

WHITE POPPY.

AMID the drowsy dream,
Lit by some fitful beam
 Of other light
Than the mere sun, supreme
On all the glint and gleam
 Shooting through night,
Above the water-way
Where my poor corpse must stay,
I bend and float away
 From human sight.

Unto the floral face,
Carven in ancient grace
 Of Gods or Greeks,
The whole sky's way gives place :
Open the walls of space,
 And silence speaks.
See! I am floating far
Beyond space and sun and star,
As drifts a nenuphar
 Down liliated creeks.

Beyond the heavens I see
The pale embroidery
 Of some wan child
Waster by earth and sea,
Whose kisses were too free,
 Too swift and wild ;
A Maenad's floating tress
Lost in the wilderness
Of death's or my caress,
 Discrowned, defiled.

Clad in pale green and rose,
Her thin face flickers, glows,
 Tempestuous flame.
Horrid and harsh she goes,
Speaks, trembles, wakes and knows
 How frail is shame!
Grows vast and cloudy and is
The whole mouth's sobbing kiss,
And crushes me with bliss
 Beyond a name.

Then fall I from excess
Of bitter ecstasies,
 Pale ghosts of blood,
To worlds where palaces
Shine through dim memories
 Of flower and flood,
Shine in pale opal and pearl,
Void of bright boy or girl,
Desolate halls that furl
 Their shapes subdued.

And wide they sunder, wide
They fall into the tide
 Of fallen things.
Me, me, O meek-browed bride,
Horrible faces hide
 And devilish wings.
Me the grim harpeis hold
In kisses slaver-cold,
Mute serpent-shapes of gold
 With serpent stings.

The dreadful bridal won,
The demon banquet done,
 My flesh let loose :—
Rises a strange red sun,
A sight to slay or stun ;
 Sepulchral dews

Fall from the rayless globe,
Whose sightless fingers probe
My golden-folded robe,
 My soul's misuse.

And in that thankless shape
Vines grow without a grape,
 Thorns roseless spring.
Nay! There is no escape:—
The yawning portals gape,
 The orbéd ring
As by a whirlpool drawn
Into that devil-dawn:—
I sink and shriek and fawn
 Upon the thing.

Ha! in the desperate pang
And subtle stroke and fang
 Of hateful kisses
Whence devilish laughter sprang,
Close on me with a clang
 The brazen abysses
The leopard-coloured paw
Strikes, and the cruel jaw
Hides me in the glutless maw—
 Crown of ten blisses!

For all the vision world
Is closed on me and curled
 Into the deep
Of my slow soul, and hurled
Through lampless lands, and furled,
 Sharp folds and steep:
Till all unite in one,
Seven planets in the sun,
And I am deeplier done
 Into full sleep.