place,
 Amid things forever rejected. Dreamed you so
 From the blankness of life to escape to a region
 enjoyed,

Glowing, and strange? Yet blank, to-night, I know,
 Spreads life, my sister; within you a deeper void.

In all this city, I think, so charged with pain,
 None suffers as thus, desiring what you do
 With insupportable longing, and still in vain
 Desiring; still condemned to accept, and rue.

Where tarries he, Love, the adored one? In fields
 unknown

Roams he apart, or in sound of a pleasant stream
 Sleeps? Nay, dwells he in cloudy rumour alone,
 A name, a vision, a sweet, eluding dream?

He lives, he lives, my sister; yet rarely to men
 He appears: they touch but his dress, and believe it is
 he,

But soft with inaudible feet he is flown, nor again
 Comes soon; rejoicing still to be wayward and free.

A moment, even now, he was near you: invisible wings
 Brushed by you; and longing to follow, to find
 That vision truth, overcomes you—the heart's sad
 things

To tell in a trusted ear, on a bosom kind.

Alas! not so he is won. When the last despair
Encamps in the heart, at last, when all seems vain,
Then, perhaps, he will steal to you unaware,
And loose your tears, and understand your pain.

MY SPIRIT TO-DAY

My spirit to-day that sprang
To meet the laughing morn,
Is clouded and forlorn
And chafes with hidden pang.
For teasing care and fret
Stifle her sweet desire,
And with small dust beset
Her eager fire.

Not so my darkened breast
Deep in its depth was stirred
When Sorrow, the dusky bird,
With me prepared her nest.
I on her wing would rise
And over city and sea
Voyage with gazing eyes,
Mournful, yet free.

Then from these pricking thorns
I pluck an omen bright:

Since most their trivial spite
The soul indignant scorns,
With joy vast as despair
Alone she mates, I know;
And, born to an ample air,
Claims a great foe.

THE SNOWS OF SPRING

O wailing gust, what hast thou brought with thee,
What sting of desolation? But an hour
And brave was every shy new-opened flower
Smiling in sun beneath a budding tree.
Now over black hills the skies stoop and lour;
Now on this lonely upland the shrill blast
Thrusts under brown dead crumpled leaves to find
Soft primroses that were unfolding fast;
Now the fair Spring cries through the shuddering wood
Lamenting for her darlings to the wind
That ravishes their youth with laughter rude.

The whole air darkens, sweeping up in storm.
What breath is this of what far power that slays?
What God in blank and towering cloud arrays
His muffled, else intolerable form?
What beautiful Medusa's frozen gaze?
Lo, out of gloom the first flakes floating pale,

Lost like a dreamer's thoughts! They shall lie deep
 To-morrow on green shoot, on petal frail
 And living branches borne down in despair
 By the mere weight of that soft-nesting sleep,
 Though all the earth look still and white and fair.

Fantasmal and extreme as some blind plain
 Upon the far side of the moon, unknown
 Deep Polar solitudes of ice enthroned
 In the white night of mountain and moraine
 The Power of that cold Sleep that dwells alone,
 Absolute in remotest idleness.
 Yet from his fancied lips the freezing breath
 Wandering about the world's warm wilderness
 Has drifted on the north wind even hither
 These gently whispering syllables of death
 Among the English flowers, our Spring to wither.

Not only the brief tender flowers, ah me!
 Suffer such desolation, but we too
 Who boast our godlike liberty to do
 Whate'er we will, and range all climes, ev'n we
 Must still abide its coming and our rue.
 It breathes in viewless winds and gently falls
 Over our spirits, till desire grown sere,
 Faith frozen into words, custom like walls
 Of stone imprison us, and we acquiesce.

O more than raging elements to fear
 Is snow-soft death that comes like a caress.

Life lives for ever: Death of her knows naught.
 Our souls through radiant mystery are led,
 Clothed in fresh raiment as the old is shed.
 But Death the unchanging has no aim, no thought,
 Deaf, blind, indifferent, feeds not yet is fed,
 Moves not yet crushes, is not rent yet rends:
 For as from icebergs killing airs are blown,
 His cold sleep to our life-warm ardour sends
 Frost wreathing round us delicate as rime,
 Making most real what should be dream alone
 To the free spirit, the gnawing tooth of time.

Who shall escape, since death and life inweave
 Their threads so subtly? Yet may truth be wooed
 In our own natures, shaken off the brood
 Of thoughts not ours, beliefs our lips believe
 But our hearts own not,—alien fortitude.
 These are of death; and with his realm conspire
 Faint souls that drowse in ignorance unjust,
 That with the world corrupt their true desire,
 And dully hate and stagnantly despise.
 Already they begin to die, to rust;
 But those that love are always young and wise.

SELECTED POEMS

O Love, my Love, the dear light of whose eyes
Shines on the world to show me all things new,
Falsehood the falser and the true more true,
And tenfold precious all my soul must prize,
Since from our life's core love so deeply grew,
O let us cleave fast to the heavenly powers
That brought us this, whose unseen spirit flows
Pure as the wind and sensitive as flowers.
They are with us! Let the storm-gathering night
Cover the bleak earth with these whirling snows,
Our hands are joined, our hearts are brimmed with
light.

LOVE OF MY LOVE

O LOVE of my Love, O blue,
 Blue sky that over me bends!
 The height and the light are you,
 And I the lark that ascends,
 Trembling ascends and soars,
 A heart that pants, a throat
 That throbs, a song that pours
 The heart out as it sings.
 Lo, the dumb world falls remote,
 But higher, brighter, the golden height!
 Oh, I faint upon my wings!
 Lift me, Love, beyond their flight,
 Lift me, lose me in the light.

SIRMIONE

Give me your hand, Beloved! I cannot see;
 So close from shadowy-branching tree to tree
 Dark leaves hang over us. How vast and still
 Night sleeps! and yet a murmur, a low thrill,
 Sighed out of mystery, steals slowly near,
 Solitary as longing or as fear,
 Through the faint foliage, stirring it, and shy
 Amid the stillness, ere it tremble by,
 Touches us on the cheek and on the brow
 Light as a dew-dipt finger! Listen now,

'Tis not alone the hushings of the bough,
 But on the slabbed rock-beaches far beneath
 Listen, the liquid breath
 Of the vast lake that rustles up all round
 Whispering for ever! Soon shall we be where
 The trees end, and the promontory bare
 Breathes all that wide and water-wandering air
 Which shall our foreheads and our lips delight,
 Blown darkly through the breadth and depth and
 height
 Of soft, immense, and solitary Night.

Where is the Day,
 Bright as a dream, that on this same cliff-way
 Fretted light shadows on old olive stems
 By whose gray, riven roots like scarlet gems
 The little poppies burned? Where those clear hues
 Of water, melted to diviner blues
 In the deep distance of each radiant bay,
 But close beneath us, past the narrowed edge
 Of shadow from sheer crag and jutting ledge,
 Shallowing upon the low reef into gold,
 A ripple of keen light for ever rolled
 Up to the frail reed sighing on the shore?
 Where are those mountains far-enthroned and hoar
 Above the glittering water's slumbrous heat,
 With old blanched towns sprinkled about their feet,

Lifting majestic shoulders, that each side
 Of that steep misty northern chasm divide,
 Where, ambushed in the dim gulf ere they leap,
 Wild spirits of the Wind and Thunder sleep?

'Tis flown, that many-coloured dream is flown,
 And with the heart of Night we are alone.

It is the verge. The promontory ends.

Now the dim branches cover us no more.

Abrupt the path descends:

But here will we sit, high above the shore,

Here, where we know what wild flowered bushes
 cloak

Old ruined walls, and crumbling arches choke

With mounded earth, though buried from our eyes

In dark now, as beneath dark centuries

The marble-towered magnificence of Rome,

From whose hot dust the passionate poet fled

Hither, and laid his head

Where these same waters laughed him welcome home!

It is all dark; but how the air breathes free!

Beloved, lean to me!

Feel how the stillness like a bath desired

With happy pressure heals our senses tired;

And drink the keen sweet fragrance from the grass

And wafts from hidden flowers that come and pass,—

None here but we, and we have left behind

SELECTED POEMS

The world, and cares confined,
All with the daylight drowned
In darkness on this height of utmost ground,
Where under us the sighing waters cease
And over us are only stars and peace.

O Love, Love, Love, look up! Let your head lean
Back on my shoulder. Ah, I feel the keen
Indrawing of your breath, and your heart beat
Under my own, and sighing through you sweet
The wonder of the Night that widely broods
Over us with her glittering multitudes.
Oh, in Night's garden has a fountain sprung
That over old earth showers forever young
A fairy splendour of still-dropping spray?
Or in mad rapture has enamoured May
Through the warm dusk mounted like wine, and
 towered
And in far spaces infinitely flowered,
Breaking the deep heaven into milky bloom?
So beautiful in this most tender gloom
Ten thousand thousand stars through height on
 height
Burn over us, how breathless and how bright!
Some wild, some fevered, some august and large,
Royal and blazing like a hero's targe,
Some faint and secret, from abysses brought,

Lone as an incommunicable thought—
 They throng, they reign, they droop, they bloom, they
 glow

Upon our gaze, and as we gaze they grow
 In patience and in glory, till the mind
 Is brimmed and to all other being blind ;
 They hang, they fall towards us, spears of fire,
 Piercing us through with joy and with desire.

Ah me, Beloved, comes an alien gust,
 A sudden cold thought, blowing bitter dust
 Upon this rapture. They are dead, all dead!
 'Tis but the beauty of Medusa's head
 Gleaming on us in icy masks, that stare
 From everlasting winter blind and bare ;
 They have no answer for our hearts that yearn,
 They have no joy in burning, only burn
 Upon their senseless motion.

Ah, no, no!

Can you not feel the warm truth overflow?
 Light to light answers, even as heart to heart,
 And by their shining we in them have part.
 Lo, the same light that in the tiniest spark
 Makes momentary beauty from the dark,
 The light that blesses warm earth and inweaves
 A million colours in young flowers and leaves,
 That our sick thoughts and melancholy eyes
 Confounds with magical simplicities,

Yea, that by dawn's beginning shall unfold
 Wide glimmering waters, and to glory mould
 Frore peaks, wild torrents in the vales between,
 And golden mists on lawns of living green,
 'Tis the same light that now above us showers
 These star-drops, white and fair as falling flowers;
 And silent rings a cry from star to sun,
 Through all the worlds, light, life and love are one!

Hush your heart now, Beloved, hush to sink
 Your thought down, deep as the still mind can think,
 Then climb as high as boldest thought can climb!
 Were these dark heavens the unfathomed gulfs of
 Time,

So might we see bright peopling spirits star
 The memoriless ages, burning far,
 Splendid or faint, tempestuous or serene,
 All quick and fiery spirits that have been,
 From whose immortal ecstasies and pains
 Drops of red life run sanguine in our veins,
 Who lived and loved, and prodigally spent
 Their strength, their prayers, upon one pure intent,
 In whom no deed was willed, no lonely thought
 Attempered and to sword-blade keenness brought,
 But it has helped us, even us, for whom
 They shine in glory from the ages' gloom.
 But Oh, it is not only these I see:

Look up, behold unnumbered hosts to be!
 What shall we do for them, whose hope endears
 Futurity's dark wilderness of years?
 Heroes, that shall adventure and attain
 What broke our wills in passion and in pain;
 Sages, to find all that we vainly seek,
 Poets, to utter all we cannot speak!
 And they at last shall into strong towers build
 The stones we bled to gather, the unfulfilled
 House of our dream; what was but fable sung,
 Or indignation on a prophet's tongue,
 Made form and hue of life's own tissue, wrought
 Into the rich reality of thought.
 And women, ah, what majesty of fate
 Is theirs, for whom the little is made great,
 The tender strong; far-off they also wait
 The glory of their burden. Love, what deep
 Of mystery unfolds! Let your heart leap!
 Lo, at your bosom all the world to come,
 A child! It waits, it watches, it is dumb,
 Yet hearkens and desires; the vision grows
 Before us, and behind us overflows,
 Mingling, as throng on throng of stars o'erhead,
 One undivided host, the mighty dead
 The mightier unborn! Time is rent away;
 There is no morrow, no, nor yesterday,
 Nor here, nor there, nor sleeping nor awaking;

But, like full waters into ocean breaking,
Lost at this moment in our hearts' high beating
The boundless tides of either world are meeting;
And by the love-cry in my heart that rings,
And by the answer in your heart that sings,
We feel, at once exulting and afraid,
Near to the glowing of the Hand that made
And out of earth, with divine fire instinct,
Moulded us for each other's need, and linked
Our brief breath with the eternal will. That light
Shall kindle, in the dulling world's despite,
The inmost of our spirits, burning through
The shadow of all we suffer, dream and do,
As surely as mine eyes, new facultied
In vision to the estranging day denied,
Still shall behold, when this fair night is fled,
All the stars shine round your beloved head.

LITTLE HANDS

Soft little hands that stray and clutch,
Like fern-fronds curl and uncurl bold,
While baby faces lie in such
Close sleep as flowers at night that fold,
What is it you would clasp and hold,
Wandering outstretched with wilful touch?
O fingers small of shell-tipped rose,
How should you know you hold so much?

Two full hearts beating you enclose,
Hopes, fears, prayers, longings, joys and woes—
All yours to hold, O little hands!
More, more than wisdom understands
And love, love only knows.

AN HOUR

Together by bright water
We sat, my love and I.
Light as a skimming swallow
The perfect hour went by
With words like ripples breaking
On full thoughts softly waking;
With thoughts so dear and shy
That no word dared to follow.
Down by that sunny water
The spring's sweet voice we heard.
The wind, the leaves' young lover,
My love's hair gently stirred.
An hour ago we parted;
I wander heavy-hearted.
Heavily, like a wounded bird,
The day lags, night draws over.

THE TUNNEL

Sitting with strangers in the hurrying train,
We spoke not to each other. Golden May

Flooded those warm fields greener from the rain.
Then sudden darkness stole it all away.

Her face was gone ; but on the dark I framed
Its features, to my fancy's utmost height,
And with love's utmost fondness, never named,
Painted the image of my life's delight.

But lo! a gleam the window's edge outlined,
And beautifully dawning through the gloom,
She came back, O how much more than my mind
Had pictured, triumphing in breath and bloom!

Then I, ashamed, gave thanks with joy; I knew
That my best dream was bettered by the true.

THE CLUE

Life from sunned peak, witched wood, and flowery
dell

A hundred ways the eager spirit woos,
To roam, to dream, to conquer, to rebel:
Yet in its ear a voice cries ever, Choose!

So many ways, yet only one shall find;
So many joys, yet only one shall bless;
So many creeds, yet to each pilgrim mind
One road to the divine forgetfulness.

Tongues talk of truth: but truth is only found
Where the heart runs to be out-poured utterly,

Like streams whose home is in their motion, bound
To follow one faith and in that be free.

O Love, since I have found one truth so true,
Let me lose all, to lose my loss in you.

BAB-LOCK-HYTHE

In the time of wild roses
As up Thames we travelled
Where 'mid water-weeds ravelled
The lily uncloses,

To his old shores the river
A new song was singing,
And young shoots were springing
On old roots for ever.

Dog-daisies were dancing,
And flags flamed in cluster,
On the dark stream a lustre
Now blurred and now glancing.

A tall reed down-weighing,
The sedge-warbler fluttered;
One sweet note he uttered,
Then left it soft-swaying.

By the bank's sandy hollow
My dipt oars went beating,
And past our bows fleeting
Blue-backed shone the swallow.

