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THE INN OF DREAMS

BY

OLIVE CUSTANCE  
(LADY AFRED DOUGLAS)

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### DEDICATION

J'ÉCRIS POUR QUE LE JOUR OÙ JE NE SERAI PLUS

J'écris pour que le jour où je ne serai plus  
On sache comme l'air et le plaisir m'ont plu,  
Et que mon livre porte à la foule future  
Comme j'aimais la vie et l'heureuse nature.

Attentive aux travaux des champs et des maisons  
J'ai marqué chaque jour la forme des saisons,  
Parce que l'eau, la terre et la montante flamme  
En nul endroit ne sont si belles qu'en mon âme.

J'ai dit ce que j'ai vu et ce que j'ai senti,  
D'un coeur pour qui le vrai ne fut point trop hardi,  
Et j'ai eu cette ardeur, par l'amour intimée,  
Pour être après la mort parfois encore aimée,

Et qu'un jeune homme alors lisant ce que j'écris,  
Sentant par moi son coeur, ému, troublé, surpris,  
Ayant tout oublié des épouses réelles,  
M'accueille dans son âme et me préfère à elles.

COMTESSE MATHIEU DE NOAILLES

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### The Inn of Dreams

Sweet Laughter! Sweet Delight!  
 My heart is like a lighted Inn that waits  
 Your swift approach . . . and at the open gates  
 White Beauty stands and listens like a flower.  
 She has been dreaming of you in the night,  
 O fairy Princes; and her eyes are bright.  
 Spur your fleet horses, this is Beauty's hour!  
 Even as when a golden flame up-curved  
 Quivers and flickers out in a dark place,  
 So is it with the flame of Beauty's face—  
 That torch! that rose! that wonder of the world!  
 And Love shall weep to see—when he rides by  
 Years hence (the time shall seem as a bird's flight)—  
 A lonely Inn beneath a winter sky.  
 Come now, sweet friends! before the summer die.  
 Sweet Laughter! Sweet Delight!

### The Kingdom of Heaven

O World that holds me by the wings,  
How shall my soul escape your snares?  
So dear are your delightful things,  
So difficult your toils and cares:  
That, every way my soul is held  
By bonds of love, and bonds of hate;  
With all its heavenly ardours quelled,  
And all its angels desolate . . .

Yet in the heart of every child,  
God and the world are reconciled! . . .

### A Dream

I dreamed we walked together, you and I,  
Along a white and lonely road, that went  
I know not where . . . and we were well content.  
Our laughter was untroubled as the sky,  
And all our talk was delicate and shy,  
Though in that cage of words wild thoughts were pent  
Like prisoned birds that some sweet accident  
Might yet release to sing again, and fly.  
We passed between long lines of poplar trees . . .  
Where, summer comrades gay and debonair,  
The south wind and the sunlight danced . . . you smiled,  
With great glad eyes, as bright as summer seas,  
To feel their twinkling fingers in your hair . . .  
And then you kissed me, quickly, like a child!

### The Autumn Day

How delicately steps the autumn day  
In azure cloak and gown of ashen grey  
Over the level country that I love!

With glittering veils of light about her head  
And skirts of wide horizons round her spread  
White as the white wing-feathers of a dove.

Her feet, a flash of silver on the sea,  
Chase silver sails that fly untiringly  
Towards the enchanted Islands of the West.

Beautiful Islands, gardens of delight!  
That flower at dawn with roses red and white . . .  
And flame at sunset gold and amethyst . . .

How delicately steps the autumn day  
In azure cloak and gown of ashen grey  
Over the level country that I love . . .

And how my heart that all sweet things beguile  
Goes laughing with her for a little while . . .  
And then turns homeward like a weary dove.

## Angels

When life is difficult, I dream  
Of how the angels dance in heaven!  
Of how the angels dance and sing  
In gardens of eternal spring,  
Because their sins have been forgiven . . .  
And never more for them shall be  
The terrors of mortality!  
When life is difficult, I dream  
Of how the angels dance in heaven . . .

