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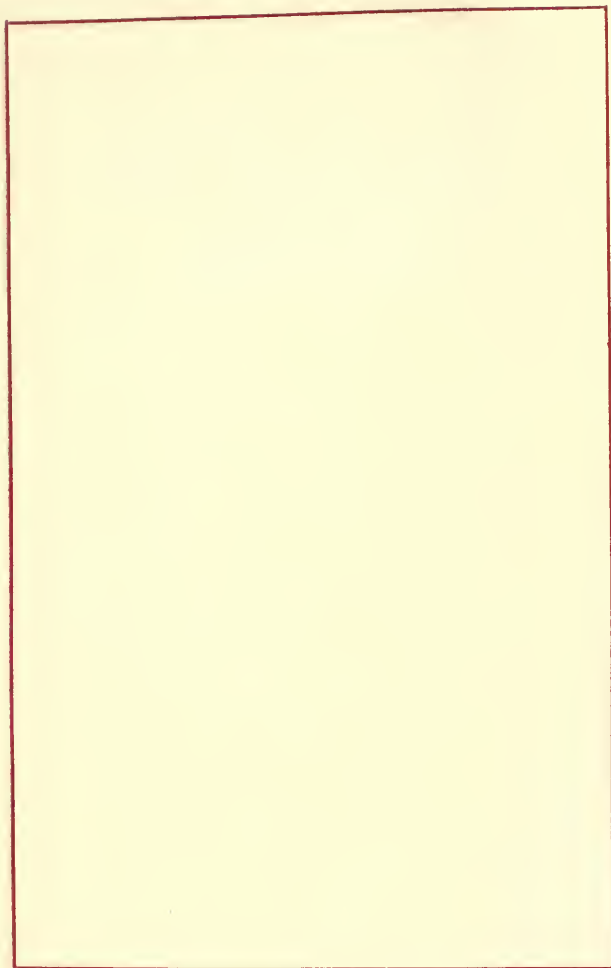
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# POEMS

By  
JOHN  
BANISTER  
TABB



A SELECTION FROM  
POEMS, LYRICS  
CHILD VERSE  
LATER LYRICS



A SELECTION FROM  
THE VERSES OF  
JOHN B. TABB

Made by ALICE MEYNELL

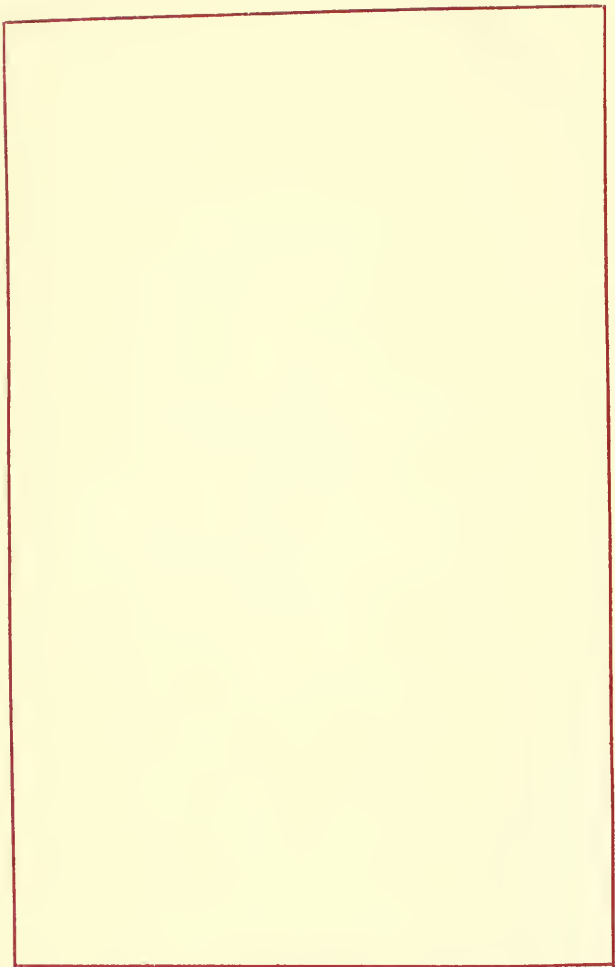


SMALL, MAYNARD & COMPANY  
BOSTON

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To  
ALICE MEYNELL  
*the Maker of this  
Selection*  
*With the Author's very grateful  
Acknowledgment of her  
Kindness*





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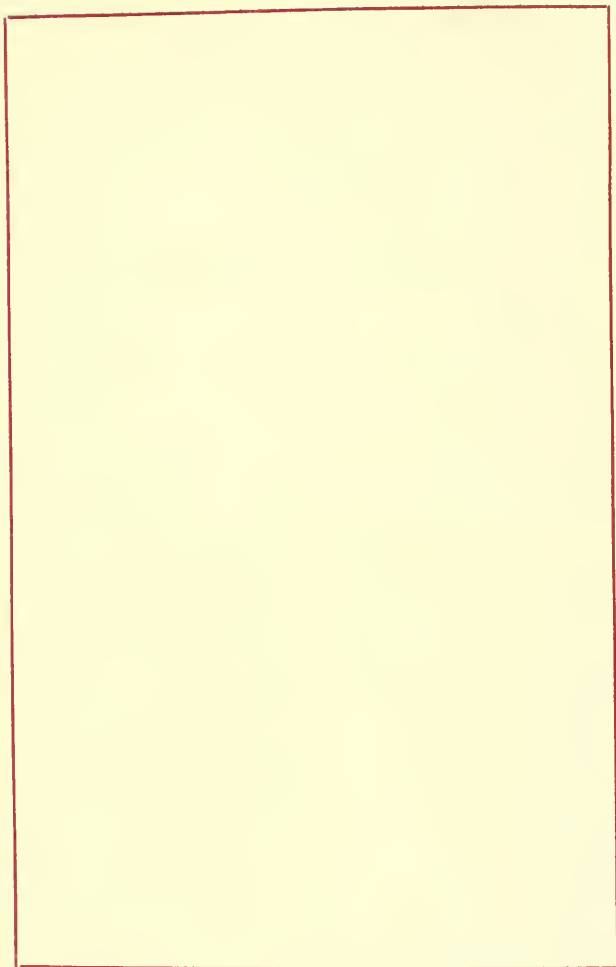
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## THE PLAYMATES

WHO are thy playmates, boy?  
"My favourite is Joy,  
Who brings with him his sister, Peace, to stay  
The livelong day.  
I love them both; but he  
Is most to me."

And where thy playmates now,  
O man of sober brow?  
"Alas! dear Joy, the merriest, is dead.  
But I have wed  
Peace; and our babe, a boy  
New-born, is Joy."

## MY CAPTIVE

I BROUGHT a Blossom home with me  
Beneath my roof to stay ;  
But timorous and frail was she,  
And died before the day :  
She missed the measureless expanse  
Of heaven, and heaven her countenance.

