

THE WINGED BEETLE

*This edition consists of 50 copies on
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THE WINGED BEETLE

BY ALEISTER CROWLEY

“There is a budding morrow in midnight”

PRIVATELY PRINTED
1910

I Dedicate this Collection

of Poems

to

JOHN FREDERICK CHARLES FULLER

DEDICATION

*Out of the East, out of the East
Didst thou flame forth, O Son of Man,
The chainless champion of the Beast!
A warrior comet, thy plumes fan
The shuddering air's black wildernesses
To fiends' insatiate caresses.*

*Thou camest crowned and helmed and armed,
Sworded, a mighty man of war:
Swayed all the stars, aghast, alarmed
As at the Thunderbolt of Thor!
The very aethyr rocked and shook
At thine indomitable look!*

*[Here must we utterly restrict
Our theological remarks.
One whom not Heaven could contradict
Says: Now, Sir, if you please, no larks!
Hence for third stanza (with a curse)
I write instead this sorry verse.]*

DEDICATION

*Yea, with one song of starry flame
In brilliance of immortal youth
Didst thou stand stedfast and proclaim
Freedom and Ecstasy and Truth,
Erect amid the wreck of Things
Poised on inexorable wings!*

.
*So much the universe may see
When its bat's-eyes may endure the sun:
This secret rests my prize to me,
That I knew thee, surpassed of none,
Fighting and faithful to the end,
A Perfect knight, a perfect friend.*

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My obligations are due to the editors of "The Equinox," "Vanity Fair," "Parsifal," and other papers, from which most of these poems are reprinted.

ROSA COELI

I

ROSE of the World!
Ruby with blood from the bright veins of God
Caught in the chalice of your heart, and pearled
With dew at many a melting period
When the amethyst lustre of your eyes dissolves
The veil that hides your naked splendour
From these infirm resolves
And halting loves of your poor poet's soul
With radiance mild and tender,
So that I see awhile the golden goal!
Yea! all your light involves
Me, me tenebrous, me too cold and base
Ever to kindle to the maiden face
(Three years my wife, three years of me unwon!)
That would be mine, be mine,
Were I but man enough
To endure the rapture of that sudden sun
The knowledge of your love,
The assumption of me into that sweet shrine
Whose godhead duly knows
Only the one wind of the utmost heaven
Through hyacinthine deeps
Down from the sapphirine steps

And azure abyss that blows ;
 Only the one sun on the steppéd snows ;
 Only the one star of the sister seven ;
 Only the one moon in the orchard close
 In the one hour that unto love is given
 Of all the hours of bliss ;
 Only the one joy in a world of woes ;
 Only the one spark in the storm-cloud riven ;
 Only the one shaft through the rose-dawn driven,
 Thy shaft, Eros !
 Not as Apollo or as Artemis
 Loosing gray death from golden thong
 To slay the poet in a song,
 The lover in a kiss ;
 But to divide the inmost marrow
 With that ensanguine arrow ;
 But to unite each bleeding part
 Of that most universal heart ;
 Leaving us slaves, and kings ;
 Bound, and with eagle's wings ;
 One soul, comprising all that may be thought,
 One soul, conscious of naught.

II

Rose of the World ! Your mystic petals spread
 Like wings over my head.
 The tide of burning blood upon my face
 Drowns all the floating images
 That danced their spectre saraband
 In Bacchic race, phastastical embrace,

Upon the sepulchres, the dizzy seas
Of this my mind, Sabbatic rout that spanned
These straits my soul! Ay, they are dead and drowned
(And damned, I doubt!) Ah God! I am exhaust
In the red moon's holocaust!
God! God! The chasms secret and profound
Suck down the porphyry flood
Of your maniacal, ensorcelled blood
That maddens and bewitches.
My life is suffocated—now I swoon—
I die! I am in hell, red hell, red hell,
Circles me closer; all the soul's afire
As if the boreal moon
With all the icy Lapland hags
That shiver on 's hibernal crags
Were but a thin white shell
Hoarding the seed of many a million suns,
Giving its life up unto its desire—
Out bursts the womb of my unguessed-at godhead;
The rose flames out in the flood; and all at once,
A brilliance disembodied,
I am shattered like the dew upon your leaves;
So that the lampless hour
Strikes, and an unborn universe perceives
Its lonely mother-flower,
Us, in our love's arcane Briatic bower.
We scatter light, a music-tingling shower;
We breathe out life, a crimson whisper;

We radiate love, a velvet-soft complaint,
Most like the echo of a chime at vesper
Rung far across narcissus-haunted leas,
Lilied lagoons, and moon-enchanted seas,
By the high-bosomed boy, large-eyed, with fasting faint
That shares an hermitage with some devoutest saint.

III

As, in our life, I passed the awful gate
Where like a Cerberus sate
The triform silence, Fate,
And bade the red blood bloom
Within that Palace of untasted gloom ;
As, in our life, confronting the black forms—
Colossal ghosts, like storms!—
I did abide in the most holy hall
And let the dread word fall,
Nor bade the red axe falter
There as I bowed mine head
Upon the amber altar,
And shed my life out there before ye all,
Careless if I had summoned from the skies
Some young true God, or spoiled the sacrifice,
And were but dead as any man is dead!
So I have given up my inmost life
Even unto you, sweet wife,
Careless—yet conscious of the babe-stirred womb
Of some dread Mother older than the Tomb,
Wiser than Life, more pitiful than Death.

IV

Your wine-stained and wine-coloured hair unloosing,
Mingle your wine-wise breath,
Spiritual siren! with the scent seducing
Your body sheds, scarred with the bleeding kisses
My tenderness bit in,
Like to a lion feeding in wild white wildernesses,
My spirit sensible to your skin :
Mingle them to a crescent character
That shall set shimmering all the parchment fine
And send a steam like wine
Laden with ecstasy and pain
Choral through all the passion-stained and passion-
trembling air.
Inspire a closer strain
Such as strange orchids give, and hyacinths,
Among the broken pedestals and plinths]
Where the gray Lords of Time, of Time forgotten,
Lie in the herbage rotten
Of the unpeopled forest.

V

O Song! O amorous and seducing,
I see thee as thou soarest,
So that, the girders of the soul unloosing,
That Child of you and me, O rose of roses,
That Child whose life encloses
Our lives, is therefore I, may wander ever

By the fritillary-fringed river,
Through lotus gardens of the sleepy gods,
On hills where every timid oread tries
Blue gentian as disguise
From holier (though she think profaner) eyes,
On seas where, it may be, (to even the odds!)
Each nymph and undine issues from the foam
Armed with a pearly mirror and with a coral comb
To tire her beauty, lure me to the lakes
Of light where strikes the day to hyaline floors
Whereon blithe fish and emerald water snakes
Play all the day, and all their innocence adores
Is some old anchor with its rusty flakes
Fallen from God knows what forgotten ship.
No! not in Fancy's palace will I play,
Nor in imagination's deep will dip
The timid foot; but rather will I strip
Each rag of thought, and leap
Into the sunset deep
Still glowing with the glamour
Of your life's blood, and ashen gold
With floating gossamer your hair, that might enfold
A giant god, and strangle him anon
With starry serpents like Laocoon,
A stoic god that might enamour
And draw him with its tendrils into time.

VI

My mouth was wet with the delicious crime
Of kissing you, one night, when in a vision

Your hair was like a forest of tall pines
In winter; black strange dwarfs with crooked spines
And elfin eyes, and bleating mouths that worked
All manner of grimace and bleak derision
Bore them away; hollow-eyed ghosts that lurked
About the sea made thereof masts; they fitted
Tall ships and goodly, furrowing the deep
To harvest merchandise; strong and keen-witted
The mariners; oho! the breezes leap
Like lovers on them; lo! they fared forth
To South, East, West and North,
Iceland, the Indies, Sicily, and Spain. . . .
Lo! men have heard of all these ships not one, not one for
ever more again.

VII

Seeing your naked body in the bed
Against the jetty silk, I thought you lay
Just as the Milky Way
Lies in the unkenned hollows of the sky.
One swarthy ray of red
Leapt from your hither eye,
And straight my dream began
To map that heaven—your eye, Aldeboran!
I launched the magic boat, and early found
The Pirate's cave and the Enchaunted Ground;
The cedared Lebanon,
The Wizard's Grot, the well of spice,
The Hanging Gardens of great Babylon:—
All these then did I visit in a trice,

And even did confirm the Bible tale
 By playing Jonah to your Jonah's whale.
 So, to the stars!

VIII

A poet is at ease
 In all such voyages :
 Why, as a boy, I steered
 Up to the Scorpion and tweaked his tail,
 Plucked foolish Capricornus by the beard
 And kissed the Blessed Damozel that leaned upon the
 golden rail,
 Drank from the glad rim of the grail
 Or soothed the squally Twins (for they could weep!)
 And while I smiled "In Heaven how safe I am!"
 Found myself in my little bed asleep
 Having been butted thither by the Ram.

IX

But in the dream of you, my starry sweet,
 It is my earth I lose six times in seven.
 I have the Freedom of the City of Heaven ;
 But strange (though fair) are all the stars I meet.
 The dull familiar and the homely drear
 Are lost for ever. Being asleep, I fear.
 Wake! Let me cut the cable of my mind!
 My harbour lies before, and not behind.
 Dreams are all lies ; those jetty shadows lie
 When the full moon doth crown the midnight sky ;
 But shadows image truth, and dreams come true,
 For when I wake my arms are full of you.

X

Another time, through tides from chaos rolled
I was upborne by this my scarabee
With scales like plates of porphyry and gold
And wings like flakes of the green light that pours
Through the blue heart of the Hawaian sea.
So to the hollow shores
We came, and did behold a silver avenue
That wound through cypress groves and woods of yew
Unto the hills; hideous hyaenas laughed,
Mean jackals snarled and screamed, and wild dogs bayed:
Bayed at the waning moon that lapsed above
Out of all light (had I not been in love,
And drunken on the quintessential draught)
So that the forest folk were sore afraid.
But when I came upon the open space
I might perceive my lady's face,
And knew she waned because that I was late.
Twin hills like ivory glinted; on their slopes
Blue rivers coursed, and many a nightingale
Told all its tremulous tale
To viewless dryads, or elate
Trilled out its bleeding hopes
Into the mist of light that hid (I know)
Bassarids, Bassarids Dionysus-mad.
Then, in that vision glad,
I saw twin towers of crimson ruby rise
Into the scented snow
That fell like dew from the heart-hungry skies.

ROSA COELI

But when I came between the hills, behold
The moon's silver and gold
Stood in the zenith, that I lost my guide.
There stood I passion-pale
Like a lost lamb that seeks the starry fold
Within that warm and scented vale
Clothed with narcissus, hyacinth, tuberose,
Snowdrop and lily, all white, all cream, all gold,
With never a blush like dawn's to flush or fail
Upon their garden-close.
O wide is the world, wide, wide!
Be sure that I was lost,
Lost, lost for ever; are there palimpsests
Wherein a man might study at great cost
His journey thence? O Rose of gramarye,
My riddle you shall ree.
My head was happy, laid betwixt your breasts.

XI

Another time I passed the holy well
And plunged (as Phoebus in the western ocean)
Into a forest of fine flame that crowned
The holy hill; all was enchanted ground,
The flames like scented tendrils of a vine
Or sensitive rays that spell
Strange curves to match their master-god's emotion,
And ever nearer to the scarlet slash
I clomb, where the strange perfumes struck me like a lash
And the dread fires scorched up my life.
There, O insufferable delight

I mock with the weak word of wife,
I was sucked down into the crater rim,
Into the crimson damask dim
Candescent cave of night—
O then I mock myself with words!
They are like cardinal-coloured birds
And honey-coloured doves :
Yet one thing mortal serves to name another
As mortal as itself.
Why must our deathless loves
Be stained by the black-hearted mother
That called things by dead names ?
The sunny elf
Language shall play with the ethereal flames
But never dare approach
The central and volcanic fire,
The inmost Force, nor, like a glittering army
Send forth its scouts to encroach
Upon our citadel desire.
Ay! though these flaming sentences
Eat like strong acid in my vitals, char me,
Blast me like lightning, smash me like black seas
Towering above the lofty ship
Whose masts did menace to the skies,
They are but plaisters of cool leaves that dip
In pleasant water to the white-hot wise
Terrible flames of hell that would devour me,
Did not the raptures of thy love embower me
In meads Elysian, fields of foamless fire,
Nights of invincible desire,

Things beyond words, beyond the want of them
 Beyond the pauses and the ecstasies
 Where should my dream get such a diadem
 Of voiceless thoughts as these ?

XII

These dreams reform
 Themselves into a rainbow to the storm
 Of simple passion ; let me from the string
 Take many-coloured wing
 As a swift-thoughted arrow
 Vertically shot against the sun !
 I would you were a sow
 And these my verses were your squealing farrow,
 That they might suck the milk of your perfection
 Unto them, that the world's ear might be won,
 The world's heart melted now,
 The world's mind drawn from its dejection,
 By the sure fact that not in idle dream
 But sole in sense supreme
 Certainly visible and tangible
 Were you, O Rose, whose root remotest hell
 Nourishes, and whose top flowers higher than the
 Throne
 Of the Eternal one.
 Thou shouldst not leave me alone
 To gaze upon the sun
 And take the glory of his excellence—
 Not unto me close curled,
 And on my body's beauty crucified

In silver spirit clad with gold of sense,
But sending forth thy rays life-pearled
As a bridegroom squandering his strength upon the bride
—Thou art sufficient to redeem the world.

XIII

O! is the secret of the starry deep
Nothing but pain and pleasure, grief and joy?
Is God a wanton boy
To play with us so bitter cheap
By such a jewelled light? Be thine the power,
Rose of the Stars, in this thy tortured hour
When the wee lips that clung to thee are cold,
To give the world a light of other gold
From that men hoard, from that the suns afford
In their implacable cars
As they roll on impassive; bid thy Lord
(O Rose, Rose of the Stars!)
And slave make known thy beauty and thy passion
In his imperfect fashion,
So that thy wisdom and thy strength are sold
In every mart of earth;
So that thine eyes enfold
The universe in one great look of love
Bring this, bring this to birth!
And neither hate below, nor hate above,
Nor chance, nor force, nor cunning shall deprive
Man of thy gift, a love alive
With more than men to-day can understand.

XIV

Give me thine hand,
Rose of the Stars, and we will soar above
Wisdom and Strength and Love,
Into the sphere where all delight retires
In azure flames and silver-edgéd fires.
Now through the veil we shoot
Like snaky lightning through a thundercloud
Up to the awful precipice-skirted place
Where deaf, blind, palsied, mute
There sits the leprous God ; we laugh aloud
Seeing him face to face,
Blowing him like a shaken sheaf of snow
With a brief gust of wind
Over the cliffs of his ensanguine throne ;
Seating ourselves thereon, as men shall know,
Above soul, spirit, heart, thought, being, mind,
All—but most irrevocably entwined
And irrevocably alone.

XV

There was a boy with O! the face of dawn,
The mother-of-pearl that shimmered on his skin.
The breasts like golden roses circling red,
The limbs like limbs of a young fawn
For liveness—O! for innocence of sin
His eyes burned wondrous bright, his sun-crowned head
Danced with its sweet and sacred hopes,
So that he paced the enamelled slopes

Laughing upon the laughing lake below,
Expectant of some strange experience
Worth all the woes of sense,
Some drop of nectar worth a world of wine,
Some grace of One divine
Worth more than all life's grace, and more than life
intense.

Was there a wonder if the silken boy
Found her a-playing on the bluebell marge
And drank from golden vats the wine of joy ;
Hot, eager, overcoming in her breath,
As she would draw him to those large
And firm white breasts and mix her liquid life
With his in pagan strife ?
Or with a grace like God, a stealth like love,
Pour on him from above
Wine from the purple vats of death ?
Nay! 'tis no wonder—shall they wonder then,
These bat-eyed newspaper-besotted men,
If thou and I have found the Elixir rare
That giveth Life to those whoso drinketh it,
The Stone beyond compare,
The harmony of the Circle and the Square,
All that surpasseth mortal wit
Even to imagine ? we have found it, Rose,
Rose of the Stars, Rose of the utmost snows !
Where ? Where Love knows.

ABJAD-I-AL'AIN

Ⲙ

A Labyrinth do I the Paraclete
Eidolize in the House of gnathous Rock
Starry with scent of dittany of Crete,
EROTIC with the love-chants of a cock
CROWing of her whose gnostic lips are wan,
LEYlah conceiving by the Lycian!

Ⲛ

Black is the midnight when that wintry bird
Stands on the snowbank like an ermine tail
Blotting the royal robes: he cries a word
That gilds the red blood in the blessed Grail;
Wherefore the beetle ramps upon the Hill,
And argent angels trumpet sour and shrill.

ⲗ

Jinn gnash their wings and lurk upon the West:
Like camels they abandon life for love,
Sucking green poison from a dugless breast.
Such is the echo in these towers, above
The incandescent sea that rolls about
The soul of God, its ravelin and redoubt.

7

Drear and devout the dead monks moan and rave
 Within these cells of this my labyrinth :
 They couple with the ghuls upon my grave,
 And on my monument's marmoreal plinth
 They rage in amorous rituals unto Pan,
 Whose leer breeds Thersites and Caliban.

7

Hour after hour *one* toils about the maze :
Two are embayed in bowers of moss and rose :
Three quarrel for the clue their spite erases :
Four squat like sun-kissed archipelagoes :
Five make an holy Nun (as none who counts)
 And track Dione to her lustral founts.

7

Woe to the world! the bull and girl conjoin.
 The monster guards the grot: the sly goat grins
 When priest and prelate privately purloin
 The perfume of our quintessential sins.
 Woe! when that pizzle, ripe for Hathor's Cow,
 Writes the red blush on Pasiphae's brow!

7

Zazel, the saturnine, the brooding fiend,
 Listens and laughs at this ecstatic "woe!"
 His desert teats from twisted terrors weaned
 The ghost of Chasmodai: our vials flow
 With galangal and marjoram and myrrh,
 As Rhodope rapes life from Lucifer.

π

Chryselephantine cross! how good you gleam!
 How gods and goats respire the dark perfume
 Of oliban, and scent the erotic steam
 Of myrtle in the cypress groves of gloom
 That rolls and gathers into shapes of bronze
 Who dream strange dreams and chant strange orisons.

ϖ

Temple and Thora, Taro and Throa!
 These are the goals and gates whereto ye tend,
 O ribbed red barrows, whose virilia
 Earn muliebria at the smooth sad end.
 Alas! ye have not learned with God and me
 To say your father's name A-dun-a-i!

ρ

Iheshwah hath the tooth between the nail
 And window in his word: therein is joy.
 But whoso dons the gilded coat of mail
 Takes from Damascus dame, and leaves the boy
 To wander as he will with whips and sighs,
 And vain hibiscus cloistered in his thighs.

σ

Kabus the nightmare makes me mad for kus
 When kun and kir are all the k's I can:
 I grow Ex Epicuri grege sus:
 I shave with steel these hairy marks of man:
 Then Sappho swoops her sweetest on the goal
 Of scorching blood, and swallows up my soul.

↳

Lola be mine, and Lola rave astrain
 Who findeth in my labyrinth a pool
 To give her ganja-gramarye in grain :—
 The boy is blind, but beautiful, O fool!
 He cannot see the scars of thy disease
 Lydia and Lalage divide his fees.

↻

Myrrh be thy music, harping thy perfume,
 When thou canst sit upon the foursquare stone
 Shaped like an egg, well hid within the tomb
 Where Jesus draws: “Consult that cruel crone
 Who mutters mantrams to her swart tom-cat,
 And trims her broomstick toward Ararat!”

⌋

Nina, the navrant enervating nun,
 Anoint thee with the lewd laborious oil
 She gathered of the sow-sweat in the sun
 And quintessentialized with tearing toil!
 Let her anoint thee! thou shalt stand as stiff
 As unicorn confronting hippogriff.

□

So fly above the hedges that confound
 Thy clue-shorn chase: is Lampsacus afire
 With sunset on its marble walls, enwound
 As an hog's heart in the cobalt desire?
 Is there a Tuscan holding to thine eyes
 A tusky marvel to affright the skies?

۷

Arab and I admit its gusty fear.

We nurse the world in our expanded wombs.
 With ambergris and cedar-oil we rear
 Colossal children stolen out of tombs.
 We hide them in our bowels, sooth to say,
 To show them to the Lord on Judgment Day.

۵

Priapus laughs, and we behold him Pan ;
 Then if I smile, in me Panthea glows ;
 I am a panther, mark the caravan,
 Devour a child, and plant a royal rose.
 Then to my rose if Pan is his own Pandar
 My horn is worth the two of Alexander.

۳

Tzedeq of God that winged magnificence
 Is called by sylphs. It pours the pregnant pearls
 Even on the thuribles of gilt incense
 That smoke within the garlands of its girls.
 So from mere myrrh mirific murders come,
 And holy bane from plain olibanum.

۱۲

Qaiyum thine anguish, with the thorny crown
 Lashing thy brow, the jackal's direful din
 Breaking thy body! Could not eiderdown
 Serve thee? His kisses cool thee? Is not sin
 The royal road to sainthood, eremite
 Whose purple pestle shuns the Dog's delight?

٦

Rays of Aldeboran invade the coil
 Of this my labyrinth and point the way.
 Lick Nina for the consecrated oil!
 Scrape Jesus for the sacramental clay!
 See how the fumes of Voodoo curl around
 Thy Wanga-circle, the enchanted ground.

٧

Shaitan appears. But gloomier clouds of smoke
 Than hell's are here, where wand and spell combine
 The utmost spawn of chaos to invoke
 As gods within the most supernal shrine.
 I am the master. Will not God contest
 The last grim struggle for his Alkahest?

٨

Tangri suffices me, and I am He,
 The bournless spirit with the sighted feet.
 Twain pearls and seventy shimmer upon me:
 My food is myrrh and dittany of Crete.
 Dolphin and Phoenix round the Maypole tree
 Dance to the wedding march of El Luty.

Explicit Abjad-i-Al'ain

THE HERMIT

AN ATTACK ON BARBERCRAFT

AT LAST an end of all I hoped and feared!
Muttered the hermit through his elfin beard.

Then what art thou? the evil whisper whirred.
I doubt me sorely if the hermit heard.

