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WHO  
LIGHTLY  
SIPS

*AND OTHER POEMS*

JOHN T. TROTH



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SIPS

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JOHN T. TROTH



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# CONTENTS

|                                    | Page |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Who Lightly Sips .....             | 11   |
| Testament .....                    | 12   |
| Madison Square .....               | 13   |
| Nona Goble .....                   | 15   |
| Little Rivers .....                | 16   |
| Storm Wrack .....                  | 17   |
| March Winds .....                  | 18   |
| Could This Thing Be? .....         | 20   |
| Love, Let Me Go .....              | 21   |
| Ballad of the "Steve Girard" ..... | 22   |
| Port Royal and Fort Anne .....     | 25   |
| Behind the Scenes .....            | 26   |
| Could You Have Seen .....          | 28   |
| Transfigured .....                 | 29   |
| Ecce Signum .....                  | 30   |
| On What Far Hillside .....         | 32   |
| Outward Bound .....                | 33   |
| From Out These Times .....         | 34   |
| Babette .....                      | 38   |
| Frankenstein .....                 | 39   |
| The Watcher .....                  | 40   |
| Mountains of Illusion .....        | 41   |
| Chimney-Pots of Paris .....        | 42   |
| The Child Eternal .....            | 44   |
| Madonna of the Alley .....         | 45   |
| Predestined .....                  | 47   |
| Running Off to Sea .....           | 49   |
| Stabb'd by Beauty .....            | 50   |
| Song of the Outbound .....         | 51   |
| Ribbage .....                      | 53   |
| The Second-Hand Book Bin .....     | 54   |

## CONTENTS

|                                 | Page |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Advice to a lover .....         | 55   |
| Prone .....                     | 57   |
| In Days of Yore .....           | 58   |
| O Crowded Caravanserai .....    | 59   |
| Morituri Salutamus .....        | 60   |
| Portrait .....                  | 61   |
| The Room .....                  | 62   |
| Renascent .....                 | 63   |
| Lame Theobald .....             | 64   |
| Lay My Lute Upon the Fire ..... | 66   |
| Fear .....                      | 67   |
| If I Must Live With Men .....   | 68   |
| Lippage .....                   | 69   |
| Taps .....                      | 71   |
| The Tramp .....                 | 72   |
| Rounded Hill-Tops .....         | 73   |
| From the Battery .....          | 74   |
| Monuments .....                 | 76   |
| The Ultimate Tryst .....        | 77   |
| Song of the Wasters .....       | 78   |
| Evergreen .....                 | 79   |
| The "Dyin'" Strain .....        | 80   |
| Voices .....                    | 82   |
| Driftwood Flames .....          | 84   |
| Slumber Song .....              | 85   |
| Indian Summer .....             | 87   |



WHO  
LIGHTLY  
SIPS

*AND OTHER POEMS*



# WHO LIGHTLY SIPS

*AND OTHER POEMS*

## WHO LIGHTLY SIPS . . .

Who lightly sips, when soft upraise  
Love's unreluctant lips,  
A mote, I swear, his wit outweighs,  
Who lightly sips!

Yon bees bowse deep where honey drips,  
Then, humming maudlin lays,  
Reel off like overladen ships.

Drain, then, Love's cup; no louder praise  
Such homage can eclipse:  
He Beauty's bounty ill repays  
Who lightly sips!

## TESTAMENT

Some day pale hands will beckon from the West,  
Bidding me climb the Evening Star's dim stairs;  
And lest that summons take me unawares,  
O Winds, and Earth, and Waves, hear my bequest:  
This fragile barque your ripples have caressed,  
This house that trembled at your softest airs,  
I leave to him of you who sweetest bears  
These bits of song to her I love the best.

Tumble them, Waves, in music at her feet!  
Whisper them, Winds, beyond my groping  
powers!  
And burgeon, old brown Earth, in lyric flowers  
Caroling down her path! For these, in guise  
Of halting rhyme, but struggle to repeat  
The perfect poems that bless me from her eyes!



## MADISON SQUARE

Where mighty streams of traffic vast converge  
The Square lies, like an island hemm'd between  
Huge cliffs and rushing waters,—an unclean,  
Unlovely island, littered by the surge.

Littered with human driftwood of the tide,—  
Flotsam and jetsam cast upon its shore;  
Faces too sad to dream the dreams of yore,—  
Desire-worn, passion-faded, anguish-eyed!

And, sitting here, I watch them come and go:  
Some sink upon the benches in despair,  
Some seize abandoned papers, seeking there  
From habit the frustrations they foreknow.

What hope remains for those who throng this  
spot?  
What healing balm their battered souls can  
purge?  
The city's roar breathes o'er them like a dirge,  
And every sign avows them God-forgot!

But suddenly, from yon sky-groping tower,  
A coverlet of Israfelian sound  
Floats down, like snow in pity of the ground,—  
The Chimes' calm chanting of the quarter-hour.

Four softly-vibrant tones caressing laid  
Down on these huddled forms of sodden care:  
Four perfect themes that thread the awe-hushed  
air

And seem to call to each—"Be not afraid!"

Yet no dull eyes of those about me fill  
With hope,—no head lifts briefly to rejoice;  
They do not even recognize His voice,—  
'Tis they forget, whom God remembers still!

But oh, the pity of it! These whose hells  
My paltry sorrows fathom scarce at all,  
Depart unsoled, and on me doth fall  
This blessed benediction of the bells!

## NONA GOBLE

Nona Goble, Nona Goble,  
  Though its ages since we met,  
Nona Goble, Nona Goble,  
  I can see you blushing yet!  
White below our climbing feet  
  Lay the quays of quaint Grenoble,  
Where the Drac and Isère meet;  
  And above us, Nona Goble,  
(Comme cette heure était heureuse!)  
  Whiter towered La Grande Chartreuse.

Nona Goble, Nona Goble,  
  Swear you've not forgot the day,  
Nona Goble! Nona Goble!  
  But be careful what you say!  
For you're false as false can be,  
  And you never knew Grenoble,—  
But your name has haunted me  
  Since I fished it from a gutter,  
Oddly signed to some old letter—  
  "Nona Goble"—Nona Goble!

Comme cette heure était heureuse!  
Garçon! Encore une Chartreuse!

## LITTLE RIVERS

I love the little rivers of the earth  
That loiter past the walls of little towns:  
They gather such a store of pungent mirth,  
And gossip indiscreetly 'neath the frowns  
Of staid, moss-vestured bridges. They have  
kiss'd  
The feet of children where their waters pass  
O'er gleaming fords; have held, in clinging tryst,  
The body sweet of many a rustic lass  
Who, shyly dipping where the great trout swims,  
Held the pool spellbound, while the current  
swirled  
Bewitched about her brown and lovely limbs!  
I leave proud streams that stride across the  
world  
To greater bards, and pipe a jocund strain  
Of little rivers, meandering o'er the plain.



## STORM WRACK

How should I heed some hinted storm  
Who guessed not that my gods were glass?  
Last night I thought me safe and warm,—  
Yet pallid in the dawn droops Gorm,  
And yon dry dust was Aldefras!

Blow gently on our untried gods,  
Stern wind that winnows world from world!  
Lest when the weary watcher nods  
Great Gorm crash down to bruise our sods,  
Or Aldefras be earthward hurled.

