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A LYRICAL LEGEND**

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ORPHEUS

A LYRICAL LEGEND BY ALEISTER CROWLEY

IN TWO VOLUMES OF WHICH
THIS IS VOLUME ONE
EACH ONE CROWN

SOCIETY
FOR THE
PROPAGATION
OF
RELIGIOUS
TRUTH

BOLESKINE
FOYERS
INVERNESS
1905

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WARNING

MAY I who know so bitterly the tedium of this truly dreadful poem be permitted to warn all but the strongest and most desperate natures from the task of reading or of attempting to read it? I have spent more than three years in fits of alternate enthusiasm for, and disgust of, it. My best friends have turned weeping away when I introduced its name into conversation; my most obsequious sycophants (including myself) were revolted when I approached the subject, even from afar.

I began Book I. in San Francisco one accursed day of May 1901. I was then a Qabalist, deeply involved in ceremonial magic, with a Pantheon of Egypto-Christian colour, in fact, the mere bouillon of which my "Tannhäuser" was the froth. The idea was to do the "biggest thing ever done in lyrics." I bound myself by an oath to admit no rhyme unless three times repeated; to average some high percentage of double rhymes—in brief, to perform a gigantic juggle with the unhappy English language. The whole of this first book is technically an ode (! ! !) and was so designed. So colossal an example of human fatuity truly deserves, and shall have, a complete exposure.¹

¹ *Vide* the Contents. Can the Spirit of Perversity attribute the unwieldiness of the structure to its formal symmetry and perfection?

Book I. was finished in Hawaii, ere June expired, and Book II. begun.

I had just begun to study the Theosophic writings—their influence, though slight, is apparent. So intent was I on producing a *big* book that the whole of my “Argonauts” (published separately, 1904) was written for the shadow-play by which Orpheus wins Eurydice to an interest in mortal joys and sorrows. Also—believe it!—I had proposed a similar play in Book III., to be called “Heracles” or “Theseus,” by performance of which Persephone should be moved, or Hades overwhelmed.

But luckily I was myself overwhelmed first, and it never got a chance at Hades. Book II., then, and its Siamese twin, were written in Hawaii, Japan, China, Ceylon, and South India, where also I began Book III. That also I finished in the Burmese jungle and at Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung at Akyab.

During this period I was studying the Buddhist law; and its influence on the philosophy of the poem is as apparent as that of Hinduism on Book II.

The summer of 1902 asked another kind of philosophy—the kind that goes with glacier travel in the Mustagh Tagh. Orpheus slept.

Book IV. was begun in Cairo on my way to England, and bears marks of confirmed Buddhism up to the death of Orpheus.

But a year's rest, and a certain advance in Scientific Knowledge, gave me, as I hope, a direct and definite view—no longer a philosophy—of the nature of things, so that the Agnosticism which is the good wine of

Buddhism sat rather tightly on shoulders broadened by responsibility, and the first part of Book IV. is flatly contradicted by its climax.

This is a pitiable sort of confession for a man to make !

What was I to do ? I could not rewrite the whole in order to give it a philosophic unity. Gerald Kelly forcibly prevented me from throwing it into the river at Marlotte, though he admitted quite frankly that he could not read even through Book I. and did not see how any one could. Tell me, he said, conjuring the friendship of years, can *you* read it ? Even a poet should be honest ; I confessed that I could not !

Taking it in sections, with relays and an ambulance, we could see no fault in it, however. It is clumsily built ; it is all feet and face ; but you cannot make a Monster symmetrical by lopping at him.

Still, we cut down every possible excrescence, doctored up the remains so as to look as much like a book as possible (until it is examined), and are about to let it loose on society.

The remaining books all share this fatal lack of Architecture ; but they are not so long ; there is some incident, though not much ; and they are proportionately less dull. Further, the scheme is no longer so ambitious, and the failure is therefore less glaring.

I might have done like Burton and his Kasidah, and kept the MS. for twenty years (if I live so long), ever revising it. But (a) I should certainly not live twenty years if I had the accursed manuscript in all sorts and sizes of type and colour of ink and pencil to stalk my

footsteps, and (b) I am literally not the man who wrote it, and, despise him as I may, I have no right to interfere with his work.

But I will not be haunted by the ghost of a Banquo that another man has failed to lay; and this kind of ghost knows but one exorcism.

One should bury him decently in fine fat type, and erect nice boards over him, and collect the criticisms of an enlightened press, and inscribe them on the tomb.

Then he is buried beyond resurrection; oblivion takes him, and he will never haunt the author or anybody else again.

So I have asked Messrs Turnbull & Spears to dig the grave and provide the coffin; the S.P.R.T. will oblige with the funeral service.

Old Man of the Sea, these three years you have drummed your black misshapen heels upon me; I have had no ease because of you; I am bepissed and conskited of your beastliness; and now you are drunk with the idea that you are finished and perfect, I shall roll you off and beat your brains out upon that hardest of flints, the head of the British Public. I am shut of thee. Allah forget thee in the day when he remembereth his friends!

August 14, 1904.

EXORDIUM

FROM darkness of fugitive thought,
From problems bewildering the brain,
Deep lights beyond heaven unsought,
Dead faces seen dimly in rain ;
From the depths of Mind's caverns, the fire
Reclaims the old magical lyre ;
The ways of creation are nought,
If only, O mother, O Muse, I may measure Thy melodies
in me again !

How wayward, how feeble the child
Three watched from the stars at his birth ;
Erato the fierce and the mild ;
Polymnia grave ; and the girth
Broad-girdled of gold and desire,
Melpomene's terrible lyre,
That lifts up her life in the wild,
The star-piercing pæan, and floats in mid-ether, and
sinks to the earth.

These three of the Muses were mine ;
They nurtured and knew me and kissed.
Erato was hidden in wine ;
Polymnia dawned in the mist :

Melpomene shone in the pyre
Of terrors that burned in her lyre ;
But all of their passion divine
I lost in the life and the stress of the world ere ever the
soul of me wist.

But, Orpheus, thy splendider light
Was the veil of thyself the more splendid.
Thou leapedst as a fountain in flight,
As a bird in the rainbow descended !
From the sweet single womb risen higher
Did Calliope string thee her lyre,
Thy mother : and veiled her in night :—
For thyself to Herself art a veil till the veils of the Heaven
be rended and ended.

Now, single myself as thy soul,
I pray to Apollo indeed !
Fling forth to the starriest goal
My spirit, invoking his rede ;
Care nought for his mercy or ire ;
Reach impious hands to his lyre.
Determined to die or control
Those strings the immortal at last, though the strings of
this heart of me bleed.

Come life, or come death ; come disdain
Or honour from mutable men,
I cry in this passionate pain—
My blood be poured out in the pen !

Euterpe ! Espouse me ! inspire
My life looking up to Thy lyre !
Of thy love, thine alone, am I fain !
Be with me, possess me, reveal me the melodies never
yet given to men.

The starry and heavenly wheels,
The earth and her glorious dye,
The light that the darkness reveals,
The river, the sea, and the sky ;
All nature, or joyful or dire,
Life, death, let them throng to the lyre,
All sealed with the marvellous seals !
Let them live in my sob, let them love in my song,
let them even be I !

Let me in most various song
Be seasons, be rivers that roll,
Be stars, the untameable throng,
All parts of the ultimate whole ;
All nature in various attire
Be woven to one tune of the lyre,
One tune where a million belong—
Multitudinous murmur and moan, melodious, one
soul with my soul !

One soul with the wail of distress
The ravished Persephone flung ;
One soul with the song of success,
Demeter's, that found her and sung ;

One soul with all spirits drawn nigher
From invisible worlds to the lyre ;—
They throng me and silently press
The strings as I need them, and quicken my fingers
and loosen my tongue !

And thou, O supreme, O Apollo !
I have lived in Thy lands for a year,
Under skies, where the azure was hollow,
The vault of black midnight was clear.
Think ! I who have borne Thee, nor tire—
May I not lift up on Thy lyre
Most reverent fingers, and follow
Thy path, take Thy reins, drive Thy chariot and
horses of song without fear ?

Let the lightning be harnessed before me,
The thunder be chained to my car,
The sea roll asunder that bore me,
The sky peal my clarion of war !
As a warrior's my chariot shall gyre !
As a lord I will sharpen the lyre !
The stars and the moon shall adore me,
Not seeing mean me, but Thyself in the glory, the
splendidest star.

Around me the planets shall thunder,
And earth lift her voice to the sea ;
The moon shall be smitten with wonder,
The starlight look love unto me.

Comets, meteors, storms shall admire,
Be mingled in tune to my lyre,
The universe broken in sunder,—
And I—shall I burn, pass away? Having been for a
moment the shadow of Thee !

LIBER PRIMUS VEL CARMINUM

TO OSCAR ECKENSTEIN,
WITH WHOM I HAVE WANDERED IN SO MANY SOLITUDES OF
NATURE, AND THEREBY LEARNT THE WORDS AND
SPELLS THAT BIND HER CHILDREN.

Τάχα δ' ἐν ταῖς πολυδένδροισιν Ὀλύμπου
θαλάμαις, ἐνθα ποτ' Ὀρφεὺς κιθαρίζων
ξύναγεν δένδρεα μούσαις, ξύναγεν θήρας ἀγρώτας.

—Βακχαι.

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain tops that freeze
Bow themselves when he did sing.
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung, as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by.
In sweet music is such art,
Killing care and grief of heart—
Fall asleep, or hearing die.

—Henry VIII.

. . . vocalem temere insecutæ
Orphea sylvæ,
Arte materna rapidos morantem
Fluminum lapsus, celeresque ventos,
Blandum et auritas fidibus canoris
Ducere quercus.

—Hor. Carm., Lib. I. xii.

INTRODUCTORY ODE

CALLIOPE, ORPHEUS

Str. a

CALLIOPE

IN the days of the spring of my being,
When maidenly bent I above
The head of the poet, and, seeing
Not love, was the lyre of his love ;
When laurels I bore to the harper,
When bays for the lyrist I bore,
My life was diviner and sharper,
My name in the Muses was more ;
When virgin I came to him stainless,
When love was a pleasure and painless !
What Destiny dreams and discovers
The fragrance men know for a lover's ?
Peace turned into laughter and tears,
Borne down the cold stream of the years !

Ant. a

ORPHEUS

O mother, O queen many-minded,
More beauty than beauty may be,

More light than the Sun ; I am blinded,
Sink, tremble, am lost in the sea.
The voice of thy singing descended,
Rolled round me and wrapped me in mist,
Some sense of thy being, borne splendid ;
I dreamed, I desired, I was kissed.
Some breath from thy music hath bound me ;
Some tune from thy lyre hath found me.
Thy words are as rushing of fire ;
But I know not the lilt of thy lyre :—
Thy voice is as deep as the sea ;
Thy music is darkness to me.

Str. β

CALLIOPE

Child of Thracian sire, on me begotten,
Knowest thou not the laughter and the life ?
Knowest thou not how all things are forgotten,
Being with a maiden wife ?
How a subtle sense of inmost being
Wraps thee in, and cuts the world away ;
Sight and sound lose hearing and lose seeing,
All the night is one with all the day ?
Hearken to her sighing !
Life droops down as dying,
Melting in the clasp of amorous limbs and hair ;
All the darkening world
Round about ye furled—
Dost thou know, or, knowing, dost thou care ?

Ant. β

ORPHEUS

Mother, I have lain, half dead, half slumbering,
 Curtained in Eurydice her hair ;
Clothed in serpent kisses, souls outnumbering
 Dewdrops flung in spray through air.
I have lain and watched the night diminish,
 Fade and fall into the arms of day,
Caring not if earth itself should finish,
 Caring only if my lover stay ;
Listening to her breathing,
Laughing, lover-weaving
 All the silken gold and glory of her head,
Kissing as if time
Forgot its steeps to climb,
 Made eternity's, one with all the dead.

Str. γ

CALLIOPE

Listen, then listen, O Thracian !
 Oeager lay on the lea :
I, from my heavenly station ;
I, from my house of creation,
 Stooped, as a mortal to be
Passionate, mother and bride ;
Flashed on wide wing to his side,
 Caught him and drew him to me.

