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A WAN-
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COUSINS

A WANDERING HARP
—SELECTED POEMS—
BY JAMES H. COUSINS



ROERICH MUSEUM PRESS
NEW YORK MCMXXXII

ROERICH

ABOUT THE POET

James H. Cousins was born in Belfast, Ireland, in 1873, and at twenty-one published a book of verse that, for all its youthfulness, marked him as a poet of distinctive promise.

At twenty-four he removed to Dublin, and found his place as one of the makers of the Irish Literary Revival. His poetry was ultimately classed by *The Nation* (London) as "second only to that of the two leaders of his movement"—W. B. Yeats and AE.

In 1913 Mr. Cousins removed to England and after two years proceeded to India as a journalist and educator. Then began fifteen years of interaction between the Celtic imagination and the environment and life of the Orient that resulted in poetry full of new beauty and extended significance. He spent a year's interval in 1919-1920 in Japan as university professor of poetry, and was adopted by a group of young poets as their initiator into renascent efforts in their own language. The University and the Ministry of Education of Japan made him their first foreign doctor of literature.

Dr. Cousins came from India to America in 1929, and after two lecture-tours among universities and cultural organizations, became guest-lecturer on poetry for the year 1931-1932 in The College of the City of New York and course-lecturer on poetry in the extension department of The New York University.

The delight of audiences from coast to coast in his recitals of his poetry, with its aesthetical charm and mental stimulation and elevation, has created a demand for a representative selection from the life-work of this world-travelled Irish poet.

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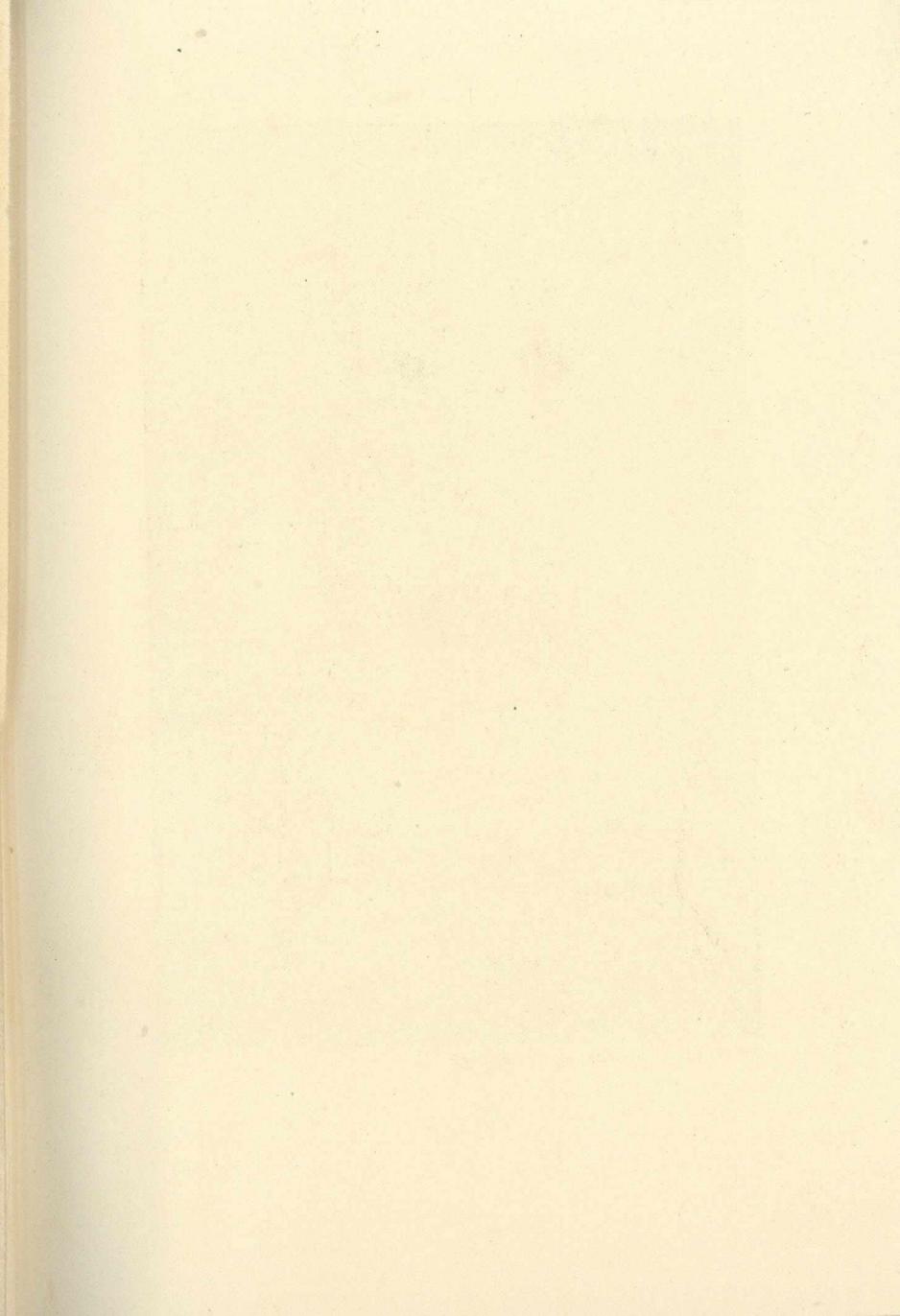
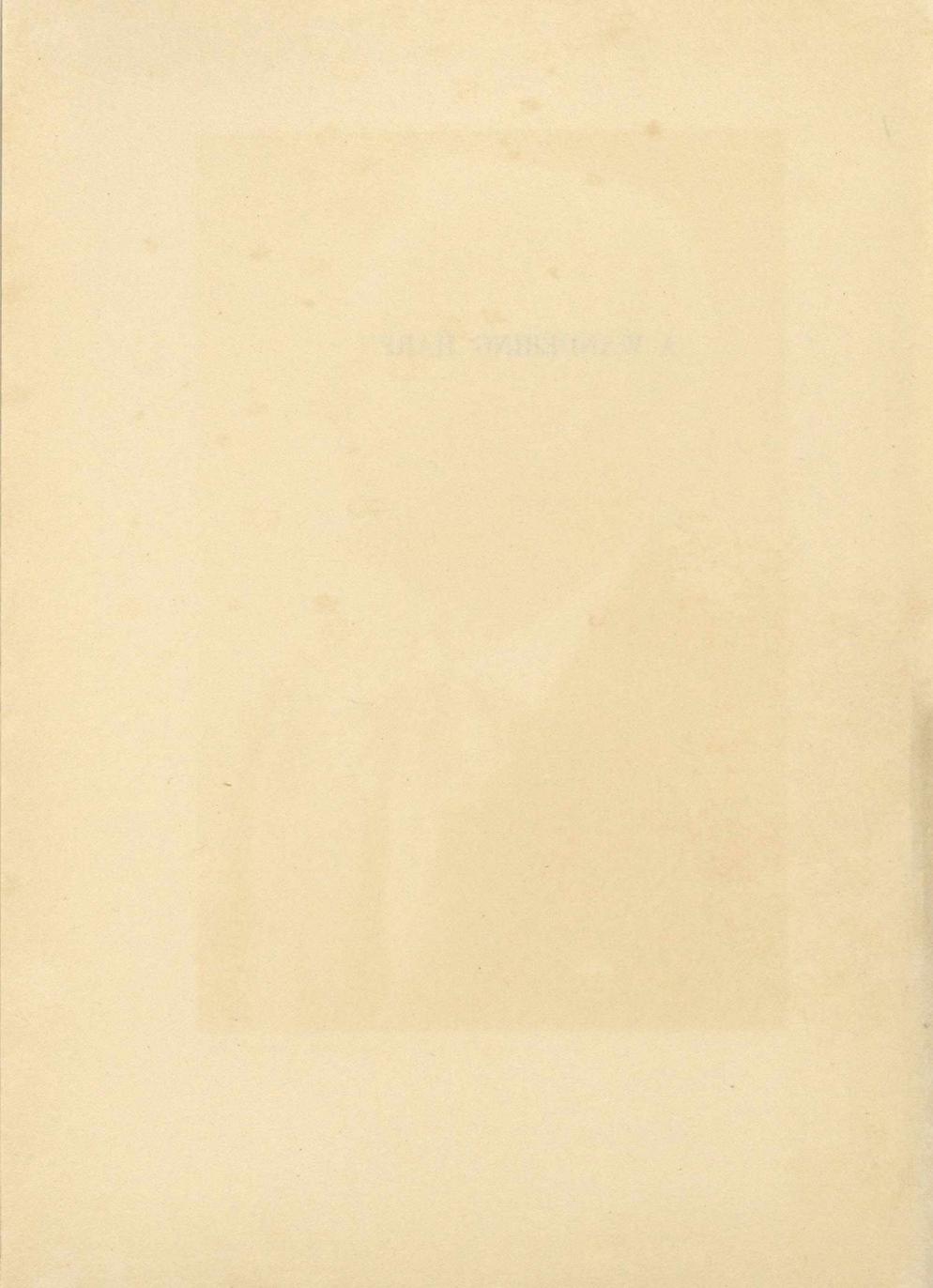


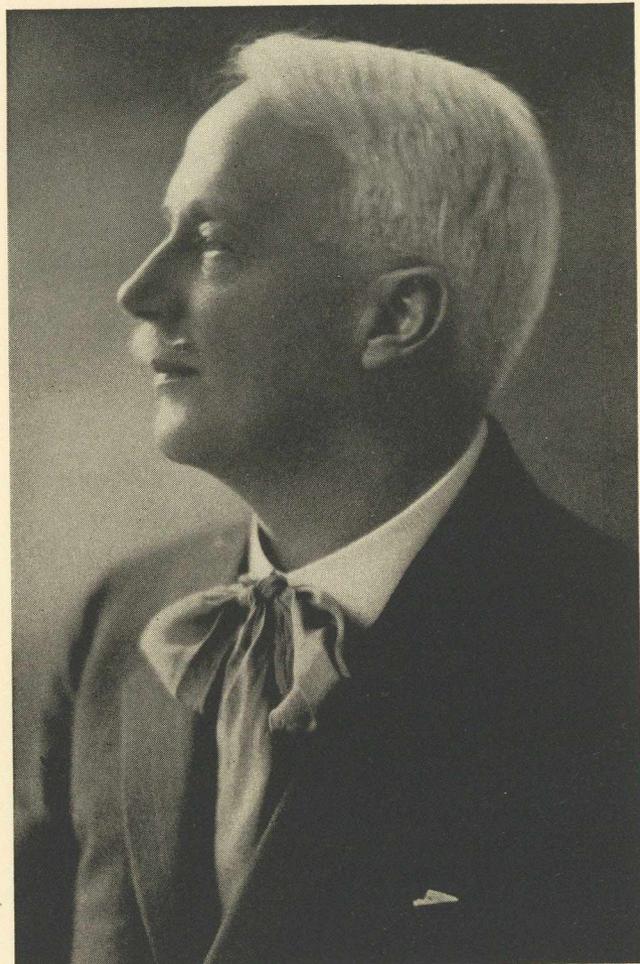
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A WANDERING HARP



THE ARCHIVE OF
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A WANDERING HARP
—SELECTED POEMS—
BY JAMES H. COUSINS



ROERICH MUSEUM PRESS
NEW YORK MCMXXXII

PERMISSION to reprint poems
in this collection has been
received where necessary, and
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NOTE

The poems here collected represent the expression of forty years of poetical aspiration: but not all of that expression; for certain whole books and certain poems have been omitted—partly because space, whatever illusoriness it admits to the scientist, masks itself as reality to the publisher, hence to the author; partly because, when judgment comes to Daniel, certain things, perhaps not valueless, but less valuable than others in a crush, have to go to the lions.

The sequence of the poems here first brought within two covers has been modified within certain groupings so as to bring together poems of mutual origin or similar intention. Here and there a word has been altered in order to make the body of a poem a more complete analogue of its soul.

Up to 1913, when I left Ireland—to become, as afterwards appeared, a world wanderer, gathering nomadic riches, but squandering the marketable possibilities of a settled abode—the vision and enthusiasm of the movement which came to be known as The Irish Literary Revival circumferenced my poetical life. Thereafter, that vision and enthusiasm became its centre—and circumferences learned not to matter. I ceased to be a citizen of my particular world—though that world had its own exquisite completeness

[v]

—and was driven by the winds of destiny on the spiritual adventure of becoming, as fully as possible, a world polarized and orbited in a citizen.

The personalities and events of the Irish Mythos, which was the deepest inspiration of the movement, had become to me the imaginative incarnations of powers and processes in the universe and in myself. I felt that its vision was more ultimate than insight and more prophetic than foresight; and through its contemplation and embodiment in my early poems I aspired towards the capacity to see the significance of the insignificant and to feel the eternal in the temporal.

Thus I came to the realization through my own art that all art is the imposition of an inner order on an outer disorder; and I have striven so to free my wandering harp and its player from the assumptions of the merely ancient, and the intimidations of the merely contemporaneous, that our song might in some degree be a translation of the music made by the passing wing of the seraph Salathiel.

J. H. C.

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A WANDERING HARP

“THE VOICE OF ONE”

I

I am the voice of one who cries:
Lo! I have lived my little day;
Have looked within a woman's eyes,
And seen them covered up with clay.

And I have laughed as well as wept;
Have found my foes, and made my
friends.

Through mighty issues I have slept—
And waked to unmomentous ends:

Have companied with hope and fear;
Have followed Love's mysterious star,
And dreamed it infinitely near—
Yet found it infinitely far.

And I have seen my fairy gold
Turn all to dull misshapen lead;
And hungry I have been, and cold,
And wished me harboured with the dead.

And sometimes I have longed to free
My soul from all that stains and mars,
To taste the quiet in the sea,
The peace that lodges with the stars.

II

I am the voice of one who cries:
Lo! I have stood beside the deep;
And I have watched the twilight skies
Grow grey with mystery and sleep,

While soft clouds held the last of light,
And furrowed all the sunset way
Where bent the silver scythe of night
To reap the aftermath of day.

And I have heard strange voices speak
In words half uttered, half withdrawn,
While far away a mountain peak
Put on the vestments of the dawn;

And o'er the adoring world there hung
Great silence as the Lord passed by,
And Day his golden censer swung
Across the altar of the sky.

[2]

III

I am the voice of one who cries:
Lo! here I cannot stop or stay.
I am not good, I am not wise,
I only follow far away;

And, seeing not, I yearn for sight
To read the heart of praise or blame,
To catch the beam within the light,
And feel the fire behind the flame;

Or, rapt from all the tyrant hours
That write their names in tears and
blood,

I long to pluck immortal flowers,
And bathe me in a cool clear flood;

And know that thing for which I seek
With frustrate fingers blind and dead;
And turn Truth's never-ceasing wheel,
And from its distaff spin my thread.

And so with ever-watching eyes
I live my life from day to day.
I am the voice of one who cries,
And crying wander on my way.

[3]

ADRIFT IN MOONLIGHT

Our oars point skyward left and right,
And on the soft, slow stream,
Amid the balmy hush of night,
Across the moon's broad beam,
We slip from shine to shine through shade
By old aspiring poplars made.

To such an hour as this belongs
A sense—not joy, not woe;
A hum of half-remembered songs
And laughter long ago;
A sadness caught from other years,
Too vague for words, too sweet for tears.

And mingled by the gentle wind
With sounds we once have known,
We hear strange music, half-divined,
From spirit bugles blown,
And feel the wafture of the wings
Of mystic, unbegotten things.

In such an hour as this the soul
Shakes free from sense that cloys,
And sights afar her starry goal,
And thrills to nobler joys
Than those vouchsafed when lithesome limbs
Danced to impassioned Paphian hymns.

We break and drop the chains of Earth,
And feel at home in Heaven;
And with the sense of royal birth
A mighty wish is given
To snap the sunset's brazen bars,
And snatch the secret from the stars.

From such rare hours—as brief as few—
Our dearest hope is this:
To win an ampler voice and view,
To draw a deeper bliss,
And hear reverberate through our dreams
The thunder of immortal themes.

LOVE'S ADVENT

I cannot set a finger on the place
Or time or circumstance, and surely say:
'Twas thus and then across the gathering grey
Of my lone life shot the first golden trace
Of love for thee. I see within thy face
Something that has been with me all the way,
Affinity and reflex night and day;
And lo! my heart feels, knows, and loves apace.

How, why? I cannot tell. I only know
One wide, white love has cancelled all the sum
Of all life's lesser loves. I can but speak
As might the watcher on some northern peak
Long night-bound, who eastward beholds a glow,
And cries: "The day, the glad great day has come!"

LOVE'S APPEAL

Oh! let me love thee, if but one brief hour.
Oh! let me take unhidden from thy lips
The fruit of knowledge which, to him who sips,
Brings joy unreckoned in the angels' dower.
Oh! fill one spacious moment with the power
Of pure, unmeasured love, though stinging whips
Of fire next moment into black eclipse
Drive me from thy pure Eden's passionless bower.

Then thou mayst set an angel at the gate
Of thine inviolate heart with burning blade
Flashing. I shall not flinch. I shall have known
Earth's sweetest guerdon. I shall stand elate
On life's pale summit, strong and undismayed,
Immutably, immortally alone.

LOVE'S INFINITY

Since first my heart awoke to winds that blew
Infinite need, lo! it has climbed its stair
Of dreams, and to the unresponsive air
Stretched hungry hands, and called and called
for you.

Then, answerless, it moulded of the dew
And splendid noons and sunset's tumbled hair
And deep sea-music, something more than fair
Which long it strove to know, but never knew.

But now your cheek is warm against my cheek.
And is love satisfied? Nay! evermore
Your hands are full of promise, and your eyes
Gleam with a spirit-light I still must seek
But never find; for joy has joy in store,
And heaven another heaven within its skies.

THE AWAKENING

In this exalted hour, between the light
Of sinking moon and rising morn, my ear
Gathers, from quivering leaf and river clear,
Sounds deepened by the touch of passing night;
While on a leafy platform, shut from sight,
But to the soul, by hearing, doubly near,
A bird, heart-throbbing with the opening year,
Outsoars in song his wing's extremest flight.

New day, new birth, new hope, new power, have given
Wings to the soul to soar and leave behind
Life's inessentials. What majestic sky
Is this, where, unamazed, from some old heaven
I hear the harp of Angus on the wind,
And feel Cuchullin's arm go battling by?

Angus, the Irish God of Love.
Cuchullin, the Irish "saviour," of joint celestial and ter-
restrial ancestry.

TO IRELAND IN AUTUMN

Something of autumn's splendour round thee lies.
Yet think it not the prelude of thy death;
For there is that within thy heart which saith
The prophet-word that blossoms in thine eyes:—
“Heed not the portent of the season's skies,
Nor count the clouds more than a passing breath
Sun-drawn from half a world that offereth
Its votive incense to the year that flies.”

That Hand which bevels down the shortening day
Is one with that which quickens leaf and wing;
So, promise of resurgence in decay
Thou hast, and, in thine autumn, germs of spring
To vindicate these lips that lately said:
They dreamed a lie who deemed thee wholly dead.

TO IRELAND

To thee, beloved! of old there came
The sailers of a thousand ships,
Who learned to love thy hidden name,
And love the music on thy lips.

And some, who thought to build thy pyre,
And on its ruin rear a throne,
Have loved to sit around thy fire
And count thy saddest songs their own.

And sons of thine, who broke love's bands
To seek a fabled, far-off shore,
Grove through the world with aching hands,
And hunger for thee evermore.—

For, though thy sorrows may not cease,
Though, blessing, thou are still unblest,
Thou hast for men a gift of peace,
O daughter of divine unrest!

THE BELL-BRANCH

Shoheen, sho ho:

Birds are homeward winging.

Shoheen, sho ho:

Herdsmen on the hills are singing:

Short the night and long the day.

Come ye weary flocks away.

Folded in deep shadows drowse,

And on long sweet grasses browse

Where the murmuring waters flow.

Shoheen, sho ho:

Hark, the Bell-branch ringing!

Shoheen, sho ho:

Danaans from the hills are singing:

Time is old and earth is grey.

Come ye weary ones away,

Where with white untroubled brows

The immortals dream and drowse,

And the streams of quiet flow.

Shoheen . . . sho ho . . .

Shoheen, sho ho—Irish, there, here, equivalent of “to-and-fro,” used as a lullaby.

The Bell-branch is a device of the Irish fairies to call mortals away from mortal allegiances.

The Tuatha-De-Danaan are the Irish personifications of powers in the universe and in humanity.

DEDICATION OF “THE QUEST”

To my wife

I said: “Since golden dust of garnered sheaves
Dulls in each crevice of the threshing-floor,
And swift sweet wings that seek a sunnier shore
Have left a troubling silence beneath our eaves;
I will arise, though Earth in autumn grieves,
And bring with pipes and dancing to her door
Harvest of dreams from fields of ancient lore.”
Alas! I bring these few poor fallen leaves.

Yet of my leaves I twine for your loved brows
This chaplet: yours, not mine; for you have trod
My being’s bounds; yours is the hand that ploughs
And sows, and draws new life from the dead sod;
And you have moved among my silent boughs
And stirred them with a wind that comes from God.

THE SLEEP OF THE KING

CONN, *High King of Ireland, A.D. 125*

CONNLA, *his son.*

FAIRY PRINCESS.

CORAN, *a Druid.*

FAIRY CHORUS.

SCENE, *a forest glade with a moss-covered bank in the background.*

Enter CONN, *crowned, with* CONNLA, *facing the sunset. CONN leans heavily with his hand on Connla's shoulder.*

CONNLA, *speaking as they advance,*

Now to the mighty pillars of the day
Night puts a mightier shoulder. In the west
Smoulder the shattered glories, piled on high
As though a king were passing to his urn.

CONN, *as to himself, with solemn import, pausing,*
"As though a king were passing to his urn."

CONNLA. My father, thou art sad.

CONN. Nay, nay, not sad.

The quiet of the woods is on my heart,
The silence that is in the end of days.

CONNLA. But wherefore didst thou pause?

CONN. I know not wherefore.

It may be I am tired and yearn for sleep;
For I have come long leagues, and in my hair

[14]

The roadway dust is matted with the mists
Of leafy valleys. (*Approaching the bank.*) Let
us rest awhile.

(*Seated*). Coran the druid chants beyond the
woods,

And binds the sacred oak upon his brow.
The watchers pass along from tent to tent,
And all is well.

CONNLA. For well thy potent arm
Swayed the broad-sword till it outlived its use.
Now Ireland's fields from springtime unto har-
vest

Thrill with the joy of sowing and of reaping.
Her happy homes from harvest-time till spring
Are merry with the murmur of the quern.
In peace her children come, her old men go;
And all the year is girt about with song,
And thou art in the song, my king, my father.

He seats himself on the ground at CONN's knee.

CONN. Sometimes my heart grows weary of my
name,

And weary of the sound of harp and song,
And hungers for great peace. (*He takes off his
crown and sets it on the bank beside him.*)

CONNLA. And here is peace,
And here we rest, as willing captives, bound
In the sweet thraldom of the regnant night.

[15]

(Chants) Rest, rest,
Sigh and jest,
Wise and foolish, gay and grave.
Down, down,
Sword and crown.
Sleep is master of King and slave.

They have both drifted into sleep.

A VOICE, *chanting in the distance*,
Night with ruddy lip
Sips the dregs of day;
Swooning o'er the world in sleep
Deep as the sleep of a child.

CONN (*stirring sleepily*). Coran the Druid chants.

CONNLA (*half awake*) His voice is weak
And far away.

CONN. The woods drink up its depth:
What reaches us is but the flying spray.

They drift into sleep again.

VOICE (*nearer*). Now beneath the quicken
Thicken sombre shades.
In the glades the fairies dance
Underneath white stars that glance
Over wood and wild
Sleeping like a child.

THE FAIRY PRINCESS *has entered and observed the sleepers. As she approaches and scrutinizes them there is heard the*

[16]

FAIRY CHORUS. The sun dropped down the sky, and
fell

Into a golden crucible,
From which uprolled
Clouds flushed with fire, that curved and curled,
And we shook them, and flooded half the world
With gold. (*They laugh.*)

FAIRY PRINCESS *takes the crown and puts it on*
CONNLA's head. *She puts a spell on CONN's*
brow.

FAIRY CHORUS. We are the dusky sunset brood,
Pursuing the daylight yet ever pursued;
And with laugh and shout
From caverns of cloud we roystering came,
And the last of the lingering sunset flame
Blew out. (*They laugh loudly, and enter as the*
FAIRY PRINCESS *beckons them.*)

PRINCESS. Here a king lies, overthrown
By a foe he ne'er has known;
One who never crossed his sight,
Yet who slays him night by night.
Dance, ye fairies, dance, and sing—
Sleep is conqueror of the king.

CHORUS, *circling the sleepers, boisterously.*
Dance, dance, dance and sing—
Sleep is conqueror of the King.

[17]

CONNLA *stirs as if awaking.*

PRINCESS, *waving the fairies away,*

Ah! he awakes. The sweet and princely face
Lights like a morn of spring beneath a cloud
Of glowing gold. Away, ye twilight ones,
Shake now the Branch of Night, and let its bells
Tremble with music, till the souls of men
Bloom upward through the soil of sleep, and
flower

And fructify in gardens no man tills.

CONNLA (*awake, to himself*). A sound of ripples
round a slanted prow

Came through my slumber. Do I sleep or wake?

PRINCESS. The king doth sleep, and I have crowned
thee king.

CONNLA (*rising*). Thou— Who art thou?

PRINCESS. I have not any name,
For I have many: one is in my heart,
And whosoever findeth that finds all.

CONNLA. But what art thou, whence comest, whither
goest?

PRINCESS. I am the lonely one amid the throng.

I am the royal beggar at the door
Of hushed and listening hearts. Among the dew
At dawn I wander, and at eve I breathe
On upturned faces round the fires of men.
I have a throne among the ageless stars,

[18]

And with the waving grass and fluttering moth,
And with the infant smile on agéd lips,
And with the immortal dreams of mortal hearts.

CONNLA. Fame hath indeed been envious of thy
fame,

Or like a poet stricken dumb in song
With rapture of his theme. At fair or feast
No song of thee has passed across the harps,—
Though thou art not unworthy of the praise
Of king or bard, thou beauteous nameless one!

PRINCESS. Men praise not me on strings that break
and fall.

Men praise me not in words that thrill and pass.
No song of me is carved on withering staves.
My praise is in the hush between their songs,
And in the silence of the leaning spear
In battle-pauses rumourous of peace,
O Connla of the flowing golden hair!

CONNLA. Thou namest me, and yet I know not thee.
But—stay! (*with growing rapture*) I think that
face has touched my dreams

With silver light, and drawn my being's tide,
And beckoned me by old and foot-worn ways
Through vales and over mountains to a shore
Where crawled a bearded wave by crumbling
caves;

And beckoned me across a tranquil sea

[19]

Into the golden glories of a dawn
Beyond the tides of death and birth and sleep.—
But wherefore hast thou wakened me from
sleep?

PRINCESS. Because thou art the best beloved of men.

CONNLA. I am indeed in honour of the king,
And blessed with noble friendship; but for me
No princess sighs at mention of my name,
Or pensively out-stares the morning star.

PRINCESS. Yet thou are not unloving.

CONNLA. Nay, for me
There breathes a rapture in the silent hour
When, in the primrose twilight, flower and tree
Exhale great life, unbosoming to love
Their perfumed secrets; when on Usna's hill
The serried forests raise their mighty spears,
A shadowy army wounding the wan sky
With prayer, while from their hearts the ring-
dove's coo
Comes iterant of love, and calls me forth
To find my love.

PRINCESS. Now has thy love found thee.

CONNLA. O voice that I have heard among the stars!
O eyes that looked from old mysterious caves!
O arms that I have felt about the world!
Now do I hear thee, see thee, now possess
Exultant as high noon!

[20]

PRINCESS (*restraining his approach*). Not yet, not
yet:

I am not won by words.

CONNLA. Then say what deed
Shall win thee. Speak, and ere another dusk
A thousand and a thousand I shall slay!
He draws his sword.

PRINCESS. Nay, not in crimson sod or flaming pyre
Do I rejoice. The scent of wayside flowers,
The chirp of little birds within the nest,
The murmured words that quiet aching hearts,
Are more to me than horn or battle-call.
My king shall mount no perilous throne. My
throne
Shall bear no power-proud king. Put by the
sword.

I am not won by deeds.

CONNLA (*sheathing his sword*). Oh! tell me then
How I may win thee?

PRINCESS. Follow where I go.

CONNLA. Whither, oh, whither, and how long the
way?

PRINCESS. A little past the beating of the heart.
A little past the finger-tip of faith.
It may be in the murmuring homes of men;
It may be in the solitude of hills;
It may be by the rock and querulous wave

[21]

That thou shalt find me, know me, and possess.
Come—follow. See! the king awakes!

She moves away beckoning. CONN sighs and stirs. CONNLA makes to go but is held back. He puts his hand to his head in perplexity, and feeling the crown, sets it where it was at first.

PRINCESS (*commanding*). Connla! (*He turns towards her.*)

PRINCESS (*entreating*). Come!

He approaches her with outstretched arms. She disappears.

CONN (*awake*). Connla, my son, where art thou?

CONNLA (*stopping*). I am here.

CONN. Thou art a voice that comes from anywhere
Across a moonlit lake. Thou standest far.
Come near. I am beset by troublous dreams
And have sore need of comfort.

