

New Poems

By

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TO AMY LOWELL

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APPREHENSION

AND all hours long, the town Roars like a beast in a cave That is wounded there
And like to drown; While days rush, wave after wave On its lair.

An invisible woe unseals The flood, so it passes beyond All bounds: the great old
city Recumbent roars as it feels The foamy paw of the pond Reach from
immensity.

But all that it can do Now, as the tide rises, Is to listen and hear the grim Waves
crash like thunder through The splintered streets, hear noises Roll hollow in the
interim.

COMING AWAKE

WHEN I woke, the lake-lights were quivering on the wall, The sunshine swam
in a shoal across and across, And a hairy, big bee hung over the primulas In the
window, his body black fur, and the sound of him cross.

There was something I ought to remember: and yet I did not remember. Why
should I? The running lights And the airy primulas, oblivious Of the
impending bee--they were fair enough sights.

FROM A COLLEGE WINDOW

THE glimmer of the limes, sun-heavy, sleeping, Goes trembling past me up the
College wall. Below, the lawn, in soft blue shade is keeping, The daisy-froth
quiescent, softly in thrall.

Beyond the leaves that overhang the street, Along the flagged, clean pavement
summer-white, Passes the world with shadows at their feet Going left and right.

Remote, although I hear the beggar's cough, See the woman's twinkling fingers
tend him a coin, I sit absolved, assured I am better off Beyond a world I
never want to join.

FLAPPER

LOVE has crept out of her sealéd heart As a field-bee, black and amber, Breaks
from the winter-cell, to clamber Up the warm grass where the sunbeams start.

Mischief has come in her dawning eyes, And a glint of coloured iris brings
Such as lies along the folded wings Of the bee before he flies.

Who, with a ruffling, careful breath, Has opened the wings of the wild young
sprite? Has fluttered her spirit to stumbling flight In her eyes, as a young bee
stumbleth?

Love makes the burden of her voice. The hum of his heavy, staggering wings
Sets quivering with wisdom the common things That she says, and her words
rejoice.

BIRDCAGE WALK

WHEN the wind blows her veil And uncovers her laughter I cease, I turn pale.
When the wind blows her veil From the woes I bewail Of love and hereafter:
When the wind blows her veil I cease, I turn pale.

LETTER FROM TOWN: THE ALMOND TREE

YOU promised to send me some violets. Did you forget? White ones and blue ones from under the orchard hedge? Sweet dark purple, and white ones mixed for a pledge Of our early love that hardly has opened yet.

Here there's an almond tree--you have never seen Such a one in the north--it flowers on the street, and I stand Every day by the fence to look up for the flowers that expand At rest in the blue, and wonder at what they mean.

Under the almond tree, the happy lands Provence, Japan, and Italy repose, And passing feet are chatter and clapping of those Who play around us, country girls clapping their hands.

You, my love, the foremost, in a flowered gown, All your unbearable tenderness, you with the laughter Startled upon your eyes now so wide with here-after, You with loose hands of abandonment hanging down.

FLAT SUBURBS, S.W., IN THE MORNING

THE new red houses spring like plants In level rows Of reddish herbage that
bristles and slants Its square shadows.

The pink young houses show one side bright Flatly assuming the sun, And
one side shadow, half in sight, Half-hiding the pavement-run;

Where hastening creatures pass intent On their level way, Threading like ants
that can never relent And have nothing to say.

Bare stems of street-lamps stiffly stand At random, desolate twigs, To testify
to a blight on the land That has stripped their sprigs.

THIEF IN THE NIGHT

LAST night a thief came to me And struck at me with something dark. I cried,
but no one could hear me, I lay dumb and stark.

When I awoke this morning I could find no trace; Perhaps 'twas a dream of
warning, For I've lost my peace.

LETTER FROM TOWN: ON A GREY EVENING IN MARCH

THE clouds are pushing in grey reluctance slowly northward to you, While north of them all, at the farthest ends, stands one bright-bosomed, aglance With fire as it guards the wild north cloud-coasts, red-fire seas running through The rocks where ravens flying to windward melt as a well-shot lance.

You should be out by the orchard, where violets secretly darken the earth, Or there in the woods of the twilight, with northern wind-flowers shaken astir. Think of me here in the library, trying and trying a song that is worth Tears and swords to my heart, arrows no armour will turn or deter.

