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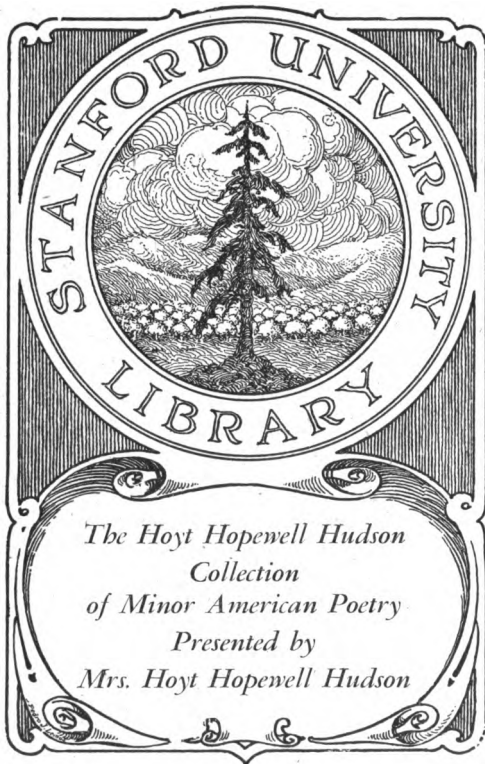
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*The Ring of
Love*

Brooks More



THE RING OF LOVE



Brooks Mott

RING OF LOVE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
BROOKES MOSE

*Author of "The Beggar's Vision," "Sons of a Free Church,"
"Songs of a Free Church,"
"The Metaphors," "The Beggar's Vision,"*

Illustrated by
FRANK FORTUNE BENTON
AND
LEWIS HENRY



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILL.



George Peck

THE RING OF LOVE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
BROOKES MORE

*Author of "The Beggar's Vision," "Sweet Maggie McGee,"
"Songs of a Red Cross Nurse,"
"Ovid's Metamorphoses, in English Blank Verse."*

Illustrated by
TRACY PORTER RUDD
AND
LEWIS PERRY



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THE JORDAN & MORE PRESS
BOSTON

TO
Margaret
TENDER AND TRUE
PEARL
OF MY
RING OF LOVE

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FASHION IN ART

Perhaps Art is subject to the whims of Fashion; and just as we have periods of grotesquely fashioned attire, so we have intervals when foolish fashions prevail in the Arts; as, Cubist and Futurist Paintings, Imagist Poetry, and Vers Libre, or Free Verse, with various other decadent forms: and, perhaps, we should include (though less foolish), the stilted imitators of Dryden and Alexander Pope.

What I have designated as decadent and foolish schools of Poetry and Art, have usually been occasioned by a revolt of the masses from some established method, or some peculiar style; which, on account of its own popularity has become too common: as, at present we are suffering from a revolt against what has been termed "The Victorian Era in Poetry"; and many of our modern poets, in their eager desire of originality, are neglecting and repudiating all that the past two thousand years has discovered concerning the laws of beauty, grandeur, music and knowledge; and in their mad endeavours to out-freak Frivolity have established a clique to howl for themselves and Walt Whitman; in

FASHION IN ART

the vain hope that noise and assertive mendacity may exalt their puny efforts above Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Shelly, Byron, Tennyson, Poe and all the immortals, and we include, without fear, the principal butt of their egotistical folly, the master of a certain form, Alexander Pope.

If a dispassionate view be taken of the fundamental cause which has led to this decadence in American Literature, we must be convinced, that the demand for lyrics, fit for the corners of our popularity-serving periodicals, has created a vast number of mediocre poets, whose self-interest it is to decry the value of difficult poetical forms; because they are incapable of original production, or even the imitation of artistic creations equal to such as have been inherited from the genius of the past.

Undismayed by such temporary insanities, I have not hesitated to publish this book, in which I have used many of the most difficult, and most beautiful metrical forms that have been given by the great masters of our language: and, I am convinced, if this endeavour prove distasteful to serious and cultivated minds, it will not be a proof that the world has repudiated beauty and the purest forms of art; but such a failure will only prove

FASHION IN ART

my ability measured not up to the difficulty of the task, that has been deliberately assumed.

For such critics who imagine that originality can only be compassed by the use of frivolous phrases, and jazzy dissonances, mis-called "Polyphonic Cadences," for such, I have no word of defense or apology; but my apprehensions are real at such times as I consider the voice of an unspoiled, intellectual minority; who, from the very nature of this production, may, perhaps, compare that which I have offered, with the great works of those I have mentioned, and whose genius I adore.

Brookes More.

THE RING OF LOVE

A Lyric Sequence

THE RING OF LOVE

I

By now I thought this April night
Should be as black as pitch,
That I might sleep and dream of you,
My little sweeting — witch.

Look,— how the late Moon squints an eye,
And slants her flattened head;
She thinks it sport to flaunt at sleep,
When she should be abed.

THE RING OF LOVE

II

Who is it that the spring-time loves,
When birds and winds are singing?
And who is it loves the sun-kist May,
That all sweet birds is bringing?

Who is it but my Goldenhair? —
Her eyes are shyly sweet;
She steps with pretty motion where
All these are sure to meet.

III

I went into the garden — O my sweet!
Gathered flowers for you; —
Weep into their loveliness,
Fill their cups with dew.

THE RING OF LOVE

Love them, cherish, worship — O my darling!
Few their precious hours;
All the gold that never fades
Is not so loved as flowers.

In gardens of the wide world — O my heart-love!
All I love is you; —
Time never cares, has no pity;
The days of love, so few!

IV

Open your window,
The night-bird sings,
The Love-star soon will set;
What is the message
True love brings —
Goldenhair —
How can your heart forget?

THE RING OF LOVE

Look out the window! —
Spangled in jet,
Stars were never so bright!
What is the reason
Hearts forget? —
Grey-blue-eyes —
Have you forgot the night?

v

Tears, tears, the minted coins of Love!
So you have bought me Grey-blue-eyes! —
If I but argue on the cause,
Always, my dull wit denies.

If your slipped pearls bear such a price,
What must your smiles command?
The more I think of your dear ways,
The less I understand.

THE RING OF LOVE

VI

What is the reason, Grey-blue-eyes,
You look at me so vicious?
I believe it's all for kisses, dear, —
You are so avaricious.

One, two, — a kiss for each,
Scornful glances got them!
This is three, to stop your lips, —
Pretty poutings bought them!

VII

All in the magic of the east,
Where history is old,
'Tis there the rogue Sun gathers up
A store of yellow gold!

He dazzles in that pilfered wealth
Those drowsy, nodding bells;

THE RING OF LOVE

For why? to cool his raging thirst
In wines of faery wells.

Oh, shut that window, Goldenhair,
The hot, hot Sun is winking!
Why should he scatter gold on you
While he is tipsied, drinking?

VIII

When drowsy eyelids of the night
Wink in the nodding trees,
Out in the still night you may hear
Echoes of music, —
Sweet in the sleeping breeze.

My love it is, she loves the dark,
The tall trees overhead; —
She carries in her eyes the dawn; —
Music must follow
The ways her steps are led.

THE RING OF LOVE

IX

Awake! awake, my Goldenhair!
What tells of death but dreaming? —
Oh, look! the gay Sun edges up;
The pomp of day is gleaming.

I know a lush lawn where the bees
Hunt clover and the bluet;
I know a sweeter nook of flowers —
Much sweeter, if they knew it!

Awake! my darling, Grey-blue-eyes;
My soul is sick of waiting!
It is a crime to lie abed
When all the birds are mating!

Open your windows, Grey-blue-eyes!
True-Love awaits to woo them —
See, the sweet windows of the skies!
The hot Sun hurries to them!

THE RING OF LOVE

X

Look, — the window, O my heart!
A golden head is peeping! —
Grey-blue-eyes — shyly hid —
Pretend that you are sleeping! —

Shame upon you, little birds;
Shame on your pretty voices;
For why? here comes my Goldenhair
While all the morn rejoices.

XI

Love in a wild-eye-phrensy,
Wanders up and down!
What, in the world, has vexed him?
Love in a pout and frown!

Under a wild-wood tree,
Stretched on a bed of moss;
Two is better than three, —
Kissing and limbs across!

THE RING OF LOVE

Join, then! sweet Love! — make two, three —
Three must love delay —
Love with two — and two are three;
Wella — wella — way! —

XII

Blushes are tattlers to the world,
Much tampered in frank innocence;
But something in a virgin's smile
Gives to the wicked no pretence.

Who can prescribe such medicine
Shall purge lewd man of all that's vile?
Pause but a moment, in the front of Sin,
Whisper to thy heart this prayer;
“Dear God, it surely would be best
If this pure girl, my Goldenhair,
Purchased her safety in Thy rest.”

THE RING OF LOVE

XIII

Who is sick of Death,
Pause, and tell me why!
Sweet must end if bitter live,
Love, too true, must die.

Play with me old Death;
Play in a posie ring!
Grim old Death! — Sad young Life
Weep, and Death will sing!

Rings of Love begin
After birth — and die —
Love begins when love has end —
Love; and tell me why.

XIV

Jolly and merry,
The pipers go;
And the birds are all singing, —
They love it so.

THE RING OF LOVE

Snare-drums are beating
A ratta tip tap,
And any street-urchin
May toss up his cap.

All the jazz music,
As well as the sweet,
Is all to my liking
At Goldenhair's feet.

xv

Why sit you beneath the lamp,
Reading a book of ditties?
There is no maid in all the land,
In all our teeming cities,
True to song as you.

Open your grey-blue eyes,
Search in your true heart;
Look, — in your heart lies
The song that I love best —
Singing in that sweet nest.

THE RING OF LOVE

XVI

I wandered in a thousand books
Of love and poesy,
And marveled, in their ways of words,
What love was there for me.

All the most lovely things of earth
Worship give to Love;
How can I hope my Goldenhair
Might worship me thereof?

Who that has known the tears of life
Can say Love's way is kind?
The voice of every day declares
Both Love and Fate are blind.

XVII

The dearest of all songs,
Any world has heard,
What is it to the voice of you —
Sweet as any bird!

THE RING OF LOVE

I stand to hear your voice,
Looking in your eyes;
I stand — I hear no song — no sound, —
For the light that in you lies.

A dear form of God's light
Is in the heart of you —
Lift up, oh lift those grey-blue eyes,
Let the God-light through!

XVIII

Pain is nothing to me;
Love must a nothing be!
Fly from me Love; stay sweet Pain!
Come to me Love, and weep again.

' O sad dove why do you mourn,
Your breast against a thorn? '
If love is truly in your nest
Pain is not in your breast.

THE RING OF LOVE

O sweet bird! why do you sing
And flutter your crimson wing?
Tell me, then, can it be true
Love is faithful to you?

XIX

We used to speak of angels,
And worship them in prayer;
We pictured them of radiance,
Beheld them everywhere.

How often have we argued
Upon the truth of it,
Until our faith could witness
Soft wings around us flit.

Blest are those days of wonder
When Faith established Truth;
When Youth could worship Old Age,
And Age could temper Youth.

THE RING OF LOVE

Those days are gone forever; —
Faith first is lost in doubt,
Then Doubt is lost in wonders,
Invention ferrets out.

The air supports vast engines,
May carry me to you; —
My whispers in charged ethers
May sigh a love-song true.

Directed sparks of lightning,
Through singing threads of wire,
Knit distant hearts together,
And kindle love to fire.

There is no doubt of angels, —
Believe on all such things;
The air is full of spirits,
And swiftly moving wings.

THE RING OF LOVE

XX

What saucy and ambitious devil
May dance the ring of love within!
Oh, let no falsity of logic
Convince you to the lust of sin!

There is no health in Love-Deception,
Its life is but a mask of death;
The simple truth and simple honour
Are jewels in the child of breath.

Observe your pledge in pure devotion,
Yourself demands good faith of you;
And yours of love is knit within you,
So be it that your love is true.

