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Contributor: E. E. Cummings
Contributor: S. Foster Damon
Contributor: John Dos Passos
Contributor: Robert Hillyer
Contributor: Stewart Mitchell
Contributor: William A. Norris
Contributor: Dudley Poore
Contributor: Cuthbert Wright

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EIGHT HARVARD POETS ***

[i]

EIGHT HARVARD POETS

**E. ESTLIN CUMMINGS
S. FOSTER DAMON
J. R. DOS PASSOS
ROBERT HILLYER
R. S. MITCHELL
WILLIAM A. NORRIS
DUDLEY POORE
CUTHBERT WRIGHT**



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1917

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[1]

E. ESTLIN CUMMINGS

[2]

[3]

[THOU IN WHOSE SWORD-GREAT STORY SHINE THE DEEDS]

Thou in whose sword-great story shine the deeds
 Of history her heroes, sounds the tread
 Of those vast armies of the marching dead,
 With standards and the neighing of great steeds
 Moving to war across the smiling meads;
 Thou by whose page we break the precious bread
 Of dear communion with the past, and wed
 To valor, battle with heroic breeds;

Thou, Froissart, for that thou didst love the pen
 While others wrote in steel, accept all praise
 Of after ages, and of hungering days
 For whom the old glories move, the old trumpets cry;
 Who gav'st as one of those immortal men
 His life that his fair city might not die.

[4]

A CHORUS GIRL

When thou hast taken thy last applause, and when

[11]

S. FOSTER DAMON

[12]

[13]

INCESSU PATUIT DEUS

The little clattering stones along the street
Dance with each other round my swimming feet;
The street itself, as in some crazy dream,
Streaks past, a half-perceived material stream.

Brighter than early dawn's most brilliant dye
Are blown clear bands of color through the sky,
That swirl and sweep and meet, to break and foam
Like rainbow veils upon a bubble's dome.

Yours are the songs that burst about my ears,
Or blow away as many-colored spheres.

You are the star that made the skies all bright,
Yet tore itself away in flaming flight;
You are the tree that suddenly awoke;
You are the rose that came to life and spoke....

Guided by you, how we might stroll towards death,
Our only music one another's breath,
Through gardens intimate with hollyhocks,
Where silent poppies burn between the rocks,
By pools where birches bend to confidants
Above green waters scummed with lily-plants.

There we might wander, you and I alone,
Through gardens filled with marble seats moss-grown,
And fountains—water-threads that winds disperse—
While in the spray the birds sit and converse.

And when the fireflies mix their circling glow
Through the dark plants, then gently might I know
Your lips, light as the wings of the dragon-flies....

—Merely dreams, fluttering in my eyes....

[15]

[YOU THOUGHT I HAD FORGOTTEN]

You thought I had forgotten. Well, I had!
(Although I never guessed I could forget
Those few great moments when we both went mad.)

The other day at someone's tea we met,
Smiling gayly, bowed, and went our several ways,
Complacent with successful coldness.—Yet

Suddenly I was back in the old days
Before you felt we ought to drift apart.
It was some trick—the way your eyebrows raise,

Your hands—some vivid trifle. With a start
Then I remembered how I lived alone,
Writing bad poems and eating out my heart

All for your beauty.—How the time has flown!

[16]

VENICE

In a sunset glowing of crimson and gold,
She lies, the glory of the world,
A beached king's galley, whose sails are furled,
Who is hung with tapestries rich and old.

Beautiful as a woman is she,
A woman whose autumn of life is here,
Proud and calm at the end of the year
With the grace that now is majesty.

The sleeping waters bathe her sides,
The warm, blue streams of the Adrian Sea;
She dreams and drowns languorously,
Swayed in the swaying of the tides.

She is a goddess left for us,
Veiled with the softening veils of time;
Her blue-veined breasts are now sublime,
Her moulded torso glorious.

The pity that we must come and go—!
While the old gold and the marble stays,
Forever gleaming its soft strong blaze,
Calm in the early evening glow.

And still the sensitive silhouettes
Of the gondolas pass and leave no track,
Light on the tides as lilies, and black
In the rippling waters of long sunsets.

[18]

THE NEW MACABER

The pleasant graveyard of my soul
With sentimental cypress trees
And flowers is filled, that I may stroll
In meditation, at my ease.

The little marble stones are lost
In flowers surging from the dead;
Nor is there any mournful ghost
To wail until the night is sped.

And while night rustles through the trees,
Dragging the stars along, I know
The moon is rising on the breeze,
Quivering as in a river's flow.

And ah! that moon of silver sheen!
It is my heart hung in the sky;
And no clouds ever float between
The grave-flowers and my heart on high.

I do not read upon each stone
The name that once was carven there;
I merely note new blossoms blown
And breathe the perfume of the air.

Thus walk I through my wonderland
While all the evening is atune,
Beneath the cypress trees that stand
Like candles to the barren moon.

[20]

TO WAR

The music beats, up the chasmed street,
Then flares from around the curve;
The cheers break out from the waving crowd:
—Our soldiers march, superb!
 Over the track-lined city street
 The young men, the grinning men, pass.

Last night they danced to that very tune;
Today they march away;
Tomorrow, perhaps no band at all,
Or the band beside the grave.
 Above, in the long blue strip of sky,
 The whirling pigeons, the thoughtless pigeons, pass.

Another band beats down the street;
Contending rhythms clash;
New melodies win place, then fade,
And the flashing legs move past.
 Down the cheering, grey-paved street
 The fringed flags, the erect flags, pass.

[21]

CALM DAY, WITH ROLLERS

Always the ships that move in mystery, on the dim horizon,
Shadow-filled sails of dreams, sliding over the blue-grey ocean,
Far from the rock-edged shore where willow-green waves are rushing,
And white foam-people leap, to stand erect for the moment.

Ho! ye sails that seem to wander in dream-filled meadows,
Say, is the shore where I stand the only field of struggle,
Or are ye hit and battered out there by waves and wind-gusts
As ye tack over a clashing sea of watery echoes?

[22]

PHONOGRAPH—TANGO

Old dances are simplified of their yearning, bleached by Time.
 Yet from one black disc
we tasted again the bite of crude Spanish passion.

... He had got into her courtyard.
She was alone that night.
Through the black night-rain, he sang to her window bars:

*Love me, love—ah, love me!
If you will not, I can follow
Into the highest of mountains;
And there, in the wooden cabin,
I will strangle you for your lover.*

—That was but rustling of dripping plants in the dark.
More tightly under his cloak, he clasped his guitar.

*Love, ah-h! love me, love me!
If you will do this, I can buy
A fringed silk scarf of yellow,
A high comb carved of tortoise;
Then we will dance in the Plaza.*

She was alone that night.
He had broken into her courtyard.

