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THE HAWTHORN

By the same Author

SNOW OVER ELDEN

A NOVEL

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With this book the author takes his place at once among the best of our story writers. To attempt any summary of the story would do it an injustice—the wonderful charm of it lies in the telling. It is a joyous book that he has given us, and I for one wished it twice as long as it is. It is a novel not of promise but of achievement."—*The Bookman*.

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DOWN HERE THE HAWTHORN

POEMS

BY

THOMAS MOULT



LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

FOR BESSIE

INCLUDED in this volume are pieces which have already appeared in *The Athenæum*, *English Review*, *Nation*, *Voices*, *The Apple*, and elsewhere in England; *Poetry*, *Forum*, *The Bookman*, etc., in America; and in "Georgian Poetry, 1918-19," and "A Miscellany of Poetry, 1919." The author wishes to thank the various editors for permission to reprint.

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DOWN HERE THE HAWTHORN

Down here the hawthorn . . .
And a stir of wings,
Spring-lit wings that wake
Sudden tumult in the brake,
Tumult of blossom tide, tumult of foaming mist
Where the bright bird's tumultuous feathers kissed.
White mists are blinding me,
White mist of hedgerow, white mist of wings.

Down here the hawthorn
And a stir of wings . . .
Softly swishing, swift with spray
All along the green laneway
Dewdimmed, sunwashed, windsweet and winter-free
They flash upon the light,
They swing across the sight,
I cannot see, I cannot see! . . .

Down here the flowering hawthorn flings
Sleet of petals, petalled shells
Spread the coloured air that sings
Magic and a myriad spells
Spun by my count of springs.

Down here the hawthorn . . .
And the flower-foam stirred
By a spring-lit bird.

DOWN HERE THE HAWTHORN

White hawthorn mist is blinding me.
I lower my gaze, and on this old
Brown bridle road
Crusted with golden moss and mould
The hedgerow flings
Lush carpetings,
Blossom-woven carpetings light lain
Under the farmer's lumbering load;
And, floating past the spent March wrack,
The footstep trail, the traveller's track.

Down here the hawthorn . . .

White mists are blinding me,
White mists that rime the fresh green bank
Where soon the fernleaf-fall
And sorrel tall
Upwaving, rank on rank,
Shall flush the bed whereon the windflowers sank.

I turn these spring-bewildered eyes of mine,
I seek above the surf of hedgerow line
Where peeping branches reach, and reaching twine
Faint cherry or plum or eglantine.
But with pretence of whisperings
The year's young mischief-wind shall take
By storm these shy striplings,
And soon or later shake
Their slender limbs and make
Free with their clinging may—
Strip from them in a single boisterous day
Their first and last vesture of pale bloom spray.

DOWN HERE THE HAWTHORN

So, as to meet such lack
In bush or brack,
The kindly hedgerows make
Sure of a springtime for these frailer things,
Shedding on each the lavish creamthorn flake.

Down here the hawthorn . . .

On all the green leaf-clusters round me clings
Thickly a spray of gentle blossomings.
Everywhere as with many bells
The young year with white magic swells.
The morning rings.
White mist is blinding me,
I cannot see, I cannot see !

Blind grows the coloured air that sings
The marvel of a myriad spells
Spun by my count of springs.
Sleet of petals, petalled shells
Falling with sudden poignancy
(As the sleet stings)
Upon the lightheart-hope which only clear sight
knows;
And slowly drifts,
Lingering among the snows
Nor, though the snow lifts,
Ever goes
The wistful heartache as the fresh spring flows
With slipping sureness to the time of the rose, and
the withered rose.

Down here the hawthorn . . .

DOWN HERE THE HAWTHORN

And heaping blossom stirred
By a joy-swift bird.
White mists are blinding me,
White mist of hedgerow, white mist of wings.
The bird's flight flings
Deep carpetings
Over the wrack
Of my life's track.

Down here the hawthorn . . .
The air of the coloured years is blurred
By the spring, by a bird.
White mists are blinding me,
White mists on the years to be.
I cannot see, I cannot see. . . .

LOVERS' LANE

THIS cool quiet of trees
In the gray dusk of the north,
In the green half-dusk of the west,
Where fires still glow;
These glimmering fantasies
Of foliage branching forth
And drooping into rest;
Ye lovers, know
That in your wanderings
Beneath this arching brake
Ye must attune your love
To hushèd words.
For here is the dreaming wisdom of
The unmovable things . . .
 And more:—walk softly, lest ye wake
A thousand sleeping birds.

CHAYAH

I

SHE lifts her face
To none
But the sun.
She has won
The sun's grace.

Her body is given
To the spring's bliss.
Sweet she is
With the kiss
Of days wind-driven.

Like a red gloom-
Leafed tulip free
Of winter she
Is to me
As I come

Sweeping with power
And the high
Exultance of sky
And earth. I
Claim her my flower.

CHAYAH

Through Time that was,
Through Time untold,
Her heart I hold
Though sun burn cold
And the wind pass.

