

DREAMS & DUST

POEMS BY DON MARQUIS

TO MY MOTHER VIRGINIA WHITMORE MARQUIS

PROEM

"SO LET THEM PASS, THESE SONGS OF MINE"

So let them pass, these songs of mine, Into oblivion, nor repine;
Abandoned ruins of large schemes, Dimmed lights adrift from nobler
dreams,

Weak wings I sped on quests divine, So let them pass, these songs of
mine. They soar, or sink ephemeral-- I care not greatly which befall!

For if no song I e'er had wrought, Still have I loved and laughed and
fought; So let them pass, these songs of mine; I sting too hot with life to
whine!

Still shall I struggle, fail, aspire, Lose God, and find Gods in the mire,
And drink dream-deep life's heady wine-- So let them pass, these songs of
mine.

DAYLIGHT HUMORS

THIS IS ANOTHER DAY

I AM mine own priest, and I shrive myself Of all my wasted
yesterdays. Though sin And sloth and foolishness, and all ill weeds Of
error, evil, and neglect grow rank And ugly there, I dare forgive myself
That error, sin, and sloth and foolishness. God knows that yesterday I
played the fool; God knows that yesterday I played the knave; But shall I
therefore cloud this new dawn o'er With fog of futile sighs and vain

regrets?

This is another day! And flushed Hope walks Adown the sunward slopes with golden shoon. This is another day; and its young strength Is laid upon the quivering hills until, Like Egypt's Memnon, they grow quick with song. This is another day, and the bold world Leaps up and grasps its light, and laughs, as leapt Prometheus up and wrenched the fire from Zeus.

This is another day--are its eyes blurred With maudlin grief for any wasted past? A thousand thousand failures shall not daunt! Let dust clasp dust; death, death--I am alive! And out of all the dust and death of mine Old selves I dare to lift a singing heart And living faith; my spirit dares drink deep Of the red mirth mantling in the cup of morn.

APRIL SONG

FLEET across the grasses Flash the feet of Spring, Piping, as he passes Fleet across the grasses, "Follow, lads and lasses! Sing, world, sing!" Fleet across the grasses Flash the feet of Spring!

Idle winds deliver Rumors through the town, Tales of reeds that quiver, Idle winds deliver, Where the rapid river Drags the willows down-- Idle winds deliver Rumors through the town.

In the country places By the silver brooks April airs her graces; In the country places Wayward April paces, Laughter in her looks; In the country places By the silver brooks.

Hints of alien glamor Even reach the town; Urban muses stammer Hints of alien glamor, But the city's clamor Beats the voices down; Hints of alien glamor Even reach the town.

THIS EARTH, IT IS ALSO A STAR

WHERE the singers of Saturn find tongue, Where the Galaxy's lovers embrace, Our world and its beauty are sung! They lean from their casements to trace If our planet still spins in its place; Faith fables the thing that we are, And Fantasy laughs and gives chase: This earth, it is also a star!

Round the sun, that is fixed, and hung For a lamp in the darkness of

space We are whirled, we are swirled, we are flung; Singing and
shining we race And our light on the uplifted face Of dreamer or
prophet afar May fall as a symbol of grace: This earth, it is also a star!

Looking out where our planet is swung Doubt loses his writhen
grimace, Dry hearts drink the gleams and are young;-- Where agony's
boughs interlace His Garden some Jesus may pace, Lifting, the wan
avatar, His soul to this light as a vase! This earth, it is also a star!

Great spirits in sorrowful case Yearn to us through the vapors that
bar: Canst think of that, soul, and be base?-- This earth, it is also a star!

THE NAME

IT shifts and shifts from form to form, It drifts and darkles, gleams
and glows; It is the passion of the storm, The poignance of the rose;
Through changing shapes, through devious ways, By noon or
night, through cloud or flame, My heart has followed all my days
Something I cannot name.

In sunlight on some woman's hair, Or starlight in some woman's
eyne, Or in low laughter smothered where Her red lips wedded mine,
My heart hath known, and thrilled to know, This unnamed presence
that it sought; And when my heart hath found it so, "Love is the name,"
I thought.

Sometimes when sudden afterglows In futile glory storm the skies
Within their transient gold and rose The secret stirs and dies; Or when
the trampling morn walks o'er The troubled seas, with feet of flame,
My awed heart whispers, "Ask no more, For Beauty is the name!"

Or dreaming in old chapels where The dim aisles pulse with
murmurings That part are music, part are prayer-- (Or rush of hidden
wings) Sometimes I lift a startled head To some saint's carven
countenance, Half fancying that the lips have said, All names mean
God, perchance!"

THE BIRTH

THERE is a legend that the love of God So quickened under Mary's

heart it wrought Her very maidenhood to holier stuff. . . . However that may be, the birth befell Upon a night when all the Syrian stars Swayed tremulous before one lordlier orb That rose in gradual splendor, Paused, Flooding the firmament with mystic light, And dropped upon the breathing hills A sudden music Like a distillation from its gleams; A rain of spirit and a dew of song!

A MOOD OF PAVLOWA

THE soul of the Spring through its body of earth Bursts in a bloom of fire, And the crocuses come in a rainbow riot of mirth.... They flutter, they burn, they take wing, they aspire. . . . Wings, motion and music and flame, Flower, woman and laughter, and all these the same! She is light and first love and the youth of the world, She is sandaled with joy . . . she is lifted and whirled, She is flung, she is swirled, she is driven along By the carnival winds that have torn her away From the coronal bloom on the brow of the May. . . . She is youth, she is foam, she is flame, she is visible Song!

THE POOL

REACH over, my Undine, and clutch me a reed-- Nymph of mine idleness, notch me a pipe-- For I am fulfilled of the silence, and long For to utter the sense of the silence in song.

Down-stream all the rapids are troubled with pebbles That fether and fret what the water would utter, And it rushes and splashes in tremulous trebles; It makes haste through the shallows, its soul is aflutter;

But here all the sound is serene and outspread In the murmurous moods of a slow-swirling pool; Here all the sounds are unhurried and cool; Every silence is kith to a sound; they are wed, They are mated, are mingled, are tangled, are bound; Every hush is in love with a sound, every sound By the law of its life to some silence is bound.

Then here will we hide; idle here and abide, In the covert here, close by the waterside-- Here, where the slim flattered reeds are aquiver With the exquisite hints of the reticent river, Here, where the lips of this pool are the lips Of all pools, let us listen and question and wait; Let us hark

to the whispers of love and of death, Let us hark to the lispings of life and
of fate-- In this place where pale silences flower into sound Let us strive
for some secret of all the profound Deep and calm Silence that meshes
men 'round! There's as much of God hinted in one ripple's splashes--
- There's as much of Truth glints in yon dragon-fly's flight--
There's as much Purpose gleams where yonder trout flashes As
in--any book else!--could we read things aright.

Then nymph of mine indolence, here let us hide, Learn, listen, and
question; idle here and abide Where the rushes and lilies lean low to the
tide.

"THEY HAD NO POET . . ."

"Vain was the chief's, the sage's pride! They had no poet and they
died."--POPE.

By Tigris, or the streams of Ind, Ere Colchis rose, or Babylon,
Forgotten empires dreamed and sinned, Setting tall towns against the
dawn,

Which, when the proud Sun smote upon, Flashed fire for fire and
pride for pride; Their names were . . . Ask oblivion! . . . "They had no
poet, and they died."

Queens, dusk of hair and tawny-skinned, That loll where fellow
leopards fawn . . . Their hearts are dust before the wind, Their loves,
that shook the world, are wan!

Passion is mighty . . . but, anon, Strong Death has Romance for his
bride; Their legends . . . Ask oblivion! . . . "They had no poet, and
they died."

Heroes, the braggart trumps that dinned Their futile triumphs,
monarch, pawn, Wild tribesmen, kingdoms disciplined, Passed like a
whirlwind and were gone;

They built with bronze and gold and brawn, The inner Vision still
denied; Their conquests . . . Ask oblivion! . . . "They had no poet, and
they died."

Dumb oracles, and priests withdrawn, Was it but flesh they deified?
Their gods were . . . Ask oblivion! . . . "They had no poet, and they
died."

NEW YORK

SHE is hot to the sea that crouches beside, Human and hot to the cool stars peering down, My passionate city, my quivering town, And her dark blood, tide upon purple tide, With throbs as of thunder beats, With leaping rhythms and vast, is swirled Through the shaken lengths of her veined streets... She pulses, the heart of a world!

I have thrilled with her ecstasy, agony, woe-- Hath she a mood that I do not know? The winds of her music tumultuous have seized me and swayed me, Have lifted, have swung me around In their whorls as of cyclonic sound; Her passions have torn me and tossed me and brayed me; Drunken and tranced and dazzled with visions and gleams,

I have spun with her dervish priests; I have searched to the souls of her hunted beasts And found love sleeping there; I have soared on the wings of her flashing dreams; I have sunk with her dull despair; I have sweat with her travails and cursed with her pains; I have swelled with her foolish pride; I have raged through a thick red mist at one with her branded Cains, With her broken Christs have died.

O beautiful half-god city of visions and love! O hideous half-brute city of hate! O wholly human and baffled and passionate town! The throes of thy burgeoning, stress of thy fight, Thy bitter, blind struggle to gain for thy body a soul, I have known, I have felt, and been shaken thereby! Wakened and shaken and broken, For I hear in thy thunders terrific that throb through thy rapid veins The beat of the heart of a world.

A HYMN

(1914)

CLOTHED on with thunder and with steel And black against the dawn The whirling armies clash and reel. . . . A wind, and they are gone Like mists withdrawn, Like mists withdrawn!

Like clouds withdrawn, like driven sands, Earth's body vanisheth:

One solid thing unconquered stands, The ghost that humbles death.
All else is breath, All else is breath!

Man rose from out the stinging slime, Half brute, and sought a soul,
And up the starrier ways of time, Half god, unto his goal,

He still must climb, He still must climb!

What though worlds stagger, and the suns Seem shaken in their
place, Trust thou the leaping love that runs Creative over space:
Take heart of grace, Take heart of grace!

What though great kingdoms fall on death Before the stabbing
blade, Their brazen might was only breath, Their substance but a
shade-- Be not dismayed, Be not dismayed!

Man's dream which conquered brute and clod Shall fail not, but
endure, Shall rise, though beaten to the sod, Shall hold its vantage sure--
- As sure as God, As sure as God!

THE SINGER

A LITTLE while, with love and youth, He wandered, singing:--
He felt life's pulses hot and strong Beat all his rapid veins along;
He wrought life's rhythms into song: He laughed, he sang the
Dawn! So close, so close to life he dwelt That at rare times and
rapt he felt The fleshly barriers yield and melt; He trembled,
looking on Creation at her miracles; His soul-sight pierced the
earthly shells And saw the spirit weave its spells, The veil of
clay withdrawn;-- A little while, with love and youth, He wandered,
singing!

A little while, with age and death, He wanders, dreaming;--

No more the thunder and the urge Of earth's full tides that
storm the verge Of heaven with their sweep and surge Shall
lift, shall bear him on; Where is the golden hope that led Him
comrade with the mighty dead? The love that aureoled his head?--
The glory is withdrawn! How shall one soar with broken wings?
The leagued might of futile things Wars with the heart that dares and
sings;-- It is not always Dawn! A little while, with age and death,
He wanders, dreaming.

