

**DIVINATIONS
AND
CREATION**

BY
HORACE HOLLEY

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FOREWORD

“O THAT I be

As oak to the carver’s knife, or tougher stone,

A moveless monolith

Scored deep with secret hieroglyphs

Whence men will slowly, letter by letter, spell

Enduring exultation for their lives!

For I am witness to a miracle

That opens a new mad mouth

Quick with astonishment of ardent words

Not mine but prophets to this wonder

That must be testified all new and strange

And ere it stale be kneaded in our clay,

Since memory would betray what must remain

Ever before us like tomorrow.

Of myself

I should not otherwise heap words

Upon the garbage of our daily gossip.

But let you pass unhailed

Myself preferring to slip within a dream

Like a stretched lily in its quiet pool.”

RENAISSANCE

ONCE more, in the mouths of glad poets,
Words have become
Terrible.
An energy has seized and ravished them
Like a young lover,
And they are pregnant.
Their sound is the roaring of March tempests;
Their meaning stabs the heart
Like the dagger thrust flashing from a dancer's sleeve.
Terrible and stark are words
Once more,
Risen from the deeps of eternal silence.
New gods and fruitfuller races
Chant
Jubilant behind them!

THE SOLDIERS

(An Impression of Battle)

WHOM I long since had known,
Long since forgotten;
Who cast their names behind them like a dream,
Like stagnant water spitting
Their tasteless souls away;
These are the soldiers,
The nameless, the changelings,
Monstrous with slow tormenting Number,
Pestilent with unremitting Machine.

Soldiers ...

These are they whom I suspected, guilty and glorious,
Crouching in my own thought's background,
Released by the whirlwind of fate
To move as winds that scream about the Pole,
As darkness of sea-depths,
As meeting of ice and flame.
Priests of the mystic sensual death,
When shall they return?
When shall they return, broken, from Hell?

The fuse of a thousand years has burned:
Lord, quicken the groping hands of tomorrow!

HERTHA

SHE will grow
Beautiful.
Beauty will come to her
Given, like sun and rain;
Will go from her
Freely, like laughter.
She will be
Centre, circumference to a great joy
Swiftly passing, repassing
Like water in and from a limpid well.
She is of the new generation, new;
Torch for the flame of passion,
Flame for the torch of love.

She will grow
Beautiful.
No, beauty itself will grow
Like her.

FLIGHT

AS sky to the hawk's wing be
O Life, for me!
Space yielding space and height compelling height,
To poise and free
The ardor of my flight!
Give me the sky
Of the hawk's wing, Life!
And does a Voice reply:
"To the hawk's wing ... to the hawk's wing,
Sky"?

LIFE

TO thrust back the hard, sleek water
With toil of body,
Spitting the bitter salt from the mouth;
Eyes just raised over
The heaving surface;
To sleep, captive of creeping tide and strangling billow;
Unable ever to stand upright in the stature of God—
The toil, the mystery, the danger!
At last sucked in by the hard, sleek, creeping water.

EGO

A SOUL of long-enduring silences,
In me
The ancient demons
Carved from Egyptian terror
Brood again,
High-throned above ten thousand pillars
Where the years
Break, like billows of sand;
Who sleep
Watchful behind lidless eyes
That men may call them sleepless;
Who speak
Seldom,
As words scored in tough, incredulous stone.

PAYSAGE D'AME

BUT there's a desert moment in the soul
All dry, all level, all monotony;
As if it were the bed of some lost stream
Or shore to salt, forgotten inland lakes
That stormed a way with waves, then died to sand,
Salt, glittering sand, interminable and mad.
In this spot or in that where one lies down
At last too reconciled,
The stretched, black tongue is just as far from speech;
And nowhere can the finger, trembling out,
Stab the escaped horizon.
Never, never and never who loves the world away
Loves one day back.

DURING A MUSIC

SHARP barbs of many arrows
Sped suddenly from the ambush of old sorrow
Transfix us;
Now the company, hypocrite,
Bleeds in its anguish of passion—
St. Stephen!
Redeemed by the arrows!

NEW YORK

(By an “artist refugee”)

“SNICKER between convulsive screams of war,
Fate, that snickered of old
Gloating to watch Æneas and his race
Orphaned from golden Troy;
Ulysses too,
No luckier, tossed upon the trackless ocean—
Snicker once more
And goad the gods against our wished return,
We, homeless as they,
Thrust forth from that same rage renewed
From Troys re-wasted
And cast upon this half-spawned isle where seized us
A worse-than-Cyclops!
Snicker that we are prisoned in such cave,
(Few, few will be the stern survivors
Winning the dream beyond or the dream forsaken!),
Yet, as you bend to gloat, see! written
In smoke and blood our hearty scorn of Cyclops,
Homeric epigram damning the isle forever:
Sting of beehive, strife of antheap, stupor of graveyard.”

TOTEM

THE lake in utter liquid silence
Mirrored the sky;
In utter granite silence rose about
Mountain on mountain, colored like a flame
And flaunting all seasons to the single view;
Mountain and lake, and wood and cloudy snow
Barred thrice against my spirit—
They conversed
With whomsoever knew their native tongue,
A mystic murmur eloquent, to me
Silence oppressive; and I stood
A stranger, subtly hated, in the land.
It seemed the world turned inside out,
I outside, banished, banned, feeling
Beyond the wall were secrets spelling life.
Strange image! Brutal wood! Tremendous form!
Totem! Guardian god of long-forgotten souls!
In you is locked the lost, the ancient tongue,
The language intimate, wooed from lake and mountain—
In you, strange silent thing,
America!

HOME

NOW as from a long arduous journey
Have I returned
Homeward within myself
And loose from aching shoulder the pressing straps,
And lay my burden down, my wisdom,
Content with home.
In this small garden I see
Meeting and mingling, fused to familiar things,
The strange glamor that beckoned across star-lit desert,
The passionate freedom that heaved within the ocean,
The glory of marble cities and marching men.
May I be local as a tree or hill,
Which no man moves in his imagination.

EPIGRAMS

1

CAN I outwatch a fixed, unwinking star?
Can I outwait the calm Millennium?
Speak from that starry silence which you are;
Yield me your heart's lone heaven—come, O come!

2

Unfold for men, O God, love's true, creative day
To flower our barren lives by mellow rain and noon:
The glory of old thought is still, and cold, and gray,
Like gardens unrenewed beneath the sterile moon.

3

Whate'er our love vouchsafe, men's praise and blame
 fall hollow,
A voice upon the winds that drown it as they blow:
So fair a vision led our thought was all to follow;
So strong a passion urged our will was all to go.

4

Love cometh to the proud as a strong wind upon little
 ships.
 Confounding them;
Unto the meek it cometh as April to the wayside,
 Scattering joy.

5

Ill health—the heart’s unseen Gethsemane;
Ill health—the mind’s unknown insanity;
Ill health—a prison round the spirit built
Darker than Judas’ sin, than Kaiser’s guilt!

6

A dead leaf has fallen in the forest,
And that is my past suffering;
A drop of rain is lost within the sea,
And that is my old desire.

7

With slow, deliberate hands
I carve my secret
On cliff, on shattered stone, on ancient wall,
Letter by letter,
Arduous, firm.

A PETAL

THE garden is drenched with dew,
Each drop has captured the dawn;
Suns purple and gold gleam through
From myriad blades on the lawn.
The trees, long rooted in gloom
Where slumberous Winter has been,
Skyward toss branches abloom
Like dancers glad to begin.

CREATIVE

RENEW the vision of delight
By vigil, praise and prayer
Till every sinew leaps in might
And every sense is fair:
Beyond the soul's most stagnant dread
A full tide drives its foam
Where life, with golden sails outspread,
Is one glad voyage home.

THE ORCHARD

I STOOD within an orchard during rain
Uncovering to the drops my aching brow—
O wondrous fancy, to imagine now
I slip, with trees and clouds, the social chain,
At one with nature, naught to lose or gain
Nor even to become; no, just to be
My being's self and essence wholly free
From needs that mold the heart to forms of pain.
Arise, I cried, and celebrate the hour!
Acclaim serener gladness; if it fail
New courage, nobler vision will survive
That I have known my kinship to the flower,
My brotherhood with rain; and in this vale
Have been a moment's friend to all alive.

THE SEER

WHO must fare alone tonight
Underneath the stormy skies,
Who must wait the morning light
Patient, alone, with fearless eyes?
The Seer, the Singer,
The Heaven-bringer,
Patient, alone, with fearless eyes.

Who must leave his kin, and roam
Past the bourn of farthest wind;
Who must make the world his home,
Glad of the crust the beggars find?
The Seer, the Singer,
The Heaven-bringer,
Glad of the crust the beggars find.

“Who was it came, who was it went?—
Ere we could speak he passed along.
He filled our hearts with wonderment:
We know him not, but hear his song.”
The Seer, the Singer,
The Heaven-bringer,
We know him not, hut hear his song!

THE PRINCE

“THE world’s proud head has shaken down
As from a burden free
The splendor of his ancient crown,
His golden royalty,
And with his broken sceptre, flings
The glory and the faith of kings.

“The throne that Time prepared for him
Within a solemn court
Settles in ruin mild and dim;
And there no more resort
Power, justice, mercy, whom his face
Once touched with stern, superior grace.

“The sacred majesty of law
Goes dressed in common weed;
Authority, once hedged with awe,
Men hire to serve their need;
All attributes of royal worth
In exile scatter through the earth.

“O lest the world, with kings, o’erthrow
Its own superior line,
Before this vacant throne I vow
One aim, one passion mine:
To raise the King on high again
And throne him in the hearts of men!”

PAGANS

CRAFTY, they come again,
Pagans of heart and brain
To seize with carefuller art
Our life in mind and heart;
Who wasted the love we sold
For image of brass and gold
But now with words betray
Our eager love today.
Up, faith, and forward, vision!
Ride wrath and drive derision
Among their tongues, to break
Riddle and rhyme they make
Lest we be taken in shames,
Netted in numbers and names!
Riddle and rhyme and spell—
Crafty, who sing so well.

CROSS PATCH

HER ardent spirit fled beyond her years
As light before a flame.
At fifteen, the tennis medal; at sixteen, the golf cup;
Then, the coveted! bluest of blue ribbons
For faultless horsemanship.
No man in all that country,
Whatever his sport,
But had to own the girl the better man.
At that she merely smiled—saying that triumph
Is all a matter of *thrill*: who tingles most,
He wins inevitably.
Half bewilderment, half jest,
They called her *Sprite*, those ordinary folk
Who thought such urge, such instinct of life to joy
Was somehow mythical.
And having named her, they no longer thought of her
(To their relief) as young or old, one sex or other—
Just herself, apart, a goddess of outofdoors.
Certainly school boys never dreamed of her tenderly
As one to send a perfumed valentine;
But when she strode among the horses in the field
They pawed the ground.
No leash could hold a dog when she passed by.
Then, despite her ardent race with time—
Ardent as though each moment were a dare
To some adventure of freed muscle and thrilled nerve—
A fleeter runner overtook her flight

And bound her tightly in a golden net,
Hands, feet and bosom; lips and hair and eyes:
Beauty, beauty of women.
Or was it she, unconscious what she raced,
Ran suddenly, breathless, glad and yet dismayed,
Into the arms of her own womanhood?
Which, no one knew, herself the least of all.
But no more did she fly beyond herself
As anxious to leave the very flesh behind,
But lingered with it in deep and rapturous content;
Her ardor turned
Henceforth within upon a secret goal.
Spirit and beauty seemed to flow together,
Each rapt in each
Like a hushed lily in a hidden pool.
Only at dances did the sprite peep out,
Ardent and yet controlled,
Alive to every turn and slope of the rhythm
As if the music spread a path for her
To what she truly sought.
'Twas at a dance she found it—found the man—
And no one had to question what she found:
Her eyes, her very fingertips proclaimed
The marvel it was to be a part of her,
A part of love.
The man—he had no medals and ribbons of triumph;
If she had fled on horse or even on foot

He never could have caught her.
It must have been his mind's humility
That made her stay,
So thoughtless of itself, so thoughtful of
Forgotten wisdoms, old greatness, world glories,
A patient, slow, but never-yielding search
(Passionate too, with wings' flight of its own)
For what—compared with other minds she knew—
Might well have seemed the blessed Western isles.
They lived beyond the village on a hill
Beneath a row of pines; a house without pretence
Yet fully conscious of uncommon worth—
A house all books inside.
Their only neighbor was a garrulous man
Who smoked a never-finished pipe
Beside a never-finished woodpile
Strategically placed against the road
So none could pass without his toll of gossip.
He started it.
One day, pointing his thumb across the pines, he said
“Something's wrong up yonder;
Their honeymoon has set behind a storm.
I heard 'em fight last night ...
Well, what'd he expect? They're all alike—*women.*”
Of course it got about,
And while no one quite believed,
Still, to make sure some friendly women called.

