



**THE SOVEREIGN IN THE STREET  
AND OTHER POEMS**

---

**LIONEL JOSEPHARE**

YB 11971

LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

RECEIVED BY EXCHANGE

Class 985  
J83

S

*The Bancroft Library*

University of California • Berkeley









# The Sovereign in the Street

And Other Poems

By

LIONEL JOSAPHARE



San Francisco  
A. M. ROBERTSON  
1907

*Exchange from*

LIBRARY of CONGRESS	
Two Copies Received	
JUL 15 1908	
Copyright Entry	
CLASS	XXG. No.
COPY A.	

Copyright, 1903 and 1907

A. M. Robertson

Received from  
Copyright Office.

27Ag '08



*Containing*

**The Sovereign in the Street**

**The Humpback, the Cripple  
and the One-Eyed Man**

**The Past**

**A Death**

187876





## The Sovereign in the Street

From a castle of thoughts that my conscience was  
building

I studied a man who was cutting a street,  
While the round-rolling sun was demeaning and  
gilding

Him thinking and ripping the ditch at his feet.

Of this native of grief, as he shoveled the furrow,  
I write, be the subject a poem or not;

For as deep did he burrow, my love traveled  
thorough

And writes, be the truth of it rubies or rot.

Oh, 'tis weird that the truth, like a corpse on the  
floor,

Should bleed on our carpets and stare at the  
light;

And that Art should ignore what she taught us be-  
fore,

And tear up the lessons we prattled last night.

Not with your eyes, my poet, rose-haunted and  
grave—

Thou poet with wondering beauty-mad eyes—  
Did I look on the slave digging low in the cave,  
Corroded with dust, sweat, itch, sunbeams and  
flies.

O dim-blushing poet with Grecian-strung lyre,  
Declare not my earth-man in melody wrong,  
Nor that Beauty's attire and effulgence inspire:  
'Tis the voice of the singer makes noble the  
song.

Like a grave-digger digging a terrible grave—  
Like a sun spirit heaving the hot day with coal,  
His dredger he drave and he hove to the pave  
The clods that he tore from the earth and flung  
whole.

The freight of his spade, coming dun from the bung  
Of the foul-smelling sand, seemed the filth of his  
fate.

And fast while he flung the material dung  
Of the earth he built sidelong the mound of his  
hate.

The wealth-wasting givers of feasts grew in riches;  
Wide, wide grew the hands at the hilt of the  
task;  
And there came a dream which is a curse on all  
ditches  
And pain guised the laborer's face like a mask.

The point of the shovel grew inward and blunt  
And the love in the eye of the trencher grew  
dim;  
As he dug with a grunt, became shorter in front,  
And his fingers grew crooked, knock-knuckled  
and grim.

Still at underground honor his scepter he points,  
With negligence digging a tragical story;  
While some dunce who anoints with wealth his vile  
joints,  
Stands proud on the swift-rolling chariots of  
glory.

O for a lithe shovel of truculent aim  
To gouge at the greed that keeps need in the  
sands!  
For the spade of good fame is of wood and steel  
frame,  
But to masters of men it is wood, steel and  
hands.

Then dig, ye bones, dig; ye have many more years;  
Your sorrows will shine to the eyelids of God;  
And Destiny hears your soft-falling tears:  
O'er the task of the spade let your man's noddle  
nod.

What matters it, marrow and gristle and brain  
Or tendon and belly and tooth are intent?  
Or that eyeball and vein in a perishing strain  
To the rim of the earth-riving shovel are bent?

Empowered of shoulder and elbow and groin,  
In struggle malefic he wearies at length,  
While innard and loin to the hot shovel join,  
Converting his pride to the need of new strength.

What long-contained smiles have been stopped at  
those lips?  
What thoughts dead and useless are oozing in  
sweat?

What majesty drips on those foul-flanneled hips?  
How laboring low makes nobility wet!

What tears that his eyelids a passage denied  
Took a brinier course through the fast-weeping  
pores?  
What thoughts were untied—what escapings of  
pride  
When first he dug sands for their silverless ores?

I could shout to the sun (whose hot splendors are  
falling  
And burning this handler of shovels) behold!  
What devils are calling and gambling and brawling  
For them who with fingers of gold count their  
gold.

But it boots not relating what devils, alack,  
With smutty red limbs and blue bellies are  
waiting  
To harrow a pack of scared souls on the rack;  
That's a matter of prayers and religious debat-  
ing.

