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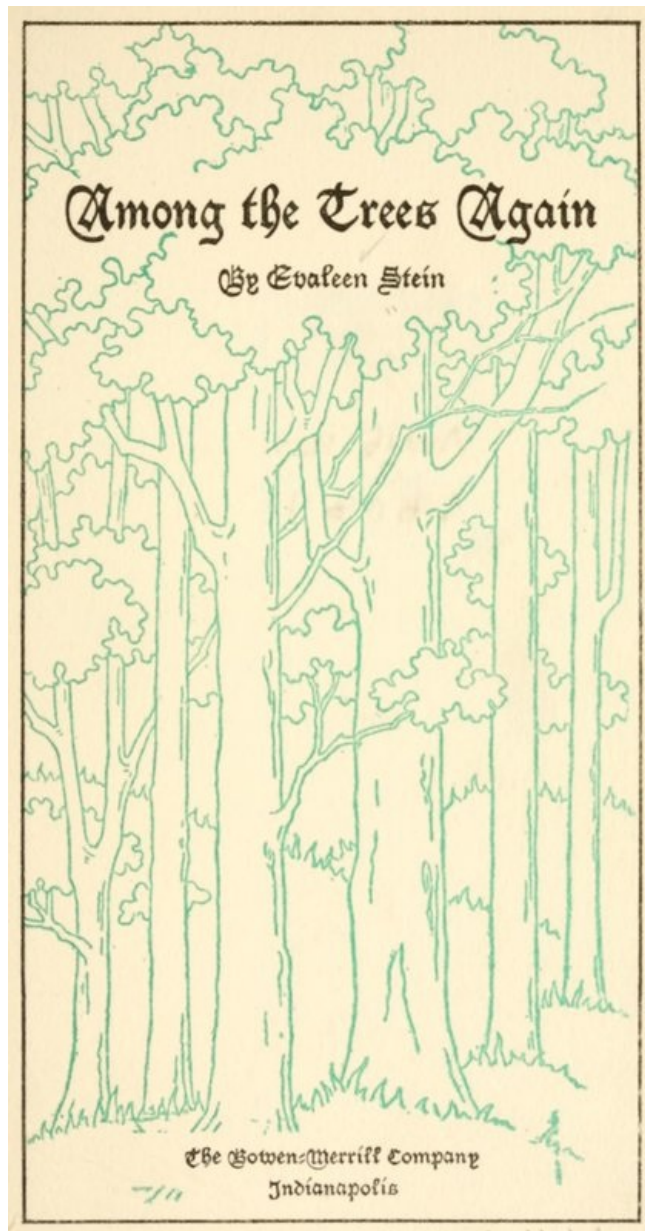
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*Among the Trees Again*

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*To the memory of my beloved brother  
Orth Harper Stein*

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*Among the Trees Again*

*I saw a meadow-land, one day;  
The grass stood green and high,  
But naught appealed in any way  
To stay the passer-by.*

*Till suddenly the sunlight strayed  
Those leafy tangles through,  
And touched to fire, on every blade  
A golden network grew!*

*A million airy cobwebs gleamed  
So silken-soft and bright,  
That all the level lowland seemed  
A tracery of light.*

*And as I watched the webs, I thought  
The field of life along,  
As slight as these, so I have wrought  
With slender threads of song.*

*They bind the grass, and blossoms, too,  
The bee and butterfly,  
And some go faintly wavering through  
The tender azure sky.*

*Yet still I wait that golden glow  
Whose fine transmuting art  
Must smite my web of song, and so  
Reveal it to the heart.*

*Ah therefore, thou, I pray thee, touch  
These frail threads I have spun,  
With grace of sympathy, for such  
Might light them like the sun!*

Aye, throb, my heart! is it not sweet to be,  
 To breathe, to bide, by growing things once more!  
 We did not guess before  
 How close our life was locked in greenery.  
 Hark! how the sparrows in the apple tree  
 Are chattering, chirping, till their tiny throats  
 Are fairly brimmed and quivering through and through  
 With rollick notes!  
 Good morrow, little birds!  
 Good morrow! morrow!—O, I would I knew  
 Some light-winged language, kindred singing words  
 Wherein to say  
 This day, this day, at last this happy day  
 I come to be a neighbor unto you!

Too long, too long, we heard strange footsteps pass,  
 Harsh, strident echoes stricken out of stone;  
 But never softened by green, growing grass,  
 Or mellowed to faint, earthy undertone.  
 And then, O heart,  
 Did we not oftentimes feel ourselves apart,  
 Alone,  
 Wrought to vague discord by some touch unknown?  
 Did we not weary with a nameless grief,  
 In dreaming of tall clover, daisy sown,  
 Or music blown  
 From the wind-harping of some little leaf?

4

It was not that within the city's core  
 There dwelt no sympathies, nor interests keen,  
 No human ties to temper its fatigues.  
 —'Twas only that we needed something more;  
 Some note rang wrong;  
 A foolish fancy, may be, but still strong,  
 That life sang sweeter snatched between the green  
 Close-lapping verdure of a fret of twigs.

Where all the ground was paven out of sight,  
 And only from a far-off strip of sky  
 My mother Nature strove to speak to me,  
 I could not harken to her voice aright;  
 I knew not why,  
 But ever to mine ears some whispering tree  
 Seemed of the inmost golden soul of her,  
 The best interpreter.  
 And so what wonder, Life, that you and I,  
 Shut out from such glad confidence, should miss  
 And grieve for this.

—But all this yearning we'll forget; for now  
 Within my window,  
 So,  
 By finger-tips,  
 I'll draw into mine arms this dancing bough,  
 And stroke its silky buds across my lips.  
 O generous-natured, friendly, neighbor tree!  
 Weave gentle blessings in the shade and shine;  
 And granting gracious patience to my plea,  
 Some simple lesson of your lore make mine,  
 Make mine, I pray!  
 O, be a kindly teacher unto me,  
 And I'll pour out such worshipful heart-wine,  
 Not any bird that sings to you all day,  
 Or nestles to low, leafy lullaby,  
 Shall hold you in such dear observance, nay,  
 Nor love you half so tenderly as I.

5



SWEPT lightly by the south wind  
The elm leaves softly stirred,  
And in their pale green clusters  
There straightway bloomed a bird!

His glossy feathers glistened  
With dyes as richly red  
As any tulip flaming  
From out the garden bed.

But ah, unlike the tulips,  
In joyous strain, ere long,  
This redbird flower unfolded  
A heart of golden song!

I KNELT beside the fairy spring,  
Among the tasseled weeds;  
Far off, with dreamy murmuring,  
The wind piped through the reeds.

Once, twice, the brimming cup I raised  
With trembling finger-tips,  
And in its limpid crystal gazed,  
Nor laid it to my lips.

Ah me! the eager heart-desires,  
So thronging swift they came,  
My spirit surged like wind-swept fires,  
I knew not which to name.

—Then all at once, I quickly quaffed  
The shining drops; but lo,  
The wish with that enchanted draught  
No man must ever know!

I LEAN upon the bridge's rail,  
 In idle joy, and gazing down,  
 So watch the frothy bubbles sail,  
 And bits of tangled grasses trail  
 Along the current's tawny brown.

The river flows at full to-day;  
 And though within the tide it pours  
 There grow no mocking sycamores,  
 Nor any crystal hints betray  
 The spicewood thickets, nor the pale  
 Soft willow wands of pearly gray,  
 Whose interwoven mazes veil  
 The fretted banks, yet here and there,  
 Adown some swirling eddy, where  
 A delving sunbeam shines,  
 What mines  
 Of gleaming, streaming, liquid gold  
 The waters hold!

And so, by rapid currents rolled  
 In billowy swells that break and chime  
 In riotous tumult uncontrolled,  
 The March flood plashes past the pier;  
 But through its sweeping tones, I hear  
 The sweet, receding murmurs rhyme  
 The burden of the April time;  
 And throbbing like a glad refrain,  
 Now far, now full, now far again,  
 The freshened breeze  
 Blows gaily, bringing pure and clear  
 The fitful, tinkling cadences.