They said that he was studying, quite as usual,
Not changed at all, just quiet and indrawn—
The last man in the world to make a quarrel—
And she, well, of course, *she* wasn't so easy to read,
Always strange and different from a child,
But even in her the sharpest eye saw nothing
That seemed the loose end of the littlest trouble.
No couple could have acted more at ease;
And anyhow, a woman like *that*, they said,
Would never have stayed so quiet behind the pines
With real unhappiness, but tossed it broadcast
Like brands against the burning of the world.
She said the house was *damp*—and that was all.
At last even the old garrulous woodpile
Knocked out those ashes and refilled his pipe.
Then, a few months later, a frightened servant girl
Ran out at early morning from the pines
Crying the judge in town.
She said her mistress suddenly, without cause,
Standing beside her in the kitchen, turned on her
Blackly a moment, with words no decent girl deserved,
Then struck her full in the face, spat on her, pulled her
hair.
She wanted damages, the servant did,
Yes, and a clean character before the world—
That is, if the woman wasn't mad.
Mad! Oh ho! the shock of it

Rolled seething over the place like a tidal wave,
And in the wake of the wave, like weed and wreckage,
Many a hint and sense of something wrong at the pines
Sprawled in the daylight.

A stable boy remembered

How not a week before she'd called for a horse,
The spiritedest saddle they had,
And when she brought him back 'twas late at night,
The horse and woman both done up,
Slashed, splashed and dripping;

But all she said was *send the bill*;

The beast's no good; Til never ride again.

So this and other stories quite as strange
Stretched everybody's nerves for the trial to come,
And made them angry when it didn't come.

He settled with the girl outside of court.

The judge's wife knew all there was to know:

Not jealousy at all, just nerves—

Every woman, you know, at a certain time ...

Of course, agreed the village, so *that's* it? still

(Not to be cheated outright) still,

Even so, she'd best take care that temper—

A husband's one thing, an unborn child's another—

She'd always been a stormy, uncontrollable soul.

Some blamed the husband he had never reined her in,

Most pitied him a task impossible.

All awaited the event on tiptoe—

It wasn't like other women, somehow, for *her* to have a
child.

No child was born.

Then other women sneered:

“She wanted one, and couldn't—served her right.”

This lapse from the common law of women

Was all the fissure the sea required

To force the dike with; little by little,

The pressure of year on year,

The pines and the two lives they hid

Grew dubious, then disagreeable, at last sinister.

At this point the new generation took up

Its inheritance, the habit of myth,

And quite as matter of course it found her hateful,

Ugly, a symbol of sudden fear by darkened paths,—

Cross Patch!

And one by one the people who were young

Beside her youth, moved off or died or changed,

Forgetting her youth as they forgot their own,

Until if ever she herself

Had felt a sudden overwhelming pang

To stop some old acquaintance on the road

And stammer out “You know, don't you? the girl I

was—

I was not always *this*, was I?” she might have met

A dozen at most to know the Sprite her youth,

But none to clear the overtangled path

That led from *Sprite* to *Cross Patch*—not one, not one
But looking back would damn
The very urge of joy in *Sprite*, and all its ardor,
For having mothered *Cross Patch*—not one, not one
To see the baffled womanhood she was;
Orphan of hopes too bright, not mother of wrong.
And thus besieged on all sides by the present
Against all sides she fought, as if by fury
To force one way to yield.
For both it was a nightmare, not a life, and neither
Could well have told how it had ever begun,
But once begun it seemed inevitable,
A storm that settled darkly round their souls,
Unwilled as winter
With moan of wind through sere and barren boughs
And skies forever masked.
The first blow of the quarrel had been hers,
A blow unguessed of either, for she struck
Like nature, not to hurt but to survive;
But wrath accrued
So soon thereafter that the blow seemed angry,
And she struck out again with eyes and tongue,
Pursuing him, the angrier at his grief,
Until in sheer defence he struck
Not at herself but at her blows, to ward them.
Keeping the while
His thought above the dark upon a star or so

Fixed in the past; but she defended her wrath
As dignified and right—they stormed
Up, up the hill and down,
Increasing darkness to the end of life.
Friends said of him
He seemed like a lonely sentinel
Posted against the very edge of doom,
Whom no watch came relieving.
“She’ll kill him yet; the fool!” the woodpile’s verdict
Before the pipe went out for the last time
Leaving the pines unneighbored.
But he was wrong, the urn outlasted the flame.
One night, hands at her throat, she came
And knelt before him, timidly looking up
And trying to speak, to *speak*—struggling as if words
Were something still to learn.
At last speech broke from her, so agonized
He hardly knew if it were supreme wrath or supreme
 supplication:
“*You did not love me. ...*”
And as he bent to her he felt
Her girlhood cry, a murdered thing returned.
He hoped that it was wrath, as easier to endure,
Feeling it burn from mind to heart, from heart to soul,
Gathering more terror, more awe, at each advance.
Like a priest with sacrifice it passed
The colonnades of his thought, entering without pause

An unknown altar of his being
Behind a curtain never moved before.
“*You did not love me. ...*”
Both gazed upon the sacrifice held up
As though it w[^]ere the bleeding heart of God.
And then the priest returned, slowly, pace by pace
Out of the hush of feeling into the hush of thought.
It was the priest and not himself, the man believed,
Who like an echo, not less agonized,
Whispered across the waste of many lives,
Whispered “*No. ...*”
Whose heart, the man’s or woman’s, lowest stooped
To raise the other, prostrate heart aloft
With supplication and consolement, urging it
To live, *O live!*—dying itself the while,
God knew before the beginning of the world.
We only know that stooping so, dust turned to dust,
All hearts meet at last.

CONFESSION

“THE first hour with her, even the first,
I felt
A leaf in some lone forest crisp and fall.
A wiser man were warned.
I stayed;
And straightway, like a strange eclipse,
All things lost luster in her presence,
Lost luster, darkening—days, events, and I.
And still I was not warned.
Yet, in my new remorse
(What else but I the knife that tortured her?)
I asked—why had I changed?
What hardened, what edged my heart,
What drove it home?
No will of mine.
Then, as the darkness thickened and grew mad,
Walling us two in one close coffin
(A cenotaph, I said!),
The brooding whisper I meant became a scream
And suddenly from that terror lightning broke
Our sunless worlds apart; and she was gone.
And she was gone.
Now, as I turn from the world’s reproach
Seared like the fields against the new seeds’ sowing,
One thing I say of that mad winter—
One thing, the last:
“Poor child ...
She was the tragedy ... before it came.”

THE MEETING

INDEED, it was no ordinary night
But gloomed by rain and riven by the light
Of reckless, crashing clouds that seemed to meet
As ships along the rivers of the street—
A night when hearts like lonely ships would fly
The burden of their ocean and their sky,
And as from storm-beridden voyage end
At last within the harbor of a friend.
Yet I was ordinary, unelate;
I felt no rendezvous that night with fate;
And had I not made promise, rain or fine,
To meet with friends at a new place to dine,
Had much preferred to idle home instead
And take my romance, second hand, in bed.
Arrived, by this time awed and silent too,
I gladly lost myself among the few
Already met, whose speech roofed out the storm,
Whose laughter lit the room and made it warm.
Well I remember yet the corner where
I tilted in a small, uneasy chair,
But cannot now recall a single word
Of all I might have said or might have heard,
For through my thoughts as through a broken pane
Somehow the darkness drifted and the rain. ...
A later guest moved in beside me soon.

I laughed; “There is between us but one spoon.”

“O that’s a custom here; each takes his turn.”

I looked at her. ... I saw the candles burn
Brighter along the pleating of her hair
And round it glory such as legends wear;
Her eyes, a moment shown, were suns gone down
To twilight of a meditative brown;
Her age ... it seemed like some rare trophy hung
Between two victories. And then my tongue
Like an old harp of long-forgotten tone
Awoke to sudden music, not its own—
Music in which her speech and silence blent
The throb of a responsive instrument. ...

“And yet how strange it is,” I said at last;
“How strange ... a something through my heart has
 passed

These very moments, something that would speak
Within my words, my thoughts, willing but weak.
It seems to come from some dim long ago.”

“So soon?” she murmured. “*Give it voice and know.*”

“Well, as I may. ... It’s like a telephone
That brings incredible leagues of whispered tone,
Or like a drama, shadowy but real,

Of some one's life replayed for me to feel—
A life that reaches hither from the dead.”

“Draw closer, closer whom it is” she said.

“There! now it's clear, no farther than a pace:
I seem to stand with some one face to face—
A woman, yes, a woman that I knew ...
But she's Egyptian!”—

“What was she to you?”

“What could she be? And yet ... and yet, close by,
I see a sleeping child—*the child is I!*
I know him as I know the yesteryear
My memory keeps in sight or odour here
More intimate than things I touch and see;
I know him as a very part of me,
A path retrodden and a gate unbarred.
By him I know the woman. ... It is hard
To keep these selves apart, so close we seem!”

“O do not try. But is there more you dream?”

“Yes, yes, that life unwinds itself again
With all its scenes of different times and men,

And round each act, each passion, every mood,
One essence clings, that woman's motherhood ...
A motherhood so urgent yet so mild
It made my spirit lonely as a child,
As one forever homesick, to return
Somewhere, sometime, to her"—

"And still you yearn?"

"Perhaps. ... Great beauty makes me lonely still
As though *her* passion worked upon my will.
In her as in a garden I was sown;
Her heart was like a far horizon thrown
About the goings and comings of my heart,
From whom my blindest path could not depart.
I was the empty cup, and she the wine—
How have I thought my being wholly mine?
I'd thank her now, but she alas is dead."

"Are you so sure? What of yourself?" she said.

"O you are right! I am no longer sure
Of what things perish and what things endure ...
And yet one thing tonight I'm certain of:
A woman without *her* I could not love!"

"But there were other women—can you see?"

“Yes, many others whom confidently
I gave the candle of my life to light;
Dimly I feel them, not like her, tonight.
Not dimly, no, with very pang renewed
I live again one hour, become one mood:
It was the evening of the day she died—
Too late the message brought me to her side—
And seeing her unresponsive, in decay,
Thin, sere, the orphan of her opulent day,
I prayed beside her, stricken to the bone,
In anguish wrestling with all grief alone ...
When underneath my sight a new sight burned
Than saw, unspoiled, the tender one returned,
Yes! somehow lovelier, somehow purer gold
While unbelievably shrunk, incredibly old.”

“The grief of love is beauty’s faithful glass.”

“The one I love, her glory would not pass ...
How strange, to walk this night among the dead!”

“The dead are walking this night in us!” she said.

“Surely! and many, many are the feet
I hear return; many the hearts that beat
Against my heart to enter and to tell
Forgotten secrets.”

“Listen, listen well!”

“A comet that through time’s prodigious black
Moved to the ends of heaven then journeyed back,
From death to birth I sped, quickened by will
That gave me motion: death and time stand still ...
Once more I lived, with altered race and name,
With altered thoughts but in my soul the same—
The soul, that music whose innumerable strings
I hear tonight, echoes of echoings
All gathered in one sound as if I stood
Within the ear of God.”

“Tonight you would!”

“The life whose orbit now dips nearest me,
It seems, but how to tell? it seems to be
Open to love as it was open before,
But on love’s other side. ...”

“You loved HER more?”

“Her? ... Yes, I feel a woman’s presence near—
How could you guess? and thoughts more strangely dear,
More intimate, than I had ever known
Even in former lives ... as if I’d grown
Ready for this new love in all my lives.”

“You loved this woman, then, as men their wives?”

