

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

POEMS

BY

ROBERT BRIDGES

PRINTED AT THE PRIVATE PRESS OF

H. DANIEL

FELLOW OF WORCESTER COLLEGE

OXFORD

1884

THE Author of these poems is too well aware of their demerits to allow them to be republished thus without some apology. But it happens that the Printer, at whose request this selection is made, is willing to take so fair a share of the blame as to make any further explanation unnecessary.

One Hundred and fifty copies printed.

This is No. 59.

CONTENTS

FROM FIRST SERIES PUBLISHED 1873

1	<i>Clear and gentle stream</i>	page 1
2	<i>Dear lady when thou frownest</i>	4
3	<i>Poor withered rose and dry</i>	5
4	<i>I found to-day out walking</i>	7

FROM SECOND SERIES PUBLISHED 1879

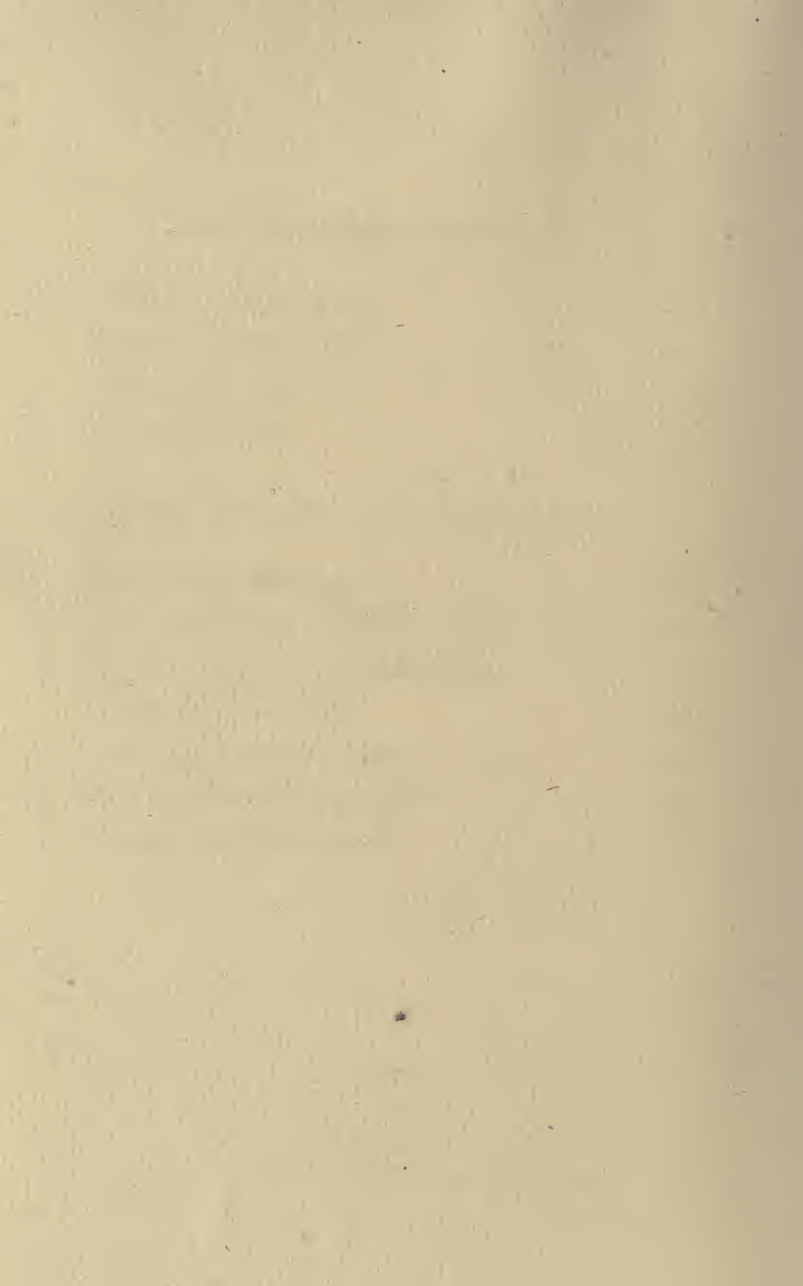
5	<i>Will Love again awake</i>	8
6	<i>Whither, O splendid ship</i>	10
7	<i>I saw the Virgin-mother clad in green</i>	12
8	<i>I know not how I came</i>	14
9	<i>There is a hill</i>	17
10	<i>Again with pleasant green</i>	21
11	<i>Behold! the radiant Spring</i>	25
12	<i>I have loved flowers that fade</i>	29
13	<i>Wherefore to-night so full of care</i>	30

