

JUNE DUSK



Florence Nash



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JUNE DUSK

FLORENCE NASH



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JUNE DUSK

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

FLORENCE NASH



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TO
MOTHER AND MARY
FOR WHOM MY LOVE IS TOO
BIG TO PUT INTO A POEM

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JUNE DUSK

JUNE DUSK

SONG OF THE THESPIANS

WE ministered rites religious
Ere most modern creeds began
And our pulpit is agnostic,
Teaching ev'ry creed to man.

We have pledged us unto nature
And no artifice of art
Have we learned to show the future
That we mined our pain of heart.

We're content to serve our altars;
Many vestals watch the flame
Who have sacrificed their beauty
For a water-written name.

JUNE DUSK

And beside them, there are many
Who do serve the temple well
By a wantonness alluring
Which brings gold for what they sell.

You may scoff at us and scorn us
But you bow to us as gods
When we sway you with emotions,
Paying life-force for your sobs.

And of all the lives we live here
We may choose the best to keep
As companion in our coffin
Should we dream in our long sleep.

JUNE DUSK

A COMÉDIENNE

I HAVE no dignity nor claims on art,
I'm but a clown who capers for awhile,
And yet I know my humour gift of God
For, once, mine antics made a sad man smile.

JUNE DUSK

THE CALL OF THE ROAD

IT's real fall on the one-night stands;
It's only colder weather here.
I'm getting lonely for the road,
We've played New York a solid year.

I'd like to take to trains again,
Now that the country's red and gold,
I guess we can't get out just yet,
Not while this standing-room is sold.

I'd like to see the fields run by
And watch the farm-house chimney's smoke;
I'd like to take an early jump
And see the sunrise for a joke.

A PRAYER

God, let me drifting go adown this world
As now, just wandering in dreams, nor see
Aught more of passion than what poets' songs
Have gently voiced unto the soul of me.

JUNE DUSK

LINES TO A DEAD POET

COME hold my hand across the space of death,
Dear, gentle singer whom I read so well,
Surely mine anguish does inform you now
Of all that love I had no chance to tell.

Gather me close within your spirit's arms,
Soothing my fears with your enchanted hands,
Whisper some song there was no time to sing
Before your journey to the shadow-lands.

Flowers were laid upon your last low bed,
Soft-petaled violets of dusk-time hue,
I have no knowledge where your grave may be,
I only know it has not prisoned you.

So hold my hand across the space of death,
Soothing my fears with your enchanted hands,
Though in this life you knew not of my love,
Such love must triumph in the shadow-lands.

JUNE DUSK

WHEN I AM DEAD

WHEN I am dead, sing me no requiems,
Chant me no dirges, nor weep for me tears;
I shall pass over the flesh-chilling border
Soul singing joyously, empty of fears.

When I am dead, I shall wander on gleefully,
Free from this burden of sense-fettered flesh,
Wander along on the highway Elysian,
Drunk with the waters of Lethe afresh.

I shall go fleeting along with the breezes
Twirling the dust of what erstwhile was I,
I'll fall in love with the scent of the roses
Which I shall capture but lose when I sigh.

When I am dead, I shall wander on merrily
Timing my feet to the pipe-flutes of Pan,
Wander along with Dryads and Fairy-folk
Wander, unseen, in the green haunts of man.

JUNE DUSK

WHEN THE DUSK-HOUR HERALDS
NIGHT

THERE'S a path I love to wander
When the dusk-hour heralds night
And the day, earth's vanquished lover,
Wanders out in rosy light.

For when day dies, all the flowers
Seem to change to saddened hue
And their voices' fragrant incense
Wafts their promise to be true.

And the wind then moans quite softly
But with sobbing sound so drear,
That my soul can guess that message
Which my senses cannot hear.

JUNE DUSK

A VISION

I HAVE seen fairies in the city's park
When Pan's pipes fluted through the star-lit
dark.

Their eyes were luminous forget-me-nots,
Like ladies' blackened with mascara dots.

Their faces, rose-leaves on a lily-stalk;
And silver bells chimed when they seemed to
talk.

Their little bodies were fantastical—
I think God made them feeling whimsical.

JUNE DUSK

WHAT THE WIND FINDS

DEAR Wind,

What do you find in your journeying?

What do I find in my journeying?

Much that is good

And much that is bad,

Causes to weep

And those to be glad.

Everything, in my journeying,

I find.

I see the whole world

In its beauty and dinginess

And summer is rich;

Winter knows naught of stinginess,

And she'd grieve that the generous gift of her
snow

Was the cause of the death of the flowers
and so

'Tis, in autumn, I blow

JUNE DUSK

And bid them to go
And stay playing with fairies till spring-winds
I blow.

And the birds of the North
I woo with my voice
Till they follow me South and, in chirpings
rejoice,

At the wondrous new beauty which round them
does grow.

To springs and to rivers
I whisper, and lo!

With their ice they protect the dear fish from
the snow

Which winter, through wisdom,
On earth does bestow,
To cool off its summer-learnt passion;
For 'tis fashion

In summer, to love with great passion

Be ye human or beast,

Be ye flower or bee,

Or even, alas and alack,

Be ye me.

JUNE DUSK

For when summer is come,
I love the whole world
For its niceness and naughtiness
And it loses its haughtiness
And woos me in manner like this:
"Oh, Wind, gently purring,
Be stronger in stirring
And grant me the boon of thy kiss."