“Ah no! It was a daughter I adored!
Her groping hands and heart in me unstored
An unsuspected world of brooding awe;
Of miracle, a law behind our law;
Of passion’s best desire resolved in clay.
On her I labored as an artist may
To manifest, before his dreams depart,
The tense, creative longing of his heart.
So then I felt ... but now as I return
Within that delicate fellowship, I learn
How much I changed by her I thought to change.
Her rapt young beauty—what on earth more strange
Than this awakening in fatherhood
Of something so maternal, yes, *so good!*—
It strained the waters of my old desire
And turned to light love’s self-consuming fire.”

“You did not feel that older self of you?”

“Not as by thoughts but as by dreams I grew
Conscious of deeper soul and wider scheme. ...”

“But never of that mother did you dream?”

“Never to be aware—yet once almost

She lived again, a momentary ghost
Invisible against the luminous day—
A presence and a sign that slipped away
While, guessing at myself, I guessed at her.
She stood about the daughter like a blur—

“About the daughter?”

“Yes. It was the hour
Of my leavetaking. Silent with the power
Of words I could not speak, of words turned tears—”

“The pang that strangles yet across the years!”

“As well as I she knew the words unsaid—”

“How should a daughter not, the day she wed?”

“Then round about her drew that other one
In whom I felt the mother, me the son ...
I thought it was a new bride’s hope confessed
Of motherhood to be. But who had guessed?
She spoke no word of whom or what returned;
For both alike unutterably I yearned ...”

“O self that to itself becomes a ghost!”

“Tonight, so near them both ... I dare almost
Believe that one and other were the same—
Adorably one womanhood that came
With beauty guarded thus, with love untold,
A flame within my life to free its gold. ...”

“With love half told, invoking more delight. ...”

“With love half heard, half known—until tonight!”

Over her yielded hands I bowed my head:

“That I am you ... that you are I!” we said.

MASTERS OF ALL

ROLLING alone, a soul that could not know
The why of itself, the what and why of the sky,
I labored with the slow blind moments
To pile about the white flame-core of my life
Dream upon dream, unconscious what they were;
Which now as by intense geology
Lie stratum on stratum, each an inadequate self
Living its aeon of old frustrate desire
But cumbrously, marvelously wrought
Compact at last from core to disk, a shape
Joining the harmonic motion of all worlds
Until, æons and æons more of mute perfection,
I found my sun, my season in the sky.
Then lo! the disk thrust out a garden
As on pavilions of old dream.
Habitable and conscious—*life*:
A little strip of being poised in the vast inane
Wherein as Adam I walk in my own dawn
And find you there as Eve, we two
Masters of all.

ELEKTRA

GLORY that you are
I do not want you to be a glory;
Are there not stars enough, and music,
And words which at the turning of thought's long vistas
Amaze the soul?
But I would have you near,
Near as the beating of my heart,
Near and familiar.
Here upon my table your wrinkled glove,
Your coat upon my chair,
And ever your footsteps, ever your speech, ah near!
For I would relearn this world looking through your
 eyes.
And build the day anew upon your kisses,
Its miracle the perfume of your presence.
Your wrinkled glove and coat
Sprawling beside me—they
Would banish the mystic stars, and bring their glory
Passionately down to wood and earth and stone
All-glorious now for me, instinct with power
To build a home about us—Paradise!

IN A BOOK OF POEMS

FAITH cried of old that life fulfills in death,
That heaven, not earth, was made the meetingplace
For dream and deed, for power and wisdom, grace
Perfected as a new-born child with breath,
As tongues with speech, eyes vision, hearts with blood.
So faith foreknew and told, even in this dark
Where every arrow seems to miss its mark,
Each sacrifice its right of gratitude.
But life's the mock of faith if life must die,
And faith's the scourge of life if life must fear.
Who spells the riddle? How shall love fulfill?
But heaven and earth grow closer, here, O here
For whoso die to self, as you and I,
And, born to spirit, learn the spirit's will.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

(For the year 1916)

“GRANT them, in peace, their blustering argument;
Calm-souled, obey their mad and soulless will;
Though it confirm their triumph and your ill,
Follow their ways and live them through, content.

“In all the world keep back no smallest plot
Beyond their lust, even for an altar place—
Nay, give them, with a lover’s eager grace
All things you have and are till you are not.

“Build to the top each vaunting Babel tower
Their pride appoints to overtake the sun,
And, witnessing its doom or ere begun,
Condemn your labor’s limit, not their power.

“Press first in every battle they deploy;
Their murder multiply, their suicide;
If they so bid, against yourselves divide:
Loose as they will, and as they will, destroy.

“Who questions them in aught, he questions Me.
I am unquestionable. Me not oppose.
By good and evil and by friends and foes
I join the ends of My eternity.

“They seize the means: the end I hold above
The frenzied schemes of their unwitting mind,
Close, yet concealed, as sunlight from the blind.
Be you the end: the end of all is love.

“Be patient to the end, and do not grieve.
Their to-and-fro is circled by My Power.
I sowed the seeds their effort brings to flower—
A paradise they know not, nor receive.”

SHE

SHE is the ewe lamb I tend by the hills of devotion.
She is the tigress I flee through the desert of shame.
She is the tempest that shatters my rock in the ocean.
She is the vision I follow, the path that I came.

DIALOGUE

“LIKE the god of a fountain, I knelt
Caressing the flow of your beauty
Till, limpid as you, I entered
The dominant whirlpool.”

“From the shadowy garden I gave you
Fruits that were softer than flowers,
Fruits of myself.
These, O lover, are renewed.”

TO CERTAIN AMERICANS

“I LOOKED, and saw the doom, and turned to salt,
Lot’s wife, become a legendary woe
Not well forgot by them who yet will show
Extremity of fate for extreme fault.
But you, worse disobedience, what shall halt
Your more than backward gaze, your backward hope
Relapsing from the decent task, to grope
For gold, unearned, within a charnel vault?
Know well, as souls have ampler light and wings
God moves His people upward to the sky
And dooms the bestial city of the plain;
Know well, whoever bestial would remain,
They join the darkness of forbidden things:
Which since you do, I pity, even I!”

FEAR

WITHIN my eyes the landscape sags
Like sodden garments from a nail;
Voices and music shatter in my ears
Like teacups in a trembling hand;
And faith, that was an eagle in the sun,
Hangs like a bat, in darkness, upside down.

INVOCATION

O GOD, who shattered every heart at last
And every mind and body, unaghost
Molding from spent hearts a purer heart,
From weary minds a hopefuller mind, to start
Renewed desire upon the way of love;
O God, take all as Thou hast taken of
My all so often; yet before I turn
Silent as earth and water, grant I burn
One beacon in this cloudy world of strife!
With all my life I reach to more than life—
Yea, ere I mingle with anonymous earth
Give me to spell this passion's passionate worth
Upon some visible, lasting monument!
Let not my rapture with my blood be spent,
But seizing light and movement, ever stay
A star against the dawn of perfect day.

DIVINATIONS

1

BLIND footprints treading the snow
In crazy hieroglyphs:
History ...
(For My beloved the snow lies white again!)

2

My beloved call one to another
“There is no yesterday!
“Memory, the fortune teller of souls,
“Slinks from her broken tent
“Fearing the storm.”

3

My beloved cry
“We move in a joyous Dream
“Parted from all that is!
“O God, Destroyer of paths that returned!”

4

Know you not, beloved,
I give you My sight
That you may behold all ends as beginnings;
My heart,
That you may adore things living;
And My memory,
To know yourselves?

5

Vainly in passionate arms you hold,
Or snare in whisper's echo
The strangers
That move in a World a world apart,
By paths that join you never.

6

The shadow of hate turned stone,
The image of scorn turned clay;
In the Seven Valleys of My will, beloved,
The strangers perish!

7

Over the gate of Death I carved in flame
“Not adoring My beauty again
“With these eyes;
“With this heart falling in love
“No more.”

8

None are the hieroglyphs within My court
You shall not read, beloved,
Save that yourselves have writ,
Yourselves adoring!

Not in your eyes that look to hill and cloud,
Nor in your hand plucking the yellow blossom
Does Spring return,
But in My radiant will
That burns upon the winter of your heart!
In this Season,
Wherever the seeds of your endeavor strike,
There is renewal.

My beloved,
I stand about you like a bright Horizon
Burning with many suns;
As flowers firmly rooted in the warm earth of Spring,
You live in the midst of Me.

MYSTIC

HANDS grope for the strung bow,
Feet for the open summit path,
Eyes for the strange altar carving.
Hands and feet tensely held, eyes closed,
Daylong I stand under the rain
Feeling a great power pouring, brimming my soul.
Break bow, close path, hide carving:
Here's all.

RAIN

ON housetops lofty as thought
The rain drips pelting down, the winter rain,
Pelting and spattering,
Driven from the austere windy north
As if the skies would cleave
To spew once more the forty days and nights
Prodigious with pelting rain,
And over these housetops lofty as thought,
Over this city,
Roll waves of desolation!
O my people, unconscious! do you not listen?
Do you not hear these messengers approach?
Where is that open door, your soul,
To give them entrance?
Thrilling, invocative, with speech of God they speak,
Conductors of truth, ripeners of seed, bringers of power,
Which you avoid as chill tormenting rain!
Nay, yourselves are chill tormenting rain
Rolling like myriad drops
Down gutters of nothingness,
Sinking to hidden pools, forgotten and stagnant.
Rolling, rolling forever
A deluge
Drowning the golden City, vision of God!

VISION

IS there a crowd that rolls upon itself,
A frantic, stuprous mob
Headless and heartless?
It is an arrow streaming to distant mark
Fixed in the will of God.
And are there darkened cities,
Peoples sword-locked and closely crucified;
Explosive passions, self-tormenting hates,
Blindness of path and peak?
They drive, all men, divided mobs and towns,
Fort-girdled states, imperious continents—
All men soever—moving to a goal
Urged as these separate waters by one moon.
They struggle, sleep; they murmur, grieve or pray,
Thoughtful and reckless, seeing, unseeing; entwined in
 bitter grasp
Beyond partition into good and evil;
Yet all, and not one conscious stream—
All, all, the sere, the singing—
Obey one urge, and each alike arrives.
O fool that turns his back!
Traitor that leagues the world to weak despair!
He gropes against the rising of the sun,
And dawn shall strike him speechless.

HIGHWAY

PATHWAY of currents charged from rapid worlds;
Between immovable poles I stand
Vibrant with forces joyous, conquering,
That fly through every atom quick with birth.
I am the highway of God,
Trodden by radiant messengers. His will;
I am the tent where angels love to sleep,
Dreaming of Love reborn.

G. B. S. & CO.

TOO late, masters of knowledge, you approach
With open tomes, encyclopaedic acres
Sown with the old world's wisdom!
I have drunk
The wine of love ... I dance
And will not batten on this corn.
Too late ...
Yet, O my masters, ye were the undertakers of great
 things,
Yea, the pall bearers of a corpulent world
Dead, dead forever.

THE IDIOT

... Yes!

But as for me,

I pass without debate of life and death,
Stumbling or dancing as the tune is pitched,
Not choosing, not remembering,
Dragging no chains and aiming for no star.

I know who frowns and grudges:

“Concentrate essence of inconstant moments,
The flower’s soul, the fool’s way his!”
And that may be.

But ever I peer about

Observing these anxious folk, these moderns,
Tired Atlases who bear

A world of borrowed marble and stolen fame—

I peer about, and ever as I pass

Touch softly each gleaming pillar, each smoking shrine
And unperceived, drop tears upon them.

Tears ...

For men are sleepers in a world of dream,

An unreal, staggering world

That any moment, as I know,

Will break asunder, crashing, heaved apart

By bursting seeds of God’s compelling spring,

Temple on temple, arch on arch,

All staggering down and whelmed

In waters of eager thought, in flames of love.

Against which day I neither lock nor loose

Nor own nor will be owned within this doom
That with a few others, unattached and free,
My soul may cry:
“Lo God, within this quickened earth
Plow under the yearning heart which I have borne
So many seasons, unfertile till You had sown!”
... Aye,
The fool’s way mine.
Where is that Prophet crying within my heart?