Kisses not mortal I lavished ;
Out of the life of him ravished
 Life for the making of thee.
Son, did I lose in the deed ?
Son, did the breasts of me bleed,
 Bleed for pure love ? Did I see
Zeus with his face through the thunder
Frowning with fury and wonder ?
 Love in Olympus is free—
I have created a god, not a mortal of mortal degree.

Ant. γ

ORPHEUS

Hear me, O mother, descended
 To earth, from the sisterly shrine !
Hear me, a mortal unfriended,
Save thou, in thy purity splendid
 Indwell me, invoke the divine !
As sunlight enkindles the ocean,
As moonlight shakes earth with emotion,
 As starlight shoots trembling in wine,
So be thy soul for a man !
Teach my young fingers to span
 That musical lyre of thine !
Passion and music and peace,
Teach me the singing of these !
 Teach me the tune of the vine !
Teach me the stars to resemble,

As tide-stricken sea-cliffs to tremble
Thy strings, as the wind-shaken pine !
Let these and their fruits and the soul of their
being be mine, very mine !

EPODE

CALLIOPE

As the tides invisible of ocean,
Sweeping under the dark star-gemmed sea ;
As the frail Caduceus' serpent-motion
Moves the deep waves of eternity ;
As the star-space lingers and moves on ;
As the comet flashes and is gone ;
As the light, the music, and the thunder
Of moving worlds retire ;
As the hoarse sounds of the heaven wonder
When Zeus flings forth his fire ;
As the clang of swords in battle ;
As the low of home-driven cattle ;
As the wail of mothers children-losing ;
As the clamorous cries of darkening death ;
As the joy-gasp of love's chosen choosing ;
As the babe's first voluntary breath ;
As the storm and tempest fallen at even ;
As the crack and hissing of the levin ;
As the soft sough of tree-boughs wind-shaken ;
As the fearful cry of souls in hell,
When past death and blinder life they waken,
Seeing Styx before their vision swell,

When the bands of earth are broken
As the spirit's spell is spoken
On the vast and barren places
Where the unburied wander still ;
As the laughter of young faces ;
As the Word that is the will ;
As the life of wells and fountains,
Of the old deep-seated mountains ;
As the forest's desolate sighing ;
As the moaning of the earth
Where her seeds are black and dying ;
As the earthquake's sudden birth ;
As the vast volcano rending
Its own breasts ; as music blending
With young maiden's loving laughter,
With the joy of fatherhood,
With the cry of Mænads after
Sacrifice by well or wood ;
As the grave religious throng
Moving silently along,
Leading heifers, snowy-footed,
Into glades and sacred groves,
Where the altar-stone is suited
To commemorate the Loves ;
As the choir's most seemly chanting ;
As the women's whispers haunting
Silent woods, or chaster spaces,
Where the river's water wends ;
As the sound, when the white faces
Burn from space, and all earth ends

In the presence of the Gods ;
These and all their periods ;
These, and all that of them is,
I bestow on thee, and this
Also, mine eternal kiss !
In one melody of bliss
These and thou and I will mingle,
Till all Nature's pulses tingle,
Hear and follow and obey thee,
 Thee, the lyrist ; thee, the lyre !
These shall hear and not gainsay thee,
 Follow in the extreme desire,
Mingling, tingling, mixed with thee
Even to all Eternity.
These, and all that of them is,
Take from Calliope in this
Single-hearted, many mouthèd, kiss.

Orpheus, seated upon Olympus, tunes his lyre.

ORPHEUS

FIRST word of my song,
First tune of my lyre,
Muse, loved of me long,
Be near and inspire!
Bright heart! Mother strong!
Sweet sense of desire!

Be near as I lift the first notes impassioned of fervour
and fire!

Not ever before
Since Nature began
Hath one cloven her core,
Found the soul of her span;
No son that she bore
Her spirit might scan;

But I, being born beyond Nature, have known her and yet
am a man.

Ye fieriest flowers,
Life-stream of the world,
In passionate bowers
Of mystery curled,

Come forth ! for the powers
Of my crying are hurled :—
Come forth ! O ye souls of the fire, where the sound of
my singing is whirled !

Ye blossoms of lightning,
Bare boughs of the tree
Of life, where the brightening
Abysses of sea
Reveal ye, the whitening
Swords kindled of me.
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O lightning, the flames of the
Gods flung free !

THE LIGHTNING

The wand of Hermes, the caduceus wonder-
working,
Sweeps in mid-æther—
Where we are lurking
It finds us and gathers.
By our mother the amber
In her glorious chamber ;
By the flames that enwreathe her ;
By the tombs of our fathers ;
Awake ! let us fly, the compeller is nigh.
Strike ! let us die !

ORPHEUS

Ye powers volcanic,
Cyclopean forces,

Workers Titanic,
I know your courses.
By fury and panic,
By Dis and his horses,
Come forth! I invoke ye, volcanoes, arise from your
cavernous sources!

THE VOLCANOES

The Hephæstian hammer on the anvil of hell,
In the hollows accurst,
Falls for the knell
Of the children of earth.
By the strength of our fires,
The fierce force of our sires,
Let us roar, let us burst!
By the wrath of our birth,
Up! and boil over in rivers of lava!
Uncover! Uncover!

ORPHEUS

Lift up thine amber
Lithe limber limbs,
Lissome that clamber
Like god-reaching hymns;
The flame in its chamber
Of glory that swims,
The spirit and shape of the fire, mine eyes with fine dew
that bedims!

Exempt from the bond
All others that binds,
As a flowery frond
The spark of thee blinds,
Within and beyond
As a thought of the mind's
In all, and about, and above! I invoke thee, my word as
the wind's.

THE FIRE

I, raging and lowering,
I, flying and cowering,
I, weaving and woven,
Budding and flowering,
Spirling and showering,
Cleaving and cloven!
My being encloses
Fountains of roses,
Lilies, and light!
I wrap and I sunder!
I am lightning and thunder!
The world-souls wonder
At me and my might!

All-piercing, all-winding,
All-moving, all-blinding,
All shaken in my hissing;
My life's light finding
All spirits, and binding
Their love with my kissing;

Ruthless, fearless,
Imperial, peerless,
 Creep I or climb.
Nought withstands me,
Bursts me or brands me ;
Nor Heaven commands me,
 Nor Space, nor Time.

Above, the Supernal !
Below, the infernal !
 Of all am I master.
On Earth, the diurnal !
In all things eternal !
 Life, love, or disaster !
Abiding unshaken,
I sleep and I waken
 On wonderful wings ;
In depth and in height,
In darkness and light,
In weakness and might,
In blindness and sight,
In mercy and spite,
In day and in night,
Averse or aright,
For dule or delight,
 I am master of things.

ORPHEUS

O mother, I fear me !
 The might of the lyre !

They tremble to hear me,
The powers of the fire.
Come near me to cheer me!
Be near and inspire!
Be strength in my heart and good courage, and speed in
the single desire!

The fire knows its master!
They flicker and flare,
Dread dogs of disaster,
Wild slaves of despair.
Faster and faster—
My soul is aware
Of a sound that is dimmer and duller, wide wings adrift
of the air.

Their forces that wander
No God-voice know they!
Their bridals they squander!
Unknown is their way!
The sky's heart? beyond her
Sweet bosom they stray.
Shall these then obey me and hear? Shall the tameless
ones hear and obey?

From secretest places
Whence darkness is drawn,
Where terrible faces
Enkindle the dawn,

From wordless wide spaces,
The ultimate lawn,
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O wind, come forth to me
fleet as a fawn.

THE WINDS

From fourfold quarters,
The depth and the height,
We come, the bright daughters
Of day shed on night ;
The sun and the waters
Have brought us to light ;
The sound of him slaughters
Our soul in his sight.
We hear the loud murmur ; we know
him ; we rest ;
We breathe in his breast.

ORPHEUS

By sunlight up-gathered
As dust of his cars,
By moonlight unfathered,
Unmothered of stars,
Unpastured, untethered,
Unstricken of scars,
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O clouds ! ye veils ! ye divine
avatars !

THE CLOUDS

Sun's spirit is calling !
We gather together,
White wreaths, as appalling
Pale ghosts of dead weather,
The veil of us falling
On snow-height and heather,
Or hovering and scrawling
Strange signs in the æther.
We hear the still voice, and we know him :
we come !
We are sightless and dumb.

ORPHEUS

More frail than your friends,
The clouds borne above,
The light of thee blends
With the moon and her love.
Thy spirit descends
As a white-throated dove.
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O mist, and make me a
sharer thereof !

THE MIST

From valleys of violet
My shadow hath kissed,
From low-lying islet,
A vision of mist,

The voice of my pilot
Steals soft to insist.
O azure of sky, let
Me pass to the tryst !
I hear the low voice of my love ; and I rest
A maid on his breast.

ORPHEUS

Thou child of soft wind
And the luminous air,
Thou, stealing behind
As a ghost, as a rare
Soft dew, as a blind
Fierce lion from his lair,
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O rain, look forth with thy
countenance fair !

THE RAIN

From highland far drifted,
From river-fed lawn,
From clouds thunder-rifted,
I leap as a fawn.
The voice is uplifted,
The lord of my dawn ;
My spirit is shifted,
My love is withdrawn.
I hear the sweet feet of my God ; I know him ; I fall
In tears at his call.

ORPHEUS

Cold lips and chaste eyes
Of frost-fall that leap,
That shake from the skies
On the earth in her sleep
Kiss nuptial, arise
As the lyre-strings sweep!
Come forth! I invoke thee, O frost, the valleys await
thee and weep.

THE FROST

So silent and wise
In her cerement clothes,
So secretly lies
My soul in my snows;
I awake, I arise,
For my spirit now knows
The first time in her eyes
That a voice may uncloze
My petals: I hear it; I come; I clasp the warm ground
In my passion profound.

ORPHEUS

In valleys heaped high,
In drifts lying low,
Swift slopes to the sky,
Come forth to me, snow!

Thy beauty and I
Are of old even so
As lover and lover. Come forth ! I invoke thee ! the hills
are aglow.

THE SNOW

Bright breasts I uncover,
Heart's heart to thy gaze ;
O lyre of my lover,
I know thee, thy praise.
Black heavens that hover,
Blind air that obeys,
I come to thee over
The mountainous ways
As a bride to the bridegroom : I blush, but I come
And bow to thee dumb.

ORPHEUS

O blacker than hell,
O bluer than heaven,
O green as the dell
Lit of sunlight at even !
O strong as a spell !
O bright as the levin !
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O ice, by their anguish, the
rocks thou hast riven !

THE ICE

My steep-lying masses,
Mine innermost sheen,

My soundless crevasses,
My rivers unseen,
My glow that surpasses
In azure and green
The rocks and the grasses.
Above, I am queen.
These know thee ; I know thee, O master, I hear and obey.
I follow thy lyrical sway.

ORPHEUS

O tenderest child
And phantom of day !
Gleam fitful and wild
On the flowery way !
Blue skies reconciled
To the kisses of clay !
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O dew ! The maiden must
hear and obey.

THE DEW

Life trembling on leaves,
Sunrise shed in tears,
Love's arrow that cleaves
The veil of the years,
Light gathered in sheaves
Of tenderest fears
As dayspring enweaves
My soul into spheres—
I hear, and I nestle upon thee, O lyrist supreme,
Light loves in a dream.

ORPHEUS

Child of sweet rain,
O fathered of frost !
Bitterest pain
The birth of thee cost.
Passion is slain
When wished of thee most.
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O hail, thou lord of a terrible
host !

THE HAIL

My father was glad of me
In places unseen ;
My mother was sad of me,
Where wind came between ;
Winter is mad of me,
Earth is my queen ;
Meadows are clad of me,
Nestled in green.
As pearls in the cloudland I slept ; but I hear the loud
call ;
I obey it and fall !

ORPHEUS

Rain's guerdon and daughter
By sunlight's spies
Divided in water,
O light-stream, arise !

Seven petals that slaughter
The menace of Dis,
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O rainbow, thou maid of the
myriad eyes !

