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# **THE TWO TWILIGHTS**

**BY**

**HENRY A. BEERS**

**BOSTON: RICHARD G. BADGER**

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## **PREFACE**

The contents of this volume include selections from two early books of verse, long out of print; a few pieces from *The Ways of Yale* (Henry Holt & Co); and a handful of poems contributed of late years to the magazines and not heretofore collected.

For permission to use copyrighted material my thanks are due to Messrs. Henry Holt & Co., and to the publishers of Harper's Monthly Magazine and of the Yale Review.

HENRY A. BEERS.

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## THE TWO TWILIGHTS

### THE THANKLESS MUSE

The muses ring my bell and run away.  
I spy you, rogues, behind the evergreen:  
You, wild Thalia, romper in the hay;  
And you, Terpsichore, you long-legged quean.  
When I was young you used to come and stay,  
But, now that I grow older, 'tis well seen  
What tricks ye put upon me. Well-a-day!  
How many a summer evening have ye been  
Sitting about my door-step, fain to sing  
And tell old tales, while through the fragrant dark

Burned the large planets, throbbled the brooding sound  
Of crickets and the tree-toads' ceaseless ring;  
And in the meads the fire-fly lit her spark  
Where from my threshold sank the vale profound.

### **BLUE ROSES OF ACADEMUS**

So late and long the shadows lie  
Under the quadrangle wall:  
From such a narrow strip of sky  
So scant an hour the sunbeams fall,  
They hardly come to touch at all  
This cool, sequestered corner where,  
Beside the chapel belfry tall,  
I cultivate my small parterre.

Poor, sickly blooms of Academe,  
Recluses of the college close,  
Whose nun-like pallor would beseem  
The violet better than the rose:  
There's not a bud among you blows  
With scent or hue to lure the bee:  
Only the thorn that on you grows—  
Only the thorn grows hardily.

Pale cloisterers, have you lost so soon  
The way to blush? Do you forget  
How once, beneath the enamored moon,  
You climbed against the parapet,  
To touch the breast of Juliet  
Warm with a kiss, wet with a tear,  
In gardens of the Capulet,  
Far south, my flowers, not here—not here?

### **THE WINDS OF DAWN**

Whither do ye blow?  
For now the moon is low.  
Whence is it that ye come,  
And where is it ye go?  
All night the air was still,  
The crickets' song was shrill;  
But now there runs a hum  
And rustling through the trees.  
A breath of coolness wakes,  
As on Canadian lakes,  
And on Atlantic seas,  
And each high Alpine lawn  
Begin the winds of dawn.

### **ANACREONTIC**

I would not be  
A voyager on the windy seas:  
More sweet to me  
This bank where crickets chirp, and bees  
Buzz drowsy sunshine minstrelsies.

I would not bide  
On lonely heights where shepherds dwell.  
At twilight tide  
The sounds that from the valley swell,  
Soft breathing lute and herdsman's bell,  
Are sweeter far  
Than music of cold mountain rills.  
The evening star  
Wakes love and song below, but chills  
With mist and breeze the gloomy hills.

I would not woo  
Some storm-browed Juno, queenly fair.  
Soft eyes of blue  
And sudden blushes unaware  
Do net my heart in silken snare.

I do not love  
The eyrie, but low woodland nest  
Of cushat dove:  
Not wind, but calm; not toil, but rest  
And sleep in grassy meadow's breast.

### **BUMBLE BEE**

As I lay yonder in tall grass  
A drunken bumble-bee went past  
Delirious with honey toddy.  
The golden sash about his body  
Could scarce keep in his swollen belly  
Distent with honey-suckle jelly.  
Rose liquor and the sweet pea wine  
Had filled his soul with song divine;  
Deep had he drunk the warm night through:  
His hairy thighs were wet with dew.  
Full many an antic he had played  
While the world went round through sleep and shade.  
Oft had he lit with thirsty lip  
Some flower-cup's nectared sweets to sip,  
When on smooth petals he would slip  
Or over tangled stamens trip,  
And headlong in the pollen rolled,  
Crawl out quite dusted o'er with gold.  
Or else his heavy feet would stumble  
Against some bud and down he'd tumble  
Amongst the grass; there lie and grumble  
In low, soft bass—poor maudlin bumble!  
With tipsy hum on sleepy wing  
He buzzed a glee—a bacchic thing  
Which, wandering strangely in the moon,  
He learned from grigs that sing in June,  
Unknown to sober bees who dwell  
Through the dark hours in waxen cell.  
When south wind floated him away  
The music of the summer day  
Lost something: sure it was a pain  
To miss that dainty star-light strain.

### **WATER LILIES AT SUNSET**

Mine eyes have seen when once at sunset hour  
White lily flocks that edged a lonely lake  
All rose and sank upon the lifting swell

That swayed their long stems lazily, and lapped  
 Their floating pads and stirred among the leaves.  
 And when the sun from western gates of day  
 Poured colored flames, they, kissed to ruddy shame,  
 So blushed through snowy petals, that they glowed  
 Like roses morning-blown in dewy bowers,  
 When garden-walks lie dark with early shade.  
 That so their perfumed chalices were brimmed  
 With liquid glory till they overflowed  
 And spilled rich lights and purple shadows out,  
 That splashed the pool with gold, and stained its waves  
 In tints of violet and ruby blooms.  
 But when the flashing gem that lit the day  
 Dropped in its far blue casket of the hills,  
 The rainbow paintings faded from the mere,  
 The wine-dark shades grew black, the gilding dimmed,  
 While, paling slow through tender amber hues,  
 The crimsoned lilies blanched to coldest white,  
 And wanly shivered in the evening breeze.  
 When twilight closed—when earliest dew-drops fell  
 All frosty-chill deep down their golden hearts,  
 They shrank at that still touch, as maidens shrink,  
 When love's first footstep frights with sweet alarms  
 The untrod wildness of their virgin breasts;  
 Then shut their ivory cups, and dipping low  
 Their folded beauties in the gloomy wave,  
 They nodded drowsily and heaved in sleep.  
 But sweeter far than summer dreams at dawn,  
 Their mingled breaths from out the darkness stole,  
 Across the silent lake, the winding shores,  
 The shadowy hills that rose in lawny slopes,  
 The marsh among whose reeds the wild fowl screamed,  
 And dusky woodlands where the night came down.

## BETWEEN THE FLOWERS

An open door and door-steps wide,  
 With pillared vines on either side,  
 And terraced flowers, stair over stair,  
 Standing in pots of earthenware  
 Where stiff processions filed around—  
 Black on the smooth, sienna ground.  
 Tubers and bulbs now blossomed there  
 Which, in the moisty hot-house air,  
 Lay winter long in patient rows,  
 Glassed snugly in from Christmas snows:  
 Tuberose, with white, waxy gems  
 In bunches on their reed-like stems;  
 Their fragrance forced by art too soon  
 To mingle with the sweets of June.  
 (So breathes the thin blue smoke, that steals  
 From ashes of the gilt pastilles,  
 Burnt slowly, as the brazier swings,  
 In dim saloons of eastern kings.)  
 I saw the calla's arching cup  
 With yellow spadix standing up,  
 Its liquid scents to stir and mix—  
 The goldenest of toddy-sticks;  
 Roses and purple fuchsia drops;  
 Camellias, which the gardener crops  
 To make the sickening wreaths that lie  
 On coffins when our loved ones die.  
 These all and many more were there;  
 Monsters and grandifloras rare,  
 With tropical broad leaves, grown rank,  
 Drinking the waters of the tank  
 Wherein the lotus-lilies bathe;  
 All curious forms of spur and spathe,  
 Pitcher and sac and cactus-thorn,