FROM THIRD SERIES PUBLISHED 1880

14	<i>Thou didst delight my eyes</i>	32
15	<i>When men were all asleep</i>	33
16	<i>I stand on the cliff</i>	35
17	<i>Perfect little body</i>	37

FOURTH SERIES, 1882. NOT PUBLISHED BEFORE

18	<i>Joy, sweetest lifeborn joy</i>	39
19	<i>O my vague desires (from PROMETHEUS)</i>	42
20	<i>The full moon from her cloudless skies</i>	43
21	<i>I praise the tender flower</i>	44
22	<i>Awake my heart to be loved</i>	45
23	<i>Who that hath ever shot a shaft</i>	46
24	<i>O youth whose hope is high</i>	52



ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream,
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day ;
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament,
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream !

Where my old feat was
Here again I fit,
Where the long boughs knit
Over stream and grass
Thick translucent eaves :
Where back eddies play

Shipwreck with the leaves,
 And the proud swans stray,
 Sailing one by one
 Out of stream and fun,
 And the fish lie cool
 In their chosen pool.

Many an afternoon
 Of the summer day
 Dreaming here I lay ;
 And I know how soon
 Idly at its hour
 First the deep bell hums
 From the minster tower,
 And then evening comes,
 Creeping up the glade,
 With her lengthening shade,
 And the tardy boon
 Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream,
 Ere again I go
 Where thou dost not flow,
 Well does it beseem
 Thee to hear again
 Once my youthful song,

[3]

That familiar strain
Silent now so long :
Be as I content
With my old lament,
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream !



DEAR lady, when thou frowneſt,
 And my true love deſpiſeſt,
 And all thy vows diſowneſt
 That ſealed my venture wiſeſt ;
 I think thy pride's diſpleaſure
 Neglects a matchleſs treaſure
 Exceeding price and meaſure.

But when again thou ſmileſt,
 And love for love returneſt,
 And fear with joy beguileſt,
 And takeſt truth in earneſt ;
 Then, though I moſt adore thee,
 The ſum of my love for thee
 Seems poor, ſcant and unworthy.

POOOR withered rose and dry,
 Skeleton of a rose,

Risen to testify

To love's sad clofe :

Treasured for love's sweet sake,

That of joy past

Thou might'st again awake

Memory at last :

Yet is thy perfume sweet,

Thy petals red

Yet tell of summer heat,

And the gay bed :

Yet yet recall the glow

Of the gazing sun,

When at thy bush we two

Joined hands in one.

But, rose, thou hast not seen,
 Thou hast not wept
 The change that passed between
 Whilst thou hast slept.

To me thou seemest yet
 The dead dream's thrall :
 While I live and forget
 Dream, truth and all.

Thou art more fresh than I,
 Rose, sweet and red :
 Salt on my pale cheeks lie
 The tears I shed.



I FOUND to-day out walking
 The flower my love loves best.
 What, when I stooped to pluck it,
 Could dare my hand arrest ?

Was it a snake lay curling
 About the root's thick crown ?
 Or did some hidden bramble
 Tear my hand reaching down ?

There was no snake uncurling,
 And no thorn wounded me ;
 'Twas my heart checked me, fighting
 She is beyond the fea.

WILL *Love again awake,
That lies asleep so long?*
O huff! ye tongues that shake
The drowfy night with fong.

*It is a lady fair
Whom once he deigned to praise,
That at the door doth dare
Her sad complaint to raise.*

She must be fair of face,
As bold in heart she seems,
If she would match her grace
With the delight of dreams.

*Her beauty would surprife
Gazers on Autumn eves,
Who watched the broad moon rise
Vpon the scattered sheaves.*

O sweet must be the voice
 He shall descend to hear,
 Who doth in Heaven rejoice
 His most enchanted ear.