THE RAINBOW

In multiple measure
The flowers of us fold
The scarlet and azure
And olive and gold,
Hyperion his treasure
Of light that is rolled
In music and pleasure
Unheard and untold.
We are kisses of light and of tears, love's triumph on
fear.
We obey : I am here !

ORPHEUS

Dim lights shed around me
In many a form
Like lovers surround me :—
O tender and warm !
They hunt me, they hound me ;
They struggle and swarm—
Come forth ! I invoke ye united, the manifold shape of
the storm !

THE TEMPEST

Wide-winged, many-throated,
Colossal, sublime,
I come and am coated
With feathers of Time.
I hear the deep note, head
My pinions to climb,
The roar of devoted
Large limbs of the mine
That mocks the loud lords of Olympus ; we mingle ; I
wake.
I come with the sound of a snake.

ORPHEUS

O storm many-winded,
O life of the air,
Thou angry and blinded
Hast sky for thy share.
O mother deep-minded,
My lyre to my prayer
Responds, and the elements answer or ever my soul is aware.

Ye powers of deep water
And sea-running bays,
Earth's fugitive daughter
In deep-riven ways,
Enamoured of slaughter,
A mirage of grays,
Deep blues, and pale greens unbegotten, I turn to your
lyrical praise.

I tune the loud lyre
To the haunts of the vale
As a sea-piercing fire
On the wings of the gale.
I lift my desire,
I madden, I wail !
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O powers, in the waters that
purple and pale.

Come forth in your pleasure,
O fountains and springs !
Come dance me a measure
Unholpen of wings !
Show, show the deep treasure,
Unspeakable things !
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O fountains, I sweep the in-
vincible strings.

THE FOUNTAINS

In the heather deeply hidden,
From the caverns darkly drawn,
In the woodlands man-forbidden,
In the gateways of the dawn,
In the glad sweet glades descended,
On the stark hills gathered high,
Where the snows and trees are blended,
Kissed at birth by sun and sky ;
We have heard the summons : we are open to the day-
spring's eye.

ORPHEUS

O broad-bosomed lakes
Whence the mist-tears uprise,
That shed in sweet flakes
The gleam of the skies,
Whose countenance takes
The bird as he flies
In kisses, come forth! I invoke ye, O lakes, where the love
of me lies!

THE LAKES

In the hollow of the mountain,
In the bosom of the plain,
Fed by river, stream, and fountain,
Slain by sun, reborn of rain;
In the desert green-engirded,
Lying lone in waste and wood,
To my breast the many-herded
Lowing kine in gracious mood
Come, drink deeply, and are glad of me, my pleasant
solitude.

ORPHEUS

From the breast of the snow
As a life-swollen stream,
Your love-rivers flow
Soft hued as a dream,
Adrift and aglow
With the sunlight supreme.
Come forth! I invoke ye, O torrents that fall in the
mazes and gleam!

THE MOUNTAIN TORRENTS

Falling fast or lingering love-wise,
Gathered into mirror-lakes,
Floating sprayed through heaven dovewise,
Dreaming, dashing ; sunlight shakes
Into million-coloured petals
All our limpid drops, and wraps
Earth with green, as water settles
On the rocks and in their gaps,
Mossy rainbow-tinted maidens, flowers and fernshoots in
their laps.

ORPHEUS

Low down in the hollows
And vales of the earth,
What eagle-sight follows
Your length and green girth ?
Your light is Apollo's,
Diana's your mirth !
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O rivers, I have watched your
mysterious birth !

THE RIVERS

In the lowland gently swelling,
Born and risen out of rain,
Wide the curves and arrowy dwelling
Where we rest or roll again.

There our calm sides shield the mortal,
Bears his bark our breast, and we
Follow to the mystic portal
Where we mingle with the sea.
Every life of earth we list to : should not we then answer
thee?

ORPHEUS

O sea mixt with æther
In whirls that awake,
Roar skywards and wreathe her
Bright coils as a snake,
In agony seethe her
Sad cries for the sake
Of peace—I invoke ye! Come forth! O spouts in the
wave's wild wake!

THE WATERSPOUTS

Whirling over miles of ocean,
Lowering o'er the solemn sea,
Hears our life the deep commotion
That we know—thy witchery.
Wheeling, hating, fearing ever
As we thunder o'er the deep,
Death alone our path can sever,
Death our guerdon if we weep.
We obey thee, we are with thee! Wilt thou never let us
sleep?

ORPHEUS

O rolled on the river
By might of the moon,
Ye tremble and quiver,
Ye shudder and swoon !
The cities ye shiver :
The ships know your tune.
Come forth! I invoke thee, O eagre! dread rival of
shoal and typhoon !

THE EAGRE

Flings my single billow spuming
Into midmost air the world,
As the echo of my booming
To the furthest star is hurled.
Now I hear the lunar clashing
That evokes me from the tide,
Now I rise, my fury lashing,
Rolling where the banks divide—
I obey thee, I am with thee, Lord of Lightning, lotus-eyed !

ORPHEUS

In sacred grove,
In silent wood,
In calm alcove,
In mirrored mood,

What light of love
Your depth endued?
Come forth! I invoke ye, O wells, ye dwellers of dim
solitude!

THE WELLS

Deep and calm to heaven's mirror
Through the cedarn grove or ashen,
Willow-woven, or cypress terror,
To the sky's less serene fashion
Still we look: around our margin
Holy priestess, longing lover,
Poet musing, vagrant virgin,
Nor their own mild looks discover,
But the light and glow of that they are meditating over.

ORPHEUS

O curves un beholden,
Bright glory of bays!
Deep gulfs grown golden
With dawn and its ways!
With sunset enfolden
In silvery praise!
Come forth! I invoke ye, O gulfs, where the sea is as
children, and plays.

THE BAYS

Where the hills reach to heaven behind us
A voice is rolled over the steep,
Some godhead whose glory would blind us,
Reflected far-off on the deep.

We hear the low chant that may bind us,
The song from the ultimate shore.
We come that our lover may find us
His bride as he found us before.
We listen, and love ; and his voice is the voice of the
God we adore.

ORPHEUS

Come forth in your gladness,
O end of all these !
O sorrow and madness
And passion and ease,
Sharp joy and sweet sadness,
Deep life and deep peace !
Come forth ! I invoke you, ringed round, earth's girdle,
the manifold seas !

THE SEA

I hear but one voice in our voices ;
One tune, multitudinous notes ;
One life that burns low or rejoices,
One song from the numberless throats.
Where ice on my bosom is piled,
Where palm-fronded islands begem
My breast, where I rage in the wild
White storms, where I lap the low hem
Of earth's mantle, or war on her crags, I am one, and my
soul is in them.

I am mother of earth and her daughter ;
I am father of heaven and his son ;

I am fire in the palace of water ;
I am God, and my glory is one !
I am bride of the sun and the starlight ;
The moonlight is bride unto me ;
I am lit of my deeps with a far light,
My heart and its flame flung free.
I am She, the beginning and end ; I am all, and my name
is the Sea !

ORPHEUS

Then thou, O my mother,
Hast given to me
The power of another,
The watery key.
Bright air is my brother,
My sister the sea ;
I have called, and they answer and come ; and their song
is but glory to thee.

One other is left me,
The light of the earth.
If Fate had bereft me,
Oh Muse, of thy birth,
Still I had cleft me
A way in her girth !
I tune the loud lyre once again to the mother of men in her
mirth.

O mighty and glad
In spring-time and summer !
O tearful and sad
When the sun is grown dumber,

When the season is mad,
And the gods overcome her,
When the sky is fulfilled of the frost and the fingers of
winter numb her !

O marvellous earth
Of multiple mood
That givest men birth
And delicate food,
Red wine to make mirth
Of thine own red blood,
And corn and green grass and sweet flowers and fruits
most heavenly-hued !

Borne skyward in swoon
By arrowy hours,
Girt round of the moon
And the girdling flowers,
The sun for a boon,
Sweet kisses of showers,
O mother, O life, O desire, my soul is a bird in thy
bowers !

My soul is caught up
In thy green-hearted waves.
I drink at the cup
Of thy sweet valley graves.
My spirit may sup
Slow tunes in thy caves.
O hide me, thy child, in thy bosom, that the heart in me
yearns to and craves.

Most virginally sprung
In the shadow of light,
Eternally young,
A magical sight,
Wandering among
Day, twilight, and night,
As a bride in her chamber that dreams many visions of
varied delight.

O how shall my lyre
Divide thee, dispart
Thy water and fire,
Thy soul and thy heart,
Thy hills that spring higher,
Thy flowers that upstart,
How quire thee, my limitless love, with a lewd and a
limited art?

A fortress, a sphere,
An arrow of flame ;
Let thy children appear
At the sound of thy name !
In my silence uprear
The sweet guerdon of shame !
Be they choral to hymn thee, O mother, thy magic
ineffable fame !

Last birth of the Sun,
Best gift of the giver,
Thou surely art One !
As the moon on the river,

Whose star-blossoms run,
Kiss, tremble, and shiver,
And roll into ultimate space, and are lost to man's vision
for ever.

Come forth to the sound
Of the lightning lyre,
Ye valleys profound
As a man's desire,
Ye woodlands bound
In the hills that are higher
Than even the note of a bird as it wings to the solar fire !

Ye fruits and corn,
Gold, rose, and green,
Vines purple-born,
Pearl-hidden sheen,
Trees waving in scorn
Of the grass between !
Come forth in your chorus, and chant the praise of your
mother and queen !

Ye trees many-fronded
That shake to the wind,
Green leaves that have sounded
My harp in your kind,
Light boughs that are rounded,
Grey tops that are shrined
In the tears of the heaven as they fall in the blackening
storm grown blind !

Ye fields that are flowered
In purple and white,
Embossed and embowered
By the love of the light,
Gold-sandalled and showered,
Dew-kissed of the night,
Your song is too faint and too joyous for mortals to hear
it aright.

Blue pansies, and roses,
And poppies of red,
Pale violets in posies
Where Hyacinth bled,
The flower that closes
Its dolorous head ;—
What song may be sung, or what tune may be told, or
what word may be said ?

All tropical scent,
Blossom-kindled perfume,
Love-colours new-lent
By the infinite womb,
Gold subtlety blent
With the scarlet bloom ;—
Shall ye in my melody live? Shall my song be not
rather your tomb?

Most musical moves
The head of the corn ;
Strong glorious loves
Of its being are born.

Dim shadows of groves
Of Demeter adorn
The waves and the woods of the earth, the heart of the
mother forlorn.

Caves curved of the wind,
Deep hollows of earth,
Whence the song of the blind
Old prophet had birth,
The caves that confined
Deep music of mirth,
Thy caves, O my mother, are these not a gem in thy
virginal girth ?

Ye mountains uplift
As an arrow in air ;
Ice-crowned, rock-cliffed,
Snow-bosomed bare,
I give ye the gift
Of a voice more fair.
Leave echo, and wake, and proclaim that ye stand against
death and despair !

Ye hills where I rested
In rapture of life,
From dawn calm-breasted
To evening's strife,
Where skies were nested
With mist for a wife !
Leave echo, and speak for yourselves : let your song
pierce the heaven as a knife !

Olympus alone
Of earth's glories is taken
For deity's throne
Deep-frozen, storm-shaken.
What glories are shown
When their slumbers awaken !
The avalanche thunders adown, and the gods of the gods
are forsaken.

To mortals your voices
Are mighty and glad.
The maiden rejoices :
The man is grown mad
For love, and his choice is
The choice of a lad
When a virgin first smiles on his suit, and the summer
for envy is sad.

Wan grows Aphrodite,
And Artemis frail ;
Apollo less mighty,
Iacchus too pale.
Dark Hades grows bright, he
Alone may avail
When the god and the mortal are one, as the mountain
is one with the gale.

THE CHILDREN OF EARTH

Our hair deep laden with the scent of earth,
The colour of her rosy body's birth,
Our mother, lady and life of all that is divine ;

We gather to the sombre sound, as spring
Had whispered, "Follow," hiding in her wing
Her glorious head and flowing breast of wine.
Though in the hollow of her heart be set
So deep and awful a fire, though the net
Of all her robes be frail as we are fine,
We gather, listening to the living lyre
Like falling water shot with amber fire,
And blown aloft by winds even to heaven's desire.