You tell me the lambs have come, they lie like daisies white in the grass Of the dark-green hills; new calves in shed; peewits turn after the plough-- It is well for you. For me the navvies work in the road where I pass And I want to smite in anger the barren rock of each waterless brow.

Like the sough of a wind that is caught up high in the mesh of the budding trees, A sudden car goes sweeping past, and I strain my soul to hear The voice of the furtive triumphant engine as it rushes past like a breeze, To hear on its mocking triumphance unwitting the after-echo of fear.

SUBURBS ON A HAZY DAY

O STIFFLY shapen houses that change not, What conjuror's cloth was thrown
across you, and raised To show you thus transfigured, changed, Your stuff
all gone, your menace almost rased?

Such resolute shapes, so harshly set In hollow blocks and cubes deformed, and
heaped In void and null profusion, how is this? In what strong aqua regia now
are you steeped?

That you lose the brick-stuff out of you And hover like a presentment, fading
faint And vanquished, evaporate away To leave but only the merest possible
taint!

HYDE PARK AT NIGHT, BEFORE THE WAR

Clerks.

WE have shut the doors behind us, and the velvet flowers of night Lean about
us scattering their pollen grains of golden light.

Now at last we lift our faces, and our faces come aflower To the night that
takes us willing, liberates us to the hour.

Now at last the ink and dudgeon passes from our fervent eyes And out of the
chambered weariness wanders a spirit abroad on its enterprise.

Not too near and not too far Out of the stress of the crowd Music screams
as elephants scream When they lift their trunks and scream aloud For joy of
the night when masters are Asleep and adream.

So here I hide in the Shalimar With a wanton princess slender and proud,
And we swoon with kisses, swoon till we seem Two streaming peacocks gone in
a cloud Of golden dust, with star after star On our stream.

GIPSY

I, THE man with the red scarf, Will give thee what I have, this last week's earnings. Take them, and buy thee a silver ring And wed me, to ease my yearnings.

For the rest, when thou art wedded I'll wet my brow for thee With sweat, I'll enter a house for thy sake, Thou shalt shut doors on me.

TWO-FOLD

How gorgeous that shock of red lilies, and larkspur cleaving All with a flash of
blue!--when will she be leaving Her room, where the night still hangs like a half-
folded bat, And passion unbearable seethes in the darkness, like must in a vat.

UNDER THE OAK

You, if you were sensible, When I tell you the stars flash signals, each one dreadful, You would not turn and answer me "The night is wonderful."

Even you, if you knew How this darkness soaks me through and through, and infuses Unholy fear in my vapour, you would pause to distinguish What hurts, from what amuses.

For I tell you Beneath this powerful tree, my whole soul's fluid Oozes away from me as a sacrifice steam At the knife of a Druid.

Again I tell you, I bleed, I am bound with withies, My life runs out. I tell you my blood runs out on the floor of this oak, Gout upon gout.

Above me springs the blood-born mistletoe In the shady smoke. But who are you, twittering to and fro Beneath the oak?

What thing better are you, what worse? What have you to do with the mysteries Of this ancient place, of my ancient curse? What place have you in my histories?

LOVE STORM

MANY roses in the wind Are tapping at the window-sash. A hawk is in the sky;
his wings Slowly begin to plash.

The roses with the west wind rapping Are torn away, and a splash Of red goes
down the billowing air.

Still hangs the hawk, with the whole sky moving Past him--only a wing-beat
proving The will that holds him there.

The daisies in the grass are bending, The hawk has dropped, the wind is
spending All the roses, and unending Rustle of leaves washes out the rending Cry
of a bird.

A red rose goes on the wind.--Ascending The hawk his wind-swept way is
wending Easily down the sky. The daisies, sending Strange white signals, seem
intending To show the place whence the scream was heard.

But, oh, my heart, what birds are piping! A silver wind is hastily wiping The face
of the youngest rose.

And oh, my heart, cease apprehending! The hawk is gone, a rose is tapping The
window-sash as the west-wind blows.

Knock, knock, 'tis no more than a red rose rapping, And fear is a plash of wings.
What, then, if a scarlet rose goes flapping Down the bright-grey ruin of things!

PARLIAMENT HILL IN THE EVENING

THE houses fade in a melt of mist Blotching the thick, soiled air With reddish
places that still resist The Night's slow care.

The hopeless, wintry twilight fades, The city corrodes out of sight As the body
corrodes when death invades That citadel of delight.