## THE REAPER

TELL me whither, maiden June,  
Down the dusky slope of noon,  
With thy sickle of a moon,  
Goest thou to reap.

“Fields of Fancy by the stream  
Of night in silvery silence gleam,  
To heap with many a harvest-dream  
The granary of Sleep.”

## INFLUENCE

**H**E cannot as he came depart—  
The wind that woos the rose;  
Her fragrance whispers in his heart  
Wherever hence he goes.



## WAYFARERS

**O** COMRADE Sun, that day by day  
Dost weave a shadow on my way,  
Lest, in the luxury of light,  
My soul forget the neighbouring night:  
Wilt thou whene'er, my journey done,  
Thou wanderest our path upon,  
Bear in thy beams a memory  
Of one who walked the world with thee,  
Or mourn, amid the lavishness  
Of Life, one hovering shade the less?

TO THE SPHINX

AH, not alone in Egypt's desert land  
Thy dwelling-place apart !  
But wheresoe'er the scorching passion-sand  
Hath seared the human heart.

LOVE'S AUTOGRAPH

ONCE only did he pass my way.  
"When wilt thou come again?  
Ah, leave some token of thy stay!"  
He wrote (and vanished), "Pain."

## SLUMBER-SONG

SLEEP ! the spirits that attend  
On thy waking hours are fled.  
Heaven thou canst not now offend  
Till thy slumber-plumes are shed ;  
Consciousness alone doth lend  
Life its pain, and Death its dread ;  
Innocence and Peace befriend  
All the sleeping and the dead.

## OUR FIRST-BORN

**I**T died so young! and yet  
Of all that vanished hence,  
Is none to lingering Regret  
So lost as Innocence.

For wheresoe'er we go,  
Whatever else remain,  
That Favourite of Heaven we know  
We shall not find again.

## TO SILENCE

Why the warning finger-tip  
Pressed for ever on my lip?

To remind the pilgrim Sound  
That it moves on holy ground,  
In a breathing-space to be  
Hushed for all eternity.

## THE POSTULANT

**I**N ashes from the wasted fires of noon,  
Aweary of the light,  
Comes evening, a tearful novice, soon  
To take the veil of night.

## THE EXPECTED OF NATIONS

**W**HILE Shepherd Stars their nightly vigils  
keep  
Above the clouds of sleep,  
Long prophesied, behold the man-child, Morn,  
Again is born.

AT THE YEAR'S END

NIGHT dreams of day, and winter seems  
In sleep to breathe the balm of May.  
Their dreams are true anon; but they,  
The dreamers, then, alas, are dreams.

Thus, while our days the dreams renew  
Of some forgotten sleeper, we,  
The dreamers of futurity,  
Shall vanish when our own are true.

## KILLDEE

**K**ILLDEE! Killdee! far o'er the lea  
At twilight comes the cry.  
Killdee! a marsh-mate answereth  
Across the shallow sky.

Killdee! Killdee! thrills over me  
A rhapsody of light,  
As star to star gives utterance  
Between the day and night.

Killdee! Killdee! O Memory,  
The twin birds, Joy and Pain,  
Like shadows parted by the sun,  
At twilight meet again!



THE WHIP-POOR-WILL

FROM yonder wooded hill  
I hear the Whip-poor-will,  
Whose mate or wandering echo answers him  
Athwart the lowlands dim.

He calls not through the day;  
But when the shadows gray  
Across the sunset draw their lengthening veil,  
He tells his twilight tale.

What unforgotten wrong  
Haunts the ill-omened song?  
What scourge of Fate has left its loathed mark  
Upon the cringing dark?

“Whip! Whip-poor-will!”  
O sobbing voice, be still!  
Tell not again, O melancholy bird,  
The legend thou hast heard!

## STAR-JESSAMINE

**D**ISCERNING Star from Sister Star,  
We give to each its name;  
But ye, O countless Blossoms, are  
    In fragrance and in flame  
So like, that He from whom ye came  
Alone discerneth each by name.

## CLOVER

**L**ITTLE masters! hat in hand,  
Let me in your presence stand,  
Till your silence solve for me  
This your threefold mystery.

Tell me—for I long to know—  
How, in darkness there below,  
Was your fairy fabric spun,  
Spread and fashioned, three in one.

Did your gossips gold and blue,  
Sky and Sunshine, choose for you,  
Ere your triple forms were seen,  
Suited liveries of green?

Can ye—if ye dwelt indeed  
Captives of a prison seed—  
Like the Genie, once again  
Get you back into the grain?

Little masters, may I stand  
In your presence, hat in hand,  
Waiting till you solve for me  
This your threefold mystery?

## TO THE VIOLET

SWEET violet, who knows  
From whence thy fragrance flows  
Or whither hence it goes?

A pious pilgrim here  
To Winter's sepulchre  
Thou comest year by year;

Alert with balmier store  
Than Magdalen of yore  
To Love's anointing bore.

Methinks that thou hast been  
So oft the go-between  
'Twixt sight and things unseen

That with thy wafted breath  
Alternate echoeth  
Each bank of sundering Death.

## THE WATER-LILY

**W**HENCE, O fragrant form of light,  
Has thou drifted through the night,  
Swanlike, to a leafy nest,  
On the restless waves, at rest?

Art thou from the snowy zone  
Of a mountain-summit blown,  
Or the blossom of a dream,  
Fashioned in the foamy stream?

Nay, methinks the maiden moon,  
When the daylight came too soon,  
Fleeting from her bath to hide,  
Left her garment in the tide.

## MIGNONETTE

**G**IVE me the earth, and I might heap  
A mountain from the plain;  
Give me the waters of the deep,  
I might their strength restrain;  
But here a secret of the sod  
Betrays the daintier hand of God.

## AN IDOLATER

**T**HE Baby has no skies  
But Mother's eyes;  
Nor any God above  
But Mother's love.  
His Angel sees the FATHER's face,  
But He the Mother's, full of grace;  
And yet the Heavenly Kingdom is  
Of such as this.

## TO HER FIRST-BORN

**L**ONG I waited, wondering  
How, so near my heart,  
Love another life could bring,  
    Made of mine a part,  
Nor let me, save in fancy, gaze  
Soul-centred, on the cloistered face!

But now, the mystery removed,  
    Thou liest on my breast,  
A form so fervently beloved,  
    So tenderly caressed,  
That as my spirit compassed thine,  
Thy soul the limit seems of mine.

So life, that vanishes anon,  
    Perchance about us lies  
Too near for Love to look upon  
    With unanointed eyes,  
Till, past the interval of pain,  
We clasp the living form again.

## ASPIRATION

I ENVY not the sun  
His lavish light ;  
But O to be the one  
Pale orb of night,  
In silence and alone  
Communing with mine own!

I envy not the rain  
That freshens all  
The parching hill and plain ;  
But O the small  
Night-dewdrop now to be,  
My noonday flower, for thee!