Deep starry gems set in a silver sea,
Sullen low voices of dark minstrelsy,
Light whispers of strange loves, of silver woven,
Dumb kisses and wild laughter following :
All these as lives of autumn and of spring
We are : we follow across the rainbow cloven,
A never-fading path of golden glory,
Whereof the lone Leucadian promontory
Holds one divinest gate : the other troven
Far, far beyond in interlunar skies,
Where the Himālayas stir them, and arise
To listen to the song that swells our arteries.

O moving labyrinth sun-crowned, dread maze
Of starry paths, of Zeus-untrodden ways,
Of mystic vales unfooted of the deep,
Our mother, virgin yet in many places
Unseen of man, beholden of the faces
Only of elemental shapes of sleep

That are ourselves, her daughters wild and fair
Caught nymphwise in the kisses of the air,
That flings our songs reverberate from steep to steep,
Songs caught in solar light, we are shed
Even down beyond the valleys of the dead,
And smiled upon in groves ruled by the holy head.

Great Pan hath heard us, children of his wooing,
Great Pan, that listens to the forest, suing
Vainly His peace that dwells even in the desolate halls.
The delicately-chiselled flowers nod,
Look to the skies, and see thee for a God,
O sightless lyre that wails, O viewless voice that calls!
Thy sound is in our depth and in her womb,
Far in Spring's milky breast, in Autumn's gloom,
In Summer's feast and song, in Winter's funerals.
In the dead hollow of the hills there rings,
Sharp song, like frost hissing on silver wings,
Or like the swelling tune we listen to for Spring's.

We come, we mountains, crowned and incense-bringing,
Robed as white priests, the solemn anthem singing;
Or as an organ thundering fiery tunes.
We come, we greener hills, and rend the sky
With happier chorus and the songs that die
Or mix their subtle joy and being with the moon's.
We come, we pine-clad steeps, we feathery slopes,
With footfalls softer than the antelope's.
We listen and obey : the sacred slumberer swoons

More tranced than death in this far following,
Careless of winter, not invoking spring ;
And all the witless woods company us and sing.

But not the glades by song of thee unstricken ?
Not they ? Shall they refuse the pulse to quicken,
Soft smiting the low melody of light ?
Tuned without fingers, the wild woods lift high
The wordless chant, the murmurous melody,
The song that dwells like moon-enkindled night.
We draw from low palm groves and cedar hills,
From stern grey slumbers, for thy music fills
All earth with unimaginable delight.
Have we not brought the leaves dew-diamonded,
The buds fresh-gleaming, star-blossoms, and shed
Our scent and colour and song around thy sacred head ?

We that are flowers are kindled in thy praise,
Even as thy song shed lustre and swift rays,
Darting to brighten and open the folded flowers.
The violet lifts its head, the lily lightens,
The daisy shakes its dew, the pansy brightens,
All cups of molten light upon the twilight hours.
The poppy flames anew, the buttercup
Glow with fresh fire, the larkspur rouses up
To be the lark indeed amid the azalea bowers.
Magnolia and light blooms of roses mute
Rouse them to gather in one golden lute
In fairy light and song into the sky to shoot.

The laughing companies of corn awaken,
Their wind-swept waves by Dædal music taken
 Into a golden heaven of festal song.
We shake and glisten in the sun, we see
The very soul and majesty of thee
 Thrill in the lyre and leave the lazy long
Notes for crisp magic of sharp rustling sound,
And thy life quickens and thy loves abound,
 Listening the answer of our dancing throng.
Joy, sleep, peace, laughter, thought, remembrance, came
Even at our prelude, a death-quickenning flame,
And earth rejoiced throughout to hear Demeter's name.

We come, in bass deep-swelling, rocks and caves,
A hollow roar across the golden waves
 Hidden in islands set deep in the untravelled sea.
Across the corn from storm-cleft mountain-sides
Our voice peals, like the thunder of the tides,
 Into the darkling hills that fringe Eternity.
Dire and divine our womb unfruitful bears
Deep music darker than tempestuous airs
 When Heaven's anger wakes : when at our own decree,
With clanging rocks sky-piercing for our tomb,
We call the thunder from our own black womb,
We hear the voice and we obey—we know not whom !

We hear thee, who are cliffs and pinnacles
Higher than heaven's base, founded far in hell's ;
 We hear, that sunder the blue skies of heaven ;

Our voiceless clefts and spires of delicate hue,
Changing and lost in the exultant blue,
 By fire and whirlwind fashioned and then riven,
Invoke fresh song, with deep solemnity
In noble notes of mastery answering thee,
 By some young tumult in our old hearts driven ;
And this immortal path of splintered rock
Shall lead the wild chant to the sky, and mock
The nectared feast of Gods with its impassioned shock.

Deep-mouthed, I, earthquake, wake in echoing thunder.
I break my mother's breast ; I tear asunder
 The womb that bore me ; I arise in terror,
Threatening to ruin her, crag, crown, and column,
Reverberate music of that mighty and solemn
 Call of creation, Vulcan's awful mirror.
I rend the sky with clamour terrible,
Shaking the thrones of earth and heaven and hell,
 Confound the universe in universal error.
I sound the awful note that summons mortals,
As I awake, to pass the dreadful portals
And face the gloom of Dis, the unnameable immortals.

Soft our mild music steals through thunderous pauses,
A phrase made magic by the Second Causes,
 The mighty Ones that dwell beneath the empyrean.
We, vines and fruits and trees with autumn laden,
Sing as the bride-song of a married maiden
 Before the god-like vigour of the man

Breaks the frail temple-doors of love asunder,
And wakes the new life's promise in pale wonder,
 Shattering the moulded glass, the shape Selenian.
Fruits of the earth, our low song joins the crowd.
We need not (to be heard) to thunder loud.
Our hearts are lifted up, our heads with love low bowed.

The tenderest light, the deepest hidden, is shed
Up through dark earth—your home, O happy dead!—
 Crusted in darkness lie the secret lights.
Formed in the agony of earth as tears,
Clothed in the crystal mirror of the years,
 We dwell, sweet-hearted nun-like eremites!
Diamond and ruby, topaz and sapphire,
Emerald and amethyst, one clear bright fire,
 We are earth's stars below, as she above hath Night's.
Our sweet clean song pierces the cover,
And thin keen notes of music flit and hover
Like spirit-birds upon the lyre of this our lover

We, children of the mountains, lying low
On earth's own bosom, deep, embowered, flow
 In wide soft waves of land : upon us sweep
The mightiest rivers : in our hollows lie
Great lakes : our voices hardly rise, but die
 In the cold streams of air : shallow and deep :
Leagues by the thousand, dells a minute long ;
All we are children of the mighty throng
 That cluster where the mountains fail, and sleep

In such cool peace that even thy lyre awakes
Hardly a soul that tenderer music makes.
Yet we arise and listen for our own sweet sakes.

THE LIVING CREATURES OF THE EARTH

The heavy hand is held,
And the whips leave weary blows.
The mysteries of eld
Are cancelled and expelled,
And the miserable throes.

All we are shapen fair
In many forms of grace,
But change is everywhere,
And time is all our share
And all the ways of space.

One lives an hour of day ;
One even man's life exceeds ;
One loves to chase and slay ;
One loves to sing and play ;
Each soul to his own deeds !

A share of joy is ours,
A double share of grief ;
So sum the many hours
In many hopes and powers,
All powers except the chief.

Emotion fills our souls,
And love delights us well,
And joy of sense full rolls ;
But leads us, and controls
Life's central citadel.

Whence we were drawn who knows ?
Of law or Gods or chance ?
But, as life's river flows,
What Sea shall clasp and close
Beyond blind circumstance ?

Such little power we own
Of vague experience,
And instinct to enthrone
The life's mere needs alone,
Nor answer " why " and " whence.

Nor wandering in the night
Our minds may apprehend
Reflecting in pure light
Of soul, what sound or sight
May lead us to some end.

We hear the dim sound roll
From distant mountains drawn,
We follow, but no soul
Guesses that silver goal,
The sunset or the dawn.

The lyre entices fast
Our willing feet and wings,
We wonder from the past
What spell is overcast
From off the sonant strings.

Awhile we deem our mates
Are calling through the wood ;
Awhile the tune creates
These unfamiliar states
Of thinking solitude.

Awhile we gather clear
A note of promise swell,
A song of fate and fear,
Assuring us who hear
Of other shapes to dwell.

A promise vast and grand,
As is the spangled sky !
We dimly understand ;
We join the following band
Of dancing greenery !

We see all Nature bend
To high Olympus' hill.
Our tunes we choose and send ;
We follow to the end,
O Orpheus, all thy will.

Our little love and hate,
Our hunger and our fear,
Pass to a solemn state
Pregnant with hope and fate.
O Orpheus, we are here !

THE EARTH

Life hidden in death,
Life shrined in the soul,
Life bright for his breath,
Life dark for his goal,
I am Mother, and Burier, and Friend—
Look thou to the end !

I am Light in thy Love,
I am Love in thy Life.
I am cloistered above
Where the stars are at strife.
I am life in thy light, and thy death
Is part of my breath.

My voices are many,
Thy lyre is but one ;
But thou art not as any
Soul under the sun !
Thou hast power for an hour
The motherly dower.

One voice of my voices
Uncalled and unheard,
No song that rejoices
Of beast or of bird,
No sound of my children sublime,
But the spirit of time.

Fear is his name,
Nor flickers nor dies
His blackening flame.
Beware, were thou wise!
Not him shalt thou hail from the dusk with thy breath;
His name—it is Death!

My seasons and years,
Shalt thou traffic with these?
Art thou Fate? Are her shears
Asleep or at ease?
Though Time were no more than the shape of thy glass—
Beware! let him pass!

ORPHEUS

Not these do I fear,
O Earth, for their peace.
I cry till they hear
O'er the desolate seas.
I call ye! give ear,
O seasons, to these
Fleet-footed, the strings of the lyre! Come forth!
I invoke ye—and cease.

O hours of the day,
And hours of the night,
Pause now while ye may
In your heavenly flight!
Give answer and say,
Have I called ye aright?
Are the strings of my lyre as fire, the voice of my
singing as light?

THE HOURS

Darkness and daylight in divided measure
Gather as petals of the sunflower,
In many seasons seek the lotus-treasure,
Following as dancing maidens, mute for pleasure,
The fervent flying footsteps of the Hour.

The sun looks over the memorial hills,
The trampling of his horses heard as wind;
He leaps and turns, and all his fragrance fills
The shade and silence; all the rocks and rills
Ring with the triumph of his steeds behind.

The bright air winnowed by the plumeless leapers
Laughs, and the low light pierces to the bed
Where lovers linger, where the smiling sleepers
Stir, and the herds unmindful of their keepers
Low for pure love of morning's dewy head.

The morning shakes its ocean-bathèd tresses,
The bright sun broadens over all the earth.
The green leaves fall, fall into his caresses,
And all the world's heart leaps, again addresses
Its life, and girds it in the golden girth.

Then noon full-fashioned lies upon the steep.
The large sun sighs and turns his bridle-rein,
Thinks of the ocean, turns his heart to sleep,
Laughing no longer, not yet prone to weep,
Feeling the prelude of the coming pain.

The hills and dales are dumb beneath the heat,
And all the world lies tranced or mutely dreaming,
Save some low sigh caught up where pulses beat
Of warm love waiting in the arboreal seat
Till the shade lengthen on the lawn light-gleaming.

Now all the birds change tune, and all the light
Glow lowlier, musing on departed day.
Strange wings and sombre, heralding the night,
Fleet far across the woods ; and gleaming bright
The evening star looks from the orient way.

Shadow and silence deepen : all the woods
Take on a tenderer phrase of musical
Breezes : the stream-sought homes and solitudes
Murmur a little where the maiden moods
Are sadder as the evening's kisses fall.

Like silver scales of serpenthood they fall
Across the blind air of the evening ;
Shadowy ghosts arise funereal
And seek unspeakable things ; and dryads call
The satyr-company to the satyr-king.

And all the light is over ; but the sky
Shudders with blanched light of the unrisen moon.
The night-birds mingle their sad minstrelsy
For daylight's requiem : and the sea's reply
Now stirs across the land's departed tune.