But listen! faint, from out the sheer  
 Deep borders of the morning sky,  
 Slips down the distance-softened cry  
 Of shy wild geese that northward fly;  
 It vibrates nearer, and more near,  
 —And see!  
 There! wheeling into sight,  
 Far as the vision may descry.  
 A level-winged advancing "V,"  
 They keep their swift, unswerving flight.  
 North, north, beyond that scudding fleece  
 Of tiny clouds, like wilder geese,  
 That join their ranks, and journey, too,  
 On,—on,—into the farthest blue.

Then, from the boundless space above,  
 I drop my dazzled eyes to view  
 The soft field-grass and meadow-rue,  
 The restful, brown earth, that I love.  
 A trick of blinding sun, maybe,  
 That halo on the hills may prove—  
 And yet, they are so dear to me,  
 The golden glory that they wear  
 Is like none other anywhere,  
 And, in my heart, I hold it true.

Though, surely, what least loving eye  
 Could wander up the river there,  
 And see aught otherwise than I?  
 Or could deny  
 That yonder little glimpse is fair?  
 The slender point of jutting land  
 Where, faintly burgeoning anew  
 With rounds of downy buds, there stand  
 A score of water-willow trees  
 In clustered tufts, and twinkling through,  
 Across the stream, beside of these,  
 A line of shining yellow light;  
 And half in sight,  
 And hidden half, upon the right,

By wild red-sumac shrubberies,  
A windmill, rising tall and white,  
Slow turning in the breeze.

And then beyond—but how express,  
What word in any tongue conveys  
The depth of dreamy tenderness  
That laps, and wraps, and overlays  
The far blue hills,  
And spills and fills  
The valleys with pale purple haze?  
O, what sweet syllables confess  
The glad heart-happiness that plays  
Through all my pulses as I gaze,  
And drink the beauty, past all praise—  
The old, immortal blessedness  
Of April days!

A PLAINTIVE song, so strangely sweet and old,  
That all my soul within itself would fold  
And gently keep so quaint a melody,  
That like a bird's its notes of liquid gold  
Might oft repeat their sweetness unto me.

A tale of joyless splendor long ago,  
Of wedded lady and of loveless woe,  
How she to soothe her sick heart's misery  
Cradled in vines her little child, and so  
Sang of dear love beneath a greenwood tree.

And through it all there runs such saddest plaint,  
As sweet as lutes, now murmurous, now faint,  
Till, like the far-heard sighing of the sea,  
It sweeps in gathering passion past restraint,  
Then breaks, and croons in mournful minor key.

Ah, well-a-day! I listen breathless till  
I half believe that sorrowing singer still  
Dreams on divinely by the whispering tree;  
For in your voice all tenderest heart-strings thrill,  
And all the woodland's marvelous minstrelsy!

O LITTLE poet, winging through  
The sheer, clear blue,  
Is it the sky you're singing to?  
Or is it that afar you see  
Some leafy, laden apple-tree,  
And half concealed and half confessed,  
A nest?  
Ah, truly now, I would I knew  
The happy secret of your glee,  
That joy wherewith you birds are blest,  
Red-breast!

So airy and so light of wing,  
You soar and sing,  
I pray, could you not softly fling,  
My merry minstrel, down to me  
Some echo of that melody  
That spills from out your tiny bill?  
Some trill  
Of all those liquid tones that ring  
So full of purest poetry,  
That rhyme, and chime, and thrill, until  
They fill  
These vibrant seas of azure air,  
Whose blue tides bear  
Their witching sweetness everywhere?  
O little master, heed to me!  
And ah, so true, so tenderly,  
I'll learn to sing how lovely grows  
This rose,  
Till, by and by, dear heart, I'll dare  
To touch some bolder note, maybe,  
Some chord whence deeper music flows;  
Who knows?

THE roar of the seas where the freezing clouds lower,  
The shriek of the storm-wind, the turbulent tide,  
The conquering currents, all vaunt of their power,  
And taunt with the centuries' secret they hide.

Of towering icebergs and glittering floes,  
The sun of the midnight in luminous rings,  
Of hopes held at bay by beleaguering snows,  
Of man in his weakness the fierce ocean sings.

Bright over the sky the aurora is red,  
And crimson as life-blood the snowflakes below;  
Swift updarting streamers of fire overspread  
All heaven and earth with a roseate glow.

Hark! Hark! to the rumble, the thunderous roar  
Of the ancient ice-mountains that shatter and rend  
And crash with the tide dashing up on the shore,  
In turmoil titanic and toil without end.

O, woe to the ship that the pitiless clutch  
Of those crushing ice-demons drags down to her doom!  
The path to the pole is o'er-scattered with such,  
And deep sleep the heroes the tempests entomb.

Beneath the wan moon of the long arctic night  
The frost-smitten sea stretches boundless and lone;  
The Shores of the Dead Men loom spectral and white,  
In Helheim, the death-goddess waits for her own.

15

But ho, to her hatred! the soul of the brave  
He bears not who dares not her fury defy!  
And ho, to her giants of wind and of wave!  
We crave but to meet and defeat them, or die!

Farewell, and farewell!—the anchor rope strains,  
Loose cable and canvas, and hasten we forth!  
The fire of desire quivers hot in our veins,  
We must sail with the gale, to the north! to the north!

Must speed with the blast to its ultimate goal,  
The path of its pinions must follow and find  
The lure of the ages, the boreal pole,  
And the measureless halls of the house of the wind!

O GOLDEN day, wherein at last,  
 Long leagues and wintry overpast,  
 I stand beneath a sky as blue  
 As April violets drenched in dew,  
 And live within a dream come true!

From rosy-berried pepper-trees  
 The winds blow spicy fragrances;  
 The palms sway softly to and fro,  
 And down below,  
 Between the glossy leaves of these,  
 The sparkling, yellow sunbeams steep  
 The mission garden, where the bees  
 Are hoarding deep  
 Of heliotrope that hangs the wall  
 As for some princely festival,  
 While white and tall  
 Bright lilies bloom in grace untold,  
 And those rare roses, passing all  
 In splendor, called "The Cloth of Gold!"

O heart, my heart, throb high and fast  
 With rapture! for how couldst thou know  
 Amid the far-off frost and snow  
 Where all the skies are overcast  
 And shrill and chill the north-winds blow,  
 How couldst thou know  
 December heavens anywhere  
 Could show such rare  
 Such tender and divinest guise,  
 That earth and air  
 Could weave such strange, resistless spell  
 As this that folds us flower-wise  
 At sweet San Gabriel!

17

San Gabriel! the holy words  
 Fall soft as music on the ear;  
 I think they are as sweet to hear  
 As any song of summer birds;  
 And harkening them, the while in clear,  
 Pure, quivering notes,  
 The ancient bells begin to chime,  
 In shadowy-wise before me floats  
 A vision of the vanished time.  
 I see again  
 The little band from sunny Spain,  
 Those godly ones, and full of grace,  
 And without stain,  
 Who, heeding neither toil nor pain,  
 Desiring men of every race,  
 That such might see sweet Jesus' face,  
 And that at length the Lord might reign  
 Among all peoples, even so,  
 Sought in the wilderness this place,  
 And consecrated, long ago.

And gazing on the sacred pile  
 Their hands upreared in loving zeal,  
 My heart goes forth to them the while,  
 Those faithful fathers, true and leal!  
 How oft along each cloistered aisle  
 They counted o'er and o'er their beads,  
 While in this garden, unawares,  
 The fragrant flowers sowed their seeds.  
 —And richly as the flowers, the prayers  
 Bore fruit in gentle deeds!

18

In arched embrasures, lifted high  
 Against the sky,  
 The bells in clear-cut beauty show;  
 And loftier still, surmounting all,  
 And blessing thus the ancient wall,  
 A cross,—and on its summit, lo!



A slender bird with pearly breast  
Sits peacefully at rest!

