

The Dream.

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Bend down in dream the shadow-shape
Of tender breasts and bare!
Let the long locks of gold escape
And cover me and fall and drape,
A pall of whispering hair!
And let the starry eyes look through
That mist of silken light,
And lips drop forth their honey-dew
And gentle sighs of sleep renew
The scented winds of night!
As purple clusters of pure grapes
Distil their dreamy wine
Whose fragrance from warm fields escapes
On shadowy hills and sunny capes
In lands of jessamine!
So let thy figure faintly lined
In pallid flame of sleep
With love inspire the dreamer's mind,
Young love most delicate and kind,
With love—how calm and deep!
Let hardly half a smile revive
The thoughts of waking hours.
How sad it is to be alive!

How well the happy dead must thrive
 In green Elysian bowers!
A sleep as deep as theirs bestow,
 Dear angel of my dreams!
Bid time now cease its to-and-fro
That I may dwell with thee, and know
 The soul from that which seems!
The long hair sobs in closer fold
 And deeper curves of dawn;
The arms bend closer, and the gold
Burns brighter, and the eyes are cold
 With life at last withdrawn.
And all the spirit passing down
 Involves my heart with gray:
So the pale stars of even crown
The glow of twilight; dip and drown
 The last despairs of day.
Oh! closer yet and closer yet
 The pearl of faces grows.
The hair is woven like a net
Of moonlight round me: sweet is set
 The mouth's unbudded rose.
Oh never! did our lips once meet
 The dream were done for ever,
And death should dawn, supremely sweet,
One flash of knowledge subtle and fleet
 Borne on the waveless river.
And therefore in the quiet hour
 I rose from lily pillows
And swiftly sought the jasmine bower
Still sleeping, moonlight for a dower,
 And bridal wreaths of willows.
And there I laid me down again:
 The stream flowed softly by:

And thought the last time upon pain,
Earth's joy—the sad permuted strain
 Of tears and ecstasy.
And there the dream came floating past
 Borne in an ivory boat,
And all the world sighed low “At last.”
The shallop waited while I cast
 My languid limbs afloat
To drift with eyelids skyward turned
 Up to the shadowy dream
Shaped like a lover's face, that burned;
To drift toward the soul that yearned
 For this—the hour supreme!
So drifting I resigned the sleep
 For death's diviner bliss;
As mists in rain of springtide weep,
Life melted in the dewfall deep
Of death's kiss in a kiss.