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# NEW POEMS

BY RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

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TO  
MY FRIEND  
ROBERT MACKAY



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I

A



## THE CRY OF THE LITTLE PEOPLES

THE Cry of the Little Peoples went up to God  
in vain ;

The Czech, and the Pole, and the Finn, and  
the Schleswig Dane.

We ask but a little portion of the green,  
ambitious earth ;

Only to sow and sing and reap in the land of  
our birth.

We ask not coaling stations, nor ports in the  
China seas,

We leave to the big child-nations such rivalries  
as these.

4 THE CRY OF THE LITTLE PEOPLES

We have learned the lesson of time, and we  
know three things of worth ;

Only to sow and sing and reap in the land of  
our birth.

O leave us our little margins, waste ends of  
land and sea,

A little grass, and a hill or two, and a shadow-  
ing tree ;

O leave us our little rivers that sweetly catch  
the sky,

To drive our mills, and to carry our wood, and  
to ripple by.

Once long ago, as you, with hollow pursuit  
of fame,

We filled all the shaking world with the sound  
of our name ;

But now are we glad to rest, our battles and  
boasting done,

Glad just to sow and sing and reap in our  
share of the sun.

Of this O will ye rob us,—with a foolish  
mighty hand,

Add, with such cruel sorrow, so small a land to  
your land ?

So might a boy rejoice him to conquer a hive  
of bees,

Overcome ants in battle,—we are scarcely more  
mighty than these—

So might a cruel heart hear a nightingale  
singing alone,

And say, “ I am mighty ! See how the singing  
stops with a stone ! ”

6 THE CRY OF THE LITTLE PEOPLES

Yea, he were mighty indeed, mighty to crush  
and to gain ;

But the bee and the ant and the bird were the  
mighty of brain.

And what shall you gain if you take us and  
bind us and beat us with thongs,  
And drive us to sing underground in a whisper  
our sad little songs ?

Forbid us the very use of our heart's own  
nursery tongue—

Is this to be strong, ye nations, is this to be  
strong ?

Your vulgar battles to fight, and your grocery  
conquests to keep,

For this shall we break our hearts, for this shall  
our old men weep ?

What gain in the day of battle—to the Russ, to  
the German, what gain,  
The Czech, and the Pole, and the Finn, and  
the Schleswig Dane ?

The Cry of the Little Peoples goes up to God  
in vain,  
For the world is given over to the cruel sons of  
Cain ;

The hand that would bless us is weak, and the  
hand that would break us is strong,  
And the power of pity is nought but the power  
of a song.

The dreams that our fathers dreamed to-day  
are laughter and dust,  
And nothing at all in the world is left for a  
man to trust.

8 THE CRY OF THE LITTLE PEOPLES

Let us hope no more, or dream, or prophesy,  
or pray,

For the iron world no less will crash on its  
iron way ;

And nothing is left but to watch, with a help-  
less, pitying eye,

The kind old aims for the world, and the kind  
old fashions die.



## CHRISTMAS IN WAR-TIME

### I

THIS is the year that has no Christmas Day,  
Even the little children must be told  
That something sad is happening far away—  
Or, if you needs must play,  
As children must,  
Play softly, children, underneath your breath !  
For over our hearts hangs low the shadow of  
    death,  
Those hearts to you mysteriously old,  
Grim grown-up hearts that ponder night and  
    day  
On the straight lists of broken-hearted dead,  
Black narrow lists no tears can wash away,

Reading in which one cries out here and here  
And falls into a dream upon a name.

Be happy softly, children, for a woe  
Is on us, a great woe for little fame,—  
Ah ! in the old woods leave the mistletoe,  
And leave the holly for another year,  
Its berries are too red.

## 2

And lovers, like to children, will not you  
Cease for a little from your kissing mirth,  
Thinking of other lovers that must go  
Kissed back with fire into the bosom of  
earth,—

Ah ! in the old woods leave the mistletoe,  
Be happy softly, lovers, for you too  
Shall be as sad as they another year,

And then for you the holly be berries of blood,  
And mistletoe strange berries of bitter tears.  
Ah ! lovers, leave you your beatitude,  
Give your sad eyes and ears  
To the far griefs of neighbour and of friend,  
To the great loves that find a little end,  
Long loves that in a sudden puff of fire  
With a wild thought expire.

## 3

And you, ye merchants, you that eat and cheat,  
Gold-seeking hucksters in a noble land,  
Think when you lift the wine up in your hand  
Of a fierce vintage tragically red,  
Red wine of the hearts of English soldiers  
    dead,  
Who ran to a wild death with laughing feet—

That we may sleep and drink and eat and  
cheat.

Ah ! you brave few that fight for all the rest,  
And die with smiling faces strangely blest,  
Because you die for England—O to do  
Something again for you,  
In this great deed to have some little part ;  
To send so great a message from the heart  
Of England that one man shall be as ten,  
Hearing how England loves her English-  
men !

Ah ! think you that a single gun is fired  
We do not hear in England. Ah ! we hear,  
And mothers go with proud unhappy eyes  
That say : It is for England that he dies,  
England that does the cruel work of God,  
And gives her well-beloved to save the world.

For this is death like to a woman desired,  
For this the wine-press trod.

## 4

And, England, when forgot this passing woe,  
Because of all your captains, strength on  
    strength,  
Think too, when the sure end has come at  
    length,  
Victory for England—for God means it so—  
Be strong in kindness for the little dead,  
The stubborn tribe that could not understand,  
But, child-like, fought the purposes of Time ;  
England, so strong to slay, be strong to spare  
England, have courage even to forgive,  
Give back the little nation leave to live,  
To shear its sheep and grow its lazy corn,—

Children there are that must be whipped to  
grow,  
And some small children must be whipped  
with fire.

## 5

And you in churches, praying this Christmas  
morn,  
Pray as you never prayed that this may be  
The little war that brought the great world  
peace ;  
Undazzled with its glorious infamy,  
O pray with all your hearts that war may  
cease,  
And who knows but that God may hear the  
prayer.  
So it may come about next Christmas Day

That we shall hear the happy children play  
Gladly aloud, unmindful of the dead,  
And watch the lovers go  
To the old woods to find the mistletoe.  
But this year, children, if you needs must play,  
Play very softly, underneath your breath ;  
Be happy softly, lovers, for great Death  
Makes England holy with sorrow this Christmas

Day ;

Yes ! in the old woods leave the mistletoe,  
And leave the holly for another year—  
Its berries are too red.

Christmas, 1899.

23

## THE ILLUSION OF WAR

WAR

I abhor,

And yet how sweet

The sound along the marching street

Of drum and fife, and I forget

Wet eyes of widows, and forget

Broken old mothers, and the whole

Dark butchery without a soul.

Without a soul—save this bright drink

Of heady music, sweet as hell ;

And even my peace-abiding feet

Go marching with the marching street,



For yonder yonder goes the fife,  
And what care I for human life!  
The tears fill my astonished eyes  
And my full heart is like to break,  
And yet 'tis all embannered lies,  
A dream those little drummers make.

O it is wickedness to clothe  
Yon hideous grinning thing that stalks  
Hidden in music, like a queen  
That in a garden of glory walks,  
Till good men love the thing they loathe.  
Art, thou hast many infamies,  
But not an infamy like this.  
O snap the fife and still the drum,  
And show the monster as she is.

SOLDIER going to the war—

Will you take my heart with you,  
So that I may share a little  
In the famous things you do ?

Soldier going to the war—

If in battle you must fall,  
Will you, among all the faces,  
See my face the last of all ?

Soldier coming from the war—

Who shall bind your sunburnt brow  
With the laurel of the hero,  
Soldier, soldier—vow for vow !

Soldier coming from the war—

When the street is one wide sea,

Flags and streaming eyes and glory—

Soldier, will you look for me ?







## THE HIDDEN LAND

HE sat by the side of the lonely hill,  
A figure strangely sad and still,  
And whatever bird or bee went by,  
Or flaunting, floating butterfly,  
He took no heed, but sat on still,  
Silent and sad by that lonely hill.  
Only sometimes his tattered hand  
Would stroke a flute that for years had been  
His sad companion in many a land—  
Thinking of all they two had seen.  
A faded, smiling, withered thing,  
He sat alone by the lonely hill  
There was nothing quite in the world so still.

It was that happy time of day  
When children troop from school to play,  
And as the minstrel sat so still,  
Children came laughing up the hill.  
His face was beautiful and good,  
The little children understood  
Why he sat there so sad and still,  
With his lonely flute by the lonely hill,  
And understood him too the birds ;  
The wild birds from the echoing wood  
Nestled about his hands and knees,  
Blue butterflies were in his hair,  
And, crowding at his lips, the bees  
Stole all the honey of his words.