Now verdigris smoulderings softly spread Through the shroud of the town, as
slow Night-lights hither and thither shed Their ghastly glow.

PICCADILLY CIRCUS AT NIGHT

Street-Walkers.

WHEN into the night the yellow light is roused like dust above the towns, Or
like a mist the moon has kissed from off a pool in the midst of the downs,

Our faces flower for a little hour pale and uncertain along the street, Daisies
that waken all mistaken white-spread in expectancy to meet

The luminous mist which the poor things wist was dawn arriving across the
sky, When dawn is far behind the star the dust-lit town has driven so high.

All the birds are folded in a silent ball of sleep, All the flowers are faded from
the asphalt isle in the sea, Only we hard-faced creatures go round and round,
and keep The shores of this innermost ocean alive and illusory.

Wanton sparrows that twittered when morning looked in at their eyes And
the Cyprian's pavement-roses are gone, and now it is we Flowers of illusion
who shine in our gauds, make a Paradise On the shores of this ceaseless
ocean, gay birds of the town-dark sea.

TARANTELLA

SAD as he sits on the white sea-stone And the suave sea chuckles, and turns to
the moon, And the moon significant smiles at the cliffs and the boulders. He
sits like a shade by the flood alone While I dance a tarantella on the rocks, and
the croon Of my mockery mocks at him over the waves' bright shoulders.

What can I do but dance alone, Dance to the sliding sea and the moon, For the
moon on my breast and the air on my limbs and the foam on my feet? For
surely this earnest man has none Of the night in his soul, and none of the tune
Of the waters within him; only the world's old wisdom to bleat.

I wish a wild sea-fellow would come down the glittering shingle, A soulless
neckar, with winking seas in his eyes And falling waves in his arms, and the lost
soul's kiss On his lips: I long to be soulless, I tingle To touch the sea in the last
surprise Of fiery coldness, to be gone in a lost soul's bliss.

IN CHURCH

IN the choir the boys are singing the hymn.
Moves in silver-moist flashes, in musical trim.

The morning light on their lips

Sudden outside the high window, one crow
withered oak-tree's top of woe.

Hangs in the air And lights on a

One bird, one blot, folded and still at the top
grail Of crystal heaven falls one full black drop.

Of the withered tree!--in the

Like a soft full drop of darkness it seems to sway
Sabbath, suffusing our sacred day.

In the tender wine Of our

PIANO

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me; Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

EMBANKMENT AT NIGHT, BEFORE THE WAR

Charity.

BY the river In the black wet night as the furtive rain slinks down, Dropping
and starting from sleep Alone on a seat A woman crouches.

I must go back to her.

I want to give her Some money. Her hand slips out of the breast of her gown
Asleep. My fingers creep Carefully over the sweet Thumb-mound, into the palm's
deep pouches.

So, the gift!

God, how she starts! And looks at me, and looks in the palm of her hand! And
again at me! I turn and run Down the Embankment, run for my life.

But why?--why?

Because of my heart's Beating like sobs, I come to myself, and stand In the street
spilled over splendidly With wet, flat lights. What I've done I know not, my soul is
in strife.

The touch was on the quick. I want to forget.

PHANTASMAGORIA

RIGID sleeps the house in darkness, I alone
Like a thing unwarrantable cross the
hall
And climb the stairs to find the group of doors
Standing angel-stern and tall.

I want my own room's shelter. But what is this
Throng of startled beings
suddenly thrown
In confusion against my entry? Is it only the trees'
Large
shadows from the outside street lamp blown?

Phantom to phantom leaning; strange women weep
Aloud, suddenly on my mind
Startling a fear unspeakable, as the shuddering wind
Breaks and sobs in the
blind.

So like to women, tall strange women weeping!
Why continually do they cross the
bed? Why does my soul contract with unnatural fear?
I am listening! Is anything
said?

Ever the long black figures swoop by the bed;
They seem to be beckoning, rushing
away, and beckoning. Whither then, whither, what is it, say
What is the
reckoning.

Tall black Bacchae of midnight, why then, why
Do you rush to assail me? Do I
intrude on your rites nocturnal? What should it avail me?

Is there some great Iacchos of these slopes
Suburban dismal? Have I profaned
some female mystery, orgies
Black and phantasmal?