Above the gurgling gutters
he heard—
surely—
a door unchained?

The passage was black; but he risked it—
death in the darkness—
or her hot arms—(*love—love me ah-h-h!*)

"A good old tune," she murmured
—and I found we were dancing.

[24]

DECORATION

A little pagan child-god plays
Beyond the far horizon haze,
And underneath the twilight trees
He blows a bubble to the breeze,
Which is borne upward in the night
And makes the heavens shine with light.
But soon it sinks to earth again,
And, hitting hills, it bursts! And then
With foam the skies are splashed and sprayed;
And that's how all the stars are made.

[25]

THRENODY

She is lain with high things and with low.
 She lies
 With shut eyes,
Rocked in the eternal flow
 Of silence evermore.

Desperately immortal, she;
 She stands
 With wide hands
Dim through the veil of eternity,
 Behind the supreme door.

[26]

[27]

J. R. DOS PASSOS

[28]

[29]

THE BRIDGE

The lonely bridge cuts dark across the marsh
Whose long pools glow with the light
Of a flaring summer sunset.

At this end limp bushes overhang,
Palely reflected in the amber-colored water;
Among them a constant banjo-twanging of frogs,
And shrilling of toads and of insects
Rises and falls in chorus rhythmic and stirring.

Dark, with crumbling railing and planks,
The bridge leads into the sunset.
Across it many lonely figures,
Their eyes a-flare with the sunset,
Their faces glowing with its colors,
Tramp past me through the evening.

I am tired of sitting quiet
Among the bushes of the shore,
While the dark bridge stretches onward,
And the long pools gleam with light;
I am tired of the shrilling of insects
And the croaking of frogs in the rushes,
For the wild rice in the marsh-pools
Waves its beckoning streamers in the wind,
And the red sky-glory fades.

[30]

SALVATION ARMY

A drum pounds out the hymn,
Loud with gaudy angels, tinsel cherubim,
To drown the fanfare of the street,
And with exultant lilting beat,
To mingle the endless rumble of carts,
The scrape of feet, the noise of marts
And dinning market stalls, where women shout
Their wares, and meat hangs out—
Grotesque, distorted by the gas flare's light—
Into one sacred rhythm for the Devil's spite.

A woman's thin, raucous voice
Carries the tune, bids men rejoice,
Bathe in God's mercy,
Draw near and learn salvation, see
With their own eyes the mystery.
Cymbals, at the hands of a tired girl,
Slim wisp amid the swirl
Of crowded streets, take up the tune,
Monotonously importune.
Faces are wan in the arc-light's livid glare;
A wind gust carries the band's flare
Of song, in noisy eddies echoing,
Round lonely black street-corners,

Till, with distance dimming,
It fades away,
Among the silent, dark array
Of city houses where no soul stirs.

The crowd thins, the players are alone;
In their faith's raucous monotone,
Loud with gaudy angels, tinsel cherubim,
A drum pounds out the hymn.

[32]

INCARNATION

Incessantly the long rain falls,
Slanting on black walls,
Which glisten gold where a street lamp shines.

In a shop-window, spangled in long lines,
By rain-drops all a-glow,
An Italian woman's face
Flames into my soul as I go
Hastily by in the turbulent darkness;—
An oval olive face,
With the sweetly sullen grace
Of the Virgin when first she sees,
Amid her garden's silver lilies,
The white-robed angel gleam,
And softly, as by a sultry dream,
Feels all her soul subdued unto the fire
And radiance of her ecstasy.
So in some picture, on which as on a lyre,
An old Italian painter laboriously has played
His soul away, his love, all his desire
For fragrant things afar from earth,
Shines the Madonna, as with a veil overlaid
By incense-smoke and dust age-old,
At whose feet, in time of dearth
Or need, a myriad men have laid
Their sorrows and arisen bold.

Incessantly the long rain falls,
Slanting on black walls.
But through the dark interminable streets,
Along pavements where rain beats
Its sharp tattoo, and gas-lamps shine,
Greenish gold in the solitude,
The vision flames through my mood
Of that Italian woman's face,
Through the dripping window-pane.

[34]

MEMORY

Between rounded hills,
White with patches of buckwheat, whose fragrance fills
The little breeze that makes the birch-leaves quiver,
Beside a rollicking swift river,
Light green in the deeps,—
Like your eyes in sunshine,—
Winds the canal,
Lazy and brown as a water-snake,
Full of dazzle and sheen where the breeze sweeps
The water with gossamer garments, that shake
The reeds standing sentinel,
And the marginal line
Of birches and willows.

Our little steamer pulls its way
With jingle of bells and panting throb
Of old engines.
In stiff array
The water-reeds wave,
And solemnly sway
To the wash and swell of our passing.
Among the reeds the ripples sob,
And die away,
'Till the canal is still again, save
For a kingfisher's flashing
Across the noon shimmer.

I stood beside you in the bow,
Watched the sunlight lose itself among your hair,
That the breeze tugged at.
Bright as the shattered sun-rays, where the prow
Cut the still water,
The warm light caught and tangled there,
Red gold amid your hair.

You were very slim in your blue serge dress....
We talked of meaningless things, education,
Agreed that unless,
Something were changed disaster would come to the nation.
You smiled when I pointed where
A group of birches shivered in the green wood-shadow,
Up to their knees in water, white and fair
As dryads bathing.
A row
Of flat white houses and a wharf
Glided in sight.
The hoarse whistle shrieked for a landing;
Bells jangled.... You were standing
A slim blue figure amid the wharf's crowd;
The little steamer creaked against the side, loud
Screamed the whistle again....

Monotonously the solemn reeds
Waved to our passing;
Ahead the canal shimmered, blotched green by the water-weeds.
With a grinding swing
And see-saw of sound,
The steamer slunk down the canal.

I never even knew your name....

That night from a dingy hotel room,
I saw the moon, like a golden gong,
Redly loom
Across the lake; like a golden gong
In a temple, which a priest ere long
Will strike into throbbing song,
To wake some silent twinkling city to prayer.
The lake waves were flakes of red gold,
Burnished to copper,
Gold, red as the tangled gleam
Of sunlight in your hair.

[37]

SATURNALIA

In earth's womb the old gods stir,
Fierce chthonian dieties of old time.
With cymbals and rattle of castanets,
And shriek of slug-horns, the North Wind
Bows the oak and the moaning fir,
On russet hills and by roadsides stiff with rime.

In nature, dead, the life gods stir,
From Rhadamanthus and the Isles,
Where Saturn rules the Age of Gold,
Come old, old ghosts of bygone gods;
While dim mists earth's outlines blur,
And drip all night from lichen-greened roof-tiles.