THESE WERE

THERE was a childhood once,
And groping hands and feet that labored,
Room after room, an old, evocative house;
A youth whose urgent pinions beat
The neighboring hills, to pass forever
Their all-encircling borderland of sky;
And there were people, travels, foreign lands,
Adventure and love.
These were ...
Blind potters of memory.
Now, like an empty cup, I hold it forth
To catch the vision ...
Drop by drop,
Sparkle of living wine.
I drain it ... thought, deed and passion
Met in this glory.
Immortal.

IMAGES D'AMOUR

1

WHETHER I was making salad in the blue bowl
Or whether, beside the open window, I sat
Leaning against the twilight—
Bruskly, a storm amid my dreams, one entered,
My brother.
Speechless he stood and stared about him there
As one whose thoughts are like a leaderless mob,
Each tripping the next.
His hands and eyes, the eyes and hands of a ghost,
Twitched vainly at the veil of my repose;
And when at last he spoke
I heard not his voice as words but moods,
Moods pitching from angry fear to awed regret
Like the stressed arpeggio of a violin:
“Letters three I as a brother wrote,
“And telegrams, unanswered one and all ...
“None knew where you had gone.
“Why did you go? And why, O why come here
“To this poor barren attic?
“A monk’s, a prisoner’s or a madman’s cell!
“What folly, what misfortune brought you here?”
Wonderingly I gazed at him so wistful, so far away,
Beating desperately against the gate of my will.
“Always, from a child, you leaned your ladder against
a cloud,
“And when the cloud drifted, you fell amidst the dirt.

“Speak!”

“It was the earth drifted, not the cloud,” I said.

“But having promised the dead mother of us both

“I came, and come again,

“To bear you home, and wind the tired springs of your
“hope.”

“This is my home, the house of my soul,” I said.

Trembling, he seized my hand.

“Come! I beg of you, come home!”

Quietly I let a perfect silence flow about us, then

“Look no more at the image of other minds;

“Look once at me.”

Eye into eye, life into life deeply he gazed

As one who sees his own bride in another’s arms

And feels his anger drown in fathomless regret.

Despite himself, he stood beside me on the hill of my
possession.

“But you will let no harm befall you?

“To me, first of all, you will come for aid?

“Please!”

Insistently, not to be forded by speech, the silence

Flowed sparkling between us.

Weeping, he turned away.

Once, when I too beat as a ghost against the gates,

I too had wept and been as water in the cup of his desire,

Who am no more a ghost

Neither a coin jingled in the blind pocket, life.

Stiffly astare,
 The drowned corpse of that visit rises
 After nine days to float upon my thought:
 “A monk’s, a prisoner s or a madman s cell!
 “What folly, what misfortune brought you here?”
 My attic, my little room
 Captured from the world’s monotony;
 My solitude, ransom of myriad souls!
 What blindness hangs before the friendliest eye!
 A room, an attic? ...
 ’Twas rooms I fled from, prisons of visioning hearts.
 Now as in the freedom of all dream
 I camp upon the crossroads of the worlds;
 The ages come and go;
 Continents arise, dissolve; seas labor;
 Images, wrapt in glory, pause and speak;
 Or, if I will, there’s nothing here at all
 Except the end of my thumb.
 Will the creator, and Desire the god
 Attend my moments;
 But my will is to be free of every will;
 My desire to conquer all desire.

Last night, following my impatient feet,
 I quit the vastness of the attic

And entered in the city as a cave.
With tunnels cut through human hopes denied
It prisoned me in streets,
And breasting the casual crowd
I felt each man and woman thrusting forth
His aura, stealing room from one another,
None giving amplitude (where are those heroes
Whose lives are amplitude about us?)
Until I felt the river and the sky.
A little star gleamed from the murky water:
How like her life in mine, I said,
Her life, bright perfect point remote,
Yea worlds remote, yet faithfully contained
In my own darkness!
But does the star itself contain the river?
Inscrutable shining star!
Then,
She leaned beside me on the brink,
Both joining hands and lips. ...
Late, when the city slept, past darkened homes
That were as lovers kept by grief apart,
I crept to the attic, the river in my ears,
Remembering.

4

The clattering footsteps of my neighbor
Up and down the stairs, impatient always for the street,

Reluctant for the attic—the silence—
They teach me
I too, and more than sailor or soldier,
Adventure!
Here is my frontier, where salt and bread and water
Change into the marvelous movements of hand and eye,
Where movement becomes a thought, and thought a
 vision;
Here I adventure!
Often, gazing at the bare wood of the table
Showing its delicate veins, I stand abashed ...
The body of God.
The body of God, given with open, tremulous hands and
 shining eyes
In fire and earth and water which to me
Murmur of glory streets and crowds betray:
Of martyrs chanting sensuous, passionate joy
Into the flame and smoke of bridal death;
Of sages brooding prayer in ancient forests;
Of children who gaze openly at the Word made flesh ...
A crucible, my attic; melting life
Into the quivering elements, love and dream.
Whence joyously I hang crucified between the two
 thieves
Poverty and Sorrow.

Sometimes I do not know if she or I be dead;
Which is the ghost, which is the living.
I saw her thrice ...
The first time I grew conscious of the world,
As if I'd drunken wine, the wine of dreams.
As a flower I burst from the dead seed of myself
Into the glory of life!
And then, the second time ...
She was the glory.
Once more (I felt the great arranger, fate, behind us)
We met ... and as it were by two wicks
The candle of life took flame.
Thrice, thrice ...
Yet as with closed eyes I see again
Her eyes shining in mine, and with fingertips
Trembling like conscious thoughts I know her warmth,
There is a vibrance, a community
Like speech of speechless children:
She is near!
Only, I too must die (or must she die?)
To join her, where she fled.
Meanwhile, I play at living in a world
Whose toys blind hands have broken.

Like atoms whirling in a drop,
 Atoms I mingled with, the crowd
 Stirred silently across the city square.
 Movements and moods passed above our heads,
 We striving to seize and fix our thoughts
 Blown from us, coals from a shallow pan.
 Then to me, witless as the rest, the eyes of a woman ...
 And I knew nothing else beside their glow.
 It lit the world.
 Sunlight was darkness to it, shining with rapt calm
 Upon the souls of men.
 For the first time—*souls!*
 Men I beheld as thoughts and not as features;
 As fates, not bodies;
 As wills and not as forms.
 A whole city I perceived as a desert
 With never a drop of water nor a shady tree
 To nourish the leaf of life;
 A nation, prodigious with leagues and millions,
 Then I recalled as seven men and women
 Standing like carven giants on a hill,
 Or like actors silent upon a darkened stage,
 Their heads bowed, hands relaxed,
 Waiting the curtain.
 But she! her I absorbed as civilization

Glowing with customs and arts,
Laws, knowledges, cities, rivers, landscapes, monuments,
Reverence for death and joy in living.
I have forgotten the numbers and size of things in this
world.

Never shall I recall them!

The crowd scattered; the great mood like an ocean
Drew to its ebb, but still the light shines ...

Men are the gardens to each others' seed;

Men are the spring for each others' gardens-

Men are the dawn of each others' daytime!

The dawn has broke; forgotten thoughts and loves

Walk like the blessed gods from soul to soul,

Bearers of recognition.

We return

Even to the birth and the beginning of time,

Children again made perfect in the womb.

7

The perfume of her lingers about me,
A garden under the level setting sun of Greece
When, at the path's end, the gleaming marble
Almost becomes the goddess.

Goddess! what is this twilight which, creating you,
Creates the darkness of your recession?

As the mild slipping of a child's steps I heard her
Approach me; as the presence of a mother
So she came; speaking, it was the voice of my beloved.
Kneeling beside my couch thus spoke my beloved:
"Now at last is the returning of our love
"From exile;
"Arise, for the thought of me is not dead.
"Surely I have come of my own will,
"Willing.
"Between the worlds of being and appearance
"Let our love dwell in peace.
"There is an island rimmed by seas denied
"Set like a pearl in the bright path of the sun.
"There, which is the world's distance, be our future.
"Arise, O my beloved."
To whom, waking to her in the darkness of this world's
midnight,
Softly, speaking into the dawn, I answered:
"Has not our future been, long ago, consummate?
"The golden words of love, O my beloved,
"These are but echoes.
"*Death does not intervene so much as living.*"
But she, weeping, already withdrawing:
"With all this I have not to do,
"With brass and marble;
"The empire of my heart shall it decay by time?"

When, strangely ecstatic, I caressing the hands withdraw-
ing:

*“Even by brass and marble shall I, toiling,
“At last arrive!”*

As from a closing door I heard “Farewell!”

As to a door closed until the dawn I said:

“Farewell!”

About me lingers the perfume of her,
A garden under the moon-disk, memory,
Where, at the path’s end, the gleaming marble
Becomes the goddess. ...

LOVERS

PETER, *an old peasant*

MARA, *his wife*

ANSON, *their son*

LORNA, *a young woman*

FIRST SCENE

The interior of PETER'S cottage. A fire of sod glows on the hearth. A table is set with cups and bowls and a loaf on a wooden plate. Three chairs are drawn up though only two places have been set. The outside door shakes uneasily in the violence of a storm, and the window rattles. ANSON, his arm bandaged in a sling, sits on the floor beside the hearth, staring into the fire and oblivious of what takes place in the room. Opposite him across the chimney-piece PETER is seated awaiting supper, troubled and wistful, a spent pipe in his hand. MARA moves between the fire, the cupboard and the table, preparing the meal. LORNA, her hair shining with wet, has drawn a stool against the outside door. She seems to be listening to the rain, but occasionally watches MARA intently, as if she had never before seen a domestic woman at work.

MARA

[Startled by the wind]

Oh dear! Oh dear!

It be the coming of the end of all things;

I have the sure feeling now.
Aye, hear the hateful wind and the rain!
They are but voices, like, and say what I always knew.

PETER

Don't be afeared for storms, Mara.
You and me have passed many a worse.

MARA

Oh yes—have been enough of them;
But I always knew in my heart this thing would fall so.

PETER

Lies a path out somewhere, Mara.

MARA

[*Indignant*]

Do you say so?
What with Umber gone too, and none to help you!
But that's the way of it:
Men look ever to their own betterment
And leave others in want behind them.

PETER

Umber stayed through the sowing, Mara,
And who can blame him for wanting to be a householder?

MARA

Oh, you never could, at all!
You never could blame anybody, you're that easy.
But I might have told you beforehand.
I knew in my heart my life would fall so;
I knew from the day my mother died and I had the
 family,
Six small ones, always hungry and wild,
My life would be a grief and a torment.

PETER

You were the good daughter to your father;
The good wife you are to me, Mara.
But I think we have been happier than most—
Won't you just say so with me?

MARA

Say so, indeed!
Harken now to me, Peter, what I will say to you;
Any time these thirty years I could have said the same,
What I hold up to you now,
This misfortune sent upon us,
This bad luck in our old age!

PETER

How could you have said so, Mara?

MARA

'Twas in my heart like a sorrow.
I always expected the worst thing would come,
As come it has.
What can you say to that now, Peter?

PETER

[Sobered]

You are right, Mara;
'Tis like a prophecy come true,
But I have been happy, aye, and looked for no trouble
Beyond my power to right it or endure it.

MARA

That's your blindness, man.
Men are blind—'tis women who see things.
There now! I suppose you will eat your supper?

PETER

Why, if it be ready ...

MARA

You would eat the same were I cold in the barrow!

PETER

[Taking his place at table]

I think I would not take food that day, Mara.

[He breaks the loaf, hesitates, looks at Lorna doubtfully, then at Mara]

Well now ...

MARA

[Angrily, watching him]

Eat, man! Is the supper not good enough, I expect?

PETER

It is so, but I was thinking ...

LORNA

Sit you, Mara.

I will fetch the porridge from the fire.

MARA

Am I the woman will let another wait on my man?

'Tis the supper she is wanting for herself.

PETER

There is enough for her, Mara.

MARA

Aye, if she eat what be Anson's!

[Full of this new grievance, she takes a bowl from the cupboard, wipes it conscientiously and lays it

on the table. Lorna, undisturbed, brings a steaming pot from the fire and fills the bowl.]

PETER

[*Perplexed*]

You be changed, Lorna.

[They eat in silence. A spark snaps from the fire and burns on Anson's coat. Lorna extinguishes it carefully]

MARA

What are you doing to him?
Seven days and nights I have cared for him,
And never at all has he looked at me or smiled at me.
He seems no longer my own son, at all.