To all God's questions never a word he said,
But simply shook his venerable head.

God sent all plagues; he laughed and heeded not,
Till people took him for an idiot.

God sent all joys; he only laughed amain,
Till people certified him as insane.

But somehow all his fellow-lunatics
Began to imitate his silly tricks.

And stranger still, their prospects so enlarged
That one by one the patients were discharged.

God asked him by what right he interfered;
He only laughed into his elfin beard.

When God revealed Himself to mortal prayer
He gave a fatal opening to Voltaire.

Our hermit had dispensed with Sinai's thunder,
But on the other hand he made no blunder ;

He knew (no doubt) that *any* axiom
Would furnish bricks to build some Donkeydom.

But!—all who urged that hermit to confess
Caught the infection of his happiness.

I would it were my fate to dree his weird ;
I think that I will grow an elfin beard.

THE WIZARD WAY

VELVET soft the night-star glowed
Over the untrodden road,
Through the giant glades of yew
Where its ray fell light as dew,
Lighting up the shimmering veil
Maiden pure and aery frail
That the spiders wove to hide
Blushes of the sylvan bride
Earth, that trembled with delight
At the male caress of Night.

Velvet soft the wizard trod
To the Sabbath of his God.
With his naked feet he made
Starry blossoms in the glade,
Softly, softly, as he went
To the sombre sacrament,
Stealthy stepping to the tryst
In his gown of amethyst.

Earlier yet his soul had come
To the Hill of Martyrdom,
Where the charred and crooked stake
Like a black envenomed snake

By the hangman's hands is thrust
Through the wet and writhing dust,
Never black and never dried
Heart's blood of a suicide.

He had plucked the hazel rod
From the rude and goatish god,
Even as the curved moon's waning ray
Stolen from the King of Day.
He had learnt the elvish sign ;
Given the Token of the Nine :
Once to rave, and once to revel,
Once to bow before the devil,
Once to swing the thurible,
Once to kiss the goat of hell,
Once to dance the aspen spring,
Once to croak, and once to sing,
Once to oil the savoury thighs
Of the witch with sea-green eyes
With the unguents magical.
Oh the honey and the gall
Of that black enchanter's lips
As he croons to the eclipse,
Mingling that most puissant spell
Of the giant gods of hell
With the four ingredients
Of the evil elements ;
Ambergris from golden spar,
Musk of ox from Mongol jar,
Civet from a box of jade,

THE WIZARD WAY

Mixed with fat of many a maid
Slain by the inchauntments cold
Of the witches wild and old.

He had crucified a toad
In the basilisk abode,
Muttering the Runes averse
Mad with many a mocking curse.

He had traced the serpent sigil
In his ghastly virgin vigil.
Sursum cor! the elfin hill,
Where the wind blows deadly chill
From the world that wails beneath
Death's black throat and lipless teeth
There he had stood—his bosom bare—
Tracing life upon the Air
With the crook and with the flail
Lashing forward on the gale,
Till its blade that wavereth
Like the flickering of Death
Sank before his subtle fence
To the starless sea of sense.

Now at last the man is come
Haply to his halidom.
Surely as he waves his rod
In a circle on the sod
Springs the emerald chaste and clean
From the duller paler green.

Surely in the circle millions
Of immaculate pavilions
Flash upon the trembling turf
Like the sea-stars in the surf—
Millions of bejewelled tents
For the warrior sacraments.
Vaster, vaster, vaster, vaster,
Grows the stature of the master ;
All the ringed encampment vies
With the infinite galaxies.
In the midst a cubic stone
With the Devil set thereon ;
'Hath a lamb's virginal throat ;
'Hath the body of a stoat ;
'Hath the buttocks of a goat ;
'Hath the sanguine face and rod
Of a goddess and a god !

Spell by spell and pace by pace !
Mystic flashes swing and trace
Velvet soft the sigils stepped
By the silver-starred adept.
Back and front, and to and fro,
Soul and body sway and flow
In vertiginous caresses
To imponderable recesses,
Till at last the spell is woven,
And the faery veil is cloven
That was Sequence, Space, and Stress
Of the soul-sick consciousness.

THE WIZARD WAY

“Give thy body to the beasts!
Give thy spirit to the priests!
Break in twain the hazel rod
On the virgin lips of God!
Tear the Rosy Cross asunder!
Shatter the black bolt of thunder!
Suck the swart ensanguine kiss
Of the resolute abyss!”
Wonder-weft the wizard heard
This intolerable word.

’Smote the blasting hazel rod
On the scarlet lips of God;
Trampled Cross and rosy core;
Brake the thunder-tool of Thor;
Meek and holy acolyte
Of the priestly hells of spite
Sleek and shameless catamite
Of the beasts that prowl by night!

Like a star that streams from heaven
Through the virgin airs light-riven,
From the life there shot and fell
An admirable miracle.
Carved minute and clean, a key
Of purest lapis-lazuli
More blue than the blind sky that aches
(Wreathed with the stars, her torturing snakes)
For the dead god’s kiss that never wakes;

Shot with golden specks of fire
Like a virgin with desire.
Look, the levers! fern-frail fronds
Of fantastic diamonds,
Glimmering with ethereal azure
In each exquisite embrasure.
On the shaft the letters laced,
As if dryads lunar-chaste
With the satyrs were embraced,
Spelled the secret of the key:
Sic pervenias. And he
Went his wizard way, inweaving
Dreams of things beyond believing.

When he will, the weary world
Of the senses closely curled
Like a serpent round his heart
Shakes herself and stands apart.
So the heart's blood flames expanding,
Strenuous, urgent, and commanding;
And the key unlocks the door
Where his love lies evermore.

She is of the faery blood;
All smaragdine flows its flood.
Glowing in the amber sky
To ensorcelled porphyry.
She hath eyes of glittering flake
Like a cold grey water-snake.

THE WIZARD WAY

She hath naked breasts of amber
Jetting wine in her bed-chamber
Whereof whoso stoops and drinks
Rees the riddle of the Sphinx.

She hath naked limbs of amber
Whereupon her children clamber.
She hath five navels rosy-red
From the five wounds of God that bled ;
Each wound that mothered her still bleeding,
And on that blood her babes art feeding.
Oh ! like a rose-winged pelican
She hath bred blessed babes to Pan !
Oh ! like a lion-hued nightingale
She hath torn her breast on thorns to avail
The barren rose-tree to renew
Her life with that disastrous dew,
Building the rose o' the world alight
With music out of the pale moonlight !
O She is like the river of blood
That broke from the lips of the bastard god,
When he saw the sacred mother smile
On the ibis that flew up the foam of Nile
Bearing the limbs unblessed, unborn,
That the lurking beast of Nile had torn !
So (for the world is weary) I
These dreadful souls of sense lay by.
I sacrifice these impure shoon
To the cold ray of the waning moon.
I take the forked hazel staff,

And the rose of no terrene graff,
And the lamp of no olive oil
With heart's blood that alone may boil.
With naked breast and feet unshod
I follow the wizard way to God

Wherever he leads my foot shall follow ;
Over the height, into the hollow,
Up to the caves of pure cold breath,
Down to the deeps of foul hot death,
Across the seas, through the fires,
Past the palace of desires ;
Where he will, whether he will or no,
If I go, I care not whither I go.

For in me is the taint of the faery blood.
Fast, fast, its emerald flood
Leaps within me, violent rude
Like a bestial faun's beatitude.
In me the faery blood runs hard :
My sires were a druid, a devil, a bard,
A beast, a wizard, a snake and a satyr ;
For—as my mother said—what does it matter ?
She was a fay, pure of the faery ;
Queen Morgan's daughter by an aery
Demon that came to Orkney once
To pay the Beetle his orisons.

So, it is I that writhe with the twitch
Of the faery blood, and the wizard itch

THE WIZARD WAY

To attain a matter one may not utter
Rather than sink in the greasy splutter
Of Britons munching their bread and butter ;
Ailing boys and coarse-grained girls
Grown to sloppy women and brutal churls.
So, I am off with staff in hand
To the endless light of the nameless land.

Darkness spreads its sombre streams,
Blotting out the elfin dreams.
I might haply be afraid,
Were it not that the Feather-maid
Leads me softly by the hand,
Whispers me to understand.
Now (when through the world of weeping
Light at last starrily creeping
Steals upon my babe-new sight,
Light—O Light that is not light!)
On my mouth the lips of her
Like a stone on my sepulchre
Seal my speech with ecstasy,
Till a babe is born of me
That is silent more than I ;
For its inarticulate cry
Hushes as its mouth is pressed
To the pearl, her honey breast ;
While its breath divinely ripples
The rose-petals of her nipples,
And the jetted milk he laps
From the soft delicious paps,

Sweeter than the bee-sweet showers
In the chalice of the flowers,
More intoxicating than
All the purple grapes of Pan.

Ah! my proper lips are stilled.
Only, all the world is filled
With the echo, that drips over
Like the honey from the clover.
Passion, penitence, and pain
Seek their mother's womb again,
And are born the triple treasure,
Peace and purity and pleasure.

—Hush, my child, and come aloft
Where the stars are velvet soft!

THE WINGS

WITH A GIFT TO MY LADY

HAD I these wings, I would not need to write.

I would be with you ; then, a young male swan,

I would find happiness afloat upon

The ripples of your muscular body, bright

As mother-of-pearl may be in God's own sight

When He would found His whole new heaven thereon!

Thence, would my body were One Eye, to con

Your face, the rosy lotus of delight!

I would dip deep my beak into the flower

And pluck your tongue, its ruby heart, and shower

All my life's love upon you, swift as Spring's!

And I would lift you on my pinions

To light and heat more splendid than the sun's,

Mistress!—Woe's me! for I have not these wings.

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

I

THE cloud my bed is tinged with blood and foam.
The vault yet blazes with the sun
Writhing above the West, brave hippodrome
Whose gladiators shock and shun
As the blue night devours them, crested comb
Of sleep's dead sea
That eats the shores of life, rings round eternity!

II

So, he is gone whose giant sword shed flame
Into my bowels; my blood's bewitched;
My brain's afloat with ecstasy of shame.
That tearing pain is gone, enriched
By his life-spasm; but he being gone, the same
Myself is gone
Sucked by the dragon down below death's horizon.

III

I woke from this. I lay upon the lawn;
They had thrown roses on the moss
With all their thorns; we came there at the dawn,
My lord and I; God sailed across

The sky in 's galleon of amber, drawn
 By singing winds
 While we wove garlands of the flowers of our minds.

IV

All day my lover deigned to murder me,
 Linking his kisses in a chain
 About my neck; demon-embroidery!
 Bruises like far-off mountains stain
 The valley of my body of ivory!
 Then last came sleep.
 I wake, and he is gone; what should I do but weep?

V

Nay, for I wept enough—more sacred tears!—
 When first he pinned me, gripped
 My flesh, and as a stallion that rears
 Sprang, hero-thewed and satyr-lipped;
 Crushed, as a grape between his teeth, my fears;
 Sucked out my life
 And stamped me with the shame, the monstrous word of
 wife.

VI

I will not weep; nay, I will follow him.
 Perchance he is not far,
 Bathing his limbs in some delicious dim
 Depth, where the evening star
 May kiss his mouth, or by the black sky's rim
 He makes his prayer
 To the great serpent that is coiled in rapture there.

VII

I rose to seek him. First my footsteps faint
 Pressed the starred moss ; but soon
I wandered, like some sweet sequestered saint,
 Into the wood, my mind. The moon
Was staggered by the trees ; with fierce constraint
 Hardly one ray
Pierced to the ragged earth about their roots that lay.

VIII

I wandered, crying on my Lord. I wandered
 Eagerly seeking everywhere.
The stores of life that on my lips he squandered
 Grew into shrill cries of despair,
Until the dryads frightened and dumfounded
 Fled into space—
Like to a demon-king's was grown my maiden face !

IX

At last I came unto the well, my soul.
 In that still glass, I saw no sign
Of him, and yet—what visions there uproll
 To cloud that mirror-soul of mine ?
Above my head there screams a flying scroll
 Whose word burnt through
My being as when stars drop in black disastrous dew.

X

For in that scroll was written how the globe
 Of space became ; of how the light

Broke in that space and wrapped it in a robe
 Of glory; of how One most white
 Withdrew that Whole, and hid it in the lobe
 Of his right Ear,
 So that the Universe one dewdrop did appear.

XI

Yea! and the end revealed a word, a spell,
 An incantation, a device
 Whereby the Eye of the Most Terrible
 Wakes from Its wilderness of ice
 To flame, whereby the very core of hell
 Bursts from its rind,
 Sweeping the world away into the blank of mind.

XII

So then I saw my fault; I plunged within
 The well, and brake the images
 That I had made, as I must make—Men spin
 The webs that snare them—while the knees
 Bend to the tyrant God, or unto Sin
 The lecher sunder!
 Ah! came that undulant light from over or from under?

XIII

It matters not. Come, change! Come, woe! Come,
 mask!
 Drive Light, Life, Love into the deep!
 In vain we labour at the loathsome task
 Not knowing if we wake or sleep;

But in the end we lift the plumèd casque
Of the dead warrior ;
Find no chaste corpse therein, but a soft-smiling whore.

XIV

Then I returned into myself, and took
All in my arms, God's universe :
Crushed its black juice out, while His anger shook
His dumbness pregnant with a curse.
I made me ink, and in a little book
I wrote one word
That God himself, the adder of Thought, had never heard.

XV

It detonated. Nature, God, mankind
Like sulphur, nitre, charcoal, once
Blended, in one annihilation blind
Were rent into a myriad of suns.
Yea! all the mighty fabric of a Mind
Stood in the abyss,
Belching a Law for *That* more awful than for *This*.

XVI

Vain was the toil. So then I left the wood
And came unto the still black sea,
That oily monster of beatitude!
(Hath *Thee* for *Me*, and *Me* for *Thee*!)
There as I stood, a mask of solitude
Hiding a face
Wried as a satyr's, rolled that ocean into space.

XVII

Then did I build an altar on the shore
Of oyster-shells, and ringed it round
With star-fish. Thither a green flame I bore
Of phosphor foam, and strewed the ground
With dew-drops, children of my wand, whose core
Was trembling steel
Electric that made spin the universal Wheel.

XVIII

With that a goat came running from the cave
That lurked below the tall white cliff.
Thy name! cried I. The answer that he gave
Was but one tempest-whisper—"If!"
Ah, then! his tongue to his black palate clave;
For on Soul's curtain
Is written this one certainty that naught is certain!

XIX

So then I caught that goat up in a kiss,
And cried Io Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan!
Then all this body's wealth of ambergris
(Narcissus-scented flesh of man!)
I burnt before him in the sacrifice;
For he was sure—
Being the Doubt of Things, the one thing to endure!

XX

Wherefore, when madness took him at the end,
He, doubt-goat, slew the goat of doubt;

And that which inward did for ever tend
Came at the last to have come out ;
And I who had the World and God to friend
Found all three foes !
Drowned in that sea of changes, vacancies, and woes !

XXI

Yet all that Sea was swallowed up therein ;
So they were not, and it was not.
As who should sweat his soul out through the skin
And find (sad fool!) he had begot
All that without him that he had left in
And in himself
All he had taken out thereof, a mocking elf!

XXII

But now that all was gone, great Pan appeared.
Him then I strove to woo, to win
Kissing his curled lips, playing with his beard,
Setting his brain a-shake, a-spin,
By that strong wand, and muttering of the weird
That only I
Knew of all souls alive or dead beneath the sky.

XXIII

So still I conquered, and the vision passed.
Yet still was beaten for I knew
Myself was He, Himself, the first and last ;
And as an unicorn drinks dew

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

From under oak-leaves, so my strength was cast
 Into the mire ;
For all I did was dream, and all I dreamt desire.

XXIV

More ; in this journey I had clean forgotten
 The quest, my lover. But the tomb
Of all these thoughts, the rancid and the rotten
 Proved in the end to be my womb
Wherein my Lord and lover had begotten
 A little child
To drive me, laughing lion, into the wanton wild !

XXV

This child hath not one hair upon his head,
 But he hath wings instead of ears.
No eyes hath he, but all his light is shed
 Within him on the ordered spheres
Of nature that he hideth ; and in stead
 Of mouth he hath
One minute point of jet ; silence, the lightning path !

XXVI

Also his nostrils are shut up ; for he
 Hath not the need of any breath ;
Nor can the curtain of eternity
 Cover that head with life or death
So all his body, a slim almond tree,
 Knoweth nor bough
Nor branch nor twig nor bud, from never until now.

XXVII

This thought I bred within my bowels, I am.
I am in him, as he in me ;
And like a satyr ravishing a lamb
So either seems, or as the sea
Swallows the whale that swallows it, the ram
Beats its own head
Upon the city walls, that fall as it falls dead.

XXVIII

Come, let me back unto the liliated lawn!
Pile me the roses and the thorns
Upon this bed from which he hath withdrawn!
He may return. A million morns
May follow that first dire dæmonic dawn
When he did split
My spirit with his lightnings and enveloped it!

XXIX

So I am stretched out naked to the knife,
My whole soul twitching with the stress
Of the expected yet surprising strife,
A martyrdom of blessedness.
Though Death came, I could kiss him into life ;
Though Life came, I
Could kiss him into death, and yet nor live nor die !

XXX

Yet I that am the babe, the sire, the dam,
Am also none of these at all ;

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

For now that cosmic chaos of I AM
Bursts like a bubble. Mystical
The night comes down, a soaring wedge of flame
Woven therein
To be a sign to them who yet have never been.

XXXI

The universe I measured with my rod.
The blacks were balanced with the whites ;
Satan dropped down even as up soared God ;
Whores prayed and danced with anchorites.
So in my book the even matched the odd :
No word I wrote
Therein, but sealed it with the signet of the goat.

XXXII

This also I seal up. Read thou herein
Whose eyes are blind! Thou may'st behold
Within the wheel (that alway seems to spin
All ways) a point of static gold.
Then may'st thou out therewith, and fit it in
That extreme sphere
Whose boundless farness makes it infinitely near.

THE TWO SECRETS

SHE used to lie, superbly bare
Wrapped in her harvest flame of hair,
And shooting from her steel-grey eyes
Inexorable destinies :
Mute oracles—mysterious—
A soul in a sarcophagus !
For I, through all my life astrain,
Through all the pulsing of my brain,
Through all the wisdom I had won
From this one and the other one
Saw nothing. Nothing. Had I known
And loved some Sphinx of steel or stone
While countless chiliads rolled, may be
I had not guessed her mystery.

So there she lay, regarding me.
And I?—I gave the riddle up.
I drank the wine, admired the cup ;
As I suppose a wise man does
Unless he be the Man of Uz
To scrape with shards a sore that grows
The more he irks it. I suppose
All men are fools who seek the truth
At such a price as joy and youth.

THE TWO SECRETS

. . . So there she used to lie. May be
Correggio's Antiope
Best paints you how she lay. And I
Loved her, and passed the matter by;
Ending at last, one may dare say,
In thinking that those eyes of grey
Meant naught, suspected naught, were blind,
Expressed the vacancy behind.

So life went on. One winter day
So silent and so still she lay
That I took cold, regarding her.
I rose, I wrapped myself in fur;
Then came to her, my thought untold
Being that she, too, might be cold.
I laid my hand upon her breast.
Cold! Icy cold! Ah you have guessed.
Right. She was dead, quite dead.

And so

You see, friend, I shall never know.
She kept her secret.

—Leave me alone!
Or—I shall hardly keep my own!

THE PRIESTESS OF PANORMITA

HEAR me, Lord of the Stars!
For thee I have worshipped ever
With stains and sorrows and scars,
With joyful, joyful endeavour.
Hear me, O lilywhite goat!
O crisp as a thicket of thorns,
With a collar of gold for Thy throat
A scarlet bow for Thy horns!

Here, in the dusty air,
I build Thee a shrine to yew.
All green is the garland I wear,
But I feed it with blood for dew!
After the orange bars
That ribbed the green west dying
Are dead, O Lord of the Stars,
I come to Thee, come to Thee crying.

The ambrosial moon that arose
With breasts slow heaving in splendour
Drops wine from her infinite snows
Ineffably, utterly tender.

THE PRINCESS OF PANORMITA

O moon! ambrosial moon!
Arise on my desert of sorrow
That the magical eyes of me swoon
With lust of rain to-morrow!

Ages and ages ago
I stood on the bank of a river—
Holy and holy and holy, I know,
For ever and ever and ever!
A priest in the mystical shrine,
I muttered a redeless rune,
Till the waters were redder than wine
In the blush of the harlot moon.

I and my brother priests
Worshipped a wonderful woman
With a body lithe as a beast's,
Subtly, horribly human.
Deep in the pit of her eyes
I saw the image of death,
And I drew the water of sighs
From the well of her lullaby breath.

She sitteth veiled for ever
Brooding over the waste.
She hath stirred or spoken never.
She is fiercely, manly chaste!
What madness made me awake
From the silence of utmost eld

The grey cold slime of the snake
That her poisonous body held?

By night I ravished a maid
From her father's camp to the cave.
I bared the beautiful blade;
I dipped her thrice i' the wave;
I slit her throat as a lamb's,
That the fount of blood leapt high
With my clamorous dithyrambs
Like a stain on the shield of the sky.

With blood and censer and song
I rent the mysterious veil:
My eyes gaze long and long
On the deep of that blissful bale.
My cold grey kisses awake
From the silence of utmost eld
The grey cold slime of the snake
That her beautiful body held.

But—God! I was not content
With the blasphemous secret of years,
The veil is hardly rent
While the eyes rain stones for tears.
So I clung to the lips and laughter
As the storms of death abated,
The storms of the grievous graft
By the swing of her soul unsated.

Wherefore reborn as I am
By a stream profane and foul,
In the reign of a Tortured Lamb,
In the realm of a sexless Owl,
I am set apart from the rest
By meed of the mystic rune
That reads in peril and pest
The ambrosial moon—the moon!

For under the tawny star
That shines in the Bull above
I can rein the riotous car
Of galloping, galloping Love ;
And straight to the steady ray
Of the Lion-heart Lord I career,
Pointing my flaming way
With the spasm of night for a spear!

O moon! O secret sweet!
Chalcedony clouds of caresses
About the flame of our feet,
The night of our terrible tresses!
It is a wonder, then
If the people are mad with blindness,
And nothing is stranger to men
Than silence, and wisdom, and kindness?