CONNLA. Nay, dream on,
Lest thou shouldst wake to troubles never
dreamed.

CONN. What troubles? Am not I the hundred-
fighter,
High King of Ireland? I have strength to break
The iron stroke of war; and now, when peace
Lays a white hand upon the brow of Ireland,
What need have I for fear, save in my dreams?

[22]

Why dost thou stand afar? Why dost thou gaze
Like watchers by the sea?

CONNLA. Oh! very far

I have to go, and needs must look before.

CONN. And whither dost thou go?

CONNLA. I know not whither?

CONN. But wherefore dost thou go?

CONNLA. I know not wherefore,

But that her lips said: "Connla, follow me."

CONN (*half rising*). And who is she?

CONNLA. She has not any name,

For she has many. One is in her heart,
And whosoever findeth that finds all.

CONN (*rising, alarmed*). Now have I need for fear.
Coran! Coran!

Come hither, druid. Connla, my son, my son!
Surely thou wilt not go and leave me lonely?

CORAN *enters on one side, and the PRINCESS, unobserved, on the other.*

CONNLA. She is the lonely one amid the throng.
She called, and I must go.

CONN. Speak! speak! Coran,
Or I am beggared of all hope and love.
Send forth thy spell and break the spell that
binds

And draws my son away.

[23]

CORAN *raises his hands above his head and endeavours to invoke power, but in vain.*

PRINCESS, *unseen by them, cancels Coran's efforts with a raised finger.*

CONN. Speak! speak! Coran.

CORAN (*dropping his hands*). A greater spell than mine has broken mine,

And I am emptied of all power.

CONN. Oh, then,

Since nought avails, and thou, my son, must go,
I shall obey a call I have not heard,

And go with thee.

CORAN. Stay! stay! O King of Erin!

The son deserts the father; but shalt thou,

The royal father of thy people, go

And leave them fatherless?

CONN (*lifting his crown*). My land, my people,

I cannot leave, though I am childless left.

CORAN. O Connla! son of Conn the Hundred-Fighter,

Be mindful of the knees which thou hast climbed—

CONN. Which but for age would bend before thee now

Beseeching thee to leave me not, but stay.

CONNLA. She is the royal beggar at the door

Of hushed and listening hearts.

[24]

CORAN. Oh, if thy heart

Is weary of the light in human eyes,

The warmth of human hands, bethink thee then

Of what the future holds for thee of strength,

Of power, of place, of happy days and nights

Heavy with harvest and the sound of chants

Around the board—

CONN (*offering the crown*). Where thou shalt sit as king.

CONNLA. Her throne shall bear no power-proud king. Her king

Shall mount no perilous throne amid decay.

Her throne is with all changeless changing things,

And with the everlasting stars.

A distant chant is heard as at first. CONNLA
listens in rapture.

CONN. Coran,

Whence comes that sound?

CORAN. The harpers tune their harps

To sing thy praise. The men of wisdom wait

To be made wise with little words of thine.

CONN (*to Coran, resigning himself to his crown*).

Come.

CONN *goes away leaning on Coran's shoulder.*

PRINCESS (*close to Connla*). Come.

[25]

CONNLA goes away after the Princess.

*Distant harps are heard mingled with the Fairy
Chorus.*

The music slowly dies away.

Darkness falls.

Note: "The Sleep of the King" is founded on the Irish legend of "Connla of the Golden Hair." It was the first play performed by The Irish National Theatre Society, Dublin, October 1902: Conn, Frank Fay; Connla, P. J. Kelly; Fairy Princess, Mary Walker; Coran, Dudley Digges.

WILL

I drew my sword against the sky,
And dared the power of God most high.

A sudden palsy loosed my grip,
And froze defiance on my lip.

My stricken weapon fell to rust.
My lordship bent its knee in dust.

I raised my forehead to the sky,
And craved the grace of God most high.

From unseen Lips there came the word:
"Leave thou the dust! Take thou thy sword!"

"The Whole in all its parts fulfil
One Purpose through the warring wills.

"The strength that broke thee is thine own:
Thyself thyself hast overthrown!"

A sword goes forth on land and sea:
Who dares the power of God and me?

VISION

When I from life's unrest had earned the grace
Of utter ease beside a quiet stream;
When all that was, had mingled in a dream
In eyes awakened out of time and place;
Then in the cup of one great moment's space
Was crushed the living wine from things that seem;
I drank the joy of very Beauty's gleam,
And saw God's glory face to shining face.

Almost, my brow was chastened to the ground
But for an inner Voice that said: "Arise!
Wisdom is wisdom only to the wise;
Thou art thyself the royal thou hast crowned;
In Beauty thine own beauty thou hast found,
And thou hast looked on God with God's own eyes."

SONG AND SINGERS

I

I heard a wonderful thing
When I drank of the Spirit's Wine;
And what I heard I sing:
But only the song is mine:

Only the struggle of speech,
Like a whirl of leaves in a blast
Or a fringe of shells on a beach
That tells of a wave that has passed.

From a rapture a moment shared
I fall on a broken wing:
But what I have heard—I have heard;
And the least is the song I sing.

II

I am a reed in a wind,
That bends in a low lagoon;
But the breeze that at morn my head inclined
May roar on the hills at noon;
May bear the passionate wingers
That carry their songs to the sun.
Many the songs and the singers,
But song at its heart is one.

TO IRELAND

I

God willed of old to lift thine ancient Name,
That thou, through suffering made most wise, most
 pure,
Shouldst bear before all men the Soul's white lure,
And lead them through the purifying flame.
But, lest thine eager feet should foil the aim
Of Time's slow builders, building strong and sure,
He mingled with thy fire, that shall endure,
Somewhat of earth—for shackle, not for shame.

Thou art not wholly earth, nor all divine;
And though rude hands of sons undutiful
Build in the clay and soil thy royal dress,
Mother of mighty dreams! let joy be thine:
Thou still hast beauty for the beautiful,
And proud, glad lovers for thy loveliness.

II

With gorgeous pageantry of light and cloud
The mighty Bens this morn above me rose,
Clothing their agony of ancient throes
In awful majesty, aloof and proud;
Like elder Gods to whom all wisdom bowed;
Who, passed through sweetening flame and cleansing
 snows,
Now fill the thrones of infinite repose,
To utmost calm and contemplation vowed.

O solemn power of Beauty that is born
Of vast calamity and hoary time!
Spirit whose smile transfigures ruining fate!
Be hers whose eyes are weary for the morn;
Be mine, to fill her ear with hope's glad chime:
"Peace! my beloved: a little longer wait."

BEHIND THE PLOUGH

Black wings and white in the hollow
Follow the track of the team,
While the sun from the noon declining
Is shining on toil-damp brows.
Birds of the mountain and sea-birds
Circle and swoop and scream,
Searching for spoils of the furrow
Where slowly the ploughman ploughs.

Make me room, O birds! I am sweeping
From the boughs of sleeping afar.
I have winged through the mists of the ages
Where sages drone and drowse.
I follow the feet of the Horses
That drag the Morning-star,
To search in the spoils of the furrow
Where God the Ploughman ploughs.

THE CORNCRAKE

I heard him, faintly, far away,
(Break break! Break break!)
Calling to the dawn of day:
Break break!

I heard him in the yellow morn
(Shake shake! Shake shake!)
Shouting through the rustling corn
Shake shake!

I heard him near where one lay dead
(Ache ache!)
Crying among poppies red
Ache ache! Ache ache!

And where a solemn yew-tree waves
(Wake wake!)
All night he shouts among the graves—
Wake wake! Wake wake!

FRESHETS

I

Far in the hills the lightnings gleam,
And heavy clouds their burdens shed.
Here all is peace,—yet see the stream
Rise roaring from its bed!

And, 'sooth, the heart's tumultuous moods
Perhaps as lofty birth may claim,
Where in the soul's high solitudes
The Spirit speaks in flame.

II

From far-off peaks in summer drowned
The river rushed by you and me,
And in an ecstasy of sound
Leaped straight into the sea.

With faith as firm, and equal mirth,
May you and I, in time to be,
Leap from our ledge of crumbling earth
Into the Spirit's sea.

Connemara.

[34]

A FLAIL-SONG

Now scythe and spade aside are laid,
And autumn shade will soon be here,
Come, fetch the flain down from its nail,
And fill the pail with water clear.
See, all the floor is covered o'er
With golden store of ripened grain.
Now, take your places left and right,
And swing and smite with might and main.
Ho! strike in time, like bells in chime,
Or poet's rhyme in jocund lays;
For gathered here are health and cheer
To chase all fear in dreary days.
So swing with skill and right good will,
And bring the *biltawn* briskly down.
Knee-deep in chaff our drink we'll quaff,
And laugh at coming winter's frown.

But let us raise our reverent praise
For summer days, for shower and sun;
For strength and zest, for labour blessed,
And hope of rest when labour's done.
Then smite and swing! Like bird on wing
Our *suistes* sing a shrill refrain,
Till to the door the barn flows o'er
With golden store of garnered grain!

Suiste (Irish, pron. almost *soos-chee*), a flail.
Biltawn, the upper loose striking part of the flail.

[35]

HIGH AND LOW

He stumbled home from Clifden fair
With drunken song and cheeks aglow.
Yet there was something in his air
That spoke of kingship long ago.

I sighed,
And inly cried
With grief that one so high should fall so low.

He snatched a flower and sniffed its scent,
And waved it towards the sunset sky.
Some old sweet rapture through him went
And kindled in his bloodshot eye.

I turned
And inly burned
With joy that one so low should rise so high.

Clifden, Connemara.

[36]

CAIRBRE'S HARP

“My harp is strung with seven strings,
And seven are the songs it sings.
One sings in pain, and one in jest,
And one, more cunning than the rest,
Tells me what secret things are done
From rising until set of sun.
But not forever would I play
That wisdom string. Unending day
Would irk these eyes that find delight
In shadows of mysterious night;
And silence, that is wisdom's crown,
Might wisdom's self in silence drown.
And so, with ever wavering strain,
I sing in jest, I sing in pain;
Like God who, in divine distress,
Grew tired of awful loneliness;
And flung His arm o'er vibrant space;
And plucked the strings of time and place;
And broke His uttermost repose
With song that through creation goes,
The song of sweet imperfect things
That murmurs through my seven strings.”

[37]

THE MARRIAGE OF LIR AND NIAV

Lir, son of Dana, Lord of the seven seas
That washed the seven islands of the world,
The chief called Eire, in the royal place
Sat in deep silence. Round his throne there stood
Seven lords vicegerent of the seven isles,
Who spake the will of Lir because their own
Had shaped them to such semblance to the king
That, but for age, none knew them each from each.
So stood they, ranked in years, as though at noon
Of some great day the shadow of the king
Had clothed itself in time, and waxed in years,
The while the king passed on from age to age
Unageing. At the silence of the king
They marvelled much, but spake not: rather, spake
In one swift glance, distilled from all their years,
A meaning not in speech. For well they knew
What mighty winds were folded in the calm
Of Lir's great brow, and how within his heart
The wave but drew a momentary breath
Ere it should sweep the borders of the seas,
And leap upon the shore of some far isle,
And, swift returning, bear upon its crest
The white plume of allegiance to the king.
For thus they too had come, and one by one
Laid down their lordship at the feet of Lir,

And passed again each to his own far isle,
And ruled it for the king, and dwelt in peace.
Year after year they came to tell the tale
Of harvest upon harvest, marsh and moor
Broken and tamed and harnessed to the will
Of happy peoples. But with each new tale
That bent with age from semblance to the old,
The pleasure of the king grew thin, and broke
As doth a garment worn beyond its time.

Then rose the king and spake: "So yet again
The year brings round the unwearying tale of peace
Whereof I weary, and your happiness
Makes misery in me. O ye faithful ones!
So well ye serve that well is turned to ill,
And I am burdened with the weight of nought.
What profits me this affluence? What avails
This peace that slumbers on its rusted harp
For lack of song? What joy is in the chant
Of what is done save when it nerves the arm
Of those who do? for doing is all in all.
Hence! hence! Fling out the oars! Spread wide the
sails!

The noise of billows buffeting dipping prows
Sings in my ears and cries 'The sea! the sea!
The strong salt breeze that crisps upon the lips
And turns the blood to rivers of fresh mead!'

How blows the wind?" "From eastward," answered
one;

And through a window opening on the east
A strong salt breeze blew round the hall and shook
The torch-flames till the shadow of the king
Broke into shadows dancing with delight,
Although the king stood still, erect and rapt
In some bright dream that shone upon his face
And lit the red-gold tresses of his hair
With the soft glow of morning. "From the west"
Another said who marked the upper clouds,
And knew the wind would blow this way and that
And neither long, so that the leaping waves,
Whipped back upon themselves, would rear their
heads,
And snap white teeth, and shake their smoky manes,
And vex the rowers with their restiveness,
And set them snarling. "Better it were, O king!"
Thus spake a third, "to wait a settled wind,
And take the stride of long unanimous waves
With strong slow swing of sure and steady oars,
And ropes that thrill like harp-strings newly strung,
And full stiff sails." So spake three other lords
Likewise. And he who was the last to bend
Before the power of Lir, and rose in strength
To rule his island, Eire, for the king,

[40]

Spake thus: "And better were it that the king,
Who is of kings most kingly, and of men
Most manly and comely, should seek out a bride
Among the isles that own his happy sway.
So might the love that binds them each to each
Find voice to speak the love they bear the king,
And thus be bound in love that is not bound,
Seeing it is a gift themselves have given."
Then answered Lir as though from out a dream:
"The wind is from the east and from the west,
And whence upon the morrow who shall tell,
Or whither, of what fair enchanted isle
Lies at the place where all the winds are furled
And harboured? Yet, what matter? To your own
Return you now; for it were well to keep
The law that binds till you have learned the law
That breaks and scatters." Then they, pondering,
passed
Each to his isle, and ruled it for the king,
And kept the law.

But when their ships had rowed
Into the night like windward faring gulls
That beat the air with slow and heavy wing
Across the billows, Lir, within his booth,
Put off his crown, and cast his robe aside,
And stole, a shadow, to a shadowy place

[41]

Where slumbrous waves moved shoreward in the
dark,
And fell, and sighed, and sighing fell asleep,
Because the winds had warred themselves to peace.
There slept the king, and dreamed of one who bent
And touched his brow with lips of silvery fire,
And spake his name as though it were her own,
Or one that she had given him in a dream
Some otherwhere and he had quite forgot.
Suddenly Lir awoke as one who feels
A presence by his side; and through his mind
There passed the words: "Better it were the king
Should seek a bride among the happy isles
That own his sway." He rose and slowly paced
Along the margin of the moving sea
That in the dark had slumbered to the full,
And musing spake: "'Twere better that the king
Should brideless live, and fill a brideless urn,
Than wed the weakness that his power has broken,
Or set a flaming envy on his throne
To burn it from the world. And yet perhaps
The day has come to establish it in strength
Beyond the shocks of time and circumstance."
But as he spake, across his word of power
A gentle tremor thrilled, as when at eve
Along the roar of plunging battle-prows
A lonely plover mews to find his mate.

For in Lir's heart the word of his last lord
Had roused the memory of a tender dream
So vague, so far beyond the misty verge
Of time and sense, that to his ear it came
Like the sweet echo of a chant of love
Heard once, before the gates of birth had closed
Upon the music that has built the worlds.
Thus musing, Lir passed onward. At his feet
The serpent-wave, white hooded, coiled and turned,
And, jutting silvery fangs, hissed to its home
Among sonorous eddies in a cove
Where dimly in the gathering dawn a boat
Strained at its ropes and groaned for liberty.
Hither, still musing, came the king, and paused
And said: "Thou too art weary of the peace
Of harbour. Thou art hungry for the sea,
And seas beyond the sea." Smiling he marked
How, wave by wave, the boat drew near the shore,
Then swung upon the billows' backward roll
Until upon a star-white curling crest
It shivered at the shock of straining cords,
And bowed, and sobbed itself again to shore.
Eight times the king had watched the boat draw near
And eight times swing to seaward: at the ninth
The king cried out in joy, and leaped on board,
And loosed the ropes, and seized the steady oars,
And swept beyond his dim and slumbering isles

Into a morn that broke in ruddy gold
Beneath a star.

Full seven times seven leagues
Beyond the last cliff of the utmost isle
Whereon was set the royal will of Lir,
There lay a land fair as the fairest dreams
That ever bard beside a kingly hearth
Built out of flame and song. Hard by the shore
The royal house of Him whose mighty Name
May not be told till first and last are one,
Shone as a pearl upon a pearly breast
Whose rise and fall scarce moved its mirrored shape,
Yet thrilled in vibrant harmony to strains
That floated from an ever open door
And passed from lip to lip of all the winds.
Within the pillared vastness of the hall,
Where neither shadow fell, nor garish light
Smote on its everlasting radiancy,
Stood bard and prince, chanting in unison
The praise of the king's daughter. On the air
The resonant waves flowed forth and softly broke
Around the shores of silence. Hand to hand
The harpers smote their harps and smiting moved
In rhythmic dance. Their locks of midnight hue
Spread out on little winds of melody

[44]

That plucked their snowy robes and through their
strings
Laughed silverly; and bore to him who slipped
From pillar unto pillar to a place
Unseen, apart, low murmurs of a name
Wrapped round with music heard in many a dream.
And as the harpers moved around the hall,
The silent throng swayed slowly side to side,
So filled with joy august and lifted up
That not an eye had sight for him who stood
Alone, apart, and flung across their song
A glad proud glance that searched into its heart
And shone with tremors of a strange delight,
As though the song were sung for one he had loved
Some other where beyond the gates of sleep.
Then when the mingled joy of all that throng
Stood pinnacled upon the utmost height
Of ecstasy, there fell a tremulous hush,
As if the parted lips of all the world
Waited the word to hurl to highest heaven
One great glad voice reverberant with acclaim.
But, as upon the breathless hour of eve
The gentle moon ascends the throne of night,
And beams white love that wakens soft desire
In waiting hearts, so in that throbbing pause
Came Niav, daughter of the King whose Name
May not be told till first and last are one.

[45]

Then all the pent-up thunder of that voice
Passed into silence and adoring calm
As in their midst she moved. And he who stood
Unseen, apart, marked how about her form
Clothed white as foam, her sea-green girdle hung
Like mermaid weed, and how within her wake
There came the sound and odour of the sea,
The swift and silent stroke of unseen wings,
And little happy cries of mating birds.
Whereat there passed across Lir's leaping heart
A billow of white bliss that drew the streams
From all his veins, so that his paling cheek
Glowed with cool fire and silvery radiance caught
From her moon-fairness, and the surging tides
Of all his being mingled with the tide
Of love that moved across the ecstatic throng
And bent and broke about her as a sea
That bears on glad white shoulders to the shore
A calm triumphant swimmer. Thus she passed
Towards that exalted place whereon no king
Sits, or will sit till first and last are one.
Howbeit, the daughter of the Nameless King
Who stands within the shadow of the world,
Upon the festal eve of that glad day
Which saw her birth, takes there her seat and reigns
One splendid hour. But ere she set her foot
Upon the golden precinct, on the throng

She cast a look of love that found a place
In every heart, but chiefest in the heart
Of him who stood alone, unseen, and joyed
With an immortal joy to watch the blue
Of her calm eyes dusk with the gentle breeze
That passed across her soul, and gleam again
With rapture of rich dusks. Across her brow
She passed a shell-white hand, and swept aside
Jet tresses, as the moonbeam fingers draw
The curtains of great midnight. Then she spake;
And to the ears of him who stood apart,
Unseen, the mellow music of her voice
Came like cool murmurs of the creamy surge
Around the shores of some enchanted isle
Where all the winds of love and hate are furled
And harboured.

Thus she spake: "From year to year,
Bards, princes! you have loved me with a love
Not less for mine than for the love of Him
Who stands within the shadow of the world
Till first and last are one; and year by year
Our joy has flowed together, as the pools
Among the pebbles, when the flowing tide
Has blent them in the rapture of the sea
And filled them with its fullness. So today
Our hearts have mingled. Yet within my own

There moves the first faint stirring of delight
Past speech, the first low murmurs of a song
Whose end is in the stars. For know you now
The day has come that chaplets all my years
With time's glad fullness, and I stand—a queen . . .
Not yet! The hour is trembling in the sky,
And some fair shadow falls across my heart
Cast by a light that blinds the eye of noon;
For in that light one stands, and through all worlds
Sighs towards me—and will come. Then, woe is me!
For less than I, can never call me his;
And more than I, must prove himself the more
By strength or stratagem. So, less or more,
Whate'er he be, my joy is mixed with pain.
Yet he will come . . . he is coming . . . he has sent
His dream before him. He will smite high noon,
And bend and break the pillars of all time
That he may make me his, though all the kings
Of all the world rage like a storm-struck sea
Round one great rock whose kingly loneliness
Bends not though all the tempests' lips should blow
The billows to the stars and drown the world!"
She ceased; and from the summit of her joy
Saw Lir . . . and knew . . . and trembled; while
the throng
Gazed question unto question, wavering
'Twixt sorrow and joy that neither went nor came;

While through the door that opened on the sea
There came from rocky ledges happy calls
Of bird to bird that answered love with love.
And Lir would fain have leaped in mighty joy
The barrier of silence to her side,
To kiss the tears from those familiar eyes
That in one look had burned through time and space,
And, unbeheld, had linked them soul to soul,
And smitten two eternities of dream
To one awakened bliss. But 'twixt the twain
There stood the legions of the Nameless King.
Whereat Lir's heart, vexed, stifled its great cry
For all the strength that, in his seven isles,
Had in a moment compassed all his will,
But being far from this enchanted isle,
Left him but lordship of an empty name
Poised on a vast and ineffectual joy.
Then Niav, half in tears, half smiles, spake thus:
"Yet for a little while I pause, a child
That babbles on the knees of the kind past,
And strokes its tender cheeks, and looks—as I—
In soft proud eyes that weep—as you, and I—
And smile, and know not which were sweeter pain,
For sorrow and joy are one, and all the past
And all the future mingle in a kiss!"
Across the throng she looked, then lightly leaped
From step to step, and at the royal place

Stood royally. Whereat the tremulous joy
That rippled round her, mellowed into calm
Sonorous murmurs round the radiant throne
As bard and prince and all within the hall,
Save Lir and Niav gazing eye to eye,
Bent low in glad allegiance, as the tide
Falls from its fullness, baring to the view
Two rocks majestic in great loneliness
From whose rapt brows quick wings dart forth and
meet
Midway above the separating sea.

Late in the deepening twilight of a day
That broke on Eire in a glare of gold
Too bright to beat with hammers of high noon
Into fit vessels for the wine of eve,
And now was emptied of all ecstasy
Save the last lees of hope, Lir, by the sea
Paced . . . paused . . . and paced again. Seaward
he glanced
At each new pause, or, tense and querulous,
Glanced ere he paused, and in the gritty stones
Stumbling struck sudden flame about his feet.
At length he turned and scanned the dimming deep
As though for all the famine of the world
All fullness lay beyond its cloudy verge.
And as Lir stood and gazed, around the shore

Wave after wave hungered from stone to stone,
And sighed themselves into an oozy chasm
Where brown arms rose and fell in mute appeal
To wandering winds that cried against the night
And silence. Then spake Lir within himself:
“Not yet returned. Perhaps my messengers
Have missed the happy isle where Niav dwells
Beyond that little line of topaz gleam
Where some sweet morning opens wise pure eyes
Upon a world of wisdom . . . Perhaps the King
Who hath no name, glad at my embassy
With gifts outshining all his eyes have seen
In his own realm, and, richer far, my love
For him, and her whose place is at my side,
Holds them in entertainment at his board,
Pleased with great joy that heralds greater far;
And for the sake of that enduring joy
Would hold the transient yet a little while
To taste its new and unreturning sweets . . .
No no! for she would speed them from her isle
With the swift wind of love, bearing the word:
‘The King hath spoken: I am thine.’ . . . Not yet;
Not even a speck upon the gloomy sea
That I may fix upon, and feel the beat
Of quick ecstatic oars, and in my heart
Hoard up their happy echo. Even now
Night like a grey-blue heron slowly falls

And folds the wings of darkness round the world,—
And she so far, so far! O mystery
That spills all memory on the thirsty sands,
And casts a life, once brimful of delight
In its own self, like some poor empty shell
Into the sea! . . . 'My joy,' she said, 'with pain
Is mixed, whate'er he be.' Nay, pain or grief
Shall ne'er be thine, since this my realm that stands
Sevenfold in strength, my sevenfold mighty name,
Proclaim me sovereign lord of half the world,
And thus co-equal of the Nameless King
Whose word shall make thee mine, since less or more
I am not. Less? or more? Oh more, far more;
For love is might, and mighty love the more
Adds strength to strength, and of the eternities
That hinge upon this hour doth make a shell
To shut thee like a pearl within its heart . . .
Less? Infinitely less; for all that was,
Of proud accomplishment or chanted fame,
Or jewelled tribute from my utmost isles,
Have through this flame of love passed into dust
To make but one poor ruby for thy brow.
And I who reared an everlasting name
To stand amid the shock of reeling suns,
Am but an echo in a lonely place
To whisper back a name that every wave
And every wind bears hither from thine isle—

And bears my messengers! For now I hear
The jerk of oars that quit the clinging sea,
And, backward swiftly swinging, split the spray
And scatter its flying plumes upon the wind.
They come, my messengers! Around the prow
The foam-fringe glimmers dimly through the dark
Like moonlight through a cloud that overhead
Opens dusk hands, and from a gloomy tower
Lets fall invisible leaves whose silvery pile
Broadens and brightens. Yet, no song! no shout?
Only the deep slow moving of proud men
Confederate in stern purpose, and the hiss
Of serpent waves in sudden frenzied swirl
Around stiff oars held firm lest, at the shock
Of keel and sand, the quiet carven maid
Who gazes ever onward from the prow
Should wince; and now the snarl of running ropes,
And swift sure feet. Hither! . . . come hither! Well?"

Forth from the crowd of dim hard-breathing men
That closed around the king like some great cloud
Thunderous and vibrant, stepped Lir's foremost lord
And spake: "Thus saith the Nameless King, 'Know
you
That less than she shall never call her his,
And more than she must prove himself the more
By strength or stratagem,'—no other word."

Then Lir a moment mused . . . and to his eyes
There came the fire that those around him knew
And joyed to know, and thundered round the king
Portentous of great purpose . . . "Be it so.
Our strength shall burst the rusty gates of dawn,
And make for stratagem a quiet way
Unto my heart's desire. The lumbering wind
Swells purposefully, and with quickening pace
Moves towards that end whereunto every sail
Must ere an hour be set. So haste you! haste!"
Lir said. And straightway through his seven isles
The flame that first had kindled in his eye
Went forth from cape to cape, from hill to hill,
And under the low gloom of starless skies
Made a new sky of unrevolving stars
That spake his will, unquenched till in his wake
One roar of thunder under leaping prows
With torchlit carven maidens overlaid
With mother-o'-pearl, or serpents ruby-eyed
Flaming, o'er whose proud heads great silken sails
Bearing a moon amid the seven seas,
And mighty throats in one exultant shout,
Rolled onward into silence.

In a dawn
Of pearl and topaz, Niav, from a dream
Of yearning hands that groped about the skies

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To find her, and swift voices through the night
Whispering her name from star to star close-linked
Into a cincture narrowing round the world,
Arose, and with her watchful maidens passed
From shadow unto shadow to the shore.
Swiftly they sought a cave that to the east
Stood open-eyed, but hidden from all eyes
Save eastward. At its pillared portal, strewn
With shell and seaweed, cool reluctant waves
Bent, solemn and aloof; and chaste sweet winds
Forever fanned a soft eternal fire
That burned but flamed not. Under its glimmering
arch

Lay a deep pool through whose untroubled heart
The tides of all the seas of all the worlds
Had passed, and in the passing purer grown
Because of her who, from its soft green marge,
Slipped like a moonbeam through a happy cloud
That wrapped it in white love. Thence newly risen
And radiant, Niav from the brightening cave
Stretched gleaming arms to greet the new fair
morn

That burned along the sea, and from her feet,
That glistened in moon-whiteness, upward climbed,
And clothed her in yellow gold, and o'er her brow
Set flickering stars among her wet blown hair.

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And as she stood there came a little cry,
Far, faint, that called her heart into her eyes
With memory of swift voices through the night
Whispering her name from star to star close-linked
Into a cincture narrowing round the world.
And as she looked, the cry across the waves
Ran like a flame, and with it glittering sails
Swept north and south; and ere she looked again,
Fresh-robed, had compassed all her isle, and surged
One wave of war on the resounding seas,
And ever nearer drew, until she saw
Her lord, and cried: "He is come!" Across the
 roar

Of throats that thundered shoreward came her cry
And smote Lir's heart with joy. Whereat he leaped
Forth from his ship, and flung the sea aside,
And, ere the arrows of the Nameless King
Put out the sun, bore Niav on his breast
Unto his ship, and sailed amid a shout
Of triumph homeward!

 Thereafter, Lir and Niav
Passed through white love from peace to peace, and
 drew
The seven isles in love about their throne . . .
And Mānanaun was born, who, fully grown

To strength made sweet with beauty, took the crown,
And reigned; of whom the bards upon their staves
Have cut great songs, and chant them through the
 world.

