

MORPHIA

To the lure of the snow-starred fields
Where the opium poppy's aflower.

Only the prick of a needle
Charged from a wizard well!
Is this sufficient to wheedle
A soul from heaven to hell?
Was man's spirit weaned
From fear of its ghosts and gods
To fawn at the feet of a fiend?
Is it such terrible odds—
The heir of ages of wonder,
The crown of earth for an hour,
The master of tide and thunder
Against the juice of a flower?
Ay! in the roar and the rattle
Of all the armies of sin,
This is the only battle
He never was known to win.

Slave to the thirst—not thirst
As here it is weakly written,
Not thirst in the brain black-bitten,
In the soul more sorely smitten!
One dare not think of the worst!
Beyond the raging and raving
Hell of the physical craving
Lies, in the brain benumbed,
At the end of time and space,
An abyss, unmeasured, unplumbed--
The haunt of a face!

She it is, she, that found me
In the morphia honeymoon;
With silk and steel she bound me,
In her poisonous milk she drowned me,
Even now her arms surround me,
Stifing me into the swoon
That still—but oh, how rarely!—
Comes at the thrust of the needle,
Steadily stares and squarely,
Nor needs to fondle and wheedle