There in the fresh New England morn.  
But where the sun came colored through  
Translucent petals wet with dew,  
The interspace was carpeted  
With oriel lights and nodes of red,  
Orange and blue and violet,  
That wove strange figures, as they met,  
Of airier tissue, brighter blooms  
Than tumble from the Persian looms.  
So at the pontiff's feasts, they tell,  
From the board's edge the goblet fell,  
Spilled from its throat the purple tide  
And stained the pavement far and wide.  
Such steps wise Sheba trod upon  
Up to the throne of Solomon;  
So bright the angel-crowded steep  
Which Israel's vision scaled in sleep.  
What one is she whose feet shall dare  
Tread that illuminated stair?  
Like Sheba, queen; like angels, fair?  
Oh listen! In the morning air  
The blossoms all are hanging still—  
The queen is standing on the sill.  
No Sheba she; her virgin zone  
Proclaims her royalty alone:  
(Such royalty the lions own.)  
Yet all too cheap the patterned stone  
That paves kings' palaces, to feel  
The pressure of her gaiter's heel.  
The girlish grace that lit her face  
Made sunshine in a dusky place—  
The old silk hood, demure and quaint,  
Wherein she seemed an altar-saint  
Fresh-tinted, though in setting old  
Of dingy carving and tarnished gold;  
Her eyes, the candles in that shrine,  
Making Madonna's face to shine.  
Lingering I passed, but evermore  
Abide with me the open door,  
The doorsteps wide, the flowers that stand  
In brilliant ranks on either hand,  
The two white pillars and the vine  
Of bitter-sweet and lush woodbine,  
And—from my weary paths as far  
As Sheba or the angels are—  
Between, upon the wooden sill,  
Thou, Queen of Hearts, art standing still.

### AS YOU LIKE IT

Here while I read the light forsakes the pane;  
Metempsychosis of the twilight gray—  
Into green aisles of Epping or Ardenne  
The level lines of print stretch far away.

The book-leaves whisper like the forest-leaves;  
A smell of ancient woods, a breeze of morn,  
A breath of violets from the mossy paths  
And hark! the voice of hounds—the royal horn,

Which, muffled in the ferny coverts deep,  
Utters the three sweet notes that sound recall;  
As, riding two by two between the oaks,  
Come on the paladins and ladies all.

The court will rest from chase in this smooth glade  
That slopes to meet yon little rushy stream,  
Where in the shallows nod the arrow-heads,  
And the blue flower-de-luce's banners gleam.

The gamekeepers are coupling of the hounds;  
The pages hang bright scarfs upon the boughs;  
The new-slain quarry lies upon the turf  
Whereon but now he with the herd did browse.

The silk pavilion shines among the trees;  
The mighty pasties and the flagons strong  
Give cheer to the dear heart of many a knight,  
And many a dame whose beauty lives in song.

Meanwhile a staging improvised and rude  
Rises, whereon the masquers and the mimes  
Play for their sport a pleasant interlude,  
Fantastic, gallant, pointing at the times.

Their green-room is the wide midsummer wood;  
Down some far-winding gallery the deer—  
The dappled dead-head of that sylvan show—  
Starts as the distant ranting strikes his ear.

They use no traverses nor painted screen  
To help along their naked, out-door wit:  
(Only the forest lends its leafy scene)  
Yet wonderfully well they please the pit.

The plaudits echo through the wide parquet  
Where the fair audience upon the grass,  
Each knight beside his lady-love, is set,  
While overhead the merry winds do pass.

The little river murmurs in its reeds,  
And somewhere in the verdurous solitude  
The wood-thrush drops a cool contralto note,  
An orchestra well-tuned unto their mood.

As runs the play so runs the afternoon;  
The curtain and the sun fall side by side;  
The epilogue is spoke, the twilight come;  
Then homeward through the darkening glades they ride.

## THE OLD CITY

Ancient city, down thy street  
Minstrels make their music sweet;  
Sound of bells is on the air,  
Fountains sing in every square,  
Where, from dawn to shut of day,  
Maidens walk and children play;  
And at night, when all are gone,  
The waters in the dark sing on,  
Till the moonrise and the breeze  
Whiten the horse-chestnut trees.  
Cool thou liest, leisured, slow,  
On the plains of long ago,  
All unvexed of fretful trades  
Through thy rich and dim arcades,  
Overlooking lands below  
Terraced to thy green plateau.

Dear old city, it is long  
Since I heard thy minstrels' song,  
Since I heard thy church-bells deep,  
Since I watched thy fountains leap.  
Yet, whichever way I turn,  
Still I see the sunset burn  
At the ending of the street,  
Where the chestnut branches meet;  
Where, between the gay bazaars,  
Maidens walk with eyes like stars,  
And the slippered merchants go

On the pavements to and fro.  
Upland winds blow through my sleep,  
Moonrise glimmers, waters leap,  
Till, awaking, thou dost seem  
Like a city of a dream,—  
Like a city of the air,  
Builded high, aloof and fair,—  
Such as childhood used to know  
On the plains of long ago.

### AMETHYSTS

Not the green eaves of our young woods alone  
Shelter new violets, by the spring rains kissed;  
In the hard quartz, by some old April sown,  
Blossoms Time's flower, the steadfast amethyst.

"Here's pansies, they're for thoughts"—weak thoughts though fair;  
June sees their opening, June their swift decay.  
But those stone bourgeons stand for thoughts more rare,  
Whose patient crystals colored day by day.

Might I so cut my flowers within the rock,  
And prison there their sweet escaping breath;  
Their petals then the winter's frost should mock,  
And only Time's slow chisel work their death.

If out of those embedded purple blooms  
Were quarried cups to hold the purple wine,  
Greek drinkers thought the glorious, maddening fumes  
Were cooled with radiance of that gem divine.

Might I so wed the crystal and the grape,  
Passion's red heart and plastic Art's endeavor,  
Delirium should take on immortal shape,  
Dancing and blushing in strong rock forever.

### KATY DID

In a windy tree-top sitting,  
Singing at the fall of dew,  
Katy watched the bats a-flitting,  
While the twilight's curtains drew  
Closer round her; till she only  
Saw the branches and the sky—  
Rocking late and rocking lonely,  
Anchored on the darkness high.  
And the song that she was singing,  
In the windy tree-tops swinging,  
Was *under the tree, under the tree*  
*The fox is digging a pit for me.*

When the early stars were sparkling  
Overhead, and down below  
Fireflies twinkled, through the darkling  
Thickets she heard footsteps go—  
Voice of her false lover speaking,  
Laughing to his sweetheart new:—  
"Half my heart for thee I'm breaking:  
Did not Katy love me true?"  
Then no longer she was singing,  
But through all the wood kept ringing—  
*Katy did, Katy did, Katy did love thee*  
*And the fox is digging a grave for me.*