NEXT MORNING

How have I wandered here to this vaulted room In the house of life?--the floor was ruffled with gold Last evening, and she who was softly in bloom, Glimmered as flowers that in perfume at twilight unfold

For the flush of the night; whereas now the gloom Of every dirty, must-besprinkled mould, And damp old web of misery's heirloom Deadens this day's grey-dropping arras-fold.

And what is this that floats on the undermist Of the mirror towards the dusty grate, as if feeling Unsightly its way to the warmth?--this thing with a list To the left? this ghost like a candle swealing?

Pale-blurred, with two round black drops, as if it missed Itself among everything else, here hungrily stealing Upon me!--my own reflection!--explicit gist Of my presence there in the mirror that leans from the ceiling!

Then will somebody square this shade with the being I know I was last night, when my soul rang clear as a bell And happy as rain in summer? Why should it be so? What is there gone against me, why am I in hell?

PALIMPSEST OF TWILIGHT

DARKNESS comes out of the earth And swallows dip into the pallor of the west;
From the hay comes the clamour of children's mirth; Wanes the old
palimpsest.

The night-stock oozes scent, And a moon-blue moth goes flittering by: All that
the worldly day has meant Wastes like a lie.

The children have forsaken their play; A single star in a veil of light Glimmers:
litter of day Is gone from sight.

EMBANKMENT AT NIGHT, BEFORE THE WAR

Outcasts.

THE night rain, dripping unseen, Comes endlessly kissing my face and my hands.

The river, slipping between Lamps, is rayed with golden bands Half way down its heaving sides; Revealed where it hides.

Under the bridge Great electric cars Sing through, and each with a floor-light racing along at its side. Far off, oh, midge after midge Drifts over the gulf that bars The night with silence, crossing the lamp-touched tide.

At Charing Cross, here, beneath the bridge Sleep in a row the outcasts, Packed in a line with their heads against the wall. Their feet, in a broken ridge Stretch out on the way, and a lout casts A look as he stands on the edge of this naked stall.

Beasts that sleep will cover Their faces in their flank; so these Have huddled rags or limbs on the naked sleep. Save, as the tram-cars hover Past with the noise of a breeze And gleam as of sunshine crossing the low black heap,

Two naked faces are seen Bare and asleep, Two pale clots swept and swept by the light of the cars. Foam-clots showing between The long, low tidal-heap, The mud-weed opening two pale, shadowless stars.

Over the pallor of only two faces Passes the gallivant beam of the trams; Shows in only two sad places The white bare bone of our shams.

A little, bearded man, pale, peaked in sleeping, With a face like a chickweed flower. And a heavy woman, sleeping still keeping Callous and dour.

Over the pallor of only two places Tossed on the low, black, ruffled heap Passes the light of the tram as it races Out of the deep.

Eloquent limbs In disarray Sleep-suave limbs of a youth with long, smooth thighs Hunched up for warmth; the muddy rims Of trousers fray On the thin bare shins of a man who uneasily lies.

The balls of five red toes As red and dirty, bare Young birds forsaken and left in a nest of mud-- Newspaper sheets enclose Some limbs like parcels, and tear When the sleeper stirs or turns on the ebb of the flood--

One heaped mound Of a woman's knees As she thrusts them upward under the ruffled skirt-- And a curious dearth of sound In the presence of these Wastrels that sleep on the flagstones without any hurt.

Over two shadowless, shameless faces Stark on the heap Travels the light as it tilts in its paces Gone in one leap.

At the feet of the sleepers, watching, Stand those that wait For a place to lie down; and still as they stand, they sleep, Wearily catching The flood's slow gait Like men who are drowned, but float erect in the deep.

Oh, the singing mansions, Golden-lighted tall Trams that pass, blown ruddily down the night! The bridge on its stanchions Stoops like a pall To this human blight.

On the outer pavement, slowly, Theatre people pass, Holding aloft their umbrellas that flash and are bright Like flowers of infernal moly Over nocturnal grass Wetly bobbing and drifting away on our sight.

And still by the rotten Row of shattered feet, Outcasts keep guard. Forgotten, Forgetting, till fate shall delete One from the ward.

The factories on the Surrey side Are beautifully laid in black on a gold-grey sky. The river's invisible tide Threads and thrills like ore that is wealth to the eye.

And great gold midges Cross the chasm At the bridges Above intertwined plasm.

WINTER IN THE BOULEVARD

THE frost has settled down upon the trees And ruthlessly strangled off the fantasies Of leaves that have gone unnoticed, swept like old Romantic stories now no more to be told.