In men's hearts the mad gods rise
And fill the streets with revelling,
With torchlight that glances on frozen pools,
With tapers starring the thick-fogged night,
A-dance, like strayed fireflies,
'Mid dim mad throngs who Saturn's orisons sing.

In driven clouds the old gods come,
When fogs the face of Apollo have veiled;
A fear of things, unhallowed, strange,
And a fierce free joy flares in the land.
Men mutter runes in language dead,
By night, with rumbling drum,
In quaking groves where the woodland spirits are hailed.

To earth's brood of souls of old,
With covered heads and aspen wands,

Mist-shrouded priests do ancient rites;
The black ram's fleece is stained with blood,
That steams, dull red on the frozen ground;
And pale votaries shiver with the cold,
That numbs the earth, and etches patterned mirrors on the ponds.

[39]

"WHAN THAT APRILLE ..."

Is it the song of a meadow lark
Off the brown, sere salt marshes,
Or the eager patches in dooryards
Of yellow and pale lilac crocuses;
Or else the suburban street golden with sunlight,
And the bare branches of elm trees
Twined in the delicate sky?
Or is it the merry piping
Of a distant hurdy-gurdy?—
That makes me so weary and faint with desire
For strange lands and new scents;
For the rough-rhythmed clank
Of train couplings at night,
And the stormy, gay-tinted sunrises
That shade with purple the contours
Of far-off, unfamiliar hills.

[40]

NIGHT PIECE

A silver web has the moon spun,
A silver web upon all the sky,
Where the frail stars quiver, every one
Like tangled gnats that hum and die.

The moon has tangled the dull night
In her silver skein and set alight
Each dew-damp branch with milky flame.
And huge the moon broods on the night.

My soul is caught in the web of the moon,
Like a shrilling gnat in a spider's web.
Importunate memories shrill in my ears
Like the gnats that die in the spider web.

Lovely as death, in the moon's shroud,
Were town streets, grey houses, dim,
Full of strange peace in the silent night.
As we walked our footsteps clattered loud.
We felt the night as a troubled song ...
Oh, the triumphing sense of life a-throb.
Behind those walls, in those dark streets,
Like the sound of a river, swift, unseen,
Flowing in darkness. Oh, the hoarse
Half-heard murmur swirling beneath
The snowy beauty of moonlight....

And that other night,
When the river rippled with faint spears
Of street lights vaguely reflected. Grey
The evening, like an opal; low,
A grey moon shrouded in sea fog:
Air pregnant with spring; rasp of my steps
Beside the lapping water; within
The dark. Down the worn out years a sob
Of broken loves; old pain
Of dead farewells; and one face
Fading into grey....

A silver web has the moon spun,
A silver web over all the sky.
In her flooding glory, one by one,
Like gnats in a web the stars die.

[42]

[43]

ROBERT HILLYER

[44]

[45]

FOUR SONNETS FROM A SONNET-SEQUENCE

I

Quickly and pleasantly the seasons blow
Over the meadows of eternity,
As wave on wave the pulsings of the sea
Merge and are lost, each in the other's flow.
Time is no lover; it is only he
That is the one unconquerable foe,
He is the sudden tempest none can know,
Winged with swift winds the none may hope to flee.

Fair child of loveliness, these endless fears
Are nought to us; let us be gods of stone,
And set our images beyond the years
On some high mount where we can be alone.
And thou shalt ever be as now thou art,
And I shall watch thee with untroubled heart.

[46]

II

Then judge me as thou wilt, I cannot flee,
I cannot turn away from thee forever,
For there are bonds that wisdom cannot sever
And slaves with souls far freer than the free.
Such strong desires the universal Giver
With unknown plan has buried deep in me
That the exquisite joy of watching thee
Has dominated all my life's endeavor.

Thou weariest of having me so near,
I feel the scorn thou hast within thy heart,
And yet thy face has never seemed so dear
As now, when I am minded to depart.
Though thou shouldst drive me hence, I love thee so
That I would watch thee when thou dost not know.

[47]

III

Fly, joyous wind, through all the wakened earth
Now when the portals of the dawn outpour
A myriad wonders from the radiant store
Of spring's deep passion and loud-ringing mirth.
Cry to the world that I despair no more,
Heart greets my heart and hope has proved its worth;
Fly where the legions of the sun have birth,
Chant everywhere and everywhere adore.

Circle the basking hills in fragrant flight,
Shout Rapture! Rapture! if sweet sorrow passes,
And whisper low in intimate delight
My love-song to the undulating grasses.
Grief is no more, love rises with the spring,
O fly, free wind, and Rapture! Rapture! sing.

[48]

IV

Long after both of us are scattered dust
And some strange souls perchance shall read of thee,
Finding the yearnings that have crushed from me
These poor confessions of my love and trust,
I know how misinterpreted will be
These lines, for men will laugh, or more unjust,
Thinking not once of love, but only lust,
Will stain the vesture of our memory.

And yet a few there may be who will feel
My deep devotion and my true desires,
And know that these unhappy words reveal
Only new images in changeless fires;
And they perchance will linger with a sigh
To think that beauty such as thine must die.

[49]

A SEA GULL

Grey wings, O grey wings against a cloud,
Over the rough waves flashing,
Whose was the scream, startling and loud,
Keen through the skies,—was it thine,
Over the moaning wind and the whine
Of the wide seas dashing?
Whose was the scream that I heard
In the midst of the hurrying air?
Was it thine, lost bird,
Or the voice of an old despair
Chanting from years long dead,
Inexorable spirit flying
On tempest wings that passed and fled
Through the storm crying?

[50]

DOMESDAY

The garlands and the songs of May
Shall welcome in the Judgment Day;
About the basking country-side
Blossom the souls of them that died.
O Dead awake! Arise in bloom
Upon the joyous dawn of doom.

They rise up from the bleeding earth
In gracious legions of re-birth,
Each as a flower or a tree
Of verdant immortality.
And hosts of glad-voiced angels sing
In the rippling groves of spring.

From the grave of youth there grows
A passionately-petaled rose,
Where the virgin whitely lies
A lily fair as Paradise.
And in that old oak's leafy glee
Some gouty sire makes sport of me.

O Dead of yore and yesterday
All hail the resurrecting May!
Beside you in the flowering grass
The feet of youth and love shall pass,
And we that greet you with a smile
Shall join you in a little while.

[52]

TO A PASSEPIED BY SCARLATTI

Strange little tune so thin and rare
Like scents of roses of long ago,
Quavering lightly upon the strings
Of a violin, and dying there
With a dancing flutter of delicate wings;
Thy courtly joy and thy gentle woe,
Thy gracious gladness and plaintive fears
Are lost in the clamorous age we know,
And pale like a moon in the lurid day;
A phantom of music, strangely fled
From the princely halls of the quiet dead,
Down the long lanes of the vanished years
Echoing frailly and far away.