WORDS ARE NOT GUNS

Put by the sword (a dreamer saith), The years of peace draw nigh!
Already the millennial dawn Makes red the eastern sky!

Be not deceived. It comes not yet! The ancient passions keep
Alive beneath their changing masks. They are not dead. They sleep.

Surely peace comes. As sure as Man Rose from primeval slime.
That was not yesterday. There's still A weary height to climb!

And we can dwell too long with dreams And play too much with
words, Forgetting our inheritance Was bought and held with swords.

But Truth (you say) makes tyrants quail-- Beats down embattled
Wrong? If truth be armed! Be not deceived. The strife is to the strong.

Words are not guns. Words are not ships. And ships and guns
prevail. Our liberties, that blood has gained, Are guarded, or they fail.

Truth does not triumph without blows, Error not tamely yields. But
falsehood closes with quick faith, Fierce, on a thousand fields.

And surely, somewhat of that faith Our fathers fought for clings!
Which called this freedom's hemisphere, Despite Earth's leagued kings.

Great creeds grow thews, or else they die. Thought clothed in deed
is lord. What are thy gods? Thy gods brought love? They also
brought a sword.

Unchallenged, shall we always stand, Secure, apart, aloof? Be not
deceived. That hour shall come Which puts us to the proof.

Then, that we hold the trust we have Safeguarded for our sons, Let
us cease dreaming! Let us have More ships, more troops, more guns!

WITH THE SUBMARINES

ABOVE, the baffled twilight fails; beneath, the blind snakes
creep; Beside us glides the charnel shark, our pilot through the deep;
And, lurking where low headlands shield from cruising scout and
spy, We bide the signal through the gloom that bids us slay or die.

All watchful, mute, the crouching guns that guard the strait sea
lanes-- Watchful and hawklike, plumed with hate, the desperate
aeroplanes-- And still as death and swift as fate, above the darkling
coasts, The spying Wireless sows the night with troops of stealthy
ghosts,

While hushed through all her huddled streets the tide-walled city
waits The drumming thunders that announce brute battle at her gates.

Southward a hundred windy leagues, through storms that blind
and bar, Our cheated cruisers search the waves, our cap- tains seek
the war; But here the port of peril is; the foeman's dread- noughts
ride Sullen and black against the moon, upon a sullen tide. And only
we to launch ourselves against their stark advance-- To guide
uncertain lightnings through these treach- erous seas of chance!

.
And now a wheeling searchlight paints a signal on the night; And
now the bellowing guns are loud with the wild lust of fight.

.
And now, her flanks of steel apulse with all the power of hell,
Forth from the darkness leaps in pride a hateful miracle, The flagship
of their Admiral--and now God help and save!-- We challenge Death
at Death's own game; we sink beneath the wave!

.
Ah, steady now--and one good blow--one straight stab through
the gloom-- Ah, good!--the thrust went home!--she founders--
flounders to her doom!-- Full speed ahead!--those damned quick-firing
guns --but let them bark-- What's that--the dynamos?--they've got us,
men! --Christ! in the dark!

NICHOLAS OF MONTENEGRO

(1912)

HE speaks as straight as his rifles shot, As straight as a thrusting
blade, Waiting the deed that shall trouble the truce His savage guns
have made.

"You have dared the wrath of a dozen states," Was the challenge
that he heard; "We can die but once!" said the grim old King As he
gripped his mountain sword.

"For I paid in blood for the town I took, The blood of my brave
men slain,-- And if you covet the town I took You must buy it with
blood again!"

Stern old King of the stark, black hills, Where the lean, fierce

eagles breed, Your speech rings true as your good sword rings-- And
you are a king indeed!

DICKENS

"The only book that the party had was a volume of Dickens. During the six months that they lay in the cave which they had hacked in the ice, waiting for spring to come, they read this volume through again and again."--From a newspaper report of an antarctic expedition.

HUDDLED within their savage lair They hearkened to the
prowling wind; They heard the loud wings of despair . . . And madness
beat against the mind. . . . A sunless world stretched stark outside As if it
had cursed God and died; Dumb plains lay prone beneath the weight Of
cold unutterably great; Iron ice bound all the bitter seas, The brutal hills
were bleak as hate. . . . Here none but Death might walk at ease!

Then Dickens spoke, and, lo! the vast Unpeopled void stirred into
life;

The dead world quickened, the mad blast Hushed for an hour its
idiot strife With nothingness. . . .

And from the gloom, Parting the flaps
of frozen skin, Old friends and dear came trooping in, And light and
laughter filled the room. . . . Voices and faces, shapes beloved,
Babbling lips and kindly eyes, Not ghosts, but friends that lived and
moved . . . They brought the sun from other skies, They wrought the
magic that dispels The bitterer part of loneliness . . . And when they
vanished each man dreamed His dream there in the wilderness. . . . One
heard the chime of Christmas bells, And, staring down a country lane, Saw
bright against the window-pane The firelight beckon warm and red. . . .
And one turned from the waterside Where Thames rolls down his slothful
tide To breast the human sea that beats Through roaring London's battered
streets

And revel in the moods of men. . . . And one saw all the April hills
Made glad with golden daffodils, And found and kissed his love again. . . .

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By all the troubled hearts he cheers In homely ways or by lost trails,

By all light shed through all dark years When hope grows sick and
courage quails, We hail him first among his peers; Whether we sorrow,
sing, or feast, He, too, hath known and understood-- Master of many
moods, high priest Of mirth and lord of cleansing tears!

A POLITICIAN

LEADER no more, be judged of us! Hailed Chief, and loved, of
yore-- Youth, and the faith of youth, cry out: Leader and Chief no
more!

We dreamed a Prophet, flushed with faith, Content to toil in pain If
that his sacrifice might be, Somehow, his people's gain.

We saw a vision, and our blood Beat red and hot and strong: "Lead
us (we cried) to war against Some foul, embattled wrong!"

We dreamed a Warrior whose sword Was edged for sham and
shame; We dreamed a Statesman far above The vulgar lust for fame.

We were not cynics, and we dreamed A Man who made no truce
With lies nor ancient privilege Nor old, entrenched abuse.

We dreamed . . . we dreamed . . . Youth dreamed a dream!
And even you forgot Yourself, one moment, and dreamed, too-- Struck,
while your mood was hot!

Struck three or four good blows . . . and then Turned back to easier
things: The cheap applause, the blatant mob, The praise of underlings!

Praise . . . praise . . . was ever man so filled, So avid still, of praise?
So hungry for the crowd's acclaim, The sycophantic phrase?

O you whom Greatness beckoned to . . . O swollen Littleness Who
turned from Immortality To fawn upon Success!

O blind with love of self, who led Youth's vision to defeat, Bawling
and brawling for rewards, Loud, in the common street!

O you who were so quick to judge-- Leader, and loved, of yore--
Hear now the judgment of our youth: Leader and Chief no more!

THE BAYONET

(1914)

THE great guns slay from a league away, the death- bolts fly
unseen, And bellowing hill replies to hill, machine to brute machine,
But still in the end when the long lines bend and the battle hangs in
doubt They take to the steel in the same old way that their fathers
fought it out-- It is man to man and breast to breast and eye to
bloodshot eye And the reach and twist of the thrusting wrist, as it
was in the days gone by!

Along the shaken hills the guns their drumming thunder roll--
But the keen blades thrill with the lust to kill that leaps from the
slayer's soul!

For hand and heart and living steel, one pulse of hate they feel. Is
your clan afraid of the naked blade? Does it flinch from the bitter
steel? Perish your dreams of conquest then, your swollen hopes and
bold, For empire dwells with the stabbing blade, as it did in the days
of old!

THE BUTCHERS AT PRAYER

(1914)

EACH nation as it draws the sword And flings its standard to the
air Petitions piously the Lord-- Vexing the void abyss with prayer.

O irony too deep for mirth! O posturing apes that rant, and dare
This antic attitude! O Earth, With your wild jest of wicked prayer!

I dare not laugh . . . a rising swell Of laughter breaks in shrieks
somewhere-- No doubt they relish it in Hell, This cosmic jest of Earth
at prayer!

SHADOWS

HAUNTED

(THE GHOST SPEAKS)

A GHOST is the freak of a sick man's brain? Then why do ye start and shiver so? That's the sob and drip of a leaky drain? But it sounds like another noise we know! The heavy drops drummed red and slow, The drops ran down as slow as fate-- Do ye hear them still?--it was long ago!-- But here in the shadows I wait, I wait!

Spirits there be that pass in peace; Mine passed in a whorl of wrath and dole; And the hour that your choking breath shall cease I will get my grip on your naked soul-- Nor pity may stay nor prayer cajole-- I would drag ye whining from Hell's own gate: To me, to me, ye must pay the toll! And here in the shadows I wait, I wait!

The dead they are dead, they are out of the way? And a ghost is the whim of an ailing mind? Then why did ye whiten with fear to-day When ye heard a voice in the calling wind? Why did ye falter and look behind At the creeping mists when the hour grew late? Ye would see my face were ye stricken blind! And here in the shadows I wait, I wait!

Drink and forget, make merry and boast, But the boast rings false and the jest is thin-- In the hour that I meet ye ghost to ghost, Stripped of the flesh that ye skulk within, Stripped to the coward soul 'ware of its sin, Ye shall learn, ye shall learn, whether dead men hate! Ah, a weary time has the waiting been, But here in the shadows I wait, I wait!

A NIGHTMARE

LEAGUES before me, leagues behind, Clamor warring wastes of flood, All the streams of all the worlds Flung together, mad of mood; Through the canon beats a sound, Regular of interval, Distant,

drumming, muffled, dull, Thunderously rhythmical;

Crafts slip by my startled soul-- Soul that cowers, a thing apart--
They are corpuscles of blood! That's the throbbing of a heart! God of
terrors!--am I mad?-- Through my body, mine own soul, Shrunken to
an atom's size, Voyages toward an unguessed goal!

THE MOTHER

THE mother by the gallows-tree, The gallows-tree, the gallows-tree,
(While the twitching body mocked the sun) Lifted to Heaven her broken
heart And called for sympathy.

Then Mother Mary bent to her, Bent from her place by God's left
side, And whispered: "Peace--do I not know?-- My son was crucified!"

"O Mother Mary," answered she, "You cannot, cannot enter in To
my soul's woe--you cannot know-- For your son wrought no sin!"

(And men whose work compelled them there, Their hearts were
stricken dead;

They heard the rope creak on the beam; I thought I heard the
frightened ghost Whimpering overhead.)

The mother by the gallows-tree, The gallows-tree, the gallows-tree,
Lifted to Christ her broken heart And called in agony.

Then Lord Christ bent to her and said: "Be comforted, be
comforted; I know your grief; the whole world's woe I bore upon my
head."

"But O Lord Christ, you cannot know, No one can know," she said,
"no one"-- (While the quivering corpse swayed in the wind)-- "Lord Christ,
no one can understand Who never had a son!"

IN THE BAYOU

LAZY and slow, through the snags and trees Move the sluggish
currents, half asleep; Around and between the cypress knees, Like
black, slow snakes the dark tides creep-- How deep is the bayou beneath
the trees? "Knee-deep, Knee-deep, Knee-
deep, Knee-deep!" Croaks the big bullfrog

of Reelfoot Lake From his hiding-place in the draggled brake.