Note: "The Marriage of Lir and Niav" follows Irish mythological precedents, but has no original, save in the illuminated imagination from which the Irish myths also came. In the myths, Mananaun, son of Lir and Niav, is the God of the Sea.

TO THE SUFFRAGETTES

Who sets her shoulder to the Cross of Christ,
Lo! she shall wear sharp scorn upon her brow;
And she whose hand is put to Freedom's plough
May not with sleek Expediency make tryst.
Therefore to you be honour!—unentic'd
By shallow tongues that bid you meekly bow
And beg, for what their pleasure may allow,
With soft obsequious voice and honour priced.

O fateful heralds, charged with Time's decree,
Whose feet with doom have compassed Error's wall;
Whose lips have blown the trump of Destiny
Till ancient thrones are shaking towards their fall;
Shout! for the Lord hath given to you the free
New Age that comes with great new hope to all!

LOVE IN ABSENCE

Hills crowned with age,
And solemn seas,
Are full of sage
Philosophies.
But, lacking thee,
I am not wise:
I need thine eyes
That I may see.

Insect and bird
Chant prose and verse,
God's passion-stirred
Interpreters.
Howe'er I seek,
Their meaning slips:
I need thy lips
That they may speak.

TO ONE IN PRISON

Dear! on Love's altar thou hast laid thee down,
Priestess and victim of such sacrifice
As might melt praise from very hearts of ice,
But wins the scoff of sycophant and clown.
Yet in that band, whose glory is the frown
Of sceptred tyranny and stained device,
Thou hast thy place; and thee it shall suffice
To tread with them the path to high renown.

And I, even I, unworthy though I be;
For these my wounds of utter loneliness,
Tired head and sleepless eyes, some part would claim
In the deep rubric of thy mystery;
So may I, in proud years that rise to bless,
Stand in the shadow of thine honoured name.

The author's wife was imprisoned in Holloway Gaol,
London, November 23 to December 23, 1910, for participa-
tion in the women's suffrage movement.

LOVE, THE DESTROYER

Come from behind those eyes that I may see
Thyself, beloved! not lip or hand or brain.
These are not thou! These are the servile train
That crowd me from thine inmost mystery.
Show me thy naked soul!—or it may be
That, lacking this, I shall, in love's mad strain,
Shatter the form, and sift it grain by grain
To find thine utter self, thee, very thee! . . .

Ah! love, forgive! Be this my penitence
That in my passion I have glimpsed the goal
Of all calamity, and surely scanned
In flood and flame, earthquake and pestilence,
Love raging forth to find Love's inmost soul,
With bridal gifts in ruin's awful hand!

SPRING CAPRICE BY A ROBIN

Who, on such a day of spring,
Should be careful how he sing?
Let the overflowing heart
Get a start,
Who shall care if no one knows
How to find a perfect close
To his strain,
When the brain
(Drunk with sun and hyacinth,
Primroses and bursting oak,
And the sowers' puffs of smoke
Over fields of brown)
Stumbling down
A melodious labyrinth,
Somehow, nohow, finds a way out,
Has his say out,—
And begins it all again,
Caring nothing how he sing
When the brain,
Wild with spring,
Gives a start
To his mad, melodious, overflowing heart?

SPRING RONDEL BY A STARLING

I clink my castanet,
And beat my little drum;
For spring at last has come,
And on my parapet
Of chestnut, gummy-wet,
Where bees begin to hum,
I clink my castanet,
And beat my little drum.
"Spring goes," you say; "suns set."
So be it! Why be glum?
Enough, *the spring has come*;
And without fear or fret
I clink my castanet
And beat my little drum.

HOW THE MOUNTAINS CAME TO BE

A bird once came and said to me:
"Hear how the mountains came to be.

"An angel from his crystal sphere
Fell to the earth. A chilly fear
Shot through his wings from tip to tip,
For there was neither boat nor ship,
Mountain nor stream, nor maid nor man,
Far as the angel's eye could scan;
Dead flatness only could he see
Before the mountains came to be.
He stretched his wings to fly away;
But round his feet the oozy clay
Gripped fast, and held him to the ground.
He stretched and strove, until a sound
Went through him from he knew not where,
And said, 'The only way is prayer!'
He dropped his wings and raised his eyes,
And sent his soul into the skies.
He prayed and prayed; and as he prayed
A wind among his plumage played
And bore him upwards towards his sphere.
Around his feet from far and near
There came a sound that seemed to say,
'Pray on! pray on! We too would pray!

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Thy prayer has touched the sleeping Powers!
Pray on: thy prayer shall yet be ours!
We too have wings that pine for flight!
We too have eyes that long for light!
Upwards he moved, and still his eyes
Were fastened on the distant skies;
And, as he rose towards heaven dim,
He drew the earth up after him.
About his feet the oozy clay
Gripped fast, but could not stop or stay
His course, till on his skyey stair
He paused beyond the need of prayer;
While from the earth, beneath, around,
There rose a tumult of glad sound.
The angel turned the sound to seek,
And lo! his foot was on a peak
That fell away to where the world
Lay like a painted flag unfurled
And shaken out from sea to sea,—
And thus the mountains came to be!"

So said the bird; and what the masque
Of meaning hid I meant to ask;
But off he flew before I knew:—
And yet I think the tale is true
If one could only hear aright,
And see with something more than sight.

[65]

WHY THE GRASS IS SHORT IN
CONNEMARA

Michael Walsh, beyond the bog,
Leaves his cattle to his dog,
Leaves his dog a marrow-bone,
Seats himself upon a stone,
And "Let you not think," says he,
"Eyesight tells of all's to see!"
Then, his eyes turned in his head,
Michael talks to people dead:
Folk that once with friendly hands
Passed the pipe from mouth to mouth,
Sharp-tongued men from northern lands,
Men, soft-spoken, from the south;
Creatures of the delving kin,
Born and buried near the sod,
Bearing little mortal sin,
Little of the grace of God.
God, who pities men who moil,
Pities these; and of His will,
Sets them not to angel toil
Past their little human skill.
"Ah!" The Father smiling says,
"I have bards and harps enough.
In the gaps of sodden days
You have handled silent stuff

Dumb with song; for out of dearth
You have clothed the naked earth;
Clothed and fed and put to school
Powers made purposeful by rule;
Wild things by the wayside born
You have changed to blessed corn
That makes glad the homes of man.
Comrades of My cosmic plan!
Shapers where My vision stirs!
My divine artificers!
Many paths lead on to Praise:
You shall go familiar ways.
Children of the wind and sun,
Do as you have always done!"
"And," says Michael, "there they go,
Ghosts of cattle, ghosts of men,
Up the hill and down again,
As they used to long ago.
And betimes at dead of night,
When the dog-star blazes bright,
And the little wisps of fog
Glide like ghosts across the bog,
I can hear thin whispered words,
And a sound like moving herds.
Then I shut the door, and think:—
Beast and man must eat and drink!
If it be the Almighty's will

That among our stony ground
Food for ghostly herds be found,
Let them eat and drink their fill;
Let them feast and have their sport—
And I sometimes think, thinks I,
Maybe that's the reason why
Connemara grass is short!"

ETAIN THE BELOVED

(Condensed)

Parts I to III of the complete poem, founded on an ancient myth embodying the Irish idea of the Psyche, or soul of things, cosmic, celestial and terrestrial, tell of the ascension of King Eochaidh to the throne of Ireland and his marriage to the Princess Etain.

At the marriage feast the king's brother, Ailill, falls in love with Etain. His passion, suppressed by honour, undermines his health; and when King Eochaidh starts on a tour of his realm, he leaves Ailill in the care of Etain with orders that she is to do everything necessary to bring him back to health.

IV

From day to day Etain with eager thought
Outran sick Ailill's fleetest-footed needs;
From sun and wind a subtle medicine caught,
And charmed swift healing from the fresh-strewn
 reeds

Upon his floor, which her own hands had brought
From ferny hollows, where cool waters laughed
That Ailill from her cup with gladness quaffed.

Yet with each dawn that came with growing power
There grew a cloudy thought in Ailill's mind

That gloomed the joy of health's returning hour,
And put a sigh in evening's gentle wind,
And touched with ill-timed frost life's opening flower,
And turned to poverty the proffered wealth
In hands that wrought his sickness and his health.

And she, in service, found a hidden way
To strange new meanings in the eyes of life;
And reached a joy beyond the shrill affray
Of horns and harps loud with the songs of strife
Or little triumphs of a passing day;
And grasped, in giving, life's most perfect gift—
Love that is raised by that which it doth lift.

So moved the twain through sunshine barred with
gloom,
Finding in each twin solace and despair:
He, like a frail and gently tended bloom,
Grudged each day's health that took him past her
care;

And she, o'ershadowed by approaching doom,
Watching his need of her grow less and less,
Sickened with grief her lips dare not express.

Tossed thus on hidden billows of the soul,
And swept by winds that warred against the will,
They drained the little draught in life's poor bowl,
And all unwitting wrought each other ill;

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Until at last, stung past the heart's control,
Marking Etain's white brow and pensive eye,
Thus Ailill broke the silence with a cry.

“O bitter joy! O sorrow passing sweet!
O blossoming life that leads to love's pale death!
O gain that speeds to loss on laggard feet!
O living voice that kills the word it saith!
O cooling touch that kindles quenchless heat!
How shall I all my heart's dear burden speak,
Or how keep silence at thy paling cheek?”

“I love thee, Queen Etain, but in such wise
As never man loved woman heretofore:
Not with the love that lives upon her eyes,
And counts her breast the summit and the shore
Of all desire, and with tempestuous sighs
Flings to the winds the spoils of reason's thrift
In barter for her body's utmost gift.

“My love, O queen, is that serener kind
Whose word outruns the lumbering wain of speech,
And springs in light from mind to answering mind;
And takes its bliss beyond the body's reach,
Thought mixed with thought, as sunlight with sweet
wind;
And crowds the ways, where human sorrow pleads,
With generations of exalted deeds.

[71]

“Ah then take back the life that thou hast spent
In vain, since thou dost slay and heal my heart;
And let quick death beat down my failing tent,
And its lone habitant be blown apart
Through the wide wastes of night's black firmament,
Where move the Powers in whose dread hands may be
The source and end of dreams and destiny.

“There past the chain of hours my faithful ghost
May through thy dreams move silently and dim;
And needing then the least, may serve thee most;
Or crying seaward from life's misty rim,
Call forth thy heart beyond its mortal coast:
Happy if in thy spirit's wakening sigh
My name one murmured moment live and die.”

Thus Ailill spoke; and like a summer shower
His eager words, tingling on heart and brain,
Stirred many a leaf to life, and many a flower;
And sank beneath her spirit's thirsty plain,
Till hidden springs, touched with a strange new power,
Welled in her eyes with flash of sudden streams
From hills that crowned some far-off world of dreams.

Clear-visioned in her meditative eye
Rolled the great world, and lo! a silent moth
Shredded its mighty frame, till down the sky
It fluttered like a poor discarded cloth

From some dead face flung out by hands that die;
And thinned like vapours round the lips of day,
And like a breath passed utterly away.

And as it passed she knew that nevermore
Life would be life again; yet in her mind
Lurked the dim fear of one who leaves the shore,
And on the sightless hazard of the wind
Moves into doubt and darkness. O'er and o'er
She turned her thought, till softly on her ear
There broke a song a bard was chanting near.

*Because the strong are fallen low,
Who deems that Strength himself is slain?
Through depth and height his arm shall go,
And he shall rear his house again,
Although the strong are fallen low.*

*Because the living all are dead,
Who deems that Life has found a grave?
Among the stars she lifts her head,
She dances lightly on the wave,
Although the living all are dead.*

*Because the beautiful has passed,
Was Beauty but a passing word?
Behold, the dust through chaos cast*

*With lovelier loveliness is stirred,
Although the beautiful has passed.*

*And if earth's lovers love amiss,
Who deems that Love has perished quite?
Lo, cloudy lips the mountains kiss,
And day is bosomed on the night,
Although earth's lovers love amiss.*

Then said Etain: "King Eochaidh in his might
Drew me to bonds of happiness; but thou
Art as a voice that calls across the night
To where some dawn blows freshly on the brow,
And love with love moves freely as the light,
Mingling in happy dreams their shadowy wings
Beyond these perishing substantial things.

"Ah, me, the pain in joy, the joy in grief!
Who tells the end when once has moved the foot?
Thy hand is on my life's new-opened leaf:
Who knows the hand may pluck its ripened fruit?
To thee—and past, the journey may be brief.
Yet I the king's behest shall all fulfil—
'Nothing withhold to heal my brother's ill.'

"So in the gaze of dawn and wondering flowers
We shall keep tryst by stream and whispering tree;
Perchance to win from life's controlling powers

[74]

The healing of thy heart's infirmity;
Perchance—" "Oh! speed the hazard of those hours,"
He cried, "that blind the flame of low desire
In the white light of Love's transmuting fire."

V

Hard by the swift-winged star, the moth-like moon
Sheds golden dust on waves of day that ebb
Into the deep beyond life's wan lagoon.
The spider Night now spins his monstrous web,
And spots the dark with many a pale cocoon
Hung in his vaporous cave, whose phantoms creep
In visions round the heavy brain of sleep.

Yet one, among the sleepers, never turns
To ease his shoulder of the weight of night;
But with the shield of sweet oblivion spurns
Those wandering shafts that tease with sound and
sight;

Till in a quiet, deep as kingly urns
In buried places, Ailill deadly lies,
Blind to the spreading signal of the skies.

Now the thick dark, that pressed Etain's calm face
Like softest wool, thins out, and moves, and lifts;
And like a memory's vague recovered trace
The silent world, looming through cloudy rifts,

[75]

Floats greyly on the grey abyss of space,
Then slowly forms, and stands at last in light
Built on the crumbled ruins of the night.

Somewhere the snipe now taps his tiny drum;
The moth goes fluttering upwards from the heath;
And where no lightest foot unmarked may come,
The rabbit, tiptoe, plies his shiny teeth
On luscious herbage; and with strident hum
The yellow bees, blustering from flower to flower,
Scatter from dew-filled cups a sparkling shower.

The meadowsweet shakes out its feathery mass;
And rumorous winds, that stir the silent eaves,
Bearing abroad faint perfumes as they pass,
Thrill with some wondrous tale the fluttering leaves,
And whisper secretly along the grass
Where gossamers, for day's triumphal march,
Hang out from blade to blade their diamond arch.

Forth came Etain, and with a little cry
Scattered the councils of the feathery brood;
And faced unblenched the red sun's winkless eye
That hawk-like hung above the quivering wood;
And passed with stately step and head on high
Toward a secluded place—where one doth wait
Silent and imperturbable as fate.

[76]

Sweetly the wizard palms of morning sleek
Her brow with spells; and when a butterfly
Brushes with soft familiar wing her cheek,
Through the deep woods she hears a ghostly sigh,
As if a hidden god were fain to speak
An ancient ageless love that, fold by fold,
Wraps her with joy in throbbing arms of old.

Now is her sandalled foot upon the edge
Of a loud-leaping stream, that flings its damp
To cool the sorrel shaking on its ledge
Under the squirrel's pine, and in a swamp
Goes dumb among the heron-haunted sedge,
Where the kingfisher, in a moment's view,
Flashes and fades, a flame of sudden blue.

At length she stands within the appointed place,
Where leafy boughs in odorous dusk are blent.
But wherefore now across her tranced face
Pass the quick fingers of bewilderment,
And doubt on doubt like shadows shadows chase?
Faintly she speaks, "Ailill I came to see.
Who art thou—for thou art yet art not he?"

From her soft eye no loosened glances tell
Desire or dread, to him whose cloudless gaze
Knows from what heights of old her footsteps fell

[77]

Out of clear light, into this web of days
And nights and mystery inscrutable,
And marks how in the calm of inner power
She moves unmoved to meet her destined hour.

“Etain,” he whispered, and again, “Etain.”
Such utter love went throbbing through her name
That nigh beyond her doubt her foot had gone;
Yet stood she wavering like a lonely flame
Outburning night, that feels the shake of dawn;
Then said, “Thy name, that doubt aside he cast?”
“Midir,” he answered, “come for thee at last.”

“Midir?” she echoed, “Midir?” and the sound
Smote upon hidden doors, and roused from sleep
Faint eyes that dreamed, vague hands that groped
around
The thought behind her thought, and from the deep
Beneath her thought climbed upward, to the bound
Whose shadowy marge like midnight gloom is cast
Between the passing moment and the past.

Then Midir said, “For no poor worm’s desire,
Nor aught of earth, thou comest, O beloved!
But for another’s good thy thoughts conspire;
And far from self thy feet have hither moved
To the high purpose of the sacred fire

That burns thine upward path through joy and pain,
Through birth, through life, through death, to me
again.”

Then asked she all bewildered: “Who art thou
Whose eyes have read my soul?” And answered he,
“Thine am I by the immemorial vow
That made thee mine, beloved! eternally,
When for a bride-price, on thy peerless brow
I set a diadem beyond the worth
Of all the crowns of all the queens of earth.”

Swiftly her thought divining, “Where, and when,
And wherefore parted, thou, beloved! shalt know.
That land which gleams in the rapt poet’s ken,
Set in a sea that has no ebb or flow,
Beyond the spear-cast of the dreams of men,
Is mine, and from all changings far withdrawn
There spreads the realm of Midir—and Etain.

“And there we loved, till that Almighty Power
Who set the heavens wheeling with a nod,
Blew thee, a butterfly, from flower to flower,
Until beyond our realm, a splendid God
Knew thee and cherished in a blossomy bower,
And nightly thy fair form in purple laid,
And at thy side his couch of slumber made.

“But thee again the breath of tempest found,
And swept thee forth, and whirled from field to field,
And dashed thee where a roar of festal sound
Shook brazenly doffed helm and resting shield,
And flung thee in a cup that passed around
To one who drank it deep in bridal mirth—
And thou wert born a daughter of the earth.

“From year to year life’s pleasures round thee played,
And fell behind the question of thine eyes
That searched the mysteries of leafy shade,
And the blue heron sailing in the skies
Cutting the silence with the rusty blade,
His voice, and sought to spy the subtile might
That killed your gathered iris in a night.

“Ah, soon I saw sweet longing on thy face,
And love’s compelling poppy on thy mouth,
And watched thee robe thy maiden blossoming grace
And dream a king came riding from the south;
Yet in thy sigh in Eochaidh’s royal place,
Unseen I saw the waft of hidden wings
Set past these perishing substantial things.

“For thou wert born for love whose windless sail
Moves on great deeps beyond life’s shallow range.
Love linked in flesh with failing flesh shall fail:

Love knit in thought with changing thought shall
change,

Nor all desire against slow Time prevail;
For that old worm all dreams shall gnaw and rend,
And love that finds an end—itself shall end.

“Oh! not for thee the little irking chain
That frets the bark on life’s expanding bole;
Nor love that maketh free, though it contain
All earth’s white loves and thee supreme and sole
Beloved beneath all heaven; for who shall gain,
Since between love and love most subtly mixed
Untrodden silence stands forever fixed?

“My love would brood upon the holy thing
Within thine inmost being folded far,
Till it at length come forth on perfect wing
To brush with sweet eclipse the morning star,
And in high heaven its utter rapture sing,
Filling the universe with golden sound
Of love immortal, measureless, unbound!

“How shall immortal love find mortal bliss,
Or measureless be bound in narrow speech,
Or free and forge the bondage of a kiss?
Nay, but its end is ever out of reach,
Its life, of fairer life the chrysalis;

And all its days, desirable and fleet,
But prints of unseen Beauty's passing feet.

"Ah! Love is thine whose all-transfusing sun
Burns out the mystery of life and death;
And all thine hours but blossom unto one
That us in utter bondage compasseth.
Now to that timeless hour Time's footsteps run
To rear our throne, whose foot shall never know
The chafe of life's eternal ebb and flow.

"And he whose heart long time was scarred and swept
By hungering winds that robbed him of repose,
Wrapped in deep joy, beyond his joy has slept
Into a passionless calm that wakes and knows
Love's highest bliss in honour stainless kept.
Farewell, and when a little while has flown
I come again." He ceased. She stood alone.

(King Eochaidh returns from his pilgrimage, and finds his brother restored to health. Etain tells him the story of his recovery, but does not tell him of the appearance of Midir.)

VI

(Time passes, and Eochaidh becomes vaguely troubled by frequent abstraction in Etain, but hides

his fears of interests beyond himself. Rising early after an apprehensive night, he is accosted outside the palace by an unknown chieftain who challenges the king to a game of chess of which Eochaidh is the acknowledged champion. The unknown visitor, who is Midir, offers as his forfeit, in case of defeat, fifty magical horses. The king, confident of victory, pledges anything the challenger may ask. The stranger wins, and demands Queen Etain as his prize. Eochaidh pleads with him to take anything but that. The stranger postpones fulfilment until a day when he will return preceded by omens and claim his due. He disappears.)

VII

Strong in the strength that finds in gentleness
A way to peace, King Eochaidh on the throne
Of Erin sits. Around his footstool press
High cares of sovereignty, that crowd his own
Like gossips out of doors, and ease the stress
Of storming thought which, held from question clear,
Fears its mute doubt, yet vaguely doubts its fear.

In silent step, hushed pulse, and listening gaze,
He marks expectancy behind her smile,
Like some faint gleam from half-remembered days
Ere the high Gods had blown them to this isle

Among inscrutable divided ways,
Some hidden destiny to mar or make
In hands as strong to give as quick to take.

Now to the king the hollow moments haste
Across his heart to some heart-emptied hour:
And now he frets to leap with sinews braced
Through lagging days and meet the threatening power.
Yet from his conflict, inner lips now taste
The mingled wine of sweet and bitter fate—
Strength to withstand, endurance to await.

These not as gifts the shadowy troublers bear,
But on his table spread what is his own.
So mused the king: "Not all from spade and share
The harvest comes: seed to its fruit has grown,
Self-shaped, though stirred by smart of sun and air;
And in life's myriad hands beaten and pressed,
Man is not made, but man made manifest."

So finding gain in threatened loss, his mind
Self-poised, through sorrow and joy makes even way,
Content if, toiling past, his fingers find
Her fingers, and in trembling silence say,
"Here in unstable circumstance entwined
We two have kissed, and whither we may tend,
Once mixed, must find each other at the end."

[84]

And she within her heart's most secret place
Has nursed a thought that grew from day to day,
Like wind-borne seed that on a rocky face
Finds root and strength to shatter ancient sway,
A thought of Love that chafes at time and space,
And moves from Love that was through Love to be
To some exalted end no eye can see.

Yet nought of this was uttered each to each;
But when, like forest monarchs strong and proud,
A silver birch beside a sinewy beech,
They stood at feast to hail the gathering crowd,
Swift winds of joy came full of happy speech,
And through the host light raptures laughed and
played,
Witless of yellowing leaf or sodden shade.

Then came a day when on the bare flag-stone
The slow snail crawled; the chestnut's candles turned
Downward as dead; the wolf-hound with a groan
Gazed in King Eochaidh's eyes through eyes that
burned
Great threat; the spear-grass hither and thither blown
Bent on the sand and traced its rings awry,
And sun and moon slid sideways down the sky.

Swiftly to Eochaidh the dread omens tell
The day of forfeiture; yet to Etain

[85]

No word he speaks. Her eyes so softly well
With wondrous beauty, all his heart is drawn
In love to hold her from the coming spell.
Pushed past its hour, the unspoken doom may break,
And love and honour stand without a shake.

On windy gap and boggy mountain path
He sets his watchers. Knee-deep where the fists
Of bracken fronds are clenched in tiny wrath,
Stern guards now stand, and where in sculptured cists
Old kings are harvested in Death's long swathe.
Closed from alarm the shingled roofs now rise
Ringed through the dark with flaming searching eyes.

The word has passed, "The king shall have his whim:
No stranger looks upon the queen to-night."
Around the feasting board men great of limb
Shut fast each door, and blind the hope of sight
With shining shields that turn the torches dim.
Throned firm in strength defying power or guile,
He joys, and hopes—yet fears Etain's faint smile.

Now harp and song have touched their utmost height,
And fall in sudden silence at a sound
Deeper than sound, and pale before a light
Clearer than light. Above, beneath, around,
All heaven and earth are shaken with a might

Past night, swift chariots clash, and mixed with these,
Far thunderings and the roar of distant seas!

And in their midst is Midir, a shining God
From whose majestic presence swiftly spreads
Peace not of earth. Before his face, unflawed
By shadow of taint, brave warriors bow their heads.
And now the king, snapping his silver rod
Of power, with sudden eyes made clear, with cheeks
Flamed by swift vision, through the silence speaks.

"Now have I seen the shining hand of Him
Who sifts the world for His divine desire;
And gathers, and within His quern's wide rim
Grinds all things meet for His transforming fire,
And kneads them to a purpose far and dim;
Who fashions all things to His growing plan,
And breaks, and moulds, and breaks the heart of man.

"Take Thou Thy will—so it be her's?" . . . A hope
Shoots a faint arrow instantly—no more.
A blinding fire falls from night's glimmering slope.
Flame-like the twain meet on the rushy floor—
And vanish. King and clansmen blindly grope
Into cool air. Across the sky two swans
Fly slowly toward the day that palely dawns.

The names of the personages of the poem should be pronounced thus: Etain, Etawn'; Eochaidh, Yo'hee; Ailill, Al'yil; Midir, Mid'yir.

THE FIRE OF LOVE, THE WINE OF LOVE,
AND THE WINGS

I will walk by the Fall of Torc in the early day,
When the waters jump and clash in a shining spray,
Like the well-filled glasses that toast the new-made
 bride;
And the rocks, under quilts of moss, lie side by side,
As a man and a woman, married, together alone.
I will climb the path where the ivy's arms have grown
Around the stem of the oak and the silver fir,
As I would to God my arms were holding her
Who has planted herself, a tree in the gap of my
 heart.
I will sit on the roaring edge, where the waters dart
White lips that are mad with love, and meet in a kiss
That is life and death in the meeting.—But I will not
 be thinking of this,
Or the ivy's arms, or the rocks in their quiet bed;
For my eyes, half closed, will have slid from the
 mountain's head
To the woody side where the earliest flame of the
 sunlight broke
On the soft young larches whose heads go up in a
 smoke.
And it's this I will think, that if someone passed that
 way

Whose eyes were not burned up with love, he would
 stop and say:
“It was not a man that I saw by the Fall of Torc,
But a smoke like the young larch-tops when the sun-
 flames work
Their secret enchantments, a smoke from a terrible
 fire of love
That can not be quenched by the floods from the top
 of the heavens above,
Or be smothered up by the flames from the deepest
 hell!”

I will walk by the shore of Loch Lein when the
 midday spell
Lies flat on the looking-glass where the purple peak
Stands still on its head, like a clown at a fair; and
 the cackle and shriek
Of the blackbird in nesting-time is echoed from elm
 and ash.
I will watch where the wild drake rises with quack
 and splash
From the reedy places that hide the desire of the
 heart.
And it's not alone I will be when the furzes part,
And your hand is in mine. O wine of my life! it is not
 of these

I will think; for my eyes will be filled with the sally
trees
In their young sweet grace, when their limbs in the
sunlight shine
As if they were steeped for an age in enchanted wine.
But it's this I will think, that if one should be going
that way
Who was sober, not being in love, he would pass and
say:
"It was not a man that I saw by the shore of Loch
Lein,
But a sally tree that is dyed with the purple stain
That comes over the minds of men who are drunk
with the wine of love!"

I will row my boat on Muckcross Lake when the grey
of the dove
Comes down on the end of the day; and a quiet like
prayer
Grows soft in your eyes, and among your fluttering
hair
The red of the sun is mixed with the red of your
cheek.
I will row you, O boat of my heart! till our mouths
have forgotten to speak
In the silence of love, broken only by trout that spring
And are gone, like a fairy's finger that casts a ring

[90]

With the luck of the world for the hand that can hold
it fast.
I will rest on my oars, my eyes on your eyes, till our
thoughts have passed
From the lake and the sky and the rings of the jump-
ing fish;
Till our ears are filled from the reeds with a sudden
swish,
And a sound like the beating of flails in a time of
corn.
We shall hold our breath while a wonderful thing is
born
From the songs that were chanted by bards in the days
gone by;
For a wild white swan will be leaving the lake for
the sky
With the curve of her neck stretched out in a silver
spear.
Oh! then, when the creak of her wings will have
brought her near,
We shall hear again a swish, and a beating of flails,
And a creaking of oars, and a sound like the wind
in sails,
As the mate of her heart will follow her into the air.
O wings of my soul! we shall think of Angus and
Caer,

[91]

And Etain and Midir, who were changed into wild
white swans
To fly round the ring of the heavens through the dusks
and the dawns
Unseen by all but true lovers till judgment day,
Because they had loved for love only. O love! I will
say,
For a woman and man with eternity ringing them
round,
And the heavens above and below them, a poor thing
it is to be bound
To four low walls that will spill like a pedlar's pack,
And a quilt that will run into holes, and a churn that
will dry and crack.
Oh! better than these—a dream in the night, or our
hearts' mute prayer
That O'Donoghue, the enchanted man, should pass
between water and air
And say: "I will change them each to a wild white
swan,
Like the lovers Angus and Midir, and their loved
ones Caer and Etain,
Because they have loved for love only, and have
searched through the shadows of things
For the Heart of all hearts, through the fire of love,
and the wine of love, and the wings."
Killarney, Easter 1913.