The trees down the boulevard stand naked in thought, Their abundant summery wordage silenced, caught In the grim undertow; naked the trees confront Implacable winter's long, cross-questioning brunt.

Has some hand balanced more leaves in the depths of the twigs? Some dim little efforts placed in the threads of the birch?-- It is only the sparrows, like dead black leaves on the sprigs, Sitting huddled against the cerulean, one flesh with their perch.

The clear, cold sky coldly bethinks itself. Like vivid thought the air spins bright, and all Trees, birds, and earth, arrested in the after-thought Awaiting the sentence out from the welkin brought.

SCHOOL ON THE OUTSKIRTS

How different, in the middle of snows, the great school rises red! A red rock silent and shadowless, clung round with clusters of shouting lads, Some few dark-cleaving the doorway, souls that cling as the souls of the dead In stupor persist at the gates of life, obstinate dark monads.

This new red rock in a waste of white rises against the day With shelter now, and with blandishment, since the winds have had their way And laid the desert horrific of silence and snow on the world of mankind, School now is the rock in this weary land the winter burns and makes blind.

SICKNESS

WAVING slowly before me, pushed into the dark, Unseen my hands explore the
silence, drawing the bark Of my body slowly behind.

Nothing to meet my fingers but the fleece of night Invisible blinding my face and
my eyes! What if in their flight My hands should touch the door!

What if I suddenly stumble, and push the door Open, and a great grey dawn
swirls over my feet, before I can draw back!

What if unwitting I set the door of eternity wide And am swept away in the
horrible dawn, am gone down the tide Of eternal hereafter!

Catch my hands, my darling, between your breasts. Take them away from their
venture, before fate wrests The meaning out of them. EVERLASTING
FLOWERS

WHO do you think stands watching The snow-tops shining rosy In heaven, now
that the darkness Takes all but the tallest posy?

Who then sees the two-winged Boat down there, all alone And asleep on the
snow's last shadow, Like a moth on a stone?

The olive-leaves, light as gad-flies, Have all gone dark, gone black. And now in
the dark my soul to you Turns back.

To you, my little darling, To you, out of Italy. For what is loveliness, my love,
Save you have it with me!

So, there's an oxen wagon Comes darkly into sight: A man with a lantern,
swinging A little light.

What does he see, my darling Here by the darkened lake? Here, in the sloping
shadow The mountains make?

He says not a word, but passes, Staring at what he sees. What ghost of us both
do you think he saw Under the olive trees?

All the things that are lovely-- The things you never knew-- I wanted to gather
them one by one And bring them to you.

But never now, my darling Can I gather the mountain-tips
From the twilight like half-shut lilies To hold to your lips.

And never the two-winged vessel That sleeps below on the lake
Can I catch like a moth between my hands For you to take.

But hush, I am not regretting: It is far more perfect now.
I'll whisper the ghostly truth to the world And tell them how

I know you here in the darkness, How you sit in the throne of my eyes
At peace, and look out of the windows In glad surprise.

THE NORTH COUNTRY

IN another country, black poplars shake themselves over a pond, And rooks and the rising smoke-waves scatter and wheel from the works beyond; The air is dark with north and with sulphur, the grass is a darker green, And people darkly invested with purple move palpable through the scene.

Soundlessly down across the counties, out of the resonant gloom That wraps the north in stupor and purple travels the deep, slow boom Of the man-life north-imprisoned, shut in the hum of the purpled steel As it spins to sleep on its motion, drugged dense in the sleep of the wheel.

Out of the sleep, from the gloom of motion, soundlessly, somnambule Moans and booms the soul of a people imprisoned, asleep in the rule Of the strong machine that runs mesmeric, booming the spell of its word Upon them and moving them helpless, mechanic, their will to its will deferred.

Yet all the while comes the droning inaudible, out of the violet air, The moaning of sleep-bound beings in travail that toil and are will-less there In the spell-bound north, convulsive now with a dream near morning, strong With violent achings heaving to burst the sleep that is now not long.

BITTERNESS OF DEATH

I

AH, stern, cold man, How can you lie so relentless hard While I wash you with weeping water! Do you set your face against the daughter Of life? Can you never discard Your curt pride's ban?

You masquerader! How can you shame to act this part Of unswerving indifference to me? You want at last, ah me! To break my heart Evader!

