

# SONGS OF THE SPIRIT

“Hush, the music swells apace,  
Rolls its silver billows up  
Through the void demense of space  
To the heavens’ azure cup!  
Hush, my love, and sleep shall sigh,  
This is immortality!”

*The Tale of Archais*

# SONGS OF THE SPIRIT

BY

ALEISTER CROWLEY

“Sublimi feriam sidera vertive”

HOR.

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“A fool also is full of words.”

*Ecclesiastes.*

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DEDICATION TO J. L. B.

THE vault of purple that I strove  
To pierce, and find unchanging love,  
Or some vast countenance above  
    All glory of the soul of man,  
Baffled my blind aspiring gaze  
With sunlight's melancholy rays,  
And closed with iron hand the ways  
That sunder space, divide the days with fiery fan.

Thine was the forehead mild and grave  
That shown throughout the azure nave  
Where Monte Rosa's silence gave  
    The starry organ's measured sound.  
Where for an altar stood the bare  
Mass of Mont Cervin, towering there  
And angels dwelt upon the stair,  
And all the mountains were aware that stood  
    around.

Thine was the passionless divine  
High hope, and the pure purpose thine,  
Higher and purer than stars shine,  
    And thine the unexpressed delight  
To hold high commune with the wind  
That sings, in midnight black and blind,  
Strange chants, the murmurs of the mind,  
To grasp the hands of heaven and find the lords of  
    light.

Mine was the holy fire that drew  
Its perfect passion from the dew,  
And all the flowers that blushed and blew  
    On sunny slopes by little brooks.  
Mine the desire that brushed aside  
The thorns, and would not be denied,  
And sought, more eager than a bride,  
The cold grey secrets wan and wide of sacred books.

Thine was the hand that guided me  
By moor and mountain, vale and lea,  
And led me to the sudden sea  
    That lies superb, remote, and deep,

Showed me things wonderful, unbound  
The fetters that beset me round,  
Opened my waking ear to sound  
That may not by a man be found, except in sleep.

Thy presence was as subtle flame  
Burning in dawning groves ; thy name  
Like dew upon the hills became,  
    And all thy mind a star most bright ;  
And, following with wakeful eyes  
The strait meridian of the wise,  
My feet tread under stars and skies ;  
My spirit soars and seeks and flies, a child of light.

Thus eager, may my purpose stand  
Firm as the faith of honest hand,  
Nor change like castles built of sand  
    Until the sweet unchanging end.  
Happy not only that my eye  
Single and strong may win the sky,  
But that one day the birds that fly  
Heard your fair friendship call me by the name of  
    friend.





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# SONGS OF THE SPIRIT



IN MEMORIAM A. J. B.

THE life by angels' touch divinely lifted  
From our dim space-bounds to a vaster sphere  
The spirit, through the vision of clouds rifted,  
Soars quick and clear.

We know the dance that hails the golden pinions  
The sun waves over an awakening earth ;  
We know the joy that floods the heart's dominions  
At true love's birth.

Even so, the mists that roll o'er earth are riven,  
The spirit flashes forth from mortal sight,  
And, flaming through the viewless space, is given  
A robe of light.

As when the conqueror Christ burst forth of prison,  
And triumph woke the thunder of the spheres,

So brake the soul, as newly re-arisen  
Beyond the years.

Far above Space and Time, that earth environ  
With bands and bars we strive against in vain,  
Far o'er the world, and all its triple iron  
And brazen chain,

Far from the change that men call life fled higher  
Into the world immutable of sleep,  
We see our loved one, and vain eyes desire  
In vain to weep.

Woeful our gaze, if on lone Earth descendent,  
To view the absence of yon flame afar—  
Yet in the Heavens, anew, divine, resplendent,  
Behold a star!

One light the less, that steady flamed and even  
Amid the dusk of Earth's uncertain shore;  
One light the less, but in Jehovah's Heaven  
One star the more!

*Amsterdam, December 23rd, 1897.*

LET me pass out beyond the city gate.

All day I loitered in the little streets  
Of black worn houses tottering, like the fate  
That hangs above my head even now, and meets  
Prayer and defiance as not hearing it.

They lean, these old black streets, a little sky  
Peeps through the gap, the rough stone path is lit  
Just for a little by the sun, and I

Watched his red face pass over, fade away

To other streets, and other passengers,  
Saw him take pleasure where the heathen pray,

Saw him relieve the hunter of his furs,  
All the wide world awaiting him, all folk

Glad at his coming, only I must weep:  
Rise he or sink, my weary eyes invoke

Only the respite of a little sleep ;  
Sleep, just a little space of sleep, to rest  
The fevered head and cool the aching eyes ;  
Sleep for a space, to fall upon the breast  
Of the dear God, that He may sympathize.  
Long has the day drawn out ; a bitter frost  
Sparkles along the streets ; the shipping heaves  
With the slow murmur of the sea, half lost  
In the last rustle of forgotten leaves.  
Over the bridges pass the throngs ; the sound,  
Deep and insistent, penetrates the mist—  
I hear it not, I contemplate the wound  
Stabbed in the flanks of my dear silver Christ.  
He hangs in anguish there ; the crown of thorns  
Pierces that palest brow ; the nails drip blood ;  
There is the wound ; no Mary by Him mourns,  
There is no John beside the cruel wood ;  
I am alone to kiss the silver lips ;  
I rend my clothing for the temple veil ;  
My heart's black night must act the sun's eclipse ;  
My groans must play the earthquake, till I quail  
At my own dark imagining ; and now  
The wind is bitterer ; the air breeds snow ;



I put my Christ away; and turn my brow  
Towards the south stedfastly; my feet must go  
Some journey of despair. I dare not turn  
To meet the sun; I will not follow him:  
Better to pass where sand and sulphur burn,  
And days are hazed with heat, and nights are  
dim  
With some malarial poison. Better lie  
Far and forgotten on some desert isle,  
Where I may watch the silent ships go by,  
And let them share my burden for awhile.  
Let me pass out beyond the city gate  
Where I may wander by the water still,  
And see the faint few stars immaculate  
Watch their own beauty in its depth, and chill  
Their own desire within its icy stream.  
Let me move on with vacant eyes, as one  
Lost in the labyrinth of some ill dream,  
Move and move on, and never see the sun  
Lap all the mist with orange and red gold,  
Throw some lank windmill into iron shade,  
And stir the chill canal with manifold  
Rays of clear morning; never grow afraid

When he dips down beyond the far flat land,  
Know never more the day and night apart,  
Know not where frost has laid his iron hand,  
Save only that it fastens on my heart ;  
Save only that it grips with icy fire  
These veins no fire of hell could satiate ;  
Save only that it quenches this desire.  
Let me pass out beyond the city gate.

## THE QUEST.

APART, immutable, unseen,  
Being, before itself had been,  
Became. Like dew a triple queen  
    Shone as the void uncovered :  
The silence of deep height was drawn  
A veil across the silver dawn  
    On holy wings that hovered.

The music of three thoughts became  
The beauty, that is one white flame,  
The justice that surpasses shame,  
    The victory, the splendour,  
The sacred fountain that is whirled  
From depths beyond that older world  
    A new world to engender.

The kingdom is extended. Night  
Dwells, and I contemplate the sight

That is not seeing, but the light  
That secretly is kindled,  
Though oft time its most holy fire  
Lacks oil, whene'er my own Desire  
Before desire has dwindled.

I see the thin web binding me  
With thirteen cords of unity  
Toward the calm centre of the sea.  
(O thou supernal mother!)  
The triple light my path divides  
To twain and fifty sudden sides  
Each perfect as each other.

Now backwards, inwards still my mind  
Must track the intangible and blind,  
And seeking, shall securely find  
Hidden in secret places  
Fresh feasts for every soul that strives,  
New life for many mystic lives,  
And strange new forms and faces.

My mind still searches, and attains  
By many days and many pains

To That which Is and Was and reigns  
Shadowed in four and ten,  
And loses self in sacred lands,  
And cries and quickens, and understands  
Beyond the first Amen.

## THE ALCHEMIST.

THIS POEM WAS INTENDED AS THE PROLOGUE TO  
A PLAY—AT PRESENT UNFINISHED.