High woods, heron-haunted,
Rose, changed, as we rounded
Old hills greenly mounded,
To meadows enchanted;

A dream ever moulded
A fresh for our wonder,
Still opening asunder
For the stream many-folded;

Till sunset was rimming
The West with pale flushes;
Behind the black rushes
The last light was dimming;

And the lonely stream, hiding
Shy birds, grew more lonely,
And with us was only
The noise of our gliding.

In cloud of gray weather
The evening o'erdarkened.
In the stillness we hearkened;
Our hearts sang together.

FERRY HINKSEY

Beyond the ferry water
That fast and silent flowed,

She turned, she gazed a moment,
Then took her onward road

Between the winding willows
To a city white with spires.
It seemed a path of pilgrims
To the home of earth's desires.

Blue shade of golden branches
Spread for her journeying,
Till he that lingered lost her
Among the leaves of Spring.

A HYMN OF LOVE

O hush, sweet birds, that linger in lonely song!
Hold in your evening fragrance, wet May-bloom!
But drooping branches and leaves that greenly throng,
Darken and cover me over in tenderer gloom.
As a water-lily unclosing on some shy pool,
Filled with rain, upon tremulous water lying,
With joy afraid to speak, yet fain to be sighing
Its riches out, my heart is full, too full.

Votaries that have veiled their secret shrine
In veils of incense falteringly that rise,
And stealing in milky clouds of wavering line
Round soaring pillars hang like adoring sighs,
They watch the smoke ascending soft as thought,

Till wide in the fragrant dimness peace is shed,
And out of their perfect vision the world is fled,
Because the heart sees pure when the eye sees not.

I too will veil my joy that is too divine
For my heart to comprehend or tongue to speak.
The whole earth is my temple, and Love the shrine
That all the hearts of the world worship and seek.
But the incense cloud I burn to veil my bliss
Is woven of air and waters and living sun,
Colour and odour and music and light made one.
Come down, O night, and take from me all but this!

I dreamed of wonders strange in a strange air;
But this my joy, my dream, my wonder, is near
As grass to the earth, that clings so close and fair,
Nourished by all it nourishes. O most dear,
I dreamed of beauty pacing enchanted ground,
But you with beauty over my waiting soul,
As the blood steals over the cheek at a heart-throb,
stole!

In the beating of my heart I have known you, I have
found.

Incredulous world be far, and tongues profane!
For now in my spirit there burns a steadfast faith.
No longer I fear you, earth's sad bondage vain,
Nor prison walls of Time, nor the gates of Death,
For the marvel that was most marvellous is most true;

To the music that moves the universe moves my heart,
And the song of the starry worlds I sing apart
In the night and shadow and stillness, Love, for you.

THINKING OF SHORES

Thinking of shores that I shall never see,
And things that I would know but am forbid
By Time and briefness, treasures locked from me
In unknown tongue or human bosom hid,

Knowing how unsure is all my knowledge, doled
To sloven memory and to cheated sense,
And to what majesty of stars I hold
My little candle of experience,

In the vast night, in the untravelled night,
I sigh and seek. And there is answer none
But in the silence that sure pressure slight
Of your heart beating close beside my own.

O Love, Love, where in you is any bound?
Fool I to seek, who have infinitely found.

GLORIOUS HEART

Swift and straight as homing dove,
Heedless, so its flight be flown,
All the full stream of thy love,
Love that knows no mortal bounding,

Pours, is emptied for its own,
Glorious Heart,
Great and loyal and abounding!

Over stormy waters eager
Lifted like a breasting prow,
Though the winds and waves beleaguer,
To one star thy true course guiding
Onward, ever onward, thou
Glorious Heart,
Steerest, hoping, well confiding.

When thy strength within thee faints,
When to grief the way is hard,
All thy heroes and thy saints,
Lo, with strong hands arming for thee,
Hold thy tenderness in guard,
Glorious Heart,
They that bore thy pains before thee.

Like a flag that, battle-girt,
Keeps its ardent colours high,
Knows not either hate or hurt,
Nay, nor fear nor thought of turning,
Flag for which men leap to die,
Glorious Heart,
I adore thy beauty burning.

WE HAVE PLANTED

We have planted a tree,
And behold, it has flowers.
How lovely their joy!
Yet they know not of ours,

Who have shared in dull cares
And the sharpness of pain
Yet feel in our kisses
The first kiss again,

And with hand clasped in hand
We turn and we see
The sweet laughing flowers
On our own fair tree.

MORN LIKE A THOUSAND
SHINING SPEARS

Morn like a thousand shining spears
Terrible in the East appears.
O hide me, leaves of lovely gloom,
Where the young Dreams like lilies bloom!

What is this music that I lose
Now, in a world of fading clues?
What wonders from beyond the seas
And wild Arabian fragrances?

In vain I turn me back to where
Stars made a palace of the air.
In vain I hide my face away
From the too bright invading Day.

That which is come requires of me
My utter truth and mystery.
Return, you dreams, return to Night:
My lover is the armed Light.

THE BUILDERS

Staggering slowly, and swaying
 Heavily at each slow foot's lift and drag,
 With tense eyes careless of the roar and throng,
 That under jut and jag
 Of half-built wall and scaffold streams along,
 Six bowed men straining strong
 Bear, hardly lifted, a huge lintel stone.
 This ignorant thing and prone,
 Mere dumbness, blindly weighing,
 A brute piece of blank death, a bone
 Of the stark mountain, helpless and inert,
 Yet draws each sinew till the hot veins swell
 And sweat-drops upon hand and forehead start,
 Till with short pants the suffering heart
 Throbs to the throat, where fiercely hurt
 Crushed shoulders cannot heave; till thought and sense
 Are nerved and narrowed to one aim intense,
 One effort scarce to be supported longer!
 What tyrant will in man or God were stronger
 To summon, thrall and seize
 The exaction of life's uttermost resource
 That from the down-weighed breast and aching knees
 To arms lifted in pain
 And hands that grapple and strain

Upsurges, thrusting desperate to repel
The pressure and the force
Of this, which neither feels, nor hears, nor sees?

DARK WIND

In the middle of the night, waking, I was aware
Of the Wind like one riding through black wastes of
the air,
Moodily riding, ever faster, he recked not where.

The windows rattled aloud: a door clashed and
sprang;

And the ear in fear waited to feel the inert clang
Strike the shaken darkness, a cruelty and a pang.

I was hurt with pity of things that have no will of
their own,

Lifted in lives of others and cast on bruising stone:
I feared the Wind, coming a power from worlds
unknown.

It was like a great ship now, abandoned, her crew
dead,

Driving in gulfs of sky; it staggered above and sped;
I lay in the deeps and heard it rushing over my head.

And the helpless shaking of window and door's desolate
rebound

Seemed like tossing and lifting of bodies lost and
 drowned
 In the huge indifferent swell, in the waters' wander-
 ing sound.

THUNDER ON THE DOWNS

Wide earth, wide heaven, and in the summer air
 Silence! The summit of the down is bare
 Between the climbing crests of wood; but those
 Great sea-winds, wont, when the wet South-West
 blows,
 To rock tall beeches and strong oaks aloud
 And strew torn leaves upon the streaming cloud
 To-day are idle, slumbering far aloof.
 Under the solemn height and gorgeous roof
 Of cloud-built sky, all earth is indolent.
 Wandering hum of bees and thymy scent
 Of the short turf enrich pure loneliness:
 Scarcely an airy topmost-twining tress
 Of bryony quivers where the thorn it wreathes;
 Hot fragrance from the honeysuckle breathes;
 And sweet the rose floats on the arching briar's
 Green fountain, sprayed with delicate frail fires.
 For clumps of thicket, dark beneath the blaze
 Of the high westering sun, beset the ways
 Of smooth grass, narrowing where the slope runs steep
 Down to green woods, and glowing shadows keep

A freshness round the mossy roots, and cool
 The light that sleeps as in a chequered pool
 Of golden air. O woods, I love you well,
 I love the flowers you hide, your ferny smell;
 But here is sweeter solitude, for here
 My heart breathes heavenly space; the sky is near
 To thought, with heights that fathomlessly glow;
 And the eye wanders the wide land below.

And this is England! June's undarkened green
 Gleams on far woods; and in the vales between
 Grey hamlets, older than the trees that shade
 Their ripening meadows, are in quiet laid,
 Themselves a part of the warm, fruitful ground.
 The little hills of England rise around;
 The little streams that wander from them shine
 And with their names remembered names entwine
 Of old renown and honour, fields of blood
 High causes fought on, stubborn hardihood
 For freedom spent, and songs, our noblest pride,
 That in the heart of England never died
 And, burning still, make splendour of our tongue.
 Glories enacted, spoken, suffered, sung!
 You lie emblazoned on this land now sleeping;
 And southward, over leagues of forest sweeping,
 White on the verge glistens the famous sea,
 That English wave, on which so haughtily

Towered her sails, and one sail homeward bore
 Past capes of silently lamenting shore
 Victory's dearest dead. O shores of home,
 Since by the vanished watch-fire shields of Rome
 Dinted this upland turf, what hearts have ached
 To see you far away, what eyes have waked
 Ere dawn to watch those cliffs of long desire
 One after one rise in their voiceless choir
 Out of the twilight over the rough blue
 Like music! . . .

But now heavy gleams imbrue
 The inland air. Breathless the valleys hold
 Their colours in a veil of sultry gold
 With mingled shadows that have ceased to crawl;
 For far in heaven is thunder! Over all
 A single cloud in slow magnificence
 Climbs like a mountain, gradual and immense,
 With awful head unstirring, and moved on
 Against the zenith, towers above the sun.
 And still it thickens luminous fold on fold
 Of fatal colour, ominously scrolled
 And fleeced with fire; above the sun it towers,
 Like some vast thought quickening a world not ours
 Remote in the waste blue, as if behind
 Its rim were splendour that could smite us blind,
 So doom-piled and intense it crests heaven's height
 And mounting makes a menace of the light.

A menace! Yes, for when light comes, we fear.
 Light, that may touch, as the pure angel-spear,
 Us to ourselves, make visible, make start
 The apparition of the very heart
 And mystery of our thoughts, awaked from under
 The mask of cheating habit, and to thunder
 Bare in a moment of white fire what we
 Have feared and fled, our own reality.

And if a lightning now were loosed in flame
 Out of the darkness of the cloud to claim
 Thy heart, O England, how wouldst thou be known
 In that hour? How to the quick core be shown
 And seen? What cry should from thy very soul
 Answer the judgment of that thunder-roll?

I hear a voice arraign thee. "Where is now
 The exaltation that once lit thy brow?
 Thou countest all thy ocean-sundered lands,
 Thou heapest up the labours of thy hands,
 Thou seest all thy ships upon the seas.
 But in thy own heart mean idolatries
 Usurp devotion, choke thee and annul
 Noble excess of spirit, and make dull
 Thine eyes, en fleshed with much dominion.
 Art thou so great and is the glory gone?
 Do these bespeak thy freedom who deflower
 Time, and make barren every senseless hour,

Who from themselves hurry, like men afraid
 Lest what they are be to themselves betrayed?
 Or those who in their huddled thousands sweat
 To buy the sleep that helps them to forget?—
 Life lies unused, life in its loveliness!
 While the cry ravens still, 'Possess, Possess!'
 And there is no possession. All the lust
 Of gainful man is quieted in dust;
 His faith, his fear, his joy, his doom he owns,
 No more; the rest is parcelled with his bones,
 Save what the imagination of his heart
 Can to the labour of his hands impart,
 Making stones serve his spirit's desire, and breathe.
 But thou, what dost thou to the world bequeath,
 Who gatherest riches in a waste of mind
 Unto what end, O confidently blind,
 Forgetful of the things that grow not old
 And alone live and are not bought or sold!"

Speaks that voice truth? Is it for this that great
 And tender spirits suffered scorn and hate,
 Loved to the utmost, poured themselves, gave all
 Nor counted cost, spirits imperial?
 Where are they now, they that our memory guard
 Among the nations? Shall I say, enstarred
 And throned aloof? No, not from heavens of thought
 Watching our muddied brief procession, not

Judges sublime above us, without share
 In our thronged ways of struggle, hope, despair,
 But in our blood, our dreams, our deeds they stir,
 Strive on our lips for language, shame and spur
 The sluggard in us, out of darkness come
 Like summoned champions when the world is dumb;
 Within our hearts they wait with all they gave.
 Woe to us, woe, if we become their grave!

It shall not be. Darken thy pall, and trail,
 Thunder of heaven, above the valleys pale!
 Another England in my vision glows.
 And she is armed within; at last she knows
 Herself, and what to her own soul belongs.
 Mid the world's irremediable wrongs
 She keeps her faith; and nothing of her name
 Or of her handiwork but doth proclaim
 Her purpose. Her own soul hath made her free,
 Not circumstance; she knows no victory
 Save of the mind; in her is nothing done,
 No wrong, no shame, no glory of any one,
 But is the cause of all and each, a thing
 Felt like a fire to kindle and to sting
 The proud blood of a nation. On her brows
 Is hope; her body doth her spirit house
 Express and eloquent, not numb and froze;
 And her voice echoes over sea and shore,

And all the lands and isles that are her own
 In choric interchange and antiphon
 Answer, as fancy hears in yonder cloud
 From vale to vale repeated low and loud
 The still-suspended thunder.

Hearts of Youth,

High-beating, ardent, quick in hope and ruth
 And noble anger, O wherever now
 You dedicate your uncorrupted vow
 To be an energy of Light, a sword
 Of the ever-living Will, amid abhorred
 Din of the reeking street and populous den
 Where under the great stars blind lusts of men
 War on each other, or escaped to hills
 Where peace the solitary evening fills,
 Or far remote on other soils of earth
 Keeping the dearness of your fathers' hearth
 On vast plains of the West, or Austral strands
 Of the warm underworld, or storied lands
 Of the orient sun, or over ocean ways
 Stemming the wave through blue or stormy days,
 Wherever, as the circling light slopes round,
 On human lips is heard an English sound,
 O scattered, silent, hidden and unknown,
 Be lifted up, for you are not alone!
 High-beating hearts, to your deep vows be true!
 Live out your dreams, for England lives in you.

MIDSUMMER, 1911.

TO WOMEN

Your hearts are lifted up, your hearts
That have foreknown the utter price.
Your hearts burn upward like a flame
Of splendour and of sacrifice.

For you, you too, to battle go,
Not with the marching drums and cheers
But in the watch of solitude
And through the boundless night of fears.

Swift, swifter than those hawks of war,
Those threatening wings that pulse the air,
Far as the vanward ranks are set,
You are gone before them, you are there!

And not a shot comes blind with death
And not a stab of steel is pressed
Home, but invisibly it tore
And entered first a woman's breast.

Amid the thunder of the guns,
The lightnings of the lance and sword,
Your hope, your dread, your throbbing pride,
Your infinite passion is outpoured

From hearts that are as one high heart
Withholding naught from doom and bale,
Burningly offered up,—to bleed,
To bear, to break, but not to fail!

FOR THE FALLEN

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds un-
counted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow
old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are
known

As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our dark-
ness,

To the end, to the end, they remain.

THE UNRETURNING SPRING

A leaf on the gray sand-path
Fallen, and fair with rime!
A yellow leaf, a scarlet leaf,
And a green leaf ere its time.

Days rolled in blood, days torn,
Days innocent, days burnt black,
What is it the wind is sighing
As the leaves float, swift or slack?

The year's pale spectre is crying
For beauty invisibly shed,
For the things that never were told
And were killed in the minds of the dead.

MID-ATLANTIC

If this were all!—A dream of dread
Ran through me; I watched the waves that fled
Pale-crested out of hollows black,
The hungry lift of helpless waves,
A million million tossing graves,
A wilderness without a track
Beneath the barren moon:

If this were all!

