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THE POEMS OF ✪  
MADISON CAWEIN

VOLUME II

NEW WORLD IDYLLS AND  
POEMS OF LOVE









THE POEMS OF  
MADISON CAWEIN

*Volume II*

NEW WORLD  
IDYLLS AND POEMS  
OF LOVE

*Illustrated*

WITH PHOTOGRAVURES AFTER PAINTINGS  
BY ERIC PAPE

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WITH ENDURING FRIENDSHIP, LOVE AND LOYALTY

TO

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY





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NEW WORLD IDYLLS





O lyrist of the lowly and the true,  
The song I sought for you  
Still bides unsung. What hope for me to find,  
Lost in the dædal mind,  
The living utterance with lovely tongue,  
To sing,—as once he sung,  
Rare Ariosto, of Knight-Errantry,—  
How you in Poesy,  
Song's Paladin, Knight of the Dream and Day,  
The shield of magic sway!  
Of that Atlantes' power, sweet and terse,  
The skyey-builded verse!  
The shield that dazzles, brilliant with surprise,  
Our unanointed eyes.—  
Oh, could I write as it were worthy you,  
Each word, a spark of dew,—  
As once Ferdusi wrote in Persia,—  
Would string each rosy spray  
Of each unfolding flower of my song;  
And Iran's bulbul tongue  
Would sob its heart out o'er the fountain's slab  
In gardens of Afrasiab.



## ONE DAY 'AND ANOTHER

### *A Lyrical Eclogue*

#### PART I

##### LATE SPRING

The mottled moth at eventide  
Beats glimmering wings against the pane;  
The slow, sweet lily opens wide,  
White in the dusk like some dim stain;  
The garden dreams on every side  
And breathes faint scents of rain:  
Among the flowering stocks they stand;  
A crimson rose is in her hand.

#### I

*Outside her garden. He waits musing:*

Herein the dearness of her is;  
The thirty perfect days of June  
Made one, in maiden loveliness  
Were not more sweet to clasp and kiss,  
With love not more in tune.

#### I

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Ah me! I think she is too true,  
Too spiritual for life's rough way:  
So say her eyes,— her soul looks through,—  
Two bluet blossoms, watchet-blue,  
Are not more pure than they.

So kind, so beautiful is she,  
So soft and white, so fond and fair,  
Sometimes my heart fears she may be  
Not long for Earth, and secretly  
Sweet sister to the air.

## II

*Dusk deepens. A whippoorwill calls.*

The whippoorwills are calling where  
The golden west is graying;  
“’Tis time,” they say, “to meet him there —  
Why are you still delaying?”

“He waits you where the old beech throws  
Its gnarly shadow over  
Wood violet and the bramble rose,  
Frail lady-fern and clover.

“Where elder and the sumac peep  
Above your garden's paling,

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Whereon, at noon, the lizards sleep,  
Like lichen on the railing.

“Come! ere the early rising moon’s  
Gold floods the violet valleys;  
Where mists, like phantom picaroons  
Anchor their stealthy galleys.

“Come! while the deepening amethyst  
Of dusk above is falling —  
'Tis time to tryst! 'tis time to tryst!”  
The whippoorwills are calling.

They call you to these twilight ways  
With dewy odor dripping —  
Ah, girlhood, through the rosy haze  
Come like a moonbeam slipping.

### III

*He enters the garden, speaking dreamily:*

There is a fading inward of the day,  
And all the pansy sunset clasps one star;  
The twilight acres, eastward, glimmer gray,  
While all the world to westward smoulders  
far.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Now to your glass will you pass for the last  
time?

Pass! humming some ballad, I know.

Here where I wait it is late and is past time —

Late! and the moments are slow, are slow.

There is a drawing downward of the night;  
The bridegroom Heaven bends down to kiss  
the moon:

Above, the heights hang silver in her light;

Below, the vales stretch purple, deep with  
June.

There in the dew is it you hiding lawnly?

You? or a moth in the vines? —

You! — by your hand! where the band  
twinkles tawny!

You! — by your ring, like a glow-worm that  
shines!

## IV

*She approaches, laughing. She speaks:*

You'd given up hope?

*He*

Believe me!

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

*She*

Why! is your love so poor?

*He*

No. Yet you *might* deceive me!

*She*

As many a girl before.—

Ah, dear, you will forgive me?

*He*

Say no more, sweet, say no more!

*She*

Love trusts; and that's enough, my dear.

Trust wins through love; whereof, my dear,

Love holds through trust: and love, my dear,

Is — all my life and lore.

*He*

Come, pay me or I 'll scold you.—

Give me the kiss you owe.—

You run when I would hold you?

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

*She*

No! no! I say! now, no! —  
How often have I told you,  
You must not use me so?

*He*

More sweet the dusk for this is,  
For lips that meet in kisses.—  
Come! come! why run from blisses  
As from a dreadful foe?

V

*She stands smiling at him, shyly, then speaks:*

How many words in the asking!  
How easily I can grieve you! —  
My “yes” in a “no” was a-masking,  
Nor thought, dear, to deceive you.—  
A kiss? — the humming-bird happiness here  
In my heart consents. . . . But what are  
words,  
When the thought of two souls in speech ac-  
cords?  
Affirmative, negative — what are they, dear?  
I wished to say “yes,” but somehow said  
“no.”



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

The woman within me knew you would know,  
Knew that your heart would hear.

*He speaks:*

So many words in the doing!—  
Therein you could not deceive me;  
Some things are sweeter for the pursuing:  
I knew what you meant, believe me.—  
Bunched bells of the blush pomegranate, to fix  
At your throat . . . Six drops of fire they  
are . . .  
Will you look — where the moon and its fol-  
lowing star  
Rise silvery over yon meadow ricks?  
While I hold — while I bend your head back,  
so . . .  
For I know it is “yes” though you whisper  
“no,”  
And my kisses, sweet, are six.

## VI

*Moths flutter around them. She speaks:*

Look! — where the fiery  
Glow-worm in briery  
Banks of the moon-mellowed bowers

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Sparkles — how hazily  
Pinioned and airily  
Delicate, warily,  
Drowsily, lazily,  
Flutter the moths to the flowers.

White as the dreamiest  
Bud of the creamiest  
Rose in the garden that dozes,  
See how they cling to them!  
Held in the heart of their  
Hearts, like a part of their  
Perfume, they swing to them  
Wings that are soft as a rose is.

Dim as the forming of  
Dew in the warming of  
Moonlight, they light on the petals;  
All is revealed to them;  
All! — from the sunniest  
Tips to the honiest  
Heart, whence they yield to them  
Spice, through the darkness that settles.

So to our tremulous  
Souls come the emulous  
Agents of love; through whose power

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

All that is best in us,  
All that is beautiful,  
Selfless and dutiful,  
Is manifest in us,  
Even as the scent of a flower.

VII

*Taking her hand he says:*

What makes you beautiful?  
Answer, now, answer! —  
Is it that dutiful  
Souls are all beautiful?  
Is it romance or  
Beauty of spirit,  
Which souls, that merit,  
Of heaven inherit? —  
Have you an answer?

*She, roguishly:*

What makes you lovable?  
Answer, now, answer! —  
Is it not provable  
That man is lovable  
Just because chance, or  
Nature, makes woman

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Love him? — Her human  
Part's to illumine. —  
Have you an answer?

VIII

*Then, regarding him seriously, she continues:*

Could I recall every joy that befell me  
There in the past with its anguish and bliss,  
Here in my heart it hath whispered to tell me,—  
They were no joys like this.

Were it not well if our love could forget them,  
Veiling the *Was* with the dawn of the *Is*?  
Dead with the past we should never regret them,  
Being no joys like this.

Now they are gone and the Present stands  
speechful,  
Ardent of word and of look and of kiss,—  
What though we know that their eyes are be-  
seechful!—  
They were no joys like this.

Were it not well to have more of the spirit,  
Living high Futures this earthly must miss?  
Less of the flesh, with the Past pining near it?  
Knowing no joys like this!

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

IX

*Leaving the garden for the lane. He, with  
lightness of heart:*

We will leave reason,  
Sweet, for a season:  
Reason were treason  
Now that the nether  
Spaces are clad, oh,  
In silvery shadow —  
We will be glad, oh,  
Glad as this weather!

*She, responding to his mood:*

Heart unto heart! where the moonlight is  
slanted,  
Let us believe that our souls are enchanted:—  
I in the castle-keep; you are the airy  
Prince who comes seeking me; love is the fairy  
Bringing us two together.

*He*

Starlight in masses  
Over us passes;  
And in the grass is  
Many a flower.—

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Now will you tell me  
How 'd you enspell me?  
What once befell me  
There in your bower?

*She*

Soul unto soul! — in the moon's wizard glory,  
Let us believe we are parts in a story: —  
I am a poem; a poet you hear it  
Whispered in star and in flower; a spirit,  
Love, puts my soul in your power.

X

*He, suddenly and very earnestly:*

Perhaps we lived in the days  
Of the Khalif Haroun er Reshid;  
And loved, as the story says  
Did the Sultan's favorite one  
And the Persian Emperor's son,  
Ali ben Bekkar, he  
Of the Kisra dynasty.

Do you know the story? — Well,  
*You* were Haroun's Sultana.  
When night on the palace fell,

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

A slave, through a secret door,—  
Low-arched on the Tigris' shore,—  
By a hidden winding stair  
Brought me to your bower there.

Then there was laughter and mirth,  
And feasting and singing together,  
In a chamber of wonderful worth;  
In a chamber vaulted high  
On columns of ivory;  
Its dome, like the irised skies,  
Mooned over with peacock eyes;  
Its curtains and furniture,  
Damask and juniper.

Ten slave girls — so many blooms —  
Stand, holding tamarisk torches,  
Silk-clad from the Irak looms;  
Ten handmaidens serve the feast,  
Each maid like a star in the east;  
Ten lutanists, lutes a-tune,  
Wait, each like the Ramadan moon.

For you, in a stuff of Merv  
Blue-clad, unveiled and jeweled,  
No metaphor made may serve:  
Scarved deep with your raven hair,



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

The jewels like fireflies there —  
Blossom and moon and star,  
The Lady Shemsennehar.

The zone that girdles your waist  
Would ransom a Prince and Emeer ;  
In your coronet's gold enchased,  
And your bracelet's twisted bar,  
Burn rubies of Istakhar ;  
And pearls of the Jamshid race  
Hang looped on your bosom's lace.

You stand like the letter I ;  
Dawn-faced, with eyes that sparkle  
Black stars in a rosy sky ;  
Mouth, like a cloven peach,  
Sweet with your smiling speech ;  
Cheeks, that the blood presumes  
To make pomegranate blooms.

With roses of Rocknabad,  
Hyacinths of Bokhara,—  
Creamily cool and clad  
In gauze,— girls scatter the floor  
From pillar to cedarn door.  
Then, a pomegranate bloom in each ear,  
Come the dancing-girls of Kashmeer.



ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Kohl in their eyes, down the room,—  
That opaline casting-bottles  
Have showered with rose-perfume,—  
They glitter and drift and swoon  
To the dulcimer's languishing tune;  
In the liquid light like stars  
And moons and nenuphars.

Carbuncles, tragacanth-red,  
Smoulder in armlet and anklet:  
Gleaming on breast and on head,  
Bangles of coins, that are angled,  
Tinkle: and veils, that are spangled,  
Flutter from coiffure and wrist  
Like a star-bewildered mist.

Each dancing-girl is a flower  
Of the Tuba from vales of El Liwa.—  
How the bronzen censers glower!  
And scents of ambergris pour,  
And of myrrh, brought out of Lahore,  
And of musk of Khoten! how good  
Is the scent of the sandalwood!

A lutanist smites her lute,  
Sings loves of Mejnoon and Leila:—  
Her voice is an Houri flute;—

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

While the fragrant flambeaux wave,  
Barbaric, o'er free and slave,  
O'er fabrics and bezels of gems  
And roses in anadems.

Sherbets in ewers of gold,  
Fruits in salvers carnelian;  
Flagons of grotesque mold,  
Made of a sapphire glass,  
Brimmed with wine of Shirâz;  
Shaddock and melon and grape  
On plate of an antique shape.

Vases of frosted rose,  
Of alabaster graven,  
Filled with the mountain snows;  
Goblets of mother-of-pearl,  
One filigree silver-swirl;  
Vessels of gold foamed up  
With spray of spar on the cup.

Then a slave bursts in with a cry:  
"The eunuchs! the Khalif's eunuchs! —  
With scimitars bared draw nigh!  
Wesif and Afif and he,  
Chief of the hideous three,  
Mesroul! — the Sultan 's seen  
'Mid a hundred weapons' sheen!"

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Did we part when we heard this? — No!  
It seems that my soul remembers  
How I clasped and kissed you, so. . . .  
When they came they found us — dead,  
On the flowers our blood dyed red;  
Our lips together, and  
The dagger in my hand.

XI

*She, musingly:*

How it was I can not tell,  
For I know not where nor why;  
But I know we loved too well  
In some world that does not lie  
East or west of where we dwell,  
And beneath no earthly sky.

Was it in the golden ages? —  
Or the iron? — that I heard, —  
In the prophecy of sages, —  
Haply, how had come a bird,  
Underneath whose wing were pages  
Of an unknown lover's word.

I forget. You may remember  
How the earthquake shook our ships;

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

How our city, one huge ember,  
Blazed within the thick eclipse:  
When you found me — deep December  
Sealed my icy eyes and lips.

I forget. No one may say  
That such things can not be true:—  
Here a flower dies to-day,  
There, to-morrow, blooms anew. . . .  
Death is silent.— Tell me, pray,  
Why men doubt what God can do?

## XII

*He, with conviction:*

As to that, nothing to tell!  
You being all my belief,  
Doubt can not enter or dwell  
Here where your image is chief;  
Here where your name is a spell,  
Potent in joy and in grief.

Is it the glamour of spring  
Working in us so we seem  
Aye to have loved? that we cling  
Even to some fancy or dream,  
Rainbowing everything,  
Here in our souls, with its gleam?

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

See! how the synod is met  
There of the planets to preach us: —  
Freed from the earth's oubliette,  
See how the blossoms beseech us! —  
Were it not well to forget  
Winter and death as they teach us?

Dew and a bud and a star,  
All,—like a beautiful thought,  
Over man's wisdom how far! —  
God for some purpose hath wrought.—  
Could we but know why they are,  
And that they end not in naught!

Stars and the moon; and they roll  
Over our way that is white.—  
Here shall we end the long stroll?  
Here shall I kiss you good night?  
Or, for a while, soul to soul,  
Linger and dream of delight?

## XIII

*They reënter the garden. She speaks somewhat pensively:*

Myths tell of walls and cities, lyred of love,  
That rose to music.— Were that power my own,

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Had I that harp, that magic barbiton,  
What had I builded for our lives thereof? —

In docile shadows under bluebell skies,  
A home upon the popped edge of eve,  
Beneath pale peaks the splendors never leave,  
'Mid lemon orchards whence the egret flies.

Where, pitiless, the ruined hand of death  
Should never reach. No bud, no flower fade:  
Where all were perfect, pure and unafraid:  
And life serener than an angel's breath.

The days should move to music: song should  
tame  
The nights, attentive with their listening stars:  
And morn outrival eve in opal bars,  
Each preaching beauty with rose-tongues of  
flame.

O home! O life! desired and to be!  
How shall we reach you? — Far the way and  
dim.—  
Give me your hand, sweet! let us follow him,  
Love with the madness and the melody.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

XIV

*He, observing the various flowers around them:*

Violets and anemones  
The surrendered Hours  
Pour, as handsels, round the knees  
Of the Spring, who to the breeze  
Flings her myriad flowers.

Like to coins, the sumptuous day  
Strews with blossoms golden  
Every furlong of his way,—  
Like a Sultan gone to pray  
At a Kaaba olden.

Warlock Night, with spark on spark,  
Clad in dim attire,  
Dots with stars the haloed dark,—  
As a priest around the Ark  
Lights his lamps of fire.

These are but the cosmic strings  
Of the harp of Beauty,  
Of that instrument which sings,  
In our souls, of love, that brings  
Peace and faith and duty.



ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

XV

*She, seriously:*

Duty? — Comfort of the sinner  
And the saint! — When grief and trial  
Weigh us, and within our inner  
Selves,— responsive to love's viol,—  
Hope's soft voice grows thin and thinner.  
It is kin to self-denial.

Self-denial! Through whose feeling  
We are gainer though we 're loser;  
All the finer force revealing  
Of our natures. No accuser  
Is the conscience then, but healing  
Of the wound of which we 're chooser.

Who the loser, who the winner,  
If the ardor fail as preacher? —  
None who loved was yet beginner,  
Though another's love-beseecher:  
Love's revealment 's of the inner  
Life and God Himself is teacher.

Heine said " no flower knoweth  
Of the fragrance it revealeth;  
Song, its heart that overfloweth,



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Never nightingale's heart feeleth"—  
Such is love the spirit groweth,  
Love unconscious if it healeth.

### XVI

*He, looking smilingly into her eyes, after a pause, lightly:*

An elf there is who stables the hot  
Red wasp that sucks on the apricot;  
An elf, who rowels his spiteful bay,  
Like a mote on a ray, away, away;  
An elf, who saddles the hornet lean  
And dins i' the ear o' the swinging bean;  
Who straddles, with cap cocked, all awry,  
The bottle-green back o' the dragon-fly.

And this is the elf who sips and sips  
From clover-horns whence the perfume drips;  
And, drunk with dew, in the glimmering gloam  
Awaits the wild-bee's coming home;  
In ambush lies where none may see,  
And robs the caravan bumblebee:  
Gold bags of honey the bees must pay  
To the bandit elf of the fairy-way.

Another oughen the butterflies know,  
Who paints their wings with the hues that glow

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

On blossoms: squeezing from tubes of dew  
Pansy colors of every hue  
On his bloom's pied pallet, he paints the wings  
Of the butterflies, moths, and other things.  
This is the elf that the hollyhocks hear,  
Who dangles a brilliant in each one's ear;  
Teases at noon the pane's green fly,  
And lights at night the glow-worm's eye.

But the dearest elf, so the poets say,  
Is the elf who hides in an eye of gray;  
Who curls in a dimple or slips along  
The strings of a lute to a lover's song;  
Who smiles in her smile and frowns in her  
frown,  
And dreams in the scent of her glove or gown;  
Hides and beckons, as all may note,  
In the bloom or the bow of a maiden's throat.

## XVII

*She, pensively, standing among the flowers:*

Soft through the trees the night wind sighs,  
And swoons and dies.  
Above, the stars hang wanly white;  
Here, through the dark,

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

A drizzled gold, the fireflies  
Rain mimic stars in spark on spark.—  
'Tis time to part, to say good night.  
Good night.

From fern to flower the night-moths cross  
At drowsy loss.  
The moon drifts, veiled, through clouds of  
white;  
And pearly pale,  
In silvery blurs, through beds of moss,  
Their tiny moons the glow-worms trail.—  
'Tis time to part, to say good night.  
Good night.

XVIII

*He, at parting, as they proceed down the garden:*

You say we can not marry, now  
That roses and the June are here?  
To your decision I must bow.—  
Ah, well! — perhaps 't is best, my dear.  
Let 's swear again each old love vow  
And love another year.

Another year of love with you!  
Of dreams and days, of sun and rain!

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

When field and forest bloom anew,  
'And locust clusters pelt the lane,  
When all the song-birds wed and woo,  
I'll not take "no" again.

Oft shall I lie awake and mark  
The hours by no clanging clock,  
But, in the dim and dewy dark,  
Far crowing of some punctual cock;  
Then up, as early as the lark  
To meet you by our rock.

The rock, where first we met at tryst;  
Where first I wooed and won your love.—  
Remember how the moon and mist  
Made mystery of the heaven above  
As now to-night? — Where first I kissed  
Your lips, you trembling like a dove.

So, then, we will not marry now  
That roses and the June are here,  
That warmth and fragrance weigh each bough?  
And, yet, your reason is not clear . . .  
Ah, well! We 'll swear anew each vow  
And wait another year.

## PART II

### EARLY SUMMER

The cricket in the rose-bush hedge  
Sings by the vine-entangled gate;  
The slim moon slants a timid edge  
Of pearl through one low cloud of slate;  
Around dark door and window-ledge  
Like dreams the shadows wait.  
And through the summer dusk she goes,  
On her white breast a crimson rose.

### I

*She delays, meditating. 'A rainy afternoon.*

Gray skies and a foggy rain  
Dripping from streaming eaves;  
Over and over again  
Dull drop of the trickling leaves:  
And the woodward-winding lane,  
And the hill with its shocks of sheaves  
One scarce perceives.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Shall I go in such wet weather  
By the lane or over the hill? —  
Where the blossoming milkweed's feather  
The diamonded rain-drops fill;  
Where, draggled and drenched together,  
The ox-eyes rank the rill  
By the old corn-mill.

The creek by now is swollen,  
And its foaming cascades sound;  
And the lilies, smeared with pollen,  
In the dam look dull and drowned.  
'Tis the path I oft have stolen  
To the bridge; that rambles round  
With willows bound.

Through a bottom wild with berry,  
And packed with the ironweeds  
And elder,— washed and very  
Fragrant,— the fenced path leads  
Past oak and wilding cherry,  
Where the tall wild-lettuce seeds,  
To a place of reeds.

The sun through the sad sky bleaches —  
Is that a thrush that calls?—  
A bird in the rain beseeches:



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

And see! on the balsam's balls,  
And leaves of the water-beeches —  
One blister of wart-like galls —  
No rain-drop falls.

My shawl instead of a bonnet! . . .  
'Though the woods be dripping yet,  
Through the wet to the rock I'll run it! —  
How sweet to meet in the wet! —  
Our rock with the vine upon it,—  
Each flower a fiery jet,—  
Where oft we 've met.

## II

*They meet. He speaks:*

How fresh the purple clover  
Smells in its veil of rain!  
And where the leaves brim over  
How musky wild the lane!  
See, how the sodden acres,  
Forlorn of all their rakers,  
Their hay and harvest makers,  
Look green as spring again.

Drops from the trumpet-flowers  
Rain on us as we pass;

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

And every zephyr showers,  
From tilted leaf or grass,  
Clear beads of moisture, seeming  
Pale, pointed emeralds gleaming;  
Where, through the green boughs streaming,  
The daylight strikes like glass.

*She speaks:*

How dewy, clean and fragrant  
Look now the green and gold! —  
'And breezes, trailing vagrant,  
Spill all the spice they hold.  
The west begins to glimmer;  
And shadows, stretching slimmer,  
Make gray the ways; and dimmer  
Grow field and forest old.

Beyond those rainy reaches  
Of woodland, far and lone,  
'A whippoorwill beseeches;  
'And now an owlet's moan  
Drifts faint upon the hearing.—  
These say the dusk is nearing.  
'And, see, the heavens, clearing,  
Take on a tender tone.



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

How feebly chirps the cricket!  
How thin the tree-toads cry!  
Blurred in the wild-rose thicket  
Gleams wet the firefly.—  
This way toward home is nearest;  
Of weeds and briers clearest. . . .  
We 'll meet to-morrow, dearest;  
Till then, dear heart, good-by.

### III

*They meet again under the greenwood tree.*  
*He speaks:*

Here at last! And do you know  
That again you 've kept me waiting?  
Wondering, anticipating  
That your "yes" meant "no."

Now you 're here we 'll have our day. . . .  
Let us take this daisied hollow,  
And beneath these beeches follow  
This wild strip of way

To the stream; wherein are seen  
Stealing gar and darting minnow;  
Over which snake-feeders winnow  
Wings of black and green.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Like a cactus flames the sun ;  
And the mighty weaver, Even,  
Tenuous colored, there in heaven,  
His rich weft 's begun. . . .

How I love you ! from the time —  
You remember, do you not ? —  
When, within your orchard-plot,  
I was reading rhyme,

As I told you. And 't was thus :—  
“ By the blue Trinacrian sea,  
Far in pastoral Sicily  
With Theocritus ”—

That I answered you who asked.  
But the curious part was this :—  
That the whole thing was amiss ;  
That the Greek but masked

Tales of old Boccaccio :  
Tall Decameronian maids  
Strolled for me among the glades,  
Smiling, sweet and slow.

And when you approached,— my book  
Dropped in wonder,— seemingly

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

To myself I said, " 'Tis she!"  
And arose to look

In Laretta's eyes and — true!  
Found them yours.— You shook your head,  
Laughing at me, as you said,  
"Did I frighten you?"

You had come for cherries; these  
Coatless then I climbed for while  
You still questioned with a smile,  
And still tried to tease.

Ah, love, just two years have gone  
Since then. . . . I remember, you  
Wore a dress of billowy blue  
Muslin.— *Was* it "lawn"?—

And your apron still I see —  
All its whiteness cherry-stained —  
Which you held; wherein I rained  
Ripeness from the tree.

And I asked you — for, you know,  
To my eyes your serious eyes  
Said such deep philosophies —  
If you 'd read Rousseau.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

You remember how a chance,  
Somewhat like to mine, one June  
Happened him at castle Toune,  
Over there in France?

And a cherry dropping fair  
On your cheek, I, envying it,  
Cried — remembering Rousseau's wit —  
“Would my lips were there!” . . .

Here we are at last. We 'll row  
Down the stream.— The west has narrowed  
To one streak of rose, deep-arrowed.—  
There 's our skiff below.

### IV

*Entering the skiff, she speaks:*

Waters flowing dark and bright  
In the sunlight or the moon,  
Fill my soul with such delight  
As some visible music might;  
As some slow, majestic tune  
Made material to the sight.

Blossoms colored like the skies,  
Sunset-hued and tame or wild,  
Fill my soul with such surmise

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

As the mind might realize  
If one's thoughts, all undefiled,  
Should take form before the eyes.

So to me do these appeal;  
So they sway me every hour:  
Letting all their beauty steal  
On my soul to make it feel  
Through a rivulet or flower,  
More than any words reveal.

V

*He speaks, rowing:*

See, sweetheart, how the lilies lay  
Their lambent leaves about our way;  
Or, pollen-dusty, bob and float  
Their nenuphars around our boat.—  
The middle of the stream is reached  
Three strokes from where our boat was beached.

Look up. You scarce can see the sky,  
Through trees that lean, dark, dense and high;  
That, coiled with grape and trailing vine,  
Build vast a roof of shade and shine;  
A house of leaves, where shadows walk,  
And whispering winds and waters talk.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

There is no path. The saplings choke  
The trunks they spring from. There an oak,  
Floods from the Alleghanies bore,  
Lies rotting; and that sycamore,  
Which lays its bulk from shore to shore,—  
Uprooted by the rain,— perchance  
May be the bridge to some romance:  
Its heart of punk, a spongy white,  
Glows, ghostly foxfire, in the night.

Now opening through a willow fringe  
The waters creep, one tawny tinge  
Of sunset; and on either marge  
The cottonwoods make walls of shade,  
With breezy balsam pungent: large,  
The gradual hills loom; darkly fade  
The waters wherein herons wade,  
Or wing, like Faëry birds, from grass  
That mats the shore by which we pass.

### *She speaks:*

On we pass; we rippling pass,  
On sunset waters still as glass.  
A vesper-sparrow flies above,  
Soft twittering, to its woodland love.  
A tufted-titmouse calls afar;  
And from the west, like some swift star,

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

A glittering jay flies screaming. Slim  
The sand-snipes and kingfishers skim  
Before us; and some twilight thrush —  
Who may discover where such sing? —  
The silence rinses with a gush  
Of limpid music bubbling.

*He speaks:*

On we pass.— Now let us oar  
To yonder strip of ragged shore,  
Where, from a rock with lichens hoar,  
A ferny spring falls, babbling frore  
Through woodland mosses. Gliding by  
The sulphur-colored firefly  
Lights its pale lamp where mallows gloom,  
And wild-bean and wild-mustard bloom.—  
Some hunter there within the woods  
Last fall encamped, those ashes say  
And campfire boughs.— The solitudes  
Grow dreamy with the death of day.

## VI

*She sings:*

Over the fields of millet  
A young bird tries its wings;  
And wild as a woodland rillet,



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Its first mad music rings —  
Soul of my soul, where the meadows roll  
What is the song it sings?

“ Love, and a glad good-morrow,  
Heart where the rapture is!  
Good-morrow, good-morrow!  
Adieu to sorrow!  
Here is the road to bliss:  
Where all day long you may hearken my song,  
And kiss, kiss, kiss;”

Over the fields of clover,  
Where the wild bee drones and sways,  
The wind, like a shepherd lover,  
Flutes on the fragrant ways —  
Heart of my heart, where the blossoms part,  
What is the air he plays?

“ Love, and a song to follow,  
Soul with the face a-gleam!  
Come follow, come follow,  
O'er hill and through hollow,  
To the land o' the bloom and beam:  
Where, under the flowers, you may listen for  
hours,  
And dream, dream, dream!”



ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

VII

*He speaks, letting the boat drift:*

Here the shores are irised; grasses  
Clump the water gray, that glasses  
Broken wood and deepened distance.  
Far the musical persistence  
Of a field-lark lingers low  
In the west's rich tulip-glow.

White before us flames one pointed  
Star; and Day hath Night anointed  
King; from out her azure ewer  
Pouring starry fire, truer  
Than pure gold. Star-crowned he stands  
With the starlight in his hands.

Will the moon bleach through the ragged  
Tree-tops ere we reach yon jagged  
Rock that rises gradually,  
Pharos of our homeward valley? —  
All the west is smouldering red;  
Embers are the stars o'erhead.

At my soul some Protean elf is:  
You 're Simætha; I am Delphis,  
You are Sappho and your Phaon,

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

I.— We love.— There lies our way, on,—  
Let us say,— Æolian seas,  
To the violet Lesbian leas.

On we drift. I love you. Nearer  
Looms our Island. Rosier, clearer,  
The Leucadian cliff we follow,  
Where the temple of Apollo  
Shines — a pale and pillared fire. . . .  
Strike, oh, strike the Lydian lyre! —  
Out of Hellas blows the breeze  
Singing to the Sapphic seas.

## VIII

*Landing, he sings:*

Night, night, 't is night. The moon drifts low  
above us,  
And all its gold is tangled in the stream:  
Love, love, my love, and all the stars, that love  
us,  
The stars smile down and every star 's a dream.

In odorous purple, where the falling warble  
Of water cascades and the plunged foam glows,  
A columned ruin lifts its sculptured marble  
Friezed with the chiselled rebeck and the rose.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

*She sings:*

Sleep, sleep, sweet sleep sleeps at the drifting  
tiller,

And in our sail the Spirit of the Rain —  
Love, love, my love, ah, bid thy heart be stiller,  
And, hark! the music of the singing main.

What flowers are those that blow their balm  
unto us,

From mouths of wild aroma, each a flame? —  
Or is it Love that breathes? sweet Love who  
drew us,

Who kissed our eyes and made us see the same?

*He speaks:*

Dreams; dreams we dream! no dream that we  
would banish!

The temple and the nightingale *are* there!  
Our love hath made them, nevermore to vanish,  
Real as yon moon, this wild-rose in your hair.

Night, night, 't is night! — and Love's own star  
's before us,

Its starred reflection in the starry stream.—  
Yes, yes, ah yes! his presence shall watch o'er  
us,

To-night, to-night, and every night we dream.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

IX

*Homeward through flowers; she speaks:*

Behold the offerings of the common hills!  
Whose lowly names have made them three times  
    dear:

One evening-primrose and an apron-full  
Of violets; and there, in multitudes,  
Dim-seen in moonlight, sweet cerulean wan,  
The bluet, making heaven of every dell  
With morn's ambrosial blue: dew-dropping  
    plumes

Of the mauve beard's-tongue; and the red-  
    freaked cups

Of blackberry-lilies all along the creek,  
Where, lulled, the freckled silence sleeps, and  
    vague

The water flows, when, at high noon, the cows  
Wade knee-deep, and the heat is honied with  
The drone of drowsy bees and dizzy flies.

How bright the moon is on that fleur-de-lis;  
Blue, streaked with crystal like a summer day:

And is it moonlight there? or is it flowers?

White violets? lilies? or a daisy bed?

And now the wind, with softest lullaby,

Swings all their cradled heads and rocks-to-  
    sleep.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Their fragrant faces and their golden eyes,  
Curtained, and frailly wimpled with the dew.

Simple suggestions of a life most fair!  
Flowers, you speak of love and untaught faith,  
Whose habitation is within the soul,  
Not of the Earth, yet for the Earth indeed. . . .

What is it halcyons my heart? makes calm,  
With calmness not of knowledge, all my soul  
This night of nights?— Is 't love? or faith? or  
both? —

The lore of all the world is less than these  
Simple suggestions of a life most fair,  
And love most sweet that I have learned to  
know!

## X

*He speaks, musingly:*

Yes, I have known its being so;  
Long ago was I seeing so —  
Beckoning on to a fairer land,  
Out of the flowers it waved its hand;  
Bidding me on to life and love,  
Life with the hope of the love thereof.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

What is the value of knowing it,  
If you are shy in showing it?—  
Need of the earth unfolds the flower,  
Dewy sweet, at the proper hour ;  
And, in the world of the human heart,  
Love is the flower's counterpart.

So when the soul is heedable,  
Then is the heart made readable.—  
I in the book of your heart have read  
Words that are truer than truth hath said :  
Measures of love, the spirit's song,  
Writ of your soul to haunt me long.

Love can hear each laudable  
Thought of the loved made audible,  
Spoken in wonder, or joy, or pain,  
And reëcho it back again :  
Ever responsive, ever awake,  
Ever replying with ache for ache.

XI

*She speaks, dreamily:*

Earth gives its flowers to us  
And heaven its stars. Indeed,  
*These* are as lips that woo us,

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

*Those* are as lights that lead,  
With love that doth pursue us,  
With hope that still doth speed.

Yet shall the flowers lie riven,  
And lips forget to kiss ;  
The stars fade out of heaven,  
And lights lead us amiss —  
As love for which we 've striven ;  
As hope that promises.

XII

*He laughs, wishing to dispel her seriousness:*

If love I have had of you, you had of me,  
Then doubtless our loving were over ;  
One would be less than the other, you see ;  
Since what you returned to your lover  
Were only his own ; and —

XIII

*She interrupts him, speaking impetuously:*

But if I lose you, if you part with me,  
I will not love you less  
Loving so much now. If there is to be  
A parting and distress,—



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

What will avail to comfort or relieve  
The soul that 's anguished most?—  
The knowledge that it once possessed, perceive,  
The love that it has lost.  
You must acknowledge, under sun and moon  
All that we feel is old;  
Let morning flutter from night's brown cocoon  
Wide wings of flaxen gold;  
The moon burst through the darkness, soaring  
o'er,  
Like some great moth and white,  
These have been seen a myriad times before  
And with renewed delight.—  
So 'tis with love;—how old yet new it is!—  
This only should we heed,—  
To once have known, to once have felt love's  
bliss,  
Is to be rich indeed.—  
Whether we win or lose, we lose or win,  
Within our gain or loss  
Some purpose lies, some end unseen of sin,  
Beyond our crown or cross.

## XIV

*Nearing her home, he speaks:*

True, true!— Perhaps it would be best  
To be that lone star in the west;



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Above the earth, within the skies,  
Yet shining here in your blue eyes.

Or, haply, better here to blow  
A flower beneath your window low ;  
That, brief of life and frail and fair,  
Finds yet a heaven in your hair.

Or well, perhaps, to be the breeze  
That sighs its soul out to the trees ;  
A voice, a breath of rain or drouth,  
That has its wild will with your mouth.

These things I long to be. I long  
To be the burthen of some song  
You love to sing ; a melody,  
Sure of sweet immortality.

## XV

*At the gate. She speaks:*

Sunday shall we ride together?  
Not the root-rough, rambling way  
Through the wood we went that day,  
In last summer's sultry weather.

Past the Methodist camp-meeting,  
Where religion helped the hymn

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Gather volume ; and a slim  
Minister, with textful greeting,

Welcomed us and still expounded.—  
From the service on the hill  
We had passed three hills and still  
Loud, though far, the singing sounded.

Nor that road through weed and berry  
Drowsy days led me and you  
To the old-time barbecue,  
Where the country-side made merry.

Dusty vehicles together ;  
Darkies with the horses near  
Tied to trees ; the atmosphere  
Redolent of bark and leather,

And of burgoo and of beef ; there  
Roasting whole within the trench ;  
Near which spread the long pine bench  
Under shading limb and leaf there.

As we went the homeward journey  
You exclaimed, " They intermix  
Pleasure there and politics,  
Love and war : our modern tourney."

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

'And the fiddles!—through the thickets,  
How they thumped the old quadrille!  
Scraping, droning on the hill,  
It was like a swarm of crickets. . . .

Neither road! The shady quiet  
Of that path by beech and birch,  
Winding to the ruined church  
Near the stream that sparkles by it.

Where the silent Sundays listen  
For the preacher — Love — we bring  
In our hearts to preach and sing  
Week-day shade to Sabbath glisten.

## XVI

*He, at parting:*

Yes, to-morrow. Early morn.—  
When the House of Day uncloses  
Portals that the stars adorn,—  
Whence Light's golden presence throws his  
Flaming lilies, burning roses,  
At the wide wood's world of wall,  
Spears of sparkle at each fall:

Then together we will ride  
To the wood's cathedral places;

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Where, like prayers, the wildflowers hide,  
Sabbath in their fairy faces ;  
Where, in truest, untaught phrases,  
Worship in each rhythmic word,  
God is praised by many a bird.

Look above you.— Pearly white,  
Star on star now crystallizes  
Out of darkness: Afric night  
Hangs them round her like devices  
Of strange jewels. Vapor rises,  
Glimmering, from each wood and dell.—  
Till to-morrow, then, farewell.

## XVII

*She tarries at the gate a moment, watching  
him disappear down the lane. He sings, and the  
sound of his singing grows fainter and fainter  
and at last dies away in the distance:*

Say, my heart, O my heart,  
These be the eves for speaking !  
There is no wight will work us spite  
Beneath the sunset's streaking.

Yes, my sweet, O my sweet,  
Now is the time for telling !

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

To walk together in starry weather  
Down lanes with elder smelling.

O my heart, yes, my heart,  
Now is the time for saying!  
When lost in dreams each wildflower seems  
And every blossom praying.

Lean, my sweet, listen, sweet,—  
No sweeter time than this is,—  
So says the rose, the moth that knows,—  
To take sweet toll in kisses.

## PART III

### LATE SUMMER

Heat lightning flickers in one cloud,  
As in a flower a firefly;  
Some rain-drops, that the rose-bush bowed,  
Jar through the leaves and dimly lie:  
Among the trees, now low, now loud,  
The whispering breezes sigh.  
The place is lone; the night is hushed;  
Upon the path a rose lies crushed.

### I

*Musing, he strolls among the quiet lanes by  
farm and field:*

Now rests the season in forgetfulness,  
Careless in beauty of maturity;  
The ripened roses round brown temples, she  
Fulfils completion in a dreamy guess.  
Now Time grants night the more and day the  
less:  
The gray decides; and brown,

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Dim golds and drabs in dulling green express  
Themselves and redden as the year goes down.  
Sadder the fields where, thrusting hoary high  
Their tasseled heads, the Lear-like corn-stocks  
die,

And, Falstaff-like, buff-bellied pumpkins lie.—  
Deeper to tenderness,  
Sadder the blue of hills that lounge along  
The lonesome west; sadder the song  
Of the wild red-bird in the leafage yellow.—  
Deeper and dreamier, ay!  
Than woods or waters, leans the languid sky  
Above lone orchards where the cider-press  
Drips and the russets mellow.

Nature grows liberal: from the beechen leaves  
The beech-nuts' burrs their little pockets thrust,  
Bulged with the copper of the nuts that rust;  
Above the grass the spendthrift spider weaves  
A web of silver for which dawn designs  
Thrice twenty rows of pearls: beneath the  
oak,

That rolls old roots in many gnarly lines,—  
The polished acorns, from their saucers broke,  
Strew oval agates.— On sonorous pines  
The far wind organs; but the forest near  
Is silent; and the blue-white smoke



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Of burning brush, beyond that field of hay,  
Hangs like a pillar in the atmosphere;  
But now it shakes — it breaks and all the  
vines

And tree-tops tremble; — see! the wind is  
here!

Billowing and boisterous; and the smiling day  
Rejoices in its clamor. Earth and sky  
Resound with glory of its majesty,  
Impetuous splendor of its rushing by.—

But on those heights the forest still is still,  
Expectant of its coming. . . . Far away  
Each anxious tree upon each waiting hill  
Tingles anticipation, as in gray

Surmise of rapture. Now the first gusts play,  
Like laughter low, about their rippling spines;  
And now the wildwood, one exultant sway,  
Shouts — and the light at each tumultuous  
pause,

The light that glooms and shines,  
Seems hands in wild applause.

How glows that garden! though the white  
mists keep

The vagabonding flowers reminded of  
Decay that comes to slay in open love,



ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

When the full moon hangs cold and night is  
deep ;

Unheeding still, their cardinal colors leap  
And laugh encircled of the scythe of death,—  
Like lovely children he prepares to reap,—  
Staying his blade a breath

To mark their beauty ere, with one last sweep,  
He lays them dead and turns away to weep.—

Let me admire,—

Before the sickle of the coming cold  
Shall mow them down,—their beauties mani-  
fold :

How like to spurts of fire

That scarlet salvia lifts its blooms, which heap  
Yon square of sunlight. And, as sparkles  
creep

Through charring parchment, up that win-  
dow's screen

The cypress dots with crimson all its green,  
The haunt of many bees.

Cascading dark those porch-built lattices,  
The nightshade bleeds with berries ; drops of  
blood,

Hanging in clusters, 'mid the blue monk's-  
hood.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

There, in that garden old,  
The bright-hued clumps of zinnias unfold  
Their formal flowers; and the marigold  
Lifts its pinched shred of orange sunset caught  
And elfed in petals. The nasturtium,  
All pungent leaved and acrid of perfume,  
Hangs up its goblin bonnet, fairy-brought  
From Gnomeland. There, predominant red,  
And arrogant, the dahlia lifts its head,  
Beside the balsam's rose-stained horns of  
honey,  
Deep in the mumuring, sunny.  
Dry wildness of the weedy flower-bed;  
Where crickets and the weed-bugs, noon and  
night,  
Shrill dirges for the flowers that soon will die,  
And flowers already dead.—  
I seem to hear the passing Summer sigh:  
A voice, that seems to weep,  
“Too soon, too soon the Beautiful passes by!  
And soon, amid her bowers,  
Will dripping Autumn mourn with all her  
flowers.”—  
If I, perchance, might peep  
Beneath those leaves of podded hollyhocks,  
That the bland wind with odorous whispers  
rocks,

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

I might behold her,— white  
And weary,— Summer, 'mid her flowers  
asleep,  
Her drowsy flowers asleep,  
The withered poppies knotted in her locks.

II

*He is reminded of another day with her:*

The hips were reddening on this rose,  
Those haws were hung with fire,  
That day we went this way that goes  
Up hills of bough and brier.  
This hooked thorn caught her gown and  
seemed  
Imploring her to linger ;  
Upon her hair a sun-ray streamed  
Like some baptizing finger.

This false-foxglove, so golden now  
With yellow blooms, like bangles,  
Was bloomless then. But yonder bough,—  
The sumac's plume entangles,—  
Was like an Indian's painted face ;  
And, like a squaw, attended  
That bush, in vague vermilion grace,  
With beads of berries splendid.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

And here we turned to mount that hill,  
Down which the wild brook tumbles ;  
And, like to-day, that day was still,  
And mild winds swayed the umbels  
Of these wild-carrots, lawny gray :  
And there, deep-dappled o'er us,  
An orchard stretched ; and in our way  
Dropped ripened fruit before us.

With muffled thud the pippin fell,  
And at our feet rolled dusty ;  
A hornet clinging to its bell,  
The pear lay bruised and rusty :  
The smell of pulpy peach and plum,  
From which the juice oozed yellow,—  
Around which bees made sleepy hum,—  
Made warm the air and mellow.

And then we came where, many-hued,  
The wet wild morning-glory  
Hung its balloons in shadows dewed  
For dawning's offertory :  
With bush and bramble, far away,  
Beneath us stretched the valley,  
Cleft of one creek, as clear as day,  
That rippled musically.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

The brown, the bronze, the green, the red  
Of weed and brier ran riot  
To walls of woods, whose pathways led  
To nooks of whispering quiet:  
Long waves of feathering goldenrod  
Ran through the gray in patches,  
As in a cloud the gold of God  
Burns, that the sunset catches.