## NARCISSUS

Where the black hemlock slants athwart the stream  
He came to bathe; the sun's pursuing beam  
Laid a warm hand upon him, as he stood  
Naked, while noonday silence filled the wood.  
Holding the boughs o'erhead, with cautious foot  
He felt his way along the mossy root  
That edged the brimming pool; then paused and dreamed.  
Half like a dryad of the tree he seemed,  
Half like the naiad of the stream below,  
Suspended there between the water's flow  
And the green tree-top world; the love-sick air  
Coaxing with softest touch his body fair  
A little longer yet to be content  
Outside of its own crystal element.  
And he, still lingering at the brink, looked down  
And marked the sunshine fleck with gold the brown  
And sandy floor which paved that woodland pool.  
But then, within the shadows deep and cool  
Which the close hemlocks on the surface made,  
Two eyes met his yet darker than that shade  
And, shining through the watery foliage dim,  
Two white and slender arms reached up to him.  
"Comest thou again, now all the woods are still,  
Fair shape, nor even Echo from the hill  
Calls her Narcissus? Would her voice were thine,  
Dear speechless image, and could answer mine!  
Her I but hear and thee I may but see;  
Yet, Echo, thou art happy unto me;  
For though thyself art but a voice, sad maid,  
Thy love the substance is and my love shade.  
Alas! for never may I kiss those dumb  
Sweet lips, nor ever hope to come  
Into that shadow-world that lies somewhere—  
Somewhere between the water and the air.  
Alas! for never shall I clasp that form  
That mocks me yonder, seeming firm and warm;  
But if I leap to its embrace, the cold  
And yielding flood is all my arms enfold.  
All creatures else, save only me, can share  
My beauties, be it but to stroke my hair,  
Or hold my hand in theirs, or hear me speak.  
The village wives will laugh and clap my cheek;  
The forest nymphs will beg me for a kiss,  
To make me blush, or hide themselves by this  
Clear brook to see me bathe. But I must pine,  
Loving not me but this dear ghost of mine."  
Then, bending down the boughs, until they dipped  
Their broad green fronds, into the wave he slipped,  
And, floating breast-high, from the branches hung,  
His body with the current idly swung.  
And ever and anon he caught the gleam  
Of a white shoulder swimming in the stream,  
Pressed close to his, and two young eyes of black  
Under the dimpling surface answered back  
His own, just out of kissing distance: then  
The vain and passionate longing came again  
Still baffled, still renewed: he loosed his hold  
Upon the boughs and strove once more to fold  
To his embrace that fine unbodied shape;  
But the quick apparition made escape,  
And once again his empty arms took in  
Only the water and the shadows thin.  
Thus every day, when noon lay bright and hot  
On all the plains, there came to this cool spot,  
Under the hemlocks by the deepening brook,  
Narcissus, Phoebus' darling, there to look  
And pore upon his picture in the flood:

Till once a peeping dryad of the wood,  
Tracking his steps along the slender path  
Which he between the tree trunks trodden hath,  
Misses the boy on whom her amorous eyes  
Where wont to feed; but where he stood she spies  
A new-made yellow flower, that still doth seem  
To woo his own pale reflex in the stream;  
Whom Phoebus kisses when the woods are still  
And only ceaseless Echo from the hill  
Unprompted cries *Narcissus!*

## NUNC DIMITTIS

Highlands of Navesink,  
By the blue ocean's brink,  
Let your gray bases drink  
    Deep of the sea.  
Tide that comes flooding up,  
Fill me a stirrup cup,  
Pledge me a parting sup,  
    Now I go free.

Wall of the Palisades,  
I know where greener glades,  
Deeper glens, darker shades,  
    Hemlock and pine,  
Far toward the morning lie  
Under a bluer sky,  
Lifted by cliffs as high,  
    Haunts that are mine.

Marshes of Hackensack,  
See, I am going back  
Where the Quinnipiac  
    Winds to the bay,  
Down its long meadow track,  
Piled with the myriad stack,  
Where in wide bivouac  
    Camps the salt hay.

Spire of old Trinity,  
Never again to be  
Sea-mark and goal to me  
    As I walk down;  
Chimes on the upper air,  
Calling in vain to prayer,  
Squandering your music where  
    Roars the black town:

Bless me once ere I ride  
Off to God's countryside,  
Where in the treetops hide  
    Belfry and bell;  
Tongue of the steeple towers,  
Telling the slow-paced hours—  
Hail, thou still town of ours—  
    Bedlam, farewell!

## BEAVER POND MEADOW

Thou art my Dismal Swamp, my Everglades:  
Thou my Campagna, where the bison wades  
Through shallow, steaming pools, and the sick air  
Decays. Thou my Serbonian Bog art, where

O'er leagues of mud, black vomit of the Nile,  
Crawls in the sun the myriad crocodile.  
Or thou my Cambridge or my Lincoln fen  
Shalt be—a lonely land where stilted men  
Stalking across the surface waters go,  
Casting long shadows, and the creaking, slow  
Canal-barge, laden with its marshy hay,  
Disturbs the stagnant ditches twice a day.  
Thou hast thy crocodiles: on rotten logs  
Afloat, the turtles swarm and bask: the frogs,  
When come the pale, cold twilights of the spring,  
Like distant sleigh-bells through the meadows ring.  
The school-boy comes on holidays to take  
The musk-rat in its hole, or kill the snake,  
Or fish for bull-heads in the pond at night.  
The hog-snout's swollen corpse, with belly white,  
I find upon the footway through the sedge,  
Trodden by tramps along the water's edge.  
Not thine the breath of the salt marsh below  
Where, when the tide is out, the mowers go  
Shearing the oozy plain, that reeks with brine  
More tonic than the incense of the pine.  
Thou art the sink of all uncleanness,  
A drain for slaughter-pens, a wilderness  
Of trenches, pockets, quagmires, bogs where rank  
The poison sumach grows, and in the tank  
The water standeth ever black and deep  
Greened o'er with scum: foul pottages, that steep  
And brew in that dark broth, at night distil  
Malarious fogs bringing the fever chill.  
Yet grislier horrors thy recesses hold:  
The murdered peddler's body five days old  
Among the yellow lily-pads was found  
In yonder pond: the new-born babe lay drowned  
And throttled on the bottom of this moat,  
Near where the negro hermit keeps his boat;  
Whose wigwam stands beside the swamp; whose meals  
It furnishes, fat pouts and mud-spawned eels.  
Even so thou hast a kind of beauty, wild,  
Unwholesome—thou the suburb's outcast child,  
Behind whose grimy skin and matted hair  
Warm nature works and makes her creature fair.  
Summer has wrought a blue and silver border  
Of iris flags and flowers in triple order  
Of the white arrowhead round Beaver Pond,  
And o'er the milkweeds in the swamp beyond  
Tangled the dodder's amber-colored threads.  
In every fosse the bladderwort's bright heads  
Like orange helmets on the surface show.  
Richer surprises still thou hast: I know  
The ways that to thy penetralia lead,  
Where in black bogs the sundew's sticky bead  
Ensnares young insects, and that rosy lass,  
Sweet Arethusa, blushes in the grass.  
Once on a Sunday when the bells were still,  
Following the path under the sandy hill  
Through the old orchard and across the plank  
That bridges the dead stream, past many a rank  
Of cat-tails, midway in the swamp I found  
A small green mead of dry but spongy ground,  
Entrenched about on every side with sluices  
Full to the brim of thick lethean juices,  
The filterings of the marsh. With line and hook  
Two little French boys from the trenches took  
Frogs for their Sunday meal and gathered messes  
Of pungent salad from the water-cresses.  
A little isle of foreign soil it seemed,  
And listening to their outland talk, I dreamed  
That yonder spire above the elm-tops calm  
Rose from the village chestnuts of La Balme.  
Yes, many a pretty secret hast thou shown  
To me, O Beaver Pond, walking alone  
On summer afternoons, while yet the swallow  
Skimmed o'er each flaggy splash and gravelly shallow;  
Or when September turned the swamps to gold

And purple. But the year is growing old:  
The golden-rod is rusted, and the red  
That streaked October's frosty cheek is dead;  
Only the sumach's garnet pompons make  
Procession through the melancholy brake.  
Lo! even now the autumnal wind blows cool  
Over the rippled waters of thy pool,  
And red autumnal sunset colors brood  
Where I alone and all too late intrude.