Nay! let him fashion an arrow
Whose heart is sober and stout!

Let him pierce his God to the marrow!
Let the soul of his God flow out!
Whether a snake or a sun
In his horoscope Heaven hath cast,
It is nothing; every one
Shall win to the moon at last.

The mage hath wrought by his art
A billion shapes in the sun.
Look through to the heart of his heart,
And the many are shapes of one!
An end to the art of the mage,
And the cold grey blank of the prison!
An end to the adamant age!
The ambrosial moon is arisen.

I have bought a lilywhite goat
For the price of a crown of thorns,
A collar of gold for its throat,
A scarlet bow for its horns.
I have bought a lark in the lift
For the price of a butt of sherry:
With these, and God for a gift,
It needs no wine to be merry!

I have bought for a wafer of bread
A garden of poppies and clover;
For a water bitter and dead
A foam of fire flowing over.

From the Lamb and his prison fare
And the Owl's blind stupor arise!
Be ye wise, and strong, and fair
And the nectar afloat in your eyes!

Arise, O ambrosial moon,
By the strong immemorial spell,
By the subtle veridical rune
That is mighty in heaven and hell!
Drip thy mystical dews
On the tongues of the tender fauns
In the shade of initiate yews
Remote from the desert dawns!

Satyrs and Fauns, I call.
Bring your beauty to man!
I am the mate for ye all;
I am the passionate Pan.
Come, O come to the dance
Leaping with wonderful whips,
Life on the stroke of a glance,
Death in the stroke of the lips!

I am hidden beyond
Shed in a secret sinew
Smitten through by the fond
Folly of wisdom in you!
Come, while the moon (the moon!)
Sheds her ambrosial splendour,

Reels in the redeless rune,
Ineffably, utterly tender!

Hark! the appealing cry
Of deadly hurt in the hollow:—
Hyacinth! Hyacinth! Ay!
Smitten to death by Apollo.
Swift, O maiden moon,
Send they ray-dews after;
Turn the dolorous tune
To soft ambiguous laughter!

Mourn, O Maenads, mourn!
Surely your comfort is over.
All we laugh at you lorn.
Ours are the poppies and clover!
O that mouth and eyes,
Mischievous, male, alluring!
O that twitch of the thighs
Dorian past enduring!

Where is wisdom now?
Where the sage and his doubt?
Surely the sweat of the brow
Hath driven the demon out.
Surely the scented sleep
That crowns the equal war
Is wiser than only to weep—
To weep for evermore!

Now, at the crown of the year,
The decadent days of October,
I come to thee, God, without fear;
Pious, chaste, and sober,
I solemnly sacrifice
This first-fruit flower of wine
For a vehicle of thy vice
As I am Thine to be mine.

For five in the year gone by
I pray Thee give to me one;
A lover stronger than I,
A moon to swallow the sun!
May he be like a lilywhite goat
Crisp as a thicket of thorns,
With a collar of gold for his throat,
A scarlet bow for his horns!

THE HAWK AND THE BABE

I THAT am an hawk of gold
Proud in adamantine poise
On the pillars of torquoise,
See, beyond the starry fold
Where a darkling orb is rolled.

There, beneath a grove of yew,
Plays a babe. Should I despise
Such a foam of gold, and eyes
Burning berylline, so blue
That the sun seems peeping through ?

Did I swoop, were Heaven amazed ?
With my beak I strike but once ;
Out there leap a million suns.
Through the universe that blazed
Screams their light, and death is dazed.

In my womb the babe may leap ;
Seek him not within mine eye !
Nor demand thou of me why
I should plunge from crystal steep
Like a plummet to the deep !

See yon solitary star!
What a world of blackness wraps
Round it! Unimagined gaps!
Let it be! Content thy car
With the voyage to things that are!

Nor, an thou perchance behold
How I plunge and batten on
Earth's exenterate carrion,
Deem torquoise match midden-mould
Or deny the Hawk of Gold!

THE DUELLISTS

WHEN Tantalus talked, Jove was angered, He cursed, He
Plunged him in Hades. In torture immersed, he
Secretly laughed at the wrath of the Gods ;
For, it chanced, he was not at all hungry or thirsty.

So now, are you sure that you know how to use me ?
It is certain the game is to win or to lose me ?
It is you that stake all—I shall win at the odds !
All I risk is one thing—will you bore or amuse me ?

The god in the garden am I with my gross
Worn mouth, whose indulgence hath made it morose.
I paw your soft flesh, and you waken a mood
To lip you, to strip you, to study you close.

You are cunning, I know—you stand out for your price !
But to cheat you is all I have left for a vice.
Then learn ! if you try to backgammon the devil
The devil is sure to have loaded the dice.

THE DUELLISTS

Just this! you allow, you forbid, you excite me
 As you think just enough to enslave me ; you slight me
 As you think may just pique me ; a temperance revel!
 As if such a red little beetle could bite me !

I see, and I laugh in my sleeve at, the game.
 I have played it myself—the rules are the same.
 But it cannot be played on an expert, my pretty!
 You forget that the Jinn are the children of flame !

Without and beyond and above I abide.
 Every move I foresee ; I foretell every tide,
 The eclipse and the comet, the oiled and the gritty,
 I know it by heart—and the balance beside !

Come close! let me suck out your lips as in languor!
 Stand off! while I cringe at your towering anger!
 I'll grip you and shake you and weep at your knees—
 Mere flames of the foil-play, its clatter and clangour !

Your one joy—your pride in your cleverness, maybe!
 My one joy—you think you are gulling a gaby,
 And at last, when you strike to the heart—if you please!
 I riposte with the lightning-flash—“Pens'-tu, mon Bébé?”

You fool—I will ruin you, turn you adrift,
 Kick you and spit—you are done! you may shift
 For yourself as girls do—on the streets, on the quays,
 Till no sot will touch you for a crust or a gift.

And yet in a sense you have won—for you played
All the beauty and passion and wit of a maid.

 You are damned: that is great! you drained life to the
 lees!

And I—I shall yawn at the end, I'm afraid.

When Christ was in hell, Satan came—how he sneered!

“How's this for a God” and he laughed at His beard:

 “After Heaven? and Palestine?”—meant to offend.

How mild the reply of the Saviour appeared!

“Between heaven and hell it were easy to choose:

These ashes are scarce worth celestial dews.

 But at least—if you must have it! Satan, my friend,
Your hell may be hot—but I do bar the Jews!”

ATHOR AND ASAR

ON the black night, beneath the winter moon,
I clothed me in the limbs of Clodia,
Swooning my soul out into her red throat,
So that the glimmer of our skins, the tune
Of our ripe rhythm, seeded the hideous play
Of death-worms crawling on a corpse, afloat
 With life that takes its thirst
 Only from things accurst.

Closer than Clodia's clasp, Death had me down
To his black heart, and fed upon my breath,
So that we seemed a stillness—whiter than
The stars, more silent than the stars, a crown
Of stars! For in the icy kiss of death
I found that God that is denied to man
 So long as love and thought
 And life avail him aught.

AFTER JUDGMENT

So! Thou has given Thy judgment, God!
And I am evermore accurst,
Cast to the blackness of the abode
By Thee—O Thou Who made me first!

Thou Who hast made me, tortured me,
Mocked me with life, mocked me with death,
Mocked me with love—O misery
Of each god's death, of each slave's breath!

Yea, for that Thou didst give me her—
Indeed my Dorothy! the sun
That fires my life, the spell to stir
My soul's enchantments every one:

For this I curse Thee! she was fair
As day and brighter than the moon
And all the gold stung in her hair;
And all the dawn of May—of June!—

Kindled her cheeks; her eyes were blue
As all Thy skies, as all Thy seas.
Her mouth—Oh God! her mouth that slew
Imagination's ecstasies!

AFTER JUDGMENT

For while I praised the pearl-clear skin,
The bright lithe body's supple growth,
By God! I could not even begin
To say one word about her mouth!

God! hadst Thou given me that one word,
I now might praise Thee, though Thou damn.
But oh! not ever a soul hath heard
Its echo, O Thou great I Am!

Lo! Thou hast made the winds, the stars,
The sun, the moon, the great grave earth;
Thou has touched the swaying nenuphars
With music, and made godly mirth

With corn and wine; Thou hast made Thee man;
Thou hast loved and suffered, died and risen;
But—hath Thy mouth grown white and wan,
Sucked out into that strange sweet prison

Nay, Thou hast never kissed the mouth
Of Dorothy! as I! as I!
Thou hast never felt its eager growth
Upon my Lesbian ecstasy.

Therefore I curse Thee not, accurst
Who art in that one flower foregone—
And I the last match Thee the first
When that red mouth I fasten on.

Farewell! O God, in endless bliss
Crowned, with Thine angels singing by:
I go to hell, with her last kiss
Yet tingling in my memory.

Nay, start not from Thy throne! I go
At Thy black damning to the deep.
Thou canst not follow me! I know
This thing I had, and this I keep.

God! I have loved. I love! I love,
And shall love through Thine ageless hell.
Thou hast the kingdom of the Above,
And I, her memory. Fare Thee well!

To Thine I Am—supreme exclaim,
The total of all that may be said!—
I answer from the abyss of flame:
Dorothy! and her mouth was red.

THE FIVE ADORATIONS

I PRAISE Thee, God, whose rays upstart beneath the
Bright and Morning Star:
Nowit asali fardh salat assobhi allahu akbar.

I praise Thee, God, the fierce and swart; at noon Thou
ridest forth to war!
Nowit asali fardh salat assohri allahu akbar.

I praise Thee, God, whose arrows dart their royal
radiance o'er the scar:
Nowit asali fardh salat asasri allahu akbar.

I praise Thee, God, whose fires depart, who drivest down
the sky thy car:
Nowit asali fardh salat al maghrab allahu akbar.

I praise Thee, God, whose purple heart is hidden in the
abyss afar:
Nowit asali fardh salat al asha allahu akbar.

TELEPATHY

(His thought.) FROM gloomy London oversea
My lady sends a letter.
My credit's gone : the Deity
May write me down a debtor,
For I had thought that I was free—
I find I have a fetter !

(Her thought.) Yea ; must some god announce afresh
No more they are twain ; they are
one flesh ?”

For here I sit and laugh and smoke
And play with youth and pleasure ;
Life is a dream, and death a joke,
And love a thing of leisure—
The dance is done, the spell is broke,
And marred the merry measure !

Yea ; my small kiss is somehow worth
The love of all the boys on earth !

The shy sweet smiles, the tender eyes
And bodies slim that woo me ;

TELEPATHY

The sobs, the sighs, the throbs, the cries
 Of love are nothing to me.
 My lady's magic madness flies
 Like poison through and through me!

Yea, love; my echo is as loud
 As all the cries of all the crowd.

The shaft of love she shot in May
 Still rankles in September;
 The flames in June that died away
 Have yet a lively ember.
 I force myself to dream all day:
 Night wakes me—I remember.

Yea; in the night thou lackest me.
 And I? Ah surely I lack thee!

I must remember how we stood
 And let mad Paris pass us
 (Holding one moment to be good,
 For all the years surpass us.)
 And touched in our beatitude
 The peak of Mount Parnassus.

Yea; we did well to break the bars,
 And dwell one moment with the stars!

We played the ancient Comedy
 That Pan taught to the Satyrs.

We slew the victim rightfully :
We tore his soul to tatters,
Still laughing through the tragedy—
We knew that nothing matters !

Yea ; fitted that strange play of Pan
For Gods and fiends ; but not for man !

Unless—unless—unless—unless
Our priestly hands were steaming
With other life (sweet murderess !)
That his that lay there screaming
Between our knives—Or blood ! confess
The truth ; or am I dreaming ?

Yea ; floating on that cold pale flood
Were two red stars of our own blood.

We left our laugh, a smouldering coal
Upon his naked middle :
We ravelled out his love ; we stole
His heart-strings for our fiddle :
Strange tortured music from his soul
We wrung, a writhing riddle !

Yea : our mouths took a subtle curve
As we devoured him nerve by nerve.

We danced, obscenely delicate,
The dance of cup and thyrsus ;

TELEPATHY

We made him love, we made him hate,
We made him bless and curse us
Yea, O my darling, we were Fate.
Then how should Fate reverse us ?

Yea, love ; how cruelly we played
With the poor worm that we had made !

It cannot be (it cannot be !)
That we ourselves are taken
In the sweet snare, my Dorothy !
Did Love, true love, awaken ?
And, even so, dear, why should we
Be wildly wit-forsaken ?

Yea ; for we digged a wanton pit.
Ourselves are fallen into it.

Our dance grew fierce—self-stirred, self-willed !
And Bacchus shewed his forehead
Jutting sharp horns ; his grape distilled
A liquor harsh and florid.
Our cool sweet kisses throbbed and thrilled
From temperate to torrid.

Yea ; the new wine burns up our brain.
Like molten gold our kisses rain.

The month of love had curled our lips
In tense perverted fancies :

Our eyes were sunk in black eclipse
To rise in glittering trances :
Our belly-muscles tight as whips
By dint of Arab dances !

Yea ; all our love is glittering steel
Sharpened on torture's aching wheel.

My Dorothy! my Dorothy!
Our mouths were wried and bleeding.
Love's eucharistic mystery!
Their suckling lips were feeding
At the black breasts of ecstasy,
Of ecstasy exceeding!

Yea ; at the paps of Isis we
Drained starry milk of ecstasy.

O thou close-fitted to my soul,
Close-fitted to my skin,
Moving as one delicious whole
Without us and within!
How have we lost the iron control
That curbed and spurred our sin?

Yea ; like one snake's death-spasm we were.
How taken in the serpent-snare?

Indeed, indeed, blind fools we passed
From light and light's dominion

TELEPATHY

To some black cavern of the vast
 On some demonic pinion.
 And here we lie—discrowned at last—
 A monarch grown a minion.

Yea; we are come from the bright God
 To some most desolate abode.

Or is it crowned, thrice crowned, we are?
 Crowned with long thorns sharp-gleaming,
 So that bright blood jets out afar
 From starry brains a-streaming?
 Yea! in our night there shines a star
 Beyond our dearest dreaming.

Yea; there is born a fearful light
 Proceeding from the Infinite.

However that may be, 'tis clear
 What duty bids endeavour:
 To find you out in London, dear,—
 A 'now' is worth a 'never'!—
 To make to-day a heaven of cheer,
 And make to-day 'for ever'!

Yea; though we know how springs run dry,
 We'll trust our future, you and I.

Ah, madman! was there ever yet
 A love that lived a lustre

TELEPATHY

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That's the last folly, to forget,
To cling to her, to trust her!
She's but one star—supremely set,
I grant!—but in a cluster!

Yea; we may tire; the sea holds yet
More fish than ever came to net!

THE SWIMMER

FATHER of light! Through the black seas I swim
To thine arising Disk. Seven waves suppress
Mine head beneath their arcane bitterness ;
Nor on their curling summits shines one dim
Foam-flake made lustrous by the light of him
To whom I strive. O blank, black wilderness
Of iron water! O this stormy stress
Of strength that strains toward thine auroral rim!

Caught up on the wild crest, thine orb I glimpse ;
Thrust in the trough, the salt wave chokes and blinds.
Shrill shrieks the wind, the voice of myriad imps ;
And mine own mockery might match the wind's
Save that—I struggle vainly, that is true ;
But—thou art rising, and the sea burns blue!

THE MUSE

O THOU who art throned by the well
That feeds the celestial streams!
O daughter of heaven and hell!
O mother of magical dreams!
O sister of me as I sit
At thy feet by the mystical well
And dream with the web of my wit
Of the marriage of heaven and hell!

O thou who art mad with the Muse
That delights in the beauty of form!
O desire of the dream of the dews!
O Valkyrie astride of the storm!
I am thine as we ride on the blast
To exult in the mystical Muse,
As there drip on the desert at last
The immaculate Delian dews.

I am thine, I am thine, I am thine—
How it slashes the skies as a sword!

THE MUSE

How it blinds us and burns us with wine
Of the dread Dionysian Lord!
Evoe! Evoe! Evoe!
Iacche! thy chrism of wine!
Evoe! Evoe! Evoe!
I am thine! I am thine! I am thine!

THE GOD AND THE GIRL

(Imitated from the Greek of Misander)

THERE was a God (well-skilled of touch and tongue)
For all his wisdom that was yet babe-young.

He took the gilded dung called womanhood,
And fed it daily with his heart's best blood.

With sun and moon he worked by day and night,
Wedding the greater and the lesser light.

So sought he to excite that leprous mould
Even to the pure, the vegetable gold.

He licked it over with his silver tongue
Sang golden songs to the disdainful dung.

Regenerating starlight of the vault
He called ; and sulphur, mercury, and salt.

Long years he laboured at the cucurbite :
Long years he thrilled the alembic with his light.

Long years he travailed at the athanor :
Inert the dung was as it was before.

THE GOD AND THE GIRL

Yet the God smiled; for in his heart there grew
Nursed at dawn's breast, and watered by its dew,

That seed that is not bought and is not sold
Of veritable, vegetable gold.

Whereat he marvelled. In Eternity
There only lived one wiser God than he.

He posed his 'Why?'. "Young God!" He made retort;
"Know, the first matter of the Work is naught.

"Know, the pure gold is naught: for all decays.
It is the Working of the Work that pays!

"More, thou mistakest in thy mind of mist
Matter for man, and dung for alchemist.

"Woman, for all thy skill of touch and tongue,
Remains, poor poet! only gilded dung.

"But thou, First Matter of the Work that art,
Defiled by contact with her hemlock heart,

"Dost blacken to the Dragon of the Sages
Whence grows the Gold. For her, throughout the ages,

"As it was ever, is, and ever shall be—on
Earth everywhere—especially in Albion—

“World without end, Amen, I see no germ
Of life to make such dung evolve a worm.

“Use her, a poisonous purge that irritates
The clogged-up bowel till it evacuates ;

“For so it may be thou shalt ease thy brain.
But dung she is, and dung she must remain.”

Thus then with proud humility the younger
Answered that holy ancient Wisdom-monger :

“The Way grows clear as crystal to my ken.
Let me to teach this alchemy to men.”

“Do!” answered He, “and learn. The race shall
rage
Through to the blackness of the Dragon-stage :

“Few may pass on.” The younger God essayed
The scheme—and a nice mess of it he made !

So that—or trousers, petticoats, or tights
Hide what makes honest men turn sodomites.

Hence our joints ache, and life is out of joint—
All ways we turn we stumble over coynte,

Slip in the slime, and sicken at the stench
Of English widow, wanton, wife, and wench.

THE GOD AND THE GIRL

And as the fairest cloak hides foulest skin
Hence thou—O snare that I am taken in,

Delicious Doris! Luckily for me
I know the whole theurgic alchemy

And breed a boon (where God begat a curse)
From thee, best coynte of His brave universe!

ROSEMARY

*“There’s rosemary, that’s for remembrance;
Pray you, love, remember!”—Hamlet.*

AMID the grandeur of my melancholy
Lackeyed by spectres of my sombre past,
I sit and smile at all the shapes of folly

That I evoke—save One, that looms at last
Towering above these ten tremendous years.
I see Him, sacred, single in the vast,

A Man of Sorrows, grey with useless tears ;
A Man of Glory, with His aureole
Radiant gossamer, a mist of spears

Storming the sky, His heart one crimson coal
To burn all lesser gods, to gild the shame
Of this my life’s long infamy, the soul

(Abased for Him) in Him one flower of flame—
Mine Aceldama one white lily-bloom
Availing me above all wealth and fame

ROSEMARY

Unto the latter things, the destined doom,
Ten years ago! how blind and black the abyss!
How swept the springtide from the winter's womb

At the sharp summons of the swift strong kiss
That rapt me up from the unfriendly earth
Into the star-abodes of Salmacis,

Bringing the soul that slept to sudden birth.
O frenzy of flame that swept across the world
In orgiastic opulence of mirth,

And left me ever in His arms close curled,
Never, O never! to shrink back again,
But (through all ruinous time violently hurled)

Never to lose the stigma of that pain,
The martyr's crown of shameful spines that weighs
Even now upon these brows, that bear in vain

Fantastic myrtles and deceitful bays
And vine-leaves withering even ere they clung.
For in His love, His love beyond all praise,

I am still beautiful, still wise, still young.
Nay, in the nuptial of that fruitful night
Of fruitless joy unmeasured and unsung

There was no seed of sorrow. O my light,
My love, my lord, accept the piteous plaint
Of me, the little wayward wanton wight,

ROSEMARY

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Whose wickedness was never fain to faint,
Through these dull years still cherishing the spark
Of Thy dear godhead in him—happy saint!

Who hath Thy light within him in the dark
Ready to burst again to ruddier dawn
An Thou shouldst travel in Thine holy bark

To drip Thy dews upon the thirsty lawn,
And wake to song beatified the bird.
But art Thou living, Lord, or far withdrawn

Into the shrines of solitude unstirred?
O Pan! have pity on the trembling faun!
In all Thy silence is there not one word?

AU BAL

A VISION of flushed faces, shining limbs,
The Madness of the music that entrances
All life in its delirium of dances!
The white world glitters in the void, and swims
Through infinite seas of transcendental trances.
Yea! all the hoarded seed of all my fancies
Bursts in a shower of suns! The wine-cup brims
And bubbles over; I drink deep the hymns
Of sorceries, of spells, of necromancies
And all my spirit shudders; dew bedims
My sight—these girls and their alluring glances!
Their eyes that burn like dawn's lascivious lances
Waking all earth to love—to love! Life skims
The cream of joy. If God could see what man sees,
(Intoxicating Nellies, Mauds, and Nances!)
I see Him leave the sapphirine expanses,
The choir serene and the celestial air
To swoon into their sacramental hair!

DISAPPOINTMENT

(AN ESSAY IN TACTICS)

“A FEMALE eunuch—a stale courtesan
With a Jew’s hook, fat lips, and goggle eyes
Wrinkled with grime and lust—so any man
May maul you ; there’s a scarcity of vice !
A woman’s soul is in her ovaries ;
Cut those, that flies. O salt and shallow pan
Of verminous moisture !—bathe in thee, forsooth ?
Age and consummate pox, avoid my youth !”