And there, above the blue hills rolled,  
Like some far conflagration,  
The sunset, flaming marigold,  
We watched in exultation:  
Then, turning homeward, she and I  
Went in love's sweet derangement —  
How different now seem earth and sky,  
Since this undreamed estrangement.

### III

*He enters the woods. He sits down despondently:*

Here where the day is dimmest,  
And silence company,  
Some might find sympathy  
For loss, or grief the grimdest,  
In each great-hearted tree —

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Here where the day is dimmest —  
But, ah, there 's none for me!

In leaves might find communion,  
Returning sigh for sigh,  
For love the heavens deny;  
The love that yearns for union,  
Yet parts and knows not why.—  
In leaves might find communion —  
But, ah, not I, not I!

My eyes with tears are aching.—  
Why has she written me?  
And will no longer see? —  
My heart with grief is breaking,  
With grief that this should be.—  
My eyes with tears are aching —  
Why has she written me?

## IV

*He proceeds in the direction of a stream:*

Better is death than sleep,  
Better for tired eyes.—  
Why do we weep and weep  
When near us the solace lies?  
There, in that stream, that, deep,—

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Reflecting woods and skies,—  
Could comfort all our sighs.  
The mystery of things,  
Of dreams, philosophies,  
To which the mortal clings,  
*That* can unriddle these.—  
What is 't the water sings?  
What is 't it promises?—  
End to my miseries!

### V

*He seats himself on a rock and gazes steadily  
into the stream:*

And here alone I sit and it is so! —  
O vales and hills! O valley-lands and knobs!  
What cure have you for woe?  
What balm that robs  
The brain of thought, the knowledge of its  
    woe?  
None! none! ah me! that my sick heart may  
    know! —  
The wearying sameness! — yet this thing is so!  
This thing is so, and still the waters flow,  
The leaves drop slowly down; the daylight  
    throbs  
With sun and wind, and yet this thing is so!



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

There is no sympathy in heaven or earth  
For human sorrow! all we see is mirth,  
Or madness; cruelty or lust;  
Nature is heedless of her children's grief;  
Man is to her no more than is a leaf,  
That buds and has its summer, that is brief,  
Then falls, and mixes with the common dust.  
Here, at this culvert's mouth,  
The shadowy water, flowing toward the south,  
Seems deepest, stagnant-stayed.—  
What is it yonder that makes me afraid?  
Of my own self afraid?— I do not know! —  
What power draws me to the striate stream?  
What evil? or what dream?  
Me! dropping pebbles in the quiet wave,  
That echoes, strange as music in a cave,  
Hollow and thin; vibrating in the shade,  
As if 't were tears that fell, and, falling, made  
A crystal sound, a shadow wail of woe,  
Wrung from the rocks and waters there be-  
low;  
An ailing phantom that will not be laid;  
Complaining ghosts of sobs that fill my  
breast,—  
That will not forth,— and give my heart no  
rest.



ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

There, in the water, how the lank sword-grass  
Mats its long blades, each blade a crooked  
    kris,

Making a marsh; 'mid which the currents miss  
Their rock-born melodies.

But there and there, one sees

The wide-belled mallow, as within a glass,

Long-pistiled, leaning o'er

The root-contorted shore,

As if its own pink image it would kiss.

And there the tangled wild-potato vine

Lifts beakered blossoms, each a cup of wine,

As pale as moonlight is:—

No mandrake, curling convolutions up,

Loops heavier blossoms, each a conical cup

That swoons moon-nectar and a serpent's

    hiss.—

And there tall gipsy lilies, all a-sway,

Of coppery hue

Streaked as with crimson dew,

Mirror fierce faces in the deeps,

O'er which they lean, bent in inverted view.—

And where the stream around those rushes

    creeps,

The dragon-fly, in endless error, keeps

Sewing the pale-gold gown of day

With tangled stitches of a burning blue:

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Its brilliant body is a needle fine,  
A thread of azure ray,  
Black-pinioned, shuttling the shade and shine.  
But here before me where my pensive shade  
Looks up at me, the stale stream, stagnant,  
    lies,  
Deep, dark, but clear and silent; streaked with  
    hues  
Of ragweed pollen, and of spawnly ooze,  
Through which the seeping bubbles, burst-  
    ing, rise.—  
All flowers here refuse  
To grow or blossom; beauties, too, are few,  
That haunt its depths: no glittering minnows  
    braid  
Its sleepy crystal; and no gravels strew  
With colored orbs its bottom. Half afraid  
I shrink from my own eyes  
There in its cairngorm of reflected skies.—  
I know not why, and yet it seems I see —  
What is 't I see there moving stealthily?

I know not what! — But where the kildees  
    wade,  
Slim in the foamy scum,  
From that direction hither doth it come,  
Whate'er it is, that makes my soul afraid.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Nearer it draws to where those low rocks ail,  
Warm rocks, on which some water-snake hath  
    clomb,

Basking its spotted body, coiling numb,  
Brown in the brindled shade.—

At first it seemed a prism on the grail,  
A bubble's prism, like the shadow made  
Of water-striders; then a trail,  
An angled sparkle in a webby veil  
Of duckweed, green as verdigris, it swayed  
Frog-like through deeps, to crouch, a flaccid,  
    pale,

Squat bulk below. . . .

I gaze, and though I would, I can not go.

Reflected trees and skies,

And breeze-blown clouds that lounge at sunny  
    loss,

Seem in its stolid eyes,

Its fishy gaze, that holds me in strange wise.

Ghoul-like it seems to rise,

And now to sink; its eldritch features fail,

Then come again in rhythmic waviness,

With arms like tentacles that seem to press

Thro' weed and water: limbs that writhe and  
    fade,

And clench, and twist, and toss,

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Root-like and gnarled, and cross and inter-  
cross

Through flabby hair of smoky moss.

How horrible to see this thing at night!  
Or when the sunset slants its brimstone light  
Above the pool! when, blue, in phantom flight,  
The will-o'-the-wisps, perhaps, above it reel.  
Then, haply, would it rise, a rotting green,  
Up, up, and gather me with arms of steel,  
Soft steel, and drag me where the wave is  
white,

Beneath that boulder brown, that plants a keel  
Against the ripple there, a shoulder lean.—  
No, no! I must away before 't is night!  
Before the fireflies dot  
The dark with sulphur blurrings bright!  
Before, upon that height,  
The white wild-carrots vanish from the sight;  
And boneset blossoms, tossing there in clusters,  
Fade to a ridge, a streak of ghostly lustres:  
And, in that sunlit spot,  
Yon cedar tree is not!  
But a huge cap instead, that, half-asleep,  
Some giant dropped while driving home his  
sheep:  
And 'mid those fallow browns

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

And russet grays, the fragrant peak  
Of yonder timothy stack,  
Is not a stack, but something hideous, black,  
That threatens and, grotesquely demon,  
frowns.

I must away from here.—  
Already dusk draws near.  
The owlet's dolorous hoot  
Sounds quavering as a gnome's wild flute;  
The toad, within the wet,  
Begins to tune its goblin flageolet:  
The slow sun sinks behind  
Those hills; and, like a withered cheek  
Of Quaker quiet, sorrow-burdened, there  
The spectral moon 's defined  
Above those trees,— as in a wild-beast's lair  
A golden woman, dead, with golden hair,—  
Above that mass of fox-grape vines  
That, like a wrecked apprentice, roofs those  
pines.—

Oh, I am faint and weak.—  
I must away, away!  
Before the close of day!—  
Already at my back  
I feel the woods grow black;  
And sense the evening wind,

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Guttural and gaunt and blind,  
Whining behind me like an unseen wolf.  
Deeper now seems the gulf  
Into whose deeps I gaze ;  
From which, with madness and amaze,  
*That* seems to rise, the horror there,  
With webby hands and mossy eyes and hair.—  
Oh, will it pierce,  
With all its feelers fierce,  
Beyond the pool's unhallowed water-streak?—

Yes; I must go, must go!  
Must leave this ghastly creek,  
This place of hideous fear!  
For everywhere I hear  
A dripping footstep near,  
A voice, like water, gurgling at my ear,  
Saying, "Come to me! come and rest below!  
Sleep and forget her and with her thy woe!"—  
I try to fly.— I can not.— Yes, and no!—  
What madness holds me! — God! that obscene,  
    slow,  
Sure mastering chimera there,  
Perhaps, has fastened round my neck,  
Or in my matted hair,  
Some horrible feeler, dire, invisible!—  
Off, off! thou hoop of Hell!



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Thou devil's coil! . . .  
Back, back into thy cesspool! Off of me!—  
See, how the waters thrash and boil!  
At last! at last! thank God! my soul is free!  
My mind is freed of that vile mesmerism  
That drew me to — what end? my God! what  
end?

Haply 'twas merely fancy, that strange fiend:  
My fancy, and a prism  
Of sunset in the stream, a firefly fleck,  
That now, a lamp of golden fairy oil,  
Lights me my homeward way, the way I flee.  
No more I stare, magnetic-fixed; nor reck,  
Nor little care to foil  
The madness there! the murder there! that  
slips  
Back to its lair of slime, that seeps and drips,  
That sought in vain to fasten on my lips.

## VI

*Taking a letter from his pocket, he hurries  
away:*

What can it mean for me? what have I done  
to her?  
I, in our season of love as a sun to her:  
She, all my heaven of silvery, numberless



ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Stars and its moon, shining golden and slumberless ;

Who on my life, that was thorny and lowery,  
Came—and made beautiful; smiled—and  
made flowery.

She, to my heart and my soul a divinity!

She, who—I dreamed!—seemed my spirit-  
affinity!—

What have I done to her? what have I done?

What can she mean by this?—what have I  
said to her?

I, who have idolized, worshiped, and pled to  
her;

Sung with her, laughed with her, sorrowed  
and sighed for her;

Lived for her only; and gladly had died for  
her!

See! she has written me thus! she has written  
me—

Sooner would dagger or serpent had smitten  
me!—

Would you had shriveled ere ever you 'd read  
of it,

Eyes, that are wide to the grief and the dread  
of it!—

What have I said to her? what have I said?

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

What shall I make of it? I who am trembling,  
Fearful of losing.— A moth, the dissembling  
Flame of a taper attracts with its guttering,  
Flattering on till its body lies fluttering,  
Scorched in the summer night.— Foolish, im-  
portunate,

Why didst thou quit the cool flowers, unfortu-  
nate!—

Such has she been to me, making me such to  
her!—

Slaying me, saying I never was much to  
her!—

What shall I make of it? what can I make?

Love, in thy everglades, moaning and motion-  
less,

Look, I have fallen; the evil is potionless:

I, with no thought but the day that did lock  
us in,

Set naked feet 'mid the cottonmouth-moccasin,  
Under the roses, the Cherokee, eying me:—

I,— in the heav'n with the egrets that, flying  
me,

Winging like blooms from magnolias, rose  
slenderly,

Pearl and pale pink: where the mocking-bird  
tenderly

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Sang, making vistas of mosses melodious,  
Wandered,—unheeding my steps,—in the  
odious

Ooze and the venom. I followed the wiry  
Violet curve of thy star falling fiery —  
So was I lost in night! thus am undone!

Have I not told to her — living alone for  
her —

Purposed unfoldments of deeds I had sown  
for her

Here in the soil of my soul? their variety  
Endless — and ever she answered with piety.  
See! it has come to this — all the tale's suavity  
At the ninth chapter grows hateful with grav-  
ity;

Cruel as death all our beautiful history —  
Close it! — the final is more than a mystery.—  
Yes; I will go to her; yes; and will speak.

## VII

*After the final meeting; the day following:*

I seem to see her still; to see  
That blue-hung room. Her perfume comes  
From lavender folds, draped dreamily,—

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

A-blossom with brocaded blooms,—  
Some stuff of orient looms.

I seem to hear her speak; and back,  
Where sleeps the sun on books and piles  
Of porcelain and bric-à-brac,  
A tall clock ticks above the tiles,  
Where Love's framed profile smiles.

I hear her say, "Ah, had I known!—  
I suffer too for what has been—  
For what must be."—A wild ache shone  
In her sad gaze that seemed to lean  
On something far, unseen.

And as in sleep my own self seems  
Outside my suffering self.—I flush  
'Twixt facts and undetermined dreams,  
And stand, as silent as that hush  
Of lilac light and plush.

Smiling, but suffering, I feel,  
Beneath that face, so sweet and sad,  
In those pale temples, thoughts, like steel,  
Pierce burningly. . . . I had gone mad  
Had I once thought her glad.—

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Unconsciously, with eyes that yearn  
To look beyond the present far,  
For one faint future hope, I turn—  
There, in her garden, one fierce star,  
A cactus, red as war,

Vermilion as a storm-sunk sun,  
Flames torrid splendor,—brings to life  
A sunset; memory of one  
Rich eve she said she 'd be my wife;  
An eve with beauty rife.

Again amid the heavy hues,  
Soft crimson, seal, and satiny gold  
Of flowers there, I stood 'mid dews  
With her; deep in her garden old,  
While sunset's flame unrolled.

And now! . . . It can not be! and yet  
To see 'tis so!—In heart and brain  
To know 'tis so!—While, warm and wet,  
I seem to smell those scents again,  
Verbena scents and rain.

I turn, in hope she 'll bid me stay.  
Again her cameo beauty mark  
Set in that smile.—She turns away.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

No farewell! no regret! no spark  
Of hope to cheer the dark!

That sepia sketch — conceive it so —  
A jaunty head with mouth and eyes  
Tragic beneath a rose-chapeau,  
Silk-masked, unmasking — it denies  
The look we half surmise,

We know is there. 'Tis thus we read  
The true beneath the false; perceive  
The ache beneath the smile.— Indeed!  
Whose soul unmask? . . . Not mine!—  
    I grieve,—  
Oh God! — but laugh and leave. . . .

## VIII

*He walks aimlessly on:*

Beyond those knotted apple-trees,  
That partly hide the old brick barn,  
Its tattered arms and tattered knees  
A scarecrow tosses to the breeze  
Among the shocks of corn.

My heart is gray as is the day,  
In which the rain-wind drearily

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Makes all the rusty branches sway,  
And in the hollows, by each way,  
The dead leaves rustle wearily.

And soon we 'll hear the far wild-geese  
Honk in frost-bitten heavens under  
Arcturus; when my walks must cease,  
And by the fireside's log-heaped peace.  
I 'll sit and nod and ponder.—

When every fall of this loud creek  
Is silent with the frost; and tented  
Brown acres of the corn stretch bleak  
And shaggy with the snows, that streak  
The hillsides, hollow-dented;

I 'll sit and dream of that glad morn  
We met by banks with elder snowing;  
That dusk we strolled through flower and  
thorn,  
By tasseled meads of cane and corn,  
To where the stream was flowing.

Again I 'll oar our boat among  
The dripping lilies of the river,  
To reach her hat, the grape-vine long  
Struck in the stream; we 'll row to song;  
And then . . . I 'll wake and shiver.



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Why is it that my mind reverts  
To that sweet past? while full of parting  
The present is: so full of hurts  
And heartache, that what it asserts  
Adds only to the smarting.

How often shall I sit and think  
Of that sweet past! through lowered lashes  
What-might-have-been trace link by link;  
Then watch it gradually sink  
And crumble into ashes.

Outside I 'll hear the sad wind weep  
Like some lone spirit, grieved, forsaken;  
Then, shuddering, to bed will creep,  
To lie awake, or, haply, sleep  
A sleep by visions shaken.

By visions of the past, that draw  
The present in a hue that 's wanting;  
A scarecrow thing of sticks and straw,—  
Like that just now I, passing, saw,—  
Its empty tatters flaunting.

## IX

*He compares the present day with a past one:*

The sun a splintered splendor was  
In trees, whose waving branches blurred

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Its disc, that day we went together,  
'Mid wild-bee hum and whirring buzz  
Of locusts, through the fields that purred  
With summer in the perfect weather.

So sweet it was to look, and lean  
To her young face and feel the light  
Of eyes that met my own unsaddened!  
Her laugh that left lips more serene;  
Her speech that blossomed like the white  
Life-everlasting there and gladdened.

Maturing summer, you were fraught  
With more of beauty than than now  
Parades the pageant of September:  
Where What-is-now contrasts in thought  
With What-was-once, that bloom and bough  
Can only help me to remember.

## X

*He pauses before a deserted house by the way-  
side:*

Through ironweeds and roses  
And scraggy beech and oak,  
Old porches it discloses  
Above the weeds and roses  
The drizzling raindrops soak.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Neglected walks a-tangle  
With dodder-strangled grass;  
And every mildewed angle  
Heaped with dead leaves that spangle,  
The paths that round it pass.

The creatures there that bury  
Or hide within its rooms  
And spidered closets — very  
Dim with old webs — will hurry  
Out when the evening glooms.

Owls roost on beam and basement;  
Bats haunt its hearth and porch;  
And, by each ruined casement,  
Flits, in the moon's enlacement,  
The wisp, like some wild torch.

There is a sense of frost here,  
And winds that sigh always  
Of something that was lost here,  
Long, long ago was lost here,  
But what, they can not say.

My foot, perhaps, would startle  
Some owl that mopes within;  
Some bat above its portal,

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

That frights the daring mortal,  
And guards its cellared sin.

The creaking road winds by it  
This side the dusty toll.—  
Why do I stop to eye it?  
My heart can not deny it—  
The house is like my soul.

XI

*'He proceeds on his way:*

I bear a burden — look not therein!  
Naught will you find save sorrow and sin;  
Sorrow and sin that wend with me  
Wherever I go. And misery,  
A gaunt companion, my wretched bride,  
Goes ever with me, side by side.

Sick of myself and all the earth,  
I ask my soul now: Is life worth  
The little pleasure that we gain  
For all our sorrow and our pain?  
The love, to which we gave our best,  
That turns a mockery and a jest?

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

XII

*Among the twilight fields:*

The things we love, the loveliest things we  
cherish,  
Pass from us soonest, vanish utterly.  
Dust are our deeds, and dust our dreams that  
perish  
Ere we can say *They be!*

I have loved man and learned we are not broth-  
ers —

Within myself, perhaps, may lie the cause; —  
Then set one woman high above all others,  
And found her full of flaws.

Made unseen stars my keblahs of devotion;  
Aspired to knowledge, and remained a clod:  
With heart and soul, led on by blind emotion,  
The way to failure trod.

Chance, say, or fate, that works through good  
and evil;  
Or destiny, that nothing may retard,  
That to some end, above life's empty level,  
Perhaps withholds reward.

## PART IV.

### LATE AUTUMN

They who die young are blest.—  
Should we not envy such?—  
They are Earth's happiest,  
God-loved and favored much!—  
They who die young are blest.

#### I

*Sick and sad, propped with pillows, she sits at  
her window:*

When the dog's-tooth violet comes  
With April showers,  
And the wild-bee haunts and hums  
About the flowers,  
We shall never wend as when  
Love laughed leading us from men  
Over violet vale and glen,  
Where the red-bird sang for hours,  
And we heard the flicker drum.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Now November heavens are gray:

Autumn kills

Every joy — like leaves of May

In the rills.—

Here I sit and lean and listen

To a voice that has arisen

In my heart; with eyes that glisten

Gazing at the happy hills,

Fading dark blue, far away.

## II

*She looks down upon the dying garden:*

There rank death clutches at the flowers  
And drags them down and stamps in earth.

At morn the thin, malignant hours,

Shrill-voiced, among the wind-torn bowers,

Clamor a bitter mirth —

Or is it heartbreak that, forlorn,

Would so conceal itself in scorn.

At noon the weak, white sunlight crawls,

Like feeble age, once beautiful,

From mildewed walks to mildewed walls,

Down which the oozing moisture falls

Upon the cold toadstool: —

Faint on the leaves it drips and creeps —

Or is it tears of love who weeps?



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

At night a misty blur of moon  
Slips through the trees,— pale as a face  
Of melancholy marble hewn;—  
And, like the phantom of some tune,  
Winds whisper in the place—  
Or is it love come back again,  
Seeking its perished joy in vain?

### III

*She muses upon the past:*

When, in her cloudy chiton,  
Spring freed the frozen rills,  
And walked in rainbowed light on  
The blossom-blowing hills;  
Beyond the world's horizon,  
That no such glory lies on,  
And no such hues bedizen,  
Love led us far from ills.

When Summer came, a sickle  
Stuck in her sheaf of beams,  
And let the honey trickle  
From out her bee-hives' seams;  
Within the violet-blotted  
Sweet book to us allotted,—  
Whose lines are flower-dotted,—  
Love read us many dreams.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Then Autumn came,— a liar,  
A fair-faced heretic; —  
In gypsy garb of fire,  
Throned on a harvest rick.—  
Our lives, that fate had thwarted,  
Stood pale and broken-hearted,—  
Though smiling when we parted,—  
Where love to death lay sick.

Now is the Winter waited,  
The tyrant hoar and old,  
With death and hunger mated,  
Who counts his crimes like gold.—  
Once more, before forever  
We part — once more, then never! —  
Once more before we sever,  
Must I his face behold!

## IV

*She takes up a book and reads:*

What little things are those  
That hold our happiness!  
A smile, a glance; a rose  
Dropped from her hair or dress;  
A word, a look, a touch,—  
These are so much, so much.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

An air we can't forget;  
A sunset's gold that gleams;  
A spray of mignonette,  
Will fill the soul with dreams,  
More than all history says,  
Or romance of old days.

For, of the human heart,  
Not brain, is memory;  
These things it makes a part  
Of its own entity;  
The joys, the pains whereof  
Are the very food of love.

V

*She lays down the book, and sits musing:*

How true! how true! — but words are weak,  
In sympathy they give the soul,  
To music — music, that can speak  
All the heart's pain and dole;  
All that the sad heart treasures most  
Of love that 's lost, of love that 's lost.—  
I would not hear sweet music now.  
My heart would break to hear it now.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

So weary am I, and so fain  
To see his face, to feel his kiss  
Thrill rapture through my soul again! —  
There is no hell like this! —  
Ah, God! my God, were it not best  
To give me rest, to give me rest! —  
Come, death, and breathe upon my brow.  
Sweet death, come kiss my mouth and brow.

VI

*She writes to her lover to come to her:*

Dead lie the dreams we cherished,  
The dreams we loved so well;  
Like forest leaves they perished,  
Like autumn leaves they fell.  
Alas! that dreams so soon should pass!  
Alas! alas!

The stream lies bleak and arid,  
That once went singing on;  
The flowers once that varied  
Its banks are dead and gone:  
Where these were once are thorns and thirst —  
The place is curst.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Come to me. I am lonely.  
Forget all that occurred.  
Come to me; if for only  
One last, sad, parting word:  
For one last word. Then let the pall  
Fall over all.

The day and hour are suited  
For what I 'd say to you  
Of love that I uprooted.—  
But I have suffered, too! —  
Come to me; I would say good-by  
Before I die.

## VII

*The wind rises; the trees are agitated:*

Woods that beat the wind with frantic  
Gestures and sow darkly round  
Acorns gnarled and leaves that antic  
Wildly on the rustling ground,

Is it tragic grief that saddens  
Through your souls this autumn day?  
Or the joy of death that gladdens  
In exultance of decay?

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Arrogant you lift defiant  
Boughs against the moaning blast,  
That, like some invisible giant,  
Wrapped in tumult, thunders past.

Is it that in such insurgent  
Fury, tossed from tree to tree,  
You would quench the fiercely urgent  
Pangs of some old memory?

As in toil and violent action,  
That still help them to forget,  
Mortals drown the dark distraction  
And insistence of regret.

VIII

*She sits musing in the gathering twilight:*

Last night I slept till midnight; then woke, and,  
far away,  
A cock crowed; lonely and distant I heard a  
watch-dog bay:  
But lonelier yet the tedious old clock ticked on  
to'ards day.

And what a day!—remember those morns of  
summer and spring,

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

That bound our lives together! each morn a  
wedding-ring  
Of dew, aroma, and sparkle, and buds and birds  
a-wing.

Clear morns, when I strolled my garden, await-  
ing him, the rose  
Expected too, with blushes,— the Giant-of-battle  
that grows  
A bank of radiance and fragrance, and the  
Maréchal-Niel that glows.

Not in vain did I wait, departed summer, amid  
your phlox!  
'Mid the powdery crystal and crimson of your  
hollow hollyhocks;  
Your fairy-bells and poppies, and the bee that  
in them rocks.

Cool-clad 'mid the pendulous purple of the morn-  
ing-glory vine,  
By the jewel-mine of the pansies and the snap-  
dragons in line,  
I waited, and there he met me whose heart was  
one with mine.

Around us bloomed my mealy-white dusty-mil-  
lers gay,



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

My lady-slippers, bashful of butterfly and ray;  
My gillyflowers, spicy, each one, as a day of  
May.

Ah me! when I think of the handfuls of little  
gold coins, amass,  
My bachelor's-buttons scattered over the garden  
grass,  
The marigolds that boasted their bits of burning  
brass;

More bitter I feel the autumn tighten on spirit  
and heart;  
And regret those days, remembered as lost, that  
stand apart,  
A chapter holy and sacred, I read with eyes that  
smart.

How warm was the breath of the garden when  
he met me there that day!  
How the burnished beetle and humming-bird  
flew past us, each a ray! —  
The memory of those meetings still bears me far  
away:

Again to the woods a-trysting by the water-mill  
I steal,

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Where the lilies tumble together, the madcap  
wind at heel;  
And meet him among the flowers, the rocks and  
the moss conceal:

Or the wild-cat gray of the meadows that the  
black-eyed Susans dot,  
Fawn-eyed and leopard-yellow, that tangle a  
tawny spot  
Of languid panther beauty that dozes, summer-  
hot. . . .

Ah! back again in the present! with the winds  
that pinch and twist  
The leaves in their peevish passion, and whirl  
wherever they list;  
With the autumn, hoary and nipping, whose  
mausolean mist

Entombs the sun and the daylight: each morn-  
ing shaggy with fog,  
That fits gray wigs on the cedars, and furs with  
frost each log;  
That velvets white the meadows, and marbles  
brook and bog.—

Alone at dawn — indifferent: alone at eve — I  
sigh:

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

And wait, like the wind complaining: complain  
and know not why:  
But ailing and longing and pining because I can  
not die.

How dull is that sunset! dreary and cold, and  
hard and dead!  
The ghost of those last August that, mulberry-  
rich and red,  
The wine of God's own vintage, poured purple  
overhead.

But now I sit with the sighing dead dreams of a  
dying year;  
Like the fallen leaves and the acorns, am worth-  
less and feel as sere,  
With a soul that 's sick of the body, whose heart  
is one big tear.

As I stare from my window the daylight, like a  
bravo, its cloak puts on.  
The moon, like a cautious lanthorn, glitters, and  
then is gone.—  
Will he come to-night? will he answer? — Ah,  
God! would it were dawn!

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

IX

*He enters. Taking her in his arms he speaks:*

They said you were dying.—  
You shall not die! . . .  
Why are you crying?  
Why do you sigh?—  
Cease that sad sighing!—  
Love, it is I.

All is forgiven!—  
Love is not poor;  
Though he was driven  
Once from your door,  
Back he has striven,  
To part nevermore!

Will you remember  
When I forget  
Words, each an ember,  
That you regret,  
Now in November,  
Now we have met?

What if love wept once!  
What though you knew!  
What if he crept once

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Pleading to you!—  
*He* never slept once,  
Nor was untrue.

Often forgetful,  
Love may forget;  
Froward and fretful,  
Dear, he will fret;  
Ever regretful,  
He will regret.

Life is completer  
Through his control;  
Lifted, made sweeter,  
Filled and made whole,  
Hearing love's metre  
Sing in the soul.

Flesh may not hear it,  
Being impure;  
But in the spirit,  
There we are sure;  
There we come near it,  
There we endure.

So when to-morrow  
Ceases and we  
Quit this we borrow,

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Mortality,  
What chastens sorrow  
So it may see? —

(When friends are sighing  
Round one, and one  
Nearer is lying,  
Nearer the sun,  
When one is dying  
And all is done?

When there is weeping,  
Weary and deep,—  
God's be the keeping  
Of those who weep! —  
When our loved, sleeping,  
Sleep their long sleep? —)

Love! that is dearer  
Than we 're aware;  
Bringing us nearer,  
Nearer than prayer;  
Being the mirror  
That our souls share.

Still you are weeping!  
Why do you weep? —  
Are tears in keeping

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

With joy so deep?  
Gladness so sweeping?  
Hearts so in keep?

Speak to me, dearest!  
Say it is true!  
That I am nearest,  
Dearest to you.—  
Smile, with those clearest  
Eyes of gray blue.

X

*She smiles on him through her tears; holding  
his hand she speaks:*

They did not say I could not live beyond this  
weary night,  
But now I know that I shall die before the morn-  
ing's light.  
How weak I am! — but you 'll forgive me when  
I tell you how  
I loved you — love you; and the pain it is to  
leave you now?

We could not wed! — Alas! the flesh, that clothes  
the soul of me,  
Ordained at birth a sacrifice to this heredity,



ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Denied, forbade.— Ah, you have seen the bright  
spots in my cheeks  
Glow hectic, as before comes night the west  
burns blood-red streaks?

Consumption.—“ But I promised you my hand? ”  
— a thing forlorn  
Of life; diseased! — O God! — and so, far better  
so, forsworn! —  
Oh, I was jealous of your love. But think: if I  
had died  
Ere babe of mine had come to be a solace at your  
side!

Had it been little then — your grief, when  
Heaven had made us one  
In everything that 's good on earth and then the  
good undone?  
No! no! and had I had a child — what grief and  
agony  
To know *that* blight born in him, too, against all  
help of me!

Just when we cherished him the most, and youth-  
ful, sunny pride  
Sat on his curly front, to see him die ere we had  
died.—

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Whose fault? — Ah, God! — not mine! but his,  
that ancestor who gave  
Escutcheon to our sorrowful house, a Death's-  
head and a Grave.

Beneath the pomp of those grim arms we live and  
may not move;  
Nor faith, nor truth, nor wealth avail to hurl  
them down, nor love!  
How could I tell you this? — not then! when all  
the world was spun  
Of morning colors for our love to walk and dance  
upon.

I could not tell you how disease hid here a viper  
germ,  
Precedence slowly claiming and so slowly fixing  
firm.  
And when I broke my plighted troth and would  
not tell you why,  
I loved you, thinking, “time enough when I have  
come to die.”

Draw off my rings and let my hands rest so  
. . . the wretched cough  
Will interrupt my feeble speech and will not be  
put off . . .

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Ah, anyhow, my anodyne is this: to know that  
you

Are near and love me!— Kiss me now, as you  
were wont to do.

And tell me you forgive me all; and say you will  
forget

The sorrow of that breaking-off, the fever and  
the fret.—

Now set those roses near me here, and tell me  
death 's a lie —

Once it was hard for me to live . . . now it  
is hard to die.

## PART V

### WINTER

We, whom God sets a task,  
Striving, who ne'er attain,  
We are the curst! — who ask  
Death, and still ask in vain.  
We, whom God sets a task.

### I

*In the silence of his room. After many days:*

All, all are shadows. All must pass  
As writing in the sand or sea:  
Reflections in a looking-glass  
Are not less permanent than we.

The days that mold us — what are they?  
That break us on their whirling wheel?  
What but the potters! we the clay  
They fashion and yet leave unreal.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Linked through the ages, one and all,  
In long anthropomorphous chain,  
The human and the animal  
Inseparably must remain.

Within us still the monstrous shape  
That shrieked in air and howled in slime,  
What are we? — partly man and ape —  
The tools of fate, the toys of time!

## II

*The bitterness of his bereavement speaks in  
him:*

Vased in her bedroom window, white  
As her glad girlhood, never lost,  
I smelt the roses — and the night  
Outside was fog and frost.

What though I claimed her dying there!  
God nor one angel understood  
Nor cared, who from sweet feet to hair  
Had changed to snow her blood.

She had been mine so long, so long!  
Our harp of life was one in word —  
Why did death thrust his hand among  
The chords and break one chord!

### ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

What lily lilies than her face!  
More virgin than her lips I kissed!  
When morn, like God, with gold and grace,  
Broke massed in mist! broke massed in mist!

### III

*'Her dead face seems to rise up before him:*

The face that I said farewell to,  
Pillowed a flower on flowers,  
Comes back, with its eyes to tell to  
My soul what my heart should quell to  
Calm, that is mine at hours.

Dear, is your soul still daggered  
There by something amiss?  
Love — is *he* ever laggard?  
Hope — is *her* face still haggard?  
Tell me what it is!

You, who are done with to-morrow!  
Done with these worldly skies!  
Done with our pain and sorrow!  
Done with the griefs we borrow!  
Joys that are born of sighs!

Must we say "gone forever?"  
Or will it all come true?

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Does mine touch your thought ever?  
And, over the doubts that sever,  
Rise to the fact that 's you?

Love, in my flesh so fearful,  
Medicine me this pain! —  
Love, with the eyes so tearful,  
How can my soul be cheerful,  
Seeing its joy is slain! . . .

Gone! —'t was only a vision! —  
Gone! like a thought, a gleam! —  
Such to our indecision  
Utter no empty mission; —  
Truth is in all we dream!

## IV

*He sinks into deep thought:*

There are shadows that compel us,  
There are powers that control:  
More than substance these can tell us,  
Speaking to the human soul.

In the moonlight, when it glistened  
On my window, white of glow,  
Once I woke and, leaning, listened  
To a voice that sang below.



ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Full of gladness, full of yearning,  
Strange with dreamy melody,  
Like a bird whose heart was burning,  
Wildly sweet it sang to me.

I arose; and by the starlight,  
Pale beneath the summer sky,  
There I saw it, full of far light,—  
My dead joy go singing by.

In the darkness, when the glimmer  
Of the storm was on the pane,  
Once I sat and heard a dimmer  
Voice lamenting in the rain.

Full of parting and unspoken  
Heartbreak, faint with agony,  
Like a bird whose heart was broken,  
Moaning low it cried to me.

I arose; and in the darkness,  
Wan beneath the winter sky,  
There I saw it, cold to starkness,—  
My dead love go wailing by.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

V

*He arouses from his abstraction, buries his  
face in his hands and thinks:*

So long it seems since last I saw her face,  
So long ago it seems,  
Like some sad soul in unconjectured space,  
Still seeking happiness through perished grace  
And unrealities, a little while  
Illusions lead me, ending in the smile  
Of Death, triumphant in a thorny place,  
Among Love's ruined roses and dead dreams.

Since she is gone, no more I feel the light,—  
Since she has left all dark,—  
Cleave, with its revelation, all the night.  
I wander blindly, on a crumbling height,  
Among the fragments and the wrecks and stones  
Of Life, where Hope, amid Life's skulls and  
bones,  
With weary face, disheartened, wild and white,  
Trims her pale lamp with its expiring spark.

Now she is dead, the Soul, naught can o'erawe,—  
Now she is gone from me,—  
Questions God's justice that seems full of flaw,  
As is His world, where misery is law,

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

And all men fools, too willing to be slaves.—  
My House of Faith, built up on dust of graves,  
The wind of doubt sweeps down as made of  
    straw,  
And all is night and I no longer see.

## VI

*He looks from his window toward the sombre  
west:*

Ridged and bleak the gray, forsaken  
Twilight at the night has guessed;  
And no star of dusk has taken  
Flame unshaken in the west.

All day long the woodlands, dying,  
Moaned, and drippings as of grief  
Rained from barren boughs with sighing  
Death of flying twig and leaf.

Ah, to live a life unbroken  
Of the flings and scorns of fate!  
Like that tree, with branches oaken,  
Strength's unspoken intimate.—

Who can say that we have never  
Lived the life of plants and trees?—  
Not so wide the lines that sever  
Us forever here from these.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Colors, odors, that are cherished,  
Haply hint we once were flowers :  
Memory alone has perished  
In this garnished world that's ours.

Music,— that all things expresses,  
All for which we 've sought and sinned,—  
Haply in our treey tresses  
Once was guesses of the wind.

But I dream! — The dusk, dark braiding  
Locks that lack both moon and star,  
Deepens ; and, the darkness aiding,  
Earth seems fading, faint and far.

And within me doubt keeps saying —  
“ What is wrong, and what is right?  
Hear the cursing ! hear the praying !  
All are straying on in night.”

## VII

*He turns from the window, takes up a book,  
and reads:*

The soul, like Earth, hath silences  
Which speak not, yet are heard :  
The voices mute of memories  
Are louder than a word.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Theirs is a speech which is not speech ;  
A language that is bound  
To soul-vibrations, vague, that reach  
Deeper than any sound.

No words are theirs. They speak through things,  
A visible utterance  
Of thoughts — like those some sunset brings,  
Or withered rose, perchance.

The heavens that once, in purple and flame,  
Spake to two hearts as one,  
In after years may speak the same  
To one sad heart alone.

Through it the vanished face and eyes  
Of her, the sweet and fair,  
Of her the lost, again shall rise  
To comfort his despair.

And so the love that led him long  
From golden scene to scene,  
Within the sunset is a tongue  
That speaks of what has been.—

How loud it speaks of that dead day,  
The rose whose bloom is fled!

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Of her who died ; who, clasped in clay,  
Lies numbered with the dead.

The dead are dead ; with them 't is well  
Within their narrow room ; —  
No memories haunt their hearts who dwell  
Within the grave and tomb.

But what of those — the dead who live !  
The living dead, whose lot  
Is still to love — ah, God forgive ! —  
To live and love, forgot !

## VIII

*The storm is heard sounding wildly outside  
with wind and hail:*

The night is wild with rain and sleet ;  
Each loose-warped casement claps or groans :  
I hear the plangent woodland beat  
The tempest with long blatant moans,  
Like one who fears defeat.

And sitting here beyond the storm,  
Alone within the lonely house,  
It seems that some mesmeric charm  
Holds all things — even the gnawing mouse  
Has ceased its faint alarm.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

And in the silence, stolen o'er  
Familiar objects, lo, I fear —  
I fear — that, opening yon door,  
I 'll find my dead self standing near,  
With face that once I wore.

The stairway creaks with ghostly gusts :  
The flue moans ; all its gorgon throat  
One wail of winds : ancestral dusts,—  
Which yonder Indian war-gear coat  
With gray, whose quiver rusts,—

Are shaken down.— Or, can it be,  
That he who wore it in the dance,  
Or battle, now fills shadowy  
Its wampumed skins? and shakes his lance  
And spectral plume at me? —

Mere fancy! — Yet those curtains toss  
Mysteriously as if some dark  
Hand moved them.— And I would not cross  
The shadow there, that hearthstone's spark,  
A glow-worm sunk in moss.

Outside 't were better! — Yes, I yearn  
To walk the waste where sway and dip  
Deep, dark December boughs — where burn  
Some late last leaves, that drip and drip  
No matter where you turn.



## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

Where sodden soil, you scarce have trod,  
Fills oozy footprints — but the blind  
Night there, though like the frown of God,  
Presents no fancies to the mind,  
Like those that have o'erawed.—

The months I count: how long it seems  
Since summer! summer, when with her,  
When on her porch, in rainy gleams  
We watched the flickering lightning stir  
In heavens gray as dreams.

When all the west, a sheet of gold,  
Flared,— like some Titan's opened forge,—  
With storm; revealing, manifold,  
Vast peaks of clouds with crag and gorge,  
Where thunder-torrents rolled.

Then came the wind: again, again  
Storm lit the instant earth — and how  
The forest rang with roaring rain! —  
We could not read — where is it now? —  
That tale of Charlemagne:

That old romance! that tale, which we  
Were reading; till we heard the plunge  
Of distant thunder sullenly,  
And left to watch the lightning lunge,  
And storm-winds toss each tree.

## ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

That summer! — How it built us there,  
Of sorcery and necromance,  
A mental-world, where all was fair;  
A land like one great pearl, a-trance  
With liliated light and air.

Where every flower was a thought;  
And every bird, a melody;  
And every fragrance, zephyr brought,  
Was but the rainbowed drapery  
Of some sweet dream long sought.

'Mid which we reared our heart's high home,  
Fair on the hills; with terraces,  
Vine-hung and wooded, o'er the foam  
Of undiscovered fairy seas,  
All violet in the gloam.

O land of shadows! shadow-home,  
Within my world of memories!  
Around whose ruins sweeps the foam  
Of sorrow's immemorial seas,  
To whose dark shores I come!

How long in your wrecked halls, alone  
With ghosts of joys must I remain?  
Between the unknown and the known,  
Still hearing through the wind and rain  
My lost love moan and moan.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

IX

*He sits by the slowly dying fire. The storm is heard with increased violence:*

Wild weather. The lash of the sleet  
On the gusty casement, clapping —  
The sound of the storm like a sheet  
My soul and senses wrapping.

Wild weather. And how is she,  
Now the rush of the rain falls serried  
There on the turf and the tree  
Of the place where she is buried?

Wild weather. How black and deep  
Is the night where the mad winds scurry! —  
Do I sleep? do I dream in my sleep  
That I hear her footsteps hurry?

Hither they come like flowers —  
And I see her raiment glisten,  
Like the robes of one of the hours  
Where the stars to the angels listen.

Before me, behold, how she stands!  
With lips high thoughts have weighted,  
With testifying hands,  
And eyes with glory sated.

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

I have spoken and I have kneeled :  
I have kissed her feet in wonder —  
But, lo! her lips — they are sealed,  
God-sealed, and will not sunder.

Though I sob, “ Your stay was long!  
You are come,— but your feet were laggard! —  
With mansuetude and song  
For the heart your death has daggered.”

Never a word replies,  
Never, to all my weeping —  
Only a sound of sighs,  
And of raiment past me sweeping. . . .

I wake ; and a clock tolls three —  
And the night and the storm beat serried  
There on the turf and the tree  
Of the place where she is buried.

## RED LEAVES AND ROSES

### I

And he had lived such loveless years  
That suffering had made him wise;  
And she had known no graver tears  
Than those of girlhood's eyes.

And he, perhaps, had loved before —  
One, who had wedded, or had died; —  
So life to him had been but poor  
In love for which he sighed.

In years and heart she was so young  
Love paused and beckoned at the gate,  
And bade her hear his songs, unsung;  
She laughed that "love must wait."

He understood. She only knew  
Love's hair was faded, face was gray —  
Nor saw the rose his autumn blew  
There in her heedless way.

## RED LEAVES AND ROSES

### II

If he had come to her when May  
Danced down the wildwood,— every way  
Marked with white flow'rs, as if her gown  
Had torn and fallen,— it might be  
She had not met him with a frown,  
Nor used his love so bitterly.

Or if he had but come when June  
Set stars and roses to one tune,  
And breathed in honeysuckle throats  
Clove-honey of her spicy mouth,  
His heart had found some loving notes  
In hers to cheer his life's long drouth.

He came when Fall made mad the sky,  
And on the hills leapt like a cry  
Of battle; when his youth was dead;  
To *her*, the young, the wild, the white;  
Whose symbol was the rose, blood-red,  
And his the red leaf pinched with blight.

He might have known, since youth was flown,  
And autumn claimed him for its own;  
And winter neared with snow, wild whirled,  
His love to her would seem absurd;  
To youth like hers; whose lip had curled  
Yet heard him to his last sad word.



## RED LEAVES AND ROSES

Then laughed and — well, his heart denied  
The words he uttered then in pride;  
And he remembered how the gray  
    Was his of autumn, ah! and hers,  
The rose-hued colors of the May,  
    And May was all her universe.

And then he left her: and, like blood,  
In her deep hair, the rose; whose bud  
Was badge to her: while unto him,  
    His middle-age, must still remain  
The red-leaf, withering at the rim,  
    As symbol of the all-in-vain.

### III

“Such days as these,” she said, and bent  
    Among her marigolds, all dew,  
And dripping zinnia stems, “were meant  
    For spring not autumn; days we knew  
In childhood; *these* endearing those;  
    Much dearer since they have grown old:  
Days, once imperfect with the rose,  
    Now perfect with the marigold.”

“Such days as these,” he said, and gazed  
    Long with unlifted eyes that held



## RED LEAVES AND ROSES

Sad autumn nights, "our hopes have raised  
In futures that are mist-enspelled.  
And so it is the fog blows in  
Days dearer for the death they paint  
With hues of life and joy,— as sin,  
At death, puts off all earthly taint."

### IV

Like deeds of hearts that have not kept  
Their riches, as a miser, when  
Sad souls have asked, with eyes that wept,  
Among the toiling tribes of men,  
The summer days gave Earth sweet alms  
In silver of white lilies, while  
Each night, with healing, outstretched palms  
Stood Christ-like with its starry smile.