## HIGH ISLAND

Pleasant it was at shut of day,  
When wind and wave had sunk away,  
To hear, as on the rocks we lay,  
    The fog bell toll;  
And grimly through the gathering night  
The horn's dull blare from Faulkner's Light,  
Snuffed out by ghostly fingers white  
    That round it stole.

Somewhere behind its curtain, soon  
The mist grew conscious of a moon:  
No more we heard the diving loon  
    Scream from the spray;  
But seated round our drift-wood fire  
Watched the red sparks rise high and higher,  
Then, wandering into night, expire  
    And pass away.

Down the dark wood, the pines among,  
A lurid glare the firelight flung;  
So for a while we talked and sung,  
    And then to sleep;  
And heard in dreams the light-house bell,  
As all night long in solemn swell  
The tidal waters rose and fell  
    With soundings deep.

## LOTUS EATING

Come up once more before mine eyes,  
    Sweet halcyon days, warm summer sea,  
Faint orange of the morning skies  
    And dark-lined shores upon the lee!  
Touched with the sunrise, sea and sky  
All still on Memory's canvas lie:  
The scattered isles with India ink  
Dot the wide back-ground's gold and pink:  
Unstirring in the Sunday calm,  
    Their profile cedars, sharply drawn,  
    Bold black against the flushing dawn,  
Take shape like clumps of tropic palm.  
Night shadows still the distance dim  
(Ultra-marine) where ocean's brim  
Upholdeth the horizon-rim.

Once more in thought we seem to creep  
    By lonely reefs where sea-birds scream,  
Ulysses-like, along the deep  
    Borne onward in the ocean-stream.  
The sea-floor spreadeth glassy still;  
No breath the idle sail doth fill;  
Our oar-blades smite the heavy seas;

Under the world the morning breeze  
Treads with the sun the unknown ways.  
Thus steer we o'er the solemn main  
Eating the Lotus-fruit again,  
Dreaming that time forever stays,  
Singing "Where, Absence, is thy sting?"  
Listening to hear our echoes ring  
Through the far rocks where Sirens sing.

## THE MERMAID'S GLASS

'T was down among the Thimble Isles  
That strew for many "liquid miles"  
The waters of Long Island Sound:  
Our yacht lay in a cove; around  
The rocky isles with cedars green  
And channels winding in between:  
And here a low, black reef was spread,  
And there a sunken "nigger-head"  
Dimpled the surface of the tide.  
From one tall island's cliffy side  
We heard the shaggy goats that fed:  
The gulls wheeled screaming overhead  
Or settled in a snowy flock  
Far out upon the lonely rock  
Which, like a pillar, seemed to show  
Some drowned acropolis below.  
Meanwhile, in the warm sea about,  
With many a plunge and jolly shout,  
Our crew enjoyed their morning bath.  
The hairy skipper in his wrath  
Lay cursing on the gunwale's rim:  
He loved a dip but could not swim;  
So, now and then with plank afloat  
He'd struggle feebly round the boat  
And o'er the side climb puffing in,  
Scraping wide areas off his skin,  
Then lie and sun each hirsute limb  
Once more upon the gunwale's rim  
And shout, with curses unavailing,  
"Come out! There's wind: let's do some sailing."

A palm-leaf hat, that here and there  
Bobbed on the water, showed him where  
Some venturous swimmer outward bound  
Escaped beyond his voice's sound.  
All heedless of their skipper's call,  
One group fought for the upset yawl.  
The conqueror sat astride the keel  
And deftly pounded with his heel  
The hands that clutched his citadel,  
Which showed—at distance—like the shell  
Round which, unseen, the Naiad train  
Sport naked on the middle main.  
Myself had drifted far away,  
Meanwhile, from where the sail-boat lay,  
Till all unbroken I could hear  
The wave's low whisper in my ear,  
And at the level of mine eye  
The blue vibration met the sky.  
Sometimes upon my back I lay  
And watched the clouds, while I and they  
Were wafted effortless along.—  
Sudden I seemed to hear a song:  
Yet not a song, but some weird strain  
As though the inarticulate main  
Had found a voice whose human tone  
Interpreted its own dull moan;  
Its foamy hiss; its surfy roar;

Its gentle lapping on the shore;  
Its noise of subterranean waves  
That grumble in the sea-cliff caves;  
Its wish among the drifting miles  
Of gulf-weed from the Indian Isles:—  
All—all the harmonies were there  
Which ocean makes with earth or air.  
Turning I saw a sunken ledge  
Bared by the ebb, along whose edge  
The matted sea-weed dripped: thereon,  
Betwixt the dazzle of the sun  
And the blue shimmer of the sea,  
I saw—or else I seemed to see  
A mermaid, crooning a wild song,  
Combing with arm uplifted long  
The hair that shed its meshes black  
Down the slope whiteness of her back.  
She held a mirror in her hand,  
Wherein she viewed sky, sea, and land,  
Her beauty's background and its frame.  
But now, as toward the rock I came,  
All suddenly across the glass  
Some startling image seemed to pass;  
For her song rose into a scream,  
Over her shoulders one swift gleam  
Of eyes unearthly fell on me,  
And, 'twixt the flashing of the sea  
And the blind dazzle of the sun,  
I saw the rock, but thereupon  
She sat no longer 'gainst the blue;  
Only across the reef there flew  
One snow-white tern and vanished too.  
But, coasting that lone island round,  
Among the slippery kelp I found  
A little oval glass that lay  
Upturned and flashing in the ray  
Of the down-looking sun. Thereto  
With scarce believing eyes I drew  
And took it captive

A while there

I rested in the mermaid's lair,  
And felt the merry breeze that blew,  
And watched the sharpies as they flew,  
And snuffed the sea's breath thick with brine,  
And basked me in the sun's warm shine;  
Then with my prize I made my way  
Once more to where the sail-boat lay.  
I kept the secret—and the glass;  
By day across its surface pass  
The transient shapes of common things  
Which chance within its oval brings.  
But when at night I strive to sound  
The darkness of its face profound,  
Again I seem to hear the breeze  
That curls the waves on summer seas;  
I see the isles with cedars green;  
The channels winding in between;  
The coves with beaches of white sand;  
The reefs where warning spindles stand;  
And, through the multitudinous shimmer  
Of waves and sun, again the glimmer  
Of eyes unearthly falls on me,  
Deep with the mystery of the sea.

## A HOLIDAY ECLOGUE

ABOVE

*First Mason:*

Tink-a-link! Tink-a-link! Hear the trowels ring;  
Feel the merry breezes make the scaffold swing;  
See the skimming swallow brush us with her wing:—  
Go it with your hammers, boys; time us while we sing.

BELOW.

*First Student:*

See the yellow sparkle of the Neckar in the glass,  
And through the cedar branches sparkles blue the sea;  
Hear the sweet piano—hear the German lass  
Sing Freut" euch des Lebens—Oh! "I love I love the free!"

*Second Student:*

I like the canary better;  
Look, how he swells his throttle!  
He gurgles like musical water  
That dances and sings in a bottle.