The stars of night remotely strewn
Looked on that restless heave and fall.
I seemed with them to watch this old
Bright planet through the ages rolled,
Self-tortured, burning splendours vain,
And fevered with its greeds insane,
And with the blood of peoples red;
I watched it, grown an ember cold,
Join in the dancing of the dead.

The chilly half-moon sank; the sound
Of naked surges roared around,
And through my heart the darkness poured

Surges as of a sea unshored.
 O somewhere far and lost from light
 Blind Europe battled in the night!
 Then sudden through the darkness came
 The vision of a child,
 A child with feet as light as flame
 Who ran across the bitter waves,
 Across the tumbling of the graves—
 With arms stretched out he smiled.
 I drank the wine of life again,
 I breathed among my brother men,
 I felt the human fire.
 I knew that I must serve the will
 Of beauty and love and wisdom still;
 Though all my hopes were overthrown,
 Though universes turned to stone,
 I have my being in this alone
 And die in that desire.

ON BOARD THE "LUSITANIA,"

DECEMBER, 1914.

I AM HERE, AND YOU

I am here, and you;
 The sun blesses us through
 Leaves made of light.
 The air is in your hair;
 You hold a flower.

O worlds, that roll through night,
 O Time, O terrible year,
 Where surges of fury and fear
 Rave, to us you gave
 This island-hour.

FETCHING THE WOUNDED

At the road's end glimmer the station lights;
 How small beneath the immense hollow of Night's
 Lonely and living silence! Air that raced
 And tingled on the eyelids as we faced
 The long road stretched between the poplars flying
 To the dark behind us, shuddering and sighing
 With phantom foliage, lapses into hush.
 Magical supersession! The loud rush
 Swims into quiet; midnight reassumes
 Its solitude; there's nothing but great glooms,
 Blurred stars; whispering gusts; the hum of wires.
 And swerving leftwards upon noiseless tires
 We glide over the grass that smells of dew.
 A wave of wonder bathes my body through!
 For there in the headlamps' gloom-surrounded beam
 Tall flowers spring before us, like a dream,
 Each luminous little green leaf intimate
 And motionless, distinct and delicate
 With powdery white bloom fresh upon the stem,

As if that clear beam had created them
 Out of the darkness. Never so intense
 I felt the pang of beauty's innocence,
 Earthly and yet unearthly.

A sudden call!

We leap to ground, and I forget it all.
 Each hurries on his errand; lanterns swing;
 Dark shapes cross and re-cross the rails; we bring
 Stretchers, and pile and number them; and heap
 The blankets ready. Then we wait and keep
 A listening ear. Nothing comes yet; all's still.
 Only soft gusts upon the wires blow shrill
 Fitfully, with a gentle spot of rain.
 Then, ere one knows it, the long gradual train
 Creeps quietly in and slowly stops. No sound
 But a few voices' interchange. Around
 Is the immense night-stillness, the expanse
 Of faint stars over all the wounds of France.

Now stale odour of blood mingles with keen
 Pure smell of grass and dew. Now lantern sheen
 Falls on brown faces opening patient eyes
 And lips of gentle answers, where each lies
 Supine upon his stretcher, black of beard,
 Or with young cheeks; on cap and tunic smeared
 And stained, white bandages round foot or head
 Or arms, discoloured here and there with red.

Sons of all corners of wide France; from Lille,
 Douay, the land beneath the invader's heel,
 Champagne, Touraine, the fisher-villages
 Of Brittany, the valleyed Pyrenees,
 Blue coasts of the South, old Paris streets. Argonne
 Of ever smouldering battle, that anon
 Leaps furious, brothered them in arms. They fell
 In the trenched forest scarred with reeking shell.
 Now strange the sound comes round them in the night
 Of English voices. By the wavering light
 Quickly we have borne them, one by one, to the air,
 And sweating in the dark lift up with care,
 Tense-sinewed, each to his place. The cars at last
 Complete their burden: slowly, and then fast
 We glide away.

And the dim round of sky,
 Infinite and silent, broods unseeingly
 Over the shadowy uplands rolling black
 Into far woods, and the long road we track
 Bordered with apparitions, as we pass,
 Of trembling poplars and lamp-whitened grass,
 A brief procession flitting like a thought
 Through a brain drowsing into slumber; nought
 But we awake in the solitude immense!
 But hurting the vague dumbness of my sense
 Are fancies wandering the night: there steals
 Into my heart, like something that one feels

In darkness, the still presence of far homes
 Lost in deep country, and in little rooms
 The vacant bed. I touch the world of pain
 That is so silent. Then I see again
 Only those infinitely patient faces
 In the lantern beam, beneath the night's vast spaces,
 Amid the shadows and the scented dew;
 And those illumined flowers, springing anew
 In freshness like a smile of secrecy
 From the gloom-buried earth, return to me.
 The village sleeps; blank walls, and windows barred.
 But lights are moving in the hushed courtyard
 As we glide up to the open door. The Chief
 Gives every man his order, prompt and brief.
 We carry up our wounded, one by one.
 The first cock crows: the morrow is begun.

A DEDICATION

The thousands of the brave, the happy young,
 Our loves and lovers, fallen in France, have shrined
 That earth for us, and France's name comes kind
 On English lips. But you, her children, sprung
 From the old liberal soil, so rudely wrung,
 Out of our own hard pain have we divined
 Your harder pain; hurt body and tortured mind,
 Where those polluting claws have torn and clung.

France, dear to men that honour human things,
 To have helped or heartened any of these your maimed
 And homeless, is itself felicity:
 It is to know what suffering man can be;
 How great his heart, when fed from splendid springs;
 What human virtue has made you loved and famed.

THE NEW WORLD

To the People of the United States

Now is the time of the splendour of Youth and Death.
 The spirit of man grows grander than men knew.
 The unbearable burden is borne, the impossible done;
 Though harder is yet to do
 Before this agony end, and that be won
 We seek through blinding battle, in choking breath,—
 The New World seen in vision! Land of lands,
 In the midst of storms that desolate and divide,
 In the hour of the breaking heart, O far-descried,
 You build our courage, you hold up our hands.

Men of America, you that march to-day
 Through roaring London, supple and lean of limb,
 Glimpsed in the crowd I saw you, and in your eye
 Something alert and grim,
 As knowing on what stern call you march away
 To the wrestle of nations; saw your heads held high
 And, that same moment, far in a glittering beam

SELECTED POEMS

High over old and storied Westminster
The Stars and Stripes with England's flag astir,
Sisterly twined and proud on the air astream.

Men of America, what do you see? Is it old
Towers of fame and grandeur time-resigned?
The frost of custom's backward-gazing thought?
Seek closer! You shall find

Miracles hour by hour in silence wrought;
Births, and awakenings; dyings never tolled;
Invisible crumble and fall of prison-bars.

O, wheresoever his home, new or decayed,
Man is older than all the things he has made
And yet the youngest spirit beneath the stars.

Rock-cradled, white, and soaring out of the sea,
I behold again the fabulous city arise,
Manhattan! Queen of thronged and restless bays
And of daring ships is she.

O lands beyond, that into the sunset gaze,
Limitless, teeming continent of surmise!
I drink again that diamond air, I thrill
To the lure of a wonder more than the wondrous past,
And see before me ages yet more vast
Rising, to challenge heart and mind and will.

What sailed they out to seek, who of old came
To that bare earth and wild, unhistoried coast?
Not gold, nor granaries, nay, nor a halcyon ease

For the weary and tempest-tost:
 The unshaken soul they sought, possessed in peace.
 What seek we now, and hazard all on the aim?
 In the heart of man is the undiscovered earth
 Whose hope's our compass; sweet with glorious passion
 Of men's good-will; a world to forge and fashion
 Worthy the things we have seen and brought to birth.

Taps of the Drum! Now once again they beat:
 And the answer comes; a continent arms. Dread,
 Pity, and Grief, there is no escape. The call
 Is the call of the risen Dead.

Terrible year of the nations' trampling feet!
 An angel has blown his trumpet over all
 From the ends of the earth, from East to uttermost
 West,

Because of the soul of man, that shall not fail,
 That will not make refusal, or turn, or quail,
 No, nor for all calamity, stay its quest.

And here, here too, is the New World, born of pain
 In destiny-spelling hours. The old world breaks
 Its mould, and life runs fierce and fluid, a stream
 That floods, dissolves, re-makes.

Each pregnant moment, charged to its extreme,
 Quickens unending future, and all's vain
 But the onward mind, that dares the oncoming years
 And takes their storm, a master. Life shall then

Transfigure Time with yet more marvellous men.
Hail to the sunrise! Hail to the Pioneers!

YPRES

She was a city of patience; of proud name,
Dimmed by neglecting Time; of beauty and loss;
Of acquiescence in the creeping moss.
But on a sudden fierce destruction came
Tigerishly pouncing: thunderbolt and flame
Showered on her streets, to shatter them and toss
Her ancient towers to ashes. Riven across,
She rose, dead, into never-dying fame.

White against heavens of storm, a ghost, she is known
To the world's ends. The myriads of the brave
Sleep round her. Desolately glorified,
She, moon-like, draws her own far-moving tide
Of sorrow and memory; toward her, each alone,
Glide the dark Dreams that seek an English grave.

SPRING HAS LEAPT INTO SUMMER

Spring has leapt into Summer.
A glory has gone from the green.
The flush of the poplar has sobered out,
The flame in the leaf of the lime is dulled:
But I am thinking of the young men
Whose faces are no more seen.

Where is the pure blossom
 That fell and refused to grow old?
 The clustered radiance, perfumed whiteness,
 Silent singing of joy in the blue?
 —I am thinking of the young men
 Whose splendour is under the mould.

Youth, the wonder of the world,
 Open-eyed at an opened door,
 When the world is as honey in the flower, and as wine
 To the heart, and as music newly begun!
 O the young men, the myriads of the young men,
 Whose beauty returns no more!

Spring will come, when the Earth remembers,
 In sun-bursts after the rain,
 And the leaf be fresh and lovely on the bough,
 And the myriad shining blossom be born:
 But I shall be thinking of the young men
 Whose eyes will not shine on us again.

WINGLESS VICTORY

I

Victory! Was that proud word once so dear?
 Are difficulty, patience, effort hard
 As danger's edge, disputing yard by yard
 The adversary without and the mind's fear,

SELECTED POEMS

Are these our only angels? friends austere
That find our hidden greatness out, and guard
From the weak hour's betrayal faith unmarred!
For look! how we seem fall'n from what we were.

Worms feed upon the bodies of the brave
Who bled for us: but we bewildered see
Viler worms gnaw the things they died to save.
Old clouds of doubt and weariness oppress.
Happy the dead, we cry, not now to be
In the day of this dissolving littleness!

II

O you dear Dead, pardon! For not resigned,
We see, though humbled, half our purpose bent
And our hope blurred, like men in banishment.
Giants amid a blank mist groping blind,
The nations ache. And old greeds unconfined
Possess men, sick at battle's blood hot-spent
Yet sleek and busy and righteously content
To wage war, safe and secret, on their kind.

If all were simple as the way of hate!
But we must reap where others sowed the seed
In time long past, of folly and pride and greed;
Confused with names, idols, and politics;
Though over all earth, where we think a State,
There are but men and women; only these.

III

Victory, winged, has flown far off again.
She is in the soul, she travels with the light.
We see her on the distant mountain height
Desired, but she has left us in the plain,
Left us awhile, to chafe and to complain,
Yet keep our wills, in this dark time's despite,
Like those that went up to the horrible fight
Beneath their burdens, plodding in the rain.

Courage! The same stuff that so greatly bore
And greatly did, is here, for gods to find,
And the dear human cause in the heart's core.
Be the task always harder than we know,
And victory further, yet in pain we grow.
The vision is before us, not behind.

ELEGY

The little waves fall in the wintry light
On idle sands along the bitter shore.
The piling clouds are all a pale suspended flight;
They tarry and are moved no more.

Thin rushes tremble about the naked dune;
A hovering sail sinks down the utmost sea;
With wreckage and old foam the unending sands are
 strewn;
And the waves heap their dumbness over me.

This is the earth that lasts beyond our dreams
Of time, and rushing onward without rest,
Deludes us with her trancing silences, yet teems
Fiercely, and burns within her breast,

Insatiate of youth, this old, old Earth,
Who uses our spent ashes for her need,
Shaping the delicate marvel of her youngest birth;
And still she kindles a new seed,

Intent on the unborn creature of her thought
And busy in the waste: O even here,
Though masked as in a calm of dumb frustration,
 naught
Stays her, no pang nor any fear;

But subtly, with a touch invisible,
She is changing and compelling; and me too,
Me too, upon the secret stream of that deep will
She moves to a destiny ever new.

And yet this hour my spirit hides its face,
And, backward turned, sighs out an idle pain
For the remembered paths these feet may not retrace
And the hours that cannot come again.

O hours of heavenly madness in delight
That felt the swiftness and the throb of wings,
That stole the burning soul of naked summer night
And the moons of the perfumed springs!

Not now to you my longing stretches hands,
But to lost hours, that had no fruit, no seed.
Like fading of low light beyond forgotten lands,
They have passed and are dead indeed.

And once, for once, unrecking Earth, you seem
With me to linger and to acquiesce,
To share the desolation of my doubt and dream,
And to ponder upon barrenness.

The wind lulls on the waste, and has no will.
The foiled tides hush and falter at their bound.
A little sand is blown, then all again is still;
And the clouds hang silence around,

With such an absence felt in the lone skies,
 Suppression of such tears, profoundly sprung
 In long-remembering looks of unconversing eyes
 As when the old bury the young.

NUMBERS

Trefoil and Quatrefoil!
 What shaped those destined small silent leaves
 Or numbered them under the soil?
 I lift my dazzled sight
 From grass to sky,
 From humming and hot perfume
 To scorching, quivering light,—
 Empty blue!—Why,
 As I bury my face afresh
 In a sunshot vivid gloom—
 Minute infinity's mesh,
 Where spearing side by side
 Smooth stalk and furred uplift
 Their luminous green secrets from the grass,
 Tower to a bud and delicately divide—
 Do I think of the things unthought
 Before man was?

Bodiless Numbers!
 When there was none to explore
 Your winding labyrinths occult,

None to delve your ore
 Of strange virtue, or do
 Your magical business, you
 Were there, never old nor new,
 Veined in the world and alive:
 Before the planets, Seven;
 Before these fingers, Five!

You that are globed and single,
 Crystal virgins, and you that part,
 Melt, and again mingle!
 We have hoisted sail in the night
 On the oceans that you chart:
 Dark winds carry us onward, on;
 But you are there before us, silent Answers,
 Beyond the bounds of the sun.
 You body yourselves in the stars, inscrutable dancers,
 Native where we are none.

O inhuman Numbers!
 All things change and glide,
 Corrupt and crumble, suffer wreck and decay,
 But, obstinate dark Integrities, you abide,
 And obey but them who obey.
 All things else are dyed
 In the colours of man's desire:
 But you no bribe nor prayer
 Avails to soften or sway.

Nothing of me you share,
 Yet I cannot think you away.
 And if I seek to escape you, still you are there,
 Stronger than caging pillars of iron,
 Not to be passed, in an air
 Where human wish and word
 Fall like a frozen bird.

Music asleep
 In pulses of sound, in the waves!
 Hidden runes rubbed bright!
 Dizzy ladders of thought in the night!
 Are you masters or slaves—
 Subtlest of man's slaves—
 Shadowy Numbers?

In a vision I saw
 Old vulture Time, feeding
 On the flesh of the world; I saw
 The home of our use outdated—
 Seasons of fruiting and seeding
 Withered, and hunger and thirst
 Dead, with all they fed on:
 Till at last, when Time was sated,
 Only you persisted,
 Dædal Numbers, sole and same,
 Invisible skeleton frame

Of the peopled earth we tread on—
Last, as first.