The children, as they ran up hill,  
Stood round the man that sat so still,



And peered into his eyes,  
And saw the bees and the butterflies,  
And wondered at the birds.  
They saw too in his withered hand  
The ancient flute that had been his friend  
In many an ancient land.  
He had sat silent, nor had cared  
For bee or butterfly or bird ;  
But, when the children came,  
And crowded round his knees,  
He opened his blue eyes,  
Young as the morning skies,  
And smiled the love of God  
Into those young young eyes.

Then all the children danced and sang,  
And, like the butterflies,

Kissed his old hair, and begged him play  
On that old flute of his—  
To pay him with a kiss.

“Children,” said he, “what shall I sing  
To such young hearts as yours,  
What shall I sing to such small ears  
That have not heard the years ?  
Tell me, what shall I sing to you—  
Shall I sing the song of the bird  
As it pipes first up to its mother’s face ?  
Shall I sing you the song unheard  
Of the opening rose in the morning light,  
Or the little whispered word  
The baby says to its mother’s breast  
In the hush of the fragrant night ?

What shall I sing to such small ears  
That have not heard the years ?”

The children said : “ O sing us the song  
Of the rainbow in the sky !  
Sing us the song of the bees and the birds,  
And the song of the dragon-fly,—  
The Song of the Beautiful Words.”

He set the flute to his lips and blew  
A little laughing note or two ;  
“ Children,” he said, “ I will play for you  
The song of the Hidden Land.  
It lies just yonder under the moon,  
Where the soft-winged moths are born,  
It is made of dew and daisies and dreams,  
And it vanishes at morn.

Dear children, will you come with me  
To that Hidden Land, and you shall see  
How they make the blue of the sky,  
How they make the dragon-fly,  
You shall see the rainbow born.  
Children, will you come with me ?  
Children, will you come with me ?”

And he blew strange notes through that flute of  
his,—  
A butterfly, a star, a kiss—  
Strange sounds like growing grass or birds,  
Ah ! far more beautiful than words :  
In that battered flute was the sound of the  
sea,  
The song of the wind in the April tree,  
The song of the humming humming bee

The song of each beautiful thing that flies,  
Looks just once in your face—and dies.

“Children,” he said, “will you come with  
me?”

“Children,” he said, “will you come with  
me?”

And the children danced, and each little hand  
Took his,—and they went to that Hidden Land.

## BALLAD OF THE DEAD LOVER

DEEP in the middle of the wood,  
Her love lies in his narrow house,  
With daisies for his winding sheet,  
Beneath the swaying boughs.

Birds peck and pipe, and sunlit leaves  
Dreamily flicker o'er his sleep ;  
But Margaret in her lonely tower,  
What can she do but weep ?

The dead man sleeps, his aching heart  
Aches now no more ; the world has passed  
Out from his eyes and ears ; he sleeps,  
He is at peace at last.

Autumn and winter—falling leaves,  
And softly falling falling snow—  
The dead man slept, nor moved nor dreamed,  
Nor anything did know.

But, with the coming of the spring—  
Was it the singing of some bird ?  
Or the sap moving, or the flowers ?—  
The dead man sighed and stirred.

Deep in the aromatic mould,  
A sound had pierced to his deaf ears ;  
It was not bird, nor rustling leaf—  
The sound of falling tears.

Margaret, in her lonely bower,  
Lay on her pillow weeping sore,

When, in the hollow night, there fell

Three knocks upon her door.

“Who knocks! who knocks!” she cried in  
fear;

His voice made answer, “It is I!”

“O God, it was an evil dream,

My love, you did not die!”

Open she flung the bolted door—

“O love, at last you are come back!”

He stood, with matted daisied hair,

His coffin on his back.

“O can you say the Holy Name?

Or are you some unhallowed sprite

Who takes my dead love's sacred form

To damn me with to-night?”



The dead man spake the Holy Name ;

“ Your own true love am I,” he said,

“ I came because I heard your tears

Falling on my green bed.”

She took his head upon her knee,

And called him love and very fair,

And with a golden comb she combed

The grave-dust from his hair.

And many a deep heart-broken word,

Waiting and aching to be said,

Spake these sad lovers each to each,

The living and the dead.

Too soon along the eastern sky

The scarlet flower of morning glows,

And faint across the sleeping world

Horizon to horizon crows.

The dead man heard the sound that warns

The errant spirit of the day ;

“ Adieu, my Margaret, adieu !

I may no longer stay.

“ But, ere I go, this promise give—

For me you must no longer weep,

Only be glad that I at last

Have fallen safe asleep.

“ Yea, bring your laughter to my grave,

There in the middle of the wood,—

It fills with roses when you laugh,

And, when you weep, with blood.”

And then the dead man went his way

Beneath the swaying forest boughs,

And laid him in his winding sheet

Within his narrow house.

## THE WIFE FROM FAIRYLAND

HER talk was all of woodland things,

Of little lives that pass

Away in one green afternoon,

Deep in the haunted grass ;

For she had come from fairyland,

The morning of a day

When the world that still was April

Was turning into May.

Green leaves and silence and two eyes—

'Twas so she seemed to me,

A silver shadow of the woods,

Whisper and mystery.

I looked into her woodland eyes,  
    And all my heart was hers,  
And then I led her by the hand  
    Home up my marble stairs ;  
  
And all my granite and my gold  
    Was hers for her green eyes,  
And all my sinful heart was hers  
    From sunset to sunrise ;  
  
I gave her all delight and ease  
    That God had given to me,  
I listened to fulfil her dreams,  
    Rapt with expectancy.  
  
But all I gave, and all I did,  
    Brought but a weary smile  
Of gratitude upon her face ;  
    As though a little while,

She loitered in magnificence  
Of marble and of gold,  
And waited to be home again  
When the dull tale was told.

Sometimes, in the chill galleries,  
Unseen, she deemed, unheard,  
I found her dancing like a leaf  
And singing like a bird.

So lone a thing I never saw  
In lonely earth or sky,  
So merry and so sad a thing,  
One sad, one laughing, eye.

There came a day when on her heart  
A wildwood blossom lay,  
And the world that still was April  
Was turning into May.

In the green eyes I saw a smile  
That turned my heart to stone :  
My wife that came from fairyland  
No longer was alone.

For there had come a little hand  
To show the green way home,  
Home through the leaves, home through  
the dew,  
Home through the greenwood—home.

## BALLAD OF THE SINFUL LOVER

FOUR years he sinned, because she died—

With base corroding anodyne

He numbed the noble pain in him,

Four years he herded with the swine.

And then at last he died, and went,

With hurry of immortal feet,

To seek in the Eternal Life

The face that he had died to meet.

Up all the stairways of the sky

Laughing he ran, at every door

Of the long corridors of heaven

He knocked, and cried out "Heliodore!"



In shining rooms sat the sweet saints,  
 Each at her little task of joy ;  
 Old eyes, all young again with heaven,  
 Watched angel girl and angel boy.

And o'er the fields of Paradise,  
 Scattered like flowers, the lovers passed,  
 All rainbows—saying each to each  
 Heaven's two words : " At last ! At last ! "

But nowhere in that place of peace  
 Found he the face that was his own,  
 Till, on a sudden, by a stream  
 He found her sitting all alone.

With outstretched hands, he cried her name ;  
 She turned on him her quiet eyes :

“Who art thou that so foul with sin  
Darest to walk in Paradise ?”

Amazed, he answered : “ If I sinned,  
My sin was sorrow for thy sake ;  
The pain, O Heliodore, the pain !  
I sinned—O lest my heart should break.”

“ I know thee not,” the saint replied,  
“ Thy sorrow is all changed to sin ; ”  
And, moving towards a golden door,  
She turned away, and entered in.

## THE SILVER GIRL

WHITER than whiteness was her breast,  
And softer than new fallen snow,  
So pure a peace, so deep a rest,  
Yet purer peace below.

Her face was like a moon-white flower  
That sways upon an ivory stem,  
Her hair a whispering silver shower,  
Each foot a silver gem.

And in a fair white house of dreams,  
With hallowed windows all of pearl,  
She sat amid the haunted gleams,  
That little silver girl ;

Sat singing songs of snowy white,  
And watched all day, with soft blue eyes,  
Her white doves flying in her sight,  
And fed her butterflies.

Then when the long white day was passed,  
The white world sleeping in the moon,  
White bed, and long white sleep at last—  
She will not waken soon.

## MARGARET

This is the little Margaret  
That dropped from the stars,  
Her face is fair as those that look  
Through golden bars  
Down on the earth  
At sunseting.

Her brow is like some holy pearl  
From the deep Indian sea,  
Her eyes are only just less blue  
Than they are true,  
Violets all blue and dew.