ABOVE.

*Second Mason:*

D'ye mind the students down in the grove  
Drinking their wine and beer?  
That's an easy life they lead.

*First Mason:*

So do we up here  
When the weathercock points west  
And the look-off's clear.

*Third Mason:*

House-top Jim's the boy for work!

*First Mason:*

True for you, my dear.  
(Whistles "The Girl I Left Behind me.")

BELOW.

*First Student:*

See the Dutchmen on those settees:  
Isn't it like the Rhine?  
And the old church-tower up over the trees—  
Kellner! Noch ein Stein!

*Third Student:*

I'd like to work with those masons there  
Half way up the sky.  
The air is sweet where the pigeons build,  
And the world is all in their eye.

*Second Student:*

But "Love is of the valley:" the Gretchen and the Kellner  
Haunt the cheerful levels of the lower story.  
Glory in the garret—comfort in the cellar:  
I will keep the comfort—you may take the glory.

ABOVE.

*First Mason:*

Look up at the pointers: they 're drawing close together;  
'T is here we get the earliest news of sun, and moon, and weather;  
We can hear time's pulse a-ticking, with the whistling weathercock.  
Drop your mortar-boards, my lads, it's coming twelve o'clock.

*Third Mason:*

Oh! it's hungry that I am with working in the wind,

But there's a shawl and bonnet—below there: do you mind?  
It's Molly with the dinner-pail: she's coming in the door.  
Faith, my belly thinks my throat is cut this half an hour and more.

*(The church clock strikes the noon.)*

## A MEMORY

I came across the marsh to-night,  
And though the wind was cold,  
I stayed a moment on the bridge  
To note the paly gold

That lingered on the darkening bay;  
The creek which ran below  
Was frozen dumb; the dreary flats  
Were overspread with snow.

The college bell began to ring,  
And as the north wind blew  
Its distant janglings out to sea,  
I thought, dear Friend, of you;

And how one warm September day,  
While yet the woods were green,  
We strayed across the happy hills  
And this wide marsh between.

The hay-stacks dotted here and there  
The water-meadows wide:  
The even lines of sluices black  
Were filling with the tide.

Then this salt stream, now winter bound,  
Fled softly through the sedge,  
Retreating from the sparkling Sound;  
And there along its edge

We strolled, and marked the far-off sloops,  
And watched the cattle graze.  
O'erhead the swallows rushed in troops,  
While bright with purple haze,

West Rock looked down the winding plain—  
Ah! this was long ago;  
The summer's gone, and you are gone,  
As everything must go.

## AMOURS PASSAGÈRES

Light loves and soon forgotten hates,  
Heat-lightnings of the brooding summer sky—  
Ye too bred of the summer's heat,  
Ye too, like summer, fleet—  
Ye have gone by.  
Walks in the woods and whispers over gates,  
Gay rivalries of tennis and croquet—  
Gone with the summer sweet,  
Gone with the swallow fleet  
Southward away!

Breath of the rose, laughter of maids  
Kissed into silence by the setting moon;  
Wind of the morn that wakes and blows,  
And hastening night that goes



Too soon—too soon!  
Meetings and partings, tokens, serenades,  
Tears—idle tears—and coy denials vain;  
Flower of the summer's rose,  
Say, will your leaves uncloset  
Ever again?

### ON A MINIATURE

Thine old-world eyes—each one a violet  
Big as the baby rose that is thy mouth—  
Set me a dreaming. Have our eyes not met  
In childhood—in a garden of the South?

Thy lips are trembling with a song of France,  
My cousin, and thine eyes are dimly sweet;  
'Wildered with reading in an old romance  
All afternoon upon the garden seat.

The summer wind read with thee, and the bees  
That on the sunny pages loved to crawl:  
A skipping reader was the impatient breeze,  
And turned the leaves, but the slow bees read all.

And now thy foot descends the terrace stair:  
I hear the rustle of thy silk attire;  
I breathe the musky odors of thy hair  
And airs that from thy painted fan respire.

Idly thou pausest in the shady walk,  
Thine ear attentive to the fountain's fall:  
Thou mark'st the flower-de-luce sway on her stalk,  
The speckled vergalieu ripening on the wall.

Thou hast the feature of my mother's race,  
The gilded comb she wore, her smile, her eye:  
The blood that flushes softly in thy face  
Crawls through my veins beneath this northern sky.

As one disherited, though next of kin,  
Who lingers at the barred ancestral gate,  
And sadly sees the happy heir within  
Stroll careless through his forfeited estate;

Even so I watch thy southern eyes, Lisette,  
Lady of my lost paradise and heir  
Of summer days there were my birthright. Yet  
Beauty like thine makes usurpation fair.

### IM SCHWARZWALD

The winter sunset, red upon the snow,  
Lights up the narrow way that I should go;  
Winding o'er bare white hilltops, whereon lie  
Dark churches and the holy evening sky.  
That path would lead me deep into the west,  
Even to the feet of her I love the best.

But this scarce broken track in which I stand  
Runs east, up through the tan-wood's midnight land;  
Where now the newly risen moon doth throw  
The shadows of long stems across the snow.  
This path would take me to the Jäger's Tree  
Where stands the Swabian girl and waits for me.

Her eyes are blacker than the woods at night  
And witching as the moon's uncertain light;  
And there are tones in that low voice of hers  
Caught from the wind among the Schwarzwald firs,  
And from the Gutach's echoing waters, when  
Still evening listens in the Forsthaus glen.

I must—I must! Thou wilt forgive me, sweet;  
My heart flies west but eastward move my feet;  
The mad moon brightens as the sunset dies,  
And yonder hexie draws me with her eyes.  
*Ruck, ruck an meine grüne Seit!* she sings  
And with her arms the frozen trunk enrings,

And lays upon its bark her little face.  
How canst thou be so dead in her embrace—  
So cold against her kisses, happy tree?  
Thou hast no love beyond the western sea.  
Methinks that at the lightest touch of her  
Thy wooden trunk should tremble, thy boughs stir:

But at the pressure of her tender form  
Thy inmost pith should feel her and grow warm:  
The torpid sap should race along the vein;  
The resinous buds should swell, and once again  
Fresh needles shoot, as though the breeze of spring  
Already through the woods came whispering.

## WAITING FOR WINTER

What honey in the year's last flowers can hide,  
These little yellow butterflies may know:  
With falling leaves they waver to and fro,  
Or on the swinging tops of asters ride.  
But I am weary of the summer's pride  
And sick September's simulated show:  
Why do the colder winds delay to blow  
And bring the pleasant hours that we abide;  
To curtained alcove and sweet household talks,  
Or sweeter silence by our flickering Lars,  
Returning late from autumn evening walks  
Upon the frosty hills, while reddening Mars  
Hangs low between the withered mullein stalks,  
And upward throngs the host of winter stars?

## [Greek: Tò Pan]

The little creek which yesterday I saw  
Ooze through the sedges, and each brackish vein  
That sluiced the marsh, now filled and then again  
Sucked dry to glut the sea's unsated maw,  
All ebb and flow by the same rhythmic law  
That times the beat of the Atlantic main—  
They also fastened to the swift moon's train  
By unseen cords that no less strongly draw.  
So, poet, may thy life's small tributary  
Threading some bitter marsh, obscure, alone,  
Feel yet one pulse with the broad estuary  
That bears an emperor's fleets through half a zone:  
May wait upon the same high luminary  
And pitch its voice to the same ocean's tone.