## The Changeling

My father was a golden king,  
My mother was a shining queen;  
I heard the magic blue-bird sing . . .  
They wrapped me in a mantle green.

They led their winged white horses out,  
We rode and rode till dawn was grey;  
We rode with many a song and shout,  
"Over the hills and far away."

They stole the crying human child,  
And left me laughing by the fire;  
And that is why my heart is wild,  
And all my life a long desire . . .

The old enchantments hold me still . . .  
And sometimes in a waking trance  
I seek again the Fairy Hill,  
The midnight feast, the glittering dance!

The wizard harpers play for me,  
I wear a crown upon my head,  
A princess in eternity,  
I dance and revel with the dead . . .

"Vain lies!" I hear the people cry,  
I listen to their weary truth;  
Then turn again to fantasy,  
And the untroubled Land of Youth.

I hear the laughter of the kings,  
I see their jewelled flagons gleam . . .  
O wine of Life! . . . immortal things  
Move in the splendour of my dream . . .

My spirit is a homing dove . . .  
I drain a crystal cup, and fall  
Softly into the arms of Love . . .  
And then the darkness covers all.

## A Song Against Care

O Care!  
Thou art a cloak too heavy to be borne,  
Glittering with tears, and gay with painted lies  
(For seldom—seldom art thou stained and torn,  
Showing a tattered lining, and the bare  
Bruised body of thy wearer); thou art fair  
To look at, O thou garment of our pride!  
A net of colours, thou dost catch the wise;

He lays aside his wisdom for thy sake . . .  
And Beauty hides her loveliness in thee . . .  
And after . . . when men know the agony  
Of thy great weight of splendour, and would shake  
Thee swiftly from their shoulders, cast aside  
The burden of thy jewelled bands that break  
Their very hearts . . . often it is too late.  
They fear the world will mock them and deride  
When they are stripped of all their golden state.  
But some are brave . . . but some among us dare  
Cry out against thy torment and be free!  
And I would rather a gay beggar be,  
And go in rags for all eternity,  
Than that thy clanking pomp should cover me,  
O Care! . . .

"Quelque part une Enfance très douce doit mourir"  
Albert Samian

Alas! I do not know on what sad day  
My childhood went away . . .  
It may have left me softly in the night  
When I was sleeping—dreaming—who can tell?  
Perhaps it whispered "wings were made for flight!"  
I only know it never said "farewell" . . .

And so I cannot tell when youth will go  
Although I love it so . . .  
But like a little amorous girl that clings  
To some fair boy, my spirit all afraid,  
While yet she holds youth back by the bright wings,  
Knows he must leave her for some other maid!

#### Candle-Light

Frail golden flowers that perish at a breath,  
Flickering points of honey-coloured flame,  
From sunset gardens of the moon you came,  
Pale flowers of passion . . . delicate flowers of death . . .

Blossoms of opal fire that raised on high  
Upon a hundred silver stems are seen  
Above the brilliant dance, or set between  
The brimming wine-cups . . . flowers of revelry!

Roses with amber petals that arise  
Out of the purple darkness of the night  
To deck the darkened house of Love, to light  
The laughing lips, the beautiful glad eyes.

Lilies with violet-coloured hearts that break  
In shining clusters round the silent dead,  
A diadem of stars at feet and head,  
The glory dazzles . . . but they do not wake . . .

O golden flowers the moon goes gathering  
In magic gardens of her fairy-land,  
While splendid angels of the sunset stand  
Watching in flaming circles wing to wing . . .

Frail golden flowers that perish at a breath,  
That wither in the hands of light, and die  
When bright dawn wakens in a silver sky.  
Pale flowers of passion . . . delicate flowers of death.

### In the South

I was pale and sad in the South like the olive-trees  
That droop their silver heads by the dusty roads,  
And are grave and cold and grey in spite of the sun . . .  
In the veils of rose and blue that the bright dawn spun  
Day wrapped me round in vain!  
I longed for the lovers and friends I had left behind,  
I longed for the North again.