Because naught can avail
To wound or to tarnish you;
Because you are neither sold nor bought,
Because you have not the power to fail
But live beyond our furthest thought,
Strange Numbers, of infinite clue,
Beyond fear, beyond ruth,
You strengthen also me
To be free of my own truth.

GOBLINS

The night is holy and haunted,
Asleep in a vale of June.
Stillness and earth-smell mingle
With the beams' unearthly boon.—
Yet a terror is fallen upon me
From the other side of the moon.
If it be Truth that's hidden
Upon that other side.
Unseen, unguessed of any,
Waiting to be descried? . . .
Without shadow or footstep,
Goblins by me glide.

The mellow moon, entrancing
 An English meadow here,
 Silvers the old farm roofs below
 And dewy grasses near.
 But the world her far side faces?
 I think of it, and fear.

If not man's ancient terror,
 Bribed with long sacrifice,
 If not old ignorance, whose hope
 Would truth to itself entice—
 If REASON be the goblin
 That thrills my blood to ice?

The bean-blossom is breathing
 From fields in glimmer spread;
 A rose hangs dim on the amber air . . .
 But I am lured and led
 To an outer vast apartness
 Beyond man's hope or dread.

I look down upon me and mine
 As with translated eyes,
 My struggle in rapture and anguish
 But noted like a fly's,
 My world at stake, my heaven and hell
 Small as a beetle's prize.

Busy in deep-sea dungeons,
 Great mouths of fishes blind;

Blind wheel of planet on planet
In gulfs no thought can find;
The proud black stare of a falcon,
Without a thought behind,

Possess me, dispossess me:
They mock me not, they are.
The worlds are all a web that's hung
Beyond conception far,
That a gorged and hairy spider
Spins in the central star.

Ferocity of begetting;
Prowling hunger's maw,
Fury of teeth and hot-spilt blood,
Cold pounce and tearing claw,
Laughterless lust, the swarm and spawn
That one another gnaw;

A race to death, a frenzy
Rushing into the night,
A rage of life, a riot,
Seen in a moment's light,
And Death the wild pursuer
Close on that fever-flight!

I see it all in vision,
I see with murdered sense
Of neither good nor evil,

Nor make a fool's pretence.
I share, I too, that hunted
And horrible innocence.

Cruelty's matched with courage.
Not that a power should thrive
Which twists its poison-tendrils
In all that is alive;
Not that with those fell doings
My fate be to connive;

Not this the ulterior terror
That has the goblin grin,
But that the ignorant stare of Space
Be the end as the origin,—
This glorious palace of the mind
A cave that tumbles in,
And reason mocked by reason
Be all the goal to win.

COMMERCIAL

Gross, with protruding ears,
Sleek hair, brisk glance, fleshy and yet alert,
Red, full, and satisfied,
Cased in obtuseness confident not to be hurt,
He sits at a little table
In the crowded, congenial glare and noise, jingling

Coins in his pocket; sips
 His glass, with hard eye impudently singling
 A woman here and there:—
 Women and men, they are all priced in his thought,
 All commodities staked
 In the market, sooner or later sold and bought.

 “Were I he,” you are thinking,
 You with the dreamer’s forehead and pure eyes,
 “What should I lose?—All,
 All that is worth the striving for, all my prize;

 “All the truth of me, all
 Life that is wonder, pity and fear, requiring
 Utter joy, utter pain,
 From the heart that the infinite hurts with deep
 desiring.

 “Why is it I am not he?
 Chance? The grace of God? The mystery’s plan?
 He, too, is human stuff,
 A kneading of the old, brotherly slime of man.

 “Am I a lover of men,
 And turn abhorring as from fat slug or snake?
 Lives obstinate in me too
 Something the power of angels could not unmake?”

 O self-questioner! None
 Unlocks your answer. Steadily look, nor flinch.

This belongs to your kind,
And knows its aim, and fails not itself at a pinch.

It is here in the world and works,
Not done with yet.—Up, then, let the test be tried!
Dare your uttermost, be
Completely, and of your own, like him, be justified.

HUNGER

I come among the peoples like a shadow;
I sit down by each man's side.

None sees me, but they look on one another,
And know that I am there.

My silence is like the silence of the tide
That buries the playground of children;

Like the deepening of frost in the slow night,
When birds are dead in the morning.

Armies trample, invade, destroy,
With guns roaring from earth and air.

I am more terrible than armies,
I am more feared than the cannon.

Kings and chancellors give commands;
I give no command to any;

But I am listened to more than kings
And more than passionate orators.

I unswear words, and undo deeds.
Naked things know me.

I am first and last to be felt of the living.
I am Hunger.

THE PARALYTIC

He stands where the young faces pass and throng;
His blank eyes quiver in the noonday sun:
He sees all life, the lovely and the strong,
Before him run.

Eager and swift, or grouped and loitering, they
Follow their dreams, on busy errands sped,
Planning delight and triumph; but all day
He shakes his head.

A PRELUDE AT EVENING

My spirit was like the lonely air
 Before night,
Like hovering cloud that's melted there
 In the late light,
When slow the vast earth-shadows reach
 To the last flush,
And the wandering silences have each
 Their own hush.
Did the green grass about me glimmer,
 Or trees tower?
Not softer to my sense, nor dimmer,
 The obscure power
Of all the world's wide trouble, fought
 In the heart's recess:
My heart was solitude, my thought
 Emptiness.
But through my spirit that seemed, unfilled,
 Alone to float,
A sudden dewy sweetness thrilled;
 A low note!
And then a loud note, rippling full
 To a still pause:
The liquid silence was a pool
 That a breeze flaws.

It throbbed again, how lonely clear!
A song that seemed
Sprung beyond memory or fear,
A voice dreamed
In a land that no man ever found;
And who knows
What shook those lingering drops of sound
At the rich close?

Ah, where were you, passion and grief
Of the world's wrong?
What had you to do with a trembling leaf
And a bird's song,
And spaces calm with coming of night,
And the fresh gloom
Of shadowy trees, and smelt delight
Of hidden bloom?

Yet O, in me that song had part
Because of you!
It drank of the very blood of the heart
It quivered through
Because of the tears of joy, and the cost
Of a joy's breath,
Measureless thoughts of a dearness lost,
Hope, and death.

Strangeness of longing, beauty, pain!
I was aware
Of all your secret, soft as rain,
In the dim air.
For Life it was that sang aloud
To the lone dew,
Brave in the night and sweet in the cloud:
My heart knew.

WANDERERS

O there are wanderers over wave and strand
Invisible and secret, everywhere
Moving thro' light and night from land to land,
Swifter than bird or cloud upon the air.
Wild Longings, from divided bosoms rent,
Rush home, and sights crushed from pain of years.
Far o'er their quarry hover Hates intent;
Wing to and fro world-wandering great Fears.
Pities like dew, Thoughts on their lonely road
Glide, and dark forms of spiritual Desire;
Yea, all that from its house of flesh the goad
Of terrible Love drives out in mist and fire.
Ah, souls of men and women, where is home,
That in a want, a prayer, a cry, you roam?

HOME-COMING

From the howl of the wind
As I opened the door
And entered, the fire-light
Was soft on the floor.

Mute each in their places
Were table and chair;
The white wall, the shadows
Awaiting me there.

All was strange on a sudden!
From the stillness a spell,
A fear or a fancy
Across my heart fell.

Were they waiting another
To sit by the hearth?
Was it I saw them newly,
A stranger on earth?

THE TIGER-LILY

What wouldst thou with me? By what spell
My spirit allure, absorb, compel?
The last long beam that thou dost drink

Is buried now on evening's brink.
 The garden's leafy alleys lone,
 With shadowy stem and mossy stone,
 Intangibly seem now to dress
 Colour and odour motionless.
 A stealing darkness breathes around,
 As if it rose out of the ground,
 And tingeing into it soft gold
 Ebbs, and the dewy green glooms cold,
 And dim boughs into black retire.
 But thou, seven-throated Flower of Fire,
 Sombring all the shadows near thee,
 Dost still, as if the night did fear thee,
 Glory amid the failing hues
 And this invading dusk refuse,
 And breathing out thy languid spice
 My spirit to thine own entice.

Warm wafts that linger touch my cheek.
 What is it in me thou wouldst seek?
 Thou meltest all my thoughts away
 As leaf on leaf is mingled grey
 In shadow on shadow, past discerning.
 O cold to touch, to vision burning,
 What power is in thee so to change
 And my familiar sense estrange?
 Thou seemest born within a mind

That has no ken of human kind ;
 Remote from quick heart, curious brain,
 Feeling in joy, thinking in pain,
 Remote as beauty of sleeping snow
 Is from a flame's wild shredded glow ;
 Remote from mirth, anger or care,
 Or the deep wound and want of prayer,
 Yet like some word of splendid speech
 Beyond our human hearing's reach,
 Whose meaning, could its sound be known,
 Might earth's imprisoned secret own
 That binds as with a viewless thread
 This throbbing heart of joy and dread
 With tremblings of the wayside grass
 And pillars of the mountain pass
 And circling of the stars extreme
 In boundless heights of heaven.

I dream

My dark heart into earth, I heap
 My spirit over with cold sleep,
 Resign my senses, one by one,
 To glooms that never saw the sun,
 Fade from this self to what behind
 Earth's myriad shapes is urging blind,
 Am emptied of man's name, become
 A blankness as the mountain dumb,

If so I may attain to win
 The secret thou art rooted in.

Can life renounce not life? Must still
 The inexorably moving will
 Seek and make rankle the dulled sting
 Of essence? Must the desert spring
 Revive, and the forgotten seed
 Be drawn again by its old need
 Through blind beginnings of a sense,
 And dark desire of difference,
 And fear, and hope that feeds on fear,
 To its own destined character?
 I cannot lose nor abdicate
 The separateness of my state,
 Nor thou, that out of burial drawn
 Through the black earth didst shoot and dawn
 Tender and small and green, and mount
 In air, a springing, silent fount,
 Until the cold bud, sheathed so long,
 Slow swelled and burst like sudden song
 Into the sun's delight, and naught
 Of costliest tissue ever wrought,
 Fragrant and in rare colours dyed
 For the white body of a bride
 Or king's anointing feast, could so

Enrich the noon or inly glow
 To lose the sweetly-kindled sense
 In mystery of magnificence.

Was there no cost to make thee fair?
 Did no far-off long pains prepare
 Those clustered curves of incense-breath?
 Did nothing suffer unto death
 To poise thee in thy glory? Came
 No tinge upon thy coloured flame
 From sighs? Was there no bosom bled
 That thou mightest be perfected—
 As, serving his taskmaster's doom
 A brown slave patient at the loom
 Toils, weaving some fine web of gold,
 More precious than his race, to fold
 In soft attire an idle queen,
 When long his own thin hands have been
 Dust, but in all their toil arrayed
 She through her pillared palace-shade
 Glows flower-like, and her young gaze has
 No thought of any deep Alas!
 Threaded into the sumptuous vest
 That lies upon her perfumed breast;
 Or as at crimsoned eve on high
 Some dying warrior turns his eye
 Where, lifted over spear and sword

Among the loud victorious horde,
 A golden trophy gleams with blood
 That from his own spent body flowed,
 And trumpets sound across the sand
 To sunset in a conquered land?

O thou wast from life's weltering ore
 Breathed by enchanting mind before
 Man was in his own shape. Far, far
 Thou seemest as the evening star!
 Yet movest me like that lone light
 Fetched through the ages of the night
 Into this breathing garden-close;
 Or like the things that no man knows
 In a child's eyes; or like, for one
 Watching a seaward-sinking sun,
 Beyond cold wastes of water pale
 The dim communion of a sail.

Ah! though I know not what thou art,
 Yet in the fastness of my heart
 How shall I tell what lies unwrought
 Into the figured films of thought,
 Uncoloured yet by sharp or sweet,
 Or what forge of transforming heat
 Threatens this world of use and fact
 Wherewith the busy brain is packed?
 Thou art of me, O Flower of Flame,

What is not uttered, has no name,
The springing of a want unmated,
A joy no fallen hour has dated.
Some of my mystery thou holdest,
Secretly, splendidly unfoldest.

ASOKA

I

Gentle as fine rain falling from the night,
The first beams from the Indian moon at full
Steal through the boughs, and brighter and more bright
Glide like a breath, a fragrance visible.
Asoka round him sees
The gloom ebb into glories half-espied
Of glimmering bowers through wavering traceries:
Pale as a rose by magical degrees
Opening, the air breaks into beauty wide,
And yields a mystic sweet;
And shapes of leaves shadow the pathway side
Around Asoka's feet.

O happy prince! From his own court he steals;
Weary of words is he, weary of throngs.
How this wide ecstasy of stillness heals
His heart of flatteries and the tale of wrongs!
Unseen he climbs the hill,

Unheard he brushes with his cloak the dew,
 While the young moonbeams every hollow fill
 With hovering flowers, so gradual and so still
 As if a joy brimmed where that radiance grew,
 Discovering pale gold
 Of spikenard balls and champak buds that new
 Upon the air unfold.

He gains the ridge. Wide open rolls the night!
 Airs from an infinite horizon blow
 Down holy Ganges, floating vast and bright
 Through old Magadha's forests. Far below
 He hears the cool wave fret
 On rocky islands; soft as moths asleep
 Come moonlit sails; there on a parapet
 Of ruined marble, where the moss gleams wet
 And from black cedars a lone peacock cries,
 Uncloaking rests Asoka, bathing deep
 In silence, and his eyes
 Of his own realm the wondrous prospect reap;
 At last aloud he sighs.

II

"How ennobling it is to taste
 Of the breath of a living power!
 The shepherd boy on the waste
 Whose converse, hour by hour,

Is alone with the stars and the sun,
 His days are glorified!
 And the steersman floating on
 Down this great Ganges tide,
 He is blest to be companion of the might
 Of waters and unwearied winds that run
 With him, by day, by night:
 He knows not whence they come, but they his path
 provide.

“But O more noble far
 From the heart of power to proceed
 As the beam flows forth from the star,
 As the flower unfolds on the reed.
 It is not we that are strong
 But the cause, the divine desire,
 The longing wherewith we long.
 O flame far-springing from the eternal fire,
 Feed, feed upon my heart till thou consume
 These bonds that do me wrong
 Of time and chance and doom,
 And I into thy radiance grow and glow entire!

“For he who his own strength trusts,
 And by violence hungers to tame
 Men and the earth to his lusts,
 Though mighty, he falls in shame;
 As a great fell tiger, whose sound

The small beasts quake to hear,
 When he stretches his throat to the shuddering ground
 And roars for blood; yet a trembling deer
 Brings him at last to his end.
 In a winter torrent falls his murderous bound!
 His raging claws the unheeding waters rend;
 Down crags they toss him sheer,
 With sheep ignobly drowned,
 And his fierce heart is burst with fury of its fear.

III

“Not so ye deal,
 Immortal Powers, with him
 Who in his weak hour hath made haste to kneel
 Where your divine springs out of mystery brim,
 And carries thence through the world’s uproar rude
 A clear-eyed fortitude;
 As the poor diver on the Arabian strand
 From the scorched rocky ledges plunging deep,
 Glides down the rough dark brine with questing hand
 Until he feels upleap
 Founts of fresh water, and his goatskin swells
 And bears him upward on those bouyant wells
 Back with a cool boon for his thirsting land.

“I also thirst,
 O living springs, for you:

Would that I might drink now, as when at first
 Life shone about me glorious and all true,
 And I abounded in your strength indeed,
 Which now I sorely need.