A CONFESSION OF FAITH

UNTO the question "Who created thee?"
My baby-lips were taught to answer "God."
And then they taught me what great God was
like,
Endowing him with envy, anger, greed,
And all dread passions that we loathe in man.
And, now, I know that mingling with my
prayers
Were loathing thoughts I feared to recognise
Because I feared the God of fearsome hell.
I knew, for me, 'twould not be hell of fire
But constant wand'ring down a dawn-grey
waste
Where steady moaning of a dreary wind
Filled me with longing for the human-kind
Of which none were existent, saving me.
'Twas thus I thought till fear made me rebel
Against a teaching which could bring such
pain.

JUNE DUSK

And then I thought "In death, is end of all."
But pansies withered and then bloomed again;
The violets seemed sweeter every spring;
The rose-bush, which in winter aped decay,
In June was fragrant with new blossoming;
And in their beauty they bespoke a God
Whose mercy touched decay and made new life.
'Twas when the birds seemed hymning in the
trees

That God was intimate and made of love.
Such revolution burning in my brain
Was often quenched by thoughts as orthodox
As "God rules hell and hell knows naught of
love
So God, being known there, can't be made of
love."

And yet the birds kept hymning just the same;
The winds kept breathing ghostly worship-
ping;
The flowers, in an odoriferous voice,
Kept praising God and naming him "Great
Love;"

JUNE DUSK

And streamlets whispered to their own selves'
shores

"He, who created us, directs our course
And, sometimes, makes us muddy that his love
May find us dearer when we're clear again;"
'Twas thus in nature that I heard God's voice
Bidding me bring my burdens to His feet
And rest me there while He would make them
light.

JUNE DUSK

AN APOLOGY

IF I did stay too long, 'twas not my fault;
For when I entered in, my brain did halt
To reason and enjoyment crowned as king.
You charmed me and the pleasure, dear, was
such

The passing hours did but lightly touch
Me, as they passed with folded, silent wing.
Gave I offence? I would indeed atone
By any punishment save one alone;
And that one is my future banishment.
That one alone I really cannot stand
So, I do pray you, make not that demand
Or sin were lesser far than punishment.

JUNE DUSK

PETER'S SMILE

SMALL Peter, with the tender wistful eyes,
Where did you find a smile so kind and wise?

Where did a baby learn such winning art?
But then, you lived, for months, near Mother's
heart.

For months, your soul might mingle with her
own,
A thing of beauty seen by you alone.

You heard the inner echoes of her voice
No wonder that your smile makes God rejoice.

JUNE DUSK

TO THE SUN

SUN, when the earth has turned towards thee
France,

Bid thy rays seek out Aimé, let their warmth
Seem like the benediction of my love
Which is so vast no passion could enhance
Its value in the sight of us or God;
Whisper his friend can sometimes find his soul
In the oft glamour of thy setting self,
And in the rosy glory of day's death
Can find the laughing glory of his soul.

JUNE DUSK

A LETTER

LET others kiss your lips.
Let others hold your hands.
Just let me have your love;
That love which understands
That hidden 'neath this flesh,
Which cloaks the soul of me,
Is one small streak of good
To last eternity.

JUNE DUSK

AT DREAM-LAND INN

OH, hush! Little Clean Heart,
Lest you wake your grosser self,
Wrap yourself in wraithiness,—
To waste our sleep were sin.
I have doffed my fleshly cloak
And in my mental mantle
I wait, for you to follow me,
At Dream-land Inn.
We can hire the minstrel, Wind,
To sing us songs of Arcady
Or wander into Cricket Hall
And hear the fairies jazz;
We can charter moon-beams
To sail upon the sea of sky,
Or listen to the scented speech
That every flower has.
We can hear the shiv'ring leaves
Telling tales of burglaries,
[32]

JUNE DUSK

Columbine just ran away
With Pierrot's heart;
We can wander, hand in hand,
Through some shadow meadow-land
Till the dawn of day-time wakes
Our thoughts apart.

JUNE DUSK

THE WRECK OF DREAMS

PERCHANCE you too are looking at the clouds
And telling your new loved one what each
seems ;

To me, they seem like driftwood made of down,
A flimsy texture but the wreck of dreams.

AN AFTER THOUGHT

My love brought nothing, dear, at all to you
But, unto me, a cleansing fire
Moulding desire
Into aspirations higher
Than I had known without my love for you.
For, though you've gone from out my life,
Your memory has led the strife
Against the baser elements in me.
I can't explain love's wizardry
But I'll love you eternally.

JUNE DUSK

ODE TO A MUSICIAN ON HIS BIRTHDAY

WERE I that mystical unknown thing, Fate,
On this, your birth-day, I should grant to you
Emotions to be tuned to melodies;
For your past sins, I'd grant you penitence
And the shamed memory that they were sweet
So that your art, in minor cadences,
Might show that joy is stronger than one's will.
And for your good deeds, I should grant you
pride
That joyous pæans might on men impress
That good has beauty in the major key;
And for your future, I should grant your soul
Its every wish, then let it wish for more
Lest surfeiture should your sweet soul-songs
dull;
And for your masterpiece, I'd grant you love.
Love all complete yet incomplete because

JUNE DUSK

No soul on earth could quite absorb it all;
It should be variant in mood that you
Might find a theme in every single kiss,
Abandoned and ascetic, each in turn,
Should claim a melody from out your brain
And jealous thoughts discordant crashes make
Till men cried out, "His music voices pain
Such as the damned must feel if there be hell."
Then an ecstatic wonderment of bliss,
In sighing strains, should tender finish make.