## CHILDHOOD

OLD Sorrow I shall meet again,  
And Joy, perchance—but never, never,  
Happy Childhood, shall we twain  
See each other's face for ever!

And yet I would not call thee back,  
Dear Childhood, lest the sight of me,  
Thine old companion, on the rack  
Of Age, should sadden even thee.

## TO THE BABE NIVA

**N**IVA, Child of Innocence,  
Dust to dust *we* go:  
*Thou*, when Winter wooed thee hence,  
Wentest snow to snow.

## GOOD NIGHT!

**G**OOD night, dear LORD! and now  
Let them that loved to keep  
Thy little bed in Bethlehem,  
Be near me while I sleep;  
For I—more helpless, LORD—of them  
Have greater need than Thou.

## MISSING

**T**HOU that didst leave the ninety and the  
nine

To seek the one,  
Behold, among the many that are mine,  
A lamb is gone.

The one perchance the worthiest to be,  
Dear LORD, with Thee;  
And so the saddest for the Mother's heart  
With him to part.

O Thou, Thyself a mourning Mother's Son,  
Fold close my little one!

## CONFIDED

**A**NOTHER lamb, O Lamb of God, behold,  
Within this quiet fold,  
Among Thy Father's sheep  
I lay to sleep!  
A heart that never for a night did rest  
Beyond its mother's breast.  
LORD, keep it close to Thee,  
Lest waking it should bleat and pine for me!

“ CHANTICLEER ”

**A** CROWING, cuddling little Babe was he,  
A child for little children far or near.

When he stood and crowed upon his mother's  
knee,

The morning echoed, “ Welcome, Chanti-  
cleer!”

He was a crowing, cuddling little Babe!

When his mother wore, alas, her life away,

He was wonder wide to see the children weep;  
But he crowed, and cuddled close enough to lay

His head upon her heart, and went to sleep:—  
He was a cuddling, crowing little Babe!

God Himself was tender to him; for, behold,

An Angel in a dream (the children said)  
Came and kissed him till his little cheek was cold;

So he never saw the tears the Twilight shed.  
He was a crowing, cuddling little Babe!

## FATHER DAMIEN

O GOD, the cleanest offering  
Of tainted earth below,  
Unblushing to Thy feet we bring—  
*“A leper white as snow!”*

## ANGELS OF PAIN

AH, should they come revisiting the spot  
Whence by our prayers we drove them  
utterly,  
Shame were it for their saddened eyes to see  
How soon their visitations are forgot.

## GOD'S LIKENESS

**N**OT in mine own, but in my neigh-  
bour's face

Must I Thine image trace:  
Nor he in his, but in the light of mine,  
Behold Thy Face Divine.

## TO THE CHRIST

**T**HOU hast on earth a Trinity—  
Thyself, my fellow-man and me;  
When one with him, then one with Thee;  
Nor, save together, Thine are we.

## MY MEDIATOR

“**N**ONE betwixt God and me?  
Behold, my neighbour, thee  
Unto His lofty throne  
He makes my stepping-stone.”



“IS THY SERVANT A DOG?”

**S** *o must* he be who, in the crowded street,  
Where shameless Sin and flaunting Pleasure  
meet,

Amid the noisome footprints finds the sweet  
Faint vestige of Thy feet.

## LIMITATION

**B**REATHE above me or below ;  
Never canst thou farther go  
Than the spirit's octave-span,  
Harmonizing God and Man.

Thus within the iris-bound  
Light a prisoner is found ;  
Thus within my soul I see  
Life in Time's captivity.

## THE YOUNG TENOR

**I** WOKE; the harboured melody  
Had crossed the slumber bar,  
And out upon the open sea  
Of consciousness, afar  
Swept onward with a fainter strain,  
As echoing the dream again.

So soft the silver sound, and clear,  
Outpoured upon the night,  
That Silence seemed a listener  
O'erleaning with delight  
The slender moon, a finger-tip  
Upon the portal of her lip.

## OUTLINES

O FRAME me in thy love, as I  
The landscape in the branches low ;  
That none beneath the bending sky  
Our sylvan secret know.

For 'tis of Life the mystery  
That, whereso'er its fibres run,  
In time or in eternity,  
The many shape the one.

## NEKROS

**L**O! all thy glory gone!  
GOD's masterpiece undone!  
The last created and the first to fall;  
The noblest, frailest, godliest of all.

Death seems the conqueror now,  
And yet his victor thou:  
The fatal shaft its venom quenched in thee,  
A mortal raised to immortality.

Child of the humble sod,  
Wed with the breath of GOD,  
Descend! for with the lowest thou must lie—  
Arise! thou hast inherited the sky.

## “VOX CLAMANTIS”

O SEA, for ever calling to the shore  
With menace or caress,—  
A voice like his unheeded that of yore  
Cried in the wilderness;  
A deep for ever yearning unto deep,  
For silence out of sound,—  
Thy restlessness the cradle of a sleep  
That thou hast never found.

## TO A PHOTOGRAPH

O TENDER shade!  
Lone captive of enamoured Light,  
That from an angel visage bright  
A glance betrayed.

Dost thou not sigh  
To wander from thy prison-place?  
To seek again the vanished face,  
Or else to die?

A shade like thee,  
Dim Eidolon—a dream disproved—  
A memory of light removed,  
Behold in me!

## FROST

**I** LEFT my window wide, for Love  
To enter while I slept :  
The moon, his homeward path above  
Her midnight vigil kept.

But suddenly, as o'er a glass,  
A clouding vapour spread ;  
The heavens were cold : and Love, alas!  
Before the dawn was dead.



## THE STATUE

FIRST fashioned in the artist's brain,  
It stood as in the marble vein  
Revealed to him alone ;  
Nor could he from its native night  
Have led it to the living light,  
Save through the lifeless stone.

E'en so, of Silence and of Sound  
A twin-born mystery is found,  
Like as of death and birth ;  
Without the pause we had not heard  
The harmony, nor caught the word  
That Heaven reveals to Earth.

## THE PILGRIM

WHEN, but a child, I wandered hence,  
Another child—sweet Innocence,  
My sister—went with me :  
But I have lost her, and am fain  
To seek her in the home again  
Where we were wont to be.

## THE MID-SEA SUN

NO peak to hide his splendour till the day  
Has passed away ;  
Nor dial-shade of any tree or flower  
To mark the hour :  
A wave his orient cradle, and a wave  
His western grave.

THE LONELY MOUNTAIN

ONE bird, that ever with the wakening spring  
Was wont to sing,  
I wait, through all my woodlands, far and near,  
In vain to hear.

The voice of many waters, silent long,  
Breaks forth in song;  
Young breezes to the listening leaves outpour  
Their heavenly lore:

A thousand other wingèd warblers sweet,  
Returning, greet  
Their fellows, and rebuild upon my breast  
The wonted nest.

But unto me one fond familiar strain  
Comes not again—  
A breath whose faintest echo, farthest heard,  
A mountain stirred.