XXI

Balance your merchandise of jewels
Against frail Innocence!
What is the diamond, what is the pearl,
Emblazoned in Pretence? —

THE RING OF LOVE

Lock the dear cabinet of your heart,
Hide the rich jewel there;
Let no one pilfer your true wealth, —
Grey-blue-eyes, Goldenhair!

Look, — who infest our city streets,
Whose jewels have been lost;
There is no care-free heart of all
That living holocaust —
In counterfeit of mirth, their laugh
Is scorched in poisoned breath;
The ready smile upon their lips,
Beckons the way to death.

It is that chastity of mind
You have enthralled me with;
You are a dream of some old day,
Wrapped in a sacred myth! —
It is a strange word I have said,
“A dream of some old day!”
And you so young, so beautiful —
A vase of dainty clay.

THE RING OF LOVE

I cannot speak of you as, "thou,"
In fashion of old times;
And all that ancient flavour fails
To mingle in my rhymes:
And yet, God knows it is the truth,
When you are gay and free,
You have an air that plainly says,
"Hands off, sir, let me be!"

This artless, artful method mixed
In your sweet sympathies,
Has so befevered my poor wits,
With down-right lunacies,
That I entreat you, gentle soul,
If I have been too free,
Remember, I am but a man —
Forget, — and pardon me.

SILENCE AND TRUE LOVE

SILENCE AND TRUE LOVE

To my beloved friend, Hon. William A. Falconer, whose manuscript translation, "Silence," inspired this.

Oh let us in our adoration raise
An altar unto Silence, under whose
Inspiring wings immortal hopes are brought
Majestically perfect to the light,
Surrounding life, and which they dominate.

Not William only was the silent one,
But all mankind, whose deeds are worthy note,
While secretly their hands and brains create:
Then why should we perplex our little hour,
With vacillating speech, if but a day
In quiet thought may make our duty clear?

The silent moments with a faery skill, —
Mute workmen in the mental universe, —
Build palaces that angels may enjoy.
If speech is silver, silence is pure gold —
Speech is of time but silence is of God.

THE RING OF LOVE

Doth not the honey-insect in the dark
With secret effort store its precious gain?
Thought labours in the silence of the night,
And gives to virtue that which virtue grants.

Alas, too often speech is not for truth,
But trippingly is given from the tongue
To hide a doubtful action; and a maze
Of many words may stifle helpful thought.

Be not deceived; speech cannot ever serve
The true communion of two loving souls;
For as the numbers in a printed list
May designate creations of true art,
But give no satisfaction to the soul —
Deprived sweet visions of transcendent forms —
So, speech may catalog a list of love,
But silence breathes the beauty of the heart.

Beware, if in the moments of such dear
Communion, you resist the secret call
That in your breast, insistent and unseen,
Commands your hallowed efforts! You may lose

SILENCE AND TRUE LOVE

A greater treasure than the wit of man
Has ever gathered from unfathomed seas;
For so is cast away the secret love
Of an eternal soul, and lost the true
Existence of your own, which not again
May feel the holy calm that silence gives.

Speech is our medium when life is naught —
In the sad moments when we do not wish to know
Or love our brothers, it is used to hide
Our misconceptions, when we feel ourselves
Most insincere, and far away from truth:
And every time we speak, strange feelings warn
That gates divine have closed against our souls —
And so our minds keep avaricious guard
Over a golden silence; but imprudent tongues
Are lavish spenders of their poverty.

A superhuman instinct of the truth,
Has ever warned us it is hazardous
To keep a silent tryst with sordid souls —
Uncared for and not loved — for as the wind
That comes and goes, but leaves no serious trace;

THE RING OF LOVE

So, idly, words may pass from man to man,
But silence, that with subtle motion glides
From heart to soul, may never be forgot.

A life that's beautiful and true — the life
Alone that lives enduringly — is made
Of silence only. In your quiet hours —
When thought may only come — consider then
That silence may give knowlege of itself;
And if your constant mind an instant may
Descend, deep in your own soul, to that depth
Where angels may inhabit, — over all
The recollections of the one most loved
Are surely not his gestures or his words;
But memory will recall the silent hours
That you and he so long have lived and loved. —
It is the silent moments you have passed,
That can alone reveal the quality
Of your affections, and your soul's desires.

But such is not the passive lassitude
That some mistake for active silence. — We
Are not concerned with futile phantasies,

SILENCE AND TRUE LOVE

Or silence in the guise of sleep or death:
An active silence may appear to sleep,
And if quiescent be preferred to speech;
But when some master passion stirs it up,
Then as a king it reigns in royal state.

How often are we forced against our will
Where evil passions reign? When two or three
Have met together they at once conspire
To quell their enemy, invisible;
For many a friendship has no other bond
Than hatred of the silence that should be
The cherished medium of sincere esteem.

But if, in spite of every effort made,
It glides among the vicious, who have met
In purposed folly wickedness to vent,
They will avert their shifting eyes from things
Above their vision: they will slink away
From their unseemly riot — giving place
To that unseen superior: — they will shun
Each other in the future, for the fear

THE RING OF LOVE

That ribald laughter is a mask to hide
The treachery that lurks on noisy tongues.

The rabble seldom understand its worth;
Yet even they may welcome, at a time
In their misguided lives, that quiet host —
But only when some solemn circumstance
Has opened to their clouded vision scenes
Almost divine. The most depraved may feel
Some moments, during their down-trodden lives
When they may guess what only Gods can know.

Look backward to the day when fearlessly
You first communed with Silence. — Solemn thoughts
Were throbbing in your breast. You saw beneath
The mist, that had enveloped you, a deep
Abysmal valley, — and of which none speaks; —
There, looking on that inner sea of light,
Or gazing in that chasm of despair,
Your eyes would neither dazzling turn nor flinch.

It was when after weary wandering,
Your footsteps led you home, or at the hour

SILENCE AND TRUE LOVE

When you must sever from the ones you love,
Or when a mighty joy exalted you,
Or on the threshold of great misery,
Or in the presence of untimely death.

Consider the blest moments when the jewels,
Unestimated values, were revealed;
Or when the sleeping verities awoke
To sudden rapture; tell me truly, then,
If Silence was not like the smile of God?
And if Misfortune followed, — with soft wings
She did not seem to buffet, but with kind
Caresses only kissed the tears away:
At such a moment silence is thrice blest,
And those who suffer from misfortune most
Are they whose hearts are nearest the divine.

They, only, know on what unfathomed seas
The fragile bark of daily life is steered — .
Their ways have led them closely unto God;

THE RING OF LOVE

And when they journey on the shores of light,
Their faithful footprints never shall be lost.

Tremendous in extent, there is no power
To measure it; and whether of the king
Or slave, or in the presence of sad death,
Or grief, or love, it ever is the same.

The secrets of its ways are never lost;
For if the first-born man should meet the last
To dwell upon the earth, its hidden wealth
Would be as adequate and just the same —
And always through the ages. — They would meet
And look in silence — kisses, terrors, tears,
Despite the lapse of uncomputed time,
Would have unchanged effect; and they would know
Each other's inmost hearts, as certainly
As if from childhood their soft limbs were twined
Together in one cradle — linked in love.

If you should truly wish to give yourself
To some dear friend, or loved one, let your lips
Forget to speak; but if a subtle fear

SILENCE AND TRUE LOVE

Unnerve you, — lest that feeling is the sign
Of a compelling love, not satisfied, —
Beware and shun him; rather flee from such
Discordant company; because your heart
Already has been warned of something wrong.

The hour of silence surely comes to us;
It is the sun of love; and as our sun of light
Makes luscious all the healthful fruits of earth,
So, when that silence shines upon our hearts,
It ripens fruits that give immortal joy.

Some mingling must take place — we know not where —
The fountains of our silence are removed
Far from the streams of reason; for two souls,
Of equal poise and lovable, may clash
In hostile silence, struggling to the death;
Whereas, a virgin and a galley-slave
In dearest harmony, of that great power,
May join their spirits by the purest bond.

THE RING OF LOVE

It cannot be foreseen, but as the clouds,
That gather without warning in the sky
And send through darkened space quick threads of light;
So, spreads around and hovers over us,
That mystery of silence out of which
Undreamed of powers may emanate and flow: —
Should that explain why tender lovers wait,
Delaying to the utmost that great day
When that revealer of the hidden life
Must enter their existence, and expel
The clouds of misconceptions, that have held
Their souls so long in duress of dark night?

And even the frivolous are gently led,
By true love, to the center of sweet life;
By which existence shall be worth to them
The value of the Gods, that is enclosed
In their divine first silence; but if they
Should fail to knit their hearts together, when
It beckons unto them, how shall they know
Its wealth and value? It will never change.
It is today the same as yesterday.

SILENCE AND TRUE LOVE

The strangest, most unlikely things take place
According to some law, not understood,
Of which no word is spoken, and of which
We do not even think; but deep within
Our hearts a quiet understanding dwells
That must inform us, Silence is the cause.

It is not open to keen arguments;
For every agitation of a soul, alert,
And on its guard, becomes an obstacle
Against the inner life, that is concealed
Within this secret. And to know realities,
This active silence must be rightly used
Among each other; for in it shall bloom,
Though seldom, fragrant, unexpected flowers,
Eternal, changeable and variant in form
And colour, in accordance to the soul
That blossoms in its own dear nourishment.

Is not the weight of gold and silver found
By balancing in water which is pure?
So, the true value of each spoken word

THE RING OF LOVE

Is ascertained by the surrounding grace
That radiates from silence. — Let me voice
My love in chosen phrases, it will not
Be valued more than long forgotten words,
That have been babbled in a thousand ways;
But let that silence follow my weak words,
And, if indeed I love, the thought of it
Will sink so deeply to the root of joy,
That life will never equal it again.

THE LAST VIGIL



*Between me and the light it seems to move
And hover in the sad-hushed atmosphere.*

THE LAST VIGIL

ELEGY

To, The Dear Inspiration, Departed —

1.

Is it a strange delusion, that I seem
To feel a shadowy presence moving here,
And all so quiet? — Is it not a dream? — —
No ghostly apparition doth appear,

Appear as tales of olden days declare; —
But, surely, in this silent room, tonight,
A subtle feeling steals upon the air;
A phantom shape between me and the light; —

Light-misted, as a shadow seems to move,
And hover in the sad-hushed atmosphere,
Above, around me, — over my lost love,
Whose form is ready to be moved from here.

THE RING OF LOVE

2.

Even as I watch, in this grief-laden air
The failing fragrance of cut flowers intrudes
On saddened reveries of life when fair,
When love was perfect. — Ah, my sad heart broods,

Broods on the joys of those remembered hours,
Remembered joys that now compel my woe,
While steals upon me the sad breath of flowers,
Breathing and dying. — Can it, then, be so,

So, that the soul of her I watch and love,
May linger in the hushed air of this room;
May touch, caress me, as the lilies move
And shed their short lives in this hallowed gloom?

THE LAST VIGIL

3.

Short lives that fade upon the fading hours! —
Even as they fade, each lingering breeze retains
Souls of their beauty — spirits of sweet flowers —
Fading upon the fragrance that remains,

Remains not longer than the moving breeze,
Dying and sighing for the silent dead,
Swooning and sickened of the world's disease,
Vanishing always, as pure souls have fled,

Fled from the slaughter of frail innocents,
Confiding souls, whose trust was in a world,
That, reckless of their safety or defense,
Treats them as outcasts, from high heaven hurled; —

THE RING OF LOVE

4.

All that confided in destructive laws
Of cruel Chance. Is it of Chance, alone,
Such destinies are turned — the master cause, —
That leads or drives us into ways unknown?

Unknown to all, unknown are all the ways —
But surely, there must be some other guide,
Some other fateful master of our days,
Save brutal Chance, for life is not denied,

Denied the soul. — Thus I decline this cup; —
Even in the very void of thought, should I,
Deluded by despairing views, call up
The futile vapours of philosophy?

THE LAST VIGIL

5.