PETER

Poor Anson.
He has not wits for speaking and hearing
And no will for eating.
His mind is never with us now;
I pray it not be wandering in darkness.

LORNA

Let him be. 'Tis the long fast of new things.

MARA

What witch's thing is that now?

PETER

What was that word you put on him Lorna,—
The new things?

LORNA

Aye, the true word; I learnt it from the beasts.

MARA

And once he pushed me away!
Me, his old mother, he did not want by him.
What times and what ways are these,
When mothers are struck by their children?
Is he not mine altogether,
My flesh and my blood?
He never did so before, never before!

[She rocks back and forth, crying feebly]

No, he never crossed us before.
Our will was his, as needs be in this world.

LORNA

What did you ever will for him
Except to make him another like yourselves?
But he is not like you, and must no more try to be.

MARA

What does she say, the strange woman?

Do not look at him so with those eyes!
What do you will for him?

LORNA

Nothing. Nothing and everything.
His own will I will for him.
I watch it creeping nearer and nearer
Like a dream in the darkness.
I watch, and can do nothing at all,
Only wait, who never waited before.

PETER

[Touched by her sadness]

But you aren't such a bad woman, Lorna.

LORNA

How should I be a bad woman, Peter?

PETER

But you were never as the others, Lorna.

LORNA

We be as God makes us;
And there is one only wrong, to change or be changed.

PETER

You say so, Lorna,

But for me a man is bad who destroys others,
And a woman is bad who lives with too many or all alone.

LORNA

Oh, I have not lived alone!
I have heard many voices speak
Gentle and wise
Out of the bright sky.
Out of the deep wood, the grass.
I have heard them since my mother went away,
Whom I just remember, dimlike.
I wandered out alone, looking for her,
And she never came to me again
But some one like her lives in the wood
Who whispers many a word I understand.
Oh, I never have been lonely!

PETER

Aren't you lonely now, Lorna?
Did you not come here because you were lonely?

MARA

'Tis our Anson she wants, Peter!

LORNA

No, never your Anson!

MARA

'Tis so! Let her not befool you, Peter!
Oh dear, oh dear,
I have no power over him since that day.
Belike she has power over him.

PETER

She says 'tis not our Anson she wants, Mara.
Perhaps you had some thoughts for a warm supper?

MARA

'Tis Anson, I tell you!

LORNA

'Tis the future and the new life, Peter.

MARA

There now! What is that but every girl's want?

PETER

Can you help him, Lorna?
Give him wit for hearing and speaking,
Make of him what he was before?

LORNA

Any woman can do that
Who waits for his weakness.

MARA

He pushed me away when I brought the porridge!

PETER

Well now, Mara, if Lorna can do for him
What we cannot do for him
We'd best be thankful, eh?

MARA

Let her not touch him!
What does she want but to make him follow her
Into the woods and live with voices and things,
Idle and selfish as she is?

LORNA

Let nobody touch him.
Let us wait for him to come
To you or to me, Mara.
That is wisdom;
For surely if Anson be urged against his will,
Even if he believe he comes by his own will,
He comes only partly,
And from her one day he will surely depart in anger.

Mara

Begule men with that now, never a woman!
Are you not both young together,

And will he not likelier come to you than to me?
So need you but sit still with that yellow hair
Before him when he awakes,
But I must work for him and take him!

[Her voice rises shrill. Anson starts uneasily, mutters, and stands up. Mara draws near him, pleading without daring to touch him.]

Anson, see yonder the warm supper.
You will eat with us, Anson? Oh yes,
You will sit down here, in your own place
Between your father and mother.
'Tis as if you had been far away,
But now all things will be homelike, as they were.

[Peter cries nervously, feeling a situation he cannot understand. Mara stirs the porridge and offers it to Anson. Lorna unbolts the door and flings it open. The storm has passed, the wind sighs away in the darkness; slow drops of water drip from the eaves. Anson leans forward searching his mother's eyes. She closes them, unable to meet his glance, but throws out her arms in deep humility. Anson turns away and passes into the night without looking at Lorna or Peter. The three stand a moment with bated breath, then Lorna closes the door and leans against it, facing Mara.]

LORNA

Have no fear and no anger, Mara,
Though he has crossed the old threshold forever.
I think it was not for myself I did this,
No, nor even for Anson,
But for ... the voices and the wisdom.

[Mara chokes, unable to reply.]

PETER

[Sadly]

I do not know him at all;
It is to you we must look for Anson now, Lorna.

LORNA

It may be so. I do not know the end yet, at all.

MARA

Oh yes, you bad woman and witch,
You have stolen him for your own pleasure!
A spell you put upon him,
Hussy, foreigner!

LORNA

I have put no spell on him, Peter,
Do not think it.
Did I want him to come that day?
Ah no, but something new has fallen over us both!

PETER

You will not take him away,
You will not change him, Lorna?

LORNA

Believe me, Peter,
Anson will be nearer though far away;
He will be more Anson, though another.
This I will do for him
Lest his agony depart without bringing renewal.

[She follows Anson. Mara sinks into a chair, crying hopelessly. Peter, blindly hopeful and sympathetic, takes her in his arms and kisses her tenderly.]

SECOND SCENE

The forest at dawn. The austere twilight reveals a circular glade. A spring, half hidden beneath a rock and the sprawling roots of a tree, overflows with rain-swollen murmur. Here and there a vista of ghostly distances opens through the trees. LORNA and ANSON ENTER THE GLADE.

LORNA

I stand at the door of the sun,
I open the morning;

I hold apart the gate for one who climbed
Seven days the lonely path,
Leaving behind the things he hated
To become the things he adored.

Powers behind tree and tempest,
Behind all that lives in freedom,
Untamed, instinctive,
You gather in me too intense for one to contain!

Pass out, pass over whither I will you.
Pass with my love
Into the soul that is near.
Glad! Glad! Glad!
Pass with your moods and thoughts,
Violently changing, making old ways new.

[*To Anson*]

Take freely the powers that come,
Your own, the self that you find
Waiting under the dawn.

Be strong and glad in the faith
That you had forgotten,—
Faith of things whole and changeless, compelling!

Be glad in tumult and riot;
Be glad in darkness and silence,
Glad in yourself and the world.

[She offers him water from the spring]

Drink, lest you turn back
Dragged by a bitter memory.
Drink, that things past become like things reborn.

ANSON

I stand within a cave that opens
To the bright reaches of the sky,
And see the heavens for the first time.
God! How beautiful we are!

Where do these paths lead that dance beneath me?
What is this will that is not will but desire,
Not desire but fulfillment?
Thanks, thanks that I am born into this morning of time!
Lorna, is it you? You have changed.
The tiger has lain her to sleep.
The fawn has awakened.
O light that made my cave so dark I must destroy it!

We two stand in a garden,
Our garden, Lorna;
Our garden that we will sow with many a delight,

Hush! A bird sings at the horizon of hearing.
Hush! An echo—or is it the mate who replies?
Who taught them our song?
I listen, but the song is part of you and me.
Come, pillow my head that I may sleep a little.
I am a child too full of the day,
Too full of wonder and growth,
Ready for the sleep at last.
What things we have to do, Lorna!
Think of them, how wonderful they are:
None, since the beginnings of time have known how sweet!
To make for ourselves a home
Full of sweet thoughts and right wishes;
To lay out a meadow and field and a garden
Where nobody ever turned a sod;
To dig for a sweet spring ... the house all new,
Yet not too far away ...
The poor, dear people, we'll teach them.

[He sinks down drowsily]

LORNA

'Tis right now, to speak of a home
Though I hated the women who grow old in homes,
And the men who keep them in homes
Prisoned from springtime,
And said, never shall I forget and grow bitter!

But these too were claimed in joy—
With happy thoughts they passed over the threshold.
This is the gift of the world,—
I too am born to-day,
I too am grateful.

TO A DANCER

SCULPTOR of that most gracious theme,
Yourself,
You carve the galleries of remembrance
Like Egypt, with a deathless attitude.
Inscrutable figures, passing ever by
In rhythmic file, yet ever, ever stayed ...
Behold, how hand outstretched to hand, they poise,
The goddess and the victim and the bride,
Your myriad moments ... traced
In bas-relief upon a poet's soul.

VICTORY

THE sense of triumph slumbers deep
And victory goes without a tongue
For all the visible fanes we keep,
For all our audible pæans sung.

Unseen of eye, by ear unheard,
It thrills to its own theme apart,
The mind's unutterable Word
And nameless Lover of the heart.

From outward glory fugitive,
Aloof from public fact and creed,
Its hope is all the life we live,
Its memory more than life indeed.

ILLUMINATION

1

THE pride that darkens after victory
Like mist upon the waters of the mind
Parted, as though a sudden eagle passed
Dipping a moment from the sun; a light
Shook down upon the waters audibly:
'Who to himself and all the world appears
Oracular, with speech of heaven and earth,
But never from his couch before the map
Has stirred a single pace, preferring ease?'
(O scorn of eagles, which have dared the sun!)

2

Then silence; but the waters of my thought,
Bared to the brilliance, for a moment shone
Like silver mirrors, facing from all sides,
Inside and out. I gazed and saw myself
Reflected in a thousand various forms:
A beast, a tree, a stone, a cloud, a child,
With thousand various images behind
Of thought and deed and memory and mood.
All moved, as they were troubled by a wind,
But at the last were nothing. Then I fell
Upon the knees that are no more my knees
And with the voice that is no more my voice
I cried a cry, the single thing I am,

As one will cry whose house has fallen down
For help to raise the ruin and go free.
And like the cry I fled outside myself
And died like echo on the farthest hill.

3

Like echo I had died, but now arise
Like echo re-awakened by the song
Of one who dwells upon the farthest hill.

CREATION

Post-Impressionist Poems

(Paris, January-October, 1913)

DEDICATION

O GOD, Thou knowest I
With what few things and slight,
Form, music, colour and my power of words,
Created heaven in this deathly place.
Aye, as I struggled for the air I breathe
And seized my bread and water from the earth
By toil and pain,
Thou knowest, God, I built a little heaven,
An atmosphere, a dream
More fixed than hills beside the ocean,
Where I have lived content.
God, if Thou hast not to struggle,
If Thou art free in fact as I in dream,
In will as I in hope,
What larger heaven Thou hast built thyself!
Sometimes within this cloudy mirror
I glimpse it steadfast, and my passion hurts
Like wounded birds in storm.
O there shall I enter,—no, not enter,—
But I shall make its equal, stone on stone,
Thy watching architect, and dwell therein
Godlike, in our good time.

THE VISION

I CLIMB.

The old spirit of the race, like hidden music,
Tugs at my toiling feet and hands,
Beats on my thought. I pause;
The whole world dances to a strange sad measured tune.

Baffled to reach sheer heights of silence
I close my ears. The world shall dance,
But dance from my own spirit's rhythm!
Deafened, I climb.

The old spirit of the race, dawn-mist,
Taking a thousand lights and gleams,
A sheen perceptible on peak and plain,
Tangles the flow of river, the stillness of tree,
The action of men in labour.

Beauty! The spirit of the race proclaims. But I
No longer perplexed, seeking the sun's pure blaze—
Life's colour shall be the hues of my own dream!—

I close my sight, and blinded, climb.
Suddenly, gaining the utmost peak,
Opening my eyes, I see beneath the sun
United in an unguessed radiant glory
The whole world changed,—created, re-created
Mine, mine to love and know! And,
Giving my ears and senses their desire,
Silence at first, then slowly arising,
The flux of musical rhythm swift and deep
Binding all things in one tremendous march,

The glad progression of my conscious spirit!
Now, kneeling in speechless wondering gratitude,
Pierced through by free, creative wills and moods,
I give myself to this, the common earth
Redeemed, dissolved in my long-prayed-for vision!
Men, rivers, trees: to you I turn again,
Too strong for hate, too humble for doubt and fear,
Descending from this peak of ecstasy
To change your drugging music for this pæan,
To drive away your pestilent dangerous beauty
For this renewing, soul-seen living sun!

THE WELL BELOVED

O THE well beloved,
Fortunate, fortunate men and women!
They show the only authentic virtue
Desirable in every race and clime:
To be at home in one's own soul
And comfortably fit, like a student's gown,
The folds and wrinkles of one's nature.