Now must I gather dust from dust,  
And dream how looked the erstwhile whole:  
Blend with parched clay the wine of trust,—  
Surmise and mold, with thrust on thrust,  
Till soars again my shattered soul!

## MARCH WINDS

O you boisterous winds of March,  
That come swaggering and swashbuckling down  
the hills and vales,  
Bragging, always bragging,  
And with your great windy oaths  
Claiming credit for the havoc Winter wrought  
before you,—  
How I love you!

You come bellowing down the valleys,  
Booming over the prostrate wolds,  
And roaring through the protesting woodlands!  
You make a raging sally down to the lake,  
Bullying its blue waters into confusion!  
You clip leaves, branches, and even mighty limbs  
With your undissuadable, invisible sword,  
Sending them crashing down or madly scurrying  
Across the clean-swept open spaces  
As ruthlessly as any wanton boy  
Tries out his young lusty sword-arm  
Upon unoffending dandelion heads!

Yet, for all your braggadocio, O turbulent winds  
of March,  
There is something brave and wholesome in your  
noisy greetings,—  
Your great buffeting claps on the back,  
And somehow, I love you!

Roar through and through my winter-turbid  
frame!

Sweep me clean,—swell out these listless lungs!  
Lift me bodily out of the memory of the old  
year's defeats

And set me down 'way off somewhere, anywhere!

Let me start out again with no inheritance  
Save the consciousness of being myself,  
A living, hoping, pulsating human creature  
Roaming this wonderful earth;  
Hungry ever for winds, waves, and sunsets,  
Thirsty ever for comradeship and love!

## COULD THIS THING BE

The wide-eyed gravity some children wear,  
Has more of dignity than purple robes;  
Their unabashed, clear gaze has all the air  
Of superhuman knowledge, as it probes  
Our vaunted depths; that luminous regard  
Veils mighty secrets it were fain to tell,—  
Deep hints, that on the ruby threshold barr'd,  
Remain forever undivulgible!

O could but one of these adventurers  
So lately poised mid-way of Heaven and earth,  
Master our speech before remembrance blurs  
And he forgets the truths he knew at birth:  
How hungrily we'd listen, could this thing be:  
And yet, it happened once,—near Galilee!



## LOVE, LET ME GO . . .

Love, let me go with thee, content  
Come blossom-time or snow;  
With thee as two streams confluent,  
Love, let me go.

May thou and I so raptly flow,  
Naught save its mystic scent  
Our perfumed passing will bestow.

But, when the world's enravishment  
Shall call me, loud or low,  
And all thy golden coin is spent,—  
Love, let me go!

## BALLAD OF THE "STEVE GIRARD"

Jeered at by the sea-gulls an' twitted by the  
tides,  
Full fathom-deep in Jersey sand my battered  
carcass hides;  
I had dreamed of swift adventure, and of waters  
wide an' free,—  
But the stiffest cruise I made was just from  
Reading to the sea!

They laid me down in Reading-town,—I wasn't  
extra fast;  
I started down the Schu'kill with nary a single  
mast,—  
With three gee-haws insteads o' sails, an' ribs  
that ached with coal,  
But I heard far surf-swept reaches pleadin',  
pleadin' with my soul!

Each trip we docked in Philly I thought they'd  
surely buy  
Me spars, an' sails, an' all the gear that makes  
a ship feel spry;  
But the captain only damn'd the mules, an'  
double-damn'd my bulk,  
So I'd amble back to Reading just a busted-  
hearted hulk!

Just a busted-hearted hulk, with a tendency to  
sulk,  
And planks most awful tantalized with semi-  
weekly salt!

But I done m' dashin' duty, if I wasn't any  
beauty,—

Tho it riled me when they'd holler "Whoa" to  
fetch me to a halt!

Well, for forty year I navigated that consarned  
canal

Along with sech ennoblin' types as Jerry, Maud,  
an' Sal;

Till one Spring we touched at Chester, where  
the Delaware swings wide,—

There I heerd the sea a-coaxin' me, an' wallowed  
deep, an' cried!

I sobbed an' shook until I snapped m' hawser  
like a thread!

To an ebbin' tide an' a settlin' fog I tossed my  
ugly head!

I thumbed m' nose where Reading-town among  
the mountains lay,

Went a-lopin' down the river, past the Capes,  
and out the Bay!

Toward the gallant, scented Indies I turned my  
old snub-nose,

But the Gulf Stream says "Avast, you rube!"  
so north I sadly goes;

Then, just abreast o' Barnegat, a rough Nor'  
easter lands

Me with a narsty wallop high an' dry on these  
here sands!

Just a busted-hearted hulk, with a tendency to  
sulk,

Because I've got to stand the jibes o' this insultin'  
sea!

And m' planks are slowly bucklin', but I often  
fall a-chucklin'—  
It took more 'n ol' Cap Kelly to say "Whoa!" to  
Stephen G.!

PORT ROYAL AND FORT ANNE  
(1604-1924)

Three careless centuries have shuffled o'er  
This earliest outpost of the westering Gaul:  
Two of red War, that saw the rise and fall  
Of fluctuant hopes the Lion or Lily wore,  
And one of healing Peace. Yet still they roar,  
These imperturbable, vast tides, through all  
Thy bays, L'Acadie,—and still wheeling, call  
Bright argent gulls 'round guns that speak no  
more!

What have they wrought, the grim, capricious  
years?  
Flags then unborn and unimagined float  
O'er sleeping bastions and the grass-grown  
moat:  
That clamorous past in travelers' ears alone  
Revives the Mic-Mac yell, the Exiles' tears,  
Where brave De Monts still gazes north—in  
stone!

## BEHIND THE SCENES

For some, the avenue's parade,  
Where mimic world, in smiles arrayed,  
Presents its afternoon charade

In self-defense:

Some crave the pleasant hint conveyed  
By marble gate or carved facade,  
And all the showy effort made  
To veil pretense.

But I foreswear the smirking crowd  
Of shallow thought and accent loud,—  
The cold, self-conscious fronts of proud  
Palatial homes;

For me, the fashion-disavowed  
Back street with nameless charm endowed  
That skirts their rear,—all overboughed  
Where green endomes.

The shady, humble lane that knows  
A franker, truer life than flows  
Past those unreal, forbidding rows  
That front the world:

Where gardens moss-grown walls enclose,  
And over wall full many a rose  
By blushing maids to honest beaux  
May yet be twirled!

And children's laughter, sweetly heard  
Its echo, from some unseen bird;  
The garden gate, the half-caught word



And downward glance:  
A rendezvous, a hope deferred,—  
A glimpse of Beauty, vaguely blurr'd,—  
So much half-seen, but more inferred,  
That spells Romance!

## COULD YOU HAVE SEEN . . .

Between the dead moon and the dawn,  
The ghost of love stole through the gray  
Wan curtains of reluctant day,—  
I saw His pallid hands thereon;

I watched His hurt, reproachful gaze  
Turn wearily from me to you,  
I marked His quiv'ring mouth, and knew  
Again the sweetness of His ways!

And even then I was aware  
The power of our united breath  
Might call the Exile back from death,—  
Could *you* have seen Him, standing there!