I would have loved you—so I love to love—
Wrapped you in beauty ! Lucid gauze of rime
Had made your limbs go glimmering down through
time,
A gracious ghost ; the soiled and draggled dove
Of Venus should be spurned, and you, my swan,
Superbly floated on the giant stream
Of fame, its crown and culmination, dream
Most inaccessible, meditated on
In vain by the world’s greatest lovers. Yet
Your lazy lewdness happens to forget

DISAPPOINTMENT

My boy's lust—all the mighty building's glamour
Dislimns—the shrine's a sty. Who dares to blight
My dreams I damn. You would not throw—last night—
Your carrion lump of lechery to my clamour,
Cheap, common as it is, a crawling cheese . . .
So, for those verses, be content with these!

THE OCTOPUS

THE red lips of the Octopus are more than myriad stars of
night.

The great beast writhes in fiercer foam than thirty
stallions amorous.

I would they clung to me and stung; I would they
quenched me with delight,
The red lips of the Octopus.

They reek with poison of the sea, scarlet and hot and
languorous.

My skin drinks in their slaver warm; my sweats his
rapt embrace excite.

The heavy sea rolls languidly o'er the ensanguine kiss of us.

We strain and strive, we die for love; we linger in the
lusty fight;

We agonize; our clutch becomes more cruel and more
murderous;

My passion splashes out at last; ah! with what ecstasy I
bite

The red lips of the Octopus!

Amsterdam, Xmas 1897.

THE EYES OF DOROTHY

O MISTRESS of a myriad mysteries!
I can remember every curve and span
Of every lovely thing; I have the plan
Of every crested crag and maze of ice
That ever I beheld; then what device,
Strange sorceress, has barred me with its ban
From you? How is it, mistress, that I can
Remember nothing of you but your eyes?

Your eyes! Live arrows with a thousand deaths
Armed! Suns of poison, menacing the wreaths
Of bay and myrtle that you twined! Dread spies
Of Satan that unveil the God in me,
And strip it naked with their mockery!
Death! will you never take away your eyes?

BATHYLLUS

ENOUGH of the frail aspergillus!
Enough of the censer of bronze!
Thy beauty, thy boy, thy Bathyllus,
Whose body is soft as a swan's,
Splendid and sinewy slim,
Cleanly and supple of limb,
Waits for the hush of the hymn.

O gather me up in the vigour
Of virile embraces, and bear
My youth to the rush and the rigour
Of marvellous mountainous air!
Pass through the cool colonnades!
Up through the gloom of the glades!
Up! we are done with the shades.

My head is an ocean in anger
With sleek and fantastical curls;
My lips like a sunset for languor,
My skin like a moonrise of pearls.
Ah! but like stars in the deep
Deep of the night, and asleep,
Are the eyes that await thee, and weep.

Comest thou not, O my master,
My God, my desirable one?
Each breath is a death, a disaster,
Till thou art arisen, O sun!
Why should I wait in the wild,
Who am thine, as a dove undefiled
In the arms of an ivory child?

My body is oiled and anointed
With dews of Thessalian bud;
My nails are all polished and pointed
And gilded, wherethrough is the blood
Like to a roseate stream
In the hills of the west set a gleam
That flows in its channel of cream.

Let us drink, O my Lord, let us fill us
With purple Falernian wine!
Thy lips on the lips of Bathyllus
As we lock us and link and entwine,
Eyes ever burning like coals
For the passion that crowns and controls
The mystical love of our souls.

Then, O if my pain were to kill me!—
In the garden of music and musk
Touch thou—and the thoughts of it thrill me—
The poppy that flowers in the dusk!
Poppy whose blossom is furled
Deep in the breasts of the world—
Ah! but the heart is imperled!

Not babes to the war of the ages
Thy dews of devotion beget;
But thoughts that illumine the sages
Are flowers of our fashioning yet.
Music and song are thereof
Gotten, my god, and above
Love, the fulfilling of love.

Ah master! thy fire the enrichment
Of all the vain store of the shrine!
All mine to entice by bewitchment
The joy that is utterly thine!
Ah! but thou sailest, a swan
Stately and splendid upon
The lake that was waste and wan!

Oh now! let thy rage interrupt
My mischievous petulant smile
Whose secret is hot and corrupt,
Leers loose at the lips and is vile!
Tear off the virginal wreath!
Tear it with tigerish teeth!
Then, oh the sword to its sheath!

Thine anger is redder and rougher;
Thou huntest with thyrsus and thong.
Ah God! it is I that must suffer,
For thee 'tis enough to be strong.
Strike! ere libation be spilt.
Home! through the grace of the gilt.
Stab! to the hilt! to the hilt!

Now, now, O my lover, be tender!
Break not the suspense of the swoon!
O my lily in pagan splendour
That throbs in the heart of the moon!
Ever the soul of me saith”
Let me sink back into death! . . .

Hush me the heart of our breath!

THE MANTRA-YOGI

I

How should I seek to make a song for thee
When all my music is to moan thy name?
That long sad monotone—the same—the same—
Matching the mute insatiable sea
That throbs with life's bewitching agony,
Too long to measure and too fierce to tame.
An hurtful joy, a fascinating shame
Is this great ache that grips the heart of me.

Even as a cancer, so this passion gnaws
Away my soul, and will not ease its jaws
Till I am dead. Then let me die! Who knows
But that this corpse committed to the earth
May be the occasion of some happier birth?
Spring's earliest snowdrop? Summer's latest rose?

II

Thou knowest what asp hath fixed its lethal tooth
In the white breast that trembled like a flower
At thy name whispered. Thou hast marked how hour
By hour its poison hath dissolved my youth,

THE MANTRA-YOGI

Half skilled to agonise, half skilled to soothe
The passion ineluctable, this power
Slave to its single end, to storm the tower
That holdeth thee, who art Authentic Truth.

O golden hawk! O lidless eye! Behold
How the grey creeps upon the shuddering gold!
Still I will strive! That by the striving broken
I may exhaust this me! That thou mayst sweep
Swift on the dead from thine all-seeing steep—
And the unutterable word be spoken.

THE POET AND HIS MUSE

Two years I strove with all my store of spice
To lure the victim to the sacrifice.

I tempted him with garlands and with dances,
With every virtue and with every vice,

With girls that twisted all his maiden fancies
Into a spasm of lust; with necromancies
Wherein he knew the utmost God to be
No more than the plain torsion of his trances.

Maugre device and stratagem, I see
How all his virgin soul revolts from me,
Knowing me for the ancient whore that sits
Crowned and triumphant through eternity:

Nor, though my beauty dazzled all his wits,
Could he conceive that frailest fairy flits
Across the abyss of mine imagining.
So I came back from all my snares and pits,
Crowned him with roses, called him lord and king.

Then the poor fool fell on me, stammering
Pale phrases of his mortal love, a thing
Almost too petty for my star of lust
To attract within her orbit: still I swing

THE POET AND HIS MUSE

My godhead over his domain of dust,
And make some foetus . . . at the least, I trust!
 And in my womb I hide it, all his all
Made mine with one swift suction, one slow thrust

Maniacal, murderous, musical, magical!
So then I would not have him for my thrall,
 So I despised the thing I had devoured!
And therefore, as I squat upon this ball

That spins and knows not, I shall spew the coward
Out from the bliss wherein he is embowered,
 A stain of senseless sex upon the sod,
And live my life, the honeyed and the flowered,

As ever. . . Shall the even match the odd?
His immortality worth my period?
 Nay! He is but the seed on whom I showered
My rain, the dear mortality of God!

LILITH

THE stench of the gross goat is in my nostrils instead of
the perfume of Artemis.
I plucked the Virgin by his broided chlamys . . . who
could have guessed that hairy horror hidden?
I have got gall to be my drink, who mingled my wine
with myrrh and musk and ambergris.
I made my bed of silk and furs; and waking found I had
swooned to sleep upon the midden.

Ah! Were those virgin lips of thine polluted with some
rank savour of Sabbatic lust?
What spell turned thee, the maiden, to a monkey jibbering
anitphonal blasphemies.
To those chaste chants I wooed thee by, the moment that
touching thee, my fruit dissolved to dust,
Fair-seeming Sodom-apple! Yet thy kisses smote all my
spine to shuddering ecstasies!

So strode the fool upon the mountain ridges, crying: One
step, and I attain the crest!
Lo! The loose cornice tricks him, and he tumbles, a
mangled nothing, to the glacier.
So the nun cries: One effort and I conquer; I pass the
gate, I win the appointed rest!
And passing it discovers the foul body of Sin that waits to
set his teeth in her.

So in my dreams, escaping from a monster, I turn one corner; "there is refuge—there!"
 Nay, there he lurked who never had pursued me . . . 'twas I who chased him to his proper holt.
 Then, O thou vile adorable, my lover, my master, catch me backward by the hair!
 Fasten thy fangs upon my mouth's gasped anguish, and split my dream-clouds with thy thunderbolt!

Though thou be God or Satan, do thou master my death-pang with thy life-pang, and possess
 All that I am with all thou art, my Vampire, my Siren that I thought a nightingale!
 Abase me! Spit on me! Scourge me! Murder me!
 Take thy wolf's meal of my loveliness!
 Give me the reek of thy foul breath, and show me the leper's face behind the shining veil!

Yea! Though I sink through measureless abysses, I trace the incommensurable curve.
 Thy foursquare wedge that rages in my circle shall match it at the infinite period.
 Polluted body, violated spirit, corrupted soul, stunned brain and tortured nerve:—
 These merge into thy bloody maw, Echidna, that shall emerge the lone white flame of God.

SPORT AND MARRIAGE

How dream from facts of nature swerves!

As I was shooting my preserves
I would not have believed, I swear,
How very tame the pheasants were.
My spaniel to a setter blushed;
The bird would simply not be flushed.
I beat one with a stick quite hard;
He only fluttered half a yard,
Scolding me: "Idiot and brute,
Why in the devil don't you shoot?"
I turned upon my heel; the bird
Followed me home—it sounds absurd!
[My fault! for getting the grand slam on
Chateau Yquem and cold boiled salmon!]
At last in anger, not for fun,
I lifted my reluctant gun,
Gave him both barrels, plain and choke,
And blew him into bits. I woke.

.
—How dreams reflect the facts of life!
I was in bed with my own wife.

THE TWINS

I

Have pity! show no pity!
Those eyes that send such shivers
Into my brain and spine: oh let them
Flame like the ancient city
Swallowed up by the sulphurous rivers
When men let angels fret them!

II

Yea! let the South wind blow,
And the Turkish banners advance,
And the word go out: No quarter!
But I shall hold thee—so
While the boys and maidens dance
About the shambles of slaughter!

III

I know thee who thou art,
The inmost fiend that curlest
Thy vampire tongue about
Earth's corybantic heart,
Hell's warrior that whirlst
The darts of horror and doubt!

IV

Thou knowest me who I am
The inmost soul and saviour
Of man; what hieroglyph
Of the dragon and the lamb
Shall thou and I engrave here
On Time's inscandescable cliff?

V

Look! in the polished granite,
Black as thy cartouche is with sins,
I read the searing sentence
That blasts the eyes that scan it:
"HOOR and SET be TWINS."
A fico for repentance!

VI

Ay! O Son of my mother
That snarled and clawed in her womb
As now we rave in our rapture,
I know thee, I love thee, brother!
Incestuous males that consume
The light and the life that we capture.

VII

Starve thou the soul of the world,
Brother, as I the body!
Shall we not glut our lust

THE TWINS

On these wretches whom Fate hath hurled
 To a hell of Jesus and shoddy,
 Dung and ethics and dust

VIII

Thou as I art Fate.
 Come then, conquer and kiss me !
 Come ! what hinders Believe me :
 This is the thought we await.
 The mark is fair ; can you miss me
 Nay, you catch me, you cleave me !

XI

See, how subtly I writhe !
 Strange runes and unknown sigils
 I trace in the trance that thrills us.
 Death ! how lithe, how blithe
 Are these male incestuous vigils !
 Ah ! this is the spasm that kills us !

X

Wherefore I solemnly affirm
 This twofold Oneness at the term.
 Asar on Asi did beget
 Horus twin brother unto Set.
 Now Set and Horus kiss, to call
 The Soul of the Unnatural
 Forth from the dusk ; then nature slain
 Lets the Beyond be born again.

XI

This weird is of the tongue of Khem,
The Conjurat[i]on used of them.
Whoso shall speak it, let him die,
His bowels rotting inwardly,
Save he uncover and caress
The God that lighteth his liesse.

THE CONVERT

(A HUNDRED YEARS HENCE)

There met one eve in a sylvan glade
A horrible Man and a beautiful maid.
“Where are you going, so meek and holy?”
“I’m going to temple to worship Crowley.”
“Crowley is God, then? How did you know?”
“Why, it’s Captain Fuller that told us so.”
“And how do you know that Fuller was right?”
“I’m afraid you’re a wicked man; Good-night.”

While this sort of thing is styled success
I shall not count failure bitterness.

THE SORCERESS

GIVE me the good sun streaming through
 Glimmering glades of yew,
And the cool grass, and one chaste shrine
 That pious hands have builded ;
 And, oiled and scented, curled and gilded,
A virgin, swimming like new wine
 In my grey old soul, that I may give
 His life to Pan, and live !

I have seen Love, and known
 A blasphemy, a violation
 And perfect profanation ;
Wherefore the god hath flown.
 My heart no longer trembles
If that blind Harper—blind, or he dissembles !—
 Touches its strings with burning finger-tips,
 Or fastens his soft lips
About my soul. . . . Then what is left
To a woman love-bereft ?

I have tasted Passion ; I have known
 How the sharpness and the softness and the sweetness
 Mix to one pomegranate's completeness
Wherein Hell and Earth are shown.

THE SORCERESS

Oh fruit forbid! was there but one ripe tree
 Fruitful for me?
 Passion is gone—the wine is spilt
 And the sword broken at the hilt.

I have invoked the demon of debauch.
 All blinding wines, all soul-devouring crimes
 I have called to me, drilled the scarlet mimes
 Of murder to my own fantastic nautch.
 And now—these demons mock me; for their pay
 They sucked my inmost soul away;
 And—naught may move me—I am lost,
 Exenterate, exhaust!

So therefore, Pan! a corpse I come before thee
 To call down Life from thine abode beyond Death.
 Three times I circle thee: three times my breath
 Breathes on thy mouth; three times I do adore Thee,
 Till thine eyes glitter and thy loose lips curl
 Make me the innocent alluring girl
 Of fifteen years—that were! so to recoil
 The same sweet garland. . . . Hither comes the lad
 With shy looks—let me blind him, let me soil
 His swan-soft body and his soul swan-pure!
 Ah! but my life is glad.
 Pan smiles! My suit preferred.
 Now, let these eyes allure
 And this worn throat throb, thrill with songs to woo him,
 Fiercer than ever mortal heard. . . .
 Ha! to him!

THE CHILD

ALIGHT and alive is the holiest flame.
Leap out, O ye sparks, at the half-hidden name
For ever my glory, for ever my shame !

Rejoice, O my soul, if his happiness hear !
Exalt thee, my joy, if the spell shall uprear
Delight in my dream, in the dream of my dear.

By passion and clamour the music is vain.
Resurges the stridence, insists it is pain ;
Until, at the last, all the puzzle is plain.

Cry out on Apollo ; he laughs at the whine.
Evoke we a soul nor of man nor divine
Deep-throned in a darker, unspeakable shrine.

O beautiful, beautiful ! light be thy luck !
Unveil thee to me ; for my flower is to pluck ;
God gives thee my virginal honey to suck.

Lo ! now is the hour, lest the happy hour go.
Ah ! love me an hour, if it kill me or no !
So be it, my God ! be it so, be it so !

CLYTIE

I STRAIN mine eyes across the surge; the spindrift cuts me
like a whip;
The wet wind wails a wolfish dirge for its slain paramour
the ship.

The ship, the ship that brings me home more than all
hoarded galleons
Brought through that sunset-blooded foam, with hulls of
teak and beaks of bronze!

More than all store of gold or spice, ivory, slaves or sandal-
wood
Art thou, O marvel beyond price, O bee-hive of beatitude!

Is not each cell that builds thee up a well of honey-scented
sips?
Is not thy soul one fragrant cup of nectar at my thirsty
lips?

Thou bearest in thine hollow staff the primal fire, the
flower's fume,
Quintessence—now may Zeus engraff its pollen in my
wintry womb!

But where's the ship the kicking mast, the plunging bow,
the reeling hull
Aching beneath the bacchant blast, malevolent and beautiful?
ful?

Ai! Ai! then where's my man, my man? I am a witch's
sieve to-night,
Parched as the lusty Lesbian was for her savage lord, the
light!

Ah! couldst thou slay me and appease—though naught
but slaughter serve my turn,
I, in an hour that bring thee ease, fret the night's silk and
ache and burn.

But now—my whole life stings in me; a viper violates my
veins;
Locusta laughs at Lalage! a ghoul that sucks at her own
brains!

Where is the ship? Where is the ship? Where is my
man, my man, my man?
—Who gave thee power to rend and rip the hearty out from
a courtezan?

I roved from town to town: I played the whore in every
slimy stews.
God! I am like a moon-struck maid, easing her drought
on sister dews.

I throw myself upon the grass; I wail, a lone wolf, to the
moon;
Huddled and hunched, a moaning mass—How near God
was those nights of June!

Death! the mere thought of it! For now—where is the
ship? where is my man?
The blood is bursting from my brow; my choked shrieks
prostitute to Pan!

Great Pan it is that thrusts his sword into my throat and
strangles me!
Great Pan that clubs me on the sward with his robust
brutality!

Ah no! ah no! Let me go blind rather than let that face
of fear
Swollen, its black indenture signed with blood, most
maculate, appear!

Come then, O ship, the dream is past! Could not I watch
and wait an hour?
Nay, by the Gods, what gallant mast cuts yon horizon like
a tower?

He comes, he comes, he comes. Oh hither, mine hand-
maids, bind me neck to knee,
Lest I should fling my body thither—where my soul
stands—across the sea.

Hold me! he must not think I yearned—he is too masterful—beware!

Oh, should he guess this body burned, shame, shame—how should a maiden fare?

Nay, girls, I know. But Pan hath wrought this marvel on my wanton's will,
Filling it with one virgin thought, as strong as summer,
and as still.

Ah hold! my body breaks away maugre your weakling struggles. Hold!
Nay! my soul faints; the stinging spray lures like his kisses did of old.

Free! Now stand back! How good it is—how good it is to be alive!
How good to swim for the first kiss! How good to dip oneself and dive!

Gods! Let him get me wholly now naked and radiant as the moon
Clambering on his plunging prow those nights of June—
those nights of June!

A SLIM GILT SOUL

FEW men are given, 'twixt heaven and hell,
To play one part supremely well.
On all time's tablets there are few
Who make a first-rate show of two,
While those who perfectly play three
We knew not, until you were he.

For what were lovelier on the lawn
Than you, pearl-naked to the dawn,
Wrapped in a scarlet dressing-gown
Not thirty miles from London town,
The "observed of all observers"—save
That Scotland Yard, serene and suave,
When trouble came, went tramping by;
Closed one, and winked the other eye.

How pleasantly you must have smiled:
"I left them, and I left them wild":
Though certainly they had abhorred
The task of locking up a lord.
For a more tragic rôle you played
Your master neatly who betrayed.
His shame and torture turned your leer
To a snarl!—your drab's smile to a sneer,

Quickened, when afterwards your help
He needed, to a currish yelp.

Now—so the wheel of Fortune whirls!—
Your kindly love for little girls
And ardour for the fine old faith
Makes all that past a wisp, a wraith.
You patronise our Sunday schools,
Pronounce on Grammar's darkest rules,
Rebuke bad taste, irreverence,
Heresy, humbug, and pretence.
Your tepid verses come like boons
To cheer Suburban afternoons ;
While Asquith, were he only wise,
Would bid a Board of Morals rise ;
Sure no one like yourself can be
Past-Master in Virginity.

Stay! if so well you play the rôles,
Why not enact dramatic scrolls ?
You would be welcome on the stage
To amuse and to instruct the age
—A shining light in Opera-Bouffe :
Giton, and Judas, and Tartufe !

THE SILENCE OF COLUMBINE

I

HAD I not been told,
I could not have believed it!
To hold and fold and mould
Your body's plastic gold!
So rapturously bold
No poet had conceived it;
And yet, bright Yniold,
I seem to have achieved it!

II

Nor word was ours, nor sight;
But in the dusk there sported
Some sprite of light and might
That pushed our fingers' flight
To the same goal, delight,
On pinions unsupported.
One touch—the world went right,
Its destiny distorted!

III

Still no word of this
Though now we surely knew
How miss the abyss of bliss,
When all the ambergris

Of your long hairs that hiss
Drew me so subtly to it?
We stole one lightning kiss
With only God to view it.

IV

Hush! Across the stair.
How its creak is thunder!
Now care! now dare! be ware!
Or—saved! at last I'm there,
Drowned in your torrent hair,
A flame, a waif, a wonder.
A lioness in her lair
Your body leaps from under.

V

Take the prize on trust!
Dare the course and run it!—
Sweet knight, you win the just,—
Your thrust! a gust of lust!—
Ah, God, then, if you must—
Wordless still, we've won it!
Tall Troy is in the dust!
We've done it, done it, done it!

VI

Do you love me, dear?
Said the glance you darted.
Good cheer! why fear the year!
Twice one is two, I hear!

I am the hound, sweet seer!
And you the hare I started.
Shall I escape a tear,
And you go broken-hearted?

VII

Kiss me! no one sees.
There—good-bye the last time!
Now, please! Luck's ease is threes.
What a kiss! what a squeeze!
Dot the i's! cross the t's!
Half a day's a vast time!
Tragedies, Comedies,
Pantomime and pastime!

THE ARCHÆOLOGIST

The carmined lips of your moustachioed mouth ;
The fading fires in your debauched grey eyes
With the black grooves about them, each a trench
Where some dead soldier rots, a sterile stench—
All of you, ripe and rotten, athwart the lies
Of paint and powder, false fanfares of youth
That blare, yet passionate ache their tongue were true—
Hag of the pit, what should I make of you ?

I will legitimize the bastard spell !
Take all your falsehood, weld it with my force.
Now then, Canidia, match thy miracle
With mine, old medlar ! Though the reek of hell
Gush from thy gorge, I hold my knightly course,
Dragon ! I love thee, and I love thee well
Who am like a shipwrecked sailor that should skry
On the horizon some scarred citadel
Or, smoking still, a volcan threat the sky,
Or hairy with burnt forests, wracked and rent,
Some ruin of an earthquaked continent !