## AN INFLUENCE

I SEE thee,—heaven's unclouded face  
A vacancy around thee made,  
Its sunshine a subservient grace  
Thy lovelier light to shade.

I feel thee, as the billows feel  
A river freshening the brine;  
A life's libation poured to heal  
The bitterness of mine.

## WHISPER

**C**LOSE cleaving unto Silence, into sound  
She ventures as a timorous child from land,  
Still glancing, at each wary step, around,  
Lest suddenly she lose her sister's hand.

## ANTICIPATION

**T**HE master scans the woven score  
Of subtle harmonies, before  
A note is stirred;  
And Nature now is pondering  
The tidal symphony of Spring,  
As yet unheard.

## THE PRECURSOR

“**A**S John of old before His face did go  
To make the rough ways smooth, that all  
might know  
The level road that leads to Bethlehem, lo,  
I come,” proclaims the snow.

## WOOD-GRAIN

**T**HIS is the way that the sap-river ran  
From the root to the top of the tree—  
    Silent and dark,  
    Under the bark,  
Working a wonderful plan  
    That the leaves never know,  
    And the branches that grow  
On the brink of the tide never see.

## CONSECRATION

**T**HE Twilight to my Star,  
Her hoary head  
A Hope receding far,  
To Life re-led.

Apart and poor I lay,  
My fevered frame  
Slow withering away,  
When soft she came,

From comfort, to my care;  
And Pity sweet  
Subdued her, kneeling there,  
*To kiss my feet.*

A Magdalen adored  
Her GOD in Thee:—  
A greater love, O LORD,  
Anointed me.



## REGRET

**W**HAT pleading passion or the dark  
Hath left the Morning pale?  
She listens! "'Tis, alas, the Lark,  
And not the Nightingale!  
O for the gloom-encircled sphere,  
Whose solitary bird  
Outpours for Love's awakening ear  
What noon hath never heard!"

## COMPENSATION

**H**OW many an acorn falls to die  
For one that makes a tree!  
How many a heart must pass me by  
For one that cleaves to me!

How many a suppliant wave of sound  
Must still unheeded roll,  
For one low utterance that found  
An echo in my soul!

## A REMONSTRANCE

**S**ING me no more, sweet warbler, for the dart  
Of joy is keener than the flash of pain:  
Sing me no more, for the re-echoed strain  
Together with the silence breaks my heart.

## SOOTHSAYERS

**T**HE winds that, gipsy-wise, foretold  
The fortune of to-day,  
At twilight, with the gathered gold  
Of sunset, stole away:

And of their cloud accomplices  
That prophesied the rain,  
Upon the night-forsaken skies  
No vestiges remain.

## THE ARCTIC

IS it a shroud or bridal veil  
That hides it from our sight,  
The lonely sepulchre of Day,  
Or banquet-hall of Night?

Are those the lights of revelry  
That glimmer o'er the deep,  
Or flashes of a funeral pyre  
Above the corpse of Sleep?

Beyond those peaks impregnable  
Of everlasting snow,  
One star—a steadfast beacon—burns  
To guard the coast below.

Whence come the ghostly galleons  
The pirate Sun to brave,  
And furl the shadowy flag of Death  
Above a warmer grave?

## EVOLUTION

OUT of the dusk a shadow,  
Then, a spark;  
Out of the cloud a silence,  
Then, a lark;  
Out of the heart a rapture,  
Then, a pain;  
Out of the dead cold ashes,  
Life again.

## SPECTATORS

**A**ROUND us, wheresoe'er we tread,  
The while our shadows pass them by,  
As in Bethsaida's porch the dead  
With upturned faces lie,  
Dreading, perchance, the vanished light,  
And Life's subsided fever-breath,  
As we the charnel-house of Night  
Beyond the Vale of Death.

## THE LOST ANCHOR

AH, sweet it was to feel the strain,  
What time, unseen, the ship above  
Stood steadfast to the storm that strove  
To rend our kindred cords atwain!

To feel, as feel the roots that grow  
In darkness when the stately tree  
Resists the tempests, that in me  
High Hope was planted far below!

But now, as when a mother's breast  
Misses the babe, my prisoned power  
Deep-yearning, heart-like, hour by hour,  
Unquiet aches in cankering rest.



## TO MY SHADOW

**F**RIEND for ever in the light  
Cleaving to my side,  
Harbinger of endless night  
That must soon betide;

“Hither,” seemest thou to say,  
“From the twilight now:  
In the darkness when I stay,  
Never thence wilt thou.”

## CLEOPATRA TO THE ASP

*“Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,  
That sucks the nurse asleep?”*

LIE thou where Life hath lain,  
And let thy swifter pain  
His rival prove ;  
Till, like the fertile Nile,  
Death buries, mile for mile,  
This waste of Love.

Soft ! Soft ! A sweeter kiss  
Than Antony's is this !  
O regal Shade,  
Luxurious as sleep,  
Upon thy bosom deep  
My heart is laid.

## INTIMATIONS

**I** KNEW the flowers had dreamed of you,  
And hailed the morning with regret ;  
For all their faces with the dew  
Of vanished joy were wet.

I knew the winds had passed your way,  
Though not a sound the truth betrayed ;  
About their pinions all the day  
A summer fragrance stayed.

And so, awaking or asleep,  
A memory of lost delight  
By day the sightless breezes keep,  
And silent flowers by night.

## LOVE'S HYBLA

**M**Y thoughts fly to thee, as the bees  
To find their favourite flower ;  
Then home, with honeyed memories  
Of many a fragrant hour :

For with thee is the place apart  
Where sunshine ever dwells,  
The Hybla, whence my hoarding heart  
Would fill its wintry cells.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

**T**HE sculptor in the marble found  
Her hidden from the world around,  
As in a donjon keep:  
With gentle hand he took away  
The coverlet that o'er her lay,  
But left her fast asleep.

And still she slumbers; e'en as he  
Who saw in far futurity  
What now before us lies—  
The fairest vision that the stream  
Of night, subsiding, leaves agleam  
Beneath the noonday skies.

## A D I E U

**G**OD speed thee setting Sun!  
Thy beams for me have spun  
Of light to-day  
A memory that one  
Alone could bring, and none  
Can take away.

## WESTWARD

**A**ND dost thou lead him hence with thee,  
O setting sun,  
And leave the shadows all to me,  
When he is gone?  
Ah, if my grief his guerdon be,  
My dark his light,  
I count each loss felicity,  
And bless the night.

## MEMORY

**L**O, the Blossom to the Bee  
Yields not more than thou to me—  
Food for Love to live upon  
When the summer days are gone,  
Poorer than they came, to find  
What was sweetest left behind.



LIGHT IN DARKNESS

**T**HE day—of sorrows pitiless—  
Proclaims “He is not here”;  
But never hath the tenderness  
Of Night denied thee near.

Nay, with the twilight sympathy  
Returning from afar,  
She wakes again for memory  
The dawn-extinguished star.