I was deaf to song, and even to beauty blind,  
Blind to the magic woof that summer weaves,  
While roses beat their pearl and ruby leaves  
Against my window pane . . .  
And orange flowers so passionately white,  
So richly perfumed, pined for my delight:  
Only my faint heart sighed,  
In pity when the glory waned and died,  
For all that lovely life unsatisfied!

I was pale and sad in the South like the olive-trees  
That droop their silver heads by the dusty roads . . .

### Spring in the South

Beautiful as some rich embroidery  
The valley lies in verdant amplitude,  
Great mountains—like old merchants—o'er it brood—  
And as a lovely woman languidly  
Trailing her long blue robes, so comes the sea  
To touch it softly in a wistful mood . . .  
The sky forgets her starry multitude,  
Seeing how fair mere earthly flowers can be!

Glad country where the wayward feet of Spring,  
Moving in mystic dances, bring desire,  
New miracles of beauty every day . . .  
Where Love and sweet Delight fly wing to wing  
Forgetful as in dreams, that bright as fire  
So burn the hours of joy as swift away!

### "I am Weary, let me Sleep"

I am weary, let me sleep  
In some great embroidered bed,  
With soft pillows for my head.  
I am weary, let me sleep . . .  
Petals of sweet roses shed  
All around a perfumed heap  
White as pearls, and ruby red;  
Curtains closely drawn to keep  
Wings of darkness o'er me spread . . .  
I am weary, let me sleep  
In some great embroidered bed.  
Let me dream that I am dead,  
Nevermore to wake and weep  
In the future that I dread . . .  
For the ways of life are steep . . .  
I am weary, let me sleep . . .

## Grief

I, that was once so eager for the light,  
The vehement pomp and passion of the day,  
Am tired at last, and glad to steal away  
Across the dusky borders of the night.  
The purple darkness now is my delight,  
And with great stars my lonely sorrows play,  
As still, some proud and tragic princess may  
With diamonds make her desolation bright.

Night has become a temple for my tears . . .  
The moon a silver shroud for my despair,  
And all the golden forests of the spheres  
Have showered their splendours on me leaf by leaf  
Till men that meet me in the sunlight, stare  
To see the shining garment of my grief!

## Daffodil Dawn

While I slept, and dreamed of you,  
Morning, like a princess, came,  
All in robe of palest blue:  
Stooped and gathered in that hour  
From the east a golden flower,  
Great and shining flower of flame . . .  
Then she hastened on her way  
Singing over plain and hill—  
While I slept and dreamed of you  
Dreams that never can come true . . .  
Morning at the gates of Day,  
Gathered Dawn, the daffodil!

## Beauty

I saw the face of Beauty—a pale rose  
In the gold dusk of her abundant hair . . .  
A silken web of dreams and joys—a snare . . .  
A net of pleasures in a world of woes,  
A bright temptation for gay youth that goes  
Laughing upon his way without a care!  
A shield of light for conquering Love to bear  
Stronger than all the swords of all his foes.

O face of Beauty—O white dawn enshrined  
In sunrise veils of splendid hair—O star!  
Shine on those weary men who sadly wise  
But guess thy glory faintly from afar—  
Missing the marvel of thy smile—and blind  
To the imperial passion in thine eyes!

## The Vision

I come from lonely downs and silent woods,

With winter in my heart, a withered world,  
A heavy weight of dark and sorrowful things,  
And all my dreams spread out their rainbow wings,  
And turn again to those bright solitudes  
Where Beauty met me in a thousand moods,  
And all her shining banners were unfurled . . .  
And where I snatched from the sweet hands of Spring  
A crystal cup and drank a mystic wine,  
And walked alone a secret perfumed way,  
And saw the glittering Angels at their play.  
And heard the golden birds of Heaven sing,  
And woke . . . to find white lilies clustering  
And all the emerald wood an empty shrine,  
Fragrant with myrrh and frankincense and spice,  
And echoing yet the flutes of Paradise . . .

### The Dance

Do you remember that day I danced in the woods,  
Under the dancing leaves?  
Do you remember the delicate blue of the sky  
And the gold-dust in the air?  
And the tawny harvest fields, and the heavy sheaves?  
Summer was surely in one of her bravest moods . . .  
And oh, the rare  
Swift joy that lifted life to an ecstasy,  
That shining day I danced for you, dear, in the woods!