AFTER-GRASS

Bright hopes that April set a-wing
Now fold in August's rich content,
And leave the zest and toil of spring
For quiet of accomplishment.
Life's wave seems spent . . . A leaf drops
dead:
Yet here, where hints of autumn pass,
The Mother's living hand has spread
The fresh new green of after-grass!

Come forth, beloved! and share with me
The Mother's miracle of cheer.
Our perished budding-time let be.
Lo! life can blossom all the year.
A smile can start eternal spring
Although our summer fade and pass;
And Love to loving hearts can bring
The greenness of the after-grass!

MY LADY'S PRAISE

Now shall I sing my lady's praise
In song that will outlive the years,
An inextinguishable blaze
Through shifting lights of smiles and tears.

But vain the hope to rise on wings
Bound close with earth's exhausting thong,
Or out of life's frail transient things
To build imperishable song.

Therefore I shall not praise her hand
That time will mingle with the dust,
But sing its power to wield a wand
That conjures an eternal trust.

I shall not praise my lady's eyes
That passing years will darken quite,
But sing their mystic depths where lies
The Spirit's everlasting light.

I shall not praise her, part or whole
That knows mutation's withering breath,
But praise the brave and shining soul
That fears not either life or death.

So shall my lady's praise belong
To time beyond time's ruining stress,
And ageless so shall live my song
That sings her everlastingness.

AWAKE

Just now I awakened suddenly out of sleep.
I came floating and wavering upwards out of the
deep,

Like the jelly-fish that sideways glimmer and sway,
Dim ghosts in the green clear waters of Galway Bay.
As a drift of wrack, this way and that way urged,
I came floating and wavering upwards, till here I
emerged;

Till here I emerged—and the Vision of limitless
Space

Is blurred by this picture that clings about my face;
This lanterned gew-gaw darkness that hides the Light;
This blindness that men call sight:

From the music of infinite Silence I am compassed
around

By this toneless, tuneless, restless serpent of sound,
This deafness that men call hearing:

From the Bliss that my soul in the body's trance was
nearing

I am plucked and hustled away

By this crowd of shuffling things that decay:

From the ocean of Peace I am flung in these shallows
of strife,

This death that men call life.

From a sleep I emerge: I am clothed again by this
woven vesture of laws;
But I am not, and never again shall be, the man that
I was.

At the zenith of life I am born again. I begin.
Know ye, I am awake, outside and within.
I have heard; I have seen; I have known the bite of
this shackle of place and name,
And nothing can be the same.

Henceforth a harshness I am for your purification;
A strong sharp odour I am of resuscitation.
I am the garlic that grows in the woods of Coolavin,
That a sword of invisible light has peeled skin below
skin,

Down to the deathless germ, the innermost I.
Across your quiet sky
I am floated out, a battle-flag.
I have flung away the body's prison-rag.
I have burst that cobweb-haunted chamber, the mind.
I have sent three shouts of freedom along the wind.
I have struck one hand of kinship in the hands of
Gods, and one in the hands of women and men.
I am awake! I shall never sleep again!

DEDICATION TO "STRAIGHT AND CROOKED"

These songs, to you who have not eyes or ears,
Chained, vulture-scarred, on life's bare, rocky tiers,
Promethean souls who hide the stolen fire
Under thick need, black anguish, foiled desire,
I dedicate, that so my heart have ease
From her great debt. Her wine upon its lees
Sweet is against your bitter. She hath her fill
Of Beauty beauteous made beside your ill,
And knoweth her joy in song is yours in fee
Nourished upon your songless misery.

Where were the heights if depth lay not between?
Where light if darkness lowered not her screen?
Down through the void would topple earth and sun
If from your place were pushed the meanest one
Of all your huddling band, O ignorant
Stark souls that in the world's deep shadows pant
For what, you know not! Here a soul draws near
To pay account—in song you will not hear!
Yea though, could you but know, your laugh immense
Would shake to dust my beggar-recompense,
I bring it, proudly prostrate, lay it down
Before your silence, asking not the crown
Of your dull scorn, as scornful poets do.
Nay, humbly here I vow these songs to you,
That I may lay up treasure for myself

In days when you have climbed my windy shelf,
And in accomplished sunshine basking sit,
When I have gone to cleanse me in the Pit
From pride, or avarice, or the curse of thought
That holds good good, ill ill, and sees them not
Twin stars that circle round one hidden pole,
Pathways that alternate to one far goal.

O ye in Abraham's bosom then that dwell!
When I to you shall raise mine eyes from Hell,
Perhaps across the resonant abyss
That day my heart shall thrill with joy of this
Dim with rebirth, when ye shall find and look
Through and beyond the letter of this book,
And for its love a loving thought shall cast
To him who felt, and thought, and sang, and passed,
Holding one truth, though many rise and fall—
Life moves to life, and One Life lives in all,
Moving with feet innumerable that go
To some high end we in the end shall know!

The wave runs down to dark and up to light.
One swimmer swims the hollow, one the height,
Then change their place. The haltless wave drives on
Unto great business past the gates of dawn,
Made meaningful by us who onward breast,
Dark in the hollow, glimmering on the crest.

The Weaver throws His shuttle right and left:
Lo! we are patterned in His warp and weft.
Wherefore with no vain hope, no vain despair,
We face the slope with neither praise nor prayer,
Content to know, though knowledge yet be dim,
Our place no meaner than the Seraphim.

With hail from hill to valley of friend to friend,
Answered or answerless, whate'er the end,
We lift or lay creation's lessening load,
Pass and repass upon the spirit's road!

STRAIGHT AND CROOKED

I passed a crookéd, stunted tree
It pushed its wizened arms at me.
I muttered as I passed along:
"I will not put *you* in a song."

I passed a stunted, crookéd man.
He smudged me with his black tea-can.
I said, as down my brows I drew:
"I will not make a song on *you*."

"I'll sing of hills, clouds, flowers and wings;
Of beautiful and mystic things,
Where God and Art are reconciled."
A something somewhere slyly smiled.

The hills drew down the heavy cloud.
The rain hung round me like a shroud.
Flat lay the wild sweet violet.
No wing would shield me from the wet.

I saw the stunted, crookéd tree.
It stretched inviting arms at me.
I put my back against its bole,
And, shivering, thanked it from my soul.

And when the crookéd, stunted man
Held out to me his black tea-can,

[100]

I drank a draught of liquor warm
That would keep out the blackest storm.

What happened then I cannot tell;
But man and tree began to swell
And rise like ocean-sailing spars
Until they touched the windy stars.

I never in my life did see
So tall and straight a man or tree:
And I began a song to make,—
But laughter seemed the earth to shake!

I tried to catch a flying thought,
But only far and thinly caught
A whisper through the twilight dim:
The straight and crookéd are in him!

Garston, Lancashire.

[101]

THE MILKY WAY

“How shall I know again the joy of the Lord?” I
cried. “How shall I sing
His songs, that are Eire’s songs, in a strange land
thick with gloom;
Or find through the low dead sky of smoky street on
street
The starry way King Orry walked through shattered
cloudy bars?”
Suddenly out of the sulphurous air an angel flashed
a wing
That shook across a grimy wall a black-stemmed
elder’s bloom;
And there! on the muddy pavement! lay out for my
halting feet
A Milky Way of the shaken elder’s five-rayed silver
stars!
Oh! now I have found again the joy of the Lord; I
lift my harp; I sing
Of life, of love, of Eire, though the Earth roll thick
in gloom;
For my vision has passed the shadows; like a smoke
they roll up; they fleet
As dust at the hooves of the Horses of Beauty that
draw her conquering battle-cars!
Garston, Lancashire.

[102]

BUBBLE-BLOWERS

Tramping a dusty road as the sun went down,
I passed a boy with a face as the bracken brown,
Perched high, like a rook with wings in battle torn,
On the topmost bar of a gate to a field of corn.
Hugged tight with his knees he held an ancient cup,
Willow-pattern, handleless, cracked, whose place had
been taken up
On his mother’s dresser by delph of a later breed.
In his hand he grasped a pipe that his father’s weed
Had stained as brown as his bracken-coloured face,
Till steeped in a rank thick odour it fell from grace
To become the sport of the sun-baked, rook-like boy,
Who sat on a gate, his eyes a-sparkle with joy,
And lifted a pipeful of soap from his cup to his
puckered mouth,
And blew out bubbles that glimmered away to the
south:
Bubbles the size of his head or his eye, and every
size between:
Bubbles that glinted the rainbow tints, but mostly
blue and green:
Bubbles that broke in a greasy splash on his tattered
coat:
Bubbles that spun and lifted, and seemed to float
Away to the end of the world and up to the sky.

[103]

. . . I smiled as I passed his gate. He caught my eye,
And lowered his bubble-machine from his mouth with
a sudden trace
Of guilt—that broke like a bubble. He smiled. His
face
As brown as the bracken, and lit with a secret joy,
Went with me, and timed my feet to the heart of a
boy.

Tramping the road of the heart at the hush of a day
That came with the cricket's whistle and scent of hay;
When the man of the fairy-folk, who lives in my
head,
Put dreams in my eyes, and thought's long plough-
lands spread
To lure my hand to the sickle to reap and bind,
To gather and garner the harvest that filled the mind.
With pomp and shouting and lilts from the fiddler's
nook,
Suddenly into my thought there fluttered a rook
With a tattered coat and a boy's brown bracken-face
That smiled on my gorgeous dreams with a subtle
trace
Of something that said, You also! I woke, and smiled,
For I saw myself, a sun-kissed ancient child,
Perched high on a gate, with bubbles about me
spread:

[104]

(For what is this hollow thing that is called my head
But an old cracked cup, filled full of bubble stuff?
And what is my song—and all songs be they tender
or tough—
But an old, old pipe where a thousand lips have
blown
Their bubbles and passed?) . . . But I knew we
were not alone,
We singers of songs. Around us on millions of gates
Sat kings in their crowns, and monks with shaven
pates;
Wise men dark with their wisdom, and wiser who
prayed for light;
Women who irked at quiet, and soldiers who thirsted
for fight,
Blowing bubbles, bubbles, bubbles: and far past the
glimmering end,
Where the great white roads of Eternity cross and
wend
Through the vast ploughed fields of space, I saw a
gate,
And the husbandmen of the worlds pass in and out,
or await
The sign of the Master-Blower of Bubbles, who sat
and blew
Stars and suns and systems that glimmered and flew
In bubbles that glinted the rainbow tints. I smiled

[105]

With the wide abashless eyes of an ancient child.
Then the Master-Blower of Bubbles slowly turned
And smiled at me over the vastness, until I burned
With the joy of knowledge that, whether the bubbles
break
In a splash on His breast, or their orbits in heaven
take,
It matters no whit if the bubbles rise or fall,
For the bubble itself is nothing, but the blowing of
bubbles is all!

A HYMN TO HIDDEN LOVELINESS

Whose is that voice whose far sweet sound
Within the soul moves strangely near,
Calling and calling, yet is drowned
In silence when I turn an ear?

Whose is that face whose instant sight
Pales the moist evening's crimson sky
With something clearer than the light,
And yet eludes the swiftest eye?

Whose is that hand whose white cool fire
Shakes the rapt body overmuch
With pangs of infinite desire,
Yet slips beyond the keenest touch?

Spirit of utter Loveliness!
Thine is the voice, the face, the hand;
Thine is the all-compelling stress,
And thine the swift shape-changing wand.

Yet, though of thee I have not sight,
My heart before the rose cries: "Thus
She too, and more!" Yea, seen aright,
Ill things of her are rumourous.

For she, beyond the nights and days,
Has set the spinning orbs astir;

And life, by straight or crooked ways,
Is slowly rounded home to her.

So, none the more my hands would close
Adoring dawnwards, calm and clear,
Than when along the whirlwind goes
The dream and work of many a year;

Nor less give thanks where poppy's blaze
Destruction bears through corn and fence,
Than where her garden sister sways
In orient grandiloquence.

Let Love make pact no death can break,—
With thee alone each heart keeps tryst.
Thy lips moved when the Buddha spake;
Thy gleam was on the face of Christ;

And in my flesh and vibrant brain,
Where dark and light are subtly blent,
Thy fingers leave a rosy stain
Of joy in utter discontent.

For, past the hunger of the heart,
Made mute by throbbing lips or limbs,
Insatiably thou mov'st apart.—
I follow where the flaming dims

[108]

From off the hearth of life; and where
The strident glories of the storm
Are folded in unruffled air.—
I seek thine essence past the form,

And dare not, though the pulses ache,
Drop flight to kiss the fleetest wing,
Nor for a heart-beat more forsake
The Lovely for the loveliest thing;

But cry: "O thou whose quenchless gaze
Shall burn the dross from earth and sky!
Take me and fill me, that thy blaze
Destroy me not, but purify!"

[109]

THE MAGICAL RING

“Gather in, gather in for a ring”
The village children sing.
“Gather in for a ring, gather in”
I echo among the whin,
Where the quiet cattle crop
The grass, raise heads, then stop
To survey my lazy position
With a gentle inquisition,
Advance . . . and pause . . . and stand
Around me on every hand,
Great gargoyles against the skies,
A ring of contemplative eyes.

Gather in, brute friends! gather in
From the world and its murky din
To the rim of my furze-fringed hollow,
Where the cheep of the darting swallow
Is mixed with the murmur of flies:
And your ring of contemplative eyes
Knows nought of life and its cares,
Save such as are moving the hares
That stretch their ears in the shades
Like fairy windmills' blades.

Gather in, gather in for a ring!
Your long tails slowly swing

[110]

Like censers at invocation.
Gather in for an incantation
To the spirits of earth and air
That crowd on us everywhere,
Called here from the clay and the skies
By your circle of magical eyes!

The vision gathers and flows.
The gulf that parted us goes.
Your ring of evocative eyes
Are as wells where the waters arise
That moved in the Great Abyss
Ere That had devolved to this;
Soaked down, then, darkened and flawed,
Climbed slowly up to the sod.
There, faint in your eyes' dim deeps,
My image wavers and creeps
Like a shadow without a name
In the depths from whence I came,
My home with the crouching clan
Ere the soul of me rose to man.

Here, stretched in the gorse and grass,
I am clasped by the vision, and pass
From the husks of life to its gist
Through the power of the Alchemist
Who has minted the senses' lead
To a golden fire in the head,

[111]

And changed your enchanting eyes
To a Mystery ancient and wise.
Lo! now, in quivering lines,
The sun out of Taurus shines,
Where the hidden heavenly Bull
The Plough of the World doth pull;
And your eyes at the end of the day
Will mirror the Milky Way,
Where the Cow of the Nourishing Night
Leaves a pathway vast and white.

Thus, high on the starry track
Of the circling zodiac
You are lifted, light as a breath,
Out-topping life and death,
On the Symbol's shakeless tower,
As Power and the Shaper of Power,
The cosmic warp and weft,
God's right hand and His left;
One to struggle and strain,
And one to support and sustain,
So long as Life hath place
To flower in the fields of space,
And the sun and the midnight skies
Make a circle of magical eyes,
And the dancing planets sing:
"Gather in, gather in for a ring!"

Cheshire.

[112]

IN MEMORY OF
FRANCIS SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON

When with dark wrongs we waged our strife,
I found you pure past praise or frown;
But in the blinding light of life
Saw not your hovering martyr-crown;
Nor dreamed that when in April showers
New life's green banners were unfurled,
You in the clash of iron powers
Should fall, and, falling, shake the world.

O friend! forgive these eyes that far
Held me from measure of your height,
Nor saw that in your war with war
You of your end had inward sight,
And heard round your vicarious head
God's thunders to the nations call:
"Life is not nourished on the dead:
Who take the sword by sword shall fall!"

Oh! honour fawns about your feet;
For you, with but a breath to live,
Let not death's bitter mar life's sweet,
But stood as One who said: "Forgive,
Father; they know not what they do!"
Ere the reluctant rifles cried
(Nay, to new life saluted!) you
On their blind error smiled, and died.

[113]

Yea, and upon our shattering grief
You smile in knowledge deeper grown,
Saying: "You count my life a leaf
By some dark wind through darkness blown:
It is not so!" And there you leave
The fact; and to new labours go,
A soul one-purposeful—to weave
Love's garments for the stark world's woe.

Surely in that exalted place
Where lauding seraphs round you press,
Some wistfulness will cross your face
Shadowed from our heart-loneliness:
Yea, you some hollowness will find
In their flame-blinded praise of Him;
Our strife in darkness call to mind,
And slip between the cherubim,
Crying: "I want no starry crown!
I want no harp save one that thrills
Marching the hosts of Reason down
To war with Wrong between the hills!"

And somehow (though we know not how,
Or may not know the well-known face)
Someone will glimpse your placid brow,
And feel you strongly in your place;

[114]

You whom no threat or danger awed;
Whose hand would heal where sharp it fell,
Smite Error on the Throne of God,
And smile on Truth though found in Hell.

Francis Sheehy-Skeffington was the first sacrificial victim in the Irish struggle at Easter 1916. He was shot without trial by order of a British officer who was afterwards found to be insane. Mr. Skeffington was trying to restrain the populace from disorder when arrested.

[115]

A HYMN TO THE SONG-GODDESS

Mother of Song and Singers! Mother of me
No less than of those made free
Of all thy realm of sea and earth and air,
Wherein, with feet in life set strongly fair
With hands by noon or midnight splendours filled,
They, for thine image here, a godlike dwelling build.
Mother of Singers! Mother of me no less,
Although these hands
Lift no sharp trumpet blown for warlike bands
To rise, to march, to press
Through flame and smoke
Beleaguered walls, or in the wilderness
Conjure from sterile sands
The loud and populous lands
Begotten of the deep.
Mother of Song! thee I too shall invoke:
For though its cords know not the conqueror's sweep,
Yet may my unadventuring harp,
Set on a grassy scarp
Midway between the sea that question thrills
And the high-answering hills,
Echo thy subtler music in a tone
Not all unknown
To some whose eyes have vision of the road
To thine occult abode.

[116]

Hellas knew thee by a name
Ninefold, sisterly, removed.
We who glimpse the secret flame
Guarded in thy circling hands,
Know thee nearer, deeply proved
One in sunned or shaded lands:—
Eastward, where the heavens glow,
Lotus-throned Saraswati;
Westward—islanded in spray
Where a swift melodious hour
Has deeper lure than wealth or power—
Brigid, Mother-mystery
Wrapped in Light that darkens day:
Three in name, but one the Word
India, Greece and Ireland heard.
O thou, Bright Arrow from the unseen Bow!
Mystic daughter of the Light,
Bride of all-containing Night,
And of thy spouse the foe!
Thy barb is fixed in thy true lover's breast.
Thou woo'st him from the depths; yet on the crest
Thou slippest into silence lest, in thee
Losing himself, thou lose a needed note
Out of the multitudinous throat
Of thy celestial harmony;
Or, while his lips thy salutation win,
He lose thy soul within.

[117]

Mother of Song and Singers! in hours replete
With joy, have we not cried with emptiness
Of the filled void, and longed and longed to press
Behind the flying music of thy feet
Through the heart's purple twilight, and the gleam
Along the lanterned chambers of the brain,
Into the crystal centre of thy strain?
Yet for our solace we have caught, in stream,
Thunder and bird-note and the murmur of trees,
In bat's jarred string and bugles of the bees,
Thy passing music: for thou art not alone
In Love's loved voice the best-loved tone;
The lure from life, to Life more bountiful;
The harmony to lull
The clash of inharmonious time,
Unto which end man's ages slowly climb:
But thou art also vocal in the spheres,
Moving to song too subtle for our ears.
Oh! there are chantings in the winds that pass,
And poets hiding in each blade of grass;
For thou, God's eldest Voice that built the whole,
Singest the choric world back to no less a goal.
The black-browed storm strides loudly from the south,
And flings himself full-length upon the pines
That he may shake from them a windy song
Giving him back his likeness. They from him
Learn a vast note against their singing-time;

[118]

And in his wake the happy flooded pools
Bubble faint wordings; while the bleating frogs
Chorus themselves to music past their range
In thirsty twilights, pushing out their joy
Songward. And these are thou, for thou hast set
Thine urgency in Earth's dim-uttering heart.
Thou spreadest thine insignia on the wave
Harp-strung with foam of tempest. Unto thee
Life strains through life; and in the soundless tomb,
Yea, in death's mould thou hast epiphany
In the mute marriage-hymn of dust to dust!

Forgive me, Mother! the dear sin of praise,
Since thou thyself art Praise, and hast no need
For our poor quavering reed.

Yet will I raise

A hymn of thankfulness that through my days
Thou didst, with song's bright sting,
Prick into agony my callow brain
With hungry questioning
And sweet creative pain.

What if it was not mine to lift star-clear
Thy face, ineffably unflawed,
Before a bending world, and hear
My harp-notes' echoed laud;
Or conjure down

Heaven's waters to the stain

[119]

Of our deep-sullied earth;
Yet unto to me was given the gradual crown,
The slow unfolded gain,
Of mine own heart,
Bringing song's greenth, refreshing after dearth.
Mother of me! in quiet paths apart—
Blazed through the midmost of the strife
For my land's freedom, and for full, free life
For mother, sister, wife—
Thou led'st my feet past failing fire and fire,
And pale blown ashes that to sense belong,
Searching the shadows for a flying trace
Of thee, till came at last thy certain grace—
Song lit with life, and life made sweet with song.
And when the sun falls from life's haughty noon,
And underfoot a shadow slowly spreads
Eastward, grey prophet of approaching night,
Grant me, O Mother! no pale humbleness
Of lessening heat, no mild apology
For song in face of clamour that would claim
Itself all sound, deaf to thy still small voice
That shall consume all tumult. Grant me this:
To hold the spirit greater than the word;
Yet of the word to mould a worthy lip
For thy pure ministration through the earth.
Mother of Singers! O most purely pure!
How should we dare to name thy sacred name,

We, dead of heart, crude-blooded, muddy-tongued,
But that, in exaltation, we have learned
Thine eye is less on deed than on desire!
Wherefore, O Mother! in the dusking time
I would outsing my morning; would eschew,
For what of praise Time's hand to me accords,
The chested strut of consequential rook
Loudly irrelevant. Yet, be it oblivion,
I shall have joy in memory of hours
Great in desire. Then wherefore should I make
The shrill complaint of seabirds in the dark?
Nay, but as shadows deepen I would play
The spring's incorrigible optimist,
The hearty thrush that from a topmost twig
Whistles the sun to sleep, and his last note
Holds through a dream under a nested wing,
Eyes eastward that the first faint hint of dawn
Fail not of salutation. Even so I
Would play at seesaw with the ardent sun
Across the fulcrum of a flame-topped hill;
Rise as he falls, and, as he sinks from sight,
Catch glimpse of chaster glories hung aloft
Among the spreading leafage of the dark
Day-hidden, till at last I lift my head
Full in the bright companionship of stars,
Washed clear of stain in midnight's holy flood
For life's new hazard here or elsewhere.

From song we come. Through song to song we go.
Mother of Song and Singers! thou dost house
All those who wear with joy upon their brows
Keen thorns of aspiration. Through their glow
Thou turn'st thy light to cleansing fire. The woe
Of Beauty, that would clasp the world for spouse,
They have, for urge thy lovers to arouse
To build more fair thy House of Life below.
More than accomplishment is on thy scrolls:
In thee desire and its fruition meet;
Yea, and for song the heart has mutely willed
Thou hast a place, with those majestic souls
Who lay their utmost tribute at thy feet—
Silence magnificent with song fulfilled.

LOVE IN THE HIGHEST

The kiss made sweet by love confessed
Was sweeter made by parting's fear.
Our words were quick and warm with zest
Because of silence threatening near.

All that the heart of pleasure knew
Held ache of what might never be;
And lyric hours in laughter flew
Across dumb gulfs of mystery.

But now our hearts no distance rends.
We take as equal, rose and thorn;
And know where each high moment ends
Love's deeper life is only born.

Our happy hearts now find each bliss
But Love's light-pitched and moving kraal;
And know clasped hands and clinging kiss
Not Love, but Love's pale ritual.

So have we found and kept the sweet
Of laughter in the face of time,
And found the quenchless fires that beat
Beneath slow age's gathering rime.

Dear! we have stilled the heart's wild strife
In ecstasy of Love's repose.
The rose has faded out of life,
For life itself is now the Rose!

THE SHADOWY COMRADE

When comes that hour in which my heart shall gaze
(Even as Dante on his Beatrice
Pale past recall of love's most fervent kiss)
On her who, living, filled my hungry days
With life and music, hope and a measure of praise;
Grant me, O Love! thine eye, averring, "This
Is shard of the budded beech, the chrysalis
Cast where no more the new-winged spirit stays."

So when the dear familiar thing decays,
I shall not grope in the clay for what I miss,
And at her hem of pearl and chrysoprase
Pluck her with sighs back to this realm of Dis;
But in sweet hope shall haunt her heavenly ways,
A shadowy comrade on her path to bliss.

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

Lord! for the pride that boasted: "In holy ire
Wield we the Sword of the Lord," let not Thy brow
Blast us in wrath! Who trieth the nations but Thou;
Thou whose name as of old is Consuming Fire?
For the pigmy reach of the soul's enforced desire,
The virtue dared in face of the threatening Now,
Thou through our dreams hast driven Thy quickening
plough

To stir our inanimate clay to Thy purpose nigher.

"Give peace," we pray, "give peace in our time,
O Lord!"

Oh! first give wisdom, deeper than deed or word,
To learn that not till the inward conflict cease,
And the will of the flesh with Thine move in accord
Past self, that is parent of strife, shall the ancient
Sword

Of Thy Love's purgation be sheathed in a lasting
peace!

A PASSER-BY

On the bank of the Suez Canal

Out of some old old volume, legend-eyed
He comes, with lonely deserts in his stride,
Head up, as one whom some far vision charms.
The setting sun plays searchlights through his arms.
Locusts, that Pharaoh knew as hungry things,
Flicker and shine on myriad mica wings
About him; and the sunlit desert dust
Spirts from his heels in glittering jets. I must,
Yes, from this deck, across that muddy span
Of water, speak to that lost ancient man!

“Sir!—if our speech hath meaning for thine ears,
And we and thou be each what each appears;
Turn unto us thy dusky face, and tell
What dream of what Rebecca by what well
Glimmers below thy turban. Or perchance
Not yet hath Miriam danced her triumph-dance
For Egypt drowned. At daybreak may we spy
Chariots of Pharaoh’s captains floating by?
Or has thy long white garment somewhere hid
A chisel for the growing pyramid?”

No answer! “Say! what art thou? What are we?—
Things yet unborn?—shadows thou canst not see?”

[126]

Or have we through some magic gateway sailed
Into a spectral world?” In vain I hailed;
For that lost ancient ghost, or man, or priest,
Aureoled with the mystery of the East,
Through the gilt closing covers of the night
Into some old old book slipped out of sight!

October 1915

[127]

TO SAROJINI NAIDU

Poetess of India

From a lion great in death
Honey came, a scripture saith.
Yea, and out of ancient song
Sweetness cometh from the strong:
Names that move, but cannot pass,—
Sappho, Dante, Kalidas,
And their singing kindred. Still,
Though we climb a lesser hill,
There are hidden heights to scale
Reckoned not in classic tale;
And on singers of our time
Waits a subtler power of rhyme
That can raise a fairy wind
Laying all the ghosts of mind,
Gaudy doubts that bend the knee
To a moment's ecstasy.

Such a wind has moved your wings,
Bird that from life's prison sings!
Caged familiar of the skies
In whose spirit-lighted eyes
India's wisdom, deep and long,
Blossoms lightly into song,
Crowning with a deathless crown

[128]

You who sang death's menace down,
And in lyric joy displayed
Strength in weakness perfect made.

Though not yours the sounding wing
Poised on gorgeous questioning,
Or the massy music lent
By a ruder instrument
Blaring all the foolish strife
'Twixt those lovers Death and Life;
Yours is song in skyey flight
Unlaborious as the light,
Mixed with golden music won
From soul-nearness to the sun,
Native to a coming day
Far upon our human way
When in eyes of all shall shine
What is prophecy in thine.

Wherefore, songstress! on our tongue
Grief for song you might have sung
Perishes in thankfulness
For the gift wherewith you bless
This our day: no strained, profound
Chant in caverns underground,
Nor the sweetness of the strong
Echoed out of ancient song;
But—for loss our deeper gain—
Sweeter sweetness born of pain!

[129]

IN PRAISE OF EARTH

“Tamas of tamas, Sat of sat,
Dead clay and life-diffusing sun,
Intimate this, remotest that,
Behind their myriad shapes are one.”

So reads my book. And all around,
Glad nature quickens after rain.
The earth-brown peasant on his ground,
Turning brown earth for future grain,
Strides with his striding oxen twain.
Over the deep-dug silent pool
The weaver-bird has hung her nest
That swings in safety as a cool
Soft wind comes chanting from the west
Lifting the morning's filmy veil;
And where my leafy shade is spread,
Koel to koel overhead
Blows his loud flute's ascending scale.
So keenly Earth's clear challenge comes,
Led by the wind's heart-thrilling drums,
With straight full eye, and steady hand
Bearing for sword the mage's wand,
That all the proud and powerful past
Fades to a shadow shadow-cast,
And sets its ear against a tree
To catch Earth's simple mystery

[130]

Which none may utter mind to mind,
But all who seek shall surely find.