*An old tower, very loft, on a small and rocky islet.  
In the highest chamber a man of some forty  
years, but silver-haired, looks out of the window.  
Clear starry night, no moon. Chamber furnished  
with books, alchemic instruments, etc. He gazes  
some minutes, sighs deeply, but at last speaks.*

*Ph.* The world moves not. I gaze upon the  
abyss,  
Look down into the black unfathomed vault  
Of Starland and behold—myself.  
The sea  
To give a sense of motion or of sound  
Washes the wall of this grey tower in vain ;

I contemplate myself in that dim sphere  
Whose hollow centre I am standing at  
With burning eyes intent to penetrate  
The black circumference, and find out God—  
And only see myself. The walls of Space  
Mock me with silence. What is Life? The stars  
Are silent. O ye matchless ministers  
That daily pass in your appointed ways  
To reach—we know not what! How meaningless  
Your bright assemblage and your steady task  
Of doubtful motion. And the soul of man  
Grapples in death-pangs with your mystery,  
And fails to wrestle down the hard embrace  
That grips the thighs of thought. And so he dies  
To pass beyond ye—whither? To find God?  
All my life long I have gazed, and dreamed, and  
thought,  
Unless my thought itself were but a dream,  
A little, troubled dream, a dream of death  
Whence I may wake—ah, where? In some new  
world  
Where Consciousness doth touch the Infinite,  
And all the strivings of the soul be found





Less humanly than that—I will go down  
And seek the stranger. [*Making as to leave room.*]  
E'en this rocky isle

Shall prove a friend—

*A Voice.* Stand still.

*Ph.* Again! Is this  
The warning of a mind o'er-strained?

[*Moving towards door.*]

*Voice.* Stand still

And see salvation in Jehovah's hands.

*Ph.* Is this the end of life?

*Voice.* Thy Life begins.

*Ph.* Strange Voice, I hear thee, and obey.  
Perchance

I have not lived so far. Perchance to-day,  
Like a spring-flower that slowly opens out  
Its willing petals to the tender dawn,  
My soul may open to the knowledge of  
A dawn of new thought that may lead—

*Voice.* To God.

*Ph.* Hope hardly dared to name it!

Enter Messenger.

*Mess.* My lord, the king's command!

*Ph.* I heed it not.

See thou disturb not my high meditation.

Away!

*Voice.* With meditations centred in thyself.

*Mess.* Who spoke?

*Ph.* Speak thou. I obey the king.

*Mess.* My lord,

He bids thee to his court, to hold the reins

Tight on the fretful horses of the state

Whose weary burden makes them slip—nay, fall

On the stern hill of war. Thou art appointed

Being the wisest man in all the realm,

(So spake the king) the second to himself—

*Ph.* Thy vessel waits?

*Mess.* For dawn.

*Ph.* Then hasten thee

To tell them I am ready. The meanwhile

I will devote to prayer.

*Mess.* At dawn, my lord.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

*Ph.* [*Turns to window.*] O Maker and O Ruler  
of all Worlds,  
Illimitable power, immortal God,  
Vague, vast, unknown, dim-looking, scarcely spied  
Through doubtful crannies of the Universe,  
Unseen, intangible, eluding sense  
And poor conception, halting for a phrase  
Of weak mind-language, O Eternity,  
Hear thou the feeble world, the lame desire,  
The dubious crying of the pinioned dove,  
The wordless eloquent emotion  
That speaks within a man, despite his mind!  
Hear, who can pray for naught, unknowing aught  
Whereof, for what to pray. But hear me, thou!  
Hear me, thou God, who fettered the bleak winds  
Of North and East, and held in silken rein  
The golden steeds of West and South, who bade  
The tireless sea respect its narrow bounds,  
And fixed the mountains, that eternal ice  
Might be thy chiefest witness, and who wove  
The myriad atoms of Infinitude  
Into the solid tapestry of night,  
And gave the sun his heat, and bade him kiss

The lips of death upon the moon's dark face,  
So that her silver lustre might rejoice  
The fiery lover, the sharp nightingale,  
And those pale mortals whom the day beholds.  
Asleep, because the many bid them slave  
From dusk to dawn being poor; and braided up  
The loose hair of all trees and flowers, and made  
Their one white light divide to red and green  
And violet and the hues innumerable  
Lesser than these, and gave man hope at last  
With the invariable law of death  
Abundant in new life, and having filled  
The world with music, dost demand of us  
"Is my work meaningless?" O thou, supreme,  
Thou, First and Last, most inconceivable  
All-radiating Unity, thou sphere  
All-comprehensive, all-mysterious,  
Spirit of Life and Death, bow down and hear!

*[Bends deeper and prays silently. The  
flame grows duller, and finally leaves  
the room in absolute darkness.  
Curtain.]*

## SONNETS TO NIGHT.

O NIGHT! the very mother of us all,  
For from thy hollow womb we children came,  
A little space to flicker as a flame,  
And then within thy tender arms to fall  
Tired, fain of nothing but to lie at last  
Upon thy bosom, and gaze in thine eyes  
Clear, calm, dispassionate, supremely wise,  
And pass with thee the gates that must be passed.

O Night, on thee is set our only hope,  
Because our eyes, so tender for the day,  
Are dazed with sunlight, and poor fingers grope  
For those far truths that mock our vague en-  
deavour,  
Whilst we may find in thee the secrets grey  
Of all things God would fain have hid for ever.

All things grow still before thine awful face.  
Now fails the lover's sigh ; Sleep's angel clings  
About the children with her dreamy wings,  
And all the world is silent for a space.  
The waving of thy dusky plumes in heaven  
Alone breathes gentle music to mine ears,  
So that despair is fain to flee, and fear  
Cowers far away amid the shades of even.

“ Hope, ” is thy whisper, “ hope, and trust in  
Night ;

My realm is the eternal, and my power  
The absolute. My child, gird on thy strength ;  
Clothe limbs with lustiness, and mind with might,  
That, communing with me, though for an hour,  
Thou mayest conquer when day comes at length.”

## THE PHILOSOPHER'S PROGRESS.

*That which is above, is like that which is below ;  
and that which is below is like that which is above.*

HERMES TRISMEGISTUS.

THAT which is highest as the deep  
Is fixed, the depth as that above :  
Death's face is as the face of Sleep ;  
And Lust is likest Love.

So stand the angels one by one  
Higher and higher with lamps of gold :  
So stand the shining devils ; none  
Their brightness may behold.

I took my life, as one who takes  
Young gold to ruin and to spend ;  
I sought their gulfs and fiery lakes,  
And sought no happy end.

I said: the height is as the deep,  
Twin breasts of one white dove ;  
Death's face is as the face of Sleep,  
And Lust is likest Love.

And with my blood I forced the door  
That guards the palaces of sin ;  
I reached the lake's cinereous shore ;  
I passed those groves within.

My blood was wasted in her veins,  
To freshen them, who stood like death,  
Our Lady of ten thousand Pains  
With heavy kissing breath.

I said: Our Lady is as God,  
Her hell of pain as heaven above ;  
Death's feet, like Sleep's, with fire are shod,  
And Lust is likest Love.

Our Lady crushed me in her bed,  
Between her breasts my life was wet ;  
My lips from that sweet death were fed ;  
I died, and would forget.



But so God would not have me die ;  
Her deadly lips relax and fade,  
Her body slackens with a sigh  
Reluctant, like a maid.

I said : O vampire Lover, weep,  
Who cannot follow me above,  
Though Death may masquerade as Sleep,  
And Lust laugh out like Love.

But God's strong arms set under me  
Lifted my spirit through the air  
Beyond the wide supernal sea,  
Beyond the veil of vair.

God said : My ways are sweet and deep ;  
The sceptres and the swords thereof  
Change : for Death's face is fair as Sleep ;  
And Lust is clean as Love.

I slept upon His breast ; and Death  
Came like Sleep's angel, and I died,  
And tasted the Lethean breath.  
There was a voice that cried :

Behold, I stand above His head  
With feet made white with whitest fire,  
Above His forehead, that is red  
As blood with His Desire.

I knew that Voice was more than God,  
And echo trembled for its trust :  
Sleep's feet, like Death's, with fire are shod,  
And Love is likest Lust.

So I returned and sought her breast,  
Our Lady of ten thousand Pains ;  
I drank her kisses, and possessed  
Her pale maternal veins.

I said : Drain hard my sudden breath,  
Be cruel for the vampire thrust !  
Let Sleep's desire be sweet as Death,  
And Love be clean as Lust !

I died amid her kisses : so  
This last time I would not forget—  
So I attained The Life ; and know  
Her lips and God's have met.

For in Those Hands above His head  
The Depth is one with That Above,  
And Sleep and Death and Life are dead,  
And Lust is One with Love.

## SONNET.

THE woods are very quiet, and the stream  
Hardly awakes the stilled ear with its word;  
The voice of wind above like dawn is heard,  
And all the air moves up, a sultry steam,  
Here in the flower-land, where I lie and dream  
And understand the silence of the bird;  
My sorrow and my weakness are interred  
In the deep water where the pebbles gleam.

I rouse the force persistent of my will  
To compel matter to the soul's desire,  
To make Heaven aid the mind that would aspire  
To touch its borders, and to drink their fill  
At those far fountains whence one drop of dew  
Descends upon my head from yonder blue.

## AN ILL DREAM.

IN the grim woods when all the bare black  
branches

Creak out their curses like a gallows-tree,  
When the miasmal pestilence-light dances,  
A spectre-flame, through midnight's infamy.  
My blood grows chill and stagnant with my shame.

O Love, to speak thy name!