## TRANSFIGURED

Watching her face across the talk-filled room  
I scarce could find it beautiful, at first:  
As though some perfect flower, denied perfume,  
With occult want left all my sense athirst.  
But, at the speaking of a name, her eyes  
Leapt into life, like drowsy woodland pools  
That fall asleep at dusk and in surprise  
Awake brimful of spendthrift Evening's jewels;  
Then soft as mist-encumbered moons they glowed,  
While parted lips appeared to greet the ghost  
Of that last, best-remembered kiss bestowed:  
It seemed as though, above some noisy host,  
An ancient oriflamme were lifted high,  
Serene and proud against a leaden sky!

## ECCE SIGNUM

What if my dust, within the decent urn,  
 Should find this fettering of the Flesh had been  
 All vain! Should my defrauded spirit learn  
 That priestly charlatans had fashion'd sin,  
 Snaring in Fear's inevitable gin  
 These pallid bodies that with passion burn!

If pitying Death should come, and whisper low  
 That his implacable, vast surges swell  
 To no shore of a Heaven bought with woe  
 And no such sunless, loveless land as Hell,—  
 What wonder if I curst my creed's cold cell,  
 Shutting me from delights I burned to know!

Were it not better if my wasted hymns  
 Had moved warm flesh to swift desire of me?  
 And if these eyes, that vain devotion dims,  
 Had welled with amorous idolatry  
 Of her who first, at Cyprus, smote the sea  
 With th' unbearable, blinding glory of her limbs!

If my forever-venturing spirit bore  
 The solace of ten thousand memories,—  
 Bright souvenirs of all that I forswore  
 Encargoed in ethereal argosies,—  
 With phantoms of remembered ecstasies  
 Might not I far more gladly put from shore?

No, no! For see, in Pain's long pilgrimage,  
 Aflame with unassuageable desires,  
 The Pilgrims of Passion pass! Their spent veins  
 rage

With Her unquenchable, mad fires,  
Whose Goad ten thousand tortured hopes in-  
spires,—  
Whose Gift is Madness for an heritage!

Wore ever Her wan servitors such face  
As they who sudden by that other sea  
Believed, and were in His reflected grace  
Transfigured, when by holy Galilee  
Christ purged their hearts of doubt's infirmity  
And planted joy unfathom'd in its place?

Behold the Sign! In Bethany's mean room  
It shone upon th' adoring face of her  
Who brake the box, anointing with perfume  
His head beforehand for the sepulcher!  
It blazed again when fear could not deter  
That belov'd disciple from the empty tomb!

Behold the Sign! 'Twas in her wondering eyes  
To whom "Go, sin no more," the Savior said:  
And when, today, the rich and poor arise  
Exalted from memorial Wine and Bread,  
Its light unveils each heart, swift-comforted,—  
Its radiance the humblest glorifies!

O we of little faith, who groping whine  
For "certain proof"! Be certain all the eyes  
Of perfect joy are windows of some shrine,  
That to His love entrusts its destinies  
Whose mark is blazon'd down the centuries,—  
Who cries to us "Behold! Behold the Sign!"

## ON WHAT FAR HILLSIDE . . .

For all its haughty taciturnity  
Man's truest friend remains the steadfast Tree,  
Bestowing Cradle, Home, and last, that Ship  
Wherein he ventures on eternity.

On what far hillside,—faithful, silent, bold,—  
Waiting through sun and rain, through heat and  
cold,  
Stands that kind Tree predestined to embark  
My transient dust within its fragrant hold!



## OUTWARD BOUND

I did not recognize him when he said—  
“This river is thy life: in laughter down  
The mother-hill it fell, a rillet-clown;  
In youth, through meadows flower-carpeted,  
It dallied long, and casually sped  
The mill, with careless hand and boyish frown:  
And when of age, it bore from town to town  
Strange burdens for the living and the dead.

But when, at last, the Ocean claims its own,  
And all thy ships go on, to havens far,  
To what dim spirit-port, what beacon'd star,  
Shall wing th' Invisible Argosy of Thee!”  
I turned to answer him, but was—alone!  
And close at hand I heard the waiting sea.

## FROM OUT THESE TIMES . . .

Long, long I lay,—my body tense with thought,  
 Interminable thought that hurled me on  
 Against vast gates of shimmering guesswork  
     wrought;  
 Straining to glimpse the Truth they ope upon,—  
 Thirsting to know what waits to crown our  
     crimes,  
 What this sick earth may see when it has passed  
     from out these times.

Till, lost in that elusive labyrinth  
 Of thought, at last I slept, and sleeping, seemed  
 To stand upon the alabastine plinth  
 Of some huge column, such as oft I dreamed  
 Might shoulder high the massive portico  
 Of that grand Olympian temple where the calm  
     Gods come and go.

Behind the column crouching low I saw  
 Those hoary, wide-browed, beautiful Gods of old  
 Ranged in their tribune of the ultimate Law;  
 And one, of gloomily heroic mold,  
 Fronting them bravely, a petitioner,—  
 I knew him, and crept forth to hear what manner  
     of plea it were.

'Twas melancholy Charon, whose bleak barge  
 Bears in weird silence to that nether-world  
 Our faring souls from life's back-beckoning marge:  
 Grisly and gaunt he stood,—tall form enfurled  
 In coarse, black sailor's cloak; yet shone his face  
 With radiance unwonted as he pled in that still  
     place.

“Masters,” he cried, “I come to crave a boon,  
And pray you hear me! Since my mother Nyx  
Bore me in yon dim land that knows no moon,  
To ferry sleepers o’er the turbid Styx,—  
What myriad millions have I borne across  
Its reedy tide, impassive, recking not their gain  
or loss!

“I felt contempt for those whom shame-faced  
Death  
Needs harry from the caves wherein they crept  
To cower and cringe before his icy breath!  
Whose very loved ones in white fear upleapt  
At sound of my inevitable oar,  
Leaving the coin and their dead alone on that  
dim shore.

“Then dawned the Golden Age, when heroes bold  
Seized my lean hand, nor shrank before my eye,—  
And I was proud! But on the centuries rolled,—  
Again man cowered, once more he feared to die;  
The Age of Chivalry for a moment burned,—  
'Twas but false dawn,—man waked, then to his  
craven couch returned.

“Ah, but of late, my Masters, have I seen  
On faces of that ever-swelling throng  
That crowds my shore, a Light that’s never been  
Thereon before! From out the West a Song  
Comes ringing, wafting rumors of great wars  
Men wage on Wrong, that cause me grip anew  
mine ebon oars!

“They tell a new Round Table of new Chivalry;  
A nobler knighthood of whole nations, vowed

To crush the power of Might and Tyranny,  
 To ransom peoples 'neath oppression bowed;  
 They hint a Holy War on vaster scale,—  
 Full half a world reconsecrate to guard its Holy  
 Grail!

“Men march, they say, a score of million strong,  
 To feed th' insatiate maw of ravening Mars;  
 Nor count it loss to die to right the wrong,  
 And set new constellations 'mong the stars:  
 No more Death stalks his prey in stealth, but  
 grim,  
 In proud state, waits,—for lo! breast-bared, they  
 come to him!

“Hear now my plea. I know these souls will  
 tread  
 The Elysian Meads with heroes of the Past;  
 Yet, august Gods, that these heroic dead  
 Shall not have fought in vain, grant that, at last,  
 From fields their dauntless blood so freely ran  
 May spring a greater Golden Age, may burst—  
 the Brotherhood of Man!”

