

THE COMING OF APOLLO

RED roses, O red roses,
Roses afire, aflame,
O burgeon that discloses
The glory of desire—
Hush! all the heart of fire
Is mingled in Thy name,
O roses, roses, roses,
Red roses of desire.

The golden-shafted sunlight
Beats down upon the sward;
The pillared serpent's one light
Is a flame of red desire;
O snake from out the mire,
I slay thee with the sword,
The strong sword of the sunlight,
The sword of my desire!

The still strong bird of sorrow
Keens through the golden blue,
And many a bitter morrow
Is borne upon his wings;
The glory that he brings
He brings, O King, to you,
The wonder-song of sorrow
In the flapping of his wings.

The flaming day grows olden
As the youth of glory wanes;
And the sun-bird grows more golden

And narrower his wings;
He swirls around in rings;
He bears the bloody stains
Of all the sorrows olden
Upon his bright gold wings.

And scarlet-rimmed and splendid,
The wide blue vault is spanned
With golden rays wide-bended
From the green earth to the skies;
The hush of noontide dies,
Song rises from the land—
And scarlet, naked, splendid,
Glow out the radiant skies.

A cloud of huge hushed laughter
Shakes all the listening boughs,
And a sudden hush comes after,
Dropped from the silent skies;
A myriad laughing eyes
Flash in a still carouse,
And shake with silent laughter
The blue vault of the skies.

A breeze—a leaf—a shadow—
The falling of a bud—
The wind across the meadow—
A flash of light—a call—
A patter on the wall—
The air is bright as blood;
A moment stands a shadow,
A moment sounds a call.

Awake! the spell is broken,
And hushed the sense of noon;
What silent word was spoken
In answer to the Call? . . .
Hush! See the rose-leaves fall;
Ah! see the pathway strewn
With tender rose-leaves, broken
In answer to the Call.

How still it lies, the garden,
Now the red flash is gone;
The brown soil seems to harden
Now the strange spell is fled;
And the earth lies cold and dead,
And the hot hours hurry on.
It is only a quiet garden
Now that the spell is fled.

But the hour, the hour and the token,
Have passed as a dream away,
Now that the spell is broken,
And the moment's flash is fled.
When the secret word was said,
Ah! what remained to say?
No word, but silence' token
That the golden God had fled.

And the roses, roses, roses
Flame in their red desire,
And every bud uncloses
To mark the sign that fled;
The wonder-word hath sped
To the far Olympian fire:

The spell of the crimson roses
Has passed from earth and fled.

But still the old silent garden
Remember the golden flush
When the heavens seemed to harden
For a moment that came and fled;
When the whole green earth grew red
In a breathless spell and a hush,
And the world grew young in the garden,
And trembled, and passed, and fled.

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