II

She is a dark flower, a tulip deep-blushed
With gypsy blood.
She sways to the passion of April. Around her
Swirl the springtides, at the flood.

I am the wind of spring. The sap-laden gust
Of my fierce hunger stings
Her petals to the glow of answering passion.
She exults. Life in her sings.

I am the sunlight, spread above her. My gladness
Through the air spills.
Responsive the heavens are, and rosily
The cold earth thrills.

She is my dark flower, my deep-blushed tulip.
The stem of her body swings to me; my ways
Are of the wind, the sun. I flood the world,
The sky and the sea blaze.

CHAYAH

III

I go apart as the moor-wind
From mortal men.
No more we walk apace.
I have done
With my kind. Their weakness is thrust
from me
And their pitiful strength . . .
Because a woman's face
Lifts to me
As to the sun.

As the sun above the wintry white
Have I shouldered
Out from the chill of their days.
That they have sinned,
That they have sorrowed and joyed, grown
saintly
Or grown unquiet, I heed no longer . . .
Because a woman's body
To my kiss is free
As to the wind.

Yet am I mortal as any man soever.
Or I had languished
With those outcast
Beyond her portal.

CHAYAH

Only as I know my kinsfolk through weakness and
through strength

Am I become one with the sun and wind . . .

Because I am mortal, first and last,

Through her I become

Immortal.

SUN MAGIC

WHERE cradling leaves their green unfold,
The Sun-King weaves a web of gold.
The sweet air swims with the bright shine
When his hand skims the bramble-twine
And the maiden-flush of flowering thorn,
And the silver bush so long forlorn
Of sleeping bud, and the windyflowers
Sprung in the sod since April showers.
His fingers speed o'er brake and hollow.
Which way they lead, the fresh winds follow,
And every branch, set swinging, herds
An avalanche of golden birds.

HERE FOR A TIME, A BREATH OF TIME . . .

With the lone hills of sheep,
Stone-scarred and gray,
And the lone bleat;
With the brown old sleeping meres that meet
The storm's sweep,
The sun's sway
And the stars, and all the seasons, with unaltering
face;
With the moor-mists swifting
As they have swifted
Down the slow dayfall since the ancient days;
With the sound of the last curlew drifting
As it hath drifted
To the nestward beat
Of tired innumerable wings:
 With these most solitary things,
These pitilessly aloof
In their harsh loneliness,
These pitifully weak
Against the stress
Of the eternal rebuff,

HERE FOR A TIME, A BREATH OF TIME

Here, for a little span
On their illimitable bleak
Abideth the warm memory
Of man.

Here, for a time, a breath of time, he brings
Faiths groping past the hills, and visionings;
Faiths and visionings great and sure
As the calm of the moor.
With feeble scratchings hath he made his mark
On the hill's steep;
For a day and a dark
They endure,
By a dark they outlast his laughter and tears,
His song.
The feeble scratchings he hath traced along
By the hill's feet.
Fainter as they uplift to the farthest crest
And the cloud-veils,
Outliving by a dark
The faiths and the fears
Of his breast
And the visionings—
By these he maketh his mark.

With the lone hills of sheep
Overspreading his eyes, and on his ears
The lone bleat,
He sinketh in sleep.
Deep
As the deep of dales
Is his sleep;

HERE FOR A TIME, A BREATH OF TIME

More deep
Than the brown old sleep of meres that meet
The storm's sweep,
The sun's sway
And the stars, and all the seasons, with unaltering
face.

He dreams: in his dream he passeth not away.
He endureth even as they
These most solitary things,
These pitilessly aloof
In their harsh loneliness,
These pitifully weak
Against the stress
Of the eternal rebuff:—
The lone hills, stone-scarred and gray,
The storm's sweep,
The stars, and the sun's sway;
The moor-mists swift
As they have swifted
Down the slow dayfall since the ancient days;
The sound of the last curlew drifting
As it hath drifted
To the nestward beat of tired innumerable wings.

TESTAMENT

WHEN these worn eyes are closed in that long sleep
Which is the soundest and the last of all,
Shroud not my limbs with purple funeral pall
Nor mock my rest with vainest prayers, nor weep,
But take my ashes where the sunshine plays
In dewy meadows splashed with gold and white,
And there, when stars peer from black pools at
night,
Let the wind scatter them. And on the days
You wander by those meadow pools again,
Think of me as I then shall be, a part
Of Earth—naught else. And if you see the red
Of western skies, or feel the clean soft rain,
Or smell the flowers I loved, then let your heart
Beat fast for me, and I shall not be dead. . . .

1910.

“TRULY HE HATH A SWEET
BED”

BROWN earth, sun-soaked,
Beneath his head
And over the quiet limbs. . . .
Through time unreckonèd
Lay this brown earth for him. Now is he come.
Truly he hath a sweet bed.

The perfume shed
From invisible gardens is chaliced by kindly airs
And carried for welcome to the stranger.
Long seasons ere he came, this wilderness
They habited.

They, and the mist of stars
Down-spread
About him as a hush of vespering birds.
They, and the sun, the moon:
Naught now denies him the moon's coming,
Nor the morning trail of gold,
The luminous print of evening, red
At the sun's tread.