You know your mouth Was always sooner to soften Even than your eyes. Now shut it lies Relentless, however often I kiss it in drouth.

It has no breath Nor any relaxing. Where, Where are you, what have you done? What is this mouth of stone? How did you dare Take cover in death!

II

Once you could see, The white moon show like a breast revealed By the slipping shawl of stars. Could see the small stars tremble As the heart beneath did wield Systole, diastole.

All the lovely macrocosm Was woman once to you, Bride to your groom. No tree in bloom But it leaned you a new White bosom.

And always and ever Soft as a summering tree Unfolds from the sky, for your good, Unfolded womanhood; Shedding you down as a tree Sheds its flowers on a river.

I saw your brows Set like rocks beside a sea of gloom, And I shed my very soul down into your thought; Like flowers I fell, to be caught On the comforted pool, like bloom That leaves the boughs.

III

Oh, masquerader, With a hard face white-enamelled, What are you now? Do you care no longer how My heart is trammelled, Evader?

Is this you, after all, Metallic, obdurate With bowels of steel? Did you never feel?-- Cold, insensate, Mechanical!

Ah, no!--you multiform, You that I loved, you wonderful, You who darkened and shone, You were many men in one; But never this null This never-warm!

Is this the sum of you? Is it all nought? Cold, metal-cold? Are you all told Here, iron-wrought? Is this what's become of you?

SEVEN SEALS

SINCE this is the last night I keep you home, Come, I will consecrate you for the journey.

Rather I had you would not go. Nay come, I will not again reproach you. Lie back And let me love you a long time ere you go. For you are sullen-hearted still, and lack The will to love me. But even so I will set a seal upon you from my lip, Will set a guard of honour at each door, Seal up each channel out of which might slip Your love for me.

I kiss your mouth. Ah, love, Could I but seal its ruddy, shining spring Of passion, parch it up, destroy, remove Its softly-stirring crimson welling-up Of kisses! Oh, help me, God! Here at the source I'd lie for ever drinking and drawing in Your fountains, as heaven drinks from out their course The floods.

I close your ears with kisses And seal your nostrils; and round your neck you'll wear-- Nay, let me work--a delicate chain of kisses. Like beads they go around, and not one misses To touch its fellow on either side.

And there Full mid-between the champaign of your breast I place a great and burning seal of love Like a dark rose, a mystery of rest On the slow bubbling of your rhythmic heart.

Nay, I persist, and very faith shall keep You integral to me. Each door, each mystic port Of egress from you I will seal and steep In perfect chrism. Now it is done. The mort Will sound in heaven before it is undone.

But let me finish what I have begun And shirt you now invulnerable in the mail Of iron kisses, kisses linked like steel. Put greaves upon your thighs and knees, and frail Webbing of steel on your feet. So you shall feel Ensheathed invulnerable with me, with seven Great seals upon your outgoings, and woven Chain of my mystic will wrapped perfectly Upon you, wrapped in indomitable me.

READING A LETTER

SHE sits on the recreation ground Under an oak whose yellow buds dot the pale blue sky. The young grass twinkles in the wind, and the sound Of the wind in the knotted buds in a canopy.

So sitting under the knotted canopy Of the wind, she is lifted and carried away as in a balloon Across the insensible void, till she stoops to see The sandy desert beneath her, the dreary platoon.

She knows the waste all dry beneath her, in one place Stirring with earth-coloured life, ever turning and stirring. But never the motion has a human face Nor sound, save intermittent machinery whirring.

And so again, on the recreation ground She alights a stranger, wondering, unused to the scene; Suffering at sight of the children playing around, Hurt at the chalk-coloured tulips, and the even- ing-green.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

ROUND the house were lilacs and strawberries And foal-foots spangling the paths, And far away on the sand-hills, dewberries Caught dust from the sea's long swaths.

Up the wolds the woods were walking, And nuts fell out of their hair. At the gate the nets hung, balking The star-lit rush of a hare.

In the autumn fields, the stubble Tinkled the music of gleaning. At a mother's knees, the trouble Lost all its meaning.

Yea, what good beginnings To this sad end! Have we had our innings? God forfend!

INTIME

RETURNING, I find her just the same, At just the same old delicate game.