O Life! O Heaven! O dreams long dead! Ye  
Spirits

Rising unbidden from Hope's cobwebbed door,  
Ye quick desires that every soul inherits,  
Leave me to weep, and torture me no more!  
My face grows grey with sheer despair; I shrink  
From dreams; I dare not think.

I had a poet's dreams. My soul was yearning  
To grasp the firmament and hold it fast,

To reach toward God, and, from His shrine  
returning,  
To sing in magic melodies the vast  
Desires of God towards man—O dreams! O years  
Drowned in these bitter tears!

I felt the springs of youth within me leaping,  
Let loose my pleasure, never guessed that pain  
Was worth the holding—now, my life is weeping  
Itself away, those agonies to gain  
Which are my one last hope, that by some cross  
Eld may avenge youth's loss!

Yet still youth burns! The hours its pleasure  
wasted  
Compel their bitter memories to grow sweet;  
Like some warm-perfumed poison if I tasted,  
Felt its fierce savour pulse, and burn, and beat,  
Yet in my veins its sleepy fire might bring  
Strange dreams of some sweet thing.

Half a regret and half a shuddering terror,  
The past lies desolate and yet is here,

Half guide, half tempter toward the stream of error,  
On whose fresh bosom many a mariner  
Puts out with silken sail—to find his grave  
In its voluptuous wave.

Here are few rocks whereon a ship hath peril ;  
No storms may ruffle its insidious stream ;  
Only, no fish invade its waters sterile,  
No white-winged birds above it glance and gleam,  
Only, it hath no shore, no wave, but gloom  
Wraps it within her womb.

No sun is mirrored in its treacherous water,  
Only the false moon flickers and flits by  
Like to the bloodless phantom shape of slaughter  
Laughing a lipless laugh—a mockery,  
A ghastly memory to wake and weep  
—Should Sorrow let me sleep.

No current draws a man, to his fair seeming,  
Yet all the while he whirls a stealthy sweep  
Narrower, nearer, where the wave is steaming  
With the slight spray tossed from that funnel deep

Which dips, one wide black shaft, most horrible,  
Down to the nether Hell.

Yet there seems time. God's grief has not  
forgotten

His mighty arm, and with His pitying breath  
A strong wind woke me ere my boat grew rotten  
With venom of the stream, that quivereth  
Now as He blew upon it—fish and bird  
Live at that silent word!

And I arose to seek the oars of Lying  
Wherewith I had embarked—the wind had torn  
Their wood to splinters—“Jesus! I am dying!  
Send me Thy cross to fashion some unborn  
Oarage of Truth to quit this stream of Death!”  
O vain, O wasted breath!

I have no strength. Upright I kneel, lamenting  
The days when Love seemed fair, the bitter years  
When pain might have found truth, ere unrelenting  
I shipwrecked Life! O agony of tears!  
Vain tears! In silence, with abated breath  
I drift, drift on to Death!



## THE STUDENT.

THERE is a gate of brass, within whose clang  
Gold and fair stones abide. But I essayed  
The path. I thundered with assaulting blade  
On that grim fortress, whose hard iron rang  
At my strong summons. As their fury sprang  
Open at last I crossed their threshold, prayed  
Reward for courage. To my soul dismayed  
These voices their loud chant of terror sang :

“Thou hast not kept thy trust. To storm the  
gates  
Were to have found out God and all delight,  
Conquered for all thy fellow-men the fates,  
And found out Paradise in Hell’s despite.”  
I heard them laugh, the Harpies and the Hates . . .  
Then fell, like death, the intolerable night.

THE PRIEST SPEAKS.

*(Boccacio. Day IV. Tale VIII.)*

LAY them together for the sake of Love  
Within a little plot of piteous earth,  
When life's last flower is faded in the sun.  
Lay them together in the tender ground  
That summer showers may shed a trembling tear.  
And summer breezes whisper melodies  
Of pity. Lay them there, and when the sky  
Opens a lingering eyelash of deep cloud,  
And the sea sparkles out from under it  
To kiss the earth into awakening  
From the dream-slumbers that its fancies weave—  
Fancies of starlight on the lucent sea  
Gleaming from wide horizon to the feet  
Of Cynthia's bow, all silver-shot with fire,  
That virgin flame that lingers evermore

In the sweet phantasies of subtle sleep—  
Fancies of lonely shadows darkly strewn  
About the leaves of autumn in the woods,  
Where the small floweret, hidden by the maze  
O' th' dying children o' the copper-beech,  
Lifts a blue forehead to the sun to kiss—  
Fancies of old romance too pitiful  
For any delicate quill to light upon—  
Yes, when the sky from stainless ebony  
Merges in azure, like as if the light  
Of stars had melted into all the black  
To gladden it, O then the solemn hush  
Of morning shall behold the silent grave,  
And wait a moment in rich worshipping  
Of Love, creator of the world's delight,  
Till the full chorus of the spirits of fire,  
Whose mighty shoulders and wide-flashing wings  
Bear the proud sun from his luxurious bed  
Of rosy fleeces in the West low lying  
Into the staircase of the jealous day,  
Burst on the silence of the world beyond  
And bid the listening poet catch the strain  
Of their half-echoed hymn. But come, my friends,

Lay them together, breast to maiden breast,  
Limb linked with limb, and lips to pallid lips,  
So beautiful in death—the moth o' th' mind  
Tells the grief-numbed senses 'tis but sleep—  
See! the pale glimmer of a ghostly arm  
Flashes a spot of light!—Ah! weary day!  
'Tis but the flickering of the candle-light  
And the unmaning sorrow of the heart  
That lends the reins to fancy's charioteer.  
Lay them together, let us leave them there!  
There comes a vision to my mortal eyes  
Of things immortal. Hark! the growing swell  
Of some wild clarion through the dazzling night,  
Whose fairy aether suddenly illumines  
With silver meteors innumerable  
And golden showers of stars—lost worlds of  
                  thought  
And poets' dreams, and jewels of virgin sighs.  
Hark! the broad rings of sound go wavering on  
Eddying and rippling through the desert sky  
That now is peopled with the diamond wings  
That float through all the palaces of God.  
O now to join them rise the armies vast

Of the lone spirits of the empty tomb,  
And there I see the lovers piteous  
Splendidly flash within the silver sphere  
Of light, and there I lose them at the last  
Most wonderfully passed within the veil  
Of Time ; caught up into the Infinite.  
Lay them together. And the hollow hill  
Shall echo me “together,” and the sky,  
And the wide sea, and all the fragrant air,  
Shall linger in the tumult of the dawn.  
Lay them together. And the still small voice  
Shall whisper “Peace,” and in the evening  
“Peace.”

## PASSOVER.

BLOOD on the lintel! On the outer side  
Death stood with wing implacable, with sword  
Steeped in the furnace cruel and abhorred  
Of Hell, in Styx well tempered. Far and wide  
Its adamant smote out, a full fierce tide  
Of vengeance and destruction from the Lord,  
While past yon door with blood well overscored  
Safety and Peace and Passover abide.

Blood on the lintel! But within our gates  
Spilt our own blood lies curdling on the ground,  
Crying to God from each envenomed wound  
While the fierce combat yet no whit abates,  
And though protected, confident, unspent,  
Sighs for relief with battle-cries are blent.

## THE VIOLET'S LOVE-STORY.

AMONG the lilies of the sacred stream  
There grew a violet, like a maiden's dream,  
And when the wind passed over them, it stirred  
Their white soft petals with its quiet word.

The sun looked on them and their leaves were  
glad ;

Only the purple blossom there, that had  
No kindred by the stream, let fall a tear,  
Half wishing for the autumn of the year.

But when the summer came, the violet guessed,  
By some slow dream that thrilled her gentle breast,  
That some sweet thing might come to her ; she  
thought  
Through the long days of how her dream was  
wrought :

She guessed it woven of the spider's thread,  
And coloured like the river's changing bed  
Where polished pebbles shine ; she guessed it frail  
And perfect, with pure wings, like silver pale.

So there, behind the leaves and stems, her lids  
Grew deep with veins of love, and Bassarids  
Racing the dim woods through, beheld her face,  
Whispered together, and desired the place.

The grey was blushing in the Eastern sky  
When there drew near a child of poesy  
With full lips very tender, and grave eyes  
Where deep thoughts dwelt in some delicious wise.

He looked upon the lilies, and a tear  
Dropped on their blossom ; but a little fear  
Came to the bosom of the violet  
Lest he see not, or see her, and forget.

But he did see her, and drew close, and said :  
“ O perfect passion of my soul, O dead  
Living desire, O sweet unspoken sin,  
Leave thou the lilies ; they are not thy kin.



“Within my heart one slow sweet whisper stole  
Consuming and destroying all my soul  
Lest, if the pure cold mind should conquer it,  
I might not know, although it still were sweet.