Her hair is like some costly thing  
From fairyland,  
I dare not touch her golden hair  
With the most reverent hand,  
I dare not look into her eyes  
With these of mine,  
Lest I should sully those pure deeps,  
Calm and divine.

Yet, little Margaret, were I to look  
Long, long enough, who knows  
But the pure light that flows  
Up from your maiden soul  
Through those pure wells,  
Might with its gentle urgency  
Wash my soul ;

As men grow pure in reading some pure  
book,

And only sweetness may surround the rose.

O little Margaret

That dropped from the stars,

Some day the prince will come from fairyland,

And take your hand,

And lead you back once more

To all that fairyland from which you came,

To the strange seas so holy and so calm,

Where deep in the ocean of his love,

Your face, his pearl,

Shall feel his shadow o'er you,

Like some palm

That grows by the deep deep Indian sea,

And loves some pearl

Rocking and shimmering thousand leagues

below ;

And you shall go

Back to the flower-beds

Where grew your eyes,

And to those morning skies

From which you fell,

Our little Margaret

That dropped from the stars.



## RED ROSE OF MARGARET

RED rose of Margaret,  
Here in my book you lie,  
Red as her lips and fragrant yet,  
Dead rose that can never die ;  
Margaret gathered one red rose, and another  
red rose I.

“ As long as any rose is red  
On this little rose-hung tree,  
As long as willow leaves are green,  
Shall I be true to thee.”

So vowed I unto Margaret and Margaret unto  
me.

“As long as this little stream shall run  
Through the quiet willows here,  
Out of the shadow into the sun,  
Shall Margaret be dear ;  
Yea, though the stream should dry and the  
willows die, and the grass grow sere.

“Yet shall I not forget,  
Though the sun should fail,  
The holy face of Margaret,  
Pale as a pearl is pale ;  
And change shall change all else, but over this  
it shall not prevail.

“And as true as I to Margaret  
To me shall Margaret be,

And some day we shall stand again

By that little rose-hung tree,

And each, with a rose in the hand, shall say :

‘ I was faithful unto thee.’ ”

## LA FOLIE

HALF fun and half sorrow

Is La Folie,

There is no to-morrow

With La Folie ;

And 'tis laugh while you may,

And weep when you must,

For we've only to-day,

And to-morrow we're dust—

Says La Folie.

Half good and half evil

Is La Folie,

Beware of the devil

In La Folie ;

'Tis be good when you must,  
And laugh all you can,  
And put not your trust  
In your enemy, man—  
Says La Folie.

Half tears and half laughter  
Is La Folie,  
O what comes after  
For La Folie !  
And 'tis give him your heart  
Like a woman true,  
And watch him break it  
In half for you—  
Says La Folie.

## WEEP, MOTHER OF LOVE!

(AFTER CATULLUS)

WEEP, Mother of Love! Weep, Baby-Boy of  
Arrows!

And weep all men that have a tear to shed!  
Because—alas!—the sparrow of all sparrows,  
The sparrow of my little girl, is dead.

O it was sweet to hear him twitter-twitter  
In the dear bosom where he made his  
nest!

Lesbia, sweetheart, who shall say how bitter  
This grief to us—so small to all the rest?

For Lesbia loved no less that little bird,  
Nor less was loved, than mother loves her  
daughter,

Or daughter mother ; would you could have  
heard

His tiny voice, pretty as falling water !

And in no other bosom would he sing,  
But sometimes sitting here and sometimes  
there,

On one bough and another, would he sing,—  
Faithful to Lesbia—as I am to her.

He, little bird, must go, as go the flowers,  
Down the dark road by which no man  
returns ;

O curses on the black strength that devours  
The beauty of life, and all its music burns !

Foul shades of Orcus, evil you befall !

'Tis true you smote her little sparrow dead—

But this you did to Lesbia worse than all :

You made her eyes with weeping—O so  
red !



THE DAYS OF DISTANCE AND THE  
NIGHTS APART

(AFTER HAFIZ—ODE 192)

THE days of distance and the nights apart

Are at an end,

All the long lonely winter of the heart

Is at an end :

No more for ever shall the autumn gloom,

No more for ever shall December freeze,

For lo ! the sweet swift-footed April breeze

Fills all the world with fragrance and with

bloom—

O my own love and friend,

Our grief is at an end !

Our grief is ended and our joys begun,  
We have climbed the night—at last we reach  
the sun ;

And the wide world from pole to pole  
bright

With the effulgent face of our delight,  
From shining end to end.

Deep in the scented shadow of your hair,  
I bow my head and weep for very bliss,

So happy I can scarce believe me there,  
Too happy even to kiss ;

For, love, O most desired and lovely friend,

Through your great locks I see the rising  
sun,

The solitary night is at an end,  
Our morning is begun.

What care I if, for love of your fair face,  
To the wide winds my work and place I  
throw !

My work is just to love you, and the place  
Just where you are the only place I know.

Ah ! to the wine-shop swiftly let us come,  
With happy harp and loud exultant drum,  
And with a mighty voice the Saki call—  
“Deep cups and many, many cups for all !”  
What matter how much money we shall spend,  
For, O most lovely and beloved friend,  
To-day the grief of HAFIZ, the long grief,  
In a wild blessedness beyond belief  
Is at an end.

## MONODY

THIS is my lady—pray you wait awhile  
    Before you lock such beauty underground,  
Shut in this dungeon that immortal smile,  
    And plunder music of its sweetest sound.

This is my lady ! Ah ! I never told  
    All that I dare speak now that she is  
    dead ;  
This is my lady ! She who lies so cold,  
    White as the flowers that wither on her  
    head.

This is my lady ! She will never know

How my heart breaks because my heart is  
hers ;

I am the nightingale,—she was the rose !

O give me leave to sing to her, fair sirs !

Ah ! rose untimely smitten of the cold,

I bring my burning lute afire with spring,—  
So young 'twould turn to blossom faces  
old !

For thee to listen—scarce is need to sing !

Love, sleeping on with such a silent air—

Awake, for all the land is flower and bird ;  
What dost thou, little sluggard, sleeping there,  
Sleeping as sound as though thou hadst not  
heard !

O raise thy head !—or, if too weary thou,  
Open thine eyes, and nod a little smile,  
And in my arms, ah ! love, I'll take thee now  
And carry thee to God each shining mile.

## REQUIEM

VAIN, all in vain ! O Love, thou dost not hear ;

Thou art too lost in sleep to wake again ;

In vain my song, in vain the falling tear,

Vain, all in vain !

She will not wake again till Gabriel sings ;

For any mortal music we can make,

My lute and I, with these heart-broken strings,

She will not wake.

Sleep then, ah ! sleep—if slumber be thy will ;

We would not vex thee, though we needs  
must weep,

Of slumber everlasting take thy fill—

Sleep then, ah ! sleep.

## THE NORTHERN SPHINX

SPHINX of the North, with subtler smile  
Than hers who in the yellow South,  
With make-believe mysterious mouth,  
Deepens the *ennui* of the Nile ;

And, with no secret left to tell,  
A worn and withered old coquette,  
Dreams sadly that she draws us yet,  
With antiquated charm and spell :

Tell me your secret, Sphinx,—for mine !—  
What means the colour of your eyes,  
Half innocent and all so wise,  
Blue as the smoke whose wavering line



Curls upward from the sacred pyre  
Of sacrifice or holy death,  
Pale twisting wreaths of opal breath,  
From fire mounting into fire.

What is the meaning of your hair—  
That little fairy palace wrought  
With many a grave fantastic thought ;  
I send a kiss to wander there,

To climb from golden stair to stair,  
Wind in and out your cunning bowers,  
O garden gold with golden flowers,  
O little palace built of hair !

The meaning of your mouth who knows ?  
O mouth where many meanings meet—

Death kissed it stern, Love kissed it sweet,  
And each hath shaped its mystic rose.

Mouth of all sweets, whose sweetness sips  
Its tribute honey from all hives,  
The sweetest of the sweetest lives,  
Soft flowers and little children's lips ;

Yet rather learnt its heavenly smile  
From Sorrow—God's divinest art—  
Sorrow that breaks and breaks the heart,  
Yet makes a music all the while.

Ah, what is that within your eyes,  
Upon your lips, within your hair,  
The sacred art that makes you fair,  
The wisdom that hath made you wise.

TO ONE WHO IS BLIND

I SAID I had forgotten her,  
That I had put away  
Our memories of Paradise  
Until the Judgment Day ;

That never more the laughing earth  
Should see us hand in hand,  
That I long since had shut the door  
Of the old fairyland.

Then on a sudden came strange news  
Upon the gossip wind  
My love of those sweet years ago  
Great God—my love was blind !

I said—the news must be a lie,  
Cruel as are the years,  
They could not be so merciless  
To such great eyes as hers.