Ah me! Ah me! I know not why  
This little bird with folded wings,  
The cross, the tender azure sky,  
Their pure, exceeding beauty brings  
Swift tears, and smites my heart, till I  
Am almost fain  
To hide mine eyes for very pain!

Yet though thus for a little space  
I bow my face,  
Nor any grace  
Of rose or lily can I see,  
I know the while that memory,  
Clear-eyed and free,  
Upon my heart is graving deep  
Each least, sweet loveliness, to keep  
Through all the coming years for me.  
And it shall be,  
In afterwhiles, when far away,  
When wintry skies are bleak and gray  
And no birds sing,  
I shall grow glad remembering  
The sweetness of this scarlet day.

A LITTLE while ago I caught,  
In cadence pure and clear,  
A waft of faintest music, wrought  
Upon my inner ear.

A part of some elusive theme  
Whose sweetly solemn air  
My soul had harkened in a dream,  
I know not when nor where.

I only know my heart-strings stirred  
With strange, forgotten pain,  
That crept upon me as I heard  
That unremembered strain.

A sense of loneliness untold,  
So boundless, deep, unknown,  
I blindly reached my hands to hold  
Your palms within my own!

I WATCH the little pear buds break  
And slip their silky sheaths,  
And flowers on the maples make  
A thousand russet wreaths,  
—Then something blinds my sight, and I  
Am full of grief, yet know not why!

A rosy purple half betrays  
The wealth the lilacs fold;  
The torches of the tulips blaze  
In flames of red and gold;  
Peach boughs are blossoming above,  
—But oh, the vague heartache thereof!

The blue sky wears in gentle wise  
Its loveliness again;  
All April sunshine,—yet mine eyes  
Are brimmed with April rain!  
The presage of sweet days to be,  
So strange a sadness stirs in me!

Two years ago, it is two years to-day,—  
 It seems a score!—since that sweet, bloomy May  
 When on the barren sea you sailed away.  
   The peach-trees then were in a rosy glow,  
     And down below,  
   The tulip buds had just begun to show.  
     —And yet, dear heart, I know  
 Though all the heaven smiled in tender blue,  
     It shone not so to you.  
 Sorrow had hooded all your skies in gray,  
 And when these dancing boughs put on their gay,  
   Bright May-time bravery, they only grieved  
     A heart bereaved.  
 And though glad robins sang to you to stay,  
   And by the stream the first sweet-flags unfurled  
 Seemed nature's truce to sorrow,—every way  
 Held warring memories wherewith to gainsay  
   And send you wandering over half the world.

Ah, well do I remember how my prayers  
 Went with you, dear, and followed unawares;  
   So speeding ever, winging far and wide  
   About the path wherein your ship should ride,  
 And pleading Heaven that most gentle airs  
     And tempered tide  
 Might bear you safely to the farther side.

Then, when I knew your voyage over,—then,  
   —For surely now, at last, I may confess,  
   Now that I have outgrown its bitterness,  
 Though, sometimes, I can almost feel again,  
   Remembering those days, that keen distress,  
   Yes, jealousy it was! not any less,  
     That constantly  
 Wrapped all my thoughts of you beyond the sea!—  
   I feared lest other lives, more large and wide  
   Than mine has been, might, day by day, divide  
 And win your life and love away from me.  
   And I was fearful for dear nature, too;  
     I could not bear  
 To think that heaven anywhere should wear  
   A hue more deeply, more divinely blue  
   Than this home sky that we together knew;  
     Or that there grew  
 Strange bud or bloom to make the earth more fair.  
   —A most unworthy fancy, it is true;  
 Since nature is but nature everywhere,  
   The same kind mother, in whatever land;  
   So too, maybe, could we but understand,  
 All hearts and loves are only as a part  
     Of one great Heart  
   Whose universal pulses so expand  
 That any lesser life that therein beats  
   Should no more dream of this word "jealousy"  
   Than yonder shining flakes of bloom should be  
   Jealous, forsooth, of the whole hawthorn tree  
 That is but one with their own mass of sweets.  
 And so, at last, through blind, unreasoning grief  
     Beyond belief,  
   Brightly within my heart there did arise  
   Love's loyalty, rebuking in this wise:  
 "Has she not spoken, oft and oft again,  
 These three plain words 'I love you'? Wherefore, then,  
     What right have you  
   To deem mere distance could her love undo?  
 To fancy aught exists that could estrange  
 Her heart from yours, wherein there is no change,  
   Or judge her own to be less simply true?"

And then, in shame, I swiftly put aside  
 All faintest questioning; thenceforth to abide  
 In trust as pure, as boundless, and as wide  
 As still sea-deeps unweaved of any tide

as sun sea deeps, unweaved of any shade.  
Nay, I have learned to cherish rightly, too,  
All light and life that minister to you.  
I hold most dear  
Whatever least thing brings you smallest cheer;  
And, day by day, my ceaseless prayer is this,  
That from the changeful, many-colored grace  
Of time and place,  
Your grief may come to weave a chrysalis  
Round its dead hopes, till waking, by and by,  
It shall find wings to bear it to the sky.  
—But, dear,—God knows I would not do you wrong,  
Nor touch one heart-string if it be not strong,—  
But O, so long,  
So long it seems! You have been gone so long!  
The feather-grass is growing green and high,  
And, piping gaily in an azure throng,  
The bluebirds spangle all the air with song;  
Again aflame the rosy peach boughs burn;  
—Can not you, too, return?

On slender stems the nodding wind-flowers blow,  
And bloodroots grow  
Where high the hedges fling their lacing frets  
Along the lanes; while, softly sifting through  
Tall plummy weeds and silver spider-nets,  
The yellow sunbeams filter down below  
Until I know  
Not any fair Italian sky is blue  
As is our earth to-day with violets!  
Nor do I think that even that Syrian sun  
You watched ride high above Damascus' towers,  
In purer light or richer splendor glowed  
Than any one  
Of these most lovely golden dawns of ours  
That wake the birds along the river road.  
The green ravines are newly fringed with fern;  
From out the brake a robin red-breast calls;  
The stream repeats, at rippling intervals,  
“Can you not now return?”

But what avail in striving to compare  
Earth's endless beauties, whether east or west!  
All lands are lovely, and I am aware  
That unto me this little spot seems fair,  
More rare  
Than all the gathered glories of the rest,  
Because I love it best.  
And so, in truth, I feel that chief I plead  
A selfish need;  
I too, like nature, long to greet the spring!  
Indeed I think I never have confessed,  
Nor have you guessed  
How much of May it is your gift to bring.  
You never knew how wintry was the cloud  
Of haunting sadness, that would oftentimes shroud  
My inmost being, and creep up to chill  
The warmer currents of my life,—until,  
In knowing you,  
I felt a pulse like that sweet, joyous thrill  
That breaks the buds when all the skies are blue!  
The bitter storms of grief I did not fear  
When you were near.  
But sometimes now I have grown half afraid  
That unforgotten frost of pain that used  
To wrap my nature will again invade  
The singing streams your April touch had loosed.  
Spring's subtler spells alone I can not learn,  
—Ah, will you not return?

Yet if it chance that prayed-for peace you sought  
Be not at length to full perfection wrought,  
If still in vain  
Time strives with memory,—then, dear, I would fain  
Let be as naught  
All I have uttered; and I will refrain

From any whispered wish, or word, or thought,  
That might to you in anywise complain.  
However much my eager heart may miss,  
How much for you my very soul may yearn,  
I will seek patience, confident in this,  
That some time, surely, Love shall conquer pain,  
And then, dear heart, I know you will return.

I SAT upon the mossy rocks  
Beside the southern sea,  
While overhead the summer clouds  
Were drifting lazily.

I watched their purple shadows trail  
Across the sea and hide  
Within the hollows of the waves  
That rode the rising tide.

Sometimes the little flakes of foam  
Dashed up in twinkling spray;  
And out along their silver paths  
The ships sailed far away.

As through the sun I followed them  
With straining, eager eyes,  
From out the sparkling waves I saw  
A shining vision rise.