Still she says: "Nay, loose no flame To lick me up and do me harm! Be all yourself!--for oh, the charm Of your heart of fire in which I look! Oh, better there than in any book Glow and enact the dramas and dreams I love for ever!--there it seems You are lovelier than life itself, till desire Comes licking through the bars of your lips And over my face the stray fire slips, Leaving a burn and an ugly smart That will have the oil of illusion. Oh, heart Of fire and beauty, loose no more Your reptile flames of lust; ah, store Your passion in the basket of your soul, Be all yourself, one bonny, burning coal That stays with steady joy of its own fire. But do not seek to take me by desire. Oh, do not seek to thrust on me your fire! For in the firing all my porcelain Of flesh does crackle and shiver and break in pain, My ivory and marble black with stain, My veil of sensitive mystery rent in twain, My altars sullied, I, bereft, remain A priestess execrable, taken in vain--"

So the refrain Sings itself over, and so the game Re-starts itself wherein I am kept Like a glowing brazier faintly blue of flame So that the delicate love-adept Can warm her hands and invite her soul, Sprinkling incense and salt of words And kisses pale, and sipping the toll Of incense-smoke that rises like birds.

Yet I've forgotten in playing this game, Things I have known that shall have no name; Forgetting the place from which I came I watch her ward away the flame, Yet warm herself at the fire--then blame Me that I flicker in the basket; Me that I glow not with content To have my substance so subtly spent; Me that I interrupt her game. I ought to be proud that she should ask it Of me to be her fire-opal--.

It is well Since I am here for so short a spell Not to interrupt her?--Why should I Break in by making any reply!

TWO WIVES

I

INTO the shadow-white chamber silts the white Flux of another dawn. The wind that all night Long has waited restless, suddenly wafts A whirl like snow from the plum-trees and the pear, Till petals heaped between the window-shafts In a drift die there.

A nurse in white, at the dawning, flower-foamed pane Draws down the blinds, whose shadows scarcely stain The white rugs on the floor, nor the silent bed That rides the room like a frozen berg, its crest Finally ridged with the austere line of the dead Stretched out at rest.

Less than a year the fourfold feet had pressed The peaceful floor, when fell the sword on their rest. Yet soon, too soon, she had him home again With wounds between them, and suffering like a guest That will not go. Now suddenly going, the pain Leaves an empty breast.

II

A tall woman, with her long white gown aflow As she strode her limbs amongst it, once more She hastened towards the room. Did she know As she listened in silence outside the silent door? Entering, she saw him in outline, raised on a pyre Awaiting the fire.

Upraised on the bed, with feet erect as a bow, Like the prow of a boat, his head laid back like the stern Of a ship that stands in a shadowy sea of snow With frozen rigging, she saw him; she drooped like a fern Refolding, she slipped to the floor as a ghost-white peony slips When the thread clips.

Soft she lay as a shed flower fallen, nor heard The ominous entry, nor saw the other love, The dark, the grave-eyed mistress who thus dared At such an hour to lay her claim, above A stricken wife, so sunk in oblivion, bowed With misery, no more proud.

III

The stranger's hair was shorn like a lad's dark poll And pale her ivory face: her eyes would fail In silence when she looked: for all the whole Darkness of failure was in them, without avail. Dark in indomitable failure, she who had lost

Now claimed the host,

She softly passed the sorrowful flower shed
In blonde and white on the floor, nor
even turned Her head aside, but straight towards the bed
Moved with slow feet,
and her eyes' flame steadily burned. She looked at him as he lay with banded
cheek, And she started to speak

Softly: "I knew it would come to this," she said, "I knew that some day, soon, I
should find you thus. So I did not fight you. You went your way instead Of
coming mine--and of the two of us I died the first, I, in the after-life Am
now your wife."

IV

"'Twas I whose fingers did draw up the young Plant of your body: to me you
looked e'er sprung The secret of the moon within your eyes! My mouth you met
before your fine red mouth Was set to song--and never your song denies
My love, till you went south."

"'Twas I who placed the bloom of manhood on Your youthful smoothness: I
fleeced where fleece was none Your fervent limbs with flickers and tendrils of
new Knowledge; I set your heart to its stronger beat; I put my strength upon you,
and I threw My life at your feet."

"But I whom the years had reared to be your bride, Who for years was sun for
your shivering, shade for your sweat, Who for one strange year was as a bride
to you--you set me aside With all the old, sweet things of our youth;--and
never yet Have I ceased to grieve that I was not great enough To defeat
your baser stuff."

V

"But you are given back again to me Who have kept intact for you your virginity.
Who for the rest of life walk out of care, Indifferent here of myself, since I am gone
Where you are gone, and you and I out there Walk now as one."