“ TRULY HE HATH A SWEET BED ”

The brown earth holds him.

The stars and little winds, the friendly moon

And sun attend in turn his rest.

They linger above him, softly moving. They are
gracious,

And gently-wise: as though remembering how his
hunger,

His kinship, knew them once but blindly

In thoughts unsaid,

As a dream that fled.

So is he theirs assuredly as the seasons.

So is his sleep by them for ever companion'd.

. . . And, perchance, by the voices of bright children
playing

And knowing not: by the echo of young laughter

When their dancing is sped.

Truly he hath a sweet bed.

A DUSK

DARK in the garden, darkly glows
The crimson richness of the rose,
And blackly dark the peony-blaze
Of hot gold middle-summer days.
Ripe lilies lift into the height
Of slowly dropping dimness, white
And whiter though the dusk-foam thickens
And all things else are looming stark
And starker, dark and blackly dark.
The lingering air from the far noonhour quickens
Once more to life, to ghostly life, and soon
Into the void of sightless, different noon,
The midnight's noon, shall be outspilled
Its fragrance finally and uttermost
Of flower and leaf distilled
Which too must soon be ghost.

Now slowly comes the time of phantom-trove.
Colour and shape and scent
To the last trace have mixed and spent;
Even the lightening lilies are at one
With all that was separate in the sun.
Over the night's black full noon move
Weird spells of nothingness, of unreality,

A DUSK

Among the flowers and where the quieted thrush
Thrilled once in tree after each vanished tree,
Over the blossom-beds and in the brambled bush,
On everything, even memory.
O I have lingered long enough ! . . .
Myself nigh phantom-grown, I come
Down the lost garden path to home.

Across the sanded threshold flags
My muffled passage through new land unknown
Of kitchen shadow drags.
Eerily alone
Looms the pale face half-shown
Of a ghostly clock long past the longest chime.
Here is the pantry, here the huddled stair,
Naught to my seeming actual anywhere,
Each sound gone whisperless, unechoing.
. . . But now those phantom lowlands slip away.
I reach the end of stumbling climb
In chamber's twilight silver-pointed by
A candle's shine.
Quietly I tread to where you, sleeping, lie. . . .
*To you, the one unshadowy thing,
O single treasure in this life of mine
That still is treasure real as when substantial day
Shrank not with night come nigh
But at the swift reality of you.
O my dark flower that never fades,
O fragrance shining through
A world of scentless shades.*

MOTHERHOOD

ONCE and a tiny child
Lay in his mother's shawl
Sheltered and safe from all
The seasons of the wild.

 He shall remember how
That nesting warmth caressed
His baby body, and
The bleak moor's vexing healed.

 He feels again
The mother-hand so certain then.

Now I, that child man-grown,
 Come to the moor and say
 "Mother of life whose gray
Breed is of ice and stone

 Little I thought wouldst thou
Gather me to thy breast
As the old warm hand,
And in some corner shield

 Me from the ken,
The loud mouthings of mute men."

WINDS

LIKE the little old man who stands with his broom
at the crossing and gives you good morning,
Familiar and stranger alike as chance make you . . .
Like the little old man, and to myself as strange
are the winds of this strange south city
With the same bland greeting. They leave me
quiescent; they stir not my kindness, my pity;
No passionate sense do I feel that their presence
is greatening life or forlorning.

But the winds that are quick in my blood as I walk
where all things are bluffing or cowering,
Mean things and monstrous, peoples and
presences . . .
All but the uncowering London herself, where she
with her brute-litter lies,
The winds that quicken my blood are away far
north on the Peak's high plains and Ardgay's
Where naught is left to befoul or bemean the vast
floors of their terrible scouring.

Even now the fierce scars of their grip and their
lash on my limbs and my spirit are clinging.

WINDS

I have companioned them over the years: like
jubilant hounds to my tread have they leapt,
Their jaws have fanged me in play, their anger
about me swept
As an enemy's: contemptuous and taunting they
dared me from my safe hearth by black nights,
And deafened and blinded and dazed have I, their
savage comrade, gone forth with them, singing.

INVOCATION

HURL down, harsh hills, your bitterness
Of wind and storm.

Stem ye the drift of herded men
 With your uncouthness

So, tasting of your power, they press
Back shrinking where upon their warm
 Safe ways of smoothness

They feed their various lusts again.

Guard ye, wild hills, with scar and whip
Your outlawry

Lest alien-hearted pigmies tame
 Your trackless boulders,

And with their unclean cunning slip
The leash of civilry

 Fast round your shoulders.
O keep ye from that shame.

Or they shall surely come, black hordes
Swarming as lice

With their obscenities and greed
 Across your fastness,

INVOCATION

Even your peaks that swing white swords,
Rent, splintered ice
 Into the vastness
Of skies where fanged winds feed.

Hurl down, harsh hills, your bitterness,
Guard ye with flail
Of shattering wind and thong of sleet
 Your pride uplifting
To the impaled stars; be pitiless
Before this unquiet trail
 Of man-herds drifting
Against your stone still feet.