The purple twilight came, and the amber moon . . .  
And the fairies danced with me . . .  
And the shy fauns crept from the tangled thicket near,  
And the startled dryads bent,  
White and starry-eyed, each from her secret tree,  
To watch that mystical dance, to share that heavenly swoon  
That mad, bright banishment. . . .  
For we were free in the perfect country, dear,  
When purple twilight came and the amber moon . . .

Some day I shall dance again that mystical dance . . .  
I know not when or where!  
But the angels shall dance with me, and I shall not be afraid.  
I shall look in their deep eyes . . .  
And feel their arms about me, and their kisses in my hair,  
And know that time is over, and the desperate ways of chance. . . .  
I shall be very wise,  
And glad at last, and the walls of the world shall fade . . .  
The day when I dance again that mystical dance.

### The Prisoner of God

Once long and long ago I knew delight.  
God gave my spirit wings and a glad voice.  
I was a bird that sang at dawn and noon,  
That sang at starry evening time and night;  
Sang at the sun's great golden doors, and furled  
Brave wings in the white gardens of the moon;  
That sang and soared beyond the dusty world.

Once long and long ago I did rejoice,  
But now I am a stone that falls and falls.  
A prisoner, cursing the blank prison walls,  
Helpless and dumb, with desperate eyes, that see  
The terrible beauty of those simple things  
My soul disdained when she was proud and free.  
And I can only pray: God pity me,



God pity me and give me back my voice!  
God pity me and give me back my wings!

### The Storm

What do they hunt to-night, the hounds of the wind?  
I think it is joy they hunt, for joy has fled from my heart.  
I only remember the hours when I sorrowed or sinned,  
I only remember the hours when I stood apart  
Lonely and tired, in difficult dreams entranced,  
And I forget the days when I loved, and laughed, and danced.

Grey hounds of the wind, I hear your wistful cry,  
The cry of unsatisfied hearts hungry for happiness  
The house is full of whispering ghosts as you hurry by,  
And my soul is heavy and dark with a great distress,  
For heaven is far away, and hope is dead;  
And the night is a tomb of tears, and despair, and dread.

O hunt no more wild hounds of the wind and rain,  
For my soul is afraid of the sound of your hurrying feet,  
And surely under the stars a beautiful joy is slain?  
Fly! black wings of sorrow . . . wet wings of the night that beat  
At the shuttered windows, swiftly fly away,  
Before God stoops to gather the golden flower of day.

### St. Anthony

#### THE ENGRAVING BY DÜRER

Dürer has drawn him resting by the way . . .  
Has he returned from some far pilgrimage?  
Or just come out into the light of day  
From a dark hermit's cell? We cannot know . . .  
With stooping shoulders, and with head bent low  
Over his book—and pointed hood drawn down.  
His eager eyes devour the printed page . . .  
Regardless of the little lovely town  
Rising behind him, with its clustered towers . . .  
O Saint, look up! and see how gay and fair  
The earth is in its summer-time of flowers,  
Look up, and see the world, for God is there . . .  
Old dreaming Saint, how many are like you,  
Intent upon the dusty book of fate:  
Slow to discern the false things from the true!  
Yet weary of world clamour and world hate,  
And hungering for eternal certainties . . .  
Not knowing how close about them heaven lies!

### Black Butterflies

O words of all my songs . . . black butterflies!  
Wild words of all the wayward songs I sing . . .  
Called from the tomb of some enchanted past  
By that strange sphinx, my soul, they slowly rise  
And settle on white pages wing to wing . . .  
White pages like flower-petals fluttering  
Held spellbound there till some blind hour shall bring  
The perfect voice that, delicate and wise,

Shall set them free in fairyland at last!  
That garden of all dreams and ecstasies  
Where my soul sings through an eternal spring,  
Watching alone with enigmatic eyes,  
Dark wings on pale flower-petals quivering . . .  
O words of all my songs . . . black butterflies!