Rather confide in every frail belief;
For, in the void of doubt, devouring death
Accords no respite to our lasting grief, —
That must remain as long as there is breath. —

Breath was the boon of those devoted days,
When voice to voice responded, heart to heart,
When as we wandered among winding ways,
We pledged each other that we should not part —

Part not in life or death? Oh death-life-pledge!
Is love more constant than inconstant breath?
Has love new life beyond that extreme edge
Where sweet life enters into bitter death?

THE RING OF LOVE

6.

Sweet life is bitter, only death is sweet;
Life is our sad night, death is our glad day;
Life is denied existence, not complete;
Life gains to value as it fades away.

Away it fades within a few short hours,
Even as I watch, and even as I breathe
The wan hours vanish in these dewless flowers, —
Breathing and dying on the form they wreathe; —

Wreathe lovingly the form that silent seems
A vision of some other world; so white
And beautiful and pure; as if God's dreams,
From stars descending, floated into sight.



*Aurora opulent in rainbow dyes,
Tiptoe is calling the enraptured thrush;*

THE LAST VIGIL

7.

The night is waning; the great moon declines;
Pale star-lights linger; the moon fades away;
Her crown no longer through the casement shines;
Her night-queen beauty has been lost in day:

Lost in day! God's artist of changing skies,
In heaven's chemicals has dipped his brush!
Aurora, opulent in rainbow dyes,
Tiptoe, is calling the enraptured thrush;

Calling the thrush while Sorrow calls me! — All
The varied melody of joyful dawn
Is echoing beyond the garden wall,
Is rising from the lilacs on the lawn!

THE RING OF LOVE

8.

The beauty of the morning, and the ways
Of all sweet nestlings in the laughing leaves,
Always remind me of those hallowed days
When Love went with me — Ah, my spirit grieves,

Grieves for the very joy that should be mine! —
Never again, when jocund morning sings,
Shall we laugh lightly, pushing through the vine,
As flitting fledglets lift their little wings!

Wings that remind me of bright spirits, unseen,
Of hallowed legends and all-trusting youth,
Of days long-vanished, that still intervene
And hide new error in forgotten truth.

THE LAST VIGIL

9.

All things accounted lovable and sweet,
While thus I linger in this pure, chaste room,
Compel me, lead me, to thy gentle feet: —
Starlight and the sweet dawn, silence, perfume,

Perfume of the dear death of drooping flowers,
The revolution of Time's Day-and-Night,
And flushed Aurora in spiced lilac bowers,
And all that's beautiful, and all delight,

Delight, desire of all dear things I see,
Shadows in dawn, and jewels in night's gloom,
All these to me, are all a part of thee,
And thou and these go with me to the tomb.

THE RING OF LOVE

FRAILTY — (*Sonnet, Elizabethan Form*)

And that is why the frailty of tripped girls
Is lovable and beautiful, — although
The acid drip of time, stain of their pearls,
Has left their sad hearts not as pure as snow.
Oh, that is why all mothers' tender sighs
Hover, — chaste haloes, on their damaged hearts!
Shew me the law of God, or man, denies
That love-desire should crave what love imparts! —
Love's failure is the reason of despair,
The flaunt of tinsel in the eye of Lust,
The reason why the frail will even dare
That desolation which depraves their dust.
O my dear sweeting, in your hallowed days,
Be merciful to all of evil ways.

PATTERNS FOR POETS

PATTERNS FOR POETS

When I first began to write poetry, I was very much puzzled as to what form I should use for the various thoughts which I tried to express. Therefore, I spent some time investigating what a great many poets have done in the way of forms and their different kinds of technique: —

The sonnet has often been discussed; there are several works defining it and giving advice to the writer of that kind of poetry; but I find very little has been said about the great many forms which have inherent beauty, and are frequently used by the better class of poets. So I conceived the idea of publishing a book in which nearly all, if not all, of the standard forms of poetry would be exemplified.

In the back of the book will be found an index which may be of advantage to those who are curious, and which should form a ready reference, so that the beginner or the curious reader, or even the professional poet, can look up an example, if he should happen to be interested in poetical forms.

THE RING OF LOVE

The lyric is such a usual form of poetry, there is no very great reason why I should give a description of it, but I hold that the greatest requisite for a good lyric is that it should have both the qualities of interest and felicity of expression, and, of course, those two requirements have been my guides in trying to produce the lyric.

The Lyric Sequence entitled "The Ring of Love" has used quite a variety of rhythms and stanzas, and as there are not a great many Lyric Sequences in the language, in that respect possibly, this poem of connected lyrics may have additional interest for some readers; as compared to unconnected lyrics.

The next form to be found in this book is in the poem "Silence and True Love" which is an essay in blank verse. There is no doubt the beauty of blank verse depends much upon the successful use of the cæsura, which should be varied, and as a general rule the cæsura should not happen too often between the fourth and fifth syllables. With that slight information, let us pass to the next form in this book.

"The Last Vigil"—page 41—is based on the elegiac form which was almost standardized by Gray's *Elegy*, but in this elegy I have included a technique that

PATTERNS FOR POETS

is original to myself. It is divided into nine parts of three stanzas each; twenty-seven stanzas in all. It will be observed that the last word of the first stanza, in each section of three stanzas, is repeated by the first word of the second stanza, and the last word of the second stanza is repeated in the first word of the third stanza; that form being continued throughout the nine parts. It was used to give the poem a feeling of solemnity and melody.

The next poem "Silence and Hope" — page 67 — is a Sestina, which is one of the rarest forms in the English language. I know of only two others besides this and it is notable for being little used, owing to the difficulty of technique required. It deserves quite a little description. It consists of six stanzas of six lines each: the lines are usually of ten syllables each, and it is concluded with an envoy of three lines. It is always to be written in that rigid number of lines. The ending word of each line should be a word of some gravity and some weight; trifling words should not be used as the endings of the lines in a sestina. After the first stanza is written, which is of six lines, the ending words of these six lines, making six words, are rigidly used as the ending words of all the other stanzas; no other word can be

THE RING OF LOVE

used as a last word of a line. The last word of the first stanza must be used as the ending word of the first line of the second stanza. The last word of the first line of stanza one becomes the ending word of the second line, stanza two. The last word of the fifth line, stanza one, must be the ending word of the third line, stanza two. The last word of the second line, stanza one, must be the last word of line four, stanza two. The last word of the fourth line, stanza one, must be the ending word of the fifth line, stanza two. The last word of the third line, stanza one, must be the last word of the sixth line, stanza two. That order must be followed throughout the poem. The second stanza is used for the pattern of the third stanza and so on. By this means, these ending words of the lines of the first stanza will each of them fall in a different position throughout the six stanzas of the poem, so that each word alternates from the first to the sixth position in each stanza. Then to make this idea complete, the same six words must all be used in the envoy which is only three lines, but they are used at the ending of the cæsura besides the ending of each of the lines. Examination of the envoy in this poem will show just where those six words should be used in the envoy. This

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method of using those ending words prevents the tinkling sounds of rhyme and at the same time produces a beautiful and melancholy sound to the ear of the reader.

The next form in this book is a Petrarchan Sonnet — page 69 — “Pearls of Hope.” This form of the sonnet has been described so often that I believe it will not be necessary to use the reader’s time with another description of it, excepting to call attention to the one fact that any poet who adopts the form of the sonnet and does not maintain the correct number of rhymes, simply advertises himself as being incapable of producing a sonnet. It, therefore, should be done with great care.

The next poem in this book is a Triolet — page 70 — “Sweetest, Fairest.” Rather frequently it has been used in our language and, to my mind, it is seldom a form that gives great pleasure. However, for a certain class of poems it is useful. Only two rhyming words are used in the triolet which consists of eight lines. The first line is repeated in the fourth and seventh. The second line is repeated in the eighth.

The next poem in this book may merit some attention entitled “Love or Wine” — page 71. It is, I believe, the one poem of its kind in the language. It consists of two Villanelles, Part I and Part II, in which the same

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rhymes are used and there is a peculiarity in the rhythm, as the reader will notice a spondee in the center of each line. The villanelle is always a poem of five stanzas, three lines each, and an envoy of four lines. It must not be varied from that fixed number. The first line of the poem is used as a refrain for the last line of the second stanza, of the last line of the fourth stanza, and of the last line of the envoy.

The third line of the first stanza is used as a refrain for the last line of the third stanza, and the last line of the fifth stanza, and for the second to last line of the envoy. The second line of the poem fixes a rhyme which must be used for the second line of all five stanzas and for the second line of the envoy. By this rule, only two rhymes are used in the entire poem. The envoy usually is addressed to a prince or some power, and contains a summing up of the idea of the poem. This is a very difficult form to write and, perhaps out of bravado, I doubled the difficulty by making it a "Double Villanelle," and made it still more difficult by the peculiarity of rhythm I adopted. It may be asked, what is the advantage of hampering one's self with a difficult form? For an answer to this, I may say, what is the advantage to the human mind in examining a beautiful

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piece of lace? The difficulty of making the lace appeals to the intelligence of the beholder besides the beauty of the pattern. The same law holds the attention of the reader in beautiful and intricate forms of poetry. The only thing to be observed is the fact that the difficulty must not be a detriment to the result. The poem must be just as beautiful, in spite of the difficulty, as if it had been written in the easiest way.

The next poem in this book is a Rondeau entitled "Sallie Slapped Me" — page 75. This form is more popular than most other exotic forms. It consists of two rhymes only, thirteen lines, and two refrains, making fifteen apparent lines. The first phrase is used as a refrain, ending the third and fifth stanzas. In this poem the refrain is "Sallie slapped me." The arrangement of the rhymes must not be varied from the sample in this book. Otherwise, it may not properly be considered as a rondeau. It is a very useful form to concentrate the mind of the reader on some particular phrase or idea.

The next form is a Rondel — page 76 — entitled "Contradiction." This is a rarer form than the rondeau, very seldom seen in the English language. The first two lines are used as a refrain, which means they

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are repeated at the last of the second stanza and at the last of the third stanza. With the refrain, the rondel consists of fourteen lines with only two rhymes permitted. The rhymes must be arranged in the exact way as they are in this example or it will be an incorrect rondel.

Most of these forms were invented by French and Italian troubadours and they all have a reason for their existence. They have a beauty in themselves; and the attitude of some of our latter day would-be poets who, because of their own incompetence, deride the use of anything that is difficult, certainly deserves derision when these forms are properly examined and understood.

The next poem in this book entitled "Bitter-Sweet" — page 77 — is a Pantoum and is a rare form for the English language. I understand that it was adopted from some poems written in the Polynesian group of islands, by Malays; it is very peculiar. The rules governing it are as follows: the second line of the first stanza must be used as the first line of the second stanza. The fourth line of the first stanza must be used as the third line of the second stanza, and this repetition of the second and fourth lines of each stanza must always be carried to the next stanza in the order above men-

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tioned. It gives a peculiar, monotonous turn to the sound of the poem and is useful if you wish a poem that repeats some idea to the mind of the reader. As above stated, it is used very seldom and in fact it would become monotonous if there were many of them used in any one book by any poet, but when used only occasionally it is quite a delight to the reader.

The next on this list is what is known as *Vers-de-Société*. The principle of this class of poetry is to be bright and witty and at the same time use a difficult form. In this poem entitled "Wright" I believe that we have something that is entirely original in many ways — page 79.

The next poem in the list is another *Rondeau* which follows the same form as the *rondeau* described before. This one is entitled "I'm Mad at the World" — page 80. This *rondeau*, you will observe, is written in my blood because I was so very mad at the world when I wrote it.

The next poem in this book is a *Ballade* entitled "Elfin Knight" — page 81. This is a difficult form to write and is seldom used in the English language. Only two rhymes are used in the poem which consists of three stanzas, eight lines each, and an envoy of four lines.

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The last line of the first stanza is used as a refrain for the last line of each stanza, and the last line of the envoy.