## BEREFT

**A**S when her calf is taken, far and near  
The restless mother roves,  
So now my heart lows, wandering everywhere,  
To wake the voice it loves.  
O distance, are the echoes backward thrown  
In mockery of pain?  
Or doth remembered anguish of thine own  
Bring them to birth again?

## OUTSPEEDED

**T**O-NIGHT the onward rushing train  
Would bear thee far from me ;  
But, winged with swifter dreams, again  
My spirit flies to thee;

Nay, speeding far beyond thee, waits  
To welcome thee anew,  
Where Dawn is opening the gates  
To let the darkness through.

## VALE

**F**AREWELL! I go my way;  
And if in long delay  
Thou must remain,  
Forget not, 'tis the track  
We trod, that leads us back  
To God again.

## O'ERSPENT

**M**Y soul is as a fainting noonday star,  
And thou, the absent night;  
Haste, that thy healing shadow from afar  
May touch me into light.

## WRECKED

**D**EEP in the forest glades,  
Where leafy welcomes wooed our wander-  
ing way,  
Once blent our shadows in the dallying shades  
That round us lay.

Thencetorth, of fate estranged,  
Each day beholds our widowed forms apart:  
The word, the glance, the gesture coldly changed!  
As heart to heart.

But cometh night to hide  
Life-wrecks, far drifted in the noonday sun,  
And, lo, our shadows in the sombre tide,  
Again are one.

## B R E A D

**S**TILL surmounting as I came  
Wind and water, frost and flame,  
Night and day, the livelong year,  
From the burial-place of seed,  
From the earth's maternal bosom,  
Through the root and stem and blossom,  
To supply thy present need,  
Have I journeyed here.

## SAND

**S**TERILE sister though I be,  
Twin-born to the barren Sea,  
Yet of all things fruitful we  
Wait the end ; and presently,  
Lo, they are not ! Then to me  
(Children to the nurse's knee)  
Come the billows fresh and free,  
Breathing Immortality.

## LIFE

**M**E, in the midst of dateless centuries,  
By Love concealed,  
Now, newly swathed in mortal destinies,  
Hath Time revealed.

A breathing space, a silence, and behold  
What I have been,  
Unswathed, the circling centuries enfold,  
Again unseen.

With Days and Nights brief fellowship was mine;  
But unto thee  
I come, a child inseparably thine,  
Eternity.



## THE TRUANT

**L**ISTEN! 'tis the Rain  
Coming home again ;  
Not as when he went away,  
Silent, but in tears to say  
    He is sorry to have gone  
    With the Mist that lured him on ;  
    And he promises anew  
    Nevermore the like to do.  
Alas! no sooner shines the sun  
Than the selfsame deed is done.

## THE BUBBLE

**W**HY should I stay ? Nor seed nor fruit have I ;  
But, sprung at once to beauty's perfect round,  
Nor loss, nor gain, nor change in me is found,—  
A life-complete in death-complete to die.

## THE BROOK

**I**T is the mountain to the sea  
That makes a messenger of me :  
And, lest I loiter on the way  
And lose what I am sent to say,  
He sets his reverie to song  
And bids me sing it all day long.  
Farewell! for here the stream is slow,  
And I have many a mile to go.

## THE MIST

**E**URYDICE eludes the dark  
To follow Orpheus, the Lark  
That leads her to the dawn  
With rhapsodies of star-delight,  
Till, looking backward in his flight,  
He finds that she is gone.

## THE LAKE

I AM a lonely woodland lake:  
The trees that round me grow,  
The glimpse of heaven above me, make  
The sum of all I know.

The mirror of their dreams to be  
Alike in shade and shine,  
To clasp in Love's captivity,  
And keep them one—is mine.

## I C E

**I** ONCE was water, and again  
My former self shall be ;  
No keep of Cold  
May captive hold  
    A spirit of the Sea.  
Beyond this prison-wall of Pain,  
    So echoless and chill,  
Despite his guardsmen Frost and Snow,  
Anon through Dimple-gate I go  
    To wander where I will.

## A SUNSET

**W**HAT means it, Lord? No Daniel  
In Nature's banquet-hall  
Appears, thy messenger, to spell  
The writing on the wall.

Is it the Babylonian doom,  
A kingdom passed away,  
A midnight monarch to assume  
The majesty of Day?

## MIDNIGHT

**A** FLOOD of darkness overwhelms the land;  
And all that God had planned,  
Of loveliness beneath the noonday skies,  
A dream o'ershadowed lies.

Amid the universal darkness deep,  
Only the Isles of sleep,  
As did the dwellings of the Israelite  
In Egypt, stem the night.

## AUTUMN

**N**OW at the aged Year's decline,  
Behold the messenger divine  
With Love's celestial countersign—  
The sacrament of bread and wine.

## OCTOBER

**B**EHOLD, the fleeting swallow  
Forsakes the frosty air;  
And leaves, alert to follow,  
    Are falling everywhere,  
Like wounded birds, too weak  
A distant clime to seek.

And soon with silent pinions  
    The fledglings of the North  
From winter's wild dominions  
    Shall drift, affrighted, forth,  
And, phantom-like, anon  
Pursue the phantoms gone.

## INDIAN SUMMER

**N**O more the battle or the chase  
The phantom tribes pursue,  
But each in its accustomed place  
The Autumn hails anew:  
And still from solemn councils set  
On every hill and plain,  
The smoke of many a calumet  
Ascends to heaven again.

## D E C E M B E R

**D**ULL sky above, dead leaves below;  
And hungry winds that winding go,  
Like faithful hounds upon the track  
Of one beloved that comes not back.



THE LARK

HE rose, and singing passed from sight—  
A shadow kindling with the sun,  
His joy ecstatic flamed, till light  
And heavenly song were one.

THE FALL OF THE SPARROW

ARE you dying, little Bird?  
“Yea; the song so often heard,  
And the gift of suffering,  
Back to God again I bring.

“All in each, and each in all,  
Counting in the Sparrow’s fall,  
By the power of sinless pain  
(His and ours) He cleanseth stain.  
Suffering, He deigned to die  
Poor and innocent as I.”

## THE MARSH

THE woods have voices, and the sea  
Her choral-song and threnody:  
But thou alike to sun and rain  
Dost mute and motionless remain.

As pilgrim to the shrine of Sleep,  
Through all thy solemn spaces creep  
The Tides—a moment on thy breast  
To pause in sacramental rest;  
Then, flooded with the mystery,  
To sink reluctant to the sea,  
In landward loneliness to yearn  
Till to thy bosom they return.

## FULFILMENT

**N**O bloom forgotten! but upon each face  
The dews baptismal, and the selfsame sign  
Of Night's communion, that the fervid gaze  
Of Paschal Morning changes into wine.

## BETRAYAL

“**W**HOM I shall kiss?” I heard a Sunbeam say,  
“Take him and lead away!”  
Then, with the Traitor's salutation, “*Hail!*”  
He kissed the Dawn-Star pale.