You have not failed, 'tis I! Yet this abhorred
 Necessity to hate and to despise—

'Twas not for this my youthful longing soared,
 Not thus would I grow wise!

Keep my heart tender still, that still is set
 To love without foreboding or regret,
 Even as this tender moonlight is outpoured.

“Now now, even now,
 Sleep doth the sad world take
 To peace it knows not. Radiant Sleep, wilt thou
 Unveil thy wonder for me too, who wake?
 O my soul melts into immensity,
 And yet 'tis I, 'tis I!

A wave upon a silent ocean, thrilled
 Up from its deepest deeps without a sound,
 Without a shore to break on, or a bound,
 Until the world be filled.

O mystery of peace, O more profound
 Than pain or joy, upbuoy me on thy power!
 Stay, stay, adorèd hour,
 I am lost, I am found again:

My soul is as a fountain springing in the rain,”

—Long, long upon that cedarn-shadowed height
 Musing, Asoka mingled with the night.
 At last the moon sank o'er the forest wide.
 Within his soul those fountains welled no more,
 Yet breathed a balm still, fresh as fallen dew:
 The mist coiled upward over Ganges shore;
 And he arose and sighed,
 And gathered his cloak round him, and anew
 Threaded the deep woods to his palace door.

INITIATION

The wind has fal'n asleep; the bough that tost
 Is quiet; the warm sun's gone; the wide light
 Sinks and is almost lost;
 Yet the April day glows on within my mind
 Happy as the white buds in the blue air,
 A thousand buds that shone on waves of wind.
 Now evening leads me woingly apart.
 The young wood draws me down these shelving ways
 Deeper, as if it drew me to its heart.

What stills my spirit? What awaits me here?
 So motionless the budded hazels spring,
 So shadowy and so near!
 My feet make not a sound upon this moss,—
 Greenest gloom, scented with cold primroses.

A ripple, shy as almost to be mute,
 Secretly wanders among further trees;
 Else the clear evening brims with loneliness,
 With stillness luminous and absolute.

The pause between sunseting and moonrise
 Exhales a strangeness. It melts out in dream
 The experience of the wise.
 This purity of sharpened sweet spring smells
 Comes like a memory lost since I was born.
 My own heart changes into mystery!
 There is some presence nears through all these spells
 Out of the darkened bosom of the earth:
 Not I the leaf, but the leaf touches me.

Who seeks me? What shy lover, whose approach
 Makes spiritual the white flowers on the thorn?
 Who seems to breathe up round me,—perfume
 strange!—

June and its bloom unborn?
 Shy as a virgin passion is the spring!
 I could have Time cease now, so there should live
 This blossom in the stillness of my heart,—
 Earth's earth, yet immaterial as a sense
 Enriched to understand, love, hope, forgive.

Now, now, if ever, could the spirit catch,
 Beyond the ear's range, thrills of airy sound.

I tremble, as at the lifting of a latch.
 Am I not found?
 This magical clear moment in the dusk
 Is like a crystal dewy-brimming bowl
 Imperilled upon lifting hands: I dread
 The breathing of the shadow that shall spill
 This wonder, and with it my very soul.

A dead bough cracks under my foot. The charm
 Breaks; I am I now, in a gloom aware
 Of furtive, flitting wing, and hunted eyes,
 And furry feet a-scare.
 Fear, it is fear exiles us each apart;
 We are all bound and prisoned in our fear;
 From the dark shadow of our own selves we flee.
 Ah, but that moment, open-eyed, erect,
 I had stept out of all fear, and was free.

How sweet it was in youth's shy giving-time
 Finding the sudden friend, whose thoughts ran out
 With yours in natural chime;
 Who knew, before speech, what the lips would tell!
 No need to excuse, to hide or to defend
 From him, in whom your dearest thought shone new
 And not a fancy stirred for him in vain.
 So was it, as with a so perfect friend,
 In that rare moment I have lost again.

But lo, a whiteness risen beyond the hill:
The moon-dawn! A late bird sings somewhere; hark
The long, low, loitering trill!
Like water-drops it falls into the dark.
The earth-sweetness holds me in its fragrant mesh.
Oh, though I know that I am bound afar,
Yet, where the grass is, there I also grew.
Blood knows more than the brain. Am I perhaps
Most true to earth when I seem most untrue?

THE SECRET

I

I lay upon my bed in the great night:
The sense of my body drowsed;
But a clearness yet lingered in the spirit,
By soft obscurity housed.

As an inn to a traveller on a long road,
Happy sleep appeared.
I should come there, to the room of waiting dreams,
In the time that slowly neared;

But still amid memory's wane fancy delighted,
Like wings in the afterglow
Dipping to the freshness of the waves of living,
To recover from long-ago

A touch or a voice, then soaring aloft and afar
The free world to range.
At last, on the brink of the dark, by subtle degrees
Came a chilling and a change.

Solitude sank to my marrow and pierced my veins.
Though I roam and though I learn
All the wonder of earth and of men, it is here
In the end I must return,

To the something alone that in each of us breathes
and sleeps,
Profound, isolate, still,
And must brave the giant world, and from hour to
hour
Must prove its own will;

To this self, unexcused and unglorified, drawn
From its fond shadows, and bare,
Wherein no man that has been, none that is or shall
be,
Shares, or can ever share.

And it tingled through me how all use and disguise
Hide nothing: none
Avails to shield, neither pleader nor protector,
But the truth of myself alone.

And the days that have made me, have I not made
them also?

Are they not drops of my blood?

What have I done with them? Flower they still
within me,

Or lie, trodden in the mud?

Why for god-like freedom an irreplaceable Here,
An irrevocable Now?

They were heavy like strong chains about my bosom,
Like hard bonds upon my brow.

The moments oozing out of the silence seemed
From my very heart lost

In the stream of the worlds: I felt them hot like tears
And of more than riches' cost.

Yet what was it alien in me stood and rebelled
And cried, Nevertheless

My passion is mine, my strength and my frailty; I
am not

Thrall unto Time's duress!

Then suddenly rose before me, older than all,
Night of the soft speech,

With murmur of tender winds, yet terrible with stars
Beyond fancy's reach;

Without foundation, without summit, without
 Haven or refuge, Night
 Palpitating with stars that dizzy thought and desire
 In their unimagined flight,
 O these most terrible! vast surmises, touching
 The pulse of a fear unknown,
 Where all experience breaks like a frail bubble,
 And the soul is left alone,
 Alone and abandoned of all familiar uses,—
 Itself the only place
 It knows,—a question winged, barbed and burning
 In the answerless frost of Space.
 I was afraid; but my heart throbbed faster, fiercer.
 I trembled, but cried anew:
 I am strange to you, O Stars! O Night, I am your
 exile,
 I have no portion in you.
 Though you shall array your silences against me,
 I know you and defy.
 Though I be but a moth in an abyss of ages,
 This at least is not yours; it is I.

II

O blessed be the touch of thought
 That marries moments from afar,
 That finds the thing it had not sought,

And smells a spice no treasure bought,
And learns what never sages taught,
And sees this earth a dazzling star!

As in the sheen of a lamp unseen,
The lamp of memory shrouded long,
There sprang before me, sweet as song,
The vision of a branch of bloom,
A swaying branch of blossom scented;
And in that bloom amid the gloom
My heart was luminously tented.

III

A score of years was melted, and I was young
And the world young with me,
When in innocence of delight I laid me down
Beneath a certain tree.

The breathing splendour of that remembered May
Had yet seven days to spill
In fragrant showers of fairy white and red
And in notes from the blackbird's bill,

When I laid me down on a bank by the water's edge:
In the glowing shadow I lay.
My very body was drenched in a speechless joy
Whose cause I could not say.

The sky was poured in singing rivers of blue;
The ripple danced in sight;
Close to the marge was a coloured pebble; it burned
Amid kisses of liquid light.

Like a hurry of little flames the tremble of gleams
Shivered up through the leaves and was gone.
Like a shaking of heavenly bells was the sound of the
leaves
In the tower of branches blown.

And odours wandering each from its honeyed haunt
Over the air stole,
Like memories out of a world before the world,
Seeking the private soul.

But I knew not where my soul was: in that hour
Neither time nor place it knew!
It was trembling high in the topmost blossom that
drank
Of the glory of airy blue;

It was dark in the root that sucked of the plenteous
earth;
It was lovely flames of fire;
It was water that murmured round and around the
world;
It was poured in the sun's desire.

Not the bird, but the bird's bright, wayward swift-
ness;

Not the flowers in magic throng,
But the shooting, the breathing and the perfumed
breaking;

Not the singer it was, but the song.

I touched the flesh of my body, and it was strange.
It seemed that my spirit knew
It was I no more; yet the earth and the sky answered
And cried aloud, It is you!

Then into my blood the word of my being thrilled,
(Not a nerve but aware)—It is I!

Yet I could not tell my thought from the green of
the grass,

My bliss from the blue of the sky.

Overbrimmed, overflowing, I rose like one who has
drunk

Of a radiance keener than wine.

I stood on the marvellous earth, and felt my blood
As the stream of a power divine.

.
Laughter of children afar on the air came to me
And touched me softly home.

There were tears in me like trembling dew; I knew
not

Where they had stolen from.

Who is not my brother, and who is not my sister?
O wonder of human eyes,
Have I passed you by, nor perceived how luminous
 in you
All infinity lies?

Love opened my eyes and opened my ears; not one,
But his soul is as mine is to me!
I heard like a ripple around the world breaking
The voices of children in glee;

I saw the beauty, secret as starlit wells,
Treasured in the bosoms of the old.
I heard like the whisper of leaf to leaf in the night-
 wind
Hopes that the tongue never told.

Was it the grass that quivered about me? I felt
Not that, but the hearts beating
Close to my own, unnumbered as blades of the grass,
And the dead in the quick heart meeting;

And I knew the dreams of wandering sorrow and joy
Breathed in the sleep of the night
From the other side of the earth, that for me was
 glowing
To the round horizon's light;

The earth that moves through the light and the dark
for ever,

As a dancer moves among
The maze of her sister stars, with a silent speed
In a dance that is always young:

And the heart of my body knew that it shared in all;
It was there, not alone nor afraid.
It throbbed in the life that can never be destroyed,
In the things Time never made.

THE MIRROR

Where is all the beauty that has been?
Where the bloom?
Dust on boundless wind? Grass dropt into fire?
Shall Earth boast at last of all her teeming womb,
All that suffered, all that triumphed, to inspire
Life in perfect mould and speech, the proud mind's
lamp serene—
Nothing? Space be starry in tremendous choir—
For whom?

In this deserted chamber, as the evening falls,
Silent curtains move no fold;
Long has ebbd the floor's pale gold;
Shadows deepen down the silent walls.
The air is mute as dreams beneath a sleeper's face,

Distant, undivined;
 But every hovering shadow seems to hold
 Want untold.

The look of things forsaken, each in its own place,
 Memories without home in any mind,
 Idle, rich neglect and perfume old—
 Over these the glimmer of the twilight fades;
 Infinite human solitude invades
 Forms relinquished, hues resigned.

O little mirror, round and clear,
 In solemn-coloured shadow lying
 Cold as the moon, pale as a tear,
 With spiritual silver beam replying
 Indifferently to all things as to one;
 Beauty's relic and oblivion,
 But void, void, void! Desolate as a cave
 Abandoned even of the breaking wave,
 A home of youth and mirth when all its guests are
 gone!

As I touch thee in the silence here,
 Where thou liest alone, apart,
 Through the silence of my heart
 Thou flashest elfin flames of fear.

Like a thought of lost delight,
 Like love-sweetness, like despair,
 Come faint spices of the night

Floating on the darkened air.

The air is tender with the sense of dew,
 Is tranced, is dim, is heavy, as if there hung
 Within the tinges of its shadowy hue
 Ghosts of lost flowers, with all their petals young,
 And the young beauty they made incense to.

O forlorn mirror, is there nothing thine?
 The cup is emptied of its fragrant wine,
 The dress is vacant of the breathing form,
 And thou that gleam'st
 All absence of what once moved gracious, white and
 warm

In thy clear wells, or luminously mused,
 O little mirror long disused,
 Laid in this empty bower's recess,
 Thou thyself seem'st
 The soul and mystery of emptiness.

Yet if I should raise thee now,
 As once and oft, thou knowest how,
 Hand and slim wrist, smooth as a flower stem, raised
 Thy silent brilliance, and with intent brow
 Eyes within thee gazed
 Seeking thy oracle,
 Shall not from those pellucid secrecies appear
 Not I, nor any shape of this dim room,
 But all that in thy cave of lambent gloom

Hath dwelt and still may dwell,
 Ambushed like visions bound in sleeping memory's
 cell;
 All that thy brightness buries as the sea
 Tossed bones and crusted gold; had I the key,
 Mightst thou not ope thy depths, mightst thou not
 yield,—
 Wonder of wonders!—what since time began
 Was never yet revealed,
 The unmapped, unmeasured, secret heart of man?

Half-shut eyes voluptuously
 Lightening, as the bosom swells and glows;
 Smile to smile flowering from an ardent thought:
 O what moments didst thou deify
 With the promise of life crushed to wine
 Redder than the cheek's triumphant rose!
 —But from deeper places hast thou brought
 Nothing? Are not other answers thine?

Hast thou not heard, hast thou not seen,
 Hast thou not shown, hast thou not found
 Shames unwhispered, terrors bound,
 Earthquake pangs of aghast surmise,
 When with itself the heart has been
 Face to face in an hour profound?
 Out of thee what ghosts shall rise,
 Shapes and gestures, and accusing eyes!

World-flattered faces in midnights of pain;
 Faces defaced by tiger-lusts insane;
 Faces appalled before a self unguessed;
 Ashaming dawns on faces fallen and dispossessed!
 O what glimpses hast thou flashed in dread,
 With what hauntings wast thou visited,
 Apparitions of a soul made bare
 Shuddering at the thing it looked on there!
 But thou art stainless, though the heart has bled,
 Thou art silent as the air
 Or the wave that closes smooth above the drowner's
 head.

No man hath seen his soul
 Save for a glimpse in the night
 Brief as an ember of coal
 Blown for an instant bright.
 To see his own soul as it is,
 Eternity must enter him.
 With the torches of Seraphim
 That have shone to the last abyss.
 Mirror, couldst thou show the spirit this,
 Then within this narrow room
 Were the Judgment and the Doom.
 For by so much as its own self it knew
 Searched by that burning vision through and through
 To the innermost of where it crouched and hid

Amid the husks of the mean deeds it did,
 Amid the shadow of all it shunned, the quest
 It turned from, and in palterings acquiesced,
 To the uttermost of what its eager passion
 Caught of the glory springing to re-fashion
 Hope and the world, and great with pity saw
 Life darkly wrestling with the angel, Law—
 By such a measure, molten in that fire
 Should the soul mete itself on God's desire,
 Suffer at last all wisdom, and endure
 The beam and vision of a thought all-pure.
 O were not this to taste Heaven's dawn, or dwell,
 Because of knowledge, in the pains of Hell?

II

Where is all the wailing, all the want
 That sorrow tore
 From Love's bleeding breast? Extinguished quite?
 Shall the wide-winged glory of hope extravagant,
 Shall the laughter, shall the song that sprang to soar
 Fall, and no ear hearken, and their failing flight
 Echoless waste walls of adamant
 Ignore?
 Draw wide the curtain! Fabulous, remote
 Night is come.
 Over Earth's lost bosom fragrant breathings float
 Into glimmering heights of gloom.

But upon the solitary verge extreme
 Steals a beam.
 Hushed and sudden, ere the eye could note
 Lo, the moon is there!
 Innocence of splendour, gazing bare,
 Drenches leaves in quiet, thought in dream.