Will she remember him when dull  
Months drag their duller hours by?  
With feet that crush the beautiful  
And leave the beautiful to die?  
Or never see? nor sit with lost  
Dreams withered, 'mid hope's empty husks,  
And wait, heart-counting-up the cost  
Of love's illusions 'mid life's dusks?

## RED LEAVES AND ROSES

### V

He is as one who, treading salty scurf  
Of lonely sea-sands, hears the roaring rocks  
Of some lost isle of misty crags and lochs ;  
Who sees no sea, but, through a world of surf,  
Gray ghosts of gulls and screaming petrel  
flocks :  
When, from the deep's white ruin and wild  
wreck,  
Above the fog, beneath the ghostly gull,  
The iron ribs of some storm-shattered hull  
Loom, packed with pirate treasure to the deck  
A century rotten : feels his wealth replete,  
When long-baulked ocean claims it ; and one  
dull  
Wave flings, derisive at despondent feet,  
A skull, one doubloon rattling in the skull.

### VI

And when full autumn sets the dahlia stems  
On fire with flowers, and the chill dew turns  
The maple trees, above geranium urns,  
To Emir tents, and strings with flawless gems  
The moon-flower and the wahoo-bush that  
burns ;  
Calmly she sees the year grow sad and strange,

RED LEAVES AND ROSES

And stands with one among the wilted walks  
Of the old garden of the gray, old grange,  
And feels no sorrow for the frost-maimed  
stalks

Since — though the wailing autumn to her  
talks —

Youth marks swift spring on life's far moun-  
tain-range.

Or she will lean to her old harpsichord;

A youthful face beside her; and the glow  
Of hickory on the hearth will balk the blow  
Of blustering rain that beats the casement  
hard;

And sing of summer and so thwart the snow.

“Haply, some day, she yet may sit alone,”

He thinks, “within the shadow-saddened  
house,

When round the gables stormy echoes moan,  
And in the closet gnaws the lonesome  
mouse;

And Memory come stealing down the stair  
From dusty attics where is piled the Past —

Like so much rubbish that we hate to keep —  
And turn the knob; and, framed in frosty hair,  
A grave, forgotten face look in at last,

And she will know, and bow her head and  
weep.”

## WILD THORN AND LILY

### I

That night, returning to the farm, we rode  
Before a storm. Uprolling from the west,  
Incessant with distending fire, loomed  
The multitudes of tempest: towering here  
A shadowy Shasta, there a cloudy Hood,  
Veined as with agonies, aurora-born,  
Of torrent gold; resplendent heaven to  
heaven,  
Far peak to peak, terrific spoke; the vast  
Sierras of the storm, within which beat  
The caverned thunder like a mighty stream:  
Vibrating on, with rushing wind and flame,  
Now th' opening welkin shone, one livid sheet  
Of instantaneous gold, a giant's forge,  
Wild-clanging; now, with streak on angled  
streak  
Of momentary light, a labyrinth  
Where shouting Darkness stalked with Titan  
torch:  
Again the firmament hung hewn with fire

## WILD THORN AND LILY

Whence leapt the thunder; and it seemed that  
    hosts  
Of Heaven rushed to war with blazing shields  
And swords of splendor. And before the  
    storm  
We galloped, while the frantic trees above  
Went wild with rain, through whose mad limbs  
    and leaves  
Splashed black the first big drops. On, on we  
    drove,  
And gained the gates, pillaring the avenue  
Of ancient beech, at whose far, flickering end,  
At last, beacons the lights of home.

And she?

Was it the lightning that lent lividness  
And terror to her countenance? or fear  
Of her own heart? revulsion? memory?  
Did deep regret, that, now the thing *was* done,  
That she was mine, a yearning to be free,  
Away from me, assail her? or, the thought,  
The knowledge, that she did not love the man  
Whom she had wedded? knowing better now  
That all her heart was Julien's from the first,  
And would be Julien's until the end.  
And did she now look backward on the past?  
Or forward — on the barrier that the church

## WILD THORN AND LILY

For all the future years had placed between  
The possible and impossible? God knows!

Yet I had won her honestly with words  
Love, only, uttered out of its soul's truth;  
Had won her — was it openly? — perhaps! —  
Although engaged to Julien.— What else  
Had led us to elopement? — Well, 't was done!  
The whole, mad, lovely, miserable affair  
Of love and youthful folly. Being done  
We must abide the reckoning. That is,  
*I* would; and she? — she saw her duty there  
Beside her husband. And within myself,  
When we alighted from the carriage, thus,—  
Beneath the porch,—my mind resolved the  
thing:

“I am her husband now, and she my wife.  
Less than her husband, I, much less a man,  
Were I not able to regain and keep  
The love she gave me, that she thinks is his,  
That is not his. 'T is pity merely now  
That makes her pensive. I am pensive, too,  
For Julien, the poet and the friend;  
The dreamer and the lover.— But all 's fair  
In love they say; and I,— well, willingly  
I'll bear the burthen of the blame of all.”



## WILD THORN AND LILY

Scarce had we entered when high heaven oped  
Vast gates of bronze and doors of booming  
brass

That dammed a deluge, and the deluge  
poured.—

I thought of him still; for I felt that she  
Was thinking too of Julien and his moods,  
That often swept his soul with storm like this,  
Yet oftener with sunlight than with storm;  
That soul of sun and tempest, ray and rain,  
My school-friend Julien! whom once she won  
To think she loved—I know not how. My  
play

Was open as the morning, and as fair.  
His poverty and genius here, and here  
My wealth and — platitude; and I had won.  
But it was hard for him. I did not dream  
That it would end so. And when Gwendolyn  
Used every gentleness — and that is much —  
I did not dream his poet's temperament  
Were so affected of a love affair,  
A wrong or right; he, whose sole aim seemed  
song.

I did not dream he 'd take it desperately,  
And end so tragically. Who 'd have thought  
His character, although so sensitive,  
Would fall into extremes of morbidness



WILD THORN AND LILY

And melancholy! Had it now been I,  
Whose heart had lost in the great game of  
love,  
None would have wondered; for I am of those  
Whose vigorous iron does not bend, but break  
At one decisive blow: *his* should have  
sprung —  
Or so I think, not broken as it had —  
Elastic as fine-tempered steel that bends  
And then resumes its usual usefulness.

A pale smile strained the corners of her mouth  
When, from the porch, into the parlor's blaze  
I led her. And her mother met us there,  
Her mother and her father. And I saw  
The slow reflection of their happiness  
Make glad her eyes, as their approval grew  
From half-severe rebukes, that were well  
meant,  
To open, glad avowal of their joy.  
She had done well, and we were soon for-  
given. . . .

But I resumed *his* letter when alone:  
His letter written her three months before,  
When all was over, and we two were one,  
And well upon our way to Italy

## WILD THORN AND LILY

For six sweet months of honeymoon. His  
word,

His letter, all of her, that came to me  
At Venice, that I opened in mistake,  
Amid a lot of papers sent from home.  
She had not read, and never should while I  
Had power to conceal until I 'd read.  
I would not let the dead scrawl mar or soil  
My late-won joy, my testament of love.  
No! I would read it, afterwards destroy.  
Thoughts made of music for a last farewell,  
When he knew all and asked her to perpend  
Expressions of past things her gift of love  
Had given speech to in the happy days.  
And so I read:—

## II

“The rhyme is mine, but yours  
The thought and all the music, springing from  
The rareness of the love that dawned on me  
A little while to make my sad life glad.  
Should I regret the sunset it refused,  
Since all my morn was richer than the world?  
Or that my day should stride without a change  
Of crimson, or of purple, or of gold,  
Into the barren blackness where the moon

## WILD THORN AND LILY

And all God's stars lay dead? Should I complain,  
Upbraid or censure or one moment curse,  
I with my morning? 'T is a memory  
That stains the midnight now: one wild-rose ray  
Laid like a finger pointing me the path  
I follow, and I go rejoicingly.

Our love was very young (nor had it aged —  
If we had lived long lifetimes — here in me),  
When one day, strolling in the sun, you spoke  
Words I perceived should hint a coming change:  
I made three stanzas of the thought, you see:  
But now 't is like the sea-shell that suggests,  
And still associates us with the sea  
In its vague song and elfland workmanship.  
Yet it has lost a something that it had  
There by the far sand's foaming; something rare,  
A different beauty like an element:

I wonder on what life will do  
When love is loser of all love;  
When life still longs to love anew  
And has not love enough: —  
I 'll turn my heart into a ray,  
And wait — a day?

I wonder on what love will hold  
When life is weary of all life;

## WILD THORN AND LILY

And life and love have both grown old  
With scars of sin and strife:—  
I'll change my soul into a flower,  
And wait — an hour?

I wonder on why men forget  
The life that love made laugh; and why  
Weak women will remember yet  
The life that love made sigh:—  
I'll sing my thought into a song,  
And wait — how long?

### III

“ And once you questioned of our mocking-bird,  
And of the German nightingale, and I  
Knowing a sweeter bird than those sweet two,  
Made fast associates of birds and brooks  
And learned their numbers. Middle April  
made  
The path of lilac leading to your porch  
A rift of fallen Paradise; a blue  
So full of fragrance that the birds that built  
Among the lilacs thought that God was there,  
And of God's goodness they would sing and  
sing,  
Till every throat seemed bursting with its song,

WILD THORN AND LILY

Note on wild note, diviner each than each.  
And waiting by the gate, that reached the lane,  
For you, who gave sweet eloquence to all,  
The afternoon, the lilacs and the spring,  
My heart was singing and it sang of you :

Two glow-worms are the jewels in  
Her ears ; and underneath her chin  
A diamond like a firefly :  
There is no starlight in the sky  
When Gwendolyn stands in the maze  
Of woodbine, near the portico ;  
For all the stars are in her gaze,  
The night and stars I know.

A clinging dream of mist the lawn  
She wears ; and like a bit of dawn  
Her fan with one red jewel pinned :  
Among the boughs there breathes no wind  
When Gwendolyn comes down the path  
Of lilacs from the portico ;  
For all the breeze her coming hath,  
The beam and breeze I know.

Two locust-blooms her hands ; and slips  
Of eglantine her cheeks and lips ;  
Her hair, a hyacinth of gloom :

## WILD THORN AND LILY

The balmy buds give no perfume  
When Gwendolyn draws near to me,  
The gate beyond the portico;  
For all aroma sweet is she,  
All fragrance that I know.

Life, love, and faith are in her face,  
And in her presence all their grace:  
And my religion is a word,  
A wish of hers. No mocking-bird,  
When Gwendolyn laughs near, dare float  
One bubble from the portico;  
For all of song is in her throat,  
All music that I know.

## IV

“The mocking-bird! and then weird fancy filled  
My soul with vision, and I saw a song  
Pursue a bird that was no bird — a voice  
Concealed in dim expressions of the spring,—  
Who sits among the forests and the fields,  
With dark-blue eyes smiling to life the flow-  
ers,—  
Where we strolled happy as the April hills:  
  
A sunbeam, all the day that fell  
Upon the fountain,—



## WILD THORN AND LILY

Like laughter gurgling in the dell  
Below the mountain,—  
Drank, with its sparkle, one by one,  
The water-words that, in the sun,  
Made melody,—the sun-rays tell,—  
That never yet was done.

A moon-ray, that had gone astray  
'Mid wildwood alleys,  
Where Echo haunts the forest way  
Among the valleys,  
The livelong night upon the rocks  
Slept, hid among girl Echo's locks,  
And stole her voice,—the moonbeams say,—  
That mocks and only mocks.

A shadow, that had made its seat  
Amid the roses  
And thorns — the bitter and the sweet  
That life discloses —  
Mixed with the rose-balm and the dew  
And crimson thorns that pierced it through,  
Until its soul,—the shades repeat,—  
Was portion of them, too.

A Fairy found the beam of gold,  
And ray of glitter ;



WILD THORN AND LILY

The shadow, whose dim soul did hold  
Both sweet and bitter;  
And made a bird, that haunts the morn  
And night; that flits from flower to thorn,  
A voice of laughter,— it is told,—  
Love, mockery, and scorn.

V.

“ Among the white haw-blossoms, where the  
creek  
Droned under drifts of dogwood and of haw,  
The red-bird, like a crimson blossom blown  
Against the snow-white bosom of the Spring,  
The chaste confusion of her lawn breast,  
Sang on, prophetic of serener days,  
As confident as June’s completer hours.  
And I stood listening like a hind, who hears  
A wood-nymph breathing in a forest flute  
Among gray beech-trees of myth-haunted  
ways:  
And when it ceased, the memory of the air  
Blew like a syrinx in my brain: I made  
A lyric of the notes that men might know:

He flies with flirt and fluting —  
As flies a falling star

WILD THORN AND LILY

From flaming star-beds shooting —  
From where the roses are.

Wings past and sings; and seven  
Notes, sweet as fragrance is,—  
That turn to sylphs in heaven,—  
Float round him full of bliss.

He sings; each burning feather  
Thrills, throbbing at his throat;  
A song of glow-worm weather,  
And of a firefly boat:

Of Elfland and a princess  
Who, born of a perfume,  
His music lulls,— where winces  
That rose's cradled bloom.

No bird is half so airy,  
No bird of dusk or dawn,  
O masking King of Fairy!  
O red-crowned Oberon.

VI

“ Alas! the nightingale I never heard.  
Yet I, remembering how your voice would  
thrill  
Me with exalted expectation, felt

## WILD THORN AND LILY

The passion-throated nightingale would win  
Into my soul in some wild way like this,  
With reminiscences of dusks long dead,  
Presentiments of nights, that mate the flowers  
And the prompt stars, and marry them with  
song.

Of such,—love whispered me when deep in  
dreams,—

I made my nightingale. It is a voice  
Heard in the April of our year of love:

Between the stars and roses

There lies a path no man may see,  
Where every breeze that blows is

A wandering melody;  
Down which each bright star gazes  
Upon each rose that raises

Its face up lovingly,  
As if with prayers and praises.

The star and rose are wiser

Than all but love beneath the skies;  
No hoard of any miser

Is rich as these are wise:  
No bee may reach or rifle,  
No mist may cloud or stifle

Their love that never dies,  
That knows nor trick nor trifle.

## WILD THORN AND LILY

There is a bird that carries  
Love-messages; and comes and goes  
Between each star that tarries,  
And every rose that blows:  
A bird that can not tire,  
Whose throat 's a throbbing lyre,  
Whose song is now a rose,  
And now a starry fire.

## VII

“O May-time woods! O May-time lanes and  
hours!

And stars, that knew how often there at night  
Beside the path, where woodbine odors blew  
Between the drowsy eyelids of the dusk,—  
When, like a great, white, pearly moth, the  
moon

Hung, silvering long windows of your room,—  
I stood among the shrubs! The dark house  
slept.

I watched and waited for—I know not  
what—

Some tremor of your gown: a velvet leaf's  
Unfolding to caresses of the spring:  
A rustle of your footsteps: or the dew  
That softly rolled, a syllable of love,

WILD THORN AND LILY

In sweet avowal, from a rose's lips  
Of odorous scarlet: or the whispered word  
Of something lovelier than new leaf or rose —  
The word young lips half murmur in a dream:

Serene with sleep, light visions load her eyes;  
And underneath her window blooms a  
    quince.

The night is a sultana who doth rise  
In slippèd caution, to admit a prince,  
Love, who her eunuchs and her lord defies.

Are these her dreams? or is it that the breeze  
Pelts me with petals of the quince, and lifts  
The Balm-of-Gilead buds? and seems to  
    squeeze  
Aroma on aroma through sweet rifts  
Of Eden, dripping from the rainy trees?

Along the path the buckeye trees begin  
To heap their hills of blossoms.— Oh, that  
    they  
Were Romeo ladders, whereby I might win  
Her chamber's sanctity,— where love must  
    pray  
And guard her soul! — so stainless of all sin!

## WILD THORN AND LILY

There might I see the balsam scent erase  
Its sweet intrusion; and the starry night  
Conclude majestic pomp; the virgin grace  
Of every bud abashed before the white,  
Pure passion-flower of her sleeping face.

## VIII

“ And once, in early May, a sparrow sang  
Among the garden bushes; and you asked  
If the suave song stayed knocking at my heart.  
I smiled some answer, and, behold, that night  
Found that my heart had locked this fancy in:

Rain, rain, and a ribbon of song  
Uncurled where the blossoms are sprinkled;  
The song-sparrow sings, and I long  
For the silver-sweet throat, that has tinkled,  
To sing in the bloom and the rain,  
Sing again, and again, and again,  
Under my window-pane.

Rain, rain, and the trickling tips  
Of the million pink blooms of the quinces;  
And I hear the song rill from the lips,  
The lute-haunted lips of my princess:  
O love! in the rain and the bloom,



## WILD THORN AND LILY

Sing again in the pelting perfume,  
Sweetheart, under my room.

Rain, rain, and the dripping of drops  
From cups of the blossoms they load, or  
Tilt over with tipsiest tops:  
And eyes as of sun-beam and odor,  
There, under the bloom-blowing tree—  
A face like a flower to see,  
Love is looking at me.

## IX

“Once in the village I had heard a song,  
A melody which I wrote down for you,  
And which you sang. But, there among your  
hills,  
The dawns and sunsets and the serious stars  
Made trite its thought and words, that seemed  
as stale  
As musty parlors of the commonplace.  
I changed its words, and here and there its  
thought,  
But, though you praised, you never sang it  
more,  
And so I knew, like some poor poet, it  
Had fallen on disfavor, God knows why,  
With its high patron. Thus its metre ran:



WILD THORN AND LILY

Look, happy eyes, and let me know  
The timid flower her love hath cherished  
Fades not before the fruit shall show,  
Seen in the clear truth of your glow  
Where naught of love hath perished.

Lift, happy lips, and let me take  
The sacred secret of her spirit  
To mine in kisses, that shall make  
Mute marriage of our souls, and wake  
The heart's sweet silence near it.

X

“And so I wrote another filled with birds,  
Deliberate twilight and eve's punctual star;  
And made the music of that song obey  
The metre of my own and melody:

Only to hear that you love me,  
Only to feel it is true;  
Stars and the gloaming above me,  
I in the gloaming with you.  
Staining through violet fire,  
A sunset of poppy and gold,  
Red as a heart with desire,  
Rich with a secret untold.

## WILD THORN AND LILY

Deep where the shadows are doubled,  
Deep where the blossoms are long,  
Listen! — deep love in the bubbled  
Breath of a mocking-bird's song.  
You, who have made them the dearer,  
Drawing them near from afar! —  
Stars and the heaven the nearer,  
Sweet, through the joy that you are.

## XI

“ Confronted with the certainty that I  
Had no approval for my love from you,  
No visible sign, but my own prompting hope's,  
Conforming with my heart's one wild desire,  
Who had not dreaded disappointment there!  
The shadow of a heart's unformed denial,  
That should take form and soon confirm the  
doubt:  
The doubt that would content itself with this:

If I might hold her by the hand,—  
Her hands so full of soothing peace! —  
Her heart would hear and understand  
My heart's demand,  
And all her idling cease.

## WILD THORN AND LILY

If she would let my eyes look in  
Her eyes, whose deeps are full of truth,  
Her soul might see how mine would win  
Her, without sin,  
In all her happy youth.

If I might kiss her mouth, and lead  
The kiss up to her eyes and hair,  
There is no prayer that so could plead,—  
And find sure heed,—  
My love's divine despair.

## XII

“ And, uninstructed, smiled and wrote ‘ despair,’  
Enamoured, yet fearful of the shade that  
should  
Some day come stealing through my silent door  
To sit unbidden through the lonely hours.—  
I cast the shudder off, and in the fields  
Found hope again, and beauty born of dreams :  
For it was summer, and all living things,  
The common flowers and the birds and bees,  
Became interpreters of love for me :

Say that he can not tell her how he loves her —  
Words, for such adoration, often fail,—

## WILD THORN AND LILY

When but a bow of ribbon, glove that gloves  
her,  
Clothes her fair femininity in mail.

So many ways and wisdoms to express what  
To th' language of devotion is denied ;  
Ambassadors to make the maiden guess what  
Before her heart's high fortress long has  
sighed.

A bird to sing his secret — she 'll perpend him :  
A bee to bid her soul to hear and see :  
A blossom, like a sweet appeal, to bend him,  
Before her there, upon a worshiping knee.

## XIII

“ So was my love confessed to you. I thought  
You loved me as love led me to believe :  
And so, no matter where I, dreaming, went  
Among the hills, the woods, and quiet fields,  
All had a poetry so intimate,  
So happy and so ready that, for me,  
'Twas but to stoop and gather as I went,  
As one goes reaching roses in the June.  
Three withered wild ones that I gathered then  
I send you now. Their scent and bloom are  
dust :

WILD THORN AND LILY

I

What wild-flower shows perfection  
Such as thy face, no blemish mars?  
I leave to the selection  
Of all the wild-flower stars:  
To every wildwood bloom that blows,  
Wild phlox, wild daisy, and wild rose.

What cascade hath suspicion  
O' the marvel that thy whiteness is?  
I leave to the decision  
Of each proclaiming breeze:  
To winds that kiss the buds awake,  
And roll the ripple on the lake.

What bird can sing the naming  
Of all the music that thou art?  
I leave to the proclaiming  
Of that within my heart:  
My heart, wherein, the whole day long,  
Sits adoration rapt in song.

2

What witch then hast thou met,  
Who wrought this amulet?  
This charm, that makes each look, love,  
Of thine a rose;

WILD THORN AND LILY

Thy face an open book, love,  
Where beauty gleams and glows,  
And thought to music set.

What fairy of the wood,  
To whom thou once wast good,  
Gave thee this gift?— Thy words, love,  
Should be pure gold;  
And all thy songs as bird's, love,  
Sweet as the Mays of old  
With youth and love imbued.

What elfin of the glade  
This white enchantment made,  
That filled thee with the essence  
Of all the Junes?  
That made thy soul, thy presence,  
Like to the moon's  
Above a far cascade.

What wizard of the cave  
Hath made my heart thy slave?  
That dreams of thee when sleeping,  
And, when awake,  
My anxious spirit keeping  
'Neath spells I can not break,  
Sweet spells, whence naught can save.

## WILD THORN AND LILY

### 3

Dear, (though given conclusion to),  
Songs,— no memory surrenders,—  
Still their music breathe in you ;  
Silence meditation renders  
Audible with notes it knew.

Sweet, when all the flowers are dead,  
Perfumes,— that the heart remembers  
Made of them a marriage-bed,—  
Shall not fail me in December's  
Gloom, but from your face be shed.

Dear, when night denies a star,  
Darkness will not suffer, seeing  
Song and fragrance are not far ;  
Starlight of the summer being  
In the loveliness you are.

### XIV

“ Revealing distant vistas where I thought  
I saw your love stand as 'mid lily blooms,  
Long, angel goblets molded out of stars,  
Pouring aroma at your feet : and life  
Took fire with thoughts your soul must help  
you read :



WILD THORN AND LILY

A song ; and songs (who does not know?)

Reveal no music but is thine.

Thou singest, and the waters flow,

The breezes blow,

The sunbeams shine,

And all the earth grows young, divine.

Low laughter ; and I look away ;

Whate'er the time of year, I dream

I walk beneath sweet skies of May

On ways where play

Both gloom and gleam,

And hear a bird and forest stream.

A thought ; and straight it seems to me,

However dark, the stars arise,

And rain down memories of thee,—

As, it may be,

From Paradise

One feels an angel-lover's eyes.

XV

“ But is it well to tell you what I felt  
When I beheld no change beyond the moods  
That gloomed or glistened in your raven eyes?  
When I sat singing 'neath one steadfast star

WILD THORN AND LILY

Of morning with no phantoms of strange fears  
To slay the look or word that helped me sing:  
When song came easier than come buds in  
    spring,  
That make the barren boughs one pomp of  
    pearls:

Oh, let the happy day go past,  
And let the night be short or long,  
    When life and love are one at last,  
And hearts are full of song,  
'Tis sweet midsummer of the dream,  
    And all the dreams thou hast  
Are truer than they seem.

And once I dreamt in autumn of  
Death with cadaverous eyes that gazed  
    From out a shadow . . . It was love  
Whose deathless eyes were raised  
From the deep darkness that unrolled  
    Wild splendor; and, amazed,  
Thy soul I did behold.

And then it seemed that some one said,  
The dead are nearer than dost know.  
    And when they tell thee love is dead,—  
Although it seems 't is so,—

WILD THORN AND LILY

Still shalt thou feel in every beat  
And heart-throb of thy woe  
Love breathing, bitter-sweet.

XVI

“ One evening when I came to talk with you,  
Impatience hurt me in your brief replies.  
And I who had refused,— because we dread  
Approaching horror of our lives made  
mained,—  
The inevitable, could not help but see  
Some change in you to’ards me.— That night  
I dreamed  
I wandered ’mid old ruins, where the snake  
And scorpion crawled in poison-spotted heat;  
Plague-bloated bulks of hideous vine and root  
Wrapped fallen fanes; and bristling cacti  
bloomed  
Blood-red and death-white on forgotten tombs.  
And from my soul went forth a bitter cry  
That pierced the silence that was packed with  
death  
And pale presentiment. And so I went,  
A white flame beckoning before my face,  
And in my ears sounds of primordial seas  
That boasted preadamic gods and men:

WILD THORN AND LILY

A flame before me and, beyond, a voice:  
But, lo, the white flame when I reached for it  
Became thin ashes like a dead man's dust;  
And when I thought I should behold the sea,  
Stagnation, turned to filth and rottenness,  
Rolled out a swamp: the voice became a  
stench.

If we should pray together now  
For sunshine and for rain,  
And thou shouldst get fair weather now,  
And I the clouds again,  
Would ray and rain keep single,  
Or for the rainbow mingle?

Dear, if this should be made to me,  
That I had asked for light,  
And God had given shade to me,  
And all to thee that 's bright,  
Wouldst thou go by with scorning,  
Refusing darkness morning?

If all my life were winter, love,  
And all thy life were spring,  
And mine with frost should splinter, love,  
While thine with birds should sing,  
Wouldst thou walk past and glitter,  
Forgetful mine is bitter?

WILD THORN AND LILY

XVII

“ Still on the anguish of a dying hope  
An infant hope was nourished ; all in vain.  
For, at the last, although we parted friends,  
The friendship lay like sickness on my soul,  
That saw all gladness perish from the world  
With loss of thee ; and, 'mid the future years,  
Love building high a sepulchre for hope.

Ah, could you learn forgetfulness,  
And teach my heart how to forget ;  
And I unlearn all fretfulness,  
And teach your soul that still will fret ;  
The mornings of the world would burn  
Before us and we would not turn,  
For we would not regret.

Did you but know what sorrow keeps,  
That drives the joy of life away,  
And I what each to-morrow keeps  
For us until it is to-day ;  
No grief or change would then surprise  
Our lives with what our lives were wise,  
And nothing could betray.

If you could be interior to  
My dreams that are all love's desire ;

WILD THORN AND LILY

And I could be superior to  
Myself and such in you inspire;  
Long stairways would the years unroll  
To lift us upward, soul to soul,  
To what celestial fire!

XVIII

“There came no words of comfort from your  
lips.

Not that I asked for pity! that had been  
As fire unto the scalded or dry bread  
Unto the famished fallen 'mid the sands!  
But all your actions said that I was wrong,  
But how, I know not and have ceased to care;  
Still standing like one stricken blind at noon,  
Who gropes and fumbles, feeling all grow  
strange

That once was so familiar; cursing God  
Who locks him in with darkness and de-  
spair.—

Your judgment had been juster had it had  
A lesser love than mine to judge.— O love,  
Where lay the justice of thy judge in this?—

‘If thou hadst praised thy God as long  
As thou hast praised a woman’s eyes,



## WILD THORN AND LILY

Perhaps thou hadst not suffered wrong,  
As now, and sat with sighs :  
But, through thy prayer and praise made  
strong,  
Perhaps thou hadst grown wise.

‘ If thou hadst bade thy God be more  
Than I, thy life had not been sad ;  
His love to thee had not been poor  
As mine. But thou wast mad,  
And cam’st, a beggar, to my door,  
And had more than I had.

‘ If thou hadst taught me how to love,  
Nor played with love as monarchs play,  
My heart had learned right soon enough,  
From thine, love’s lowlier way.  
But all thy love stood far above,  
Nor touched my soul to sway.’

## XIX

“ Thus did you write me, or in words like these,  
When all was over and your heart was led,  
Through pity, haply, thus to justify  
Yourself, that needed not to justify,  
Since all your reason lay in four small words,



WILD THORN AND LILY

Enough to wreck my world and all my life,  
*You did not love*: what more is there to tell?—  
Yet, haply, it was this: One soul, that still  
Demanded more than it could well return;  
And, searching inward, yet could never pierce  
Beyond its superficiality.  
You did not know; yet I had felt in me  
The rich fulfillment of a rare accord,  
And could not, though the longing lay like  
    song  
And music on me, win your soul's response.

Were it well, lifting me  
    Eyes that give heed,  
Down in your soul to see  
Thought, the affinity  
    Of act and deed?  
Knowing what naught may tell  
    Of heart and soul:  
Yet were the knowledge whole,  
    And were it well?

Were it well, giving true  
    Love all enough,  
Still to discover new  
Depths of true love for you,  
    Infinite love?

WILD THORN AND LILY

Feeling what naught may tell  
Of heart and soul:  
Yet were the knowledge whole,  
And were it well?

XX

“What else but, laboring for some good, to lift  
Ourselves above the despotism of self,  
All egoism strangling strength and hope,  
To work and work, and, in the love of work,  
Which takes the place, in some, of love’s real  
self,  
To quench the flame that eats into the heart?  
Art, our intensest and our truest love,  
Immaculateness that has never led  
One of her lovers wrong, his love all soul!  
I followed beauty, and my ardor prayed  
Your memory would, feature and form and  
face,  
Be blotted out within me; rise no more  
To mar the labor that I owed to Art.  
I prayed, yea, to forget you, you I loved:  
I prayed; and, see!—how Heaven answered  
me:

I have no song to tell thee  
The love that I would sing;

WILD THORN AND LILY

The song that should enspell thee  
With words, and so compel thee  
    That thou, with love, must wing  
Into my life to-morrow —  
For all my songs are sorrow.

My strength is not a giant  
    To hold thee with strong hands,  
To make thee less defiant;  
Thy spirit more compliant  
    With all my love demands:  
Alas! my love is meekness,  
And all my strength is weakness.

What hope have I to hover —  
    When wings refuse to rise —  
Within thy heart's close cover,  
And there to play the lover,  
    Concealed from mortal eyes?  
What hope! to give me boldness,  
When all thy looks are coldness?

XXI

“ I prayed ; and for a time felt strong as strength,  
And held both hands out to the loveliness  
That lured in the ideal. And I felt

## WILD THORN AND LILY

Compelling power upon me that would lift  
My face to heaven, now, to see the stars,  
Now bend it back to earth to see the flowers.  
I learned long lessons 'twixt a look and look:

Breezes and linden blooms,  
Sunshine and showers;  
Rain, that the May perfumes,  
Cupped in the flowers:  
Clouds and the leaves that patter  
Raindrops that glint and glare —  
Or be they gems that scatter?  
Sapphires the sylphides shake,  
When their loose fillets break,  
Out of their radiant hair?

Now is my heart a lute!  
Now doth it pinion  
Song in love's swift pursuit  
In thought's dominion!  
Dreaming of all thou meanest,  
Thou, with uneager eyes,  
Nature! of worlds thou queenest,  
Whither thy mother hand  
Draws us from land to land,  
Far from the worldly wise!

WILD THORN AND LILY

XXII

“ Thus would I scatter grain around my life,  
Gold grain of song, to lure them down to me,  
Cloud-colored doves of peace to fill my soul,  
And find them turn to ravens while they flew,  
Black ravens of despair that would not out.  
The old, dull, helpless aching at the heart,  
As if some scar had turned a wound again.  
While idle grief stared at the brutal past,  
Which held a loss that made the past more rich  
Than all Earth’s arts: that marveled how it  
came

Such puny folly should usurp love’s high  
Proud pedestal of life that held your form,  
In Parian, sculptured by the hands of thought.  
And oft I shook myself,— for nightmares  
weighed

Each sense,— and seemed to wake; yet ever-  
more

Beheld a death’s-head grinning at my eyes.

So when the opening of the door doth thrill  
My soul with sudden knowledge death is  
come,

Let me forget you or remember still,  
It will not matter then that life went ill,  
When death bends to me and my lips are dumb.

WILD THORN AND LILY

Then I shall not remember : and shall leave  
No memory behind me, and no trace  
Of aught my life accomplished. Let none  
grieve.

There is no heart my passing will bereave ;  
And there are thousands who can fill my place.

Who knocks?— The night camps on each hill  
and heath :

And round my door are minions of the  
night :

And like a weapon, riven from its sheath,  
The wind sweeps, and the tempest grinds  
its teeth

Around me and my wild, hand-hollowed light.

Who knocks?— the door is open! — And I see  
The Darkness threatening, with distorted  
fists

Of cloudy terror, Courage on her knee :

Shine far, O candle! for it so may be  
Love is bewildered in the night and mists.—

No wandering wisp art thou, that haunts the  
rain

With pallid flicker, fading as it flies! —

## WILD THORN AND LILY

The door is open! — Will he knock again?—  
The door is open! — Shall it be in vain?—  
Come in! delay not! thou, whose ways are  
wise!

Who knocked has entered: let the darkness  
pass,  
The door be closed! — Now morning lights  
shall thrust  
It open; and the sunlight shine and mass  
Its splendor here where once but darkness  
was,  
And in its rays — motes and a little dust.”

• • • • •

## XXIII

And I had read, read to the bitter end;  
Half hearing lone surmises of the rain  
And trouble of the wind. At last I rose  
And went to Gwendolyn. She did not know  
The kiss I gave her had a shudder in it;  
Nor how the form of Julien rose between  
Me and her lips, a blood-stain o'er his heart.



## THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

### I

She knows its windings and its crooks ;  
The wildflowers of its lovely woods ;  
The crowfoot's golden sisterhoods,  
That crowd its sunny nooks :  
The iris, whose blue blossoms seem  
Mab's bonnets ; and, each leaf a-gleam,  
The trillium's fairy-books.

He knows its shallows and its pools,  
Its stair-like beds of rock that go,  
Foaming, with waterfall and flow,  
Where dart the minnow schools ;  
Its grassy banks that herons haunt,  
Or where the woodcock call ; and gaunt  
The mushrooms lift their stools.

She seeks the columbine and phlox,  
The bluebell, where the bushes fill  
The old stones of the ruined mill ;

THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

She wades among the rocks :  
Her feet are rose-pearl in the stream ;  
Her eyes are bluet-blue ; a beam  
Lies on her nut-brown locks.

He comes with fishing-reel and line  
To angle in the darker deeps,  
Where the reflected forest sleeps  
Of sycamore and pine :  
And now and then a shadow swoops  
Above him of a hawk that stoops  
From skies as clear as wine.

And will he see, if they should meet,  
That she is fairer than each flower  
Her apron fills? and in that hour  
Feel life less incomplete? . . .  
He stops below : she walks above —  
The brook floats down, as white as love,  
One blossom to his feet.

And she?— should she behold the tan  
Of manly face and honest eyes,  
Would all her soul idealize  
Him? make him more than man? . . .  
She dropped one blossom when she heard  
Soft whistling — was it man or bird,  
Whose notes so sweetly ran?





## THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

They knew before they came to meet;  
For some divulging influence  
Had touched them thro' the starry lens  
God holds to bring in beat  
Two hearts — her heart one haunting wish,  
And his — forgetful of the fish,  
Her flower at his feet.

### II

The sassafras twigs had just lit up  
The yellow stars of their fragrant candles,  
And the dogwood brimmed each blossom-cup  
With spring to its brown-tipped handles;  
When down the orchard, 'mid apple blooms —  
Say, ho, the hum o' the honey-bee! —  
A glimpse of Spring in the sprinkled glooms?  
Or only a girl? with the warm perfumes  
Blown round her breezily.

The maple, as red as the delicate flush  
Of an afterglow, was airy crimson;  
And the haw-tree, white in the wing-whipped  
hush,  
Gleamed cool as a cloud that the moonlight  
dims on;  
And under the oak, whose branches strung —  
Say, heigh, the rap o' the sapsuckér! —

## THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

Gray buds in tassels that sweetly swung,  
They stood and listened a bird that sung,  
As glad as the heart in her.

Yellow the bloom of the rattle-weed,  
And white the bloom of the plum and cherry;  
And red as a stain the red-bud's brede,  
And clover the color of sherry:  
And a wren sings there in the orchard drift,—  
And, ho! the dew from the web that slips!—  
And a thrush sings there in the woodland rift,  
Where he to his face her face doth lift,  
Her face with the willing lips.

For a while they sat on the moss and grass,  
Where the forest bloomed a great wild gar-  
den;—  
Then the beam from the hollow — it seemed to  
pass,  
And the ray on the hills to harden,  
When she rose to go, and his joy fell flat;—  
And, heigh, the wasp i' the pawpaw bell!—  
As she waved her hand — why, it seemed at that  
'Twas Spring's own self he was gazing at,  
And the life of his life as well.

THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

III

The teasel and the horsemint spread  
The hillsides, as with sunset sown,  
Blooming along the Standing-Stone  
That ripples in its rocky bed:  
There are no treasures that hold  
Gold yellower than the marigold  
That crowds its mouth and head.

'T is harvest-time: a mower stands  
Among the morning wheat and whets  
His scythe, and for a space forgets  
The labor of the ripening lands;  
Then bends, and through the dewy grain  
His long scythe hisses, and again  
He swings it in his hands.

And she beholds him where he mows  
On acres whence the water sends  
Faint music of reflecting bends  
And falls that interblend with flows:  
She stands among the old bee-gums,—  
Where all the apiary hums,—  
Like some sweet bramble-rose.

She hears him whistling as he leans,  
And, reaping, sweeps the ripe wheat by;  
She sighs and smiles and knows not why:—



## THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

These are but simple country scenes :  
He whets his scythe again, and sees  
Her smiling near the hives of bees  
Beneath the flowering beans.

The peacock-purple lizard creeps  
Along the rail; and deep the drone  
Of insects makes the country lone  
With summer where the water sleeps :  
She hears him singing as he swings  
His scythe; he thinks of other things —  
Not toil, and, singing, reaps.

### IV

Into the woods they went again,  
Over the wind-blown oats;  
Out of the acres of golden grain,  
In where the light was a violet stain,  
In where the lilies' throats  
Were brimmed with the summer rain.

Hung on a bough a reaper's hook,  
Over the wind-blown oats;  
A girl's glad laugh and a girl's glad look,  
And the hush and ripple of tree and brook,  
And a wild bird's silvery notes,  
And a kiss that a strong man took.

## THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

Out of the woods the lovers went,  
Over the wind-waved wheat;  
She with a face, where love was blent,  
Like to an open testament;  
He, from his head to feet,  
Dazed with his hope that was eloquent.

Here how oft had they come to tryst,  
Over the wind-waved wheat!  
Here how oft had they laughed and kissed!  
Talked and tarried where no one wist,  
Here where the woods are sweet,  
Dim and deep as a dewy mist.

### V

Her pearls are blossoms-of-the-vale,  
Her only diamonds are the dews;  
Such jewels never can grow stale,  
Nor any value lose.

Among the millet beards she stands:  
The languid wind lolls everywhere:  
There are wild roses in her hands,  
One wild rose in her hair.

To-morrow, where the shade is warm,  
Among the unmown wheat she 'll stop,

THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

And from one daisy-loaded arm  
One ox-eyed daisy drop.

She 'll meet his brown eyes, true and brave,  
With blue eyes, false yet dreamy sweet:  
He is her lover and her slave,  
Who mows among the wheat.

. . . . .

When buds broke on the apple trees  
She wore an apple-blossom dress,  
And laughed with him across the leas,  
And love was all a guess.

When goose-plums ripened in the rain,  
Plum-colored was her gown of red;  
He kissed her in the creek-road lane —  
She was his life, he said.

When apples thumped the droughty land,  
A russet color was her gown:  
Another came, and — won her hand?—  
Nay! carried off to town. . . . .

When grapes hung purple in the hot,  
None missed her and her simple dress,

THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

Save one, whom, haply, she forgot,  
Who loved her none the less.

When snow made white each harvest sheaf,  
He sought her out amid her show;  
Her rubies, redder than the leaf  
That autumn forests sow.

Not one regret her shame reveals;  
She smiles at him, then puts him by;  
He pleads; and she? she merely steals  
Her heart and — lives her lie.

VI

And he returned when poppies strewed  
Their golden blots o'er moss and leaf,—  
Blond little Esaus of the wood,  
So fair of face, of life so brief.—  
Did he forget?— Not he, in truth! —  
“No month,” he thought, “holds so much grace,  
No month of spring, such grace and youth,  
As the sweet April of her face.”

In fall the frail gerardia  
Hung hints of sunset and of dawn  
On root and rock, as if to draw

THE IDYLL OF THE STANDING-STONE

Her lips, remind him of one gone : —  
Of one unworthy, in pursuit  
Of butterflies, who does not dream  
A flower, broken by her foot,  
Sweeps, helpless, with her down the stream.

## SOME SUMMER DAYS

### I

If you had seen her waiting there  
Among the tiger-lily blooms,—  
That sowed their jewels everywhere  
Among the woodland gleams and glooms,—  
You had confessed her very fair,  
And sweeter than the wood's perfumes.

A country girl with bare brown feet,  
She waits, while day slopes down the deeps :  
The afternoon is dead with heat,  
And all the weary shadow sleeps  
Like toil, arm-pillowed in the wheat,  
Beside the scythe with which he reaps.

There is no sound more distant than  
The cow-bell on the vine-hung hill ;  
No nearer than the locust's span  
Of noise that makes the silence shrill :  
And now there comes a sun-browned man  
Through tiger-lilies of the rill.

SOME SUMMER DAYS

Long will they talk : till, in the end,  
The clear west glows, the east grows pale ;  
Until the glow and pallor blend  
Like moonlight on a shifting sail ;  
And then he 'll clasp her ; she will bend  
Her head, consenting. Day will fail :

The west will flame, then fade away  
Through heavy orange, rose, and red,  
And leave the heavens violet gray  
Above a gypsy-lily bed :  
Then they will go ; and he will say  
Such words to her as none has said.

A million stars the night will win  
Above them ; and one firefly  
Pulse like a tangled starbeam in  
The cedar dark against the sky :  
Then he will lift her dimpled chin  
And take the kiss she 'll not deny.

And when the moon, like the great book  
Of Judgment, golden with the light  
Of God, lies open o'er yon nook  
Of darkest wood and wildest height,  
Together they will cross the brook  
And reach the gate and kiss good night.



## SOME SUMMER DAYS

### II

And now he wipes his hand along  
The beaded fire of his brow  
Hard toil has heated; and the strong  
Face flushes fuller health as now  
He fills his hay-fork to the prong,  
And, tossing it, again doth bow.

And now he rests, and looks away  
Across the sun-fierce hills and meads  
No rolling cloud has cooled to-day;  
And from his face the brawny beads  
Drip; and he marks the heaps of hay,  
The fields of corn, the fields of weeds.

At last he sees the tempest build  
Black battlements along the west,  
Black breastworks that are thunder filled;  
And bares his brow; and on his chest  
The sweat of toil is cooled; and stilled  
The pulse of toil within his breast.

A strong wind brings the odorous death  
Of far hay-meadows, and the scent  
Is good within his nostrils' breath:  
The mighty trees are bowed, that leant  
For no man, as when Power saith  
"Bow down!" and stalwart men are bent.

### SOME SUMMER DAYS

He laughs, long-gazing as he goes  
Along the elder-sweetened lane :  
He feels the storm wind as it blows  
Across the sheaves of golden grain,  
And stops to pull one bramble-rose,  
And watch the swiftly coming rain.

And there, 'mid locust trees, the farm  
Dreams in a martin-haunted place :  
He marks the far-off streaks of storm  
That, driven of the thunder, race :  
He sees his child upon her arm,  
And in the door his wife's fair face.

### III

Below the sunset's range of rose,  
Below the heaven's bending blue,  
Down woodways where the balsam blows,  
And milkweed tufts hang, gray of hue,  
A Jersey heifer stops and lows —  
The cows come home by one, by two.

There is no star yet : but the smell  
Of hay and pennyroyal mix  
With herb-aromas of the dell ;  
And the root-hidden cricket clicks :

SOME SUMMER DAYS

Among the ironweeds a bell  
Clangs near the rail-fenced clover-ricks.