It is not love, but worship most religious,
This abject me, this wallowing at thy knees !

THE ARCHÆOLOGIST

I am like a pilgrim; the blue-faced baboons
Of Christ receive him; he prostrates him, swoons
In rapture; slobbers on some leprous piece
Of flesh torn from Saint Damien—prestigious!
Yet, that were relic of an holy man,
And thou the carcass of a courtesan!

Beneath my seas thy creaking timbers tremble,
Gallant old barque! I shake thee, stem and stern,
With furious kisses in blind rage at Time
Who hath wrought on thee his cold and common crime.
So now I rise, laughing with love, and burn!
Those dissolute embers of thy lust grown dun,
The ashen horrors of thy face, resemble
The dull red glare of a November sun.

THE LADDER

“I will arise and go unto my Father”

MALKUTH

DARK, dark, all dark! I cower, I cringe.
Only above me is a citron tinge
As if some echo of red, gold, and blue
Chimed on the night and let its shadow through.
Yet I who am thus prisoned and exiled
Am the right heir of glory, the crowned child.

I match my might against my Fate's,
I gird myself to reach the ultimate shores,
I arm myself the war to win :—
Lift up your heads, O mighty gates!
Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!
The King of Glory shall come in.

TAU

I pass from the citrine: deep indigo
In this tall column. Snakes and vultures bend
Their hooded hate on him that would ascend.
O may the Four avail me! Ageless woe,
Fear, torture, throng the threshold. Lo! The end
Of matter! The immensity of things

THE LADDER

Let loose—new laws, new beings, new conditions :—
 Dire chaos; see! these new-fledged wings
 Fail in its vaguenesses and inanitions.
 Only my circle saves me from the hate
 Of all these monsters dead yet animate.
 I match, &c

YESOD

Hail, thou full moon, O flame of Amethyst!
 Stupendous mountain on whose shoulders rest
 The Eight Above. More stable is my crest
 Than thine—and now I pierce thee, veil of mist!
 Even as an arrow from the war-bow springs
 I leap—my life is set with loftier things.
 I match, &c.

SAMECH (and the crossing of the Path of Pe)

Now swift, thou azure shaft of fading fire,
 Pierce through the rainbow! Swift, O swift! how streams
 The world by! Let Sandalphon and his quire
 Of Angels ward me!

Ho! what planet beams
 This angry ray? Thy swords, thy shields, thy spears!
 Of meteors war and blaze; but I am I,
 Horus himself, the torrent of the sky
 Aflame—I sweep the stormy seas of air
 Towards that great globe that hangs so golden fair.
 I match, &c.

TIPHERETH

Hail, hail, thou sun of harmony,
 Of beauty and of ecstasy!
 Thou radiance brilliant and bold!
 Thou ruby rose, thou cross of gold!
 Hail, centre of the cosmic plan!
 Hail, mystic image of the Man!
 I give the sign of slain Asar.
 I give the sign of Asi towering.
 I give the sign of Apep, star
 Of black Destruction all-devouring.
 I give thy sign, Asar re-risen:—
 Break, O my spirit, from thy prison!

I match, &c.

GIMEL (with the crossing of the path of Teth)

Hail, virgin Moon, bright Moon of Her
 That is God's thought and minister!
 Snow-pure, sky-blue, immaculate
 Hecate, in Thy book of Fate
 Read thou my name, the soaring soul
 That seeks the supreme, sunless goal!

And thou, great Sekhet, roar!
 Confront the lion in the way!
 Thy calm indomitable eyes
 Lift once, and look, and pierce, and slay!

THE LADDER

I am past. Hail, Hecate! Untrod
 Thy steep ascent to God, to God!
 Lo, what unnamed, unnameable
 Sphere hangs above inscrutable?
 There is no virtue in thy kiss
 To affront that soul-less swart abyss.

I match, &c.

DAATH

I am insane. My reason tumbles;
 The tower of my being crumbles.
 Here all is doubt, distress, despair:
 There is no force in strength or prayer
 If pass I may, it is by might
 Of the momentum of my flight.

I match, &c.

GIMEL (and the crossing of Daleth)

Free from that curse, loosed from that prison;
 From all that ruin am I risen!
 Pure still, the virgin moon beguiles
 My azure passage with her smiles.

Now! O what love divine redeems
 My death, and bathes it in her beams!
 What sacring transubstantiates
 My flesh and blood, and incarnates

The quintessential Pan? What shore
 Stretches beyond this secret door?
 Hail! O thou sevenfold star of green,
 Thou fourfold glory—all this teen
 Caught up in ecstasy—a boon
 To pass me singing through the moon!

Nay! I knew not what glory shone
 Gold from the breathless bliss beyond:
 But this I know that I am gone
 To the heart of God's great diamond!

I match, &c.

KETHER

I am passed through the abyss of flame;
 Hear ye that I am that I am!

THE RETURN

Behold! I clothe mine awful light
 In yonder body born of night.
 Its mind be open to the higher!
 Its heart be lucid-luminous!
 The Temple of its own desire
 The Temple of the Rosy Cross!

THE LADDER

As Horus sped the flame, Harpocrates
Receive the flame, and set the soul at ease.
I who was One am One, all light
Balanced within me, ordered right,
As it was ever to the initiate's ken
Is now, and shall be evermore. Amen.

BELLADONNA

My heart's blood hot upon your lips is reason
For the ensanguine banners of their bliss ;
My white soul that your malice took by treason
Is the cold ardour in your cheek, and this
My bower that was jasmine in its season
Is all your yellow snakes of hair, that hiss
And fasten all their fangs upon me—these
I knew, forget ; they leave your saint at ease.

I have forgotten all these things, erotic
While it was dark, while flesh corroded flesh
With cancerous kisses acrid and exotic
Like orchids, while the star-queen flung her mesh
Over us as we swam, one soul dicrotic
That blindly leapt through billow salt and fresh :—
Oh darkness ! how the perfume of it clings !
How then have I forgotten all these things ?

The light came on us kissing. Then I vaunted
My lust again, and drank that fearful cup
But—what new witchcraft held my soul enchanted ?
What necromancy sucked my spirit up ?
I saw the demon-archimage that haunted
Your eyes, that had me to his house to sup

BELLADONNA

My blood, and crunch my bones—mine agonies
To build into the rapture of your eyes!

So then I have forgotten all the other.

Only those eyes pursue me through the æon,
Whether by God's grace we love one another,
Whether I weave an ode or blare a pæan.
There is no help, my vampire and my mother!
But I am snared within those eyes Circean
That blaze at me from wall, or wood, or well
Their final knowledge of their final Hell.

For there is no soul, none, beyond ours, suave sister,

In the fierce light—the boon, the bane, the bliss,
The bale!—our eyes are born to burn and blister
And blast Love's queen herself in their abyss.
See! the scarred cheek where our lips lightly kissed her;
We whose eyes kiss, the sacramental kiss!
The kiss whose lightest petal is a curse
Fit to dissolve the ultimate universe.

Then, let us make a child! Shall he not be

A flame of fire, a ringless ocean, a wind
All-penetrating, a ten-branching tree,
A height of spirit, an abyss of mind?
Shall we not veil our eyes, lest he should see
The extreme secret in their soul confined
And die? Then let us also cease from seeing
And wake the lusty whirlwind of our being!

Come! let the night fall; let us drown what knows
In what exults; blot out the wizard figure
Of thought, and build the many-coloured rose
Your body on the cross, my body's rigour.
Chaos and Cosmos as God ebbs and flows
Less than your thrust—wring out the extreme vigour!
Annihilation take us, till we rise
Once more to the damnation in your eyes!

THE POET AT BAY

YOU? much-respected married man!
I? whom all decent people ban!
You, of all people, come to me
And ask about my poetry?
For shame, sir! Well, if you insist!

Like an enamoured lutanist
Graven on some bishop's amethyst,
So there is graven by fate's steel
And polished by time's emery wheel
This passion that consumeth me,
Music that mars man's dignity!

My love is like an unhealed scar
That throbs and bleeds at the word war!
My love is like a masterless
Hound, running wide on a false scent.
I am the plaything of distress;
The marionette of the Event!

Yet this red lust that rots my sword
Is the same flame that tempered it.
Though my death be my birth's reward,
And folly be the prize of wit,

Life was, and laughter. Take the odds
Offered us by the gambling gods!

I saw a painted dancing-girl
Writhe, jerk, shake, snap her fingers, curl
Her lips into a lecherous leer
All night for sixpence and her beer.
I met her eyes. We knew each other,
In God's womb sister and twin brother!
She blazed. Each belly-twitch set swinging
The censers of the stars, set singing
The myriad choirs of cherubim.
All nature dived from sense, to swim
In that past-space past-period
Infinite ocean that is God.

Such luck be yours! You cannot tell
The pulse that makes my forehead swell.
You see me walk in clubs, not cloisters;
Eat not ambrosia, but oysters.
Nor shall it all avail you, though
You eat your heart for lust to know,
To watch these sparks of verse I throw
Cold ere they flame! For they attest
The anvil's ring, the hammer's zest,
The white-hot rage of steel, that is
My soul exulting in God's kiss
The hammer, and the anvil life. . . .
.
Go, and explain it to your wife!

UT

I

HAIL to the golden One
Seen in the midmost Sun!
Hail to the golden beard and golden lips,
His whole life golden to the finger-tips!
Hail to the golden hair in golden showers
Hiding the eyes like blue blue lotus-flowers!
His name is Ut, for He
Hath risen above all things that be.

II

Ardent and white, the Lord
Whirls forth a strident sword.
Its blade is broader than the great World-Ash;
Its edge is keener than the lightning-flash.
Brighter than all the lights of heaven, it whirls
Out in a chaos of creative curls
And sheathes itself in Me,
Arisen above all things that be.

III

Even as the burning tongue
Of God to God that clung

Dissolved His being to a nameless naught,
Brake all the wings and waves of time and thought,
So in the quivering flame that hurled
Its founts of life to the remotest world
Supreme stood Death, and sware
Destruction to all things that were !

IV

Child, father, warrior,
I worshipped Thee before ;
Friend, bridegroom, now I yield me to the rod.
My God, and very God of very God
As breath, as death, as all, as naught, unknown,
Known, is there not an end, when one alone
Stand I, and thou, and He
Arisen above all things that be ?

ROSA DECIDUA

“O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night
In the howling storm
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.”—BLAKE.

ROSE of the World!
If so, then what a world!
What worm at its red heart lay curled
From the beginning? Plucked and torn and trampled
And utterly corrupt is she
That was the queen-flower unexampld
In gardens goodlier than Arcady.

O Thou! whose body was my lyre, whose soul
Lay on my mouth like a live coal!
This time thou hearest not my song; thine ears
Are stopped with worse than death;
And all this wasted breath
Of mine—those songs of six most memorable years
Of ecstasy and agony—may not attain
To charm thy being into love again. . . .

This is no tragedy of little tears.
 My brain is hard and cold ; there is no beat
 Of its blood ; there is no heat
 Of sacred fire upon my lips to sing.
 My heart is dead ; I say that name thrice over ;
 Rose !—Rose !—Rose !—
 Even as lover should call to lover ;
 There is no quickening,
 No flood, no fount that flows ;
 No water wells from the dead spring.
 My thoughts come singly, dry, contemptuous,
 Too cold for hate : all I can say is that they come
 From some dead sphere without me ;
 Singly they come, beats of a senseless drum
 Jarred by a fool, harsh, unharmonious.

There is no sense within me or about me ;
 Yet each thought is most surely known
 For a catastrophe.
 No climax of a well-wrought tragedy !
 Single and sterile.

I am here for naught.
 I have no memory of the rose-red hours.
 No fragrance of those days amid the flowers
 Lingers ; all's drowned in the accursed stench
 Of this damned present. The past years abort
 And this is found. Foul waters drench
 My earth. All's filth. With what cold eye one scans
 This body that was—so long since—two years ! I
 wrench

My soul to say it—all a man's
 Delight. Come, look at it! This leaden skin
 With ochre staining its amorphous grey;
 All that elastic brilliance passed away;
 Minute invading wrinkles where the flesh
 Is soaked away by the foul thing within
 Her soul; the bloom so faint and fresh
 Smudged to a smoky glow as one may see
 At sunset in the Factory lands; the lips
 Thinned and their colour sickened into slate;
 The eyes like common glass; the hair's gloss dull;
 The muscles gone, all pendulous with fat;
 The breath that was more sweet than Lebanon
 And all the flowers and honey and spice thereof
 Ripe for my soul's kiss, eagerly to cull,
 Now like a corpse three weeks drowned, swollen by
 sun

And water and vermin. There she sways and stares,
 And with the jaw dropped all awry—first swears,
 Then lurches; then she slobbers unctuously:
 "I am not old: I am quite beautiful;
 How have I lost your love?
 Pitiful! Pitiful! Pitiful!

This is no tragedy of little tears.
 This worm was in her blood
 Lurking for thrice five years,
 And now I see him—that old slime that leers
 Where Bacchus smiles, that evil and averse
 God that is wholly curse,

As He is wholly blessing to the wise.
This thing invertebrate, this sewer-flood,
Compact of treacheries, meannesses, and lies,
Horrible thirst, infamous beastliness,
Dirt and disease, so sottish wallowing,
Yet sensitive to pain so hideous
That sometimes he appears all pain, all fear,
All hate—so slavish, yet so fierce a king,
A tyrant to himself, insidious
And cunning as some sordid sorceress ;
Incapable of action or control,
Yet a black gulph to drown so strong a soul! . . .

He lay close curled within my rose's heart.
There is no blame ; yet what avails all art ?
See! I reel back beneath the blow of her breath
As she comes smiling to me : that disgust
Changes her drunken lust
Into a shriek of hate—half conscious still
(Beneath the obsession of the will)
Of all she was—before her death, her death !
So hell boils over in her, and she rages
—It seems through countless ages—
With all the vile abuse
That had degraded Glasgow's grimiest stews,
With all the knowledge of despair
Striking me cunningly, striking everywhere,
Mutilating the corpse of my dead love
With such a savagery,
Intensity above

All understanding, that it bleeds again
As a corpse should bleed at the murderer's touch!
Then, not content, she must needs smutch
All my past purifying pain,
Turning all life to a thing fouler than
Aught yet imaginable to man!

Who asks me for my tears?
She flings the body of my sweet dead child
Into my face with hell's own epitaph,
Profanes that shrine
Of infinite love and infinite loss,
My empty shrine, the one shrine undefiled,
My one close-claspèd cross—
And hers as much as mine!
Profanes it with a hideous laugh
And a lie flung with a curse; and I must hear,
And must not stamp on the snake, because, forsooth
This was my love, my peace, my faith, my truth,
The rosebud of my youth!

It was—it is not—it can never be.
This would corrupt God's body with a breath.
I see Him sicken and swoon; I see Him rot
Through, though His tabernacle be
Eternity.
This makes a man catch hold of death
Greedily like a harlot in the street
That plucks by the arm some sot.
Death shakes me off with a hoarse curse.
Tied to this woman, his beneficence

Were too like heaven—and heaven's somehow to earn
No doubt—no way that I know! Hell's enough
If hell would only burn
And silence the one devil-word of love.

Ay! death slinks off.
I have a child that claims my life
To keep from knowledge of her mother's fate,
To keep from heritage thereof,
To shield from the world's scoff,
To watch, stamp out the seeds of madness in her.
God! that hast held me back from hate,
Be merciful to me a sinner
And ward me, warding her! As it is written :
Excepting Adonai build the house, they labour
In vain that build it. And Again :
Excepting Adonai keep the city,
The watchman watcheth but in vain.
God, if there be a God, be Thou my Neighbour ;
And if that God have pity, have Thou pity!
For never man was smitten as I am smitten ;
Nor from Time's yesterday to Time's to-morrow
Was there a sorrow like unto this sorrow!
How many hours was Christ upon the cross?
How many days in hell? But I have hung
From the day of infinite loss
Watching her degradation into dung
Three years.
Three years!
And now who asks me to shed tears?

Let a man pierce my side,
 I warrant him nor blood nor water flows,
 But such a poison as Locusta never
 Distilled from toad, asp, viper, scorpion,
 Nightshade, gall, orpiment, Jews' hearts,
 Old women's tongues, by monstrous arts ;
 But this my poison drips, without endeavour,
 From the mere soul of the world's rose !
 What alchemy of hell this ronyon
 Venus has skill of!

Wonder that I live !

This has been like a bag-pipe drone to wail
 Its monotone through high, low, fast and slow.
 It has been like a secret cancer,
 Forcing all servants of the life to give
 Their work to the usurper ; all its themes assail
 The main word Life ; they build their archipelago
 Of poison in each sea where life was holy.
 Their questions have no answer,
 But all's converted to the abominable
 Soul-sickening thing that one is tied to. This is I
 Just as God in His Nature, wholly
 Involved therein, its tune, its motive, its quintessence.
 There were no meaning in Spring's aspen spell,
 Where man's sole treasury, the sky,
 Made bankrupt of His presence.
 Only, this God is a black fiend ;
 Of blood, the babe's drink, weaned
 And fattened on—what liquor and meat? Unnameable
 By all the giant horrors that haunt hell!

These years I have watched her fade, my masterful
love
And all-embracing pity strove
Like athletes in an amorous bout to make
Some child to tread upon that snake.
But ever the worm slipped, escaped; its spires
Here crushed, there rose the stronger for the pressure
That gave it purchase; keener flamed the fires
In its eyes triumphant. Now its soul asserts
Its master-pleasure;
The worm exerts
Its adult might, and in one bout
The spine snaps of that child of Love and Pity,
And mangled he falls out
Of the fight. Just so child Hercules
Strangled two serpents in his pretty
Red fists, achieved twelve labours, won to ease,
And was done down to death and madness by
The subtle poison that himself distilled.
So all the God in life is chilled
To a corpse. The informing one? God's a cast
clout
Of a leper! Leave me here, corruptest of earth's whores
To scrape my sores

Cry like a dog and run about the city!
There is no word left, now the deed is dead!
No thought of her is in me; I am a stranger
To all that dream of danger
And bliss that Rose was. The green shoots

Of life that spring in me are fed
Not even on the more of her decay.
They spring from other roots.
Now I am cleansed of her, I am so to say
A man part paralysed. One limb is dead
In feeling as in motion. This remains
To ask: Will all catch death—how soon? This head
Excites its miserable brains
To think the word it knows by intellect
To be the right word—pity! Then reflect:
“Pitiful! Pitiful! most pitiful!
The pity of it! Think of the love past,
Blossoms too beautiful!
Think of the hardships conquered comrade-wise!
Think of the babe and its most piteous end!”
—All these things sound like lies.
I do not comprehend
Anything of them—“Pity! pity! pity!”
’Tis like the dripping of some stagnant rain
From the housetops of a ruined city
Upon the flagstones. Not one petal clings
Upon the stalk of life or memory. Stain
Not one pale thought with blushes; my soul’s dead
As a corpse flung out of the tideway on
The stinking flats of London mud. The springs
Are dry beyond appeal; dull grey like lead
(And heavier) is my soul’s carrion.
If she came pleasing now, pure passionate, and
sane,
I would not take her back again.

I am warned—that's the word. Let my own back feel
the lash!

All power of live is burnt right through to ash.
Bray it in a mortar, mix with gall and ink,
And give it to the children for a drink!

I'll wait till she is dead, to bring those tears.
I doubt not in the garden of my heart
Whence she is torn that flowers will bloom again.
May those be flowers of weeping, flowers of art.
Flowers of great tenderness and pain,
Broad liliated meers
Lying in a lonely leafless forest
Silent and motionless beneath the moon.

I feel my weakness, O thou soul that soarest
Into a heaven beyond imagining
On the unfaltering wing.
Of the magic swan! I know this tune
Should swell to a strong note, a triumph note
Blared through a trumpet's throat
To tell the world I am no coward, or else
Sob in sweet minor, soft as Asmodel's
Chant to the nightingale. I am so wrecked, so rent
That one seems brag, the other sentiment.
I cannot leave the present; I will not pose
There lies the rotten rose
And stinks. That is the truth; the rest is gloss.
My loss was total loss.
So close that rose lay to my heart, its fall
Was the catastrophe of all.

Now call me callous! Pass me, prigs, and sneer
At the base soul that could not bear its cross!
I say that infinite loss is infinite loss,
That tears are trivial, tears are happiness,
That this blind ache is God's last punishment
For love; that all things in that one thing shent
Are damned, that had I loved her less
I could have prated in some honeyed strain.
Taking a subtle pleasure in my pain.
It is my bulk, the mass of my intent,
That makes the ruin abject. I had sung
Some partial earthquake; here the universe
Crashes with one great curse,
Whelming the singer and the song. My tongue
Is palsied; only this chaotic clash
Of curses echoes the dire crash.

And after all the roar, there steals a strain
At last of tuneless, infinite pain;
And all my being is one throb
Of anguish, and one inarticulate sob
Catches my throat. All these vain voices die,
And all these thunders venomously hurled
Stop. My head strikes the floor; one cry, the old cry,
Strikes at the sky in its exquisite agony:

Rose! Rose o' th' World!

THE CIRCLE AND THE POINT

THE CIRCLE

I AM the Holy Queen of Heaven!
Eternal matter is my name.
The veiled star, the crowned eleven.
These are my soul, as thou my flame,
O wingéd globe of serpents twined,
O sun of glory in my skies!
O subtle spirit of my mind!
O ardent rapture of mine eyes!
Thou secret centre, motion, rest:—
Come to my breast! Come to my breast!

THE POINT

I am the Lord of Heaven, and I
Am secretly arrayed and robed
In all the azure abyss of sky
By serpents wingéd, wound and globed.
Thou art the Infinite of space,
Thou the blue-lidded love of air!
I burn to kiss the exultant face,
To grip the body bent and bare.
O music! to my silence be!
I come to thee! I come to thee!

IN MEMORIAM

E. R. et E. H.

STRIP, dear! Naked-pure you lie—
Surely we are done with dreams!
Open to the world's wide eye!
Let them know, sweet, how it seems
(To a love like ours) to die!