So Charon spake; for one long moment rolled—  
 Reverberating through that vaulted place  
 Like undissuadable winds across a wold—  
 His echoed fervor. For one heart-throb's space  
 Full silence fell; my mind ached with suspense!  
 For Charon's quest (and mine!) what answer held  
 Omnipotence?

But all that splendid temple lay illumed  
 With soul-pervading light,—suffused, serene;  
 Till straight the judgment of the Great Gods  
 boomed—



“Go, faithful Ferryman, and row thy barge between  
The bournes of Life and Death in peace, for we  
Who plann’d these times have also plann’d their  
end,— Go, trust, and—see!”

Then Charon and the Gods remoter grew,  
Drifting to far, dim distance on the sea  
Of that portentous Voice which through and  
through  
My brain resounded still,—sonorously  
Booming, as though to mark momentous hours;  
I ’woke—’twas Easter morn! The glad bells  
rocked a hundred towers!

## BABETTE

Somehow I cannot think of you  
As lost to me, Babette:  
You've only wandered down the path  
In search of mignonette,—  
Leaving me poring o'er a book  
Whose leaves are strangely wet!

The book of strayed and empty years  
That held no glimpse of you,—  
I read, so sure that myrtled groves  
Will burst upon my view;  
Yet every hope-turned page reveals  
A sorry sprig of rue!

But you'll come,—in the doorway stand  
Against the sunset glow;  
Creep, as of old, within the arms  
That such grim hunger know,—  
And close my book, with welling eyes,  
Swearing it wasn't so!

You'll laugh, and say "'Twas but a tale;  
Come, hold me close,—forget!  
A kiss for every littlest bloom  
Will buy my mignonette!"

Somehow, I cannot think of you  
As lost to me Babette!



## FRANKENSTEIN

Thank God, the mountains everlasting stand  
Unmoved, and sleepy valleys, as of old,  
Their misty sails of morning prayer unfold;  
For far and wide goes trampling o'er the land  
The Demon Harrower that our fathers plann'd,  
Not pausing to prevision how the mold  
Of ancient custom would be torn and rolled  
To flatness, uninspired beneath his hand.

For this that they acclaimed Democracy  
Lifts not the many to the few's estate,  
But gives the many license to create  
Drab levels for the few to tread with them;  
To make a god of Mediocrity  
And crown a dung-hill with a diadem!

## THE WATCHER

(Suggested by Rodin's "Thinker")

Lone on the peaks a Watcher sits, and broods  
On late frustrations: far beneath him lie  
Lands of fictitious peace,—vast multitudes  
Basking in fatuous ignorance of the Eye  
That darts its smould'ring, speculative flames  
From tall Manhattan's towers to Peter's dome,—  
The cumulative Greed whose lesser names  
Were Macedon, and Corsica, and Rome!  
And if he come in yellow, white, or black,  
'Tis one; no words that stabbing hand will stay,—  
Naught but united might will hurl him back  
Whose wolves strain at the leash, and toast  
"The Day!"

O Peoples of the World, guard well your trust:  
World-conquest wields a sword that knows  
no rust!

## MOUNTAINS OF ILLUSION

The desire-begotten trails that climb the Mountains of Illusion  
Throng with lineal descendants of the Souls that  
blazed them first,  
Whose rapt faces are as banners flung from  
hopes as yet unvanquished,  
Or aghast at glimpsed analogies between the  
Best and Worst.  
Lo! Some are still aflame with unimaginable  
sunsets,  
Full crestward set, and avid for the hinted vales  
of Dream,—  
But others shuffle sadly down from heights  
ablaze behind them,  
Their haunted eyes with ghosts of unforgotten  
fires agleam.

These innumerable, secret ways are fused and  
interwoven,  
Like frail filaments of Fancy in a mind at war  
with Facts:  
Underfoot are stones eroded, or encarnadined  
and glist'ning  
With the mutely crimson signets of unpublish-  
able pacts.  
Some dripped, in splendid squandering, from  
eager feet, unheeded,  
And some from feet reluctantly relinquishing each  
drop;—  
There is blood of you and me upon the Moun-  
tains of Illusion,  
Though God alone knows why we climb, or  
pities when we stop!

## CHIMNEY-POTS OF PARIS

O chimney-pots of Paris,  
How sentry-like you stand  
On sudden crest and craggy height  
About that roofoy land!  
A land whose slatey palisades  
And dormered valleys glow  
With sunset tints that never gild  
The canyons far below.

O chimney-pots of Paris,  
Exotic realm of dreams!  
Day-long your children wander  
Yon madly fevered streams;  
But at nightfall, climbing upward,  
Seek the mansards where they dwell,  
While your blue smoke, curling starward,  
Whispers "Rest ye,—all is well!"

O chimney-pots of Paris,  
Though cast in homely mold,  
Great bards in song and story  
Your glories have extolled:  
It must be they first glimpsed you  
From attics where the arts  
Of bygone Mimi Pinsons  
Made Heaven in their hearts!

Dear chimney-pots of Paris,  
You spell Romance to me!  
And ere youth's panting race is run  
I yearn once more to see

Your friendly silhouettes against  
The evening oriflamme,  
And the sum of all your watch-towers  
Glorified in Notre Dame!

## THE CHILD ETERNAL

Thou art the Mecca of my heart's desire,  
The Faithful all in me personified:  
Thy bosom is a gleaming Mosque,—its pride  
These palpitant twin Domes of snow and fire,  
A-tremble with the tumult of the Choir,  
Kiss-molded by the worshipper outside,  
Who doth to them each secret hope confide  
And with them every ravishment conspire!

Dear love, should one who brings a closer claim  
With lispings worship creep upon thy breast,  
And were they bosom avidly caressed  
By tugging lips and little, paddling hands,—  
Remembering man is only man in name,  
Exile me not from out thy pleasant lands!



## MADONNA OF THE ALLEY

Across the drably uninspired back street  
On which my office windows look askance,  
Blithely, at her monotonous task, there sings  
A little mender of Oriental rugs,  
And, incidentally, of other things.

And every morning, ere my toils begin,  
I look down at her through the alley's murk,—  
(For she is young, and healing to the eyes!)  
And she, a stolen second glancing up,  
Companionably smiles, good-morning-wise.

That brave, gay, tender smiles pervades  
The working-day, and runs through all my hours,  
Just as her busy shuttle threads its way  
Through warp and woof, playing at hide-and-seek  
With her sweet, nimble fingers all the day.

It gleams at me from figures dull and drear,  
It glorifies the most prosaic task;  
And spreads its elfin beauty o'er the drought  
Of bitter broodings, coaxing foolish smiles  
To twitch the corners of my solemn mouth.

And thus, throughout my uneventful days,  
The healing shuttle of a young girl's smile  
Darts here and there, and subtly quickens me  
To hope, and faith, and glamour of the things  
That go to make Youth's guileless ecstasy!

As though this shabby rug that is my Self  
(Desire-worn and Passion-faded!) were  
Confided to her skilful minist'rings,—  
Emerging bright and clean and whole again,  
Mended by the little mender of rugs  
And other things!