Oh! in such hours, from life apart
Yet closer to its inmost heart,
How freshly comes upon our dearth,
How calmly on our gusty moods,
The authenticity of Earth,
The deep sincerity of woods,
The strong pure passion of the sea;
The fluttering glad futility
Of hosting moths that take to air,
To “Whither?” answer “Anywhere!
What matter? Between dawn and night
All's home where there is wind and sun,
And time for frolic, space for flight,
And what-may-be when flight is done!”

How shrewdly comes from hedge and tree
Rebuke from many a sounded fife
To those who, looking, never see,
And, too much living, miss great Life;
Who, snatching wealth's bedraggled hem,
The spirit's bounty never knew
When evening proffered unto them
The moon-pearl on a pearly hand
Of cloud outheld through turquoise blue
Above a sapphire-paven land;

[131]

Who miss, for all the noise and glare
On passing pleasure vainly spent,
The ecstasy of those who share
Maid Beauty's chaste abandonment.

Too long to Earth we dole the wage
Of proudly shallow patronage.
No need hath she for wreaths of song
That boast them her interpreters.
Nay, far more fitly is it hers
To lay her prophet-length along
Our deadness, and to meaning raise
The corpse of crowded empty days,
And set against our shrill unease
Her ancient quiet certainties.

"Put by," she counsels, "would you live,
Shed garments of the buried years.
New day must day's new garment give;
Nor, for your retrospective tears,
Can you win comfort from the old
If you would sight the Age of Gold.
Know that alone you proudly cast
The gage of war for this: to hold
Out of your tuneless iron age
Some relic of the mouldered past,
Some squalid sacred privilege.
Oh! wiselier far my vagrants go

[132]

Who daily take with youthful laugh
The immortal pilgrim's bowl and staff,
And, reading well my secret, know
That Joy takes never Peace to wife
While death usurps the place of life.
From grasping thought my pilgrims part,
And, down love's pathways pure and plain,
They reach, beyond the sundering brain,
The instant nuptials of the heart."

Lo, unto eyes whose gaze is true
She momentarily makes all things new;
Changeless through change doth lightly pass.
Behold! the dry bent blade of grass
Whose shade and substance make a square,
Now rounds its shadow to eclipse;
And through a myriad thrilling tips
Her reach is onward everywhere,
Timing to dance of sun and sod
The young adventuring of God.
Yea, and though all, when all is done,
Behind their myriad shapes be one,
No truer wisdom through our days
Will straighten out our devious ways
To where, beyond the shadowy Fates,
We shall have speech with One who waits,
Than this—to thank that Power whose grace

[133]

Put eyes within our forward face,
Pathfinding for the runner Soul
Not back to start, but on to goal.

Who finds this wisdom finds the might
To climb the tree of life and reach
Cool sanctuaries of restraint
Where poise is window unto sight,
And silence winnower of speech;
Where love has lost the tiger-taint
In vision of the bridal mirth
That blends divinity with earth,
Bone of true bone, true flesh of flesh.
Inly they know what purpose broods
When midnight drags her starry mesh
Along the deep infinitudes;
What pride gives dignity to dust;
From trampled grape comes what sweet must;
What love moves the confederate Powers
Wherewith Fate wields her lightest wand,
Or in dark salutary hours
Turns down a catastrophic hand.

Softly they sleep whose heads have found
The solid comfort of the sod;
Who know, outstretched on holy ground,
That nearest Earth is nearest God.

Madanapalle, India.

[134]

THE BANYAN TREE

Under the banyan thickly lie
Leaves like an autumn newly shed,
While keen against the sapphire sky
The green of spring breaks overhead.

So closely neighbour birth and death
It seems that the pervading sun
Holds in a trance-like pause of breath
Past, present, future blent in one.

Yea, folded here in calm, beside
Our shallow fret of joy and ruth,
Back on itself the living tide
Augustly flows from age to youth;

For age in wrinkles witch-like stands
And leans great wisdom on her crutch,
Yet pushes forth adventuring hands
Earthward for youth to spring at touch.

Had we thy secret, ancient child!
Our hearts might lightlier pay time's toll;
Count years behind, not on us, piled,
Each hour the birth-time of the soul.

So might we thy large saneness share,
Roots proud in clay and fruitage skied;

[135]

Not wholly thinned to fire and air,
Nor in earth-darkness wholly tied.

Unto which end our prayer is made
That we, through deeper vision won
Here where the night-like slumbrous shade
Is cast and mixed by noonday sun,

May glimpse where fast the shuttle gleams,
Flying to weave in mystic ways
Something of daylight in our dreams,
Something of dreaming in our days.

Adyar, Madras.

[136]

ODE TO TRUTH

Sing now of Truth!
Lift up the heart's exalted melody
To that o'ershadowing Power
Which on the foaming marge of youth
And age's quiet sea
Setteth from hour to hour
The silver chain of an invisible moon
Veiled from rude gaze as oriental brides;
And marcheth captive our loud-clashing tides,
With all their fretful tune,
Beyond the troubled waters of heart and brain,
To where doth reign
Behind all wavering thought and fluctuant mood,
Past mortal change and stain,
Immortal certitude.

Greatly thine accents down the ages roll
In hoary faiths. Yet, though the labouring Soul
In these find food
To stanch the hunger of the passing day,
Still, Truth! thine utmost plenitude
Calls past these Taverns on the Pilgrim's Way.
Not all of thee thy richest bearer hath;
Not He whose feet trod out the Eightfold Path;
Nor He whose voice the tang of thunder hath,
God Shiva, when earth's evil hath sufficed
To earn His shaking for the nations' good;

[137]

Nor the thrice-gentle Christ
On His uplifted Rood.
Nay, not in these, or others great as these,
Though earth's long myriads bend adoring knees,
Art thou all emptied, thou of gods the God,
The authorizing crown, the imperious rod.
Yea, and of all man's thought
On anvils of desire obscurely wrought
To tortured shapings of the twilit brain,
This is the only heresy,
This of man's knees the one idolatry:
To hush thy magic to a single strain,
And sharpen thy mild suasion to a goad;
To turn thy heavenly wealth to earthly gain,
Thy cosmic traffic to a rutted road.

Wiselier the Celtic seer in vision saw
Thy snow-white birds that left thy snow-white brow,
And through the prismatic earth found each a cage
In varying colour of a race and age,
Yet sang one mystic song: for thou
Of earth and heaven art the one life and law,
The truthful poise of bird and insect wings,
The speechless loyalty of stone to stone,
The essence of all seen and unseen things,
Behind our tinted bow the stainless white,
The single ending of our scattered sight.

[138]

Glory to thee, Great Radiance dimly felt!
And to the Dark be glory in her degree
Against whose curtain we have glimpse of thee
Narrowed to stars to light their age's shame.
And honour to those on earth who never knelt
Save to thy holy name;
Strong souls who dared inquisitorial doom
In thine inexorable necessity.
Oh! vain for them the cowed and flickering gloom;
Vainly the faggots flared, the smoke upcurled!
Fire unto fire they calmly went;
And when from bodily chain the soul was rent,
Fire from the fire immortally they came,
Unbodied Powers kindling a subtler flame
To burn the wood, hay, stubble from the world!

And we, as they,
In this our great incalculable day,
To thee, O Truth, for succour turn,
Parent of all for which our spirits yearn—
Peace, Freedom, Beauty, Love.
Thou hast alone the secret, thou the power,
Omnipotent, omniscient Truth!
In some heart-easing hour
Out of our flesh to draw the ravening tooth
Of war and tyranny and hate,
And from our demon-haunted state

[139]

To lift us angel-high.
Thou art the alchemist whose art
From heavy forgings of the flaming heart
Canst mint new coinage for a realm divine;
Wizard who hast the authentic gesturings
To turn earth's water into heavenly wine
Tasting at once of our deep human springs
And the celestial vintage of the sky.
Thou of thy planets art the parent sun;
And all creation's feet in cadence run
To thy compelling flute,
O hidden Lover! whose most urgent suit
Halts not on misty frontiers of thy realm,
But in vast importunity of love
Doff's robe and helm,
And, as doth move
One life to countless blooms from one deep root,
Feelest towards us from the invisible lands
With mild compassionate hands.
Yea, like Lord Krishna with the dancing maids
In India's holy shades,
Thou laughest singly by the side of each,
Takest on thee the stammer of our speech,
And wearest the rude guise
Borrowed from fancies of our dream-dark eyes.
Thy touch gives verity to joy. Our grief
Of thy great yearning is a beckoning wraith.

[140]

Thy mute disclosure shineth in the leaf
That with its season keepeth punctual faith.
Thou art the rumour through the gossip day;
And all our nights are streaked with flaming brands
Seeking the near, communicable way
Our darkness understands,
To call us from the clay.
What if the splendours of accomplished noon
Not yet shall blind our dawning's cadent moon;
Though, for the House of Life that shall endure,
Slow, slow and sure
Thou labourest patiently in earth's crude stuff;
Enough, O conquering Truth! enough
That for the speeding of the start
Thou grantest us our glimpse of goal,
For they who catch the vision of the whole
May greatly dare the part.

[141]

MOULTED FEATHERS

Along the line on the yellow sand where the tide to its
highest rose,
A long white line of moulted feathers of vanished
sea-birds is shed.
Strangely it shakes the heart with the touch of a life
beyond ours that comes and goes;
Fullness—and ebb into distance; flight—and its wing
defeated and shed!

And perhaps on the mystic verge of desire, where
immortal and mortal meet;
Where the Land of the Ever Young is frayed and
strewn by the urge of our human tide,
Some godlike one will smile and sigh at these moulted
feathers of song at his feet,—
And I shall be satisfied!

THE TAJ MAHAL

The Paradox

What love exhaled what beauty! What desire
Broke whitely past the flesh, and in dumb stone
Found silence louder than the heart's wild tone
That for vast sorrow raised this moonlit pyre!
Flame to white flame, minar and slender spire
He bade arise, consuming his deep moan.
Vain! vain! His grief for us to bliss has grown
Through beauty's quenchless and preserving fire.

Canst Thou not leave us to our little ends,
Allah? nor our dear purposes annoy
With something deeper than the eye can see,
As here, where, more than stricken love intends,
Sorrow is throned on everlasting joy,
And death is crowned with immortality.

The Forgotten Workers

Ten thousand and ten thousand came and went,
Forgotten builders of one lasting name;
Even as fuel perishes to flame,
Grapes to new wine, their strength for others
spent.
Yet here they have enduring monument,
One with the master's whom our lips proclaim;

Beyond the loud irrelevance of fame,
The worker lost, in his great work content.

Ah! smile on us who build Thy House of Life,
Allah! that we, though nameless, have the grace
To perish greatly in Thy rising fane
Where Beauty wields pain's hammer, death's
 keen knife.

Grant us oblivion in Thy shining Face!
All else forgotten, Thou alone remain!

The Murmurs in the Dome

Sunrise. The servant makes his morning round,
And on the tombs his duster flicks and swings
With a soft swish. A raucous beggar sings.
High in the dome, caught swiftly from the ground
Murmur and murmur echo and rebound,
Transfiguring those abject common things
To heavenly Presences on rustling wings
Joined in a conclave of celestial sound.

Had we but ears made pure that we might hear,
Allah! beyond this flying dust of speech,
The authentic Voice that our vain words eclipse;
Ah! then, the Infinite low-murmuring near,
We might outsing our beggar-whine, and reach
A godlike utterance on human lips!

[144]

The Builder's Rest

For her alone, love's queen, this queenly tomb
He planned; and for himself in thought essayed
On Jamuna's thither margin to be laid
In a severer pomp of kingly gloom.
Ah! vainly men to fashion fate presume!
Steadfast through passing empires, here arrayed
In deathless beauty he himself had made,
Dust by her dust, he finds his perfect doom!

Open our eyes, and unto them display,
Allah! the hidden Taj that through our strife
Invisibly we build with passion's fire
And thought's high sculpturing. Grant us each
 day
Beautiful burial, sweet death in life,
And peace at last beside the heart's desire!

The Taj Mahal at Agra, North India, was built by the
Mohammedan Emperor, Shah Jahan, over the body of his
wife, Mumtaj Mahal. It was begun in 1630 and finished in
twenty years by twenty thousand workmen.

[145]

CLAY

To Commemorate a student sculptor's first model

His eyes with fresh creation shone.
Before him new-made beauty lay.
Deep wonder-eyed
In art's first smarting joy he cried:
"I did not think I could have done
So much with such rough clay!"

Master! when our crude lives have won
The stamp that doth Thy Hand display,
Perhaps thou too wilt cry,
Thou! even Thou, Artist of earth and sky:
"I did not think I could have done
So much with such rough clay!"

Brother! if clay unto your fingers' clay
Make answer swift and just
In this high heavenly way;
If "dust to dust"
In beauty wed
Be no poor phrase of parting o'er the dead,
But metaphor of God's own finger-thrust
Breaking our shapeless night to shapen day;
Yea, if our fashioning hands are born of Earth,
And she through them in art find second birth,
And through our flesh reach finer mould

[146]

In death's disintegrating cold;
Now may we shed our human arrogance,
We, lonely, self-outcast from sod and sky,
And, underneath the kindred glance
Of Earth's glad suffering eye,
Glimpse the majestic purposes of pain
Crumbling our mortal rust
In some immortal Artist's play;
And in a sunlit new-discovering rain
Of happy tears
Dance with the homeless tribes of driven dust,
And share the ecstasy of trampled clay!

Blesséd are they who thus can find
Kinship with clay and sun and wind!
They in the wounds of life's harsh feuds
Pour oil and balm of art's beatitudes!
Blesséd the opened ears
Wherein the music of orchestral spheres
Moves, as upon a stream a murmuring whirl!
Blesséd the seeing eye that in the splash
Of rain finds wealth in pearl on pearl!
And blesséd they who, for the clash
Of their close-grappling wills
Of flesh and mind and soul
Find weapons wholly meet
Where ocean doth her stormy legions roll,

[147]

Or where the steel-bright rivers flash
Out of the resonant scabbards of the hills!
Blesséd the wingéd feet
That move with Hermes-lightness on the rough
Ascending human way,
Comrades, not vassals, of the clay!
Thrice blesséd they,
Loving all things yet taking none to wife,
Who count abundant life
Good, yet not good enough
For those whose being has its root
Past sound and sight,
Nourished on starry fruit
Plucked from the laden branches of the night!

[148]

A NUPTIAL ODE

*For the marriage of wave and cloud, commonly
called a waterspout, in the Bay of Bengal, 1919*

We that in ships unto the sea go down,
Lord it in pride
Over the tied
Untravelled town.
Yet, for all upon our tongue,
Still have we left unsung
To the high utmost of its song-estate
Morn's blinding signal from an open gate,
And midnight's myriad-candled rites
Whereof we, acolytes
Into deep mystery initiate,
Chant not at all, or only in symbol chant.

Hush! even now,
Touched by vision's hierophant
On panting breast
And rapt interpretative brow,
We part the chamber-curtains of the west,
And in the trance of twilight see
The primal mystery.

Lo! vastly there
The fathering Cloud, eager from sleep,

[149]

Shakes out his knotty hair,
And towards the couchant mothering Deep
Puts forth an arm thrilling and tentative
With what may live
Of solace, agony and bliss
In his tremendous kiss.
And she,
Fruitful yet ever virgin Sea,
Moves towards the whirling, flameless fire
In his arm's irresistible desire;
Yet falls away
In swooned reluctance from his passion's sway,
Pulled with heaving breast and breath
Between the lure and horror of life and death.
For she who of her being gives
Life's plasmic substance unto all that lives,
Out of this hour's wild consanguinity
Of twin-born Cloud and Sea
Shapes elemental life to be;
And in dim ages past the figuring mind
She shall from earth's long barrows thief away
The silent generations of our clay
Hearsed by the body-snatching rain and wind;
Yea, for our dust—
Her own that she has given us in trust—
Shall be the ultimate urn
Whatever way our deathless pilgrim turn.

[150]

Oh! there—a sudden twilight star
Throws from afar
A barrier of silence to our chant,
And holds it hesitant
This side of the starry uttermost of song
That only to the spirit doth belong,
Nor rudely may be bent
Unto that dissonant accompaniment
That now affrights the ear:
No sweet celestial choiring angel-clear,
Nor the persuasive Orphic note
To man and beast and tree heart-intimate,
But elemental music, rude, remote,
Round which dread swooping issues wait;
The awful piping of a sea-hoofed Pan
Rutting through weedy glades
And monster-haunted shades
Native no more to soul-awakened man.

Ah! unto thee,
Most fiercely wooed, most marriageable Sea,
Who towards thy fiery moment now dost pant,
Goes not the last abandon of our chant;
For though stooped Science dredge thy dark
abyss,
And stalk the worm upon thy fretted brink
For our beginnings, lo! our spirit's reins

[151]

Know the sure inward pull
Of hands made steady and cool
From washings in a calmer wave than thine,
And a less heady drink.
Yea, though through all men's veins
Runs yet the fiery tincture of thy phlegm,
Haunting their dreamings like a poisonous wine
With Paphian ghosts that pluck their being's hem;
Not unto them or thee
Bend we the final knee,
Or yield the immortal spirit's anadem,
We the twice-born
Of thine old night and a still shrouded morn.

Yet must we dedicate
Unto the utmost measure of thy state
Full share of praiseful song
To thee, so vastly patient at the thong
Of thy great binder; thee who hast
Borne our amœbean protoplast.
On thy swiftly turning gyre
Thou hast upswung our slow compounded clay,
Nor whimpered underneath the dire
Aeonian labours of the shaping Soul
Through and beyond the fingers of thy spray
Towards, ah! what dim, what distant goal,
What moulded vessel with what godlike stamp?

[152]

Though our ascension's gradual ramp
Bear us beyond thy trouble, still to thee
Goeth the grateful heart
For thine ungrudging part
In those high pawns of heaven's wizardry—
Hands that thy rapture, soul-transmuted, stirs
To toil as heaven's artificers;
Feet that to spirit purposes have climbed;
Lips that celestially have rhymed.
For these to thee our thanking head is bent,
Even as player for fair instrument,
O primal Undine, void of soul
Till through thy hollow heart shall roll
A subtler urge
Than moves the slow prismatic surge
On golden, long, irradiant sands
In sleepy orient lands.

Yet wherefore even our song's most vain pretence
Of songful precedence,
When each responsive throat
But resonates unto one mystic note
As the dark Master, for his bliss, has willed?
Now let our chant be filled
With joy that each may echo unto each
A syllable of that majestic speech!
What if man's destiny it be to float

[153]

On yet unsprouted pinions of the soul
About life's hidden pole;
And thou bestride life's dim circumference
Till life and we and thou go hence
At a deep inward call;
Lo! at the utmost bacchanal
A festive cosmic lip
Shall happily take shape
From man's ripe-rounded grape,
And from thy pledging goblet sip,
Yea to the seas drink of the seas
Even to their lees!

Now is it meet that every head be bowed
While from yon palpitating cloud
Appalling urgency feels to and fro;
And unto it at last, at last, doth go,
Past all alarm,
In great surrender utterly,
Tremblingly white of arm,
The upstrained invitation of the Sea
Unto some fanged immeasurable bliss
Whose word of rapture is a mighty hiss,
As Wave and Cloud,
Vast coiled with vast, to reeling passion vowed,
In awful nuptials madly blent
Are clasped and spent!

[154]

A PLANETARY CONJUNCTION

Over the Pacific Ocean

Venus and Jupiter sat side by side
On a cloud-bank over the buried sun;
But in the silver mirror of the tide
Their sea-washed limbs were mingled into one.

And yet, if this was really so
I do not know;
For suddenly my eyes
(Duped by the protean wizardry
Of image-changing sea
And magic-making skies)
Saw instead a stem upshoot
From a deeply hidden root;
Shoot in silver up the sea
(Cooling the tropic ardour of the tide
Round Asia's dimly folded hem)
And find its consummation, godly proud,
On a soft couch of cloud,
Where, loverly,
Two silver flowers upon a single stem
On a cloud-bank above the furrowed tide,
Venus and Jupiter bloomed side by side.

But whether this was so,
Or whether this

[155]

Was but the frail caught shadow of the bliss
That moves and gleams
When the Mage-Master's fingers throw
The vast reticulation of His dreams
Across these windows of our outer night
To lure us to the veritable Light,
I cannot tell. But this I know,
That godlike ones have bathed Their shining limbs
In the thick turgid sea
Of our mortality,
Not only in divine theophany,
But verily Themselves, yea verily!
For in the hour when the brain's fen-fire dims,
And the blood's flickering whims
Make of themselves a white
And steady light,
Then have They crossed my sight,
Even as seer and prophet saith.
That this is so,
My lifted hand here witnesseth.
Yea, well I know
The feel of Them about me in the day.
Their footfall friendly makes the loneliest way.
Deep in the sevenfold furnace of despair
Another Form is there;
And in the mystic cavern of the night,
Behind the doors of sound and sight,

My spirit joins Their high austere delight,
And knows that our pale wavering planets are
Conjunct with an unwavering Star.

But not alone Their shining limbs they lave
In our thick turgid wave:
Oh! I have tasted sap in our harsh stem
That would push us up to Them,
Even to Their native heavenly place,
Had we but grace
To set our pulses to the rhythmic thrill
Of that importunate Will,
And climb into great silence silverly
Out of the muddy rootings of our deep
Where blindly ravening monsters creep,
Up to the mirroring surface of the sea.
Oh! we might unto heavenly stature spring,
Yea, loverly,
As Jupiter and Venus, side by side
High-symbolling across the tide,
Godlike with godlike hold great whispering
On Love's rare-footed dizzy crest,
And, heart with deep heart satisfied,
Fulfil the Spirit's ancient quest,
Immortal bridegroom with immortal bride.

THE VOLCANO ASAMAYAMA IN JAPAN

I

Asamayama lifts a quivering lip
And breathes his heart's wild hell in heaven's face.
Old angers round his mouth have left their trace.
Chained passion shakes him like a labouring ship.
Bald as a monk, he cracks his lightning's whip,
And scars his flesh, that falls from humble grace,
Vexed that his unrepentant pride's red mace
Calls ash and cinders only to his scrip.

Aye, and not he alone, if truth were told,
Not he alone, but each aspiring heart,
And lips with song unsung made sharply sweet,
Yea all whom wizard Life gives lead for gold,
Wince at as low an end to hope's high start—
Cinders and ash under oblivious feet.

II

“Hast Thou no throb responsive to our trust,
Eternal Power who crushest us to wine
For Thy delight, yet dost to us assign
Out of life's baking but a blackened crust?
No, no! Despite our tale of moth and rust,
Still have we hope that we shall yet divine
Thy purpose ours, and see Thine emblem shine
On our scarred banners—even in the dust:”

I said. And there a wayside Buddha stood
Graven in cinder! Ruin and peace were wed
With such most godlike impress that I cried:
“All that life could not when the spirit would
Shall yet prevail!” Asamayama said:
“Lo! in its ash my flame is justified!”

MILLWHEELS

A miller stood beside his mill
Under a larch-clad, pine-topped hill,
And heard, or fancied he could hear,
From his two millwheels, rumbling near,
Words with their creaky gurgling blent
That sounded like an argument.

One wheel, upon whose sparkling head
Power from above was richly shed,
Moved with a patronising bow,
And scattered largesse from his brow,
And offered to the thirsty lands
The gift of water from his hands.
One gathered from his look and tone
He deemed those riches were his own.

The other wheel, about his feet
Found life resistless, cold and fleet;
A stream that bore him from the ground
And whirled him in a fruitless round.
No drop for self his toil could save
Between the cradle and the grave;
And always, in his ceaseless grind,
He turned a threat in his dark mind.

Then, as they argued swift and pat
That this is this and that is that,
And bandied all the foolish lies

[160]

That men and millwheels hold as wise,
The listening miller set his head
Sideways, and subtly smiled, and said:
“My friends, high up the larch-clad hill
From one deep spring your life doth spill;
And miles beyond my farthest crop
One sea your brawling speech will stop.
Yea, boast you high or mourn you low,
One Power is in your seaward flow;
And while you scatter praise and blame,
You do My grinding just the same!”

And then the millwheels seemed to cease;
And on the world there fell great peace,
As if a back had dropped a load;
And I went thinking down the road
Under the larch-clad, pine-topped hill
Where stood the Miller by His mill
Smiling with eyes of jewelled flame.

I quite forgot to ask His Name!

Kutsukake, Japan.

[161]

LOVE IN EXILE

I

Love was our feast, our worship, our desire
And its fulfilment. Love blew out the light
At day's dear end. Love watched the entwined night,
And to sweet music plucked each new day's wire.
Then, because men of love in season tire,
Said Love: "These twain love on in time's despite;
So, lest their love too soon reach heavenly height
And share our throne, let severance damp their fire."

O jealous Love; my heart, grafted on hers,
And hers on mine, have fruit past passion's flower:
Each sundered part rounds to a wedded whole;
Each whole unto sublimer union stirs;
Nor thou, O Love! nor life nor death hast power
To break the immortal bonds of soul and soul!

II

Those happy islands make me sick at heart
Because towards each brave heavenward-lifted face
Its lover Sea hurries in wide-armed race
To take and give in love's dear mutual art.
But my once wave-kissed world is fallen apart,
Fallen sheer apart. All ocean, flat of face,
I am, or all dead earth, dead for love's grace
To fructify what now is arid smart.

Cry out, O heart! cry till the silence rings;
Cry as dry river-beds cry out for rain!
Cry as the Deep before the first of things,
Till Love's great angel spread his brooding wings,
And Love's fair earth and heaven are built again,
Sea-kissed, and watered by life-giving springs!

III

Now must I feed on faith, but very thin
 The feast is. I am troubled by their cries,
 These clamouring sceptics, arms, and ears, and eyes.
 One asks: "Where is the touch that we should win?"
 Another, "When does whispering-time begin?"
 And one, "When comes that look so brave and wise?"
 And from blank present each the past denies,
 Says: "Being not, she never can have been!"

O far, far love! I have no argument
 To stay their unbelief—save you alone.
 And, lacking that, I turn from them apart,
 And, by the saving power that Love has lent,
 Upon my mind, eyes, ears and arms have grown
 To see, hear, hold you to my dreaming heart!

[164]

IV

Thought! I would have you take exceeding care
 That when in the dark you find my dear love's bed,
 You make no flutter of wings about her head,
 Nor with your foot make creak her dream's high
 stair.

Rather, I'd have you in the silent air
 Be an untroubling perfume vaguely spread,
 That so her sleep be happily bestead.
 This do, O thought! and we rich gain shall share.

But when the wind of dawn through fern and tree
 Wakens the birds to their accustomed psalms,
 And her to exile from remembered bliss;
 Ah thought! be then no thought, but instantly
 Be very I, soul, body; be these palms
 Cool on her forehead, this good morning kiss!

Japan, 1919-1920.

[165]

LOVE AND SPRING

What is this perfume soothing the harsh air,
This living glow
Stirring the pallid snow
That shuffles like a serpent to its lair?
No cherries bloom yet for a woman's hair;
Yet on love's business to and fro
The sparrows come and go,
And chirp derision while dull poets sing:
"Love comes with spring."

What do they know of love who only know
Love's phantom in their passion's twisted glass?
Love that with spring doth come, with spring
 may go;
But love, true love, with seasons cannot pass.
Love is no wheel-slave to a tyrant's whims;
Flies not the revelation of the light;
Nor one unconsecrated throb doth feel
When in the lanterned tavern of the night
The cup of life o'er-brims.
Nay, Love itself doth turn the cosmic wheel.
It is God's hand, and spring His changing glove.
So chirp the sparrows to and fro:
"Love comes with spring,
You sing!

[166]

Ah no, no no!
Love comes not with the spring
Or any passing thing.
Spring comes with love!"

Tokyo, March 1920.

[167]

IN TIME OF RAIN

I wondered why the rain
Fell in such haste,
And why the river raced
With such melodious pain
Down to the fan-spread plain,
Out to the vast Pacific main;
Till at a pine-log bridge,
Where fly and midge
Circled in dervish dance,
I caught her conquering glance,
The pink and slender Meadowsweet
That, on light elfin feet,
Stretched from her grass-green bank,
And, in a boldly bashful maiden prank,
Where the chaste River, knightly dressed
In steely glitter, coldly past her pressed,
His bright young cheek mischievously caressed
With passionate pink finger-tip
Through which did slip
Such bliss that from it there was no dissembling:
He trembled—and she trembled at his trembling.

Alack!

There was no turning back;
For, fast behind,
Instant-made suitors crowded, blind

[168]

To all desire save one:
To reach the sea-set ladder of the sun,
And climb the walls of cloud, and spring
With eager wing
On to the hunched volcano's back,
And seek again the zigzag track
Down to the pine-log bridge
Where dances fly and midge,
And touch again the elfin feet
Of the pink passionate Meadowsweet,
And feel again with happy sigh
That wonderful caressing finger-tip
Through which, from Beauty's soul, doth slip
Such bliss that (I confess it without shame)
Were I that River, I
Would do the same.

Yes,

Here I will confess
That this my song doth press
On pilgrimage as fleet
To end as sweet.
For I as perfect bliss
Have known as this;
Not for a moment, nay, but in a pool
Of green, ecstatic quiet, spirit-cool,
Known love's long rule
Unto the rapturous full;

[169]

Till came a sudden spate
Out of dim hills of fate,
And swept me forth, singing in exquisite pain,
Down to the separating plain,
Out to the lonely main.
Oh! I have swarmed up ladders of high prayer
Into faith's upper air;
And I have yearned me cloudlike towards a land
Stained by no faithless hand;
And I do think
That on the cloistered brink
Of love's ecstatic pool,
Heart-ardent, spirit-cool,
The noble sister of the Meadowsweet,
Gold-hearted Marguerite,
Feels the premonitory shake
Of winds that soon will break
In language rumourous of coming rain
That seeks its home again.