It seemed a ghostly castle white,  
With battlement and tower,  
That hung on the horizon's verge  
By some unearthly power.

I saw its spectral turrets gleam  
As white as ivory,  
And wondered who the wizard king  
That reigned upon the sea.

—But while, with breathless gaze, I watched  
This castle, by and by  
It vanished in the underworld  
Beyond the sea and sky!

I WOULD that I could weave a song  
As airy and as light,  
As are the roundelays that throng  
Within my heart to-night.

I would that I might set to tune  
The beauty of this hour,  
When, like a primrose bud, the moon  
Breaks into golden flower.

And all the happy, lilting notes,  
Beyond divinest words,  
That nestle in the downy throats  
Of little sleeping birds,

The breeze-borne scent of mignonette,  
That in the garden grows,  
Where, strung like pearls, the dew is wet  
Upon the briar-rose,

These things it is, whose voices I  
Have sought for overlong;  
Yet still their cunning tones defy  
The artifice of song.



TO THE "WINGED VICTORY OF  
SAMOTHRACE"

THOU wonder of the warrior prow,  
Supreme, immortal Victory!  
Before thy majesty I bow  
And all my soul flames forth to thee!

Within the shadow of thy wings  
A thousand voices sound for me;  
In far, tumultuous murmurings,  
I catch the echo of the sea;  
The salty surge that rolls more near,  
Till loud and clear  
In mighty thunder tones I hear  
The rush of old Ægean tides,  
The bright, white waves that from the shore  
Sweep seaward with unceasing roar;  
In dawning skies the day-star guides,  
Across the surf the seabirds call,  
Whilst white and tall  
With swift sails swelling over all,  
The shield-hung warship rides.

And like the heaven-born dreams that soar  
From hero spirits, eagle-wise,  
And urge to deeds of great emprise  
And fly before  
The eager, throbbing hearts that know  
No goal but victory, even so,  
Above the restless breakers' roar,  
Upon the high cliff evermore  
Thou standest with bright wings outspread,  
In all thy fresh-wrought godlihead,  
Beloved of the conqueror!

And as I gaze I seem to trace  
The features of thy fearless face,  
The matchless marvel of its grace  
That like a star  
Across the seas of Samothrace  
Shone forth afar;  
I hear the southern winds intone  
Whilst backward blown  
Thy trailing garments, fluttering  
From out the slender girdle, cling  
About thy limbs and so confess  
Their lines of perfect loveliness;  
Then suddenly o'er everything  
Great shouts and martial echoes ring!  
I see thee, storm-like, rushing past  
Thy hand upon the carven mast,  
And harken whilst thy proud lips fling  
The loud, triumphal trumpet blast!

O glorious image! what if time  
Hath smitten with ungentle touch  
Thy perfect beauty? Still sublime  
Thou art a conqueror, and still  
All men unite to name thee such!  
Before thee all my pulses thrill,  
Old hopes and dreams awake in me;  
O Victory,  
Lead, lead but thou mine eager will,  
I follow fast and far until  
Some day my ship shall harbor thee!

As to the summer air the rose  
Pours forth her perfume all the day,  
For every careless wind that blows  
To scatter far away,

So gives my heart to thee the rare  
Fine fragrance of its sweetest thought,  
And thou art heedless as the air  
Whereto the rose is naught!

THE mandrakes lift, like little mosques,  
Their domes between the vines,  
And butterflies for worshipers  
Are flocking to their shrines.

And from tall, tapering mullein towers  
And minarets of green,  
The honey-bee muezzins drone  
To bloodroot buds between,

That pilgrim-wise along the road  
Come trooping to the light,  
In pale green caftans closely wound  
And turbans spotless white.

While all the way with budding things  
Is tufted thicker than  
The praying mats the Persian weaves  
In streets of Ispahan.

And listen! with a lordly note  
Like joyous burst of drums,  
In gorgeous gown of gold and black  
The oriole sultan comes!

THE creamy dogwood branches,  
The rosy redbud trees,  
The drifts of sweet wild-plum bloom  
O'erhung by honey bees,  
The gleaming buckeye blossoms  
The south wind blew apart,  
Oh, all the woods awaking,  
They overfilled my heart!

Then clear, from out a thicket,  
There rang that golden note  
That flutes from none but only  
The tawny thrush's throat;  
So charged with all sweet secrets  
The April has to tell,  
I bowed my head and harkened,  
Enchanted by its spell.

Till presently that magic  
Heart-melting melody  
Drew all my soul to meet it  
In sudden ecstasy.  
My spirit found its pinions  
In blessed bird-like birth,  
And knew the joyous passion  
That thrilled through all the earth.

The while the thrush was singing,  
I heard the violets stir,  
And through the dreamy woodlands  
The breaking buds confer;  
I half divined the glories  
Of all the springs to be,  
—When, O, the song was silent!  
The thrush had flown, ah me!

ON a lofty mountain summit  
In a tawny, desert land,  
Lo, a mighty human profile,  
But not hewn by human hand;  
In the living rock forever  
Looming dark, majestic, grand.

O'er its outline, heaven fronting,  
When the dawn's first radiance streams  
With its rosy touch, and tender,  
Then this face of granite seems  
As a sleeper's unawakened  
From the thrall of peaceful dreams.

But when down the western heavens  
Sinks the setting sun, blood-red,  
Then the mountain mists that mantle  
Cover close that quiet head,  
As men draw a pall of purple  
Round about their kingly dead.

And the stars, like lighted tapers,  
Flicker forth in golden rows  
From the heaven's holy altar,  
Whilst the night-wind as it blows  
Seems to chant a solemn requiem  
For the passing soul's repose.

Head of royal Montezuma,  
So the ancient legends tell;  
Montezuma, granite shrouded  
By some great enchanter's spell,  
Lying lordly by the borders  
Of the land he loved so well.

But in silence unrevealing  
Still that calm face fronts the sky;  
Heeding neither tears nor laughter,  
Nor if sun or storm go by;  
Keeping still its primal counsel,  
In repose, serene and high.

THE cherry trees are haunted  
By hordes of robber jays,  
And warmer winds are fanning  
The poppies to a blaze.

And loosed in fitful flurries,  
The sweet syringas fall,  
To lie like little snow-drifts  
Against the garden wall.

Upon the laden lattice,  
In softly rounding shapes,  
A wealth of tiny clusters  
Are growing into grapes.

Heigho! a drowsy shimmer  
Enfolds the sunny hours;  
And humming-birds are hidden  
In scarlet trumpet-flowers.

The tenderness of springtime  
Is almost overpast;  
But O, the gracious summer,  
It comes, it comes at last!

My heart was like a sunless, cold,  
Unlovely land of ice and snow,  
Wherein no blessed buds unfold,  
Nor singing waters flow.

Then all at once the April skies  
Laughed in your look, and at that hour  
My spirit melted, torrent-wise,  
My life broke into flower!

O dearest heart, I had not guessed  
What marvel of immortal seeds  
Lay hidden deep within my breast,  
Beneath its barren weeds!

But now I know, but now I know  
The glory of the flower of love,  
The joyous splendor of its glow,  
The subtile pain thereof!

High overhead,  
By summer breezes sped,  
From every latest burgeoned bough  
The last, spring petals fall;  
And red, red, red,  
Along the garden bed,  
The poppy plants are holding now  
Their crimson carnival.

Clear, sweet, and strong,  
I hear the robin's song,  
And catch the merry caroling  
Of some bold bobolink;  
And phlox flowers throng  
The garden ways along,  
While peonies and roses bring  
Their pageantries of pink.

White, gold, and green,  
The lily spires are seen,  
And hollyhocks, in stately rows,  
With tufted buds are set;  
Tall, in between,  
The growing sunflowers lean,  
And thick the sweet alyssum shows  
Among the mignonette.

Ho! truant May!  
Have you, then, gone astray,  
Unwitting that in realms of June  
Return were no avail?  
Ah, well-a-day!  
So wings the spring away;  
The summer's ever oversoon,  
But June, sweet June, all hail!