## PREDESTINED

As a sea-bird wings thro' the mist and rain  
To the crag and his mate's warm side,  
A thousand leagues o'er the heaving main  
With never a voice to guide,—  
So I, thro' the troubled years, to that nest  
Ordained when the world began,—  
O the gods never fashion'd a lovelier breast  
For the weary head of a man!

As a wave is born on the sea's dim verge  
And, mindless of keel and oar,  
Rolls landward, obeying some cosmic urge,  
Till it breaks in foam on the shore,—  
So I surge homeward from strange, far lands  
To break in joy at your feet,  
And lose myself in the pale gold sands  
Of your beauty, my own, my sweet!

Two globules of moisture will be updrawn  
To separate clouds, and the twain  
In a sudden shower of some April dawn  
Will meet on your window-pane;  
Will meet, and mingle, and grow to one  
By decree of an ancient fate,  
So surely the goals of a world are won  
And mate draws unto mate.

So we in the primeval slime lay curled,  
Predestined, each for each,  
And called to each other across the world  
Ere ever the dawn of speech!

By infinite travail, through infinite years,  
Through many an avatar,—  
And we yet may wing to invisible spheres,  
Each to a separate star!

But now—this world,—the new-born year,  
This life, and Love's new laughter;  
We two, content,—who hold no fear  
What fate may follow after:  
The chapter we read was inscribed by a Hand  
We can trust to write on and on  
To the ultimate, crowning sunset planned  
By the Wisdom that gave us dawn!

## RUNNING OFF TO SEA

The thought of You was first a brook  
Meandering through a meadow;  
It little recked what reeds it shook  
Or where its waters led, O!

Before I knew, the roguish wight  
Had swelled into a river  
That rushes o'er me in its might,  
And sets my banks a-quiver!

I'm carried seaward with the stream,—  
A sailor's fate for me, dear!  
Since, rather late in life, 'twould seem  
I'm running off to sea, dear!

## STABB'D BY BEAUTY . .

O I am stabb'd by Beauty till every nerve  
Aches with sharp agony of thirst unquenched!  
Bright knives of hillock, hollow, and gracious  
curve,  
That turn in the wound, leaving my senses  
drenched  
With floods of feeling scarce to be endured!  
Time was when these same knives flashed in  
a sweet  
And swift caress,—a ravishment that cured  
World-weariness, and winged my lagging feet,—  
But now they kill—and yet, I do not die!  
O would that 'neath those unforgetting skies,  
Awed in the Cyprian sedges I might lie,  
Watching the Mother of all Beauty rise:  
Then plunge, swim her-ward, and with exultant  
hymns,  
Drown in the spreading splendor of her limbs!



## SONG OF THE OUTBOUND

O the windy track again, spinnakers a-crack again,  
'Cross the world an' back again,—  
Up an' down the seas!  
Ain't no use o' settin' home an' wishin' y' could  
go a-roamin',—  
Better watch the bubbles foamin',  
(Dreamin' o' the trees!)

Home-ties an' familiar faces make y' wish for  
other places,—  
Make y' dream of other faces  
Waitin' by the jetty-wall;  
When y'r wishful to be leavin', (ache to see the  
sky-line heavin'!)  
Little good is all their grievin'  
When y' hear the Wander Call!

Little they know of the passion, every nerve an'  
fiber lashin',  
For to feel the salt spray splashin',—  
For to be just what you are!  
What can they know of the yearnin' (like a fiery  
fever burnin'!)  
For some stranger-woman turnin'  
'Round to smile in the bazaar!

It's a wide ol' world y'r born in, an' there's  
little time twixt mornin'  
And old-age's sudden warnin'  
Which nothin' can forestall;

Sure y' don't live very of'en, an' no kind o'  
craft's a coffin  
To up anchor an' sail off in,  
For to see it all.

O the settin' sun's behind us! And to east'ard,  
(to remind us  
Of where a month may find us)  
Shadows creep on sea and sky,  
Like ghosty palm-trees swayin', an' it's me to  
who they're sayin',  
"Come, O come! Don't be delayin'!"  
And I'm goin', so—Goodbye!

## RIBBAGE

The life of man is but a phrase;  
He plans the punctuation,  
But finds instead, to his amaze,  
A mild interrogation!

His proper study is himself,—  
But, being sadly human,  
He, leaving that book on the shelf,  
Sits poring over "Woman,"—

The most elusive, inexact,  
And disconcerting science,—  
It contradicts the Solemn Fact  
And hurls at Truth defiance!

And yet, he reads with all his eyes,  
As though, could he but plumb it,  
'T would fit him for the Paradise  
Envisioned by Mahommet:

Though I suspect the Houri band  
Provided by the Prophet  
Were simpler far to understand,  
Or Paradise were Tophet!

## THE SECOND-HAND BOOK BIN

Threading an alley choked with wintry grime,  
I met an army at "attention,"—ranks  
On serried ranks of motlied mountebanks  
Scarr'd from campaigning with Dictator Time:  
Exiled at whim from out the kindlier clime  
Of blazing hearths, without so much as thanks,  
They stood;—above each veteran phalanx  
Flaunted a shameful banner—"Choice, one dime"!

No mercenaries these, that on review  
In tattered uniforms defied the cold;  
But heroes all, who oft, for me and you,  
Fought the good fight, all debonair and bold  
'Gainst Melancholy, Doubt, and dull Despair;  
I stopped, and gave my best salute, I swear!

## ADVICE TO A LOVER

Nature's an exacting lover;  
To a faint, half-hearted passion  
Some prim beauties she'll uncover  
In a desultory fashion.

If you shun her secret places,—  
Deem her methods rather mussy,  
If you shrink from hot embraces,—  
Over-finical and fussy,

Small hope yours of close communing,—  
Hearing more than half her story;  
Little chance have you of swooning  
To her cosmic, amorous glory!

She demands a lusty suitor,  
And on them has ever lavished  
Rarest bliss who stark salute her,  
Ravishing and being ravished!

Leave all timid reservations,  
Decorous, over-nice, behind you:  
Seek in her a bride's elations,  
Let her as a bridegroom find you.

Half-immersed upon their edges  
Clasp her wanton little rivers,  
Sprawl full-length among the sedges  
Answering their ecstatic shivers!

Press your bosom, bare and heaving,  
To the tree-bole,—match its sighing;  
Partly yours will be its leaving,  
Some of you the fructifying.

Lie where, pinkly-tipped with clover,  
Sunny hill-top breasts are squandering  
Milk of life, slow running over  
Into rillets, valeward wandering.

Match her every sigh and trembling,—  
Curve your body to her hollows;  
Waste no time in shy dissembling,—  
Give! And take what surely follows!

Nature's an exacting lover:  
Would you know as mistress, Summer,  
Let the maiden Spring discover  
All you are, hold nothing from her!



## PRONE

Brown sedges tread their stately sarabands  
Against the sun, along blown brows of dunes;  
Gay pirouetting waves, 'neath flung festoons  
Of spumy lace, beckon with soft, wet hands  
Across the level silence of the sands,  
Begging them join their jubilant platoons:  
The dull sand listens for a many moons,  
And why they do not never understands.

O body, that can only sway and yearn  
In poignant wistfulness to be with those  
Who beckon where the salt spray veering blows!  
O dreams, that dance away across the sea!  
O heart, that must forever faint and burn  
Athirst between the rooted and the free!