“My pure desires arose and cast out love  
That flew away, most like a wounded dove,  
Only the drops were mine its bosom bled,  
Now the last time it hovers by my head :

“Now the last time I turn and go to her.”  
The violet smiled at him : his fingers fair  
Plucked the sweet blossom to his breast ; his eyes  
Mused like delight, and like desire were wise.

There was a maiden like the sun, to whom  
His footsteps turned amid the myriad bloom  
Of flowers and leafy pathways of the wood,  
Where, in a dell of roses white, she stood.

He came to her and looked so dear and deep  
Into her eyes, the wells and woods of sleep,  
And took the violet from his breast, and stood  
A glad young god within the golden wood.

He kissed the blossom, and bent very low,  
And put it to her lips—and even so  
His lips were set on them; the flower sighed  
For deep delight, and in the long kiss died.

Years fled and faded, yet a flower was seen  
Gracious and comely in its nest of green,  
And tender hands would water it and say  
“O happy sister, she that went away!

“For she brought back my lover to my heart,  
And knew her work was perfect, and her part  
Most perfect when she died between the breath,  
And in the bridal kisses kissed to death.”

So grew the newer blossom and was glad:  
Sweet little hopes her faint fair forehead had  
That one day such a death might crown her days.  
And so God too was glad, the story says.

THE FAREWELL OF PARACELSUS  
TO APRILE.

THOU Sun, whose swift desire to-day is dull,  
And all ye hosts of heaven, whose lips are mute,  
And trees and flowers and oceans beautiful  
Among whose murmurs I have struck this lute  
With joy supreme or agony acute,  
And love transcending everything alway,  
Pity me, pity, since the poisonous root  
Of parting strikes the beauty of the day;  
We meet for the last time beside the ocean gray.

Soul of my soul, we never can forget—  
But, is our parting burnt across the skies?  
Is the last word said? Must our lips be set  
Not to new song, but to the bitter sighs  
As of a child whose flower-garden dies,  
Who knows no hope of some enduring spring?

Is the last song made, whose faint melodies  
Brushed the pale air with an archangel's wing?  
Is Hope divorced, our queen? Is Love discrowned,  
our King?

Far o'er the Ocean sets a fiery star  
And meteors cross the angry horizon,  
A comet blazes, reddening the bar  
Of silver water where the moonlight shone,  
And, as I stand upon the cliff like one  
Amazed, a shape seems always at my back  
To whisper wickedness, o'erheard of none,  
And stealthily to follow on my track,  
And cloke my lifted eyes with suffocating black.

Vainly I turn to seek him, for my eyes  
Are dimmed with saltness never born of brine;  
Vainly I fight the air, he sneers, and lies,  
And laughs at all this agony of mine,  
And chills my heart, and desecrates the shrine  
Where Love his holy incense used to burn,  
And mocks those thoughts, those songs, those looks  
divine

While his lewd visage no man may discern,  
And baffling darkness hides his terror if I turn.

Fighting and falling ever, weariest  
Even of beating off the tempter's blows,  
Struggling in vain to what one hopes the best,  
A distant river over many snows,  
On whose green bank the purple iris glows,  
And the anemone in some wild cleft,  
And the white violet, and the briar rose,  
And the blue gentian from the heavens reft—  
Lo! 'Twas that golden bank but yester morn I left.

O river where we dwelt! Your summer sward  
Whereon we lay, two kings of earth and air;  
For whom ten thousand angels had drawn sword  
At our light bidding. Surely, surely, there  
We might float ever to the sea, and spare  
The dainty plumage of that perfect place.  
O God! O Life! O Death, thou would'st not  
wear  
Such evil mask upon thy golden face—  
O Mary, pity me of thine abounding grace.

Those days are dead, and hope no newer birth.

I left thy shores, blue stream, at His command  
Who reared the mountains from the shaken earth ;

Who holds the lightning in His holy hand,  
And binds the stars in adamantine band,  
And yearns towards the children of His mind.

I left their summer and their dewy strand  
To pass a life of work, alone, unkind,  
To fight a way toward heaven, mute, desolate and  
blind.

The dusty desert glimmers in the night,

A solitary palm-tree shades the well ;  
I am alone, a weary eremite  
Striving the secrets of the stars to tell,  
And every blade of grass that makes the dell  
Is counted and divined by me, who stare  
With eyes half blinded by the fires of Hell  
That my wild brain imagines everywhere,  
Roaring and raging round with red infernal glare.

The yellow sand toward the deep sky extends :

A dusky mirage would confuse my view ;

Far, far away, where desolation ends,  
    There is a water of serenest blue ;  
    And by it stands, as patient and as true  
As in the past, his form to whom I turn,  
    And break my bondage and would touch anew  
His holy lips ; my body and spirit yearn ;  
He fades away, and fires of Hell within me burn.

Still, as I journey through the waste, I see  
    A silver figure more divine arise ;  
The Christ usurps the horizon for me,  
    And He requickens the forgotten skies ;  
    His golden locks are burning on my eyes,  
And He with rosy finger points the way,  
    The blood-wrought mystic path of Paradise  
That leads at last through yonder icy spray  
Of Death to the blue vaults of the undying day.

But oh! this desert is a weary land,  
    Poisons alone their prickly heads lift high ;  
The sun, a globe of fury, still doth stand  
    In the dark basin of the burning sky.  
    There is no water, no, nor herb, and I

Faint at his anger who compels the herd  
To fall upon the waste, so fierce and dry  
That none may pass it, not the very bird.  
Throughout the vast expanse no single sound is  
heard.

Only the moaning of the dying ox,  
And my parched cry for water from cracked lips ;  
In vain the stern impenetrable rocks  
Mock my complaint : the empty pitcher dips  
Into the empty well ; the water drips,  
Oozing in tiny drops caught up again  
By the sun's heat, that brooks not his eclipse  
And dissipates the welcome clouds of rain.  
God! have Thou pity soon on this amazing pain.

If but a lion stirred with distant roar  
The silence of the world, perchance at last  
I might find honey in his mouth, and store  
His tawny flanks until the sand were past.  
Nay, but these wastes intolerably vast,  
Like glowing copper raging for the heat,  
Stretch and stretch on and leave me all aghast



Straining my eyes in horror and defeat  
Toward the long vista seen where rescue seems to  
greet.

The vessel fills with brackish foam. I drink,  
Drink to the end, and stagger on alone  
Without a staff to hold me if I sink  
In the hot quagmires of untrusty stone.  
Foodless and beastless, so despairing grown,  
I know not, care not, only trust that soon  
The sun's dominion may be overthrown,  
And o'er the wilderness appear the moon  
With cold lips to bestow the inestimable boon.

Still I have never prayed for death, but rather  
Would be found fighting toward the goal I seek,  
Stretching both hands toward a loving father,  
And struggling toward some barren voiceless  
peak  
With feet made stedfast, if God made them  
weak ;  
So, on the journey, in the hottest fight  
I would be found by Death, whose palace bleak

Should be a resting-place until the night  
Broke, and I met my God, and stood within His  
sight.

Only my brain grows feebler with the toil,  
And clearer runs the river I forsook ;  
Now in clear pools its myriad fountains boil,  
Now there runs singing to its breast a brook ;  
Now it flows gently to a little nook  
Where I once rested—Ah! I clench my hand  
And turn away with yet undaunted look,  
Setting my face toward the distant land  
That must lie somewhere far beyond this world of  
sand.

About me are the bones of many men  
Who turned to God their rapt adoring eyes,  
And cast away the love within their ken  
For this vague treasure-house beyond the  
skies—  
Whither I turn, like a dumb beast that dies,  
A wistful look, and breathe a dumb complaint.  
Lo! they have cast away the mask of lies

And not found Truth. So he would be a saint  
Whose skeleton lies here because his soul did faint!

I will not turn toward Sodom any more,  
Lest its ripe glades of fruit waft up their scent,  
And draw me to them, what time heavens pour  
Brimstone and fire from out the firmament,  
And all my substance in its fall be spent ;  
Lest I lie there beneath a barren sea  
Forgotten of high God, until there went  
The final trumpet of the dead, who flee  
Vainly that fearful blast of judgment. Woe is Me !

My feet, in spite of me, in circles bend ;  
I meet my own tracks often, all in vain  
I seek some tower or cliff to make an end,  
I find no object on the distant plain ;  
Misty distortions crowd upon my brain,  
And spectre fountains gurgle on the ground ;  
I drop to drink, and hear the horrid strain  
Of chuckling devils, that grimace around,  
And think I catch the note of Hell's three-headed  
Hound.

Up still and staggering to the doubtful goal,  
Feet dragging horribly behind, I move  
Deathlike for dearth and for despair of soul;  
At last I drop. From Heaven there comes a  
Dove  
Bearing the semblance of the Man I love,  
And fountains and fresh grass by magic spell  
Are suddenly around me. And above  
I hear the voice my visions know so well:  
“Well striven all this day against the power of  
Hell!”