#### In Praise of Youth

O delicate youth, thy praises shall be sung  
While yet my heart is young . . .  
While Life and I, in search of lovely things,  
Go out with dancing feet and dreaming eyes,  
And find wild Folly, with her rainbow wings,  
Sweeter than all the wisdom of the wise.

O delicate Youth, thy praises shall be sung  
While yet my heart is young . . .  
Thy whiteness, and thy brightness, and the sweet  
Flushed softness of thy little restless feet . . .  
The tossed and sunny tangle of thy hair,  
Thy swiftness, slimness, shyness, simpleness,  
That set the old folk sighing for the rare  
Red rose of Joy thy careless days possess.

. . . And when at last, with sad, indifferent face,  
I walk in narrow pathways patiently;  
Forgetful of thy beauty, and thy truth,  
Thy ringing laughter, thy rebellious grace . . .  
When fair Love turns his face away from me . . .  
Then, let me die, O delicate sweet Youth!

#### Opal Song

Shy and wild . . . shy and wild  
To my lovers I have been.  
Frank and wayward as a child,  
Strange and secret as a queen;  
Fain of love, and love beguiled,  
Yet afraid of love, I ween!

False and true . . . false and true  
Is the woman's heart in me . . .  
Fair lost faces that I rue,  
Golden friends I laugh to see,  
Changing, I come back to you,  
Never doubt my loyalty!

#### Gifts

Come near! you are my friend and I will wear  
Gems for your sake, and flowers in my hair;  
Garments of silver gauze, and cloth of gold . . .  
And I will give you power to have and hold,  
And passion, and delight and ecstasy.  
What will you give to me?

And I will give you, if you will but stay,  
The magic mirror of the dawn, where day  
Waking, beholds the wonder of her face—

If you will keep me yet in your embrace,  
And let me dream of Love's eternity.  
What will you give to me?

Yes! I will give you the gold veils of light,  
And the dark spangled curtains of the night . . .  
And I will give you as a flower unfurled,  
The proud and marvellous beauty of the world,  
And all the wild, white horses of the sea.  
What will you give to me? . . .

#### Primrose Hill

Wild heart in me that frets and grieves,  
Imprisoned here against your will . . .  
Sad heart that dreams of rainbow wings  
See! I have found some golden things!  
The poplar trees on Primrose Hill  
With all their shining play of leaves . . .  
And London like a silver bride,  
That will not put her veil aside!

Proud London like a painted Queen,  
Whose crown is heavy on her head . . .  
City of sorrow and desire,  
Under a sky of opal fire,  
Amber and amethyst and red . . .  
And how divine the day has been!  
For every dawn God builds again  
This world of beauty and of pain . . .

Wild heart that hungers for delight,  
Imprisoned here against your will;  
Sad heart, so eager to be gay!  
Loving earth's lovely things . . . the play  
Of wind and leaves on Primrose Hill . . .  
Or London dreaming of the night . . .  
Adventurous heart, on beauty bent,  
That only Heaven could quite content!

#### A Morning Song

You saw my window open wide,  
    And woke me early, sister day!  
You came in all your lovely pride,  
With laughing looks that I adore,  
    With wings of blue and grey . . .  
With sunshine skirts that swept the floor,  
With songs to drive night's dreams away,  
    You called me out to play.  
And so I took you by the hand,  
And found the way to fairyland . . .  
With such impatient feet I climb  
    The ladders of delight!  
For well I know that ruthless time  
    Turns morning moods to tears and night.

#### The Wings of Fortune

Fair fortune you are wild and coy,  
Fickle, mysterious, and shy . . .  
And so we lost you, Love and I!  
And now, at last, because we find  
Your golden footprints, Love the boy,  
Dreams you are near . . . but Love is blind!  
Yet, surely Sorrow's arms unwind  
From this tired heart, and dark distress  
Fades softly . . . softly from the world:  
And in Hope's silver sky unfurled,  
I see the banners of delight!  
And the grey heaven of life grows bright  
With the red dawn of happiness . . .  
As with a laughing look Love flings  
His heavy crown of thorns away . . .  
Fair fortune, you are wild and coy,  
And ah! I fear you will not stay.  
But Love has caught you by the wings  
And radiant as Eurydice  
By her brave poet's song set free,  
I rush into the arms of joy!