*The smile, that rests to play
 Upon her lip, foretells
 What musical array
 Tricks her sweet syllables.*

And yet her smiles have danced
 In vain, if her discourse
 Win not the soul entranced
 In divine intercourse.

*She will encounter all
 This trial without shame,
 Her eyes men Beauty call,
 And Wisdom is her name.*

Throw back the portals then,
 Ye guards, your watch that keep,
 Love will awake again
 That lay so long asleep.

A PASSER BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
 Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
 That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
 Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?
 Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales oppressed,
 When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
 Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
 In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country so well thou knowest,
 Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air :
 I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
 And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
 Thy sails for awning spread, thy masts bare :
 Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snowcapped, grandest
 Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair
 Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
 I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
 That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
 Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.
 But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
 As thou, asslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
 From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
 In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.



LATE SPRING EVENING

I SAW the Virgin-mother clad in green,
 Walking the sprinkled meadows at sundown ;
 While yet the moon's cold flame was hung between
 The day and night, above the dusky town :
 I saw her brighter than the Western gold,
 Whereto she faced in splendour to behold.

Her dress was greener than the tenderest leaf
 That trembled in the sunset glare aglow :
 Herself more delicate than is the brief,
 Pink apple-blossom, that May showers lay low,
 And more delicious than 's the earliest streak
 The blushing rose shows of her crimson cheek,

With jealous grace her idle ears to please,
 A music entered, making passion vain :
 Three nightingales sat singing in the trees,
 And praised the Goddesses for the fallen rain,
 Which yet their unseen motions did arouse,
 Or parting Zephyrs shook out from the boughs.

And o'er the treetops, scattered in mid air,
 The exhausted clouds, laden with crimson light,
 Floated, or seemed to sleep; and, highest there,
 One planet broke the lingering ranks of night;
 Daring day's company, so he might spy
 The Virgin-queen once with his watchful eye.

And when I saw her, then I worshipped her,
 And said,—O bounteous Spring, O beauteous Spring,
 Mother of all my years, thou who dost stir
 My heart to adore thee and my tongue to sing,
 Flower of my fruit, of my heart's blood the fire,
 Of all my satisfaction the desire!

How art thou every year more beautiful,
 Younger for all the winters thou hast cast:
 And I, for all my love grows, grow more dull,
 Decaying with each season overpast!
 In vain to teach him love must man employ thee,
 The more he learns the less he can enjoy thee.

WOOING

I KNOW not how I came,
New on my knightly journey,
To win the fairest dame
That graced my maiden tourney.

Chivalry's lovely prize
With all men's gaze upon her,
Why did she free her eyes
On me, to do me honour ?

Ah ! ne'er had I my mind
With such high hope delighted,
Had she not first inclined,
And with her eyes invited.

But never doubt I knew,
 Having their glance to cheer me,
 Vntil the day joy grew
 Too great, too fure, too near me.

When hope a fear became,
 And passion, grown too tender,
 Now trembled at the shame
 Of a despised surrender ;

And where my love at first
 Saw kindness in her smiling,
 I read her pride, and curfed
 The arts of her beguiling.

Till winning less than won,
 And liker wooed than wooing,
 Too late I turned undone
 Away from my undoing ;

And stood beside the door,
 Whereto she followed, making
 My hard leave-taking more
 Hard by her sweet leave-taking.

Her speech would have betrayed
 Her thought, had mine been colder :
 Her eyes distress had made
 A lesser lover bolder.

But no! Fond heart distrust,
 Cried Wisdom, and consider :
 Go free, since go thou must,
 And so farewell I bid her.

And brisk upon my way
 I smote the stroke to sever,
 And should have lost that day
 My life's delight for ever ;

But when I saw her start
 And turn aside and tremble ;—
 Ah! she was true, her heart
 I knew did not dissemble.

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,
 Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine :
 And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
 Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

 Straight trees in every place
 Their thick tops interlace,
 And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
 Vpon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows :
 His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,
 Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
 Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

 His winter floods lay bare
 The stout roots in the air :
 His summer streams are cool, when they have played
 Among their fibrous hair.