## THE DAYSPRING

**W**HAT hand with spear of light  
Hath cleft the side of Night,  
And from the red wound wide  
Fashioned the Dawn, his bride

Was it the deed of Death?  
Nay, but of Love, that saith,  
“Henceforth be Shade and Sun,  
In bonds of Beauty, one.”

## THE MIDDAY MOON

**B**EHOLD, whatever wind prevail,  
Slow westering, a phantom sail—  
The lonely soul of Yesterday—  
Unpiloted, pursues her way.

## MEADOW FROGS

**E**RE yet the earliest warbler wakes  
Of coming spring to tell,  
From every marsh a chorus breaks—  
    A choir invisible—  
As though the blossoms underground  
A breath of utterance had found.

Whence comes the liquid melody?  
    The summer clouds can bring  
No fresher music from the sky  
    Than here the marshes sing.  
Methinks the mists about to rise  
Are chanting their rain prophecies.

## FERN SONG

**D**ANCE to the beat of the rain, little Fern,  
And spread out your palms again,  
And say, "Tho' the sun  
Hath my vesture spun,  
He had laboured, alas, in vain,  
But for the shade  
That the Cloud hath made,  
And the gift of the Dew and the Rain."  
Then laugh and upturn  
All your fronds, little Fern,  
And rejoice in the beat of the rain!

## WINTER TREES

**L**IKE champions of old,  
Their garments at their feet,  
Defiant of the cold,  
The wrestling winds they meet :  
Anon, if victors found,  
With vernal trophies crowned.

## BABY'S DIMPLES

**L**OVE goes playing hide-and-peek  
Mid the roses on her cheek,  
With a little imp of Laughter,  
Who, the while he follows after,  
Leaves the footprints that we trace  
All about the Kissing-place.

## A BUNCH OF ROSES

**T**HE rosy mouth and rosy toe  
Of little baby brother  
Until about a month ago  
Had never met each other;  
But nowadays the neighbours sweet,  
In every sort of weather,  
Half-way with rosy fingers meet,  
To kiss and play together.



## T O A S T A R

**A**M I the only child awake  
Beneath thy midnight beams?  
If so, for gentle Slumber's sake,  
The brighter be their dreams!

But shouldst thou, travelling the deep,  
The silent angel see  
That puts the little ones to sleep,  
Bright star, remember me!

## BEETHOVEN AND ANGEL

ONE made the surging sea of time  
Subservient to his rod:  
One, from the sterile womb of stone,  
Raised children unto God.

## MILTON

SO fair thy vision that the night  
Abided with thee, lest the light  
A flaming sword before thine eye  
Had shut thee out from Paradise.

## SHELLEY

AT Shelley's birth  
The Lark, dawn-spirit, with an anthem loud  
Rose from the dusky earth  
To tell it to the Cloud,  
That, like a flower night-folded in the gloom,  
Burst into morning bloom.

At Shelley's death  
The Sea, that deemed him an immortal, saw  
A god's extinguished breath,  
And landward, as in awe,  
Upre him to the altar whence he came,  
And the rekindling flame.

## SHELLEY IN NATURE

SHELLEY, the ceaseless music of thy soul  
Breathes in the Cloud and in the Skylark's song,  
That float as an embodied dream along  
The dewy lids of morning. In the dole  
That haunts the West Wind, in the joyous roll  
Of Arethusan fountains, or among  
The wastes where Ozymandias the strong  
Lies in colossal ruin, thy control  
Speaks in the wedded rhyme. Thy spirit gave  
A fragrance to all nature, and a tone  
To inexpressive silence. Each apart—  
Earth, Air and Ocean—claims thee as its own;  
The twain that bred thee, and the panting wave  
That clasped thee, like an overflowing heart.

## KEATS—SAPPHO

**M**ETHINKS, when first the nightingale  
Was mated to thy deathless song,  
That Sappho with emotion pale,  
Amid the Olympian throng,  
Again, as in the Lesbian grove,  
Stood listening with lips apart,  
To hear in thy melodious love  
The pantings of her heart.

## POE'S PURGATORY

ALL others rest ; but I  
Dream-haunted lie—  
A distant roar,  
As of tumultuous waters, evermore  
About my brain.

E'en Sleep, tho' fain  
To soothe me, flies affrighted, and alone  
I bear the incumbent stone  
Of Death  
That stifles breath,  
But not the hideous chorus crying "Shame!"  
Upon my name.

Had I not Song?  
Yea ; and it lingers yet  
The souls to fret  
Of an ignoble throng,  
Aflame with hate  
Of the exulting Fate  
That hurls their idols from her temple fair,  
And shrines me there.

## SILENCE

TEMPLE of GOD, from all eternity  
Alone like Him without beginning found;  
Of time and space and solitude the bound,  
Yet in thyself of all communion free.  
Is, then, the temple holier than He  
That dwells therein? Must reverence surround  
With barriers the portal, lest a sound  
Profane it? Nay; behold a mystery!

What was, abides; what is, hath ever been:  
The lowliest the loftiest sustains.  
A silence, by no breath of utterance stirred—  
Virginity in motherhood—remains,  
Clear, 'midst a cloud of all-pervading sin,  
The voice of Love's unutterable word.

## DAYBREAK

WHAT was thy dream, sweet Morning? for,  
    behold,

    Thine eyes are heavy with the balm of night,  
    And, as reluctant lilies to the light,  
The languid lids of lethargy unfold.

Was it the tale of Yesterday retold—

    An echo wakened from the western height,  
    Where the warm glow of sunset dalliance bright  
Grew, with the pulse of waning passion, cold?

    Or was it some heraldic vision grand  
Of legends that forgotten ages keep

    In twilight, where the Sundering shoals of day  
Vex the dim sails, unpiloted, of Sleep,

    Till, one by one, the freighting fancies gay,  
Like bubbles, vanish on the treacherous strand?



## GLIMPSES

AS one who in the hush of twilight hears  
The pausing pulse of Nature, when the Light  
Commingles in the dim mysterious rite  
Of Darkness with the mutual pledge of tears,  
Till soft, anon, one timorous star appears,  
Pale-budding as the earliest blossom white  
That comes in Winter's livery bedight,  
To hide the gifts of genial Spring she bears—

So, unto me—what time the mysteries  
Of consciousness and slumber weave a dream  
And pause above it with abated breath,  
Like intervals in music—lights arise,  
Beyond prophetic Nature's farthest gleam,  
That teach me half the mystery of Death.

## HOMELESS

**M**ETHINKS that if my spirit could behold  
Its earthly habitation void and chill,  
Whence all its time-encircled good and ill  
Expanded to eternity, 'twould fold  
Its trembling pinions o'er the bosom cold,  
Recalling there the pulse's wonted thrill,  
And lean, perchance, to catch the echo still  
That erst in life the dream of passion told.