But the pendulum swaying through seasons to bring  
The scenic effusion of May, we remember—  
From flowery Spring will as quietly swing  
Back, back in its path to the wilds of November.

So the beam in Time's balance will pass in its frame  
And the places of wealth become blighted and  
cold;  
For its gold and its fame from weary blood came,  
And Time will refund it with blood from the  
gold.

## The Humpback, the Cripple and the One-Eyed Man.

One eve, while at my window-panes I stood,  
Gray films of memory patched the dull gray view,  
Where thoughts, blithe-winged, meandered as they  
    would,  
Like odd-eyed fairies that from childhood flew.  
When mind's deep glass on childhood's ground  
    reflects,  
Where is the childish tenant of that place?  
Dead in his older self, now recollects  
The inscrutable sorrows on that infant's face.  
Yond sets the sun, that has not lost a day  
In tacking through the sky his blazing hull.  
But where's the light that sunned that child at play?  
E'en memory's picture-light of it is dull.



Thus oft, while legendary youth adjusting  
To present movings in the glare of wealth,  
I gaze past little house-tops poor and rusting,  
Where honor crawls and freedom breathes by stealth.  
To those brown wooden homes my thoughts 'gan fall,  
My love and pity passed; and fancy strayed  
Through dark defiles of streets, which ended small,  
And there the ragged-running rabble played.  
Out of that struggling multifarious throng,  
A movement, as of setting forth, began;  
From which emerged a captain huge and strong,  
What time I saw he was a humpbacked man.

I next beheld him in my room. His tread  
Was like an army's, though he came alone.  
With woes to stoppage fraught, he gazed ahead  
And, victim of a thousand crimes, did groan.  
Lofty, though lashed and lulled from eloquent line,  
Despoilt with tasks and years, on him, withal,  
Innumerable beauties did still twine,  
Like roses livening a ruined wall.  
Rigid with strength, solidified with grief,  
He felt no amber sun-beams make him bright,  
But saw, with the magic eyesight of belief,  
The hand of wrong betwixt him and the light.

His frown was apt with anger to chastise,  
Like God's, to awe the ungodly to obey;  
And yet the kindlier prospect of his eyes  
Was like a twilight turning bluebells gray.  
His smile was like a hope of sweeter woe,—  
A vision rising from a lake of tears;  
For tears from hopes and pent-up visions flow,  
And his had flowed in spirit through the years.  
Of sentences to tie into a tale,  
He lacked supply, nor gained them from the gloom,  
And, when of his few words he made avail,  
His voice was like the coward's in a tomb.

He showed me wrongs and schedules of complaint,  
In wide expectance of my soon surprise;  
And at such misery as he could paint,  
Asked me to imitate his bardlike sighs.  
But I, in walls with seemlier pictures brimming,  
Did scrutin his with courtesy at most.  
Ill-framed with splendors, frightless was his  
limning—

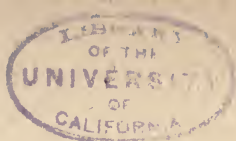
The noontime telling of a midnight ghost.  
Then he, with toppling-heavy shoulders bowed,  
Withdrew unsoothed and through his people went,  
Obscurely as the shadow of a cloud  
Through a dark forest. Then my view was bent.

Then came a rogue who entered with a thud—  
A crippled, crack-legged, crimson-browed alarm,  
A night-hag's dwarf, inbred with Satan's blood  
And marked by Hell's astrology for harm.  
Softly! He is all memory now. But I  
Remember what a tragic rage he had  
And physiognomic shadows that did ply  
His hate and seem, each one, a face to add.  
Hobblor upon mismated legs he came,  
Stopping in fault, or with short-coming hurry,  
Limped hither thither like a shifting flame  
And cursed and perjured with exceeding worry.

From a short reverie and scowl aside,  
This flame-and-smoke hued villain then rebounded;  
"Remorse on you! Fall down and weep," he cried,  
And, being raged, a throaty tale expounded.  
"Boilers will burst in wrath and vent their ills;  
New patriots your walls from walls will pluck,  
Unlock the axles of the frothing mills  
And hurl the hot vibrating wheels amuck.  
I see your windows bursted spouting flame  
And you in cinders blacker than ours now—"  
Madman! I stopped him there and, with exclaim,  
Seated my fist compactly on his brow.

Binding his forehead with his arms he quailed  
Out of my eyes, nor back his dudgeon darting,  
Avaunted and himself with tears regaled  
And sobs to keep him company departing.  
And then I saw that I was not alone:  
The third who now against me did contrive  
Was clad in mouldy black, not aye his own,  
And, having but one eye, looked half alive.  
The eye survivor seemed in fright to stare  
Still at the violence that had quashed the other;  
Or else accounted all the world unfair  
For leering on the cave left by its brother.