O, THE ships have sails for the swelling gales,  
The falcon flies in the wake of the wind,  
In the speed of the steed of the Bedouin breed  
The blood leaps high to the hoof-beats' lead,  
As the leagues are left behind.

But what care I  
For the birds that fly,  
Or all the vessels that sail the sea;  
The blasts that blow  
Till the trees bend low,  
Or the barbs of Araby!

I spring to birth with the dust of earth,  
Yet span the heaven from pole to pole;  
Or flashing far as the farthestmost star,  
I know no barrier, bound nor bar  
To hold from my boldest goal.  
The storm's red spark  
As it cleaves the dark,  
With my viewless wings it can not keep pace;  
More fleet than light  
My measureless flight  
To the starless ends of space!

THE moonbeams filter softly through  
The leaves upon the linden tree;  
And as I sit alone, dear heart,  
My spirit yearns for thee!

Yet in some gracious-wise to-night  
We do not seem far worlds apart;  
I reach my empty arms and dream  
I fold thee to my heart.

I close my brimming eyes, and see  
The strange, sweet beauty of thy smile,  
And fancy that our palms are met  
In loving clasp the while.

In soft, clear tones, I seem to hear  
The long-hushed voice I loved so well;  
—I tremble, lest a breath should break  
This moment's happy spell!

O brother mine, could it be true  
Thine own dear presence hovers near  
To comfort with this heavenly peace  
Thy little sister here?

ALONG the lane I idly pass  
 Unheeding where the footpath goes,  
 And loiter through the ripe wild-grass  
 That down the open roadway grows  
 In feathery, tall tufts that rise  
 In filmy tangles, misty-wise;  
 The grass that when the south wind blows,  
 Shines out and shows  
 Shot through with silver lights and rose,  
 And tiny gold and violet seeds  
 That quiver off each gleaming stem  
 And powder all the wayside weeds,  
 And like a glory cover them.

With eager palms I gently press  
 Soft sheaves of it against my lips  
 In sheer delight; and so caress  
 And fondle with light finger-tips,  
 And watch its beauty when the bright,  
 Clear spears of light  
 Pierce through its slender leaves and smite  
 Their rose and purple, till my sight  
 Is dazzled with its loveliness!

In verdant nets along the way  
 The tendrils of a wild-grape vine  
 Through elder thickets intertwine;  
 And poising lightly on a spray  
 Of fruited bramble stems where shine  
 Close clustering berries, red as wine,  
 A little thistle-bird, still gay  
 In April's yellow plumage, clings  
 With airy grace, and slowly swings,  
 And lifts his wings  
 In dainty, drowsy flutterings;  
 They flicker like bright flakes of gold,  
 And fan his body, small and slim,  
 While lovingly the winds enfold  
 And summer's heart broods over him.

47

The sky is softer than the blue  
 Of cornflower buds beneath the dew;  
 And down below  
 Upon the marshy meadow swales  
 The bindweed weaves its rosy veils  
 Where thick the blowing rushes grow  
 Among the tasseled reeds and rue;  
 And up between the mossy rails  
 It lightly climbs, and clambers through  
 The growing corn, and barley, too,  
 And winds the fallow weeds and trails  
 Along the creek where cowslips grew.

O lavish stems, that fondly fling  
 Close clasp about the earth, and cling  
 In wreaths of fragrant flowering,  
 Ev'n as ye do  
 To that dear soil wherefrom ye spring,  
 So does my love cleave thereunto!  
 And so my full heart-blossoms bind  
 The bright midsummer fields, and find  
 Sweet fellowships with everything!

48

THE air is shot with spangling drops,  
But heedless of the rain  
The sun laughs, through a silver veil,  
Upon the golden grain.

And lightly arching up the east  
In faintly penciled lines,  
That throb and flush to tinted bars,  
A double rainbow shines.

It seems to touch the fragrant earth,  
Till, tangled in the breeze,  
It winds a film of irised light  
About the distant trees.

In frothy clusters down the road  
The blooming elders lean,  
With dripping buds that shine like pearls  
Within a sea of green.

And heaped around them, pink as shells,  
The roses are in flower,  
While earth and sky are freshly keyed  
To sweetness by the shower.

COME, draw more near! Clasp hands with me!  
 Ah close, and closer still!  
 The night spreads to infinity!  
 And through my heart a sudden chill,  
 —I pray loose not your loving hold!—  
 A fear, a loneliness untold  
 Smites sharply, till mine eyes o'erfill!  
 Nor have I strength nor stress of will  
 To set my spirit free.

The cold, the darkness, and the dread  
 Immensity of space,  
 The great, wan moon, whose ghostly face  
 For ages has been dead,  
 The weird lights wheeling overhead,  
 The unknown worlds that onward roll,  
 In endless wanderings ever led,  
 That find no goal,  
 The spectral mists that overspread  
 With pallid light the lesser stars,  
 The lurid glow that glimmers red  
 Across the front of Mars,  
 —O dearest heart, when all is said,  
 I am afraid! and from the whole  
 Wide waste of worlds I hide my sight,  
 And from the boundless night!

The ancient mystery of the skies,  
 Their silent depths from pole to pole,  
 The void, the vastness terrifies!  
 —O, let me rather search your eyes,  
 And with your sweet, warm touch disperse  
 This terror of the universe  
 That strikes into my soul!

THE fields are full of sunlight,  
And leafy golden-green,  
And misty purple shadows  
Are flitting in between;  
The flaky elder flowers  
Are drenched with honey-dew,  
And all the distant woodlands  
Stand veiled in tender blue.

Half seen between green thickets  
Of grape-vine and wild rose,  
In twinkling swirls of silver  
The lazy river flows;  
While down the grassy roadside  
The milkweed balls are bright,  
And waving prince's-feather  
Is tipped with snowy white.

Ah, ever-dearest home-land,  
'Tis here my spirit sings!  
And as my heart caresses  
The sweet, familiar things,  
Such rare midsummer magic  
Distills through all the air,  
I think these fields are fairer  
Than any anywhere!

To-NIGHT a little child lies dead;  
I never saw its face;  
I try to fancy now instead  
Its lines of baby grace.

And for the sake of her who weeps  
These lonely watches through  
So wakefully my spirit keeps  
A weary vigil, too.

A thousand thoughts appeal to me  
In close-besieging crowd;  
But through them all I only see  
A little, snow-white shroud.

Nor may I set dull grief at naught,  
However I am fain;  
Since when the heart-strings are distraught,  
The will must strive in vain.

Ah me! there breaks the dawning sun,  
In golden light serene;  
Yet still I mourn this little one,  
Whom I have never seen!

THROUGH sunny spaces overhead  
A gray hawk's lazy pinions spread,  
And poppies open wide and red  
    Where golden harvests grew.

In rosy wreaths upon the swales  
And fallow fields the bindweed trails,  
And late-sown buckwheat swiftly pales  
    To blossoming anew.

The pond within the pasture land  
Reflects the cattle as they stand  
In depths of dipping sedges and  
    Of tangled meadow-rue.

In silver splashes through the green,  
Fine, filmy spider-webs are seen,  
And crumpled cockle-flowers between  
    Are rifts of tender blue.

On stately stalks of standing corn  
A wealth of cresting plumes are borne,  
And tawny tasseled tufts adorn  
    The ripened barley, too.

So, steeping nature far and wide,  
Deep sweeps the flood of summer-tide,  
Till all things that therein abide  
    Are richly tintured through.



O, FRESH from off the ocean  
The salt wind riots through  
The fragrant fern and bay-leaves  
And dripping honey-dew.

The morning's on the moorland,  
And flashing, far away,  
I glimpse the foam-white seagulls  
And feathers of the spray.

O hasten! let us hasten!  
The tide sings up the sand  
The song my heart has harkened  
Across long leagues of land.

So far, far have I journeyed,  
Such weary ways, O sea!  
Breathe, breathe me breath of life now,  
And steep the soul of me!