How calm the dissolution! Could she spurn  
Her spouse, so late, and brother? Could she trace  
The strange familiar lineaments, and mark  
The doom of her own writing in the face,  
To find, alas! no more the vital spark,  
Nor breathe one sigh of pity to return?

## UNMOORED

**T**O die in sleep—to drift from dream to dream  
Along the banks of slumber, beckoned on  
Perchance by forms familiar, till anon,  
Unconsciously, the ever-widening stream  
Beyond the breakers bore thee, and the beam  
Of everlasting morning woke upon  
Thy dazzled gaze, revealing one by one  
Thy visions grown immortal in its gleam.

O blessed consummation! thus to feel  
In Death no touch of terror. Tenderly  
As shadows to the evening hills, he came  
In garb of GOD's dear messenger to thee,  
Nor on thy weary eyelids broke the seal,  
In reverence for a brother's holier name.

## THE AGONY

**I** WRESTLED, as did Jacob, till the dawn,  
With the reluctant Spirit of the Night  
That keeps the keys of Slumber. Worn and  
white,

We paused a panting moment, while anon  
The darkness paled around us. Thereupon—  
His mighty limbs relaxing in affright—  
The Angel pleaded: "Lo, the morning light!  
O Israel, release me, and begone!"

Then said I, "Nay, a captive to my will  
I hold thee, till the blessing thou dost keep  
Be mine." Whereat he breathed upon my brow;  
And, as the dew upon the twilight hill,  
So on my spirit, over-wearied now,  
Came tenderly the benediction, Sleep.

## THE PETREL

A WANDERER o'er the sea-graves ever  
green,

Whereon the foam-flowers blossom day by day,  
Thou flittest as a doomful shadow gray  
That from the wave no sundering light can wean.  
What wouldst thou from the deep unfathomed  
glean,

Frail voyager? and whither leads thy way?  
Or art thou, as the sailor legends say,  
An exile from the spirit-world unseen?

Lo! desolate, above a colder tide,  
Pale Memory, a sea-bird like to thee,  
Flits outward, where the whitening billows hide  
What seemed of Life the one reality—  
A mist whereon the morning bloom hath died,  
Returning, ghost-like, to the restless sea.

## THE PORTRAIT

EACH has his Angel-Guardian. Mine, I know,  
Looks on me from that pictured face. Behold,  
How clear, between those rifted clouds of gold,  
The radiant brow ! It is the morning glow  
Of innocence, ere yet the heart let go  
The leading-strings of heaven. Upon the eyes  
No shadow: like the restful noonday skies  
They sanctify the teeming world below.

Why bows my soul before it? None but thou,  
O tender child, has known the life estranged  
From thee and all that made thy days of joy  
The measure of my own. Behold me now—  
The man that begs a blessing of the boy—  
His very *self*; but from himself how changed !

## THE BOY BISHOP

“**A** GAME, Marcellus!” “Well, what shall it be?”

Let’s play we’re Christians.” And with one accord

The children grouped around their mimic lord,  
Marcellus, throned as Sovereign Pontiff. He  
The part so often played in mockery

With solemn rite enacted—word for word  
Repeating as on each in turn he poured  
The waters of a new Nativity.

Then burst the thunders of an edict. Rome

Trembled, and all her gods offended frowned,  
Foreshadowing the hurricane to be.

Men faltered; but among the faithful found—  
The yeanelings of the flock—with martyrdom  
Marcellus and his neophytes were crowned.

## ASLEEP

**N**AY, wake him not !  
Unfelt our presence near,  
Nor falls a whisper on his dreaming ear:  
He sees but Sleep's celestial visions clear,  
All else forgot.

And who shall say  
That, in life's waking dream,  
There be not ever near us those we deem  
(As now our faces to the Sleeper seem)  
Far, far away ?



## ST AFRA TO THE FLAMES

**H**ERE, on the prey of passion, famished Flames,  
Feed here! Spare not your victim. Torture  
tames

The wanton flesh rebellious. Let the heat  
Of these your fierce caresses free the feet  
And loose the fettered pinions of desire.

Delay not! Leap the barriers and fire

The citadel, the heart. A flame is there

To which your kiss is coldness. Clothe me fair,  
O CHRIST, with purple penance. Crown me queen  
Of agonies that cleave all mists between

My GOD and me! Life's vintage drop by drop  
Fast fills the destined measure of my cup.

Quaff, LORD, my potion! Pledge me, and Thy  
breath

Shall sweeten all the bitterness of death.

## AN INTERPRETER

WHAT, O Eternity,  
Is Time to thee?—  
What to the boundless All  
My portion small?

Lift up thine eyes, my soul!  
Against the tidal roll  
    Stands many a stone,  
    Whereon the breakers thrown  
Are dashed to spray—  
Else were the Ocean dumb.

So, in the way  
    Of tides eternal, thou  
    Abidest now;  
And GOD himself doth come  
    A suppliant to thee,  
    Love's prisoned thought to free.

## EARTH'S TRIBUTE

**F**IRST the grain, and then the blade—  
The one destroyed, the other made;  
Then stalk and blossom, and again  
The gold of newly minted grain.

So Life, by Death the reaper cast  
To earth, again shall rise at last;  
For 'tis the service of the sod  
To render GOD the things of GOD.

## HOLY GROUND

**P**AUSE where apart the fallen sparrow  
lies,  
And lightly tread;  
For there the pity of a Father's eyes  
Enshrines the dead.

## THE HOUSEHOLDERS

ONE plucked the grape, and trod the wine,  
And headlong rushed the sotted swine  
To perish in the sea.  
One blessed the cup, and poured the blood,  
And lo! about His banquet stood  
The brides of Chastity.

## INSOMNIA

E'EN this, LORD, didst Thou bless—  
This pain of sleeplessness—  
The livelong night,  
Urging God's gentlest angel from Thy side,  
That anguish only might with Thee abide  
Until the light.

Yea, e'en the last and best,  
Thy victory and rest,  
Came thus to Thee;  
For 'twas while others calmly slept around,  
That Thou alone in sleeplessness wast found,  
To comfort me.

ANONYMOUS

**A**NONYMOUS—nor needs a name  
To tell the secret whence the flame,  
With light, and warmth, and incense, came  
A new creation to proclaim.

So was it when, His labour done,  
God saw His work, and smiled thereon;  
His glory in the picture shone,  
But name upon the canvas, none.

BARTIMEUS TO THE BIRD

**H**AD I no revelation but thy voice—  
No word but thine—  
Still would my soul in certitude rejoice  
That love divine  
Thy heart, his hidden instrument, employs,  
To waken mine.

## THE OLD PASTOR

**H**OW long, O LORD, to wait  
Beside this open gate?  
My sheep with many a lamb  
Have entered, and I am  
Alone, and it is late.

## AT SEA

**T**HY beauty fills each bubble-dome  
Upon the waters wide:  
So may it in Thy lowliest home—  
My bosom—LORD, abide.

## STILLING THE TEMPEST

'T WAS all she could:—The gift that Nature  
gave,  
The torrent of her tresses, did she spill  
Before His feet: and lo, the troubled wave  
Of passion heard His whisper, “Peace be still!”