Shiftless, ere long he into words did stray;  
Inhaled the simple twilight for his lung,  
Which worked (in their behalf who were away)  
The leaky loud poetics of his tongue.  
His plural and most voluble debating  
Paused often and amazed to pick its choice  
Of words and repetitions lost and waiting  
In the astounding mazes of his voice.  
He said that we are foemen to defeat them  
Whose lives we press and purchase hour to hour;  
And swore that we are cannibals and eat them  
Whose strength is in the dainties we devour.



“Tripe-fed philosopher and gloomy dunce!”  
To him I quick in rising soul replied,  
“You are the devils cast from Heaven once,  
Now from the light of heavenly wealth denied.  
A fool tongue curling, ‘justice’ is your word:  
Not you, not I, but God knows what that is,  
And how much debt the crime of life incurred,  
And how each yearning knave may reason his.  
To vanquish Heaven is a feat for Hell,  
That Pleasure, smiling, frighten at Hell’s frown;  
Your duty is to envy and rebel;  
Mine is to battle your rebellion down.

“Therefore, should I be gracious to your will,  
Letting your fortunes bask where mine have  
    flourished,  
And with my art your artless hopes fulfill,  
Your wants would grow in purpose, being nourished;  
Yet would, as grew their project, lose in power,  
For, being wronged, the courage gains in force;  
But favors, man, would steal your anger’s flower,  
Leaving you poor in motive and resource.  
Then should I grant the simple things you ask,  
I would be shrewdly stealing all you own:  
The conquest of its own is honor’s task;  
Without which task, how would its work be known?”

Then he, naught saying nor attempting, turned,  
Slinking off like a lean cat in the rain.  
But scarce outside his transit I discerned,  
Another came to give my fancies pain.  
O mortal horror! Not until Hell's doom,  
When the last shivering consumptive imp  
Will slam the black and icy gates of gloom  
And fall convulsed with many a woeful crimp,  
Will there again such mangled monster crawl  
Out of the glimmering pits (as if surviving  
Satan and all his tortures) as did fall  
Into my sight—a shape that howled arriving.

Of the deformities of them before  
He was the ghastly, physical conjunction;  
Shaped by his wounds and showing many more  
To try my fear or delicate compunction,  
Threefoldly damaged, wrenched from noble height,  
With blood-stains in his beard and hair that ran  
Into mad masses, he was all, outright,  
Humpbacked and crippled and a one-eyed man,  
Like the first huge up-shouldered one he loomed,  
And like the angry cripple dragged a limb,  
And like the one-eyed man's his one eye bloomed,  
And as a gory giant he was grim.

He spoke: "I am that one you firstly scanned.  
I am the man of many woes and wrongs.  
I know the backs that suffer and withstand.  
I know the hearts to which your blood belongs.  
No longer I am anvil to your pride:  
I walk, though lamed by Jealousy and Fear;  
For when my comrades took me for their guide,  
The jealous rivals of my wrath stabbed here.  
Then I the wisdom of our wants became,  
And he who was half-sighted was put by,  
Shrieking as he struck here with hideous aim,  
'Let our great leader be one-eyed, as I.'

"Thus I am fit memorial of the strife;  
My body is become a bloody flag.  
Adorned with the atrocities of life,  
I am the fury of the hut and rag.  
Humpbacked I am from shouldering golden wrongs;  
Lame—all my deeds by jealousy are crippled;  
One-eyed in the half-wisdom of my throngs,  
But in resolve all their terrifics tripled.  
I threaten you, Revenge has yet in keep  
Memory of inextinguishable stuff,  
And Retribution can through armies leap  
Till overcrowded Hell must cry 'Enough!'

“Your crimes, though weak, have bent me into  
strength,  
That I may clasp your struggles in my hand.  
Though bowed, I crush; though lame, limp to great  
length;  
One-eyed,—my deeds I need not understand.  
Tremble and move as timber struck by steel.  
Howl with repentance through your vacant fame.  
Depart on limbs that soon may learn to kneel;  
And, fallen in escaping, bleed with shame!”  
He said no more; but his dark arm rose high.  
And he is here. His shoulders heave with woe.  
And he is thinking and he has one eye;  
Monster, with wrongs and wrath, he will not go.