O little child of long ago,  
God grant the news untrue !  
Except for one strong selfish thought—  
That I may come to you

And sit beside you in the dark,  
And, as in Paradise  
I gave you all my breaking heart,  
Now bring to you—my eyes.

## THE HARP-PLAYER

(FOR A PICTURE BY AGNES SLOTT-MÖLLER)

What play you on your harp there by the fiord ?

Grief that has turned to joy with thinking on,  
Heartbreak that comes back singing in a bird,  
The kindness now of some old bitter word,  
Unhappy things grown happy being gone,  
Yea, all the bitter-sweetness of my lord—  
It was for this he gave me a harp of gold.

Love took my love—yet gave not his again.

Gave he then nought for all those bitter tears,  
Heart loyal, and strong pulses and warm breath,

That loved him verily even unto death,  
And all your woman-words in his boy's ears :  
Was all this given, and given all in vain ?

Love gave me for my tears a harp of gold.

## TO LYKKE \*

LYKKE, whose name is like some river in Wales  
That through the hills says over all day long  
Softly its own name, softly, like a song,  
Writes it in brimming ripples through long  
    dales,  
And whispers it through all its moonlit vales ;  
I, unfamiliar with your Danish tongue,  
Say your name over, over, all day long—  
Lykke and Lykke—like the nightingales.

Born of two arts in union, well they knew  
That made you, Lykke, all of burning love,

\* "Lykke" is pronounced somewhat like "Leuga"—the  
"eu" as in French, and the "ga" rather as "ge" in German.

To coil the softest sunshine for your hair,  
And where the bluest flowers of heaven grew,  
When of the same white clay God made the  
    dove,  
They made you, Lykke, knowing you were fair.



## A CARAVAN FROM CHINA COMES

(AFTER HAFIZ)

A CARAVAN from China comes ;

For miles it sweetens all the air

With fragrant silks and dreaming gums,

Attar and myrrh—

A caravan from China comes.

O merchant, tell me what you bring,

With music sweet of camel bells ;

How long have you been travelling

With these sweet smells ?

O merchant, tell me what you bring.

A lovely lady is my freight,  
 A lock escaped of her long hair,—  
 That is this perfume delicate  
 That fills the air—  
 A lovely lady is my freight.

Her face is from another land,  
 I think she is no mortal maid,—  
 Her beauty, like some ghostly hand,  
 Makes me afraid ;  
 Her face is from another land.

The little moon my cargo is,  
 About her neck the Pleiades  
 Clasp hands and sing ; HAFIZ, 'tis this  
 Perfumes the breeze—  
 The little moon my cargo is.

## THE WOMAN OF DREAMS

I AM she who comes back and comes back with  
the sound of the rain,

I am she who whispers and whispers hidden  
among the leaves ;

I am the sea and the wind, and the sigh of the  
summer grain,

And the lonely reed am I that rocks and  
whimpers and grieves.

I am the woman who came in the dawn and  
the dew of your days,

For when first awakened your eyes 'twas  
upon my face they fell ;

From your cradle you rose and walked the  
world in the hope of my face,  
Seeking the woman of dreams, in heaven, in  
earth, and in hell.

Yes! I am the woman of dreams, the woman  
no man shall wed—

Would you mate with the rising moon, or  
the glimmer of stars upon streams?

Or marry the mist on the mere, or the hopes in  
the heart of the dead?

Then home to your hearth shall you bring  
me—me, the woman of dreams.

Have you seen a light on the hills you never  
shall touch with your hand?

Have you heard a voice in your sleep you  
never again shall hear ?

Have you dreamed of a sea so blue, and O of  
so green a land,

Believed in a tale more true than the stories  
of eye and ear ?

Have you dreamed of a gold and a silver more  
silver and more gold

Than men mine in the mountains, or deep  
dived for some dream

Pearl beyond reach of diver, at the spent end  
to hold

A drowning clutch of radiance, a sinking,  
circling gleam ?

I was the gold, I the silver, the light on the  
hills, the pearl,

The sound of the summer leaves was I, the  
    sound was I of the rain,  
The hope in your heart was I, your dream  
    boy's dream of a girl,  
Yea, the woman of dreams was I—that all  
    men must love in vain.

Ah! never shall you be mine, beloved, nor  
    ever can I be yours!

You are the kiss of the sun on the sea, I am  
    the flying foam,

Ah! shall we live in a rainbow, love, so long as  
    a rainbow endures,

For I am the woman of dreams, and the  
    rainbow is my home!







O CLIMB with me, this April night,  
The silver ladder of the moon—  
All dew and danger and delight ;  
Above the poplars soon,

Into the lilac-scented sky,  
Shall mount her maiden horn,  
Frail as a spirit to the eye—  
O climb with me till morn.

LET whoso will sing towns and towers,  
    'Tis not so that my heart is made,  
My world is a wide world of flowers,  
    Leaf upon leaf and blade on blade.

Of buds and butterflies and birds  
    I ponder, lying in the grass,  
For company, the quiet herds,  
    And the slow clouds that pass and pass.

Safe in the leafy arms of trees,  
    I watch, through many a summer noon,  
The silken shadows of the breeze,  
    Till the stars come and bring the moon.

To silent talk of growing things

I hearken with a loving ear,

And all that buds or builds or sings,

Is to my heart beloved and near.

O meadows of the earth so green !

O meadows of the sky so blue !

How happy have these sad eyes been

Just looking my great love at you !

## SONG TO THE MOON

SWEET mother moon ! for am I not your child ?

Kind mother moon ! what is your child to  
do ?

For surely there is in me something wild—

And they all tell me that it comes from you.

Here am I lonely as a babe new-born,—

Nothing to bring the world in hard exchange ;

A ray too delicate to live till morn,

A phantom in the daylight, lost and strange.

O put a dream into my lunar head—

That I may sell its silver as I sing,

And earn a meal, moon-mother, and a bed,

And buy my bruised lute another string.

## THE CUCKOO

O CUCKOO troubling yonder hill  
    With call—and call—and call,  
I pray you sing a little low,  
    If you must sing at all.

You ghost-like bird that breaks the peace  
    Of April with your cry,  
Not spring you mean, for when you come  
    The spring is near to die.

To me you seem a midnight bird,  
    A voice of death and doom  
That in the palace of the spring  
    Cries from some haunted room.

The vultures tearing at my heart  
Bring no such keen a pang,  
Bird with the blossom in your voice,  
As though the hawthorn sang.

## THE NIGHTJAR

TO-NIGHT, beneath an operatic moon  
I listened to the flattered nightingale,  
Ornate, melodious, impeccable—  
Round notes of fluted silver soft as dew—  
The soul of Tennyson become a bird.

'Twas thus, I thought, that Leighton painted  
Greece,  
Thus fell the moulded notes of Mendelssohn,  
Canova thus made marble make-believe—  
The very marble colder for his art.

Is this the voice that made the fame of Keats ?  
Moon of the voices of the voiceless night,  
Moon-echo of the sun that is the lark.  
Men tell of Itys and thine ancient woe,  
Only old grief could wield so new an art—  
An art so cold, a studious art of tears,  
That charms the taste, but never stirs the soul.

So have I seen a perfect face go by,  
Hard wax of measured features without flaw,—  
Snow-queens of beauty, cold as death within,  
Faces of smitten metal, chiselled stone.

This patterned song holds nothing for my  
heart,  
I need a more bewildered wistful song,  
Agony-made, and warm with hidden tears,  
The heart-made music of a heart that breaks.



O nightingale, it is not thine that song—  
Water-fall song, a ruined-castle song,  
Song of the mouldering minster, glassy lake,  
And mossy mountain song.

Great nightingale, there is a toad of sound,  
Whose raucous passion until yesterday  
Found not a nest in any willing ear ;  
Browning among the birds, the nightjar he,  
Spinning a homespun thread of coarsest song.  
Ah ! but the mighty rude sincerity,—  
Brawny, and bracken-born, and hoarsely sweet,  
Song of the hairy heather-honeyed throat.

He recks not of the moon, nor heeds the stars,  
He churrs but to his mate and flutters low,  
Flits, flaps, from pine to pine, and never tires—

O patient passion ! passionate patience ! so  
Would I too will to wait, and so would sing.

Coarse beak of blunted music, uncouth bird  
That grinds monotonous music in the night,  
Trusting that truth shall make amends for art ;  
Thy voice is as the face the future loves,  
Face poor in feature, rich in flaming soul,  
Rude bird, a shire of pinewoods in thy voice,  
Fern-throated, thistle-tongued, and moorland  
bred.

Thine is the voice of souls, the voice that cries,  
Lonely, across the world, for but one voice  
That hears and cries again, or never hears ;  
Voice of the uncouth beauty, of the tongue  
Harsh in cold ears, but dulcet to the ear

That loves the voice, and loves no other  
voice—

All heedless of the accomplished nightingale.