What is the secret the slim reeds know That makes them to shake and
to shiver so, And the scared flags quiver from plume to foot?-- The frogs
pipe solemnly, deep and slow: "Look under the root!
Look under the root!"

The hoarse frog croaks and the stark owl hoots Of a mystery moored
in the cypress roots.

Was it love turned hate? Was it friend turned foe? Only the frogs and
the gray owl know, For the white moon shrouded her face in a mist At
the spurt of a pistol, red and bright-- At the sound of a shriek that stabbed
the night-- And the little reeds were frightened and whist; But always
the eddies whimper and choke, And the frogs would tell if they could, for
they croak: "Deep, deep! Death-deep!
Deep, deep! Death-deep!" And the dark tide
slides and glisters and glides Snakelike over the secret it hides.

THE SAILOR'S WIFE SPEAKS

YE are dead, they say, but ye swore, ye swore, Ye would come to
me back from the sea! From out of the sea and the night, ye cried, Nor the
crawling weed nor the dragging tide Could hold ye fast from me:--
Come, ah, come to me!

Three spells I have laid on the rising sun And three on the waning
moon-- Are ye held in the bonds of the night or the day Ye must loosen
your bonds and away, away! Ye must come where I wait ye, soon--
Ah, soon! soon! soon!

Three times I have cast my words to the wind, And thrice to the
climbing sea; If ye drift or dream with the clouds or foam Ye must drift
again home, ye must drift again home--

Wraith, ye are free, ye are free; Ghost, ye are free, ye are free!

Are the coasts of death so fair, so fair? But I wait ye here on the
shore! It is I that ye hear in the calling wind-- I have stared through the
dark till my soul is blind! O lover of mine, ye swore, Lover of mine,
ye swore!

HUNTED

Oh, why do they hunt so hard, so hard, who have no need of food?
Do they hunt for sport, do they hunt for hate, do they hunt for the
lust of blood?

.
If I were a god I would get me a spear, I would get me horse and
dog, And merrily, merrily I would ride through covert and brake and
bog,

With hound and horn and laughter loud, over the hills and away--
For there is no sport like that of a god with a man that stands at bay!

Ho! but the morning is fresh and fair, and oh! but the sun is
bright, And yonder the quarry breaks from the brush and heads for
the hills in flight;

A minute's law for the harried thing--then follow him, follow him
fast, With the bellow of dogs and the beat of hoofs and the mellow
bugle's blast.

.
Hillo! Halloo! they have marked a man! there is sport in the
world to-day-- And a clamor swells from the heart of the wood that
tells of a soul at bay!

A DREAM CHILD

WHERE tides of tossed wistaria bloom Foam up in purple
turbulence, Where twining boughs have built a room And wing'd winds
pause to garner scents And scattered sunlight flecks the gloom, She
broods in pensive indolence.

What is the thought that holds her thrall, That dims her sight with
unshed tears? What songs of sorrow droop and fall In broken music for
her ears? What voices thrill her and recall The poignant joy of happier
years?

She dreams 'tis not the winds which pass That whisper through the
shaken vine; Whose footstep stirs the rustling grass None else that

listened might divine; She sees her child that never was Look up with
longing in his eyne.

Unkissed, his lifted forehead gains A grace not earthly, but more
rare-- For since her heart but only feigns, Wherefore should love not
feign him fair? Put blood of roses in his veins, Weave yellow sunshines
for his hair?

All ghosts of little children dead That wander wistful, uncaressed,
Their seeking lips by love unfed, She fain would cradle on her breast
For his sweet sake whose lonely head Has never known that tender rest.

And thus she sits, and thus she broods, Where drifted blossoms
freak the grass; The winds that move across her moods Pulse with low
whispers as they pass, And in their eerier interludes She hears a voice
that never was.

ACROSS THE NIGHT

MUCH listening through the silences, Much staring through the
night, And lo! the dumb blind distances Are bridged with speech and
sight!

Magician Thought, informed of Love, Hath fixed her on the air--
Oh, Love and I laughed down the fates And clasped her, here as there!

Across the eerie silences She came in headlong flight, She stormed
the serried distances, She trampled space and night!

Oh, foolish scientists might give This miracle a name-- But Love
and I care but to know That when we called she came.

And since I find the distances Subservient to my thought, And of
the sentient silences More vital speech have wrought,

Then she and I will mock Death's self, For all his vaunted might--
There are no gulfs we dare not leap, As she leapt through the night!

EA CHANGES

I MORNING

WE stood among the boats and nets; We saw the swift clouds fall,

We watched the schooners scamper in Before the sudden squall;-- The
jolly squall strove lustily To whelm the sheltered street-- The merry
squall that piled the seas About the patient headland's knees And
chased the fishing fleet.

She laughed; as if with wings her mirth Arose and left the wingless
earth And all tame things behind; Rose like a bird, wild with delight
Whose briny pinions flash in flight Through storm and sun and wind.

Her laughter sought those skies because Their mood and hers were
one, For she and I were drunk with love And life and storm and sun!

And while she laughed, the Sun himself Leapt laughing through the
rain And struck his harper hand along The ringing coast; and that wind-
song Whose joy is mixed with pain Forgot the undertone of grief
And joined the jocund strain, And over every hidden reef Whereon the
waves broke merrily Rose jets and sprays of melody And leapt and
laughed again.

II MOONLIGHT

We stood among the boats and nets . . . We marked the risen moon
Walk swaying o'er the trembling seas As one sways in a swoon;

The little stars, the lonely stars, Stole through the hollow sky, And
every sucking eddy where The waves lapped wharf or rotten stair Moaned
like some stricken thing hid there And strangled with its own despair
As the shuddering tide crept by.

I loved her, and I hated her-- Or did I hate myself because,
Bound by obscure, strong, silken laws, I felt myself the worshiper Of
beauty never wholly mine? With lures most apt to snare, entwine, With
bonds too subtle to define, Her lighter nature mastered mine; Herself half
given, half withheld, Her lesser spirit still compelled Its tribute from my
franker soul: So--rebel, slave, and worshiper!-- I loved her and I
hated her.

I gazed upon her, I, her thrall, And musing, murmured, What if
death

Were just the answer to it all?-- Suppose some dainty dagger
quaffed Her life in one deep eager draught?-- Suppose some amorous
knife caressed The lovely hollow of her breast?"-- She turned a mocking

look to mine: She read the thought within my eyne, She held me with
her look--and laughed!

Now who may tell what stirs, controls, And shapes mad fancies into
facts? What trivial things may quicken souls To irrevocable, swift acts?
Now who has known, who understood, Wherefore some idle thing
May stab with deadlier sting Than well-considered insult could?-- May
spur the languor of a mood And rouse a tiger in the blood?--

Ah, Christ!--had she not laughed just when That fancy came! . . . for
then . . . and then . . . A sudden mist dropped from the sky,

A mist swept in across the sea . . . A mist that hid her face from me . . .
A weeping mist all tinged with red, A dripping mist that smelt like
blood . . . It choked my throat, it burnt my brain . . . And through it
peered one sallow star, And through it rang one shriek of pain . . . And
when it passed my hands were red, My soul was dabbled with her
blood; And when it passed my love was dead And tossed upon the
troubled flood.

III MOONSET

But see! . . . the body does not sink; It rides upon the tide (A
starbeam on the dagger's haft), With staring eyes and wide . . . And now,
up from the darkling sea, Down from the failing moon, Are come
strange shapes to mock at me . . . All pallid from the star-pale sea,
White from the paling moon . . .

Or whirling fast or wheeling slow Around, around the corpse they go,
All bloodless o'er the sickened sea Beneath the ailing moon!

And are they only wisps of fog That dance along the waves? Only
shapes of mist the wind Drives along the waves? Or are they spirits that
the sea Has cheated of their graves? The ghosts of them that died at sea,
Of murdered men flung in the sea, Whose bodies had no graves?-- Lost
souls that haunt for evermore The sobbing reef and hollowed shore And
always-murmuring caves?

Ah, surely something more than fog, More than starlit mist! For
starlight never makes a sound And fogs are ever whist-- But hearken,
hearken, hearken, now, For these sing as they dance!

As airily, as eerily, They wheel about and whirl, They jeer at me,

they flee at me, They flout me as they swirl! As whirling fast or
swaying slow, Reeling, wheeling, to and fro, Around, around the corpse
they go, They chill me with their chants! These be neither men nor
mists-- Hearken to their chants:

Ever, ever, ever, Drifting like a blossom Seaward, with the starlight
Wan upon her bosom-- Ever when the quickened Heart of night is
throbbing, Ever when the trembling Tide sets seaward, sobbing, Shall
you see this burden Borne upon its ebbing: See her drifting seaward
Like a broken blossom,

Ever see the starlight Kiss her bruised bosom.

Flight availeth nothing . . . Still the subtle beaches Draw you back
where Horror Walks their shingled reaches . . . Ever shall your spirit
Hear the surf resounding, Evermore the ocean Thwarting you and
bounding; Vainly struggle inland! Lashing you and hounding, Still the
vision hales you From the upland reaches, Goading you and gripping,
Binds you to the beaches!

Ever, ever, ever, Ever shall her laughter, Hunting you and haunting,
Mock and follow after; Rising where the buoy-bell Clangs across the
shallows,

Leaping where the spindrift Hurtles o'er the hollows, Ringing
where the moonlight Gleams along the billows, Ever, ever, ever,
Ever shall her laughter, Hounding you and haunting, Whip and follow
after!

IV SUNSET

I stood among the boats The sinking sun, the angry sun, Across the
sullen wave Laid the sudden strength of his red wrath Like to a shaken
glaive:-- Or did the sun pause in the west To lift a sword at me, Or
was it she, or was it she, Rose for an instant on some crest And plucked
the red blade from her breast And brandished it at me?

THE TAVERN OF DESPAIR

THE wraiths of murdered hopes and loves Come whispering at the
door, Come creeping through the weeping mist That drapes the barren
moor; But we within have turned the key 'Gainst Hope and Love and

Care, Where Wit keeps tryst with Folly, at The Tavern of Despair.

And we have come by divers ways To keep this merry tryst, But
few of us have kept within The Narrow Way, I wist; For we are those
whose ampler wits And hearts have proved our curse-- Foredoomed to
ken the better things And aye to do the worse!

Long since we learned to mock ourselves; And from self-mockery
fell

To heedless laughter in the face Of Heaven, Earth, and Hell. We
quiver 'neath, and mock, God's rod; We feel, and mock, His wrath; We
mock our own blood on the thorns That rim the "Primrose Path."

We mock the eerie glimmering shapes That range the outer wold,
We mock our own cold hearts because They are so dead and cold; We
flout the things we might have been Had self to self proved true, We
mock the roses flung away, We mock the garnered rue;

The fates that gibe have lessoned us; There sups to-night on earth
No madder crew of wastrels than This fellowship of mirth. . . . (Of
mirth . . . drink, fools!--nor let it flag Lest from the outer mist Creep in
that other company Unbidden to the tryst.

We're grown so fond of paradox Perverseness holds us thrall, So
what each jester loves the best He mocks the most of all; But as the jest
and laugh go round, Each in his neighbor's eyes Reads, while he flouts
his heart's desire, The knowledge that he lies.