## THE SINGER OF ONE SONG

He sang one song and died—no more but that:  
A single song and carelessly complete.  
He would not bind and thresh his chance-grown wheat,  
Nor bring his wild fruit to the common vat,  
To store the acid rinsings, thin and flat,  
Squeezed from the press or trodden under feet.  
A few slow beads, blood-red and honey sweet,  
Oozed from the grape, which burst and spilled its fat.  
But Time, who soonest drops the heaviest things  
That weight his pack, will carry diamonds long.  
So through the poet's orchestra, which weaves  
One music from a thousand stops and strings,  
Pierces the note of that immortal song:—  
"High over all the lonely bugle grieves."

## POSTHUMOUS

Put them in print?  
Make one more dint  
In the ages' furrowed rock? No, no!  
Let his name and his verses go.  
These idle scraps, they would but wrong  
His memory, whom we honored long;  
And men would ask: "Is this the best—  
Is this the whole his life expressed?"  
Haply he had no care to tell  
To all the thoughts which flung their spell  
Around us when the night grew deep,  
Making it seem a loss to sleep,  
Exalting the low, dingy room  
To some high auditorium.  
And when we parted homeward, still  
They followed us beyond the hill.  
The heaven had brought new stars to sight,  
Opening the map of later night;  
And the wide silence of the snow,  
And the dark whispers of the pines,  
And those keen fires that glittered slow  
Along the zodiac's wintry signs,  
Seemed witnesses and near of kin  
To the high dreams we held within.

Yet what is left  
To us bereft,  
Save these remains,  
Which now the moth  
Will fret, or swifter fire consume?  
These inky stains  
On his table-cloth;  
These prints that decked his room;  
His throne, this ragged easy-chair;  
This battered pipe, his councillor.  
This is the sum and inventory.  
No son he left to tell his story,  
No gold, no lands, no fame, no book.  
Yet one of us, his heirs, who took  
The impress of his brain and heart  
May gain from Heaven the lucky art  
His untold meanings to impart  
In words that will not soon decay.  
Then gratefully will such one say:  
"This phrase, dear friend, perhaps, is mine;  
The breath that gave it life was thine."

## HUGH LATIMER

His lips amid the flame outsent  
A music strong and sweet,  
Like some unearthly instrument  
That's played upon by heat.

As spice-wood tough, laid on the coal,  
Sets all its perfume free,  
The incense of his hardy soul  
Rose up exceedingly.

To open that great flower, too cold  
Were sun and vernal rain;  
But fire has forced it to unfold,  
Nor will it shut again.

## CARÇAMON

His steed was old, his armor worn,  
And he was old and worn and gray:  
The light that lit his patient eyes  
It shone from very far away.

Through gay Provence he journeyed on;  
To one high quest his life was true,  
And so they called him *Carçamon*—  
The knight who seeketh the world through.

A pansy blossomed on his shield;  
"A token 'tis," the people say,  
"That still across the world's wide field  
He seeks *la dame de ses pensées*."

For somewhere on a painted wall,  
Or in the city's shifting crowd,  
Or looking from a casement tall,  
Or shaped of dream or evening cloud—

Forgotten when, forgotten where—  
Her face had filled his careless eye  
A moment ere he turned and passed,  
Nor knew it was his destiny.

But ever in his dreams it came  
Divine and passionless and strong,  
A smile upon the imperial lips  
No lover's kiss had dared to wrong.

He took his armor from the wall—  
Ah! gone since then was many a day—  
He led his steed from out the stall  
And sought *la dame de ses pensées*.

The ladies of the Troubadours  
Came riding through the chestnut grove  
"Sir Minstrel, string that lute of yours  
And sing us a gay song of love."

"O ladies of the Troubadours,  
My lute has but a single string;  
Sirventes fit for paramours,  
My heart is not in tune to sing.

"The flower that blooms upon my shield

It has another soil and spring  
Than that wherein the gaudy rose  
Of light Provence is blossoming.

"The lady of my dreams doth hold  
Such royal state within my mind,  
No thought that comes unclad in gold  
To that high court may entrance find."

So through the chestnut groves he passed,  
And through the land and far away;  
Nor know I whether in the world  
He found *la dame de ses pensées*.

Only I know that in the South  
Long to the harp his tale was told;  
Sweet as new wine within the mouth  
The small, choice words and music old.

To scorn the promise of the real;  
To seek and seek and not to find;  
Yet cherish still the fair ideal—  
It is thy fate, O restless Mind!

### ECCE IN DESERTO

The wilderness a secret keeps  
Upon whose guess I go:  
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard;  
And yet I know, I know,

Some day the viewless latch will lift,  
The airy door swing wide  
To one lost chamber of the wood  
Where those shy mysteries hide,—

One yet unfound, receding depth,  
From which the wood-thrush sings,  
Still luring in to darker shades,  
In—in to colder springs.

There is no wind abroad to-day.  
But hark!—the pine-tops' roar,  
That sleep and in their dreams repeat  
The music of the shore.

What wisdom in their needles stirs?  
What song is that they sing?  
Those airs that search the forest's heart,  
What rumor do they bring?

A hushed excitement fills the gloom,  
And, in the stillness, clear  
The vireo's tell-tale warning rings:  
"Tis near—'tis near—'tis near!"

As, in the fairy-tale, more loud  
The ghostly music plays  
When, toward the enchanted bower, the prince  
Draws closer through the maze.

Nay—nay. I track a fleeter game,  
A wilder than ye know,  
To lairs beyond the inmost haunt  
Of thrush or vireo.

This way it passed: the scent lies fresh;  
The ferns still lightly shake.  
Ever I follow hard upon,  
But never overtake.

To other woods the trail leads on,  
To other worlds and new,  
Where they who keep the secret here  
Will keep the promise too.

## TO IMOGEN AT THE HARP

*Die Geisterwelt ist nicht verschlossen:  
Dein Sinn ist zu—dein Herz ist todt.  
Auf, bade, Schüler, unrerdrössen  
Die ird'sche Brust im Morgenroth!*

FAUST.

Hast thou seen ghosts? Hast thou at midnight heard  
In the wind's talking an articulate word?  
Or art thou in the secret of the sea,  
And have the twilight woods confessed to thee?  
So wild thy song, thy smile so faint, so far  
Thine absent eyes from earthly vision are.  
Thy song is done: why art thou listening?  
Spent is the last vibration of the string  
Along the waves of sound. Oh, doth thine ear  
Pursue the ebbing chord in some fine sphere,  
Where wraiths of vanished echoes live and roam,  
And where thy thoughts, here strangered, find a home?  
Teach me the path to that uncharted land;  
Discovery's keel hath never notched its strand,  
No passport may unbar its sealed frontier,—  
Too far for utmost sight, for touch too near.  
Subtler than light, yet all opaque, the screen  
Which shuts us from that world, outspread between  
The shows of sense; like as an ether thin  
Fills the vast microscopic space wherein  
The molecules of matter lie enisled.  
A world whose sound our silence is; too wild  
Its elfin music beats, too shrill, too rare,  
To stir the slow pulse of our thicker air.