Nightjar, for thee I build a cage of gold,  
And here within the palace of the moon,  
Where the dark pine makes black the silver  
ground,

Bird of the heart, my nightjar, sing to me—  
While in the valley, sings the bird of brain.

## AN EASTER SONG

ARISE, my heart, and sing thy Easter song !  
To the great anthem of returning bird,  
And sweetening bud, and green ascending  
blade,  
Add thou thy word.  
Long was the winter and the waiting long ;  
Heart, there were hours, indeed, thou wert  
afraid,—  
So long the Spring delayed.

Shut in the Winter's alabaster tomb,  
So white and still the sleeping Summer lay  
That dead she seemed ;

And none might know how in her magic side  
Slept the young Spring, and moved, and  
smiled, and dreamed.

Behold, she wakes again, and, open-eyed,  
Gazes, in wonder, 'round the leafy room,  
At the young flowers. Upon this Easter Day  
Awaken, too, my heart, open thine eyes,  
And from thy seeming death thou, too,  
arise.

Arise, my heart ; yea, go thou forth and sing !  
Join thou thy voice to all this music sweet  
Of crowding leaf and busy, building wing,  
And falling showers ;  
The murmur soft of little lives new-born,  
The armies of the grass, the million feet  
Of marching flowers.

How sweetly blows the Resurrection horn  
Across the meadows, over the far hills !  
In the soul's garden a new sweetness stirs,  
And the heart fills,  
As in and out the mind flow the soft airs.  
Arise, my heart, and sing, this Easter morn ;  
In the year's resurrection do thy part,—  
Arise, my heart !

## FOR SUNDIALS

SHADOW and sun—so too our lives are made—  
Here learn how great the sun, how small the  
shade!

Soon shall the shining circle cease to run ;  
Soon shall to-morrow turn to yesterday ;  
That knife of shadow cutting in the sun  
Cuts patiently thy light of life away.

## NEW-BORN

FRAIL new-born wings,  
Small voice that sings,  
New little beating heart,  
Dread not thy birth,  
Nor fear the earth—  
The Infinite thou art :  
The sun doth shine,  
The earth doth spin,  
For welcome—enter in  
This green and daisied sphere,  
Rejoice—and have no fear.



## WAYFARING

APPLES along the highway strewn,  
And morning opening all her doors,  
The cawing rook, the distant train,  
The valley with its misty floors ;

The hillside hung with woods and dreams,  
Soft gleams of gossamer and dew,  
From cock-crow to the rising moon  
The rainbowed road for me and you.

Along the highway all the day  
The waggons filled with apples go,

And golden pumpkins, and ripe corn,  
And all the ruddy overflow

From Autumn's apron as she goes  
About her orchards and her fields,  
And gathers into stack and barn  
The treasure that the summer yields.

A singing heart, a laughing road,  
With salutations all the way,—  
The gossip dog, the hidden bird,  
The pig that grunts a gruff good-day ;

The apple-ladder in the trees,  
A friendly voice amid the boughs,  
The farmer driving home his team,  
The ducks, the geese, the uddered cows ;

The silver babble of the creek,  
The willow-whisper—the day's end.  
With murmur of the village street,  
A called good-night, an unseen friend.

## TWILIGHT

STRANGE, at this still enchanted hour,  
How things in daylight hard and rough,  
Iron and stone and cruel power,  
Turn to such airy star-lit stuff.

Yon mountain, vast as Behemoth,  
Seems but a veil of silver breath,  
And soundless as a flitting moth,  
And gentle as the face of death,

Stands this stern world of rock and tree,  
Lost in some hushed sidereal dream,—  
The only living thing a bird,  
The only moving thing a stream.

And, strange to think, yon silent star,  
    So soft and safe amid the spheres,—  
Could we but see and hear so far—  
    Is made of thunder too and tears.

## SONG

Take it, love !  
'Twill soon be over,  
With the thickening of the clover,  
With the calling of the plover,  
Take it, take it, lover.

Take it, boy !  
The blossom's falling,  
And the farewell cuckoo's calling,  
While the sun and showers are one,  
Take your love out in the sun.

Take it, girl !

And fear no after,

Take your fill of all this laughter,

Laugh or not, the tears will fall,

Take the laughter first of all.

## A DITHYRAMBUS OF BUTTERMILK

LET whoso will sing Bacchus' vine,  
We know a drink that's more divine ;

'Tis white and innocent as doves,  
Fragrant and bosom-white as love's

White bosom on a summer day,  
And fragrant as the hawthorn' spray.

Let Dionysus and his crew,  
Garlanded, drain their fevered brew,

And in the orgiastic bowl  
Drug and besot the sacred soul ;



This simple country cup we drain  
Knows not the ghosts of sin and pain,

No fates or furies follow him  
Who sups from its cream-mantled rim.

Yea ! all his thoughts are country-sweet,  
And safe the walking of his feet,

However hard and long the way,—  
With country sleep to end the day.

To drain this cup no man shall rue,—  
The innocent madness of the dew

Who shall repent, or frenzy fine  
Of morning star, or the divine

Inebriation of the hours

When May roofs in the world with flowers !

About this cup the swallows skim,  
And the low milking-star hangs dim

Across the meadows, and the moon  
Is near in heaven—the young moon ;

And murmurs sweet of field and hill  
Loiter awhile, and all is still.

As in some chapel dear to Pan,  
The fair milk glimmers in the can,

And, in the silence cool and white,  
The cream mounts through the listening night ;

And, all around the sleeping house,  
You hear the breathing of the cows,

And drowsy rattle of the chain,  
Till lo ! the blue-eyed moon again.

## SPRING

This is the spring,  
The time to fling  
Sad hearts sky-high !  
To sail old hopes  
Like kites in the sky,  
And take old dreams  
From hidden places,  
And find old loves  
In the new faces.

This is the spring  
The time to sing,  
The time to wing—

Old flowers come out  
With the old blue eyes,  
Yet filled anew  
With the old surprise,  
And not a thing  
In the old world dies.

This is the spring,  
The time to bring  
Love to the folk  
That make the flowers,  
The lovely faces  
In hidden places,  
Fast asleep  
Through the April showers.

Blue were their eyes,  
Blue are the flowers,

Green as the light ascending blade,  
Was the hope in the hearts  
That laughed and said ;  
' Are you afraid ? '  
Forget them not,  
This shining day,  
The apple-blossom  
Is in the sky,—  
But, do you forget  
That you will die,  
That even you  
Will some day lie  
As low as any flower of May.

If only when you come to die,  
From your still heart  
A song shall rise,

Or from the eyelids  
Of your eyes  
The moon shall steal out  
In the sky,  
An unforgetful fragrant flower,  
Or from your grave  
A butterfly  
Flit for an hour.

## SONG

Time is very long  
Without a song,  
Weary is the day,  
With love away.

O is there nothing singing,  
Is there nothing winging,  
Nothing, nothing, flinging  
Its warm wild heart away !

If only I could borrow  
A rainbow from to-morrow,



To pay the lovely debt  
I owe to yesterday,—  
Ah! then my head would rest  
On young to-morrow's breast.

## A SONG OF BREAD AND HONEY

OF all the meals you can buy for money,  
Give me a meal of bread and honey !

A table of grass in the open air,  
A green bank for an easy chair,

The table-cloth inwrought with flowers  
And a grasshopper clock to tick the hours

Between the courses birds to sing  
To many a hidden shining string,

And neither man nor maid be seen,  
But a great company of green

Upon a hundred thousand stalks  
Talk to us its great green talks.

And, when the merry meal is done,  
To loiter westward with the sun,

Dipping fingers ere we go  
In the stream that runs below.

Of all the meals you can buy for money  
Give me a meal of bread and honey !

## OCTOBER MOONLIGHT

THE moon is up at half-past five,  
She frightens me among the pines ;  
The moon, and only half-past five !  
With half the ruddy day alive—  
So soon, so high, so cold, she shines,  
This daylight moon among the pines.

The moon is walking in the wood,  
Her face is very white and strange ;  
The moon is coming through the wood,  
Her face half-hidden in her hood,  
Cold silver face whose hourly change  
Blanches her cheek more white, more  
strange.

The moon beneath a pine-tree stands,  
Her weary face is full of dreams ;  
The moon by yonder pine-tree stands,  
She builds a palace with her hands,  
Pillars of silver, shafts and beams,—  
She builds a palace for her dreams.

The moon is sleeping in the trees,  
So early is she tired of heaven,  
The moon is dreaming in the trees,  
Her shepherd boy she sees ! she sees !  
Asleep, and it is only seven !  
O moon, that is so tired of heaven.