Not one of us but had some pearls And flung them to the swine,
Not one of us but had some gift-- Some spark of fire divine-- Each
might have been God's minister In the temple of some art-- Each feels
his gift perverted move Wormlike through his dry heart.

If God called Azrael to Him now And bade Death bend the bow
Against the saddest heart that beats Here on this earth below, Not any
sobbing breast would gain The guerdon of that barb--

The saddest ones are those that wear The jester's motley garb.

Whose shout aye loudest rings, and whose The maddest cranks and
quips-- Who mints his soul to laughter's coin And wastes it with his
lips-- Has grown too sad for sighs and seeks To cheat himself with
mirth; We fools self-doomed to motley are The weariest wights on

earth!

But yet, for us whose brains and hearts Strove aye in paths perverse,
Doomed still to know the better things And still to do the worse,--
What else is there remains for us But make a jest of care And set the
rafters ringing, in Our Tavern of Despair?

COLORS AND SURFACES

A GOLDEN LAD

(D. V. M.)

"Golden lads and lasses must Like chimney-sweepers come to dust."
--SHAKESPEARE.

So young, but already the splendor Of genius robed him about--
Already the dangerous, tender Regard of the gods marked him out--

(On whom the burden and duty They bind, at his earliest breath, Of
showing their own grave beauty, They love and they crown with death.)

We were of one blood, but the olden Rapt poets spake out in his
tone; We were of one blood, but the golden Rathe promise was his, his
alone.

And ever his great eye glistened With visions I could not see, Ever
he thrilled and listened To voices withholden from me.

Young lord of the realms of fancy, The bright dreams flocked to his
call Like sprites that the necromancy Of a Prospero holds in thrall--

Quick visions that served and attended, Elusive and hovering things,
With a quiver of joy in the splendid Wild sweep of their luminous
wings;

He dwelt in an alien glamor, He wrought of its gleams a crown,--
But the world, with its cruelty and clamor, Broke him and beat him
down;

So he passed; he was worn, he was weary, He was slain at the touch
of life;-- With a smile that was wistful and eerie He passed from the
senseless strife;--

So he ceased (is their humor satiric, These gods that make perfect
and blight?)-- He ceased like an exquisite lyric That dies on the breast
of night.

THE SAGE AND THE WOMAN

'TWTXT ancient Beersheba and Dan Another such a caravan Dazed
Palestine had never seen As that which bore Sabea's queen Up from the
fain and flaming South To slake her yearning spirit's drouth At
wisdom's pools, with Solomon.

With gifts of scented sandalwood, And labdanum, and cassia-bud,
With spicy spoils of Araby And camel-loads of ivory And heavy cloths
that glanced and shone With inwrought pearl and beryl-stone She came,
a bold Sabean girl.

And did she find him grave, or gay? Perchance his palace breathed
that day With psalters sounding solemnly-- Or cymbals' merrier
minstrelsy-- Perchance the wearied monarch heard Some loose-tongued
prophet's meddling word;-- None knows, no one--but Solomon!

She looked--with eyne wherein were blent All ardors of the Orient;
She spake--all magics of the South Were compassed in the witch's mouth;-
- He thought the scarlet lips of her More precious than En Gedi's myrrh,
The lips of that Sabean girl;

By many an amorous sun caressed, From lifted brow to amber breast
She gleamed in vivid loveliness-- And lithe as any leopardess-- And verily,
one blames thee not If thine own proverbs were forgot, O Solomon,
wise Solomon!

She danced for him, and surely she Learnt dancing from some moonlit
sea

Where elfin vapors swirled and swayed While the wild pipes of
witchcraft played Such clutching music 'twould impel A prophet's self to
dance to hell-- So spun the light Sabean girl.

He swore her laughter had the lilt Of chiming waters that are spilt In
sprays of spurted melody From founts of carven porphyry, And in the
billowy turbulence Of her dusk hair drowned soul and sense-- Dark
tides and deep, O Solomon!

Perchance unto her day belongs His poem called the Song of Songs,
Each little lyric interval Timed to her pulse's rise and fall;-- Or when he
cried out wearily That all things end in vanity Did he mean that Sabean

girl?

The bright barbaric opulence, The sun-kist Temple, Kedar's tents,--
How many a careless caravan 'Twixt Beersheba and ruined Dan,
Within these forty centuries, Has flung their dust to many a breeze,
With dust that was King Solomon!

But still the lesson holds as true, O King, as when she lessoned you:
That very wise men are not wise Until they read in Folly's eyes The
wisdom that escapes the schools, That bids the sage revise his rules By
light of some Sabean girl!

NEWS FROM BABYLON

"Archaeologists have discovered a love-letter among the ruins of
Babylon." --Newspaper report.

The world hath just one tale to tell, and it is very old, A little tale--a
simple tale--a tale that's easy told: "There was a youth in Babylon who
greatly loved a maid!" The world hath just one song to sing, but
sings it unafraid, A little song--a foolish song--the only song it hath:
"There was a youth in Ascalon who loved a girl in Gath!"

Homer clanged it, Omar twanged it, Greece and Persia knew!--
Nimrod's reivers, Hiram's weavers, Hindu, Kurd, and Jew--
Crowning Tyre, Troy afire, they have dreamed the dream; Tiber-side
and Nilus-tide brightened with the gleam--

Oh, the suing, sighing, wooing, sad and merry hours, Bliss
tasted, kisses wasted, building Babel's towers! Hearts were aching,
hearts were breaking, lashes wet with dew, When the ships touched
the lips of islands Sappho knew; Yearning breasts and burning
breasts, cold at last, are hid Amid the glooms of carven tombs in
Khufu's pyramid-- Though the sages, down the ages, smile their
cynic doubt, Man and maid, unafraid, put the schools to rout; Seek to
chain love and retain love in the bonds of breath, Vow to hold love,
bind and fold love even unto death!

The dust of forty centuries has buried Babylon, And out of all her
lovers dead rises only one; Rises with a song to sing and laughter in his
eyes, The old song--the only song--for all the rest are lies!

For, oh, the world has just one dream, and it is very old-- 'Tis
youth's dream--a silly dream--but it is flushed with gold!

A RHYME OF THE ROADS

PEARL-SLASHED and purple and crimson and fringed with
gray mist of the hills, The pennons of morning advance to the music of
rock-fretted rills, The dumb forest quickens to song, and the little
gusts shout as they fling A floor-cloth of orchard bloom down for the
flash- ing, quick feet of the Spring.

To the road, gipsy-heart, thou and I! 'Tis the mad piper, Spring,
who is leading; 'Tis the pulse of his piping that throbs through the
brain, irresistibly pleading; Full-blossomed, deep-bosomed, fain woman,
light- footed, lute-throated and fleet, We have drunk of the wine of
this Wanderer's song; let us follow his feet!

Like raveled red girdles flung down by some hoidenish goddess
in mirth The tangled roads reach from rim unto utter- most rim of the
earth-- We will weave of these strands a strong net, we will snare the
bright wings of delight,-- We will make of these strings a sweet lute that
will shame the low wind-harps of night.

The clamor of tongues and the clangor of trades in the peevish
packed street, The arrogant, jangling Nothings, with iterant, dis-
sonant beat, The clattering, senseless endeavor with dross of mere
gold for its goal, These have sickened the senses and wearied the
brain and straitened the soul.

"Come forth and be cleansed of the folly of strife for things
worthless of strife, Come forth and gain life and grasp God by fore-
going gains worthless of life"--

It was thus spake the wizard wildwood, low-voiced to the
hearkening heart, It was thus sang the jovial hills, and the harper sun
bore part.

O woman, whose blood as my blood with the fire of the Spring is
aflake, We did well, when the red roads called, that we heeded the
call and came-- Came forth to the sweet wise silence where soul may
speak sooth unto soul, Vine-wreathed and vagabond Love, with the goal

of Nowhere for our goal!

What planet-crowned Dusk that wanders the steep slopes of our firmament there Hath gems that may match with the dew-opals meshed in thine opulent hair? What wind-witch that skims the curled billows with feet they are fain to caress Hath sandals so wing'd as thine art with a god-like carelessness?

And dare we not dream this is heaven?--to wander thus on, ever on. Through the hush-heavy valleys of space, up the flushing red slopes of the dawn?-- For none that seeks rest shall find rest till he ceaseth his striving for rest, And the gain of the quest is the joy of the road that allures to the quest.

THE LAND OF YESTERDAY

AND I would seek the country town Amid green meadows nestled down If I could only find the way Back to the Land of Yesterday!

How I would thrust the miles aside, Rush up the quiet lane, and then, Just where her roses laughed in pride, Find her among the flowers again. I'd slip in silently and wait Until she saw me by the gate, And then . . . read through a blur of tears Quick pardon for the selfish years.

This time, this time, I would not wait For that brief wire that said, Too late!-- If I could only find the way Into the Land of Yesterday.

I wonder if her roses yet Lift up their heads and laugh with pride, And if her phlox and mignonette Have heart to blossom by their side; I wonder if the dear old lane Still chirps with robins after rain, And if the birds and banded bees Still rob her early cherry-trees. . . .

I wonder, if I went there now, How everything would seem, and how-- But no! not now; there is no way Back to the Land of Yesterday.

OCTOBER

CEASE to call him sad and sober, Merriest of months, October! Patron of the bursting bins, Reveler in wayside inns, I can nowhere find a trace Of the pensive in his face; There is mingled wit and folly, But the madcap lacks the grace Of a thoughtful melancholy. Spendthrift of the seasons' gold, How he flings and scatters out Treasure filched from summer-time!-- Never ruffling squire of old Better loved a tavern bout When Prince Hal

was in his prime. Doublet slashed with gold and green; Cloak of crimson; changeful sheen, Of the dews that gem his breast; Frosty lace about his throat;

Scarlet plumes that flaunt and float Backward in a gay unrest-- Where's another gallant drest With such tricky gaiety, Such unlesioned vanity? With his amber afternoons And his pendant poets' moons-- With his twilights dashed with rose From the red-lipped afterglows-- With his vocal airs at dawn Breathing hints of Helicon-- Bacchanalian bees that sip Where his cider-presses drip-- With the winding of the horn Where his huntsmen meet the morn-- With his every piping breeze Shaking from familiar trees Apples of Hesperides-- With the chuckle, chirp, and trill Of his jolly brooks that spill Mirth in tangled madrigals Down pebble-dappled waterfalls-- (Brooks that laugh and make escape Through wild arbors where the grape

Purples with a promise of Racy vintage rare as love)-- With his merry, wanton air, Mirth and vanity and folly Why should he be made to bear Burden of some melancholy Song that swoons and sinks with care? Cease to call him sad or sober,-- He's a jolly dog, October!

CHANT OF THE CHANGING HOURS

THE Hours passed by, a fleet, confused crowd; With wafture of blown garments bright as fire, Light, light of foot and laughing, morning-browed, And where they trod the jonquil and the briar Thrilled into jocund life, the dreaming dells Waked to a morrice chime of jostled bells;-- They danced! they danced! to piping such as flings The garnered music of a million Springs Into one single, keener ecstasy;-- One paused and shouted to my questionings: "Lo, I am Youth; I bid thee follow me!"