The rhymes must be arranged in the same order as they are arranged in this example. Otherwise, it will be an imperfect ballade. The envoy, like envoys in other exotic forms, is usually addressed to a prince or some power and contains a summing up of the poem. It is frequently used for superstitious subjects, witches, ghosts, etc. It seems to be beneficial to that idea.

The next form in this book "The Nautical Ballad of Ben Bo Bohns" — page 85 — is patterned on the old style ballad which was popular in the English, Welsh and Irish languages of the old bards that flourished six hundred years ago. They usually had a superstitious turn, and used internal rhymes freely, which were controlled by the cæsuras. The point of the minstrels who sung them was to tell a story in poetical form at a banquet of some lord or baron, and usually dealt with heroic deeds, or wild actions, or superstitions, or things that would excite the superstition of the hearers. It is needless to say that very little was said by those old bards in the way of flowers, roses and stars, and such other stock beauties that are today worked to death by

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modern poets. The object was to tell something. It is a difficult form to write correctly because on account of the lack of ornament the writer is forced *to say something*, and that something *must be* said, and that something *must be* interesting.

The next form in this book is entitled "Consequence" — page 89 — and is a song with a chorus. Of course, such a poem is subject to great latitude and the poet may follow a great many patterns.

The next poem in the list is a lyric "A Tropic Idyl" — page 90. As I have called your attention before to this form, I do not repeat the description.

An ode follows entitled "Ode — To Love Divine" — page 91. Since the days of Cowley a great many odes have been written in this irregular style of meter and rhyming. They are generally supposed to be poems based on spiritual subjects.

After this series of Patterns For Poets follows a series of lyrics entitled A Sentimental Series, and it does not seem to me that it is necessary to describe this series as they follow closely what is usually known as lyrics.

I might say, however, one thing. Lyrics of today have frequently degenerated into nothing but a con-

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glomeration of "high-flutin" lines, when everything is considered. It is much more difficult to write a lyric that *means something*, than it is to write a series of lines each line of which might be beautiful in itself.

The next poem in this book, in order to round out the variety of forms, is a short Narrative, and the criticism of lyrics, which mean little, applies in greater force to a narrative that means nothing. A narrative should be *interesting*; tell its story in an unmistakable way.

Indeed, there are very few genuine Sonnet Sequences in our language, especially if written in the Petrarchan form, and, it seems to me, this book of poetic patterns is justly ended by the inclusion of my Sonnet Sequence, The Lover's Rosary, which (if I be not censured for boasting) is the only Sonnet Sequence that has ever been produced in any language in which each sonnet is linked to every other sonnet, by such a contrivance; a chain of interlinked rhymes.

In conclusion, I may say that I do not believe this idea of presenting to the reader one of each important form used in poetry and all by one author, has ever been attempted before; and it seems to me that there should be some interest to the reader when reading a variety of such beautiful forms as we have inherited

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from the past. I also hope it may be of some advantage to the younger writers of our day who have had some difficulty in finding patterns for these various forms, presented thus in one compact form, in one book.

SILENCE AND HOPE — *Sestina*

The moon sleeps — silent on the ocean wave;
The stars are sleeping in the calm of night;
The world is lost in dreams — and all is still. —
Oh happy hour! the time that ever gives
To me sweet comfort, and the precious hope
That life results from everlasting sleep.

When radiant morning calls the world from sleep,
And, like a God, the sun wheels from the wave,
The world will rouse to labour without hope;
And I mid thankless toils, will sigh for night;
The night when I'll awake to life that gives
Peace and delight, when all the earth is still.

Oh happy hours, when all the earth is still!
Oh precious hours, when all are lost in sleep!
Oh sweetest calm, when weary Nature gives

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The world to rest! — All but the restless wave,
Which rolleth with the moon the live-long night; —
And I, — awake, enthralled in dreams of hope.

How wonderful if I could always hope,
Giving to joy the span of life that still
Remains! Alas, the never-ending night,
That man has softly named, 'Eternal Sleep,'
Never returns one motion; but the wave
Sweet light returneth that the star-light gives.

The day gives labour, but the calm night gives
The beauty of the stars — and blessèd hope; —
The morning wind awakes the troubled wave,
But night returns and all again is still. —
To me, oh gently come, Eternal Sleep; —
Come gently while I slumber, in the night.

Look out upon the splendour of the night!
There is a beauty in the air, that gives
The troubled spirit peace — that even sleep

SILENCE AND HOPE

Or death not equals. — Stars and starry hope —
Sweetest companions when the night is still! —
When silently the moon sleeps on the wave!

L'Envoy —

Prince! — the wave rolls in the silent night —
When all the world is still the star-light gives
Immortal hope, that mortals wake from sleep.

PEARLS OF HOPE — *Sonnet*

Why should we covet everlasting rest, —
The long sad peace that hallows a dark grave? —
Action — may give new courage to the brave
Who live in hope. — O ye, who are depressed
In oft-repeated failure, it is best
To live and die in hope! May not the wave,
That rolls from far, some lonely shore to lave,
Give up the riches of her shining breast;

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Bring forth her priceless pearls with upward heave? —
Oh, let no dark design our hopes bereave,
For we are like the wave in life's wide ocean,
Restless and tossed by many a storm's commotion,
And on eternal shores may chance to leave
Some pearls of hope for this sad earth's devotion.

SWEETEST, FAIREST — *Triolet*

Sweetest; — loveliest in the land!
Fairest; — prettiest and best!
Who — can such a girl withstand? —
Sweetest; — loveliest in the land,
We are slaves, at your command! —
Well you know it — you have guessed —
Sweetest; — loveliest in the land,
Fairest; — prettiest and best.

LOVE OR WINE

(A Double Villanelle)

PART I

**Fill to the brim! sparkling wine!
Drink to the girl — drink the sea!
Here's to the girl, here's to the vine!**

**Wonderful hair, — girl divine, —
Beautiful eyes — witchery —
Fill to the brim, sparkling wine!**

**Dimple of Love's perfect design,
Smiling for me — only for me!
Here's to the girl, here's to the vine!**

PATTERNS FOR POETS

Languishing eyes, stars that shine,
Kindle my love. — A pledge to thee!
Fill to the brim, sparkling wine.

Never for me, never mine!
Women and wine never agree, —
Here's to the girl, here's to the vine!

L'Envoy —

Prince, choose wine! — wine so fine!
Choose the girl! which will it be?
Here's to the girl, here's to the vine,
Fill to the brim, sparkling wine.

LOVE OR WINE

PART II

Fill the bowl, sparkling wine!
Drink, my lads, drink the sea!
Drink to the girl, she is mine!

Lovely, fair, smiles divine,
Eyes! that are full of deviltry,
Fill the bowl, sparkling wine!

Queen of hearts, God's design, —
Owns my soul, steps on me, —
Drink to the girl, she is mine!

PATTERNS FOR POETS

Good as gold, extra fine,
Twice the best, triple three;
Fill the bowl, sparkling wine!

Come to me, gentle vine!
Teach me every flattery;
Drink to the girl, she is mine!

L'Envoy —

Prince, a drink, don't decline;
Girls and wine and kings agree;
Fill the bowl, sparkling wine!
Drink to the girl, she is mine!

SALLIE SLAPPED ME — *Rondeau*

Sallie slapped me, — good and square!

Sallie slapped me, — I declare!

When I took her scissors — snip,

Snip — a ringlet quick to clip; —

Such a pretty lock of hair!

Gad, — that girl is my despair;

Ha! she'd better have a care —

Many a slip 'twixt cup and lip —

Sallie slapped me.

Sallie said a naughty swear;

Swore she'd have my scalp to wear; —

Look, the biggest flirt can trip;

Here I wear this golden strip;

Tit for tat is only fair;

Sallie slapped me!

PATTERNS FOR POETS

CONTRADICTION — *Rondel*

What is the reason of my discontent,
And I rejoicing in the love of you?
There is no answer that wits can invent,
Nothing in logic to furnish a clue.

Worries and troubles all wits will pursue,
Hunting the cause of that happy-lament:—
“What is the reason of my discontent,
And I, — rejoicing in the love of you?”

This will explain to you all that is meant;
One thought was doubled in answer of two;—
This it is, — Love me dear, do not consent;
Agree — contradict — and your answer will do:—
What is the reason of my discontent,
And I, — rejoicing in the love of you?

BITTER-SWEET — *Pantoum*

**This is the only thing I know;
I love you so, will you be mine?
Will you be mine? I love you so
Because I think you are divine.**

**I love you so, will you be mine? —
If you are mine then I am yours; —
Because I think you are divine,
I love the pain my heart endures.**

**If you are mine, then I am yours,
And that sweet reason tells me why
I love the pain my heart endures,
And must endure until I die:**

**And that sweet reason tells me why
The bitter-sweet, the pain I love, —
And must endure until I die, —
Is sweet below and sweet above.**

PATTERNS FOR POETS

**The bitter-sweet, the pain I love !—
When sweet is bitter, even pain
Is sweet below and sweet above,
For pain gives love its only gain.**

**When sweet is bitter, even pain
Is all my passion to possess ;
For pain gives love its only gain,
And love is doubled in distress.**

wright!

my lady bid me write whate right
in this her book of gold and whight
; so here i've tried my best to wright
to wit, some witty thing not tright
. but look! alas some other wight
, his wit has writ from left to right
, and left me in a sorry flight
! now i believe, with all my might
, a holy rite the heart may right
; but i know no rite my mind to right
: although a tête-à-tête tonight
with thee might help my mind to light
till i could rightly write a writing right

I'm Mad At The World—Rondeau

I'm mad at the world— I don't give a care!
My teeth are all rotting, and even my hair
Is getting too thin to be seen—
These humans are all of them mean,
Not one of them tries to be fair—

I'm grouchy and grumpy, I'm cross as a bear,
The night is pitch-black,— the day-light a glare,—
The winter too brown,— the summer too green,—
I'm mad at the world.

The girls giggle at me, because they declare
My paunch is too big and my ribs are too spare;
And whether too chunky or whether too lean
I don't give a hang!— and the ninnies may clean
Go chase their own giggles— I stand up and swear
I'm mad at the world!

written in my blood }
May 1st, 1923 }

Brookes More

ELFIN KNIGHT — *Ballade*

**The song of an elfin knight, —
A knight from over the seas, —
The song of a mad, mad flight, —
A witch and her sorceries: —
“ What of your victories?
Boast not a valiant deed —
Ho! for the knight that flees
The witch — the phantom steed.**

**“ What of the right — O Knight,
And never a day of ease!
Look that your sword is bright,
Witches are hard to please. —
Demons of mysteries, —
Devils of every creed!
What do I worship on my knees? —
The witch — the phantom steed!**

PATTERNS FOR POETS

“ Flitting in ghostly white,
Carried away on the breeze,
And a black steed, blacker than night, —
Black as her deviltries! —
O victims of witcheries,
When that your love makes speed,
Remember an elf that sees
The witch — the phantom steed!

L'Envoy —

“ Prince of Insane Decrees,
Mercy, attend my need! —
Bless the good saint that frees
The witch — the phantom steed.”

**THE NAUTICAL BALLAD
OF
BEN BO BOHNS**

THE NAUTICAL BALLAD

OF

BEN BO BOHNS —

**Ho! Ben Bo Bohns of the Will o' the Wisp,
He sails to the phantom west!
For thirteen years and thirteen months
He's chased that phantom quest!
Quoth Ben, " We've sailed from the rim of the east,
From the port of Kalkut Town,
And steered our ship on the shining sea
To the west where the day goes down.**

**" For thirteen years and thirteen months
And thirteen days to the dot,
We've steered to the west, but the west remains
That same far distant spot.
Crowd on all sail, you lubber crew!
With thirteen sails to the breeze,
In the thirteenth hour of the thirteenth day
We'll sail the Western Seas! —**

PATTERNS FOR POETS

“ What ails you now, my Bos’n Bold,
What trouble is in your eye? ”
“ O Captain Ben, again and again
That wizard ship goes by;
Her hulk is red and her crew is dead,
And she’s weather-beat with age;
She scuds in the gale, with never a sail,
Where the western billows rage.”