Is it Earth's pale mirror lifted lone
 For an answer to her million sighs?
 Can that far tranquillity atone
 In the gaze of those unnumbered eyes
 For the pang, and for the moan,
 For the heart's dim burial and long dirge,
 Luring, as she lures the mutinous sea-surge,
 To her will of peace this human tide?
 From a charmed shadow on the shorn hill-side
 Hand-in-hand lovers through the trees emerge,
 And pause; their very souls are glorified,
 Their feet tread airy on immaterial ground,
 With marvelling gaze they feel
 That well of spiritual light o'erflow
 The listening hush, and steal
 Fear and trouble, as though
 The world were one vast music of ethereal sound
 And they a stillness in the midst of it.
 Peace, peace and pity! pardon, pity, peace,
 Passing all mortal wit

O truth long-sought and magically found,
 O wonder and release!
 O secret of the world long-hidden in day's dust!
 They bathe their hearts in that sweet dew, their hands
 Thrill clasping in a touch that understands
 Nothing magnificent but a divine surrender
 Absolving and august.
 To distances immersed and tender
 Unfolds this vale of struggle hard and pent,
 Region of unwon ravishment
 In unadventured lands,
 A place of leaves and lonely light and leafy scent
 Storied like that old forest of the perilous Fleece.

Sorceress of million nights!
 Hast thou charmed indeed the brew,
 When with stealth of perverse rites—
 Mouths that mutter, hands that strew,—
 Love tormented and malign,
 Flushed with terror like a maddening wine,
 Sought another's rue?
 Hecate of the cross-roads, hast thou hearkened
 To the sailing witch's mew
 And the felon raven's croak
 When the shuddering winds were darkened
 And the leaves rushed from the withered oak?
 Ah, not these foul toys would I invoke!

O for some supreme enchanting spell,
 Voice of a God crying aloud,
 Felt and feared on Earth's heart-strings,
 To conjure and to compel
 Like a spectre from the shroud
 Or like incense-dust that springs
 Into fire and fragrant cloud,
 Out of thy blind caves and cold recesses
 Out of that blank mirror's desert beam
 All the unnumbered longings and wild prayers,
 Infinite heart-broken tendernesses,
 Indignations and despairs,
 That from man's long wound of passion stream,
 Sucked like vapour, like a mist of tears
 Into that imagined peace, that ecstasy!
 O surely, surely, thou hast wrought thy part
 In every secret and tempestuous heart,
 Thou that hast gleamed on thousand battle-crim-
 soned spears,
 Thou that wast radiant on Gethsemane!

She has seen not, she has heard not.
 Hearts have leapt for her, but she has stirred not.
 Pity she has made, but none has had,
 Though her magic mingles with Earth's want
 And the trouble of Earth's tender sons,
 Thunder of the builded Babylons,

Music of the dreaming poet's chant,
 Venture of the steering argosies,
 With a light as of divine fulfilment clad
 Breathing in for ever syllables of peace.
 Peace, is it peace? Yet Earth, dark Earth,
 Mother, O Mother, thou that nourishest
 In the blind patience of thy teeming breast
 Hope without end; who drivest life to birth,
 Yet numberest not our dear and sacred dead,
 Unheeding of our anguish and lost cries
 So thou mayst build beyond us, in our stead,
 A race enriched with all for which we bled,
 Of haughtier stature and of kinglier eyes;
 Thou of whose vast desire strong realms of old,
 The dynasty of empires, were but waves
 That towered and crashed into their splendid graves
 For thine unresting hunger to remould
 Yet mightier, O insatiable! Doth fear
 Not shake thee, Mother, seest thou not even here
 In that cold mirror's answer what shall steep
 Thee also in oblivion? Thou shalt keep
 Of all the fruit of thy most fiery spring,
 Stored riches of thy sleepless trafficking,
 And proud perfection thou hast travailed for,
 Nothing! The beauty that thy body bore
 Fresh and exulting (Mother, dost not weep?)
 Laughter of streams, young flowers, and starry seas,

Pillar and palace, heaven-faced images
 That man has wrought, his tossing heart to ease,
 Nothing! To cloud shall vanish the deed done:
 The bannered victory, the wrong borne alone,
 Nothing! and thou be desolate and none
 To feel thy desolation: emptiness,
 Night within night, immense and issueless,
 Till as a breath upon the mirror dies,
 Fades the last smoke of thy long sacrifice.

Out of the deeps, trembling, the soul
 Cries through night to the silent pole:
 "I that am want, I that am grief,
 I that am love, I that am mirth,
 I that am fear, I that am fire,
 Though thou clothe me in beauty brief,
 Though I have worn thy sweet attire,
 I, thy endless sorrow, Earth,
 Dwell in the glory of God's desire,
 That kneads for ever in the flesh
 Of man, to make his spirit afresh,
 A marvel more than all thy wandering seas,
 And mightier than thy caverned mysteries,
 Nor stays nor sleeps, but world on world transfuses
 Melted ever to diviner uses,
 Through infinite swift changes burning,
 Itself the end, no end discerning,

Till all the universe be wrought
Into its far perfecting thought.
Then this mind of cloud and rue
Shall in eternal mind be new,
Mirror of God, pure and alone,
See and be seen, know and be known.

WORDS

Words, breathing words, full-murmuring syllables!
How you enrich the thoughts that dwell in you
With far-brought perfume, that no meaning tells
Yet stirs the mind to flower in thoughts anew!

Sometimes how lulling like the rain's soft veil,
Then vivid as the pressure of a hand,
Now filled with fair surmises like a sail
Against the blue coast of some foreign land.

O words, you live and therefore you can die,
Ill-yoked, imprisoned, tamed in a dull task!
So callous tongues may use you, but not I,
Who for your grace, a wooing lover, ask.

Dead things may kill; and you being dead entomb
The frozen thought that once you clothed in bloom.

THE MEETING

Faces of blank decorum, and bald heads
And the drone of a voice saying what none denies;
Words like cobwebs, scarcely stirred by a breath,
Loosely hanging, grey in an unswept corner,
Thoughts belonging to nobody, like old coats
Cheaply borrowed out of a dead man's wardrobe.

SELECTED POEMS

Over his spectacles looks the Chairman, blandly
Solemn, exacting attention, nodding approval.

I look on the floor and ponder the shaven planks,—
Tall trees once, tossing aloft in the wild air;

I watch the sun that falls upon oaken carvings,
A gentle beam from millions of miles away:

Hands and a chisel carved them,—at night the lips
Of the carver blew the dust from his work and smiled.

The chairs, so silent under the ponderous flesh,—
Pleasure shaped them out of a brain's designing.

The brass of the chandelier, the molten metal
Streamed in the mould, conspired to friendly uses.

I feel the spring of the trees and their old rejoicing,
The touch of the warmth of hands that felt for beauty.

Near and neighbourly are those shapes about me,
Taking the light sweetly and saying nothing.

Why is a voice, the only human assertion,
Farther away than the suns of the astronomers?

RICORDI

Of a tower, of a tower, white
In the warm Italian night,
Of a tower that shines and springs
I dream, and of our delight.

Of doves, of a hundred wings
 Sweeping in sound that sings
 Past our faces, and wide
 Returning in tremulous rings:

Of a window on Arno side,
 Sun-warm when the rain has dried
 On the roofs, and from far below
 The clear street-cries are cried:

Of a certain court we know,
 And love's and sorrow's throe
 In marbles of mighty limb,
 And the beat of our hearts aglow:

Of water whispering dim
 To a porphyry basin's rim;
 Of flowers on a windy wall
 Richly tossing, I dream.

And of white towns nestling small
 Upon Apennine, with a tall
 Tower in the sunset air
 Sounding soft vesper-call:

And of golden morning bare
 On Lucca roofs, and fair
 Blue hills, and scent that shook
 From blossoming chestnuts, where

Red ramparts overlook
Hot meadow and leafy nook,
And girls with laughing cries
Beat clothes in a glittering brook:

And of magic-builded skies
Upon still lagoons; and wise
Padua's pillared street
In the charm of a day that dies:

Of olive-shade in the heat
And a lone, cool, rocky seat
On an island beach, and bright
Fresh ripples about our feet;

Of mountains in vast moon-light,
Of rivers in rushing flight,
Of gardens of green retreat
I dream, and of our delight.

UMBRIA

Deep Italian day with a wide-washed splendour fills
Umbria green with valleys, blue with a hundred hills.
Dim in the south Soracte, a far rock faint as a cloud
Rumours Rome, that of old spoke over earth, "Thou
art mine!"

Mountain shouldering mountain circles us forest-
browed

Heaped upon each horizon in fair uneven line;
 And white as on builded altars tipped with a vestal
 flame
 City on city afar from the thrones of the mountains
 shine,
 Kindling, for us that name them, many a memoried
 fame,
 Out of the murmuring ages, flushing the heart like
 wine.
 Pilgrim-desired Assisi is there; Spoleto proud
 With Rome's imperial arches, with hanging woods
 divine:
 Monte Falco hovers above the hazy vale
 Of sweet Clitumnus loitering under poplars pale;
 O'er Foligno, Trevi clings upon Apennine.
 And over this Umbrian earth—from where with bright
 snow spread
 Towers abrupt Leonessa, huge, like a dragon's chine,
 To western Ammiata's mist-apparelled head,
 Ammiata that sailors watch on wide Tyrrhenian
 waves,—
 Lie in the jealous gloom of cold and secret shrine
 Or Gorgon-sculptured chamber hewn in old rock
 caves,
 Hiding their dreams from the light, the austere
 Etruscan dead.
 O lone forests of oak and little cyclamens red

Flowering under shadowy silent boughs benign!
Streams that wander beneath us over a pebbly bed!
Hedges of dewy hawthorn and wild woodbine!
Now as the eastern ranges flush and the high air
 chills
Blurring meadowy vale, blackening heaths of pine,
Now as in distant Todi, loftily-towered—a sign
To wearying travellers—lights o'er hollow Tiber
 gleam,
Now our voices are stilled and our eyes are given to
 a dream,
As night, upbringing o'er us the ancient stars anew,
Stars that triumphing Cæsar and tender Francis
 knew,
With fancied voices mild, august, immortal, fills
Umbria dim with valleys, dark with a hundred hills.

A VISION OF RESURRECTION

The Genius of an hour that fading Day
Resigned to wide-haired Night's impending brow
Stole me apart, I knew not where nor how,
And from my sense ravished the world away.
Rose in my view a visionary ground,
A rugged plain, beneath uncoloured skies.
There slowly in the midst without a sound
Upheaved a motion as of birth. I gazed,

When lo! a head, with upcast empty eyes
 And semblance of dead shoulders' majesties,
 Whose fleshless arms a marble breast upraised.

But even as this emerged, nor yet was free,
 Behold it ripen into bloom and form,
 The shrunk limbs round and into colour warm,
 The hair spring new as leaves upon a tree,
 And curl like small flames round the forehead fair.
 At last the eyelids open wide: it seems
 A glorious-statured youth that wakens there,
 Casting his eyes in wonder down, to feel
 This body that with clear blood newly teems,
 How perfect, yet still heavy as from dreams,
 And over it the ancient beauty steal.

O lost in musing recollection sweet,
 What summoning cry thine age-long slumber stirred?
 In that profound grave has thy cold ear heard
 From heaven the mailed Archangel call, whose feet
 Stand planted in the stream of stars, and whose
 Time-shattering trump hath pealed to the world's
 core?

Yet still doth thy averted head refuse
 To lift its eyes up; still thy spread hands lean
 On earth, while pensive thou surveyest o'er
 This radiant shape that all thy sorrows bore,
 Strong now as if no pain had ever been.

What thoughts begin to glide upon thy brain,
 And part thy lips with sighs? Is it some fear
 'Mid flattering heavenly airs approaching near
 This strange unproven peace to entertain?
 Musing, "O rebel flesh, in my hard need
 How often didst thou fail me! I know well
 How thou didst make me suffer, toil, and bleed,
 At once my prison and my enemy.
 Dear body, I fear thee yet: dark rages dwell
 Within thee: how shalt thou in peace excel?
 How learn to bear perfect felicity?"

Nay, rather that fond wonder in thy look
 Is wonder to have lost the thoughts that maim,
 The wounds of evilly-invented shame
 And fear that each sweet impulse overtook.
 Now thou art free, and all thy being whole,
 Perceivest in that peril-haunted earth
 The fair and primal gestures of thy soul,
 And knowest how all thy full completion fed,
 The urging hungers, the sun-sweetened mirth;
 Yea, finding even in those furies worth,
 Which lacking, hardly art thou perfected.

What trees are these whose dim young branches rise
 Above thee? Springing waters freshen sweet
 New tender green for thee to pace and greet
 The growing of the dawn of Paradise.

Thou gazest round thee with a listening face,
 Harkening perhaps to some far-floating song
 Unheard of men. Ah, go not ere thy grace,
 O glorified, of me be throughly learned!
 But as I prayed in supplication strong
 The vision faded, and the world, whose wrong
 Mocks holy beauty and our desire, returned.

THE ENEMY

Would'st thou this monster, that we name the world,
 Who round the envied tree of blissful fruit
 Lies like a dragon curled
 In jealous watch, our venture to dispute;
 Would'st thou that she were smoothly negligent,
 By any pleader bent,
 A tender judge, to tears and pity prone,
 She that on love defeated builds her throne,
 The spoiler strong, sanguine with our despairs,
 She that the traitor in us holds in fee,
 Rich with our woes, with our fears cruel, she
 Whose easy wisdom the sad heart ensnares?

Rather rejoice that this immortal foe
 To truceless war our ardour challenges.
 She hath her task to do,
 Her maw to fill, her rages to appease;

Nor less because the noble rebel claims
 Exemption from her shames,
 Is of her native harshness justified.
 Sharp be our swords, trebly our armour tried,
 Our hearts enduring and relentless be
 To look her 'twixt the eyes as conquering men
 And take her worst of wounds. For then, O then,
 If we can bear our freedom, we are free.

PINE TREES

Down through the heart of the dim woods
 The laden, jolting waggons come.
 Tall pines, chained together,
 They carry; stems straight and bare,
 Now no more in their own solitudes
 With proud heads to rock and hum;
 Now at the will of men to fare
 Away from their brethren, their forest-friends
 In the still woods; through wild weather
 Alone to endure to the world's ends:
 Soon to feel the power of the North
 Careering over black waves' foam;
 Soon to exchange the steady earth
 For heaving decks; the scents of their home,
 Honeyed wild-thyme, gorse, and heather,
 For the sting of the spray, the bitter air.

JOHN WINTER

What ails John Winter, that so oft
Silent he sits apart?
The neighbours cast their looks on him;
But deep he hides his heart.

In Deptford streets the houses small
Huddle forlorn together.
Whether the wind blow or be still,
'Tis soiled and sorry weather.

But over these dim roofs arise
Tall masts of ocean ships.
Whenever John Winter looked on them,
The salt blew on his lips.

He cannot pace the street about,
But they stand before his eyes!
The more he shuns them, the more proud
And beautiful they rise.

He turns his head, but in his ear
The steady Trade-winds run,
And in his eye the endless waves
Ride on into the sun.

His little boy at evening said,
Now tell us, Dad, a tale

Of naked men that shoot with bows,
Tell of the spouting whale!

He told old tales, his eyes were bright;
His wife looked up to see
And smiled on him; but in the midst
He ended suddenly.

He bade them each good-night, and kissed
And held them to his breast.
They wondered and were still, to feel
Their lips so fondly pressed.

He sat absorbed in silent gloom.
His wife lifted her head
From sewing, and stole up to him.
What ails you, John? she said.

He spoke no word. A silent tear
Fell softly down her cheek.
She knelt beside him, and his hand
Was on her forehead meek.