## The Past

Tell me not, O buff-skulled master, that the heart of  
youth is faster

In the orbit of its dreaming when fantastic and un-  
wise;

That our youngest-bred affection is but amorous  
dejection

Which experienced correction of our loving will sur-  
prise.

For I reckon that if our sighs

In the foretime of our Fancy brought the summer  
to her breast,

And she kissed our first request,

She will be forever's best,

Though we move a hundred hearts to trust the heart  
that first she blessed.

And of them whose Cupid lies

Dead in memory's garden, I too have a fancy in  
demise.

In that garden of this telling stood a wonder-window  
dwelling  
With a front of pillared marble and a door of oak  
and gold.  
There were sculptured lions jessant by a stairway  
iridescent,  
And a fountain sprayed incessant in a circle there  
of old.

And along the magic mold  
Bloomed those buds which oft at weddings beatific  
virgins wear,  
Fragrant, fortunate and fair,  
In their enterissued hair,  
And which oft I wreathed for Daphne when atwain  
we wandered there;  
With whose tresses to enfold,  
Set the fragrance on her forehead for the love the  
blossoms told.

Tall beside the trees of twilight, when the daysdone  
of July light  
Thrilled the sinking world with spectres and our  
eyes with western flame,  
Turned she slowly and thereat heard myriad fearful  
feet that pattered  
As unto her ears I flattered deeds of no sufficient  
name.

Dame of mythologic frame,  
Like a near but vague-lipped phantom by a great  
magician wrought,  
Pale with love and calm for thought,  
She was past the scope of marvel, more than ardor  
ever sought.

And in Heaven's month she came,  
Tressed like Pluto's queen and featured like a  
harbinger of fame.

Then it was the day's perfection seemed no common  
road's reflection  
But the earthly recollection of a heavenly day be-  
fore.

Yet it seemed the heart's Creator, as our halo-haired  
spectator,  
Turned our steps from life's equator to a dim and  
deathlike floor.

There the stars by daylight bore  
Unphenomenal effulgence on our kiss-expectant  
smiles;

There the amaranthine aisles  
Of the future bent their miles,  
Filled with omens that repentance to my life still  
reconciles,

When the ghosts come slow and sore,  
To the after-years of slumber for a troubled glimpse  
of yore.

When those glorious walls were standing, and the  
signal buds expanding  
Where the previous hand of Spring had painted  
green the earthly chart,  
Life in life a mansion making, yet with inward  
horror shaking,  
We beheld the gray dust breaking through the tints  
of Heaven's art.

Anguish has no rougher dart  
Than the jetty-headed missile whose remembrance  
still brings pain;

For I seldom can attain  
Pure delight or pleasure feign  
Forth from her of whom the landscape seemed a  
pageant in her train,

When she stood in scenes apart  
With omnipotent beauty regent o'er the liegdom  
of my heart.

In that beauty she descended from the realms of  
light and wended  
Through the wonders of a passion in the orchard of  
a dream.

Mystic then was life's transition as the glammers of  
tradition;  
Future lay in recognition; I beheld its banners  
gleam.

Ever now the turbid stream  
Through the miserable meadow flows to people in  
the town;

And the darkened sun looks down  
On a field of blasted brown.

Gone that manse that spread its marvels for a  
woman's rich renown,

Gone that palace which did seem  
Consecration in its purpose; in conception there  
supreme.

In that edifice adorning the prophetic front of morn-  
ing—

In that architectural marble glowing white upon the  
green—

In those towers that eternal years I prayed would  
find supernal

- And on them lie soft as vernal dews, ambition placed  
its queen.

Superhumanly serene,

But her blue-eyed lustrous pallor, and the wreath  
upon her brow—

Gone I know not when or how  
Are no benediction now

On the vanishment of glory or the dead leaves on  
the bough,

With dead ivy stopt between,  
And the black foundations falling from a structural  
unseen.

Every window that I cherished in tempestuous  
gloom has perished;

Yet I seek that moonlit palace till the searching ends  
in fright.

For 'tis wretched, on returning to the substance of  
our yearning,

To find shadow fast inurning what was quadrilater-  
ally bright.

Then a fervor fools the sight;

For, in thinking of that ground, by actual presence  
overgrown,

I am in the wished-for zone,

Where the wisher stands alone

And the deathly scenes enliven as the past becomes  
his own.

And that past is flushed with light

As my eyelids droop and darken to all save the  
dreams of night.

But in mornlight after dreaming, comes a written  
thing redeeming

Vestiges of retribution from the penance of my  
days—

Is a flash of oldtime smitten by a hand with pallors  
litten,

Sending prose epistles written in my past and  
present praise.