The moon is up : the choral crowd of stars
Shapen like strange or unknown animals,
Move in their measure : beyond Æolian bars
The clustering winds, moving as nenuphars,
Gather and muse before the midnight calls.

The darkness is most deep in hollow dells.
There, blacker than Cocytus, lurk the shades
Darker than death's, more terrible than hell's,
Uttering unwritten words : the silent wells
Keep their sweet secret till the morning maids

Bring their carved pitchers to the moss-grown side.
For now beyond, below the east, appears
A hint as if a band, silvern and wide,
The girdle of some goddess amber-eyed,
Rose from the solemn company of the spheres

The sky is tinged, as if the amorous flesh
Of that same queen shone through the girdle drawn
By her own kissing fervour through its mesh.
Last, glory of godhead ! flickers, flames the fresh
First faint frail rose and arrow of the dawn.

SPRING

Mild glimpses of the quiet moon, let through
Tall groves of cedar, stain the glade ; gleams mild
The kirtle of the unweaned spring, stained blue
From the blue breasts that suckle to the child.
Through the new-leavèd trees
The hidden stranger sees
The moon's sweet light, the shadows listening
If a ghost-foot should fall :
And if a ghost-voice call
Tremble the leaves and light-streaks of the spring.
On wavering wing
The small clouds gallop in the windy sky :
The hoarse rooks croak and droop them to the nest :
One sweet small throat begins to sing,
Becomes the song, losing identity
Ere its wail wakes the long low-lying crest
That rears across the west.

Spring, maiden-footed, steals across the space,
Sandalled with tremulous light, with flickering hair
Blown o'er the sweet looks of the fair child-face,
Like willows drooping o'er the liquid mere,

Whence timid eyes look far,
Even where her kisses are
Awaited by the tender mother lips,
Earth's, that is lonely and old,
Grown sad, fearful, and cold
With bitter winter and the sun's eclipse ;
So the child slips
From bough to bough between the weeping tress,
And with frail fingers smooths and touches them.
They murmur in their sleep : the moonlight dips
And laughs, seeing how young buds catch life from
these
Child-kisses on the stem.

The leaves laugh low, and frosty-footed Time
Shoulders a lighter burden ; in the dale
Some distant notes of lovely music climb,
Thrown from the golden-throated nightingale,
Pale sobs of love and life
With death and fear at strife,
Fiercely beset and hardly conquering,
When spring's bright eyes at last
Flash through the sullen past,
And tune its pain to tears, its peace to sing.
The earth's lips cling
To the child's bosom, and low smiles revive ;
Love is new-born upon the golden hour,
And all the life of all the exultant spring
Breathes in the wind that wakes the world alive
Into the likeness of a flower.

SUMMER

Full is the joy of Maidenhood made strong,
Too proud to bend to swift Apollo's kiss ;
Rejoicing in its splendour, and the throng
Of gaunt hounds leashless before Artemis.
In strange exulting bliss
The maiden stands, full-grown, with bounding breasts
Bared to the noon, and narrow
Keen eyes, that glance, dim fires that veil their crests
To flame along the arrow
Aimed at some gallant of ten tines perched high
Branching against the sky
His cedar-spreading horns : erect she stands,
Holding in glimmering hands
A silver bow across the shining weather,
While, bound in pearl-wrought bands,
Her bright hairstreams ; she draws the quivering feather
Back to the small ear curved : with golden zone
Gathering her limbs she stands alone
Like a young antelope poised upon a spire of stone.

What tender lightning flashes in the bosom
Heaving with vigour of young life ? What storm
Gathers across the brow's broad lotus-blossom ?
What sudden passion fills the fragrant form
With subtle streams of warm
Blood tingling to the finger-tips of rose ?
Swiftly the maiden closes
The lustre of her look : disdainful glows
The fire of wreathing roses

In her bright cheeks : she darts away to find
Like some uncovered hind
 Shade in the forest from the stag's pursuit,
 Ere the sun's passion shoot
His ray, strange deeps unknown and feared to uncover.
 But now the ancient root
Of some wise oak betrays her to her lover :
 She stumbles and falls prone : the forest noon
 Guesses life's law ; all nature's tune
 Tells that the hour is come when May must grow to June.

•Then in the broad glare of the careless sun
 Apollo's light is on her and within ;
His shafts of glory pierce her one by one ;
 His kisses darken, shivering and keen,
 Swift glories cold and clean
Of that chaste bridal, and the earth gets gladness,
 Till the last winter's traces
Fall from the spring's last cold wind—shining sadness !—
 And from the frail new faces
Blushing through moss ; and all the world is light
With the unsufferably bright
 Full joy and guerdon of that sunny season
 By Love's sweet trap of treason.
 So the bright girl is now a woman brighter ;
 And childhood sees a reason
 Beneath the strong stroke of the goodly smiter
For all the past : and love at last is hers.
No more the bosom's pride demurs
While in her womb the first faint pulse of motherhood
 soft stirs.

AUTUMN

Full amber-breasted light of harvest-moon,
And sheaves of corn remembering the sun
Laughing again for love of that caress
When night is fallen, and the sleepy swoon
Of warm waves lap the shoreland, one by one ;
Forgetful kisses like a dream's possess
All the low-lying land,
And, statelier than the swaying form
Of some loud God, lifting the storm
In his disastrous hand,
Steps the sweet-voiced, the mellow motherhood
Glad of the sun's kiss, full of life, well wooed
And won and brought to his bed,
Proud of her rhythm in the lusty kiss,
Triumphant and exulting in the mood
Wherein her being is
Crowned with a husband's head,
And left in solitude which is not solitude.

She strides with mighty steps across the glade
Laughing, her bosom swelling with the milk
Born of a million kisses : leaps her womb
Pregnant with fruits, and latter flowers, and shade
Of the great cedar-groves : soft, soft, as silk,
Her skin glows amber, silvered with the bloom
Mist-like of the moon's light,
A slumberous haze of quietude
Shed o'er the hardy limbs, and lustihood,

And boldness, and great might.
Earth knows her daring daughter, and the sea
Breaks into million-folded mystery
Of flower-like flashes in the pale moonrise,
Exulting also, now the sun is faded,
With joy of her supreme fertility
And glowing masteries
Of autumn summer-shaded,
The golden fruit of all the blossoming sky.

And now the watcher to the bright breasts blind
Loses the seemingly shape, the loud swift song ;
Now the moon falls, and all the gold is gone,
And round the storm-caught shape hard gusts of wind
Blow, and her leaves are torn, a flying throng
Of orange and purple and red ; the sombre sun
Shines darkly in her breast
But wakes no joy therein,
And all his kisses sharp and keen
Bring only now desire of rest,
Not their old rapture : the warm violet eyes
Melt into sweet hot tears : subtler the sighs
Are interfused of death ;
And the bright looks grow duller,
And fear is mingled with love's ecstasies
Again, and all her breath
Fails, and the shape and colour
Fade, fail, are lost in the sepulchral seas.

WINTER

Know ye my children? From the old strong breast
Not weary yet of life's grey change, not drawn
Into the utter peace of death, the rest
Of the dim hour that lingers ere the dawn,
Spring these that laugh upon thee. In the snow
See forests bare and gaunt,
Where wingèd whispers haunt,
Lighting the dull sky with a slumberous glow ;
Hear the strange sounds of winter chaunt ;
Feel the keen wisdom of the winter thrill
Young hearts with passionate foretaste
Of death in some wild waste
Of deserts darkening at some wild god's will,
Of frozen steppes awaiting the repose
That only death discovers, never sleep.
My misery is this
That I must wake to childhood gold and rose,
And maidenhood, and wifehood, and still keep
Bound on Life's fatal wheel—revolving bliss.

O that worn wisdom and the age of sorrow
Could learn its bitter lesson, and depart
Into some nightfall guiltless of a morrow,
Into some cave's unprofitable heart
Beyond this curse of birth ! O that dread night
Could come and cover all,
Even itself to fall
To some abyss past resurrection's might !
For the old whispers of my old life call

Accursèd hopes, accursèd fears, accursèd pleasures.
Long-suffering of all life !
Changed consciousness at strife !
No dancer treads the melancholy measures
Unchanged for one short tune : no dancer flags,
The hateful music luring them to move
Weary and desolate ;
And as the rhyme revolves and shrills and drags
Their limbs insane they smile and call it love,
Or, mocking, call it hatred : it is Fate.

These grey eyes close to the deceitful dream
Of death that will not take the tired for ever.
Again, again, revolves the orb ; the stream,
The dew, the cloud, the ocean, and the river.
My magic wand and cup and sword and spell
Languish, forgotten fears.
The cup is filled with tears ;
The sword is red with blood ; the pentacle
Built of flesh ; the wand its snake-head rears
Swift energy : my labour is but lost.
I, who thus thought all things to end,
Find in the void no friend.
I have but conjured up the fiend that most
I trusted to abolish : all my toil
Goes to give rest to life, and build anew
These pinnacles of pain,
Cupola upon cupola ; the soil
To comfort, to avail, to assoil with dew,
To build the year again.

ORPHEUS

O hours not of day
But of æons that roll !
Earth stretches away
From pole unto pole ;
Four seasons decay,
Ere one sound of thy soul,
O fervent and following years, springs over the solar goal !

Come forth to the sound
Of the seven sweet strings !
Advance and rebound !
Be your pomp as a king's !
Girdled around
With seasons and stings
As a serpent's encompassing Time. Come forth ! on the
heavy grey wings !

Ye arbiter lords
That sit as for doom,
Bright splendour of swords
Leaps forth in your gloom !
But stronger my chords
Shall lift in your womb
The love of your passage and time, immemorial ages,
your tomb.

Ye linger for long,
But ye pass and are done :

But I, my sweet song
Outliveth the sun !
Ye are many and strong ;
I am stronger, and one !
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O years, in my evening
orison.

THE YEARS

Crowned with Eternity, beyond beginning ;
Sandalled with wings, Eternity's ; the end
Far beyond sight of striving soul or sinning ;
Ourselves see not, nor know, nor comprehend.
Reeling from chaos, unto Chronos winning,
Devoured of Him our Father and our friend,
This is our life, lead winged or footed golden :
We pass, and each of other is un beholden.

Ranged in dim spectral order and procession,
We span man's thought, we limit him in time ;
None of the souls of earth have had possession
Of larger loves or passions more sublime.
Where the night-caverns hide our solemn session
The summoning word lifts up our holy rhyme.
Even as a mighty river, bend to bend,
We rise in turn and look toward the end.

Also, the Gods arisen from the living
Lights of the sky, half hidden in the night,
Vast shapes beholden of men unbelieving,
Staggering the sense and reason with the sight.

Manifold, mighty, monstrous, no light giving
Unto the soul that is not also light ;—
We rise in ghastly power ; we know the token,
The speech of silence and the song unspoken.

ORPHEUS

Come forth to the sound,
Ye lustres of years
That hide in profound
Abysses of fears,
Hidden and bound !
The voice of tears
Implores and impels ye, O lustres, with a tune that is
strong as a seer's.

THE LUSTRES

Fivefold the shape sublime that lifts its head
Uniform, self-repeating, comparable
At last to a man's life : twice seven times dead
Ere the light flickers in that citadel,
Or the great whiteness lure his soul instead
Of many-coloured earth : ere the strong spell
Fail, and the Fates with iron-shapen shears
Cut the frail silver, hide him from the years.

Fivefold : the year that is in darkness hidden,
Being beginning : then the moving year,
All change and tumult ; then the quiet unhidden
Of deep reflection ; then the gladdening tear

Or saddening smile, the laughter not forbidden
And love enfolding the green-woven sphere :
Lastly, the burning year of flame and fume
That burns men up in fire's sepulchral womb.

Fivefold : the child, the frail, the delicate :
Then the strong laughing mischief : then the proud
Fight toward manhood and the sense elate,
Creative power and passion : then the loud
Assertion of young will, the quickening rate
And strength in blood, in youth with life endowed,
And firmness fastening ; the last lustre's span
Consolidates and shows the perfect man.