A world whose light our darkness is; that lies  
With its sharp edges turned toward mortal eyes,  
Like figures painted on a folded fan—  
The broken colors of some hidden plan.  
The few who but an instant's look have had  
At the spread pattern broadwise have gone mad.  
As in a high-walled oriental street  
A sudden door flies open, and a fleet  
Departing dream the thirsty traveler sees  
Of fountains leaping in the shade of trees,  
So they who once have caught the glimpse divine:  
They have but wet their lips with goblins' wine,  
And, plagued with thirst immortal, must endure  
The visions of the heavenly calenture,—  
Of springs and dewy evening meadows rave,  
While hotly round them shines the tropic wave,  
And the false islands of mirage appear,  
Uplifted from some transcendental sphere  
Far down below the blue horizon line.  
And thirst like theirs is nursed by songs like thine.  
For thou, in some crepscular dim hour,  
When the weak umber moon had hardly power  
To cast a shadow, and a wind, half-spent,  
Creeping among the way-side bushes went,  
Hast seen a cobweb spun across the moon,  
A faint eclipse, penumbral, gone full soon,  
Yet marking on the planet's smoky ring  
A silhouette as of a living thing.  
Or on the beach making thy lonely range,  
Close upon sunset, when the light was strange  
And the low wind had meanings, thou hast known

A presence nigh, betrayed by shadows thrown  
On the red sand from bodies out of sight;  
Even as, by the shell of curving light  
Pared from the dark moon's edge, the eye can tell  
Where her full circle rounds invisible.

Teach me the path into that silent land.  
Take once again the haunted wires in hand,  
And pour the strain which, waking, thou hast heard  
Whistled when night was deep by some lone bird  
Hid in the dark and dewy sycamore,—  
When thou hast risen and unbarred the door  
And walked the garden paths till night was flown,  
Listening the message sent to thee alone.  
Ah! once again thy harp, thy voice once more,  
Fling back the refluent tide upon the shore.  
All nature grows unearthly; all things seem  
To break and waver off in shapes of dream,  
And through the chinks of matter steals the dawn  
Of skies beyond the solar road withdrawn.  
Oh, flood my soul with that pure morning-red!  
It is the sense that's shut, the heart that's dead:  
All open still the world of spirits lies  
Would we but bathe us in its red sunrise.

### THE IDEAS OF THE PURE REASON

I saw in dreams a constellation strange,  
Thwarting the night; its big stars seemed to range  
Northward across the zenith, and to keep  
Calm footing along heaven's ridge-pole high,  
While round the pole the sullen Bear did creep  
And dizzily the wheeling spheres went by.  
They from their watch-towers in the topmost sky  
Looked down upon the rest,  
Nor eastward swerved nor west,  
Though Procyon's candle dipped below the verge,  
And the great twins of Leda 'gan decline  
Toward the horizon line,  
And prone Orion, sprawling headlong, urge  
His flight into the far Pacific surge.

I heard a voice which said: "Those wonders bright  
Are hung not on the hinges of the night;  
But set to vaster harmonies, they run  
Straight on, and turn not with the turning sphere,  
Nor make an orbit about any sun.  
No glass can track the courses that they steer,  
By what dark paths they vanish and appear.  
The starry flocks that still  
Are climbing heaven's hill  
Will pasture westward down its sloping lawn;  
But yon wild herd of planets,—who can say  
Through what far fields they stray,  
Around what focus their ellipse is drawn,  
Whose shining makes their transcendental dawn?"

I told my vision to a learned man,  
Who said: "On no celestial globe or plan  
Can those unset, unrisen stars be found.  
How might such uncomputed motions be  
Among the ordered spheres? Heaven's clock is wound  
To keep one time. Idle our dreams, and we,  
Blown by the wind, as the light family  
Of leaves." But still I dream,  
And still those planets seem  
Through heaven their high, unbending course to take;  
And a voice cries: "Freedom and Truth are we,  
And Immortality:

God is our sun." And though the morning break,  
Across my soul still plays their shimmering wake.

## ON GUARD

*O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
To help me after.—Romeo and Juliet.*

He has chosen the death that is easy  
And left me the life that is hard.  
He has emptied the cup to the lees, he  
Has left me alone to keep guard.

Remains not a drop in the beaker  
Of the bitter-sweet cordial he quaffed:  
The strong has forsaken his weaker  
And stolen his anodyne draught.

The cause that he taught me to cherish,  
The weapons he trained me to wield,  
He has given it over to perish  
And thrown down the sword and the shield.

O how shall the coward persevere  
When the hero slinks out of the fight;  
Or weakness keep up the endeavor  
Abandoned by desperate might?

The hour of stern trial has found me:  
The sentinel fires are burnt low,  
And I hear in the shadows around me  
The stealthy approach of the foe.

Be it so then, my master, my leader:  
These helpless ones, dear to you, these  
Will I fend while I may, though I bleed, or  
Am beaten with blows to my knees.

Lo here, where your body lies fallen,  
I draw from its scabbard the sword  
And raise it—how feebly!—and call on  
Your spirit, my captain, my lord.

The watch-fire is sunken to embers,  
With signals the darkness is starred.  
Let them come! There is one who remembers—  
There is one who will stand upon guard.

## SURSUM CORDA

Take courage, heart. Why dost thou faint and falter?  
Why is thy light turned darkness ere the noon?  
The wind blows west, no clouds the heaven alter,  
Night comes not yet; with night, too, comes the moon.

"Alas, alas! the dewy morning weather,  
The tender light that on the meadows lay,  
When Youth and Hope and I set out together,—  
Light Youth, false Hope, that left me on the way!"

Take courage yet; thou art not unattended:  
See Love and Peace keep step on either hand.  
How green the vales! The sky how blue! How splendid  
The strong white sunshine sleeps across the land!



"Alas the thrushes' song hath long had ending  
I heard at dawn among the pine woods cool.  
The brook is still, whose rocky stair descending,  
I drank at sunrise from each rosy pool."

The noon is still; the songs of dawn are over;  
Yet turn not back to prove thy memories vain.  
The mist upon the hills canst thou recover,  
Or bring to eastern skies the bloom again?

But courage still! Without return or swerving,  
Across the globe's huge shadow keep the track,  
Till, unperceived, the slow meridian's curving,  
That leads thee onward, yet shall lead thee back,

To stand again with daybreak on the mountains,  
And, where the paths of night and morning meet,  
To drink once more of youth's forgotten fountains,  
When thou hast put the world between thy feet.

### LOVE, DEATH AND LIFE

The warm wind comes in rushes,  
The night is thick and sweet:  
I cannot see the bushes—  
The tall syringa bushes  
Above the gate that meet,  
Whose fallen blooms she crushes  
Under her heedless feet;  
But their heavy, rich perfume  
Is round us in the gloom  
Which lends its friendly cover  
To bashful maid and lover:  
Which cheats me of her blushes  
But makes her kiss complete.  
'Way down the village street  
A lantern swings and dances  
In front of the old church porch,  
And throws its telltale glances  
On the puddles and the plashes,  
And flares in the wind like a torch,  
And scatters sudden flashes  
On the elm leaves overhead.  
But you need have no dread  
Of that harmless, far-off spark;  
For the night is thick and dark,  
O the dark is thick and sweet!  
So, closer: let the beat  
Of your heart encounter mine.  
(How you tremble—like a leaf!)  
O you do not need to fear  
Any shame or any grief  
While my arms around you twine  
And the night wind pours its wine.  
Come nearer, still more near;  
Press closer, closer yet.  
Your cheeks are warm and wet,  
Like this wind from out the south,  
And warm and wet your mouth;  
And yon lantern won't discover  
The maiden and her lover.  
'Tis only the sexton, nothing more—  
There was a funeral to-day—  
The sexton locking the church door,  
Locking it up and going away.  
Why should it fall on a day like this?  
What has death to do in a world of bliss?  
O passionate black night!  
O rush of the southern breeze,

Laden with blossoms and rain,  
Asserter of life and its right,  
Cherisher, breeder of things,  
Swelling the sap in the trees,  
Swelling the blood in the vein,  
Filling the rivers and springs:  
Whisper the girl at my side,  
Quicken her pulse with thy breath,  
Teach her the way of a bride,  
Teach her to take and to give.  
What hast thou to do with us, Death?  
By God, we live!