And after I had granted you those gifts,
Were I that mystical unknown thing, Fate,
I selfishly should grant a simple theme
Suggested by a few fond thoughts of me.

JUNE DUSK

PAN FASHIONED YOU

I THINK the god who fashioned you was Pan
And that he mixed the springtime's sunniness
With the grave moods of little elfin folk
To find your smile its merry wistfulness.

CONCERNING CONJUGATION

WHEN I did go to school,
I thought it such a bore
To learn to conjugate
The verbs love and adore.
And since I've met you, dear,
I know 'twas waste of time
For tenses have they none
Save that of present time.
And they have but one form
I can affirm as true,
'Tis that which does express
My feelings, dear, for you.

JUNE DUSK

A LOVER'S PLAINT

PRETTY light, dancing around the sun,
Tell me how many kisses you've won
From the sun.

Pretty shore, guarding yon little lake,
Tell me how many kisses you take
From the lake.

Pretty star, nestling near to the moon,
How many times have you had that boon
From the moon?

How many kisses you all have won!
Whereas I, poor soul, I have won none
From "Some one."

SHOULD YOU VOW YOUR LOVE FOR ME

WOULD that I knew some god or fay
To whisper to your heart to love me;
For should you vow your love for me,
Eternally, dear one, you'd love me.

For I should love you in such way
That my love never should grow boring;
'Twould first be sad, and then be gay,
But, always, it would be adoring.

And when our lips should meet to kiss,
My kisses, dear, should be quite many
But of so many diff'rent kinds
You'd never have enough of any.

My love should be the poet's dream,
That's too elusive for expression,
But I should tell it, dear, to you
In wordless way of sweet confession.

A REQUEST

I PRAY you give me back my heart,
Since you have hearts a-plenty,
I should not like to feel it break
At some odd years and twenty.

Yet, it is such a little thing
And worn so weak with weeping,
I know 'twould die were it moved now
So hold it in your keeping.

But, by whatever gods you have
I humbly do implore you
Be kind and lie and humour it
Since it does so adore you.

I LAY AWAKE

FOR yester eve you made some show of love,
I lay awake throughout the entire night
And wove me dreams out of mine ecstasy,
Ecstasy free from sensual delight.

JUNE DUSK

I DO NOT BRING YOU ANYTHING

I do not bring you anything,
I've only come to get
A little hour of your life
Which I shall not forget.

Which I shall not forget, my sweet,
So prithee do be kind,
Plant kisses, like forget-me-nots,
To bloom within my mind.

Plant kisses like forget-me-nots,
And little roses too,
Warm kisses that shall bloom beside
Sad separation's rue.

JUNE DUSK

MY LOVE THOUGH SMALL IS
EXQUISITE

My love, though small, is exquisite
And very pure. That's requisite!

My love, though pure, is passionate
So towards me be compassionate.

Lean down your lips—but gingerly!
Kiss me—but only tenderly.

JUNE DUSK

I NEVER KNEW THAT LOVE COULD BE LIKE THIS

I NEVER knew that love could be like this ;
That I could sit, alone, and know your kiss
Was on another's lips and never care
But be contented that my own sweet share
Of you was mine and, kissing, was aware
Of something helpless that you missed in this
Embrace so learned in the school of bliss.

YOUR LOVE HAS GONE

YOUR love has gone—gone somewhere with
your smile,
Gone from your eyes, and from your lips
astray,
Gone from your speech, and from your hand-
clasp too;
And my sweet bliss has turned to dull dismay.

JUNE DUSK

WHY DID YOU SEND ME BACK MY
HEART?

WHY did you send me back my heart?
I have no place to put it now;
My breast is nourishing a dream,
A little dream with placid brow.

A dream that's small as pure things are
But O! so very, very sweet,
I bow mind head, in ecstasy,
And kiss my small dream's baby-feet.

And must I put that dream aside
And gather up mine heart instead?
My little dream has been so bright
My heart will seem a thing that's dead.

FINALE

NEVER again, however we endeavour,
Shall you or I find any love like ours ;
When we were young we wove it out of fancy
Nor broidered it with passion's purple hours.
We were content with Rapture's pastel
shadings,
Fed love on sunsets or a poet's line,
Held hands and wept at Pagliacci's ending—
The comedy that's ended now is mine.

JUNE DUSK

ASHES OF INCENSE

My heart holdeth naught but the ashes of incense

Wherewith I made fires for your shrine;
And you, who were erstwhile mine idol and
worshipped

With rapture ecstatic and fine,
Had found the indelible proof of my loving
Grow purer and finer with time.

For mine was no passion of sensual longing
But something poetic and rare.

I brought you my soul and I laid it before you,
I stripped every inch of it bare;
I showed you the dreams that I wove me of
fancy,

You fashioned each dream, unaware.

I likened your soul to the breath of the roses,
I pictured your heart as divine;

JUNE DUSK

I gave all the best of my life to a worship
That wearied you out in due time.
Mine idol withdrew then though friendship was
left me.
Pale ashes are cold things, but mine.

I HAVE FORGOTTEN YOU

I HAVE forgotten you
And all the time I gave
To thinking of you
I now save
To think of spring and little things
Like lilies, roses, sunsets, tunes,
The humming sounds of angels' wings
And poets' sadness told in runes.