## IN DAYS OF YORE . . .

In days of yore they were discreet,  
Those modest, shy, retiring feet;  
    Dainty boots that showed, at best,  
    Their soles,—the uppers were but guessed  
Beneath their crinoline retreat!

With grace and coquetry replete,  
    Like maiden secrets, half-confessed,  
They quickened many a beau's heartbeat  
    In days of yore.

But now, they boldly throng the street,  
And modesty seems obsolete,—  
    The "uppers" give the eye no rest!  
    To glimpse the souls,—ah, that's the quest!  
To think this surfeit was a treat  
    In days of yore!

## O CROWDED CARAVANSERAI

O crowded caravanserai, my Heart,  
Wherein have taken refuge and grown old  
So many hopes,—dost fear to set apart  
One place of honor more? Must thou withhold  
Thy gesture of glad welcoming at last?  
For see, I bring thee now a wanderer  
Before the time of benisons is past,—  
Exult! Forget! Fling wide thy gates to her!  
Shelter this final dream, nor heed the wind,  
The skeptic wind that mutters in thine eaves,—  
'Tis but an old, old doubt that haunts the mind,  
But thou art ever young, and Youth believes:  
Make room, before the remnant of me die—  
One more, O crowded caravanserai!

## MORITURI SALUTAMUS

Way there! Make way, O ye virtuous!  
 Way for the Heirs of the Earth!  
 She, the solicitous Mother,  
 Bequeathes us her ultimate mirth!  
 We (and we know!) shall inherit  
 Gifts that are types of our worth!

Scums of life's ebb-tide she leaves us,—  
 Ashes of impotent powers!  
 Sunlight so old it is rotten!  
 Dust of decayed Passion Flowers!  
 Impulses, footless and sterile,—  
 All these, and more, will be ours!

For she offered the loan of her fairest,  
 And we sneered at her generous terms!  
 We wanted the world for our plaything,  
 From whole solar systems to germs:  
 We couldn't be bothered with reason  
 Who were born to be fodder for worms!

Way for the High Priests of Sorrows!  
 Pilgrims of Passion are we!  
 Wan lords of still-born Tomorrows,—  
 Our throne the gaunt single-branch Tree!  
 Way! Let us pay for our pleasures  
 The Price that we wouldn't foresee!

## PORTRAIT

The many saw less in him than the few,  
Who saw but what imbues a fleeting glance  
With consciousness of insignificance:  
Some hinted evil, some pale good they knew,  
Too vague to give them pause, nor was a clue  
Found in his voice's cautious utterance:  
Behind that unarresting face Romance  
Writhed unsuspected,—save by one or two.

But some of us to whom his doors were wide,  
Saw one who stood undaunted, while a flood  
From fettered feet to hands in honor tied  
Rolled grimly upward, yet whose uplifted eyes  
Saw only Beauty, leaning from the skies,  
And blessed her for the tumults in his blood!



## THE ROOM

How perfect all would be, this winter night,  
Were you but here beside me, fragrant-warm!  
Where chuckling logs uptoss their rosy light  
Against the ceiling, careless of the storm  
That rages 'round this tranquil haven, where  
We two so oft sat curled in this big chair.

The room is just as you would have it, dear,—  
A garrulous, companionable fire,  
Our favorite books conveniently near  
This memory-laden chair—Oh, Heart's Desire,  
All that we loved is here,—it lacks but you  
To consummate the wonted rendezvous!

Well know I how 'twould be: your sweet, rapt  
gaze  
Fixed on the fire, and all the vivid spell  
Of that rare face illumined in its blaze;  
Quick lips, alive with all they had to tell,—  
So you would speak, until, in swift surmise  
You'd feel, and turn to meet, my hungry eyes!

And then, what golden glory in a glance!  
Your eyes, but late with anecdote a gleam,  
Turned suddenly upon my countenance  
In moving, melting look of love supreme!

Oh, darling! Why not in these arms, instead  
Of lying there so still and white and—dead!



## RENASCENT

Sand-cradled on the Cytherean shore,  
Far, far away and long ago, for me  
An awe-struck shell observed The Mystery,  
And down the years a visual echo bore  
Of gleaming breasts the very gods adore,  
Pomegranate mouth, and wave-wet hair blown  
free,  
Slim, gracious hands, and blinding limbs the sea  
Still clung to, as it could not give them o'er!

Only in some such labyrinthine womb  
Could you, my Sweet, have come to me, soft-  
curled,—  
The quintessential wonder of the world  
In miniature,—caressed by ghostly breeze,  
And lulled across the ages by mimic boom  
And murmurous dreams of reminiscent seas!

## LAME THEOBALD

Stalwart, bronzed Bartholomew,  
Strong the stone to smite and hew,

Chaff'd his lame friend Theobald,—  
(Longtime with gentler Muse enthralled)—

Boasting—"With muscles like the stone  
Beneath my mallet, I am known

Wherever Kings have gold to give  
For matchless forms that all but live:

My chisel brings to earth again  
Brave shapes of Goddesses and men,

As on the granite's deathless heart  
I grave the evidence of my art!

Fame's not for thee! On some far day  
When thy last sonnet's long been prey

Of book-worm, mildew, mold, and rot,—  
When e'en they name is world-forgot,

A hundred years thou'lt see endow  
With vaster length and breadth than now

My fame,—immune to Time or shock,  
Anchored in everlasting rock!"

To which lame Theobald rejoin'd:  
" 'Tis true thy fame is marble-groined;

Yet on a day a thousand years  
Beyond the one of thy kind fears,

When thy great statues, at the last,  
Have, crumbling, into fine sand passed,

Two lovers, on the dust thereof,  
Will sit and talk—of Life and Love,—

Will sing my Songs,—fall silent,—kiss!  
Wouldst know a fairer fame than this?"

To which, his face o'er cast with rue,  
No answer found Bartholomew.

## LAY MY LUTE UPON THE FIRE

Lay my lute upon the fire,—  
I am sickened  
Of the hopes that one time quickened  
My desire!

I am wearied of the whirring  
Wings of visions,  
Bruised with beating 'gainst decisions  
Oft recurring.

Down the corridors of Fancy  
Grope un sentient  
Dreams, that vainly call their ancient  
Necromancy.

And my thoughts are worn and bleeding  
From pursuing  
Distant gleams, and pathways wooing,  
Nowhere leading!

. . . . .

On the altar-fire lay it,  
Mute, yet deathless:  
Till you come, belov'd, and breathless,  
Bid me play it!

## FEAR

Stretched in the sedge that blows about the brows  
Of placid cliffs, I watch the distant, slow,  
Mysterious life that weaves its web below  
Within the harbor. Blundering, sheep-like scows  
Follow their tugs,—blue fields the fisher ploughs,  
And moonstruck tides like hopeful suitors flow  
So credulously in, then seaward go,  
Whimpering their grief against unheeding prows.

The gallant, lordly ships at anchor swing  
Asleep, until some hinted challenge blown  
From hidden shores makes fretful timbers groan  
And mocks furled sails. The summons taunts my  
youth!

Dared I but launch my dreams against the sting  
And salt of Disillusionment and Truth!