So, dear! Virginal you were
When I touched your life with song;
Virgin now to death lie there!
You shall not await him long.
(Fold your body in your hair!)

Satan, hail! our consecration!
Lilies, lilies: let them swathe you,
Robes baptismal of damnation!
Tuberose and iris bathe you
In the sea, annihilation!

All white flowers I build, a fane
Fit to shroud the sacrifice.
I will kiss you once again
Ere I pull the trigger twice.
—Or our death were died in vain.

Are you ready, sweet? Then fold
 Once your arms about me, cling
 Close and clip me as old—
 In the presence of the King
 That awaits us. Love is bold.

We are witness—by our fate—
 To one poet—is there one?
 That beyond the miry weight
 Of the fog there shines a sun!
 Be he comforted thereat!

.
 Yea! I chant your mastery!
 In the hag-ridden, mange-bitten,
 Sodden, superstitious sty
 That John Milton made of Britain
 In the twentieth century,
 Two in blood the runes have written—
 How to love and how to die!

Praise, O Martyrs! Not one bead
 Of your strong blood but shall thrill
 In our hearts, and burn and breed
 Myriad children to your will.
 We will damn the coward's creed,
 And the eunuch's squeaking still,
 Till the world is yours indeed!

Yea! at last the spell shall break
 Wherewith Christ and Cromwell bound us

IN MEMORIAM

We shall once more (for your sake!)
Be the men that Shakespeare found us.
All our life and lust awake!
All your love and joy surround us
Smooth and deadly as a snake!

Thus I build your monument,
Happy martyrs, passion-crowned!
Death your holiest sacrament,
Life mere garlands that you wound
Laughing on your brows, and rent!
Fare ye well, O world-renowned!
Enter into great content!

AD FIDELEM INFIDELEM

AH, sweet my sister! Was it idle toil,
When in the flowerless Eden of Shanghai
We made immortal mischief, you and I
“Casting our flame-flowers on the dull brown soil?”
Did we not light a lamp withouten oil
Nursed by unfruitful kisses, stealthily
Strewn in the caldron where our Destiny
Bides brooding—Mother, bid its brew to boil!

Ah, Sweetheart, we were barren as Sahara,
But on Sahara burns our subtle star.
Soon an oasis, now too lone and far,
Shall bloom with all the blossoms of Bokhara :
See! o'er the brim the mystic fountain flows!
Cull from the caldron the ensanguine Rose!

THE SPHINX

BENEATH the cruel splendid Sphinx
My soul lies supine still, and drinks
Damnation from the emerald eyes,
Death from the painted mouth that dies
As, drunk on life, she sucks it in!
O crimson masterpiece of sin,
The mouth that maddens me and slays
My youth in many molten ways!
All her adulterous ardours wake
The god, the tiger, and the snake.
I yield; her soft, her strenuous breath
Fills me and feeds my soul on death.

O Sphinx, more sacred than the stars!
O beast! O God! thy passion chars
This life. Beneath thy claws I writhe.
For like a lion thou art lithe
And like a bull exceeding strong.
Thine eagle's scream beats down my song.
Ah slay me, slay me now! Have done! . . .
The torture is but half begun.

THE JEW OF FEZ

THERE was a Jew—tradition says—
Who loathed the colour of his fez.

“Black gives an air of gloom,” he said :
“I should look beautiful in red !”

He told the Mullah of his plight
The good man answered : “Very right !

“Islam is free to all mankind :
You only need to be resigned.”

The Jew agreed ; he learnt to pray
Five several times each mortal day.

Instead of Abraham, the Mullah
Called him Habib Husain Abdullah.

But (what indeed is hardly strange)
His views on Art began to change.

“This red’s a shrieking tone, I swear !
O for the black I used to wear !”

THE JEW OF FEZ

His bullied servants overheard
This wicked renegado-word.

Four soldiers dragged the Jew away
To prison on that very day.

The Cadi and the Caid wept;
They thought a promise should be kept.

“Be calm” (said they) “and do not strive!
We think of burning you alive.”

“Shame!” said the wretch. “’Tis cruel to
Burn me because I am a Jew!”

The wise old Cadi wagged his head.
“I do not see a Jew,” he said.

“This clear distinction must be made.
We only burn a renegade.”

The fire they burnt Abdullah at
Went merrily; for he was fat.

THE PENTAGRAM

In the Years of the Primal Course, in the dawn of terrestrial
birth,
Man mastered the mammoth and horse, and Man was the
Lord of the Earth.

He made him an hollow skin from the heart of an holy tree,
He compassed the earth therein, and Man was the Lord of
the Sea.

He controlled the vigour of steam, he harnessed the light-
ning for hire ;
He drove the celestial team ; and Man was the Lord of the
Fire.

Deep-mouthed from their thrones deep-seated, the choirs
of the æons declare
The last of the demons defeated, for Man is the Lord of
the Air.

Arise, O Man, in thy strength! the kingdom is thine to
inherit,
Till the high gods witness at length that Man is the Lord
of his spirit.

SONG

The World for a whore !
The Sky for a harlot !
All life—at your door—
For a woman of scarlet !
A bitter exchange
A bad bargain to strike ? It
May seem to you strange :
The fact is—I like it !

II

You offer me gold,
Place, power and pleasure
To have and to hold—
Inexhaustible treasure !
I'll give it and more
In this planet of boredom
For a girl that's a whore,
And is proud of her whoredom !

AN HYMN

FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Independence Day)

Brothers and sisters, on this day
Of deathless glory, let us come
United in our glad array
To hymn our fathers' martyrdom.
Ashes to ashes? Dust to dust?
So let it be! In God we trust.

They died—they died—and we are free.
Take up their cross! Deserve their crown!
The stainless flag of liberty
By man shall not be trodden down!
Ashes to ashes? Dust to dust?
So let it be! In God we trust.

In war and earthquake, wreck and wrong,
Still let the flag of freedom fly!
In peace and safety, still be strong!
For we will live as we would die.
Ashes to ashes? Dust to dust?
So let it be! In God we trust.

Though ruin wash the world in blood,
Though death devour, though time decay,

AN HYMN

Let but our hearts hold brotherhood,
And this they shall not take away.
Ashes to ashes? Dust to dust?
So let it be! In God we trust.

Stand! and join hands! and let us sing!
Shake out Old Glory to the skies!
With heart and hand defiant fling
Our purpose against Destiny's
Ashes to ashes? Dust to dust?
So let it be! In God we trust.

PROLOGUE TO RODIN IN RIME

Nor I can give, nor you can take ; endures
The simple truth of me that this is yours
Is not the music mingled with the form
When all the heavens break in blind black storm ?
Are we not veiled as Gods, and cruel as they,
Smiting our brilliance on the shuddering clay ?
Silence and darkness cover us, confirm
Our splendour to its unappointed term :
For all the mean homunculi that dance
Around us shudder at our brilliance.
These puppets perish in the good grand glare,
Our sworded sunlight in the boundless air !
These bats need cloisters ; these tame birds a cage ;
How should they know the Masters of the Age ?
Or understand when the Archangels cry
Adoring us “ Έλλην κατ’ άστερ ‘έι” ?

THE CAMP FIRE

IN MEMORIAM A. C. S.

The meer is haunted, berylline that lies
Upon the enchanted moor, bare to the skies.
Far as the eye leaps, there is nothing seen
But Mystery, the horizon hungry and lean
Like a slim snake encompassing the air.
Subtly the lake woos, like a virgin's prayer.

No moon there was; no stars could pierce the blind
O'ertoppling mass of heaven; there was no wind.
There was no man, no beast; no sound or sight
Broke thy swart span, O brooding vulture, Night!
Where the tarn dwindled, was lost altogether,
I piled, I kindled the sparse twigs of heather
On one squat square stark rock; I struck my steel.
The sparks splash: flares the pyre, a wildering wheel
Of light that rolled, and lit the meer, and showed
A glint of gold in that inane abode.

Thus then I sate, and warmed me at the blaze,
Brooding like Fate upon my desert days.
Before the dawn, the pyre burnt through to ash,
The god withdrawn; effaced the golden gash!

I sate and shivered: so this pregnant breath
Must be delivered at the door of Death!
Poor petty torch to which our spirits flutter
Our wings to scorch! Ah, shall no angel utter
Some word to allay the universal doom?
All swept away into a dusty tomb!

My friend! who dreamt that dream of Permanence?
Are we exempt from any common sense
Was not my fire warm while it burned? Am I
No living lyre because my songs must die?
Is not Becoming Being's twin? Be mute!
Is Death's low drumming louder than Life's lute?
Was I the ass, that fed my body on
That crackling grass, long after midnight gone;
Or thou, that shivered all night long for fear
The sun delivered no dawn upon the meer?

More, canst thou tell what god may watch thy beacon,
Feed it from hell or heaven, ere it weaken,
From some anointed sceptre, fiery dew
For this appointed, that my soul win through?

Nay! all we know not anything. Yet raise,
Though we must throw our hearts to feed its blaze,
The aspiring flame, the passionate glow, the bloom
Whose root is shame, whose fruit the trackless tomb.
I wail "I know not," louder and livelier
Who laugh, and go not, shaveling sinister!

THE CAMP FIRE

To you for help, who snarl "I know," and grasp,
Mean mongrel whelp! my bulging sporrán's clasp.

So, Swinburne, sleep! That which is written is written.
I will not weep. The torch of song is smitten
Into dry stray leaves elsehow doomed for sure
To damp decay, Victorian manure,
Miasmatal squelch, black slough to mire the Sun,
The stink and belch and snivel of Tennyson!

Hail and farewell, my brother! I am he
To plant in hell thy sunkissed sea-lily
Thou has lived! As I live, stars in midnight's deep.
Thou hast died. All die; why boggle at the leap?
Serene and splendid blazed thy fire, night's sun:
Thy task is ended, brother, thy work done.
Drone on thy shore, no pæan stir thy surge!
A period to life, death, heaven, and hell!
There is no God: hail, brother! and farewell!

AVE ADONAI

PALE as the night that pales
 In the dawn's pearl-pure pavilion,
I wait for thee, with my dove's breast
Shuddering, a god its bitter guest—
 Have I not gilded my nails
 And painted my lips with vermilion?

Am I not wholly stript
 Of the deeds and thoughts that obscure thee?
I wait for thee, my soul distraught
With aching for some nameless naught
 In its most arcane crypt—
 Am I not fit to endure thee?

Girded about the paps
 With a golden girdle of glory,
Dost thou wait me, thy slave who am,
As a wolf lurks for a strayed white lamb?
 The chain of the stars snaps,
 And the deep of night is hoary!

Thou whose mouth is a flame
 With its seven-edged sword proceeding,

AVE ADONAI

Come! I am writhing with despair
Like a snake taken in a snare,
 Moaning thy mystical name
 Till my tongue is torn and bleeding!

Have I not gilded my nails
 And painted my lips with vermilion?
Yea! thou art I; the deed awakes,
 Thy lightning strikes; thy thunder breaks
 Wild as the bride that wails
 In the bridegroom's plumed pavilion!

THE WILD ASS

I

THE secret of the House of Set
Is hidden in my sevenfold veil ;
For I am he that doth beget
The Rood, and bear the Holy Graal.

Yet is my manhood woman-frail
Barren my motherhood. Then how
Shall men my mystic mountain scale ?
These ram's-horn thumbs jut from my brow

To push them to the miry slough
Wherein the foes of Set are caught.
Come, let us pluck the Golden Bough
From the brave Tree of life and thought !

Who heareth naught, he heedeth naught.
Come, we are safely housed and shrined
Where subtler images are wrought
Than boast the treasures of Mind !

II

The secret of the House of Set.
As a poor pilgrim clambering
Toils on the slopes, so I to get
Halidom for my lord the King.

THE WILD ASS

Faintly and feebly murmuring
I uttered the mysterious runes,
And bade my body's sleekness sing
Silky, satanic, subtle tunes.

Was he not holy? Milk of moons
Were not so pallid as his cheek,
And roses of a million Junes
His mouth left livid. So I seek

In all God's seas a tiny creek
Wherein to moor my shallop. Nay!
He is a mountain, chill with bleak
Stark winds of innocence astray!

The fearful passion sweeps me away.
So with a passionate thrill of fear
I creep—like shadows across Day!
Like Winter on the expended year!—

From those cold feet, a frozen meer,
To those cold knees, a lost lagoon,
To that wild woodland, strangely near
To the lone tower that tops the moon!

Verily and Amen! Unhewn
The great grim forest menaces.
What gardener may dare to prune
Those woods to build me palaces?

So climb, each ledge an infinite stress,
Lustful as light, as lechery loth,
From the brutality of Besz
To the plumed perjury of Thoth!

I held him holy. Holier both
Than aught the bearers of the bier,
Thoum-aesh-neith and Auramoth,
Saw in the hiding-house of fear.

The sorceries that span the sphere,
The spells that harness star and sun,
I whispered in his siren ear—
Once, twice, and thrice for every one!

Once, twice, and thrice—the boon's begun!
With four and five and six it stirs:
With seven the druid dance is done,
And Death drives home his silver spurs!

Then—the last leap. What crowning curse
Can bid that cup of curses brim?
How may God's maniac ministers
Lash the last langour out of Him?

I did it. How? So great and grim
The Gods are, I may never guess.
Suffice it, on his mouth I swim
A drowning dastard. The caress

THE WILD ASS

Wakes the lost life. I see him dress
The godhead. Up he bounds and brays :—
The wild ass of the wilderness,
The soul that sees, the soul that slays !

Inhabit the untrodden ways,
Set! Thou my god and I thy priest,
Thy temple hidden in the haze
Of deserts death to god or beast !

Thou who art both shalt foin and feast
With me who am both, thy hate's co-heir,
Lord of the West and of the East—
The scorpion's hole, the lion's lair !

I kissed his mouth—sublime despair!
Our souls were one; our bodies met—
Yea! darkness cover everywhere
The secret of the House of Set !

THE OPIUM-SMOKER

(IN EIGHT FUGUES)

I

CROWN me with poppy-leaves: sere are the bays.
Fling down the myrtle: the myrtle decays.
Still be the strife of the strenuous days!

Still be thy stridency, Player Pandean!
Soothe me the lute; but oh hush to the pæan!
Feed me on kisses of flowers Lethean!

Specks on the wheel are the nights and the days,
Fast as they fall from me, lost in the haze,
Sobered to softness of silvery grays.

Satan is fallen from the pale empyrean
Down in the dusk with the dead Galilean:—
Fill me the cup of the poppy Circean!

II

Hardly a glimmer to chasten the gloom;
Hardly a murmur of Time at his loom;
Nothing of sense but the poppy-perfume.

THE OPIUM-SMOKER

Boy, as you love me, I charge you to fold
 Pipe over pipe into gardens of gold
 Such as a god may be glad to behold.

Seated on high in the æons of doom,
 Sucked as a seed to the infinite womb,
 Sealed is my soul in the sheath of its tomb.

Boy, as you love me, I charge you to mould
 Pipe after pipe, till the heavens are rolled
 Back and are lost as a tale that is told!

III

Silence and darkness are weaving a web
 Broidered with Nothing at uttermost ebb:—
 Cover, oh cover the shaming of Seb!

Fling the wide veil, O Nuit, on the shame!—
 Shame from the Knowledge and unto the Name—
 Hide it, O hide it, in flowers of flame!

Now in the balance of infinite things
 Stirs not a feather; the universe swings
 Poised on the stealth of ineffable wings.

Surely the sable Osirian bird
 Sole in the æther shall utter the Word
 Now that its crying can never be heard!

IV

See how the Star of the Universe blazes!
Millions of meteors in marvellous mazes
Mingle their magic of peony praises.

Oh! the dark streak on the heart of its flood!
Smitten is the Star, and its poisonous blood
Drips through the race of the luminous scud.

Poison and poison and poison! I quiver,
Drenched with the hate of the horrible river—
O but the stars of it stagger and shiver!

Leave me in peace, O disaster of light!
Leave me to solitude, leave me to night!
Is there no moon to enkindle the height?

V

See how the moon with her amrita dew
Drinks up the death of the Star, and renews
Life in cascades of peonian hues!

Nay, but she curves to arise, to increase;
Glamour on glamour to sicken and cease.
How shall the warrior win to the peace?

Fade, O thou moon in thy magical bark!
Sink in the ocean thy silvery spark!
Leave me, ah leave me alone in the dark!

THE OPIUM-SMOKER

Art thou not burnt in the fire of my will?
 See, by the flashes that crimson and kill
 I am the master; the magic is still.

VI

See! how the wrath of my rune that I send her,
 Fire of my fire, is flung flying to end her,
 Wrapping in ruin that scintillant splendour.

Fire of my fire! how the brilliance darts forth,
 Runs to the uttermost pole of the north,
 Splashing all space with the spume of my wrath!

Ah! but the subtle, the perilous way;
 That hath no fire to enkindle the clay.
 Ever to all be the work of me Nay!

I who am Being and Knowledge and Bliss
 Lack by so much of the utter abyss:—
 Bring me, O bring me, O bring me to this!

VII

Nay! it is over; I may not attain.
 Why am I faint but because I am fain
 Roll me the rapture of amber again!

Ah! but the poppy's deciduous dream
 May not avail me to stand to the stream
 Bearing me back from the Mighty Extreme.

Subtle and sombre the eagre of sleep
Rolls up the bay to envelope the steep.
What then is left, what is left—but to weep?

Maybe the stridency purpled of Pan
Leads at the last to the light of His plan.
Maybe his work is the wealth of a man!

VIII

Bring me the tablets, the stylus of jade!
Lend me thy light, O compassionate maid!
Soul of the master, O come to mine aid!

Make me the man of the marvellous mission!
Sharpen the sword of veridical vision
Cut me the knot of the mighty magician!

Here I devote me (record me the vow)
Unto the terrible task of the Tao.
Soul of the master, the writer be thou!

Bring me the tablets and stylus! Have done!
Guard me the doors; they are open to none,
Not to the Emperor! I have begun.

IN MANU DOMINÆ

(A BLACK MASS)

THE pale girl with the glittering eyes
Leans forward ; all her youth's despair
Stares from the fleshless face that lies
'Mid the faint flax of her hair
Fallen on her foolish 'broideries :
She is too deathly fair.

She stares—she stares—she reads this thought,
What black joy her harsh cough affirms.
Life leers—a jesting Juggernaut !
Death beckons, beckons to the worms.
And the smile upon his face is fraught
With all its ghastly terms.

Out of the glimmer and incense-reek
Two clamorous colour-cries emerge.
The frightful flush that stains her cheek
Is the rouge of the White Scourge ;
Her pallor is like a spectre sleek
That dances to a dirge.

Her slim transparent hand is wan
As a moonstone, as blue ice !

She hath divers jewels crusted on
 To her rings' graven obscenities,
Like elfin eyes, the malison
 Of a basilisk cockatrice!

She hath a cold, an ardent gleam
 In the staring eyes of her;
She weaves a witch-web of dank dream
 Before her worshipper;
Her hand allures him to its theme:
 Sceptre to sepulchre!

So cold, so chaste, so sombre glows
 The purpose of her cypress glance!
A sphinx set up amid the snows,
 An Attis frozen in his dance,
Is this unnatural god that knows
 No man's inheritance.

So with a strange Circean smile
 She bends herself and moves
With a vile, a calculated wile
 In the unfamiliar grooves,
Whose horror hath so great a guile
 That her hates pass for loves.

Within the gold bars of her rings
 She grips the god as in a vice.

She watches every twinge that wrings
The heart of the struggling sacrifice,
Lest she should lose the joy that stings,
The furies that entice.

Slower and firmer and steadier!
Relentless, ruthless, still she sways ;
And the snake-cold stealth and hate of her
Flash in the jewels, and bite, and blaze ;
While the mystic hand, her minister,
Moves in its fatal ways.

The victim twists and writhes beneath
The scornful spell, the giant grip.
He rolls his eyes, he grinds his teeth
Like a slave under the whip ;
And his tortured groans can only wreathe
A sneer upon her lip.

In the half-light her jewels flame
Like stars that presage pestilence.
O laughterless, O hideous game
Of sterile smiles, of cold incense !
Her death's-head grins the gargoyle shame
Of her virile virulence.

Now let the slave gasp out his soul
In the agony supreme !

She laughs outright as she gains the goal
Of her dark and deadly dream ;
And the white life leaps from his control
Wild, in a choking scream.

She curves white lips to a cup of death ;
Her eyes gleam, and her wise brows nod ;
Her hand makes music with her breath
Dancing upon the ivory rod—
The dying priestess offereth
The sacrifice to God

MR TODD

A MORALITY

In Memoriam

LILITH

Obiit Kal. Mai 1906

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

GRANDFATHER OSSORY (*eighty-one*)

ALFRED OSSORY (*fifty*), *his son, a shipowner*

EMILY OSSORY (*forty-five*), *his wife*

EUPHEMIA OSSORY (*eighteen*), *his daughter*

CHARLEY OSSORY (*ten*), *his son*

GEORGE DELHOMME (*twenty-four*), *of the ministry of Foreign Affairs*

DIONYSUS CARR (*thirty-four*), *Professor of Experimental Eugenics in the
University of Tübingen; and*

MR. TODD

THOMAS, *a footman*

A HOSPITAL NURSE

SCENE: *The sitting-room in OSSORY'S house in Grosvenor Square.*

TIME: *Midday.*

The persons are in correct morning dress, except the invalid GRANDFATHER, who is in a scarlet dressing-gown, with gold embroidery, and CARR, who affects a pseudo-Bohemian extravagance. He wears a low collar, a very big bow-tie of gorgeous colours, a pale yellow waistcoat, a rich violet lounge suit with braid, patent leather boots, pale blue socks. But the refinement and breeding of the man are never in question. His hair is reddish, curly, luxuriant. He is clean-shaved, and wears an eye-glass with a tortoiseshell rim.

TODD has a face of keen pallor; he is dressed in black, with a flowing black cape, black motor-cap. He gives the impression of great age combined with great activity.

ACT I

GRANDFATHER *sunk in melancholy in his arm-chair;*
MRS. OSSORY *red and weeping;* OSSORY *(a*
British heavy father) grief-stricken; EUPHEMIA
sobbing at the table; CARR and DELHOMME *cold*
and hot respectively in their expression of
sympathy. MR. TODD *is at the door, his cloak*
on, his hat in his hand.