I have forgotten you
And all the time I gave
To loving of you
I now save
To weep for things that cannot live
Like bliss we weave from dreaming's strands,
The understanding love can give
And God's gifts held within our hands.

AFTER A QUARREL

I HAVE found my strength and your weakness
In this rupture between us twain.
To you, 'twas a nettle of anger
While to me 'twas a flower of pain.

And I found this joy in my sadness;
To my love, 'twas a pure white flame
That melted the dross from the metal
And has made it all god-like again.

JUNE DUSK

LOVE STOLE MY YOUTH

LOVE, which was born within my breast,
Did steal my youth, to build her nest,
And wakened me from sleeping.

Then one, who loved my bird's soft nest,
Stole bird and nest from out my breast
But sent the bird back weeping.

Her cries are mournful in my breast
And, from them, I shall have no rest
Till, in death's arms, I'm sleeping.

FOR I WAS BLIND

BECAUSE you saw my love and knew me blind,
You lied to me. Ah, lying that was kind!
For though I pay your kiss with all my years,
I am not poor who have so many tears.

JUNE DUSK

I FOUND THE GOD OF LITTLE THINGS

Lo, I found the god of fairies and the little
things of spring
And he gurgled at my burden and 'twas
changed into a string,
Which hung upon my loving's lute, could tune
the saddest thing
Into a song of all that joy which now has taken
wing.

AN ADIEU

My love for you is such a spirit thing
I need not hold your hands nor kiss your lips
Nor even watch the soul-signs of your eyes
To keep it living and not mem'ried thing.
My soul can find your spirit in the skies,
In scented breeze, wind-wafted from a rose,
In cadences of soft tuned melodies,
In all there is seductive and yet pure.
Therefore, beloved one, I can leave you now
And, in the doing so, bespeak my love
Which is so vast it has no human bonds.
If, in some future time, a slight caress
Seems wind-imprinted on your soft sweet cheek,
'Twill be my spirit on the wind conveyed
To whisper that I live and love you yet.

JUNE DUSK

LONELINESS

Hour after hour went by
Till time knew change o' day
And Love seemed just a cruel thing
Which used our hearts for play,
But whispered softly "Time
Though fools these mortals be
To let me hurt them, surely they
Feel pain exquisitely."

SOMETIMES AT NIGHT

SOMETIMES at night, beloved one, I long
Enwrapped within your slender arms to lie;
Passively, purely; as an infant might
Save for the stifled breathing of some sigh.

JUNE DUSK

WHY MUST I LOVE?

WHY must I love
When all my love does bring
Is sorrowing
And wistful hopes that wing
Their way to you adown the hush of night?

For my poor hopes
And all the love they bring
Find your heart ice
And come back perishing
With cold and pain before the day grows light.

I WHISPER TO THE VOICES OF THE
DAWN

BELOVÉD one, I whisper to the voices of the
dawn
To hie them forth and hARRY you until you hear
the song
Of mingled hope and mournfulness I always
hear at dawn
Because another day has come and lonely
nights are long.

JUNE DUSK

LET ME COME

EVEN if it should bore you, let me come
And spend a little hour at your side
For I should turn those minutes into dreams
And parentage of dreams should bring you
pride.

Even though it annoy you, let me come
And whisper out my burden once again;
For, hearing it, I know you'd kiss me and
I'd realise the poetry of pain.

A LOVE-SONG

Love, make some sign that you did hear me
pray;

Gently caress me with soft love-blurred eyes,
Or touch mine hands with your live finger-tips
And I shall feed my dreams upon my sighs.

Or, which were best, pray let me, as of yore,
Kiss your soft throat just where the pulses
throb

And all night long they'll pulse upon my lips
Till lonely dawn does wake me with a sob.

JUNE DUSK

GATHER ME CLOSE IN YOUR ARMS

GATHER me close in your arms, oh my sweet,
And shelter my head on your breast
For I've loved you long, with a bitter pain,
And my constancy crieth for rest.

Shelter my head on your breast, oh my sweet,
And bend down your lips to my brow;
For I've waited long for your sweet soft kiss
And my patience is perishing now.

Bend down your lips to my brow, oh my sweet,
And I'll lift my lips unto thine,
For I've thirsted long, with enfevered lips,
For your mouth and its amourous wine.

BEWILDERED

I NEVER felt so far from you
As when you held me in your arms
And I awoke to mine own self,
Roused by my pulses' mad alarms.

I never felt so self-engrossed
As when your kiss fell on my lips
And I grew fevered as one must
Who Aphrodite's poison sips.

I never felt your soul so pure
But when, to save me from myself,
I clung to you with all my strength
I woke your body to itself.

JUNE DUSK

SINCE I AM FLESH

I LOVE your spirit yet, since I am flesh,
Between your soul and mine there ever stands
The outer semblance of your inner self
To rouse my senses with most sweet commands.

I love your eyes when love's glance softens
them

Until they seem deep pools of Hebe's wine
Whereof mine eyes drink till my soul is drunk
And all my flesh leans achingly towards thine.

I love your hands when love's touch wakens
them

Until they seem a vibrant torch of flame
Whereto my pulse leaps till my blood's on fire
And I become divinely mad again.

I FEAR MY HEART GROWS LAME

DEAR, place your hand to steady my poor heart
That runs so fast I fear me 'twill grow lame,
But let no word, beloved, from our lips,
Delay the hour from turning into flame.