I love to fall upon one of them suddenly
Just out the window, or round the corner,
When I am vacant or grieving or hateful;
I know them by a secret sympathy,
And I go straightway healed, as by a spell,
Strutting a little, hearty, bold, superb,—
Spilling over, in short, as a man's life often should.

I remember each of them I've seen:
Such days are mirrors hung against my hope.
There's one, now, leaned beside a mossy well,
Dipping his fingers, lingering.
Within his eyes I saw
Continual amazement, the revelation
Of sheer meanings in things blinked at, passed over,
since,—
Well,—Wordsworth, we'll say;
And one that followed a rebel mob all night
To feel the human pulse at point of bursting.
(And when he came again among us
So strangely catholic, titan he, we stared in awe.)

And one that stood before an antique desk
Pondering old difficult words in a parchment book,
Seldom turning a page, so deep he peered
Into the lost childhood and mystery of time
Glimmering through the philosophic Greek;
And then another (he too, an old, old man)
Whose sweeping beard fell down and almost hid
The tawny violin he pressed
Rapturously to him, like a new mother; and I waited
Impatient for a fierce music to stab me ecstatic,
(But he deeply, deeply listening
To some old master or some grave inward tune
Forgot me, though I coughed.)

O, O the well beloved!

Who taught them the true secret of being
Over our heads who wait but hear it not?
They never hurry, never disintegrate their souls,
Fill the moment and the life-time richly up;
Grow to the time and place they find themselves
Inevitably, like the weather,
And seem to a casual passer-by
The very spirit of the brook or forest,
Its human symbol, its reality;
Become the lordly genius of all knowledge
That holds the piecemeal generations
Fixed to a conscious, unifying will.

They are not many,

But where you meet but one or two
There's the rare odour in the world's garden,
The poignant taste in the soul's wine,—
The essence that memory feeds upon,
Sick of the common waste of life,
To write a noble record or a joyous dream.

IN A FACTORY

SMOKY, monotonous rows
Of half-unconscious men
Serving, with lustreless glance and dreamless mind,
The masterful machines;
These are the sons of herdsmen, hunters,
Lords of the sunlit meadow,
The lonely peak,
The stirring shadow-haunted wood,—
Of mariners who swung from sea to sea
In carven ships
And named the unknown world:
Hunters, herdsmen, sailors, all
By trade or chase or harvest
Winning their substance
Rudely, passionately like a worthy game
With a boy's great zest of playing.
 O labour,
Whoso makes thee an adventure
Thrilling to the nervous core of life,
He is the true Messiah,
The world's Saviour, long-awaited, long-wept-for.

IN A CAFÉ

1

HOW the grape leaps upward to life,
Thirsty for the sun!
Only a crushed handful, yet
Laughing for its freedom from the dark
It bubbles and spills itself,
A little sparkling universe new-born.
Well, higher within my blood and ecstasy
You'll sunward rise, O grape,
Than ever on the slow, laborious vine.

IN A CAFÉ

2

I DRAIN it, then,
Wine o' the sun, sun-bright,
And give it fuller life within my blood,
A conscious life of richer thought and joy.
And yet,—
That too will perish soon like withered leaves
Athirst for an ultimate sun
Upon the soul's horizon.
Come down, O God, even to me,
And drain my being as I drank the grape,
That I, this moment's perfect thing,
Live so for ever.

A GAUGUIN

TO see, know, passionately take to heart
The terrible beauty, in feature and in soul,
Of one I heartily, heartily hate;
Then, possessed by her magnificence,
Wholly become it, lover-like for the time,
Create her perfect likeness, line and form,
Conspicuous for the world's astartled wonder:
This is the last mystery of art,—
Moulding, with a strong, slow, hate-masterful hand,
The delicate mask of some tormenting beauty.

A PASTEL

YONDER the towered city, yonder the world ...
A heart-beat more, and surely from the East
Another land will show
Its delicate promise native to our joy
Over the mauve and silver twilight:
The soul of some remote, unguessed Japan.

LES MORTS

STRANGELY between the darkness and my heart
The lost eyes shine,
And hands, fonder than all desire,
Pass slowly on my hair and face.
Whispers, arising from old depths of dream,
Hover within my thought, awaking tears.
How soft,
How soft and tenderly clinging
Pass the hands of the dead
Over our hair in darkness.
These are they that living we could not hold,
That slipped like lustral water
Out of our hands, away;
And all our passion, all our desperate prayer
Held them, O held them not.

MYTH

GOD bless me! how that rascal time
Keeps on his poet's tricks!
I' the full daylight stare of trained historians and doctors,
Under the very hands of moderm bridge-builders, aero-
plane-inventors and what-not,
He's imperceptibly filled my heart with a new romantic
myth
Rich-flavoured as any tale Greek schoolboys heard
On Attic slopes of a shepherd's holiday!
Those boys grown up and changed,—those boys grown
men?
Freckles a City Mayor, three children, frock-coat and
public title?
(He swam our swimming pond three times across);
Champion a judge, his car outside the court,
Whom surely God designed a prime first baseman?
And Hornet a clothes-importer,—prominent, etc.?
No, no!
They are not *men*, like all these common lives,—
ril not believe it, though across the ocean
Newspapers and letters mark their late success.
No.
If they are not still young, eternal boys.
Their age has steeped itself in richer essence
And turned them into joyous demigods.
Their true life takes my memory like a myth
Witnessed each day by the bright holiday sun,

The glad, splashing river, the haunting odour of cherry
blossoms,
And my own faithful heart, that yearns—
That yearns *for demigods, not men.*

VALE

HER eyes turn mutely, patiently
Like a hurt fawn's away, moist with a sense
Of some great passionate faith or promise
Broken, denied to the living-out of life.
And in the muter stillness where they stand
He sees as through an opened window
The last petal from a well-loved bough
Tremble and flutter down;
Hears, as from a neighbour orchard,
A friendly throstle flute his parting tune,
And suddenly, suddenly knows from her, from him,
That spring itself, fleeing a stricken land,
Has passed for ever.

ENGLAND

I GAZE upon the golden steaming hills,
England! and yield a grateful heart to thee.
What! this cottage thatched against the sun,
This April morning steeped in fallow glebe,
And not an English heart broken in rapture
To keep thee—England?
The Vandal poets wait against the coast
To conquer thee and give the land a soul.

THE PLAIN WOMAN

WHAT is the beauty of women?

Listen!—a song that makes the whole world sob

Its aching heart away.

But I?

I am the silence closed about the song

That keeps it beautiful.

EVERYMAN

I CURSED,—she wept;
And from her tears and broken heart
Eden arose about me, and I stood
Perfect within her beauty.
God! how has that spirit hid unseen
Behind the clods and hates of daily life?

THE LONELY CUP

WITHIN the dusky room
Betweenwhiles of the fire's insistent flap
My silver spoon taps out
Like startled sentinel's musket,
The steaming tea
Hisses against the cup like far-off rapids,
Whirlpools of dim alarm ...
Impelled, I deeply gaze within the amethyst liquid
Somehow become a globed, translucent fate.
Shapes, colours, figures, dreams and deeds
Create, conjoin, dissolve;
Ideas, evolutions, histories, moods and souls
Steam richly up and fill the empty room.
No broken heart, no desolation,
But life's vast wonder, changing, quick, intense,—
A whole fellowship of things imminent and real,
Portentous times to come,—sweetens for me
The lonely cup.

SKYSCRAPERS

A FOREST of strange palms
That stir not, nor sway in the wind,
Nor nod sleepy at evening, nor reach to nestling birds
A warm and comfortable mossy bough;
Strange giant palms
Rigid and sternly fixed in the purple sunset.
One day the loud vexed ocean
Will drive a furious tempest from the East
To lash your stony trunks,
To tear your earth-devouring roots
And shake upon a shore deserted
This terrible fruit of flame long petrified.

HOMeward

THERE is no other bosom for a grown man
To sob his whole heart-bursting grief upon
Than the sweet motherhood of his own native race;
No voice to call him back from loneliness
Than his own language, uttered from the first comfort-
ings of love
By the hushed lips of poets and faithful women
Speaking into the great darkness
That he, in his dark time, may turn homeward again
and find
The world's heart warmly near.

THE DANCE

SLOW moonlight steeps the jungle-glade,
And all the movement, all the pulse of night,
Gathers within the hollow-sounding ocean.
Long, melancholy waves
Beat nature's avid life within my blood;
An essence slips from the still trees
Freeing my thought from dream.
I rise,
Feeling the air like womanhood about me,
Arise and grope through silence to the moon,
Then turn, sway, bow and pause again,
Waiting the rhythm.
Find me, sea-loud night!
Find me, for you are spent and old.
I bring fresh heart and joyous consciousness
Will give you speech, soul, freedom, thought,—
Will tell the old, heroic lie of life
So gaily none will doubt for another age.
The rhythm falls like women's passion
Upon my lips, my hands;
The world is sudden music and I dance,
I dance, the soul of the lonely, moon-steeped glade,
The thought, the freedom of the laboured sea,
Swayed by a grace not mine
In worship to a long-forgotten god.
The womanhood of things closely and warm
Presses my thrilling senses,

Creating at my fingers and my eyes
A vision,—Eve, all palpable and warm,—
That beats upon my sobs
And mates my life with passion.

Eve!

I come ... O Eve!

Then, like a setting moon, a storm subdued,
The rhythm closes round about itself,
Passing to secret consummation
Beyond nature, farther out than thought,
Lost even to heart-beats.

And I, tossed by, forgotten, wingless to follow,
Sink back into the apathetic darkness
With earth's ten million years,
Into the prison-house of tree and ocean.

Eve. ...

THE CROWD

FED from the gloom of night-strewn barren streets
And gorged from the gloomier night of barren homes,
The heavy, corpulent crowd
Enormously sprawls the house of carnival,
Mute as a foeless, mateless sea-deep monster
Heaving through livid, phosphorescent caves
Its bulk of terrible hunger seeking prey.
As one great staring Thing the brutal crowd,
Passion-distended,
Rolls ponderously out its whole slow length,
The avid, pitiless will of huddled men
Absorbing into one vapid, bottomless soul
Its long-craved prey of pleasure.
The dancers flutter, dazzling Its vacant eye;
These girls with shining trays of heaped fruit
And wines from the world's mad reckless south
Steep drowsily Its wandering senses;
Deafened by changing music. It grows partly glad.
How did I come a part of this huge Thing,
Myself so harmless?
Yet I too fled from my own hateful gloom,
From many a biting sorrow,
Gladly forgetting myself and others
To surge with these the warm sleek blazing house,
The house of carnival.
So the monster dies. Its bloated power
Dissolves in tears. I look and deeply know

The secret parts, like me, of the corpulent Thing,
The avid men and women of the crowd.
And O these dancing girls, this glittering fruit
The Thing glutted Its empty heart upon,
'Twas all the broken pieces of old joy,
The fragments of our man and woman dream
Which, blindly coming together,
We sought amid these changing lights and sounds
To take, to gather up, fragment by fragment,
And shape into one conscious soul again.
I, when the rear gate of my life opens,
From all such tragic hypocritic days
Shall turn to the far mountain of my secret will,
That stark, still place, to build a small cottage there
Beside a whispering brook,
To sit alone and think of many things.

THE EGOIST

“SHE has no soul.

“Her almond eyes diminish to a spark

And change the sun to amber.

When she looks at me

I draw without myself and pass, unwilling,

The strange lids of her eyes, and enter

A garden that knows no law,

Sowed with imaginations like a god’s.

I enter and become

Another self, drunken

By new thoughts and hot-pulsed danger.

I long to sing, to prove my madness,

Dancing away from habit,

Responsibility and the grave laws of soul.

A woman has no right to perilous thoughts.

She has no soul, and O,

I lose my own, and all my satisfied past,

Desiring her.”

THEY

SHE, with smile of wrinkled stone,
Watched Lola dance.

Like naked flames
Blown dazzling by a masterful wind
Frantic with conflagration, leaping on
To seize intolerable smokeless heights;
Like branches, laurel and bay,
Gently, soberly borne by virgin girls
In white procession
To lay upon some holy monument;
Like stars that light through storm
Astonishing the soul—
Two stars above the rushing tempest poised ...
Her hair, her limbs, her eyes:
O God! how Lola danced!