[53]

ELEGY FOR ANTINOUS

Come, let us hasten hence and weep no more,
The sinking sea flows on its tranquil ways,
Night looms serenely at the eastern door
And trails the last cloud into lifeless haze.
Antinous is dead, we kneel before
The portals of our past in vain, nor raise
The laughing phantoms of our yesterdays
Upon this desolate and empty shore.

Now deepening pools of shadow overflow
Into the sea of dark; a far-off bell
Sobs with a sweet vibration long and slow
A last farewell, forevermore, farewell;
And will He wake and hear? We cannot tell;
And will He answer? Ah, we do not know.

[54]

SONG

O crimson rose, O crimson rose,
Crushed lightly in two little hands;
A child's soft kiss was in your heart,
A child's warm breath was in your soul.

The child is gone, O crimson rose,
And stained and hardened are the hands,
And who shall find your golden heart
And who shall kiss your withered soul?

Happy are you, O crimson rose,
But I have stains upon my hands;
You died with kisses in your heart,
I live with sorrow in my soul.

[55]

"MY PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU"

He pondered long, and watched the darkening space
Close the red portals whence the hours had run,
As like young wistful angels, one by one,
The stars cast timid flowers about His face.
"Yea, now another scarlet day is done!"
He cried in anguish, and with sudden grace
Stretched forth His arms, as though He would erase
The few, dim embers of the scattered sun.

"The scarlet day is done, and soon the light
Will wake again my desecrated skies.
Oh, that another dawn might never rise!—
My foolish children!" Through the vast of night
The young stars shivered in a silver horde
Before the Infinite Sorrow of their Lord.

[56]

THE RECOMPENSE

When the last song is sung, and the last spark
Of light dies out forever, and the dark,
The voiceless dark eternal shrouds the earth;
When the last cries of pain and shouts of mirth
Sink in the desolate silences of space;
Where then shall flower the beauty of your face,
O Love the laughing, Youth the rose-in-hand,
In what unknown and undiscovered land
Shall flower then the beauty of your face?

I know not but I know that all returns
At last unchanged, and to the heart that yearns
Shall be repaid all loneliness and loss.
Sometime with shadowy sails shall fly across
The shoreless ocean of infinity
A ship from out the past, and the great sea
Of life shall bear you from the strange worlds over
The waves, and back again to the old lover.

Yes, in some future far beyond surmise
You will dream here with half-remembering eyes,
And I shall write these words, content awhile
In the slow round of time to see you smile.

[57]

R. S. MITCHELL

[58]

[59]

POPPY SONG

I

Footsteps soft as fall the rose's
Petals on a dewy lawn,
Shaken when the wind uncloses
Golden gateways for the dawn;

Laughter light as is the swallows'
Chatter in the evening sky,
Wafted upward from the hollows
Where the limpid waters lie;

Weeping faint as is the willow's
By the margin of the lake,
Trembling into tiny billows
That the silent teardrops make;

Phantoms fitful and uncertain
As the pearly autumn rain,
Sweeping on in cloudy curtain
Down the wide way of the plain.

[60]

II

Oh, unhappy now to waken
When the dream had scarce begun!
Out of gentle twilight taken
Into realms of burning sun:

Oh, unhappy now to find me
Lost 'neath heavens hot with noon;
All that fairy land behind me;
Poppy fields and rising moon!

Drawbridge and portcullis screeching,
Bugles braying soon and late;
Who are they that come beseeching,
Calling at my castle gate?

Drive them hence, for they encumber
Days and nights with waking pain;
Tell them that I lie and slumber
Under poppies, wet with rain.

Who art thou that bendest praying
Over me with clasped palms;
Dim through surging darkness, saying
Words of prayer and murmured psalms?

Who art thou that kneelest weeping
By the border of my bed?
Cease thou, for I was but sleeping—
Dreaming, only, and not dead!

III

Phantoms flitting and uncertain
Sweeping round the endless plain;
Autumn twilight's dusky curtain,
Drowsy poppies, drenched with rain.

[62]

LOVE DREAM

Strange that on warp and woof of dreams
Fancy should weave the web of truth,
And yet this fairy figment seems
Part of a half-forgotten youth
Stolen from days I thought were sped
Out of the world beyond the dead.

Smiled she not when at the edge
Of evening we walked alone
Plucking spring's blossoms from the hedge
That she might wear them as her own,
Or do I hold a hopeless tryst
Here with a shadow, made of mist?

Now as will crumpled rose leaves, pent

By fingers we can never know,
Rouse with the richness of their scent,
Thoughts of a summer long ago,
All the expanse of land and sea
Speaks with a thousand tongues to me.

'Twas from coast we watched slow form,
Out of the frosty ocean's breath,
The blue-gray ramparts of the storm
Flashing with signal fires of death,
Whilst with a murmur, far and wide,
Swept in the low wind with the tide.

Then, at last, when lips were dumb
With fear of parting, did we wend
Along the meadow lanes that come
From nowhere, and in nothing end,
And, smiling, kiss, though ill at ease,
Under the rustling orchard trees.

But will the promise given keep?
Can the heart love still when 'tis dead?
What if the spirit, waked from sleep,
Never recall the words it said?
Dwell in a dreamland, or else be
Lost in life's eternity?

[64]

THE ISLAND OF DEATH

There is an island in a silent sea
That rises—four, rough, rugged walls—on high
Above the ocean in calm majesty.
A mountain of despair against the sky!
About its summit soaring seagulls fly,
Or rest them in its lofty cypress trees,
And greet the black barge bearing those who die
Upon our earth to everlasting ease
And pleasant lives that know not man's eternities.

White halls and palaces their dwellings stand;
These shadowy souls are all unknown to graves
And live, faint phantoms in a fairy land
Of dreams and idleness. They hear the waves
Sing, and the winds come calling from the caves
Of night beyond the ocean, and the cry
Of screaming gulls; stare at each ship that braves
This wilderness of waters, and glides by
In awe-struck silence, ever fearing to draw nigh.

The sun, descending, sows the sea with gold,
And showers splendour through the fading skies,
Whilst from the murky waters they behold
The moon, a shape of silver, slow arise.
And every evening, as the daylight dies,
There comes that bark of death, whose white sail seems
An angel in the dark. A while it lies
Below them in the harbour, then there gleams
A new shape on the stairs up to that land of dreams.

[66]

FROM THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Then, as the whispering evening crossed the sea,
Sweeping the waters with her veil of grey,
Wave-worn and weary of the ocean, we
Beheld the enchanted island far away—
Half hidden in the twilight low it lay

On the horizon like a lazy cloud,
Its coasts encompassed with long lines of spray.
We spread the sails and swiftly the ship plowed
The purple path ahead until the surf sang loud.