And place your mouth adjacent to my lips
That when love's flame consumes me with mad
thirst

From that dear goblet, filled with lover's wine,
I may drink deep without beseeching first.

JUNE DUSK

MY WORSHIP'S OVER

My worship's over but the whole world seems
An empty thing whereof all joy is spent.
Oh cruel fate! Why were you not content
To let mine eyes stay bandaged with their
dreams?

TO MY IDEAL

ART thou some stranger whom I have not seen
Or do I meet thee whilst thy face is masked?
When shall I know thee? Where, my love, and
how?

It matters not for it shall come to pass
As our wise destinies have ordered it.
We may be atoms in Nirvana then;
But, sweet, I should prefer it here and now
For till I meet thee, all things lead to thee;
And having known thee, nothing more shall be.

Sometimes, in gazing eyes, I see thy look;
Sometimes, in handclasps, I divine thy touch;
And one there was who borrowed thy soft
speech
And used thine accents for his whispered lies.
For though mine ears have never heard thy
voice

My soul can sense it in the tuneful wind;

JUNE DUSK

And though I have not looked into thine eyes
I sometimes see them high up in the skies,
Wee wisps of blue which bid me cherish thee—
And yet, for all I know, thine eyes are brown—
Though I have never seen thy lips, my love,
In the night's silence I have felt their kiss.
But when I sought to kiss them they were gone.
And yet, I shall not come with mouth unkissed,
But each kiss lost has made my lips more sweet
For each kiss spent has bought them lure of
love.

CYNTHIA TO ENDYMION

THY wish, thy wish!

I would that it were granted

And thy dear arms

Did tightly me enclose.

I would our lips in love's sweet kiss were meet-
ing

And all our throbbing pulses madly beating
Unto the god-like ecstasy of love,

And that our sighs, now lengthy and now fleet-
ing,

Were, in love's fashion, wordlessly entreating
For still more kisses so replete with love.

JUNE DUSK

THE YOGI IN THE FOREST

GREAT universal Spirit, man-named God,
I bow, in pride and great humility,
Who am a part of all, which is Thyself.
My pride is this, that I am part of Thee
Though but the slightest atom of Thy might.
Mine humbleness has root in this sad fact,
I am impure therefore material.
Let thy great mightiness assist me, now,
To cleanse me of impurities and flaws;
Let the corruption, which encases me,
Depart from me and, in a vile decay,
Resolve itself into a nothingness
Which shall be all since it shall be Thyself.

THE TALE OF MOHAMED ALI

SHARP, hellish torments agonise his soul
For his torn heart has under it that bowl
Whereon is written, in a raging flame,
"I catch your blood and fate flings back the
 same
Into your heart to ooze out, drop by drop,
For death not always comes when life does
 stop."

So he whose life has stopped, lives on; a man
Living in hell; for only there one can
Endure the torments which do wrack his frame
Which loved her so yet never once the same
Shall lie beside her, in a lover's way,
From sunset till the night pales into day.

Yes, longing now lies in his arms, once filled
With her soft body whose love-pulses thrilled
To a divine, ecstatic, passioned beat

JUNE DUSK

The while their souls did journey forth and
meet.

So, lonely now, he muses on her hair
And wonders whoso lies entangled there.

EVENING

DYING, the day sank on a couch of dusk
And clouds did lower curtains, 'gainst the sun,
Of rosy gauze, then darker velvet ones ;
Gently, the trees spread over her who slept
A fairy covering of filmy lace
Which vandal night destroyed the while I
watched.

Sighing, the wind brought scent of fragrant
musk
To that vast chamber, curtained from the sun ;
Nor lit by moon-lamp nor the starry ones.
Gently, the breeze pronounced that nature wept
(A summer showering fell on my face)
For day found rest eternal while I watched.

JUNE DUSK

A MAGDALEN IN THE DESERT

SOMETIMES, within this desert gloom so dense,
The naked beauty of my soft young limbs
And rose-tipped blossoms of my budding
breasts

Do hypnotise mine eyes till mem'ry's gaze
Doth look upon a sinful softer time
When all my senses slowly swooned beneath
The evil unction of caressing hands.

Is it my fault that memory doth live
Rousing my senses wide awake again
Until in shudd'ring shivers of delight
They cause dead moments to revivify?
Not mine the fault, who mortify my flesh
Until I weep at its disfigurement,
But that of all those lovers in my past
Who loved my body till their strength was
spent.

For I had many lovers in that past

JUNE DUSK

And some were subtle masters of delight
Who thought me mistress of the art of love
The whilst we loved throughout an entire night.
The colours of the sunset do recall
The rose-tinged silken cushions of my couch
Whereon in snowy nudity I lay
Priestess well-versed in Aphrodite's rites.
And at that altar, many devotees
Did bow them down and worship her with me.

Now Aphrodite lies unpedestaled,
Her altars stripped, by conscience, of delight
But I, who was her priestess, recollect
The soft erotic beauties of her shrine.

JUNE DUSK

FROM A HOTEL WINDOW

THOUGH late the hour, far below,
I see lone, straggling women yet
Upon the pavement, cold and wet,
Parading sex that's fallen low.

And men there are who stop and buy
That tainted draught to quench the thirst
Of lust, and give their manhood first
To those who sell to passers-by.

For these will sell, while one will buy,
To gain their daily tithe of bread.
Poor fallen sisters. Better dead
Than slaves to lusts of passers-by.