## NOVEMBER

THIS year, I said, when first along the lane,  
With tiny nipples of the tender green  
The winter-blackened hedge grew bright  
again,

This year I watch and listen. I have seen  
So many springs steal profitless away,  
This year I garner every sound and scent.  
And you, young year, make not such haste to  
bring

Hawthorn and rose, nor jumble, indiscreet,  
Treasure on treasure of the precious spring,  
But bring all gently forth upon the air,  
Unhasting to the fair.

Yet still the spring escaped me, and once  
more

I stand in the late autumn's sighing door,  
While the dishevelled lone distracted trees  
Lose in bewildered sweeps their yellow  
leaves ;

And the birds sing not, nor is butterfly  
Pursued of swallow, nor swallow in the eaves,  
Long since flown south to warmer climes than  
these ;

And here is but November left and I :  
To wonder if the hawthorn bloomed in  
May,

And if the wild-rose with so fine a flush  
Mantled the cheek of June, and if the way  
The stream went singing foamed with meadow-  
sweet,

And if the throstle sang in yonder bush,  
And if the lark dizzied with song the sky.  
I watched and listened, yet so sweet, so fleet,  
The mad young year went by.



AT EVENING I CAME TO THE WOOD

AT evening I came to the wood, and threw  
myself on the breast

Of the great green Mother, weeping, and the  
arms of a thousand trees

Waved and rustled in welcome, and murmured,  
“ Rest—Rest—Rest !

“ The leaves, thy brothers, shall heal thee,  
and thy sisters, the flowers, bring peace.”

At length I stayed from my weeping, and lifted  
my face from the grass ;

The moon was walking the wood, with feet  
of mysterious pearl,

And the great trees held their breath, trance-  
like, watching her pass,

And a bird called out of the shadows, with  
voice as sweet as a girl.

And then, in the holy silence, to the great green  
Mother I prayed :

“Take me again to thy bosom, thy son who  
so close to thee

Aforetime, filial, clung ; then into the city  
strayed—

The painted face of the town, the wine and  
the harlotry.

“Bathe me in lustral dawns, and the morning  
star, and the dew ;

Make pure my heart as a bird, and innocent  
as a flower,

Make sweet my thoughts as the meadow mint

—O make me all anew—

And in the strength of beech and oak gird  
up my will with power.

“I have wandered far, O my Mother, but  
here I return at the last,

Never again to stray in pilgrimage wanton  
and wild ;

A broken heart and a contrite here at thy feet  
I cast,

O take me back to thy bosom !”—and the  
Mother murmured, “Child.”







## SLEEP FOR LONDON

ONLY this prayer for London, merciful Lord :  
Of all thy bounty just a little sleep,  
A little sleep for London, merciful Lord.

There is much sleep in heaven, merciful Lord,  
Spare us a little, of thine Infinite Love,  
A little sleep for London, merciful Lord.

See her so worn and weary, with her head,  
Like some tired sempstress, fallen on her arm,  
Trembling awake at any least alarm,—  
She dreams, poor soul, dreams sweetly she is  
    dead,

With no more morns for ever, merciful Lord.

We ask no great thing, Lord,  
None of thy splendid answers unto prayer ;  
Only a little sleep—she is so worn,—  
Some intermission of implacable morn,  
Nothing more great or splendid beg for her,  
Only a little sleep, merciful Lord.

Only a little holiday of sleep,  
Soft sleep, sweet sleep ; a little soothing psalm  
Of slumber from thy sanctuaries of calm,  
A little sleep—it matters not how deep ;  
A little falling feather from thy wing,  
Merciful Lord,—is it so great a thing ?

Lo ! in the east, with cruel face of steel,  
Day the taskmaster cries the abhorrèd hour,  
And wakens London with the lash of dawn,



Merciful Lord, dawn comes not so in heaven,  
Nor steals it so o'er many a rich man's lawn—  
Kind-hearted nymph, soft-footed as a flower,  
That with her dews night-weary eyes would  
    heal—

Is there indeed a land where dawn is sweet ?

Here morn flies bloody down each London  
    street,

The fury Dawn that hates to see men rest—  
Of all thy good, great Lord, deep sleep is best ;  
A little sleep for London, merciful Lord !

## THE THAMES

RIVER of Death that divides implacable foes for  
a little,  
Keeps, so I fable, the hand of the East from  
the throat of the West,  
Thames that puts on her jewels this frivolous  
lute-stringed twilight—  
Mark yon crescent of pearls from the Minster  
clock to the Tower,  
Mark her bracelets of light, her beautiful  
golden bridges,  
Mark the moons in her hair, and her palaces  
down to the water :  
And mark over there on the dark other side of  
her flowing,

Stretched at black length, a formless and  
cowering monster,

Here and there a small eye lit in the night of  
his strength—

Wafted over to him little frightened waifs of  
the laughter.

'Tis the Leviathan Labour watching there in  
the darkness,

Watching and waiting the hour to spring with  
a roar from his dockyards,

Tear down those honeycombed lights and  
burn up the butterfly people,

Break them, and burn them, and quench them  
down there in the River of Death.

## LONDON BEAUTIFUL

LONDON, I heard one say, no more is fair,  
London whose loveliness is everywhere,  
London so beautiful at morning light  
One half forgets how fair she is at night,  
London as beautiful at set of sun  
As though her beauty had but just begun ;  
London, that mighty sob, that splendid tear,  
That jewel hanging in the great world's ear.  
Strange queen of all this grim romantic stone,  
Paris, say some, shall push you from your  
    throne,  
And all the tumbled beauty of your dreams

Submit to map and measure, straight cold  
schemes

Which for the loveliness that comes by  
chance

Shall substitute the conscious streets of  
France,

A beauty made for beauty that has grown,  
An alien beauty, London, for your own.

O wistful eyes so full of mist and tears,  
Long be it ere your haunted vision clears,  
Long ere the blood of your great heart shall  
flow

Through inexpressive avenue and row ;  
Straight-stepping, prim, the once adventurous  
stream,

Its spirit gone, it loiters not to dream,

All straight and pretty, trees on either side,  
For London's beauty London beautified.

Ah ! of your beauty change no single grace,  
My London with your sad mysterious face.

## A FAREWELL TO LONDON

LONDON, that long our loves may last,  
Let's part awhile, beloved town,  
I need the peoples of the breeze,  
The conversation of the down.

I hear the sea that calls me home,  
And the wild, wild bird that whistles me,  
And I must go and meet to-day  
An unforgotten faithful tree.

Back to my palaces of air,  
Where all day long green fountains play,  
Back to the singing uplands pure  
And the clear call at break of day.

The short sweet nights, the long sweet days,  
The innocent madness of the dew,  
The sun's great brimming cup to drink,—  
Then back, my London, back to you.



## BROOKLYN BRIDGE AT DAWN

OUT of the cleansing night of stars and tides,  
Building itself anew in the slow dawn,  
The long sea-city rises : night is gone,  
Day is not yet ; still merciful, she hides  
Her summoning brow, and still the night-car  
glides  
Empty of faces ; the night-watchmen yawn  
One to the other, and shiver and pass on,  
Nor yet a soul over the great bridge rides.

Frail as a gossamer, a thing of air,  
A bow of shadow o'er the river flung,  
Its sleepy masts and lonely lapping flood ;

Who, seeing thus the bridge a-slumber there,  
    Would dream such softness, like a picture  
        hung,  
    Is wrought of human thunder, iron and  
        blood ?

V



To love !  
That is my prayer—  
Gifted to love,  
Just the old simple everlasting way :  
Of all life's gifts  
That is the gift I crave.

I ask not kindness,  
I ask not any gift or any grace,  
Or any charity ;  
The love I mean  
Is not for you to give or take away.

That you are cruel  
Shall be no less provocative

Than that you're kind,  
And whether you remember or forget  
Shall to the love I crave  
Be equal lure.

I ask not nearness,—  
You are ever near ;  
I ask not sympathy  
In common aims,  
I ask not comprehension,  
I ask not anything.

Only I pray to love,  
And bring my heart  
Gladly for you to break—  
If break it can—  
Gladly to feel your fair contemptuous feet

Grind it beneath you  
In the passionate dust.  
Yea, break my heart,  
For that were ecstasy !

Think not 'tis you I crave,  
You to possess, command, nay ! nor to serve ;  
My love would not be kind,  
Nor live in offices of tenderness ;  
You to the thing I crave  
Are but the accident from which it springs.

It is not admiration,  
It is not gratitude,  
It is only love—  
A madness,

A glory burning in the lonely brain,  
A fearful fire filling the lonely heart.

To love, to love, to love !

Is this the way ?



HOPELESS of hope, past desire even of thee,  
There is one place I long for,  
A desolate place  
That I sing all my songs for,  
A desolate place for a desolate face,  
Where the loneliest land meets the loneliest  
sea.