Fivefold : the humour changes as his child
Calls him first " father " ; sense of strength divine
Fills him ; then man's work in the world, and wild
Efforts to fame : then steadier in the shrine
Burns the full flame : then, turning, the years piled
Seem suddenly a burden ; then the fine
Flavour of full maturity is tasted :
The man looks back, and asks if life be wasted.

Fivefold : delight in woman altering
To joy of sunlight only : love of life
Changing to fear of death : the golden spring
Trembles ; he hates the cold, the winter strife,
Laughs not with lust of combat : feebly cling
His old hands : he has sepultured his wife :
Last, palsied, shaking, drawing tremorous breath,
He gasps—and stumbles in the pit of death.

ORPHEUS

O girded and spanned
By the deeds of time,
Rocks shattered and planned
In your depth : where climb
The race and the land,
And the growth sublime
Of worlds—I invoke ye ! Come forth, ye centuries ! Come
to the rhyme !

THE CENTURIES

How hardly a man
Though his strength were as a spring's
Shall stretch out his span
To the width of my wings !
The years are enfolden
In my bosom golden,
My periods
Are the hours of the Gods.
They have their plan
In my seasons ; all things
Are woven in the span
Of the spread of my wings.

My brazen gates cleft
By shafts shed of time,
Are ruined and left
As the Gods sing their rhyme.

Buttress and joist are
Effaced of the cloister.
Fane after fane
We lift us again
To the hoarier transept
Where ages climb,
And ruin is left
Where the Gods said their rhyme.

The deity-year
(Whereof I am an hour)
Shall be born and appear
As the birth of a flower,
Shall fade as they faded,
The flower wreaths braided
In maiden's hair.
The Gods shall fare
As the children of Fear
In the Fear-God's Power,
And their names disappear
As the fall of a flower !

The universe-day
(Whereof I am a second)
Shall fall away
And be no more reckoned ;
Shall fall into ruin.
(Sad garden it grew in !)
Ungessed at, unknown,
Beyond them alone,

Is a space that is grey
As it caught them, and beckoned,
And lost them—their way
Is nor counted nor reckoned!

Inconceivable hollow,
Eternity's womb!
Cataclysmal they follow,
Tomb hidden in tomb.
Reeled off and unspun,
Time's fashion is done
In the ultimate
Abysses of fate.
Æons they swallow,
And swamp in the gloom,
Where Eternities follow
Their biers to their tomb.

ORPHEUS

O Mother, O hollow
Sweet heart of the moon!
O matchless Apollo
That granted the tune!
Time's children follow
The strings that commune
With Nature well cloven that comes to the lyre's lilt
silver-hewn.

O bays of the wind,
And shoreland of Thrace!

O beaten and blind
In the light of my face !
Heaven thunders behind,
Hell shakes for a space,
As I fling the loud sound to the sky, and the vaults of
the Earth give place.

O mystical tune
Of a magic litten
Of music, the moon,
The stars unsmitten,
The sun, the unhewn
Stones deeply bitten
By runic fingers of time, where decrees of the Fates are
written !

Time listens, obeys me ;
All Nature replies ;
Nought avoids me, nor stays me,
Not checks, nor defies.
Tribute she pays me
From seas unto skies.
But Death—shall he heed me or hear ? shall he list to the
lyre and arise ?

O thou who art seated,
Invisible king,
The never-defeated,
The shadowy thing !

What mortal hath greeted
Thy shrine, but shall sing
Not earthly but tunes of thine own, in the vaults of
Aornos that ring?

Nor caring nor hearing
For hearts that be bowed,
Nor hating nor fearing
Man's crying aloud,
Solemnly spearing
The single, the crowd,
Thou sittest remote and alone, unprofane, with due silence
endowed!

I call thee by Nature,
My mother and friend!
By every creature!
By life and its end!
By love, the true teacher,
My chanting I send,
Invoking thy stature immense, the terrible form of a fiend!

I hear not a word,
Though my music be rolled
As the song of a bird
Through fields of gold.
Hast thou not heard?
Have I not told
The magic that bridleth the Gods, the Gods in their
houses of old?

Art thou elder than they
In their mountain of light?
Is thy fugitive way
Lost in uttermost night?
Shalt thou not obey,
Or my lyre not affright,
If I call thee by Heaven and Earth with a God's tumultu-
ous might?

If I curse thee or chide
Shalt thou tremble not, Thou?
Not move thee and hide
From the light of my brow?
Shall my arrows divide
Not the heart of thee now?
Art thou cased in strong iron to mock the spells that all
others avow?

Art thou muffled or hidden
In adamant brass?
Is my music forbidden
In Orcus to pass?
Have I cursed thee and chidden?
My flesh being grass,
I curse not as yet, but command thee; the names that
avail I amass.

No sound? no whisper?
No answer to me?
From dawn-star to Hesper
I call upon thee!

In the hour of vesper
I change the key!
I cry on Apollo to aid, I lift up my lyre on the sea.

Thou reaper of fear,
Accurst of mankind,
I charge thee to hear,
Deaf horror deep-mined
In hell! O uprear
On the front of the wind!
I curse thee! Thou hearest my hounds of thunder that
mutter behind?

How strange is the dark
And the silence around!
Hardly the spark
Of my silvery sound
Moves, or may mark
The heaven's dim bound.
How strange! I have sought him in vain—perchance
not in vain have I found!

No! Life thrills in me;
Vibrates on the lyre;
The Fates still spin me
Their thread of desire:
Still, woo and win me
Soft eyes, and the dire
Low fervour of sensual phrase, song kin to the nether-
most fire!

In silence I wait
For his voice to roll,
For the coming of Fate,
The strength of my soul.
My words create
One glorious whole
From the fragments divided that seem past a man's or
a god's control.

I, seeing the life
Of the flowers renew,
The victorious strife
Of the spring run through,
The child's birth rife
With loftier dew—
I know the deep truth in myself ; see acacia in cypress
and yew.

Death is not at all !
'Tis a mask or a dream !
The things that befall
Only slumber or seem !
They fear ; they appal—
They are not as ye deem !
Death died when I dipped my lyre in the sweet Heli-
conian stream !

Give praise to your lord,
All souls that draw breath,
All flowers of the sward !
For the song of me saith :

“ Sound the loud chord !
Let love be a wreath !
Death is not for ye any more, for I am the Master of
Death ! ”

PARABASIS

As I sit in the sound
Of the wash of the surf,
On the long low ground,
The trees and the turf ;
In front the profound,
The warrior seas,
Upstirred of the breeze,
By the far reef bound—
I know the low music of love, I feel the sweet murmur
in me,

My soul is in tune with the sea.

The stars are above me,
The rocks are below me,
The sea is around !
Great Gods that love me
Lead me, and show me
Their powers profound.
Their lightnings move me
To stir me, to throw me
As into a swoond,
The song of the infinite surf that is beaten and bound
As a fierce wolf-hound,
The song that lures me, and lifts me, and mingles my
soul into sound !

O Nature, my mother,
Heart melted on heart
At last! Not another,
Not any shall part
Thy soul from my art.
How should it be otherwise,
Sister divine,
Lover, my mother wise,
Wiser than wine?
Seeing I linger
Here on the beach—
Let God's own finger
Here to me reach,
Making me singer
Each unto each—
Nature and Man made one
In the light and fire of the sun,
And the sobbing tune
Of the moon,
Wedded in cyclic bonds,
Where fall the æon-fronds,
Whose large bed bears a child
(In its due period)
Not merciful and not severe,
Knowing nor love nor fear,
But majesty most mild,
Being indeed a God.

Yea, let the very ray-hand of Apollo
Lead me where none may follow

Save in blind eagle-fury and full flight,
Pythian against the light,
Writing in all the sea, the trees, the flowers,
The many-fruited bowers,
The lusted lilies and arboreal scent
And fresh young element
Of blood in every osseous vein of time,
New senses more sublime !
Should it not be that the ill days are past
And my soul lost at last,
Lost in thy bosom who art mother of all
Ere the first was, to fall
After the end. And then, O soul endued
(In this my solitude)
With all the thousand elements of life,
Shall I not call thee wife ?
O Muse long wooed !
Long called to in the forest, on the mountain,
Reached after in the fountain,
Grasped in the slumberous sea,
And yet, ever, aye, ever ! escaping me !

But here where the wise pen
And silver cadences outrunning song,
And clear sweet clean-chiselled English, sharp and strong
Of the one man among the latter men
Who lived with Nature, saw her face to face,
And died not : here in this consummate place,
Immortal now, though the Antarctic sent
Its mightiest coldest wave and rose and rent

The coral and annihilated land,
Or though the swarthy hand
Or foot misshapen of the Hephaestian,
(Hating the air-breathing man,
In such sweet love as dwells, above all other places
Here, in our hearts and faces,
Nature's and man's) if his coarse hand or foot,
The implacable forceful brute,
Shifted towards the bellows, and one blast
Blew thorough all the air aghast
And in one vast Titanic war,
Almighty avenging roar,
Oahu flung skywards blown in dust—and was no more—
Even then immortal stands
This loveliest of all lands,
Lovelier even than they
Know in Elysian paths, heroic bands
Treading dim gardens brighter than the day,
Even in his voice who is passed, and shall not pass away !
Here therefore I know Nature ; I am filled
With dew not earth-distilled
As I have prayed in vain, not vainly willed.
Now all the earth is stilled ;
But ever the monotonous sea
Keeps solemn symphony,
Tuning my lyre to her own melody,
Not understandable in colder lands
Where no man understands
More than the mart ; the raucous ironshod
Feet, smashing verses ; the hard heavy hands

Of time : the hateful laugh where whoredom trod ;
The savage snarl of man against his friend :—
How should he (such an one) perceive the end,
Or listen to the voice of Nature, know it for the voice of
God ?

EPODE

NATURE

Lo ! in the interstellar space of night,
Clothed with deep darkness, the majestic spaces
Abide the dawn of deity and light,
Vibrate before the passionless pale faces
Shrined in exceeding glory, eremite.
The tortoise skies in sombre carapaces
Await the expression and the hour of birth
In silence through the adamantine girth.

I rose in glory, gathered of the foam.
The sea's flower folded, charioting me risen
Where dawn's rose stole from its pearl-glimmering home,
And heaven laughed, and earth : and mine old prison,
The seas that lay beneath the mighty dome,
Shone with my splendour. Light did first bedizen
Earth with its clusters of fiery dew and spray,
When I looked forth and cried " It is the day ! "

The stars are dewdrops on my bosom's space ;
The sun and moon are glances through my lashes,

Long, tender, rays of night ; my subtle face
Burns through the sky-dusk, lightens, fills, and flashes
With solemn joy and laughter of love ; the grace
Of all my body swaying stoops and dashes
Swift to the daisy's dawn of love : and swiftest,
O spirit of man, when unto me thou liftest !

Dawn shakes the molten fire of my delight
From the fine flower and fragrance of my tresses !
Sunset bids darken all my body's light,
Mixing its music with the sad caresses
Of the whole world : I wheel in wingless flight
Through lampless space, the starless wildernesses !
Beyond the universal bounds that roll,
There is the shrine and image of my soul.

Nature my name is called. O fruitless veil
Of the strange self of its own self begotten !
O vision laughterless ! O shadowy tale !
O brain that halts before its thought forgotten !
Once all ye knew me—ere the earth grew pale,
And Time began, and all its fruit lay rotten,
Once, when thou knewest me indeed, and fed
At these strong breasts—Ah ! but the days are dead !

Now, in the dusty corridors of Time,
I am forgotten : Gaian language falters
If I would teach thee half an hint sublime
Shed of the rayless fire upon my altars.

Vain are the light and laughter of man's rhyme,
Vain the large hymns, and soaring songs and psalters !
My face, my breast, no soul of man uncovers,
Nor is my bed made lovely with my lovers !

I long for purple and the holier kiss
Of mortal lyrist ; in these arms to gladden ;
To take him to the spring and source of bliss,
And in his vast embrace to rouse me, madden
Once with the light of passion, not to miss
Uttermost rapture till the sweet loves sadden
To sweeter peace thrilled with young ecstasy—
Ah ! man's high spirit may not reach to Me !