## THE DYING PANTHEIST TO THE PRIEST

Take your ivory Christ away:  
No dying god shall have my knee,  
While live gods breathe in this wild wind  
And shout from yonder dashing sea.

When March brings back the Adonis flower  
No more the white processions meet,  
With incense to the risen lord,  
About the pillared temple's feet.

From tusk of boar, from thrust of spear  
The dead rise not. At Eastertide  
The same sun dances on their graves—  
Love's darling and the Crucified.

Yet still the year's returning tide  
Flows greenly round each ruined plinth,  
Breaking on fallen shafts in foam  
Of crocus and of hyacinth:

Tossing a spray of swallows high,  
To flutter lightly on the breeze  
And fleck with tiny spots of shade  
The sunshine on the broken frieze.

I know the gray-green asphodels  
Still sheet the dim Elysian mead,  
And ever by dark Lethe's wells  
The poppy sheds her ghostly seed.

And once—O once!—when sunset lay  
Blood red across the winter sea,  
Where on the sands we drained our flasks  
And danced and cried our *Evoe!*

Among the tossing cakes of ice  
And spouting of the frozen spray,  
We saw their white limbs twist and whirl—  
The ancient sea-gods at their play.

The gold-brown liquor burned my heart,  
The icy tempest stung my brow:  
The twanging of Apollo's lyre—  
I heard it as I hear it now.

O no, the old gods are not dead:  
I think that they will never die;  
But, I, who lie upon this bed  
In mortal anguish—what am I?

A wave that rises with a breath  
Above the infinite watery plain,  
To foam and sparkle in the sun  
A moment ere it sink again.

The eternal undulation runs:

A man, I die: perchance to be,  
Next life, a white-throat on the wind,  
A daffodil on Tempe's lea.

They lied who said that Pan was dead:  
Life was, life is, and life shall be.  
So take away your crucifix—  
The everliving gods for me!

## THE UPLAND

We often go a-driving across the pleasant land,  
In summer through the pine woods dark, or by the ocean strand;  
But when the orchards blossom, and when the apples fall,  
We seek the high hill country that props the mountain wall.

Old farms with mossed stone fences, old grassy roads that wind  
Forever on and upward to higher fields behind,  
By ancient bush-grown pastures, bestrewn with boulders gray,  
And lonely meadow slopes that bear thin crops of upland hay.

As, terrace over terrace, we climb the mountain stair,  
More solitary grow the ways, more wild the farms and rare,  
And slenderer in their rocky beds the singing brooks that go  
Down-slipping to the valley stream a thousand feet below.

Above us and above us still the grim escarpments rise,  
Till homeward we must turn at last, or ere the daylight dies,  
And leave unscaled the summit height, the even ridge o'erhead,  
Where smolder through the cedar screen the sunset embers red.

What should we see, if once we won on that top step to stand?  
A wondrous valley world beyond? A far-stretched tableland?  
Almost it seems as though there lay the threshold of the sky,  
And that the foot which crossed that sill would enter Heaven thereby.

And when, dear heart, the years have left us once again alone,  
And from our empty nest the broods have scattered forth and flown,  
Shall we not have the old horse round and take the well-known track  
Into the high hill country, and never more come back?

## THE REMAINDER

Now faith is dead and hope is deadly sick,  
And joy—dear joy—she died so long ago  
I have forgot her face; but these are quick,  
Black care, and stinging shame, and bitter woe.

Then what is left in my Pandora's chest?  
Courage is left, but mated with despair,  
Who should have wed with hope. Yet be ye blest—  
Rise up and take your blessing, happy pair!

I lay in thine, sad bride, this princely hand—  
In all the world there is no nobler name—  
And thou, brave groom—though 'tis not what we planned—  
Take her, she will be true: be thou the same.

Courage and sorrow: might these two give birth?  
O thought too bold, O dream too sweet, too wild?  
Though joy—dear joy—be dead and cold in earth,  
Her ghost is peace, and love is sorrow's child.

## THE PASTURE BARS

The hunted stag, now nearly spent,  
Turns homeward to his lair:  
The wounded Bedouin seeks his tent  
And finds safe shelter there.

So life returns upon its track:  
We toil, we fight, we roam,  
Till the long shadows point us back,  
And evening brings us home.

To-night beside the pasture bars  
I heard the whippoorwill,  
While, one by one, the early stars  
Came out above the hill.

I heard the tinkle of the spring,  
I heard the cattle pass  
Slow through the dusk, and lingering  
To crop the wayside grass.

O weary world of fret and strife,  
O noisy years and vain,  
What have you paid me for my life  
Since last, along this lane,

A barefoot boy, I drove the cows  
In summer twilights still,  
And paused beneath the orchard boughs  
To list the whippoorwill?

Come, peace of God, that passeth all  
Our understanding's sight:  
Fall on me with the dews that fall,  
And with the falling night.

Among these native hills and plains,  
By these baptismal streams,  
Wash off the city's fever stains,  
Bring back my boyhood's dreams.

Beside the doors where life began  
Here let it find its close;  
And be its brief, remaining span  
All given to repose.

## THE RISING OF THE CURTAIN

We sit before the curtain, and we heed the pleasant bustle:  
The ushers hastening up the aisles, the fans' and programmes' rustle;  
The boy that cries librettos, and the soft, incessant sound  
Of talking and low laughter that buzzes all around.

How very old the drop-scene looks! A thousand times before  
I've seen that blue paint dashing on that red distemper shore;  
The castle and the guazzo sky, the very ilex-tree,—  
They have been there a thousand years,—a thousand more shall be.

All our lives we have been waiting for that weary daub to rise;  
We have peeped behind its edges, "as if we were God's spies;"  
We have listened for the signal; yet still, as in our youth,  
The colored screen of matter hangs between us and the truth.

When in my careless childhood I dwelt beside a wood,  
I tired of the clearing where my father's cabin stood;  
And of the wild young forest paths that coaxed me to explore,

Then dwindled down, or led me back to where I stood before.

But through the woods before our door a wagon track went by,  
Above whose utmost western edge there hung an open sky;  
And there it seemed to make a plunge, or break off suddenly,  
As though beneath that open sky it met the open sea.

Oh, often have I fancied, in the sunset's dreamy glow,  
That mine eyes had caught the welter of the ocean waves below;  
And the wind among the pine-tops, with its low and ceaseless roar,  
Was but an echo from the surf on that imagined shore.

Alas! as I grew older, I found that road led down  
To no more fair horizon than the squalid factory town:  
So all life's purple distances, when nearer them I came,  
Have played me still the same old cheat,—the same, the same, the same!

And when, O King, the heaven departeth as a scroll,  
Wilt thou once more the promise break thou madest to my soul?  
Shall I see thy feasting presence thronged with baron, knight, and page?  
Or will the curtain rise upon a dark and empty stage?

For lo, quick undulations across the canvas run;  
The foot-lights brighten suddenly, the orchestra has done;  
And through the expectant silence rings loud the prompter's bell;  
The curtain shakes,—it rises. Farewell, dull world, farewell!

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