Green waves and green grasses—and nought  
else is nigh,  
But a shadow that beckons ;  
A desolate face,  
And a shadow that beckons  
The desolate face to the desolate place  
Where the loneliest sea meets the loneliest sky.

Wide sea and wide heaven, and all else afar,  
But a spirit is singing,  
A desolate soul  
That is joyfully winging—  
A desolate soul—to that desolate goal  
Where the loneliest wave meets the loneliest  
star.

O LOVE, I look across the sea,  
The sails go by,  
From vastness into vastness fade,  
Lost in the sky.

O the great world ! so wide and cold,  
And you so far !  
If only you could come as near  
As yonder star.

Aloft, alone, I vex it not  
With me or mine ;  
So far—yet am I near enough  
To see it shine.

FOR lack and love of you, love,  
I pine the long days through ;  
I waste the powers  
Of the rich hours,  
For lack and love of you.

For lack and love of you, love,  
All life is grown untrue ;  
O I squander  
And I wander,  
For lack and love of you.

For lack and love of you, love,

I grow myself untrue ;

I am drowning,

Drowning, drowning,

For lack and love of you.

TRUE heart,  
True heart,  
I have no joy but thee—  
Sugared delights may be,  
And coloured toys ;  
But my enduring joys  
Must come from thee,  
Always and always, love,  
Must come from thee.

LONG after you are dead  
I will kiss the shoes of your feet,  
And the long bright hair of your head  
Will go on being sweet ;  
In each little thing you wore  
We shall go on meeting, love ;  
In a ring we shall meet,  
In a fan we shall meet,  
Or a long-forgotten glove.  
Long after you are dead,  
O the bright hair of your head,  
And the shoes of your little feet !

OF all the days we said that day was good,  
When, 'neath the blue publicity of heaven,  
Amid the flickering marguerites we stood,  
And gave—or thought we gave—what once  
is given  
And only once is taken quite away.  
But, child, since then how rich the months  
that passed  
With child-glad hours and many a perfect day,  
Nor maybe yet the happiest or the last.

Yet, love, I wonder if the day we went  
Up that high tower, and stood up in the  
sky,



Yet unto earth returned again, was meant  
To symbolise our love ; nay, even I,  
In a dim-lighted, unbelieving hour,  
Have wondered if we really climbed the tower !

I DID not know I loved you, love, like this :

I thought our love was chance and passing  
need ;

Your eyes were very brown, and, O your  
kiss

Was sweet indeed—

Yet dreamed I not of loving you like this.

You stole so unannounced into my life,

No fatal premonitions or alarms

Told me that you were my star-chosen  
wife ;

There were your arms—

And unannounced I stole into your life.

Had some one asked me of you, I had said :

“ It is too late to meet her—long ago

She is a dream, or maybe she is dead ;

I do not know

More to tell any of her,” I had said.

And now, beloved, too well you know the  
rest—

One woman must be heaven, and earth, and  
hell ;

So soft, yet so responsible, a breast !

I said “ Too well ”—

Love, is my head too heavy for your breast ?

I LIE awake to watch your sleeping face,  
And listen to your tender-taken breath ;  
Only at times I shudder—  
For your sleep seems so like death.

GRACE o' God,  
Flower face,  
Silver feet,  
In what place,  
Heaven or earth,  
Did we meet ?  
At what time  
Of the day ?  
In what way ?  
Was it near,  
Was it far,  
In some star,  
Or just here,  
Quite, quite near ?

Tell me, dear—  
Grace o' God,  
Tell me, dear.  
Grace o' God,  
I know well  
When we met ;  
It was first,  
Grace o' God,  
When I knew  
I loved you—  
Then we met—  
That was just,  
Grace o' God,  
Flower face,  
Silver feet ;  
When I first  
Looked—O looked !

On your face—  
Silver feet,  
Golden heart,  
Grace o' God.

I HEARD a liar say my love doth cease,  
Heart of my heart, because sometimes I rest  
My burning head upon some other breast,  
Seeking in all this hell a little peace,  
A little comfort in this long disease  
Of loss I suffer, loss by them unguessed  
Who find in the new-born East for long-lost  
West  
Sufficient heaven. I am not of these.

But, sometimes, when the life I may not kill  
Grinds pitiless iron on the screaming nerve,



I cry for woman as ether, woman as wine,  
Lest Death's black poppies in my hair I  
twine :

Thus faithful, faithless, work I on until

Finished the bidding of the saint I serve.

GIVE me thy tears : I ask not for thy kiss,  
Or for thy smile—but only for thy tears ;  
Take where thou wilt thine hopes—give me  
thy fears ;

Lavish on shallower loves thy time of bliss :

But when it ends,—and naught so certain is  
As bliss doth end—though it be years on  
years

Though 'twere the hour before the last hour  
nears,

Come to me then—I ask no boon but this.

O LET them watch at corners and peer and  
smell,

Those starveling sneak-thieves of the human  
heart,

Selling their little lies in some foul mart,—

I have a miracle no man can sell,

A wonder that no thieving tongue can tell ;

The secret is : how beautiful thou art,

The four winds cannot blow us two apart,

And we care not whether 'tis heaven or hell—

Knowing the time is now so very soon

When we shall sit at each end of the moon,

Our two hands safe together across the sky ;  
Laughing at that pathetic world below,  
That said it knew and yet could never  
know,—  
How could it know, down there in its sad  
sty !

Ah ! sweet, the cruel world—

How cruel it is !

How much we pay it

For a simple kiss—

The silly world, as if we wouldn't pay

More than the world can give or take away !

But, love, there is one toll that we must pay,

When the dark ferry-boat on the dark stream

Rows us both softly back from dream to dream.

WAS it for this we met—to part like this ;  
Was it for this we loved—to lose this way ;  
Can this be April reddening into May,  
And will the woods grow green and never miss  
Beneath their boughs the murmur of our bliss,  
The happy children of a summer day ;  
Was it for this we loved—to lose this way ;  
Was it for this we met—to part like this !

O little haunted river, will you run  
Still through the trees and leap the rocks in  
foam,

Yet hear no more our voices blent with  
yours ;

If thus the painted scene of love endures,  
Earth's floor of flowers and heaven's azure  
dome,

O can the play be ended—quite, quite done !

I LOVE her love no more. I would have died  
For her least need, but of her cruel whims  
I am no slave. Man is too much a god  
To worship even a woman utterly :  
This let one woman learn and one man teach.  
A man is woman and a man besides,  
A woman only woman.

ALL the loving ever done  
Is not so sweet as the kiss o' the sun,  
Nor a woman ever born  
As good to look on as the morn.  
Up, my soul, and let's away  
Over the hills at break of day,  
Following, whate'er befalls,  
Yonder fairy horn that calls,  
Angel-blown in yonder star ;  
Better far, O better far,  
Better far than any girl,  
Is the morning's face of pearl,



And the wind about our ears  
The true music of the spheres,  
And the running of the river  
Good to listen to for ever.







How many friends I loved are gone !

Death delicately takes the best :

O Death, be careful of the rest !

I cannot spare another one,—

So many friends I loved are gone !

## THE TRAVELLER

'Twas moonrise on the Tenth of May,  
I met a traveller walking fast ;  
I touched his arm and bade him stay—  
“ Old friend, we meet at last.”

All tall and dark and strange he seemed  
Under the rising moon,  
He turned and said—“ I never dreamed  
That we should meet so soon.

“ You are too young to be my friend,  
All hope and boyish breath ;  
Are you quite sure you know my name ? ”  
“ Your name,” I said, “ is—Death.”

I SAW a rose in my garden blowing—  
I said, "O rose, where art thou going?"  
Answered the rose: "Where the stream is  
    flowing,  
And all the winds of the world are blowing,—  
Where thou thyself art also going."

"Rose," said I, "will it come to pass,  
When your petals fall upon the grass,  
That you some dewy morn again  
Will press your cheek at my window-pane?"  
The rose's answer was, "Alas!"

## THE WAY OF A DREAM

I HAD a dream, and it went this way—  
It went the way of a bird in the air,  
It went the way of the butterfly,  
It went the way of the moon in the sky,  
It went the way of all things fair :  
It went to dwell with a sleeping face  
That rests in a hidden marble place,  
Where no foot falls, no word is said,  
Only sometimes a bird will call,  
Or a little wintry leaf will fall,  
Or a snowdrop lift its head.



## LIFE

LIFE is that doomed, mysterious, sad-eyed  
flower

That through the cosmic granite, like a rose,  
Pushes its dewy stem, and for an hour  
In the stern sunshine of existence blows.

## MARJORIE AND THE SPRING

I SAID : It is the spring, Marjorie !

But she never heard ;

I said : There is the thrush, Marjorie !