Was it for this that Jesus died?
That Buddha fasted while he sought
The law of Karma? Which he taught—
Vain hope to save the crucified.

AFTER A CONCERT

I HAVE gone, sadly, through this dreary world
Searching, assiduously, all the way

To find a soul which did idealise;

I searched afar, on by-paths as on roads,

But, natheless, never did my searching find

Aught save some souls I had idealised.

And I grew weary and my soul cried out,

“Must all this searching simply go to find

The bitter meaning of futility?”

Just then your music stole within my soul

Voicing out dreams I dared not dream to
have

Because so diff'rent from the common trend

Of thoughts which throng the brains of com-
mon men.

Yes, all the tender moodiness of one,

Who dreams of things he cannot hope to be,

Seemed, in your music, to proclaim itself.

JUNE DUSK

Did your soul journey through a million years
To gain the knowledge—to yourself be true
Though you should lie to every other one—?
And did it know a myriad of loves
Before it learned that love must always end?
And did it worship many diff'rent gods
Before it learned God creature of one's brain
As high or low as was one's worship's name?
Did your soul show its beauty unto men
Who jeered at it because from them estranged,
As poets' souls are from the souls of men,
That you do hide it now in seeming shame?
Is it because you've reached great spirit-height
And find it is too lonely to be bliss,
That in your sobbing soul there dormant, lies
The force to love in an abandoned way?
Or do strange voices from the land of Dis
Wantonly woo you to strange ecstasies?

I feel you've had the courage to proceed
Along that path, whose borders are insane,
Until you've found the ending of those thoughts
Which I have left in chaos, to my shame.

A SEA-SHELL

BORN of some passion hidden in the sea,
My life is love which only lives in song.
I croon a dirge throughout the whole night long
Nor, at the dawning, ceases threnody
Save when my lover, Wind, breathes themes to
me.

When he moans low he woos me from the song
Of sterile love-life and does make me long
To reach life's end when he shall mate with me.

Yet, like a lute, I do betray the wind
And sing my song of purest ecstasy
Beneath the spell of a caressing touch
From one who hears my singing and has mind
To see my singing's inmost secrecy
Is a vain hope which to my heart I clutch.

JUNE DUSK

SHAKESPEAREAN SONNETS

I

I COME to thee with tale which I'll now tell
Unto the soul I envy most on earth
For ev'ry one who knows thee knows as well
That love for thee in ev'ry heart has birth;
Thine eyes unsearchable, whose wondrous hues
Are like a glimpse of heaven before death,
Do, from our hearts, our loves exact as dues
To God for thine annuity of breath.
I come to thee to tell my tale of woe
In hopes thy mercy may enlighten me
By showing me the spirit that doth glow
Behind those love-compelling eyes I see.
Ah! should you show me what that spirit is
In aping it I might then conquer his.

II

He is my love for whose love I do long
But other things than longing purchase love
So sometimes do I whisper, "God it's wrong
Not to direct our longings from above."
And yet, I would not have my love for him
Be God-directed to another man.
No, for it is my poor life's sweetest whim
To think that win his love, some day, I can.
Sometimes, from dreaming, wake I with a start
And realise what sorrow waiting is
When one is waiting with a longing heart
For some sweet love-sign that shall come from
him.

Therefore I come to thee and beg thee tell
What I may do to save me from this hell.

III

One time, I knew his heart was filled with love
For one so diff'rent from the mould of me
That I cried to my soul, in rage of love,
"If it must be why need mine eyes to see?"
I went along with nails clenched in my palm
Yet people, seeing the gay smile I wore
Did swear I never had known one love's qualm
Whereas my soul was suff'ring from a score.
But in the night, when prying eyes were closed,
My smile was lost in agonised frown
And if, perchance, in sleep my body dozed
My spirit went to Hers and bowed it down.
For his loved one was hated holy thing
To whom my soul did rueful worship bring.

IV

Thou canst not picture to thy soul I know
How one may love where love is wanted not
Yet in such love a beauty great doth grow
Which others that are happy loves have not.
It has a sweetness only pain can give,
Which is like a great minor-written tone;
It only asks the right to be let live
And cherish its desire some place, alone.
It only seeks the right to hide its life
In some sequestered nook where naught can
 come
To show it that it is a hopeless strife
To try to drown, with hope, fate's hateful hum.
 And yet, one hope another hope does bring
 Which hopes my hope to bliss doth prelude
 sing.

JUNE DUSK

THE GODS PROTECTED ME

P_{SHAW}! I had bartered my common-sense
(And that's the best of me)
For a foolish love that was not worth while
But the gods protected me.
And yet, there are times when I almost wish
That the gods had neglected me.

I' THE MYSTIC MOOD

THROUGH the mists o' doom,
I hear the fate-bells pealing,
Calling me to worship
On the still cold height.
Aye, I hear the fate-bells pealing
Through the mists o' doom, revealing
A visioning in loneliness
That fills my soul with fright.

JUNE DUSK

FLOWER O' YOUTH

FLOWER o' YOUTH, shall I fling you away
And sit me down in a corner to pray?
Nor sip of your perfume while I may?
Flower o' youth, shall I do that? Say.

“Flower o' youth, is like flowers of May,
They are cheap to get till they wilt away,
But sniff o' their perfume and 'twill stay
To bloom in your heart when life grows grey.”