## IF I MUST LIVE WITH MEN . . .

If I must live with men, then let it be  
Close to the heart's heart of some mighty town,  
Where I may sense the deep, tumultuous pulse  
That mutters rumors of the world's dim fringe.  
High-perched in some sheer canyon would I  
    dwell,  
Lulled by the manifold, incessant roar  
And rumble of the surging stream below,—  
As my cliff-clinging forebears dared to climb  
And nest high up the towering palisades  
Whose granite knees denied the torrent's might!  
But me-ward, lacking those grand harmonies,  
Must rise and swell the Babel-voice of life,—  
The din and clatter of vast traffic, bound  
From mart to mart, from cause to super-cause;  
The speech significant of sirens, bells,  
Of horns and whistles, warnings and alarms;  
That thrilling surmise, when the newsboy host,  
Armed with an extra, sticky from the press,  
All leathern-lunged, descends upon the street,  
Retailing rumbles of some hinted war,  
Exploiting murders, suicides, and trials,  
And out-Chaosing Chaos with shrill cries!  
Then myriad lights, intrigue-perfumed cafes,  
And revelers' songs! The mystic, pregnant hush  
That just precedes sonorous, solemn chimes  
Marking full midnight from deep-echoing towers!  
All these, and twice ten thousand more as well,  
Must be my price, among mad men to dwell!



## LIPPAGE

When man on yielding lips imprints  
  (Those lips that oft malign us!)  
An artless kiss, experience hints  
  He'd best be writing "finis."

But periods are round, it's true,  
  And like a ball keep rollin'  
Until they break themselves in two,  
  Which makes, of course, a colon:

One can't stop thus: in secret fears  
  Man speeds the fatal drama;  
One dot rubs out, the other smears,  
  And—presto—there's a comma,

Which indicates one isn't through,—  
  He hastens to erase it;  
One rub, a dash appears to view,  
  The next, a blank! Hic jacet!

Blanks must be filled: he prints a short,  
  Stern mark of exclamation!  
Which her still smiling lips contort  
  To mild interrogation.

To questions man an answer owes,  
  'Tis quite ill-bred to slight 'em;  
And so, da capo, on it goes  
  Ad lib., ad infinitum!

## WHO LIGHTLY SIPS

The moral is that Beauty's lip  
Is Satan's wine-cup, surely,  
Since man becomes, from his first sip,  
A drunkard, prematurely!

## TAPS

Eddie, an' Jim, an' Squint-eye Joe,  
Barefooted, freckled, and tanned,  
Lay on their backs, with their moth-eaten pup,  
In the warm September glow;  
An' told what they'd be, when they growed up,—  
Eddie, an' Jim, an' Joe.

Eddie, an' Jim, an' Squint-eye Joe  
Were bound to be richer 'n kings:  
Eddie's ambition a judge's wig,  
Jim would explorin' go,  
An' Joe'd be a actor, when he got big,—  
Eddie, an' Jim, an' Joe.

Eddie, and Jim, and Squint-eye Joe  
Lay on the shell-torn earth!  
Jim dragged Joe to a crater's brink  
Where Eddie, dying below,  
Beckoned, and gave him his last drop to drink,—  
Eddie, and Jim, and Joe!

Eddie, and Jim, and Squint-eye Joe  
Lie on their backs—asleep.  
Their Great Adventure has come and passed,  
And crosses three, in a row,  
Tell that they're richer than kings, at last,—  
Eddie, and Jim, and Joe.

## THE TRAMP

The noonday swooned upon the prostrate road  
That panted in the dust of her desire;  
The tramp trudged on beneath red-kerchiefed  
load

To where an opening in the powdered brier  
Showed gracious lawns, a score of arching elms,  
And wide, old-fashioned house with vines  
o'erlaid:

He turned, as one whom memory overwhelms,  
Slunk to the porch, and in the lilacs' shade  
Stood raptly listening. Thro' the open door  
Stole the cool scent of matting,—voices humm'd  
In murmurous content,—and o'er and o'er  
A child her music lesson idly drumm'd;  
Somewhere a hoarse and ancient clock boomed  
“One,”—

He sobbed, and stumbled on beneath the sun!

## ROUNDED HILL-TOPS

A child should be allowed to lie  
On rounded hill-tops, near the sky:

Where clear, life-giving rills well over  
From Nature's breasts, pink-tipped with clover:

And he should talk with them while young,  
Each matching tongue with babbling tongue;

Since, if his boyhood with them flows  
As each to stronger current grows,

He'll trust the rill when it's a stream,—  
Float fearless in its arms, and dream:

When it's a river, he a man,  
Fast friends they'll be as they began;

Then, if he understands it still  
And trusts it, as when on the hill,

He'll shrink not from the last, great tide  
That bears him to the ocean wide,

And unafraid of roar and boom,  
Be wafted back to Nature's womb;

From her green breasts in turn to rise  
On rounded hill-tops, near the skies!



## FROM THE BATTERY

Up from the sea's mysterious anteroom,—  
 Should'ring cold fogs that shroud the lower  
 bay,  
 Loom stately ships that havenward feel their  
 way,  
 Their towering prows all frosted white with  
 spume.

Each regal phantom, hesitant, a-wing,  
 In turn is pounced upon by rude convoys  
 Of stunted, snorting tugs, whose smoke and  
 noise  
 Mar the chaste grandeur of her harboring.

They charge, with bows all matted hemp, like  
 manes,  
 And hawes-hole eyes agleam 'neath shaggy  
 hair,  
 Like thundering bison harrying to its lair  
 Some prehistoric monster of the plains!

Churning small maelstroms of pale emerald foam,  
 They butt, and fret, and bully her upstream  
 With vast officiousness, and to the scream  
 Of raucous whistles warp her surely home.

So is it when those mystic vapors vague  
 That shroud the poet's soul are crystallized  
 Into blest shapes of Beauty,—scarce-surmised,  
 Of restless power to urge, torment, and plague.



Oft might these Ships of Fancy run aground  
On rocks of Grim Reality, or hated shoal  
Of Bitter Truth,—go down with every soul,  
But for the watchful tugs that hover 'round:

The oft-unwelcome tugs of Common Sense,—  
Though smirching with chagrin our nacreous  
dreams,  
Still reconcile what is with what but seems,  
And guide us toward the better recompense.

## MONUMENTS

Come with me into any woodland glade  
And I will show you there a monument:  
No towering shaft of granite, overlaid  
With chiseled art and rich embellishment,—  
No graven legend to immortalize  
The brave, above their tired, crumbling bones,—  
But such a superscription as the eyes  
Of heart alone may read in blackened stones,  
Charred sticks, and ashes of a vanished fire:  
“Here, for an hour, a footsore wanderer  
Unslung the heavy pack of Soul’s Desire,  
Resting him from the search for Things that  
were;  
And world-forgetting, by the world forgot,  
Raised wordless thanks that consecrate the  
spot!”

## THE ULTIMATE TRYST

Once more this breathless rendezvous  
I keep,—sense-fettered feet  
Poised on the wild, sob-shaken shore  
Where Pain and Pleasure meet;  
And on my bared and bloody brow  
Strange winds exulting beat!

Oft, oft I've met them here before,—  
Those friends, whose speech is one:  
Heard Pleasure's long-drawn, quav'ring sigh  
In Pain's caught breath undone;  
Full oft have we such converse held,  
And parted, with the sun.