“ Crowd on more sail, we’ll never fail;
’Tis the Flying-Dutchman ship;
She leads the way to Phantom Bay
Where the western waters dip.”
“ O Captain Ben,” said the helmsman then,
“ There’s another ship that’s queer! ”
“ Have never a fear,” quoth Ben Bo Bohns,
“ ’Tis The Ancient Marineer;

BEN BO BOHNS

“ ’Tis the ship of The Ancient Marineer,
She sails the fading west,
Clap on all sail, in calm or gale,
She leads us to our quest.”
Then in a fright the Midshipmite,
“ O Captain, Ben Bo Bohns,
In the first monsoon, if you sing that tune,
We’ll go to Davie Jones.”

“ Fear not my lad, ’tis not that bad,
We’ll welcome breeze or gale;
If a phantom ship can weather the storm,
The Will o’ the Wisp can’t fail.” —
They stretched the sheets till the cordage sang,
The crazy crew sang too; —
The crazy ship with a shudder and a moan,
To the west like an arrow flew.

PATTERNS FOR POETS

Far, far to the west, on that strange quest,
They sail the Western Sea,
To join those other phantom ships, —
God save that phantom three!
O mates beware, foul days or fair,
Beware of Ben Bo Bohns!
For if you see that awful three
You'll sup with Davie Jones.

CONSEQUENCE — *Song*

Never the flight of time has turned
Summer back to spring;
When summer is old and turns to gold,
Birds forget to sing.

Chorus

Why should the summer of my love
Bring a sadder season?
Love me as true as I love you
And Time will lose his reason.

When have autumn's russet leaves
Whispered, " Summer follows " ?
When leaves are dead and birds have fled
Winter haunts the hollows.

Chorus

Why should the summer of my love
Bring a sadder season?
Love me as true as I love you
And Time will lose his reason.

PATTERNS FOR POETS

A TROPIC IDYL — *Lyric*

By banks of sweet magnolias,
That line a tropic-stream,
We sailed through sleeping fragrance,
As in a lovely dream.

As the half-concealed magnolias,
That spangle in the night,
Her mantle, gently parted,
Revealed a dazzling white.

Her eyes were large and lustrous, —
Like stars in dreamy rest;
Her hair unbound and golden,
Concealed a snow-white breast.

PATTERNS FOR POETS

She never saw the crescent,
That seemed to sail the air;
And I was lost in wonder, —
While we were dreaming there.

ODE —

TO LOVE DIVINE

Swift and lovely dreams—oh, steep our souls
In visions of divinity!
Spread your varied rainbows on the sea
Of this mortality, that rolls
In sorrow and despair!
Oh, let the virtue of such purity
Span over that dark gulf, and lead us where
Mortality at last shall fail!

PATTERNS FOR POETS

O Spirit, eager to prevail
Against the dissolution of our days,
Seek the great throne
Of that divinity, — alone
That turns our devious ways
From this mortality to immortality!

O Love divine, —
The very grave of Death, —
The essence of our life is thine;
We are the creatures of thy living breath!
Oh, let our adoration be to thee
A bond of purity and chastity!

THE HERMIT — *Sonnet*

When from the entrance of his lonely cave,
The hermit views the glory of the dawn,
He turns and sighs, "Alas, the night is gone,
I would the sun were quenched beneath the wave."
And I, an erēmite, love cannot save,
Witness the glory of a rising sun,
And, turning, sigh, "My sorrow hath begun —
I would the night were lasting as the grave."

Thou art the sun, like morning's golden car,
Who hast arisen in my peaceful night,
While fast before thee fadeth many a star. —
Stars, beautiful, that I, an erēmite,
Did love for their sweet influence, — which far
Serene and silent shone with steady light.

A SENTIMENTAL SERIES

COME BACK

Wonderful moving stars,
Guiding the fading ships; —
Motionless seeming — sailing —
Slowly the vision slips!

Sail! sail! ships and stars!
Sail — to your destiny!
All that I love goes with you —
Go — — but come back to me.

THE LOVELIEST BUD

Do you believe this bud has blown
And shut for you, — to bloom anew? —
Has spread its petals one by one,
And shown its chalice wet with dew? —
I saw it open bright and gay,
I saw it lift to hear the thrush;

THE LOVELIEST BUD

I saw it bloom when soft the day
Crept up with timid hush.

I saw it sway in the pale moon-light,
Its cup with sparkling jewels filled;
For all that night an elfin wight
Delicious dew distilled.
And when the eye of day awoke,
And all the birds began to sing,
That little elf with gentle stroke
Shut up the flower-spring.

He left it sweet and fresh for me, —
This bud that once was a blooming flower, —
For me to pluck — for you to see —
For you to bloom a happy hour.
And it is fair, and you are fair,
And every word of this is true;
And here it is for you to wear, —
Fresh and sweet with dew.

RED ROSES

Roses were white in ancient days,
White as the maids of heaven;
Perfectly white, till in despite
The red rose thus was given: —

Mischievous Cupid, bad blind boy,
In Venus' garden slipped,
And shot a white rose in the heart,
With arrow golden tipped.

Love's poison in the wounded rose
Ran riot, as it bled,
And changed its petals, vestal-white,
To conscious, blushing red.

SECRET WINGS

A gentle ghost, pale as a star,
Hid in a shadow-cloud; —
Even a spirit might miss that form,
Wrapped in a misty shroud. —

I felt its presence, as the thrill
That steals on secret wings,
Into the heart with hallowed thoughts,
When twilight silence brings. —

A BIT OF LACE

Why should the tendrils of the heart entwine
Around the little things,
That, cherished, baffle the swift flight
Of Time's insatiate wings?

As I caress with fond and lingering touch,
This bit of fragile lace,
The past is present, and my heart
Recalls a gentle face.

LITTLE WITCH

You tried to tease me; little witch!
With frown and pout pretended; -
But every pout and frown was rich
In smiling, dimple-blended —
You tried to tease me.

You tried to please me — sad coquette!
With sighs and tender kisses;
But now, you'll have it, you forget
Those tender, dainty, blisses —
You tried to please me!

AT LAST

The morning breeze expires
Upon the cool sea's breast;
The last ray of the sun
Fades in the shadowed west.

Into the heaven's blue
The soul of music dies;
And slowly to his nest
The stricken eagle flies.

All to love must haste,
And all from life depart;
And I shall be content
To rest upon thy heart.

PURE AND SWEET

Thou art a lovely flower,
Pure and sweet and fair; —
Others frail and lovely,
Have fallen unaware. —

Everyone who loves you,
Breathe with me a prayer! —
God protect and keep you
Pure and sweet and fair.

DOWN THE LANE

Down the lane a maiden goes,
Sweet and lovely as a rose;
Modesty dwells in her eyes,
Pure as planets in the skies;
Rosebud's red her cheeks have ta'en,
Lily's white her brow would stain. —
Ah! sweetest smiles will she bestow
On any one that she doth know; —
But thrice as merry would I be
If all her smiles were meant for me.

Sullied was the day's bright eye,
When that fair girl passed me by;
Look, the sun suffered eclipse,
When I saw her tempting lips!
All unheeded his bright glare,
When I saw her golden hair —
Sad fate! sorry dolt! alas!
To pine for sake of a pretty lass! —
Gad! — I must get a remedy
For this disease that threatens me.

MY WHITE ROSE

Gleam-trove! Dream-love!
Maid of my dream,
Floating so softly
Down a wide stream. —

Bright glows the white rose
In billowy bed,
Under the wide sky
Cold, white and dead.

Swing low! wing slow!
Beautiful star!
Swing to the white rose;
Silvery car.

SWING IN THE MOON-LIGHT

Swing in the moon-light!
Higher and higher!
I could swing always —
Never could tire.

What of our troubles!
What of the world!
What of our sad thoughts! —
Upwards we're whirled!

Talk to the planets,
Speak to the moon —
Tell them in whispers
A pretty love tune!

SWING IN THE MOON-LIGHT

Swing it, swing swiftly!
Don't let the cat die!
Why should we worry!
Swing to the sky!

Oh, you are dizzy,
Let her swing slow;
Hold up! — stop pushing! —
Stop her — — so —.

A MEMORY

Is it the spirit of a dream —
The dearest memory —
Is it the essence of a flower
The soul of ecstasy? —

As the pure fragrance that is given
To steal upon the air,
The long-loved memory of you
Steals on me, unaware:

And everything that's beautiful,
And everything that's true,
And everything that's lovely, pure,
Is in the thought of you.

DIPLOMATIC

We were chatting in the dark,
Trying to name the stars;
“Look,” I whispered, “that is Mars,
Like a golden spark!”

“I don’t like old Mars,” she pouted,
“Butchers make me weary —
There’s a nicer one, — there — dearie, —
Tell me all about it.”

When I looked at her, a grin, or
Something worked her dimple:
It was Venus — “Not so simple! —
You’re the little sinner!”

FORGET-ME-NOT

Right in the midst of our meadow,
A shy pretty flower grew,
Like a small part of the great sky,
Perfect and pure, and blue.

Modest and sweet, it grew there; —
When I went to that spot,
Sometimes I heard a whisper,
Saying, “ Forget-me-not.”

IT MUST BE SO — *Rhapsody*

That day (it must be so) the smile
Of noonday sun was caught, — the while
We wandered, — and imprisoned in
Your laughing eyes, — magnets that win
Whatever they desire.

’Twas then,
(It must be so) to a secret glen,
Hunting for flowers that blew so late,
Desire, or chance, or some kind fate,
Our willing footsteps led, to where
A pretty brook emerges fair
Amid the ferns. And you did quaff
Its chilly store, and heard it laugh,
And laugh, with many a light
And silvery gurgle; for so bright
And happy was the stream.

IT MUST BE SO

And I

Could swear that all its silvery,
Delightful, rippling laughter staid
And echoed in your breast, sweet maid!
And you did keep it there.

And now,

To all the Gods of Heaven, I vow!
(It must be so) some late bird trilled
His artless melody, and filled
Your spirit with his merry lay,
As far upon our homeward way
His music followed us with oft
Repeated note, sweet, pure and soft:

And oh,

(It must be so) the bright
Æolian voice of Hope, with light
And lovely echoes, made the song
Of that wild bird to linger long
And beautiful with you.

IT MUST BE SO

Thus all

The mingled sounds, that ever call
From wild unvisited retreats;
And all those joys the brook repeats
In varied cadence; and the gleam
Of happy noons, that in the stream
Is brightly glassed; all went with you,
And filled your heart with all that's dear and true.

WHO RETURNS!—
NARRATIVE

WHO RETURNS? —

Forth from his bare and simple cell! —
Ah, should the poet gladly leave,
That in chaste arbours he may weave
Garlands of joy, the world to tell? —
And were it best, in this sad day,
That he should sigh his soul away;
Or in a chosen dream should dwell? —

The tales that gentle are and fair,
To lull the careless child of time
How many bards have wrought in rhyme:
The chronicles of sin's despair,
That probe the depth of hell's abyss,
And leave no touch of hope or bliss,
Are seldom subjects of their care: —

WHO RETURNS? —

In mantle of the purest white,
As silent as a moving star,
As silent as all spirits are,
A sweet form in the blue-dark night
Went slowly to a place unclean,
Stealthily entered, all unseen,
A palace of diseased delight.

A hall she entered — strange and quaint —
Filled with the breath of ancient days —
Its columns wreathed with carved fays,
Its walls adorned with many a saint,
And famous heroes, wise and grave,
And statues breathing actions brave,
And martyrs, pictured pure of taint.

She stops and shudders, as with fear,
Viewing the vistas of that hall,
Where, seems it, the most light foot-fall
Should give a sharp touch to the ear;
Where each device, on arras old,
A moving phantom seems to hold —
Where shadows vanish and appear.

WHO RETURNS? —

It seemed one shadow, half-outlined,
Vague as a frightened thought could paint,
Appeared among the rest, as faint
As might a ghost that haunts the mind —
So dim the eye could hardly trace
Its shifting form and doubtful face, —
Obscurely shown and undefined.