I know these mercies still diviner grow  
Each day I strive, but should I sit and rest  
One hour of dawn, and cry, “I will not go  
Another step without more sleep,” that blest  
Dove flies away, the fountains are repressed,  
The grass is withered, and the angry sky  
Rages more fierce that day, and from the crest  
Of black foul mountains comes a bitter cry:  
“He that returneth now shall in destruction die.”

So I press on. Fresh strength from day to day  
Girds up my loins and beckons me on high,

So I depart upon the desert way,  
So I strive ever toward the copper sky,  
With lips burnt black and blind in either eye.  
I move for ever to my mystic goal  
Where I may drain a fountain never dry,  
And of Life's guerdon gather in the whole,  
And on celestial manna satisfy my soul.

Each night new failure and each day fresh strength,  
A sense of something nearer day by day ;  
Though the ill road's intolerable length,  
League upon league, fling back the torrid ray  
Of the fierce sunlight night can scarce allay  
With the incessant beating of cool wings,  
And men's bleached skeletons infest the way,  
Yet Hope her passion like a flower brings,  
And Courage ranks me with unconquerable kings.

So, in the power of these who guard my path,  
I hope one day to earn a loftier crown  
Than that pale garland fresh from summer scath  
That I called Love, and lie delighted down  
Beside the fountains, fled the roaring town,

Where we were happy all the summer through,  
And merry when the autumn tinged with brown  
The glades, and in the winter thought we knew  
Behind the cloudy weather some far sky was blue.

That crown I hope for shall be garlanded  
Of deathless flowers of equal bloom. And thou,  
O thou true lover, thou beloved head  
And marble pallor of a prince's brow,  
At the cliff's edge we stand together now ;  
The parting of our ways has come at last,  
Mine is the bitterest journey, as I trow,  
A man may take, so solitary, so vast,  
It binds the future now, and stultifies the past.

Only the hope that God may reunite  
Our ways diverging, and make one again  
The deathless love that burns a beacon bright  
On the black deeps, the irremeable main,  
That men must launch on, the exalted plain  
Of Life. We sever, and our tears are few,  
Knowing perchance beyond the moment's pain

We shall regather where the skies are blue  
And live and love for aye, pure, passionate, and true.

Also before my eyes there gleams from Heaven  
The likeness of a Man in glory set ;  
The sun is blotted, and the skies are riven—  
A God flames forth my spirit to beget ;  
And where my body and his love are met  
A new desire possesses altogether  
My whole new self as in a golden net  
Of transcendental love one fiery tether,  
Dissolving all my woe into one sea of weather.

So I am ready to assume the Cross,  
Start on my journey with the last word said ;  
Turn my back resolute on dung and dross,  
And face the future with no twitch of dread,  
But dare to converse with the holy dead,  
And taste the earnest of the church's bliss.  
Love, God be with you ! He is overhead  
And watches us, that nothing be amiss—  
Love ! our hearts bleed as one in the last lingering  
kiss.

Good-by, good-by, good-by! the echo rings  
A harsh, jarred sound in my self-tortured ears,  
And agony, a fount of blood, upsprings  
And tears our bosoms with dividing fears.  
The cruel sea its final billow rears  
And I must pass to seek an unknown sky;  
We dare not see each other's face for tears,  
And the last kisses—Did we only die!  
Love! Ah! One kiss! One kiss! One kiss!  
Good-by, Good-by!



A SPRING SNOWSTORM IN  
WASTDALE.

ON rocky mountain bare  
Of grass, and meadows fair,  
Angels their trumpets blow upon the night,  
While o'er the shrinking dale  
The insatiable gale  
Roars with unconquered and impassive might.  
Their robes of snow they rend,  
And their deep voices blend  
With tempest, like that angry Amphitrite,  
His hair blown wild and loose  
On windy Syracuse,  
Lashing the waves with words of wrath, a terror  
of bright light.

Here the thick snowflakes fall,  
Till mountain in their pall,

And stream beneath their curtain are embraced ;  
They drive and beat and hiss,  
Till their cold maiden kiss  
Touches the lake's intolerable waste,  
And from the wave is born  
A maiden like the morn,  
In sudden foam, an Aphrodite chaste,  
Clean as the cold wind blown  
From each abyss of stone,  
Where the north whirlpool rushes down with  
wreckage interlaced.

Where on the bank I stand  
In this gray barren land  
Of winter, and the doubtful glint of spring,  
If on the hills there glow  
Through the thick mist of snow  
Sunshine from westward in the evening ;  
While in a dell appear  
Violets and snowdrops clear,  
Buds of the larch, and swallows on the wing,  
Till once again the storm

Lofty and multiform  
Close the bright glimpse of summer and the hope  
of everything.

Silence her throne assumes,  
Stars mount the sky, and looms  
The misty monarch of the dale on high :  
About the silver feet  
I worship, as is meet,  
The warrior God that fixed the curvéd sky,  
Rent the cavernous earth,  
Moulded in awful birth  
The terror of the cloudy canopy,  
And tore from underground  
The lake's immense profound,  
And clad the mountains now with this faint snow  
embroidery.

Now the white flakes decrease,  
Wastwater lies in peace,  
Kissed by the breezes where the wind once bit ;  
Gable alone doth stand,  
A Pyramid more grand

Than Pharaoh's pride exalted, or the wit  
Of magian shepherds built  
Who sought his land and spilt  
Blood of ten million slaves to conquer it.  
Clad in sparse robes of white  
The mountain beckons Night  
Her tracery of azure with the cold moon-rays to  
knit.

Armoured with secret might  
I stand on earth upright,  
Strong in the power of Him who welded earth,  
Barred in the sky with steel,  
And breathed upon the wheel  
Of this vast scheme of stars, and made Him mirth  
In the poor dreams of us  
Who strive mysterious  
To pierce the bands of sense, and break the girth  
Of our own minds' desire,  
Till He relume the fire  
Lost at our fall, not kindled fresh till that diviner  
birth.

IN NEVILLE'S COURT,  
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

I THINK the souls of many men are here  
    Among these cloisters, underneath the spire  
    That the moon silvers with magnetic fire ;  
But not a moon-ray is it, that so clear  
Shines on the pavement, for a voice of fear  
    It hath, unless it be the breeze that mocks  
    My ear, and waves his old majestic locks  
About his head. There fell upon my ear :

“O soul contemplative of distant things,  
    Who hast a poet's heart, even if thy pen  
    Be dry and barren, who dost hold Love dear,  
Speed forth this message on the fiery wings  
    Of stinging song to all the race of men :  
    That they have hope ; for we are happy here.”

## SUCCUBUS.

WHO is Love, that he should find me as I strive,  
Pale and weary, dumb and blind, where curses  
    thrive,  
Fold my sleep within his wings, and lead my  
    dreams  
Through a land of pleasant things, of woods and  
    streams,  
Bind my slumber with a chain of pure delight,  
Though the canker of it stain at death of night,  
Fill with passion and distaste and wakened pleasure  
All the moments run to waste that else were  
    treasure?  
Who is Love? a fury red with all men's blood  
On his cruel altars shed, a deadly flood?  
Or a veiled vision black with shame and fear,  
Whose most loathliest attack at night is near,

When the gates of spirit tense with angel's tread  
Close, and all the gates of sense swing wide instead,  
When the will of men is sleeping, and when the  
mind

Hears no sobs of spirits weeping above the wind,  
All the subtle paths are clear for wicked breath,  
And no angel warns the ear that this is death?  
Is this fiend the Love that came when youth rose  
up

Purple with its holy flame, and flower-fair cup,  
Gave me of his burning wine to fire my heart,  
Filled me with desires divine toward my art?  
Is he then the Love who robs me of my aim,  
Doubts me if my heart still throbs with that cold  
flame,

Calm and eager purpose yet to reach the goal  
That high hopes have sternly set before my soul,  
To know, will, dare for man's sake if man may,  
Grasp the secret of the plans that rule the way  
Of stars and suns, that shape the tiniest blade  
Of Grass whose frailties 'scape the passing maid,  
Whose light foot brushes fern and moss? But Love  
Comes a thief to men who turn toward things above

To set snares, by night, and makes afraid  
The spirits' holy might with one slight maid  
Visioned and unsubstisting save in foreign thought,  
To its own strength a slave by witchcraft brought!  
This is not Love but Lust, not Life but Death is  
    found,  
All the halls of sense with strife cry and resound.  
The Brain awakes in wrath; behold! the foemen  
    flee,  
All the earth is clad with gold and all the sea;  
Driven back the demons yield, falter and cease;  
For a little while the shield of sleep is peace.  
Clear and bright the lamp burns; clean and sharp  
    the sword,  
While I watch their paths between before the  
    Lord.



## A RONDEL.

REST, like a star at sea  
Thrice loved, thrice blest,  
Burns. Will there come to me  
Rest?

By these suppressed  
Desires my soul must flee,  
By heaven's crest,

I pray that secretly  
Toward God's breast  
I draw, to find, maybe,  
Rest!