But even as his tender touch
Her dumb distress consoled,
The mighty waves danced in his eyes
And through the silence rolled.

There fell a soft November night,
Restless with gusts that shook

The chimneys, and beat wildly down
The flames in the chimney nook.

John Winter lay beside his wife.
'Twas past the mid of night.
Softly he rose, and in dead hush
Stood stealthily upright.

Softly he came where slept his boys,
And kissed them in their bed.
One stretched his arms out in his sleep:
At that he turned his head.

And now he bent above his wife.
She slept a sleep serene.
Her patient soul was in the peace
Of breathing slumber seen.

At last he kissed one aching kiss,
Then shrank again in dread,
And from his own home guiltily
And like a thief he fled.

But now with darkness and the wind
He breathes a breath more free,
And walks with calmer step, like one
Who goes with destiny.

And see, before him the great masts
Tower with all their spars

Black on the dimness, soaring bold
Among the mazy stars.

In stormy rushing through the air
Wild scents the darkness filled,
And with a fierce forgetfulness
His drinking nostril thrilled.

He hasted with quick feet, he hugged
The wildness to his breast,
As one who goes the only way
To set his heart at rest.

When morning glimmered, a great ship
Dropt gliding down the shore.
John Winter coiled the anchor ropes
Among his mates once more.

SONGS OF THE WORLD UNBORN

Songs of the world unborn
Swelling within me, a shoot from the heart of Spring,
As I walk the ample and teeming street
This tranquil and misty morn,
What is it to me you sing?
My body warm, my brain clear,
Unreasoning pleasure possesses my soul complete;
The keen air mettles my blood,

And the pavement rings to my feet.
 O houses erect and vast, O steeples proud,
 That soar serenely aloof,
 Vistas of railing and roof,
 Dim-seen in the delicate shroud of the frosty air,
 You are built but of shadow and cloud,
 I will come with the wind and blow,
 You shall melt, to be seen no longer, O phantoms fair.
 Embattled city, trampler of dreams,
 So long deluding, thou shalt delude no more;
 The trembling heart thou haughtily spurnest,
 But thou from a dream art sprung,
 From a far-off vision of yore,
 To a dream, to a dream returnest.

Time, the tarrier,
 Time, the unshunnable,
 Stealing with patient rivers the mountainous lands
 Or in turbulent fire upheaving,
 Who shifts for ever the sands,
 Who gently breaks the unbreakable barrier.
 Year upon year into broadening silence weaving,
 Time, O mighty and mightily peopled city,
 Time is busy with thee.
 Behold, the tall tower moulders in air,
 The staunch beam crumbles to earth,
 Pinnacles falter, and fall,

And the immemorial wall
 Melts, as a cloud is melted under the sun.
 Nor these alone, but alas!
 Things of diviner birth,
 Glories of men and women strong and fair,
 They too alas! perpetually undone!
 As the green apparition of leaves
 Buds out in the smile of May;
 As the red leaf smoulders away,
 That frozen Earth receives;
 In all thy happy, in all thy desolate places,
 They spring, they glide,
 Unnumbered blooming and fading faces!
 O what shall abide?

Aching desire, mutinous longing;
 Love, the divine rebel, the challenge of all;
 Faith, that the doubters doubted and wept her fall,
 To an empty sepulchre thronging;
 These, the sap of the Earth,
 Irresistibly sprung,
 In the blood of heroes running sweet,
 In the dream of the dreamers ever young,
 Supplanting the solid and vast delusions,
 Hearten the heart of the wronged to endure defeat,
 The forward-gazing eyes of the old sustain,
 Mighty in perishing youth and in endless birth,
 These remain.

THE DEATH OF ADAM

Cedars, that high upon the untrodden slopes
Of Lebanon stretch out their stubborn arms,
Through all the tempests of seven hundred years
Fast in their ancient place, where they look down
Over the Syrian plains and faint blue sea,
When snow for three days and three nights hath fall'n
Continually, and heaped those terraced boughs
To massy whiteness, still in fortitude
Maintain their aged strength, although they groan ;
In such a wintriness of majesty,
O'ersnowed by his uncounted years, and scarce
Supporting that hard load, yet not o'ercome,
Was Adam: all his knotted thews were shrunk,
Hollow his mighty thighs, toward which his beard,
Pale as the stream of far-seen waterfalls,
Hung motionless; betwixt the shoulders grand
Bowed was the head, and dim the gaze; and both
His heavy hands lay on his marble knees.
So sits he all day long and scarcely stirs,
And scarcely notes the bright shapes of his sons
Moving in the broad light without his tent,
That propt on poles about a giant oak
Looks southward to the river and the vale:
Only sometimes slowly he turns his head,

As seeking to recover some lost thought
 From the dear presence of the white-haired Eve
 Who, less in strength, hath less endured, and still
 With slow and careful footsteps tendeth him,
 Or seated opposite with silent eyes
 Companions him: their thoughts go hand in hand.
 So now she sits reposing in the dusk
 Of their wide tent, like a great vision throned
 Of the Earth Mother, tranquil and august,
 Accorded to some youthful votary
 Deep in an Asian grove, under the moon.

Peace also rests on Adam; not such peace
 As comes forlornly to men dulled with cares,
 Whom no ennobling memory uplifts;
 Peace of a power far mightier than his own,
 Outlasting all it fostered into life,
 Pervades him and sustains him: such a peace
 As blesses mossed and mouldering architraves
 Of pillars standing few among the wreck
 Of many long since fallen, pillars old,
 Reared by a race long vanished, where the birds
 Nest as in trees, and every crevice flowers,
 As mothering Earth, having some time indulged
 Men's little uses, makes their ruin fair
 Ere in her bosom it be folded up.
 Thus Adam's mind relinquishing the world,

That grows more dim around him every day,
 Withdraws into itself, and in degree
 As all that mates him to the moving hours,
 Even as his outward joy and vigour fail,
 So surely turns his homing spirit back
 Unto those silent sources whence delight
 And hope and strength and buoyancy of old
 Flowed fresh upon his youth, persisting still
 To seek those first and fairest memories
 In youth and sunshine O how lightly lost,
 How difficult in darkness to regain!
 He sits in idle stillness, yet at times
 From the dark wells of musing some old hour
 Floats upward, as the tender lotus lifts
 Her swaying stalk up through the limpid depth
 Of pools in rivers never known to man,
 And buoyed on idle wet luxurious leaves
 Peacefully opens white bloom after bloom.
 He is rapt far from this last shore of age;
 He sees the face of Eve as she approached
 To bring him flowers new-found in Paradise,
 Or hiding her young sorrow on his breast;
 And Abel as a child and Cain with him
 Playing beneath the shadow of old trees,
 All dearer by the desert interposed
 Of time and toil and passionate regret,
 Troubling his inmost spirit, until his face,

SELECTED POEMS

Wrought with remembrance and with longing, wears
The pressure and the sign of all that swells
And brims his heart, fain to be freed in speech.

“What ails thee, Adam?” gentle Eve began.

“Why art thou troubled, what thoughts vex thy mind?

For though my eyes are dim, yet I can see

Thy breast heaves upward, and long sighs go forth,

And thou dost move thy hands, and shake thy head.”

But Adam answered not; he seemed alone.

Then, lifting up his eyes, he saw his sons

Slowly approaching in the evening light

With all their flocks; and many voices rose

On the clear air about the tents and trees,

As they made ready for the sacrifice

Before the evening meal: soon they drew near

To Adam's tent; and he looked on them all,

Standing to wait his blessing, of all years,

From the boy Adriel to the aged Seth,

Outlined with glory by the sinking sun.

Strange in their strength and beauty they appeared;

And Adam, though he saw them, seemed to gaze

Beyond them, seeking what he found not there.

Over them all his eyes unresting roved,

While they in silence waited for his word.

At last he spoke: “Where is my firstborn Cain?”

They looked on one another. Few had heard

That darkened name; but Eve bowed down her head.
 And Seth stood forth amid them hushed and spoke
 With a grave utterance, "Cain is far away.
 Thou knowest, O my father, how we have heard
 That far beyond the mountains to the east
 He dwells, and ever wanders o'er that land.
 Many days' journey must a man be gone
 Ere he reach thither and return again;
 Nor know we certainly where Cain may dwell.
 Yet what thou biddest, that shall be performed;
 Shall we send to him?" Adam answered, "Send:
 Let them go quickly, see that they make haste.
 But on the tenth day bid them come again,
 Whether they have found him, or have found him not,
 For mine eyes fail, yea, and my heart grows cold."

Heavy as pale clouds of October roll
 Over the soaring snows of Ararat,
 The vapour of oblivion fell once more
 Down over Adam's head, in languor drooped
 Between his mighty shoulders on his breast.
 From morn to night, from night to morn he sat
 As in a trance of deep thought undivined.
 His children looking on his face were filled
 With desolation and disquietude,
 Sad as Armenian shepherds when they watch
 For the still clouds to roll from those great peaks,

Praying the clear bright North winds to restore
 Their guardian mountain; with such heavy hearts
 They waited for his face to give a sign
 That still gave none. Listless amid their toil
 They grew, and sitting idle by their flocks
 Each from his station, scattered on the hills,
 Turned often to the east, in hope to spy
 The messengers returning: but at eve
 While the grey-bearded elders patient sat
 In the cool tent-doors, they would pace the shore
 Under the gathering stars, and murmured low
 One to another saying, "What is this
 That comes upon us all, what evil thing
 Whereof we have not heard? What cloud is fallen
 Upon our father Adam, and why seeks he
 This Cain whose name we know not? Peace is gone,
 And nothing now is as it was before."
 And others answered, "Well for us, if they
 Whom we have sent on such a hazard come
 Ever again or we behold them more!
 Would they had never gone on this dark quest!
 We have no hunters brave and swift as they,—
 Ophir, that was the strongest of us all,
 And Iddo, that could match the eagle's sight."
 Thus the young men spoke their despondent mind.
 But every morn renewing wearied hope
 They turned with the sunrising to the east,

And numbered the long hours till noon, and still
 Nor morn nor noon brought tidings; and each eve
 Watching tall herons by the sandy pools
 Widen their wings and slow with trailing feet
 And lifted head sail off into the sky,
 They followed them with long and silent thoughts
 Over the darkening mountains, far and far
 Into that never yet imagined world
 Beginning to oppress them; whither now
 Their fears went wandering through enormous night.
 Thus waxed and waned each heavy day; at last
 From mouth to mouth the unquiet murmur ran,
 " 'Tis the ninth evening, and they are not come!"

The kingly star had stolen from his throne
 In the first brightening of the morrow morn:
 And far in the east, with frail cloud overspread,
 Light hovered in the pale immensity.
 A mile-broad shade beneath the mountain slept;
 But opposite a dewy glimmer soon
 Moulded the shapes of rough crags, and beneath
 Strewn boulders, and thin streams, and slopes obscure.
 There, on the slopes amid the rocks appeared
 The youth of Adam's race, assembled forms
 Sitting or standing with hand-shaded eyes
 At gaze into the eastern gorge, where hills
 Between dark shoulders inaccessible

Opened a narrowing way into the dawn.
Stillier than statues, yet with beating hearts
They waited while the wished light kindled clear,
Invading that deep valley, until the sun
Flamed warm upon their limbs through coloured air,
And slow rose upward: it was nigh to noon:
At last a motion on the horizon stirred
And a faint dust in the far gorge was blown.
Then those that sat rose up and gazed erect,
And those that stood moved and stept on a pace,
And as they watched amid the shining dust
Two far-off forms appeared, but only two.
Their straining eyes watched, but no other came.
A sigh ran through their troubled ranks, they turned
To one another, then again to those
Two lonely journeyers downcast and slow,
Who now discerned them from afar and raised
Their hands in greeting; then some ran, with cakes
Of bread, and skins of milk, and honeycombs,
Down the great slope to meet the messengers;
And others climbed the ridge and backward ran
Down to the tents, the river, and the vale,
And came to where Seth sat beneath a tree
Waiting, with folded arms, and cried to him,
"They come, they come; but Cain comes not with
them."
Then Seth arose and came to Adam's tent,

And stood before his father in the door.
 Eve questioning sought his eyes: he shook his head
 And looked on Adam; motionless he sat
 Plunged in a trance, yet dimly was aware
 Of tidings, as he heard the voice of Seth,
 " 'Tis the tenth morning, and thy sons return."

Faintly by imperceptible degrees
 Light stole o'er Adam's features, and Seth saw
 The wellings of his troubled mind on them,
 As one who in a cavern lifts a torch
 And sees the gradual recesses grow
 Out of their ancient gloom, uncertain shapes
 Of rugged roof and walls without an end:
 So dark from innermost obscurity
 The slumbrous memories of Adam rose
 And on his face appeared: yet still a veil
 Remained betwixt his senses and the world;
 When now the noise of many feet drew nigh
 Softly approaching: and Seth spoke again,
 "Behold! thy sons, thy messengers are here."
 He drew the matted curtains of the tent
 Aside, and Adam raised his head and saw
 All his assembled children coming on,
 Hushing their steps in awe; they stopped at gaze
 Now as his eyes were on them; but before
 Came the two messengers and stood alone,

How soiled and burnt with travel! Round the neck
Of Ophir hung the leopard's spotty hide
Stripped from that fierce beast strangled by his hand,
Torn now and stained; neither had paused to wash
The thick dust from his feet; but Iddo held
A spray of leaves new-plucked to freshen him
Seared on the parching mountain; thus they stood
With troubled countenance and hanging head
Till Ophir spoke; all listened rapt and still.
"Father, we went; and lo, we are come back
On the tenth morn, according to thy word.
For we have sought Cain but have found him not.
We passed beyond the mountains and we crossed
The sultry desert, toiling in hot sands
Two heavy days, and thence with difficulty
Climbed the far ridge unto the land beyond.
It is a land not fruitful like our vale,
Barren it is with short grass and few trees;
On the fifth day we came into the midst
Of that bare country and we saw no man,
Nor knew we whither to direct our steps,
When on a slope at unawares we spied
A sheepfold made of stones, and Lo! we said
To one another, Surely he was here.
Then eagerly we climbed the highest hill
And all around gazed long, but saw no more.
But toward the evening, when the light was low

And the extremest mountains grew distinct,
 Far off in the clear air, but very far,
 We saw a little smoke go up to heaven,
 And we cried out, It is the home of Cain!
 But deeply we were troubled and perplexed,
 For we were faint and footsore, and thy word
 Lay heavy on our thoughts, remembering it,
 On the tenth morning see that ye be here!
 Surely our hearts were eager to go on;
 But thinking of thy word we feared to go.
 And hardly even now are we returned.
 Father, we did thy bidding. Is it well?"

All gathered nearer, hushed and wistful; all
 Awaited Adam's voice, but he was mute.
 They would have prayed him, but they ventured not;
 Like hunters that at hot noon, lost in woods,
 Pressing through boughs and briers, at unawares
 Come on the huge throat of a hollow cliff
 Ribbed with impending ledges of wet moss,
 Whence in a smooth-lipped basin of black stone
 Some secret water wells without a sound:
 Then sorely though they thirst they fear to drink,
 Awed by the mystery of that silent source,
 So these awhile with beating hearts delayed
 To speak, awaiting what his words might be.
 At last he raised his head and turned his eyes

On Eve, and looked upon her long, while she
 On him hung gazing: light began to burn
 In his dimmed eyes, and his whole frame was wrought
 With the stirring of his spirit, as of old.
 At length the thoughts were kindled on his tongue:
 He lifted up his voice and cried aloud.