A rusby island guards the sacred bower,
 And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
 The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
 Robbing the golden market of the bees :
 And laden barges float
 By banks of myosote ;
 And scented flags and golden flower-de-llys
 Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool
 Eddies away, are tangled mats on mats
 The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool
 And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass ;
 Where spreading crowfoot mats
 The drowning nenuphars,
 Waving the tassels of her silken grass
 Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
 Not the white water-lily spoked with gold ;
 Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows
 On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold :
 Yet should her roots but try
 Within these deeps to lie,
 Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold
 Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
 Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
 Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
 Forgetting soon his pride of fishery ;
 And dreams, or falls asleep,
 While curious fishes peep
 About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
 Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes by the pathway through the trees
 An aged dame at evening trudges home :
 And merry voices greet her, and she sees
 Her dear grandchildren, down the hill that come
 To meet her, and to bear
 Her basket home with care,
 Divining that, of all her treasures, some
 Will be for them to share.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
 Whether he bathe at morning in the stream :
 Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
 The meadows, busy with a blurring steam ;
 Or watch, as fades the light,
 The gibbous moon grow bright,
 Vntil her magic rays dance in a dream,
 And glorify the night.

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames ?

O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow !

O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,

No sharer of my secret I allow :

Left ere I come the while

Strange feet your shades defile ;

Or lest the burly oarman turn his prow

Within your guardian isle.



SPRING

INVITATION TO THE COVNTRY

A GAIN with pleasant green
Has Spring renewed the wood,
And where the bare trunks stood
Are leafy arbours seen ;
And back on budding boughs
Come birds, to court and pair,
Whose rival amorous vows
Amaze the scented air.

The streams unbound anew
Refill their mossy banks,
The forward season pranks
With flowers of varied hue :
And scattered down the meads
From hour to hour unfold
A thousand buds and beads
In stars and cups of gold.

Now hear, and see, and note,
 The farms are all astir,
 And every labourer
 Has doffed his winter coat ;
 And how with specks of white
 They dot the brown hillside,
 Or jaunt and sing outright
 As by their teams they stride.

They sing to feel the Sun
 Regain his wanton strength ;
 To know the year at length
 Rewards their labour done ;
 To see the rootless stake
 They set bare in the ground,
 Burst into leaf, and shake
 Its grateful scent around.

Ah now an evil lot
 Is his who toils for gain,
 Where crowded chimneys stain
 The heavens his choice forgot ;
 'Tis on the blighted trees
 That deck his garden dim,
 And in the tainted breeze
 That sweet spring comes to him.

Far rather would I choose
 The grace of brutes that bask,
 Than in an eager task,
 My inborn honour lose :
 Would rather far enjoy
 The body, than invent
 A duty, to destroy
 The ease which nature sent ;

And country life I praise
 And lead, because I find
 The philosophic mind
 Can take no middle ways ;
 She will not leave her love
 To mix with men, her art
 Is all to strive above
 The crowd, or stand apart.

Thrice happy he, the rare
 Prometheus, who can play
 With hidden things, and lay
 New realms of nature bare :
 Whose venturous step has trod
 Hell underfoot, and won
 A crown from man and God
 For all that he has done.—

That highest gift of all,
 Since crabbèd fate did flood
 My heart with fluggish blood,
 I look not mine to call ;
 But, like a truant freed,
 Fly to the woods, and claim
 A pleasure for the deed
 Of my inglorious name.

And am content, denied
 The best, in choosing right ;
 For Nature can delight
 Fancies unoccupied
 With ecstasies so sweet
 As none can even guess,
 Who walk not with the feet
 Of joy in idlenefs.

Then leave your joyless ways,
 My friend, my joys to see.
 The day you come shall be
 The choice of chosen days :
 You shall be lost, and learn
 New being, and forget
 The world, till your return
 Shall bring your first regret.

SPRING

REPLY

BEHOLD ! the radiant Spring,
 In splendour decked anew,
 Down from her heaven of blue
 Returns on funlit wing :
 The zephyrs of her train
 In fleecy clouds disport,
 And birds to greet her reign
 Summon their sylvan court.

For even in freet and square
 Her tardy trees relent,
 As some far-travell'd scent
 Kindles the morning air ;
 And forth their buds provoke,
 Forgetting winter brown,
 And all the mire and smoke
 That wrapped the dingy town.

Now he that loves indeed
 His pleasure must awake,
 Left any pleasure take
 Its flight, and he not heed ;
 For of his few short years
 Another now invites
 His hungry soul, and cheers
 His life with new delights.