She waits upon the slope beside  
The windlassed well the plum-trees shade,  
The well-curb that the goose-plums hide;  
Her light hand on the bucket laid,  
Unbonneted she waits, glad-eyed,  
Her dress as simple as her braid.

She sees fawn-colored backs among  
The sumacs now; a tossing horn;  
A clashing bell of brass that rung:  
Long shadows lean upon the corn,  
And all the day dies scarlet-stung,  
The cloud in it a rosy thorn.

Below the pleasant moon, that tips  
The tree-tops of the hillside, fly  
The evening bats; the twilight slips  
Some fireflies like spangles by;  
She meets him, and their happy lips  
Touch; and one star leaps in the sky.

He takes her bucket, and they speak  
Of married hopes while in the grass  
The plum lies glowing as her cheek;

## SOME SUMMER DAYS

The patient cows look back or pass;  
And in the west one golden streak  
Burns like a great cathedral glass.

### IV

The skies are amber, blue, and green  
Before the coming of the sun;  
And all the deep hills sleep, serene  
As if enchanted; every one  
Is ribbed with morning mists that lean  
On woods through which vague whispers run.

Birds wake: and on the vine-hung knobs,  
Above the brook, a twittering  
Confuses songs; one warbler robs  
Another of its note; a wing  
Beats by; and now a wild throat throbs  
Triumphant; all the woodlands sing.

The sun is up: the hills are heaped  
With instant splendor; and the vales  
Surprised with shimmers that are steeped  
In purple where the thin mist trails;  
The water-fall, the rock it leaped,  
Are burning gold that foams and fails.

## SOME SUMMER DAYS

He drives his horses to the plow  
Along the vineyard slopes, where bask  
Dew-heavy grapes, half-ripened now,  
In sun-shot shafts of shade: no mask  
Of joy he wears; his face and brow  
Glow as he enters on his task.

Before him, soaring through the mist,  
The gray hawk wildly wings and screams;  
Its dewy back gleams, sunbeam-kissed,  
Above the wood that drips and dreams;  
He guides the plow with one strong fist;  
The soil rolls back in level seams.

Packed to the right the sassafras  
Lifts leafy walls of spice that shade  
The blackberries, whose tendrils mass  
Big berries in the coolness made;  
And drop their ripeness on the grass  
Where trumpet-flowers fall and fade.

White on the left the fence and trees  
That mark the garden; and the smoke,  
Uncurling in the early breeze,  
Tells of the roof beneath the oak;  
He turns his team, and, turning, sees  
The damp, dark soil his coulter broke.

## SOME SUMMER DAYS

Bees hum; and o'er the berries poise  
Lean-bodied wasps; loud blackbirds turn  
Following the plow: there is a noise  
Of insect wings that buzz and burn;—  
And now he hears his wife's low voice,  
The song she sings to help her churn.

## V

There are no clouds that drift around  
The moon's pearl-kindled crystal, (white  
As some sky-summoned spirit wound  
In raiment lit with limbs of light),  
That have not softened like the sound  
Of harps when Heaven forgets to smite.

The vales are deeper than the dark,  
And darker than the vales the woods  
That shadowy hill and meadow mark  
With broad, blurred lines, whereover broods  
Deep calm; and now a fox-hound's bark  
Upon the quietude intrudes.

And though the night is never still,  
Yet what we name its noises makes  
Its silence:—now a whippoorwill;  
A frog, whose hoarser tremor breaks



SOME SUMMER DAYS

The hush; then insect sounds that fill  
The night; an owl that hoots and wakes.

They lean against the gate that leads  
Into the lane that lies between  
The yard and orchard; flowers and weeds  
Smell sweeter than the odors keen  
That day distils from hotness; beads  
Of dew make cool the gray and green.

Their infant sleeps. They feel the peace  
Of something done that God has blessed,  
Still as the pulse that will not cease  
There in the cloud that lights the west:  
The peace of love that shall increase  
While soul to soul still gives its best.



'AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK:

I

The wild brook gleams on the sand and ripples  
Over the rocks of the riffle; brimming  
Under the elms like a nymph who dripples,  
Dips and glimmers and shines in swimming:  
Under the linns and the ash-trees lodging,  
Loops of the limpid waters lie,  
Shaken of schools of the minnows, dodging  
The glancing wings of the dragon-fly.

Lower, the loops are lines of laughter  
Over the stones and the crystal gravel;  
Afar they gloom, like a face seen after  
Mirth, where the waters slowly travel;  
Shadowy slow where the Fork is shaken  
Of the dropping bark of the sycamore,  
Where the water-snake, that the footsteps  
waken,  
Slides like a crooked root from shore.

AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

Peace of the forest; and silence, dimmer  
Than dreams. And now a wing that win-  
nows

The willow leaves, with their shadows slimmer  
In the shallow there than a school of min-  
nows:

Calm of the creek; and a huge tree twisted,  
Ringed, and turned to a tree of pearl;  
A gray-eyed man, who is farmer-fisted,  
And a dark-eyed, sinewy country girl.

The brow of the man is gnarled and wrinkled  
With the weight of the words that have just  
been spoken;

And the girl has smiled and her eyes have  
twinkled,

Though the bonds and the bands of their love  
lie broken:

She smiles, nor knows how the days have  
knotted

Her to the heart of the man who says:

“Let us follow the paths that we think allotted.  
I will go my ways and you your ways.

“And the man between us is your decision.

Worse or better he is your lover.—

Shall I say he 's worse since the sweet Elysian  
Prize he wins where I discover

AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

Only the hell of the luckless chooser?—

Shall I say he 's better than I, or more,  
Since he is winner and I am loser,  
His life 's made rich and mine made poor?"

"I tell you now as I oft and ever  
Have told," she answered, the laughter dying  
Down in her eyes, "that his arms have never  
Held me!—no!—but you think me lying,  
And you are wrong. And I think it better  
To part forever than still to dwell  
With the sad distrust, like an evil tetter,  
On our lives forever, and so farewell."

And she turned away; and he watched her  
going,  
The girlish pride in her eyes a-smoulder:  
He saw her go, and his lips were glowing  
Fever that parched. And he stood, one  
shoulder  
Slouched to the tree; and he saw her stoop-  
ing,  
There by the bank, with a reckless foot;  
Straighten; and tear from her breast his  
drooping  
Lilies and fasten the pleurisy-root.

## AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

With its orange fire he saw her passing  
On and on; and the blood beat, burning  
His brain to madness; and seemingly massing  
The weight of the world on his heart in  
yearning . . .

Butterflies swarmed in the moist sand-alleys;  
A fairy fleet of Ionian sails  
They seemed with their wings, or of pirate gal-  
leys,  
Maroon and yellow, for Elfland gales.

He watched her going; and harder, thicker  
The pulse of his breath and his heart's hard  
throbbing.—

How should he know that her heart was  
sicker?

How should he know that her soul was sob-  
bing? —

She never looked back: and he saw her vanish  
In swirls of the startled butterflies,  
Like a storm of flowers; and he could not  
banish

The thought he had lost his all through lies.

## II

He heard the cocks crow out the lonely hours.  
How long the night! how far away the dawn!

AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

It seemed long months since he had seen the  
flowers,  
The leaves, the sunlight, and the bee-hived  
lawn;  
Had heard the thrush flute in the tangled  
showers.

His burning eyes ached, staring at the black  
Stolidity of midnight. Would God send  
No cool relief unto his mind,—a rack  
Of inquisition,—tortures to unbend,  
That stretched him forward and now strained  
him back?

Incomprehensible and undivulged,  
The thought that took him back, retraced their  
walks,  
Through woods, on which the sudden perfumes  
bulged,  
The bird-songs and the brilliant-blossomed  
stalks;  
And all the freedom which their talk indulged.

Oh, strong appeal! And he would almost  
yield;  
When, firmly forward, he could feel her fault

AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

Oppose the error of a rock-like shield,  
And to resisting phalanxes cry halt —  
And, lo! bright cohorts broken on the field.

O mulct of morning! to the despot night  
Count down unminted gold, and let the day  
Walk free from dungeons of the dark; delight  
Herself on mountains of the violet ray,  
Clad in white maidenhood and morning white!

A melancholy coast, plunged deep in dream  
And death and silence, stretched the drowsy  
dark,  
Wherein he heard a round-eyed screech-owl  
scream,  
In lamentation, and a watch-dog bark,  
Vague as oblivion, lost in night's deep stream.

And then hope moved him to divide the blinds  
To see if those bright sparkles were a star's,  
Or but his feverish eyelids, which the mind's  
Commotion weighed.— No hint of morning  
bars  
With glimmer heaven's swart tapestry he finds.

So he remained, impatient, till the first  
Exploring crevices of Aztec morn,



## AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

Dim cracks of treasure, Eldorados burst :  
Then could he face his cowardice and scorn  
His jealousy that thus his life had cursed.

Love knew no barriers now. And where he  
went  
Each woodland path was musical with birds ;  
Each flow'r was richer, more divine of scent ;  
For love sought love with such expressive  
words  
That dawn's delivery was less eloquent.

### III

Who is it hunts with his dog  
There where the heron is flying  
Gray through the feathering fog  
Over the Fork, where is lying,  
Bridge-like, a butternut log,  
There where the horsemint is drying?

Who is it hunts in the brush,  
Under the linns and the beeches,  
Here where the water-falls rush,  
Dark, where the noon never reaches?  
Here where the Fork is one crush  
Of flags with a bloom like the peach's?



AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

He is handsome and supple and tall,  
Blond-haired and vigorous-chested,  
Blue-eyed as the bud by the fall  
Where he listens,— his rifle half rested,  
Half leaned on the crumbling stone wall,—  
Whose briars he lately has breasted.

He waits; and the sun on the dew  
Of the cedars and leaves of the bushes  
Strikes glittering frostiness through . . .  
If a covey of partridges flushes  
What good will a Winchester do,  
Or the dog to his feet that he crushes?

Then a man breaks strong through the weeds  
Where the buck-bushes toss and the spires  
Of the white-blossomed cohosh; 'mid reeds  
Wild-carrots, and trammelling briars:  
It is he! to his loved one who speeds —  
And the man in the bushes — he fires. . . .

From leaves of the wind-shaken wood  
The dew of the dawn is still falling:  
He is gone from the place where he stood,  
Just there where the black crow is calling:  
There is blood on the weeds: is it blood  
On the face of the man who is crawling?

AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

Red blood or a smudge of the dawn? —

Now he lies with his gray eyes wide, staring,  
Stiff, still at the sun: he has drawn

His limbs in a heap: and the faring  
Bee-martins light near or pass on,  
Not one of them knowing or caring.

It is noon: and the wood-dove is deep  
In the calm of its cooing: and over  
The tops of the forest trees sweep

The shadows of buzzards that hover:  
Wide-winged they sail on as asleep:  
And the bob-white is whistling from cover.

It is dusk: and the heat, that made wilt

The leaves and the wildflowers' faces,  
Gives place to the dew-drops that tilt

With coolness the weeds where are traces  
Of horror and darkness and guilt,  
That nothing can wash from those places.

It is night: and the hoot-owlet mocks

The dove of the day with wild weeping,  
The Fork is scarce heard on its rocks

Where the man is so quietly sleeping:  
Through the woods snaps the bark of a fox;  
The lightning is fitfully leaping.

AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

IV

All day, 'twixt hope and fear,  
She waited at the gate,  
Looking for him, more dear  
Now that he made her wait:  
Day went and night draws near:  
Stormy it grows and late.

Still, still she waits: great limbs  
The winds rend from the ridge;  
Each swollen shallow swims  
Head-deep below the bridge;  
The drift, that breaks and brims  
Swirls lighter than the midge.

The night grows wildly gray  
With lightning-litten rain;  
The forests sound and sway,  
An oak is rent in twain;  
The thunder rolls away  
Like some vast bolt and chain.

The Fork is whirling wreck  
Of field and farm and wood;  
And many a foaming fleck  
Drives where the rock-fence stood;—  
A torrent sweeps break-neck  
Above the washed-out blood.

AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

Night deepens: still she waits  
Expectant in despair:  
The Fork has reached the gates,  
The wood's wreck everywhere.  
But when the storm abates,  
She thinks, he will be there.

She sees the lightning rush  
Its blazing hells above;  
She hears the thunder crush  
Heaven as if earthquake-clove —  
Loud in the tempest's hush  
She calls with all her love.

He comes, she feels; and stands  
The rushing waters o'er  
Her feet, and on her hands  
And hair the wild down-pour,  
The lightnings are wild brands  
To light him to her door.

Night deepens: but she knows  
God will not fail to send  
Her love to soothe her woes,  
And one day's errors mend.—  
The wild stream foams and flows  
Booming in fall and bend.

AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK

Again the lightnings light  
The night like some wild torch;  
The waters foam and fight;  
And one uprooted larch  
Sweeps down, with something white  
Wedged in it, by her porch.

She stoops: the lurid rain  
Beats on her back and head —  
Ay! he hath come again!  
With livid lips once red!  
A bullet in his brain  
The night hath brought him — dead!

## A NIELLO

### I

It is not early spring and yet  
Of bloodroot blooms along the stream,  
And blotted banks of violet,  
    My heart will dream.

Is it because the wind-flower apes  
The beauty that was once her brow,  
That the white thought of it still shapes  
    The April now?

Because the wild-rose learned its blush  
From her fresh cheeks of maidenhood,  
Their thought makes June of barren brush  
    And empty wood?

And then I think how young she died —  
Straight, barren death stalks down the trees,  
The hard-eyed hours by his side  
    That kill and freeze.

## A NIELLO

### II

When orchards are in bloom again  
My heart will bound, my blood will beat,  
To hear the red-bird so repeat,  
    On boughs of rosy stain,  
His blithe, loud song,—like some far strain  
From out the past,—among the bloom,—  
(Where bee, and wasp, and hornet boom) —  
    Fresh, redolent with rain.

When orchards are in bloom once more,  
Invasions of lost dreams will draw  
My feet, like some insistent law,  
    Through blossoms to her door:  
In dreams I 'll ask her, as before,  
To let me help her at the well;  
And fill her pail; and long to tell  
    My love as once of yore.

I shall not speak until we quit  
The farm-gate, leading to the lane  
And orchard, all in bloom again,  
    'Mid which the wood-doves sit  
And coo; and through whose blossoms flit  
The cat-birds crying while they fly:  
Then tenderly I 'll speak, and try  
    To tell her all of it.



## A NIELLO

And in my dream again she 'll place  
Her hand in mine, as oft before,—  
When orchards are in bloom once more,—  
    With all her old-time grace:  
And we will tarry till a trace  
Of sunset dyes the heav'ns; and then —  
We 'll part, and, parting, I again  
    Will bend and kiss her face.

And homeward, dreaming, I will go  
Along the cricket-chirring ways,  
While sunset, like one crimson blaze  
    Of blossoms, lingers low:  
And my lost youth again I 'll know,  
And all her love, when spring is here —  
Hers! hers! now dead this many a year  
    Whose love still haunts me so.

## III

I would not die when Springtime lifts  
    The white world to her maiden mouth,  
And heaps its cradle with gay gifts,  
    Breeze-blown from out the singing South:  
Too full of life and loves that cling,  
    Too heedless of all mortal woe,  
The young, unsympathetic Spring,  
    That death should never know.

A NIELLO

I would not die when Summer shakes  
Her daisied locks below her hips,  
And, naked as a star that takes  
A cloud, into the silence slips.  
Too rich is Summer; poor in needs;  
Wrapped in her own warm loveliness  
Her pomp goes by, and never heeds  
If one be more or less.

But I would die when Autumn goes,  
The sad rain dripping from her hair,  
Through forests where the wild wind blows  
Death and the red wreck everywhere:  
Sweet as love's last farewells and tears  
'T would be to die, when heavens are gray,  
In the old autumn of my years,  
Like a dead leaf borne far away.

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

### I

#### SPRING ON THE HILLS

Ah, shall I follow, on the hills,  
The Spring, as wild wings follow?  
Where wild-plum trees make wan the hills,  
Crab-apple trees the hollow,  
Haunts of the bee and swallow?

In red-bud brakes and flowery  
Acclivities of berry;  
In dogwood dingles, showery  
With dew, where wrens make merry?  
Or drifts of swarming cherry?

In valleys of wild-strawberries,  
And of the clumped May-apple;  
Or cloud-like trees of hawberries,  
With which the south-winds grapple,  
That brook and pathway dapple?

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

With eyes of far forgetfulness,—  
Like some white wood-thing's daughter,  
Whose feet are bee-like fretfulness,—  
To see her run like water  
Through boughs that slipped or caught her.

O Spring, to seek, yet find you not,  
To search and still continue;  
To glimpse, to touch, but bind you not,  
To lose and then to win you,  
All sweet evasion in you.

In pearly, peach-blush distances  
You gleam; the woods are braided  
Of myths, of dream-existences;—  
There, where the brook is shaded,  
Some splendor surely faded.

O presence, like the primrose's,  
Once more I feel your power!  
In rainy scents of dim roses  
I breathe you for an hour,  
Elusive as a flower.

## II

### THE WOOD SPIRIT

Ah me! I still remember  
How flushed, before the shower,

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

The dusk was; like a scarlet rose,  
Or blood-red poppy-flower.

Now heaven is starred; the moonlight  
Lays blurs upon the grain —  
You may not know it from white frost,  
The moonlight on the rain.

And all the forest utters  
A restless moan in rest,  
For all the deep, dark shadow lies  
Like iron on its breast.

I mark the moveless shadow,  
I mark the unreaped corn,  
Then something whispers overhead,  
“Come to me, mortal-born.”

I sit alone and listen;  
The low leaves sound and sigh;  
The dew drips from the bearded grain,  
A mist slips from the sky.—

I hear her whisper, whisper,  
And breathe in some dim place;  
Her feet are easier than the dew,  
And than the mist her face.

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

I may not clasp her ever,  
This spirit made for song,  
Who dwelleth in the young, young oak  
The old, old oaks among.

Her limbs are molded moonlight;  
Her breasts are silver moons:  
She glimmers and she glitters where  
The purple shadow swoons.

And since she knows I love her,  
She says my soul has died,  
And laughs and mocks me in the mist  
That haunts the forest-side.

When winds run mad in woodlands  
And all the great boughs swing,  
I see her wild hair blow and blow  
Black as a raven's wing.

When winds are tamed and tethered  
And stars are keen as frost,  
I search and seek within the wood,  
There where my soul was lost.

I seek her, and she flies me;  
I follow; and the whole  
Dim woodland echoes with her voice,  
Soft calling to my soul.

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

### III

#### OWL ROOST

The slope is a mass of vines :  
If you walk in the daylight there,  
A gleam as of twilight shines  
Through the vines massed everywhere :  
Each trunk, that a creeper twines,  
Is a column, strong to bear  
The dome of its leaves that wave,  
Cathedral-dim and grave.

Black moss makes silent the feet :  
And, above, the fox-grapes lace  
So thick that the noonday heat  
Is chill as a murdered face :  
And the winds for miles repeat  
The fugue of a rolling bass :  
The deep leaves twinkle and turn  
But over no flower or fern.

An angular spider weaves  
Great webs between the trees,  
Webs that are witches' sieves :  
And honey- and bumblebees  
Go droning among the leaves,  
Like the fairies' oboës :



## DEEP IN THE FOREST

At dark the owlets croon  
To the stars and the sickle-moon.

At dark I will not go  
There where the branches sigh;  
Where naught but the glow-worms glow,  
Each one like a demon's eye:  
O'er which, like a battle-bow,  
With an arrow that it lets fly,  
The new-moon and one star  
Hang and glimmer afar.

At dawn, if my mood be dim,  
And the day be a cloudless one,  
There where the sad winds hymn  
I'll walk, but its shade will shun;  
Its shade, where I feel the grim  
Horror of something done  
Here in the years long past,  
That the place conceals to the last.

## IV

### MOSS AND FERN

Where rise the brakes of bramble there,  
Wrapped with the trailing rose,

DEEP IN THE FOREST

Through cane where waters ramble, there  
Where deep the green cress grows,  
Who knows?  
Perhaps, unseen of eyes of man,  
Hides Pan.

Perhaps the creek, whose pebbles make  
A foothold for the mint,  
May bear,— where soft its trebles make  
Confession,— some vague hint —  
(The print,  
Goat-hoofed, of one who lightly ran) —  
Of Pan.

Where, in the hollow of the hills  
Ferns deepen to the knees,  
What sounds are those above the hills,  
And now among the trees? —  
No breeze! —  
The syrinx, haply, none may scan,  
Of Pan.

In woods where waters break upon  
The hush like some soft word;  
Where sun-shot shadows shake upon  
The moss, who has not heard —  
No bird! —

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

The flute, as breezy as a fan,  
Of Pan?

Far in, where mosses lay for us  
Still carpets, cool and plush;  
Where bloom and branch and ray for us  
Swoon in the noonday flush,  
The hush  
May sound the satyr hoof a span  
Of Pan.

In woods where thrushes sing to us,  
And brooks dance sparkling heels;  
Where wild aromas cling to us,  
And all our worship kneels,—  
Who steals  
Upon us, haunch and face of tan,  
But Pan?

## V

### WOODLAND WATERS

Through leaves of the nodding trees,  
Where blossoms sway in the breeze,  
Pink bag-pipes made for the bees,  
Whose slogan is droning and drawling:  
Where the columbine scatters its bells,

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

And the wild bleeding-heart its shells,  
O'er mosses and rocks of the dells  
The brook of the forest is falling.

You can hear it under the hill  
When the wind in the wood is still,  
And, strokes of a fairy drill,  
Sounds the bill of the yellow-hammer :  
By the solomon's-seal it slips,  
Cohosh and the grass that drips —  
Like the words of an Undine's lips,  
Is the sound of its falls that stammer.

I lie in the woods: and the scent  
Of the honeysuckle is blent  
With the sound: and a Sultan's tent  
Is my dream, with the East enmeshéd:—  
A slave-girl sings; and I hear  
The languor of lute-strings near,  
And a dancing-girl of Cashmere  
In the harem of good Er Reshid.

From ripples of Irak lace  
She flashes the amorous grace  
Of her naked limbs and her face,  
While her golden anklets tinkle :  
Then over mosaic floors

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

Open seraglio doors  
Of cedar: by twos, by fours,—  
Like stars that tremble and twinkle,—

While the dulcimers sing, unseen,  
The handmaids come of the Queen  
'Neath silvern lamps, one sheen  
Of jewels of Afrite treasure:  
And I see the Arabia rise  
Of the Nights that were rich and wise,  
Beautiful, dark, in the eyes  
Of Zubeideh, the Queen of Pleasure.

## VI

### THE THORN-TREE

The night is sad with silver and the day is glad  
with gold,  
And the woodland silence listens to a legend  
never old,  
Of the Lady of the Fountain, whom the fairy  
people know,  
With her limbs of samite whiteness and her hair  
of golden glow,  
Whom the boyish South-wind seeks for and the  
girlish-stepping rain,

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

Whom the sleepy leaves still whisper men shall  
never see again ;

She whose Vivien charms were mistress of the  
magic Merlin knew,

That could change the dew to glow-worms and  
the glow-worms into dew.

There 's a thorn-tree in the forest, and the fairies  
know the tree,

With its branches gnarled and wrinkled as a  
face with sorcery ;

But the May-time brings it clusters of a rainy  
fragrant white,

Like the bloom-bright brows of beauty or a hand  
of lifted light.

And all day the silence whispers to the sun-ray of  
the morn

How the bloom is lovely Vivien and how Merlin  
is the thorn :

How she won the doting wizard with her naked  
loveliness

Till he told her demon secrets that but made his  
magic less.

How she charmed him and enchanted in the  
thorn-tree's thorns to lie

Forever with his passion that should never dim  
or die :

## DEEP IN THE FOREST

And with wicked laughter looking on this thing  
that she had done,  
Like a visible aroma lingered sparkling in the  
sun;  
How she stooped to kiss the pathos of an elf-  
lock of his beard,  
All in mockery, at parting, and mock pity of his  
weird:  
But her magic had forgotten that "who bends to  
give a kiss  
Will bring down the curse upon them of the  
person whose it is":  
So the silence tells the secret.— And at night the  
fairies see  
How the tossing bloom is Vivien, who is strug-  
gling to be free,  
In the thorny arms of Merlin, who, forever, is  
the tree.

## VII

### THE HAMADRYAD

She stood among the longest ferns  
The valley held; and in her hand  
One blossom like the light that burns,  
Vermilion, o'er a sunset land;  
And round her hair a twisted band



## DEEP IN THE FOREST

Of pink-pierced mountain-laurel blooms:  
And darker than dark pools, that stand  
Below the star-communing glooms,  
Her eyes beneath her hair's perfumes.

I saw the moon-pearl sandals on  
Her flower-white feet, that seemed too chaste  
To tread pure gold: and, like the dawn  
On splendid peaks that lord a waste  
Of solitude lost gods have graced,  
Her face: she stood there, faultless-hipped,  
Bound with the cestused silver,— chased  
With acorn-cup and crown, and tipped  
With oak-leaves,— whence her chiton slipped.

Limbs that the gods call loveliness! —  
The grace and glory of all Greece  
Wrought in one marble form were less  
Than her perfection! — 'Mid the trees  
I saw her; and time seemed to cease  
For me — And, lo! I lived my old  
Greek life again of classic ease,  
Barbarian as the myths that rolled  
Me back into the Age of Gold.

## WRECKAGE

### I

Love and the drift of many dreams,  
Under the moon of a Florida night,  
Over the beach with its silvery seams  
White as a sail is white.

Love that entered into two lives  
Out of the dreams that the nights have borne,  
Over the waves where the vapor drives,  
Mists that the stars have torn.

Love that welded two hearts and hands  
There by the sea, 'neath the shell-white moon,  
Like to the stars and the mists and the sands  
Setting two lives in tune.

Nights of love that one still keeps  
Sacred; — nights, that the faith of one  
Heartened there in the treacherous deeps,  
Under a tropic sun.

## WRECKAGE

### II

Parting he said to her: "Let us be true to them,—

All of our dreams, of the night, of the morning:

What is our present, its hope, but a clew to them?

What is our past but a dream and a warning?

Have you considered the life that regretfully  
Foldeth weak arms to the fate it might master?—

Had I been true to my dreams, never fretfully  
Halted, my future and joy had been faster."

They had come down to the ocean that, bellowing,

Boiled on the sand and the shells that were broken;

All of the summer was fading and yellowing;

Now they must part and their vows had been spoken.

It had befallen that heaven was lowering;

Over the sea, like the wraith of a wrecker,  
Clamored the gull; and the mist in the showering

East seemed the ghost of a lofty three-decker.

## WRECKAGE

Infinite foam; and the boom of the hollowing  
Breakers that buried the rocks to their  
shoulders;

Battle and boast of the deep in the wallowing  
World of the waves where the red sunset  
smoulders.

Long was the leap of the foam on the thunderous  
Beach; and each end of the beach was a flying  
Fog of the spray: and she said, "Let it sun-  
der us!

Still we will love, for love is undying!"

Yet, if it comes to the thing he has said to  
her? —

Wreckage and death? — the love she has  
given

Turned into sorrow? — Oh, that was a dread to  
her!

He, like a weed, by the waters far driven!  
Weeping, her bosom with shudders was shaken  
as

She for a moment hard clung to her sailor,  
Kissed him and — parted. His boat had been  
taken; as

Paler it grew the woman grew paler.

## WRECKAGE

### III

'All day the rain drove, falling  
    Upon the sombre sea ;  
All day, his wet sail hauling,  
    The sailor tacked a-lea ;  
And through the wild rain calling,  
    What was it? — was it he?

At dusk the gull clanged, drifting  
    Above the boiling brine ;  
And, through the wan west sifting,  
    Streamed one red sunset line ;  
And in its wild light shifting,  
    His far sail seemed to shine.

All night the wind wailed, sighing  
    Along the wreck-strewn coast ;  
All night the surf, defying,  
    Rolled thunder in and boast ;  
All night she heard a crying —  
    The sea? or some lost ghost?

### IV

The balm of the night and the glory,  
    The music and scent of the sea,  
Are as song to her heart or a story  
    Of the never-to-be.

## WRECKAGE

The stars and the night and the whiteness  
Of foam on the stretch of the sand;  
Faint foam that is tossed, like the brightness  
Of a mermaid's hand.

No sail on the ocean; no sailor  
On shore, and the winds all asleep;  
'And her face in the starlight far paler  
Than women who weep.  
'A mist on the deep; and the ghostly  
White moon in the deep of the night;  
'And a light that is neither; that mostly  
Is shadow not light.

No sea-gull, that vanished with gleaming  
Of wings, in the swing of the spray;  
Perhaps it was only her dreaming,  
Or merely a ray  
Of moonlight; the glimmering essence  
Of all that is grayest and dim —  
But never his face, or his presence  
That dripped in each limb.

'And she cried through the night, "Let me  
perish!  
O God, let me die of despair!  
If he whom I love, whom I cherish,  
Is weltering there!"

## WRECKAGE

She seemed but a sea-mist made woman,  
And he but a sound of the sea  
Made man where nothing was human,  
And never would be.

### V

Long he sailed the deep that glasses  
The face of God and His majesty ;  
Passed the Horn and the Seas of Grasses,  
Drifting aimlessly.

Time went by with its days that ever  
Burden the hearts of those who be  
Far away from their love ; whom sever  
Leagues of the shapeless sea.

Land at last, whose reefs rolled broken  
Foam of the balked waves everywhere ;  
Land ; one tangle of weeds and oaken  
Wreck and of rocks laid bare.  
Here and there the sand stretched livid  
Leagues of famine, one blinding glare ;  
Crag, o'er which gaunt birds winged vivid,  
Harsh in the earthquake air.

A little cloud in the sunset's splendor ;  
A little cloud that the sunset stains :  
Night, and a wisp of a moon that, slender,  
Dreams of the hurricanes.



## WRECKAGE

Winds that stride as with sounding sandals;  
Winds that the tempest has loosed from  
chains:  
Light that leaps like a spear he handles,  
Shaking his thunder-manes.

Wrenching the world in wreck asunder,  
Black rebellion of hell and night;  
Wrath and roar of the rocks and thunder,  
Flame and the winds that fight . . .  
Beating the drift and the hush together,  
Waves and winds that the morn makes white;  
Calm and peace of the tropic weather  
After the typhoon's might.

Clouds blow by and the storm 's forgotten.  
Savage coasts where the sea-cow feeds.  
Wash of weeds and the sea-weeds rotten.  
And a dead face in the weeds.  
None to know him or name him brother;  
Only the savage in feathers and beads;  
The South-Sea Islander, fitting another  
Barb in the shaft he speeds.

Far away where the sea-gulls gather;  
Far away where the evening falls,  
Lone she stands where the wild waves lather,  
Rolling the sea in walls.—

## WRECKAGE

Who shall tell her, the lonely tryster?  
Tell her of him on whom she calls? —  
Suns that beat on his face and blister?  
Stars? or the sea that crawls?

## VI

She dreamed that there, beside the ocean sitting,  
Alone she watched, when, at her feet, behold!  
Between the foam-ridge and the sea-gull's flit-  
ting,  
His body rolled.

All was not as it was before they parted;  
She dreamed he had remembered, she forgot;  
He 'd said he would forget her, angry-hearted,  
And yet could not.

And then it seemed that, had she known, she  
surely  
Had given pity when she could not give  
Her love to him, who loved her madly, purely,  
And bade him live.

And then she dreamed she looked upon the  
slanted  
Hulk of a wreck: and high above the wave,  
Worn of the wind and of the cactus planted,  
His nameless grave.

## SIREN SANDS

### I

The rhododendrons bloom and shake  
Their petals wide and gleam and sway  
Among palmettoes, by the lake,  
Beyond the bay.

Shores where we watched the eve reveal  
Her cloudy sanctuaries, while  
The bay lay lavaed into steel  
For mile on mile.

We watched the purple coast confuse  
Soft outlines with the graying light;  
And towards the gulf a vessel lose  
Itself in night.

We saw the sea-gulls dip and soar;  
The wild-fowl gather past the pier;  
And from rich skies, as from God's door,  
Gold far and near.

## SIREN SANDS

Two foreign seamen passed and we  
Heard mellow Spanish; like twin stars,  
Where they lounged smoking, we could see  
Their faint cigars.

Night; and the heavens stained and strewn  
With stars the waters idealized,  
Until their light the rising moon  
Epitomized.

Morn; and the pine-wood balms awake;  
Winds roll the dew-drop from the rose;  
The wide lake burns; and, on the lake,  
The ripple glows.

Far coasts detach deep purple from  
The blue horizon, and the day  
Beholds the sunburnt sailor come  
And sail away.

The bird that slept at dusk, at dawn  
Awakes again within the thorn.—  
Sweet was the night to it, now gone;  
And sweet is morn.

## II

Through halls of columned scarlet,  
Like some dark queen, the Dusk  
Trails skirts of myrrh and musk,

## SIREN SANDS

Hung in each ear, a starlet  
Gleams,— gems the clouds' gaunt Jinn  
Guard; and, beneath her chin,  
The moon, an opal tusk.

There lies a ghostly glory  
Upon the sea and sand;  
A gleam, as of a hand,  
Stretched from the realms of story,  
Of rosy golden ray;  
Pointing the world the way  
To some far Fairyland.

As fades the west's vermilion  
Above the distant coasts,  
The stars come out in hosts;  
Within the night's pavilion,  
As flower speaks to flower,  
Dim hour calls to hour,  
Pale with the past's sweet ghosts.

### III

Music that melts through moonlight,  
Faint on the summer breeze;  
Fireflies, moonlight, and foaming  
Susurrus of the seas.

## SIREN SANDS

Music that drifts like perfume,  
And touches like a hand;  
Dreams and stars and the ocean,  
And we alone on the sand.

Glimmers and vague reflections,  
And the white swirl of the foam;  
Pale on the purple a vessel,  
And a light that beckons home.

And I seem to see the music,  
On a moonbeam bar that floats,  
For the music is moonlight magic,  
And the flies are its golden notes.

And I seem to hear one singing  
Of a brown old coast and sea,  
Of lives that were filled with passion,  
And old-world tragedy.

And I hear the harsh reef's calling  
For a noble ship at sea,  
And the winds of the ocean singing  
A dirge for the dead to be.

Till it seems that I am the pilot,  
And you are the mermaidén,  
Who lures him on to the wrecking  
And into her arms again.

## SIREN SANDS

### *Song*

Over the hills where the winds are waking

All is lone as the soul of me;

Over the hills where the stars are shaking,

Breton hills by the sea.

These were with me to tell me often

How she pined in her Croisic home,

Winds that sing and the stars that soften

Over the miles of foam.

Fishers' nets and the sailor faces;

Sad salt marshes and granite piers;

Brown, loud coast where the long foam races —

And a parting full of tears.

A gray sail's ghost where the autumn lies on

Wraiths of the mist and the squall-blown

rain;

Her dark girl eyes that search the horizon,

Grave with a haunting pain.

Stars may burn and the wild winds whistle

Over the rocks where the sea-gulls rave —

My heart is bleak as the wind-worn thistle

Dead on her seaside grave.



## SIREN SANDS

### IV

Sad as sad eyes that ache with tears  
The stars of night shine through the leaves;  
And shadowy as the Fates' dim shears  
The weft that twilight weaves.

The summer sunset marched long hosts  
Of gold adown one golden peak,  
That flamed and fell; and now gray ghosts  
Of mist the far west streak.

They seem the shades of things that weep,  
Wan things the heavens would conceal;  
Blood-stained; that bear within them, deep,  
Red wounds that will not heal.

Night comes, and with it storm, that slips  
Wild angles of the jagged light:—  
I feel the wild rain on my lips,—  
A wild girl is the Night.

A moaning tremor sweeps the trees;  
And all the stars are packed with death:—  
She holds me by the neck and knees,  
I feel her wild, wet breath.

## SIREN SANDS

Hell and its hags drive on the rain:—  
Night holds me by the hair and pleads;  
Her kisses fall like blows again;  
My brow is dewed with beads.

The thunder plants wild beacons on  
Each volleying height.— My soul seems blown  
Far out to sea. The world is gone,  
And night and I alone.

Tampa, Florida, February, 1893.

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES.

### I

#### THE BATTLE

The night had passed. The day had come,  
Bright-born, into a cloudless sky:  
We heard the rolling of the drum,  
And saw the war-flags fly.

And noon had crowded upon morn  
Ere Conflict shook her red locks far,  
And blew her brazen battle-horn  
Upon the hills of War.

Noon darkened into dusk — one blot  
Of nightmare lit with hell-born suns; —  
We heard the scream of shell and shot  
And booming of the guns.

On batteries of belching grape  
We saw the thundering cavalry  
Hurl headlong,— iron shape on shape,—  
With shout and bugle-cry.

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

When dusk had moaned and died, and night  
Came on, wind-swept and wild with rain,  
We slept, 'mid many a bivouac light,  
And vast fields heaped with slain.

### II

#### IN HOSPITAL

Wounded to death he lay and dreamed  
The drums of battle beat afar,  
And round the roaring trenches screamed  
The hell of war.

Then woke; and, weeping, spoke one word  
To the kind nurse who bent above;  
Then in the whitewashed ward was heard  
A song of love.

The song *she* sang him when she gave  
The portrait that he kissed; then sighed,  
"Lay it beside me in the grave!"  
And smiled and died.

### III

#### THE SOLDIER'S RETURN

A brown wing beat the apple leaves and shook  
Some blossoms on her hair. Then, note on  
note,

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

The bird's wild music bubbled. In her book,  
Her old romance, she seemed to read. No look  
Betrayed the tumult in her trembling throat.

The thrush sang on. A dreamy wind came  
down

From one white cloud of afternoon and  
fanned

The dropping petals on her book and gown,  
And touched her hair, whose braids of quiet  
brown

Gently she smoothed with one white jeweled  
hand.

Then, with her soul, it seemed, from feet to  
brow

She felt him coming: 't was his heart, his  
breath

That stirred the blossom on the apple bough;  
His step the wood-thrush warbled to. And now  
Her cheek went crimson, now as white as  
death.

Then on the dappled page his shadow — yes,  
Not unexpected, yet her haste assumed  
Fright's startle; and low laughter did confess  
His presence there, soft with his soul's caress  
And happy manhood, where the rambo  
bloomed.

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

Quickly she rose and all her gladness sent  
Wild welcome to him. Her his unhurt arm  
Drew unresisted; and the soldier leant  
Fond lips to hers. She wept. And so they  
went  
Deep in the orchard towards the old brick  
farm.

### IV

#### THE APPARITION

A day of drought, foreboding rain and wind,  
As if stern heaven, feeling earth had sinned,  
Frowned all its hatred. When the evening  
came,  
Along the west, from bank on bank unthinned  
Of clouds, the storm unfurled its oriflamme.

Then lightning signaled, and the thunder woke  
Its monster drums, and all God's torrents  
broke.—

She saw the wild night when the dark pane  
flashed;  
Heard, where she stood, the disemboweled oak  
Roar into fragments when the welkin crashed.

Long had she waited for a word. And, lo!  
Anticipation still would not say "No:"

He has not written; he will come to her;

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

At dawn! — to-night! — Her heart hath told her  
so;

And so expectancy and love aver.

She seems to hear his fingers on the pane —  
The glass is blurred, she can not see for rain:

Is *that* his horse?— the wind is never still:  
And *that* his cloak?— ah, surely that is plain! —  
A torn vine tossing at the window-sill.

She hurries forth to meet him; pale and wet,  
She sees his face; the war-soiled epaulet;

A sabre-scar that bleeds from brow to cheek;  
And now he smiles, and now their lips have met,  
And now . . . Dear heart, he fell at  
Cedar Creek!

## V

### WOUNDED

It was in August that they brought her news  
Of his bad wounds; the leg that he must lose.

And August passed, and when October raised  
Red rebel standards on the hills that blazed,  
They brought a haggard wreck; she scarce knew  
whose,

Until they told her, standing stunned and  
dazed.



## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

A shattered shadow of the stalwart lad,  
The five-months husband, whom his country had  
    Enlisted, strong for war; returning this,  
    Whose broken countenance she feared to kiss,  
While health's remembrance stood beside him  
    sad,  
And grieved for that which was no longer his.

They brought him on a litter; and the day  
Was bright and beautiful. It seemed that May  
    In woodland rambles had forgot her path  
    Of season, and, disrobing for a bath,  
By the autumnal waters of some bay,  
    With her white nakedness had conquered  
    Wrath.

Far otherwise she wished it: wind and rain;  
The sky, one gray commiserative pain;  
    Sleet, and the stormy drift of frantic leaves;  
    To match the misery that each perceives  
'Aches in her hand-clutched bosom, and is plain  
    In eyes and mouth and all her form that  
    grieves.

Theirs, a mute meeting of the lips; she stooped  
And kissed him once: one long, dark side-lock  
    drooped

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

And brushed against the bandage of his  
breast ;  
With feeble hands he held it and caressed ;  
Then all his happiness in one look grouped,  
Saying, " Now I am home, I crave but rest."

Once it was love ! but then the battle killed  
All that sweet nonsense of his youth, and filled  
His heart with sterner passion.— Ah, well !  
peace  
Must balm its pain with patience ; whose sur-  
cease  
Means reconciliation ; e'en as God hath willed,  
With war or peace who shapes His ends at  
ease.—

What else for these but, where their mortal lot  
Of weak existence drags rent ends, to knot  
The frail unravel up ! — while love (afraid  
Time will increase the burthen on it laid),  
Seeks consolation, that consoleth not,  
In toil and prayer, waiting what none evade.

## VI

### THE MESSAGE

Long shadows toward the east : and in the  
west

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

A blaze of garnet sunset, wherein rolled  
One cloud like some great gnarly log of  
gold;  
Each gabled casement of the farm seemed  
dressed  
In ghosts of roses blossoming manifest.

And she had brought his letter there to read,  
There on the porch, that faced the locust  
glade;

To watch the summer sunset burn and fade,  
And breathe the twilight scent of wood and  
weed,

Forget all care and her soul's hunger feed.

And on his face her fancy mused a while:

“Dark hair, dark eyes.— And now he has a  
beard

Dark as his hair.”— She smiled; yet almost  
feared

It changed him so she could not reconcile  
Her heart to that which hid his lips and smile.

Then tried to feature, but could only see  
The beardless man who bent to her and  
kissed

Her and their child and left them to enlist:  
She heard his horse grind in the gravel: he  
Waved them adieu and rode to fight with Lee.

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

Now all around her drowsed the hushful hum  
Of evening insects. And his letter spoke  
Of love and longings to her: nor awoke  
One echo of the bugle and the drum,  
But all their future in one kiss did sum.

The stars were thick now; and the western  
blush  
Drained into darkness. With a dreamy sigh  
She rocked her chair.— It must have been  
the cry  
Of infancy that made her rise and rush  
To where their child slept, and to hug and  
hush.

Then she returned. But now her ease was  
gone.

She knew not what, she felt an unknown  
fear  
Press, tightening, at her heart-strings; then  
a tear  
Scalded her eyelids, and her cheeks grew wan  
As helpless sorrow's, and her white lips drawn.

With stony eyes she grieved against the skies,  
A slow, dull, aching agony that knew  
Few tears, and saw no answer shining to

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

Her silent questions in the stars' still eyes,  
"Where Peace delays and where her soldier  
lies."

They could have told her. Peace was far  
away,  
Beyond the field that belched black batteries  
All the red day. 'Mid picket silences,  
On woodland mosses, in a suit of gray,  
Shot through the heart, he by his rifle lay.

## VII

### THE WOMAN ON THE HILL

The storm-red sun, through wrecks of wind and  
rain,  
And dead leaves driven from the frantic  
boughs,  
Where, on the hill-top, stood a gaunt, gray  
house,  
Flashed wildest ruby on each rainy pane.

Then woods grew darker than unburdened grief;  
And, crimson through the woodland's ruin,  
streamed  
The sunset's glare—a furious eye, which  
seemed  
Watching the moon rise like a yellow leaf.

## WAR-TIME SILHOUETTES

The rising moon, against which, like despair,  
High on the hill, a woman, darkly drawn,  
The wild leaves round her, stood; with features wan,  
And tattered dress and wind-distracted hair.

'As still as death, and looking, not through tears,  
For the young face of one she knows is lost,  
While in her heart the melancholy frost  
Gathers of all the unforgotten years.

What if she heard to-night a hurrying hoof,  
Wild as the whirling of the withered leaf,  
Bring her a more immedicable grief,  
A shattered shape to live beneath her roof!

The shadow of him who claimed her once as  
wife;  
Her lover! — no! — the wreck of all their past  
Brought back from battle! — Better to the last  
A broken heart than heartbreak all her life!