“O that mine eyes had seen thee once again,
 Cain, that my hands had blessed thee! Thou art gone,
 For ever gone, and still that curse abides
 On thee who wast my joy, my first-born child.
 Eve, Eve, hast thou forgotten that far hour,
 When our first child, our baby newly-born,
 Held up his little and defenceless hands
 Crying toward thy bosom?” And Eve sighed:
 “Surely my bosom hath not forgotten Cain,
 Who sucked the tender first milk from its paps.
 His feet are worn, wandering the desert wide,
 But I have washed them with my tears in dreams.
 O, in my heart he has not left his home.
 Would I might lay my arms about him now!
 Yet why, O Adam, utterest thou these thoughts?
 Thou knowest how betwixt us and our son
 There lies a land we may not overleap
 More than the flames of those exiling swords,
 Because of our fault, Adam, and of his.
 Why dost thou waken this our ancient pain?”

But Adam still uplifted his lament:

“He is gone from us, gone beyond our reach,
 Beyond our yearning, he remembers not
 These arms that were around his weakness once,
 These hands that fed him and that fostered him
 And now would bless him. All these have I blessed
 With many blessings, but him whom I cursed
 Him would I bless at last, and be at peace.
 He is gone from me, and now these also go
 Whither I know not, and I fear for them.
 How often have I seen them going forth
 Into the woods upon these hills, how oft
 See them with night returning, but now they
 Depart for ever and return no more.”

Eve wondering replied with earnest voice,
 “Behold them, Adam, they are very fair
 And strong with all the strength that we have lost.
 What ill shall harm them more than hath harmed
 us?

Remember how when I was used to fear,
 Beholding our first child in his soft youth
 Go from us on his tender feet alone—
 His tender feet a little stone might bruise,
 And would have caught him back to my fond breast,
 Thou didst rebuke me, saying it must be
 That he go forth alone; now thou dost fear,
 When these are strong and we can help no more.”

But Adam shook his head and answered not.
For he was like a shepherd who hath lit
A fire to warm him on the mountain side
In the first chill after the summer heats,
And drowsing by the embers wakes anon
With wonder-frighted eyes, to see the sparks
Blowing astray run kindling over grass
And withered heath and bushes of dry furze,
And ere his heavy senses, pricked with smoke,
Uncloud, the white fire rushes from his reach,
Leaps to embrace the tall pines, tossing up
A surge of trembling stars, and eagerly
Roars through their topmost branches, wide aflame,
While all around enormous shadows rock
And wrestle, as tumultuous light o'errides
The darkness as with charging spears and plumes,
Till the whole hillside reddens, and beyond
Far mountains waken flushed out of the night:
Then he who ignorantly had started up
This wild exulting glory from its sleep
Forgets to stir his steps or wring his hands;
The swiftness and the radiance and the sound
Beget a kind of rapture in his dread;
Like that amazed shepherd Adam saw
His race, sprung out of darkness, fill the earth
Increasing swift and terrible like fire
That feeds on all its ruins, wave on wave

Streaming impetuous without rest or pause
 Right onward to the boundaries of the world:
 And he how helpless who had caused it all!
 So stood his soul still in a gaze of awe
 Filled with the foretaste of calamity:
 And his lips broke into a groaning cry.
 "What is this thing that I have done, what doom,
 What boundless and irrevocable doom,
 My children, have I wakened for you all?
 O could I see the end, but end is none.
 My thoughts are carried from me, and they faint,
 As birds that come from out the farthest sky,
 Voyaging to a home far, far beyond,
 Sink in our valley on a drooping wing
 Quite wearied out, yea, we have seen them sink,
 So my thoughts faint within my bosom old;
 The vision is too vast, I am afraid."

But understanding nothing of his speech,
 That yet seemed opening some mysterious door
 Disclosing an horizon all unknown,
 His children listened, touched to trouble vague
 And longing without name: like travellers
 Who in a company together pass
 On some spring evening by an upland road,
 And as they travel, each in thought immersed,
 Rich merchants, wise in profitable cares,

Adventurous youths, and timorous old men,
Through deepening twilight the young rising moon
Begins to cast along them a mild gleam,
And shadows trembling from the wayside trees
In early leaf steal forward on the ground
Beside them, and faint balm is past them blown;
All troubles them with beauty fresh and strange,
Stealing their thoughts away; so tenderly
Were Adam's children troubled when they heard.
Long silence fell. At last with heavy voice
And weakened utterance Adam spoke again:
"My children, bring me fruits and bring me flowers,
Set them within my sight that I may see
And touch them, and their sweetness smell once more."
They hasted and plucked flowers and gathered fruit
Such as their valley yielded; balsam boughs,
Late roses, darkly flushed, or honey-pale,
And heavy clustered grapes, and yellowing gourds,
Plump figs, and dew-moist apples, and smooth pears.
All these they brought and heaped before his sight.
Voyagers in the utmost seas, when ice
Pinions their vessel fast and they prepare
For the blind frozen winter's boundless night,
How jealously they watch the last low rays,
How from the loftiest vantage in their view
Cherish the rosy warmth still on their limbs,
Tarrying until the bright rim wholly dips!

Adam, by huger darkness overhung,
 So longed to taste life warm even to the last;
 And fostering those fair flowers upon his lap
 And holding a gold apple in his hand
 Remembered Eden. O what blissful light
 Flowed o'er his heart and bathed it in its beams!
 It seemed the deep recesses of his soul
 Welled up their inmost wisdom at the last:
 He glowed with some transfiguring fire; his lips
 Moved, and his face uplifted was inscribed
 With mighty thoughts, that thus at length unrolled
 Their solemnly assembled syllables.

“Look well on me, my children, whom ye lose!
 Behold these eyes that have wept tears for you,
 Behold these arms that have long toiled for you!—
 These hands in Paradise have gathered flowers;
 These limbs, which ye have seen so wasted down
 In feebleness, so utterly brought low,
 They grew not into stature like your limbs.
 I wailed not into this great world a child
 Helpless and speechless, understanding naught,
 But from God's rapture perfect and full-grown
 I suddenly awoke out of the dark.
 How sweet a languor did enrich the blood
 In my warmed veins, as on my opening eyes
 The splendour of the world shone slowly in,

Mingling its radiant colours in my soul!
Yea, in my soul and only in my soul
I deemed them to abide: sky, water, trees,
The moving shadows and the tender light,
This solid earth, this wide and teeming earth,
Which we have trodden, weary step by step,
Nor found beginning of an end of it,
I deemed it all abounding in my brain:
The murmur of the waters and the winds
Seemed but a music sighing from my joy;
Then I arose, and ventured forth afoot;
And soon, how soon, was dispossessed of all!
By every step I travelled into truth
That stripped me of my proud dreams, one by one,
Till all were taken. On such faltering feet
By gradual but most certain steps I came
Into my real and perfect solitude,
Alone amid the world that knew not me.
O Eve, thou knowest what I tell not now,
How I was comforted, and all the woe
That fell on our transgression; yet not less
When that first child lay babbling on thy knees,
Then again said I, 'Surely this is mine.'
And you, my children, whom I saw increase
Around me, stronger as my strength decayed,
How often have I called you also mine!
But now my first-born is not any more,

Or wanders lost from me, and ye, ye too
Go from me over earth, forgetting me.
So surely I perceive, for all that I
In joy begot you, ye are mine no more.
But ye, who seem the proud and easy lords
Of this fair earth, ye too must tread the path
Which I trod in my ignorant longing, lose
What I have lost, and find what I have found.
What seek you, O my children, what seek you?
For I behold you in this narrow vale,
That mountains and deep forests compass round
Filled with desires. Beyond is all the world
That hardly shall content them; ye must go
Forth into that vast world, as from my feet
This water glides, we know not whither; yea,
Even as this stream is prisoned in its speed,
So shall ye be imprisoned in desire.
But when you have imagined peace and balm
For your endeavour, musing, 'This is mine,'
When you shall say, 'I have a cause for joy,'
Then be distrustful, lest you only learn
How cruel is desire till it attain,
And being baffled yet more cruel grows,
Indignant not to find what it had sought,
And suffering ye rage, and raging fall
Upon your own flesh. Ah, deal tenderly
With one another, O my sons, for ye,

Caged in these limbs that toil under the noon,
Are capable of sorrow huge as night;
And still must ye bear all, whatever come.
Look how the trees in an untimely spring
Put forth their sweet shoots on the frosty air
That withers up the tender sap, yet still
Cannot delay their ripening, nor fold back
Their wounded buds into the sheltering rind;
So shall ye shrink, yet so must ye endure.
I that was strong and proud in strength, and now
Am come to this last weakness, tell you this:
Alas, could ye but know it as I know.
I speak in vain, ye cannot understand."

He ended sighing: for his mind was filled
With apprehensions rolling up from far
The doom and tribulation of his race.
Looking upon the faces of his sons,
Well he divined their weakness from his own.
He knew what they should suffer; yet the worst
He knew not; had he known, he would have rued
Less to be parent of their feebleness
Than of their strength, the power to maim and rend
And ravage even that which to their hearts
Is dearest, though they know not what they do,
Trampling their peace in dust; had he seen all
The dreadful actors on the endless stage,

Sprung from his loins,—the triumphing blind hordes,
Spurred by an ignorant fury to create
An engine of fierce pleasure in the pangs
Wrung from the brave, the gentle, and the wise,
And raging at a beauty not their own
That vexes all their vileness; till the world,
Discovering too late its precious loss,
Loves and laments in vain: had he seen this,
His grief had gone forth in a bitterer cry.

But they that heard him heard incredulous.
Trouble was far, and sweet youth in their hearts.
The beauty of the world encompassed them;
All else was fable; and they stood elate
Yet stirred and pensive, in such wondering pause
As might a troop of children who have found
In a king's garden, under shadowy yews,
Ancestral marbles on a sculptured wall,
Half hid in vines, and lifting up the leaves
Gaze in a bright-eyed wonder on fair shapes
Of arming heroes and unhappy queens,
Or press soft lips on Helen's woeful mouth,
Touching her perfect breast, and smile on her,
Unknowing how beneath that heavenly mould
Swelled, like a sea, the powers of love and pain,
Powers that shall surely also rock themselves
In storms, and their young courage crush to sobs,

Toss them on easeless beds, blind their hot eyes
 With tears, in longing violent as vain,
 Till they shall quite forget how life was once
 Sweet as a rose's breath and only fair,
 As now 'tis fair and sweet to Adam's sons.

Exalted in expectancy, they mused,
 And in their veins a warmer current glowed
 Round their full-moulded limbs; their open eyes
 Shone wistful, and they murmured to themselves,
 When Adam's voice recalled them to his grief.
 Out of unfathomable deeps his words
 Seemed drawn in solemn slowness. "Lo, the light
 Makes ready to go from you, even as I.
 Harken, my sons! Upon the mountain-side
 There is a cave that looks toward the East:
 And thence in the evening clearness have I oft
 Far-off beheld the gates of Paradise.
 Mine eyes would feel that glory once again
 Ere they be turned for ever to the night.
 Therefore go down and strew a bed for me,
 Lay me upon that bed and bear me up.
 It grows late and I may not tarry more."

But now at last the certainty of woe
 Smote through them, and they feared exceedingly,
 Scarce knowing yet what this command might mean.

They would have stayed, but Adam with raised hands
Moved them unto his bidding; they went down
And busied them, most sadly, o'er that toil
By the stream's shore, plaiting a bed of withes,
And some prepared rough poles, some gathered leaves.
Adam with Eve remained alone; the light
Slept warm upon the grass and on their feet,
And round about them in the spacious tent
Struck upward hovering glories, pale and clear.
He turned to her those eyes which never yet
Sought there a solace or heart's ease in vain,
And spoke, "O Eve!" but even there his voice
Stopt in the shadow of his coming thoughts,
And he could say no more; but she came near
To lay her hands on his cold hands, and looked
On his bowed face, and with a soft reproach
Answered him, "Adam, thou didst say but now
That all were going from thee o'er the earth
And thou shouldst be alone, and none be thine,
And no companion with thee any more.
Am I not with thee? Shall I go from thee?
Am I not thine? Am I not wholly thine?"
Then Adam lifted up his fallen brow
And gently laid his great arms round her neck;
He looked into her eyes, into her soul.
The face of Eve was falling toward his breast;
Her hair with his was mingled; now no more

They spoke, for they had come beyond all words.
 They spoke not, stirred not, but together leaned,
 With the resigning gesture of a grief
 Becalmed for ever in the certitude
 Of this last hour that over them stood still.
 Thus had they stayed, nor moved, nor heeded aught;
 But 'twixt them and the light a shadow fell:
 And Adam lifted up his eyes, and saw
 Seth standing there; he knew the hour was come.

For lo, about the doorway were the sons
 Of Adam all assembled, with their wives
 And children weeping; they had brought a bed
 Of plaited osiers heaped with leaves; and now
 Laying him on that litter, silently
 They lifted up the poles. Eve weeping sank
 Upon her knees: she kissed the dear last kiss;
 She held his body in her tender arms
 One aching moment, then relinquished him.
 Thus they began, the young men and the old,
 To bear him forth, unwillingly, with slow
 Sad footsteps planted on the yielding sand,
 While all the women wailed and wept aloud,
 Beating their breasts; they felt and were afraid
 Yet understood not; their despair was blind.
 But Eve, who understood her perfect loss
 Even to the utmost pang, wept now no more.

Her daughters sobbing round her, hid their heads:
 She only, with dim eyes, stretched forth her hands.

But they that bore the litter passed beside
 The bright stream's pebbly margin; and with them
 The bearded men and boys, all overcome
 With desolating thoughts and silent fears,
 Followed: soon slowly they began to climb
 Slopes scattered darkly o'er their bossy knolls
 With shadowy cedars, where the jutting ribs
 Of grey rock interposed; until at last
 They came to the great cavern in the cliff,
 And rested, gazing backward o'er the vale
 Reposing in the golden solitude.

Then Adam said, "Lift me, that I may see."
 With careful arms they lifted him: he gazed
 Down on the valley stretched out at his feet,
 Marked with the shining stream; he saw beyond
 Ranges of endless hills, and very far
 On the remote horizon high and clear
 Shone marvellous the gates of Paradise.
 There was his home, his lost home, there the paths
 His feet had trod in bliss and tears, the streams,
 The heavenly trees that had o'ershadowed him,
 Removed all into radiance, clear and strange
 As to a fisher on dark Caspian waves,
 Far from the land, appears the glimmering snow

Of Caucasus, already bathed in dawn,
 Like a suspended opal huge in heaven,
 And wonder awes him to remember how
 Long happy mornings of his youth he strayed
 Over those same far valleys of his home,
 Now melted and subdued to phantom shade
 Beneath that lonely mount hung in the dawn:
 So over darkened intervening vales
 Tinged in the sweet fire of the light's farewell,
 Shone Eden upon Adam. Then he sighed
 A sigh not all of grief, "It is enough.
 Leave me, my children, to my peace; go ye
 And comfort Eve, go, prosper and be blest."

They each turned fearfully to each, but Seth
 Bowed down his head and hushed them with his hand.
 Silent with running tears they wept farewell,
 And, often looking backward, on slow feet
 Moved down the wide slope. Adam was alone.
 At last his eyes were closing, yet he saw
 Dimly the shapes of his departing sons,
 Inheriting their endless fate; for them
 The world lay free, and all things possible.
 Perchance his dying gaze, so satisfied,
 Was lightened, and he saw how vast a scope
 Ennobled them of power to dare beyond
 Their mortal frailty in immortal deeds,

Exceeding their brief days in excellence,
Not with the easy victory of gods
Triumphant, but in suffering more divine ;
Since that which drives them to unnumbered woes,
Their burning, deep, unquenchable desire,
Shall be their glory, and shall forge at last
From fiery pangs their everlasting peace.

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