HEART OF A SEAMSTRESS

I'd like to rest these tired eyes
On that green place where once I lay
Deep in the grass and thought the skies
Too grand and blue to pass away.
I'd like to put this needle down
And never stitch another seam,
And seek the place beyond the town
Where once I dreamed . . .

(Ah God ! my dream).

I'd like to bathe these aching hands
In that wee brook I used to know
Where after school we girls would go
And tread along its shining sands
With our bare feet, and feel the cool
Kind lapping of each teeny wave,
And think ourselves grown up and brave
To splash knee-deep through every pool.

I'd go there now, I would, and stay
A long long day if I could choose.
I'd watch the pretty lizards play,
And look for rubble stones, and use

HEART OF A SEAMSTRESS

A clear pool for my looking-glass
And find no care-marks on my face,
And see again the bonny lass
Who found her heaven in that dear place.

I'd make a bed of ferns, and lie
Stretched where the happy sunbeams dart
And little winds come whispering by
And kiss these eyes (ah God ! the smart) . . .
And maybe dreams would soothe my fret
And this poor body be a part
Of that green world, and I forget
I'd come from hell . . .

(Ah God, my heart!)

BIOGRAPHY

FOR him no springing south air rocked
Ever with the massed praise of larks,
Nor westering season blazed with shocked
Vistas of corn, and golden darks.

One changeless winter was his year,
Dribbling in slow gray monotone
Through mirthless space, stirred by the near
Harsh bursts of trafficking alone.

Chill stone and high-stacked chimney climbed
Each day before his baffled eyes;
Yet was his life with colour primed,
And yet his heart knew spring's surprise,

And summer, with the south air rocked
By the proud lifting praise of larks,
And westering autumn blazed with shocked
Vistas of corn, and golden darks.

FLAMBOROUGH HEAD

EVENING, like a gentle sister
Steals across the harbour, trimming
Her moon-lantern where the brimming
Seas and smouldering skies meet.

Gliding onward, trailing sweet
Lilac while her flitting feet
Skim the waves, the fields of wheat
On the cliff . . .

Now she is stooping
To the poppies gaily trooping
Like the red-capped little people . . .

Higher than the hills and steeple
To the dream-clouds she is heaping
Lilac, lilac, till the sleeping
Stars are wakened there and, peeping,
Creep out softly, like the day's end.

On the cliff path lovers wend
Laughing ways through Paradise . . .

FLAMBOROUGH HEAD

By the moon's light in their eyes
Evening, like a gentle sister,
Knows they walk in Paradise.

1911.

‘HOW BEAUTIFUL THEY ARE’

How beautiful they are,
The Kingly Ones,
They walked the earth once humbly as we walk,
Our men, our sons.

They walk the earth no more;
Yet they abide
More closely by us now; always we see them
At the hearthside.

Once we were comrades by chance;
Now are they near
In all our wayfaring, their faces shine
Like the young year.

Their laughter, too, is April's
After the storm.
Their thoughts are shafting sunlight in wet skies.
Their love is warm.

We shrined strange heroes once.
Now, memory faints
On the holy men of old. Henceforth
These are our saints.

“ HOW BEAUTIFUL THEY ARE ”

These that we touched, and kissed,
And frowned upon;
That these were frail, yet died because the good
Was overthrown.

That they in one dread hour
Were terrible
Stains not their sainthood, nor is heaven less sure
That they knew hell.

How beautiful they are,
How bright their eyes.
Their hands have grasped the key
Of Paradise !

They hold it out to us,
Our men, our sons:
. . . To us,
The lonely ones.

FOR BESSIE, SEATED BY ME IN
THE GARDEN

To the heart, to the heart the white petals
Quietly fall.
Memory is a little wind, and magical
The dreaming hours.
As a breath they fall, as a sigh;
Green garden hours too langorous to waken,
White leaves of blossomy tree wind-shaken:
As a breath, a sigh,
As the slow white drift
Of a butterfly.
Flower-wings falling, wings of branches
One after one at wind's droop dipping;
Then with the lift
Of the soft air's breath, in sudden avalanches
Slipping.
Quietly, quietly the June wind flings
White wings,
White petals, past the footpath flowers
Adown my dreaming hours.
At the heart, at the heart the butterfly settles.
As a breath, a sigh
Fall the petals of hours, of the white-leafed flowers,
Fall the petalled wings of the butterfly.

FOR BESSIE, SEATED BY ME

To my heart, to my heart the white petals
Quietly fall.

To the years, other years, old and wistful
Drifts my dream.

Petal-patined the dream, white-mistful
As the dew-sweet haunt of the dim whitebeam,
Because of memory, a little wind . . .

It is the gossamer-float of the butterfly
This drift of dream

From the sweet of to-day to the sweet
Of days long drifted by.

It is the drift of the butterfly, it is the fleet
Drift of petals which my noon has thinned,
It is the ebbing out of my life, of the petals of days.
To the years, other years, drifts my dream . . .