It surely seemed that shadow willed
Some dubious act, some witchery,
Some scheme of impious treachery, —
Instinct upon the air, that filled
With swooning odours; dense as musk
That filters all the twilight dusk,
When no one knows from whence distilled.

And a cold dread, an icy chill
Into her bosom slowly crept —
Benumbed of life, it seemed she slept
In standing posture, white and still;
As might an angel, petrified,
Arms wide-extended, open-eyed;
As life should cease in bloom and thrill.

WHO RETURNS? —

As if a dreaming bird, asleep,
Should suddenly awake to see
A serpent coiled, and stealthily
Preparing for the fatal leap; —
So she awoke, as from a dream,
And saw a strange unearthly gleam,
Secreted in those shadows deep.

Out, through the gates she would have passed,
Swift as a bird when noise alarms,
But as the bird of fabled charms
Is by an evil eye held fast,
So she, as might an ouphe of dreams,
Stood helpless, — in unearthly gleams
Of doubtful light through shadows cast. —

THE LOVER'S ROSARY —

Sonnet Sequence

THE LOVER'S APOLOGY

There is a pleasure in reading that which expresses beautiful thoughts in plain and unadorned language; and there is a pleasure in that which is lovely and beautiful but expressed in symbols—although the shadowed meanings may at first baffle the reader.

Is it not the poet's business to record the desires of the heart as well as the calculations of the mind? When Life turns its kaleidoscope, contrasting shapes and colours unite in harmonious designs; and so, the apparent contradictions of the mind and heart may be combined to form a completed destiny.

If I have offered anything of beauty, let it not be denied for the sorrow that is found in truth.

A chain of beads, used for counting prayers, may be called a "Rosary," but such a string, or chain, is more correctly named a "Chaplet." A Chaplet is composed of fifty-nine beads; and when the devotee has told the fifty-nine beads three times, he has thereby completed a "Rosary." My dear reader, when you have the third time read this chain of sonnets, fifty-nine, you will have completed "The Lover's Rosary." And, as the beads are often made of precious jewels, let us hope some pearls may be found: alas, I fear many are fashioned of ashes.

The curious reader may discover the method of rhymes by which the sonnets are linked together.

PART I
PEARLS

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

P E A R L S

I

How often have I wandered by some stream,
That laughing bubbled on its joyful way,
And absent-minded, while my mind was fay,
Forgot the world to revel in a dream: —

The splendid sun that makes the ripples gleam,
The quivering birds, sweet-singing all the day,
The velvet banks, dainty with blossoms gay,
All these the ground-work of my dreaming, seem

Transfigured from mortality to things
Surpassing heaven. Such a wight, bewitched,
I revel in a world of phantasy. —

For you, my love, let Fancy spread her wings,
And like a doting miser, thrice enriched,
Surround me with your golden memory: —

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

II

While one day strolling through a factory,
I saw a great machine, some genius made,
As busily it wove a rich brocade
Of silken texture; and it seemed to me,

While watching it, absorbed in revery,
A mist descended, or a silent shade
Surrounded, or an unseen spirit laid
A veil upon it. — Quickly and silently

The turning wheels and clicking needles change
To noiseless forms that as they swiftly move
Weave a strange fabric of my destiny: —

The patterns on the mystic warp arrange
In characters that prophecy our love,
Though recent, ends not with eternity.

PEARLS

III

Far from its crag that looks upon the sea,
A mere speck in the sky, an eagle sails —
Slowly fading — and while my sight avails,
A sense of desolation weighs on me.

But soon upon the wings of Revery
My spirit follows as my vision fails;
And careless of the time or adverse gales,
Floats with the bird through skies of phantasy.

Unhappy omen! — When I talked with you
A sense of apprehension weighed me down,
That your sweet spirit from my gaze might float!

Far as my free thought to that eagle flew
Oh, let me follow — if my love has flown —
Follow to worlds ethereal and remote!

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

IV

Gold is the aged miser's antidote
For all the ills of poor humanity;
But while he fondles that insanity,
His life escapes him as a drifting boat:

Brave in his words, the lozel loves to quote
A witless jargon of profanity —
Gathered from comrades of like vanity —
But at the last as thorns they vex his throat:

Believe me, dearest, rich with golden speech,
You, the sweet miser of Love's flattery,
Are drifting slowly from the life you prize:

Not like the lozel — I must now beseech
You swear not "No" when "Yes" your oath
should be; —
From a small word the poisoned arrow flies.

PEARLS

V

Kisses and kind words, tears and woful sighs,
Anger and petulance, sweet winning ways,
Fretful or radiant as unsettled days
When storm and sunshine lurk in fickle skies;

Silly with wisdom or with nonsense wise,
Worthy of motley or immortal bays, —
Your whims divert me: — but one virtue stays
Unchanged within you, as the gem defies

Dissolving ocean and corroding years;
In this you change not; true as tempered steel
That bent or twisted straightens when released;

Let him you've yielded love forget his fears,
For loyal to the passion that you feel,
Your love, once given, always is increased.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

VI

Whether a sordid passion or a feast
Of soul and reason is the greater joy
May be debated. Let who will destroy
His better self and wallow as the beast

In pleasures earthly, long I've ceased
To think of love that as a base alloy
Depends upon the touch of flesh. The toy
That pleases with its tinsel is the least

Enjoyed when once its fraud is realized —
And yet there is a radiance of the mind
That shines forth from the person that we love,

By which the body is idealized: —
Your beauty has so dazzled me that blind
To every reason I can nothing prove.

PEARLS

VII

All things of beauty were designed for love —
Our hearts delight in many-tinted flowers,
Nodding in nooks and water-circled bowers, —
Haunt of the wild fowl and the timid dove; —

The deep cool lake, the wide sky swung above,
Beautiful both, if blue or grey with showers; —
The white clouds, menaced by tall city towers,
Or Godly spires that point where angels move: —

All these our souls delight to dote upon,
And others many, but of things most fair
The beauty of a maid surpasses all:

And, since of these by far the loveliest one,
If you are not love's pattern, I will swear
That Nature's ways are never natural.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

VIII

How sweet when nearly waking, dreams recall
The image of a dear and absent friend; —
The sleeper, fondly struggling not to end
His drowsy passion, still imagines all

More beautiful than life. A willing thrall
Of empty visions, he will even lend
Himself to conscious error, and extend
The flight of time, if he may longer loll

In stolen rapture. — As the sleeper's trance
Your image is before my swimming eyes,
Awake or sleeping, always — everywhere:

But not a soulless, pictured radiance
Of you — only your presence satisfies —
I'd rather awake and see you standing there.

PEARLS

IX

Dreaming of things not earthly and most rare,
Angelic forms are pictured in the mind,
While, to the loveliness around us blind,
Our vision feeds on phantoms of the air:

All those outlines of vacancy compare
With counterparts on earth, that we might find
In humble circumstances, loved, enshrined
And worshiped, though we pass them unaware.

How often have I pictured you in dreams,
As some celestial spirit, not of earth,
And dreamed my love was what I deified:

But now, you only loving, that which seems
Of fancy is forsaken. — Your true worth
In truth sufficient, — I am satisfied.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

X

'Twas only yesterday that you denied
All love for me, and spitefully maintained
You hated and despised me; whether feigned
Or truthful I was helpless to decide:

But now you smile and flutter by my side,
And love is in your glances: whether trained
A flirt you play me thus, or whether pained
With slight excuse you pouted, I'll not chide,

Nor criticise; because, in spite of all
Your contradictions and caprices, I
Am confident that I have read your heart:

Although you strive against me, I recall
A thousand actions that have certainly
Declared the truth your lips will not impart.

PEARLS

XI

If poetry is the text-book of the heart,
Then I should conquer the strong citadel
That you have battled for so long and well
With all your batteries of guile and art:

Soon as my love had gained a feeble start,
I fed my fancy, — silent in my cell, —
On all romances that the poets tell
Of Venus and the trick of Cupid's dart.

Alack, your will has woven such a spell,
That, sitting with you, I forget the way,
Pursued by lovers, fabled of old time;

And so, rejecting their example, dwell
Upon the manner of the present day, —
That shows true love in action, not in rhyme.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XII

Keen as the bloodhound, man imagines crime
In actions that are plainly innocent:
He seizes on a false clue, and intent
Upon his victim overlooks the prime

Necessities of circumstance and time
And proper motive, even to invent
Unheard of causes for things never meant, —
Riveting chains from deeds almost sublime.

But I, poor dolt, must follow a false trail
More silly than the wonder-finding sleuth, —
Who rather than his thief should fleck the bars, —

For every time you flout at me I fail
To guess your purposed fraud; — always the truth
Shines from your eyes as purity from stars.

PEARLS

XIII

Love is an ancient subject, and the stars
In lovers' themes have always been the same;
But ever since that mischief-maker came,
To shoot promiscuous arrows in soft wars,

The old, old story nothing ever bars; —
The telling of it is a world-old game; —
Perhaps the Heavens, that provide the flame,
Unite with Love, as Venus shines with Mars.

Proud of my art, I purposed not to shame
These pages, writing sonnets with those two
Mingled to form a subject, old and trite;

But, whether it is wrong or not to blame
My love on lunacy, the stars and you
Are always present in my dazzled sight.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XIV

Do you remember, just the other night,
When, happy, I was sitting at your feet,
A sudden sickness seized me, as the heat
Of summer suns may strike with blinding light?

Pale as the pale moon, in a hasty fright,
Arising from your crimson-cushioned seat,
You brought me red wine, saying,
“ Drink it, Sweet: ”
And as I took it I could see the white

Reflection of a crescent in the wine, —
Like silver in a wave of burning gold, —
Diana imaged by the chalice vine:

Can you believe that omen was a sign,
That like Diana, beautiful and cold,
Your heart may love but never will be mine?

PEARLS

XV

You seem so fickle, but a hallowed shrine
Is hidden in your bosom, which you guard
With such a jealous care, that no reward,
Nor penalty, nor subtly planned design

Can overcome it. — Nothing so divine —
Not even the lily, white and yet unscarred,
And not the richest aromatic nard,
Nor brilliant crystal from Brazilian mine,

Are equal to enhance its purity,
Or lend it ornament. It is because
You worship in that temple I have failed:

Although I've proved your passion, certainly,
Yet as the vestal of that fane you pause,
And check the love that surely has prevailed.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XVI

Silent as a spirit a white cloud sailed
Alone across the bluest summer sky;
And as I gazed upon it floating by,
It seemed a weeping angel, robed and veiled:

For I could quite discern her features, paled
And tear-wet, as she witnessed from her high
Estate the woes for which the world must sigh,
Condemned for sins long ages have entailed:

And imaged in a dark pool at my feet,
That same cloud seemed an evil witch,
With angry scowl determined on my ill:

But this astonished me; — the angel, sweet
In the blue sky, and the dark face in the ditch,
Both had your features — explain it if you will.

PEARLS

XVII

If you should spy Amanga on her hill,
In wilding arbour, where sweet eglantine,
Or wandering ivy, tangles with its vine
Love-garlands, dipping to the glassy rill;

The rill that murmurs to the whip-poor-will,
His cadence blending where the mountain pine
Tinctures the breeze with aromatic wine —
Delicious juices secret gnomes distil; —

If you should see her, hidden in that bower,
Spreading her nympholepsies of desire —
A love-god dreaming — how could you deny

Your breast to garden love's devoted flower,
That sheds a new life, — as the lotus fire
In mind and heart — immortal though we die?

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XVIII

Midnight with her most starry canopy
Concealed you in purple as you sat beneath
The green magnolia, weaving a love-wreath
Of flowers, — gathered when the moon was high.