OSSORY. It is kind of you to have so come far to break
the sad news, my dear sir. I hope that we shall see you
again soon under—under—under happier circumstances.

[TODD *bows very low to the company as if deeply*
sympathising; but turning his face to the
audience, smiles as if at some secret jest. The
actor should study hard to make this smile sig-
nificant of the whole character, as revealed in
the complete play; for TODD does not develop
through, but is explained by, the plot. TODD
goes out; OSSORY follows, and returns in a
minute. There is no sound in the room but that
of EUPHEMIA'S sobs.

OSSORY [*returning, throws himself into a chair near the*
door]. Dear me! dear me! Poor, poor Henry!

DELHOMME. In the very flower of his life. ...

CARR [*solemnly*]. Truly, my dear sir, in the midst of life we are in death.

[EUPHEMIA *looks up and darts a furious glance at him for she knows that he is mocking British solemnity and cant.*

DELHOMME. Crushed—crushed in a moment—

MRS. OSSORY [*very piously*]. Without a warning. Ah well, we must hope that— [Her voice becomes a mumble.

DELHOMME. I will bid you good morning; I am sure you will not wish strangers to intrude upon your grief. If there is anything that I can do—

MRS. OSSORY [*“conventionally”*]. Pray do not leave us yet, Monsieur Delhomme. Lunch is just ready.

DELHOMME. I really think that I should go.

[*He shakes hands.*

MRS. OSSORY. Good morning. We are so grateful for your sympathy and kindness. [He turns to the old man.] Grandfather is asleep.

[DELHOMME *shakes hands coldly with CARR, wondering why he does not offer to come with him. He goes to EUPHEMIA.*

EUPHEMIA. [*Jumps up and gives her hand, hiding her tear-stained face. She has a slight lisp.*] Good morning, monsieur. [He bends over her hand and kisses it.

DELHOMME. Always my sympathy and devotion, made-moiselle.

EUPHEMIA. Thank you—thank you.

[*Her real attitude to him is listlessness bordering on aversion, but constrained by politeness; he mistakes it for modesty striving with young love.*]

DELHOMME. Good morning, Mr. Ossory. Anything I can do, of course; anything I can do.

OSSORY. Thank you, my dear lad. Anything you can do, of course—I will let you know at once. By the way, you haven't asked her yet, I suppose?

DELHOMME. Not yet, sir. I am rather diffident: I do not care to precipitate affairs.

OSSORY. Well, I am really very anxious to see her future assured. And you know our proverb, "The early bird catches the worm." [*Points to him, and over his shoulder to her.*] There's our scientific friend, eh?

DELHOMME. Oh, I'm not afraid of him. A "*farceur*," no more, though sometimes a pleasant one.

OSSORY. *Tu t'en f—, ça, mon vieux chameau? Quoi?*

DELHOMME. [*very disgusted at OSSORY'S vulgarity, which mistakes argot for chic*]. Well, sir, as soon as I can find a favourable opportunity—

OSSORY. Grief is a good mood to catch them in, my boy. I know! I know! I've been a bit of a dog in my time.

[*Shakes hands as they go out.*]

DELHOMME. [*returning*]. One word in your ear, sir, if I may. It's purely instinctive—but—but—well, sir, I mistrust that man Todd!

OSSORY. Thanks: I believe you may be right.

DELHOMME. Good-bye, sir!

OSSORY. Good-bye.

MRS. OSSORY [*rising*]. Alfred, that man is a devil!

OSSORY. What, little Delhomme?

MRS. OSSORY. Of course not, Alfred. How can you be so silly? Todd!

OSSORY. Why, whatever do you mean?

MRS. OSSORY. I don't mean anything but what I say. He's a devil; I'm sure of it. I know it was his fault, somehow.

OSSORY. Nonsense, nonsense, my dear! He was not even in the car.

MRS. OSSORY. It was his car, Alfred.

OSSORY. You're a fool, Emily.

CARR. I think Mr. Ossory means that we could hardly hold him responsible if one of his steamers ran down a poor polar bear on a drifting iceberg.

MRS. OSSORY. I know I'm quite unreasonable; it's an instinct, and intuition. You know Saga of Bond Street said how psychic I was!

[During the next few speeches CARR and EUPHEMIA correspond by signs and winks.]

GRANDFATHER. When I was in Australia forty-four years ago there was a very good fellow of the name of Brown in Ballarat. Brown of Buninyong we used to call him. I remember——

MRS. OSSORY. *[bursting into tears]*. How can you, grandpa? Can't you realise that poor Henry is dead?

GRANDFATHER. Henry dead?

MRS. OSSORY. Didn't you hear? He was run over by Mr. Todd's motor-car this afternoon in Piccadilly.

GRANDFATHER. There, what did I tell you? I always disliked that man Todd from the first moment that I heard his name. Dear, dear! I always knew he would bring us trouble.

OSSORY. Well, this doesn't seem to have been his fault,

as far as we can see at present. But I assure you that I share your sentiments. I have heard very ill things said of him, I can tell you.

MRS. OSSORY. Who is he? Does any one know? A man of family, I hope. How dreadful for poor Henry if he had been run over by a plebeian!

OSSORY. Well, we hardly know—I wonder if his credit is good. [*His voice sinks to a whisper as the awful suspicion that he may be financially unsound strikes him.*]

CARR. [*sharply, as if pained*]. Oh, oh! Don't suggest such a thing without the very best reason. It would be too terrible! [*This time EUPHEMIA laughs.*]

OSSORY. My dear boy, I deliberately say it. I have the very best of reasons for supposing him to be very deeply dipped. Very deeply dipped.

CARR. [*Hides his head in his hands and groans, pretending to be overwhelmed by the tragedy. Looks up.*] Well, I was told he other day that he held a lot of land in London, and has more tenants than the Duke of Westminster!

OSSORY. Well, we'll hope it is true. But in these days one never knows. And he leaves a very unpleasant impression wherever he goes. If I were not an Englishman I should say that the feeling I had for him was not very far removed from actual fear!

CARR. Well said, sir. Hearts of oak in the City, eh?

[OSSORY glares at him suspiciously. EUPHEMIA both enjoys the joke and is angry that her father is the butt of it.]

EUPHEMIA. Well, I'm not afraid of him—I think I rather like him. I'm sure he's a good man, when one knows him.

CARR. Oh, Todd's a good sort! I think I must be going, sir.

EUPHEMIA. I wish you would stay and help me with the letters, Mr. Carr. We shall have a great deal to do in the next day or two.

CARR. Well, if you really wish it, I will try and be of what service I can.

[CARR, *with his back to audience, laughs with his hands, behind it.*

MRS. OSSORY. That is indeed kind of you, Professor!

[CARR'S *hand-laugh grows riotous.*

GRANDFATHER. Where is Nurse? I want my whisky and milk.

MRS. OSSORY. [*Rings.*] I shall go down to lunch, Alfred. Lunch when you like, please, everybody. I fear the house will be much upset for a day or two. You must go down to the mortuary at once. I am really too upset to do anything more.

CARR. [*Over L. To EUPHEMIA.*] She hasn't done much yet!

EUPHEMIA. What a brute you are!

MRS. OSSORY. And we can't possibly go to the dear Duchess on Friday!

CARR. [*almost in tears*]. Forgive my seeming callousness! On my honour, I never thought of that. "Sunt lachrymae rerum."

[*A nurse and a footman appear. The latter wheels GRANDFATHER out of the room, using the greatest care not to shake him.*

GRANDFATHER. Oh, my sciatica! You careless scoun-

drel, you're shaking me to pieces! Emily, do get a gentler footman. Oh! Oh! Nobody cares for the poor old man. I am thrown on the dust-heap. Oh, Emily, may you suffer one day as I suffer! Oh! Oh! Oh!

[The Nurse comes forward and soothes him.]

NURSE. You must really be more careful of my patient, Thomas.

THOMAS. I humbly beg pardon, miss. I think the balls is gritty, miss. I'll ile 'em to-morrow.

GRANDFATHER. There, you see, Nurse is the only one that loves me. I should like to marry you, Nurse, eh? And cut 'em all out?

MRS. OSSORY. *[Glares at Nurse in silence, not trusting herself to speak to her.]* Now, grandpa, don't be silly! You know how we all love you! *[She goes to the chair and shakes it, unseen.]* Thomas, there you are again! How can you be so thoughtless?

GRANDFATHER. Oh! Oh! Oh!

[They get him out of the room.]

MRS. OSSORY *[returning]*. Good-bye, Mr. Carr. It is so good of you to help.

CARR. Not at all, Mrs. Ossory, not at all. I am only too glad. You should try and get a nap after lunch.

MRS. OSSORY. I will—I really think I will. *[Exit.]*

CARR. *[Closes the door, turns to EUPHEMIA, executes a quiet hornpipe, goes to EUPHEMIA, holds out his arms.]* Sweetheart!

EUPHEMIA. How dare you! How can you! With poor Uncle Henry lying dead!

CARR. Why have a long Latin name if you mean to play

the English hypocrite? Who was poor Uncle Henry? Did you love poor Uncle Henry so dearly as all that? How old were you when your father quarrelled with poor Uncle Henry? About two and a half! The only thing you know about poor Uncle Henry is that poor Uncle Henry once tickled your toes. [EUPHEMIA *gives a little scream of horror.*] Enough humbug about poor Uncle Henry! . . . Sweetheart!

EUPHEMIA. Mine own!

[*They embrace and kiss with great intensity.*]

EUPHEMIA. Unhand me, villain! . . .

But one has to be decent about one's relations. Even the humbug of it is rather fun.

CARR. There speaks the daughter of Shakespeare's country. I am sure the Bacon imbroglio was a consummate practical joke on somebody's part. As I see the joke, I take no side in the controversy!

But we should look on the bright side of things!

[*Pompously.*]

Poor Uncle Henry, dead and turned to clay,
 May feed the Beans that keep the Bile away.
 Oh that whom all the world did once ignore
 Should purge a peer or ease an emperor!

EUPHEMIA. But where is the bright side of our love?

CARR. Why, our love!

EUPHEMIA. Cannot you, cannot you understand?

CARR. Not unless you tell me!

EUPHEMIA. I can't tell you.

CARR.—Anything I don't know.

EUPHEMIA. Oh, you laugh even at me!

CARR. Because I love you. So I laugh at humanity: if I took men seriously I should have to cut my throat.

EUPHEMIA. So you don't take me seriously either?

CARR. If I did, I should have to cut——

EUPHEMIA. What?

CARR. My lucky!

EUPHEMIA. What a dreadful expression! Where do you learn such things?

CARR. I notice you don't have to ask what it means.

EUPHEMIA. Stop teasing, darling!

CARR. I'm not teething! That's what I complain of; you always treat me as a baby!

EUPHEMIA. Come to his mummy, then!

CARR. You're not my mummy! That's what I complain of; you always treat me as a Cheops, ever since that night on the Great Pyramid!

EUPHEMIA. [*Hides her head in his bosom.*] Oh shame, shame!

CARR. Not a bit of it! Think of the infinite clearness of the night——

“The magical green of the sunset,
The magical blue of the Nile.”

The rising of the great globed moon—the stars starting from their fastnesses like sentries on the alarm—the isolation of our stance upon the summit—the faery distance of Cairo and its spear-sharp minarets—and we—and we——

EUPHEMIA. Oh me! Oh me!

CARR. Shall I remind you—

EUPHEMIA. Must *I* remind *you*?

CARR. No; my memory is excellent.

EUPHEMIA. Of what you swore?

CARR. I swore at the granite for not being moss.

EUPHEMIA. You swore to love me always.

CARR. The champagne at the Mena House is not champagne; it is—the cork of it is labelled “Good intentions.”

EUPHEMIA. Then you didn’t mean it?

CARR. [*kissing her*]. Am I, or am I not—a plain question as between man and man—loving you now?

EUPHEMIA. Oh, I know! But I am so worried that everything most sure seems all shaken in the storm of it! I was glad—glad, glad!—when that Mr. Todd came in with his news, so that I could have a real good cry. [*Very close to him, in a tragic whisper.*] Something has happened—something is going to happen.

CARR. And something has not happened—I knew it was a long time since we missed a week. By the way, have you heard the terrible news about Queen Anne? Dead, poor soul! Never mind, silly, you told me most dramatically, and it shall be counted unto you for righteousness.

EUPHEMIA. I think you’re the greatest brute in the world—and I love you.

CARR. How reciprocal of you!

EUPHEMIA. Sweet!

CARR. On my honour, I haven’t a single chocolate on me. Have a cigar? [*Business with case.*]

EUPHEMIA. Be serious! You must marry me at once.

CARR. Then how can I be serious! I understand from

a gentleman named Shaw that marriage is only a joke—no, not Shaw! Vaughan, or Gorell Barnes, or some name like that!

EUPHEMIA. But you will, won't you?

CARR. No, I won't, will I?

[Sings.] "I have a wife and bairnies three,
And I'm no sure how ye'd agree, lassie!"

EUPHEMIA. What? [She releases herself.]

CARR. Well, the wife's dead, as a matter of fact. Her name was Hope-of-ever-doing-something-in-the-Wide-Wide. But the bairns are alive: young Chemistry, already apt at repartee—I should say retort; little Biology, who's rather a worm between you and me and the gatepost; and poor puny, puling, sickly little Metaphysics, with only one tooth in his upper jaw!

Oh, don't cry! I love you as I always did and always shall. I'll see you through it somehow!

But don't talk foolishness about marriage! We are happy because when I come to see you I come to see you. If we were living together you would soon get to know me as the brute who grumbles at the cooking and wants to shut himself up and work—[mimicking her voice] "And I wouldn't mind so much if it were work, but all he does is to sit in a chair and smoke and stare at nothing and swear if any one comes in to ask him if my darling new old rose chiffon moiré Directoire corsets match my eau-de-Nil suede tussore appliqué garters." See?

EUPHEMIA. But—hush!

[She flies away to the other end of the room. The door opens. Enter THOMAS.]

THOMAS. Mr. Delhomme would like to see you for a moment on urgent business.

[The lovers exchange signals privately.]

EUPHEMIA. Show him up.

THOMAS. Yes, miss. *[THOMAS goes out.]*

CARR. I will go and get a snack. Trust me—love me—

EUPHEMIA. I will—I do.

[They embrace. CARR goes to the door—turns.]

CARR. Love me—trust me.

[EUPHEMIA “flies to him, kisses him again, nods.]

EUPHEMIA. I will—I do—I love you—I trust you.

CARR. Sweetheart! *[they kiss, furtively, as if hearing footsteps.]* So long!

[She retreats into the room, and blows him a kiss.]

CARR. *[outside, loudly].* Good morning, Miss Ossory!

EUPHEMIA. *[sinking into a chair, faintly].* Good-bye—no. no! Till—when?

[She is almost crying, but sets her teeth and rises.]

THOMAS. *[opening the door].* Mr. Delhomme.

[Enter DELHOMME.]

DELHOMME. I am a thousand times sorry to intrude upon your grief, Miss Ossory, but—

EUPHEMIA. Uncle Henry was nothing to me.

DELHOMME. In any case, I should not have spoken to you, but my Embassy has suddenly called me. I am to go to Constantinople—I may be a month away—and—I want to see you first.

EUPHEMIA. Of course, to say good-bye. It is sweet of you to think of us, Monsieur Delhomme.

DELHOMME. Of you—of thee. How difficult is the English language to express subtle differences!

You must have seen, Miss Ossory—

EUPHEMIA. [*dully*]. I have seen nothing.

DELHOMME. May I speak?

EUPHEMIA. What is this? Oh!

DELHOMME. I need not tell you, I see. My unspoken sympathy and devotion—

EUPHEMIA. Spare me, I pray you.

DELHOMME. I must speak. Mademoiselle, I am blessed in loving you. I offer you the sympathy and devotion of a lifetime.

EUPHEMIA. I beg you to spare me. It is impossible.

DELHOMME. It is the truth—it is necessary—I should kill myself if you refused.

EUPHEMIA. My father—

DELHOMME. Your respected father is my warmest advocate.

EUPHEMIA. You distress me, sir. It is impossible.

DELHOMME. Ah, fairest of maidens, well I know your English coyness and modesty! [Taking her hand.] Ah, give me this pure hand for good, for ever! This hand which has been ever open to the misery of the poor, ever closed to box the enemies of your country!

EUPHEMIA. It is not mine!

DELHOMME. I do not understand. I am too worn a slave in the world's market for my fettered soul to grasp your innocence. Ah! you are vowed to Our Lady, perhaps? Yet, believe me—

EUPHEMIA. Oh, sir, you distress me—indeed you distress me!

DELHOMME. I would not brush the bloom from off the lily—and yet—

EUPHEMIA. My god!—Monsieur Delhomme, I am going to shock you. Oh! Oh!

[She buries her face in her hands. He starts back, surprised at the turn things are taking, and at the violence of her emotion and of its expression.]

DELHOMME. What is it! Are you ill! Have I—

EUPHEMIA. *[Steady and straight before him.]* I am another man's—his—his mistress. There!

[He reels, catches a chair and saves himself. Her breast heaves; swallowing a sob, she runs out of the room.]

DELHOMME. *[Utterly dazed].* I—I—oh, my god! My father! My God! I thought her—oh, I dare not say it—I will not think it. *[On his knees, clutching at the chair.]* My god, what shall I do! She was my life, my hope, my flower, my star, my sun! What shall I do! Help me! help me! Who shall console me? *[He continues in silent prayer, sobbing].*

[The door opens; MR. TODD steals into the room on tiptoe, bends over him and whispers in his ear. The expression of anguish falls from his face; a calm steals over him; he smiles in beatitude and his lips move in rapture. He rises, shakes TODD by the hand; they go out together.]

[GRANDFATHER wheeled into the room by THOMAS, CHARLEY walking by him. The servant leaves them.]

GRANDFATHER. Bitter cold, Charley, for us old people! Nothing right nowadays! Oh, my poor leg! Bitter, bitter cold! I mind me, more than sixty years ago now—oh dear! oh dear! Run and tell Nurse I want my liniment! Oh dear! oh dear! what a wretched world. Sciatics—like rats gnawing, gnawing at you, Charley.

CHARLEY. You frighten me, grampa! Why doesn't Mr. Carr come and play with me?

GRANDFATHER. He has gone out with your mother. He'll come by-and-by, no doubt. Run and fetch Nurse, Charley! [CHARLEY runs off.]

Oh dear! I wish I could find a good doctor. Nobody seems to do me any good. It's pain, pain all the time. Nurse! can't you tell me of a good doctor? For oh! for oh! [*He looks about him fearfully; his voice sinks to a thrilled whisper*] I am so afraid—afraid to die! Is there nobody—

[Enter TODD, and stands by his chair, laying his hand on the old man's shoulder. He looks up.]

I wish you were a doctor, Mr. Todd. You have such a soothing touch. Perhaps you are a doctor? I can get nobody to do me any good.

[TODD whispers in his ear. The old man brightens up at once.]

Why, yes! I should think that would relieve me at once. Very good! Very good!

[TODD wheels him out of the room, the old man laughing and chuckling. Enter OSSORY and EUPHEMIA, talking.]

OSSORY. I want to say a word, girlie, about young Delhomme. Er—well, we all grow older, you know—one day—er—ah! Nice young fellow, Delhomme!

EUPHEMIA. I refused him twenty minutes ago, father.

OSSORY. What? How the deuce did you know what I was going to say? Bless me, I believe there may be something in this psychic business after all!

EUPHEMIA. Yes, father, I feel I have strange powers!

OSSORY. But look here, girlie, why did you refuse him? *Reculer pour mieux sauter* is all very well, don't you know, but he gives twice who gives quickly.

EUPHEMIA. That's the point, father. If you accept a man the first time he asks you it's practically bigamy!

OSSORY. But—little girl, you ought to accept him at once. He will make you an excellent husband—I wish it. [*Pompously.*] It has ever been the desire of my heart to see my Phemie happily mated before I lay my old bones in the grave.

EUPHEMIA. But I don't love him. He's a quirk.

OSSORY. Tut! Nonsense! Appetite comes with eating.

EUPHEMIA. But I don't care for *hors d'oeuvre*.

OSSORY. Euphemia, this is a very serious matter for your poor old father.

EUPHEMIA. What have you got to do with it? Really, father—

OSSORY. I have everything to do with it. The fact is, my child—here! I'll make a clean breast of it. I've been gambling, and things have gone wrong. Only temporarily, of course, you understand. Only temporarily. But—oh, if I had only kept out of Fidos!

EUPHEMIA. Is it a dog? [*Whistles.*] Here, Fido, Fido! Trust, doggie, trust!

OSSORY. that's it! they won't trust, those dogs! To put it short—[*a spasm of agony crosses his face*—Good Lord alive, *I'm* short! If I can't find a couple of hundred thousand before the twelfth I'll be hammered.

EUPHEMIA. And so——?

OSSORY. Very decent young fellow, little Delhomme. I can borrow half a million from him if I want it; but I don't care to unless—unless things—unless you——

EUPHEMIA. I'm the goods, am I? You old bear!

OSSORY. I know, Phemie, I know. It's those damned bulls on Wall Street! How could I foresee——

EUPHEMIA. At least you might have foreseen that I was not a bale of cotton.

OSSORY. But I shall be hammered, my dear child. We shall all have to go to the workhouse!

EUPHEMIA. [*coldly*]. I thought mamma had three thousand a year of her own.

OSSORY. That's just what I say. The workhouse!

EUPHEMIA. My dear father, I really can't pity you. I think you're a fool, and you've insulted me. Good morning!

[*She goes out.*]

OSSORY. Oh, the disgrace of it, the shame of it! She little knows—How will the Receiver look at that Galapagos turtle deal? Receivers are damned fools. And juries are worse. Ah, Phemie, so little a sacrifice for the father who has given all for you—and she refuses! Cruel! Cruel! Which way can I turn? Is there nobody whose credit—— Let's think. Jenkins? No good. Maur?

Too suspicious—a nasty, sly, sneaking fellow! Higginbotham, Ramspittle, Rosenbaum, Hoggenger, Flipp, Montgomery, MacAn—no, hang it! no hope in a Mac—Schpliechenspitzel, Togahening, Adams, Blitzenstein, Cznechzaditzch—no use. I wonder where I caught that cold! who the devil is there that I could ask?

[Enter THOMAS —OSSORY'S back toward door.