"Your widow am I, and only I. I dream God bows his head and grants me this
supreme Pure look of your last dead face, whence now is gone The mobility, the
panther's gambolling, And all your being is given to me, so none Can
mock my struggling."

"And now at last I kiss your perfect face, Perfecting now our unfinished, first
embrace. Your young hushed look that then saw God ablaze In every bush, is

given you back, and we Are met at length to finish our rest of days In a
unity."

HEIMWEH

FAR-OFF the lily-statues stand white-ranked in the garden at home. Would
God they were shattered quickly, the cattle would tread them out in the loam. I
wish the elder trees in flower could suddenly heave, and burst The walls of the
house, and nettles puff out from the hearth at which I was nursed.

It stands so still in the hush composed of trees and inviolate peace, The home
of my fathers, the place that is mine, my fate and my old increase. And now
that the skies are falling, the world is spouting in fountains of dirt, I would give
my soul for the homestead to fall with me, go with me, both in one hurt.

DEBACLE

THE trees in trouble because of autumn, And scarlet berries falling from the bush, And all the myriad houseless seeds Loosing hold in the wind's insistent push

Moan softly with autumnal parturition, Poor, obscure fruits extruded out of light Into the world of shadow, carried down Between the bitter knees of the after-night.

Bushed in an uncouth ardour, coiled at core With a knot of life that only bliss can unravel, Fall all the fruits most bitterly into earth Bitterly into corrosion bitterly travel.

What is it internecine that is locked, By very fierceness into a quiescence Within the rage? We shall not know till it burst Out of corrosion into new florescence.

Nay, but how tortured is the frightful seed The spark intense within it, all without Mordant corrosion gnashing and champing hard For ruin on the naked small redoubt.

Bitter, to fold the issue, and make no sally; To have the mystery, but not go forth; To bear, but retaliate nothing, given to save The spark in storms of corrosion, as seeds from the north.

The sharper, more horrid the pressure, the harder the heart That saves the blue grain of eternal fire Within its quick, committed to hold and wait And suffer unheeding, only forbidden to expire.

NARCISSUS

WHERE the minnows trace A glinting web quick hid in the gloom of the brook,
When I think of the place And remember the small lad lying intent to look
Through the shadowy face At the little fish thread-threading the watery nook--

It seems to me The woman you are should be nixie, there is a pool Where we
ought to be. You undine-clear and pearly, soullessly cool And waterly The pool for
my limbs to fathom, my soul's last school.

Narcissus Ventured so long ago in the deeps of reflection. Illyssus Broke the
bounds and beyond!--Dim recollection Of fishes Soundlessly moving in heaven's
other direction!

Be Undine towards the waters, moving back; For me A pool! Put off the soul
you've got, oh lack Your human self immortal; take the watery track.

AUTUMN SUNSHINE

THE sun sets out the autumn crocuses And fills them up a pouring measure
Of death-producing wine, till treasure Runs waste down their chalices.

All, all Persephone's pale cups of mould Are on the board, are over-filled; The
portion to the gods is spilled; Now, mortals all, take hold!

The time is now, the wine-cup full and full Of lambent heaven, a pledging-cup;
Let now all mortal men take up The drink, and a long, strong pull.

Out of the hell-queen's cup, the heaven's pale wine-- Drink then, invisible
heroes, drink. Lips to the vessels, never shrink, Throats to the heavens incline.

And take within the wine the god's great oath By heaven and earth and hellish
stream To break this sick and nauseous dream We writhe and lust in, both.

Swear, in the pale wine poured from the cups of the queen Of hell, to wake
and be free From this nightmare we writhe in, Break out of this foul has-been.

ON THAT DAY

ON that day I shall put roses on roses, and cover your grave With multitude of white roses: and since you were brave One bright red ray.

So people, passing under The ash-trees of the valley-road, will raise Their eyes and look at the grave on the hill, in wonder, Wondering mount, and put the flowers asunder

To see whose praise Is blazoned here so white and so bloodily red. Then they will say: "'Tis long since she is dead, Who has remembered her after many days?"

And standing there They will consider how you went your ways Unnoticed among them, a still queen lost in the maze Of this earthly affair.

A queen, they'll say, Has slept unnoticed on a forgotten hill. Sleeps on unknown, unnoticed there, until Dawns my insurgent day.