#### Shadow-Nets

When I was wandering on the Downs to-day  
I saw the pine-woods sleeping in the sun . . .  
For they were tired of weaving shadow-nets—  
Weaving all day in vain . . . in vain . . . in vain . . .  
Pale phantom nets to snare the golden sun!  
And then I thought of how the poets weave  
With shadowy words their cunning nets of song,  
Hoping to catch, at last, a shining dream!

#### Peacocks. A Mood

In Gorgeous plumage, azure, gold and green,  
They trample the pale flowers, and their shrill cry  
Troubles the garden's bright tranquillity!  
Proud birds of Beauty, splendid and serene,  
Spreading their brilliant fans, screen after screen  
Of burnished sapphire, gemmed with mimic suns—  
Strange magic eyes, that, so the legend runs,  
Will bring misfortune to this fair demesne . . .

And my gay youth, that, vain and debonair,  
Sits in the sunshine—tired at last of play  
(A child, that finds the morning all too long),  
Tempted with its beauty that disastrous day  
When in the gathering darkness of despair  
Death shall strike dumb the laughing mouth of song.

#### Hyacinthus

Fair boy, how gay the morning must have seemed  
Before the fatal game that murdered thee!  
Of such a dawn my wistful heart has dreamed:  
Surely I too have lived in Arcady  
When Spring, lap-full of roses, ran to meet  
White Aphrodite risen from the sea . . .

Perchance I saw thee then, so glad and fleet;  
Hasten to greet Apollo, stoop to bind  
The gold and jewelled sandals on his feet,  
While he so radiant, so divinely kind,  
Lured thee with honeyed words to be his friend,  
All heedless of thy fate, for Love is blind.

For Love is blind and cruel, and the end  
Of every joy is sorrow and distress.  
And when immortal creatures lightly bend  
To kiss the lips of simple loveliness,  
Swords are unsheathed in silence, and clouds rise,  
Some God is jealous of the mute caress . . .

But who shall mourn thy death—ah, not the wise?  
Better to perish in thy happiest hour,  
To close in sight of beauty thy dark eyes,  
And, dying so, be changed into a flower,  
Than that the stealthy and relentless years  
Should steal that grace which was thy only dower.

And bring thee in return dull cares and tears,  
And difficult days and sickness and despair . . .  
O, not for thee the griefs and sordid fears  
That, like a burden, trembling age must bear;  
Slain in thy youth, by the sweet hands of Love,  
Thou shalt remain for ever young and fair . . .

#### Hylas

Dark boy, how radiantly you went to meet  
Your mystic doom . . . what colours in the sky!  
As though that cup of beauty the gods hold  
Brimmed over on a world in ecstasy . . .  
What silver flutes charmed all the forest ways . . .  
How the green shimmered, jewelled thick with flowers,  
And how the sun was like a globe of gold . . .  
Yet you but thought to chase the perfect hours  
Down that white road of wonder and delight,  
The highway of your dreams, and heedlessly  
You crushed the violets with your slim brown feet,  
And whistled low, and sang a careless song . . .  
Because your life was full of lovely days,  
Because your life was delicate and sweet . . .  
O youth and dawn . . . you dreamed not of the night . . .  
O life and laughter . . . but the night is long . . .

#### Blue Flowers

I go to gather in the woods for you  
The wild flowers that are blue . . .  
Petals to match the colour of your eyes!

None but blue blossoms will I take, yet see  
How sweetly tempting me  
The fruit trees swing their scented treasures.

And how the buttercups and daisies dance  
To meet my dazzled glance!  
But gold and silver, Sweet, are naught to you.

And so let others rob God's gardens . . . shake  
The stars down for your sake—  
I bring you but the wild flowers that are blue!

### Madrigal

Rare garden where my heart goes gathering  
Many a lovely and delightful thing,  
Pale roses of your body and the fair  
Unrivalled yellow blossoms of your hair!