JUNE-DUSK

YOUR eyelids trembled for some pulsing thing
Of subtle sin vibrated in your eyes,
And all your breaths were gathering in sighs
Which seemed to gasp, "Let ecstasy begin,"
You stooped to kiss me—Was it strength of
 soul
That tinged your lips with icy innocence
Or was it flower of experience?—
I never knew more exquisite a sin.

JUNE DUSK

ALL NIGHT WE WATCHED THE
SUNSET

ALL night long you were close to me
And we watched the sunset and heard the sea
And you held my hand till my senses blurred
Into the light for the dawn had stirred.

All Sunrise poured its light on me
But I closed mine eyes and I still could see
Your eyes as they flooded with passion's light
And the night burned out in a fire less bright.

THE DUSK RE-CAPTURES YOU

Love, ev'ry day the dusk re-captures you
And that dim room wherein you sat so still—
Without one movement, save where throbbing
 pulse
Made your throat's anguish stronger than your
 will.

That will which prisoned sin within our eyes
And fed our lips with unassuaged desire
But made my soul-sin damnable
Because our bodies' purity was so entire.

JUNE DUSK

SHOULD YOU SPEAK NOW

SHOULD you speak now, i' faith 'twere very truth
To state she has no feelings to be hurt.
For my heart broke and all my soul grew numb
To think you knew my love and mocked at it.
You knew your will, though volatile, was mine
And that mine actions were controlled by it;
That sometimes, when I longed to kiss your
mouth,

I did not dare so much as touch your hand
For my sworn love was really love itself
And sought your pleasure not mine own de-
light.

You knew my heart gave all it had to give
Of love that had not perished sorrowing,
And that my soul gave all it had to give
Of holiness and of its power to sin.
So, when you mocked my painful passiveness
And all the depth of longing it contained
My rage flared up and, in a blaze of hate,
Consumed my love and left my feelings dead.

A TALE WITH A MORAL

I HEARD it said stage-folks were naughty
And that their manner, which was haughty,
Was merely scorn for folks' opinions
And that of vice they were the minions;
That they loved lobster, wine and whisky,
And 'mongst themselves were very frisky;
In fact, of morals that they had none—
The prudish way for saying "had fun."

Miss Sapphic Kiss, in whose support I
First trod the boards, gained great renown by
A kiss which really made her famous
Because the clergy cried, "You shame us."
And people said, "She has no morals."
And 'mongst her leading men are quarrels
As to just which one knows the huge bliss
Of getting her most-highly-damned kiss.

JUNE DUSK

She read old Chaucer for diversion,
For cigarettes, expressed aversion
As likewise, for all wine and whisky
And people who were classed as frisky.

And lobsters? Why, she never ate them
(Although as backers doesn't hate them)
She wore no jewels, only coral,
Most ladies do, when strictly moral.

Knowing that somewhere lay a moral,
I asked Miss Kiss, with question oral,
How it came that she, stage-reprobate,
Should, in private life, be so sedate.
Unto that question so bromidic
Miss Kiss made answer—'twas specific—
"You'll grant my murder-scenes imagined.
Then why not love-scenes though impassioned?"

JUNE DUSK

TO A GHOST-MAN

I THINK it is a sorry thing
We did not die in fact
Who then might wander with the dead,
Unconscious of each act,
Because the dead have never talked;
Death's ennui taught them tact.

JUNE DUSK

OH, FIE ON ME!

WHEN I was young, with chuckling glee,
I read such things! oh, fie on me!

I read Boccacio to discover
The things that Byron failed t'uncover,
And joyed in their descriptions graphic
Of love-scenes that were—not phlegmatic.

I read old Horace nor was haughty
Because his morals were so naughty.
I knew the ancients weren't seraphic.
They say the ladies' odes were—Sapphic.

Yes, I found classics most magnetic,
I read them and became—esthetic;
But here my tale becomes pathetic,
I've since that time become ascetic.

And so I say, "Oh, fie on me,
To read such things with chuckling glee!"

MEMORY MY LOVE DOES BORROW

I LOVE to-day but to-morrow
Memory my love does borrow,
Oblivion does steal it after that;
And I know, much to my sorrow,
Such will be the case to-morrow
For constancy with me has never sat.

JUNE DUSK

YES, DEAR

AND hast thou loved
Before this love for me?

Yes, dear, I've loved
And each love was a school
Whereat I learned a touch,
A sweet caress,
Some subtle gift of bliss
With which to win
And hold thy love to me.

Should one be loved
If our love ceased to be?

Numbers be loved,
And thy love be a school
Whereat I learned much;
A sweet caress,
And wherein I did miss,
When I did win,
To hold a love to me.

A POEM WITHOUT A HERO

Most poets, when they write, extoll a hero
But my chaste muse prefers to chant a lady.
The reason that my muse has given is
That ladies' lives are free from aught that's
shady.

What? For applause, you think that state-
ment sung!

No 't isn't that. My muse is pure—and young.
Oh, gentle reader, prithee do read on
Perhaps my muse may change her ways anon.

Now poets, when they write, evolve a pet style
And mine, though still in stage that's embry-
onic,

Must, to the reader who does know such things,
Proclaim itself as something soon Byronic.
But style and heroine are all I've got
I lack a hero so you lose a lot.

For Byron's style was not like Nelly Glynn's
Which writes in dots when interest begins.

JUNE DUSK

I AM IN LOVE WITH LOVE

I AM in love with love, not thee,
So soon thy kiss will bore me
And hastily from thee I'll flee,
Who seemingly adore thee;
For I'm in love with love, not thee,
And soon thy kiss will bore me.