The Hours passed by; they paced, great lords and proud, Crowned on with sunlight, robed in rich attire; Before their conquering word the brute deed bowed, And Ariel fancies served their large desire;

They spake, and roused the mused soul that dwells In dust, or, smiling, shaped new heavens and hells, Dethroned old gods and made

blind beggars kings: "And what art thou," I cried to one, "that brings His mistress, for a brooch, the Galaxy?"-- "I am the plumed Thought that soars and sings: Lo, I am Song; I bid thee follow me!"

The Hours passed by, with veiled eyes endowed Of dream, and parted lips that scarce suspire, To breathing dusk and arrowy moonlight vowed, South wind and shadowy grove and murmuring lyre;-- Swaying they moved, as drows'd of wizard spells Or tranc'd with sight of recent miracles, And yet they trembled, down their folded wings Quivered the hint of sweet withholden things, Ah, bitter-sweet in their intensity! One paused and said unto my wonderings: "Lo, I am Love; I bid thee follow me!"

The Hours passed by, through huddled cities loud With witless hate and stale with stinking mire:

So cowed monks might march with bier and shroud Down streets plague-spotted toward some cleansing pyre;-- Yet, lo! strange lilies bloomed in lightless cells, And passionate spirits burst their clayey shells And sang the stricken hope that bleeds and clings: Earth's bruised heart beat in the throbbing strings, And joy still struggled through the threnody! One stern Hour said unto my marvelings: "Lo, I am Life; I bid thee follow me!"

The Hours passed by, the stumbling hours and cowed, Uncertain, prone to tears and childish ire,-- The wavering hours that drift like any cloud At whim of winds or fortunate or dire,-- The feeble shapes that any chance expells; Their wisdom useless, lacking the blood that swells The tensed vein: the hot, swift tide that stings With life. Ah, wise! but naked to the slings Of fate, and plagued of youthful memory! A cracked voice broke upon my pityings: "Lo, I am Age; I bid thee follow me!"

Ah, Youth! we dallied by the babbling wells Where April all her lyric secret tells;-- Ah, Song! we sped our bold imaginings As far as yon red planet's triple rings;-- O Life! O Love! I followed, followed thee! There waits one word to end my journeyings: "Lo, I am Death; I bid thee follow me!"

DREAMS AND DUST

SELVES

My dust in ruined Babylon Is blown along the level plain, And
songs of mine at dawn have soared Above the blue Sicilian main.

We are ourselves, and not ourselves . . . For ever thwarting pride
and will Some forebear's passion leaps from death To claim a vital
license still.

Ancestral lusts that slew and died, Resurgent, swell each living vein;
Old doubts and faiths, new panoplied, Dispute the mastery of the brain.

The love of liberty that flames From written rune and stricken reed
Shook the hot hearts of swordsmen sires At Marathon and Runnymede.

What are these things we call our "selves"? . . . Have I not shouted,
sobbed, and died In the bright surf of spears that broke Where Greece
rolled back the Persian tide?

Are we who breathe more quick than they Whose bones are dust
within the tomb? Nay, as I write, what gray old ghosts Murmur and
mock me from the gloom. . . .

They call . . . across strange seas they call, Strange seas, and
haunted coasts of time. . . . They startle me with wordless songs To
which the Sphinx hath known the rhyme.

Our hearts swell big with dead men's hates, Our eyes sting hot with
dead men's tears; We are ourselves, but not ourselves, Born heirs, but
serfs, to all the years!

I rode with Nimrod . . . strove at Troy . . . A slave I stood in
Crowning Tyre, A queen looked on me and I loved And died to
compass my desire.

THE WAGES

EARTH loves to gibber o'er her dross, Her golden souls, to waste;
The cup she fills for her god-men Is a bitter cup to taste.

Who sees the gyves that bind mankind And strives to strike them
off Shall gain the hissing hate of fools, Thorns, and the ingrate's scoff.

Who storms the moss-grown walls of eld And beats some falsehood
down Shall pass the pallid gates of death Sans laurel, love or crown;

For him who fain would teach the world The world holds hate in
fee-- For Socrates, the hemlock cup; For Christ, Gethsemane.

IN MARS, WHAT AVATAR?

"In Vishnu-land, what avatar?" --

BROWNING.

PERCHANCE the dying gods of Earth Are destined to another birth,
And worn-out creeds regain their worth In the kindly air of other stars--
What lords of life and light hold sway In the myriad worlds of the Milky
Way? What avatars in Mars?

What Aphrodites from the seas That lap the plunging Pleiades Arise
to spread afar The dream that was the soul of Greece? In Mars, what
avatar?

Which hundred moons are wan with love For dull Endymions?
Which hundred moons hang tranced above Audacious Ajalons?

What Holy Grail lures errants pale Through the wastes of yonder
star? What fables sway the Milky Way? In Mars, what avatar?

When morning skims with crimson wings Across the meres of
Mercury, What dreaming Memnon wakes and sings Of miracles on
Mercury? What Christs, what avatars, Claim Mars?

THE GOD-MAKER, MAN

NEVERMORE Shall the shepherds of Arcady follow Pan's moods

as he lolls by the shore Of the mere, or lies hid in the hollow;
Nevermore Shall they start at the sound of his reed-fashioned
flute;

Fallen mute Are the strings of Apollo, His lyre and his lute; And
the lips of the Memnons are mute Evermore; And the gods of the
North,--are they dead or forgetful, Our Odin and Baldur and Thor?
Are they drunk, or grown weary of worship and fretful, Our Odin
and Baldur and Thor?

And into what night have the Orient dieties strayed? Swart
gods of the Nile, in dusk splendors arrayed, Brooding Isis and somber
Osiris, You were gone ere the fragile papyrus, (That bragged you
eternal!) decayed.

The avatars But illumine their limited evens And vanish like
plunging stars; They are fixed in the whirling heavens No firmer than
falling stars; Brief lords of the changing soul, they pass Like a breath from
the face of a glass, Or a blossom of summer blown shallop-like over
The clover And tossed tides of grass.

Sink to silence the psalms and the paeans The shibboleths shift, and
the faiths, And the temples that challenged the aeons Are tenanted only
by wraiths; Swoon to silence the cymbals and psalters, The worships
grow senseless and strange,

And the mockers ask, "Where be thy altars?" Crying, "Nothing is
changeless--but Change!"

Yes, nothing seems changeless, but Change. And yet, through the
creed-wrecking years, One story for ever appears; The tale of a City
Supernal-- The whisper of Something eternal-- A passion, a hope, and a
vision That peoples the silence with Powers; A fable of meadows
Elysian Where Time enters not with his Hours;-- Manifold are the tale's
variations, Race and clime ever tinting the dreams, Yet its essence,
through endless mutations, Immutable gleams.

Deathless, though godheads be dying, Surviving the creeds that
expire, Illogical, reason-defying, Lives that passionate, primal desire;
Insistent, persistent, forever Man cries to the silences, Never

Shall Death reign the lord of the soul, Shall the dust be the ultimate

goal-- I will storm the black bastions of Night! I will tread where my
vision has trod, I will set in the darkness a light, In the vastness, a god!"

As the forehead of Man grows broader, so do his creeds; And
his gods they are shaped in his image, and mirror his needs; And
he clothes them with thunders and beauty, he clothes them with
music and fire; Seeing not, as he bows by their altars, that he
worships his own desire; And mixed with his trust there is terror, and
mixed with his madness is ruth, And every man grovels in error, yet every
man glimpses a truth.

For all of the creeds are false, and all of the creeds are true;
And low at the shrines where my brothers bow, there will I bow,
too;

For no form of a god, and no fashion Man has made in his desperate
passion But is worthy some worship of mine;-- Not too hot with a gross
belief, Nor yet too cold with pride, I will bow me down where my
brothers bow, Humble--but open-eyed!

UNREST A FIERCE unrest seethes at the core Of all existing
things: It was the eager wish to soar That gave the gods their wings.

From what flat wastes of cosmic slime, And stung by what quick
fire, Sunward the restless races climb!-- Men risen out of mire!

There throbs through all the worlds that are This heart-beat hot and
strong, And shaken systems, star by star, Awake and glow in song.

But for the urge of this unrest These joyous spheres were mute; But
for the rebel in his breast Had man remained a brute.

When baffled lips demanded speech, Speech trembled into birth--
(One day the lyric word shall reach From earth to laughing earth)--

When man's dim eyes demanded light The light he sought was
born-- His wish, a Titan, scaled the height And flung him back the
morn!

From deed to dream, from dream to deed, From daring hope to
hope, The restless wish, the instant need, Still lashed him up the slope!

.
I sing no governed firmament, Cold, ordered, regular-- I sing the
stinging discontent That leaps from star to star!

THE PILTDOWN SKULL

WHAT was his life, back yonder In the dusk where time began,
This beast uncouth with the jaw of an ape And the eye and brain of a
man?-- Work, and the wooing of woman, Fight, and the lust of fight,
Play, and the blind beginnings Of an Art that groped for light?--

In the wonder of redder mornings, By the beauty of brighter seas,
Did he stand, the world's first thinker, Scorning his clan's decrees?--
Seeking, with baffled eyes, In the dumb, inscrutable skies, A name for the
greater glory That only the dreamer sees?

One day, when the afterglows, Like quick and sentient things,

With a rush of their vast, wild wings, Rose out of the shaken ocean
As great birds rise from the sod, Did the shock of their sudden splendor
Stir him and startle and thrill him, Grip him and shake him and fill him
With a sense as of heights untrod?-- Did he tremble with hope and vision,
And grasp at a hint of God?

London stands where the mammoth Caked shag flanks with slime--
And what are our lives that inherit The treasures of all time? Work, and
the wooing of woman, Fight, and the lust of fight, A little play (and too
much toil!) With an Art that gropes for light; And now and then a
dreamer, Rapt, from his lonely sod Looks up and is thrilled and startled
With a fleeting sense of God!

THE SEEKER

THE creeds he wrought of dream and thought Fall from him at the
touch of life, His old gods fail him in the strife-- Withdrawn, the
heavens he sought!

Vanished, the miracles that led, The cloud at noon, the flame at
night; The vision that he wing'd and sped Falls backward, baffled, from
the height;

Yet in the wreck of these he stands Upheld by something grim and
strong; Some stubborn instinct lifts a song And nerves him, heart and
hands:

He does not dare to call it hope;-- It is not aught that seeks reward--
Nor faith, that up some sunward slope Runs aureoled to meet its

lord;

It touches something elder far Than faith or creed or thought in man,
It was ere yet these lived and ran Like light from star to star;

It touches that stark, primal need That from unpeopled voids and
vast Fashioned the first crude, childish creed,-- And still shall fashion,
till the last!

For one word is the tale of men: They fling their icons to the sod,
And having trampled down a god They seek a god again!

Stripped of his creeds inherited, Bereft of all his sires held true,
Amid the wreck of visions dead He thrills at touch of visions new. . . .

He wings another Dream for flight. . . . He seeks beyond the
outmost dawn A god he set there . . . and, anon, Drags that god from the
height!

.
But aye from ruined faiths and old That droop and die, fall bruised
seeds; And when new flowers and faiths unfold They're lovelier
flowers, they're kindlier creeds.