Through the haze

Of summers long ago

Love's entrancements flow,

A blue-green pageant of earth,

A green-blue pageant of sky,

As a stream

Flooding back with lovely delta to my heart.

Lo! the petalled leafage is finer, under the feet

The coarse soil with a rainbow's worth

Of delicate colours lies enamelled,

Translucently glowing, shining.

Each balmy breath of the hours

From eastern gleam to westward gloam

Is meaningfull as the falling flowers:

FOR BESSIE, SEATED BY ME

It is a crystal syllable
For love's defining,
It is love alone can spell—
Yea, Love remains: after this drift of days
Love is here, Love is not dumb.
The touch of a silken hand, comradely, untram-
melled,
Is in the sunlight, a bright glance
On every ripple of yonder waterways,
A whisper in the dance
Of green shadows;
Nor shall the sunlight be shut out even from the
dark.
Beyond the garden heavy oaks are buoyant on the
meadows,
Their rugged bark
No longer rough,
But chastened and refinèd in the glowing eyes of
Love.
Around us the petals fulfil
Their measure and fall, precious the petals are still.
For Love they once were gathered, they are gathered
for Love again,
Whose glance is on the water,
Whose whisper is in the green shadows.
In the same comrade-hand whose touch is in the
sunlight,
They are lying again.
Here Love is . . . Love only of all things outstays
The drift of petals, the drift of days,

FOR BESSIE, SEATED BY ME

Petals of hours,
Of white-leafed flowers,
Petalled wings of the butterfly.
Drifting, quietly drifting by
As a breath, a sigh. . . .

LARGESSE

AND then the day came up, slow-coloured, quietly
rich,

With dawn-rose petalling as by a seasonal rote

First the low fringing cloud, the slumb'rous hills
afloat

Like heavier cloud above sunk-mists, a thrush's
throat,

Then, by a window's way, a dreaming maiden's bed,

And, last, across the glistening meadows sweetly
shed

To where a drunken lout lay sprawling in a ditch.

Nor cloud nor lightening hills, nor meadow dewy-
spun,

Receive more lavish share of the sprink'd eastern
rose;

Even that chamber, essenced of stainless snaws.

And the glad thrush, that yesterdawn had flung

Rich bubbling love-notes to the maid, among

Her window-mirrored leaves, sweetlier never sung

Than now above the sodden wretch, who slumbers on.

THE RETURN

A SUN-SWEET day in the sundown time
Where the great hills dip to the dusking dale,
And no sound breaking the silent climb
But a lonely wheeling curlew's wail.
And the far bird's scream, and the glittering shine
Of a star on the far dim eastern line
Bring back far days and a dream once mine
Where the great hills dip to the dale.

For the world-call came even here, even here
Where the great hills dip to the dusking dale,
And the old road laughed at a young heart's fear
And lured young feet to its wonder-trail,
And drew young eyes to the rosy sky. . . .
And the world grew wide as the feet climbed high,
But the young heart's dream was a dream gone by
With the hills dipping down to the dale.

O the world was strange and the years less kind
Than the years with the hills and the dusking dale
And the dale's deep calm that none may find
While the long road lures and the heart is hale.

THE RETURN

And now in the chill of a wild bird's scream
I linger alone where the gloom is the gleam
Of a still, far star, with a far, far dream

And the hills dipping down to the dale.

1912.

YONDER LIES LONDON

YONDER lies London the abysmal bitch,
Kennelled beneath the pall of her own breath.
She is obsessed by her fecundity.
The litters of those ruthless loins are rich
In mongrel virtue, yet their sire is death.
Sprawling her round from mid-land to the sea
She suckles them till her black milk runs dry,
Draining the sap of men to glut them by.

Must it remain for Time to stem the spate
Of potency in her grim ravisher,
And she, brute-mother of cities, satiate
Her avidness with sheer increase of brood;
Or shall a godcast seed take root in her
That she whelp forth a litter of royal blood,
And gaze aghast on her new strange queenhood ?

THE OLD MEN

THEY crowd the brink of the pit,
The old, lascivious men.
With horrible lust in their eyes
And twitching avid senses, thwarted
Of age's peace, contorted,
Never to be sound or sweet again,
They gape above the shambles, their thoughts lick
at the blood
Spitting up from the pen.

It is the shambles of the young;
The human altar-place
Where for a nightmare space,
Endures the monstrous sacrificial rite
Whereby to these old crafty men might be made sure
The lean years remaining, and fattened, and the
panic soothed
Of their doomed, their sated race.

The beauty of the ripening males
Whose limbs are unblenched,

THE OLD MEN

Whose eyes are clear, who love with all their proud
Glad pulses thundering and hearts aburst in flame
That time has fanned, not quenched,
This ripening beauty in the old bleared eyes
Of impotence is hateful. It has become
The blood-offering of the impotent
To the oncoming wolves of Time. . . .
Yea, out of the arms of the maids who adore them,
Even from the arms of the women who bore them,
These young are wrenched.