He
Wearied a little, gray before his time,
Polite, attentive ... apathetic ...
Quickened, knew within his blood
Suddenly the old adventure;
Within his thought
The tense, creative pull and tingle of life—
The vision—
Knew himself in Lola, and leaned

With eyes and heart and will
To seize this marvel
And make its essence eternally his own.

She, with smile of wrinkled stone,
Watched Lola dance.

HERTHA

EXQUISITE to her slow silk's rustle
Nay its echo
Who save one hate-tortured might say how perfect
This woman's silken and perfumed exquisite
Feminine beauty?

THE GIRL

SHE plagues me with the rapture of my sex;
I bring her flowers and kisses,
I breathe her hair
And dream against her breasts;
I splash her limbs with water from a pool.
Then, inspired to something of my manhood,
I sing to her, and to myself, a song,
The song of Eve:
But frightened she laughs aloud
And runs and hides within the sleepy wood.
I follow, sobbing.

THE ENCOUNTER

POOR shivering girl,
All eyes
That swim in timid wonder,
Hungry, forlorn, street-corner girl,
How the stupid world has starved her!
Stay, I will give her riches,—
Not bread and wine and pearls,
(Those eyes were never starved for bread alone!)—
But love, soft kisses, ardent words
And fellow-admiration; these
Will lid her lidless eyes, restore her soul
To vacant lip and bosom.
She
Will lie as summer dawn within my heart,
And moonlight on my imagination.

THE BLUE GIRL

SHE does not walk, like me;
She swims, an undulation, a perfumed water,
Changing, changing.
When she is gone I try to think of her,
But dream and all desire turn inward, empty,—
Her passing burns no steadfast line upon my vision
To recreate her beauty from,
Beauty, like life itself, lost in its own rhythm.
Perfume and water.
Others I could dream of, and loved my dream far
 more than woman.
She alone I must have, the beautiful,
Like perfumed water, flowing, flowing.

EVE'S LAMENT

WHEN I first stopped, dismayed, and wept,
Caught in the tangled vines, at the world's
 wildness,
You swiftly came, O Adam,
Heartily bade me wait, and singing gaily
Hewed through the crowded jungle growth a way.
Lonely I waited by the cave, afraid
You never should return; but you returned,
And standing upright in the dim home-twilight,
Kissed me, and loved me safe.

Then, when I wept once more
For rivers to be crossed and hills laid low
And the great ocean to be governed,
You heartily bade me wait, and while I waited,
Lonely and desolate at home,
You, Adam, pushed your might against the hills
And laid them low;
Pondered a moment by the swollen streams
And bridged them;
Flung ships across the white, rebellious seas,
And governed to your will the tide and storm.
But, each adventure done, you hastened
Searching for Eve, and ever as you came
Brought the glad bold heart that stirred my heart,
Strong manhood to my womanhood so warm,—
Adventure to my adventure,—

That, united in our twilit chamber,
We laughed for contentment, lapped in vision.
Never the task too hard,
Never the way too long,
But you returned, O Adam,
Joyous to me.

Now, in a moody night
I looked upon the stars, wept forlorn,
Lost within their infinite mocking spaces,
Their soulless tangle,—wept, and cried aloud
To save my spirit slipping, slipping away.
The boy-heart swelled within you.
You bade me wait a little, then sped
Out to the solitary hills,
Down in the dripping pits
Pondering, and groping and dreaming,
To measure them, to master them, for me.

So long, so long I waited,
Grown cold with barren terror;
Yet, turned thus upon myself
My womanhood awoke more fiercely,
Steeped richer passion in my heart,
Made me more lovely than a dream,
Desirable and warm.
And I danced, dreaming of your return,

Adventure to match adventure,
Vision to match your vision;

Then

You homeward crept, O Adam,
Dragged by unconscious habit, like a worm,
And stumbled upon the threshold empty-eyed.
Dumbly you sit apart
Amazed by the cold frame of things
As one stricken by a mortal inward fear;
And all my passion spilled upon your lips,
And all my trembling silence
Has not restored your boyish mirth,
Has not rekindled your eyes, melted your heart,
Given your cosmic space a human feature
Nor saved me from this modern widowhood.

EVE

WHY have you hid yourself, O Eve,
Among these laughing girls,
And why are you divided, Womanhood,
Among these anxious women?
There is no world for me,
But only silent hills and empty woods,
And restless seas and rivers,
And lights of sun and star
That bear their barren torches up and down,
And only seasons, storms and holidays;
No soul, but only thoughts and moods
And self-tormenting dreams,
Until we mate, O Eve,
And gather all these fragment-worlds and lives
Into our large and procreant passion.

GHOSTS

IF you have never lain
Against the passion of a poet's heart
In his great hour,
Created by his triumph to a queen
And known the world beneath you;
Girl,
Go straightway to a far, deserted hill
And cry, with arms outflung,
That you are dead, not living,—
Aye, mock the sun
And call the world a dream;
Pray fiercely for birth
With words and gestures such as ghosts employ
Beneath the grave
(For you are one with them!),—
Do so
And I, whose hour passed on
Without the mating heart, the comrade arms,
The poet loneliest in his vision,—I
Will follow you, O girl,
And mingle with your bitterest sob
Silence less sweet.

EVE'S DAUGHTER

YOU have tamed me, O
Eve's daughter!
The promise of veiled eyes,
The passion of newly opened arms,
Breasts' opulence at twilight,—
All the vision I sought to mould of life
(The man-dream, womanhood),—
You tenderly seize, you change. Eve's daughter.
All womanhood is you. Eve's daughter,
And touched by you with something still and far,
An awe, remote as stars.
Eyes shine with new promise,
Arms' passion creates a new desire, a longing
To enter life's unravishable heart
You, only you can still.
O, you have tamed me, child,
Eve's daughter ... and mine.

LOVE

THIS is the way, O girl, of love divine
That men and women, rooted in earth's soil
With trees and dogs, ignore:
My conscious and abundant passion
For life in God,
Directed by your unawakened beauty,
Pours out in ardent words and warm embraces,
And stirs the soul within you:
Aye, I give you soul, new life and being
From my abundance,—
Wake you in stainless, masterful ecstasy
From your long earthly sleep;
And you arise, conscious, grateful, devoted
(*In love* as blind hearts say).
Then, the steep wave spent,
My head upon your lap, my hands relaxed,
A great emptiness where I had hailed my soul,
You, O conscious girl,
Will know to render me a soul again
With ardent hands and voice, with joyous will,
And I shall rise
Your mate, restored against your need.
Ah, amid the ruin of all worlds and lives,
Our being shall not fail.
Nay,
We two shall live for ever.

SOULS

WOMEN

Brightness of many limbs and wondering eyes

A calm still garden: dawn: leaves that slowly

Yield to sleepy breezes: glimmering fountains

Painting barbaric colours black and gold

On peering faces—

Odours that steep the essence of magic

Dream of infinite passion to be—

Women

Women unwearily keeping their beauty perfect

Sheltered in shady gardens

Limbs and breasts and eyes—

Suddenly

Crashing forgotten gates in thunderous war-song

Men, thrust by desire: hands outstretching: enter

Naked as they.

THE DREAMER

GOD the Father in His easy chair pondering the
great book of Vision
Lets fall a casual hand the while He broods tremen-
dously the word;
And on his little stool beside the human child, restless
for play,
Takes the slack fingers in his busy grasp,
Fondles them, tracing the great grave philosophic lines
and wrinkles
And rubs his cheek against the palm, kissing it all over
with a sudden fondness;
But fallen from his little stool, and crying aloud,
Pulls at the casual Hand and whimpers for a word, a
glance,
All in vain, now and for ever;
For God the Father is quite lost in the terrible endless
Vision,
And from the height whereon He broods sunk in His
easy chair,
Only the casual Hand falls down, the slack, forgetful
fingers,
Tear-wet or kissed, gently relax, nor close the Book, nor
lift the child.

O BRUTES AND DREAMERS!

COULD it not be
That God, turning His essence outward
Upon our world to search the things we know and live
among

For some creation corresponding to His being,
Might see, when ranging these stars and worlds,
These ponderous, slow, impenetrable shapes,
Nothing,—*nothing?*

In all these forms that stop and prison us
Only a void wherethrough His glances pass
Without resulting image?

Could it not be
That all our universe to Him is unsubstantial,
Unreal, inane?
And, passing from thence (which is nowhere) to us,
These active, self-impressing souls, their moods and
states.

Their terrible energy of good and evil,
These also make no image on His thought,—
Not even echo, shadow, memory?

But, wherever a vision-caught spirit of man
In self-oblivious loyalty labours on
This outer world, endows it with his vision,
Changes its substance, pierces it with moods
Humanized, aspiring,—*there*
God pauses, closelier turns and knows
(Not in the shaping soul or shapen world

But in their perfect union),
An actual thing at last, a correspondence,
Essence materialized. Himself attained,
The one reality in space and time?—
Could that not be, O brutes and dreamers,
Say!

REVEILLE

WHETHER the conscious world,
Girt round by hate and wrong and terror,
Desperately defend itself
As a few brave guards and watchful captains
Maintain about some lone remote fortress
A small circle of troubled peace;
Or whether, ourselves a blind anarchy,
We vainly pit our selfishness and fear
Against a whole outer universe of law,
Admitting across the frontier from time to time
Enough of God's terrible order and justice
To burn a small torch amid our inward gloom—
Ah, when shall we raise our battle-blinded eyes
Above this endless conflict we wage
Life by life, for a mere breathing-space and foothold,—
Heart-knit, soul-united once both East and West
Thrilled by the energy of a mutual dream,
Take heed and know if brute or Prophet hold
True mirror of the attributes of man.

BEFORE A GAUGUIN

I ESCAPE from all them that hold me;
The prisons and the strong stockades of love,
The deep pits of hatred, let me go.
I pass on perforce from name to name,
Assume new qualities and titles
Sewed and patched on for the day's need
From old definitions proudly fitting once
But soiled, rent and tawdry long since
Like the heaped regalia of long unfashionable kings.
I pass on, escape even from myself.
The swiftest mood and widest embracing thought
Reel from my eager tortuous progression.
Nay, the whole world grins
Knowingly from its mask of good and evil;
Murderers, in utmost pity, droop before their judge,
And for the sake of the world's masquerade
Dive willingly into the black mud of stigma.
Otherwise ...
But we are all anarchists
Stumbling brave and blind through a strange lost region
Bordering the stupendous ecstasy of life.

THE HILL

BE not too certain, life!
(Or is that power of death, that tedious power
Which with insistent sneer
Shatters continually and steeps in slime
The difficult house I raise,
The house of consciousness?)—
Be not too certain of me;
Deem me not wholly tamed,
Content with labour ineffectual
Upon this ruined house of thought;
Or, turning to things outside,
Content to hurry a life-time through these streets
Darkened with vaster ineffectiveness
Even this sea-flung, sea-swift fog
Makes so pathetic romance of!
Count not too long upon my slavehood!
For as I have often dreamed,
There is a hill
Sloping against the dizzy, mystic sky
Whither, in a moment, I can go.

There is a hill

And, pausing for courageous breath
Pace after pace I'll climb
Fleeing from thee, O insufficient life,
A weak yet conscious Christ
Bearing his cross of aspiration.
O, bleeding and gasping on that hill

To me the vision of things
Already perfect, consummated, present
Sudden will rise, and I shall thrill
With powers you know not of,
Old tedious world of streets,
Inevitable failure, self-deception,
Death-in-life;
For, writhing as I might be
In supreme pain, and broken
Upon the wheel of dissolution,
Never was so great aspiration void;
And I shall wholly triumph
Convinced at last of my own perfect soul,
And God, the soul's desire.

AN OLD PRAYER RESAID

IS it too much to seek
Among the living, one friend, one man or woman
To stand ever between me and the blinding glory of God,
Mirroring the pure flame to my weak eyes
And visibly to every humble sense
Showing the glory?
Too much to seek?
Is there not one among the breathing
Who like the demigods of old
Mythed to a people's heart the manner and the way,
Will draw my thought and passion from itself,
Make me forget the dangerous mystery, Soul,
Wholly admiring, wholly intent upon a great nature
Heroic, tender and calm?