And who loves Nature more
 Than he, whose painful art
 Has taught and skilled his heart
 To read her skill and lore ?
 Whose spirit leaps more high,
 Plucking the pale primrose,
 Than his whose feet must fly
 The pasture where it grows ?

One long in city pent
 Forgets, or must complain :
 But think not I can stain
 My heaven with discontent ;
 Nor wallow with that sad,
 Backsliding herd, who cry
 That Truth must make man bad,
 And pleasure is a lie.

Rather while Reason lives
 To mark me from the beast,
 I'll teach her serve at least
 To heal the wound she gives :
 Nor need she strain her powers
 Beyond a common flight,
 To make the passing hours
 Happy from morn till night.

Since health our toil rewards,
 And strength is labour's prize,
 I hate not, nor despise
 The work my lot accords ;
 Nor fret with fears unkind
 The tender joys, that bless
 My hard-won peace of mind,
 In hours of idleness.

Then what charm company
 Can give, know I,—if wine
 Go round, or throats combine
 To set dumb music free.
 Or deep in wintertide
 When winds without make moan,
 I love my own fireside
 Not least when most alone.

Then oft I turn the page
 In which our country's name,
 Spoiling the Greek of fame,
 Shall found in every age :
 Or some Terentian play
 Renew, whose excellent
 Adjusted folds betray
 How once Menander went.

Or if grave study suit
 The yet unwearied brain,
 Plato can teach again,
 And Socrates dispute ;
 Till fancy in a dream
 Confront their souls with mine,
 Crowning the mind supreme,
 And her delights divine.

While pleasure yet can be
 Pleasant, and fancy sweet,
 I bid all care retreat
 From my philosophy ;
 Which, when I come to try
 Your simpler life, will find,
 I doubt not, joys to vie
 With those I leave behind.

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,
 Within whose magic tents
 Rich hues have marriage made
 With sweet unmemoried scents :
 A honeymoon delight,—
 A joy of love at fight,
 That ages in an hour :—
 My song be like a flower !

I have loved airs, that die
 Before their charm is writ
 Vpon the liquid sky
 Trembling to welcome it.
 Notes, that with pulse of fire
 Proclaim the spirit's desire,
 Then die, and are nowhere :—
 My song be like an air !

Die, song, die like a breath,
 And wither as a bloom :
 Fear not a flowery death,
 Dread not an airy tomb !
 Fly with delight, fly hence !
 'Twas thine love's tender sense
 To feast, now on thy bier
 Beauty shall shed a tear.

WHEREFORE to-night so full of care,
My soul, revolving hopeleſs ſtrife,
Pointing at hindrance, and the bare
Painful eſcapes of fitful life ?

Shaping the doom that may befall
By precedent of terror paſt :
By love diſhonoured, and the call
Of friendſhip flighted at the laſt ?

By treaſured names, the little ſtore
That memory out of wreck could ſave
Of loving hearts, that gone before
Call their old comrade to the grave ?

O ſoul be patient : thou ſhalt find
A little matter mend all this ;
Some ſtrain of muſic to thy mind,
Some praiſe for ſkill not ſpent amiſs.

Again shall pleasure overflow
Thy cup with sweetness, thou shalt taste
Nothing but sweetness, and shalt grow
Half sad for sweetness run to waste.

O happy life! I hear thee sing,
O rare delight of mortal stuff!
I praise my days for all they bring,
Yet are they only not enough.



THOUV didst delight my eyes :
 Yet who am I? nor first
 Nor last nor best that durst
 Once dream of thee for prize ;
 Nor this the only time
 Thou shalt fet love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear :
 Ah! little praise ; thy voice
 Makes other hearts rejoice,
 Makes all ears glad that hear ;
 And short my joy : but yet,
 O song, do not forget.

For what wert thou to me ?
 How shalt I say ? The moon,
 That poured her midnight noon
 Vpon his wrecking sea ;—
 A fail, that for a day
 Has cheered the castaway.