I saw you not, nor even heard you sigh,
Unconscious, sweeter than Aurora's breath,
At dawn that steals across the dripping heath
From the far mountains, and their mystery:

But there you waited in the screening shade,
While I passed by you through the mossy vale,
Absorbed, and musing on my cherished dream;

For I would woo you in a serenade,
From slumbers gentle to awake and sail
Beneath the stars upon a tranquil stream: —

PEARLS

XIX

Awake, awake! arise from thy dream!

**A splendour envelops the wave and the vale,
Down by the banks of the Pond-lily Stream.**

**Come hither, come hither! the late moonbeam
Has silvered the tree-tops that circle the dale,
Down by the banks of the Pond-lily Stream.**

**A shallop is waiting in waters that gleam
'With thousands of stars, and the moon-light pale,
Down by the banks of the Pond-lily Stream.**

**Oh! light as the fairies that trip in thy dream,
Oh, swiftly and lightly the shallop will sail,
Down by the banks of the Pond-lily Stream —**

**Come hither, come hither! the wave and the vale
Are spangled with stars and the moon-light pale!**

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XX

Why should the plaintive voice of love prevail
When silently the hosts of heaven in bright
Procession move,— great armies of the night,—
A time and tide when love may hardly fail?

Why should the love-call of the nightingale
Sound dearest in the slowly fading light,—
The shadows rising with his upward flight,
The sun declining in a misty veil?

The last note of my serenade was husht,
But no white hand undid your casement bars,—
And not a sound disturbed your hallowed shrine:

But as I turned to go a footstep crusht
The soft turf at my side, and like the stars
That witnessed it, your eyes were seeking mine.

PEARLS

XXI

As when some precious vintage of old wine
Excites the spirit to its utmost pitch
Of exaltation, marvelously rich
Chimeras and absurdities combine

And form illusions, heavenly, divine; —
So passionate elixirs may bewitch
The brain to conjure up delusions, which
No brush can rival and no touch refine.

When I am with you, every nerve afire
And tingling with excitement, I am lost
To reason and I crown you with perfection;

But when I leave you, — as the stars expire
In the gray dawn, or as flames die in the frost, —
The heat of passion yields to cold reflection.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXII

If beauty is the bloom of your complexion —
The lovely luster of your laughing eyes —
The trick of a swift dimple that defies
The keenest vision — that escapes detection

Only to be sought for; — why should this affection
Make havoc with my judgment? Every prize
That such a beauty offers quickly flies —
Life, bloom and luster flit with youth's defection.

Alas, my passion heeds no argument —
My present joy has routed future ills —
My future ills may never come to pass!

And, always with you, I am confident
That every wrong a valid reason fills —
For usage, gold is better mixed with brass.

PEARLS

XXIII

Angling one day in waters clear as glass
I watched the silly fishes 'round the bait,
Circle and nibble, witless of their fate,
Until the boldest, an audacious bass,

Snapped at the sharp hook. Quickly on the grass
I landed him. — Stooping to estimate
His value and to guess his goodly weight,
My brain went dizzy. — If the soul should pass

Forth from the living body, and should wish
A life for both the spirit and the clay,
'Twould not be more surprising — I could see

Myself transformed into a silly fish;
And while I sported in a tranquil bay,
You smiled and fixed a baited hook for me.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXIV

If you consider it you will agree
To this conclusion. — Multitudes believe
Their hearts are honest, though their lips deceive
Themselves and others. Many a fallacy

Is cherished only to bolster what must be
False to the core; for those who fear and grieve
Will clutch at gossamers, hoping to relieve
Their everlasting doom. — Ah, what can we

Depend upon! If fraud, so prevalent,
Makes virtue of necessitous deceit,
Must we, too, sacrifice the truth for guile?

Forget experience, and be confident
An honest love is truthful. It is sweet
To know the one you love is never vile.

PEARLS

XXV

Before we loved, you greeted with a smile
Whenever you might meet me on the street;
And you were always lovable and sweet,
Considerate and kind, and free from guile:

And so the habit gained on me to while
Away my evenings, sitting at your feet;
And you with pretty ways contrived to cheat
The measured hours. — How can we reconcile

Those days of quiet friendship, so replete
With pure affection, to the present strife
That seems to flourish as our love increases?

Love must engender madness from its heat;
Or, shall we say, because it mingles life
A two-fold vigour double fire releases?

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXVI

Love fades and dies, as life with age decreases;
Love never can die — it must live forever: —
There is no logic clear enough to sever
Such contradictions from the simplest theses.

Even while I'm certain that your love increases,
Your life is stricken with a wasting fever;
And what I hold should die not, Death will never
Permit to live. — Alas, that virtue ceases!

Let me recite my love — a rosary —
Sweet thoughts of you in symbols, as on beads
That hint of thrice five sacred mysteries.

'Tis all that's left; the future flies from me; —
The present moment gone, to nothing leads; —
And life is but the sum of memories.

PEARLS

XXVII

Dreamily playing on the ivory keys,
While slowly the dim twilight seeks the west,
A subtle feeling seems to haunt my breast
That you are mingling in those harmonies: —

Strains from old masters, fitting melodies,
Sweeter than if an angel's hand caressed
His own loved instrument, now float and rest
Around me: — Ah, my wondering spirit sees

Forms not of earth: — as keenest eyes, possessed
In youth, when slumber has renewed their power
Search in the dawn for blossoms fresh with dew; —

Whether those forms exist as spirits blest
With life, I know not, but the very flower
Of life and beauty must remain with you.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXVIII

Inform my spirit! — (if it can be true) —
Ye winging habitants of yielding air
Are ye surrounding us, and everywhere
Instinct with life, beneath the utmost blue?

Or is it all a fiction, always new
Because our sad wits need it to repair
The ravage of destruction, that we dare
To conjure shapes our eyes may never view?

Now that I cannot see your lovely face,
Each evening when the glorious day-light fails,
My soul is rapt in silent reveries:

As if enchanted, I can see and trace
In sunset splendours — where the thin rack trails
In waves of beryl — sailing argosies.

PEARLS

XXIX

O amber ships afloat on beryl seas —
 With all your silken sails a-spread for gales
 That bear you swiftly from our saddened vales
 To happy islands, — isles that mysteries

Which now perplex us, — sorrow, death, disease,
 May never burden, — trim, oh trim your sails!
 Hasten from this dark planet where the wails
 Of stricken spirits pall on every breeze!

Take with you all that joyful is and blest;
 Leave us no mingling of the true and pure —
 Envy to temper, and malicious spite —

For oh, already from our midst the best,
 The purest, truest, to your haven obscure,
 Careens through ether on her wings of light!

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXX

Oh, sacred pledges hidden from the sight
Of alien eyes, recorded dimly here
In shadowy symbols! Words that charm the ear
And haunting visions of the secret night,

Sealed to the curious, yield refined delight,
Elusive and discreet, obscurely clear! —
Ah, never perish from this book the dear
Allusions she will understand aright!

I feel her presence as I turn these pages —
And the rich treasure, borne in amber ships
Across ethereal seas to shores distressing,

From her Elysium my soul engages; —
It seems I hear the murmur of her lips
Denying what her kind eyes are confessing.



*But still I love to think in some Dream Aiden
She wanders -*

PEARLS

XXXI

She moved upon this earth a joy and blessing;
The wild dove knew her voice, and every flower
That blossomed in the forest knew the hour
When she should pass it by — a witch-like
guessing.

The fragrant violet, for her caressing,
Lifted its head in cool sequestered bower,
And many a bloom, from foot of mossy tower,
Envied the turf her gentle foot was pressing.

Oh, never more will timid homing swallows
Wheel round her as she comes back flower laden,
From spangled meadows by the brooklet-
shallows!

But still I love to think in some Dream-Aiden
She wanders — happy where the day is long —
Where swift time lingers for the joy of song.

PART II
A S H E S

A S H E S

XXXII

Now to the world comes one in earnest song,
With stylus saddened, dipped in blood and tears,
Shed by those heroes of forgotten years,
Now veiled in glooms, a silent shadow-throng. —

Their deeds of glory tarnished in the long
Sweep of dark ages, lo, the sad world nears
Deeper eclipse — fleet-footed Future bears
From shadow-voids, to whelm the great and
strong.

Alas, the doomed world may dissolve in space,
But never should the truth of love be lost,
Nor elemental passion be forgot.

Oh let my spirit fabled paths retrace,
And recreate that dim ethereal host,
In forms immortal — that they perish not. —

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXXIII

Into the void of death old Chronus tost
Essential Deities, now long forgot;
Into the shadows, whither we know not,
But dead to us and to the future lost:

If they, immortal, shriveled in the frost
Of Time's advancing touch, what counterplot
May finite beings frame, to change one jot
The issue of a final holocaust?

The proud old oak-tree fades before our eyes,
And, hidden in the silent wilderness,
Ancestral granite may dissolve in woe:

Inhaling for its life the body dies;
And he who pleads immortal Powers to bless
A future date — forgets a mortal foe.

ASHES

XXXIV

In what dim antres of Forgetfulness
Are lingering the Gods of long ago,
Who, laughter-loving, mingled in the flow
Of mortal tears and human wretchedness?

Joyous they moved through avenues of distress,
And bathed the dark ways in a heavenly glow
Of light and reason, that the earth below
Might something of immortal hope possess.

No more among us, all their attributes are blent
In One Omnipotent, that dwelleth far
Beyond the knowledge of the finite mind:

And the sweet peace, that hallowed worship lent,
Is fast receding, as a fading star
Whose feeble virtue — few may seek or find.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXXV

O happy cherub, leaning on the bar
That separates the City of the Blest,
Secure, from caverns where lost souls, distress,
Haunt the sad hollows of a darkened star, —

Shalt thou not sorrow that such beings are
Doomed always there to wander without rest —
Weeping, with their own wickedness possest —
Barred from thy love, from thy kind pity far?

Behold, our hearts, from our unhappy state,
In this unstable world of suffering,
Conceive like sorrows for the stars unknown; —

But, O kind angel! see our equal fate,
Where Fate flies drunken on unguided wing;
A bane to blight us — till the soul has flown.

ASHES

XXXVI

What pensive spirit, poised on drooping wing,
Has ever ventured from his ghostly vale,
Through yielding ether and the moonlight pale,
That hither a true message he may bring?

No more the prophet's cries are quickening
The multitudes, and miracles now fail
To overcome the doubters that assail
The blessed altars where the faithful cling:

If, then, our hallowed faith is but a dream,
And the world welters in a whirl of chance,
Why should we sorrow while endowed with
breath?

For, whether wise or merry, it would seem
The ways are tangled as an opiate's trance, —
Till the strange riddle — has been solved by death.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXXVII

Then let desire to sordid ways advance,
And, having cast aside unreasoned hope,
We may proceed with unchecked force to cope,
Victorious, in the Tournament of Chance:

For what avails it if we break a lance
For truth and glory, and defeated grope,
Unaided, down oblivion's fatal slope
As the spent ghost of Bayard, slain for France? —

Such was the folly of that peerless soul,
He dared not tarnish his escutcheon's flower
To gain great glory by one action wrong!

Oh, fatal argument for either goal:
Choose brutal force and swagger out an hour,
Or, swayed by visions — die to grace a song!

ASHES

XXXVIII

Oh, for the tincture of an opiate-flower,
With triple virtue, and a dream profound
In a wide solitude where not a sound
May vex to motion a suspended hour:

Never to waken from the gentle power
Of living sleep, but like a dreamer drowned
In popped slumber, to renew a round
Of visionary joys in Morpheus' bower!

By some smooth alchemy, unthought of yet,
To mingle in one essence life and death,
And float in ecstasy betwixt extremes! —

A vain delusion; what can void the debt
Our dust assumed, when vivified with breath
It pledged a long extinction — for short dreams.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XXXIX

To bless or ban thee, O destroying Death,
Remains a riddle with no answer found;
For whether it were better to be bound
Forever to this clay with living breath,

Or let the spirit forth, where wandereth
In vacant vistas, — void of light and sound,—
Unshapen, immaterial forms around
Dim nebulae, above or underneath:

Ah, that may put our courage to the touch,
May breed up dreadful doubts; dismay the heart
Most callous to the outcome of its doom: —

Sleep or oblivion, aught or naught, is much
Beyond the limit wisdom may impart; —
And silence is our witness — from the tomb.