Oiwake, Nagano, Japan.

[170]

LOVE'S RETURN

One throbbing cloud o'er ocean glows
Towards one that broods on land.
From each to each the lightning throws
An eager fire-veined hand.

O heart! whose prophet-vision plumbs
Bliss deep ev'n unto pain,
We know from what high rapture comes
This wild relief of rain—

Then peace. Beloved! glad rivers haste
Towards their great love, the sea;
But, after dance and shouting, taste
Fulfilment silently.

So, when our yearning reaches goal,
Forgive my lips their wrong
If in the clasp of soul and soul
Dies out the need for song!

East China Sea, April 1920.

[171]

THE TWO CROSSES

*To celebrate the occasion of a
Christian prelate's not refusing
the croix de guerre*

"Take up thy cross," Christ said,
And follow me."
But He has long been dead,
And, wiser, we,
For that peace-giving Rood
He meekly bore,
Take, as the prize of blood,
The Cross of War.

Shame was His meed for blows
In Peter's day;
But Peter's servant knows
Another way.
Not now war's blade he sheathes,
As said the Lord,
But with his blessing wreathes
The murdering sword;
Yea, for the humbled head
And thorn-pierced brain,
Proudly doth wear instead
The sign of Cain.

[172]

PROCESSIONAL ODE

*for the placing of the mask of Francis Thompson in
the home of Yoné Noguchi the poet, in Japan, 1920*

Behold his face! "This? No! his living face,
Sworn to allegiance with the dust,
Made pact with Death,
And signed away his lyrical breath
For some dark boon beyond our moth and rust.
Clay unto clay,
Too soon he went the dreaded human way.
Those eyes grew dim
That shone with the flying glory of seraphim
On heavenly embassy. That aeolian frame,
Made vocal by every wind of song, became
A thing of horror to shrink from, to hustle away
Clay under clay.
From the mouth of the worm,
From the worm's inappeasable mouth,
No art of man had power to hold him fast
When dry-lipped Death, in his bacchic fever-storm,
With our singer's life had quenched his drouth,
And his emptied vessel upon the ground had cast,
Smearing mortality's ultimate disgrace
On his cold, blind, songless face!"

O ye of little faith!
How could he suffer silence and eclipse

[173]

Who took from off the Muses' lips
No reedy echo of a blasted wraith,
But song's immortal secret. Starry-willed,
He from the blare and clash of life distilled
Celestial music, throwing back to heaven
Heaven's voice with Earth's own sister-music filled,
Stretching the rapture of his hymn
From snowflake unto seraphim.
Lo! past the "Lampads seven"
He has winged his flight
In music, incense and light,
Carrying rumour to the flaming Throne
Of Man Promethean grown,
Who on the hearth of earth blows up a fire,
Stolen from clay, transmuted from desire,
Which yet shall burn with fragrance of our sod
Within the House of God!
He has ascended to his natal place
Who for a season to the earth was lent,
And unto us has sent
This comforter.—Behold his face!
Life's figurehead backed by invisible sails
Filled with adventuring gales
On seas beyond our cramped horizon's ring;
An open book
For unborn legions dimly gathering,
Where they who wisely look

[174]

May read, in script no passing years can dim,
The very meaning of him!

O ye who, in the presence of the pall,
Chant gloomy psalms of life's distress,
Wailing that nearer fruit is nearer fall,
How close is ripe to rottenness,
Counting your house no more than wood and stone
Your selves none other than your flesh and bone!
Raise now instead a welcoming strain,
For, lo! the face you lost is here again,
Purged of corruption's stain.
Well have your heart-strings and his orphaned song
Cried out against the silence of the grave
And slow time's lapsing wave.
Before the long
Deep genuflection of his vested word
Death dare not pass unheard
Love's cry for sight.—Behold! behold his face,
Reborn of earth and art's transfiguring flame,
The same yet not the same,
Fixed in the flux of time whose hand can trace
No slow decay on this our memory's norm;
For ere relentless Death had driven his plough
O'er cheek and brow,
Song's wordless clay-born sister-craft
Full in the face of old Oblivion laughed,

[175]

And snatched this fadeless relic of his form
From the mouth of the worm!

Now let hot grief take faith's cool healing kiss;
Love's whisper tell
How the dim Gardener crushed his leaf to smell
His own involv'd sweetness. Count not this
But a cicatrix on the wound of life,
O ye bereaved! Lift up your eyes and see
No puny changeling for the unchilded wife,
But, more than perishing flesh, the visible he,
The hieroglyph of the soul's mystery.
Here, of his many faces this doth last,
The sum, the summit; life's whole meaning cast
Into one look all looks had flickered toward;
One coin compounded of his squandered hoard;
One silence built on song's high equipoise!

Now we, to sound of the heart's drum and fife,
Though secretly our eyes be sweetly wet,
Here in the front of his closed house of life
His hatchment proudly set;
Proudly, yet not in vainly swelling pride,
But with deep humbleness, as his, clear-eyed,
That held his music but an answering strain
When the Celestial Fiddler drew His bow
In earshot of the soul's taut tympanum,

[176]

And sands of speech, dead scattered else and dumb,
Sprang to the pattern-dance of hidden strings
With stars and leaves and waves and wings.

Come now within the presence, feet unshod,
Where art and song, child laughter, friendship free,
Make for our treasure fit reliquary.
Wave each your burning incense-rod
Till it smoke forth, snaky as maenad's hair
Curled like a wind that blows its old despair
To some strange solace touched with heavenly thrill.
Draw near and look your fill.
Look where, no more of casual ardours born,
Freed from life's fear-haunted morn,
And age's undesirous hands and feet,
Out of the nuptials of cool clay and clay,
Song's Minerva springs complete,
Born the Jupiterian way.

Last, ere with forehead thrice upon the ground
We take our leave with reverence profound,
Mark you that mouth's curved sweet-lipped line,
Shut as if tasting the new-trodden wine
Of choicest vintages of speech
From high-trailed branches past our longest reach,
Ungathered save by those whose feet have made
The spirit's escalade.

[177]

Beneath that brow behold those fallen lids
Cured of our darkness by what magic touch?
Oh! we do wonder much
What stellar maze their franchised vision thrids;
How takes each star
The "abashless inquisition" of those eyes
That even in life's winkered glance
Caught the cosmic ordonnance,
And now doth find
High confirmation and the amplitude
Of the trajectory of his arrowy mind.
Yea, for his faith's reward,
Stands he as Moses stood,
Ablink at the stripped splendour of the Lord;
But with more subtle sight
Nearer the flame doth draw,
And on a holier Sinai's loftier height
Receives the Tables of a deeper law!

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SURYA-GITA

(*Sun-Songs*)

Sunset

Darkness, a giant vast of mouth,
For the slaking of his drouth
Drags from the cloud-branch overhead
Day's one fruit, the rounded, red
Pomegranate people call the sun.
Through his hands red juices run
As he breaks it on the far
Sharp horizon's scimitar.
Then, his cheeks and mouth and beard
With the ruddy liquor smeared,
Loudly laughing at his joke
That has robbed the human folk
Of the fruit that fills their needs,
Flings he the pomegranate seeds
Far across the fields of night.

Lo! a myriad buds of light
Break in silver shoots of hope
That along the morning slope
Scarlet-skirted blooms will run
Leading the pomegranate sun.

Night

"Alms for the poor," Night thinly whined,
And held to Day his begging-bowl.

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His dark rags trembled in the wind.
Day felt soft pity in his soul;
And in his bag, of cloud-thread spun,
Searched with compassionate hands of
 light,
And dropped his golden coin—the sun—
Into the begging-bowl of Night.
Night laughed, and wagged his miser
 head;
And on the floor of darkness poured
His day-hid wealth of stars, and said:
“Now comes to grace my silver hoard
That foolish pilgrim’s golden gift.”
He turned—and lo! the coin was gone,
And through a far-off cloudy rift
Came the slow subtle smile of Dawn.

Sunrise

Father! from distant lands of night
I come, Thy wandering child.
With Thee, at Thy first kiss of light,
My heart is reconciled;
And, for my bankrupt spirit’s need,
Thy love’s warm fingers run,
Spreading the sky’s rich title-deed
Sealed with Thy seal—the sun.

Santiniketan, Bengal.

[180]

GORGEOUS LIES

*Nought that enters the eye
Is itself in simple sooth.
Only the poet’s painted lie
Limneth the face of truth!*

A frog jumps after a fly—
And the steel-hard face of the lake
Wrinkles to smiling mouths of sky.

The swimming water-snake,
Darting death with its fang,
Wriggles to rhythm of light.

Reversed, the mountains hang,
As boughs of blossoming night
Wherethrough, day’s season done,
From the gathered fruit of day
The expressed juices run,
Rich red through silver and grey;
Wine of God’s gladness given
To earth as the pledgings pass
From the tankard of heav’n to the
 Heav’n
In the lake’s over-brimming glass.

Wagtails flirting fly
With a flash at each splashing tip.

[181]

A swirl of vapour on high
Is a golden sailing-ship
Carrying merchandise
Of myth and marvel and dream
To the harbours of the wise.

Ah! what compassionate gleam
In the eye of evening wakes,
Whose brooding ecstasy
To deep commingling shakes
The heart of the world and me?

Mystery thrilling to tears
Through the twilit sedges sings.
The glory of God appears
Through trivial inglorious things!

*Nought to the seeing eye
May be sung for itself in sooth.
Only the poet's gorgeous lie
Telleth the simple truth!*

Madanapalle, South India.

[182]

A DEAD SCARAB

Never rose in Grecian air,
To a life gone elsewhere,
Half so fair a cenotaph
As this beetle's body; chaff
From death's threshing; skyey wrack
Flung upon a jungle track;
Turquoise and opal thrown away
In the pleasure of a day!

What of mighty bulk and plan!
Here, beyond the skill of man,
God had polished with His sleeve,
Tints of iridescent eve
To a subtle wavering sheen;
Blue that melted into green;
And a tint that hardly knew
Whether it was green or blue,
Or a magic tincture cast
When some seraph's pinion passed
Scattering splendours not its own
From the rainbow round the Throne.

Then, as towards the ground I bent
Rapt in silent wonderment,
Half a hundred beetles flew
Past with such loud joy, I knew

[183]

If my blood would stand but still,
I might see God on the hill
Furbishing with all His might
Creatures for an hour's delight;
Breathing on them with His breath
Glory blent of life and death;
Loosing on the scented breeze
Exquisite futilities!

Ah! what glints of laughter lurk
At such heavenly handiwork
Round His mouth and in His eyes
I but mistily surmise;
Or the buzz about His head
As the souls of beetles dead,
Flying back into His hand,
Chant: "Oh! to that glimmering land
We would fain go forth anew,
Kindred of the transient dew;
For immortal Beauty's sake
Mortal habitation make;
And for wages sip again
Honey from the lip of pain!"

Therefore God the Artist laughed
As He plied His handicraft;
Toiled all night to speed by day
Travellers on the Pilgrims' Way.

[184]

Such His labour's urgent zest
Not an hour had he for rest.
"So," I said, "it is not fair
To disturb Him with my prayer;
And tonight I go to bed,
Sins unpardoned, prayers unsaid,
Wondering, till my light is spent,
What old Egypt's scarab meant!"

[185]

A SONG OF STILLNESS

Stand still, my soul! and see
Salvation from the Lord.
Chariots and men let be!
Oblivion's wave be poured
On all pursuing thee,
That up from Egypt roared
Deafness on what may be
Only in stillness heard!

Ocean and earth yield up
To men who grasp and hoard!
Pharaoh his fate let fill!
Ours, soul! the standing still
At the revealing word.
For us enough a cup
Empty for what is poured
From fruit of one tall tree
With food and water stored.
This, and a space of time
Sweet with the grace of rhyme.

Still! still! my soul! Oh see
About our quiet feet
The squirrel strangely stirred
To mute companionship,

[186]

And overhead the fleet
Arcana of the bird
Passing from lip to lip
Divine discovery.
And, soul! behold at dark,
When frogs rain-drunken croak,
The fireflies' throbbing spark;
Heart of the yearning night
Breaking in beats of light;
Flashes of fairy fire
A thousand hammers smite
Shaping one will entire
With simultaneous stroke.

Still, soul! Oh very still,
Lest we escape the thrill
Of utmost mystery
That opened eyes may greet,—
Celestial splendours curled
In this most poignant-sweet
God-blossom of a world,
That wake, with ancient smart,
Nostalgia of the heart,
Home-hunger of the will.

Oh! that disclosure come
To stilled and crystal sight,
Let all our mouths be dumb;

[187]

Earthward our eyes be bent
In holy sacrament,
Finding in dew-damp sod
Body and blood of God.

Lo! signal to the wise,
Now from our earth arise,
Moulded of sky and clay,
The pillared fire by night,
The pillar of cloud by day,
That cry: "No promised land
Lies far, but here at hand;
Here, where ye dreaming drew
To break your day's duress;
And all the ways hereto
Are ways of quietness!"

BENEFICENT BEAUTY

That thing which I have left undone,
Or, done, has failed what thou hast willed,
Forgive, O Beauty! as the sun
Forgives the flower that he has killed!
And, more, forgive my sceptic laugh
That I should bow in songless shame
To you, since you must shoulder half
The blame, if there is aught to blame!
For, here, within your pulse's reach,
Where Venus apes your hidden eye,
Great silence is the seemliest speech!
We shall have singing by and by.

I know that on a hidden vine
Hangs, for the gathering, song's full fruit.
But lips aglow with present wine
Have little breath to fill a flute!
Perhaps a day will come when I,
While thundering echoes round me roll,
Shall raise your ringing glories high,
And clash them from the towering soul.

Meanwhile, to hear your whisper float
When dayspring shakes the sleeping trees;
At noon to watch your gilded boat
Flash through the spume of sunny seas,

Sweet is; and sweet, with shadows blent,
To taste your deep and silent bliss,
Your thrill from far aloofness sent
Along the moonbeam's holy kiss,
When you at sleep-time on my head
Empty the jasmine's perfume jars,
And draw around my dreaming head
The sequin-coverlet of stars.

So fastened are my foolish eyes,
O Beauty! on your glamorous ways,
I have not leisure to grow wise
And old enough to sing your praise!

DESTRUCTIVE BEAUTY

Deirdre and Helen—names
They gave you passing by:
Emain and Troy in flames—
Your answer to their sigh.
O hand to which ours have flown,
Beggars for rest and meat!
You sow, where we have sown,
Fierce poppies through our wheat;
Flinging on dull content
Destructive Beauty's shine;
Torch-trailing foxes sent
Through the fields of the philistine!

Deirdre and Helen! we
Who loved you long ago,
Still as felicity
Count your most shattering blow;
Knowing that, till the bread
Be broke, the wine be spilled,
Love's feast cannot be spread,
Love's utmost be fulfilled.
Else were our dreaming vain,
Robbed of the end whereto
Wrestles the heart and brain—
Lost, to be lost in you!

Deirdre and Helen! take
What name, what shape you please;
But for your lovers' sake
Grant us no deadening ease
With some poor perfect gift
Staling and swiftly spent;
Rather, our vision lift
Through high bewilderment
Unto a purer pride,
Whether our singing give
Sorrow because you died,
Laughter that still you live!

Deirdre is the Irish Helen, Emain the Irish Troy.

[192]

PROEM

To "*Forest Meditation*"

I sing of waters, winds and trees.—
But no! I do not sing of these.
One theme alone my Daemon sings:
The Spirit mixed in mortal things.
She sings no passing wind or tree:
She sings their haunting mystery.

She sings a fruiting branch that swings
To rhythmic wafts of soundless wings;
A fadeless tree, an edgeless wind,
In the deep forest of the mind,
Through which perpetual sunrise flings
A glory over common things.

Yet deeper, farther comes the bruit
Of joy from life's ancestral root,
From which a gust of music brings
Hints of celestial happenings.
Oh! hangs all this from boughs that rise
On the dim peaks of Paradise.

Let pass the loud branch-bearing throng
That lifts a boastful wind of song
Praising man's proud adventurings!
A Spirit-song my Daemon sings:
For humblest things of Heavenly birth
Are better than the best of Earth.

[193]

FOREST MEDITATION

Through a fragrant forest nook
Garrulously goes a brook
Bright through boulders, on and on,
Even as Alfred Tennyson
Sang of Philip's brook that ran
Through the brain and heart of man
In the age Victorian.
Aye, so well his song sang he,
Little song he left for me.
Yet, while he his music spent
Where the brooklet babbling went,
My kingfisher-fancy wings
Back to shadow-haunted springs,
Questing for the mystery
Voluble in brook and tree,
Mixed through bird and beast and me.
For I feel one Breath profound
Wakes these trumpet-boughs to sound;
And a shadowy Runner goes
Wheresoe'er the brooklet flows;
And these breaking bubbles shine
On invisible sweet wine
That a phantom beaker dips
While upstraining phantom lips
Taste intoxication rife

[194]

In the heady draught of Life,
As the minstrel brooklet sings
Snatches from the theme of things.

THE BROOK SINGS

"Ah! those singing moods that flit,
Finite through the infinite,
Not alone fulfilment find
In response of kind to kind;
In love's call from nested wing
And the instant answering,
Or the mingling human look
Striking through my shaded nook
Sudden sunshine of the soul:—
Lo! that lichen-ermined bole
Lifts its air of kingly birth
Out of humbleness of earth,
Rising proudly to the proud
Pageantry of regal cloud
That shall break to feed poor folk
And the oxen in the yoke.

"Hark! shrewd Nature's paradox
In a windy whimsy rocks
All my forest choristers
In a rhythmic joy that blurs
Wayward will and selfward choice
To a single sylvan voice,

[195]

One though multitudinous,
Crying: 'Come! O come to us,
Ye who yearn for quiet bliss!
In our tree-metropolis,
Wrapped in sleepy shadow, find,
For the crowded heart and mind,
And for baffled will and mood,
Sanctifying solitude!'

"Yea, the phantom Harper flings
Joy from catastrophic strings;
Turns to songful interlude
Earth's and man's vicissitude;
And melodious minstrelsy
Draweth from the dumb, as I
From old Earth's disastrous dip
Borrow my musicianship,
Ringing out my golden tone
On the stillness of the stone.

"Lo! my radiant moments glow
Only in my seaward flow
To the sagest of my strains:
'Substance goes, but song remains.'
Weighted not by staff and purse,
Past accumulation's curse,
All our vagrant singing throng
On our passing build our song;

[196]

And our tuneful fancies fly
Winged with cosmic sympathy;
Claiming kindred with the brief
Glory of the falling leaf;
Aching with the sod that aches
As the green-lance lily breaks
Earth to moon-white wondering
At the summons of the spring
In drum-beat and bugle-strain
As the charging wind and rain
Spend themselves in wild pursuit
Of the Secret's flying foot."

Thus the brook: and as it sings
Snatches from the theme of things,
Meaning mounts from hidden springs,
Bearing towards a hidden sea
Fragments of the mystery
Mixed in man and brook and tree.
Aye, and deeper far than these
Chanting waters, listening trees,
Goeth vision's tempered glance
To the roots of circumstance,
Laying primal meanings bare
To the wash of sun and air,
Till, in Nature's cleansing gaze,
Our high consequential days

[197]

Lay their trumps and plumage down,
Vassals to a star-set crown
On a Brow whose purpose glows
Sisterly in clay and rose.
Lo! our solid splendours seem
Shreds of archetypal dream;
And our hued and vibrant art
Pulsings of a heavenly Heart
In whose depths the meanings lurk
Of our earthly handiwork.
Yea, beyond the will that stirs
Hands of earth's artificers
Burns the infinite Desire,
Of our flame the parent Fire,
Edging with a shining hem
All the labouring joy of them
Who through fragile veilings see
Sanctions of Eternity,
And whose lightest fancies dance
To divine significance.

Ah! but what at last avail
Searchings deeper than the tale,
Since our utmost questings come
Where the Wheel at midst is dumb,
And the shadowy Lips proclaim
Whence and whither are the same,

[198]

Silent Source and silent Fall?
Ours the articulate interval
Here between the First and Last,
Where our singing-time is cast
With Creation's interplay
In the dance of Night and Day;
Where at noon the insect-swarm
Passes in a music-storm;
Where the joy-drunk sun-shower weaves
Moonstone garlands in the leaves;
And the moon in rhythmic lines
Green through leafy greenness shines,
As the peasant, out of sight,
Sings him homeward ere the night,
Heart and brain at happy ease
From the ancient mysteries
Chanted sagely by a brook
In a fragrant forest nook.

The Nilgiris, South India.

[199]

THE FIRST WIND

There was vast quiet at the first of things.
Not yet had come the ministry of wings
Seed-spreading, pollen-bearing to and fro.
No voiceless tree did her dumb brother know;
For not as yet was born that Power whose spell
Could bridge the sundering vastness of an ell,
And give the touch to mingle each with each,
And wake the mystery of mutual speech.
In that first motionless and lonely calm
Tree-talk was emptied in a vague "I am,"
That, and no more, as joylessly they stood,
A silent, unacquainted multitude,
Separate, unfulfilled. . . . Ah! who could say,
Before was born the linking finger-play,
What were the music of the straight-strung harp?
Stretch to the skies your aspiration's warp,
It shall avail you nothing for a mesh
To snare the beautiful in soul or flesh,
Or dress your starkness, till to right and left
Goes the warm thread of love's close-linking weft
Bringing to light the hidden fair design,
Divinely human, humanly divine.

So stood the trees in that primeval trance.
No zephyr gave the lilt for leafy dance,
Or set the tune to shake the moony night

[200]

To glittering ecstasies of leaf and light.
Only great solitude was round their feet.
Yet through their veins crept up a quiet heat
Slowly from Life's insatiable fire,
And woke them to a wondering desire
That grew to thirsting lips and groping hands
For something more than any understands,
Some dim vast fellowship whose touch could stanch
The hunger aching forth from bole and branch.

At last that urgent agony of need
In buried rootlet and frustrated seed
Moved from aeonian sleep the Powers of air.
At their first breath each leaf grew whisperer;
And through the trees deep agitations went
As from His hand the unseen Weaver sent
The first full shuttle of the level wind.
Then came great stirring. Head by head inclined
So low that each a neighbourly shoulder felt,
And thrilled to what that revelation spelt
Of beauty breaking in a wild surmise
To mingling courtesies of hands and eyes,
And life let loose to spend for its increase,
And the rich ultimate and brimful peace.
Unto a revelling song the forest swayed,
And fingering leaves with leafy fingers played,
Smarting with joy that thrilled them overmuch

[201]

In that first quivering ecstasy of touch;
Joy that sighed down until the blissful trees
Purred to the silken handstroke of the breeze,
And sheltering creatures waxed exceeding kind
Moved by the magic of love's gentle wind.

[202]

THE SECRET

A hundred twilights they had flown
From fields unknown,
Grey birds whose resting grey grows virgin white
In ecstasy of flight.
A hundred twilights they had stayed their prows
On wavy boughs
Of greenly breaking casuarina seas.
Oh! in what mysteries
Of scented colour on the deep of air
A hundred twilights they had set them fair,
After a folded moment's rhythmic space,
For some close-nested place,
Some silent, far apart,
Hushed harbour of the heart!
Strange was it that my heart had never cast
At the grey birds that came, and paused, and passed,
An arrowy question; never, till the stress,
This twilight hour, of spirit loneliness
Drew from me *Whence?* and *Whither?* the ancient cry
Of all things born to die,
All valley things unwinged to overleap
The encircling hills of birth and death and sleep.
Yet with the question came the answering word;
For in my being's branches stirred
My spirit's nested bird,

[203]

And bore me up in sisterly delight
With all things dowered with flight,
Who scan the secret of the skies,
And read earth's face with clear interpretative eyes.
Nay! ask me not to tell
That twilight vision. Ask not me who fell
From that all-comprehending altitude
Through shape on shape more dark and rude,
Till once again
I wallowed in the pen
Of days and deeds, of merchandise and men.
Light unto light alone may answer make.
The hand may take
Only the measure of its emptiness.
Wherefore within the stress
Of life's most dear, most dark futilities,
I have no ease,
Being burdened with the answer to the cry,
The riddling, bitter *Whither? Whence? and Why?*
Of all things born to die.
Yet what in vision saw I starry clear
I cannot speak, they cannot hear;
For what upon the wing befell
Winged unto wingless may not tell;
And secrets high and wise and old
Only with equals may be told.

OFFERTORY

Very straight, but very thin,
Bare of foot and dark of skin,
On her head a cloth-wrapped load,
Down the dusty Adyar road
Statelily a coolie woman
Briskly stepped—to any true man
Making challenge like a sabre
For her labour
Borne so queenly up,
Though for her life's cup
Held, one saw, few drops of leisure,
And her household measure
Brimmed, as one could see,
Most with poverty.
Yet, though tight her mouth was drawn,
Something shone
In her eyes,
Distant, wing-borne seraph-wise,
Holding mine.

To a little wayside shrine,
Where a flame in darkness burned,
The woman turned;
Laid her load
On the dusty Adyar road;

From her thin and old
Russet sari's fold
Gathered in a trice
Jasmine flowers and rice;
Just a handful—just
That—and heavenly trust
Lifting these, thought I,
More than millions high.

To the shrine the woman bowed,
Deeply, strangely proud,
Not as one who cowers;
Spread her rice and jasmine flowers
On the threshold of the shrine
Where the symbolled Power divine,
Less beheld than felt,
Dimly dwelt.
Then, with close-shut eyes,
Rigid, straight, palmyra-wise,
Stood she, very calm,
Empty-handed, palm to palm
At her naked breast
Closely pressed;
Gave her head a forward tilt;
From it spilt

[206]

Over its devoted brim
Every thought but thought of Him;
Silent stood, alive, yet dead.

And God said:
"I accept your offering,
Sister! not the offered thing;
Not the rice and jasmine flowers.
These my image-making Powers
Shaped and coloured from my stuff
Mild or tough
As my thought desired;
Beat and fired
In the furnace of my heart.
These are part
Of myself.
Who can gather pelf
Out of offers
Filched from his own coffers?
Yet, beyond the offered thing,
I accept your offering;
Not—for bliss your proffered price—
Jasmine flowers and rice,
Though, for life's fair nourishment
And for beauty sweetly spent,
These be good.
I accept your attitude.

[207]

I, who only live
While I give,
See in it a sign
Mirroring mine;
Warranty of sure persistence
Of existence
Set on law,
Simple, without flaw:
'That which only takes,
Swells and breaks.
Only that which gives,
Truly lives.' ”

The woman wakened from her trance;
Gave a glance
Up and down the Adyar road;
Lifted to her head her load;
Fresh as dew-washed day
Went her way,
Bearing in her heart a bliss
Drawn from deeper life than this.

Madras.

[208]

METAMORPHOSES

I

If those shape-changings yet may be
That Ovid and his kindred sing,
Make me a broad bird-haunted tree,
Earth-rooted, yet with heart to spring
So heavenly high that, when the glades
Hold it as truth that all is night,
I may assert above their shades
The flouted legend of the light.

And when the dark is dark indeed,
And jungle voices round me jar,
I with such scrutiny would read
The promise of a single star
That instantly my nested tongues
Should scatter news of darkness gone,
When slowly down my thrilling rungs
Should step the golden feet of dawn.

II

If those shape-changings may be still
That Ovid and his kindred sang,
Make me a calm, exalted hill
Where secret-symbolled curtains hang
So thick that mortals travel-proud
In vain my sky-tranced summit seek,

[209]

But judge by its enfolding cloud
The hidden stature of the peak.

And when my call through heaven moves
The laden horses of the rains,
And down my ways their silver hooves
Clatter with gladness for the plains;
What matter if the well-wheel's stress
Forget me on the thanking drums,
Nor dream from what high loneliness
The lowland folk's refreshment comes.

III

If those shape-changings still have power
That Ovid sang of long ago,
I would be turned into a flower
And in a quiet garden grow:
Not some familiar blossom sweet,
But, mixed of every scent and hue,
Bending before His passing feet
A bloom the Gardener never knew.

There let winged creatures, to and fro
Flying, my honey take and live;
My uttermost reward to know
The joy of those who freely give.
And when my season has been knelled,

[210]

May I beyond the date of me,
Be by one flowerlike spirit held
A fair and fragrant memory.

IV

If those shape-changings yet are made
That Ovid sang in days gone by,
Take me, and in a flowery glade
Turn me into a butterfly.
There let me, all the sunny days,
A shuttle flickering right and left,
Through the hued warp that Eros lays
Weave the white thread of Psyche's weft.

Let beauty still with beauty wed,
While I, who sanctify the rite,
Shepherd through seasons far ahead
The generations of delight.
Though from their joy I move apart,
Our dreams shall fill with ancient things;
I find their honey in my heart,
And they my troubling touch of wings.

V

If those shape-changings men still know
That Ovid sang, Oh! I would rise
And turn into a cloud of snow,

[211]

And, to the pipe of windy skies,
In a celestial passion sweep
In frantic dances, happy feuds,
And at my joy's end whitely sleep
In still Himālayan solitudes.