I am Nature and God : I reign, I am, alone.
None other may abide apart : they perish,
Drawn into me, into my being grown.
None other bosom is, to bear, to nourish,
To be : the heart of all beneath my zone
Of blue and gold is scarlet-bright to cherish
My own's life being, that is, and is not other ;
For I am God and Nature and thy Mother.

I am the thousand-breasted milky spouse,
Virginal also : Tartarus and Gaia
Twinned in my womb, and Chaos from my brows
Shrank back abashed, my sister dark and dire,
Mother of Erebus and Night, that ploughs
With starry-sandalled feet the fields of fire ;
My sister shrank and fell, the infernal gloom
Changed to the hot sweet shadow of my womb.

I am : that darkness strange and uterine
Is shot with dawn and scented with the rose ;
The deep dim prison-house of corn and wine,
Flowers, children, stars, with flame far subtler glows
Formless, all-piercing, death-defying, divine,
A sweet frail lamp whose shadow gleams and shows
No darkness, is as light is where its rays
Cross, interweave, and marry with the day's !

I am : the heart that flames from central Me
Seeks out all life, and takes again, to mingle
Its passion with my might and majesty,
Till the vast floods of the man's being tingle
And glow, self-lost within my soul and sea
Of love, and sun of utter light, and single
Keen many-veined heart : our lips and kisses
Marry and muse on our immortal blisses.

I am : the greatest and the least : the sole
And separate life of things. The mighty stresses
Of worlds are my nerves twitching. Branch and bole
Of forests waving in deep wildernesses
Are hairs upon my body. Rivers roll
To make one tear in my superb caresses,
When on myself myself begets a child,
A system of a thousand planets piled !

I am : the least, the greatest : the frail life
Of some small coral-insect still may tremble
With love for me, and call me queen and wife ;
The shy plant of the water may dissemble

Its love beneath the fronds ; reply to strife
With strife, and all its tiny being crumble
Under my rough and warrior husband-kiss,
Whose pain shall burn, and alter, and be bliss !

I am : no word beside that solemn one
Reigns in sound's kingdom to express my station,
Who, clothed and crowned with suns beyond the sun,
Bear on the mighty breast of foam Thalassian,
Bear on my bosom, jutting plenilune,
Maiden, the fadeless Rose of the Creation !
The whole flower-life of earth and sky and sea
From me was born, and shall return to me !

I am : for men and beings passionate,
For mine own self calm as the river-cleaving
Lotus-borne lord of Silence : I create
Or discreate, both in my bosom heaving :
My lightest look is mother of a Fate :
My fingers sapphire-ringed with sky are weaving
Ever new flowers and lawns of life, designed
Nobler and newer in mine olden mind.

I am : I am not, but all-changing move
The worlds evolving in a golden ladder
Spiral or helical, fresh gusts of love
Filling one sphere from the last sphere grown gladder ;
All gateways leading far to the above.
Even as the bright coils of the emerald adder
Climb one by one in glory of sunlight, climb
My children to me up the steep of Time.

I am : before me all the years are dead,
And all the fiery locks of sunrise woven
Into the gold and scarlet of my head :
In me all skies and seas are shaken and cloven :
All life and light and love about me shed
Begotten in me, in my moving moven,
Are as my tears : all worlds that ever swam
As dew of kisses on my lips : I am.

But thou, chief lover, in whose golden heart
The melody and music lifts its pæan,
Whose lyre fulfilled of me, fathered of Art
And that Sun's song beyond the Empyréan,
Who art myself, not any more apart,
Having called my children by the call Pandean,
Mellowed with Delphian gold, the Ephesian quiver,
To float down Time for ever and for ever ;—

I am thy lyre and thou mine harper : thou
My music, I thy spirit : thou the lover
And I the bride : the glory of my brow
Deeper delight, new ardour, to discover
Stoops in thine heart ; my love and light endow
Thy life with fervour as I bend me over
The starry curve and surface of the sea,
And kiss thy very life out into me.

O central fountain of my yearning veins !
O mountain single-soaring, thou art blended
Into my heaven : prescient of the pains
That shall bring forth—what worlds? my heart is rended !

My womb reverberates the solar strains,
The lyre vibrating in me : sharp and splendid
My face glows, gladdens ; nuptial ecstasy
Is all the guerdon and the spoil of me !

I am : the universe grown old must bear
A scion ere it sink to dædal slumber.
Thou art my strength, and I am only fair.
Our kisses are as stars ; our loves encumber
With multitude the fields of space, and where
Our kisses tune the worlds, their lives outnumber
The moments of eternity : apart
I am for ever : and, in me, thou art !

EXPLICIT LIBER PRIMUS

LIBER SECUNDUS VEL AMORIS

TO MARY BEATON
WHOM I LAMENT

The Kabbalists say that when a man falls in love with a female elemental—undine, sylph, gnome, or salamandrine, as the case may be—she becomes immortal with him, or otherwise he dies with her. . . . The love of the magus for such beings is insensate, and may destroy him.—*Eliphas Levi*.

Orpheus for the love he bare to his wife, snatcht, as it were, from him by untimely Death, resolved to go down to Hell with his harp, to try if he might obtain her of the infernal power.—*The Wisdom of the Ancients*.

ORPHEUS, FINDING EURYDICE DEAD, STUNG BY A
SERPENT, LAMENTS OVER HER.

COME back, come back, come back, Eurydice !
Come back to me !
Lie not so quiet, draw some faint sharp breath !
It is not death :
It cannot, must not be, Eurydice.
Come back to me !
Let me as yet lament not ! Let me stoop !—
Those eyelids droop
Not with mere death, but dreams, Eurydice !
Come back to me !

O you that were my lover and my wife !
Come back to life !
Come back, breathe softly from the breast of gold
These arms enfold.
Give me your lips and kiss me once ! O wife,
Come back to life !
Nay, let the wind but stir the silky hair,
(God's lesser air,
Not His full blossom of woman's breath !) O wife,
Come back to life !

Stir once, move once, rise once, Eurydice !
 Be good to me !
Rise once.—O sleep not ! Listen ! Is not all
 Nature my thrall ?
Once only : be not dead, Eurydice !
 Be good to me !
I love you—be not dead !—rise up and say
 “I feigned, I lay
Thus so you kissed me”—O Eurydice,
 Be good to me !

There is not one sweet sigh of all the old sighs—
 Open your eyes !
Not one warm breath of the young breast : no sleep
 Could be so deep.
The last pale lotus opens to the skies.
 Open your eyes !
Lift the blue eyelids under the deep lashes
 Till one light flashes !
Wake with one supreme sigh like the old sighs !
 Open your eyes !

I cannot leave you so, Eurydice.
 Come back to me !
Just in the triumph, in love's utmost hour,
 Life's queenliest flower—
All shattered, overblown. Eurydice,
 Come back to me !

I cannot have you dead, and live : let death
 Strangle my breath
Now as I kiss you still—Eurydice !
 Come back to me !

Fling down the foolish lyre, the witless power !
Cast the dead laurel in the dust ! The flower
 Of all the world is marred, the day's desire
Distorted in the eclipse, the sun's dead hour.

Let me fall down beside thee ! Let me take
The kisses that thou canst not give, and slake
 Despair in purposeless caresses, dire
Shames fang-wise fastened of the eternal snake.

Is there no warmth where beauty is so bright ?
No soul still flickering in the lambent light
 Still shed from all the body's excellence ?
No lamp unhidden of the utter night ?

Cannot my life be molten into thee
Or thy death fall with rosier arms on me
 Or soul with soul commingle without sense,
As the sun's rays strike deep into the sea ?

O beauty of all beauty—central flower
Of all the blossoms in the summer's bower !
 Fades not all Nature in thy fall ? the sun
Not darken in the miserable hour ?

I hate all Nature's mockery of life.
The laugh is grown a grin ; the gentle strife
Of birds and waves and winds at play is grown
A curse, a cruelty. My wife ! my wife !

I am broken, I cannot sleep, I cannot die.
Pain, pain for ever ! Nature is a lie,
The gods a lie. Myself ? but I am found
Sole serious in the hateful comedy.

Blackness, all blackness ! How I hate the earth,
The curse that brought my being into birth.
I, loving more her loveliness, am bound
And broken—thrice more bitter for my mirth !

Song, was it song I trusted in ? Or thou,
Apollo, was it thou didst bind my brow
With laurel for a poison-wreath of hell
To sear my brain and blast my being now ?

A band of most corroding poison wound
Dissolving with its venom the profound
Deep of my spirit with its terrible
Sense without speech and horror without sound.

A devil intertwining in my heart
Its cold and hideous lust, a twiforked dart
Even from the fatherly and healing hand—
The double death without a counterpart

In hell's own deepest pit, far, far below
Phlegethon's flame and Styx's stifling flow,
Far below Tartarus, below the land
Thrust lowest in the devilish vertigo.

If I could weep or slumber or forget!
If love once left me, with his eyelids wet
With tender memory of his own despair
Or frozen to a statue of regret!

If but the chilling agony, that turns
To bitter fever-heat that stings and burns
Would freeze me, or destroy me, or impair
My sense, that it should feel not how it yearns!

Or if this pain were only pain, and not
A deadness deeper than all pain, a spot
And central core of agony in me,
One heart-worm, one plague-leprosy, one blot

Of death, one anguish deeper than control?—
Then were I fit to gain the Olympian goal
And fling forth fiery wailings to the sea,
And tune the sun's ray to my smitten soul!

How should I sing who cannot even see?
Grove through a mist of changeless misery.
An age-long pain—no time in wretchedness!—
As of an hammer annihilating me

With swift hard rhythm, the remorseless clang ;
Or as a serpent loosening his fang
 To bite more deeply—this inane distress
More than despair or death's detested pang.

I live—that shames me ! I am not a man.
Nothing can I to sharpen or to span
 My throat with iron fingers, or my sword
In my heart's acid where the blood began

Long since to leap, and now drops deadly slow,
Clotted with salt and sulphur and strong woe.
 I shall not die : the first sight of the sward
Stained with the spectral corpse had stung me so,

Not stabbed me, since I saw her and survive.
I shall not die—Ah ! shall I be alive?
 This hath no part in either : bale and bliss
Forget me, careless if I rot or thrive.

Heaven forgot me—or she were not dead !
And Hades—or I should not raise my head
 Now, and look wildly where I used to kiss,
Gaze on the form whence all but form has fled !

I am alone in all the universe,
Changed to the shape and image of a curse,
 Muffled in self-confusion, and my brain
Wakes not nor sleeps : its destiny is worse.

It thinks not, knows not, acts not, nor appeals,
But hangs, remembers : it abides and feels
 As if God's vulture clung to it amain,
And furies fixed with fiery darts and wheels

Their horror, thought-exceeding, manifold,
Vertiginous within me—and the cold
 Of Styx splashed on me, making me immortal,
Invulnerable in its bitter mould ;

Leaving its own ice, penetrating streams,
Grim streaks, and dismal drops, abysmal beams
 Thrown from the gulph thorough the place and portal,
Each drop o'erladen with a curse that steams

Unnatural in the coldness : let me be
Alone, inviolate of eternity !
 Let all the winds of air leave me, nor fan :
Nor wash me all the waves of all the sea !

Let all the sun's light and the moon's be blind,
And all the stars be lampless to my mind,
 Until I see the destiny of man
And span the cruelty that lurks behind

Its beauty, and its glory, and its splendour !—
The girl-babe's face looks up to the mother tender,
 Looks for a kiss in dumb desire, and finds
Her jaws closed trap-like to expunge and end her !

Let all the life and dream and death be done,
And all the love and hate be woven in one,
All things be broken of the winter winds,
No soul stand up and look upon the sun !

Save only mine !—that my voice may confound
The universe, and spell the mighty sound
To shake all heaven and earth, to mingle hell
In chaos, in some limitless profound ;

That it may tear Olympus from its place,
Mix it with Hades, change the Ocean space,
Level the tides of time that sink and swell,
And curse my very father to his face !

O father, father Apollo, did I wrong
Thy chariot and thy horses in my song ?
Why clove thine arrow the unseated air,
The heaven void of thee, why the thunder-thong

Slipped from the tether, and the fatal stone
Sped not to my heart, not to mine alone ?
Ah why not ? but to hers as she lay sleeping
By hate, not fate, quelled, fallen, and overthrown ?