THE AWAKENING

THE steam, the reek, the fume, of prayer Blown outward for a
million years, Becomes a mist between the spheres, And waking
Sentience struggles there.

Prayer still creates the boon we pray; And gods we've hoped for,
from those hopes Will gain sufficient form one day And in full
godhood storm the slopes Where ancient Chaos, stark and gray, Already
trembles for his sway.

When that the restless worlds would fly Their wish created rapid
wings, But not till aeons had passed by With dower of many idler
things; And when dumb flesh demanded speech Speech struggled to the
lips at last;-- Now the unpeopled Void, and vast,

Clean to that uttermost blank beach Whereto the boldest thought may
reach That voyages from the vaguest past-- (Dim realm and ultimate
of space)-- Is vexed and troubled, stirs and shakes, In prescience of a god
that wakes, Born of man's wish to see God's face!

The endless, groping, dumb desires,-- The climbing incense thick
and sweet, The lovely purpose that aspires, The wraiths of vapor wing'd
and fleet That rise and run with eager feet Forth from a myriad altar
fires: All these become a mist that fills The vales and chasms nebular;
A shaping Soul that moves and thrills The wastes between red star and
star!

A SONG OF MEN

OUT of the soil and the slime, Reeking, they climb,
Out of the muck and the mire, Rank, they aspire;
Filthy with murder and mud, Black with shed blood, Lust and
passion and clay-- Dying, they slay;
Stirred by vague hints of a goal, Seeking a soul!
Groping through terror and night Up to the light:
Life in the dust and the clod Sensing a God;
Flushed of the glamor and gleam Caught from a dream;
Stained of the struggle and toil, Stained of the soil,
Ally of God in the end-- Helper and friend--
Hero and prophet and priest Out of the beast!

THE NOBLER LESSON

CHRIST was of virgin birth, and, being slain, The creedists say, He
rose from death again. Oh, futile age-long talk of death and birth!-- His
life, that is the one thing wonder-worth; Not how He came, but how He
lived on earth. For if gods stoop, and with quaint jugglery Mock nature's
laws, how shall that profit thee?-- The nobler lesson is that mortals can
Grow godlike through this baffled front of man!

AT LAST

EACH race has died and lived and fought for the "true" gods of
that poor race, Unconsciously, divinest thought of each race gild- ing
its god's face. And every race that lives and dies shall make itself

some other gods, Shall build, with mingled truth and lies, new icons
from the world-old clods. Through all the tangled creeds and dreams and
shifting shibboleths men hold The false-and-true, inwoven, gleams: a
matted mass of dross and gold. Prove, then, thy gods in thine own
soul; all others' gods, for thee, are vain; Nor swerved be, struggling
for the goal, by bribe of joy nor threat of pain.

As skulls grow broader, so do faiths; as old tongues die, old gods
die, too,

And only ghosts of gods and wraiths may meet the backward-
gazer's view. Where, where the faiths of yesterday? Ah, whither
vanished, whither gone? Say, what Apollos drive to-day adown the
flaming slopes of dawn? Oh, does the blank past hide from view
forgotten Christs, to be reborn, The future tremble where some new
Messiah-Memnon sings the morn? Of all the worlds, say any earth,
like dust wind-harried to and fro, Shall give the next Prometheus
birth; but say-- at last--you do not know.

How should I know what dawn may gleam beyond the gates of
darkness there?-- Which god of all the gods men dream? Why
should I whip myself to care? Whichever over all hath place hath shaped
and made me what I am; Hath made me strong to front his face, to
dare to question though he damn.

Perhaps to cringe and cower and bring a shrine a forced and
faithless faith Is far more futile than to fling your laughter in the face
of Death. For writhe or whirl in dervish rout, they are not flattered
there on high, Or sham belief to hide a doubt--no gods are mine that
love a lie! Nor gods that beg belief on earth with portents that some
seer foretells-- Is life itself not wonder-worth that we must cry for
miracles? Is it not strange enough we breathe? Does every-thing
not God reveal? Or must we ever weave and wreathe some creed that
shall his face conceal? Some creed of which its prophets cry it holds
the secret's all-in-all: Some creed which ever bye and bye doth crumble,
totter, to its fall! Say any dream of all the dreams that drift and
darkle, glint and glow, Holds most of truth within its gleams; but say
--at last--you do not know.

Oh, say the soul, from star to star, with victory wing'd, leap on
through space And scale the bastioned nights that bar the secret's
inner dwelling-place; Or say it ever roam dim glades where pallid
wraiths of long-dead moons Flit like blown feathers through the shades,
borne on the breath of sobbing tunes: Say any tide of any time, of all
the tides that ebb and flow, Shall buoy us on toward any clime; but
say--at last--you do not know!

LYRICS

"KING PANDION, HE IS DEAD"

"King Pandion, he is dead; All thy friends are lapp'd in lead." --
SHAKESPEARE.

DREAMERS, drinkers, rebel youth, Where's the folly free and
fine You and I mistook for truth? Wits and wastrels, friends of wine,
Wags and poets, friends of mine, Gleams and glamors all are fled, Fires
and frenzies half divine! King Pandion, he is dead!

Time's unmannerly, uncouth! Here's the crow's-foot for a sign! And,
upon our brows, forsooth, Wits and wastrels, friends of wine, Time
hath set his mark malign; Frost has touched us, heart and head, Cooled
the blood and dulled the eyne: King Pandion, he is dead!

Time's a tyrant without ruth!-- Fancies used to bloom and twine
Round a common tavern booth, Wits and wastrels, friends of wine,
In that youth of mine and thine! 'Tis for youth the feast is spread; When
we dine now--we but dine!-- King Pandion, he is dead!

How our dreams would glow and shine, Wits and wastrels, friends of
wine, Ere the drab Hour came that said: King Pandion, he is dead!

DAVID TO BATHSHEBA

VERY red are the roses of Sharon, But redder thy mouth, There is nard,
there is myrrh, in En Gedi, From the uplands of Lebanon, heavy With
balsam, the winds Drift freighted and scented and cedarn-- But thy mouth
is more precious than spices!

Thy breasts are twin lilies of Kedron; White lilies, that sleep In the
shallows where loitering Kedron Broadens out and is lost in the Jordan;
Globed lilies, so white That David, thy King, thy beloved Declareth them
meet for his gardens.

Under the stars very strangely The still waters gleam; Deep down in
the waters of Hebron

The soul of the starlight is sunken, But deep in thine eyes Stirs a more

wonderful secret Than pools ever learn of the starlight.

THE JESTERS

A TOAST to the Fools! Pierrot, Pantaloon, Harlequin, Clown,
Merry-Andrew, Buffoon-- Touchstone and Triboulet--all of the tribe--
Dancer and jester and singer and scribe. We sigh over Yorick--(unfortunate
fool, Ten thousand Hamlets have fumbled his skull!-- But where is the
Hamlet to weep o'er the biers Of his brothers? And where is the poet
solicits our tears For the others? They have passed from the world and
left never a sign, And few of us now have the courage to sing
That their whimsies made life a more livable thing-- We, that are
left of the line, Let us drink to the jesters--in gooseberry wine! Then
here's to the Fools! Flouting the sages Through history's pages And driving
the dreary old seers into rages-- The humbugging Magis Who prate that
the wages Of Folly are Death--toast the Fools of all ages! They have
ridden like froth down the whirlpools of time, They have
jingled their caps in the councils of state, They have snared half
the wisdom of life in a rhyme, And tripped into nothingness
grinning at fate-- Ho, brothers mine, Brim up the glasses with gooseberry
wine!

Though the prince with his firman, The judge in his ermine, Affirm
and determine Bold words need the whip, Let them spare us the rod
and remit us the sermon, For Death has a quip

Of the tomb and the vermin That will silence at last the most
impudent lip! Is the world but a bubble, a bauble, a joke? Heigho, Brother
Fools, now your bubble is broke, Do you ask for a tear?--or is it worth
while? Here's a sigh for you, then--but it ends in a smile! Ho, Brother
Death, We would laugh at you, too--if you spared us the breath!

"MARY, MARY, QUITE CONTRARY"

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary, How does your garden grow? With
silver bells and cockle-shells And pretty maids all in a row!" --Mother
Goose.

MARY, Mistress Mary, How does your garden grow? From your
uplands airy, Mary, Mistress Mary, Float the chimes of faery When the
breezes blow! Mary, Mistress Mary, How does your garden grow?

With flower-maidens, singing Among the morning hills-- With
silvern bells a-ringing, With flower-maidens singing, With vocal lilies,
springing By chanting daffodils; With flower-maidens, singing
Among the morning hills!

THE TRIOLET

YOUR triolet should glimmer Like a butterfly; In golden light, or
dimmer, Your triolet should glimmer, Tremble, turn, and shimmer,
Flash, and flutter by; Your triolet should glimmer Like a butterfly.

FROM THE BRIDGE

HELD and thrilled by the vision I stood, as the twilight died, Where
the great bridge soars like a song Over the crawling tide--

Stood on the middle arch-- And night flooded in from the bay, And
wonderful under the stars Before me the city lay;

Girdled with swinging waters-- Guarded by ship on ship-- A gem
that the strong old ocean Held in his giant grip;

There was play of shadows above And drifting gleams below, And
magic of shifting waves That darkle and glance and glow;

Dusky and purple and splendid, Banded with loops of light, The tall
towers rose like pillars, Lifting the dome of night;

The gliding cars of traffic Slid swiftly up and down Like monsters,
fiery mailed, Leaping across the town.

Not planned with a thought of beauty; Built by a lawless breed;
Builded of lust for power, Builded of gold and greed.

Risen out of the trader's Brutal and sordid wars-- And yet, behold! a
city Wonderful under the stars!

"PALADINS, PALADINS, YOUTH NOBLE- HEARTED"

GALAHADS, Galahads, Percivals, gallop! Bayards, to the saddle!--
the clangorous trumpets, Hoarse with their ecstasy, call to the mellay.

Paladins, Paladins, Rolands flame-hearted, Olivers, Olivers, follow the bugles!

Girt with the glory and glamor of power, Error sits throned in the high place of justice; Paladins, Paladins, youth noble-hearted, Saddle and spear, for the battle-flags beckon! Thrust the keen steel through the throat of the liar.

Star (or San Grael) that illumines thy pathway, Follow it, follow that far Ideal!-- Thine not the guerdon to gain it or grasp it; Soul of thee, passing, ascendeth unto it, Augmenting its brightness for them that come after.

Heed then the call of the trumpets, the trumpets, Hoarse with the fervor, the frenzy of battle,-- Paladins, Paladins, saddle! to saddle! Bide not, abide not, God's bugles are calling!-- Thrust the sharp sword through the heart of the liar.

"MY LANDS, NOT THINE"

MY lands, not thine, we look upon, Friend Croesus, hill and vale and lawn. Mine every woodland madrigal, And mine thy singing waterfall That vaguely hints of Helicon.

Mark how thine upland slopes have drawn A golden glory from the dawn!-- Fool's gold?--thy dullness proves them all My lands--not thine!

For when all title-deeds are gone, Still, still will satyr, nymph, and faun Through brake and covert pipe and call In dances bold and bacchanal-- For them, for me, you hold in pawn, My lands--not thine!