The streets are scoured for their prey,
The hills are hunted through.
Should Youth appear in their midst
These old, these horrible men will clutch with
skinny hands
And thrust his fairness forth to the pit, to the place
Their blasphemous bloodless lips
Have named the crucible of God, His holy brew.

If Youth resist, they scream
Their palsied rage
Like the beasts they hear howling round the door
Of their old age.
They cast up filth into his fearless face,
They torture his eyes.
They torture his limbs, those splendid limbs,
They stamp the life from out his body while they
may.

THE OLD MEN

While they may, poor fear-stark fools,
Little dreaming such beauty is beyond their evil
reach,
That the flame of his passion is undestroyed and
indestructible,
That ever on and onward, albeit horse and handman
stumble, rolls
Truth's equipage.
For Truth is youth made Sage.

And being sweet of heart, Youth cannot hate
These old, these crafty men.
Being trustful, Youth goes as they lead,
And thus he cometh to his own destruction
Within this shambled pen.
Soon shall he trust himself alone, and guard
His faith in his own wisdom and desires
Right jealously, for then
Be these old men his own close kin,
Be they endeared and deep-trusted,
No more shall they bandage his eyes,
Nevermore shall Youth be led again
To the brink of the pit that they crowd round,
These old, lascivious men.

LABOUR

HE strains the dawn-stark vastness with his growth.

He towers beside the anvil-steel of Time.

Bewilderment part-veils his eyes, and loth

Is he to spill the brute-largesse of prime.

Creation waits appalled upon his mood . . .

Now comes the shock of ageless visioning

Into that tense stature; and day, a flood

Of anvilled suns. Brain linked with brawn

gives wing

To each strong sweeping stroke of the gripped

weight

Down crashing in his task of gianthood.

He is a joy-smith. Seas and cities ring

With new sound clamant far. He stands elate,

Assured henceforth his mastery shall reveal

Only new laughters from the smitten steel.

HEEDLESS THE BIRDS . . .

By this same copse in spring I came,
The birds sang round me cheerily.
In that wild dancing world of flame
Mine was the one wild heart made tame;
I hearkened wearily.
Fain would I share
With them my care;
But they would have no heed of me.

Now, while the wan year waneth dim,
My heart grows joyous-wild again;
But where black trees the bleak skies limn
Those birds do pipe a doleful hymn.
Yet though, gladmost of men,
I'd fain re-wake,
Spring in the brake,
They heed no more than they did then.

BROWN AUTUMN, BROWN
BRANCHES . .

BROWN autumn, brown branches,
Your mellowness blanches,
Your fruiting is thinn'd
In the mist-wet wind. . . .
Brown season, brown bracken,
When the sleet-storms come
With their sweep of spume
Your sun-rich bloom
Shall blacken, shall blacken. . . .
Brown mirror-faced mere,
At the first word of winter
Stark-syllabled, clear,
From brink to dim brink
You shall shrink,
You shall splinter. . . .

Brown wistful season, outwearied year,
Though the chill mist be sweeping
Your days,
Though the sleet-storms are heaping
White spume on your dusking, on your darkening
of ways,

BROWN AUTUMN, BROWN BRANCHES

Untroubled I gaze:
No haunting of summer-kind airs
Nor memoried grace
Of the sun shall my spirit endeavour to trace
In the nearing gales
(Bitter flowers, bitter flowers flaking
Your face);
No summer's new waking
In the fierce fang'd wind as it tears
At your russeted veils.
I that was heedless of shine, for the spring
Uncaring,
Deaf to the boom of the bright blood-beat
Through the world as the birds,
To the sap in the pastures unsensed as the heart of
the herds,
Knowing naught, seeing naught but a bright maid-
flower
Blossoming beside me, singing the hour. . . .
Brown autumn, brown branches, withering,
How shall I heed you, I that was heedless of spring ?

Brown autumn, the sweep of your leaf
Shall stir not my grief.
Alone you shall brood,
Through your falling mood;
I shall be as a stranger,
I the proud ranger
Of summer's green alleys,
Blue hills, golden valleys,

BROWN AUTUMN, BROWN BRANCHES

My brown love beside me, a wandering beam
From the sun-sky, singing our dream. . . .
I that was heedless of summer as spring,
How shall I fling
Out from my heart
My gladness ?
How shall I make me a part
Of your sadness ?
The spring is still
In my blood's beat
As your mellowness blanches,
Blinding me, stinging. . . .
The summer is sweet
On my dream-misty sense though the fruit-bared
branches
Are dript with gray rains, are gray in the deepening
chill.
And here is my bride
At my side !
Blossoming, singing. . . .

DREAM AND DARK FIRES ARE OVER

I

DREAM and dark fires are over, now
I stand outstaring on the starkness
Of lattice-filtered dawn, half darkness
Half misty day. No morning-rise
Hath shafted through the glooming to mine eyes.
Nor circling the summit of the bridle-brow
As once, at eastward, followeth the sun:
His pink wild roses fall
No more across the fields, the farm, nor stain
These curtains and this blue-washed kitchen-wall.
No garden climbing flowers beat on the pane.
The birds with such impoverish'd matins-time have
done.