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,
 In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
 Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town ;
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing ;
 Lazily and incessantly floating down and down :
 Silently sitting and veiling road, roof and railing ;
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.
 All night it fell, and when full inches seven
 It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
 Its clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven ;
 And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
 Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare :
 The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness ;
 The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air ;
 No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
 And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
 They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze
 Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snow-balling ;
 Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees ;
 Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
 "O look at the trees !" they cried, "O look at the trees !"

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
 Following along the white deserted way,
 A country company long dispersed afunder :

When now already the sun, in pale display
 Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.

For now doors open and war is waged with the snow ;
 And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,
 Tread long brown paths as towards their toil they go :

But even for them no cares awhile encumber
 Their minds diverted ; the daily word unspoken,
 The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
 At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm they
 have broken.

I STAND on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling
 A silver field afar in the mournful sea,
 The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing
 At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea :
 Whose smile severe and chaste
 June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.
 In lofty thought strive, O spirit, for ever :
 In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavour.

Ah! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean
 Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides ;
 Were't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion
 Precipitate all o'errides, and turns, nor abides :
 For you sad birds and fair,
 Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air ;
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

But far away, I think, in the Thames valley,
 The filent river glides by flowery banks :
 And birds fing sweetly in branches that arch an alley
 Of cloistered trees, mofs-grown in their ancient ranks :
 Where if a light air stray,
 'Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.
 Love and peace be thine, O fpirit, for ever :
 Serve thy sweet defire : despife endeavour.

And if it were only for thee, entrancèd river,
 That scarce doft rock the lily on her airy ftem,
 Or ftir a wave to murmur, or a rufh to quiver ;
 Were't but for the woods, and fummer afleep in them :
 For you my bowers green,
 My hedges of rofe and woodbine, with walks between,
 Then well could I read wifdom in every feature,
 O well fhould I underftand the voice of Nature.



PERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair !
 Though cold and stark and bare,
 The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.

Thy mother's treasure wert thou ;—alas ! no longer
 To visit her heart with wonderous joy ; to be
 Thy father's pride ;—ah, he
 Must gather his faith together, and his strength make stronger.

To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,
 Dost thou with a turn or a gesture anon respond ;
 Startling my fancy fond
 With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.

Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it :
 But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff ;
 Yet feels to my hand as if
 'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

So I lay thee there, thy funken eyelids clofing,—
 Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy laft little bed!—
 Propping thy wife, fad head,
 Thy firm, pale hands acrofs thy cheft difpofing.

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither hath
 he taken thee?
 To a world, do I think, that rights the difafter of this?
 The vifion of which I mifs,
 Who weep for the body, and wifh but to warm thee and awaken
 thee?

Ah! little at beft can all our hopes avail us
 To lift this forrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,
 Unwilling, alone we embark,
 And the things we have feen and have known and have heard
 of, fail us.



JOY, sweetest lifeborn joy, where dost thou dwell ?
 Upon the formless moments of our being
 Flitting, to mock the ear that heareth well,
 To escape the trained eye that strains in seeing,
 Dost thou fly with us whither we are fleeing ;
 Or home in our creations, to withstand
 Blackwingèd death, that slays the making hand ?

The making mind, that must untimely perish
 Amidst its work which time may not destroy,
 The beauteous forms which man shall love to cherish,
 The glorious songs that combat earth's annoy ?
 Thou dost dwell here, I know, divinest Joy :
 But they who build thy towers fair and strong,
 Of all that toil, feel most of care and wrong.

Sense is so tender, O and hope so high,
 That common pleasures mock their hope and sense ;
 And swifter than doth lightning from the sky
 The ecstasy they pine for flashes hence,
 Leaving the darkness and the woe immense,

Wherewith it seems no thread of light was woven,
Nor doth the track remain where once 'twas cloven.

And heaven and all the stable elements
That guard God's purpose mock us, though the mind
Be spent in searching : for his old intents
We see were never for our joy designed :
They shine as doth the bright sun on the blind,
Or like his pensioned stars, that hymn above
His praise, but not toward us, that God is Love.

For who so well hath wooed the maiden hours
As quite to have won the worth of their rich show,
To rob the night of mystery, or the flowers
Of their sweet delicacy ere they go?
Nay, even the dear occasion when we know
We miss the joy, and on the gliding day
The special glories float and pass away,

Only life's common plod : still to repair
The body and the thing which perisheth :
The foil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear,
The grinding enginry of blood and breath,
Pain's random darts, the heartless spade of death :
All is but grief, and heavily we call
On the last terror for the end of all.