## MOSBY AT HAMILTON

Down Loudon lanes, with swinging reins,  
And clash of spur and sabre,  
And bugling of the battle-horn,  
Six score and eight we rode that morn,  
Six score and eight of Southern born,  
All tried in war's hot labor.

Full in the sun, at Hamilton,  
We met the South's invaders;  
Who, over fifteen hundred strong,  
'Mid blazing homes had marched along  
All night, with Northern shout and song,  
To crush the rebel raiders.

Down Loudon lanes, with streaming manes,  
We spurred in wild March weather;  
And all along our war-scarred way  
The graves of Southern heroes lay —  
Our guide-posts to revenge that day,  
As we rode grim together.



MOSBY AT HAMILTON

Old tales still tell some miracle  
Of Saints in holy writing —  
But who shall say why hundreds fled  
Before the few that Mosby led,  
Unless it was that even the dead  
Fought with us then when fighting.

While Yankee cheers still stunned our ears,  
Of troops at Harper's Ferry;  
While Sheridan led on his Huns,  
And Richmond rocked to roaring guns,  
We felt the South still had some sons  
She would not scorn to bury.

## THE FEUD

Rocks, trees and rocks ; and down a mossy stone  
The murmuring ooze and trickle of a stream  
Through brambles, where the mountain spring  
lies lone,—  
A gleaming cairngorm where the shadows  
dream,—  
And one wild road winds like a saffron seam.

Here sang the thrush, whose pure, mellifluous  
note  
Dropped golden sweetness on the fragrant  
June ;  
Here cat- and blue-bird and wood-sparrow wrote  
Their presence on the silence with a tune ;  
And here the fox drank 'neath the mountain  
moon.

Frail ferns and dewy mosses and dark brush,—  
Impenetrable briers, deep and dense,  
And wiry bushes ; — brush, that seemed to crush  
The struggling saplings with its tangle, whence  
Sprawled out the ramble of an old rail-fence.

## THE FEUD

A wasp buzzed by ; and then a butterfly  
In orange and amber, like a floating flame ;  
And then a man, hard-eyed and very sly,  
Gaunt-cheeked and haggard and a little lame,  
With an old rifle, down the mountain came.

He listened, drinking from a flask he took  
Out of the ragged pocket of his coat ;  
Then all around him cast a stealthy look ;  
Lay down ; and watched an eagle soar and  
float,  
His fingers twitching at his hairy throat.

The shades grew longer ; and each Cumberland  
height  
Loomed, framed in splendors of the dolphin  
dusk.

Around the road a horseman rode in sight ;  
Young, tall, blond-bearded. Silent, grim, and  
brusque,  
He in the thicket aimed — Quick, harsh, then  
husk,

The echoes barked among the hills and made  
Repeated instants of the shot's distress.—  
Then silence — and the trampled bushes  
swayed : —  
Then silence, packed with murder and the  
press  
Of distant hoofs that galloped riderless.

## LYNCHERS

At the moon's down-going, let it be  
On the quarry hill with its one gnarled tree.

The red-rock road of the underbrush,  
Where the woman came through the summer  
hush.

The sumac high and the elder thick,  
Where we found the stone and the ragged  
stick.

The trampled road of the thicket, full  
Of footprints down to the quarry pool.

The rocks that ooze with the hue of lead,  
Where we found her lying stark and dead.

The scraggy wood; the negro hut,  
With its doors and windows locked and shut.

## LYNCHERS

A secret signal; a foot's rough tramp;  
A knock at the door; a lifted lamp.

An oath; a scuffle; a ring of masks;  
A voice that answers a voice that asks.

A group of shadows; the moon's red fleck;  
A running noose and a man's bared neck.

A word, a curse, and a shape that swings;  
The lonely night and a bat's black wings.

At the moon's down-going, let it be  
On the quarry hill with its one gnarled tree.

## DEAD MAN'S RUN

He rode adown the autumn wood,  
A man dark-eyed and brown;  
A mountain girl before him stood  
Clad in a homespun gown.

“To ride this road is death for you!  
My father waits you there;  
My father and my brother, too —  
You know the oath they swear.”

He holds her by one berry-brown wrist,  
And by one berry-brown hand;  
And he hath laughed at her and kissed  
Her cheek the sun hath tanned.

“The feud is to the death, sweetheart:  
But forward must I ride.”—  
“And if you ride to death, sweetheart,  
My place is by your side.”

## DEAD MAN'S RUN

Low hath he laughed again and kissed  
And helped her with his hand;  
And they have galloped into the mist  
That belts the autumn land.

And they had passed by Devil's Den,  
And come to Dead Man's Run,  
When in the brush rose up two men,  
Each with a levelled gun.

"Down! down! my sister!" cries the one;—  
She gives the reins a twirl.—  
The other shouts, "He shot my son!  
And now he steals my girl!"

The rifles crack: she will not wail:  
He will not cease to ride:  
But, oh! her face is pale, is pale,  
And the red blood stains her side.

"Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart!  
The road is rough to ride!"—  
The road is rough by gulch and bluff,  
And her hair blows wild and wide.

"Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart!  
The bank is steep to ride!"—



DEAD MAN'S RUN

The bank is steep for a strong man's leap,  
And her eyes are staring wide.

“Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart!  
The Run is swift to ride!”—  
The Run is swift with mountain drift,  
And she sways from side to side.

Is it a wash of the yellow moss,  
Or drift of the autumn's gold,  
The mountain torrent foams across  
For the dead pine's roots to hold?

Is it the bark of the sycamore,  
Or peel of the white birch-tree,  
The mountaineer on the other shore  
Hath followed and still can see?

No mountain moss or leaves, wild rolled,  
No bark of birchen-gray!—  
Young hair of gold and a face death-cold  
The wild stream sweeps away.

## THE RAID

### I

Far in the forest, where the rude road winds  
Through twisted briars and weeds, stamped  
down and caked  
With mountain mire, the clashing boughs are  
raked  
Again with rain whose sobbing frenzy blinds.

There is a noise of winds; a gasp and gulp  
Of swollen torrents; and the sodden smell  
Of woodland soil, dead trees — that long since  
fell  
Among the moss — red-rotted into pulp.

Fogged by the rain, far up the mountain glen,  
Deep in a cave, an elfish wisp of light;  
And stealthy shadows stealing through the  
night  
With strong, set faces of determined men.

## THE RAID

### II

'Twi'x't fog and fire, in pomps of chrysoprase,  
Above vague peaks, the morning hesitates  
Ere, o'er the threshold of her golden gates,  
Speeds the wild splendor of her chariot's rays.

A gleaming glimmer in the sun-speared mist,  
A cataract, reverberating, falls:  
Upon a pine a gray hawk sits and calls,  
Then soars away no bigger than a fist.

Along the wild path, through the oaks and firs,—  
Rocks, where the rattler coils himself and  
suns,—  
Big-booted, belted, and with twinkling guns,  
The posse marches with its moonshiners.

## THE BROTHERS

Not far from here, it lies beyond  
That low-hilled belt of woods. We 'll take  
This unused lane where brambles make  
A wall of twilight, and the blond  
Brier-roses pelt the path and flake  
The margin waters of a pond.

This is its fence — or that which was  
Its fence once — now, rock rolled from rock,  
One tangle of the vine and dock,  
Where bloom the wild petunias;  
And this its gate, the ragweeds block,  
Hot with the insects' dusty buzz.

Two wooden posts, wherefrom has peeled  
The weather-blistered paint, still rise;  
Gaunt things — that groan when some one  
    tries  
The gate whose hinges, rust-congealed,  
Snarl open: — on each post still lies  
Its carven panther with a shield.

## THE BROTHERS

We enter ; and between great rows  
Of locusts winds a grass-grown road ;  
And at its glimmering end,— o'erflowed  
With quiet light,— the white front shows  
Of an old mansion, grand and broad,  
With grave, Colonial porticoes.

Grown thick around it, dark and deep,  
The locust trees make one vast hush ;  
Their brawny branches crowd and crush  
Its very casements, and o'ersweep  
Its rotting roofs : their tranquil rush  
Haunts all its spacious rooms with sleep.

Still is it called The Locusts ; though  
None lives here now. A tale 's to tell  
Of some dark thing that here befell ;  
A crime that happened years ago,  
When past its walls, with shot and shell,  
The war swept on and left it so.

For one black night, within it, shame  
Made revel, while, all here about,  
With prayer or curse or battle-shout,  
Men died and homesteads leapt in flame :  
Then passed the conquering Northern rout,  
And left it silent and the same.

## THE BROTHERS

Why should I speak of what has been?  
Or what dark part I played in all?  
Why ruin sits in porch and hall  
Where pride and gladness once were seen;  
And why beneath this lichened wall  
The grave of Margaret is green.

Heart-broken Margaret! whose fate  
Was sadder far than his who won  
Her hand — my brother Hamilton —  
Or mine, who learned to know too late;  
Who learned to know, when all was done,  
And naught I did could expiate.

To expiate is still my lot! —  
And, like the Ancient Mariner,  
To show to others how things were,  
And what I am, still helps me blot  
A little from that crime's red blur,  
That on my life is branded hot.

He was my only brother. She  
A sister of my brother's friend.  
They met, and married in the end.  
And I remember well when he  
Brought her rejoicing home, the trend  
Of war moved towards us sullenly.

## THE BROTHERS

And scarce a year of wedlock when  
Its red arms tore him from his bride.  
With lips by hers thrice sanctified  
He left to ride with Morgan's men.  
And I—I never could decide—  
Remained behind. It happened then.

Long days went by. And, oft delayed,  
A letter came of loving word  
Scrawled by some camp-fire, sabre-stirred,  
Or by a pine-knot's fitful aid,  
When in the saddle, armed and spurred  
And booted for some hurried raid.

Then weeks went by. I do not know  
How long it was before there came,  
Blown from the North, the clarion fame  
Of Morgan, who, with blow on blow,  
Had drawn a line of blood and flame  
From Tennessee to Ohio.

Then letters ceased; and days went on.  
No word from him. The war rolled back,  
And in its turgid crimson track  
A rumor grew, like some wild dawn,  
All ominous and red and black,  
With news of our lost Hamilton.



## THE BROTHERS

News hinting death or capture. Yet  
No word was sure; till one day,— fed  
By us,— some men rode up who said  
They 'd been with Morgan and had met  
Disaster, and that he was dead,  
My brother.— I and Margaret

Believed them. Grief was ours too:  
But mine was more for her than him:  
Grief, that her eyes with tears were dim:  
Grief, that became the avenue  
For love, who crowned the sombre brim  
Of death's dark cup with rose-red hue.

In sympathy,— unconsciously  
Though it be given,— I hold, doth dwell  
The germ of love that time shall swell  
To blossom. Sooner then in me —  
When close relations so befell —  
That love should spring from sympathy.

Our similar tastes and mutual bents  
Combined to make us intimates  
From our first meeting. Different states  
Of interest then our temperaments  
Begot. Then friendship, that abates  
No love, whose soul it represents.

## THE BROTHERS

These led to talks and dreams: how oft  
We sat at some wide window while  
The sun sank o'er the hills' far file,  
Serene; and of the cloud aloft  
Made one vast rose; and mile on mile  
Of firmament grew sad and soft.

And all in harmony with these  
Dim clemencies of dusk, afar  
Our talks and dreams went; while the star  
Of evening brightened through the trees:  
We spoke of home; the end of war;  
We dreamed of life and love and peace.

How on our walks, in listening lanes  
Or confidences of the wood,  
We paused to hear the dove that cooed;  
Or gathered wildflowers, taking pains  
To find the fairest; or her hood  
Filled with wild fruit that left deep stains.

No echo of the drum or fife,  
No hint of conflict entered in  
Our thoughts then. Will you call it sin —  
Indifference to a nation's strife?  
What side might lose, what side might win,  
Both immaterial to our life.

## THE BROTHERS

Into the past we did not look :  
Beyond what was we did not dream ;  
While onward rolled the thunderous stream  
Of war, that, in its torrent, took  
One of our own. No crimson gleam  
Of its wild course around us shook.

At last we knew. And when we learned  
How he had fallen, Margaret  
Wept ; and, albeit my eyes were wet,  
Within my soul I half discerned  
A joy that mingled with regret,  
A grief that to relief was turned.

As time went on and confidence  
Drew us more strongly each to each,  
Why did no intimation reach  
Its warning hand into the dense  
Soul-silence, and confuse the speech  
Of love's unbroken eloquence !

But, no ! no hint to turn the poise,  
Or check the impulse of our youth ;  
To chill it with the living truth  
As with the awe of God's own voice ;  
No hint, to make our hope uncouth ;  
No word, to warn us from our choice.

## THE BROTHERS

To me a wall seemed overthrown  
That social law had raised between;  
And o'er its ruin, broad and green  
A path went, I possessed alone;  
The sky above seemed all serene;  
The land around seemed all my own.

What shall I say of Margaret  
To justify her part in this?  
That her young heart was never his?  
But had been mine since first we met?  
So would you say! — Enough it is  
That when he left she loved him yet.

So passed the spring, and summer sped;  
And early autumn brought the day  
When she her hand in mine should lay,  
And I should take her hand and wed:  
And still no hint that might gainsay,  
No warning word of quick or dead.

The day arrived; and with it born,  
A battle, sullyng the East  
With boom of cannon, that increased,  
And throb of musket and of horn:  
Until at last, towards dusk, it ceased;  
And men with faces wild and worn,

## THE BROTHERS

In fierce retreat, swept past; now groups;  
Now one by one: now sternly white,  
Or blood-stained; now with looks whose  
fright

Said all was lost: then sullen troops  
That, beaten, still kept up the fight.—  
Then came the victors: shadowy loops

Of men and horse, that left a crowd  
Of officers in hall and porch. . . .  
While through the land, around, the torch  
Circled, and many a fiery cloud  
Marked out the army's iron march  
In furrows red that pillage plowed,

Here were we wedded. . . . Ask the  
years

How such could be, while over us  
A sword of wrath swung ominous,  
And on our cheeks its breath struck fierce!—  
All I remember is —'t was thus;  
And Margaret's eyes were wet with tears.

No other cause my memory sees  
Save this, *that* night was set; and when  
I found my home filled with armed men  
With whom were all my sympathies  
Of Union — why postpone it then?  
So argued conscience into peace.

## THE BROTHERS

And then it was, when night had passed,  
There came to me an orderly  
With word of a Confederate spy  
Just taken; who, with head downcast,  
Had asked one favor, this: "That I  
Would see him ere he breathed his last."

I stand alone here. Heavily  
My thoughts go back. Had I not gone,  
The dead had still been dead! (for none  
Had yet believed his story) he,  
My dead-deemed brother, Hamilton,  
Who in the spy confronted me.

O you who never have been tried,  
How can you judge me!— In my place  
I saw him standing,— who can trace  
My heart-thoughts then!— I turned aside,  
A son of some unnatural race,  
And did not speak: and so he died. . . .

In hospital or prison, when  
It was he lay; what had forbid  
His home return so long: amid  
What hardships he had suffered, then  
I dared not ask; and when I did,  
Long afterwards, inquire of men,



## THE BROTHERS

No thing I learned. But this I feel —  
He who had so returned to life  
Was not a spy. Through stress and strife,—  
This makes my conscience hard to heal! —  
He had escaped: he sought his wife;  
He sought his home that should conceal.

And Margaret! Oh, pity her!  
A criminal I sought her side,  
Still thinking love was justified  
In all for her — whatever were  
The price: a brother thrice denied,  
Or thrice a brother's murderer.

Since then long years have passed away.  
And through those years, perhaps, you 'll ask  
How to the world I wore my mask  
Of honesty?— I can but say  
Beyond my powers it was a task;  
Before my time it turned me gray.

And when at last the ceaseless hiss  
Of conscience drove, and I betrayed  
All to her, she knelt down and prayed;  
Then rose: and 'twixt us an abyss  
Was opened; and she seemed to fade  
Out of my life: I came to miss



## THE BROTHERS

The sweet attentions of a bride :  
For each appealing heart's caress  
In me her heart assumed a dress  
Of dull indifference ; till denied  
To me was all responsiveness ;  
And then I knew her love had died.

Ah, had she loaded me, perchance,  
With wild reproach or even hate,  
Such would have helped me hope and wait  
Forgiveness and returned romance :  
But 'twixt our souls, instead, a gate  
She closed of silent tolerance.

Yet, 't was for love of her I lent  
My soul to crime. . . . I question me  
Often, if less entirely  
I'd loved her, then, in that event  
She had been justified to see  
The deed alone stand prominent.

The deed alone ! But love records  
In his own heart, I will aver,  
No depth I did not feel for her  
Beyond the plummet-reach of words :  
And though there may be worthier,  
No truer love this world affords

## THE BROTHERS

Than mine was, though it could not rise  
Above itself. And so 't was best,  
Perhaps, that she saw manifest  
The crime, so I,— as saw her eyes,—  
Might see; and so, in soul confessed,  
Some life atonement might devise.

Sadly my heart one comfort keeps,  
That, towards her end, she took my hands  
And said,— as one who understands,—  
“ Had I but seen! — But love that weeps  
Sees only as its loss commands.”  
And sighed.— Beneath this stone she sleeps.

Yes; I have suffered for that sin:  
Yet in no instance would I shun  
What I should suffer. Many a one,  
Who heard my tale, has tried to win  
Me to believe that Hamilton  
It was not; and, though proven kin,

This had not saved him. Still the stain  
Of the intention — had I erred  
And 't was not he — had writ the word  
Red on my soul that branded Cain:  
For still my error had incurred  
The fact of guilt that would remain.

## THE BROTHERS

Ah, love at best is insecure,  
And lives with doubt and vain regret ;  
And hope and faith, with faces set  
Upon the past, are never sure ;  
And through their fever, grief, and fret  
The heart may fail that should endure.

For in ourselves, however blend  
The passions that make heaven and hell,  
Is evil not accountable  
For most the good we comprehend?  
And through these two,— or ill, or well,—  
Man must evolve his spiritual end.

It is with deeds that we must ask  
Forgiveness: for, upon this earth,  
Life walks alone from very birth  
With death, hope tells us is a mask  
For life beyond of vaster worth,  
Where sin no more sets love a task.

## EPILOGUE

*Would I could sing of joy I only  
Remember as without alloy:  
Of life full-filled, that once was lonely:  
Of love a treasure, not a toy:  
Of grief, regret but makes the keener,  
Of aspiration, failure mars —  
These would I sing, and sit serener.  
Than song among the stars.*

*Would I could sing of faith unbroken;  
Of heart-kept vows, and not of tears:  
Of promised faith and vows love-spoken,  
That have been kept through many years:  
Of truth, the false but leaves the truer;  
Of trust, the doubt makes doubly sure —  
These would I sing, the noble doer  
Whose dauntless heart is pure.*

*I would not sing of time made hateful;  
Of hope that only clings to hate:  
Of charity, that grows ungrateful;  
And pride that will not stand and wait.—*

*Of humbleness, care hath imparted;  
Of resignation, born of ills,  
These would I sing, and stand high-hearted  
As hope upon the hills.*

*Once on a throne of gold and scarlet  
I touched a harp and felt it break;  
I dreamed I was a king — a varlet,  
A slave, who only slept to wake! —  
Still on that harp my memory lingers,  
While on a tomb I lean and read,  
“Dust are our songs, and dust we singers,  
And dust are all who heed.”*



POEMS OF LOVE





*What though I dreamed of mountain heights,  
Of peaks, the barriers of the world,  
Around whose tops the Northern Lights  
And tempests are unfurled!*

*Mine are the footpaths leading through  
Life's lowly fields and woods,— with rifts,  
'Above, of heaven's Eden blue,—  
By which the violet lifts*

*Its shy appeal; and, holding up  
Its chalice'd gold, like some wild wine,  
Along the hillside, cup on cup,  
Blooms bright the celandine.*

*Where soft upon each flowering stock  
The butterfly spreads damask wings;  
And under grassy loam and rock  
The cottage cricket sings.*

*Where overhead eve blooms with fire,  
In which the new moon bends her bow,  
'And, arrow-like, one white star by her  
Burns through the afterglow.*

*I care not, so the sesame  
I find; the magic flower there,  
Whose touch unseals each mystery  
In water, earth, and air.*

*That in the oak tree lets me hear  
Its heart's deep speech, its soul's dim words;  
And to my mind makes crystal clear  
The messages of birds.*

*Why should I care, who live aloof  
Beyond the din of life and dust,  
While dreams still share my humble roof,  
And love makes sweet my crust.*

## GERTRUDE

When first I gazed on Gertrude's face,  
Beheld her loveliness and grace;  
Her brave gray eyes, her raven hair,  
Her ways, more winsome than the spring's;  
Her smile, like some sweet flower, that flings  
Its fragrance on the summer air;  
And when, like some wild-bird that sings,  
I heard her voice,— I did declare,—  
And still declare!— there is no one,  
No girl beneath the moon or sun,  
So beautiful to look upon!  
And to my heart, as I know well,  
Nothing seems more desirable,—  
Not Ophir gold, nor Orient pearls—  
Than seems this jewel-girl of girls.

## LOVE

For him, who loves, each mounting morn  
Breathes melody more sweet than birds';  
And every wind-stirred flower and thorn  
Whispers melodious words:—  
Would you believe that everything  
Through *her* loved voice is made to sing?

For her, the faultless skies of day  
Grow nearer in eternal blue,  
Where God is felt as wind and ray,  
And seen as fire and dew:—  
Would you believe that all the skies  
Are Heaven only through *his* eyes?

For them, the dreams that haunt the night  
With mystic beauty and romance,  
Are presences of starry light,  
And moony radiance:—  
Would you believe this love of theirs  
Could make for them a universe?

## HEART OF MY HEART

### I

Here where the season turns the land to gold,  
Among the fields our feet have known of old,—  
When we were children who would laugh and  
run,

Glad little playmates of the wind and sun,—  
Before came toil and care and years went ill,  
And one forgot and one remembered still;  
Heart of my heart, among the old fields here,  
Give me your hands and let me draw you near,  
Heart of my heart.

### II

Stars are not truer than your soul is true;  
What need I more of heaven than than you?  
Flowers are not sweeter than your face is  
sweet —  
What need I more to make my world complete?

HEART OF MY HEART

O woman nature, love that still endures,  
What strength hath ours that is not born of  
yours?

Heart of my heart, to you, whatever come,  
To you the lead, whose love hath led me home.

Heart of my heart.



## STROLLERS

### I

We have no castles,  
We have no vassals,  
We have no riches, no gems and no gold :  
Nothing to ponder ;  
Nothing to squander —  
Let us go wander  
As minstrels of old.

### II

You with your lute, love ;  
I with my flute, love,  
Let us make music by mountain and sea :  
You with your glances,  
I with my dances,  
Singing romances  
Of old chivalry.

## STROLLERS

### III

“Derry down derry!  
Good folk, be merry!  
Hither! and hearken where happiness is!  
Never go borrow  
Care of to-morrow,  
Never go sorrow  
While life hath a kiss!”

### IV

Let the day gladden,  
Or the night sadden,  
We will be merry in sunshine or snow:  
You with your rhyme, love,  
I with my chime, love,  
We will make Time, love,  
Dance as we go.

### V

Nothing is ours;  
Only the flowers,  
Meadows, and stars, and the heavens above:  
Nothing to lie for,  
Nothing to sigh for,  
Nothing to die for  
While still we have love.

STROLLERS

VI

“Derry down derry!  
Good folk, be merry!  
Hither! and hearken a word that is sooth:—  
Care ye not any,  
If ye have many,  
Or not a penny,  
If still ye have youth!”

## THE BURDEN OF DESIRE

### I

In some dim way I know thereof:  
A garden glows down in my heart,  
Wherein I meet and often part  
With many an ancient tale of love.  
A Romeo garden, banked with bloom,  
And trellised with the eglantine;  
In which a rose climbs to a room,  
A balcony one mass of vine,  
Dim, haunted of perfume.  
A balcony, whereon she gleams,  
The soft Desire of all Dreams,  
And smiles and bends like Juliet,  
Year after year,  
While to her side, all dewy wet,  
A rose stuck in his ear,  
Love climbs to draw her near.

## THE BURDEN OF DESIRE

### II

'And in another way I know,  
Down in my soul a graveyard lies,  
Wherein I meet, in ghostly wise,  
With many an ancient tale of woe.  
A graveyard of the Capulets,  
Deep-vaulted with ancestral gloom,  
Through whose dark yews the moonlight jets  
On many a wildly carved tomb,  
That mossy mildew frets.  
A graveyard where the Soul's Desire  
Sleeps, pale-entombed; and, kneeling by her,  
Love, like that hapless Montague,  
Year after year,  
Weary and worn and wild of hue,  
Within her sepulchre,  
Falls bleeding on her bier.

## THE TRYST

At dusk there fell a shower :  
The leaves were dripping yet :  
Each fern and rain-weighed flower  
Around was gleaming wet,  
When, through the evening glower,  
His feet towards her were set.

The dust's damp odor sifted  
Around him, cool with rain,  
Mixed with the musk that drifted  
From woodland and from plain,  
Where white her garden lifted  
Its pickets down the lane.

And there she stood ! 'mid scattered  
Clove-pink and pea and whorl  
Of honeysuckle,—flattered  
To sweetness wild,—a girl,  
O'er whom the clouds hung shattered  
In moonlit peaks of pearl.

## THE TRYST

She made the night completer  
For him; and earth and air,  
In that small spot, far sweeter  
Than heaven or anywhere.—  
Swift were his lips to greet her,  
Her lips love lifted there.



## GYPSYING

Your heart 's a-tune with April and mine a-tune  
with June,

So let us go a-roving beneath the summer moon.

Oh, was it in the sunlight, or was it in the rain,

We met among the blossoms within the locust  
lane?

All that I can remember 's the bird that sang  
aboon,

And with its music in our hearts we 'll rove be-  
neath the moon.

A love-word of the wind, dear, of which we 'll  
read the rune,

While we two go a-roving beneath the summer  
moon.

A love-word of the water we 'll often stop to  
hear —

The echoed words and whispers of our own  
hearts, my dear.

## GYPSYING

And all our paths shall blossom with wild-rose  
sweets that swoon,  
And with their fragrance in our hearts we 'll rove  
beneath the moon.

It will not be forever; yet merry goes the tune  
While we two still are rovers beneath the sum-  
mer moon.

A cabin, in the clearing, of flickering firelight,  
When old-time lanes we strolled in the winter  
snows make white:

Where we can dream together above the logs and  
croon

The songs we sang when roving beneath the  
summer moon.

## UNCERTAINTY

*"'He cometh not,' she said."*— Mariana.

It will not be to-day and yet  
I think and dream it will; and let  
The slow uncertainty devise  
So many sweet excuses, met  
With the old doubt in hope's disguise.

The panes were sweated with the dawn;  
Yet through their dimness, shriveled drawn,  
The aigret of one princess-feather,  
One monk's-hood tuft with oilets wan,  
I glimpsed, dead in the slaying weather.

This morning when my window's chintz  
I drew, how gray the day was!— Since  
I saw him, yea, all days are gray!—  
I gazed out on my dripping quince,  
Defruited, torn; then turned away

## UNCERTAINTY

To weep, but did not weep: but felt  
A colder anguish than did melt  
About the tearful-visaged Year!—  
Then flung the lattice wide and smelt  
The autumn sorrow. Rotting near

The rain-drenched sunflowers bent and bleached,  
Up which the frost-nipped gourd-vines reached  
And morning-glories, seeded o'er  
With ashen aiglets; whence beseeched  
One last bloom, frozen to the core.

The podded hollyhocks — that Fall  
Had stripped of finery — by the wall  
Rustled their tatters; dripped and dripped,  
The fog thick on them: near them, all  
The tarnished, hag-like zinnias tipped.

I felt the death and loved it: yea,  
To have it nearer, sought the gray,  
Chill, fading garth. Yet could not weep,  
But wandered in an aimless way,  
And yearned with weariness to sleep.

Mine were the fog, the frosty stalks,  
The weak lights on the leafy walks,  
The shadows shivering with the cold;  
The breaking heart; the lonely talks;  
The last, dim, ruined marigold.

## UNCERTAINTY

But when, to-night, the moon swings low —  
A great marsh-marigold of glow —  
And all my garden with the sea  
Moans, then, through moon and mist, I know  
His ghost will come to comfort me.

## LOST LOVE

I loved her madly. For — so wrought  
Young Love, divining Isles of Truth  
Large in the central seas of Youth —  
“Love will win love,” I thought.

Once when I brought a rare wild pink  
To place among her plants, the wise,  
Soft lifting of her speaking eyes  
Said more than thanks, I think. . . .

She loved another.— Yes, I know  
All you would say of woman. You,  
Like other men, would comfort too. . . .  
But then I loved her so.

She loved another.— Ah! too well  
I know the story of her soul! —  
A weary tale the weary whole  
Of how she loved and fell.

## LOST LOVE

I loved her so! . . . Remembering now  
My mad grief then, I wonder why  
Grief never kills. . . . I could not  
die.—

She died — I know not how.

Strange, is it not? For she was dear  
To me as life once.— A regret  
She is now; just to make eyes wet  
And bring a fullness here.

Yet, had she lived as dead in shame  
As now in death, Love would have used  
Pride's pitying pencil and abused  
The memory of her name.

This helps me thank my God, who led  
My broken life in sunlight of  
This pure affection, that my love  
Lives through her being dead.



## OVERSEAS

*Non numero horas nisi serenas.*

When fall drowns morns in mist, it seems  
In soul I am a part of it;  
A portion of its humid beams,  
A form of fog, I seem to flit  
From dreams to dreams.

An old chateau sleeps 'mid the hills  
Of France: an avenue of sorbs  
Conceals it: drifts of daffodils  
Bloom by a 'scutcheoned gate with barbs  
Like iron bills.

I pass the gate unquestioned, yet,  
I feel, announced. Broad holm-oaks make  
Dark pools of restless violet.  
Between high bramble banks a lake,—  
As in a net

## OVERSEAS

The tangled scales twist silver,—shines . . .  
Gray, mossy turrets swell above  
A sea of leaves. And where the pines  
Shade ivied walls, there lies my love,  
My heart divines.

I know her window, dimly seen  
From distant lanes with hawthorn hedged:  
Her garden, with the nectarine  
Espaliered, and the peach-tree, wedged  
'Twixt walls of green.

Cool-babbling a fountain falls  
From gryphons' mouths in porphyry;  
Carp haunt its waters; and white balls  
Of lilies dip it that the bee  
Sucks in and draws.

And butterflies, each with a face  
Of faëry on its wings, that seem  
Beheaded pansies, softly chase  
Each other down the gloom and gleam  
Trees interspace.

And roses! roses, soft as vair,  
Round sylvan statues and the old  
Stone dial—Pompadours that wear  
Their royalty of purple and gold  
With queenly air. . . .

## OVERSEAS

Her scarf, her lute, whose ribbons breathe  
The perfume of her touch; her gloves,  
Modeling the daintiness they sheathe;  
Her fan, a Watteau, gay with loves,  
Lie there beneath

A bank of eglantines that heaps  
A rose-strewn shadow.—Naïve-eyed,  
With lips as suave as they, she sleeps;  
The romance by her, open wide,  
O'er which she weeps.

## AT THE STILE

Young Harry leapt over the stile and kissed  
her,  
Over the stile when the sun was sinking;  
'T was only Carrie; just Mary's sister!—  
And love hath a way of thinking.

“Thy pail, sweetheart, I will take and carry.”  
Over the stile one star hung yellow.—  
“Just to the spring, my dearest Harry.”—  
And Love is a heartless fellow.

“Thou saidst me ‘yea’ in an April shower  
Under this tree with leaves a-quiver.”—  
“I say thee nay now the cherry 's in flower,  
And love is taker and giver.”

“O false! thou art false to me, sweetheart!”—  
The light in her eyes grew trist and trister:  
“To thee, the stars, and myself, sweetheart,  
I never was aught but Mary's sister.

AT THE STILE

“ Sweet Mary’s sister ! just little Carrie ! —  
But what avail my words or weeping ? —  
Next month, perhaps, you two will marry —  
And I in my grave be sleeping.”

Alone she stands ’mid the meadow millet,  
Wan as the petals the wind is strewing :  
Some tears in her pail as she stoops to fill it —  
And love hath a way of doing.

## FERN-SEED

*"We have the receipt of fern-seed; we walk invisible."*— Henry IV.

And you and I have met but thrice! —  
Three times enough to make me love! —  
I praised your hair once; then your glove;  
Your eyes; your gown — you were like ice.  
And yet this might suffice, my love,  
And yet this might suffice.

I know now what it is I'll do:  
I'll search and find the ferns that grow,  
The fern-seed that the fairies know,  
And sprinkle fern-seed in my shoe,  
And haunt the steps of you, my dear,  
And haunt the steps of you.

You 'll see the poppy-pods dip here,  
The blow-ball of the thistle slip,  
And no wind breathing — but my lip  
Next to your anxious cheek and ear,  
To tell you I am near, my love,  
To tell you I am near.

FERN-SEED

On wood-ways I will tread your gown —  
You 'll know it is no brier! — then  
I'll whisper words of love again,  
And smile to see your quick face frown;  
And then I 'll kiss it down, my dear,  
And then I 'll kiss it down.

You 'll sit at home and read or knit,  
When suddenly the page is blotted —  
My hands! — or all your needles knotted:  
And in your rage you 'll cry a bit:  
But I — I 'll laugh at it, my love,  
But I — I 'll laugh at it.

The secrets which you say at prayer  
I too will hear; or, when you sing,  
I too will sing, and whispering  
Bend down and kiss your eyes and hair,  
And you will know me there, my dear,  
And you will know me there.

Would it were true what people say! —  
Would I *could* find that faëry seed!  
Then would I win your love, indeed,  
By being near you night and day: —  
There is no other way, my love,  
There is no other way.



PORPHYROGENITA

I

Was it when Kriemhild was queen  
That we rode by ways forgotten  
Through the Rhineland, dimly seen  
'Neath a low moon white as cotton?  
I, a knight? or troubadour?  
Thou, a princess? — or a poor  
Damsel of the Royal Closes? —  
For, I met thee — somewhere sure! . . .  
Was it 'mid Kriemhilda's roses?

II

Or in Venice, by the sea? —  
What romance grew up between us?  
Thou, a doge's daughter? — She,  
Titian painted once as Venus? —  
I, a gondolier whose barque  
Glided past thy palace dark? —  
Near St. Mark's? or Casa d'Oro? —  
From thy casement didst thou hark  
To my barcarolle's "*Te oro*"?

## PORPHYROGENITA

### III

Klaia wast, of Egypt: yea,  
Languid as its sacred lily.  
Didst with me a year and day  
Love upon the Isle of Philæ?  
I, a priest of Isis? — Sweet,  
'Neath the date-palms did we meet  
By a temple's pillared marble?  
While, from its star-still retreat,  
Sank the nightingale's wild warble?

### IV

Have I dreamed that I, thy slave,  
From thy lattice, my sultana,  
Beckoning, thy white hand did wave,  
Dropped me once a rose? sweet manna  
Of thy kiss warm in its heart?  
That, through my Chaldæan art,  
With thy Khalif's bags of treasure,  
From Damascus we did start,  
Fled to some far land of pleasure?

### V

Was I one? another thou? —  
Let it be. What of it, dearest? —

PORPHYROGENITA

Haply 'tis the memory now  
Of these passions dead thou fearest? —  
Nay! those loves are portions of,  
Evolutions of this love,  
Present love, where thou appearest  
To combine them all and prove.

## THE CASTLE OF LOVE

*He speaks*

### I

Now listen! 'tis time that you knew it.—  
Like the prince in the Asian tale,  
I wandered on deserts that panted  
With noon to a castle enchanted,  
That Afrits had built in a vale;  
A vale where the sunlight lay pale  
As moonlight. And round it and through it  
I searched and I searched. Like the tale,

### II

No eunuch, black-browed as a Marid,  
Prevented me. Shadows it seemed  
Were the slaves there, with kohl and with henné  
In eyes and on fingers; and many  
The phantoms of beauty, that dreamed  
Where censers of ambergris steamed.  
And I came on a colonnade, quarried  
From silvery marble it seemed.

## THE CASTLE OF LOVE

### III

And here, in a court, wide, estraded,  
Rich tulips, like carbuncles, bloomed,  
And jonquils and roses:— and lories,  
And cockatoos, brilliant in glories  
Of plumes, like great blossoms illumed,  
Winged, splashed in a fountain perfumed:  
Kept captive by network of braided,  
Spun gold where stone galleries gloomed.

### IV

From nipples of back-bending Peris  
Of gold, glowing auburn, in rays  
The odorous fountain sprang calling:  
I heard through the white water's falling,—  
As soft as the zephyr that plays  
With moonlight on bloom-haunted ways,—  
A music; a sound, as if fairies  
Touched wind-harps whose chords were of  
rays.

### V

I followed: through corridors paneled  
With sandal; through doorways deep-draped  
With stuffs of Chosroës, rich-garded

## THE CASTLE OF LOVE

With Indian gold; up the corded  
Stone stairway, bronze-dragoned, wing-  
shaped:  
Through moon-spangled hangings escaped —  
'Twixt pillars of juniper channeled —  
To a room constellated and draped.

### VI

As in legends of witchcraft: a vassal  
Of visions beholds naught yet hears  
Sweet voices that call and he follows,—  
So me, like the fragrance of aloes,  
That chamber with song, it appears,  
Surrounded; the song of the spheres . . .  
My soul found your soul such a castle —  
Your love is the music it hears.

## CONSECRATION

*She speaks.*

Last night you told me, where we, parting,  
waited,

Of love somehow I'd known before you told.—  
Long, long ago, perhaps, this love was fated,  
For why was it made suddenly so old?

Is it because the love we have and cherish  
Born with us seems, and as ourselves shall  
last?

Part of our lives, we can not let it perish  
Out of our present's future or its past?

Yet, all was changed; and, still, I did not wonder

That, robed in vaster splendor, broke the  
dawn:

Nor marvel that, beside my feet and under,  
Each flower seemed fairer than the flower  
gone.



## CONSECRATION

The wild bird's silvery warble seemed completer ;  
A whiter magic filled the morn and noon,  
And night — each night ! — seemed holier grown  
and sweeter  
With Babylonian witchcraft of the moon.—

Is love an emanation? whose ideal  
Communicates its beauty? — Is it moved  
Through some strange means to consecrate the  
real?  
Making the world the worthier to be loved?

## ROMANTIC LOVE

### I

Is it not sweet to know? —  
The moon hath told me so —  
That in some lost romance, love,  
Long lost to us below,  
A knight with casque and lance, love,  
A thousand years ago,  
I kissed you from a trance, love? —  
The moon hath told me so.

### II

Or were it strange to wis? —  
The stars have told me this —  
That once a nightingale, love,  
Sang on an Isle of Greece;  
From whose melodious wail, love,  
Its song's wild harmonies,  
Was born a spirit-woman —  
Yourself! whom I, a human,  
Made mine! . . . So goes the tale, love! —  
The stars have told me this.

## ROMANTIC LOVE

### III

Is it not quaint to tell? —

The flowers remember well —  
How once a wild-rose blew, love,  
Dim in a haunted dell;  
To which a bee was true, love.  
The bee, so it befell,  
Was *I*: the rose was *you*, love! . . .  
The flowers remember well.

### IV

To moon and flower and star

We are not what we are.—  
Sometimes, from o'er that sea, love,  
Whose golden sands are far,—  
From shores of Destiny, love,—  
The dreams that know no bar,  
Will waft a truth that glistens  
To Memory who listens,  
Reminding you and me, love,  
We are not what we are.

## PASTORAL LOVE

The pied pinks tilt in the wind that worries —  
Sing, Oh, the wind and the red o' her  
cheek! —  
And the slow sun creeps on the rye nor  
hurries —  
And what shall a lover speak?

The toad-flax brightens the flaxen hollows —  
Sing, Ay, the bloom and her yellow hair! —  
And the greenwood brook a wood-way fol-  
lows —  
And what shall a lover dare?

The deep woods gleam that the sunlight  
sprinkles —  
Sing, Hey, the day and her laughing eye! —  
And a brown bird pipes and a wild fall  
tinkles —  
And what may a maid reply?

## PASTORAL LOVE

Hey, the hills when the evening settles!

Oh, the heavens within her eyes!

What will he ask 'mid the dropping petals?

And what will she say with sighs?—

“Look, where the west is a blur of roses!”—

“There's naught like the rose o' the cheeks

I see!”—

“Look, where the first star's eye uncloses!”—

“But what of *your* eyes, my destiny?”

## ANDALIA AND THE SPRINGTIME

### I

Blow, winds, and waken her!  
You, who have taken her,  
Never forsaken her,  
    Filled her with spring!  
My mad and merriest  
Part of the veriest  
Season and cheeriest:  
    Blow, winds! and sing,  
Birds of the spring! that taught her  
Airs of the woods; this daughter  
Wild of the winds, that waft her  
Into my heart with laughter,  
    Wild as a wildwood thing.

### II

She, who is fraught with it,  
Thrilled with it, brought with it,  
Spring! — like a thought, with it  
    Beautiful too!

## ANDALIA AND THE SPRINGTIME

Now like a dream of it;  
Filled with the gleam of it;  
Now a bright beam of it,  
    Piercing me through,  
Sweet, with her eyes that are often  
Laughter and languor; that soften  
Dreamily, drowsily, slowly,  
Then, on a sudden, are wholly  
    Dancing as dew.

### III

Face,—like the sweetest of  
Perfumes,—completest of  
Flowers God's fleetest of  
    Months ever bear!—  
Listen, O lisper wind,—  
Lighter and crisper wind,—  
Have you a whisper, wind,  
    Soft as her hair?  
Night and the stars did spin it;  
Darkness and brightness are in it:  
Let but a ray of it bind me,  
Wrap it around me and wind me,  
Blind as the blind are and blinder,  
Yet through my heart would I find her,  
    Lost though I were.



## OLIVIA IN THE AUTUMN

Not redder than her lips

    This weather!

Not rosier two rose-hips

    Together!

As she comes carolling

Down wildwood ways, where sing

The birds, and flowers swing

    In many a feather.

Of her beloved cheeks

    October

Makes flame-flushed leaves, and speaks,—

    Now sober,

Now wild,—its happiness

In gold, and on her dress

Lays many a bright caress

    As if to robe her.

The wild-birds praise her eyes

    Each hour;

Above her bend the skies

    And shower

OLIVIA IN THE AUTUMN

Around her, there and here,  
Strays of the passing year,  
Azure and gold and sere  
Of weed and flower.

The wood-winds kiss her hair  
And wonder  
What flower blossoms there:  
And, under  
Its deeps of acorn-brown,  
Her glory and her crown,  
The sunbeams lay them down,  
And dream and ponder.

And I — I take her hands,  
Her lover;  
And kiss her where she stands;  
And over  
Our heads the soft winds call,  
And heav'n smiles down; and all  
The golden dreams of Fall  
Around us hover.

## SYLVIA OF THE WOODLAND

### I

O you, who know our Mays that blow  
The bluets by the ways;  
The Indian-pink,—whose bloom you 'd think  
Was blood for some wild bee to drink,—  
How — can you say — in their wise way  
Is it you 're like our Mays? —  
In gleam and gloom and wild perfume  
Of moods that run from shade to sun: —  
While in you seems the light that dreams  
In thoughts of other days.

### II

Meseems some song, for which I long,  
From you to me takes wing  
Each time you speak; a bird, whose beak  
Is in my heart; whose wildwood art  
Makes every beat say "Sweet, sweet, sweet,"  
And all its pulses sing.

## SYLVIA OF THE WOODLAND

And when I gaze upon your face,  
I seem to look into a brook,  
That laughs through buds and leafing woods,  
Reflecting all the spring.

### III

You spoke but now — and, lo! I vow,  
From haunts of hart and hind,  
I seemed to hear Romance draw near,  
White hand in hand with Song, and stand,  
In some green aisle of wood, and smile,  
Beguiling soul and mind:  
You laugh — and, lo! I seem to go  
In Mirth's young train; and bird-songs rain  
Around, above; and Joy and Love  
Come dancing down the wind.

## WITNESSES

### I

You say I do not love you! — Tell me why,  
When I have gazed a little on your face,  
And then gone forth into the world of men,  
A beauty, neither of the earth nor sky,  
A glamour, that transforms each common place,  
Attends my spirit then?

### II

You say I do not love you! — Yet, I know,  
When I have heard you speak and dwelt upon  
Your words a while, my heart has gone away  
Filled with strange music, very soft and low,  
A dim companion, touching with sweet tone  
The discords of the day.