## NIGHTFALL.

THE seas that lap the sand  
Where lilies fill the land  
Are silent, while the moon ascends to span the  
    curvéd leaves.

The lordly stars arise  
With pity in their eyes  
So large and clear and wise,  
And angels yearn toward the world that wonders,  
    wakes, and grieves.

Sleep holds the hand of life,  
And, as a loving wife  
Moves not for fear the sufferer should wake before  
    his hour,  
So sleep is deadly calm,  
And fills with perfect balm

The night's unquiet psalm  
That wanders all too trembling up, and quivers as  
a flower.

The wise man opens wide  
His casement, as a bride  
Flings her bright arms to meet her spouse home-  
ward who hasteneth ;  
He trims his lamp, and brings  
The books of many kings  
To spread their holy wings  
About his head, and sing to him the secret ways  
of death.

His eyes are fixed, he sees  
Men dimly, like to trees  
Walking, and guesses they must be the angels of  
the Lord ;  
His hand is strong to hold  
The talent of fine gold,  
The wand so clean and cold ;  
His altar has a lamp divine, his girdle has a  
sword.

He knows, and doth not fear ;  
His will is keen and clear ;  
His lips are silent to protect the secret mysteries.  
No tempter spreads his net  
So that his thoughts forget  
The glory they have set  
Before their face, nor loose their hold upon the  
perfect prize.

My hands no longer write :  
Communion with the night  
Is built, a bride of fiery truth across the subtle  
mind.  
God's angels, and His fire,  
Consume the soul's desire,  
And strike a lighter lyre.  
I seek; the angels lead me on, all light and truth  
to find.

## THE INITIATION.

THERE is a bare bleak headland which the sea  
Incessantly devours,  
A rock impregnable, where herb and tree  
Are not. A vision of it came to me  
In night's most ghastly hours.

I who desire, beyond all named desire,  
To pass the envious bounds of air and fire,  
And penetrate the bosom of the night,  
Saw in a vision such a neophyte  
Stand on the forehead of the rock; I saw  
The armies of unalterable law  
Shudder within their spheres, as to him came  
His master's spirit, like a tongue of flame,  
To touch his lips and ears and eyes and hands  
With that pale amber that divides the lands  
Of sense and spirit, and beheld him quail

As fell from all his shaken soul the veil.  
Then on the night began the awful gale  
That did assume a voice  
Whereat the air was peopled with such forms  
As ride abroad upon the path of storms,  
And in the awe rejoice.  
They gather, chanting, round that noble head.  
The master of the prisons of the dead  
Loosens the bonds and bids the furies spring  
For their last struggle ere they own a king.  
This pæan of the sky they sing.

#### CHANT OF DEMONS.

*We ride upon the fury of the blast,  
Fast, fast.  
We race upon the horses of the wind,  
The tameless thunder follows hard behind,  
Fast, and too fast.  
The lightning heralds us, the iron blast  
Lends us its splendour for a steed fire-shod,  
The steed of God!*

From all the caverns of the hollow sea,  
And all the fortresses that guard the air,  
And all the fearful palaces of fire,  
And all the earth's dwarf-ridden secrecy,  
They come, they gather, and they ride, to bear  
Destruction and disorder and desire ;  
They cling to him who braves the gale of night,  
And mock his might ;  
They rush upon him like a wave, and break  
In fiery foam against him, and they shake  
Life in its citadel,  
They open Hell  
To let the Furies and the Fates spring forth  
On their wild chargers of the icy North  
To quench the holy lamp.  
His spirit and his life within him quail,  
And all the armaments of sin assail  
With deadly tramp,  
And swordless fury that devours and bites  
And tears and clutches him, whom heavenly lights  
Shield and lead on afar,  
Where beyond storm and passion is the sky,  
And where the sacred hand of the Most High

Holds out a star.  
He stands amid the storm, a mighty rock,  
His long hair blows about, the demons mock  
His entry to their kingdom, and despair.  
Groans in the blackness, infamous and bare,  
And hateful shapes and eyes surround his head—  
O for the magic of those mightier dead  
To scatter them, and utterly destroy  
Their likeness, and to penetrate the joy  
Of yonder places past the realm of fear!  
O that some mighty seer  
Came to avenge, that might deliver him  
From this grim fight, whose horrid ranks are dim  
With mist of spuméd blood, whose long chill hour  
Beats out each second with the ghastly power,  
Reluctant till the morning. Shall they cease,  
These black battalions, and the dawn bring peace  
To a head holier? Or shall he succumb,  
Fight through long agonies and perish dumb,  
Sword gripped hard to the last? or shall he fall  
Recreant, coward, and no more at all  
Reach the dim martyr-hall of heroes? Yet  
The surging shapes gape hideous, to beget



Fresh arméd foemen to destroy the king.  
And first, on black imperishable wing,  
That Nameless Thing.

Darkness, a dragon, now devours  
The vision of those deadly powers,  
The legions of the lords of sin  
It is an hour till dawn begin.

## ISAIAH.

### A SONNET.

THE world is dusk, expectant of its doom ;  
Foulness is rampant, purity is dumb ;  
Despair stalks terrible. But I am come,  
God-nurtured, in the void abyss of gloom ;  
The Spirit of my God is set on me ;  
He hath anointed me to preach glad news  
Unto the meek ; the broken heart to loose,  
To utter to the captive liberty,  
The prison's opening to all the bound,  
And unto all men to proclaim aloud  
The year acceptable before the Lord.  
Therefore He fills my voice with silvery sound,  
And by His spirit, a pillar of fire and cloud,  
My eyes are lightning, and my tongue a sword.

## THE STORM.

IN the storm that divides the wild night from the  
passionate kiss of the morning  
Stands there a tower by the sea unshaken by  
wave and by wind,  
Lightning assails, and the sea breaks vain on the  
battlements, scorning  
Even to fling back the foam shattered before  
and behind,  
Save for one window its height rears up unbroken  
and blind.  
Here may a man gaze out to the night by the stars  
of it stricken,  
Out to the blind black air that the lightning  
divides and is dumb;  
Here, and look back in the tower where pallid  
shades murmur and quicken,  
Low laughs leap in the silence, sink to a sigh ere  
there come,

Far from the feet of the storm, a pulse like the  
beat of a drum.  
Throbs the wild sound through the storm, and the  
wings of it waken and quiver,  
Only the watcher, unmoved, looks on the face of  
the night ;  
Sees the strong hosts that unite, a fervent implac-  
able river  
Foaming from heaven and hell, two armies of  
crimson and white ;  
Flecked is the sky with their blood shed as by  
sabres of light.  
Now they are clutching his arms, the phantoms  
that throng there behind him,  
Foul and distorted, whose sight may not on men  
ever dawn ;  
Now they entice and entreat, now strive with fresh  
fury to bind him,  
Cords that are cut by an angel whose sword is  
unceasingly drawn,  
Glitters, and bids them fall back as if struck by  
the eye of the morn.  
Would he but turn he should see a woman laid  
naked before him,

Stretching her arms to his breast, reaching her  
lips to his face,  
Lips that should grant but one kiss ere the  
demons descended and tore him  
Limb from wet limb, and devoured, and bore this  
stained soul into space  
Far from the regions of hope and the lands that  
are holy with grace.  
Always the battle proceeds and always the tempest  
re-quickens,  
Pregnant with thunder, delivered when the swift  
knife is let flash ;  
Always the wind has its will and the slaughter-steam  
rises and thickens,  
Always the sea is a lion, enraged by the wind and  
its lash,  
Always the heavens resound with the thunder's  
unchangeable crash.  
Heaven has conquered, behold! and the hosts of  
the demons are fleeing,  
Dawn drives before her fair feet the feather-light  
wings of the gale,  
Silent the tower rears aloft its front into beauty  
and seeing,

Only the window is dark ; only there hangs like  
a veil  
Sleep on the chamber and clings. Heard I a  
woman-fiend wail ?  
Heard I the sound of a kiss ? Has man been  
destroyed in the daylight,  
Man whom the night could not quell ? What  
angel fled weeping away ?  
There in the East there extends a white light  
devouring the grey light,  
There the sun rises and brings hope with the  
dawn of the day,  
Silence hides certainty—surely voices of angels  
that pray,  
Surely the sound of delight, and of praise, and  
unspeakable glory  
Rings in the wind like a bell, and wakes the  
white air of the lea,  
All the bright sea is aflame, and the caps of it,  
golden or hoary,  
Leap in the light of the sun, in the light of the  
eyes of the sea.  
Triumph is born like a flower, and the soul of  
the adept is free.

## WHEAT AND WINE.

CLEAR, deep, and blue, the sky  
Is silvered by the morn,  
And where the dewdrop's eye  
Catches its brilliancy  
Strange lights and hues are born :  
I have seen twelve colours hover on a single spray  
of thorn.