Between the cliffs, by the faint stars, we found
A gloomy gate, and boldly sailing in,
Watched the dark mountains slowly closing round,
And heard faint echoes of the ocean's din
Melting like spirits' voices, fleet and thin;
When of a sudden, as we faltered nigh,
Out of the hills where only night had been
A mist of minarets and towers high,
Rose like the yellow light of morning in the sky.

Gazing we drifted toward that golden bloom
Of palaces whose light glowed on our sail;
There we floated wrapped in wild perfume;
Then music burst upon us in a gale;
Grave, deep-toned trumpets and the lyre's long wail,
And farther, the faint sound of singing men.
We grasped our oars—but slowly, as will pale
The morning star, the vision faded, then
The empty dark swept in and all was night again!

[68]

THRENODY

Have you forgotten me,
O my beloved?
Have you deserted me
Now in the autumn?

See where the swallows fly
South o'er the ocean:
Soon will the winter wind
Sweep the Ægean.

Up from the vineyard comes
Music of laughter;
Far through the valleys they
Gather the harvest.

Westward the evening star
Sinks in the mountains;
Pale 'neath the rising moon
Lies Mytilene.

Here where the headland looks
Wide o'er the water,
I have brought laurel leaves,
Decking your barrow.

Why do I linger now
Vainly lamenting?
O it is lonely, love,—
Lonely in Lesbos!

[70]

HELEN

Again the voices of the hunting horns
And the new moon, low lying on the hills,
Tell that the summer night is on its way.—
O languid heart, shalt thou much longer watch
This pale procession of the silent hours
Melt into shadows of unending years?
Much longer feed on yearning and despair

And all the anguish of departed time?
Tomorrow is as yesterday; today
No nearer than the morning when there stood
In Leda's palace, asking for my hand,
Tall Menelaus with his yellow hair;
No nearer now than the first time these hands
Dared linger in caress upon the curls
Of him whose dark eyes laughed their love to mine.
'Tis only as if one short, restless sleep
Lay over the wide chasm of the years
Beyond which loom lost faith and ruined Troy.
The night wind brings, as twenty summers since,
The silver-breasted swallows from the Nile
To quiet Sparta, nestled in her hills,
Locked inland from the voices of the sea;
And far across the porticos I hear
The ivory shuttle singing in the loom
'Midst maidens' chatter, as in olden days;
And men still murmur as they pass me by:
"Lo, look on her, the wonder of the world,
Beauteous Helen, Lacedæmon's Queen!"
I watch them gaze intently on my face
As they would keep it in their memory
Forever, and the very while they gaze
I see the flame of Troy gleam in their eyes.

I think sometimes I have already passed
Into the kingdom of untroubled death,
And wandering lonely amongst them I knew
In Hellas or that land beyond the seas,
Behold each shadow as it passes by
Shrink half involuntarily, and turn,
And veil its face and vanish in the gloom.
Whilst out of that dim distance whence my steps
Are moving and to which they shall return
After an interval of endless years,
There comes a voice that calls me from afar:
"Art thou not Helen, dowered of the gods
With all that man can covet? Wert thou not
Created the most beautiful of earth,
And is not beauty wisdom, wisdom power?
What hast thou done with their almighty gift?"
And then, ere I would answer, silence falls
Around me, and the dark divides, and I
See the blue twilight on the Spartan hills.

[72]

LARGO

Thou only from this sorrow wert relief,
Inviolable death, grave deity of rest,
Wherein all things past somehow seem the best
That ever could have come to be. Proud grief
Her lustrous torch hath lighted in this brief
Dim time before the dark, when the wide west
Fades where illimitable skies suggest
Days vanished in the beauty of belief.

As one unto a battle come, that stands
Aloof awhile, beholding friend and foe
Clashing in conflict, till his soul commands
He, too, prest on whither the bugles blow,
Lifting his eyes sees over wasted lands
Life's dust and shadow drifting to and fro.

[73]

LAZARUS

At morn we passed a hall where song
And dance had been and wine flowed free,
And where, 'mid wrecks of revelry,
Had lain the feasters all night long.

They saw us through the mist of dawn,
And, turning, called us to their feast—
The sound of lutes and cymbals ceased—
But one He fixed His gaze upon.

In whose wide eyes there seemed to be—
Behind the laughing, wine-flushed face
And tilted ivy-crown's gay grace—
Faint glimpses of Eternity.

Then sad, the Master bowed His head,
And, through the rosy twilight, dim,
Walked up and softly spake to him:
"Art thou not he that late was dead?"

The drinker raised his cup on high,
And murmured: "Priest of Nazareth,
I am he thou didst raise from death—
Lo, thus I wait again to die!"

[74]

A CRUCIFIX

This was the cross of God on which men's eyes
Dwelt with the love of dead divinity,
As they who by the desolate orient sea
In battle made their sainted sacrifice,
Dreaming their boundless striving should devise
A symbol whereby men might know that he
Who wins his way on earth to victory,
Thus in his consummated sorrow dies.

All things are sacred to that tender sight:
Time's ancient altars whence strange incense curled
Innocent to the unknown gods; the light
Of love is thine; faith's banner is unfurled,
Even where the farthest watchmen, through the night,
Call on the cloud-wrapped ramparts of the world.

[75]

NEITH

Somehow the spirit of that day—
Rain-clouded streets and brooding air—
Determined me to live and dare,
Living, to laugh the world away.

As in a crystal dreamers see
Out of unwinding mists arise
The splendors of some paradise
Woven of gold and ivory;

Deep in the globe of thought I saw
Dawn from tempestuous dust that form
Toward which the endless ages storm
Uproarious—to break with awe.

Of all things ignorant, yet wise,
Sitting enthroned at life's last goal,
Dividing body from the soul,
Looking at each with flameless eyes.

Immutable, unknown, unsung,

Through triumph and delight unearned,
Through sorrow undeserved, I learned
Salvation from thy wordless tongue.

Then flying the embracing gloom
Of burnt-out days and parched desire,
I built my soul an altar fire
Of laughter in the face of doom.

[77]

A FAREWELL

Nay: by this desolate sea our troubled ways
Shall separate forever; swift hath sped
The hour of youth, and yet to hang the head,
Lamenting lost things of departed days,
Were only from that shadowland to raise
A wraith, that whispering of the quiet dead,
Would mimic the strange life of love; instead,
Let us relent and hail the past with praise.

Go, then; and should inevitable fate
Lead us at last beyond the world of men
Where laurel and applause content no more,
Whither the soul takes silence for its mate,
There might we meet, and, smiling, once again
Clasp hands and part upon some windy shore.