### III

You say I do not love you! — Yet, it seems,  
When I have kissed your hand and said fare-  
well,

## WITNESSES

A fragrance, wilder than the wood's wild bloom,  
Companions dim my soul and fills, with  
dreams,  
The sad and sordid streets where people dwell,  
Dreams of spring's wild perfume.

## A PUPIL OF PAN

My love's adorable and wise  
As heaven and the winds of spring:  
Go thou and gaze into her eyes —  
Such scholars of the starry skies!  
— Canst marvel at the thing?

My love is like a bud that blows  
With fragrant honey in its heart:  
Go, watch her smile — Wouldst not suppose  
She from some warm, white, serious rose  
Had learned the happy art?

The thoughts she speaks are pearls unstrung  
That strew her fancy's golden floor:  
Go listen — For, the woods among,  
She met with Pan, when very young,  
Who taught her all his lore.



## LORA OF THE VALES

Lora is her name that slips  
Soft as love between the lips :  
You must know she is so wise  
All she does is lift her eyes,—  
Larkspur-blue as April skies,—  
At her name — and that replies —  
    She 's so wise, is Lora.

Lora is her name whose sound  
Hedges all my heart around  
With the gold of happiness :  
When she speaks, you will confess,  
Music's self her words express,  
Every vowel a caress —  
    She 's so kind, is Lora.

Lora is her name that brings  
Thoughts to me of morning things :  
Songs of birds ; of bees that creep  
In the ruffled bluebells deep ;  
Butterflies, that, half asleep,  
On some rose their vigil keep —  
    She 's so young, is Lora.

LORA OF THE VALES

Lora, lean to mine your face;  
So; and round you let me lace  
One firm arm, and gently woo  
Your small mouth, as fresh as dew,  
Till it says your heart is true,  
True to me as mine to you,  
Sunny-hearted Lora!

## PLEDGES

### I

What the May-apple or  
Woodland anemone —  
Star-perfect as a star —  
Says to the honey-bee:  
Or to the winds that woo,  
Filling their hearts with dew:  
What says the bluet's blue  
To the sun's ray — do you  
Know or do I?—

### II

Listen, and you may hear  
What the oxalis says  
Into the downy ear  
Of the pale moth that sways  
There on its heart and drinks:  
Or what the forest-pinks  
Say to the dew that winks,  
Butterfly-wing that blinks —  
Glimmering by.

## PLEDGES

### III

They say: "When April trod  
By in a blowing blush,—  
Wise as a word of God  
Holding all Heaven a-hush,—  
Singing a song of love,  
We, as she passed above,  
Sprang from the notes thereof,  
Filling with joy each grove,  
Beauty and mystery."

## ORIENTAL ROMANCE

### I

Beyond lost seas of summer she  
Dwelt on an island of the sea,  
Last scion of that dynasty,  
Queen of a race forgotten long,—  
With eyes of light and lips of song,  
From seaward groves of blowing lemon,  
She called me in her native tongue,  
Low-leaned on some rich robe of Yemen.

### II

I was a king. Three moons we drove  
Across green gulfs, the crimson clove  
And cassia spiced, to claim her love.  
Packed was my barque with gums and gold;  
Rich fabrics; sandalwood, grown old  
With odor; gems; and pearls of Oman,—  
Than her white breasts less white and cold;—  
And myrrh, less fragrant than this woman.

## ORIENTAL ROMANCE

### III

From Bassora I came. We saw  
Her condor castle on a claw  
Of soaring precipice, o'erawe  
The surge and thunder of the spray:  
Like some great opal, far away  
It shone, with battlement and spire,  
Wherefrom, with wild aroma, day  
Blew splintered lights of sapphirine fire.

### IV

Lamenting caverns, dark and deep,  
That catacombed the haunted steep,  
Led upward to her castle-keep . . .  
Fair as the moon, whose light is shed  
In Ramadan, was she, who led  
My love unto her island bowers,  
To find her . . . lying young and dead  
Among her maidens and her flowers.

## THE TOLLMAN'S DAUGHTER

She stood waist-deep among the briars:  
Above, in twisted lengths, were rolled  
The sunset's tangled whorls of gold,  
Blown from the west's cloud-pillared fires.  
And in the hush, no sound did mar,  
You almost heard, o'er hill and dell,  
Deep, bubbling over, star on star,  
The night's blue cisterns slowly well.  
A crane, a shadowy crescent, crossed  
The sunset, winging 'thwart the west;  
While up the east her silver breast  
Of light the moon brought, white as frost.

So have I painted her, you see,  
The tollman's daughter.— What an arm  
And throat were hers! and what a form!  
— Art dreams of such divinity.  
What braids of night to smooth and kiss! —  
There is no pigment anywhere  
A man might use to picture this —  
The splendor of her raven hair.



## THE TOLLMAN'S DAUGHTER

A face as beautiful and bright,  
As rosy fair as twilight skies,  
Lit with the stars of hazel eyes  
And eyebrowed black with penciled night.

For her, I know, where'er she trod  
Each dewdrop raised a looking-glass,  
To catch her image, from the grass;  
That wildflowers bloomed along the sod,  
And whispered perfume when she smiled;  
The wood-bird hushed to hear her song,  
Or, heart-enamoured, tame though wild,  
Before her feet flew fluttering long:  
The brook went mad with melody,  
Eddied in laughter when she kissed  
With naked feet its amethyst —  
And I — she was my world, ah me!

## CREOLE SERENADE

Under moss-draped oak and pine,  
Murmuring, falls the fountained stream;  
In its pool the lilies shine,  
Silvery, each a glimmering gleam.

Roses bloom and roses die  
In the warm rose-scented dark,  
Where the firefly, like an eye,  
Winks and glows, a golden spark.

Amber-belted through the night  
Drifts the alabaster moon,  
Like a big magnolia white  
On the fragrant heart of June.

With a broken syrx there,  
With bignonia overgrown,  
Is it Pan in hoof and hair? —  
Or his image carved from stone?

CREOLE SERENADE

See! her casement's jessamines part;—  
Through their stars and swooning scent  
Like the moon she leans. O heart,  
'T is another firmament!

*Sings:*

The dim verbena drugs the dusk  
With lemon odors; everywhere  
Wan heliotropes breathe drowsy musk  
Into the jasmine-heavy air;  
The moss-rose bursts its dewy husk  
And spills its attar there.

The orange at thy casement flings  
Star-censers oozing rich perfumes;  
The clematis, long-petaled, swings  
Deep clusters of dark purple blooms;  
With flowers, like moons or sylphide wings,  
Magnolias light the glooms.

Awake, awake from sleep!  
Thy balmy hair,  
Unbounden, deep on deep,  
Like blossoms there,—  
That dew and fragrance weep,—  
Will fill the night with prayer.  
Awake, awake from sleep!

## CREOLE SERENADE

And dreaming here it seems to me  
A dryad's bosom grows confessed,  
Nude in the dark magnolia tree,  
That rustles with the murmurous West—  
Or is it but some bloom I see,  
White as thy virgin breast?

Through Southern heavens above are rolled  
A million feverish stars, that burst,  
Like gems, from out the caskets old  
Of night, with fires that throb and thirst:  
An oleander, showering gold,  
The heav'n seems, star-immersed.

Unseal, unseal thine eyes!—  
Too long her rod  
Queen Mab sways o'er their skies  
In realms of Nod!—  
Their starry majesties  
Will fill the night with God.  
Unseal, unseal thine eyes!

## IDEAL DIVINATION

How I have thought of her,  
Her I have never seen!—  
Now from a raying air  
She, like the Magdalene,  
Flowers — a face serene,  
Radiant with raven hair.

Now in a balsam scent  
Laughs from the stars that gleam;  
Naked and redolent,  
Bends to me breasts of beam,  
Eyes that were made to dream,  
Throat that the dimples dent.

Would she were real, ah me!  
Would she were real and here!  
And no "impossible she"!  
But one to draw me near,  
Hold me and name me dear!—  
But, that can never be!

## IDEAL DIVINATION

“ Living, each learns to know  
Life is not worth its pain;  
Loving, each finds a woe  
Or, at the end, a chain:  
Fardled of hope we strain  
Whither no hope may know.

“ Life is too credulous  
Of time that beckons on.  
Memory still serves us thus —  
Gauging each coming dawn  
By a day dead and gone,  
Day that 's a part of us.”

So says my soul, that 's mocked  
Here of the flesh and held;  
Ever rebellion rocked,  
Fighting, forever quelled;  
Titan-like, fate-compelled,  
Yearning to rise, but locked

Supine where torrents pour  
Hellward; on crags that, high,  
Scarred of the thunder, gore  
Heaven . . . The vulture's eye  
Swims, and the harpies' cry  
Clangs through the ocean's roar. . . .

## IDEAL DIVINATION

Then, like æolian light,  
    Calling, it hears her lips:  
Scorched by her burning white  
    Splendor of arms and hips,  
Slimy each horror slips  
    Back to its native night. . . .

Rul'st thou some brighter star?  
    Inviolable queen  
Of what the destinies are?  
    Thou, with thy light unseen  
Filling my life with sheen,  
    Leading my soul afar!

Thou, who oft leav'st thy skies,  
    Comest in dreams to me,  
With amaranthine eyes,  
    Asphodel shadowy  
Hair, and mysteriously  
    Say'st to my heart, "Arise!

"Be not afraid to dare  
    All of life's tyranny!  
I will reward thee there!  
    There, where my love shall be  
Thine to eternity!—  
    Only be brave and bear!"



## APOCALYPSE

Before I found her I had found  
    Within my heart, as in a brook,  
Reflections of her: now a sound  
    Of imaged beauty, now a look.

So when I found her, gazing in  
    Those Bibles of her eyes, above  
All earth, I saw no word of sin;  
    Their holy chapters all were love.

I read them through. I read and saw  
    The soul impatient of the sod —  
Her soul, that through her eyes did draw  
    Mine — to the higher love of God.

## CAN I FORGET?

Can I forget how Love once led the ways  
Of our two lives together, joining them;  
How every hour was his anadem,  
And every day a tablet in his praise!  
Can I forget how, in his garden's place,  
Among the purple roses, stem to stem,  
We heard the rumor of his robe's bright hem,  
And saw the aureate radiance of his face! —  
Though I beheld my soul's high dreams down-  
hurled,  
And Falsehood sit where Truth once towered  
white,  
And in Love's place usurping Lust and Shame,  
Though flowers be dead within the winter world,  
Are flowers not there? and starless though the  
night,  
Are stars not there, eternal and the same?

## MY ROSE

There was a rose in Eden once : it grows  
On Earth now, sweeter for its rare perfume :  
And Paradise is poorer by one bloom,  
And Earth is richer. In this blossom glows  
More loveliness than old seraglios  
Or courts of kings did ever yet illumine :  
More purity than ever yet had room  
In soul of nun or saint.— O human rose !—  
Who art initial and sweet period of  
My heart's divinest sentence ; where I read  
Love, first and last, and in the pauses, love ;  
Who art the dear ideal of each deed  
Through which my life is strong to attain its  
goal,—  
Set in the mystic garden of my soul !

## RESTRAINT

Dear heart and love! what happiness is it  
To watch the firelight's varying shade and  
shine  
On thy young face; and through those eyes of  
thine —  
As through clear windows — to behold them  
flit,  
In sumptuous chambers of thy mind's chaste  
wit,  
Thy soul's fair fancies! then to take in mine  
Thy hand, whose pressure brims my heart's  
divine  
Hushed rapture as with music exquisite!  
When I remember how thy look and touch  
Sway, like the moon, my blood with ecstasy,  
I dare not think to what fierce heaven might  
lead  
Thy soft embrace; or in thy kiss how much  
Sweet hell,—beyond all help of me,—  
might be,  
Where I were lost, where I were lost indeed!

## IN JUNE

### I

Hotly burns the amaryllis,  
    Starred with ruby red:  
Coolly stand the snowy lilies  
    In the lily-bed:  
Emerald gleams the wild May-apple,  
    'Neath its parasol,  
And where gold the sunbeams dapple  
    Woods, and thrushes call,  
Marion strolls with Moll,  
Singing, "Fol-de-rol;  
Fol-de, fol-de-rol.

### II

"March was but a blustering liar;  
    April, sad as night:  
May, a milkmaid from the byre,  
    Full of love but light.  
June, sweet June!—ah! she's My Lady,  
    Fair and fine and tall,

IN JUNE

Strolling down the woodways shady —  
June is best of all!  
She is like my Moll!  
Fol-de-rol-de-rol!  
She is like sweet Moll!”

## WILL O' THE WISPS

Beyond the barley meads and hay,  
What was the light that beckoned there?  
That made her young lips smile and say:  
"Oh, busk me in a gown of May,  
And knot red poppies in my hair."

Over the meadow and the wood  
What was the voice that filled her ears?  
That sent into pale cheeks the blood,  
Until each seemed a wild-brier bud  
Mowed down by mowing harvesters? . . .

Beyond the orchard, down the hill,  
The water flows, the water swirls;  
And there they found her past all ill,  
Her pale dead face, sweet, smiling still,  
The cresses caught among her curls.

At twilight in the willow glen  
What sound is that the silence hears,  
When deep the dusk is hushed again,  
And homeward from the fields strong men  
And women go, the harvesters?



## WILL O' THE WISPS

One seeks the place where she is laid,  
Where violets bloom from year to year —  
“O sunny head! O bird-like maid!  
The orchard blossoms fall and fade  
And I am lonely, lonely here.”

Two stars look down upon the vale;  
They seem to him the eyes of Ruth:  
The low moon rises very pale  
As if she, too, had heard the tale,  
All heartbreak, of a maid and youth.

## IN A GARDEN

The pink rose drops its petals on  
The moonlit lawn, the moonlit lawn;  
The moon, like some wide rose of white,  
Drops down the summer night.

No rose there is  
As sweet as this —

Thy mouth, that greets me with a kiss.

The lattice of thy casement twines  
With jasmine vines, with jasmine vines;  
The stars, like jasmine blossoms, lie  
About the glimmering sky.

No jasmine tress  
Can so caress

Like thy white arms' soft loveliness.

About thy door magnolia blooms  
Make sweet the glooms, make sweet the glooms;  
A moon-magnolia is the dusk  
Closed in a dewy husk.

However much,  
No bloom gives such

Soft fragrance as thy bosom's touch.

IN A GARDEN

The flowers blooming now will pass,  
And strew the grass, and strew the grass;  
The night, like some frail flower, dawn  
Will soon make gray and wan.  
Still, still above,  
The flower of  
True love shall live forever, Love.

“ IF I WERE HER LOVER ”

I

If I were her lover,  
I'd wade through the clover  
Over the fields before  
The gate that leads to her door;  
Over the meadows,  
To wait, 'mid the shadows,  
The shadows that circle her door,  
For the heart of my heart and more.  
And there in the clover  
Close by her,  
Over and over  
I'd sigh her :  
“ Your eyes are as brown  
As the Night's, looking down  
On waters that sleep  
With the moon in their deep ” . . .  
If I were her lover to sigh her.

“IF I WERE HER LOVER”

II

If I were her lover,  
I'd wade through the clover  
Over the fields before  
The lane that leads to her door;  
I'd wait, 'mid the thickets,  
Or there by the pickets,  
White pickets that fence in her door,  
For the life of my life and more.  
I'd lean in the clover —  
    The crisper  
For the dews that are over —  
    And whisper:  
“Your lips are as rare  
As the dewberries there,  
As ripe and as red,  
On the honey-dew fed” . . .  
If I were her lover to whisper.

III

If I were her lover,  
I'd wade through the clover  
Over the fields before  
The pathway that leads to her door;  
And watch, in the twinkle  
Of stars that sprinkle

“IF I WERE HER LOVER”

The paradise over her door,  
For the soul of my soul and more.  
And there in the clover  
I'd reach her ;  
And over and over  
I'd teach her —  
A love without sighs,  
Of laughterful eyes,  
That reckoned each second  
The pause of a kiss,  
A kiss and . . . that is  
If I were her lover to teach her.

## NOËRA

Noëra, when sad fall  
Has grayed the fallow,  
Leaf-cramped the wood-brook's brawl  
In pool and shallow;  
When, by the wood-side, tall  
Stands sere the mallow:

Noëra, when gray gold  
And golden gray  
The crackling hollows fold  
By every way,  
Shall I thy face behold,  
Dear bit of May?

When webs are cribs for dew,  
And gossamers  
Streak past you, silver-blue;  
When silence stirs  
One leaf, of rusty hue,  
Among the burrs:



## NOËRA

Noëra, thro' the wood,  
Or thro' the grain,  
Come, with the hoiden mood  
Of wind and rain  
Fresh in thy sunny blood,  
Sweetheart, again!

Noëra, when the corn,  
Heaped on the fields,  
The asters' stars adorn —  
And purple shields  
Of ironweeds lie torn  
Among the wealds:

Noëra, haply then,  
Thou being with me,  
Each ruined greenwood glen  
Will bud and be  
Spring's with the spring again,  
The spring in thee.

Thou of the breezy tread,  
Feet of the breeze:  
Thou of the sunbeam head,  
Heart like a bee's:  
Face like a woodland-bred  
Anemone's.

## NOËRA

Thou to October bring  
An April part!  
Come, make the wild-birds sing,  
The blossoms start!  
Noëra, with the spring  
Wild in thy heart!

Come with our golden year;  
Come as its gold:  
With the same laughing, clear,  
Loved voice of old:  
In thy cool hair one dear  
Wild marigold.

## AMONG THE ACRES OF THE WOOD

### I

“ I know, I know ;  
The way doth go  
Athwart a greenwood glade, oh !  
White bloom the wild-plums in that glade,  
White as the bosom of the maid  
Who, stooping, sits, and milks and sings  
Among the dew-dashed clover rings,  
When fades the flush, the henna blush,  
The orange-glow of sunset low,  
And all the winds are laid, oh ! ”

### II

“ I wot, I wot.—  
And is it not  
Right o'er the viney hill? — ”  
“ Yea : where the wild-grapes mat and make  
Penthouses of each bramble-brake,  
And dangle plumes of fragrant blooms :

## AMONG THE ACRES OF THE WOOD

Where threads of sunbeams string the glooms  
With beaded gold; and flowers unfold  
Their eyes of blue; — and all night through  
Sings, wildly shrill, one whippoorwill."

### III

"I ween, I ween,  
The path is green  
'Neath beechen boughs that let  
Soft glimpses of the sapphire sky  
Gleam downward like a wood-nymph's eye:  
At night one far and lambent star  
Shines o'er it, like a watching Lar,  
'Mid branching buds a tangled bud  
Among the acres of the wood,  
Where blooms the wet wild violet  
And only we have, trysting, met."

## WORDS

I can not tell what I would tell thee,  
What I would say, what thou shouldst hear;  
Words of the soul that should compel thee,  
Words of the heart to draw thee near.

For when thou smilest, thou, who fillest  
My life with joy, and I would speak,  
'Tis then my lips and tongue are stillest,  
Knowing all language is too weak.

Look in my eyes: read there confession:  
The truest love hath least of art:  
Nor needs it words for its expression  
When soul speaks soul and heart speaks  
heart.

## THE SIRENS

Wail! wail! and smite your lyres' sonorous gold,  
And beckon naked beauty; luring me  
With arms and breasts and hips of godly mold,  
Dark, wind-wild locks seen through the surf-  
blown sea!

Vain all your magic! dull in unclosed ears!  
Beside one voice sweet-calling o'er the foam,  
That, in my heart, like some strong hand appears  
To gently, firmly draw my vessel home.

## WHY?

Why are the bright stars brighter after rain?

Why is strong love the stronger after pain?

Reply, reply!

Why sings the wild swan heavenliest when it  
dies?

Why is fair love the fairest when it flies?

Oh why! Oh why!

Why are sweet kisses sweetest when they're  
dead?

Why is love loveliest when 'tis buried?

Reply, reply!



## NOCTURNE

A disc of violet blue,  
Rimmed with a thorn of fire,  
The new moon hangs in a sky of dew ;  
And under the vines, where the sunset's hue  
Is blent with blooms, first one, then two,  
Begins the crickets' choir.

Bright blurs of golden white,  
With points of pearly glimmer,  
The first stars wink in the web of night ;  
And through the flowers the moths take flight,  
In the honeysuckle-colored light,  
Where the shadowy shrubs grow dimmer.

Soft through the dim and dying eve,  
Sweet through the dusk and dew,  
Come, while the hours their witchcraft weave,  
Dim in the House of the Soul's-sweet-leave,  
Here in the pale and perfumed eve,  
Here where I wait for you.

## NOCTURNE

A great, dark, radiant rose,  
Dripping with starry glower,  
Is the night, whose bosom overflows  
With the balsam musk of the breeze that blows  
Into the heart, as each one knows,  
Of every nodding flower.

A voice that sighs and sighs,  
Then whispers like a spirit,  
Is the wind, that kisses the drowsy eyes  
Of the primrose open, and, rocking, lies  
In the lily's cradle, and soft unties  
The rose-bud's crimson near it.

Sweet through the deep and dreaming night,  
Soft through the dark and dew,  
Come, where the moments their magic write,  
Deep in the Book of the Heart's-delight,  
Here in the hushed and haunted night,  
Here where I wait for you.

## METAMORPHOSIS

Before Love's lofty goddess — Life hath toiled  
To mold from burning dew and dewy fire —  
Who kneel and worship with a heart sin-soiled,  
Within the secret Temple of Desire;

Their curse is such: that, even while they  
    pray,—  
They shall not see, nor shall they know there-  
    of! —  
Their Deity is changed from fire to clay —  
Lust! fashioned in the very form of Love.

## AT TWENTY-ONE

The rosy hills of her high breasts,  
Whereon, like misty morning, rests  
The breathing lace; her auburn hair,  
Wherein, a star-point sparkling there,  
One jewel burns: her eyes, that keep  
Recorded dreams of love and sleep:  
Her mouth, with whose comparison  
The richest rose were poor and wan:  
Her throat, her form — what masterpiece  
Of man can picture half of these! —  
She comes! a classic from the hand  
Of God! wherethrough I understand  
What Nature means and Art and Love,  
And all the immortal myths thereof.

## KINSHIP

There is no flower of wood or lea,  
No April flower, as fair as she:  
O white anemone, who hast  
    The wind's wild grace,  
Know her a cousin of thy race,  
    Into whose face  
A presence like the wind's hath passed.

There is no flower of wood or lea,  
No May-day flower, as fair as she:  
O bluebell, tender with the blue  
    Of sapphire skies,  
Thy lineage hath kindred ties  
    In her, whose eyes  
The heaven's own qualities imbue.

There is no flower of wood or lea,  
No June-time flower, as fair as she:  
Rose,— odorous with beauty of  
    Her lips that pressed,—  
Behold thy sister here confessed!  
    Whose maiden breast  
Is fragrant with the dreams of love.

“ SHE IS SO MUCH ”

She is so much to me, to me,  
And, oh, I love her so,  
I look into my soul and see  
How comfort keeps me company  
In hopes she, too, may know.  
I love her, I love her, I love her,  
This I know.

So dear she is to me, so dear,  
And, oh, I love her so,  
I listen in my heart and hear  
The voice of gladness singing near  
In thoughts she, too, may know.  
I love her, I love her, I love her,  
This I know.

So much she is to me, so much,  
And, oh, I love her so,  
In heart and soul I feel the touch  
Of angel callers, that are such  
Dreams as she, too, may know.  
I love her, I love her, I love her,  
This I know.

## HER EYES

In her dark eyes dreams poetize ;  
The soul sits lost in love :  
There is no thing in all the skies,  
To gladden all the world I prize,  
Like the deep love in her dark eyes,  
Or one sweet dream thereof.

In her dark eyes, where thoughts arise,  
Her soul's soft moods I see :  
Of hope and faith, that make life wise ;  
And charity, whose food is sighs —  
Not truer than her own true eyes  
Is truth's divinity.

In her dark eyes the knowledge lies  
Of an immortal sod,  
Her soul once trod in angel guise,  
Nor can forget its heavenly ties,  
Since, there in Heaven, upon her eyes  
Once gazed the eyes of God.



## MESSENGERS

The wind, that gives the rose a kiss,  
With murmured music of the south,  
Hath kissed a sweeter thing than this;—  
The wind, that gives the rose a kiss,—  
Hath kissed the red rose of her mouth.

The brook, that mirrors skies and trees,  
And echoes in a grottoed place,  
Hath held a fairer thing than these;—  
The brook, that mirrors skies and trees,  
Hath held the image of her face.

O happy wind! O happy brook!  
What message from her do you bear?—  
“We bear from her her kiss and look—”  
O happy wind! O happy brook!—  
“That blessed us unaware.”

## APART

### I

While sunset burns and stars are few,  
And roses scent the fading light;  
And, like a slim urn, dripping dew,  
A spirit carries through the night,  
The pearl-pale moon hangs new,—  
I think of you, of you.

### II

While waters flow, and soft winds woo  
The golden-hearted bud with sighs;  
And, like a flower an angel threw,  
Out of the momentary skies  
A star falls, burning blue,—  
I dream of you, of you.

### III

While love believes and hearts are true,  
So let me think, so let me dream;  
The thought and dream so wedded to  
Your face, that, far apart, I seem  
To see each thing you do,  
And be with you, with you.

## THE BLIND GOD

I know not if she be unkind;  
If she have faults, I do not care.  
Search through the world — where will you  
find  
A face like hers, a form, a mind?—  
I love her to despair!

If she be cruel, cruelty  
Is a great virtue, I will swear:  
If she be proud, then pride must be  
Better than all humility.—  
I love her to despair!

Why speak to me of that or this?  
All you may say weighs not a hair!  
To me, naught but perfection is  
In her, whose lips I may not kiss!—  
I love her to despair!

## CARA MIA

### I

Sweet lips, where kisses sleep,  
Soft eyes, so filled with dreams,

Waken, oh waken!

Open your blossoms deep,

Sweet lips, where kisses sleep:

Unfold your brightest beams,

Soft eyes, so filled with dreams:

Waken, oh, waken!

### II

Sweet lips, that give perfume,

Soft eyes, that kindle light,

Come, let me kiss you!—

To every flower in bloom,

Sweet lips, you lend perfume!

In every star at night,

Soft eyes, you kindle light!—

Come, let me kiss you!

CARA MIA

III

Who would not love to rest?

Who would not love to lie?

Who would not love them?

Of such sweet flowers caressed,

Who would not love to rest?

With such stars in their sky,

Who would not love to lie?

Who would not love them?

## MARGERY

### I

When spring is here and Margery  
Goes walking in the woods with me,  
She is so white, she is so shy,  
The little leaves clap hands and cry —  
    “ Perdie ;  
So white is she, so shy is she,  
    Ah me !  
The maiden May hath just passed by ! ”

### II

When summer 's here and Margery  
Goes walking in the fields with me,  
She is so pure, she is so fair,  
The wildflowers eye her and declare —  
    “ Perdie !  
So pure is she, so fair is she,  
    Just see,  
Where our sweet cousin takes the air ! ”

## MARGERY

### III

Why is it that my Margery  
Hears nothing that these say to me?  
She is so good, she is so true,  
My heart it maketh such ado,  
    Perdie!  
So good is she, so true is she,  
    You see,  
She can not hear the other two.



## CONSTANCE

Beyond the orchard, in the lane,  
The crested red-bird sings again —  
O bird, whose song says, "Have no care,"  
Should I not care when Constance there,—  
My Constance with the bashful gaze,  
Pink-gowned like some sweet hollyhock,—  
If I declare my love, just says  
Some careless thing as if in mock?  
Like — "Past the orchard, in the lane,  
Hark! how the red-bird sings again!"

There, while the red-bird sings his best,  
His listening mate sits on the nest —  
O bird, whose patience says, "All 's well,"  
How can it be with me, come, tell?  
When Constance, with averted eyes,—  
Soft-bonneted as some sweet-pea,—  
If I talk marriage, just replies  
With some such quaint irrelevancy,  
As, "While the red-bird sings his best,  
His loving mate sits on the nest."

## CONSTANCE

What shall I say? what can I do?  
Would such replies mean aught to you,  
O birds, whose music says, "Be glad"?  
Have I not reason to be sad  
When Constance, with demurest glance,  
Her face all popped with distress,  
If I reproach her, pouts, perchance,  
And answers thus in waywardness? —  
"What shall I say? what can I do?  
My meaning should be plain to you!"

## LYDIA

When Autumn 's here and days are short,  
Let Lydia laugh and, hey!  
Straightway 't is May-day in my heart,  
And blossoms strew the way.

When Summer 's here and days are long,  
Let Lydia sigh and, ho!  
December's fields I walk among,  
And shiver in the snow.

No matter what the seasons are,  
My Lydia is so dear,  
My heart admits no calendar  
Of Earth when she is near.

## HELEN

Heaped in raven loops and masses  
Over temples smooth and fair,  
Have you marked it, as she passes,  
Night and starlight mingled there,—  
Braided strands of midnight air,—  
Helen's hair?

Deep with dreams and moony mazes  
Of the thought that in them lies,  
Have you seen them, as she raises  
Them in question or surprise,—  
Two gray gleams of daybreak skies,—  
Helen's eyes?

Fresh as dew and honied wafers  
Of a music sweet that slips,  
Have you marked them, brimmed with laugh-  
ter's  
Song and sunshine to their tips,—  
Blossoms whence the perfume drips,—  
Helen's lips?

## HELEN

He who sees her needs must love her:  
But, beware, who'er thou art!  
Lest like me thou shouldst discover  
Nature overlooked one part,  
In this masterpiece of art —  
Helen's heart.

## MIGNON

Oh, Mignon's mouth is like a rose,  
A red, red rose, that half uncurls  
Sweet petals o'er a crimson bee:  
Or like a shell, that, opening, shows  
Within its rosy curve white pearls,  
White rows of pearls,  
Is Mignon's mouth that smiles at me.

Oh, Mignon's eyes are like blue gems,  
Two azure gems that gleam and glow,  
Soft sapphires set in ivory:  
Or like twin violets, whose stems  
Bloom blue beneath the covering snow,  
The lidded snow,  
Are Mignon's eyes that laugh at me.

O mouth of Mignon, Mignon's eyes!  
O eyes of violet, mouth of fire!—  
Within which lies all ecstasy  
Of tears and kisses and of sighs:—  
O mouth, O eyes, and O desire,  
O love's desire,  
Have mercy on the soul of me!

## TRANSUBSTANTIATION

### I

A sunbeam and a drop of dew  
Lay on a red rose in the South:  
God took the three and made her mouth,  
Her sweet, small mouth,  
So red of hue,—  
The burning baptism of His kiss  
Still fills my heart with heavenly bliss.

### II

A dream of truth and love come true  
Slept on a star in daybreak skies:  
God mingled these and made her eyes,  
Her dear, clear eyes,  
So gray of hue,—  
The high communion of His gaze  
Still fills my soul with deep amaze.



## LOVE AND A DAY

### I

In girandoles of gladioles  
The day had kindled flame;  
And Heaven a door of gold and pearl  
Unclosed, whence Morning,—like a girl,  
A red rose twisted in a curl,—  
Down sapphire stairways came.

Said I to Love: “What must I do?  
What shall I do? what can I do?”  
Said I to Love: “What must I do,  
All on a summer’s morning?”

Said Love to me: “Go woo, go woo.”  
Said Love to me: “Go woo.  
If she be milking, follow, O!  
And in the clover hollow, O!  
While through the dew the bells clang clear,  
Just whisper it into her ear,  
All on a summer’s morning.”

## LOVE AND A DAY

### II

Of honey and heat and weed and wheat  
The day had made perfume;  
And Heaven a tower of turquoise raised,  
Whence Noon, like some pale woman,  
gazed —  
A sunflower withering at her waist —  
Within a crystal room.

Said I to Love: "What must I do?  
What shall I do? what can I do?"  
Said I to Love: "What must I do,  
All in the summer nooning?"

Said Love to me: "Go woo, go woo."  
Said Love to me: "Go woo.  
If she be 'mid the rakers, O!  
Among the harvest acres, O!  
While every breeze brings scents of hay,  
Just hold her hand and not take 'nay,'  
All in the summer nooning."

### III

With song and sigh and cricket cry  
The day had mingled rest;  
And Heaven a casement opened wide

## LOVE AND A DAY

Of opal, whence, like some young bride,  
The Twilight leaned, all starry eyed,  
A moonflower on her breast.

Said I to Love: "What must I do?  
What shall I do? what can I do?"  
Said I to Love: "What must I do,  
All in the summer gloaming?"

Said Love to me: "Go woo, go woo."  
Said Love to me: "Go woo,  
Go meet her at the trysting, O!  
And 'spite of her resisting, O!  
Beneath the stars and afterglow,  
Just clasp her close and kiss her — so,  
All in the summer gloaming."

## LOVE IN A GARDEN

### I

Between the rose's and the canna's crimson,  
Beneath thy window in the night I stand;  
The jeweled dew hangs little stars, in rims, on  
The white moonflowers; each a spirit hand  
That points the path to mystic Shadowland.

Awaken, sweet and fair!  
And add to night thy grace!  
Suffer its loveliness to share  
The white moon of thy face,  
The dark cloud of thy hair.  
Awaken, sweet and fair!

### II

A moth, like down, swings on th' althea's  
pistil,—  
Ghost of a tone that haunts its bell's deep  
dome;—

## LOVE IN A GARDEN

And in the August-lily's cone of crystal  
A firefly hangs the lantern of a gnome,  
Green as a gem that gleams through hollow  
foam.

Approach! the moment flies!  
O sweetheart of the South!  
Come! mingle with night's mysteries  
The red rose of thy mouth,  
The dark stars of thine eyes.—  
Approach! the moment flies!

### III

Dim through the dusk, like some unearthly pres-  
ence,  
The night-song silvers of a dreaming bird;  
And with it borne, faint on a breeze-blown es-  
sence,  
The rainy whisper of a fountain's heard —  
As if young lips had breathed a perfumed  
word.

How long, my love, my bliss!  
How long must I await  
With night — that all impatience is —  
Thy greeting at the gate,  
And at the gate thy kiss?  
How long, my love, my bliss!

## FLORIDIAN

### I

The cactus and the aloe bloom  
Beneath the window of your room;  
That window where, at evenfall,  
    Beneath the twilight's first pale star,  
You linger, tall and spiritual,  
    And hearken my guitar.

It is the hour  
    When every flower  
Is wooed of moth or bee —  
Would, would you were the flower, dear,  
And I the moth to draw you near,  
    To draw you near to me,  
    My dear,  
    To draw you near to me!

### II

The jasmine and bignonia spill  
Their balm about your windowsill;

FLORIDIAN

That sill where, when magnolia-white,  
In foliage mists, the moon hangs far,  
You lean with bright deep eyes of night,  
And hearken my guitar.

It is the hour  
When from each flower  
The wind woos essences —  
Would, would you were the flower, love,  
And I the wind to breathe above,  
To breathe above and kiss,  
My love,  
To breathe above and kiss!



## WHEN SHIPS PUT OUT TO SEA

### I

It's "Sweet, good-by," when pennants fly  
And ships put out to sea;  
It's a loving kiss, and a tear or two  
In an eye of brown or an eye of blue:—  
And you'll remember me,  
Sweetheart,  
And you'll remember me.

### II

It's "Friend or foe?" when signals blow  
And ships sight ships at sea;  
It's "Clear for action! and man the guns!"  
As the battle nears and the battle runs;—  
And you'll remember me,  
Sweetheart,  
And you'll remember me.

### III

It's deck to deck, and wrath and wreck,  
When ships meet ships at sea;

WHEN SHIPS PUT OUT TO SEA

It's scream of shot and shriek of shell,  
And hull and turret a roaring hell; —  
And you'll remember me,  
Sweetheart,  
And you'll remember me.

IV

It's doom and death, and pause a breath,  
When ships go down at sea;  
It's hate is over and love begins,  
And war is cruel whoever wins; —  
And you'll remember me,  
Sweetheart,  
And you'll remember me.

## A CHRISTMAS CATCH

When roads are mired with ice and snow,  
And the air of morn is crisp with rime;  
When the holly hangs by the mistletoe,  
And bells ring in the Christmas-time:—  
It's — Saddle, my Heart! and ride away  
To the sweet-faced girl with eyes of gray!  
Who waits with a smile for the gifts you  
bring —  
A man's strong love and a wedding-ring —  
It's — Saddle, my Heart, and ride!

When vanes veer north and storm-winds blow,  
And the sun at noon is a blur o'erhead;  
When the holly hangs by the mistletoe,  
And the Christmas service is sung and said:—  
It's — Come, O my Heart, and wait a while,  
Where the organ peals, in the altar aisle,  
For the gifts that the church now gives to you —  
A woman's hand and a heart that's true.  
It's — Come, O my Heart, and wait!

## A CHRISTMAS CATCH

When rooms gleam warm with the fire's glow,  
And the sleet raps sharp on the window-pane:  
When the holly hangs by the mistletoe,  
And Christmas revels begin again:—  
It's — Home, O my Heart, and love, at last!  
And her happy breast to your own held fast:  
A song to sing and a tale to tell,  
A good-night kiss and all is well.  
It's — Home, O my Heart, and love!

## A SONG FOR YULE

### I

Sing, Hey, when the time rolls round this way,  
'And bells peal out, 'Tis *Christmas Day!*  
The world is better then by half,  
    For joy, for joy:  
In a little while you will see it laugh —  
For a song's to sing and a glass to quaff,  
    My boy; my boy.  
So here 's to the man who never says nay! —  
Sing, Hey, a song of Christmas Day!

### II

Sing, Ho, when roofs are white with snow,  
And homes are hung with mistletoe:  
Old Earth is not half bad, I wis —  
    What cheer! what cheer!  
How it ever seemed sad the wonder is —  
With a gift to give and a girl to kiss,  
    My dear; my dear.  
So here 's to the girl who never says no!  
Sing, Ho, a song of the mistletoe!

## A SONG FOR YULE

### III

No thing in the world to the heart seems wrong  
When the soul of a man walks out with song;  
Wherever they go, glad hand in hand,  
    And glove in glove,  
The round of the land is rainbow-spanned,  
And the meaning of life they understand  
    Is love; is love.  
Let the heart be open, the soul be strong,  
And life will be glad as a Christmas song.

## CHORDS

### I

When love delays, when love delays and joy  
Steals like a shadow o'er the happy hills;  
When hope is gone; and no to-morrow fills  
The promise of to-day; still I employ  
My soul with thoughts of thee,  
Who 'rt not for me, for me!

When love delays, when love delays and song  
Aches at wild lips, unutterable, as the sound  
Of ocean strives, within the shell's mouth  
bound;  
'And hope is gone for ever, slain of wrong;  
Still in my heart one word  
Keeps calling like a bird.

When love delays, when love delays and sleep  
Seals tired eyelids,—like the sound of foam,  
Heard 'mid familiar flowers far from home,—



## CHORDS

When hope lies dead; in dreams, in dreams I  
keep  
Feeling thy lips' sweet touch,—  
And, oh! it is too much!

When love delays, when love delays and sorrow  
Drinks her own tears that add but to her  
thirst;  
When song and sleep and love itself seem  
curst,  
And hope lies dead; still, still I dream to-morrow  
Will bring some word of cheer  
From thee who art not here.

Will love delay, will love delay till death  
Hath sealed these lips and locked these eyes in  
night?  
Till unto love and hate indifferent quite  
This form shall lie? Then wilt thou, wild of  
breath,  
Bend down and kiss me there  
When I no more shall care?

## II

If thou wouldst know the Beautiful that breathes  
And beckons through the World, far must  
thou seek! . . .

## CHORDS

She is no shadow wreathed with hemlock  
wreaths;

No drowsy sorrow whose wan eyes are weak  
With melancholy vigils; and no shade  
Of tragic sin of the sweet sun afraid:

No tearful anger torn of truthless love,

Who stabs her sick heart to the dagger's hilt  
For vengeance sweet; no miser mood, or maid,  
In owlet towers! — Nay! she sings above

On morning meads 'mid flowers that never  
wilt.

If thou dost seek the Beautiful, beware!

Lest thou discover her, nor know 'tis she;  
And she enslave thee to thy heart's despair,

And fill thy soul with yearning, utterly,  
For that wild-rose which is her mouth, that  
brings

Dew-odors of the dawn; for those twin springs  
Of light, her eyes; the bloom of her white brow,

O'er which the foliage of her dark hair lies:  
The melody which is her heart, that sings

The poetry of love, to which all bow,

Both gods and men, the love that never dies.

Lost art thou then, lost as the first lone star

Set in the splendor of the sunset's wave;

## CHORDS

Lost in thy loneliness of searching far,  
Striving to clasp her, evermore her slave:  
Lost — gladly lost! a devotee to her  
Who, in the end, perhaps may let thee share  
A portion of her bliss, her heritage  
Of happiness in the same way and wise  
As woods and waters share it.— Then prepare  
Thy soul,— made perfect,— for its final wage,  
Her kiss, whose touch shall apotheosize.

### III

Now that the orchard's leaves are sere,  
And drip with rain instead of dew,  
No moon-bright fruit hangs moon-like here,  
And dead your long white lilies too,—  
And dead the heart that broke for you:

How comes the dim touch of your arm?  
Your faint lips on my feverish cheek?  
Your eyes near mine? deep as a charm,  
And gray, so gray! till I am weak,  
Weak with wild tears and can not speak.

I am as one who walks in dreams;  
Sees, as in youth, his father's home;  
Hears from his native mountain streams  
Far music of continual foam,  
And one sweet voice that bids him come.

## AT HER GRAVE

### I

With your eyes of April blue,  
And your mouth  
Like a May-rose, fresh with dew,  
Of the South,  
With your hair as golden sweet  
As the ripples of ripe wheat,  
How you make my old heart beat!—  
Who are you?

### II

There is something that I knew,  
Long ago,  
In your voice that thrills me through  
With the glow  
Of remembered happiness;  
And your look — I can not guess  
What it is there, nor express.—  
Who are you?

## AT HER GRAVE

### III

You are like her! even the hue  
Of her eyes! —  
It is strange you stop here, too,  
Where she lies! —  
Where she lies who was, you see,  
All to me a girl could be —  
But no wife. — You stare at me. —  
Who are you?

### IV

Well, I left her. That 's not new —  
God above!  
Men, who live so, often do.  
'T is n't love.  
So I broke her heart, they say, —  
And been wretched since that day:  
And our child — don't turn away! —  
Who are you?

## A CONFESSION

These are the facts:—I was to blame.  
I brought her here and wrought her shame.  
She came with me all trustingly.  
Lovely and innocent her face:  
And in her perfect form, the grace  
Of purity and modesty.

I think I loved her then: would dote  
On her ambrosial breast and throat,  
Young as a wildflower's tenderness:  
Her eyes, that were both glad and sad:  
Her cheeks and chin, that dimples had:  
Her mouth, red-ripe to kiss and kiss.

Three months passed by; three moons of fire;  
When in me sickened all desire:  
And in its place a devil,— who  
Filled all my soul with deep disgust,  
And on the victim of my lust  
Turned eyes of loathing,— swiftly grew.

## A CONFESSION

One night, when by my side she slept,  
I rose: and leaning, while I kept  
The dagger hid, I kissed her hair  
And mouth: and, when she smiled asleep,  
Into her heart I drove it deep —  
And left her dead, still smiling there.



## LAST DAYS

Ah! heartbreak of the tattered hills,  
And heartache of the autumn sky!  
Heartbreak and heartache, since God wills,  
Are mine, and God knows why!

I held one dearer than each day  
Of life God sets in sunny gold —  
But Death hath ta'en that gem away,  
And left me poor and old.

The heartbreak of the hills is mine,  
Of trampled twig and rain-beat leaf,  
Of wind that sobs through thorn and pine  
An unavailing grief.

The sorrow of the loveless skies'  
"Farewells" are wild as those I said  
When last I kissed my child's blue eyes  
And lips, ice-dumb and dead.

## AT TWILIGHT

Once more she holds me with her pensive  
eyes;

Once more I feel her voice's witchery  
Within my heart unfountain tears and sighs,  
And fill the soul of me.

Once more she bends a silent face above;

Once more I feel her hands' soft touches  
shake

My life, unbinding long-imprisoned love,  
Bidding my lost dreams wake.

Once more I see her serious smile; and touch'

Once more the lips of her whose kisses  
say —

“The night was long, and thou hast suffered  
much:

At last, dear heart, 't is day!”

## DAY AND NIGHT

They said to me, "The days are not so far off  
When she will come, who gave her heart to  
thee;"

And still I wait, while twilight's lonely star, off  
Her long-loved hills, dips dewy to the sea.