Then comes the happy moment : not a stir
 In any tree, no portent in the sky :
 The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,
 The morrow hath no name to call it by,
 But life and joy are one,—we know not why,—
 As though our very blood long breathless lain
 Had tasted of the breath of God again.

And having tasted it I speak of it,
 And praise him telling how I trembled then
 When his touch strengthened me, as now I fit
 In wonder, reaching out beyond my ken,
 Reaching to turn the day back, and my pen
 Vrging to tell a tale which told would seem
 The witlefs phantasy of them that dream.

But O most blessed truth, for truth thou art,
 Abide thou with me till my life shall end.
 Divinity hath surely touched my heart ;
 I have possessed more joy than earth can lend :
 I may attain what time shall never spend.
 Only let not my duller days destroy
 The memory of thy witness and my joy.

O MY vague defires !
 Ye lambent flames of the foul, her offspring fires :
 That are my foul herself in pangs sublime
 Rising and flying to heaven before her time :

What doth tempt you forth
 To drown in the south or shiver in the frosty north ?
 What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,
 Ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying ?

Joy, the joy of flight !
 They hide in the fun, they flare and dance in the night ;
 Gone up, gone out of sight : and ever again
 Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah ! they burn my soul,
 The fires, devour my soul that once was whole :
 She is scattered in fiery phantoms day by day,
 But whither, whither ? ay whither ? away, away !

Could I but control
 These vague defires, these leaping flames of the soul :
 Could I but quench the fire : ah ! could I stay
 My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away !

THE full moon from her cloudless skies
 Turneth her face, I think, on me ;
 And from the hour when she doth rise
 Till when she sets, none else will see.

One only other ray she hath,
 That makes an angle close with mine,
 And glancing down its happy path
 Vpon another spot doth shine.

But that ray too is sent to me,
 For where it lights there dwells my heart :
 And if I were where I would be,
 Both rays would shine, love, where thou art.

I PRAISE the tender flower,
 That on a mournful day
 Bloomed in my garden bower
 And made the winter gay.
 Its loveliness contented
 My heart tormented.

I praise the gentle maid
 Whose happy voice and smile
 To confidence betrayed
 My doleful heart awhile :
 And gave my spirit deploring
 Fresh wings for soaring.

The maid for very fear
 Of love I durst not tell :
 The rose could never hear,
 Though I bespake her well :
 So in my song I bind them
 For all to find them.

AWAKE my heart to be loved, awake, awake !
 The darknefs filvers away, the morn doth break,
 It leaps in the sky : unrifen luftres flake
 The o'ertaken moon. Awake, O heart, awake !

She too that loveth awaketh and hopes for thee :
 Her eyes already have sped the shades that flee,
 Already they watch the path thy feet fhall take :
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake !

And if thou tarry from her,—if this could be,—
 She cometh herſelf, O heart, to be loved, to thee ;
 For thee would unafhamèd herſelf forſake :
 Awake to be loved, my heart, awake, awake !

Awake, the land is ſcattered with light, and ſee,
 Vncanopied ſleep is flying from field and tree :
 And bloſſoming boughs of April in laughter flake ;
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake !

Lo all things wake and tarry and look for thee :
 She looketh and faith, “O fun now bring him to me.
 Come more adored, O adored, for his coming's fake,
 And awake my heart to be loved : awake, awake !”

WHOO that hath ever shot a shaft at heaven
 Whether of wonder, praise or humble prayer,
 But hath not straight received his answer given,
 And been made strong with comforting, aware
 Of strength and beauty for his purpose meant,
 Whether it were a lark's song or a scent
 That wanders on the quavering paths of the air ?

The sweetest of all birds, that fed my slumber
 With music through the thought-exalting night,
 Among forgotten fancies without number
 Transfigured sorrow to a heart's delight.
 And uninvited memories, that stole
 With haunting trouble to their slavèd soul
 Were turned to wondrous joys and aspects bright.

So intimate a part are we of Nature
 That even to call us best part doth us wrong,
 Being her mind, the meaning of her feature,
 To whom her varied forms wholly belong.
 So that what were not ours were worthless quite,

And thus to me it happened on that night
 To be the love and joy of this bird's song.