And upon the inky phrase,

White and fragrant yet though folded are those  
buds I once thought fair—

Those that usual virgins wear

Twisted in their bridal hair.

And a sign within the letter tells a kiss was given  
there.

I remember those love-bays  
Tree-plucked near a path once precious but now  
dingy in its ways,—  
Near a door of oak and gold,  
Where two sculptured lions jessant watched a stair-  
way irridescent,  
And a fount I thought incessant, in a circle sprayed  
of old.

## A Death

The sleeper sobbed and moved again;  
His visage brown, and death-bed gown, lay wealthy  
in the wealth of men.  
His veins were sick as pauper's when the pauper  
pulls his rags again  
And feels the agony again  
Of flesh becoming clay again.  
A burnished bed with old-world lace remained him  
now of worldly grace.  
Reptilian shadows crossed his face. I thought he  
would not wake again.

I touched his heart. It sprang again—  
Winc'd after years, of gold, of tears, of curses from  
the hate of men.  
Twice did he look like death; but when I touched  
his eyes, they stared again,  
Insanely shrewd that I again  
Had thought he might not wake again.  
From sleep the eyelids oft awoke; in dying squalls  
the drab mouth spoke.  
While Death withheld the final stroke, I touched  
the lips, that moaned again:

“Lord God, give me to live again.  
'Tis true that I have mouthed the lie, have torn the  
soul from things and men.  
But I will sweeten them, Lord, when Thou givest  
me to live again—  
To breathe of noisy life again,  
To pet the cheek of youth again.  
With bleeding soles in stricken gait, let me retrace  
those days of hate;  
From honor I will ne'er abate. But who can enter  
youth again?

“Not yet sift me with dust again!  
Another while on this fair isle, fain would I speak  
with actual men.  
Send me thy symbol saying when Thou sayest, ‘Let  
him live again;’  
In darling childishness again,  
In youth's immaculate strength again—  
And I will flay my soul of greed; the hungry from  
my hunger feed;  
Oh, very little should I need, O Lord, if I may live  
again.



“And no sin-gleaming gold again.  
To love and give I then would live, and publish laws  
of love to men,  
And give nor be dejected when they came not with  
their thanks again.  
I would believe and give again,  
Rejected be and love again;  
And through my wisdom would I press the sins and  
lusts that gave me stress,  
Partaking now of deeds that bless—O blessed deed  
to live again!

“Lord, let me preach my wish again:  
These lands unsold and shores of gold, in freedom  
will I give to men;  
Yea, wealth and love will I give when I find them  
touched with life again.  
Kinder than all my kind again,  
Would I live, living once again.  
Rich would it be to wander poor, or nigh the beauti-  
ful stand pure,  
And love the darkling and obscure; and thus I  
would in life again.

“Where is the way to youth again?  
What access hidden, charm forbidden, gives the  
light of living men?  
What cave turns through the years and when it  
opens is the world again?  
O visible gates to see again!  
O to unlock those gates again!  
Shining like hope when hope is near, that I may in  
and disappear,  
And, lost within the pleasure, hear the prelude of  
my life again.

“So fond am I to be again  
The hand-enclasped, the joy-addressed, the laughter-  
sharing guest of men,  
And glow with games that loudened when the  
simplest fancy sang again,  
That must I pass (to live again)  
Through Hades, where, in pomp again,  
The keepers of the secret lurk, near Titans bent in  
monstrous work,  
And lightnings through the thunders jerk—all  
would I dare to live again.

“Those years so good to feel again,  
Those paths to go, those woods to know, where  
amorous women walk with men,  
Their sweets I would not envy when they passed  
nor looked on me again.

For, but to see the trees again,  
Through tortures I would work again;  
Though every hour that I must pass be reptile  
turned and scaled with brass  
Their fangs would feel as pleasant grass, o’er which  
I tread to youth again.

“Thus play despair and hope again;  
Despair, despair, the humble tear of eyes beholding  
happier men,  
Well worth our envy—envy when? Say will they  
hope to live again?—  
To try the mood of Heaven again?  
O let me live to pray again!  
O faithless bed, O rotting boat, upon what waters  
do we float,  
While I on backward visions dote? Ah! Who has  
lived and lived again?”



G#17165153



G# 17165153G

PS 3514

07 S6

1907

JUL 15 1908

10  
11  
12  
13



~~YB 11971~~

Josaphare  
187876

GENERAL LIBRARY - U.C. BERKELEY



8000860927