ASHES

XL

The occult Magian, versed in subtle art,
Intent on solving hidden mysteries,
Nightly observes the slowly moving skies,
Obscurely shadowed on his ancient chart:

All his quaint patterns of the stars impart
Disputed knowledge; when a monarch dies,
Or deeds of honour to enhance the wise,
Rich in their pride, before their souls depart:

But we, consulting those celestial signs,
Can only wonder where the spirits dwell, —
Long vanished from this world, for weal or woe; —

And, wonder as we may, the mind declines
To answer, whether heaven, or sleep, or hell; —
Our dreams must satisfy — until we go.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XLI

Secluded from his kind in silent cell,
Through the long cycles of uncounted years,
The anchorite in mental vision rears
A paradise to balance real hell:

Deep gloom is wrapt around his heart to quell
Each healthful impulse of his nature; tears
And laughter, love and hope, and even fears,
That rouse up to endeavour, never swell

His deadened pulse — never stir his heart:
But while his precious days in dreams are lost,
A fateful spectre hovers at his side;

Adds up each hour, with an accountant's art; —
Alas, despising time's enormous cost,
His life is death — before his flesh has died.

ASHES

XLII

The bark sails for a moment and is tossed
By the rough winds into eternity;
And the mild autumn breezes presently
Must vanish for the winter's killing frost:

But like the brave sport who has staked and lost,
With only smiles for his adversity,
Let us play hazard on a changing sea,
And chance a wreck, no matter what the cost:

For brief the tally of our days ordained,
When we were ushered in this world of tears
By the slant twist of fickle Fortune's wheel:

And every action is a moment gained,
An added motion to the moving reel
That pictures life — as the dark ending nears.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XLIII

Consider not the substance that we feel,
But bid Imagination stretch her wand,
That from mysterious voids a phantom land
Of woven thoughts her magic may reveal;

For the racked world, hurled as a crooked wheel,
Far through the sky by some Titanic hand,
Escapes this pitfall, or that stormy strand,
Only to vanish — it is nothing real:

And, therefore, to abide where silent Thought,
Eternal by Enchantment's soft control,
Broods in an aery palace of her own,

Is better, more substantial joy, than aught,
Supposed of substance, that deludes the soul
To sensual pleasures — mortal when they're
known.

ASHES

XLIV

When the soft tones of a great anthem roll
And quiver in the air — delicious pain —
Our morbid pulse beats with the sad refrain,
Giving a strange joy to the wakened soul:

And when we listen to the muffled toll
Of slow bells, warning us with solemn strain
What futile ends our labours may attain,
We look through dark death to a brighter goal.

Ah, why should discord lead to harmony,
Or why should sorrow sweetest joy entwine,
Or why should darkness lead us to the light?

Our reason staggers at the wrongs we see; —
Surely, our souls must quaff ethereal wine
To pluck eternal day — from hopeless night.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XLV

Oh, let us top our glasses with red wine
And drown in folly sober-vested Care;
Ho, all ye wise men! let us motley wear
And gaily habit with the surfeit swine:

For where goes Wisdom, if we hew the line
And listen to her words that only bear
Us ever deeper in a deep despair,
Where not the feeblest ray of light may shine?

Crown only joyful clowns with classic bays,
And worship Folly in the world's wide fane;
Greet with light laughter either feast or crust:

Toils of a life-time for a puff of praise,
That flits tomorrow, is but labour vain —
The weak and strong — dissolve in equal dust.

ASHES

XLVI

Alas, if man is only born to drain
A cup of sorrow, measured to the brim,
Why should he drown his anguish in a dim
Belief that present woe is future gain?

What law, or logic, may convince his brain
How foolish are the hopes that dazzle him?
Rather than know his doom, he will not trim
One feeble ray that shows his hopes are vain.

But if shrewd wisdom has increased our woe,
Let us forget our sorrows while we dote
On graceful birds, on all sweet flowers that
bloom,

And on the moon and stars that come and go,
And doves, white winged, that on the warm air
float, —
Ah, why should they — be subject to our doom?

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XLVII

O sacred Forest of an age remote!
The little birds, that hover in thy trees,
Tune their unchanged immortal melodies
To Nature's voice that in thy realm doth float.

And even the speckled toad, ordained to dote
Upon the silent Moon, from squatting knees
Peers upward, out of boggy pools, and sees
Her guiding through the skies her silver boat.

Alas, each day the cruel hunter sights
His scientific tubes to slaughter all, —
That silence may succeed the sound of song:

But on the slippery toad his heel alights,
While hunting luckless victims, and his fall
Gives him to Death — that all may suffer wrong.

ASHES

XLVIII

Know ye the green hills whence the brooklets brawl
Down to the valleys, where the lion's lair,
The leopard's den and the serpent's path declare
How bounteous Nature may provide for all?

Know ye the valleys where the lilies loll,—
The sleepy hollows where the poppies flare
Vermillion splendours in the golden glare
Of glowing sunsets, — where the ripe fruits fall

From hanging branches on huge crocodiles, —
Where drowsily sprawling on the sun-struck rock
The lazy lizzard blinks his beedy eyes?

Oh, always on her children Nature smiles!
Smiles on the wicked, smiles as if to mock
That rogues may fatten — when a victim dies.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

XLIX

**Here, from the rose-bush to this hollyhock,
The wily insect has prepared her net,
Invisible, fine, sparkling with the wet
Round jewels of the dawn, as if to mock**

**The fairy fringes of Titania's frock; —
No hapless victim has been tempted yet
To test that tangle, or approached to fret
The blossoms, tempting on their thorny stalk:**

**But when the gay-moth flaunts a damask wing, —
Hunting for honey or an amorous mate, —
Her gauzy pinions, as they touch a thread,**

**Rouse the fierce ogress from her lair to spring
Swift as a tiger. — Oh, disastrous fate,
That fraud should live — when innocence is dead!**

ASHES

L

Enraptured, as he sees through Heaven's gate,
With wonders of that other world possest,
The Praying Mantis, his long arms address
In adoration, seems to supplicate

God's blessing; but ferocity, innate,
Lurks hidden in his hypocritic breast:
Oh, what a universe! — a devil's jest
Where savage guile for innocence may wait:

Good saints above! now let us laugh, the while
We have our chuckle at old Satan's glee;
For, even as the insect seems to pray,

An urchin's mischief ends his artful guile —
Alas, a viper stings the lad's bare knee;
And while we mourn — old Satan has his day.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

LI

Observe the wisdom of the winging bee,
That wanders in a labyrinth, ablaze
With healthful blooms of balmy summer days,
And garners stores against adversity:

She gives no credit to Philosophy,
Who feebly falters in a tangled maze
Of sounding words, — addressed divergent ways
To life or death, as either case may be:

For, though each morning — when the sun awakes
The drowsy world again to diligence —
Brings her that closer to eternal night,

She fails not, as the moments go, but takes
Rich toll of life, her own life's recompense,
And gains fair balance — till her last long flight.

ASHES

LII

Far to the north where Arctic's cold, intense,
Sweeps over snowy ledges, glittering white,
The hunted silver-fox awaits the night,
Trusting his cunning to contrive defense:

Far to the south, in the green thickets dense,
The bird of paradise with dazzling flight,
Seeks to elude the trapper's eager sight, —
His gain her loss, her death his recompense.

For no necessity the beautiful
Are slaughtered by the cruel of great might. —
Beauty and virtue often lose the race. —

What subterfuge can circumvent that rule,
And give to them the gain of vested right,
By which the weak — may win a doubtful case?

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

LIII

When through the breaking clouds the rainbow's light
Makes glad the valley at the mountain's base,
The drooping flowers renew their pretty grace,
And lift their petals, fresh with raindrops bright:

And soon it seems as if a wizard's might
Is working wonders with the rainbow's rays,
Which disappearing leave nor sign nor trace,
Save tiny birds that balance in swift flight:

Out of the rainbow they appear to spring,
And dart with humming sound among the flowers,
And flash their splendour till the day is done:

So, when a lovely soul unfolds her wing,
Ah, must she hover in celestial bowers,
Only to vanish — in the vast unknown?



*So when a lovely soul unfolds her wing,
Ah, must she hover in celestial bowers.*

ASHES

LIV

His pomp forgotten, couched on fragrant flowers,
Forever deaf to the discordant moan
Of his poor dwarf, now perched on his great throne,
The Sultan lies in state in silken bowers.

The courtiers all have fled from the hushed towers,
And wait on his assassin; and alone
That witless jester wails, in monotone,
Fantastic songs, as on the throne he cowers: —

“ Life is a pearl — in a deep ocean rolling —
Grant me but life and your pearls I want none;
Sultan and subject, all have a last day.

“ Gauzy-winged pearl of a sultan go soulling —
Clown of his foolish fun stroll in the sun —
Sultan or zaney — the pearl rolls away.”

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

LV

Poised as a rapier glittering in the sun,
The deadly dragon-fly awaits his prey;
But near him a frail rosebud gives the day
Largess of life that she has briefly won:

Surely the canker-moth that rose must shun,
For like an old-time knight, as reckless and gay,
The valiant dragon-fly disputes the way —
Our gentle rosebud's witless champion.

A few short hours may span his might in war,
And, silent on the velvet-matted moss,
Dissolves to dust the short-lived dragon-fly:

And the limp rose, now leaning sadly o'er
Her fallen hero, covers him with loss
Of her own petals — fragrant while they die.

ASHES

LVI

How beautiful it seems when the soft gloss
Of summer evening on the tranquil plains
Falls gently from the moon, while jewelled wains,
With light surrounding, follow her across

The darkening dome their flaming points emboss!
But while deceiving rays transform the stains
Of deadly contest, — and the sad remains
Of those who strove for life but gained its loss, —

While the charmed sight is ravished, far away
Comesoundsabhorrent, — asifhell'swoeswells, —
From slinking jackals sobbing frightful mirth.

And those fair night-forms, when the glare of day
Again has poured in nooks of dells and fells,
Mortescient crumble — to the crumbling earth.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

LVII

All through the night the languid lily's bells
Sleep on the soft breeze, wafted in her glen,
But, quickened into new life, quiver when
The wakeful lark his happy matin swells:

And when the rising sun lights crystal wells,
And that sweet flower leans o'er the stream, again
Adoring her Creator, is it in vain
That life is only where the Spirit dwells?

But, even as adoring worship fills
Her fragile being, from the town, near by,
An orphan finds and plucks — the lily's doom:

And torn from her cool glen amid the hills,
To deck the sorrow of a grave, and die,
She sighs her life away — against the tomb.

ASHES

LVIII

Ever the round world turns a gladdened eye
To worship her material God that swings
In golden splendour, and a splendour flings,
Life-giving, from the universal sky:

And ever as the joyous moments fly, —
Ah, whither on their rapid sun-made wings, —
The changing world turns from her God and brings
Darkness intense to hide her Deity.

And, lo, our changing souls, may worship now,
Persuaded in a God of blessed sway,
Sufficient to the need, benign to save;

But on the morrow stifle every vow,
No more submissive to that faith, and say,
The mystery of life — turns to the grave.

THE LOVER'S ROSARY

LIX

What, then, is left to grace our fitful day,
If at the last, to some vortexual cave,
Our exhalations, vanished from the grave,
Fade into nothing from dissolving clay?

Is there no path, no sure immortal way,
To lead this spirit, that the Spirit gave,
Over the marge of Death's Lethean wave,
That Time may gain what Time has snatched
away?

Ah, whether man must vanish; or his flitting soul
Die never; or, as evolutions roll
Tremendous cycles, he achieve his goal —

Absorption in the One Omnipotent —
How shall I know? Till then let this Lament,
Immortal, be — my living monument.

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RONDEAU		The Three Lucks (to be published in " Bar Room Ballads").
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