## ALL IN ALL

WE know Thee, each in part—  
A portion small;  
But love Thee, as Thou art—  
The All in all:  
For Reason and the rays thereof  
Are starlight to the noon of Love.

## THE GOOD SEED

THE Magi came to Bethlehem,  
The House of Bread, and following them,  
As they the Star, I too am led  
To CHRIST, the living House of Bread.

A pilgrim from the hour of birth,  
The night-cold bosom of the earth  
I traversed, heavenward journeying,  
A hidden prophecy of Spring  
My only guide, a lifted blade  
My only weapon, till the Shade,  
The latest to withstand me, lay  
Death-smitten at the door of Day.

O Light! O heavenly Warmth! to you,  
My cup-bearers, I quaffed the dew,  
The pledge and sacramental sign  
Of Life that mingling first with mine—  
A sap-like inspiration—ran  
To mingle with the life of man.

As leaped the Infant in the womb,  
At Mary's voice, e'en so to bloom  
And ripeness, while the reapers sang,  
My soul—their songs inspiring—sprang



To meet the scythe, the flail, the stone  
Of sacrifice, whereby alone,  
Through waves of palpitating flame,  
The Bread upon the altar came.

And here, O mystery of Love!  
Behold, from highest heaven above,  
Through *Me*, the Son of GOD again  
A victim for the sons of men!

## THE ANGEL'S CHRISTMAS QUEST

“**W**HERE have ye laid my LORD?  
Behold, I find Him not!  
Hath He, in heaven adored,  
His home forgot?  
Give me, O sons of men,  
My truant GOD again!”

“A voice from sphere to sphere—  
A faltering murmur—ran,  
‘Behold, He is not here!  
Perchance with Man,  
The lowlier made than we,  
He hides His majesty.’”

Then, hushed in wondering awe,  
The spirit held his breath,  
And bowed: for, lo, he saw  
O’ershadowing Death,  
A Mother’s hands above,  
Swathing the limbs of Love!

## THE LAMB-CHILD

WHEN CHRIST the Babe was born,  
Full many a little lamb  
Upon the wintry hills forlorn  
Was nestled near its dam;

And, waking or asleep,  
Upon His Mother's breast,  
For love of her, each mother-sheep  
And baby-lamb He blessed.

## OUT OF BOUNDS

A LITTLE Boy of heavenly birth,  
But far from home to-day,  
Comes down to find His ball, the Earth,  
That sin has cast away.

O comrades, let us one and all  
Join in to get Him back His ball!

## A LENTEN THOUGHT

**A**LONE with Thee, who canst not be alone,  
At midnight, in Thine everlasting day ;  
Lo, less than naught, of nothingness undone,  
I, prayerless, pray.

Behold—and with Thy bitterness make sweet,  
What sweetest is in bitterness to hide—  
Like Magdalen, I grovel at Thy feet,  
In lowly pride.

Smite, till my wounds beneath Thy scourging  
cease ;  
Soothe, till my heart in agony hath bled ;  
Nor rest my soul with enmity at peace,  
Till Death be dead.

ON CALVARY

**I**N the shadow of the rood  
Love and Shame together stood ;  
Love, that bade Him bear the blame  
Of her fallen sister Shame ;  
Shame, that by the pangs thereof  
Bade Him break His Heart for Love.

MATER DOLOROSA

**A** GAIN maternal Autumn grieves,  
As blood-like drip the maple leaves  
On Nature's Calvary.  
And every sap-forsaken limb  
Renews the mystery of Him  
Who died upon a Tree.

## STABAT

**W**HY, O my GOD, hast Thou forsake Men?  
Not so my Mother; for behold and see,  
She steadfast stands! O FATHER, shall it be  
That *she* abides when Thou forsakest Me?

## RABBONI!

**I** BRING Thee balm, and lo! Thou art not  
here!

Twice have I poured mine ointment on thy brow,  
And washed Thy feet with tears. Disdain'st  
Thou now

The spikenard and the myrrh?

“Has Death, alas, betrayed Thee with a kiss  
That seals Thee from the memory of mine?”

“Mary!” It is the selfsame Voice Divine.

“Rabboni!”—only this.

## EASTER MORNING

**B**EHOLD, the night of sorrow gone,  
Like Magdalen the tearful Dawn  
Goes forth with love's anointing sweet,  
To kiss again the Master's feet!

## EASTER LILIES

**T**HOUGH long in wintry sleep ye lay,  
The powers of darkness could not stay  
Your coming at the call of day,  
Proclaiming Spring.

Nay, like the faithful virgins wise,  
With lamps replenished ye arise,  
Ere dawn the death-anointed eyes  
Of CHRIST the king.

## EASTER LAMBS

**O**URS is the echoed cry  
Of helpless Innocents about to die.  
Remembering them  
In Ramah for the Lamb of Bethlehem  
Untimely slain,  
We, when the paschal sacrifice is nigh,  
Lament again.

## THE ASSUMPTION

**B**EHOLD! the mother bird  
The Fledgeling's voice hath heard!  
He calls anew,  
"It was thy breast  
That warmed the nest  
From whence I flew.  
Upon a loftier tree  
Of life I wait for thee;  
Rise, mother-dove, and come,  
Thy Fledgeling calls thee home!"



## TRIUMPH

**D**ESPITE the North Wind's boast,  
Despite the muffled host  
Of hushing snow,  
There cometh from below  
Out of the darkness wakened, one by one  
The dreamers of the Sun—  
Not in the bleak array  
Of winter, but with fragrant banners gay  
Leaping the barriers strong  
Of Ice, and loosing Song,  
The prisoner, and letting go  
Long-fettered Laughter, as the shadowy Foe  
Shrinks from the echoing cry  
Of "Life and Victory!"

## MY ANGEL

**O** LITTLE child, that once was I,  
And still in part must be,  
When other children pass me by,  
Again thy face I see.

Where art thou? Can the Innocence  
That here no more remains,  
Forget, tho' early banished hence,  
What Memory retains?

Alas! and could'st thou look upon  
The features that were thine,  
To see of tender graces none  
Abiding now in mine,

Thy heart compassionate would plead,  
And, haply, not in vain,  
As Angel Guardian, home to lead  
The wanderer again.

TO HER THREE DAYS' CHILD

**I** ONLY, its mother, have known  
The life that is taken away.  
As the grape and the vine have we grown  
Hour by hour, day by day;  
Flesh of flesh, blood of blood, bone of bone.

As it was, evermore must it be,  
O Babe from thy mother removed;  
As light unto shadow are we,  
Each in other approved,  
Two in one, and in GOD, one in three.

## AVE ATQUE VALE

WHERE wast thou, little song,  
That hast delayed so long  
To come to me?  
"Mute in the mind of GOD:  
Till where thy feet had trod,  
I followed thee."



JUN 1988

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