

THE STORM.

Written on the North Atlantic Ocean.

IN the sorrow of the silence of the sunset, when the
world's heart sinks to sleep,
And the waking wind arises from the wedding of
the aether and the deep,
There are perfumes through the saltness of the
even; there are hints of flowers afar;
And the God goes down lamented by the lonely
vesper star.

The monsters rise around us as we move in moving
mist,
Slow whales that swim as musing, and lo! or ever
we wist,
Looms northward in the grey, mysterious ice, ca-
thedral high,
Clad in transparent clouds of cold, as a ghost in
drapery.

The solemn dusk descending creeps around us
from the East;
Clouded as with the ungainly head of a mysterious
beast.
Long wisps of darkness (even as fingers) reach and
hold
The sobbing West toward them, clasp the barred
Hesperian gold.

Still pale a rose reflection lingers, in pure soft blue;
Even above the tempest, where a lonely avenue
Leads from the wan moon's image, shadowy in the air,

Waning, half hidden from the sun—and yet her
soul is there.

So stand I looking ever down to the rolling sea,
Breast-heaves of a sleeping mother, spouse of Eternity:
The dark deep ocean mother, that another hath reviled,
Calling her bitter and barren—and am I not her
child?

O mother sea, O beautiful, more excellent than earth,
How is thy travail understood, except thou give me
birth?

O waves of death, O saltness, O sorrow manifold!
I see beneath thy darkness azure; deeper still, the
heart of gold.

Am I not true, O mother, who hast held the lives of
men
Sucked down to thy swart bosom—O render not
again!
Keep thou our life and mix it with thine eternal
sleep:
Rest, let us rest from passion there, deep! O how
deep!

Deep calleth unto deep, Amen! hast thou no pas-
sion, thou?
Even now the white flames kindle on thy universal
brow.
I hear white serpents hiss and wild black dragons
roll;
And the storm of love is on thee—ah! shall it
touch thy soul?

Nay, O my mother, in eternal calm thy virginal
depths lie.
The peace of God, that passeth understanding,
that am I!
Even I, perceiving deeply beneath the eyes of flame

The soul that, kindling, is not kindled: I have
known thy Name.

Awake, O soaring billows! Lighten the raging dome,
Wrap the wide horizon in a single cloak of flaming
foam,
Leap in your fury! Beat upon the shores un-
seen! Devour your food,
The broken cliff, the crumbled bank, the bar. I
know the mood.

Even so I see the terror of universal strife:
Murderous war, and murderous peace, and miser-
able life:
The pang of childbirth, and the pain of youth, and
the fear of age,
Life tossed and broken into dust in the elemental
rage.

Is not God part of every the tiniest spark of man?
Is He not moulded also in His own eternal plan?
Even so; as the woes of earth is the angry crested sea.
Even so; as Her great peace abideth in the deep—
so He!

What wreck floats by us? What pale corpse rolls
horribly above,
Tossed on the unbewailing foam, cast out of light
and life and love?
The sea shall draw thee down, O brother, to her
breast of peace,
Her unimaginable springs, her bridal secrecies.

Even so draw me in life, O mother, to thy breast!
Below the storm, below the wind, to the abiding
rest!
That I may know thy purpose and understand thy
ways:

So, weeping always for the woe, also the love to
praise!

The darkness falls intensely: no light invades the
gloom.

Stillness drops dew-like from the heaven's unre-
verberant womb.

Westward the ship is riding on the sable wings of
night,

I understand the darkness—why should I seek the
light?