And I recall that night, which gave its soul of  
Calm beauty to the earth, when she did give  
Her love's white starlight to the rugged whole of  
My barren life and bade me see and live.

The days go by, and my sick soul recalls but  
The revelation of that evening sky:  
The days! whose hours are as narrow walls,—  
but  
Of whiter shadow,—where hearts break and  
die.

The day is error's: it can but deceive us  
With shows of Earth, blind with the primal  
curse.

The night is truth's: its myriad fires weave us  
The thoughts of God, the visible universe.

### THREE BIRDS

A red bird sang upon the bough  
When wind-flowers nodded in the dew:  
My spring of bird and flower wast thou,  
O tried and true!

A brown bird warbled on the wing  
When poppy buds were hearts of heat:  
I wooed thee with a golden ring,  
O sad and sweet!

A black-bird twittered in the mist  
When nightshade blooms were filled with  
frost:  
The leaves upon thy grave are whist,  
O loved and lost!

## UNREQUITED

Passion? not hers! who held me with pure eyes:  
One hand among the deep curls of her brow,  
I drank the girlhood of her gaze with sighs:  
She never sighed, nor gave me kiss or vow.

So have I seen a clear October pool,  
Cold, liquid topaz, set within the sere  
Gold of the woodland, tremorless and cool,  
Reflecting all the heartbreak of the year.

Sweetheart? not she! whose voice was music-  
sweet;  
Whose face was sweeter than melodious  
prayer.

Sweetheart I called her.— When did she repeat  
Sweet to one hope, or heart to one despair!

So have I seen a wildflower's fragrant head  
Sung to and sung to by a longing bird,  
And at the last, albeit the bird lay dead,  
No blossom wilted, for it had not heard.

## THE HEART'S DESIRE

God made her body out of foam and flowers,  
And for her hair the dawn and darkness blent ;  
Then called two planets from their heavenly  
towers,  
And in her face, divinely eloquent,  
Gave them a firmament.

God made her heart of rosy ice and fire,  
Of snow and flame, that freezes while it burns ;  
And of a starbeam and a moth's desire  
He made her soul, to'ards which my longing  
turns,  
And all my being yearns.

So is my life a prisoner unto passion,  
Enslaved of her who gives nor sign nor word ;  
So in the cage her loveliness doth fashion  
Is love endungeoned, like a golden bird  
That sings but is not heard.

## THE HEART'S DESIRE

Could it but once convince her with beseeching!  
But once compel her as the sun the south!  
Could it but once, fond arms around her reach-  
ing,  
Upon the red carnation of her mouth  
Dew its eternal drouth!

Then might I rise victorious over sadness,  
O'er fate and change, and, with but little care,  
Torched by the glory of that moment's gladness,  
Breast the black mountain of my life's despair,  
And die, or do and dare.



## OUT OF THE DEPTHS

### I

Let me forget her face!  
So fresh, so lovely! the abiding place  
Of tears and smiles that won my heart to her;  
Of dreams and moods that moved my soul's dim  
    deeps,  
    As strong winds stir  
Dark waters where the starlight glimmering  
    sleeps.—  
In every lineament the mind can trace,  
    Let me forget her face!

### II

Let me forget her form!  
Soft and seductive, that contained each charm,  
Each grace the sweet word maidenhood implies;  
And all the sensuous youth of line and curve,  
    That makes men's eyes  
Bondsmen of beauty, eager still to serve.—

## OUT OF THE DEPTHS

In every part that memory can warm,  
Let me forget her form!

### III

Let me forget her, God!  
Her who made honeyed love a bitter rod  
To scourge my heart with, barren with despair;  
To tear my soul with, sick with vain desire!—  
Oh, hear my prayer!  
Out of the hell of love's unquenchable fire  
I cry to thee, with face against the sod,  
Let me forget her, God!

“ THIS IS THE FACE OF HER ”

This is the face of her  
I've dreamed of long  
That in my heart I bear :  
This is the face of her  
Pictured in song.

Look on the lily lids,  
The eyes of dawn,—  
Deep as a Nereid's,  
Swimming with dewy lids  
In waters wan.

Look on the brows of snow,  
The locks of night :  
Only the gods can show  
Such brows of placid snow,  
Such locks of light.

The cheeks, like rosy moons ;  
The lips of fire :  
Love sighs no sweeter tunes  
Under romantic moons  
Than these suspire.

“THIS IS THE FACE OF HER”

Loved lips and eyes and hair!

Look, this is she!

She, who sits smiling there,

Throned in my heart's despair,

Never for me!

## INDIFFERENCE

She is so dear the wildflowers near  
Each path she passes by,  
Are over fain to kiss again  
Her feet and then to die.

She is so fair the wild birds there  
That sing upon the bough,  
Have learned the staff of her sweet laugh,  
And sing no other now.

Alas! that she should never see,  
Should never care to know,  
The wildflower's love, the bird's above,  
And his, who loves her so.

## GHOST WEATHER

Wild gusts of drizzle hoot and hiss  
Through writhing lindens torn in two —  
The dead's own days are days like this!  
Yea; let me sit and be with you.

Here in your willow chair, whose seat  
Spreads purple plush.—Hark! how the  
gusts  
Seem moaning voices that repeat  
Some grief here; in this room, where dusts

Make dim each ornament and chair;  
This locked-in memory where you died:  
Since angels stood here, saintly fear  
Guards each dark corner, mournful-eyed.

Through this dim light bend your dim face;  
Or, like a rain-mist, gray of gleam,  
A soft, dim cloudiness of lace,  
Stand near me while I dream, I dream.

## THE FOREST POOL

One memory persuades me when  
Dusk's lonely star burns overhead,  
To take the gray path through the glen —  
That finds the forest pool, made red  
With sunset — and forget again,  
Forget that she is dead.

Once more I look into the spring,  
That on one rock a finger white  
Of foam that beckons still doth bring —  
Some moon-wan spirit of the night,  
Who dwells within its murmuring,  
Her life the sad moonlight.

I see the red dusk touch it here  
With fire like a blade of blood;  
One star reflected, white and clear,  
Like a wood-blossom's drowning bud;  
While all my grief stands very near,  
Pale in the solitude.



## THE FOREST POOL

And then, behold, while yet the moon  
Hangs — silver as a twisted horn  
Blown out of Elfland — sweet with June,  
White in white clusters of the thorn,  
Slow, in the water as a tune,  
An image pale is born :

That has her throat of frost; her lips —  
Her mouth where God's anointment lies;  
Her eyes, wherefrom love's arrow-tips  
Break, like the starlight from dark skies;  
Her hair, a hazel heap that slips;  
Her throat and hair and eyes.

And then I stoop; the water kissed,  
The face fades from me into air;  
And in the pool's dark amethyst  
My own pale face returns my stare:  
Then night and mist — and in the mist  
One dead leaf drifting there.

## AT SUNSET

Into the sunset's turquoise marge  
The moon dips, like a pearly barge  
Enchantment sails through magic seas,  
To fairyland Hesperides,  
Over the hills and away.

Into the fields, in ghost-gray gown,  
The young-eyed dusk comes slowly down;  
Her apron filled with stars she stands.  
And one or two slip from her hands  
Over the hills and away.

Above the wood's black caldron bends  
The witch-faced Night and, muttering, blends  
The dew and heat, whose bubbles make  
The mist and musk that haunt the brake  
Over the hills and away.

Oh, come with me, and let us go  
Beyond the sunset lying low,  
Beyond the twilight and the night,  
Into Love's kingdom of long light,  
Over the hills and away.

## DEAD AND GONE

Can you tell me how he rests,  
Flowers, growing o'er him there?  
His a right warm heart, my sweets,—  
So, cover it with care.

Can you tell me how he lies  
Such nights out in the cold,  
O cricket, with your plaintive call,  
O glow-worm, with your gold?

If my eyes are sorrowful,  
Well may they weep, I trow,—  
Since his dead eyes gazed into them,  
They have been sad enow.

If my heart make moan and ache,  
Well may it break, I'm sure —  
For his dead love is more, ah me!  
More than it can endure.

## ONE NIGHT

### I

A night of rain. The wind is out.  
And I had wished it otherwise:  
A calm, still night; no scudding skies;  
Or, in the scud, above the rout,  
The moon; by whose pale light my eyes  
Might meet her eyes; the smile that tries  
To come but will not; lips, that pout  
With seeming anger, all surmise,  
When I have said "I love your lies"—  
Lips I shall kiss before she dies.

### II

What force this wind has! As it runs  
Around each unprotecting tree  
It seems some beast; and now I see  
Its form, its eyes; a woman's once:—  
Dark eyes! that blaze as lionly  
As some bayed beast's, that will not flee

## ONE NIGHT

The pine-knots and derides the guns.—  
Or is it but the thought in me!  
The thought of that which is to be,  
The deed, that rises shadowy?

### III

And now the trees and whipping rain  
Confuse them. . . . I must drive it  
hence,  
The memory of her eyes! the tense  
Wild look within them of hard pain! . . .  
Yet she must die — with every sense  
Strung to beholding knowledge, whence  
My heart shall be made whole again.—  
Here I will wait where night is dense.  
Soon she will come, like Innocence,  
Thinking her youth is her defense.

### IV

And when she leaves,—and none perceives,—  
The old gray manor, where the eight  
Old locusts, (twisted shadows), freight  
With mossy murmurings its eaves,  
One moment at the iron gate  
She 'll tarry. Then, with breath abate,

## ONE NIGHT

Come rustling through the autumn leaves.  
And I will take both hands and sate  
My mouth on hers and say, " You 're late ";  
She 'll laugh to hear I had to wait. . . .

## V

O passion of past vows, revive  
Imagination, and renew  
The ardor of love's language you  
For love's rose-altar kept alive!  
Repeat the oaths that rang with dew  
And starlight!— Tell her she is true  
As beautiful.— I will contrive  
To make her think I have no clue  
To all her falseness. I will woo  
As once I wooed before I knew.

## VI

And we will walk against the wind;  
The shuffling leaves about our feet;  
Our ruin, as the wood's, complete,  
Because one woman so hath sinned  
And never suffered. She shall meet  
No murder in my eyes; no heat

## ONE NIGHT

Of fate in holding hand that 's pinned  
To hers. To make her trust to beat,  
I 'll kiss her hand, her hair,—like wheat  
Of affluent summer,—saying “Sweet.”

## VII

And should I bungle in this thing,  
This purpose that must see her dead  
To cure this fever in my head?—  
What other thing is there to bring  
Soul satisfaction? when is shed  
No real blood, save what makes red  
The baulked intention?—I will fling  
The mask aside! — But hate hath led  
Desire too far now to be fed  
With failure. I have naught to dread,

## VIII

When we have reached the precipice  
That thwarts the battling of the sea,  
And wallows out great rocks, that knee  
The giant foam with roar and hiss,  
I will not cease to coax and be  
The anxious lover. Trusting she



## ONE NIGHT

Will not suspect my farewell kiss  
Until it turns a curse, and we  
Sway for an instant totteringly,  
And she has shrieked some prayer at me.

## IX

O let me see wild terror there  
Upon her face! the wilder frown  
Of crime's appraisal, and renown  
Of my life's injury, that bare  
This horror with its bloody crown! —  
No pity, God! For, if her gown,  
Suspending looseness of her hair,  
Delay the plunge . . . the night is  
brown . . .  
My heel must crush her white face down,  
And Hell and Heaven see her drown.

## THE PARTING

She passed the thorn-trees, whose gaunt branches  
tossed  
Their spider-shadows round her ; and the breeze,  
Beneath the ashen moon, was full of frost,  
And mouthed and mumbled in the sickly trees,  
Like some starved hag who sees her children  
freeze.

Dry-eyed she waited by the sycamore.  
Some stars made misty blotches in the sky.  
And all the wretched willows on the shore  
Looked faded as a jaundiced cheek or eye.  
She felt deep sorrow yet could only sigh.

She heard his skiff grind on the river rocks  
Whistling he came into the shadow made  
By the great tree. He kissed her on her locks ;  
And round her form his eager arms were laid.  
Passive she stood her purpose unbetrayed.

And then she spoke, while still his greeting kiss  
Stung in her hair. She did not dare to lift  
Her face to his ; her anguished eyes to his

## THE PARTING

While tears smote crystal in her throat. One  
    rift  
Of weakness humored might set all adrift.

Anger and shame were his. She meekly heard.  
And then the oar-locks sounded, and her brain  
Remembered he had said no farewell word;  
And swift emotion swept her; and again  
Left her as silent as a carven pain. . . .

She, in the old sad farm-house, wearily  
Resumed the drudgery of her common lot,  
Regret remembering.—'Midst old vices, he,  
Who would have trod on, and somehow did not,  
The wildflower, that had brushed his feet, forgot.

## THE DAUGHTER OF THE SNOW

Though the panther's footprints show,  
And the wild-cat's, in the snow,  
You will never find a trace  
Of the footsteps of a certain  
Maiden with a paler face  
Than the drifts that fill and curtain  
Hillside, valley, and the wood,  
Where the hunter's wigwam stood  
In the winter solitude.

What white beast hath grown the fur  
For the whiter limbs of her?—  
Raiment of the frost and ice  
To her supple beauty fitting;  
Wampum strouds, as white as rice,  
Of the frost's fantastic knitting,  
Wrap her form and face complete;  
Glove her hands with ice; her feet  
Moccasin with beaded sleet.

## THE DAUGHTER OF THE SNOW

'Though he knew she made a haunt  
Of the dell, it did not daunt:  
Where the hoar-frost mailed each tree  
    In soft, phantom alabaster,  
And hung ghosts of bud and bee  
    On each autumn-withered aster;  
By the frozen waterfall,  
There she stood, beneath its wall,  
In the ice-sheathed chaparral.

Where the beech-tree and the larch  
Built a white triumphal arch  
For the Winter, marching down  
    With his icy-armored leaders;  
Where each hemlock had a crown,  
    And pale diadems the cedars;  
Where the long icicle shone,  
There he saw her, standing lone,  
Like a mist-wraith turned to stone.

And she led him many a mile  
With her hand-wave and her smile,  
And the printless swiftness of  
    Feet of frost, and snowy flutter  
Of her raiment; now above,  
    Now below, the boughs of utter  
Winter whiteness. Led him on

THE DAUGHTER OF THE SNOW

Till the dawn and day were gone,  
And the evening star hung wan. . . .

Hunters found him dead, they tell,  
In the winter-wasted dell,  
With his quiver and his bow,  
Where the cascade ran a rafter,  
White, of crystal and of snow;  
Where he listened to her laughter,  
Promises, that were as far  
As the secrets of a star,  
And her love that naught could mar.

And her countenance is this  
Stamped on his: and this her kiss,  
Haunting still his mouth and eyes,  
Colder than the cold December:  
This her passion, that defies  
All control, the stars remember  
Filled him, killed him: this is she  
Clinging to him, neck and knee,  
Where his limbs sank wearily.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE STAR

(*Love Spiritual*)

*“This union of the human soul with the divine æthereal substance of the universe, is the ancient doctrine of Pythagoras and Plato.”*—Divine Legation.

There is love for love: the heaven  
Teems with possibilities:  
And, when love is purely given,  
Love returns from where none sees:  
And such love becomes a ladder  
Reaching heavenward, from the sadder  
Night of Earth; from out the driven  
Darkness of its miseries.

There is love for love: and Beauty,  
From her star above the Earth,  
Smiles, and straight each cloud of sooty  
Night takes on celestial worth:  
And, like some white flower unfolding,  
Love is born; and softly holding  
Up its face, as if in duty,  
Grows to that which gave it birth.



THE SPIRIT OF THE STAR

Earth and Heaven are prolific  
Of love's wonders: and the sky  
Teems with spirits, fair, terrific,  
Who, if loved, shall never die:  
Dæmons, haggard as their mountains;  
Naiads, sparkling as their fountains;  
Sylphids of the winds, pacific  
As the stars they tremble by. . . .

Such was I; who long had waited  
For the everlasting sleep:  
Where, around me, worlds dilated,  
Waned or waxed within the deep:  
Where, beneath my star, a planet  
Whirled and shone, like glowing granite,  
While around it ne'er abated  
One white satellite its sweep.

I was sad: my beauty wearied,  
Useless as a scentless bud  
Fading ere it blooms. The serried  
Mists of worlds, as red as blood,  
Streamed beneath me. And the starry  
Firmament above bent, barry  
With the wild auroras, ferried  
Of the meteors' sisterhood.





## THE SPIRIT OF THE STAR

I was loveless with a yearning  
After love that never came;  
All my astral being burning  
Towards that world without a name,  
World I knew not: till, with splendor  
Of compulsion that was tender,  
Something drew me, unreturning,  
Filled me with a finer flame.

So I left my star, whose lances  
Pierced with arrowy gold the heat  
Of heaven's hyacinth; its glances  
Saddened me. No more to meet,  
Then I left my star; and, beating  
Downward, heard it still repeating  
Far farewells; and through the trances  
Of dark space its face looked sweet.

Passed your moon: a melancholy  
Disc at first; then, vast and sharp,  
Lo, a world, all white and holy!  
Where, upon the crystal scarp  
Of a mountain,—like a story  
Of high Heaven revealed in glory,—  
Gradual, as if music slowly  
Built it, rolling from a harp,—

## THE SPIRIT OF THE STAR

Rose a city: cloudy nacre  
Were its walls, that towered round  
Acre upon arch-piled acre  
Of a marble-terraced ground:  
Caryatids alternated  
With Atlantes, sculpture-weighted:  
And its gates — some god the maker —  
Rhombs of symbolized diamond.

In the white light glittered swimming  
Domes of dazzle: swirl on swirl,  
Temples lifted columns, brimming  
Crystal flame, that seemed to whirl:  
Battlemented moonstone darkled;  
Palaces, pale-pillared, sparkled,  
Cloudy opal: and, far dimming,  
Aqueducts of ghostly pearl.

Streaming steeples shone, of dædal  
Emblem; each an obelisk:  
Minarets, each one a needle,  
Balancing a bubble-disc;  
Some of diamond, like a blister  
Frozen; some of topaz-glister,  
Vinous; in whose blinding middle  
Blazed an orb of burning bisque.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE STAR

And I saw where, silvery slanted,  
A vast pyramidic heap  
Rose of spar; whereon was planted  
The acropolis of Sleep,—  
God of these:— that, looming higher,  
Wrought of seeming ice and fire,  
Where pale rainbow-colors panted,  
Gleamed above the lunar deep.

Robed in white simarre and chiton,  
Visions filled its every square,  
Moving like a finer light on  
Light: and in the glory there  
Music rang and golden laughter;  
And before each shape, and after,  
Radiance went, that shadowed white, on  
Temple and on palace stair.

Though they called me, I descended  
Earthward. For great longing drew  
Me and, drawing me, was blended  
With your world. I never knew  
It was Earth, until,— forsaking  
Heaven,— I beheld it taking,—  
A great azure sphere,— its splendid  
Way along the singing blue.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE STAR

And when night came, here, above you,—  
Sleeping by your folded sheep  
On the hills,— I stooped: whereof you  
Dreamed: I kissed you in your sleep:  
I, your destiny, who wrought it  
So you knew me: you, who thought it  
Not so strange that I should love you,  
I a spirit of the deep.

'Twas your love that sought and found me,  
Drew me from that star-life sad;  
Won my soul to yours and bound me  
With such love as none hath had:  
I am she, you may remember,  
That fair star that seemed an ember  
O'er you, that you loved.— Around me  
Wrap your arms now and be glad.

Look above: what seems a petal,  
Burning, of a rose; that far  
Point of radiance, bright as metal,  
Fiery silver, is your star!  
Look above you: rise unto it.  
Let it lead you now who drew it  
Down to Earth, where shadows settle!—  
On that star no shadows are!



## THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN

(*Love Ideal*)

*“Among the mountains of Carmarthen, lies a beautiful and romantic piece of water, named The Van Pools. Tradition relates, that after midnight, on New Year’s Eve, there appears on this lake a being named The Spirit of the Van. She is dressed in a white robe, bound by a golden girdle; her hair is long and golden; her face is pale and melancholy.”—Keightley’s “Fairy Mythology.”*

Midsummer-night; the Van. Through night’s  
wan noon,

Wading the storm-scurd of an eve of storm,  
Pale o’er Carmarthen’s peaks the mounting  
moon.—

Wilds of Carmarthen! sombre heights, that  
swarm

Girdling this water, as old giants might  
Crouch, guarding some enchanted gem of  
charm,—

THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN

Wilds of Carmarthen, that for me each night  
Reëcho prayers and pleadings,—all the  
year

Unanswered, — made to listening waters  
white!

Mountains, behold me yet again! Bend  
near!

Behold her lover! hers, that shape of snow,  
Who dwells amid these pools; who will not  
hear

My heart's wild pleading, calling loud, now  
low,

Unhappy, to her, 'mid the lonely hills.

Whene'er a ripple trembles into glow,  
Where yeasty moonshine scuds the foam,  
straight thrills

Heart's expectation through my veins, and  
high

With "she!" each pulse the exultation fills.  
But she 'tis never. Once . . . and then!  
would I,

Would I had perished, so beholding!—  
World,

'Twas you, O world, who would not let me  
die!

## THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN

Once I beheld her!—If some fiend had  
    curled  
Stiff talons in my hair, and, twisting tight,  
    Had raised me high, then into Hell had  
    hurled;  
Fresh from that vision of her beauty white,  
    With Heaven in my soul, I, unamerced,  
Shackled with tortures, yet might mock Hell's  
    spite.

Immortal memory, quench in me this  
    thirst!—  
O starlike vision, that a moment clove  
    My sight, and then for ever left me curst!  
Oh, make me mad with love, with all thy  
    love!  
Me, me, who seek thee 'mid these wilds  
    when gloom  
Storms or drip gold the sibylline stars  
    above!—  
Let thy high coming in a flash consume  
The light of all the stars! and make me mad,  
    Mad with love's madness! fill me with sweet  
    doom!

Sleep will I not now, for my soul is sad:  
    For, should I sleep, there might come other  
    dreams,—

THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN

Sadder than thou art,— in thy beauty clad  
And all thy tyranny. To me it seems  
Better to wake here, underneath this pine,  
Until thy face upon my vision gleams.—  
Thou, who art wrought of elements divine,  
And I of crasser clay, clay that will think,  
“ Since I am hers, why should she not be  
mine? ”

Again, its usual phantom, on the brink  
Of thy lone lake, I ask thee: “ Must I yearn  
Forever, haunted of that vision’s wink? ”—  
When, glassing out great circles, which did  
urn

Some intense essence of interior light,  
(As clouds, that clothe the moon, unbinding,  
burn,

Riven, erupt her orb, triumphant white,)  
I saw, midmost the Van, a feathering fire  
Dilating ivory-wan.— Expectant night  
Tiptoed attentive, fearful to suspire.—

Wherefrom arose — what white divinity?  
What godhead sensed with glory and desire?  
Born for the moment for the eyes of me!  
Then re-absorbed into the brassy gloom  
Of whispering waves that sighed their  
ecstasy.

THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN

Thou! in whose path harmonious colors bloom,  
Pale pearl and lilac, asphodel and rose,—  
Like many flow'rs auroral of perfume,—  
Thou leftst me thus, to marvel as who knows  
He is not dead and yet it seems he is,  
Since all his soul with spirit-rapture  
glows.—

O sylph-like brow! lips like an angel's kiss!  
High immortality! whose face was such  
As starlight in a lily's loveliness! . . .

The gold that bound thee seemed too base  
to clutch

Thy chastity, though clear as golden gum  
That almsgs sweat, and fragrance to the  
touch!

Thy hair — not hair! — seemed rays, like those  
that come

Strained through the bubble of a chryso-  
lite.—

No word I said: thy beauty struck me dumb.

Thy face, that is upon my soul's quick sight  
Eternal seared, hath made of me a shade,

A wandering shadow of the day and night:  
A seeker 'mid the hoary hills for aid,

The sole society of my sick heart, who  
Shuns all companionship of man and maid:

THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN

Who, comrade of the mountain blossoms  
blue,  
And intimate of old trees, goes dreaming  
they,—

As in that legendary world that drew  
Oracles from lips in oaks—, may sometime  
say

Prophetic precepts to it: how were won  
A spirit loved to love a mortal;— yea,  
In vain.—

But one day, frog-like in the sun,  
Beside a cave,—the nightshade vines made  
rank

And hairy henbane, where huge spiders  
spun,—

Wrinkled as Magic, I a grizzled, lank,  
Squat something startled, naught save skin  
and hair;

With eyes wherein dwelt demons; flames, that  
shrank

And grew;— familiars, who fixed me with  
glare

As, raising claw-like hands when I drew near,  
Frog-like he croaked, “Thou fool! go seek  
her there!

Woo her with thy heart's actions! making  
clear

THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN

Thy soul's white passage for her coming  
feet! —  
In! in! thou fool! plunge in! Fear naught  
but fear!"

Yet I have waited many weeks. Repeat.  
Acts of the heart with passionate offering  
Of love whose anguish makes it seven times  
sweet.

Still all in vain, in vain. To-night I bring  
My self alone; my soul unfearing, see!  
My soul unto thee! — Shall the clay still cling  
Clogging fulfillment? and achievement be  
Balked still by flesh? — no! let me in — to  
die,

Haply; or, for a moment's mystery,  
Gaze in thine eyes: one splendid instant lie  
In thy white arms and bosom; and thy kiss,  
My elemental immortality! —

Part of thy breathing waves, to laugh or  
hiss  
In foam; or winds, that rock the awful deeps,  
Or build with song vast temples for thy  
bliss.

Wherein, responsive as thy white hand sweeps  
The chords of some sad shell, I'll dream and  
roam



## THE SPIRIT OF THE VAN

Through glaucous chambers where the green  
day sleeps.

Dead not with death, what secrets hath thy  
home

Not mine then, epoched in exultant  
foam? . . .

Deeper, down deeper! yea, at last I come!

## THE CAVERNS OF KAF

(*Love Sensual*)

*“‘Where am I?’ cried he; ‘what are these dreadful rocks? these valleys of darkness? are we arrived at the horrible Kaf?’”*—Vathek.

One, Benreddin, I have heard,  
Near the town of Mosul sleeping,  
In a dream beheld a bird,  
Wonderful, with plumes of sweeping  
Whiteness, crowned pomegranate-red:  
And, it seemed, his soul it led,  
Brilliant as a blossom, keeping  
Near the Tigris as it fled.

Following, at last he came  
To a haggard valley, shouldered  
Under peaks that had no name:  
Where it vanished. 'Mid the bouldered  
Savageness a woman, fair,

## THE CAVERNS OF KAF

In a white simarre, stood there,  
Auburn-haired; around whom smol-  
dered  
Pensive lights of purple air.

And she led him down to vast  
Caves of sardonyx, whose ceiling  
Domed one chrysoberyl. Blast  
On blast of music,—stealing  
Out of aural atmospheres,—  
Beat like surf upon his ears;  
Then receded, faintly pealing  
Psalteries and dulcimers.

Living figures seemed to heave  
High the walls, where, wild, embattled,  
Warred Amshaspand and the Deev:  
Over all two splendors rattled  
Arms of Heaven, arms of Hell;  
Forms of flame that seemed to swell  
Godlike: Aherman who battled  
With Ormuzd he could not quell.

There she left him wond'ring; till  
The reverberant music, drifting,  
Strong beyond his utmost will,  
Drew him onward where, high lifting

## THE CAVERNS OF KAF

Pillar and entablature,  
Vast with emblem, yawned a door —  
Valves of liquid lightning, shifting  
In and out and up and o'er.

Through the door he swept: deep-domed,  
Green with serpentine and beryl,  
Loomed a cavern, crusted, foamed,  
Tortuous with gems of peril:  
Difficult, a colonnade  
Seemed, of satin-spar, to braid  
Deeps of labyrinthed and sterile  
Tiger-spar that, twisting, rayed.

Dizzy stones of magic price  
Crammed volute and loaded corbel:  
Iridescent shafts of ice  
Leapt: with long reëchoed warble  
Waters unto waters sang:  
Crystal arc and column sprang  
Into fire as each marble  
Fountain flung its foam that rang.

And around him, filled with sound,  
Streams of resonant colors jetted:  
Rainbow surf that interwound  
Crypts and arcades, crescent-fretted:

## THE CAVERNS OF KAF

Mists of citron and of roon;  
Lemon lights that mocked the moon;  
Shot with scarlet, veined and netted,  
Beating golden hearts of tune.

Suns arose, of blinding blue; ;  
Moons of green-dilating splendor:  
In whose centers slowly grew  
Spots like serpents' eyes that, slender,  
Glared; at first, prismatic beams;  
Then, intolerable gleams;  
Hissing trails of fire, tender  
As an houri's breath that dreams.

Characters of Arabic,  
Cabalistic, red as coral,  
Flashed through violet veils, so quick  
None might read: as if, in quarrel,  
Iran wrote of Turan there  
Hate and scorn, or, everywhere,  
Wrought some talisman of moral  
Strength no Afrit's heart would dare.

Sounding splendors drew him on  
To another cavern; hollow;  
Hewn of alabaster wan;  
Lucid; where his gaze could follow

## THE CAVERNS OF KAF

Caves in caves ; transparent flights  
Rolling, lost in moving lights,  
Glaucous gold : he like a swallow  
O'er a lake the morning smites.

Down the dome flashed out and in  
Instant faces of the Peris :  
Restless eyes of Deevs and Jinn  
In the walls watched : unseen Faeries  
Out of rainbows rained and tossed  
Flowers of fire full of frost ;  
Blossoms where the fire varies,  
Gold and green and crimson-mossed.

Then there met him, face to face,  
Seven odalisques of Heaven,  
Swinging in a silver space  
Flaming censers : and the seven,  
Crowned with stars of burning green,  
Seemed to turn to incense ; seen,  
As it rose, to be a driven  
Hippogrif, or rosmarine.

Aloes, Nard, and Ambergris,  
Sandal, Frankincense, and Civet,—  
Genii of the fragrances,—  
Rein each winged aroma ; give it

## THE CAVERNS OF KAF

Spurs and race it down the lull  
Of the caverns, clouded dull  
    With wild manes of musk; now vivid,  
Vaporous white and wonderful.

And Benreddin's aching soul,  
    In each sense intoxicated,  
Reached, at last, what seemed the goal  
    Of all passion: golden-gated,  
Vast, a fountain: where he saw  
Limbs of light without a flaw;      
    Breasts and arms of bloom; that  
        waited  
For his soul to nearer draw.

Houri faces shimmered there;  
    Fluid forms.— It, with a thunder  
Of wild music, like the hair  
    Of a genie, flamed from under  
Caverns of the demon-world:  
Filled with voices, high it hurled,  
    Calling him, with beckoning wonder  
Of cœrulean forms that swirled.

And with burning lips and eyes  
    In he plunged: hoarse laughter greeted,  
Demon laughter: then sad sighs,  
    Dying downward: passion-heated



## THE CAVERNS OF KAF

Hands seemed drawing him away,  
Downward: where a rocking ray  
    Flamed and swung, and Eblis-sheeted  
Shadows wandered ghostly gray.

. . . . .

And, 'tis said, that he was young,  
    Young that morning. When the dart-  
        ing,  
Anguish-throated bulbuls sung,  
    In the silent starlight starting,  
One, a Baghdad merchant, led  
By the hoariness of its head,  
    Found what seemed a mummy: parting  
Hair from brow, Benreddin — dead.

## THE SALAMANDER

(*Love Dæmonic*)

*“The Fire-Philosophers, and the Rosicrucians, or Illuminati, taught that all knowable things (both of the soul and of the body) were evolved out of fire, and finally resolvable into it: and that fire was the last and the only-to-be known God: as that all things were capable of being searched down into it, and all things were capable of being thought up into it.”—The Rosicrucians.*

Once she breathed upon my eyes,  
Touched the soul that dreamed within me;  
All the magic that might win me  
Whispered to my heart with sighs —  
Darkness can not make them lies! . . .

Bring me moly, hellebore!  
Mix them for my soul's nepenthe,  
For my spirit's dread Amenti,  
For the curse that comes once more  
With unutterable lore!

## THE SALAMANDER

Sunlight, starlight or the moon,  
Stormlight, firelight or the sheening  
Witchlight intimate no meaning  
Of her glory's plenilune;  
Of her soul's unriddled rune,

And most awful beauty! nor  
Actual, nor yet ideal! —  
Insubstantial and yet real;  
Partly flame and partly star,  
Yet no part of what these are.

I am hers and — woe is mine!  
Has she drugged me with the sadness  
Of some elemental madness? —  
Like a demigod I pine  
'Twixt the mortal and divine.

When I see her, lo, she stands  
In the luminous electre  
Of a star: a smiling spectre  
With white scintillating hands  
Luring to unhallowed lands.

Then, behold, in fearful file,  
A mirage of tower and terrace,  
Lawn and mountain range,— that buries

## THE SALAMANDER

Flame in frost,— looms! mile on mile  
Of her crescent-glowing Isle:

Where the lurid waters lull  
Shores that roll the rainbow fire;  
Where, with living lute and lyre,  
Rose-red, swiftly as a gull,  
Glides her star-like galley's hull.

And, behold, before I know,  
I am where her walls of amber,  
Towers of limpid ruby, clamber  
Over terraces below  
Summits of refulgent snow.

Lambent lazuli and shell  
Colonnade her courts of marble;  
Where, of lightning, fountains warble  
Out of basined pearl, or well  
Into hollowed carbuncle.

Rosy silver seems her skin,  
And a flame her arm commanding,  
With its gleaming hand, me, standing  
At her gates, to enter in,  
Burning as a Seraphin.

## THE SALAMANDER

Lucid darkness are her eyes,  
Where the frozen fire smolders;  
And upon her shining shoulders,  
Like a tangible glitter, lies  
Auburn hair like sunset skies.

Mouth of sibilant soft flame;  
Lilith lips, whose roses lighten  
With illusive love; and brighten  
With wild passion and the name  
Of desire no man may tame.

Passion, and the thoughts that wed  
Love and loathing; such caresses  
Of sweet touch as naught expresses  
Here on Earth, yet full of dread,  
Madness, whereof death is bred.

She hath drawn me to her lips;  
Borne me through her palace portal;  
And the fire, which is immortal,  
From me like a garment slips —  
Ah, the spirit-part's eclipse!

As when moon and planet swoon  
Unto each, my body kindles,  
Strangely, while my spirit dwindles,

THE SALAMANDER

Like the Earth-o'ershadowed moon,  
Darkening from lune to lune.

Then she laughs; and leads me where  
Cloudy, wild, chameleon color  
Marbles halls with hues, the duller  
For her astral presence there,  
Beaming white with beaming hair:

Where, in roses purple pale,—  
Dropping like a ruby bubble  
Through the moon dust,—“double double,”  
Throbs the crimson nightingale,  
There she lures me with some tale.

Or to where the scarlet snake  
Coils beneath great flaming flowers;  
Where the musk mimosa bowers  
Roll their rosy clouds, and make  
Sunset heavens of each lake.

Where the bees and moths go by,  
Fiery diamond; opal-burning  
Butterflies, and iris-turning  
Peacock-painted birds, that vie  
With the flow'rs, like fragments fly

## THE SALAMANDER

Of wild rainbow: Where, in rills,  
Down the rocks, that lichens redden,  
Constellated moss and leaden  
Fungus glow; and all the hills,  
As with flames, the orchid fills.

Where, in coruscating light,  
Glare the golden-checked zinnias;  
And the bugle-bloomed gloxinias,  
Making morning of each height,  
Float like mists of ruby white.

There, beneath some blazing vine,  
Where the liquid moonlight glitters  
Of a river,—coral litters  
Red with grail,—like prisms in wine  
I have watched the fishes shine.

Or, o'er sunset-colored moss,  
Glow-worms trail their beryls; sprinkling  
Green the smouldering shade; while, twink-  
ling,  
With convulsive sapphire gloss,  
Fireflies rained blue lights across.

Where the reeds seemed rays of rose,  
And white mirrored moons, the lotus —



## THE SALAMANDER

Each a spirit giving notice  
Of the inner light that glows  
Where the under water flows—

Shapes arose of flashing spray:—  
Where, a wild auroral splendor,  
Rolled the forest,— emerald-tender  
As the light of breaking day,—  
Beckoned forms of starry ray.

Through the violetish light,  
Winged with nautilus and lily  
Flame, adown the forests stilly  
Vistas, moony whirls of white,  
Floated shapes with eyes of night.

I must follow where she leads.—  
Blinding portals of her castle  
To my entering feet are facile. . . .  
Love no terrible trumpet needs  
At her gates to bugle deeds. . . .

Lo, my being never veils  
Aught from her. To her caresses  
All my heart knows it confesses  
With a faith that never fails,  
Though it hears the truth that wails

## THE SALAMANDER

In its soul's admonishment,  
Of the curse that sits in session  
In each amorous expression  
Of her love; its violent  
Flame, by which my life is rent.

I have drained the feverish cup  
Of all darkness. Made a leman  
Of an elemental demon;  
And my soul lies, staring up,  
Draining poison at each sup.—

While she smiles on me 'tis well:  
I shall follow, though she make me  
What her self is; never wake me  
From the dream I can not tell,  
That is neither heaven nor hell:

Where I drink mesmeric gold  
Of wild vision,—that romances  
In informing Protean fancies  
With a beauty never old,  
And emotion never cold.—

Let me drink and never wake  
From the trances that environ  
Me, and 'neath the subtle siren

## THE SALAMANDER

See the demon, like a snake,  
With destroying eyes that ache.

While the slow laconic look  
Of her eyes express no censure,  
Gazing in them, I adventure,—  
Far beyond the wisest book,—  
Ways her serpent fancy took.

Yet I know I reverence  
One whose gaze in God's negation;  
One who, like an emanation  
Of all evil, chains my sense  
With satanic influence.

Yet, while still I hear her say,  
"One more kiss before the morning!  
One more bliss for love's adorning!  
One more kiss ere break of day,"  
Still my soul with her must stay.

Stay, nor know, nor ever see!  
Till her basilisk beauty flashes,  
And the curse, from out the ashes  
Of her passion, fiery,  
Strikes — destroying utterly.

## LYANNA.

*“These elementary beings, we are told, were by their constitution more long-lived than man, but with this essential disadvantage, that at death they wholly ceased to exist. In the meantime they were inspired with an earnest desire for immortality; and there was one way left for them, by which this desire might be gratified. If they were so happy as to awaken in any of the initiated (Rosicrucians) a passion, the end of which was marriage, then the sylph became immortal.”—Godwin’s “Lives of the Necromancers.”*

Summer came over the Indian Ocean

Girdled with fire, tiaraed with light;

Her eyes all languor, her lips — a potion

To quaff — of poppy. And gold and white

She flashed and sparkled; all gleam and  
motion,

All blush and blossom she came; and I,

Of the race of the sylphs, o’er the Indian  
Ocean

Followed her through the sky.

## LYANNA

Self-exiled so from the sylphs that cluster,  
Pulsing with pearl and burning with blue,  
In domes of the dawn,—where the organs  
bluster

Low of the winds,—where they glow like  
dew  
As the day dreams up, and their armies  
muster,

Ranges of glitter, in cloudy gold,  
At the gates of the Dawn, of blinding luster,  
To forth when her gates unfold.

For Summer murmured me, “Follow! fol-  
low!”

Whispered one word that was all of love.—  
Winged with the speed of the sweeping swal-  
low,

I followed the word she had breathed above:  
“Follow! follow!”—the god Apollo  
Never followed, with speed as strong  
The flying nymph through holt and hollow,  
As I that word of song.

Fleet as the winds are fleet, yea, and fleeter  
Far than the stars that throb, like foam,  
Through the firmament's blue, in musical  
metre

## LYANNA

Winnowed my wings; and the golden gloam  
Rang; and life was a passion, completer  
Than a life in Eden; and love,— a lyre  
That sang in my heart and made life sweeter  
With hope,— a leaping fire.

Thus to the north my wings went maying  
Radiant ways, till a castle shone  
Gaunt on great cliffs, with the late skies gray-  
ing  
O'er walls of war and their towers lone,  
With tortuous steps to the sea, where, spray-  
ing,  
Thundered the breakers; and terrace and  
stair,  
Rock o'er the waters, rose rosy and raying  
Deep in the sunset's glare.

A dewdrop burns when the dawn lights  
prickle:  
And all my being tingled with light,  
Bloomed when I saw her, tarrying fickle,  
White on the castled height:  
Slender she shone as the moon in sickle,  
The slim new-moon, like a pearl-pale  
streak;  
And golden, too, as the honey-trickle  
Of combs where the wax is weak.



## LYANNA

In dreams I came to her, lo! as a vision:  
Yea, by her side as a dream I stood;  
To her innermost spirit I sighed my mission,  
In the vestal ear of her maidenhood:  
And she deemed me a dream; and I made a  
prison  
Of my arms for her soul while she, smiling,  
slept:  
Her body lay still, but her soul had arisen,  
And looked on my face and wept:

“Lyanna, I hoop thee with arms of fire!”—  
My words were music, a harp afloat,—  
“Lyanna, my heart is a vibrant wire,  
Thy love is its only note.  
Let it sing forever. Let it sound entire,  
Full as the angels’ who hover and harp  
To the glory that ’s God, like a golden lyre  
Borne in a beam that is sharp. . . .

“Behold me, thy rose! full of flame and splen-  
dor!  
Thy rose to pluck: thy ruby bloom:  
Thy sylphid rose, with eyes that are tender;  
Lips that are fire; and limbs of perfume  
And fragrant fire: thy heart’s defender!



LYANNA

Thy airy lover!" . . . And, bending  
above,  
Sweeter my speech than a flower's that,  
slender,  
Tells to the stars its love.

Lo, as I spoke, with thoughts that thicken,  
Her heart seemed filled; and she spoke;  
but sleep  
Shadowed her words, till my kiss did quicken  
And free, like stars from the night that  
leap:—  
“ Long I have waited; and long did sicken  
To clasp thee thus, O my rose of love!  
Oft have I dreamed of thee, yea, and was  
stricken  
With joy at the thought thereof.

“ White are the clouds; but I saw thee whiter  
'Mid dazzling domes of the dawn; and  
knew  
Tho' bright are God's stars, that thine eyes  
were brighter,  
Brighter and burning blue.  
And my heart was thine, though it held thee  
slighter

## LYANNA

Than hues that the mists of the morning  
take:  
And waited and yearned, and the yearning  
tighter  
Than tears in the hearts that break.

“ ‘Lyanna! Lyanna!’ I heard thee ever  
Calling ‘Lyanna,’ a ripple of flame:  
‘Lyanna! Lyanna!’ like song forever;  
And I marveled at my name.  
The sound was such—that if stars could  
sever  
And silver-syllable a word of beams,  
So would it sound.—I turned; but never  
Beheld thee, only in dreams.

“ Thou walkedst a beauty afar: a glitter  
Of gleaming aroma: and I, with moan,  
Reached thee my arms: but thy gaze was  
bitter,  
Calmer and sterner than stone:  
Avoiding thou passedst in scorn: a sitter,  
I seemed, on the uttermost bounds of bliss:  
When, lo! on the wind,—a flame, a flitter  
Of fire,—thy laugh, and thy kiss!”—

I had won her love. And, behold! the thun-  
der

## LYANNA

Trumpeted tempest: I heard the seas  
Lunge at the walls like a roaring wonder,  
And the rain-wind sing in the trees.—  
Lyanna my bride.— And the heavens asunder  
Rushed — chasms of glaring storm, where  
poured  
The thunder's cataracts, rolling under —  
And showed me, horde on horde,

The shouting spirits of storm.— The portal  
Of sleep was riven; she rose, and saw:  
And I said to her soul, "Of the utterly mortal  
Mine the eternal lot and law."—  
"I love thee!" she answered.— And I, "Im-  
mortal  
Am I through thy love!" . . . And so  
we fled. . . .  
Behold! when they came in the morn, a-  
startle,  
Men whispered — "Lyanna is dead!"

THE SPIRITS OF LIGHT AND  
DARKNESS

*Voices of Darkness*

Ere the birth of Death and of Time,  
And of Hell, with its tears and its torments :  
Ere the waves of heat and of rime,  
And the winds to the heavens were as garments :  
Cloud-like in the womb of Space,  
Mist-like from her monster womb,  
We sprang, a myriad race  
Of thunder and tempest and gloom.

*Voices of Light*

As from the evil good  
Springs, and desire :  
As the white lily's hood  
Buds from the mire :  
So from this midnight brood  
Sprang we with fire.