TO A DANCING DOLL

FORMAL, quaint, precise, and trim, You begin your steps demurely-- There's a spirit almost prim In the feet that move so surely, So discreetly, to the chime Of the music that so sweetly Marks the time.

But the chords begin to tinkle Quicker, And

your feet they flash and flicker-- Twinkle!-- Flash
and flutter to a tricksy Fickle meter; And you foot it
like a pixie-- Only fleeter!
Now our current, dowdy Things--
"Turkey-trots" and rowdy Flings-- For they
made you overseas In politer times than these, In an age when grace could
please, Ere St. Vitus Clutched and shook us, spine
and knees;-- Loosed a plague of jerks to smite us!
Well, our day is far more brisk And our manner rather slacker), And
you are nothing more than bisque And lacquer--
But you shame us with the graces Of courtlier times and places
When the cheap And vulgar wasn't "art"-- When the faunal prance and
leap Weren't "smart."
Have we lost the trick of wedding Grace to
pleasure? Must we clown it at the bidding Of some tawdry, common
measure?
Can't you school us in the graces Of your pose and dainty paces?--
Now the chords begin to tinkle Quicker-- And your
feet they flash and flicker-- Twinkle!-- And you
mock us as you featly Swing and flutter to the chime Of the music-box
that sweetly Marks the time!

LOWER NEW YORK--A STORM

WHITE wing'd below the darkling clouds The driven sea-gulls
wheel; The roused sea flings a storm against The towers of stone and
steel.

The very voice of ocean rings Along the shaken street-- Dusk,
storm, and beauty whelm the world Where sea and city meet--

But what care they for flashing wings, Quick beauty, loud refrain,
These huddled thousands, deaf and blind To all but greed and gain?

AT SUNSET

THE sun-god stooped from out the sky To kiss the flushing sea,

While all the winds of all the world Made jovial melody; The night
came hurrying up to hide The lovers with her tent; The governed
thunders, rank on rank, Stood mute with wonderment; The pale worn
moon, a jealous shade, Peered from the firmament; The early stars, the
curious stars, Came peering forth to see What mighty nuptials shook
the world With such an ecstasy Whenas the sun-god left the sky To
mingle with the sea.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT

**ALACK-A-DAY for poverty! What jewels my mind
doth give to thee!**

Carved agate stone porphyrogene, Green emerald and beryl green,
Deep sapphire and pale amethyst, Sly opal, cloaking with a mist The levin
of its love elate, Shy brides' pearls, flushed and delicate, Sea-colored lapis
lazuli, Sardonyx and chalcedony, Enkindling diamond, candid gold, Red
rubies and red garnets bold: And all their humors should be blent In one
intolerable blaze, Barbaric, fierce, and opulent, To dazzle him that
dared to gaze!

Alack-a-day for poverty: My rhymes are all you get of me! Yet, if your
heart receive, behold! The worthless words are set in gold.

SILVIA

I STILL remember how she moved Among the rathe, wild blooms she
loved, (When Spring came tip-toe down the slopes, Atremble 'twixt her
doubts and hopes, Half fearful and all virginal)-- How Silvia sought this
dell to call Her flowers into full festival, And chid them with this
madrigal:

"The busy spider hangs the brush With filmy gossamers, The frogs
are croaking in the creek, The sluggish blacksnake stirs, But still the
ground is bare of bloom Beneath the fragrant firs.

"Arise, arise, O briar rose, And sleepy violet! Awake, awake,
anemone, Your wintry dreams forget--

For shame, you tardy marigold, Are you not budded yet?

"The Swallow's back, and claims the eaves That last year were his
home; The Robin follows where the plow Breaks up the crusted loam;
And Red-wings spies the Thrush and pipes: 'Look! Speckle-breast is
come!'

"Up, blooms! and storm the wooded slopes, The lowlands and the
plain-- Blow, jonquil, blow your golden horn Across the ranks of rain!
To arms! to arms! and put to flight The Winter's broken train!"

She paused beside this selfsame rill, And as she ceased, a daffodil Held
up reproachfully his head And fluttered into speech, and said:

"Chide not the flowers! You little know Of all their travail 'neath the
snow,

 Their struggling hours Of choking sorrow underground. Chide
not the flowers! You little guess of that profound And blind, dumb
agony of ours! Yet, victor here beside the rill, I greet the light that I
have found, A Daffodil!"

And when the Daffodil was done A boastful Marigold spake on:

"Oh, chide the white frost, if you choose, The heavy clod, so hard to
loose, The preying powers Of worm and insect underground. Chide
not the flowers! For spite of scathe and cruel wound, Unconquered by
the sunless hours, I rise in regal pride, a bold And golden-hearted,
golden-crowned Marsh Marigold!"

And when she came no more, her creek Would not believe, but bade us
seek

Hither, yon, and to and fro-- Everywhere that children go When the
Spring Is on the wing And the winds of April blow-- "I will never think
her dead; "She will come again!" it said; And then the birds that use the
vale, Broken-hearted, turned the tale Into syllables of song And chirped it
half a summer long:

"Silvia, Silvia, Be our Song once more, Our vale revisit, Silvia,
And be our Song once more: For joy lies sleeping in the lute; The merry
pipe, the woodland flute, And all the pleading reeds are mute That

breathed to thee of yore.

"Silvia, Silvia, Be our Moon again,

Shine on our valley, Silvia, And be our Moon again: The fluffy owl
and nightingale Flit silent through the darkling vale, Or utter only words
of wail From throats all harsh with pain.

"Silvia, Silvia, Be Springtime, as of old; Come clad in laughter,
Silvia, Our Springtime, as of old: The waiting lowlands and the hills
Are tremulous with daffodils Unblown, until thy footstep thrills Their
promise into gold."

And, musing on her here, I too Must wonder if it can be true She died,
as other mortals do. The thought would fit her more, to feign That, full
of life and unaware That earth holds aught of grief or stain, The fairies
stole and hold her where Death enters not, nor strife nor pain;--

That, drowsing on some bed of pansies, By Titania's necromancies Her
senses were to slumber lulled, Deeply sunken, steeped and dulled, And
by wafture of swift pinions She was borne out through earth's portals
To the fairy queen's dominions, To some land of the immortals.

THE EXPLORERS

AND some still cry: "What is the use? The service rendered?
What the gain? Heroic, yes!--but in what cause? Have they made less
one earth-borne pain? Broadened the bounded spirit's scope? Or died to
make the dull world hope?"

Must man still be the slave of Use?-- But these men, careless and
elate, Join battle with a burly world Or come to wrestling grips with
fate, And not for any good nor gain Nor any fame that may befall-- But,
thrilling in the clutch of life, Heed the loud challenge and the call;--
And grown to symbols at the last, Stand in heroic silhouette Against
horizons ultimate, As towers that front lost seas are set;--

The reckless gesture, the strong pose, Sharp battle-cry flung back to
Earth, And buoyant humor, as a god Might say: "Lo, here my feet have
trod!-- There lies the meaning and the worth!

They bring no golden treasure home, They win no acres for their
clan, Nor dream nor deed of theirs shall mend The ills of man's
bedeviled span-- Nor are they skilled in sleights of speech, (Nor

overeager) to make plain The use they serve, transcending use,-- The
gain beyond apparent gain!

EARLY AUTUMN

WITH half-hearted levies of frost that make foray, retire, and
refrain-- Ambiguous bugles that blow and that falter to silence again--

With banners of mist that still waver above them, advance and
retreat, The hosts of the Autumn still hide in the hills, for a doubt
stays their feet;--

But anon, with a barbaric splendor to dazzle the eyes that behold,
And regal in raiment of purple and umber and amber and gold,

And girt with the glamor of conquest and scarved with red
symbols of pride, From the hills in their might and their mirth on the
steeds of the wind will they ride,

To make sport and make spoil of the Summer, who dwells in a
dream on the plain, Still tented in opulent ease in the camps of her
indolent train.

"TIME STEALS FROM LOVE"

TIME steals from Love all but Love's wings; And how should aught
but evil things, Or any good but death, befall Him that is thrall unto
Time's thrall, Slave to the lesser of these Kings?

O heart of youth that wakes and sings! O golden vows and golden
rings! Life mocks you with the tale of all Time steals from Love!

O riven lute and writhen strings, Dead bough whereto no blossom
clings, The glory was ephemeral! Nor may our Autumn grief recall
The passion of the perished Springs Time steals from Love!

THE RONDEAU

YOUR rondeau's tale must still be light-- No bugle-call to life's stern
fight! Rather a smiling interlude Memorial to some transient mood
Of idle love and gala-night.

Its manner is the merest sleight O' hand; yet therein dwells its might,

For if the heavier touch intrude Your rondeau's stale.

Fragrant and fragile, fleet and bright, And wing'd with whim, it gleams
in flight Like April blossoms wind-pursued Down aisles of tangled
underwood;-- Nor be too serious when you write Your rondeau's tail!

VISITORS

THEY haunt me, they tease me with hinted Withheld revelations, The
songs that I may not utter; They lead me, they flatter, they woo me. I
follow, I follow, I snatch At the veils of their secrets in vain-- For lo! they
have left me and vanished, The songs that I cannot sing.

There are visions elusive that come With a quiver and shimmer of
wings;-- Shapes shadows and shapes, and the murmur Of voices;-- Shapes,
that out of the twilight Leap, and with gesture appealing Seem to deliver a
message, And are gone 'twixt a breath and a breath;-- Shapes that race in
with the waves Moving silverly under the moon,

And are gone ere they break into foam on the rocks And recede;--
Breathings of love from invisible Flutes, Blown somewhere out in the
tender Dusk, That die on the bosom of Silence;-- Formless, And fleeter
than thought, Vaguer than thought or emotion, What are these visitors?

Out of the vast and uncharted Realms that encircle the visible world,
With a glimmer of light on their pinions, They rush . . . They waver, they
vanish, Leaving me stirred with a dream of the ultimate beauty, A
sense of the ultimate music, I never shall capture;--

They are Beauty, Formless and tremulous Beauty,

Beauty unborn; Beauty as yet unapparelled In thought; Beauty that
hesitates, Falters, Withdraws from the verge of birth, Flutters, Retreats
from the portals of life;-- O Beauty for ever uncaptured! O songs that I
never shall sing!

THE PARTING

WE have come "the primrose way," Folly, thou and I! Such a
glamor and a grace Ever glimmered on thy face, Ever such a witchery Lit
the laughing eyes of thee, Could a fool like me withstand Folly's feast and

beckoning hand? Drinking, how thy lips' caress Spiced the cup of waywardness! So we came "the primrose way," Folly, thou and I!

But now, Folly, we must part, Folly, thou and I! Shall one look with mirth or tears Back on all his wasted years, Purposes dissolved in wine, Pearls flung to the heedless swine?--

Idle days and nights of mirth, Were they pleasures nothing worth? Well, there's no gainsaying we Squandered youth right merrily! But now, Folly, we must part, Folly, thou and I!

AN OPEN FIRE

THESE logs with drama and with dream are rife, For all their golden Summers and green Springs Through leaf and root they sucked the forest's life, Drank in its secret, deep, essential things, Its midwood moods, its mystic runes, Its breathing hushes stirred of faery wings, Its August nights and April noons; The garnered fervors of forgotten Junes Flare forth again and waste away; And in the sap that leaps and sings We hear again the chant the cricket flings Across the hawthorn-scented dusks of May.