Even the oxyard's mute . . . O how
The world from the farm window blurs
About me to an emptier chillness
As I grope seeking day ! nor stirs
My heart to dream or fire: only an answering
stillness.

DREAM AND DARK FIRES ARE OVER

II

Ah, but beyond the stair and overhead
There's dream and dark fire yet,
One flower, at sleep, at sleep within a sacred bed,
Warm and white-wondrous she . . . Jonquil and
violet,
Narcissus, tulip, all the soul -
Of dew-fresh beauty burgeoning
Athwart the beds of snowy spring
Sleeps in that sleeping loveliness;
Braving, when other flowers were fallen memories,
The season's chance and change, while these
And dream, dark fires, like frightened spirits stole
Back to the dim recesses of the heart, aghast
Before the ghost of seasons spent.
O ghost, thou impotent,
I watch thee creeping now, and, creeping, cast
Gray ashes flameless, ashes flowerless
All things o'erspreading but her loveliness!

III

Her loveliness, . . . that lilts to song across the
thought
Of labour as my strength begins my farming day,
Leaping as darkling fire, as coloured dream . . .
How should it pass, how shall it steal away?

DREAM AND DARK FIRES ARE OVER

Though it were wrought
Out of no stouter fabric, frail as are
Those flowers that shrank before their insecurity,
Yet is its substance proved supreme
As that fog-stabbing star
Whose sureness wheeleth round
More splendidly
For the dark chasmèd terrors of the vast profound.

IV

Hearken . . . the chirrup of a bird
Hailing the murk-blind morning ! . . . It had heard
No golden comrade-peal of early praise
More blithely ! Yet no wind drifts comfortward
For bird-heart in this birdless maze
Of naked twig, this stagnancy, this black
Drear wilderness of stricken garden brack.
My soul hath leash of thee, O bird alone,
For an eternal summertime
Doth surely prime
Thy secret vision, steep thy spirit as it steeps
And primes my lovely sleeper's own. . . .
Hearken, again . . . The sudden noise
Of clattering hens and their proud lord
Comes rifting down the moonless dusk o' the yard.
No barrier of mist
Can hold that crowing voice.
And now the shippon's sounds begin.

DREAM AND DARK FIRES ARE OVER

No more the duck-pen sleeps.
The first pig-squeal, peevish with dark, comes
rasping in,
Breaking the crimson purr of newly kindled hearth.
Can beast
Or bird, be dawn upon their sight
Bedewed or rimed, resist
The ecstasy of breaking light ? . . .

V

The ecstasy of breaking light: O white
As the surprising dazzle of wide pastured snows
Before my face the dimness flows.
For I bethink that she, my flower, my love,
At sleep, at sleep above—
Perchance her loveliness is cradled on
Such summer through her dream !
Perchance the chill of the day is gone
And round her bed become as a warm garden-close
Enflushed with the June's gleam
Upon her waking. Bright my day hath turned,
O bright with crowding hope,
And rich as when the dream and dark fires always
burned. . . .
Outside is still the starkness
Of an unlifting dawn, half darkness
Half misty day. I grope, gladly I grope
For lantern and the milking pails.

DREAM AND DARK FIRES ARE OVER

I shall go out in gratitude
And, down the dark yard oozing wet,
Greet the sweet farm-life that, despite the bleak,
the brood
Of a November, hails
The June! O life most wise
That makes of leaden earth its surest Paradise!
Voicing the foggy air
As though the heaven-gates were thrown wide once
more.

But stay (how else) . . . A moment while I set
Lantern and pails beside the dim porch door
Quietly: and quietly
I climb the stair. . . .

CHAYAH, MY BEAUTIFUL . . .

CHAYAH, my beautiful,
It is not the gipsy blush
Of your blood, nor the lush
Red lips laughing away
Their own wistfulness;
It is not the sway
Beneath your dress
Of a wondrous body, nor your eyes
Waking
Like tawny moonflames in dark troubled skies,
Nor the bronze-glinted massing
Of your hair;
It is not these
That set me apart
From the world of men, and my heart
Unbearably aching.

Your dusk-lovely ways
Have many witnesses.
Strangers may share
The gloom-rich grace
Of your passing.

CHAYAH, MY BEAUTIFUL

Chayah, my beautiful,
There are some have caught
The fleet glimpse of your white
Wisdom of mind.
And the wild thought
Stirs in them. Yet their sight
Is even as a stranger's, to your queenhood of spirit
blind.

For I of all men have known
The shy caress
Of your nearness.
And to me alone
You offered a soul's star-height
Of loveliness.

And the ache of my heart never dies.
. . . There are days, sudden days
When I am desolate, gulfed among
The unfamiliar throng
On whom you gaze
With troubled eyes.