I drive my prayer along the crowded street
But meet only a passionate, willful race
Or here and there a wistful fellow pilgrim;
And all the while the immanent, pitiless glory of God
Burdens and breaks my heart.

IN THE MIRROR

I HAVE not dared to be alone
These many months, but passed with all the world,
A driven ghost, through the black magic
That we call life; till now
My mirror suddenly bids me halt.
Before its dimly lighted depths I pause
Seeking the image I have known, serene, heroic,
Dwelling for me within the mysterious glass,
The I ...
Lost, lost these fearful, hurried, wasted days.
Now islanded about by silence,
Poised safe upon the twilight
Alone, intent, thrice-conscious,
I dare again, I *will* ... and
Convinced, convincingly
Out of the glooms of my departed self
It starts, it gathers,
Shines from the mirror, throbs within my heart;
And gladder than any warrior-ravished bride
My song of triumph flows ...
Loving the world and by all things adored.

PILGRIM

HOW often, paused before some brilliant name
Shining by thought or will;
Or glimpsing a modern chief
Serenely intent
Upon his purpose undefinable,—
How often the shadow of ourselves
Projects far forward
Even to touch the titan we admire,
When, heart-leaping, soul-conscious,
Thither, we say, the distance to traverse,
Thither the summit we must still attain.
Our consciousness is never to itself
Sufficient and content,
But ever seems
A pilgrim thrust upon an endless way,
Toiling to reach
Some ultimate shrine of self contained in self.
The road of life winds upward, upward.
Gathering all types and natures
Into one fate,
Linking the brute to God.
Never a day
Opens our eyes and minds to a new sun
But, thrilled by fear or joy
Excessively intense
And startled from ourselves,
We recognize a way that winds in our own soul,

Bidding us follow.
And, looking beyond,
We find nor end, nor pause, nor quiet,
Only the road that winds
Upward and upward,
And the great compulsion of time and change
Goads us along the dizzy, myriad days.
Even death, we feel, but plants new pilgrim feet
Upon the ancient upward pilgrim way.
O, disheartened we lean
Upon our staff of the soul's self-recognition,
Pondering the interminable road
And our own worldly burden.
The road of life winds upward, upward,
Strewn with disheartened pilgrims
Even as you and I.

Yet, when we will to yield,
Dismayed by the cold, bleak summits of time,
And toil no more,
Leaving perfection to a tougher soul,—
Content to pause midway
With broken staff, closed eyes, and folded hands,
(A little slumber, O narcotic sleep!),—
Then, opening eyes.
After the moment's frantic oblivion,
Then has the landscape changed

Unwilled, untoiled-for:
By no labour, no conscious pilgrimage of self
Our soul has gained ascent.

New vistas arise
With pleasurable moods
And, for a little, time has lost its dread.

Then first do we confess a power
Beyond our conscious purpose
Filling the universe of men and things;
Changing, replacing, creating,
At once here, before us and behind,
Planning itself a pilgrimage so vast
That our supreme success would make it fail.

There is a power
Not to be sought, but seeking;
Holding, not to be held;
Using, not to be employed;
Ignoring, not mocking personality,
Shaping the fragments of men and things
Into an order and perfection not our own.

Life is the climber-up!

Life is the pilgrim!

We but a part of the road he treads upon
Mounting the cloud-piled hill!

So, being not the climber but the climbed,
Not the eternal pilgrim but the way,

I come to find myself
Circled by a great confidence and peace.
No more shall I attempt,
Blindly afraid, to seize
His garment or sandal, and stay
Life, the creative, unstaying;
No more shall I perplex and madden
My sensitive thought
With torment of a sheer, heart-breaking hill;
Nay, but thankfully aware
At last, and not too late,
How rightly fits my nature to the world,
Learn to live fully, gratefully within
The perfect here and now
Which life, from full-brimmed pilgrim's wallet,
Tosses each soul in passing
Upward and upward
On his mysterious way.
 Pass freely along, O life,
God's pilgrim.
Godspeed! I speed, I release thee!

PARADOX

IF I praise death, I feel it by the genius of life:
If I praise life, I speak it within the ears of death.

FRAGMENT

THEIR eyes shine, the rapt boy-gleam that never be-
fore
Poured out the hearts of strong, world-toughened men,—
Shine, and eagerly turn
The one way, Wesward,
So many arrows cleaving a single mark;
And like the wheat in windy acres tossing
Their limbs reach forth
The one way. Westward, all their ardent hands.
Their ardent hands and feet, one rapid, impetuous rhythm
Tosses them, swaying, advancing.

The tapestries of kings superb in battle
Bore never so rich design,
Nor rugs that ancient faith made intricate
Visioning the fervent soul,
As here
These dancing feet, the citizenship of earth,
Responsive, passionate, trace
Unconsciously along the echoing street.

I follow.
I join them.
Closer, closer I press me,
Body and spirit
Urged to the central core
Of this new passion warming, transforming men.

Like a strong man bearing proudly aloft his burden
Our slow, deep-rolling voices
Carry to heaven a grave and mighty hymn.
We reach to the world's edges
Gathering all men and women,
Uniting them, creating to one titanic, puissant nature
The myriad moods and passions of the race.
Not one avoids or declines us, impetuously receiving
In deepest heart the mutual rapture
Bursting at last the swart frontiers
Of nations, races, hatreds of class and clan.
No master to lead us.
No slave to follow;
We go.

JANUS

“THERE!

Look where the blazing star reels down
To sudden death in some mean stagnant water—
That, O friend, is signal to the doom
Rushing upon a world, a fair, dear world
That dies almost unmourned. But I
Die with it in my heart.”

My silence questioned him.

“A world,—how shall I tell it?
So calm, so gracious? Well,
It lay in little villages apart
Like secrets in a lover’s memory;
In villages where family names and deeds
Survived, creating magnanimity;
And there were albums, birthdays, festivals;
And old men grave, old women queenly;
And night enframed each leisurely day in gold;
Poets were read and known;
Slow organs breathed along the shadowy street;
And manners were thought the better part of men;
October twilight,—God! it seemed as though
History itself, and all the human race.
Had come each autumn to its perfect fruitage.
Friend, believe me, a fair, dear world lies dead.”
Moved by his measured sadness
I rose to score the dead world’s epitaph
On starkest rock by distant hills unknown

Where some strayed reveller of future times
Might chance upon it, and had he a soul,
Lament the passing of a kingly race.
But even as I rose I felt about me
The new world shaping in the ancient wreck;
That modern vision of life,—city-haste
But with it city-plenitude; and souls
Created by the tenser rhythm of crowds;
No long-maturing names, but freer men;
And roads hewn out like equatorial belts
From race to race;
And cloud-lost aeroplanes; colossal ships;
Long inter-racial tasks, to unify
A million labourers in a single dream;
New words, terms, thoughts,—the conscious mind
Reached out atiptoe, startled by its wealth;
New dreams, of art and peace,
Advanced by stouter hearts than Caesar's;
I felt this world in labour, and I knew
Not death, but birth, had agonized my soul.

CREATOR

GOD looked at me ... a woman's eyes
Piercing through and beyond
As there were nothing here,—
Nothing, where this heart beats, where this mind labours!
Now the whole daylong I stand
Lost in this strange nothingness,
Seeking ...
As a shadow might seek the hand that cast it,
As an echo might seek its sound,
... A soul.

I have been with them who run hither and thither
Before the antique silence of a church,
Who kneel at carved dark altars
And sniff wantonly the heady incense;
They are like those who guard a forgotten fortress,
Defending a frontier no hostile army ever will attack,
Long ago a vigorous Life passed by
Making terrible battle of being against non-being.
His memory lingers, and these
Proud of their strategy and their courage
Take arms and stand before his fading footprints in due
array.
The sun glitters on their new swords and buttons,
And death, their only foe,
Steals up and crushes them beneath the burden of their
unused armour!
May I cast this lie utterly away,

Creep out from this entanglement of memory,
Stamp underfoot the secondhand experience men term soul.
This is the lie that fetters the world.

All men save thieves and artists mix its poison w[^]ith their
daily bread.

Soul never existed before,
Will never exist until I give it being in and by myself.

There is no type, no model;

No path worn sleek by generations of dragging knees
Can lead me to its place.

It is a chaotic nothingness round about my life,
Flesh with my hand and eye, thought with my thought;

It whirls past my finger-tips,

Hides beyond my swiftest imagination.

Here in its midst I stand

Lonely as no mortal ever was before,

Confronting it, stern, anguished, half-daunted,

Waiting for the great mood gathering power within me.

Soon shall I leap forward for the last time,

Seize the chaos with all my being, godlike,

Creatively shape it into a perfect spirit, *self*,

Or fall back prostrate, knowing myself no better than
dogs and trees.

The blatant legions of triumphant hell

Swing past with reckless booty.

What faith, what sureness of the daily life!

God looked at me

CREATION

NATURE'S truant and scapegoat.
When I was made the earth held back her flame,
Mixed no prodigious sulphur with my blood;
Said: Here's one must beg or steal his life
Day by day; I'll give him nothing mine.
How long I crouched apart;
How long I hated the ample-winged birds,
Envied the sturdy oxen, the swift hound, the painless tree.
When a man passed I wept, bewildered.
How long I begged of water its ease,
Of wind its lightness, of fire its passion.
I crouched apart from laughter and tears;
Love I knew not, only I knew that hearts with sulphurous
 blood
Beat grief and rapture through all lives but mine.
All else is perfect; nothing am I, I said.
Then, like a tiny puff of wind on the great sea
Thickened by obdurate calm,
A prayer, a feeble spirit-breath sighed within me.
My hand tightened as for a titan task.
I gazed at it, bewildered,
Said: Nay, another suffering begins;
Now while the burden of storm and season
And men and things harries the gable of life,
A cunninger spite steals in beside the hearth
To pester the feeble flame.
But, stirring again my thick obdurate calm,

The prayer increased.
My breath drew deep, as for the dance of passion.
What is this? I cried.
Stronger, stronger it heaved and whirled and swirled.
I could not crouch, I rose, I stood erect,
Clenched hand, drew breath.
Impelled by some new sense not mine, yet mine,
I leaned swiftly to myself, as to heaped inarticulate clay,
Moulded the mass to likeness of a dream,
Fondled the outline to a wondrous curve,
Gave eyes, ears, breath.
Hasten, said God: not so in a thousand years
Shall man create himself.
Swifter I laboured, singing.
Then when the shape fairly answered my desire,
Answered, contained the vision of things perfect,
I in my feeble days painfully descried,
I entered in, assumed it as my own.
 Nature's scapegoat!
While men and beasts drag the burden of nature,
Her being, loved for her sake, not their own,
Her need their passion, her desire their power,
I stand apart with God
And brood upon the world behind this dream.

ECSTASY

O LAST, unassailable perfect triumph of life,
The very signal of attained being to avidest men:
When the bound, slow-groping panting soul
Abruptly risen to freedom, joyously perceptive
In presence of some unexpected beautiful thing,
Cries out to perish.
To die all through straightway, and nevermore *be*,—
Unless, unless, it be the universe itself,
Container of all space and time,
Container of that very moment of sweet anguish,
That very death-life cry and the mad, rent spirit;
Container of itself—as the opulent spring contains
One clear, articulate bird—as the unpartisan year
One season of spring whose pomp, whose passing alike
Inspires no pride, no awe—*returning again*.
How the life-filled spirit of man,
In its great moment, knows and envies God.

GOAL

*OVER my head bowed in the passing of the souls first
rapture
The day burns calmly and slow pressed in its brazen bowl
Like incense peacefully consumed by shrines where few
men worship;
Odours arising drift and catch at my weary senses,
Wakening an inner power my will, my courage never
inspired.
Without ash the day burns out, without pollution; calmly
and slow
The day in its brazen bowl consumes the perfumed ash of
yesterday.
Mingled in one strange maddening odour the incense of
the passing moment
Restores the old, forgotten years. All time returns, a
strange perfume.
To-morrow so shall burn, and its to-morrow. No moment
wastes and none
Sinks to ashes in the bowl that calmly burns all life away.
My will, my name, my love, my soul consume; O God,
at last I am.*

THE END