Tall lilies of your gay and careless grace,  
And O the wistful flower of your face!  
And all the soft and starry mysteries  
Of those divine forget-me-nots, your eyes . . .

O come, fair Love, before the flowers fade,  
And bless this garden that the gods have made . . .  
Rare garden where my heart goes gathering  
Many a lovely and delightful thing . . .

### Endymion

Your hair was like a honey-coloured flame  
Seen through a veil of silver when you came  
And took me in your arms that winter night . . .  
The moonlight, amorous of your golden hair,  
Toyed with it softly, as a woman might  
With some bright treasure, delicate and rare.

O, young Endymion, risen from the dead,  
Born once again to beauty, O bright head!  
The moon stoops low to kiss you, as of old;  
Stoops graciously from her great throne of pearl,  
With outstretched arms mysterious and cold . . .  
But you have left her for a mortal girl.

### Dance Song

O hide your passion from the moon.  
When young and slender she appears  
In shining gown and silver shoon . . .  
And, all her path with stars impearled,  
She dances round the darkened world.

O hide your sorrows from the sun . . .  
The sun should never see your tears!  
Weep, if you will, when day is done . . .  
But laugh and sing and clap your hands  
While yet the sun in heaven stands.

### A Memory

O how I loved you when we met  
For that one moment of the day!  
Yes, loved you desperately, and yet  
Could scarcely find a word to say—  
No wonder that you looked and smiled

As though upon some timid child.  
You never guessed, how could you guess  
That I adored your loveliness!

You never saw the prisoned soul  
Behind the windows of my eyes,  
Frantic to break from fate's control  
And charm you with her flatteries . . .  
And show you, your cold heart to move,  
The shining treasure of her love,  
And worship in a long embrace,  
The reckless beauty of your face!

You never knew . . . and the dream died  
A broken rose beneath your feet . . .  
You went your way . . . the world is wide  
And I forgot, for youth is sweet . . .  
Yet when at night I lie awake,  
My heart is sad for a dream's sake,  
And I remember and regret . . .  
O how I loved you when we met!

### The Photograph

O Beauty, what is this?  
A shadow of your face . . .  
Where is the wild flower grace  
That Love is wont to kiss?

Where is the bird that brings  
To your untroubled eyes  
The blue of fairy skies,  
The flash of fairy wings? . . .

O wild bird of delight,  
That no white hand may hold,  
Or fairest cage of gold . . .  
For who would stay its flight?

The song-bird of your voice  
Whose magic song Love hears,  
Trembling behind your tears,  
Trilling when you rejoice . . .

O Beauty, what is this?  
The shadow of a rose . . .  
A little ghost that goes  
Oblivious of Love's kiss.

Only a shadow . . . yet  
It may, in some dark hour  
Recall the living flower . . .  
If haply Love forget.

### St. Sebastian

So beautiful in all thine agony!  
So radiant in thine infinite despair . . .  
Oh, delicate mouth, brave eyes, and curled bright hair . . .  
Oh, lovely body lashed to the rough tree:  
What brutal fools were those that gave to thee  
Red roses of thine outraged blood to wear,  
Laughed at thy bitter pain and loathed the fair  
Bruised flower of thy victorious purity?

Marvellous Beauty . . . target of the world,  
How all Love's arrows seek thy joy, Oh Sweet!  
And wound the white perfection of thy youth!  
How all the poisoned spears of hate are hurled  
Against thy sorrow when thou darest to meet  
With martyrdom men's mockery of the truth!

### The Magic Mirrors

In the dim mirrors of imagination,  
I watch the silent dancing of my soul . . .  
I watch her as she dances with my dreams . . .  
See how she takes innumerable disguises,  
And hides her beauty behind many masks,  
And how, sometimes, she seems to laugh and sing,  
. . . And weep . . . and call upon the unknown Gods . . .  
But not one mirror has betrayed her voice,  
Or shown to me the secret of her face . . .  
O silent dance of sorrow and delight,  
My heart grown tired with watching, turns away,  
To make perhaps a little passionate song  
Out of the shadows of immortal things . . .

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE INN OF DREAMS \*\*\*

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