[78]

[79]

WILLIAM A. NORRIS

[80]

[81]

OF TOO MUCH SONG

Sedges, have you sung too much,
Sedges gray along the shore?
Can this autumn tempest touch
Answering chords in you no more?
Is the summer all forgot?—
Now the ice is dark and strong
That has bound you to the spot—
Did you die of too much song?

Something in me is a harp
Played by every wanton breeze.
Moaning soft and piping sharp
Are its wondrous melodies.
Is the playing over-fast
Though the answer now is strong?
Like the sedges at the last
Will it die of too much song?

[82]

[WHEREVER MY DREAMS GO]

Wherever my dreams go, you are always there,
And you and I have gone to many a land,
Seeing high hills at dawn and desert sand,
Temples and mosques and people bowed in prayer.
We too have prayed in many places where
Beauty has come as I have clasped your hand,
And through long silence learned to understand
The dumb sweet language of your eyes and hair.

We have been lovers in all fair romances
Beyond the rising or the sunken sun.
There have been foes to meet, and I have done
Great deeds beneath the splendor of your glances....
And yet I dreamed alone; you could not guess
What joy you brought into my loneliness.

[83]

[OUT OF THE LITTLENESS]

Out of the littleness that wraps my days,
The oppressive mist of gray and common things,
Sometimes my dream on its audacious wings,
Dripping with golden fire, above the haze,
Flashes and veers against the sudden blaze
Of sunlight. There no other wings may gleam
But only yours, companioning my dream
In its strange flight up new and radiant ways.

And once, I thought, in a far solitude,
The black waves moaned and broke unutterably
On a stern cliff where hand in hand we stood.
There were none near us when the dark had gone,—
Only the clean wind of a sailless sea,
And you and I alone in the great dawn.

[84]

NAHANT

Last night the sea was an enchanted moan
And a pale pathway that the moonlight made.
All night it sorrowed in the dark alone,
Groping with ghostly fingers, half afraid,
Up the great rocks and sobbing back again,
Weary of search, yet still unsatisfied.
It seemed to have the voice of all dead men
And all fair women who had ever died.

But now the sun has risen, and the spray
Leaps into sudden light along the shore.
Each little wave has caught a golden ray—
As if the dawn had never come before.
Beyond the cliffs brown fishing boats go by
Under the reach of the wide laughing sky.

[85]

QUI SUB LUNA ERRANT

In a strange land they dwell, too far away
From sunlight and the common mirth of men

Ever to come within our casual ken.
We see them not, but if by chance we stray
Down cypress aisles when the wan summer day
Draws to a thin and sickly close, we hear
Murmur of mad speech by some watery weir
Or languid laughter and faint sound of play.

They never see the dawn; like the pale moths
That haunt lugubrious shadows of dim trees
They celebrate their lunar mysteries
At woodland shrines, where with green thyrsus rods
And weak limbs wrapped in silken sensuous cloths
They chant the names of their dead pagan gods.

[86]

[ACROSS THE TAUT STRINGS]

Across the taut strings of my yearning soul
Pass fingers of all fleet and beautiful things:
Comings of dawn and moonlight glimmerings,
Mid-summer hush and Sabbath bells that toll
Over broad fields, a sound of thrushes' wings
Near sunset hour, a girl with lips apart,
Wonder and laughter,—these have touched my heart
And left their music lingering on its strings.

At twilight of some gray, eventual year,
A few late friends will turn, with trembling breath,
From the raw mound of earth that hides my face....
Yet I shall still find beauty, even in death,
And some lone traveller of the night will hear
An echo of music in that quiet place.

[87]

ESCAPE

They danced beneath the stars, a crazy rout
With antic steps that had some little grace;
And one leapt high with song and frenzied shout,
And one ran silent with a gleaming face.

They danced until the shy moon looking down
Deemed herself lost above some Grecian glade;
A mile away the trim New England town
Echoed the Bacchanalian din they made.

And still they danced, until the moon sank low,
Blushing a little, and night's diadem
Of stars grew pale before the eastern glow....
And with the dawn their keepers came for them.

[88]

ON A STREET CORNER

But all the time you spoke I did not hear
The words you said. I only heard a far
Faint sound of summer waters and a clear
Calling of music from some lonely star.
I thought I heard the lisp of falling dew
In a dark meadow where no breezes stirred....
Then all at once the noisy street, and you
Smiling at me because I had not heard!

[89]

SEA-BURIAL

Over the sands the swollen tide came creeping,
Over the sands beneath the gleaming moon;
At first it seemed a child's uncertain croon,
And then a sound of many mourners weeping.
Then all at once a crested wave was sweeping
Around the still form in the moonlight there,
Twining its silver fingers in her hair....
And yet it could not rouse her from her sleeping.

With dawn the tide went seaward, bearing her
In its strong arms that clung so tenderly,
And laid her in a strange place far away
Where the tall seaweeds rise and never stir....
And there she sleeps, while pass alternately
The brooding night and the green luminous day.

[90]

[91]

DUDLEY POORE

[92]

[93]

A RENAISSANCE PICTURE

Calm little figure, ivy-crowned,
How long beneath the barren tree
Where this pale, martyred god has found
Surcease from his long agony,
You watch with an untroubled gaze
Life move on its accustomed ways!

Within your childish heart there dwells
No sorrow that uprising dims
Your eye, whence not a teardrop wells
For pity of those writhen limbs,
Or for the travail of a race
Consummate in one lifeless face.

Though tinkling caravans go by
Forever over twilight sands,
With myrrh and cassia laden high
For other shrines in other lands,
No weight of grief thereat you know,
But softly on your pan-pipes blow.

From what dim mountain have you strayed,
Where, ringed by the Hellenic seas,
You dwelt in an untrodden glade
Sacred to woodland deities,
Along whose faint paths went at dawn
Endymion or a dancing faun?

From groves where sacrificing throngs
Called you by some fair Grecian name,

With ritual meet and choric songs,
Strange, that to this dark hill you came
To seek, unmindful of their loss,
A refuge underneath the cross.

There is some deeper secret lies
Hidden out of human sight
In keeping of those tranquil eyes
That shine with such immortal light,
And in their shadows gleam and glow
While still upon your pipes you blow.

All but inscrutable, your gaze
Declares your place is even here,
Sharing this martyr's cup of praise,
And year by sadly westering year,
Till the last altar lights grow dim,
Dividing sovereignty with him.

[95]

THE PHILOSOPHER'S GARDEN

Some strange and exquisite desire
Has thrilled this flowering almond tree
Whose branches shake so wistfully,
Else wherefore does it bloom in fire?
Why scatter pollen on the air,
Marry its pale buds each to each,
The year's unkindly tempests bear,
Or to the calm clear sunlight reach?