As it came leaping on the dark unguarded
 Silence of midnight to the door of the ear :
 And finding the warm passages unwarded
 Sped up the spiral stair, and mounted near
 To where in unseen rooms the delicate sprite
 That never sleeps sat watching through the night
 Weaving the time in fancies strange and drear.

Nor was it that the heavenly music fluttered
 The quick electric atoms ; rarer far,
 The melody this bird of passion uttered
 Coloured the firmament where all thoughts are :
 As in the characters a poet's hand
 Has traced, there lie—for poets understand—
 Heart-thrills that shoot through blackness like a star.

And so, as summer eve will sweetly soften
 The wayward thoughts of all who forth may fare,
 To me there came the spirit who haunts not often
 My heart for sorrow of the sadness there :
 But now her face was lit with joy, her eyes
 Were eager messengers of her surprise
 That she was quit of her profound despair.

Clothed was she like a nun, and yet her vesture
 Did fade despite unto her merry grace,
 As gaily she came forward with a gesture
 As gamefome as the childhood in her face,
 That I had seen so long downcast and fade,
 Robbed of the happy birthright which she had,
 Which earth may steal away but not replace.

There is no sorrow like the slow heart-fearing,
 When phantoms bred of earth spring up between
 Two loving hearts, who grew to their endearing,
 When all their pushing tendrils yet were green :
 No time-struck ruin is so fade to see
 As youth's disease : than thus, O Love, to be,
 'Twere better for thy honour not to have been.

Had I not seen the servitude of folly,
 The minute-measuring of days and nights,
 With superstition preaching melancholy
 And pleasure counterfeiting her own rights ;
 Afraid to turn again and look behind,
 Lest truth should flame and overwhelm the mind,
 Fanning her red regret of old delights.

The mimicry of woe that is a trouble
 To them that practise it, but which to those

To whom the joy is owed makes sorrow double
 Seeing the debtor destitute that owes.
 The tinfelling of cruel bars, to blind
 The caged bird to think the hand is kind
 Which liberty denies and food bestows.

From which I hurried as a beast from burning,
 Nor cared in flying where my terror led ;
 Only beyond recall and past returning,
 Nor now repent if then too far I fled. —
 So long, dear life, as in my flesh thou reign'ft
 I will sin with thee rather than against,
 Let me die living rather than live dead.

But neither is there human pleasure rarer
 Than love's renewal after long disdain,
 Nor any touching tale for telling fairer
 Than that wherein lost lovers meet again :
 Such joy must happy souls beyond the grave,
 If once again they meet, in Heaven have,
 Without which all the joys of Heaven were vain.

'Twas even thus she came and in my dreaming,
 My pleasure was not less than Heaven's may be :
 The spiritual and unearthly seeming

So far outdid a touched reality :
 As glances sent in love do more than tell
 What words can never phrase or utter well,
 And which 'tis shame and blindness not to see.

But now the joy was mine, for gentle pity
 Of her who wearily lived long alone
 With mopes and mummers in a sensuous city
 That held no passion equal to her own,
 For gentle pity, I say, constrained me well,
 As pains those separated souls they tell
 Prepare for Heaven, and mould their hearts of stone.

But their sweet ecstasy is all abiding
 And cannot pall with time nor tire nor fade,
 Nor any more can day of death, dividing
 Their earthborn loves, those happy haunts invade.
 But joy for ever—if that joy compare
 With my best joy on earth, may I be there !
 Though even from that I shrink and am afraid.

Now when I woke and thought upon this vision,
 Wherein she smiled on me and I on her,
 I could not quite be clear of all misprision
 Who of us most was changed : or if it were

The song I heard not—sleeping as I heard—
 That shaped our empty dream, while sang the bird
 Regardless of his fond interpreter.



O YOVTH whose hope is high,
 Who dost to Truth aspire,
 Whether thou live or die,
 O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly
 Through tempest, flood and fire,
 Nor dost not shrink to try
 Thy heart in torments dire :

If thou canst Death defy,
 If thy Faith is entire,
 Press onward, for thine eye
 Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,
 And with their deathless quire
 Soon shall their eager cry
 Be numbered and expire.