There is a great grey tower  
Cut clear against the deep ;  
In the sun's wakening hour  
I think it has the power  
To touch the soul of sleep  
With its tender thought, and bid me to awake for  
joy—and weep.

This night I am earlier,  
No drowsy thought drew nigh

At eve to make demur  
That I be minister  
To Cynthia maidenly :  
All night I have watched her sail through a black  
and silver sky.

Within my soul there fight  
Two full and urgent streams,  
Work's woe and dream's delight :  
Like snow and sun they smite,  
Days battle hard with dreams :  
On a world of misty beauty the Aurora clearly  
beams.

So labour fought with pride,  
And love with idleness,  
My soul was torn and tried  
With the impassioned tide  
Of storm and deathly stress—  
I had never dreamed a lily should arise amid the  
press.

Yet such a flower sprang here  
Within this soul of mine,



When foemen bade good cheer  
To foemen, grew one clear  
    Concept, ideal, divine,  
Of a god of light and laughter, of a god of wheat  
    and wine.

Work on, strong mind, devise  
    The outer life aright ;  
Dream, subtle soul, and arise  
To noblest litanies  
    That pierce the mask of night—  
In a man work lifts his eyelids, but his dreams  
    lend eyes their light.

So dreams and days are wed,  
    And soul and body lie  
Ambrosial in Love's bed.  
See, heaven with stars is spread—  
    So glad of life am I  
If an angel came to call me I am sure I would not  
    die.

## A RONDEL.

THE wail of the wind in the desolate land  
Lifts voice where the heaven lies pallid and  
blind ;  
Sweeps over the hills from the sea and the sand  
The wail of the wind.

The earth gives a bleak echo back, and behind  
Lurk sorrows and sins in the grasp of a hand,  
And love and despair are the lords of mankind.

The mountains are steadfast ; immutably grand,  
Bid me to their bosom the chain to unbind :  
At peace and at pity I now understand  
The wail of the wind.

## THE VISIONS OF THE ORDEAL.

THE mind with visions clouded,  
    (Asleep? Awake?)  
By bloodless shades enshrouded,  
    (By whom, and for whose sake?)  
With visions dimly lighted,  
By its own shade affrighted,  
In its own light benighted,  
    The doors of hell may shake.

Unbidden spring the spectres  
    (Whence come, where bound?)  
To baffle those protectors  
    Whose wings are broad around.  
Uprise they and upbraid,  
Till life shrinks back afraid,  
And death itself dismayed  
    Sinks back to the profound.

Unholy phantom faces  
    (Of self, Of sin ?)  
Grin wild in all the places  
    Where blood is trodden in :  
The ground of night enchanted  
With deadly blooms is planted,  
Where evil beasts have panted  
    And snakes have shed their skin.

With poison steams the air,  
    And evil scent  
Is potent everywhere ;  
    Creation waits th' event :  
In silence, without sighing,  
The living and the dying,  
Oppressed and putrefying,  
    Curse earth and firmament.

What dreams disturb my slumber,  
    Or what sights seen ?  
Foul orgies without number  
    In dens and caves obscene,

Accurst, detestable,  
In which I laugh with hell,  
And furies chant the knell  
Of all things clean.

Ah God! the shapes that throng!  
Ah God! what eyes!  
The souls grown sharp and strong  
That my lips made their prize,  
The ruined souls, the wrecks  
Of bodies fair of flecks  
Long since, ere God did vex  
My soul with sacrifice.

Pale youth and bloodless maiden  
Whose breasts have bled,  
With wrath or mercy laden,  
By love or terror led,  
Reproachful or reviling,  
Some pure and some defiling,  
Some fearful and some smiling,  
Some living and some dead.

These press upon my lips  
    What lips of flame  
To burn me, unless slips  
    Some cooler kiss, from shame  
Washed clean by God's desire,  
To save me from their fire—  
Those kiss me and respire  
    The perfume of the Name.

Remorse and terror banished  
    By pitying lovers,  
Who from my eyes have vanished,  
    (The Lidless Eye discovers),  
Repenting souls that turn,  
Whose hearts with pity burn  
For me, who now discern  
    Their love around me hovers.

Their love wards from my head  
    The furious hate  
Of those loves doubly dead  
    That may not pass the gate :

By their entreating prayer  
The angels fill the air  
To guard my steps, to bare  
The veil inviolate.

The visions leave me now ;  
I sink to sleep ;  
Calm and content my brow,  
My eyes are large and deep.  
The morning shall behold  
On feet and plumes of gold  
My spirit soon enfold  
The flocks on heaven's steep.

Refreshed, encouraged, lightened,  
Sent on the Way  
Whose Sun and Star have brightened  
From dawning into day,  
I set my face, a flint,  
Toward where the holy glint  
Of lamps affords the hint  
That leads me—where it may.

## POWER.

THE mighty sound of forests murmuring  
In answer to the dread command ;  
The stars that shudder when their king  
Extends his hand,

His awful hand to bless, to curse , or moves  
Toward the dimmest den  
In the thick leaves, not known of loves  
Or nymphs or men ;

(Only the sylph's frail gossamer may wave  
Their quiet frondage yet,  
Only her dewy tears may lave  
The violet ;)

The mighty answer of the shaken sky  
To his supreme behest ; the call



Of ibex that behold on high  
Night's funeral,

And see the pale moon quiver and depart  
Far beyond space, the sun ascend  
And draw earth's globe unto his heart  
To make an end ;

The shriek of startled birds ; the sobs that tear  
With sudden terror the sharp sea  
That slept, and wove its golden hair  
Most mournfully ;

The rending of the earth at his command  
Who wields the wrath of heaven, and is dumb ;  
Hell starts up—and before his hand  
Is overcome.

It heard these voices, and beheld afar  
These dread works wrought at his behest :  
And on his forehead, lo ! a star,  
And on his breast.

And on his feet I knew the sandals were  
More beautiful than flame, and white,  
And on the glory of his hair  
The crown of night.

And I beheld his robe, and on its hem  
Were writ unlawful words to say,  
Brodered like lilies, with a gem  
More clear than day.

And round him shone so wonderful a light  
As when on Galilee  
Jesus once walked, and clove the night  
And calmed the sea.

I scarce could see his features for the fire  
That dwelt about his brow,  
Yet, for the whiteness of my own desire,  
I see him now ;

Because my footsteps follow his, and tread  
The awful bounds of heaven, and make

The very graves yield up their dead,  
And high thrones shake ;

Because my eyes still steadily behold,  
And dazzle not, nor shun the night,  
The foam-born lamp of beaten gold  
And secret might ;

Because my forehead bears the sacred name,  
And my lips bear the brand  
Of Him whose heaven is one flame,  
Whose holy hand

Gathers this earth, who built the vaults of space,  
Moulded the stars, and fixed the iron sea,  
Because His love lights through my face  
And all of me.

Because my hand may fasten on the sword  
If my heart falter not, and smite  
Those lampless limits most abhorred  
Of iron night,

And pass beyond their horror to attack  
Fresh foemen, light and truth to bring  
Through their untrodden fields of black,  
A victor king.

I know all must be well, all must be free,  
I know God as I know a friend ;  
I conquer, and most silently  
Await the end.

## VESPERS.

THE incense steams before the Christ,  
It wraps His feet with grey,  
A perfumed melancholy mist,  
Tears sacred from the day;  
And awe, a holiness, I wist,  
More sweet than man may say.

I bend my head to kiss the brow,  
Scarred and serene and wide,  
The bosom and the loin-cloth now  
And where the blood has dried,  
The blood whose purple tide doth flow  
From out the smitten side.

The fragrance of his skin begets  
Desire of holy things ;

Through the dim air a spirit frets  
His closely-woven wings ;  
Like love, upon my brow he sets  
The crown of many kings.

(The trembling demons of the sea  
Before the poet bend ;  
He greets the angels quietly  
As one who greets a friend ;  
He waiteth, passionless, to be  
A witness of the end.)

I chant in low sweet verses still  
A mystic song of dread,  
As one imposing all his will  
Upon the expectant dead ;  
And lights dip down, and shadows fill  
The dreams that haunt my head.

I sing strange stories of that world  
No man may ever see ;  
My lips with strong delight are curled  
To kiss the sacred knee,

And all my soul is dewed and pearled  
With tears of poetry.

The strong mysterious spell is cast  
To bind and to release ;  
To give the devils hope at last,  
To the unburied peace ;  
To gladden the reluctant past  
With silent harmonies.

The song grows wilder now and strives  
All heaven to enchain,  
As who should grasp a thousand lives,  
And draw their breath again  
Into some cavern where he dives,  
A hell of grisly pain.

And now behold! the barren Cross  
Bursts out in vernal flowers ;  
The music weeps, as on the moss  
The summer's kissing showers,  
And there sweep, as sweeps an albatross,  
The happy-hearted hours.

My rapt eyes grow more eager now,  
    God smites within the host,  
White fires illuminate my brow  
    Lit of the Holy Ghost ;  
I see the angel figures bow  
    On heaven's silent coast.