THE POOL

THERE is a lonely moorland pool,
I know it well:
It hath a deeper, softer blue
Than the deep sapphire in the skies
And the soft blue of children's eyes
Or the bluebell.
In Springtime, as the days grow full,
So hush'd in solitude it is
You almost hear the silences.
But if you break the hem of trees
And stand upon its bank, the flies
And birds go startling through
That lonely dell
From hawthorn sprays all wet with dew,
And stare at you.
The brown birds tell
A stranger's come, and all is noise and chirpy
cries.
The lizards peep in great surprise;
A snail tucks in his horns, and tries
To hide inside his shell.

THE POOL

The flies dart up and down, and rise
In myriads high
As if they spy
A miracle.

But if you go on Summer days
The Sun-King's there.
Stalking the woods, treading the wheat,
He comes with scorching feet.
He fills the valleys with a haze,
He sets a laughing world ablaze;
And if you keep quite still new sounds
Begin to rustle everywhere.
A red stag comes with eager bounds
And splashes till it makes him wink,
Dipping his tongue where noonday heat
Can parch no longer, glad to drink.
The rabbits munch the meadowsweet;
They have no care.
And soon a baby squirrel strays
Out of the maze
Of wood-green ways
Down to the water's brink, and plays
Until a tiny trembling bleat
Drifts on the air,
And then his bright eyes turn to greet
A thirsty lamb.

THE POOL

When Autumn's fingers touch with gold
That moorland glen,

And mists creep wanly down the wold,
Twining the trees that look so old,

My pool is nearly hushed again.

The drip, drip, drip of windless rain

Makes doleful music in the hedge,

And where you see a tawny speck

A paddling frog croaks in the sedge;

Down at the bubbling water's edge

Sounds the harsh sudden *crek-rek-rek!*

Of a moorhen.

Through all that place of Summer joys

And Springtime hopes there is no further noise.

No longer woodland creatures come:

You hear no drowsy hum,

No gladsome voice.

Yet in those flaming dawns and eves

Of days grown dim,

My lonely, rush-ringed moorland pool

Seems most my own.

I wander there alone,

Among the crinkling yellow leaves

All glimmering mellow in the glow

Of sunset, and I know

No place more wonderful,

So weird and grim.

THE POOL

I look into that quiet face
And vainly seek to trace
A secret meaning, for I lose
Myself in dreams
Of forest streams
And hillside rains and mountain dews . . .
Until I wake to hear the whirr
Of black moth wings that rudely stir
The twilight, and a whispering
Steals through the dusk as if the place
Had all become a living thing.

1910.

PRAYER

WHEN men defame the cause they smiled upon,
And weaklings turn their faces from the fight,
When our fine vision dims to darkest night,
And victory's beginning has swift end;
O may I stand with those who battle on,
Staunch in the ranks so pitifully thinned,
Strong with the strength of the Great North
Wind . . .
And the courage of you, my Friend.

When Death creeps grimly to my quiet room
Chilling my soul with his harsh whispered word,
When daylight flickers and the world grows blurred,
And life goes guttering like a candle's end;
O may that vision shine on through the gloom !
And as my tired heart's pulsing slowly stills,
Give me the calmness of the everlasting hills . . .
And your dear arms, my Friend.

1911.

AUTUMN OVER ELDEN

THE moor is quiet, in sleeping loveliness,
A gray gaunt woman
Unwearied by the hours, the heavy press
Of crowding autumns . . .
The granite-moulded bosom half concealed
Beneath the fall
Of a spent brown shawl;
And sweet contentments for the long day's yield
Over the furrowed features fling
The glow of a spirit-sunset, glimmering.

The moor is a living, a dream-drowsy presence
Whose silences, now clinging deep, outcling
All the world's seasons, as an old warm odorous
essence.

When the stonebelted gorseland's girth
Is lightly wreathed
With a young radiance of patterning,
Though elsewhere all's a drift of dance
And greeneried mirth
And voiced exuberance,
Even the prime of proud wild blossoming
By silence is ensheathed.

AUTUMN OVER ELDEN

And as at the mute blossom-time
So through the months of prime and the after-
prime.

Where the slow rune
Which is the breath of labouring moors
Elsewhere would quicken, summer-soon,
To melodies outflaming on the furze,
Silence stays brooding ever, everywhere.

Blossom-pride,

Fruiting-tide,

These with this autumn noon are one.

And silence still comes after, waits upon the birth

In the wide plover-haunted air

Twixt cloud and blackening heather

Of the white weather.

If old forgotten feet came once, footstep and song

Are vanished, lost along

The years that mark this gaunt gray ruggedness

That's lost to man, harshly aloof from mortal
track.

Only Time's seasons come, strange-shaped and
echo-less

From flowery flametime to the russet wrack,

As spring, a maid whose bliss

Is quieted in the rapture of a kiss,

And summer, a madonna miracle-mute,

Crowning her the first bridefruit,

Winter, an old old nurse who by the cradle broods,

Swaddling in white the sleep

Of the heather buds;

AUTUMN OVER ELDEN

But most, as now, when silence is more deep
For a far curlew's call,
A woman past her uplifting, on the slow fall;
A gray gaunt woman, in sleeping loveliness,
Unwearied by the hours, the heavy press
Of crowding autumns. . . .

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