## SPIRITS OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

### *Voices of Darkness*

We had lain for long ages asleep  
In her bosom, a bulk of torpor,  
When down through the vasts of the deep  
Clove a sound, like the notes of a harper:  
Clove a sound, and the horrors grew  
Tumultuous with turbulent night,  
With whirlwinds of blackness that blew,  
And storm that was godly in might.  
And the walls of our dungeon were shattered  
Like the crust of a fire-wrecked world:  
As torrents of clouds that are scattered,  
From the womb of the deep we were hurled.

### *Voices of Light*

Us in unholy thought  
Patiently lying,  
Eöns of violence wrought,  
Violence defying;  
When, on a mighty wind,  
Voiced of a godly mind,  
Big with a motive kind,  
Girdled with wonder,  
Flame and a strength of song,  
Rolling vast light along,

SPIRITS OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Thundered the Word, and Wrong  
Vanished,— and we were strong,  
Strong as the thunder.

*Voices of Darkness*

We people the lower spaces,  
Where our cities of silence make scorn  
Of the sun, and our shadowy faces  
Are safe from the splendors of morn.  
Our homes are wrecked worlds and each  
planet  
Whose sun is a light that is sped ;  
Bleak moons, whose cold bodies of granite  
Are hollow and flameless and dead.

*Voices of Light*

We in the living sun  
Live like a passion :  
Ere the sad Earth begun  
We and the sun were one,  
As God did fashion.  
Lo! from our burning hands,  
Flung like inspired brands,  
Sowed we the worlds, like sands,  
Countless as ocean :

## SPIRITS OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

And 'tis our breath gives life,  
Life to those stars, all rife  
With iridescent strife,  
Music and motion.

### *Voices of Darkness*

We joy in the hate of all mortals;  
Inspire their crimes and the thought  
That falters and halts at the portals  
Of actions, intentions unwrought.  
We cover the face of to-morrow:  
We frown in the hours that be:  
We breathe in the presence of sorrow:  
And death and destruction are we.

### *Voices of Light*

We are man's hope and ease,  
Joy and his pleasure;  
Authors of love and peace,  
Love that shall never cease,  
Free as the azure.  
Lo! we but look, and light  
Heartens the world with might,  
Vanquishes death and night  
Hate and its burnings:



SPIRITS OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

And from our bosoms stream  
Beauty and yearnings  
For a diviner dream,  
Higher discernings.

*Voices of the Break of Day*

Morning and birth are ours;  
Light that is blown  
From our fair lips; and flowers,  
Dropped from our hands in showers,  
Seeds that are sown:  
Song and the bursting buds,  
Life of the fields and floods;  
Strength that's full-grown:  
And, from our beryl jars,  
Filled with the clouds and stars,  
Pour we the winds and dew;  
While by our eyes of blue  
Darkness is rent in two,  
Conquered and strown.

*Voices of the Dawn*

Ye in your darkness are  
Dark and infernal;  
Subject to death and mar!  
But in the spaces far,  
Like our effulgent star,  
We are eternal.

## THE WATER WITCH

See! the milk-white doe is wounded.

He will follow as it bounds  
Through the woods. His horn has sounded,  
Echoing, for his men and hounds.  
But no answering bugle blew.  
He has lost his retinue  
For the shapely deer that bounded  
Past him when his bow he drew.

Not one hound or huntsman follows.

Through the underbrush and moss  
Goes the slot; and in the hollows  
Of the hills, that he must cross,  
He has lost it. He must fare  
Over rocks where she-wolves lair;  
Wood-pools where the wild-boar wallows:  
So he leaves his hunter there.

Through his mind then flashed an olden

Legend told him by the monks:—  
Of a girl, whose hair is golden,  
Haunting fountains and the trunks

## THE WATER WITCH

Of the woodlands; who, they say,  
Is a white doe all the day,  
But when woods are night-enfolden  
Turns into an evil fay.

Then the story once his teacher  
Told him: of a mountain lake  
Demons dwell in; vague of feature,  
Human-like; but each a snake,  
She is queen of.— Did he hear  
Laughter at his startled ear?  
Or a bird?— And now, what creature  
Is it,— or the wind,— stirs near?

Fever of the hunt! This water,  
Falling here, will cool his head.  
Through the forest, dyed in slaughter,  
Slants the sunset; ruby-red  
Are the drops that slip between  
Hollowed hands, while on the green,—  
Like the couch of some wild daughter  
Of the forest,— he doth lean.

But the runnel, bubbling, dripping,  
Seems to bid him to be gone;  
As with crystal words and tripping  
Steps of sparkle luring on.

## THE WATER WITCH

Now a spirit in the rocks  
Calls him; now a face that mocks,  
From behind some boulder slipping,  
Laughs at him through liliated locks.

And he follows through the flowers,  
Blue and gold, that blossom there;  
Thridding twilight-haunted bowers  
Where each ripple seems the bare  
Beauty of white limbs that gleam  
Rosy through the running stream;  
Or bright-shaken hair, that showers  
Starlight in the sunset's beam.

Till, far in the forest, sleeping  
Like a luminous darkness, lay  
A deep water, wherein, leaping,  
Fell the Fountain of the Fay,  
With a singing, sighing sound,  
As of spirit things around,  
Musically laughing, weeping  
In the air and underground.

Not a ripple o'er it merried:  
Like the round moon in a cloud,  
In its rocks the lake lay buried:  
And strange creatures seemed to crowd

## THE WATER WITCH

Its dark depths: dim limbs and eyes  
To the surface seemed to rise  
Spawn-like; or, all formless, ferried  
Through the water shadow-wise.

Foliage things with woman faces,  
Demon-dreadful, pale and wild  
As the forms the lightning traces  
On the clouds the storm has piled  
In the darkness.— On the strand —  
What is that which now doth stand? —  
'Tis a woman: and she places  
On his arm a spray-white hand.

Ah! two mystic worlds of sorrow  
Were her eyes; her hair, a place  
Whence the moon its gold might borrow;  
And a dream of ice her face:  
Round her hair and throat in rims  
Pearls of foam hung; and through whims  
Of her robe, as breaks the morrow,  
Gleamed the rose-light of her limbs.

Who could help but gaze with gladness  
On such beauty? though within,  
Deep within the beryl sadness  
Of those eyes, the serpent sin

## THE WATER WITCH

Seemed to coil.— She placed her cheek  
Chilly upon his, and weak  
With love-longing and its madness  
Grew he. Then he heard her speak:—

“Dost thou love me?”—“If surrender  
Of the soul means love, I love.”

“Dost not fear me?”—“Fear?—more slender  
Art thou than a wildwood dove.

Yet I fear—I fear to lose

Thee, thy love.”—“And thou dost choose  
Aye to be my heart’s defender?”—

“Take me. I am thine to use.”

“Follow then.— Ah, love, no lowly

Home I give thee.”— With fixed eyes  
To the water’s edge she slowly

Drew him. . . . Nor did he surmise  
Who this creature was, until  
O’er his face the foam closed chill,  
Whispering, and the lake unholy  
Rippled, rippled and was still.

## THE SUCCUBA

I have dreams where I believe  
That a queen of some dim palace,  
One, whose name is Genevieve,  
Weighs me with her love or malice :  
She is dead and yet my bride :  
And she glimmers at my side  
Offering a crystal chalice  
Filled with fire, diamond-dyed.

I have dreams. Ah, would that I  
Might forget them! — I remember  
How her gaze, all icily  
Draws me, like a glowing ember,  
Up her castle-stair's pale-paved  
Alabaster, from the waved  
Ocean, grayer than November,  
Where I linger, soul-enslaved.

Walls of shadow and of night  
Lit with casements full of fire,  
Somber red or piercing white :  
As the wind breathes lower, higher,



## THE SUCCUBA

Round the towers spirit-things  
Whisper, and the haunted strings  
    Moan of each huge, plangent lyre  
Set upon its four chief wings.

In its corridors at tryst  
    Flame-eyed phantoms meet. Its sparry  
Halls are misty amethyst:  
    Battlemented 'neath the starry  
Skies it looms; the strange unknown  
Skies where, green as glow-worms, sown,  
    Gloom the stars; the moon hangs barry  
Beryl, low and large and lone. . . .

Can it be a witch is she?  
    Or a vampire? she, far whiter  
Than the spirits of the sea! —  
    She whose eyes are cold, yet brighter  
Than her throat's pale jewels. Lo!  
Flame she is though seeming snow:  
    And her love lies tighter, tighter  
On my heart than utter woe.

Though I dream, it seems I live;  
    And my heart is sick with sorrow  
Of the love that it must give  
    To her; passion, it must borrow

## THE SUCCUBA

Of herself, unhallowed, vain;

Then return it her again:

Thus she holds me; and to-morrow  
Still will hold with sweetest pain.

In her garden's moon-white space

Strangest flowers bloom: huge lilies,

Each one with a human face;

Knots of spirit-amaryllis;

Cactus-bulbs with pulpy blooms

Gnome-like in the silver glooms;

And dim deeps of daffadillies,

Fay-like, brimming faint perfumes.

But to me their fragrance seems

Poison; and their lambent lustre,

Spun of twilight and of dreams,

Poison; and each pearly cluster

Hides a serpent's fang. And I,

Looking from an oriel, sigh;

For my soul is fain to muster

Heart to breathe of them and die.

Then I feel big eyes, as bright

As the sea-stars. Gray with glitter,

She behind me, moony white,

Smiles, 'mid hangings wherein flitter

## THE SUCCUBA

Loves and deeds of Amadis  
Darkly worked. And then her kiss  
    On my mouth falls; sweet and bitter  
With a bliss that is not bliss.

And I kiss her eyes and hair;  
    Smooth her tresses till their golden  
Glimmer sparkles. Everywhere  
    Shapes of strange aromas, holden  
Of the walls, around us troop;  
And in golden loop on loop,—  
    Of the lull'd eyes vague beholden,—  
Forms of music o'er us stoop.

Yet I see beneath it all,  
    All this sorcery, a devil,  
Beautiful, and white, and tall,  
    Broods with shadowy eyes of evil:  
She, who must resume with morn  
Her true shape: a cactus-thorn,  
    Monstrous, on some lonely level  
Of that demon-world forlorn.

I have dreams where I believe  
    That a queen of some dim palace,  
One, whose name is Genevieve,  
    Weighs me with her love or malice:

## THE SUCCUBA

And all night I am her slave  
There beside the demon wave,  
    Where I drain the loathsome chalice  
Of her love, that is my grave.

## MASKS

### *Cucullus non facit monachum*

Live it down! as you have spoken  
You could live it ere you knew  
What love was —“ a bauble broken,  
Foolish, of a thing untrue.”—  
You, Viola, with your beauty,  
Cloistered, die a nun? No! you —  
You must wed: it is your duty.

There's your poniard; for the second  
In this tazza dropped: the blood  
On it scarcely hard. . . . I reckoned  
Happily that hour we stood  
There upon your palace-stairway,  
How, with the Franciscan hood  
Cowled, I said, there was a bare way.

In the minster there I found it —  
Our revenge. I saw him, wild,  
Stalking towards the church: around it

## MASKS

Dogged him, marking how he smiled  
In the moonlight where I waited.  
When the great clock, beating, dialed  
Ten, I knew he would be mated.

Heaven or my better devil! —  
Hardly had his sword and plume  
Vanished in the dark, when, level  
On the long lagoon, did loom,  
Under moonlight-woven arches,  
Her slim gondola: all gloom:  
One tall gondolier: no torches.

Dusky gondolas kept bringing  
Revellers: and far the night  
Rang with instruments and singing.—  
From the imbricated light  
Of the oar-vibrating water,  
Gliding up the stairway, white,  
Velvet-masked,— the count's own daughter!

Quick I met her: whispered, "Flora,  
Gaston.— *Mia*, till they go,  
One brief moment here, Siora.—  
She'll perceive us — she, below,  
See! the duchess' diamonds sparkling  
Round the inviolable glow  
Of her throat — there, dimly darkling:

## MASKS

“That’s Viola!” . . . Thus I drew her  
In the church’s ancient pile —  
Under her black mask I knew her,  
By her chin, her lips, her smile.  
Through one marble-foliated  
Window fell the moon-rays. While  
All the maskers passed we waited.

I had drawn the dagger. Turning  
Called her by her name. Some lie  
Of a passion sighed, her burning  
Hand in mine; when, stalking by,  
In the square, *his* form bejeweled  
Gleamed. My very blood burned dry  
With the hate his presence fueled.

Our revenge! up-pushing slightly  
Cowl, the mask fell, and revealed  
Balka, as the poniard whitely  
Flashed. The hollow nave re-pealed  
One long shriek the loft repeated.  
Swift, I stabbed her thrice. She reeled  
Dead. I thought of you, the heated

Horror on my hands; and tarried  
Still as silence. Drawn aside  
On her face the mask hung, married



## MASKS

To its camphor-pallor: wide  
Eyes with terror — stone. One second  
I regretted; then defied  
All remorse. Your promise beckoned;

And I left her. Love had pointed  
Me this way. I walked the way  
Clear-eyed and . . . it has anointed  
Us fast lovers? — Do not say,  
Now, that you will go and nun it!  
For this man who scorned you? — Nay! —  
Live to hate him! You 've begun it.

## CARMEN

*La Gitanilla*, tall dragoons  
In Andalusian afternoons,  
With ogling eye and compliment,  
Smiled on you as along you went  
Some sleepy street of old Seville;  
Twirled with a military skill  
Moustaches; buttoned uniforms  
Of Spanish yellow bowed your charms.

Proud, wicked head, and hair blue-black,  
Whence the mantilla, half thrown back,  
Discovered shoulders and bold breast  
Bohemian brown. And you were dressed  
In some short skirt of gypsy red  
Of smuggled stuff; and stockings,— dead  
White silk,— that, worn with many a hole,  
Let the plump leg peep through; while stole,  
Now in, now out, your dainty toes,  
Sheathed in morocco shoes, with bows  
Of scarlet ribbon.— Flirtingly  
You walked by me; and I did see

## CARMEN

Your oblique eyes, your sensuous lip,  
That gnawed the rose I saw you flip  
At bashful José's nose while loud  
The gaunt guards laughed among the crowd.  
And in your brazen chemise thrust,  
Heaved with the swelling of your bust,  
A bunch of white acacia blooms  
Whiffed past my nostrils hot perfumes.

As in a cool *neveria*  
I ate an ice with Mérimée,  
Dark Carmencita, very gay  
You passed, with light and lissome tread,  
'All holiday bedizenéd;  
A new mantilla on your head:  
Your crimson dress gleamed, spangled fierce;  
And crescent gold, hung in your ears,  
Shone, wrought Morisco; and each shoe,  
Of Cordovan leather, buckled blue,  
Glanced merriment; and from large arms  
To well-turned ankles all your charms  
Blew flutterings and glitterings  
Of satin bands and beaded strings:  
Around each tight arm, twisted gold  
Coiled serpents, and, a single fold,  
Wreathed wrists; each serpent's jeweled head,  
With rubies set, convulsive red.

## CARMEN

In flowers and trimmings, to the jar  
Of mandolin and gay guitar,  
You in the grated patio  
Danced: the curled coxcombs' staring row  
Rang pleased applause. I saw you dance,  
With wily motion and glad glance,  
Voluptuous, the wild *romalis*,  
Where every movement was a kiss,  
A song, a poem, interwound  
With your Basque tambourine's dull sound.  
I,— as the ebon castanets  
Clucked out dry time in unctuous jets,—  
Saw angry José through the grate  
Glare on us, a pale face of hate,  
When some indecent officer  
Presumed too lewdly to you there.

Some still night in Seville: the street  
Candlejo: two shadows meet:  
Swift sabres flash within the moon —  
Clash rapidly.— A dead dragoon.

## AT NINEVEH

There was a princess once, who loved the slave  
Of an Assyrian king, her father; known  
At Nineveh as Hadria; o'er whose grave  
The sands of centuries have long been  
blown;

Yet sooner shall the night forget its stars  
Than love her story:—How, unto his  
throne,

One day she came, where, with his warriors,  
The King sat in his hall of audience,  
'Mid pillared trophies of barbaric wars,  
And, kneeling to him, asked, "O father,  
whence

Comes love and why?"—He, smiling on her  
said,—

"O Hadria, love is of the gods, and hence  
Divine, is only soul-interpreted.

But why love is, ah, child, we do not know,  
Unless 't is love that gives us life when  
dead."—

And then his daughter, with a face aglow

## AT NINEVEH

With all the love that clamored in her blood  
Its sweet avowal, lifted arms of snow,  
And, like Aurora's rose, before him stood,  
Saying,—“ Since love is of the powers above,  
I love a slave, O Asshur! — Let the good  
The gods have giv'n be sanctioned.— Speak  
not of

Dishonor and our line's ancestral dead!

*They* are imperial dust. *I* live and love.”—  
Black as black storm then rose the King and  
said,—

A lightning gesture sweeping at her there,—  
“ Enough! ho, Rhana, strike me off her head!”

And at the mandate, with his limbs half bare  
A slave strode forth. Majestic was his form  
As some young god's. He, gathering up her  
hair,

Wound it three times around his sinewy arm;  
Then drew his sword. It for one moment  
shone

A semicircling light, and, dripping warm,  
Lifting the head he stood before the throne.  
Then said the despot, “ By the horn of Bel!

This was no child of mine!”— Like chiseled  
stone

Stern stood the slave, a son of Israel.

AT NINEVEH

Then striding towards the monarch, in his  
eye

The wrath of heaven and the hate of hell,  
Shrieked, "Beast! I loved her! look on us  
and die!"

Swifter than fire clove him to the brain.

Then kissed her face, and, holding it on high,  
Cried out, "Judge thou, O God, between us  
twain!"

And, fifty daggers in his heart, fell slain.



## SENORITA

An agate black, her roguish eyes  
Claim no proud lineage of the skies,  
No starry blue; but of good earth  
The reckless witchery and mirth.

Looped in her raven hair's repose,  
A hot aroma, one red rose  
Droops; envious of that loveliness,  
Through being near which, its is less.

Twin sea-shells hung with pearls, her ears;  
Whose delicate rosiness appears  
Part of the pearls; whose pallid fire  
Binds the attention these inspire.

One slim hand crumples up the lace  
About her bosom's swelling grace;  
A ruby at her samite throat  
Lends the required color-note.

## SENORITA

The moon brings up the violet night  
An urn of pearly-chaliced light;  
And from the dark-railed balcony  
She stoops and waves her fan at me.

O'er orange blossoms and the rose  
Vague, odorous lips the South Wind blows,  
Peopling the night with whispers of  
Romance and palely passionate love.

And now she speaks; and seems to reach  
My soul like song that learned its speech  
From some dim instrument — who knows?—  
Or flow'r, a dulcimer or rose.

## SINCE THEN

I found myself among the trees  
What time the reapers ceased to reap;  
And in the sunflower-blooms the bees  
Huddled brown heads and went to sleep,  
Rocked by the balsam-breathing breeze.

I saw the red fox leave his lair,  
A shaggy shadow, on the knoll;  
And, tunnelling his thoroughfare  
Beneath the soil, I watched the mole —  
Stealth's own self could not take more care.

I heard the death-moth tick and stir,  
Slow-honeycombing through the bark;  
I heard the cricket's drowsy chirr,  
And one lone beetle burr the dark —  
The sleeping woodland seemed to purr.

And then the moon rose: and a white  
Low bough of blossoms — grown almost  
Where, ere you died, 't was our delight  
To tryst,— dear heart! — I thought your ghost:  
— The wood is haunted since that night.

## AFTER DEATH

At moonset, when ghost speaks with ghost  
And spirits meet where once they sinned,  
Between the whispering wood and coast,  
My soul met her soul on the wind,  
My late-lost Evalind.

I kissed her mouth. Her face was wild.  
Two burning shadows were her eyes,  
Wherein the love,— that once had smiled  
A heartbreak smile,— in some strange wise,  
I did not recognize.

Then suddenly I seemed to see  
How sin had damned my soul and doomed  
To wander thus eternally  
With love and loathing, that assumed  
The form of her entombed.

## THE OLD MAN DREAMS

The blackened walnut in its spicy hull  
    Rots where it fell;  
And, in the orchard, where the trees stand full,  
    The pear's brown bell  
Drops; and the log-house in the bramble lane,  
    From whose low door  
Stretch yellowing acres of the corn and cane,  
    He sees once more.

The cat-bird sings upon its porch of pine;  
    And o'er its gate,  
All slender-podded, twists the trumpet-vine  
    Its leafy weight:  
And in the woodland, by the spring, mayhap,  
    With eyes of joy  
Again he bends to set a rabbit-trap,  
    A brown-faced boy.

Then, whistling, through the underwoods he  
    goes,  
    Out of the wood,

THE OLD MAN DREAMS

Where, with young cheeks, red as an autumn  
rose,

In gingham hood,

His sweetheart waits, her school-books on her  
arm :

And now it seems

Beside his chair bends down his wife's fair  
form —

The old man dreams.

## MEMORIES

Here where Love lies perished,  
Look not in upon the dead,  
Lest the shadowy curtains, shaken  
In my Heart's dark chamber, waken  
Ghosts, beneath whose garb of sorrow  
Whilom gladness bows his head:  
When you come at morn, to-morrow,  
Look not in upon the dead,  
Here where Love lies perished.

Here where Love lies cold interred,  
Let no syllable be heard,  
Lest the hollow echoes, housing  
In my Soul's deep tomb, arousing  
Wake a voice of woe, once laughter  
Claimed and clothed in joy's own word:  
When you come at dusk, or after,  
Let no syllable be heard,  
Here where Love lies cold interred.



## MARCH AND MAY

Windy the sky and mad;  
    Surly the gray March day;  
Bleak the forests and sad,—  
    Oh, that it only were May!

On maples, tasseled with red,  
    No blithe bird, fluting, swung;  
The brook, in its swollen bed,  
    Raved on in an unknown tongue.

We walked in the wind-tossed wood:  
    Her face as the May's was fair;  
Her blood was the May's own blood;  
    And May's her radiant hair.

And we found in the woodland wild  
    One cowering violet,  
Like a frail and timorous child,  
    In the caked leaves bowed and wet.

And I said, "We have walked in vain!  
    To find but this shivering bud,  
Weighed down with its weight of rain,  
    Crouched here in the wild March wood."

MARCH AND MAY

But she said, " Though the day be sad,  
And the skies be dark with fate,  
There is always something glad  
That will help our hearts to wait.

" Look, now, at this beautiful thing,  
In this wood's wild hollow curled!  
'Tis a promise of joy and spring,  
And of love, to the waiting world.

" Ah, the sinless Earth is fair,  
And man's are the sin and the gloom —  
Come, bury the days that were,  
And look to'ard the days to come!"

. . . . .  
And the May came on with her charms,  
With twinkle and rustle of feet;  
Blooms stormed from her luminous arms,  
And songs that were wildly sweet.

Now I think of her words that day,  
This day that I longed so to see,  
That finds her dead with the May,  
And my life but a withered tree.

## IN AUTUMN

### I

Sunflowers wither and lilies die,  
Poppies are pods of seeds ;  
The first red leaves on the pathway lie,  
Like blood of a heart that bleeds.

Weary always will it be to-day,  
Weary and wan and wet ;  
Dawn and noon will the clouds hang gray,  
And the autumn wind will sigh and say,  
“ He comes not yet, not yet,  
Weary always, always ! ”

### II

Hollyhocks bend all tattered and torn,  
Marigolds all are gone ;  
The last pale rose lies all forlorn,  
Like love that is trampled on.

Weary, ah me ! to-night will be,  
Weary and wild and hoar ;  
Rain and mist will blow from the sea,  
And the wind will sob in the autumn tree,  
“ He comes no more, no more.  
Weary, ah me ! ah me ! ”

“WHEN SHE DRAWS NEAR”

I

When she draws near,  
I seem to hear  
The shy approach of some wild innocence:  
As if — in acorn crown —  
A dryad should step down  
From some dim oak-tree where the woods are  
dense.

II

When she's with me,  
I seem to see  
The brambles blossom where just touched her  
dress:  
As, with her love's perfume,  
She touches into bloom  
The thorns of life and gives them loveliness.

## REED CALL FOR APRIL

### I

When April comes, and pelts with buds  
And apple-blooms each orchard space,  
And takes the dogwood-whitened woods  
With rain and sunshine of her moods,  
Like your fair face, like your sweet face:

It's honey for the bud and dew,  
And honey for the heart!  
And, oh, to be away with you  
Beyond the town and mart.

### II

When April comes and tints the hills  
With gold and beryl that rejoice,  
And from her airy apron spills  
The laughter of the winds and rills,  
Like your young voice, like your sweet  
voice:

REED CALL FOR APRIL

It's gladness for God's bending blue,  
And gladness for the heart!  
'And, oh, to be away with you  
Beyond the town and mart.

III

When April comes, and binds and girds  
The world with warmth that breathes above,  
And to the breeze flings all her birds,  
Whose songs are welcome as the words  
Of you I love, O you I love:

It's music for all things that woo,  
And music for the heart!  
And, oh, to be away with you  
Beyond the town and mart.

## HER VIOLIN

### I

Her violin! — Again begin  
The dream-notes of her violin;  
And tall and fair, with gold-brown hair,  
I seem to see her standing there,  
Soft-eyed and sweetly slender:  
The room again, with strain on strain,  
Vibrates to Love's melodious pain,  
As, sloping slow, is poised her bow,  
While round her form the golden glow  
Of sunset spills its splendor.

### II

Her violin! — Now deep, now thin,  
Again I hear her violin;  
And, dream by dream, again I seem  
To see the love-light's tender gleam  
Beneath her eyes' long lashes:  
While to my heart she seems a part



## HER VIOLIN

Of her pure song's inspired art;  
And, as she plays, the rosy grays  
Of twilight halo hair and face,  
While sunset burns to ashes.

### III

O violin! — Cease, cease within  
My soul, O haunting violin!  
In vain, in vain, you bring again,  
Back from the past, the blissful pain  
Of all the love then spoken;  
When on my breast, at happy rest,  
A sunny while her head was pressed —  
Peace, peace to these wild memories!  
For, like my heart naught remedies,  
Her violin lies broken.

## MEETING IN SUMMER

A tranquil bar  
Of rosy twilight under dusk's first star.

A glimmering sound  
Of whispering waters over grassy ground.

A sun-sweet smell  
Of fresh-reaped hay from dewy field and dell.

A lazy breeze  
Jostling the ripeness from the apple-trees.

A vibrant cry,  
Passing, then gone, of bullbats in the sky.

And faintly now  
The katydid upon the shadowy bough.

And far off then  
The little owl within the lonely glen.

MEETING IN SUMMER

'And soon, full soon,  
The silvery arrival of the moon.

And, to your door,  
The path of roses I have trod before.

And, sweetheart, you!  
Among the roses and the moonlit dew.

## HER VIVIEN EYES

Her Vivien eyes,— beware! beware! —  
Though they be stars, a deadly snare  
They set beneath her night of hair.  
Regard them not! lest, drawing near —  
As sages once in old Chaldee —  
Thou shouldst become a worshiper,  
And they thy evil destiny.

Her Vivien eyes,— away! away! —  
Though they be springs, remorseless they  
Gleam underneath her brow's bright day.  
Turn, turn aside, whate'er the cost!  
Lest in their deeps thou lures behold,  
Through which thy captive soul were lost,  
As was young Hylas once of old.

Her Vivien eyes,— take heed! take heed! —  
Though they be bibles, none may read  
Therein of God or Holy Creed.  
Look, look away! lest thou be cursed,—  
As Merlin was, romances tell,—  
And in their sorcerous spells immersed,  
Hoping for Heaven thou chance on Hell.





## REASONS

### I

Yea, why I love thee let my heart repeat:  
I look upon thy face and then divine  
How men could die for beauty, such as thine,—  
Deeming it sweet  
To lay my life and manhood at thy feet,  
And for a word, a glance,  
Do deeds of old romance.

### II

Yea, why I love thee let my heart unfold:  
I look into thy heart and then I know  
The wondrous poetry of the long-ago,  
The Age of Gold,  
That speaks strange music, that is old, so old,  
Yet young, as when 't was born,  
With all the youth of morn.



## REASONS

### III

Yea, why I love thee let my heart conclude :  
I look into thy soul and realize  
The undiscovered meaning of the skies,—  
That long have wooed  
The world with far ideals that elude,—  
Out of whose dreams, maybe,  
God shapes reality.

## HER VESPER SONG

The summer lightning comes and goes  
In one white cloud above the hill,  
As if within its soft repose  
A burning heart were never still —  
As in my bosom pulses beat  
Before the coming of his feet.

All drugged with odorous sleep, the rose  
Breathes dewy balm about the place,  
As if the dreams the garden knows  
Arose, in immaterial grace —  
As in my heart sweet thoughts arise  
Beneath the ardour of his eyes.

The moon above the darkness shows  
An orb of silvery snow and fire,  
As if the night would now disclose  
To heav'n her one divine desire —  
As in the rapture of his kiss  
All my glad soul is drawn to his.

## HER VESPER SONG

The cloud divines not that it glows ;  
The rose knows nothing of its scent ;  
Nor knows the moon that it bestows  
Light on our earth and firmament —  
So is the soul unconscious of  
The beauties it reveals through love.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

There in the past I see her as of old,  
Blue-eyed and hazel-haired, within a room  
Dim with a twilight of tenebrious gold;  
Her white face sensuous as a delicate bloom  
Night opens in the tropics. Fold on fold  
Pale laces drape her; and a frail perfume,  
As of a moonlit lily brimmed with rain,  
Breathes from her presence, drowsing heart and  
brain.

Her head is bent; some red carnations glow  
Deep in her heavy hair; her large eyes gleam;—  
Bright sister stars of those twin worlds of snow,  
Her breasts, through which the veined violets  
stream.—

I hold her hand; her smile comes sweetly slow  
As thoughts of love that haunt a poet's dream:  
And at her feet once more I sit and hear  
Wild words of passion — dead this many a year.

## SNOW AND FIRE

Deep-hearted roses of the purple dusk  
And lilies of the morn;  
And cactus, holding up a slender tusk  
Of fragrance on a thorn;  
All heavy flowers, sultry with their musk,  
Her presence puts to scorn.

For she is like the pale, pale snowdrop there,  
Scentless and chaste of heart;  
The moonflower, making spiritual the air,  
Like some pure work of art;  
Divine and holy, exquisitely fair,  
And virtue's counterpart.

Yet when her eyes gaze into mine, and when  
Her lips to mine are pressed,—  
Why are my veins all fire then? and then  
Why should her soul suggest  
Voluptuous perfumes, maddening unto men,  
And prurient with unrest?

## IN MAY

### I

When you and I in the hills went Maying,  
You and I in the bright May weather,  
The birds, that sang on the boughs together,  
There in the green of the woods, kept saying  
All that my heart was saying low,  
“I love you! love you!” soft and low;—  
And did you know?  
When you and I in the hills went Maying.

### II

There where the brook on its rocks went winking,  
There by its banks where the May had led us,  
Flowers, that bloomed in the woods and mead-  
ows,  
Azure and gold at our feet, kept thinking  
All that my soul was thinking there,  
“I love you! love you!” softly there;—  
And did you care?  
There where the brook on its rocks went winking.

IN MAY

III

Whatever befalls through fate's compelling,  
Should our paths unite or our pathways sever,  
In the Mays to-come I shall feel forever  
The wildflowers thinking, the wild-birds telling,  
In words as soft as the falling dew,  
The love that I keep here still for you,  
As deep and true,  
Whatever befalls through fate's compelling.



“ WERE I AN ARTIST ”

Were I an artist, Lydia, I  
Would paint you as you merit,  
Not as my eyes, but dreams descry;  
Not in the flesh, but spirit.

The canvas I would paint you on  
Should be a strip of heaven;  
My brush, a sunbeam; pigments, dawn  
And night and starry even.

Your form and features to express  
Likewise your soul's chaste whiteness,  
I'd take the primal essences  
Of darkness and of brightness.

I'd take pure night to paint your hair;  
Stars for your eyes; and morning  
To paint your skin — the rosy air  
Which is your limbs' adorning.

“ WERE I AN ARTIST ”

To paint the love-bows of your lips,  
I'd mix, for colors, kisses;  
And for your breasts and finger-tips,  
Sweet odors and soft blisses.

And to complete the picture well,  
I'd temper all with woman,—  
Some tears, some laughter; heaven and hell,  
To show you yet are human.

## THE RIDE

She rode o'er hill, she rode o'er plain,  
She rode by fields of barley,  
By morning-glories filled with rain,  
Along the wood-side gnarly.

She rode o'er plain, she rode o'er hill,  
By orchard land and berry ;  
Her eyes were sparkling as the rill,  
Cheeks, redder than the cherry.

A bird sang here, a bird sang there,  
Then blithely sang together ;  
Sang sudden greeting everywhere,  
“ Good-morrow ! ” and “ Good weather ! ”

The sunlight's laughing radiance  
Laughed in her radiant tresses ;  
The bold breeze made her wild curls dance,  
And flushed her face with kisses.

## THE RIDE

“ Why ride you here, why ride you there,  
Why ride you here so merry?  
The sunlight living in your hair,  
And in your cheek the berry?

“ Why ride you with your sea-green plumes,  
Your sea-green silken habit,  
By balmy bosks of faint perfumes,  
And haunts of roe and rabbit? ”

“ The morning ploughed the east with gold,  
And planted it with holly;  
And I was young and he was old,  
And rich, and melancholy.

“ A wife they 'd have me to his bed,  
And to the church they hurried;  
But now, gramercy! he is dead!  
Thank God! is dead and buried.

“ I ride by tree, I ride by rill,  
I ride by rye and clover,  
For by the church beyond the hill  
Awaits my first true lover.”

## AT PARTING

What is there left for us to say,  
Now it is time to speak good-by?  
And all our dreams of yesterday  
Are one with yester-evening's sky —  
What is there left for us to say,  
Now different ways before us lie?

A word of hope, a word of cheer,  
A word of love, whose help shall last,  
When we are far to bring us near  
Through memories of the happy past; '—  
A word of hope, a word of cheer,  
To keep our young hearts true and fast.

What is there left for us to do,  
Now it is time to say farewell?  
And care, that bade us once adieu,  
Returns again with us to dwell —  
What is there left for us to do,  
Now different ways our fates compel?

## AT PARTING

Clasp hands and kiss, touch lips and smile,  
And look the love that shall remain —  
When severed so by many a mile —  
The sweetest balm for bitterest pain :  
Clasp hands and kiss, touch lips and smile,  
And trust to God to meet again.

## IN THE GARDEN OF GIRLS

Serious, but smiling, stately and serene,  
And lovelier than a flower,  
She stands; in whom all sympathies convene  
As perfumes in a bower;  
Through whom I feel what soul and heart must  
mean,  
And all their love and power.

Eyes, that commune with the frank skies of  
truth,  
Beneath their cloud-like curls;  
Lips of immortal rose, where joy and youth  
Nestle like priceless pearls;  
Hair, that suggests the Bible braids of Ruth,  
Deeper than any girl's.

When first I saw her, 't was as if within  
My gaze took shape some song —  
Played by a master of the violin —  
A music, pure and strong,  
That rapt my soul above all earthly sin  
To heights that know no wrong.



“ COME TO THE HILLS ”

Come to the hills, the woods are green —  
The heart is high when lovers meet —  
There is a brook that flows between  
Mossed rocks where we will make our seat,  
Where we will sit and speak unseen.

I hear you laughing in the lane —  
The heart is high when lovers meet —  
The clover smells of sun and rain  
And spreads a carpet for our feet,  
Where we will walk and dream again.

Come to the woods, the dusk is here —  
The heart is high when lovers meet —  
A bird upon the branches near  
Sets music to our hearts' sweet beat,  
Our hearts that beat with something dear.

I hear your step; the lane is passed —  
The heart is high when lovers meet —  
The little stars come bright and fast,  
Like happy eyes that watch us, Sweet,  
That see us greet and kiss at last.

## EVASION

### I

Why do I love you, who have never given  
My heart encouragement or any cause?  
Is it because, as earth is held of heaven,  
Your soul holds mine by some mysterious  
laws?  
Perhaps, unseen of me, within your eyes  
The answer lies.

### II

From your sweet lips no word hath ever fallen  
To tell my heart its love is not in vain —  
The bee that woos the flow'r hath honey and  
pollen  
To cheer him on and bring him back again:  
But what have I, your other friends above,  
To feed my love?

## EVASION

### III

Still, still you are my dream and my desire;  
Your love is an allurements and a dare  
Set for attainment, like a shining spire,  
Far, far above me in the starry air:  
And gazing upward, 'gainst the hope of hope,  
I breast the slope.

## WILL YOU FORGET?

In years to come, will you forget,  
Dear girl, how often we have met?  
And I have gazed into your eyes  
And there beheld no sad regret  
To cloud the gladness of their skies,  
While in your heart — unheard as yet —  
Love slept, oblivious of my sighs? —  
In years to come, will you forget?

Ah, me! I only pray that when,  
In other days, some man of men  
Has taught those eyes to laugh and weep  
With joy and sorrow, hearts must ken  
When love awakens in their deep,—  
I only pray some memory then,  
Or sad or sweet, you still will keep  
Of me and love that might have been.

## CONTRASTS

No eve of summer ever can attain  
The gladness of that eve of late July,  
When 'mid the roses, dripping with the rain,  
Against the wondrous topaz of the sky,  
I met you, leaning on the pasture bars,—  
While heaven and earth grew conscious of the  
stars.

No night of blackest winter can repeat  
The bitterness of that December night,  
When, at your gate, gray-glittering with sleet,  
Within the glimmering square of window-light,  
We parted,— long you clung unto my arm,—  
While heaven and earth surrendered to the  
storm.

## CARISSIMA MEA

I look upon my sweetheart's face,  
And, in the world about me, see  
No face like hers in any place.

It is not made, as others sing  
Of their young loves, like ivory,  
But like a wild-rose in the spring.

Her brow is low and very fair,  
And o'er it, smooth and shadowy,  
Lies deep the darkness of her hair.

Beneath her brows her eyes gleam gray,  
And gaze out glad and fearlessly —  
Their wonder haunts me night and day.

Her eyebrows, arched and delicate,—  
Twin curves of penciled ebony,—  
Within their spans contain my fate.

Her mouth, that was for kisses curved,—  
So small and sweet! — it well may be  
That it for me is yet reserved.

CARISSIMA MEA

Between her hair and rounded chin,  
Calm with her soul's calm purity,  
There lies no shadow of a sin.

Of perfect form, she is not tall,—  
Just higher than the heart of me,  
O'er which I place her, all in all.

She is not shaped, as some have sung  
Of their young loves, like some slim tree,  
But like the moon when it is young.

Her hands, that smell of violet,  
So white and fashioned fragrantly,  
Have woven round my heart a net.

Yea, I have loved her many a day ;  
And though for me she may not be,  
Still at her feet my love I lay.

Albeit she be not for me,  
God send her grace and grant that she  
Know naught of sorrow all her days,  
And help me still to sing her praise !



## AN AUTUMN NIGHT

Some things are good on autumn nights,  
When with the storm the forest fights,  
And in the room the heaped hearth lights

    Old-fashioned press and rafter :  
Plump chestnuts hissing in the heat,  
A mug of cider, sharp and sweet,  
And at your side a face petite,  
    With lips of laughter.

Upon the roof the rolling rain,  
And, tapping at the window-pane,  
The wind that seems a witch's cane  
    That summons spells together :  
A hand within your own a while ;  
A mouth reflecting back your smile ;  
And eyes, two stars, whose beams exile  
    All thoughts of weather.

AN AUTUMN NIGHT

And, while the wind lulls, still to sit  
And watch her fire-lit needles flit  
A-knitting, and to feel her knit  
    Your very heart-strings in it:  
Then, when the old clock ticks " 't is late,"  
To rise, and at the door to wait  
Two words, or, at the garden-gate,  
    A kissing minute.

## A DAUGHTER OF THE STATES

She has the eyes of some barbarian Queen  
Leading her wild tribes into battle; eyes,  
Wherein th' unconquerable soul defies,  
And Love sits throned, imperious and serene.

And I have thought that Liberty, alone  
Among her mountain stars, might look like her,  
Kneeling to God, her only emperor,  
Kindling her torch on Freedom's altar-stone.

For in her self, regal with riches of  
Beauty and youth, again those Queens seem  
born —  
Boadicea, meeting scorn with scorn,  
And Ermengarde, returning love for love.

## THE QUARREL

An instant only and her eyes  
Flashed lightning like the angry skies ;

And o'er her forehead, curving down,  
Fell dark the shadow of a frown ;

Then backward, deep and stormy fair,  
She tossed the tempest of her hair ;

Then of her lips' full rose disdain  
Made a pink-folded bud again ;

Then quicker than all utterance,  
All changed : and at a word, a glance,

Her anger rained its tears, then passed ;  
And she was in my arms at last ;

The austere woman, doubly dear,  
And lovelier for each falling tear :

But why we quarreled, how it grew,  
I can not tell, I never knew :

## THE QUARREL

Perhaps 't was Love; he, who, with tears,  
Would show how fair a face appears;

As, after storm, the sky 's more blue,  
A wildflower 's fairer for the dew.

## MIRIAM

What better praise for all her ways  
Than that all days her ways illumine?  
Such brightness as the maiden year  
Knows, when God's kindness seems as near  
As flowers whose wisdom 's but to bloom.

Hers the deep hair: a face more fair  
Than roses June sets blossoming:  
The sunshine of her gladness gleams  
In bloom-bright lips and cheeks, and dreams  
Upon her throat's soft coloring.

Her voice is sweet as birds that greet  
With song the coming of the light:  
The serious happy gleam that lies  
In the dark lustre of her eyes  
Is as the starlight to the night.

Beyond the sea such girls as she  
It was whom Titian loved to paint,  
With calm Madonna eyes, and hair  
Rich auburn; robed in gold and vair,  
Fair as the vision of a saint.

## THE SUMMER SEA

Over the summer sea,  
When the white-eyed stars look pale,  
And the moonbeams make a trail  
Of gold through the waves for me,  
I turn my ghostly sail  
    Away, away,  
And follow the form I see  
Over the summer sea.

Over the misty sea,  
Ere the cliff which highest soars  
From the billow-beaten shores  
Reddens all rosily,  
Where the witch-white water roars,  
    Far on, far on.  
Through the foam she beckons me  
Over the summer sea.

Over the haunted sea,  
When the great, gold moon low lies  
On the rim of the western skies,  
'Twixt the moon, she comes, and me,



## THE SUMMER SEA

And gazes in my eyes ;  
    Low down, low down,  
'Twixt the orbéd moon and me,  
Over the summer sea.

Deep in the bitter sea,  
Wilt thou drag me down, O sweet?  
Down, down! from hair to feet  
Filled with thee utterly?  
Against thy heart's wild beat? —  
    At last! at last!  
Wilt drag me down with thee,  
Deep in the summer sea?

## FINALE

So let it be. Thou dare not say 't was I!—  
Here in life's temple, where thy soul can see,  
Look where the beauty of our love doth lie,  
Shattered in shards, a dead divinity!—  
Approach: kneel down: yea, render up one sigh!  
This is the end. What need to tell it thee!  
So let it be.

So let it be. Care, who hath stood with him,  
And sorrow, who sat by him deified,—  
For whom his face made comfort,— lo! how dim  
They heap his altar which they can not hide,  
While memory's lamp swings o'er it, burning  
slim.—  
This is the end. What shall be said beside?  
So let it be.

## FINALE

So let it be. Did we not drain the wine,  
Red, of love's sacramental chalice, when  
He laid sweet sanction on thy lips and mine?  
Dash it aside! Lo, who will fill again  
Now it is empty of the god divine!—  
This is the end. Yea, let us say Amen.  
So let it be.

## CONCLUSION

The songs Love sang to us are dead :  
Yet shall he sing to us again,  
When the dull days are wrapped in lead,  
And the red woodland drips with rain.

The lily of our love is gone,  
That graced our spring with golden scent :  
Now in the garden low upon  
The wind-stripped way its stalk is bent.

Our rose of dreams is passed away,  
That lit our summer with sweet fire :  
The storm beats bare each thorny spray,  
And its dead leaves are trod in mire.

The songs Love sang to us are dead :  
Yet shall he sing to us again,  
When the dull days are wrapped in lead,  
And the red woodland drips with rain.

## CONCLUSION

The marigold of memory  
Shall fill our autumn then with glow:  
Haply its bitterness will be  
Sweeter for love of long-ago.

The cypress of forgetfulness  
Shall haunt our winter with its hue:  
Its apathy to us not less  
Dear for the dreams love's summer knew.



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