Yet I can give that hope no name,
Nor that divine emotion share,
For, though I see it flowering there,
Because our speech is not the same
The passionate secret must lie hid
Burdened with unexpressed delight,
Where none of all man's race can bid
It forth, or voice its beauty right.

There's nought in earth or heaven knows
That hope for which our being longs,
The stars are busied with their songs,
The universal springtime flows
From sun to sun in scorn of man,
Careless if he be quick or dead,
Or if this earth, as it began,
Be voiceless and untenanted.

[96]

THE TREE OF STARS

There stands a tree where no man knows,
And like an earthly tree it grows,
Save that upon its branches wide
The earth and all the stars beside,
The chilly moon and the great sun,
The little planets, one by one,
Are hung like fruit to redden there
And ripen in the heavenly air.

And when the seeds are round and full
The watchful gods will come and pull
The ripened fruit from off the tree;
And then that heavenly company
Will bear the shining planets in
And garner them in a deep bin
And sort them out, and save the seed

To plant new trees in time of need.

[97]

AFTER RAIN

All day the heavy skies have lowered,
Long beaten by autumnal rain;
The lilac's withered leaves lie showered
Where little rain-pools star the plain;
All things that for a season flowered
Sink back to earth again.

Strange, then, that with the year's decrease
And out of gathering dusk you rise
Seeking love's ultimate surcease,
Phantom, whose memory-haunted eyes
Know that there never can be peace
Hoped-for, till memory dies.

In vain where these dead leaves lie strown
Where all things, bending earthward, fail,
Like a young spirit newly flown,
Flower-fragile, blossom-like and pale,
You search; and must fly back, a blown
Rose leaf on the cold gale.

You might have rested but for this:
That love's intense flame burning through
The shuddering body with a kiss
Woke in the prisoned spirit, too,
So keen an ecstasy of bliss
As could, for all they made amiss,
Nor life nor death undo.

[99]

COR CORDIUM

Deep in a heart, beneath o'er-hanging boughs,
Love built himself a house,
And whoso entered in, Love bade him stay,
Nor ever from that feast to come away
Dissatisfied or weary of the fare
Love set him there.

Forever through the groves and glades
Kind thoughts went softly to and fro,
And memories like white-footed maids
With gentle tread would come and go
Among the ever-garrulous trees.
And through the branches overhead
I know not what sweet spirits strayed,
Or what commandant spirit led
Their mazy dances, but one played
So deftly on a psaltery
That they for joy must needs keep singing;
All the chambers of Love's house
With that sweet minstrelsy were ringing.
Faces to the windows came,
Tears to happy eyelids started,
Feeling, as by sudden flame,
Their cares and their sad hearts parted,
Each old clinging sorrow dead.

All who ever guested there
To each other, murmuring, said:
"In this heart breathes purer air,
The thoughts that move across this sky
Have had a more mysterious birth,

Are lovelier, float more stately
Than clouds across the sky of earth."
All guests within that heart's deep wood,
All friends together in that house,
High converse held with an ærial brood,
With spirit-folk kept delicate carouse;
None ever turned ungreeted from that door.
(Sorrow himself was guest a weary while,)
But yesterday when I passed by once more,
Met me no welcoming smile,
Nor any breath the unwavering branch to stir,
Silent each glad ærial chorister;
Three drowsy poppies brooded by the wall,
Lonely and tall.

Then, as I leaned above their crimson bloom,
The flower of day grew old and witheréd,
Night with a sigh sat down beside her loom
Winding her shuttle with a silver thread.
Suddenly from the starlit plains of air
Ethereal tumult, airy tempest blew,
Immortal music showering everywhere,
Flashed to the earth in an harmonious dew,
Leaped jubilant from cloud to craggy cloud,
Binding the moon in a melodious chain,
Storming the troubled stars, a luminous crowd,
Dropping in fiery streaks to earth again.
From out the windows of God's house
Faint as a far-echoing wave,
The angels, bending their calm brows,
Song for song in answer gave;
And faster than a falcon flies,
Thronging spirits in a cluster
Passed before my dazzled eyes,
Shedding an ærial lustre,
Burning with translucent fire,
Shaking from their dewy wings
Wild, ineffable desire
Of starry and immortal things,
Torturing with delicious pain
Past telling sweet, the bewildered heart,
Piercing the poor mortal brain
With beauty, a keen fiery dart.
Ah! Even as an oracle
Whose soul a god has breathed upon,
The beauteousness unbearable
Possessed me so all strength was gone.
Smitten by a barbéd joy,
My sense with rapturous pain grew dim,
Joy pierced me as it would destroy.
Still higher rose the celestial hymn.
And then of all that starry throng
That streamed toward the upper sky,
One spirit darted down again,
And stood upon a bough near by.
"Even I unsealed thy sight," he said.
Alas, that shape I did not know,
For he was so transfigured,
So circled by the unearthly glow
Of his pulsating aureole;
I who so well the flesh had known
I did not know the soul.
With troubled eyes he bended down,
And all about me where I stood
Every blossom, every tree,
All the branches of that wood
Were trembling in their ecstasy.
They knew ere I had half divined.
But at his voice old dreams awoke
In dusty chambers of the mind,
And when again he softly spoke
With sudden tears mine eyes were wet.
And lowlier still he bent his head:
"Dost thou, dear friend, not know me yet?"
"Yes, for I know thy voice," I said.

"Dear Phantom, this immortal guise,
This disembodied self of thine,
Hath dazed mine unacquainted eyes.
Thou dweller on the steps divine,
Thou image of a god's desire,
Thou spark of the celestial flame
Art fashioned out of wind and fire
And elements without a name;
What sacred fingers mingled them
And trembled with a god's delight?
Thy body is a burning gem,
Thy limbs are chrysolite.
A glory hangs about thy head
For thou in thine immortal lot
In heaven's own light art garmented.
I know thee, yet I know thee not."
Then he, with shining eyes half shut,
Radiantly standing there:
"I did but change my leafy hut
For a mansion in the air,
The eerie wood, the enchanted ground,
The dim, bird-haunted glades we trod,
Grew all untuneful when I found
A dwelling in the heart of God.
I latched the gate at dawn of day,
I planted poppies by the door,
To His retreats I came away
And I shall wander thence no more.
The windy heights are all my love,
The spheral lights, the spheral chimes,
The trailing fires, the hosts that move
In concourse through sidereal climes;
I troop with the celestial choirs;
We have not any wish to be
Sad pilgrims, torn by sad desires,
Wayfarers of mortality.
The husk of flesh we have put by;
The dark seeds planted in the earth
Have blossomed in the upper sky,
In airy gardens have new birth."