WHEN WE DID KISS FOR THE
EMOTION'S SAKE

I DID not love you
Neither did you me
When we did kiss, for the emotion's sake,
One idle moment of an idler day.

I did not love you
But that kiss, in me,
Did all the passions of great love awake
And they have bided with me to this day.

But though I love you,
I can't let you see
For I'm a woman with my pride at stake
And pride's road lies a silent, saddened way.

JUNE DUSK

THE WEAK'NING STRENGTH OF LOVE

IF but my mind could take the tangled skein
Of thought made from the threads of my life's
 deeds,
And by unraveling, convert it to
An ordered sequence where now chaos leads,
I'd write a poem for thine eyes to read
Which would convey the weak'ning strength of
 love,
For all my deeds since my heart went to thee
Are actioned thoughts with, somewhere in them,
 love.

IF YOU WERE DEAD

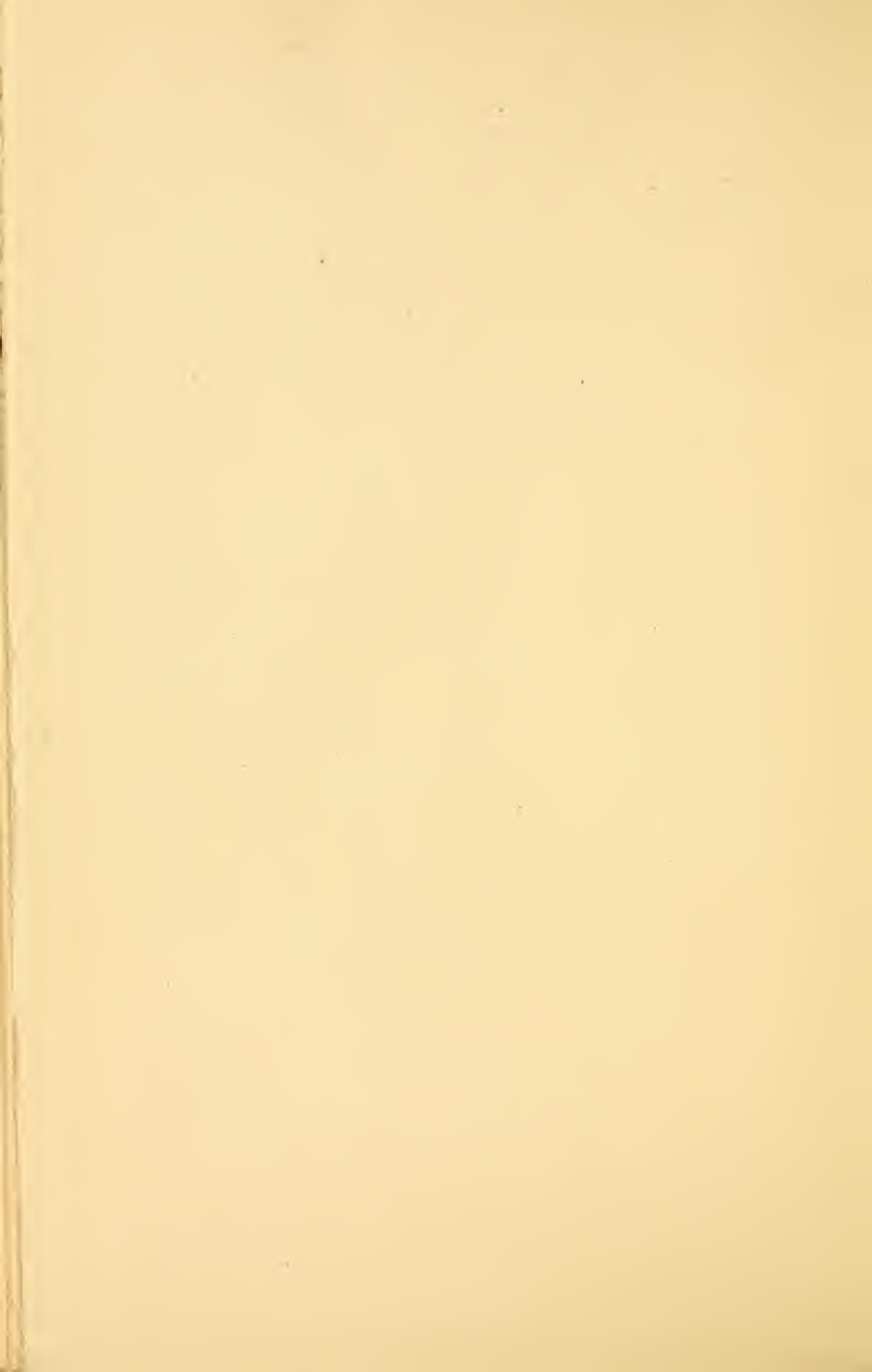
DEAR, Love, if you were dead,
I should not mourn for you;
But, selfishly, would deem it again
That death, for you, had knowledge wrought
Of my great love for you.
Since the dear dead must surely know
And, understanding, whisper low
Their pity for a love unsought.

JUNE DUSK

WITHIN YOUR DULCET EYES OF GREY

WITHIN your dulcet eyes of grey
A million little poems play
And most of them are blithe and gay;
But 'twas a little pensive fay
That made me stoop, that other day,
And kiss your eyes in wistful way.







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