But she never cared ;

I said : Come, see the crocuses,

How fine they flame !

But she never came.

I said : Where art thou, Marjorie ?

Dost thou not hear,

O lie-a-bed, O sleepy-head,

That spring is here ?

Come in your gown of gold and green

To meet the king !

Three springs in vain to Marjorie

This song I sing ;

But she never hears, and she never cares,

And she ne'er will come,

For Marjorie is dead, yea ! blind is Marjorie,

Yea ! deaf is she and dumb.

I HEARD Death on a summer day  
Go singing up the street :  
I turned to an old friend and said,  
“ Was ever voice so sweet !  
O see the poppies in his hair—  
And his alabaster feet ! ”

## HIC JACET

I WHOSE strength was like a tower  
Am now a little blue-eyed flower,  
A blade of grass, an April shower.

I whose arm was strong as ten  
Am weaker than the little wren,  
Or a drop of churchyard rain.

I whose face was once all light,  
All dreams and boyhood and delight,  
Cover my face up in the night.

## MY FRIEND

I HAVE a friend who is dead—

A wonderful friend is he :

He knows I am lonely and living,

So he spends his time with me.

He forsakes the shining gardens,

And all the rainbowed dead,

To sit and talk and comfort me—

For living—my friend who is dead.

TIME cannot take away  
What Time did give ;  
Sad as our hearts may be,  
We once did live ;

And, howso robbed, who knows  
But those strange friends,  
Death and Eternity,  
May make amends.









TO MRS. LANGTRY, ON HER DE-  
PARTURE FROM AMERICA

I DO not bring you flowers,  
Or singing birds,  
To say farewell,  
Nor even words ;  
Nor to the altar of your eyes  
Do I bring sighs ;  
Such antiquated tribute  
To the youth  
Of the eternal Spring  
I do not bring.  
And, surely—stars above !—  
I bring you not

That miracle called love :  
All I can bring—  
The one gift worthy you—  
Is to bring back again  
The wonder and the joy and the delight  
Of mortal eyes that saw a little while  
The loveliness immortal.  
I that am poor in all that is not you  
What can I do  
Save bring you back yourself  
As offering!  
Had I but pain  
Then would I bring that too—  
Alas! there is no pain  
For me and you.  
So all I bring,  
As tribute to your feet,

Is that most precious thing  
The joy you gave,  
Indifferently sweet  
As some bright star,  
That shines alike on all,  
And shines for none alone ;  
Shines but for shining's sake  
In the high heaven afar.  
Fair star, too soon to sink  
Behind the sea,  
My little hoard of star-dust  
Here I bring,  
As offering :  
You unto you—from me.

## EX LIBRIS

*. . . multum ille et terris jactatus et alto,  
Vi superum, saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram :  
Multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem,  
Inferretque deos Latio : . . .*

Having no home, what should I do with these,  
Tossed as I am about the sounding seas,  
Sport of exiling winds of change and chance—  
Feet in America, and heart in France.

Homeless, 'tis meet I find my books a home :  
Coffined in crates and cases long they lay,  
Distant from me three thousand miles of foam.  
Dungeoned in cellars cold and nailed away,  
As in a sepulchre, till Judgment Day.

Lost to their gentle uses in the tomb,  
Cobwebbed companions of the spidered gloom,  
At last they rise again to live once more,—  
Dread resurrection of the auction room.

Books I have loved so well, my love so true  
Tells me 'tis time that I should part from you,  
No longer, selfish, hoard and use you not,  
Nor leave you in the unlettered dark to rot,  
But into alien keeping you resign—  
Hands that love books, fear not, no less than  
mine.

Thus shall you live upon warm shelves again,  
And 'neath an evening lamp your pages glow,  
Others shall press 'twixt leaf and leaf soft  
flowers,

As I was wont to press them long ago ;  
And blessings be upon the eyes that rain  
A tear upon my flowers—I mean on “ours”—  
If haply here and there kind eyes shall find  
Some sad old flower that I have left behind.



AN EPITHALAMIUM ON THE MAR-  
RIAGE OF WILLIAM FAVERSHAM  
AND JULIE OPP

No one to-day is happy as you are,  
    No one so happy in any place or land,—  
        Not in sea-hidden islands ringed with spray,  
Nor yet in any impregnable bright star,  
        Nor any girl or boy.  
Nearest approached to your beatitude  
    Are we who watch your wonderful glad eyes  
        Here at the awful gates of Paradise ;  
Our hungry hearts eager with gratitude—  
    Only to look on the rare face of joy.  
O Will ! Oh Julie ! do you understand ?  
    This is the day !

Do you remember how the long days wore ?

So long, so many, so empty, and so slow ;

It seemed indeed that they could never go :

And O! the lonely sound of all that sea !

The days will not be empty any more,

And you shall search the calendar in vain,

Nor find one long day in the longest year ;

Yes! pray some god to make them long

again—

O you will never have one minute to spare

From the grave business of felicity !

Husband and wife ! O happy, happy pair !

A union so perfect that it seems

A fabled bliss, a marriage made in dreams,

A rainbow strangely painted on the air.

Husband and wife—those old unhappy words  
Glow with mysterious blessedness once  
more,  
Like an old world made young again with  
flowers.

And the green leaf and the returning birds,  
And the warm murmur soft of gleaming  
showers—  
Young April packed with sweetness to the  
core.

Young king and queen,—pass to your palace  
now ;  
Pass in and from your happy windows gaze  
Along your stately avenue of days,  
Survey the shining gardens of your peace,  
And all the future filling with increase

Of garnered joy, and prosperous with  
praise—

The long sweet ripening of your marriage  
vow.

ON SOME RECENT EDITIONS OF  
OSCAR WILDE

THESE are the poems of that tragic one,  
Who, loving beauty much, loved life too well ;  
Therefore, to-night he makes his bed in hell.  
Gone are the grace and glory—all is gone ;  
The tower is fallen that so proudly shone  
In the sun's eye, and now the hucksters sell  
The sculptured stone, foul groping where it  
fell—  
O ruin fair for ghouls to batten on !  
Maggots in the decay of the divine,  
Ghouls of the printing-press, ere yet he died

You spat your little venom on his name,  
You who now pick and pillage in his fame,  
Robbing the pockets of the crucified :  
But the great silent talker makes no sign.

ON THE ASSASSINATION OF  
PRESIDENT MCKINLEY

THIS is no way to freedom : to smite down  
Some unoffending head that wears a crown—  
Only to set it on a sterner brow.

Not I of those who dream the world's release  
Will come by the soft processes of peace,  
Or the pacific compromise of power ;  
And when at last dawns the stern bloody hour,  
When the slave stands with rifle in his hand,  
And sweeps the master from the stolen land,  
I too would hold a rifle in my hand.

But when that day dawns we shall fight like  
men,

Glad men that laugh because at last they see  
So close the blazing eyes of those they hate—  
In honesty of hate his life or ours,  
His death or ours in honesty of hate.  
We shall not sting an unsuspecting heel,  
Or fire into an unprotected breast :  
This is no way to freedom—it were best  
Another hundred years to wait and wait,  
Then flash into the sun the fearless steel.



## A PRAYER

OUT of the deeps I cry to thee, O God!  
I fain would bring my soul safe up the sky—  
This shining jewel rainbowed like a tear,  
This star in the body that belongs to heaven.  
With all the straining strength of my poor  
    might,  
I stagger with it up the dreadful way—  
O but I fear unless some succour comes,  
Some kindness of some angel, or some help  
From watching planet sad to see me climb,  
That in some gulf the precious thing must  
    fall.  
For I am weak and weary, and all my will

Went in the miles behind me, and no more  
Remains in me to face the frowning height.

Ah ! is my soul, that is so much to me,  
Nothing to thee, O God ?  
See in my hands that I stretch up to thee  
The lovely thing thou gavest : let it not  
Die ere I die—but rather pluck its light  
Out of my brain, while still it brightly burns,  
Not with my body gutters to decay.  
Out of the deeps I cry to thee, O God!  
I fain would bring my soul safe back to thee.

*If thou hadst not been born, if this fair day  
Had not illuminated all the year,  
Shining like diamond in the calendar,  
If Time were empty of this date divine,  
And grim November robbed of its one flower,  
O what of me !*

*If thou hadst not been born !  
How strange the thought, how lonely to the heart  
Whose future is all written in thine eyes,  
Whose past was but a prophecy of thee !*

*If thou hadst not been born !—Ah ! but thou  
wert !*

*And God was good to me, and of His grace,*

*In this same garden of time thou makest sweet  
Gave me to wander, seeking for my flower.*

*Attar of all the roses of the world,  
Enchanted flower that in the mystery  
Of one perfection hides all perfect things,  
Given to him who loves thee in thy face.*



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