There did he make an end, for O
Those spirits, singing, darted by again,
And at the showering sound he trembled so
I saw his earthly dalliance gave him pain,
And cried in sorrow, "O my friend, farewell!
Now from the luminous, paradisal bands,
Gabriel, Israfael, Ithuriel,
Beckon to you with their exulting hands."

[105]

THE WITHERED LEAF, THE FADED FLOWER BE MINE

The withered leaf, the faded flower be mine,
The broken shrine,
All things that knowing beauty for a day
Have passed away
To dwell in the illimitable wood
Of quietude,
Undying, radiant, young,
Passed years among.

No blighting wind upon their beauty blows,
The altar glows
With flames unquenchable and bright
By day, by night;
Secure from envious time's deflowering breath
They know no death,
But silently, imperishably fair,
Grow lovelier there.

He who adores too much the impending hour,
The budding flower,
Who knows not with what dyes an hour that's dead
Is garmented,
Who walks with glimmering shapes companionless,
He cannot guess
With how great love and thankfulness I praise
The yesterdays.

[107]

CUTHBERT WRIGHT

[108]

[109]

THE END OF IT

We met, and on the decorous drive touched hands,
"Good-bye; a pleasant trip to you," I said.
The sunlight slept upon the still uplands,
Your figure fading in the dusty red
I watched awhile, then turned with casual face
To where a torrent glimmered down a glade,
No human voice troubled the lovely place,
Only the fall a cruel music made.

A time I lay and marked with curious stare
The keen sun-lances quiver on the lawn,
And thought on shrines all voiceless now and bare,
The holy genius of their boughs withdrawn,
Till with hoarse cry the train that you were on
Stabbed the indifference of the empty air ...

Then I awoke and knew that you were gone.

[110]

THE NEW PLATONIST

Circa 1640

Our loves as flowers fall to dust;
The noblest singing hath an end;
No man to his own soul may trust,
Nor to the kind arms of his friend;
Yet have I glimpsed by lonely tree,
Bright baths of immortality.

My faultless teachers bid me fare
The cypress path of blood and tears,
Treading the thorny wold to where
The painful Cross of Christ appears;
'Twas on another, sunnier hill
I met you first, my miracle.

The painted windows burn and flame
Up through the music-haunted air;
These were my gods—and then you came
With flowers crowned and sun-kissed hair,
Making this northern river seem
Some laughter-girdled Grecian stream.

When the fierce foeman of our race
Marshals his lords of lust and pride,
You spring within a moment's space,
Full-armed and smiling to my side;
O golden heart! The love you gave me
Alone has saved and yet will save me.

Perchance we have no perfect city
Beyond the wrack of these our wars,
Till Death alone in sacred pity
Wash with long sleep our wounds and scars;
So much the more I praise in measure
The generous gods for you, my treasure.

[112]

THE ROOM OVER THE RIVER

Good-night, my love, good-night;
The wan moon holds her lantern high,
And softly threads with nodding light
The violet posterns of the sky,
Below, the tides run swift and bright
Into the sea.

Odours and sounds come in to us,
Faint with the passion of this night,
One little dream hangs luminous
Above you in the scented light;
Roses and mist, stars and bright dew
Draw down to you.

How often in the dewy brake,
I've heard above the sighing weirs,
The night-bird singing for your sake
His lonely song of love and tears;
He too, sad heart, hath turned to rest,
And sleep is best.

Flower of my soul! Let us be true
To youth and love and all delight,
Clean and refreshed and one with you
I would be ever as to-night,
And heed not what the day will bring,
Nor anything.

And now the moon is safe away,
Far off her carriage lampions flare,
Lost in the sunken roads of day,
They vanish in the icy air.
Good-night, my love, good-night,
Good-night.

[114]

THE FIDDLER

Once more I thought I heard him plain,
That unseen fiddler in the lane,
Under the timid twilight moon,
Playing his visionary strain.

No other soul was in the place
As up the hill I came apace;
Though once I heard him every day,
I never once have seen his face.

It was my immemorial year,
When rhymes came fast and blood beat clear;
He too, perchance, was then alive,

Now separate ghosts, we wander here.

Sometimes his ghostly rondelay
Broke on my dream at dawn of day,
And through my open window stole
The perfumed marvel of the May.

Sometimes in midnight lanes I heard
The twitter of a darkling bird,
As hidden from the ashen moon,
The pathos of his music stirred.

O happy time! How goodly seemed
The dauntless timeless dream I dreamed,
Those dear imaginary sins,
The joys that in one torrent streamed.

When moon and stars go out for aye,
And I am dead and castaway,
This autumn city I have loved
Will know me not, but he will stay.

In faded suburbs he will play.
Some other boy's brief morn away,
Till sapphire windows palely burn
Amid the undefeated gray.

And yet—sometimes I seem to know
I shall not 'scape his phantom bow;
More paramount than death or pain,
This ghost will follow where I go.

In some well-kept untroubled hell
Where frustrate souls like mine may dwell,
I shall look up and hear his note
Coming across the asphodel.

No shades will gather at his tune
To dance their ghostly rigadoun,
Only that lonely voice will cleave
The everlasting afternoon.

[116]

FALSTAFF'S PAGE

To Reginald Sheffield

In blaze of curls and cowslip-colored coat
He pranks a way before the wheezing Knight.
Tall Windsor shows no blossom like this wight
By park or sedgy pool or bearded moat;
A skylark burbles in that milk-white throat,
And I have heard him down a singing stream,
Ere the brute morn shattered my happy dream
Upon the sill, and weeping I awoke.

We had a music once; a poesie
Sweet as a maiden, lissome as this lad,
Full of rich merriment and gentle joy;

That other England lives and laughs in thee,
A peal of morris-music, blithe and glad,
Thou spray of bloom! Thou flower of a boy!

[117]

A DULL SUNDAY

(After Debussy)

It has been a long day,
A long, long day;
And now in floods of twilight,
In long green waves of sunset softly flowing,
Evening.
It is evening over the great towns,
It is evening in our hearts.

And though the last frail tendrils
And flowers of incense
Have long ago uncurled themselves around
The cynical Cathedral,
I hear the thin white voices of children,
Little girls and little boys,
Calling the name of Jesus
And His most Sacred Heart,
Singing about a kind of parish heaven,
A little walled city, all golden and lilac,
Like the one seen by François Villon's mother
In an old, bituminous, smoke-bitten painting
Of the Middle Ages.

And in this faith she wished to live and die.

[**Transcriber's Note:** Untitled poems whose titles are omitted in the body of the text as originally published have had their conventional "first line" titles (as seen in the table of contents) added to the body of this transcription. They are enclosed in square brackets and are in gray text as an indication to the reader.]

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