SOME day, when summer's overpast,  
 And loosed by frost, in gold and brown  
 These greenly clinging leaves drift down,  
 When shrill winds hush  
 The robin red-breast and the thrush,  
 When all the skies are overcast  
 With racks of rain, so chill and gray  
 Not any burgeoning may be,—  
 Some day,  
 Across far foreign lands and vast  
 Unbounded spaces of the sea,  
 So homeward, homeward, journeying fast,  
 At last  
 She will come back to me!

I reckon up, in daily sum,  
 The time until that scarlet date;  
 I think the fall will never come,  
 So wearily I wait!  
 The hours seem leaguings to belate  
 The days, that never crept so slow;  
 And yet,  
 I used to love the summer so!  
 But now my heart may only fret  
 And pray for it to go.  
 And yearning so, with lashes wet,  
 I half forget  
 The greenery on every bough,  
 How red the poppies are, and how  
 Amid the tufted mignonette  
 The scented south-winds gently blow;  
 I heeded them not,—I only know  
 Time never seemed so long as now!

57

I search the azure skies in vain,  
 No hint of autumn rain!  
 No hint of fall from bluebirds, nor  
 Green fields of growing grain.  
 Then idly reckoning, as before,  
 I strive anew to make less far  
 That glad date on the calendar;  
 To number less the days that are,  
 The changes fixed for sun and star,  
 The moons that yet must wax and wane;  
 Thus evermore  
 With fresh impatience, o'er and o'er,  
 I count the hours;—yet still am fain  
 To tell them over once again.

O hasten, hasten, autumn days!  
 Sear swift this dewy, summer green!  
 I am grown weary with delays;  
 Speed! Speed!  
 Bring bitter winds and chill, nor heed  
 The mellow sweets between!  
 What if the dead leaves strew the ways,  
 And southward all the songs take wing?  
 Despite all cheerless frosts that be,  
 My eager heart awaits the spring,  
 So knowing she will surely bring  
 The birds and May to me.

58

THE skies are gray, where far and wide,  
Beyond the water-willows,  
The marshes spread their emerald tide  
Of blossom-crested billows.

And on the vague horizon's rim,  
In vaporous purple masses,  
The distant woods show soft and dim  
Across the lush, green grasses.

An east wind stirs the ivory balls  
Upon the button-bushes;  
And hark! a hidden rain-bird calls  
From out the blowing rushes.

Within the water, yonder spray  
Of rosy mallow flowers  
Turns faint and pale, till not more gray  
The cloudy heaven lowers.

And all the birches' tender green  
An ashen hue is growing;  
While mottled with a silver sheen  
The ruffled waves are flowing.

Then softly through the forest leaves,  
That turn, and toss, and quiver,  
The rain, with murmurous cadence, weaves  
A roundel in the river.

It dots the waves with dancing pearls,  
It gleams, and streams, and twinkles;  
It sweeps and sinks in silvery swirls,  
And rings, and sings, and tinkles.

The clustering sedges dip and sway,  
Till, after fitful failing,  
The sun bursts gaily through the gray,  
And craggy clouds are sailing

Where, southward, in a brilliant sky,  
As light as any feather,  
The little moon curves white and high,  
In token of fair weather.

FROM out the depths of the abyss,  
Faint echoes of a torrent's roar  
O'er crags whence lordly eagles soar  
To poise above the precipice.

A dizzy pathway, sheer and steep;  
A startled catching of the breath;  
And, bearing menaces of death,  
A loosened snow-drift's sudden sweep!

Then, blown from out the upper sky,  
Keen, fitful gusts of icy air,  
So light, so tenuous and rare,  
The heart leaps strangely swift thereby.

The white moon floating in the calm  
Still ether space, so near, it seems,  
To grasp his eager childhood dreams,  
One need but thither reach his palm.

A sense of majesties and might,  
An exaltation born of these;  
—The summit's awful silences;  
A glimpse of Godhead from the heights!

ACROSS the dewy prairie  
The morning wind is borne,  
Beyond the new-mown hayfields,  
And through the tasseled corn.

Upon the silver-maples  
It lifts the swinging leaves,  
And steals a subtile sweetness  
From rows of golden sheaves.

Within the sunny orchard  
The harvest apples fall,  
While from the tossing branches  
The saucy jay-birds call.

In crinkled, fringy clusters  
The scarlet poppies burn,  
Where, softly opening, eastward  
The yellow sunflowers turn.

And nibbling in the garden,  
Between the cherry trees,  
I see a robber rabbit  
Among the pink sweet-peas.

While with a fitful fanning,  
The lazy wind-mill swings,  
About the bloomy peaches  
A robin redbreast sings.

And in the far horizon  
There dwells such tender hue,  
These azure cornflower blossoms  
Are not so sweet and blue.

BENEATH the forest trees I lie,  
And watch the deep blue summer sky,  
And count the white cranes floating by  
    On level wings;  
And in the undergrowth I hear  
A bittern softly treading near,  
While through the willows, sweet and clear,  
    A wood-thrush sings.

And flashing, plashing, close to me,  
With murmurous, melting melody,  
The swirling, crystal Kankakee  
    Flows deep and swift  
Through liquid tints and tones untold  
Of topaz, turquoise, bronze and gold,  
That in its lucent depths unfold  
    And drift, and sift,

Till down among the pearly shells  
A wealth of changeful color dwells;  
And like a string of silver bells  
    The ripples ring  
Through trailing water-weeds that raise  
Their tangled, yellow blossom-sprays  
Where in a green and golden maze  
    Tall rushes swing.

And far across the glassy tide,  
The marshes shimmer, low and wide,  
Where birds and bees and wild things hide  
    In reedy grass  
Whose wavering, evanescent hues  
Pale, darken, change, and interfuse,  
Till my enchanted senses lose  
    All things that pass,

And only feel an exquisite  
Glad throb of light and life complete;  
While like some subtile essence sweet,  
    The wilderness,  
The perfumes warm of wave and wood  
The silence of the solitude,  
All merge and mingle in my mood,  
    Till half I guess

The secrets that the winds impart,  
And draw so near to nature's heart  
I feel her inmost pulses start;  
    While happily  
I sink upon her fragrant breast,  
Like yonder thrush within its nest,  
And deep, entrancing sense of rest  
    Steals over me.

I KNOW a little village  
Where fisher folk abide;  
The dark pine woods behind it,  
The southern sea beside.

There rosy pink crape-myrtles  
In every dooryard grow,  
And through the glossy live-oaks  
The salt sea breezes blow.

At break of day the fishers  
Sail out to sea to reap  
The harvest that they sowed not,  
The harvest of the deep.

Then, when their nets are emptied,  
They set their sails for land,  
To heap the shining fishes  
Upon the shining sand.

Where little barefoot children  
Await them, eager-eyed,  
And play the while with sea-shells  
Cast upward by the tide.

And all seem so content there,  
From worldly care so free,  
I would that I could find it,  
This secret of the sea!

LAND of strange, unearthly beauty,  
Tawny Desert, over me  
Thou hast cast the deep enchantment  
Of some subtile sorcery!

These thine endless barren reaches  
Where no fruitful harvests grow,  
Unto some bring nameless heartache;  
But to me thou dost not so!

Here, where all the air seems newly  
From the springs of life distilled,  
Every breath is like a beaker  
With rare, sparkling rapture filled!

And my heart exults and glories  
In the strange, compelling power  
Of enchanting, changeful color,  
That is thy supremest dower.

Joy to me thine ever cloudless  
Sky of purest turquoise hue,  
And thy rosy mountain ranges  
Wrapped in pale, translucent blue.

Beautiful the rainbow ether  
Shifting, shimmering evermore,  
In diaphanous, dazzling splendors  
Over all thy boundless floor,

Where the low-boughed silver sage-bush  
Softly tufts the tawny land,  
And the tropic Spanish bayonet  
Clusters tall on every hand.

While for leagues and leagues the cactus,  
Child of sun and sand and bare  
Rainless regions, lifts its columns  
Through the rare, transparent air.