Full many a night they've held me close  
And had their will of me!  
I've thought my swooning universe  
Too small to hold us three,  
And yet, it has,—until tonight,  
But this our last will be!

. . . . .

The heart's mad, throbbing threnody  
My vision hindereth,—  
Is this, at last, your kiss, old friends?  
This chill your perfumed breath?  
Ah, God! I asked but Joy and Pain,  
But Thou hast sent me—Death!

## SONG OF THE WASTERS

We have bent to the sway of the palpitant Clay,  
 We have listened to palpable lies;  
 The rose-berimm'd highway has been our pet  
 byway

And Hell but a joke in disguise;  
 But now, as we crouch by Life's cold hearth, in  
 vain

We wonder how none of us guessed  
 That these flames that consume us breed ashes,  
 and doom us

To writhe in eternal unrest!

To the uttermost seas on each casual breeze

We have drifted as Destiny willed:  
 We have warbled Love's psalters at various altars,  
 And kissed where we'd better have killed!  
 Broadcast have we scattered the strength of our  
 youth

To pamper each vagrant desire,—  
 Until pleasures and pains are so mixed in our  
 veins

That Thought is a blistering fire!

We seek in our breast the old, magical zest  
 Of emotions that fail to emote!

Our souls are besotted, our bodies berotted,  
 The clutch of Decay's at our throat!

We grovel, and pray for just one more last chance,  
 Yet know, in our hearts, 'twould be vain!

For we fools that are fated with Death to be  
 mated

Would do it all over again!

## EVERGREEN

Green, hopeful, and sweet-scented, in a still,  
Sad world of phantom life and wrinkled  
wraith,—

Such is the hemlock on the snow-cloaked hill  
Among stark trees that lack its sturdy faith,  
And such the heart your bright old eyes reveal,  
Dear ancient lady, where, behind the pane,  
You watch life passing with unlessened zeal,  
And smile on those who do not smile again.  
But I have seen a youthful face that set  
A mournful album's page with light aflame!  
Yours, when you waited (and are waiting yet)  
The bridegroom recreant who never came:  
As guards that dingy back your beauty's sheen,  
So you, your heart,—he'll find it evergreen.



## THE "DYIN'" STRAIN

There's a glorious strain like a golden vein  
That runs through Adam's breed,  
And here and there crops out to square  
Its debt, with some deathless deed;  
It's the strain of the men who can't say "When!"  
Whose reckoning seems awry,—  
The lads that never could learn to live  
But are teaching the world to die!

So here's a toast to the valiant host  
Of those who "didn't belong,"—  
For at last they're quits, those brave misfits,  
Odd sizes that seemed all wrong;  
They were born with a list, an illogical twist,  
And never could quite see "Why,"—  
But they're right with the ultimate scheme of  
things  
For they're teaching us how to die!

And as in their praise this glass I raise,  
In its depths a vision lies  
Of the mothers who gave them a heritage brave,  
(Whom they couldn't teach to be wise!)  
Who, for Love's dear sake, crossed the Bloody  
Lake  
And shattered the Gates of Pain,  
And gallantly gave to the world the gift  
Of the marvelous "dyin'" strain!



Wherever some hope forlorn begged alms,  
The dust their tribute yields,  
For some lie bleached 'neath Cuba's palms,  
And some in Flemish fields;  
And in truth, God wot, there's never a spot  
Beneath the compassionate sky  
But is drenched with the dew of that dauntless  
crew  
That has showed us the way to die!

## VOICES

On the breast of the Night, in the vale of her  
 ebony bosom,  
 I lie, as a lover, foreknowing the daggers of  
 morning,—  
 As a lover may lie, in complaisance divining re-  
 proaches  
     Stilled by his kisses.

The impalpable Night, to my guilty embrace un-  
 responsive,  
 Speaks not comforting word nor with fingers  
 caresses my eyelids,  
 But mutely, with shivering shake of black tresses,  
 unleashes  
     Those that torment me!

Formless and nameless, but never, in God's pity,  
 tongueless,  
 They rest not, nor leave me, but ceaselessly  
 whirring and wheeling  
 On wings of white fury come flutt'ring and beat-  
 ing at windows  
     Fastened forever!

They speak of the Past and their speech makes  
 a myth of the Future;  
 They moan of the Future, but Yesterday's  
 memory denies it!  
 Their whispering voices swell into reverberant  
 thunder,  
     Daring me name it!

“Name but one day, or an hour, when the You  
of your dreaming  
Cast out the You we are haunting, yielding the  
vision  
Whole-hearted allegiance,—but name it and we,  
swiftly vanishing,  
Grant you Tomorrow!”

I seek in my brain, I drag through its corridors  
winding,  
I cry to the Past, but no Hour wings back to  
redeem me:  
The Voices go on through the night, and the  
wings keep on beating,  
Beating in darkness!

## DRIFTWOOD FLAMES

Love, there will come a day an unseen hand  
Will turn the page of Memory, and bring  
Dim recollections of a dimmer land;  
Some idle hour, and you remembering  
A long-forgotten name, you know not why,—  
Briefly amazed to find you could recall  
Its unromantic sound. And should you sigh,  
More for the past than it—will that be all?  
Will it be no more to you than a name,—  
A bit of driftwood cast upon the shore  
Of reminiscence? Or to sudden flame  
Will burst some ember in your bosom's core,  
And will you close your eyes, and know again  
That distant kiss and all the ancient pain?

## SLUMBER SONG

O scimitar Moon in the morning skies,  
O Sword that scatters the stars,  
Stand guard o'er the white little bed where lies  
My little white love, asleep,—  
My blossom that's folded deep  
In a dream set adrift from Mars:  
O scimitar Moon in the morning skies,  
O Sword that scatters the stars!

O crescent Moon on the brows of Day,  
O Cradle that rocks in the sky,  
Swing low, swing low, for she's tired with play!  
Tho' your ends, like Love's, I ween  
May be sharp, there's a couch between  
Softly swung, where my love may lie:  
O crescent Moon on the brows of Day,  
O Cradle that rocks in the sky!

O silvery Sickle that garners Dawn,  
O Moon that will melt into day,  
Come down, come down, when your blade's  
withdrawn  
From heavens afire with sun,  
And bring my sweet, slumbering one  
A harvest of sheaves from the Milky Way:  
O silvery Sickle that garners Dawn,  
O Moon that will melt into day!

O slim, golden Galley with star-dust pearled,  
O Galley at anchor on high,  
Sail down to the body so tenderly furled

And carry her spirit afar  
To shores where the sugar-plums are,—  
But bring her back safe to my arms, lest I die!  
O slim, golden Galley with star-dust pearled,  
O Galley at anchor on high!



## INDIAN SUMMER

Over the drowsing hedgerows and the haws,  
A gold and purple spell is folded low  
In softly-booming silences, as though  
The Summer's loveliness makes tremulous pause  
For one long look into our eyes, and draws  
A deeply-murmurous sigh that she must go:  
Yet her wan, misted gaze is all aglow  
With hints of what will come when Winter thaws!

An early autumn shivers through my veins;  
Its coronal of brave vermilion  
Flames on my heart,—a hint of burnished  
bronze  
To come, and then dull, rusty browns to bend  
In sorrow over Love's bright, brief domains:  
Can this be all? Is this, so soon, the end?

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