THOMAS. Mr. Todd.

[Enter TODD—OSSORY doesn't turn.

OSSORY. I can't see him, Thomas. [Turns.] I beg your pardon, Mr. Todd. The fact is, I'm damnably worried over pay-day. I don't know you very well, but I have a sound business proposition to put before you. I think you might help me. God knows I have tried every one else. Now—

[TODD takes him by the shoulder and whispers in his ear.

Why, really, that is good of you—damned good of you! Why, damme, sir! you're a public benefactor. Come, let us arrange the preliminaries—

[They go out, OSSORY clinging tightly to TODD'S arm. Enter MRS. OSSORY and CARR, dressed for walking.

MRS. OSSORY. She cut me! You saw it! She cut me absolutely dead!

CARR. Possibly she didn't see you.

[As MRS. OSSORY is not looking, he employs a gesture which lessens the likelihood of this, by calling attention to her bulk.

MRS. OSSORY. I know she saw me. My only Duchess!

CARR. There's better duchesses in Burke than ever came out of it, Mrs. Ossory. By the way, unless rumour lies, the jade! you can fly much higher than a paltry Duchess!

MRS. OSSORY. Why, why, what do you mean? Oh, dear Professor, how sweet of you! Or are you joking? Somehow one never knows whether you are serious or not! But you wouldn't make fun of my embarrassments—Society is so serious, isn't it? But, oh do! do tell me what they say!

CARR. Well, Mrs. Ossory—you know our mysterious friend?

MRS. OSSORY. Mr. Todd?

CARR. Yes. Well, they say that—he is a King in his own country.

MRS. OSSORY. And I've always disliked and distrusted him so! But perhaps that was just the natural awe that I suppose one must always feel, even when one doesn't know, you know. I wonder, now, if we could get him to a little dinner. One could always pretend one didn't know who he was! Let me see, now! Caviar de Sterlet Royale—

CARR. Consommé royale, sole à la royale, timbale royale à l'empereur, bouchées à la reine, asperges à la royale, haunch of royal venison—can't insult him with mere baron of beef—pouding royale, glace . . . l'impératrice, canapé royale—you'll be able to *feed* him all right!

MRS. OSSORY. How clever you are, Professor! Thank you so much. Now who should we ask to meet him?

CARR. I rather expect you'll have to meet him alone!

MRS. OSSORY. *Tête-à-tête!* But would that be quite *proper*, Professor?

CARR. How very English!—all you English think that. But—royalty has its own etiquette.

[*Enter CHARLEY.*

Come along, Charley boy, and show me how the new engine works!

Never mind that old frump of a Duchess, Mrs. Ossory—perhaps Mr. Todd may call. [*Goes out with CHARLEY.*

MRS. OSSORY. I do hope he meant it. But he's such a terrible man for pulling legs, as they call it.—I can't think where Euphemia picks up all her slang!—If that plain, quiet man should really be a crowned King! Oh! how I would frown at her! Ah! ah! Somebody coming.

[*Enter THOMAS.*

THOMAS. Mr. Todd.

[*Enter TODD.*

MRS. OSSORY. Oh, my dear Mr. Todd, I am so glad to see you! I'm in such distress! You will help me, won't you?

[*TODD bows, smiles, and whispers in her ear. She smiles all over. TODD offers his arm. She goes out on it, giggling and wriggling with pleasure. Enter EUPHEMIA.*

EUPHEMIA. I wonder where mother is! No, I don't want her. I'm too happy. How I love him! How proud I am—when another girl would be so shamed! I love him! I love him! Oh, what a world of ecstasy is this! To be his, and he mine! to be—oh! oh! I cannot bear the joy of it. I want to sit down and have a good cry. [*Sits, crying and laughing with the joy of it.*]

Oh, loving Father of all, what a world Thou hast made! What a gift is life! How much it holds of love and laughter! Is there anything more, anything better? I cannot believe it. Is there anything, anybody that could make me happier?

THOMAS. Mr. Todd. [Enter TODD.]

EUPHEMIA. Good afternoon, Mr. Todd! So glad to see you! Why, how strange you look! What have you to say to me? [TODD *whispers in her ear.*

EUPHEMIA. How splendid! You mean it? It is true? Better than all the rest! Come, come!

[She throws her arm round his neck and runs laughing out of the room with him.]

[Enter CARR and CHARLEY, a toy steam-engine puffing in front of them; they follow on hands and knees. The engine stops at the other end of the room.]

CHARLEY. Oh, my poor engine's stopped!

CARR. You must pour more spirit into it.

[CHARLEY goes to the cupboard and gets it, busying himself until CARR'S exit. CARR sighs heavily, and sits down thoughtfully.]

Todd's been too frequently to this house. Well, Charley and I must get on as best we can. Life is a hard thing, my God!

“Meantime there is our life here. Well?”

It seems sometimes to me as if all the world's wisdom were summed up in that one Epicurus phrase. For if Todd has solved all their problems with a word, at least he

supplies no hint of the answer to mine. For I—it seems I hardly know what question to ask!

Oh, Charley boy, the future is with you, and with your children—or, can humanity ever solve the great secret? Is progress a delusion? Are men mad? Is the great secret truly transcendental? We are like madmen, beating out our poor brains upon the walls of the Universe.

Is there no Power that might reveal itself?

[*Kneels.*] Who art Thou before whom all things are equal, being as dust? Who givest his fame to the poet, his bankruptcy to the rich man? Who dost distinguish between the just and the unjust? Thou keeper of all secrets, of this great secret which I seek, and have nowise found! This secret for whose very shadowing-forth in parable I, who am young, strong, successful, beloved, most enviable of men, would throw it all away! Oh Thou who givest that which none other can give, who art Thou? How can I bargain with Thee? what shall I give that I may possess Thy secret? O question unavailing! For I know not yet Thy name! Who art Thou? Who art Thou?

THOMAS [*opening the door*]. Mr. Todd. [*Enter TODD.*

CARR. [*rising*]. How are you? I'm afraid you find me distracted! Listen: all my life I have sought—nor counted the cost—for the secret of things. Science is baffled, for Knowledge hath no wings! Religion is baffled, for Faith hath no feet! Life itself—of what value is all this coil and tumult? Who shall give me the secret? What is the secret? [TODD *whispers in his ear.*

Why, thanks, thanks! What a fool I have been! I have always known who you were, of course, but how

could I guess you had the key of things? Simple as ABC—or, rather, as A! And nothing to pay after all! “For of all Gods you only love not gifts.” [*Ushers TODD to the door.*] I follow you.

[*TODD smiles kindly on him. They go out.*

[*The child turns; and, finding himself alone, begins to cry.*

CHARLEY. My nice man has gone away. Old Todd has taken him away. I think I hate that old Todd!

[*Enter TODD.*

I hate you! I hate you! Where is my nice man?

[*TODD whispers in his ear.*

Oh, I see. It is when people get to be grown-ups that they don't like you any more. But I like you, Mr. Todd. Carry me pick-a-back!

[*TODD takes CHARLEY on his shoulder, and goes dancing from the room, the boy crowing with delight.*

CURTAIN.

TRANSLATIONS

L'AMOUR ET LE CRANE

Love is seated on the skull
Of humanity;
And the mad, malicious fool,
Laughing brazenly,

Gaily blows his bubbles high
In the air apace.
Will they reach the stars that lie
At the end of space

The shining globe—O fragile veil!
Gives one leap supreme,
Breaks and spits its soul out, frail
As a golden dream.

Groans the skull at every puff:
“Peace, I pray thee, peace!
The game is fierce and fond enough—
Will it never cease?”

“That which thy babe’s mouth, cruelly fain,
Squanders in the scud,
Monstrous assassin is my brain,
My flesh and my blood!”

L'ALCHIMIE DE DOULEUR

ONE with his ardour makes thee tender,
Another clothes thee in his grief,
Nature! Saith one: "The falling leaf!"
The other: "Praise October splendour!"
Thou unknown Hermes that assists
Me, before whom I crouch and tremble;
Thou mak'st me Midas to resemble,
The saddest of all alchemists!

For gold within my crucible
Turns iron; and heaven turns to hell
In cloudland's ghostly napery
I find a corpse—that I loved well
And in celestial gardens I
Build mightiest sarcophagi

LE VAMPIRE

O THOU, who like a dagger-stroke
Art planted in my plaintive heart,
Who art come hither like a flock
Of fiends, by mad and gilded art

Come, of this dark soul and discrowned
To make thy bed and thy domain—
Vile wretch to whom my life is bound
Even as a convict to his chain,

Even as a gambler to his game,
Even as a drunkard to his thirst,
Even as a harlot to her shame—
Be thou accurst, accurst, accurst!

I prayed the falchion's fiery craft
To win my freedom in a trice ;
And called the treacherous poison-draught
To master me my cowardice.

Alas! Alas! disdain me,
Both sword and poison mock my mood :
“Unworthy! how deliver thee
From thine accursed servitude

LE VAMPIRE

“Imbecile! vain thy manhood’s boast!
Slew we the fiend and broke thy chain,
Thy kisses to its bleeding ghost
Would bid thy vampire live again!”

LE BALCON

MOTHER of memories, and queen of queens!
Thou, all my happiness! Thou, all my duty!
Remember the dear hearth, the twilight screens,
Thy beauty, and our passion, and thy beauty!
Mother of memories, and queen of queens!

Those evenings in the firelight velvet-lined
Or on the balcony, veiled by rosy wings
Of mist. Thy breast was soft, thy kiss was kind.
We often said imperishable things
Those evenings in the firelight velvet-lined.

On summer evenings how the sun is fine!
How space seems deep! How roars the heart's red flood!
I lean toward thee, adoring, queen of mine,
And thought I breathed the perfume of thy blood—
On summer evenings how the sun is fine!

The night fell thick and thick, a screen of sable;
Mine eyes within the blackness guessed at thine.
I drank thy sighs—oh poison comfortable!
Thy feet slept in these brother hands of mine:
The night fell thick and thick, a screen of sable.

I have the art to evoke delicious hours
And live my past again between thy knees ;
Why should I seek thy beauty's languorous dowers
Save in thy body's passion, thine heart's ease
I have the art to evoke delicious hours.

These vows, these scents, these kisses infinite
Shall be reborn from gulfs we may not sound,
So scale the sky, young suns, in choral flight,
Winged from their lustral lapse in seas profound!
O vows! O scents! O kisses infinite!

LE GOUT DE L'INFINI

I adore Thee as I do the Vault of Night,
(O Vase of Sadness! Silence of great might!)
And love Thee more that Thou escapest me
Dazzling my dreams, ironic subtlety
That still adds league to league—leagues limitless
That keep the azure abyss from my caress!

I grip God's throat, I grapple Him to terms—
So, to a corpse, a choir of coffin-worms!
Ah beast! I love thee, cruel and uncontrolled,
Even to that ice that burns when fire is cold.

L'HEAUTONTIMOROUMENOS

CALM as a headsman at the block
I smite thee, not for anger's sake,
Even as Moses smote the rock ;
And from thine eyelid I will make

Flow forth the streams of suffering
To water my Sahara years,
My swollen passions, maddening
Shall swim upon thy sea of tears,

Like ships beyond the bar that bound,
And in my heart that they enlarge
With hope thy dear sobs shall resound,
A drummer rattling out the "Charge!"

For am I not a discord-note
In God's great anthem—thanks to thee
Black Irony with greedy throat
That shaketh me, devoureth me

Through my soft voice this harpy screams !
My blood, this viper-venom base !
I, the black mirror by whose gleams
Megaera watches her own face.

I am the wound and I the steel;
I am the buffet and the ear;
I am the limbs, and I the wheel,
Victim and executioner!

The Vampire of my heart am I,
Lord of that God-forsaken train
That, damned to laugh eternally,
Know they can never smile again.

LE VIN DE L'ASSASSIN

My wife is dead, and I am free!
Now I can drink my whole week's wage.
I used to come home stony—she
Tore my nerves with her cries of rage.

I am as happy as a king:
The air is pure; the lark's astir—
We had just such another spring
The year I fell in love with her.

The dreadful thirst that parches me
Craves wine, wine, wine to loose its clutch:
Wine, wine enough to brim with glee
Her grave—and that is saying much.

I threw her body down the well!
The little wall around that ran
I pushed upon her as she fell.
—I will forget her if I can!

By all the oaths of tenderness
Whose tendrils nothing may unbind,
And to bring back the enchanteress
Love to the days when she was kind.

I begged of her a darkling tryst
One night—a night of wind and rain.
She came, poor silly devil! Pist!
We are all more or less insane.

She was still beautiful, although
So tired. Still sweet! still pale! still shy!
I loved her overmuch—and so
“Out of this life you go!” said I.

No one can understand me. None
Of these dull drunkards could divine
In nightmares this that I have done
—To make a winding-sheet of wine!

This black invulnerable vice
—Engines of iron! towers of stone!—
For winter's blight or summer's spice
True love, true love hath never known—

True love with black inchauntments filled,
Its hellish rout of shrieks and groans,
Its phials of poison death-distilled,
Its rattling chains and skeletons!

Here am I, free, alone—alone!
I shall be drunk, dead drunk, to-night.
Then I shall slip to the cold stone
Without remorse, without affright;

LE VIN DE L'ASSASSIN

And I shall sleep—yes, like a dog!
The lumbering wagon with its weight
Of wheel, its load of stone or log,
May well come crawling—it is fate!

Crush my curs'd head—cut me in half!
The guilty soul, the swinish clod!
I laugh at it—laugh as I laugh
At the body and the blood of God!

WOMAN

THE whole wide world is meat-of-murderess
For thee, foul woman, cruel from idleness.
To whet thy teeth at this ferocious play
Thy rat-trap needs a man's heart every day.
Thine eyes, lit up like shops or booths that flare
When all the world keeps holiday, still glare,
Using a borrowed power with insolence,
Ignoring beauty's law that lent them sense.
Blind wheel and deaf, of Hell in travail curled!
Brave tool that drinks the blood of all the world!
Hast thou no shame? and hast thou no alarm
Whose mirror shows thee thy decaying charm?
Hath not the vastness of the evil thing
Thou think'st thee wise of, sent thee shuddering
When Nature—grand, persistent, tenebrous—
Uses thee, woman, thee, princess of pus,
Vile animal!—to slay a genius?
O golden mire! fame ignominious!

TOUË ENTIERÈ

THE Devil is my lofty vault
This morning came to talk with me.
And (ever trying to find fault)
Said "I should like to know, pardie!

"Of all the beauties that compose
The enchantment of her darling breath,
The black seductions and the rose
Wherewith her body glittereth,

"Which is the sweetest?" O my soul!
Thus didst thou answer the Accurst:
"In her, since all's divine control,
There cannot be or last or first.

"Since all transports me, how shall I
Aught of one thing affirm aright?
She dazzles like the morning sky
And soothes my spirit like the night.

"Too exquisite the music is
That all her lovely shape affords
For impotent analysis
To mark how every bar accords.

TOUT ENTIÈRE

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“O mystic metamorphosis!
Silk woven in the senses' loom
Her breath the soul of music is,
Her voice the spirit of perfume!”

LE VIN DES AMANTS

SPACE is glorious to-day!
Throw bridle, bit, and spurs away!
Let us seek, astride of Wine,
A Heaven faery and divine!

Like twin angels in dismay,
Smit by Godhead's blistering ray,
Where dawn lurks blue and crystalline,
Seek the mirage in the shrine!

Softly poised upon the wing
Of the whirlwind let us ride,
With its madness sway and swing,
Sister, swimming side by side ;
Onward through the starry streams
Toward the Heaven of my dreams!

LE REVENANT

LIKE angels lion-eyed that rove
I shall return to thine alcove,
Gliding with silent step and light
Like the shadows of the night.

And I will give thee, dusky dove!
Cold as the moon, these lips of love;
And seek caresses, like a snake
Playing round a crystal lake.

At the pallid moon's disgrace
Empty thou shalt find my place
That shall be cold till night appear.

As others' tenderness and truth
Desire to rule thy life, thy youth,
So will I dominate by fear!

LOLA DE VALENCE

(IMITATION)

YOU have so many charms ; my brain, my breast
Find it surpassing hard to choose the best ;
But—if I must!—then let my song declare
The sweet, shy rosebud in your crisp black hair!

LE BEAU NAVIRE

I WILL recount to thee, enchantress smooth!
The varied beauties that adorn thy youth,
 And paint for thee thy loveliness
Where infancy and womanhood caress.

Sweeping the air with that broad skirt, to me
Is imaged some tall ship that puts to sea
 With canvas spread, that treads a measure
Of love-in-idleness and peace-with-pleasure!

On shining shoulder and soft rounded throat
Thy poised head sways—strange grace of melilote
 With a triumphant air and mild
Thou passest on thy way, majestic child!

I will recount to thee, enchantress smooth,
The varied beauties that adorn thy youth,
 And paint for thee thy loveliness
Where infancy and womanhood caress.

Thy bosom juts its jubilation of jet
Triumphant, like a noble cabinet
 Whose clear and polished panels fling
Back like bright shields the lightnings of the Spring.

LE BEAU NAVIRE

Challenging shields, with rosy bosses starred!
Wardrobe of tender secrets, filled with nard,
 Wines, scents, liqueurs, a Comus train
Fit to intoxicate man's heart and brain.

Sweeping the air with that broad skirt, to me
Is imaged some tall ship that puts to sea
 With canvas spread, that treads a measure
Of love-in idleness and peace-with-pleasure!

Strong limbs that toss aside their tented veil
Brew acrid draughts of madness, darkly male,
 Like two black witch-women that turn
And stir some ghastly philtre in their urn.

Thine arms—could strangle a young Hercules!—
Rival and beat the python's strength-in-ease;
 Made to crush—obstinately sure
To print him in thine heart, thy paramour!

On shining shoulder and soft rounded throat
Thy posed head sways—strange grace of melilote!
 With a triumphant air and mild
Thou passest on thy way, majestic child!

L'INVITATION AU VOYAGE

MY sister, my child,
How sweet to the wild
To travel and live there together!
At leisure to lie,
To love and to die
In thine own strange native weather!
The watery suns
Of those hot horizons
Have the mystical charm of the years
That mysterious lies
In thy traitorous eyes
As they glitter behind their tears.

There, all is peace and ecstasy;
Pleasure, calm, and luxury!

Furniture fine
That the years make shine
Shall stand in our own bedchamber.
The rarest flowers
Shed their scented showers
To tinge the vague rapture of amber.

L'INVITATION AU VOYAGE

Arabesque is the ceiling.
 The mirrors ? revealing
 An Orient shining in splendour—
 How it all whispers
 The spirit's vespers
 In its speech—slow, secret, and tender !

There, all is peace and ecstasy ;
 Pleasure, calm, and luxury !

The canals ? See yonder
 Ships (glad to wander)
 Sleep sound with their wings close-furled !
 It is to fulfil
 Thy lightest will
 That they come from the end of the world.
 The sun as it falls
 Clothes the fields, the canals,
 The city itself in a robe
 Of azure and gold—
 The warm light shall enfold
 With slumber the passionate globe.

There, all is peace and ecstasy ;
 Pleasure, calm, and luxury !

EPILOGUE TO “PETITS POEMES EN PROSE”

MINE heart at ease, I climbed the promontory
Whence one may contemplate the town out-spread :
Hospital, brothel, jail, hell, purgatory,

Where each thing monstrous rears its prospered head!
Well know'st Thou, Satan (ease this woe of mine!)
I went not thither futile tears to shed ;

But, an old lecher with's old concubine,
To madden sense on the enormous bitch
Whose hellish charm pours youth from me like wine !

Whether thou sleep in morning's sheets (dear witch!)
Heavy, obscure, and chill ; or preen thee, vain,
In evening's veils, with gold embroidery rich,

Infamous Capital, I love thee ! Drain
Whose thieves and whores give me to ease life's itch
Pleasures inscrutable to the profane !

COLLOQUE SENTIMENTAL

In the ancient frozen solitary park
Two figures passed anon—now mark!

Their eyes are dead, their lips are soft and grey;
One scarce can hear the words they say.

In the ancient frozen solitary part
Two ghosts evoke the past—oh hark!

“Dost thou remember our old ecstasy?”
“Why do *you* wish to remind *me*?”

“Does thy heart beat still at my name, and glow?
“Seest thou my soul in dreams, dear?” “No.”

“Ah! the fair days of joyaunce and of gree
“When our mouths kissed, ah kissed!” “Maybe!”

“How blue the sky was, as our hope was clear!”
“Hope has gone down to Hell’s nadir.”

So in the foolish alleys they conferred,
And only midnight overheard.

EN SOURDINE

CALM in the twilight of the lofty boughs
Pierce we our love with silence as we drowse ;

Melt we our souls, hearts, senses in this shrine,
Vague languor of arbutus and of pine !

Half-close your eyes, your arms upon your breast ;
Banish for ever every interest !

The cradling breeze shall woo us, soft and sweet,
Ruffling the waves of velvet at your feet.

When solemn night of swart oaks shall prevail
Voice our despair, musical nightingale !

THE MAGICIAN

[TRANSLATED FROM ELIPHAZ LEVI'S VERSION OF THE
FAMOUS HYMN]

O LORD, deliver me from hell's great fear and gloom!
Loose thou my spirit from the larvæ of the tomb!
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

I bid the night conceive the glittering hemiphere.
Arise, O sun, arise! O moon, shine white and clear!
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

Their faces and their shapes are terrible and strange.
These devils by my might to angels I will change.
These nameless horrors I address without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

These are the phantoms pale of mine astonied view,
Yet none but I their blasted beauty can renew;
For to the abyss of hell I plunge without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

GLOSSARY OF OBSCURE TERMS

Used in Stanza 3 of Dedication

a	marish	Our	throne
contradict	crashed,	please,	contemptuous
could	and	remarks ;	at
curse)	tongue,	restrict	his
for	Out	Says :	a
Heaven	Tottered	sir,	crone,
Hence	hence ! ’	sorry	his
[Here	Yea !	stanza	the
I	And	theological	Cringed
if	at	third	flickered
instead	wallowed	this	in
larks !	Get	utterly	upon
must	God	verse.]	dung.
no	‘Slave,	we	himself
not	truculence ;	whom	torrid,
Now,	crumbled	(with	Ghost’s
One	thy	write	Jesus
		you	thy