Wild and splendid in thy freedom,  
Unsubdued as is the sea,  
From the first, O lordly Desert,  
Thou hast drawn my heart to thee!

Desolate thou art, and silent,  
Barren both of fruit and flower;  
Yet I love thine arid grandeur  
That defies man's utmost power!



*THE LAST SURVIVOR FROM THE  
LIFE-BOAT*

69

BENEATH his pillow, hid away  
From careless sight, the nurses say,  
And safe from any stranger's view,  
As miser might some treasure rare,  
So does he guard, with jealous care,  
A baby's shoe.

And evermore by day and night,  
With burning eyeballs fever-bright,  
This wan survivor of the sea  
Scans each blank, closing wall in turn,  
In dim endeavor to discern  
If sail there be.

And then the weary sigh that slips  
Suspiring from those parching lips  
No heart may hear nor bleed therefor!  
As, with hot tears that fall like rain,  
He soothes a dying baby's pain  
And o'er and o'er

Croons snatches of soft lullabies  
To empty arms held cradle-wise.  
—O human heart-break, love and grief!  
God pity him in his distress,  
Ev'n as the sea was pitiless  
Beyond belief!

God comfort, as with straining breath,  
Unheeding either life or death,  
Yet still with faint unwitting smile,  
His fingers fondly seek and fold  
The little sea-stained shoe, and hold  
And stroke the while.

70

FROM off the traveled road that lay  
 Between wide fields of wheat and corn,  
 An old gate, gray and weather-worn,  
 Led down a shady woodland way.

One scarce might trace the narrow path,  
 So green it was and overgrown  
 With springtime's seeded aftermath;  
 Tall grasses that had never known  
 The mower's scythe or sickle's scath,  
 And rosy mayweed lightly sown  
 Where'er the summer winds had blown;  
 And all their tangled stems the red  
 Sweet clover blossoms overspread.

Near by, through scented, leafy veils  
 Of wreathing vines, and dewy, dense  
 Green underwood, a brood of quails  
 Sped swiftly past the ragged rails  
 That tilted off a mossy fence;  
 And over it, on airy wing,  
 A robin paused in glad content  
 Where budding elder-bushes leant  
 And brambles clambered flowering.

Then, suddenly, a low, sweet sound  
 Rose, faintly quivering on the breeze,  
 And all that blossom-studded ground  
 Seemed charged with murmurous mysteries!  
 As if all rarest forest keys  
 In dreamful chords divinely blent,  
 Sang forth from some sweet instrument;  
 While pulsing through, with rhythmic beat,  
 In slumberous melodies there went  
 The soft susurrus of the trees,  
 The wind that wandered through the wheat,  
 And all the changeful strains of these.

72

And as I listened, marveling  
 Where those light, liquid tones might be,  
 Forgetting all and everything  
 Save that enchanting minstrelsy,  
 I wandered slowly through the wood,  
 Till all at once the parted green  
 Revealed its secret, for I stood  
 Upon the verge of a ravine  
 Wherein the sunbeams broke between  
 Tall rustling hemlock boughs, and bright  
 As burnished silver in the light,  
 A tiny stream ran tinkling through,  
 While hidden somewhere out of sight,  
 A little spring made music, too.

The shining water slipped and slipped  
 Adown the mossy rocks, and dripped  
 From off fine fringing ferns, in drops  
 Of endless threaded pearls that tipped  
 The tasseled sedge and alder tops  
 With flickering light,—and then it sipped  
 A drowsy draught of sun, and dipped  
 Beneath small clustering buds, and hid  
 Among lush marigolds, and slid  
 Between tall serried ranks of reeds,  
 And stroked their little leaves and lipped  
 The flower-spangled jewel-weeds;  
 Then, speeding suddenly amid  
 Faint shimmering spray, it lightly tripped  
 Across white pebbly sand, and stripped  
 The marsh flowers' gold, and fled, half seen,  
 A splash of silver through the green.

73

And all the while that music sweet  
 Kept softly murmuring at my feet,

As down the rocks in ceaseless streams  
The limpid cascades poured, and still  
The slumberous light in yellow beams  
Bathed the green hemlock boughs,—until  
I seemed to lose all waking will,  
And all my soul was lulled to dreams;  
Wherethrough there floated, drowsy-wise,  
Bright glints of bird-wings, gracious gleams  
Of tender, sunlit summer skies,  
And fleet, sweet visions of the rare  
Deep, shadowy hearts the forests bear.

THE scarlet briars trailed across  
The grave I journeyed far to see;  
Upon the stone, half hid in moss,  
“Prepare for death, and follow me.”

The birds flew southward down the sky;  
Upon a golden linden tree  
The leaves that fluttered seemed to sigh,  
“Prepare for death, and follow me.”

My father’s father slept below  
So dreamless deep and silently,  
I spelled the message soft and slow,  
“Prepare for death, and follow me.”

—Ah me! ’twas years ago the birds  
Fled swift o’er that far golden tree;  
And wherefore now come back these words,  
“Prepare for death, and follow me”?

AMONG the hardy marigolds  
The spicy gillyflower unfolds,  
And in the elm a catbird scolds  
    With saucy, outspread wings;  
To mellow sweets the pippins speed,  
The sunflower disks are brown with seed,  
And round about them finches feed  
    In clinging, yellow rings.

The latest poppy fires are dead,  
But bright as blossoms overhead  
In shining sheaves of bronze and red,  
    The frost-tipped pear leaves show;  
While from their branches blackbirds sing  
Or break to noisy chattering;  
And slender silken cobwebs string  
    The tall grass down below.

Along the uplands, faintly seen  
Across the fallow fields between,  
The winter wheat grows bravely green  
    Despite the coming cold;  
And studding all the stubbled ground  
In tasseled shocks the corn is bound,  
The ripened ears heaped close around  
    In piles of purest gold.

To smoky wreaths along the ways  
The newly kindled brush-heaps blaze,  
And filmy veils of purple haze  
    Mesh all the amber air;  
Among the fleeces of the sheep  
The yellow sunbeams softly creep,  
And sweet contentment, wide and deep,  
    Rests gently everywhere.

THE rose-trees and the barberries  
Are strung with coral beads;  
And fitful breezes lightly sift  
The ripened poppy-seeds.

Still, heedless of the nipping frost,  
Along the garden bed  
The white and purple gillyflowers  
Their spicy fragrance shed.

And weaving richest tapestries  
Upon the lattice frame,  
The woodbine laces in and out  
In gold, and rose, and flame.

Along the wall the grapevines trace  
Their brown and twisted frets,  
And all the trailing clematis  
Is hung with soft aigrettes.

Through fringes that the larches wave  
The sky shows fair and blue,  
And somewhere, from beneath the eaves,  
I hear the pigeons coo.

The glory of the noonday sun  
Pervades the dreamy air,  
And the sweet heart of beauty throbs  
In music everywhere.

MORE sweet than all the buds that blow  
Where summer's rarest roses grow,  
    More splendid than white lily spires,  
    Or shining, scarlet poppy fires,  
Love's fragrant flower,—even so,  
    The blossom of the heart's desires.

And richer than all fields enfold  
Or all earth's burdened branches hold,  
    Than any autumn vintage red,  
    Or yellow sheaves new harvested,  
Love's ripened fruit of mellow gold,  
    The sum of life, when all is said.

O THE sweetness of the jangle  
 Of the sheep-bells, in the tangle  
 Of the wild witch-hazel bushes and the spreading red-bud trees!  
 —Ah, the silence when it ceases!  
 But the beauty of the fleeces,  
 And the soft eyes peering at me through the woodbine lattices!

And beyond them, and the network  
 Of the dogwood, and the fretwork  
 Of the interlacing grapevines, and across the meadow land,  
 I can see the color showing  
 Where the winter-wheat is growing,  
 With the corn encamped about it like a plumed protecting band.

While among the many-seeded  
 Tufts of russet weeds, unheeded,  
 Truant ducks go idly twinkling through the yellow stubble-field;  
 Their white feathers like the glosses  
 Of the shining silver bosses  
 That adorn the tawny luster of an olden golden shield.