Let springtime slay me where I lie:
My shed life tree and flower renews.
Oh! I shall beautifully die
Into a myriad scents and hues.
I shall pass on through death to birth,
Happy that I, with lips of white,
Wakened the warm desire of earth
With the cool kiss of heaven's delight.

INSTALLATION ODE

for the first woman magistrate in India

What is this sight not seen before?
This perfume to this precinct rare?
Rose-petals on a penal floor!
A scent of roses in the air!
Law's sternness moved to noble mirth!
A strange new hope in eyes of fear!
A sense of something come to birth
In unseen realms drawn gently near!

Oh! rises now the Woman's Day
The seeress in vision saw,
Symbolled in simple hands that lay
Rose-garlands on the neck of Law;
And—deeper than those hands intend—
Proclaim a dream to fullness grown:
“Justice her blinding band shall rend
When comes the Mother to her own.”

Lo! She has come! And unto her
Goes the great hope of heart and mind.
Life's giver turns life's arbiter;
A woman, but no longer blind.
She shall cast out old harshness scolded,
False medicine for souls that ail;

And, wise in lore of life, shall hold
In stabler grasp a juster scale.

She shall smoothe out with healing hand
The twisted purpose of offence
No sword her sentence will demand
Where love awakens penitence.
Keener than punitory blade
Her eye shall touch transgression's core;
And at that inner accolade
Sin shall rise up and sin no more!

Saidapet Courthouse, Madras, February, 1923.
The magistrate was the author's wife.
The seeress was Anna Bonus Kingsford.

[214]

AFTER A SHOWER

Oh! love has fallen as a shower;
And out of hidden nurseries
In breaking bud and swinging trees,
At call of that forth-bidding power,
From secret cradles under leaves,
And under cool palmyra eaves,
Life casts her chrysalis, and springs
To dance where dancing sunlight goes,
And turn the heart's flower-bordered rows
From prim acceptance of repose
To moth-made revelry of wings!

Oh! love has fallen as a shower;
And through the palpitating blue
The shrieking circling swallow-crew
Build up a high invisible tower
With madcap magic of design
Sketched in grey-lightning curve and line;
Then break, and cry in mimic woe
For very access of delight
And crowd the heart with chase and flight
Of swirling leaves bewildered quite
When the great winds contrarious blow!

Oh! love has fallen as a shower;
And the hibiscus of the heart,

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That bled within the bud apart,
Unfolds its hanging scarlet flower;
And all its fervent hope distils
Into a crystal drop that thrills
With urgent bliss upon its tongue.
Heart-full of rainbow speech it aches;
In joy of near fulfilment shakes,
And on the verge of utterance breaks
In one great tear for song unsung!

LOVE'S IMMORTALITY

I

If I could think one life must quite suffice
The love-rich heart for perfect thanksgiving,
I should cry out against so poor a thing
As the slow coming on of age's ice;
Aye, against fate should find a deep device
To build new skies for love's love-curious wing,
And with strange murmurs of an earthly spring
Trouble the autumn peace of Paradise!
Oh! never has the heart, that loved indeed,
Counted its golden memory's hoarded glow
Better than laughter of love's squandered pence!
Love has another and a nobler creed:
To count love's river sweetest in its flow,
And life's most happy boon its passing hence!

II

So, when you die; and all the world you filled
Crumbles at length to silent nothingness,
Having no mouth for speech, no hands to bless;
After some space, when the jarred heart is stilled,
I shall awake one morning spirit-thrilled
By you, well-knowing still your strong caress;
And at your call shall slip my spirit's jess
To wing life's twilight towards you fiery-willed!

Oh! I shall laugh, and call the calendar
Time's Ananias! I shall twist the earth
Back through the hours between my finger and thumb;
Outwit frustrating flesh; hold age's scar
A jesting presage of my proper birth
When our souls cry: "I have come!" "O love! you
have come!"

III

For I have loved you as no mortal man
Ever loved mortal woman. I have seen
Your very flesh so shot with heavenly sheen
That, exiled from you by my sex's span,
I have cried out to heaven to lift the ban,
Or give new life, to be what you have been;
To call you lord as now I call you queen,
Till fuller knowledge love more perfect plan!

And after that? Oh! we two dare not rest
On heights below the highest. Calm or storm,
Life beyond life, towards love's ecstatic goal
We must press on, till our insatiate zest
Quash the redundancy of form and form,
And Love's own self marry us soul to soul!

[218]

IRELAND AFTER TEN YEARS

Land of my birth! again I greet
Thy grey-wing sky, green earth, sweet air;
And, passing hence, lay at thy feet
The tribute of a simple prayer,

That, since thy long red saga's wave
Beyond thy dream's edge sinks from view,
Thy children, one in heart, may brave
The splendid hazard of the New;

Yet, for the spirit's deeper thirst,
From ancient, wise, enchanted springs
Drink, that thy Last be as thy First—
A glory sought by saints and kings.

July, 1925.

[219]

A SONG BY SILENUS

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, SHELLEY, ACT II, SCENE II

Sang Silenus in a wood:

Once the Chief of Gods above
Scattered, out of plenitude,
Wine of His creative love.
One who caught it in the cup
Of his body drank it up;
Wept and fretted, laughed and fired;
Stalked the thing that he desired;
Sated, stretched him in a grove;
Snored him back to thirsty mood.

God, who watched him, quiet-eyed,
Turned His face away, and sighed;
Almost His love's largesse rued.

One a seething ichor caught
In the chalice of his heart,
And its impulse hotly wrought
Into sacred joy and smart;
Architected, sculptured, limned;
Genuflected, grovelled, hymned;
Visited with holy wrath
Climbers by another path;
Packed the whole within the part;
Strangled thus the thing he sought.

[220]

God, who drooped a watching eye,
Murmured gently: "By and by,
When his strivings come to nought."

One a crystal vintage quaffed
From the goblet of his brain;
Quenched his fire; and murder-craft
Bent to compass knowledge-gain;
Straightened to a rigid line
All the pulsing sphere divine;
Shed the life to seize the law;
Worshipped only what he saw;
Chewed the husk, and cast the grain;
At the poet's passion laughed.

Said the Chief God: "Agonies
Shall his way to wisdom ease
With their fiery-pointed shaft."

One in solemn rapture stood,
Drunken with untasted wine;
Body, heart and brain subdued
Till their powers, made perfect, shine
With a white creative fire
Lit by infinite desire
That a new-made heaven and earth,
Built in beauty, brings to birth,
Housing man become divine.

[221]

Nodded God, and whispered: "Good!"
But His eyes appeared to be
Only filled with prophecy:
Sang Silenus in a wood.

THE COMPLETE LOVER

I

Read my confession here unfurled:
I am the lover of the world.
All things that cross my senses' verge
I seize, and in my being merge.

I am the sire of ventures bold;
Have mothered blessings manifold,
And strewed my love upon the wind
To feed love-lacking human-kind.

When Phidias carved a marble tress,
It was to wait my hand's caress;
And Giotto raised his tower sublime
For my devoted feet to climb.

Shelley in Rome dishearted slept
Till on his tomb my heart was wept.
Scriabine music made from fire
To feed the flame of my desire.

Let Beauty smile by sea or land,
There you will find my plighting hand.
What various transports move my will,
She counts my love unchanging still.

However blows its moody wind,
All marriage mirth is to her mind;
For whatso'er my ardour stirs,
All worship in the end is hers.

So I espoused the sun and moon,
And married every wild bird's rune;
Have clasped the dancing April gust,
And laid my breast against the dust.

When lonely flowers to hunger wake,
I the beloved completion make.
I have enfolded weeping skies,
And charmed the tiger's roving eyes.

Where leafy vows are softly sighed,
I am the dear enraptured bride;
And I the bridegroom proud who goes
To share the nuptials of the rose.

II

Yet though with these, for Beauty's sake,
Love's ceremonial vow I take,
I have a secret none may share:
I am the great philanderer!

Whatever lips my warm lips pressed,
I had a deeper, farther quest,

[224]

With something esoteric hid
Beneath my sidelong drooping lid.

Whatever joys divert the day,
Night gives my wing the homeward way
To where, beyond a hidden gate,
I hold my heart inviolate.

There, in a garden paradised,
I keep the Soul's eternal tryst.
She stretches silence as a screen.
She waits me, felt, but, ah! unseen.

She will not mix with mine her name
Till I can burn a crystal flame;
With God and Life and Her made one,
Espoused of all, and bound to none.

Life's loves with little passions play
In satisfactions of a day.
Love that from life's dim first doth wend
Fulfil it only in the end.

So count I craft of hand and lip
But tools of my apprenticeship;
Plummet and compass, gauge and chart
To perfect love's perfected art.

To no less heavenly conquest She
Yieldeth her white virginity.

[225]

Yea, though I woo Her countless ways,
Still She eludes my longing gaze.

Only God's eye in secret sees
Her veiled celestial sanctities,
Till I, grown Godlike, claim my prize—
And perish in Her burning eyes!

NOCTURNAL ODE AT SEA IN STORM

In faith I lay me down,
Though the clouds frown
Beyond the iron screen
That thinly throbs the sea and me between;
And herded waves rush by in mad stampede
Goaded by some tremendous need,
Horning my habitation of the night
With hissing spite,
And in their own foamed venom drown.

In faith I lay me down,
Though I am bound and blinded in the net
Of storm's incalculable threat;
For there is standing at my being's gate
The inexorable Angel of my Fate,
Appointed ere the winds and waves were spun
By cosmic fingers on their giddy run
About the world, or lightning flung its lance
In glittering arrogance,
Or pompous thunderings
Shook out their brazen wings,
Mock heraldry o'er day's bedraggled crown.

In faith I lay me down;
For He has power
(If such my fate) to stem the threatening hour;

To bid the madcap waters roll
No wave within the cipher of His scroll,
But halt their overwhelming slope
Beyond the circle of my horoscope.
His lifted hand can fend the blackest frown.
In faith I lay me down.

In faith I close mine eyes
Beyond the day's wild, wandering surmise,
Certain, whate'er the issue, I shall wake
Here—or here-else where no mad waters break:
What matter where,
Since I shall find the Eternal Lover there
As I have found Him here
In one true heart this many a lovelit year,
And heard His music, made by fingers warm
That shall outplay the orchestra of storm!
Godward our climbings go, the peak though dim:
Shall not our sinkings gravitate to Him?
In faith I close mine eyes.

Falls the ripe fruit that other fruit may rise.
Night the rich profit hath
Of day's ingathered aftermath.
Lo! in each wave's importunate hollowed palm
The dark sweet wine of inner calm

[228]

Mysteriously mine Angel now doth press
From all my stormy windfalls. In the stress
Of death's dire threat life's fool now waxeth
wise.

In faith I close mine eyes.

Sunlight and shade their mutual purpose find.
Our living is with dying intertwined.
Yea, have I not, with each outgoing breath,
Rehearsed the ultimate trick of death
That is but sleep made permanent?
What if the flesh should shirk the last event
This catastrophic night
Or in some distant moment hushed and white?—
My petrel spirit, shaken from the nest
Of my imprisoning breast,
Sovereign shall tread all waves that fall and rise.
In faith I close mine eyes.

In the sea's frenzied game of pitch-and-toss
I cannot suffer loss.
Rather from life's last threshings I shall gain
The harvest of mine own essential grain
Under tonight's or under no night's skies.
In faith I close mine eyes . . .

Bay of Biscay, August 1925.

[229]

ABOVE THE RAINBOW

I stand on a Himālayan height
Watching the shower and sunlight march.
Deep in a valley's early night
A rainbow builds its Roman arch.

It lifts upon its spectral lines
A crumbling edifice of gloom.
Above, in heavenly gardens, shines
The eternal snow-flowers' waxen bloom.

O hills where light and darkness meet!
O moment chastening and proud
That puts below my climbing feet
The sign God set upon the cloud!

I take the challenge of the bird
Exulting past the rainbow's rise:
Lightly upon the spirit's word
I leave the earth and seek the skies;

I spread my pinions on the blast,
Casting the cage of date and name,
Above the hint of waters past,
Beyond the threat of future flame.

Kalimpong, Bengal.

[230]

SUNRISE ON KINCHINJUNGA

Sweetly at dawn, Oh! high and heavenly sweet,
Sun-lips of thy pure whiteness take love's toll.
Thou from thy shoulders dost the night-wraps roll
The more in beauty morning's grace to greet.
Thou scatterest sleep with ecstasy. I meet
Thy pledgings with my heart's o'er-brimming bowl.
Thou hast called up the mountains in my soul,
And set high hunger throbbing in my feet!

O sky-throned poet! who thy moods may tell?—
A moment vast in majesty; the next
Dwindled to wanness of a sea-bleached shell;
Then, on the scroll of heaven a shining text
Saying to spirits joyfully perplexed
How near the static and ecstatic dwell!

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THE BURDEN OF IMMENSITY

I

Bring incense and all instruments of praise
Before the snow-spread altars of the Hills.
Yet, though the soul to solemn worship wills,
Stark sight and sound the sceptic senses daze.
On those colossal steeps no life-print stays;
White death stupendous deeps with silence fills;
While here the earth to awful thunder thrills
Instantly with the lightning-stroke that slays.

Oh! though the brow with eager search be flushed,
It quails at scriptures writ too large to see.
By frigid power my votive hymn is hushed;
My tribute candle gutters uselessly;
And all my purpose is a petal crushed
Beneath the burden of immensity!

II

Wherefore to you I turn to be made strong,
O comprehensible dear transient things!—
Beauty between a butterfly's frail wings,
A dew-edged leaf, the bulbul's golden song.
To you and to all finite things belong
God's touch familiar on our quivering strings

That to the exile soul nostalgia brings,
And dreams that round the heart for utterance throng.

And when in twilight the cicada twangs
His jew's-harp for an hour, Oh! I would sit
Where coils a creeper innocent of fangs,
And worship in an odorous quiet lit
By one ripe star that from the night-branch hangs
Tingling with rumours of the infinite!

SONG BY A FRUIT-TREE

I was a blind and buried thing
That groped about me in the mould
Because the ancient wizard, Spring,
Sent his enchantment through my cold
With such a poignant edge of ache
That I could only die—or break.

My green spear splintered earth's hard baulk.
I felt the far inviting sky.
I took the harshness of a stalk
To show the wizard I was I.
But More-than-me within me woke.
I strained to answer it—and broke.

My flower-flag fluttered by a pool.
I dreamed my destiny had end
In being simply beautiful.
But there was Something in me penned
That swelled and struggled to be free
For more substantial ministry.

I struck my flag, and tamed my power
The tribes of earth and air to feed.
But Something in me knew an hour
Of deeper portent, wider need,
That in my heart accomplisheth
The cyclic Will of life and death.

I sent my seed upon the wind
In autumn's splendid jeopardy
The purpose and the path to find
Of Something-wonderful-to-be
That through and past my thrilling grooves
Unto sublime fulfilment moves.

BEFORE RAIN

All day a heart pulsed in the brooding sky.
All day a brain beat out a thought.
And heart and brain in single purpose wrought
So sharp an agony,
That one whom life had taught
To read sky-portents with unclouded sight,
Knew that, ere fall of night,
Someone in heaven or on the earth must cry.

All that, tow'rds which, through eyes that searched
and burned,
A thousand thousand days aspired;
All that long sleepless nights had long desired;
All guerdon sought or scorned;
All that was vision-fired
By holy things most passionately hoped
When dream-doors shut or oped,
Mixed now, and moved, and to heart-breaking
yearned.

Now on the earth a burden trails along.
All things are silent that should speak.
The very parrots pass without a shriek.
The rooks in conclave throng.
The peacock's tail hangs meek.
A dumb drooped tree its waiting shadow shakes

[236]

Over a heart that aches
For birth into its heritage of song.

At last! at last! to those made weather-wise
Speaks the sharp sign that all fulfils.
Hark! the old lion, thunder, through the hills
Growls with swift glaring eyes.
Now! past our palsied wills,
Flame, with its lancing pennants, thrilling drums,
Unto deliverance comes
With a great shout of birth that shakes the sky!

Then comes the rain!—a drop; a coin as wage
For waiting: then the deepening shower.
Earth is scrawled o'er with flowing songs an hour.
O heart! be thou a page
Vocal with so great power!
So shall we, with a word's victorious helm,
Emancipate a realm,
And in a line immortalise an age!

Mysore.

[237]

A TIBETAN BANNER

Sent to Nathalia Crane, the young American poetess, from Kalimpong, Lower Himalayas

I

This is a lama's banner, made
In Lhasa, past the palisade
Of peaks where the Himálayan snows
Lie in millennial repose,
And Death spreads out his winding-sheet
For all but consecrated feet.

It came with mule-back caravan
By slippery track that glibly ran
So intimate with precipice
And neighbourly with sheer abyss,
That he who bore it towards the plains
Left to his mule the useless reins,
And closed his eyes, and clung with hope
To it and to his horoscope,
And calmed his heart with holy song
And dreams of rest at Kalimpong,
Where red-robed brothers, day and night,
Pray, chant and labour towards the Light.

It came when Buddha's birthday moon
Rose like a festival balloon

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Above the twilight's incense-haze;
When, at the end of balmy days,
The sun's pulsating ladle spills
Its molten silver on the hills;
And summer, bringing new release
To fountain-heads of warm increase,
All night from icy caverns hears
The drip of tributary tears.

I think the mountains that it passed
Must on this painted scroll have cast
A vast mild look of wondering
That such a small and silent thing
Should hold, as in a folded shell,
The sound of wisdom's ocean-swell
And sea-bird songs that shall outrhyme
The lips of geologic time.

Its way was cleared by prayer and grace,
Till, in the jostling market-place,
Starred by a ring of almond eyes
Drawn from the lure of merchandise,
The quiet lama took his stand,
And turned his prayer-wheel in his hand,
And from his wise and travelled scroll
Spelt out the secret of the soul,
And traced the ancient Middle Way
From darkness to the spirit's day.

[239]

Not in fine phrases poised and proud
Taught he the simple-hearted crowd,
But carried succour for their need
On the broad back of fancy's steed,
Telling the tale I here rehearse
In unsophisticated verse.

II

A thousand thousand years ago,
On a great mountain tipped with snow,
Born of the giant Earthquake's pains
'Twixt Tibet and the Indian plains,
Lived Avalokiteswara,
Invisible incognita;
Man-woman grown to God-estate,
Pure, passionless, compassionate;
Set on the sacred lotus-seat
With blessing hands and folded feet;
Dwelling in meditative mood
Upon the verge of Buddhahood.

There no marauding edict ran
To sate the murder-lust of man.
Insect and fish and bird and beast
About that hill from quarrel ceased;
The shimmering cobra cast its fang,
And tree and flower in chorus sang.

[240]

So peacefully the tale of days
Was told in duty, prayer and praise,
That hardly could the sages say
If still the seasons went their way.
Softly the nesting of the bird
Signalled that spring again had stirred;
And tattered moths at close of day
Whispered the winter on its way.

There came a time, our banner says,
When at the end of pilgrim days
A sage of India hither came,
And Lotup-nyng-po was his name.
He loved with searching souls to sit
And read the lore on palm-leaves writ;
He loved through squalid streets to go
With healing herbs for human woe;
He loved the earth, he loved the sky,
But chiefly loved all things that fly.
And birds of water, earth and air
Sang to his heart their deepest care;
For such is love's compelling power,
It wakens pleasure in a flower;
Yea, and love's foot, if all were known,
May stir to joy the trampled stone.

So Lotup-nyng-po inly knew
What need the birds together drew;

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What secret hunger strove to speak
In quivering wing and chattering beak;
What impulse moved the feathered clan
To slip beyond the fate of man,
To miss the cage of sense and mind,
And the pure spirit's freedom find.
Wherefore, at worship's holy time
Did Lotup-nyng-po slowly climb
The sacred pathway to the peak,
The hidden Heart of hearts to seek;
With sun-ripened fruit and stingless wine
Placate the guardians of the shrine
And there the birds' petition breathe,
While incense vapours upward wreathe
Grey through the smoky camphor-flame
And chantings of the Holy Name.

Then from the peak of virgin snow
There came an answering golden glow
That gathered to a mist of wings
Blessing all bound and hungry things;
For there is neither great nor small
To Love whose heart enfoldeth all;
It shrinks to fill the sand-fly's room;
Grades to the owl the needed gloom;
And in the worm's clay-shuttered ear
Speaks the slow speech that it can hear.

[242]

So Avalokiteswara,
Love's perfect-hearted replica,
Swept all of bird-like in His breast
Into the compass of a nest;
Into one magic moment's haste
Crowded the feathered year to taste
The sweet and bitter of the wing
From building-time to scattering,
And learn the pathways to the brain
For entrance of His mystic strain.
Then on the clamorous fluttering storm
He lighted in the cuckoo's form,
And the shrill conclave of the birds
Silenced with wisdom's quiet words.

III

“O ye whose hearts are moved to pray
For light upon the upward way!
Hark ye! and, hearkening, give heed
Not in the word to find the deed.
Lo! in the space 'twixt breath and breath
Lurks the sure-striking serpent death;
And all your treasures, packed with pride,
Another scatters far and wide.

“Live then to die. Get then to spend.
In each beginning find its end.

[243]

Thus, to no pain or pleasure thrall,
Your lips may taste the joy of all.
Where many waters troubling meet,
No pilgrim bathes his dusty feet;
But the deep lake that outward flows
Whispers the secret of repose.

“Search not for truth on dusty shelves,
But in the scriptures of yourselves.
They only towards the quest shall win
Who seek the spirit’s way within.
Would you the peace Nirvanic know,
To your own peace in silence go.
The wandering jackal’s hungry wail
Draws barking dogs upon his trail.

“Learn ye that life’s alluring fruit
Springs from a hidden heavenly root.
The wise ones look with love on all,
But know all fruit at last shall fall.
Who seeks the world, his heart beclouds
In the thick solitude of crowds;
But he who seeks a peak apart
Must hold the world within his heart.

“Blessed are ye who make your care
The turning of the wheel of prayer

[244]

For Gods who dwell in heavenly light,
And Gods who seek the shades of night;
For struggling, sorrowing human-kind;
For ghosts that wander as the wind;
For all dumb things that round you dwell,
And the sad company of hell.

“Cease not to turn the pleading drum
And chant *Om mani padme hum*;
For they who seek the spirit’s end
Have all creation for their friend;
For deep in all created things
Quivers the skyward lift of wings;
And prayer for hearts that upward groan
Strikes back in blessing on your own.”

So said the cuckoo: and the birds,
In song beyond the wing of words,
Fashioned melodious formulæ
To set their hearts’ thanksgiving free;
And on the ’scutcheon of the sky
Scribbled a mystic heraldry
Tracing, for eyes that truly see,
The ancient line of liberty.
In that ecstatic whirling rout
The sacred cuckoo faded out;
And on the peak a mist of wings,
Blessing all bound and hungry things,

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Melted into a golden glow
About the brow of virgin snow.

From that deep-hidden Heart has purled
So sweet a blessing on the world,
That climbing souls, from age to age,
Have sought that sacred vicinage,
And find the inner peace they seek
Around that holy, haunted peak,
So far removed from human care
That foothill husbandmen, astir
When the great broom of many dawns
Sweeps from the sky the starry awns,
Reckon its far, dim, snow-fed stream
Some river in the realm of dream,
And think its track from hill to vale
The silver zigzag of a snail.

IV

Thus runs the scroll—or nearly thus:
And what of truth it holds for us
Hangs all on what we hold of truth;
For there is nothing so uncouth
Or so seductive to the sight
But shares the secret of the Light.
Not for life's tree-top sings alone
The ancient song that life has known:

[246]

The very dust that stains its bole
Carries the purpose of the whole.

So, when your poet-eyes have fed
On parrot green, pomegranate red,
And you are tired of merry jape
With boar and leopard, bird and ape,
That tell in rude but vivid art
The story of the searching heart,
I think this song of Tala Hill
Will touch your spirit with the thrill
Of something intimately sweet
That clings about its quiet feet.

But, whether you the scriptures scan
Of man made God or God made man;
Whether those Powers of ancient date
That man has served with love and hate,
Be smoke-made phantoms of the fire
Of his unquenchable desire,
Or whether they be Shapes that pass
Across imagination's glass
From islands of reality
Cast by a beam across that sea
Whose slow erosion on our verge
Shall with its own our being merge;
Still may your spirit's open eye

[247]

The mystery of things descry.
Whatever songs your lips indite,
Still may the gleam of inner Light
Golden your thrumming finger-tips;
Still your discriminating lips
Taste in tame rose and wild-heart gorse
The heavenly savour of their source.

Their day of vision has begun
Who in the sunflower see the sun.
Life unto them on plain or hill
Holds something sacramental still.
They feel that Presence infinite
Whose hand for searching eyes has writ
Upon the universal scroll
The mutual language of the soul;
Who makes this temple, Night-and-Day,
A hospice on the pilgrim's way;
Who for the footsore sends the showers,
And for sweet incense made the flowers;
Who stands with sanctifying grace
In midmost of life's market-place,
And turns our world of sea and land
A murmuring prayer-wheel in His hand.

Parts II and III are condensed from a manuscript in the temple at Kalimpong. The interpretation of the prayer-wheel, which is that of the hill people themselves, differs from the current outside idea.

[248]

SPRING IN KASHMIR

Now, while on the Himalayan heights,
The flower-like snows in sunshine fade,
Here, in a garden of delights,
A mimic wintertime is made.

Lo! in an exquisite pretence,
The Indian *may* doth here assume
Snow-shapes, and hold in white suspense
Her lovely avalanche of bloom.

The soaring poplar earthward shakes
Its cotton as the wind's will shifts,
And fills the air with pallid flakes
That gather into snowlike drifts.

The slim acacia's clustered flower
Out of the veins of earth distils,
Through life's reincarnating power,
The dying whiteness on the Hills.

Daisies in white-eyed wonder wake
And spread their simulated snows
Where unseen hands in silence make
The snowballs of the guelder rose;

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And where, touched by the season's
mood,

Shy things adventurous are made,
And white nun Iris dons her hood
And joins the gentle masquerade.

Oh! in this tryst of joy and peace,
This paradise of sight and sound,
The brooding spirit finds release,
And sees, with vision grown profound,

Nature, in necromantic role—
To break the risk of bartering
Ascetic winter's begging-bowl
For sudden opulence of spring—

Conjure a flower-formed world of snow,
And lay for life's exploring feet
A gradual path where she may go
In confidence from cold to heat;

And crown her brow with a white kiss
To cool the ardour of the day,
Lest she, too quickly finding bliss,
Should lose the happy Middle Way.

[250]

THE GOBLET

A gleam of water edged by sculptured hills;
These to the eye; but how the soul expands
Unto the vision of a Power that fills
A goblet raised in vast ecstatic hands!

Here not alone the blue kingfisher dips
For food, or comes for drink the singing boy:
This cup doth know the touch of unseen Lips;
High Gods have shaped it, and high Gods enjoy.

Housed where the water-hen a home has found,
I, borne by Beauty towards my God-estate,
Am drunk with form and colour, scent and sound,
And still of this deep draft insatiate;

For, in the mystery of Beauty's feast,
The more I take, the more is she increased!

The Lake, Srinagar.

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BIRDS BEFORE DAWN IN KASHMIR

No rebel gleam threatens the tyrant Dark.
So perfect and so final is its hush,
Past days may be delusions. Ah! but hark!
That sudden sweet sedition of the thrush!

The golden questions of the oriole
Yellowly touch the darkness one by one,
Till vision slowly fills a slow-made bowl
With blent crescendo of both song and sun.

Is it that song grows out of growing day,
Or day is builded by enlarging song?
Chained to the wheel, who knows the wheel's
own way?

This much will help our shackled feet along:

That all man's songs, wherewith he cheers his
night,

Are his rebellious prophecies of light!

THE SHRINE

For fear you might some time go out,
And never might come home again,
I made a place secure from doubt
Of dreams or deeds, from marts and men;
Close-cheeked to life, yet spirit-far,
A sanctuary of the soul
To hold all memories that are
Worthy to wear an aureole.

There daily do I bow my head
And set within my secret shrine
Your wisdom's life-sustaining bread,
Your laughter's heart-uptlifting wine.
And there, from life's illusion free
And thoughts and moods that ebb and flow,
I celebrate love's mystery,
And your perpetual presence know.

There, too, though life of you went dumb,
I have your music in the air;
Yea, in love's alchemy become
The holy thing I worship there;
And know that when all ways are trod,
We two shall stand, beyond time's rout,
A pillar in the House of God,
Whence we shall never more go out.

GLADIOLUS

in an oriental garden

In my garden sauntering solus
Came I on a gladiolus;
But before I bent my knee
Something strange occurred to me!

What had been a flower now glowed a
Crimson-lanterned peaked pagoda,
Sacred to the More-than-man
In the islands of Japan.

On my garden fell the mood a
Painter puts about a Buddha:
Inward sight where sorrows cease;
Power at poise with radiant peace.

In my garden knelt I solus
At the shrine of gladiolus,
Lit to pleasure more than sight
By, and for, the Lord of Light!

Dai-Butsu, Japanese for the Buddha, trans.—More-than-man.

Buddha is "The Enlightened One."

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TO IRELAND

Something within this earth of me
With yours an ancient friendship knows;
But deeper than nativity
My ultimate allegiance goes.

Unto my heart's wild seaward strife
You spread the foot-spring of the shore.
You were to me the door of life,
But life grew larger than its door.

I loved your paths, for on them dawned
The vision of the Hidden Way
Through passion to a tryst beyond
The transient liaison of clay.