REALITIES

REALITIES

WE are deceived by the shadow, we see not the substance of things. For the hills are less solid than thought; and deeds are but vapors; and flesh Is a mist thrown off and resumed by the soul, as a world by a god. Back of the transient appearance dwells in ineffable calm The utter reality, ultimate truth; this seems and that is.

THE STRUGGLE

I HAVE been down in a dark valley; I have been groping through a deep gorge; Far above, the lips of it were rimmed with moonlight, And here and there the light lay on the dripping rocks So that it seemed they dripped with moonlight, not with water; So deep it was, that narrow gash among the hills, That those great pines which fringed its edge Seemed to me no larger than upthrust fingers Silhouetted against the sky; And at its top the vale was strait, And the rays were slant And reached but part way down the sides; I could not see the moon itself; I walked through darkness, and the valley's edge Seemed almost level with the stars, The stars that were like fireflies in the little trees.

It was the midnight of defeat; I felt that I had failed; I was mocked of the gods; There was no way out of that gorge; The paths led no whither And I could not remember their beginnings; I was doomed to wander evermore, Thirsty, with the sound of mocking waters in mine ears, Groping, with gleams of useless light Splashed in ironic beauty on the rocks above. And so I whined.

And then despair flashed into rage; I leapt erect, and cried: "Could I but grasp my life as sculptors grasp the clay And knead and thrust it into shape again!-- If all the scorn of Heaven were but thrown Into the focus of some creature I could clutch!-- If something tangible were but vouchsafed me By the cold, far gods!-- If they but sent a Reason for the failure of my life I'd answer it; If they but sent a Fiend, I'd conquer it!--

But I reach out, and grasp the air, I rage, and the brute rock echoes my

words in mockery-- How can one fight the sliding moonlight on the cliffs? You gods, coward gods, Come down, I challenge you!-- You who set snares with roses and with passion, You who make flesh beautiful and damn men through the flesh, You who plump the purple grape and then put poison in the cup, You who put serpents in your Edens, You who gave me delight of my senses and broke me for it, You who have mingled death with beauty, You who have put into my blood the impulses for which you cursed me, You who permitted my brain the doubts wherefore you damn me, Behold, I doubt you, gods, no longer, but defy!-- I perish here? Then I will be slain of a god! You who have wrapped me in the scorn of your silence, The divinity in this same dust you flout

i>Flames through the dust, And dares, And flings you back your scorn,-- Come, face to face, and slay me if you will, But not until you've felt the weight Of all betrucked humanity's contempt In one bold blow!-- Speak forth a Reason, and I will answer it, Yes, to your faces I will answer it; Come garmented in flesh and I will fight with you, Yes, in your faces will I smite you, gods; Coward gods and tricksters that set traps In paradise!-- Far gods that hedge yourselves about with silence And with distance; That mock men from the unscalable escarpments of your Heavens."

Thus I raved, being mad. I had no sooner finished speaking than I felt The darkness fluttered by approaching feet, And the silence was burned through by trembling flames of sound, And I was 'ware that Something stood by me.

And with a shout I leapt and grasped that Being, And the Thing grasped me. We came to wrestling grips, And back and forth we swayed, Hand seeking throat, and crook'd knee seeking To encrook unwary leg, And spread toes grasping the uneven ground; The strained breast muscles cracked and creaked, The sweat ran in my eyes, The plagued breath sobbed and whistled through my throat, I tasted blood, and strangled, but still struggled on-- The stars above me danced in swarms like yellow bees, The shaken moonlight writhed upon the rocks;-- But at the last I felt his breathing weaker grow, The tense limbs grow less tense,

And with a bursting cry I bent his head right back, Back, back, until I
heard his neck bones snap; His spine crunched in my grip; I flung him to
the earth and knelt upon his breast

And listened till the fluttering pulse was stilled. Man, god, or devil, I
had wrenched the life from him! And lo!--even as he died The
moonlight failed above the vale,-- And somehow, sure, I know now how!--
Between the rifted rocks the great Sun struck A finger down the cliff, and
that red beam Lay sharp across the face of him that I had slain; And in that
light I read the answer of the silent gods Unto my cursed-out prayer,
For he that lay upon the ground was--I! I understood the lesson then; It
was myself that lay there dead; Yes, I had slain my Self.

THE REBEL

No doubt the ordered worlds speed on With purpose in their wings;
No doubt the ordered songs are sweet Each worthy angel sings; And
doubtless it is wise to heed The ordered words of Kings;

But how the heart leaps up to greet The headlong, rebel flight,
Whenas some reckless meteor Blazes across the night! Some comet--
Byron--Lucifer-- Has dared to Be, and fight!

No doubt but it is safe to dwell Where ordered duties are; No doubt
the cherubs earn their wage Who wind each ticking star;

No doubt the system is quite right!-- Sane, ordered, regular;

But how the rebel fires the soul Who dares the strong gods' ire!
Each Byron!--Shelley!--Lucifer!-- And all the outcast choir That chant
when some Prometheus Leaps up to steal Jove's fire!

THE CHILD AND THE MILL

BETTER a pauper, penniless, asleep on the kindly sod-- Better a
gipsy, houseless, but near to the heart of God,

That beats for ears not dulled by the clanking wheels of care--
Better starvation and freedom, hope and the good fresh air

Than death to the Something in him that was born to laugh and
dream, That was kin to the idle lilies and the ripples of the stream.

For out of the dreams of childhood, that careless come and go,
The boy gains strength, unknowing, that the Man will prove and
know.

But these fools with their lies and their dollars, their mills and
their bloody hands, Who make a god of a wheel, who worship their
whirring bands,

They are flinging the life of a people, raw, to the brute machines.
Dull-eyed, weary, and old--old in his early teens--

Stunted and stupid and twisted, marred in the mills of grief, Can
your factories fashion a Man of this thing-- a Man and a Chief?

Dumb is the heart of him now, at the time when his heart should
sing-- Wasters of body and brain, what race will the future bring?

What of the nation's nerve whenas swift crises come? What of
the brawn that should heave the guns on the beck of the drum?

Thieves of body and soul, who can neither think nor feel,
Swine-eyed priests of little false gods of gold and steel,

Bow to your obscene altars, worship your loud mills then! Feed
to Moloch and Baal the brawn and brains of men--

But silent and watchful and hidden forever over all The masters
brood of those Mills that "grind exceeding small."

And it needs no occult art nor magic to foreshow That a people who
sow defeat they will reap the thing they sow.

"SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI"

CONQUERORS leonine, lordly, Princes and vaunting kings, Ye are
drunk with the sound of your braggart trumps-- But lo! ye are
little things!

Earth . . . it is charnel with monarchs! And the puffs of dust that
start Where your war steeds stamp with their ringing hoofs Were each
some warrior's heart.

Peoples imperial, mighty, Masterful, challenging fate, The tread of
your cohorts shakes the hills-- But lo! ye are not great!

Nations that swarm and murmur, Ye are moths that flutter and
climb-- Ye are whirling gnats, ye are swirling bees, Tossed in the winds

of time!

Earth that is flushed with glory, A marvelous world ye are! But lo!
in the midst of a million stars Ye are only one pale star!

A breath stirs the dark abysses. . . . The deeps below the deep Are
troubled and vexed . . . and a thousand worlds Fall on eternal sleep!

THE COMRADE

I

HATH not man at his noblest An air of something more than man?-- A
hint of grace immortal, Born of his greatly daring to assist the gods In
conquering these shaggy wastes, These desert worlds, And planting life
and order in these stars?-- So Woman at her best: Her eyes are bright with
visions and with dreams That triumph over time; Her plumed thought,
wing for wing, is mate with his.

II

The world rolls on from dream to dream, And 'neath the vast
impersonal revenges of its going,

Crushed fools that cried defeat Lie dead amid the dust they
prophesied-- Ye doubters of man's larger destiny, Ye that despair, Look
backward down the vistaed years, And all is battle--and all victory! Man
fought, to be a man! Through painful centuries the slow beast fought,
Blinded and baffled, fought to gain his soul;-- Wild, hairy, shag, and
feared of shadows, Yet the clouds Made him strange signals that he
puzzled o'er;-- Beast, child, and ape, And yet the winds harped to him, and
the sea Rolled in upon his consciousness Its tides of wonder and romance;--
- Uncouth and caked with mire, And yet the stars said something to him,
and the sun Declared itself a god;-- The lagging cycles turned at last
The pictures into thought, Thought flowered in soul;-- But, oh, the myriad
weary years Ere Caliban was Shakespeare's self And Darwin's ape had
Darwin's brain!-- The battling, battling, and the steep ascent, The fight to
hold the little gained, The loss, the doubt, the shaken heart, The stubborn,
groping slow recovery!-- But looking backward toward the dim
beginnings, You that despair, Hath he not climbed and conquered? Look
backward and all's Victory! What coward looks forward and foresees

defeat?

III

Who climbed beside him, and who fought And suffered and was glad?
Is she a lesser thing than he, Who stained the slopes with bloody feet, or
stood Beside him on some hard-won eminence of hope Exulting as the
bold dawn swept A harper hand along the ringing hills? Flesh of his flesh,
and of his soul the soul, Hath she not fought, hath she not climbed?

And how is she a lesser thing?-- Nay, if she ever was 'Twas we that
made her so, who called her queen But kept her slave.

IV

Had she not courage for the fight? Hath she not courage for the years
to come? Hath she not courage who descends alone-- (How pitifully alone,
except for Love!) Where man's thought even falters that would
follow, Into the shadowy abyss (Through vast and murmurous caverns
dark with crowding dread And terrible with hovering wings), To
battle there with Death?--to battle There with Death, and wrest from him,
O Conqueror and Mother, Life!

V

Hath she too long dwelt dream-bound in the world of love,

Unconscious of the sterner throes, The more austere, impersonal, wide
faith, The urge that drives Christs to the cross Not for the love of one
beloved, But for the love of all? If so, she wakes! Wakes and demands a
share in all man's bolder destinies, The high, audacious ventures of
the soul That thinks to scale the bastioned slopes And strike stark Chaos
from his throne. We still stand in the dawn of time. Not meanly let us
stand nor shaken with low doubts! For there beyond the verge and
margin of gray cloud The future thrills with promise And the skies are
tremulous with golden light;-- She too would share those victories,
Comrade, and more than comrade;-- New times, new needs confront us
now; We must evolve new powers To battle with;-- We must go forward
now together, Or perchance we fail!

ENVOI

A LITTLE WHILE

A little while the tears and laughter, The willow and the rose-- A
little while, and what comes after No man knows.

An hour to sing, to love and linger . . . Then lutanist and lute Will
fall on silence, song and singer Both be mute.

Our gods from our desires we fashion. . . . Exalt our baffled lives,
And dream their vital bloom and passion Still survives;

But when we're done with mirth and weeping, With myrtle, rue, and
rose, Shall Death take Life into his keeping? . . . No man knows.

What heart hath not, through twilight places, Sought for its dead
again To gild with love their pallid faces? . . . Sought in vain! . . .

Still mounts the Dream on shining pinion . . . Still broods the dull
distrust . . . Which shall have ultimate dominion, Dream, or dust?

A little while with grief and laughter, And then the day will close;
The shadows gather . . . what comes after No man knows!