Eternity, a wheel of light,  
    And Time, a fleece of snow,  
I saw, and deep beyond the night,  
    The steady mystic glow  
Of that lamp's flame unearthly bright  
    That watches Earth below.

Long avenues of sleepy trees  
    And bowers arched with love,  
And kisses woven for a breeze,  
    And lips that scarcely move,  
Save as long ripples on the seas,  
    That murmur like a dove.

I saw the burning lips of God  
    Set fast on Mary's face,



I saw the Christ, with fire shod,  
Walk through the holy place,  
And the lilies rosier where he trod,  
Blushed for a little space.

I saw myself, and still I sang  
With lips in clearer tune,  
Like to the nightingale's that rang  
Through all those nights of June ;  
Such nights when stars in slumber hang  
Beneath the quiet moon.

Still, in those avenues of light,  
No maid, with golden zone,  
And lily garment that from sight  
Half hides the ivory throne,  
Lay in my arms the livelong night  
To call my soul her own.

The Christ's cold lips my lips did taste  
On Time's disastrous tide,  
His bruised arms my soul embraced,  
My soul twice crucified ;

And always then the thin blood raced  
From out the stricken side.

The incense fumes, the chant is low,  
Perfume around is shed ;  
I am as one of Them who know  
The secrets of the dead :  
The sorrows that walk to and fro,  
The love that hides his head.

O living Head! whose thorns are keen  
To bruise and pierce and slay ;  
O Christ! whose eyes have always been  
Fixed fast upon the way,  
Where dim Jerusalem was seen  
A city cold and grey!

The flowers of fire that grow beneath,  
And blossom on the Tree  
Are fed from his despair and death  
Who sings of land and sea,  
And all those mountains where thy breath,  
Jehovah, still must be.

The censer swings to slower time,  
The darkness falleth deep :  
My eyes, so solemn and sublime,  
Relent, and close, and weep :  
And on the silence, like a chime,  
I heard the wings of Sleep.

## BY THE CAM.

TWILIGHT is over, and the noon of night  
Draws to its zenith. and beyond the stream  
Dance the wild witches that dispel my dream  
Of gardens naked in Diana's sight.  
Foul censers, altars desecrated, blight  
The corpse-lit river, whose dank vapours teem  
Heavy and horrible, a deadly steam  
Of murder's black intolerable might.

The stagnant pools rejoice ; the human feast  
Revels at height ; the sacrament is come ;  
God wakes no lightning in the broken East ;  
His awful thunders listen and are dumb ;  
Earth gapes not for that sin ; the skies renew  
At break of day their vestiture of blue.

## ASTROLOGY.

A LONELY spirit seeks the midnight hour,  
When souls have power  
To cast away one moment bonds of clay,  
And touch the day  
With pallid wistful lips beyond the earth,  
And bring to birth  
New thoughts with which life long has travailed ;  
As if one dead  
Should rise and utter secrets of the tomb,  
And from hell's womb  
Or heaven's breast bring all the load of fears,  
Toils of long years,  
Sorrows of life and agonies of death,  
Hard caught-up breath,  
The labouring hands of love, the cheeks of  
shame,  
The gloomy flame

Of lust, the cruel torment of desire  
More than hell fire,  
And bid them fade, as if the bryony  
Let her flower die,  
And banished them through space, as if a star  
Dropped through the far  
Vault of the sky, and, as a lamp extinct  
With blood-red tinct,  
Went out. So lonely in mysterious night  
A wild, strange light  
Flickers around the sacred head of man,  
And bids him scan  
The scroll of heaven, and see if there be not,  
Black with no blot  
Of cloud, but golden lettered on the blue  
That mothers dew,  
This message of good hope, good trust, good  
fate  
And good estate :  
Work on, hope ever, let your faith be built  
Of gold unguilt ;  
Your love exceed the starry vault for height,  
The heaven for might ;

Your faith wax firmer than a ship at sleep  
On the grey deep,  
Anchored in some most certain anchorage  
From ocean's rage ;  
Your patience stand when mountains shake and  
quail  
Before the gale  
Of God's great tribulation. Make thee sure  
Thou canst endure.  
And work, work ever, sleep not, gird thy head  
With garlands red  
Of blood from swollen veins forced in bitter toil  
To win some spoil  
Of knowledge from the caverns of the deep.  
So shall the steep  
Pathways of heaven gleam with loftier fires  
Than earth's desires.  
So shalt thou conquer Space, and lastly climb  
The walls of Time,  
And by the golden path the great have trod  
Reach up to God!"

## DÆDALUS.

THE scorpion kisses and the stings of sin  
    Cling hard within  
The heart whose fibres, like a slender vine,  
    Earth's hopes entwine,  
And all the furies of the air caress  
    The sorceress  
Whose bosom beats in unison with shame,  
    A flower of flame  
Whose root most secretly made fast in hell  
Is watered by the seraphim that fell.

The heart wherein is lit the sacred fire  
    Of high desire,  
Burnt clean from all untruth and sacrilege,  
    Her wings may fledge,  
And fly a little in the broad sweet air,  
    Till unaware



The Spirit of Jehovah, like a dove  
    On wings of love,  
Breathe the sweet kiss, a sacrament untold,  
And clothe the heart's desire with flames of gold.

No rash Icarian wing this passion plies,  
    But sanctifies,  
As if a censer (that a cherub swings)  
    Blossomed with wings  
And floated up, an incense-breathing bird,  
    With songs half heard  
Before the throne of God. Even so this life  
    Of sordid strife  
Is made most holy, beautiful, and pure,  
By this desire, if this desire endure.

So to the altar of the Highest aspire  
    Those souls whose fire  
Has on it cast one grain of pure incense,  
    (Who guesses—whence?)  
Those souls that cast their trammels off, and spring  
    On eager wing,

Immaculate, new-born, toward the sky,  
    And shall not die  
Until they cleave at last the lampless dome,  
And lose their tent because they find their home.

## EPILOGUE.

LIKE snows on the mountain, unlifted  
By weather or wind as it blows,  
In hollows the heaps of it drifted,  
The splendour of fathomless snows ;  
So measure and meaning are shifted to fashion a  
rose.

The garland I made in my sorrow  
Was woven of infinite peace ;  
The joy that was white on the morrow  
Made music of viols at ease ;  
The thoughts of the Highest would borrow the  
roar of the seas.

This pastime of hope and of labour  
Fled singing through bountiful hours,  
With sleep for a bride, for a neighbour

With Death in the blossoming bowers  
That slays with his merciless sabre the passion of  
flowers.

This pastime had hope for its metre,  
And trust in high God for the tune,  
And passion of sorrow made sweeter  
Than loves of the leafiest June,  
When Artemis' arrows are fleeter than rays of the  
moon.

My hope in the ocean was founded,  
Nor changed for the wind and the tide ;  
My love by the heaven was bounded,  
And knew not a barrier beside ;  
My faith beyond heaven was grounded, as God to  
abide.

Though death be the stain on our roses,  
The roses of heaven are white ;  
Though day on the world of us closes,  
The stars only dream of the night  
As of music that roars and reposes and dies in  
delight.

Dead stars in the season of sighing,  
Lost worlds of unspeakable pain,  
White winds in the winter-tide dying,  
Or pestilence risen from rain ;  
So thoughts are that perish for lying and rise not  
again.

Blue waves in the summer uncrested,  
New homes for the fair and the free,  
Bright breezes in forest-leaves nested,  
Sweet birds in the flowering tree ;  
So thoughts that by truth have been tested sing  
down to the sea.

But weak as the flowers of summer  
Are the flowers that float on my stream ;  
My song-birds to others are dumber  
Than voices half heard in a dream ;  
My muse, louder gods overcome her, the eyes of  
them gleam.

The sorrow that woke me to singing  
Is deeper than songs that I sing ;  
The birds that fresh music are bringing

No chords for my memory bring ;  
Those lips like a soul that are clinging most  
silently cling.

Take though for these verses, though time be  
So sure and so swift for thy feet,  
Though far from this England thy clime be  
In years that sway slow as the wheat,  
Take thought, for an hour let my rhyme be not  
wholly unsweet.

For truth and desire and devotion  
May lend through the verses a voice,  
They tremble with violent motion,  
They yearn to be fair for thy choice  
As billows and winds of the ocean that roar and  
rejoice.

For winds that are shaken and riven  
I bound by my power unto me ;  
For these have I battled and striven  
With winds that are rapid and free ;  
With weapons of words I have driven the pulse of  
the sea.

There steals through my coldness a fire,  
Between my slow words is a sword,  
One lit by the heart of desire,  
One sharp in the hand of the lord;  
To these that sink, sleep, and expire, your welcome  
accord.

With winds and white seas for your raiment  
Your stature immutably stands:  
My love, with no claim, as a claimant  
Came seeking out truth in the sands,  
Found truth, and must place in poor payment this  
book in your hands.



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