In long loops from off the hedges,  
 Trailing downward to the edges  
 Of the wayside grass and clover-leaves, fine cobweb threads are wound;  
 Fairy clues that lead my eager  
 Errant fancy to beleaguer  
 Some concealed, enchanted chamber in the richly covered ground.

Till the sun begins the lighting  
 Of his western fires, that smiting  
 Through the orchard boughs are splintered into spears of ruddy flame;  
 An irradiating splendor  
 That transfigures all the slender  
 Little leafless twigs and branches with a glory without name!

O, I know the year is going!  
 Neither reaping-time nor sowing  
 Will restore the tender beauty of its blossoms that are dead:  
 Yet I cherish all their sweetness  
 In the ripeness and completeness  
 Of the gold and crimson fruitage that my heart has harvested.



HEIGHO, sparrow! Reckless of the rain;  
When chill the cheerless wind grows,  
Chirping might and main!  
Is it naught, then, when the rose  
Blows again?

Beating, sleeting on your draggled coat!  
Surely, 'tis enough to drown  
Any happy note  
Nestling in that downy brown  
Little throat.

Ah me, sparrow! Had I but your power,  
Think you in the freezing sleet  
I would waste an hour?  
—I'd sing my sweetest to a sweet  
Orange flower!

THE sky is like an opal,  
And the horizon's ring  
Is yellow, like a band of gold,  
To hold so rich a thing.

The wheat-fields are as fleecy  
As any cloud that blows,  
But tawny tufts of standing corn  
Prick lightly through the snows.

Beside the drift-bound wind-mill  
A pearly shadow plays  
In tones of tender violet,  
And vague, elusive grays.

And tinged with quiet olive  
The hedges fine and bare,  
Whose thorny masses down the road  
An alien softness wear.

O, subtile chords of color  
Are fingered by the frost!  
Though touched and tuned to colder key,  
No grace of earth is lost.

For see! a deep red ruby  
The opal heaven grows,  
And yonder pool of ice is one  
Great golden-hearted rose!

THERE is a garden so divinely fair  
That in its magic bound, surpassing sweet,  
The golden buds, so Persian songs repeat,  
Spring forth immortal in enchanted air;  
But, ah, a close there is, more heavenly rare,  
Where, cherished warm within the heart's retreat,  
Love's whitest lilies burgeon to complete  
And fragrant flowering lovely past compare.

O dearest friend, such lilies have I found  
Within my heart, undreamed-of but for thee!  
Nor any fabled buds of genie's ground  
Are sweeter in their immortality;  
When thou art near, like notes of happy birds,  
My thoughts uprise in songs that need no words.

THE brook has broken through its glass,  
And where the snows were drifted  
Round tangled blades of last year's grass,  
The yellow sun is sifted.

Uncovered by the melting night  
And warm, deceiving day-time,  
The myrtle bed is green and bright  
As in the midst of Maytime!

I almost fancy that I hear  
The hum of bees in clover,  
And from the maples, glad and clear,  
The first red-robin lover.

A mock spring laughs in mocking skies,  
(O little buds, be wary!)  
And masking in sweet April's guise  
The youthful year makes merry.



UPON the gray crags, steep and sheer,  
The columbines' gold tassels swing,  
And wind-flowers cling,  
Where, lightly poised, the mountain deer  
Drink in the dewy atmosphere  
In long, deep draughts of sun and spring;  
From haunts that know no hunter's snare  
The hermit-thrush and wood-dove wing,  
Whilst through green openings squirrels fare  
And here and there  
Great, silvery moths go fluttering.

Along the valley, in a trail  
Of purple light, the mist clouds sail,  
And, soft and pale  
As wreaths of newly risen smoke,  
They wrap the red-wood trees and veil  
The topmost crests of pine and oak,  
And balsam boughs and juniper  
Wherethrough the west winds faintly stir  
The underwood, and gently stroke  
The tall young ferns, and smooth the fur  
Of countless happy forest-folk.

Wild little hearts, that throb unknown  
Save to the fondling winds alone,  
Bright eyes, that sparkle free of fear,  
O earth is sweet, and life is dear!  
Here in these forests, still your own,  
In primal peace, this many a year  
God keep you here!  
Here where across the waking lands  
Young willows wave their bloomy wands,  
Whilst up the heights and far away  
The pine trees climb in singing bands  
And feathery spruces surge and sway  
And clap their cones, like little hands,  
For gladness of the day!

Up, up, they clamber on until  
The tenuous air smites keen and chill,  
And far winds blow  
From leagues of everlasting snow;  
And then the mountain buds, more bold,  
Their sheaths unfold  
And light their golden fires and glow  
With flame unquenched by frost or cold.

Whilst ever o'er them, shimmering high  
Against the sky,  
A glittering, crystal radiance streams,  
Wherein the mountain floats and gleams  
Through frosty fleeces, till it seems  
That some great morning star, instead  
Of earth, hangs trembling overhead,  
A dream of all most lovely dreams!  
An airy miracle, overspread  
With veils of silvery tissue spun  
Of ice and mist and snow and sun.  
A dazzle of all lights in one!

I watch it till, tall towering there  
Through brightening air,  
Such special splendor does it wear  
It seems the sun's own citadel,  
At sight whereof my lips grow dumb  
With joy I find no voice to tell;  
So stricken silent, as with some  
Deep gladness of o'er-mastering spell;  
Nor any song of mine may dare  
To follow where  
The summit's utmost radiant peak,  
Bright as God's chosen cherubim,  
Soars through the smiling sky to seek  
And fearless front the face of Him.



ALONG the street a tiny pair  
Of childish figures lately went;  
The boy's face wore a fearless air,  
The little sister's sweet content.

He closely clasped her chubby hand,  
And led her through the throng, while she  
Seemed perfectly to understand  
He would protect her loyally.

And as I watched them pass from sight,  
My heart began to ache, for so  
I held my brother's fingers tight  
And toddled down the long ago.

Then all at once, beyond control,  
The tears uprose in blinding rain,  
Such hopeless yearning stirred my soul  
To lay my hand in his again!



LIGHTLY let the boat go drifting,  
 Neither hand nor oar uplifting,  
 Let no motion fret the ocean, and no sail be now unfurled;  
 Stranger than Aladdin's story,  
 Lo, the dream-surpassing glory  
 And the marvel unimagined of the limpid underworld!

Gaze within the magic mirror  
 Of the water, crystal clearer  
 Than the gleaming glass enchanted, made by Merlin's sorcery  
 And behold the secrets hidden  
 Through the ages, till unbidden  
 Sons of men came sailing, sailing down the blue Pacific sea.

See the pearl-encrusted portals  
 Of the caverns, wherein mortals  
 Dare not pierce with earthly vision, dare not fare with feet profane;  
 Coral-columned halls with golden  
 Thrones in emerald deeps withholden,  
 Lit with sparkling amber splendor, where the merry mermen reign.

See the long kelp banners flying  
 From their gardens underlying  
 All the rare, transparent surface of this sunny, southern sea;  
 Grasses, shot with silver spangles,  
 Wreathed and caught in starry tangles  
 Of the purple ocean-pansy and the fringed anemone.

And the brilliant sea-weeds scattered  
 Like a gay mosaic shattered  
 In a million shining fragments over all the ocean floor;  
 While the bright-hued fish go darting  
 In swift journeys, meeting, parting,  
 Weaving gold and scarlet patterns through the water evermore.

Through the light that throbs and quivers  
 Down the depths, and breaks and shivers  
 Into splintered flakes of brightness, that so melt and interfuse  
 Into all such strangest ranges  
 Of translucent color changes,  
 That the eye is thrilled, bewildered, with their rare enchanting hues.

—Ah, would thus upon the gleaming  
 Southern sea, in happy dreaming,  
 We might drift and drift forever! never shoreward guide the keel!  
 Azure skies, forever smiling,  
 Into visions sweet beguiling,  
 And beneath our boat the splendor of those rosy dreams made real!

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