I loved your toil, when seed was laid,
Or flail-men parted grain and husk.
I loved the joy of man and maid
Dancing at Ventry in the dusk.

I loved your moods of gold and grey;
That hour when, to the heart's delight,
The ebbing deluge of the day
Left quivering drops on boughs of night.

But most I loved, when day was done,
Your hearths when on the folk-tale fell
A light more splendid than the sun
From seraph-winged Salathiel.

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With these my dreaming heart abides.
Towards these from orient seas doth go
Below the drift of all my tides
A deep unswerving undertow.

I know a legend-haunted place
Where I can wander night and day
With quick and dead, the ancient race
Of comrades on the upward Way;
Poets who heard a distant drum
That rallied visions to their eyes
Of holy Ireland free; and some
Who gladly fell that She might rise.

And in and out with these will go
The flicker of the flame-faced kings
Who touch men's hearts with heavenly
 glow
And give their thoughts the lift of wings.

These unto me Their hands will reach
Over the archway of the sun,
Speaking the single spirit-speech
From heights where East and West are
 one.

Before the blinding morning breaks
I shall step out behind a star
And seek the quiet haunted lakes
And hills where my De Danaans are.

[256]

THE CITY OF HOPE

Geneva

Fresh snow on peaks through balmy air descried,
And sunlight flashing from green flowing jade,
Have, though the leaves thin winterward, remade
Summer by autumn cooled and purified.
Swan, gull and waterhen have hither hied,
Assured, like all thy fugitives, of shade,
Near where strong men, through suffering, have
 essayed
To seek the peace that blooms from buried pride.

City of Man's great hope! I too have knelt
Unto a dream that here my spirit drew;
Not the dark fever Byron wildly felt,
But that bright vision thou and Shelley knew:
Beauty, espoused of free aspiring Mind,
Bringing to birth a world made wise and kind.

Written near the site of the hotel where Shelley stayed,
and in view of the villa where Byron lived.

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PASSIONATE AUTUMN

In the Jura Mountains

Snow on the Juras has oblivion rolled
Where summer's perished progeny are urned;
And in the valleys rowdy showers have spurned
Forest regalities discrowned in mould.

Yet may a magic story still be told
—Though all men's mystic hieroglyphs were
burned—

Where alchemy of autumn now has turned
The cascades of the silver birch to gold.

What had green youth, for all its proud desire,
To match these passionate splendours of decay?
The sun but lent the woods an alien fire.
It fades: but ember trees now glow and sway
Self-kindled in a wind that high has blown
Fragments of flame, expiring, but their own.

PADEREWSKI PLAYS

in Lausanne Cathedral

I

On pillars mounting to dark mystery
Some gloomy zealot of a silent God
Inscribes: "It is forbidden to applaud."
We wait like forest spirits robbed of glee,
Till, look! each pillar turns into a tree
Swayed by a wind that laughs at rule and rod,
Because of magic rising from the sod,
And old Silenus talking gloriously!

He talks through Schumann's beauty, Chopin's tears,
Beethoven's quiet and the storm of Liszt,
Through Schubert's longing; talks us up to spheres
Where our rapt brows by Presences are kissed,—
And gloomy silence whirls away in fright
On the loud torrent of the heart's delight!

II

Master! and freeman of the world's free lands!
You, with no gesture of a hand that deigns,
Suffering with Chopin for a land in chains,
Laid by your art at Freedom's rough demands.
Now, though your hair no aureole expands
Of russet flame, the inner fire remains;

But man's long sorrow sweetens now your strains,
And his sure triumph thunders from your hands.

Who says the snow has fallen on your head?
Nay! you have mounted to the soul's pure snow
With eyes unflinching and unwavering tread,
By paths which only Alpine spirits know,
Whose end is on the white accomplished peak
Where the immortals with immortals speak!

PEACE

An anticipation

Now God be praised, and all gods;
And if these be a dream,
Praise be to the God in Man
Who his heart again hath raised,
And a hope's faint gleam
To flame doth fan;
To the red-eyed plan
Of the war-drunk demon-dancers,
Whose life is strife's increase,
Has chorused the many voices of man
To a single voice that answers:
"Let there be peace!"

"Lo! now," saith Man's spirit, "Give
ear!

Old feuds I have fed on,
False hates that my true heart hid,
The legend of fear,
And the nightmare of Armageddon
Inscribed on scroll and pyramid,
I put to the spirit's sword!
Ye prophets that lipped your
Vain blessing and ban!
For your 'Thus saith the Lord,'

(Though no Lord scrolled your scripture)
Write: "Thus saith Man:"

"I shall rest no more my will,
My thought, my wish on
The mouldered past;
Nor my heart's need fill
With empty superstition;
But these out-cast;
And from Life and the Truth of Life
New vision borrow;
And in heaven's full view
The saga of purposeful strife,
Of joy and sorrow,
Shall write anew.

"Give ear, O women, O men,
O creed, O nation,
Long self-estranged!
Behold at your lips
The Water of Liberation:
Drink—and be changed!
Henceforth shall your dream and hunger,
Mute or spoken,
Adventure's lure,
By the measure of shackles shed,

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Of bondage broken,
Decline or endure.

"Fear not, though freedom were one
With a wild desire
In ages gone.
Lo! out of the sun
Comes forth in purging fire
True Freedom's dawn:
For, as light in a cloudy mesh,
Shall spirit in substance striving,
Exalt and illumine the whole;
And the urge of the flesh
Be but spur and rein to the driving
Desire of the Soul.

"Not yet, saith the Spirit of Man,
Have we perfect sight of
The peace-full hour.
Lo! now must we break and ban
The confederate might of
Perverted power
That denieth the grace
Once granted to children's crying,
Would sow for a harvest of dearth,
And across the insulted face
Of heaven flying,
Drop hell on earth.

[263]

“Oh! then, when swept are the skies,
And earth upraises
Clean hands from seas serene;
And man in the eyes
Of man unfearful gazes,
Shall a wonder be heard and seen;
For forth in ecstatic swells
From a myriad steeples
Shall flow a music-flood,
The marriage-bells
Of the long love-famished peoples
Made now one breath, one blood.

“Yea, out of the ground,
Called up by Man’s new vigour,
Through branch and sod
Shall one beauty abound
In undreamt-of hue and figure,
A Garden of God;
And the ravening creatures of night,
In Man’s joy sharers,
From mutual murder freed,
Shall come forth into light
From the vanished twilight of terrors,
And earth have peace indeed!”

London, Kellogg Pact Day, August 27, 1928.

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FLYING THINGS

At twenty dizzy storeys from the ground
I heard Chicago its wild welcome fling
At a great fishlike, shining, roaring thing
That blazed an airy trail the earth around.
And I recalled how I had watched a browned
Small humming-bird, on speed-invisible wing,
Before a purple-black petunia swing,
And sip its honey, poised with murmuring
sound.

No one applauded! But my heart applauds
All flying things, all things desiring flight;
And mostly man, who, against awful odds,
Straining to rise from darkness into light,
Would barter all that heart and brain has
stirred
To learn the simple secret of a bird!

[265]

CANYONS

I watched the Colorado River gleam
A mile below me from the Canyon's edge.
Far down, the trees were statured as the sedge,
The broad full torrent was a ribbon-stream.
I thought of cities where, with strut and beam,
Strong arm, quick brain, Man lifted, ledge on ledge,
His canyon-streets until their clouded wedge
Threatened old Heaven with Man's new Babel-dream.

O land whose golden age lies all ahead,
Not in a past the present falsifies!
Thy life-stream from no earthly spring is fed:
It rears, not delves, its canyons unto skies
Whose future stars shall round thy turrets hang
Themes for great song not even Whitman sang!

HAREBELLS

I

Under a wind
From the north pole
Their heads inclined.
Straightway my soul

For music's rush
Was one bent ear;
Like the quick thrush
That, venturing near

Where sods rain-darkened
Behind a storm,
Head-tilted hearkened
For morning's worm.

For I felt sure
In heart and mind,
All things endure
A self-same wind

That breaks the glancing
Poplar veil,
And shakes the dancing
Peacock's tail;

One heart makes sing
Where planets call

And harebells swing
In Donegal.
So I was certain
I should hear
Sounds yet unheard in
Music's sphere,
Could but the riot
In sense and stuff
Attain to quiet
Deep enough
To bring to me
In sparkling spate,
Inaudibly
Articulate,
Their answering stammers,
Echoing jars,
To pulsing hammers
Of the stars.

II

Years passed and hazed
That memory:
Asia erased
Dunfanaghy;
Till suddenly,
When free from care

[268]

Beside a sea,
I, wandering where
Old men for metals
Dug when young,
Saw the red petals,
Flaming tongue,
Of day's hibiscus
Radiate
Through San Francisco's
Golden Gate;
And, apropos
Of nothing, heard
From long ago
A thrush-like word:
"Let blooms be shed
And years divide;
Nothing is dead
Of all that died."
And at that hint
And loosened spells,
Came the sky-tint
Of swung harebells,
With tunes divined
Deep in the soul,
Stirred by a wind
From some dim pole.

[269]

MORNING SONG IN HAWAII

Let us in worship-song unite
Unto the Lady of Delight
Here on the marge of her domain—
The grey-eyed Spirit of the Rain,
Who drapes the sun with cloudy fears,
Then lightly laughs herself to tears;
And for her heart's expended powers
Receives the trembling thanks of flowers
Spread on a rainbowed carpet meet
For passage of her pearly feet.

Oh! more than thanks of flower and tree
She hath from opened eyes that see
In falling rain, in seas that smile
Around this paradisaal isle,
And in the spent volcano's cone,
A deeper Being than their own,
Which rounds to beauty the uncouth
Cicatrix of a fiery youth,
And changes to a mood of mirth
The ancient agonies of earth!

Mount Tantalus, Honolulu.

[270]

THE FAN

Just as the day's drooped spirit had begun
Down darkening tides to drift
In sleepy swirls between
Clouds of blue-black and seas of olive-green,
Seeking some haven out of time and place;
A sudden, swift
Conspiracy of rain
And setting sun
Through the thick brain
Of heaven ran;
Gave to ill-favoured gloom all colour's grace,
And stretched across its clouded face
A rainbow-fan
That briefly in a spectral arc reposed . . .
Then closed.

Yet in that moment I had inner sight
Of an immense mysterious wand of light
Upheld in front of fundamental night,
That at its zenith split and spread
Spoke-wise from left to right
From overhead,
Until it seemed to span
The savage dark
With colour's rhythmic rule,
And in majestic oscillation cool

[271]

The face of Chaos with a cosmic fan,
Whose sevenfold arc
Line over line disclosed
The hues that had reposed
In the aeonian all-enfolding white,
As in the moon-pale bud the tinted flower:

Violet for fathering Power,
Indigo for Duty's yoke,
Blue for Mother Nature's cloak,
Green for Life—its joy and care,
Yellow for Wisdom gathered there,
Orange to match the Mind's deep fire,
Red for Struggle and Desire.

What more I might have seen I cannot tell,
For on that vision fell
The curtain of the visible, that hides
What at the heart of things abides,
Lest the unveiled reality defeat
Man's double destiny—to win
Sight from without and insight from within
Till, through much toil, outer and inner meet,
As first seed in the last sheaf harvested.

Yet, though that vision fled,
My spirit's hearth keeps homely with the glow
Of those implicit heavens. Well I know
That the keen current of my blood
Feels not alone the pull of passionate red;

[272]

But in my veins
Runs the rainbow-coloured flood
That scintillates through Sirius, and strains
Star gladness through the prism of a tear.
Yea, even as in Japan
Poets in rhythmic syllables indite
The joy in grief, the sadness in delight,
The blossoms that proclaim the withering year,
Upon an open fan;
So on the cosmic quadrant One doth write
Not the high praise alone of Titan Powers
In lightning's flourish of calligraphy,
Nor of vast Presences that move the sea
In chanting lines, as once they moved the land
In its young fiery pliant hours.
Nay, that inscrutable Hand
Moment by moment, in more intimate script,
Inscribes the ballad of our human throes
Lightened by pleasures exquisitely lipped;
Nor God nor mortal knows
Of that brave song the uttermost content,
What triads of endeavour, joys and woes,
What lyrics of divine accomplishment,
Before, upon the final Ode to Man,
Creation's fan
Shall close.

The Eastern Sea, between Japan and China, 1929.

[273]

TRANSIENT BEAUTY

What is more beautiful than dew on grass?—
Unless it be a sudden light on leaves,
Or whispering breezes over fallen sheaves,
Or wings that make soft breathings as they pass.
Beauty looks wistfully through broken glass,
And furtively where the dread spider weaves.
There is cold beauty where still death bereaves,
And strange keen beauty in the word Alas!

O Transient Beauty! our lone hearts have learned
(Exiled from light, unreconciled to shade)
From thee, to shed the load our toil has earned,
Our makings wherewith we are all unmade.
Down thy dim paths our feet have homeward yearned,
And through things fading found what cannot fade!

NOW ALL IS PAST AND DONE

Now all is past and done,—
And all to begin again;
With a lifetime set with the sun,
And a night bewildered by rain;
And a lamp gone out whose beam
Could have broken a century's gloom;
And a high desire and dream
As a child dead in the womb.
Now only a failing blade
Is the need, for a slackening duel
Between a shade and a Shade,
And a coin for the final fuel.
Yet, equal in foolish state
Are triumph and hopes that fail
In the count of the Ultimate,
If there be truth in the tale
That is told of the hero Cuchullin,
Who returned from breaking a wrong,
And found it exceedingly dull in
The courts of the Gods with no song
To welcome Lugaid and Laeg
And himself from the deeds they had
wrought;
For the Gods, with eyes grown vague
From gazing long upon Nought,

Murmured: "A shuffling of feet
The Silence a moment cleft!"
And Cuchullin slid to his seat—
That he had never left;
Where shadow and substance are one,
In the circle of Perfected Men,
With all past and done,—
And all to begin again.

Colombo, May 3, 1930.

[276]

IN A SWISS GARDEN

O trees and flowers and butterflies!
A moment from your labours cease.
I think you must be very wise,
You have about you such great peace.

T: "We house all comers free of rent:"
F: "We scatter for the common good:"
B: "To serve creation is our bent:"
They said. I heard—and understood.

O trees and flowers and butterflies!
May God our usefulness increase!
I think *we* must be very wise
Who know the simple path to peace.

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THE TROTH

I

Love, when Love's self was all in all,
Us two sent forth one troth to keep;
One spirit through the deep to call,
And one to answer from the deep.

And down the long descent our cry
Linked the wild hearts of cosmic storm.
Our searchings made Life's shuttle fly
Through the dim webs of power and form.

Our joy the misty systems swung
Upon our flaming finger-tips.
Our separated sorrow wrung
Stupendous sighs from burning lips . . .

From our twin nebulae we sprang . . .
We swam the pale galactic tide . . .
Felt round with fierce volcanic fang . . .
And raged . . . and rested . . . side by side . . .

From age-long sleep we greenly woke
Root-wedded on a rocky steep . . .
Dream-urged, our captive bonds we broke
Through jungles hungrily to creep . . .

[278]

Until, through pendulous birth and death,
We raised our heads and stretched our knees,
And breathed a strange exalted breath
Among enchanted flowers and trees;

And heard a Voice like to a lute
Of thunder say: "Lo! without let
All this is thine; but of one fruit
Thou shalt not eat." And so we ate.

We dared the curse on venturous doubt:
Labour and sweat, pain and the grave:
Knowing the Sword that drave us out
But each to each the closer drive.

One mutual flame in heart and mind
Lured us beyond the rust of rest.
We knew no treasure we should find
Could match the glory of the Quest;

The glory, exultation, strife;
The bay-crowned and the thorn-wreathed brow;
The joy of intermingled life;
The pain of severance . . . as now,

When Love, whose power is all in all,
Has cast me forth, some troth to keep;
A spirit through the deep to call,
And strain for answer from the deep.

[279]

II

O distant love! palm-shadows fall
In benediction on your way.
At dusk the lizards on your wall
Creep out to listen while you play

Brahms and Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt,
Chopin, Debussy, Scott, Ravel;
And in the mornng, spirit-kissed
By lips that would their blessing tell,

You will set out with brave high head
To share the life tumultuous,
Where wakened India strives to shed
The sprawled imperial incubus

That blurs the democratic hope
Which lit new light in human glance,
But glares now on the tragic slope
Of unrepentant arrogance

Passed on by hands that still would wield
Man's fate for greedy fortune's fee,
And, unheroic-hearted, yield
All save essential liberty.

Dear love! the sundering waters thrill
With pulsings of your fiery heart

[280]

Beating to break the twisted will
That holds the East and West apart;

For we have shared love's glad increase,
The squandered heart's immediate gain;
And know the rich unshaken peace
Of freedom's voluntary chain.

And though dim fortune draw my feet
Far from you, some old troth to keep,
Our sundered hearts unsundered meet
In one deep cry across the deep,

That She, whose visions radiate
The secret of Man's source and goal,
Be freed for her world-healing fate,
Lest Earth's exasperated soul,

With outraged patience cancelled quite,
Rise, and wipe out with fiery tears
And bury in Atlantean night
The sin that splits the hemispheres.

III

Dear love! from strident city street
My Ariel's chanting in the air
Has guided my world-wandering feet
To sunned and scented quiet, where,

[281]

Based on the blue Odyssean sea,
Smoke-plumed Vesuvius rises clear;
And in the mists of memory
Shelley and Wordsworth hover near,

Singing the song, that ever lives
While time man's triumphs overthrows,
Of solace only Nature gives,
Of freedom Love alone bestows.

Here has pure friendship, wed with art,
Set high on Capri's towering isle
A home of beauty, where the heart
Spreads in the spirit's quiet smile.

And here, in long pellucid hours
When dusk the hot sirocco cools,
From tall, fantastic, rocky towers
I look on tideless, windless pools,

Turquoise, dove-blue and apple-green,
Inlaid enamelled chalices
Filled from the sea that sighs between
Dead Caesar's perished palaces,

And subtly coils with searching fang
Round rocks where inner ears again
May catch the song the sirens sang
To lure Ulysses and his men.

[282]

Here watch I through festoons of vine
The going sun, in Bacchic jape,
Splashing Solaro's ridge with wine
Ere yet his fire has browned the grape

That in heart-shapen clusters draws
Heart's-blood of Earth; while olive trees
Decant smooth drops by heavenly laws
From secret earth-distilleries;

And sly goat-footed breezes play
Their pan-pipes, and from twilight's trance
Rouse the slim cypresses to sway
In a rapt pause of sacred dance.

But not alone these gentle powers
Delectably the daylight fill.
In spangled night's melodious hours
A sudden, deep, portentous thrill

Stifles the serenading notes
Of nature's troubadours, and bids
The housed and meditative goats
To carry out their whimpering kids;

And from my stellar heritage
Fans up the flame of old desires
In which my spirit shares the rage
Of captive and rebellious fires

[283]

Whose insurrection wildly wakes,
With whirling fierce flame-bladed thrust,
The old Vesuvian power that shakes
Man and his labours to the dust.

IV

O love! more deep than grief or mirth
My brooding heart would fain draw near
The ancient oracle of Earth
With true interpretative ear;

For here a Presence in cool eyes,
By fruiting and by fruitless trees,
Walks where the fabled fig still weaves
The old Edenic draperies

That did our disobedience tell,
And called the swift exiling knife
That flashed behind us when we fell
Esteeming knowledge more than life.

In veiled but penetrating eyes
I feel the symbol-signs that say
How buried seeds of Paradise
Trouble with dreams the drowsy clay;

How, mixed in worthlessness and worth,
Inscribed on banner and on urn,

[284]

The Love, O love! that drave us forth
But rounds departure to return

Unto companionship with Them
That bask in Eden's cloudless sun,
When, grafted on the spirit's stem,
Knowledge and life shall bloom as one;

When passion to compassion grows;
When vision sees in hand that delves,
In wing that soars, in friends and foes,
But adumbrations of ourselves;

When dies the crimson wandering fire
As radiant Love assumes control,
And incantations of desire
Yield to enchantments of the soul.

V

Dear! from a dream this morn I woke
Of morning's old familiar grace;
But ah! my salutation broke
On unresponsive time and space.

Nor could love's chariot, lightning-drawn,
O'ertake the heart's imagined boon:
I bloomed in pale Italian dawn;
You wilted in the tropic noon.

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Yet, solace for all hungry souls,
My lips with inner joy repeat:
"Lo! at the spirit's hidden poles
All separate meridians meet."

Time ends the pact by time begun;
But neither time nor space can mar
A tryst that antedates the sun,
A bond sealed on a vanished star.

Oh! we who have in will essayed
To love in the celestial way,
Dare not our mutual Gods degrade
Through frail alliances with clay.

Not the most poignant inner reach
Of trellised fingers, mingled eyes,
Nor all love's songs in all men's speech
That holy passion pacifies.

Higher than exile's aching walls,
Clearer than joy in union lit,
Through all life's finitudes it calls
From infinite to infinite.

And not alone doth love invite
Our hearts on that high quest to go:
All life's desirings of delight
Press on with us; for well we know

[286]

What comrades crowd the spiral track
Trode out in star-dust and in loam,
Where pressing on is hastening back,
And even truant feet go home;

And where, by reckonings that flout
The rude arithmetic of men,
Two souls from Eden-gate went out—
And only two shall come again.

For, mixed in seraph, sage and elf,
In wandering waters, captive trees,
Life, through enlargements of itself
Moves on to mightier syntheses;

Compacting to an instant's glance
All that through sight the senses stirred;
Hushing life's myriad utterance
Back to the one enfolding Word;

Till shrink the forests to a seed,
The sea into a raindrop slips;
And music is again a reed
At Pan's, a flute at Krishna's, lips,

Waiting once more the ancient call
To play us forth Love's Troth to keep;
One spirit through the deep to call,
And one to answer from the deep.

July 1930.

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LOVE'S ECONOMY

A vilanelle thirty years after

You looked so good, so rare,
That, when love neared its prize,
I only touched your hair.

My wild heart did not dare
More nearness to devise,
You looked so good, so rare.

Yea, though your smile made fair
Your brave illustrious eyes,
I only touched your hair.

What lost I to prefer
Soul's touch to body's cries,
You looked so good, so rare?

Oh! love's long wealth they share
Who love economise:
I only touched your hair.

Now life has joy to spare
Because, by love made wise,
You looked so good, so rare,
I only touched your hair.

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AN ANNIVERSARY

(Maundy Thursday, April 9, 1903)

To Gretta, April 9, 1931

I walked into the air;
For walls I found
Inadequate to share
The spreading ground

Of my felicity
That skyward rose
For that which came to me
(And never goes)

That day of all my days
That pivoted
My life, in wondrous ways
Supremely wed;

So that, while calends count
Year following year,
My soul's memorials mount,
A growing sphere

That, on Love's orbit cast,
Through heaven swings,
Girt gloriously with vast
Saturnian rings

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Round whose detergent fires
My spirit flies
After what soul desires
And sense denies;

My brow and breast laid bare
Along Life's wind;
The years my lengthening hair
Curving behind.

As thus I musing walked
In the heart's haze,
Nature comradely talked
In divers ways

In wind and flower and wood;
Yet all conjoint
To magnify my mood;
And—to the point—

Two swallows stilled their sleek
Home-hunting wings,
And gossiped beak to beak
Of household things;

And with commanding call
A woodpecker

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—Like a capped cardinal—
Climbed his tree-stair

With solemn pulpit-stride
Till, out of sight
Of gossips scandal-eyed,
He drummed delight.

Likewise, a wrinkled oak,
Touched by the day,
Some old tree-language spoke
And seemed to say

That, had I power to pry
Her secret near,
In that charmed moment I
Might see and hear

The iris round her root
As anklets ring,
And on a twirling foot
Her skirts outswing

And all her being thrill
In static dance,
Though so sedately still
To my dull glance.

[291]

One thing stood strangely mute.
An orange-tree
So pompous was with fruit
I smiled to see

A fancied circus-wight,
No longer young,
His conscious breast with bright
Gold medals hung.

Yet wrong I did it there,
That wordless tree,
Thinking it had no care
For mine or me;

For straightway came that scent
That symboleth
A mightier event
Than birth or death;

The scent of orange-flowers
That mutely tells
The consecrated towers
To swing their bells

And tell the universe
That on that day
Two souls on earth rehearse
The heavenly play

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In which Life sets the tasks
To cell and sun
To seek behind their masks
The Hidden One.

Such thought, with mine to share,
I had not hoped.
All Life's live seasons there
Were telescoped

So wizardly complete,
It seemed to me
The solid counterfeit
Of the dream-tree

That Francis Thompson sang,
Whose vision made
Flower, leaf and fruitage hang
All undecayed.

Its wax-white, greenly-blent,
Virginal robes,
And spread accomplishment
Of golden globes,

Had meaning more profound,
More subtly wrought,
Than symphonies of sound,
Or delving thought,

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Seeing it summed for me
Of mine own soul
The authentic history,
Upon whose scroll

Mysteriously meet
The Powers that move
The simultaneous feet
Of Life and Love;

That mingle sweet and sage,
Delight and truth;
And season gathering age
With gathered youth.

Therefore that silent tree
Played a veiled part,
That anniversary,
Its hidden heart

Seemed so to palpitate
In tune with mine,
I knew it knew the date
Was April nine;

That Maundy morn that brought
To me (and you)
The bliss the Shelleys sought,
The Brownings knew.

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A MUSICIAN'S HOME

EXTERIOR

Suddenly sight through insight passed, to where
Enchanted fingers on invisible staves
Translated shapes and hues to rhythmic waves,
And flowers flung sound, not scent, upon the air.
I caught the crackling of the poppy's flare
Making elegiac murmurs over graves,
While marg'rite sang the maiden song that saves,
And canterbury bells rang time for prayer.

Foxglove, poinsettia, dahlia, row by row
Upstanding, carolled to delphinium's wand.
I heard the lilies a loud fanfare blow
Goldenly under Gabriel's hidden hand,
And for a moment silence music's foe
That roared its threat from sky and sea and land.

INTERIOR

And when, day done, fair hands whose wing-wafts
lent
The touch of life that ivory silence thrills;
And fingers whose deft wizardry distils
Through string on string sound's rapturous content;
Repeat, through art, creation's vast event;
Oh! then new earth, new heaven, the vision fills;

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His melody is skyline to new hills;
Her harmony a star-built firmament.

They cease. But silence is no longer strange:
It folds all music under waiting wings
As Spring her seedlings in the Winter's grange.
We see, commingled in the flux of things,
Beauty immortalized through mortal change,
And Life survive a thousand perishings.

THE CHOICE

If choose I must a resting-place
What time my feet begin to fail;
By God's most hospitable grace
I choose a brook-side in a vale.

I ask not ocean's trumpeting,
Or hills that hearken to the skies;
For one is loud with questionings,
And one is quiet with replies.

But by my brooklet's lyric leap
My heart may contemplate at ease
Life's deep desirings for the deep
Mingled with mountain memories.

And mine own rivulet of rhyme
May run from summit unto sea,
Singing between the banks of time
The music of eternity.

BY THE RIVER

The Delaware at Eddington, Pennsylvania

A great blue-heron slopes across my eyes,
And on a quiet pool his shadow flings;
Then scans around his feet the expanding rings,
Contented with a reedy paradise;
While, overhead, man's droning dragon-flies,
Seeking to shrink the magnitudes of things
With his courageous mimicry of wings,
Shatter and sting the unoffending skies.

Tall bulrushes some happy secret hear
And whisper as if cradled they espied
Reasons why Pharaoh's daughter should appear.
Broad spatterdocks, wave-lifted side by side,
Sink not as sinks the stream, but stoutly rear
Their heads on high, and wait another tide.

ORCHARD WINDFALLS

From branches veiled by branches from the eye,
Pears that their lowlier kindred quite outgrew,
Reaching a sweeter savour, ruddier hue,
Drop to the earth, and where they drop they lie.
Here is choice feasting for the butterfly,
Gold-winged with edgings from a smoking flue,
Or black circumferenced with gold and blue—
The bright stigmata of the sun and sky.

And while my ears imbibe the leafy chimes
Of stems whose upward urgings heavenward call,
The feasters spread and close in lazy rhymes
Their sated pinions—caring not at all
That life unsatisfied is life that climbs,
And life that reaches fruitage reaches fall.

WOODLAND DUSK

The shadows of the trees across the grass
Are slanted emerald imposed on jade.
Between the oaks the levelling sunrays pass,
And stencil maple boles with beechen shade.

A squirrel seeks his refuge hidden high.
Two birds like furtive shadows darkly climb
Unto their casual caravanserai
In comradeship beyond the nesting-time.

Now stands each tree-trunk as a blackened husk
Whose smoke still hangs in greenly glimmering
bands.

Now, in the transformations of the dusk,
They turn to sails hoisted by unseen hands

On straining masts, to drive the mundane barque
Into the vast adventure of the dark.

Sarobia, Eddington, Pennsylvania.

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INVISIBLE DESIGN

To a Butterfly

Honey from blooms the zephyr swings
And fitful flight your day fulfil;
And out of these, upon your wings,
The wizard hands of life distil
In rhythmic line and rainbow tone
A beauty you have never known.

And should my honey-days depart,
And all seem ruin round me spread,
I shall remember, and take heart,
Knowing that somewhere overhead
Expands in deeper eyes than mine
My soul's invisible design.

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