She lies so pitiful and pure—and I,
Breast to her breast, mouth to her mouth, I lie,
Hand upon hand, and foot on foot, sore weeping—
Can she not live again or I not die ?

As the old prophet on the child I fall
And breathe—but no breath answers me at all.
All of my kisses stir no blush, no sigh ;
She will not hear me ever if I call !

Let the far music of oblivious years
Sound in the sea beneath !
Are not its waters one with all my tears ?
Hath Atropos no comfort in her shears ?
No Muse for me one wreath ?

Were I now dead and free to travel far
Whither I will, ah me !
Not whither I must—were there no avatar
Drawn like my love from some close kindred star ?
No shape seen on the sea ?

Were I now free of this intense desire,
By swift magician power
I might fly westward shod with wings of fire
And find my love, and in her arms expire,
Or wed her for an hour.

(Not for an hour as man, but even as God
Whose day is like an æon.
Love hath nor station, stage, nor period :
But is at once in his inane abode
Beneath the spring Dircean.)

Alas, the will flies ere the power began.

Lo, in the Idan grove
Invoking Zeus to swell the power of Pan,
The prayer discomfits the demented man !
Lust lies as still as love.

Therefore in memory only is there life,
And in sweet shapes of art :
The same thought for the ointment and the knife—
Oh lightning ! blast the image of my wife
Out of my mind and heart !

How can one hour dissolve a year's delight ?
One arrow striking the full eagle-flight
Drop him so swift, giving no time to die,
No dusk to herald and delay the night ?

A serpent stung her sleeping : if the abyss
Know any cell more dolorous than this,
Were there a sharper tooth to destiny
Than this that strikes me in the dead girl's kiss :—

O if aught bitterer could be, could know,
If nine-fold Styx could gather in its flow
Cocytus, Phlegethon, and Acheron,
All mixed to one full flood of hate and woe :

And poisoned by all venom like to his
Who kissed Eurydice the traitor-kiss :—
Then let them sting me fourfold, nor atone
Then for the eightfold misery of this !

Is not some justice somewhere? Where is he
Hateful to God and man, a misery
To his own vileness by exceeding it,
Who crawls God-cursed throughout eternity?

Nay! sure he lives, and licks his slavered lips,
Laughing to think how the sweet morsel slips,
The breast-flower of my bride; the dainty bit
Fit for—ah God! the pearl-smooth blossom drips

Poisonous blood that will not poison me,
Though I drink deep its fierce intensity.
My lips closed silent on her bosom's light,
The stung blood springs—like pearls beneath the sea

Whose moony glimmer hath a purple vein
Hidden—so I athirst of the sad stain
Drink up her body's life, as if to spite
Its quiet, as if the venom were to drain

Into my life—that hurts me not at all,
Struck by a stronger buffet: let me call
All deaths! they come not, seeing I am broken
In this one horror where a man may fall.

I am alive, and live not: I am dead,
And die not: on my desolated head
No dew may drop, no word of God be spoken,
None heard, if by some chance some word be said.

The wheels of Fate are over me ; quite crushed
Lies my pale body where her body blushed,
Quite dead ! there is no single sob that stirs,
No pulse of blood of all that filled and flushed

Her cheek and mine, her breast and mine : and lo !
How sunset's bloom is faded on the snow !
There is no laugh of all those laughs of hers,
Those tender thrills of laughter I used to know.

Nor in all nature weep the careless eyes,
Nor any soul of life may sympathise,
All I once was in this is torn and rended—
Scorned and forsaken the lone lyre lies.

Hath that not yet some sympathy with me ?
That lyre that was myself, my heart's decree
And ruler, subtle at the dawn, and splendid
Noonwards, and soft at day's declivity !

I flung it in my anguish to the ground.
I raise it, and its music hath not found
One string or snapped or loosened, and the tune
Is the old triumph garlanded and crowned !

Folly and hate ! Blithe mockery of sorrow !
Shrill me no harsh lies of some sweet to-morrow !
Soothe me no hateful mysteries of the moon,
How one life lends what other lives may borrow !

I hate that foolish counterfoil of grief
That one pain to its friend may give relief—
 Eurydice replace Eurydice
Long hence—no separation sharp and brief

But dwelling in the intermediate
Halls between Hades and the house of Fate :
 Atropos cut, and pass to Clotho, and she
Respin the shuttle in some other state.

What shall it boot me now to gather flowers
From this young hope to wile the angry hours ?
 That many thousand years shall pass, and show
Eurydice again amid her bowers,

Forgetting, and myself again be born,
Clasp her grave beauty in the middle corn,
 Forgetting also : Time as fallen snow
Blotting the mind and memory that adorn

At least our present littleness : nor hope
Of larger excellence, extended scope,
 Shall help me here, forgetting : nothing skills
Of this poor truth—to flatter with the trope !

Wooing in mockery !—nothing skills but this
To raise her now, and resuspire the kiss,
 United by the splendour of the will's
Success—to marry, to be made of bliss,

I care not whether here or there : to live
In memory and identity : to give
 No part of self or soul to Lethe's water :
To grapple Nature, interpose an "if"

In her machinery of conditioned mood ;
Suspending law, suspending amplitude
 Of all Her function ; to espouse her daughter
In forced embrace lasciviously rude,

Indecorous, shameful to the eternal "must" !
Law may be mercy, mercy never just !
 Thus I would alter, and divide her ways,
And let her wheels grind themselves down to dust.

One supernatural event—but one! —
Should scale Olympus, shattering the throne
 Of the Ægis-bearing Father : and the days
Of all the Universe be fallen and done.

Well then ? O sceptred Splendour ! dost Thou see
How little means Thy Universe to Me ?
 How petty looks Thy will to My desire ?
Hebe and Hera to Eurydice ?

I, knowing all the progress of the earth,
The dim procession, altering death and birth,
 The Seven Stairs, the gusts of life in fire
And Love in Life, and all the serpent girth

Of sevenfold twining worlds and sevenfold ways
And nights made sevenfold of the sevenfold days
All the vast scheme evolving into man,
And upward, onward, through Olympian haze

Into the crowning spiritual mist,
Where spirit in the spirit may subsist,
Evolve itself in the amazing plan
Through many planes, as shining amethyst

Melts to the sapphire's sombre indigo,
And lifts, still sapphire, to the ocean glow ;
Thence into emerald and the golden light,
Till ruby crowns the river's living flow

And glory of colour in the sun's own flame—
Beyond, to colours without sense or name,
Impossible to man, whose vivid sight
Would blast him with their splendour as they came

Flashing through spiritual space, withdrawn
Now, and now flung triumphant in the dawn
Not of mere sun's rise, but before the birth
Of a new system on the unfolded lawn

Of space beyond the sceptre of the Gods !
I, seeing all this, would foil Time's periods
For one small woman on this one mean earth,
Would spoil the plan of the inane Abodes,

Throw out of gear all Nature's enginery
For such a grain of tinsel dust as I,
Reluctant to be mangled in the wheel—
Looks other meanness so contemptibly?

Yet I persist. Thou knowest, O most High Zeus,
When Hera to thine Io did refuse
Peace, and the gadfly bit like barbed steel
Those limbs with dewes of love once lying loose,

When thy vast body boarded her, wrapped round
Her senses with a mist of being profound,
A flame-like penetration, serpentine,
Twining and leaping without end or bound,

Inevitable as the grasp of Fate:—
Thou, reft of her by envy of thy mate
Didst shake the heaven with bellowings undivine,
And rooted stars from their primeval state.

Not without law, sayest thou? Almighty Zeus,
Am I not also mothered of a Muse?
Let there be law! untimely to release
This soul untinctured of the Stygian dewes,

Unsprinkled of Lethean lotus-drops!
Life grows so steadily, so sudden stops—
(Surely no part in Nature's moving peace!)
Thus, when the young, like tempest-stricken crops

Unripe, are blasted in the blossoming spring—
This is a miracle, not the other thing !

Nature insults herself, blasphemes her God,
Thus cutting short the life's hard happening.

Nor would I suffer thus, nor she repine
Had my wife faded (as rose-tinted wine
Bleached in the sunlight) reached her period
And fallen gently in the arms divine,

Caressing arms of pale Persephone,
And bathed her in death's river tenderly,
Washing the whole bright body, the long limbs,
The clothing hair, the face, the witchery

Of all the smiling shape in the dark stream,
As one who gathers the first floral beam
Of daylight by the water, dives and swims
Deep in cool alleys, softer than a dream :

So, rising to the other bank, aglow
With the bright motion and the stream's young flow,
She might discover the Elysian ground,
And find me waiting, find me sad and slow

Pacing the green flower-lighted turf, and leap
Into my body's kisses, into sleep :—
Sweeter this latter bridal than we found
The first, now lost in time's eternal deep.

It is not cruel if the ripe fruit fall—
But never an elegy funereal
Wept for untimely burial, but cried
Aloud against the Fates, forbore to call

In pity or passion on the Gods of peace ;
But cursed, but wailed, nor bade its sharp tongue cease
Until the lightning spat, sharp to divide
Bone from its marrow for their blasphemies !

So I should curse, unless indeed my grief
Be not too great to yield me such relief.
Methinks a sob must start and mar the roar
Of loud harsh laughing bitter unbelief

Scarring the sky with poisonous foam of song.
Also, what curse might remedy the wrong ?
Are not all feuds forgotten in a war ?
All stars exhausted in Astrea's throng

When the swift sun leaps skyward ? Let me speak
Words rather of wisdom : hate may rage and wreak
Vengeance in vain if wisdom smile beyond,
Too high to care, too ultimate to seek.

The bitterest sorrow of all sorrow is this :
I had no time to catch one last long kiss,
Nor bid farewell, nor lay one lily-frond
Of resurrection for the sign of bliss,

Remembrance of some immortality
Affirmed if not believed : alas for me
That might not interchange the last sad vows,
Nor close the blue eyes clearer than the sea

Before they darkened, and the veil of death
Shrouded their splendour : still there lingereth
Some sad white lustre on the icy brows,
Some breast-curve surely indicating breath,

Some misty glamour of deep love within
The eye's cold gleam ! some dimple on the chin
Hinting of laughter : even now she seems
A folded rosebud, where the ivory skin

Closes the ripe warm centre flower, the mind,
The spirit that was beautifully kind,
The sense of beauty shadowed in deep dreams,
Sent through the horn gates by some sleepy wind.

All lingers : all is gone : a little while,
And all the live sweet rapture of the smile
Of her whole being is discomfited,
The body broken, desolated, vile,

Till nought remains but the memorial urn
Of deep red gold, less golden than did burn
Once the strong breast : the ash within is shed,
Dust given for flowers : what memory shall turn

Unto the flowers, think worthy to remember
How the dust scattered from their fading ember
Is their own sign and seal of fatherhood,
Grey seas of sorrow sun-kissed into amber.

Above me hangs the sun : horrid he hangs,
A rayless globe of hell, shooting forth fangs
Snake-wise to parch and burn my solitude,
Nor leave me quiet lamenting, with these pangs

Tearing my liver, more Promethean
Than ever Titan knew—the sunbright span
Of narrow water mocks me, brightening
Far to the indigo Ionian.

The sun hangs high, as in the Arabian tale
Enchanted palaces defy the gale,
Perched upon airy mountains, on the wing
Of genii poised, souls suffering and pale

With their long labour : wizard spire and dome
That maidens grown magicians had for home,
Where the charmed sword and graven talisman
Held them supremely floating on the foam

Where cloudier seas innavigably roll,
Misty with elemental shape or soul,
Thin grey essential nebulæ of man,
Caught in the mesh of magical control !

All these are beautiful and shapen so
That every bastion flames a separate glow
Of changing colour : all detestable,
Abhorrent, since the goodly-seeming show

Is one large lie of cruelty and lust,
Carven from spectral images of dust,
Founded on visions of the accursèd well,
And built of shame and hatred and distrust,

And all things hateful and all lying things—
O song! where wanderest on forgetful wings?
Shall these wild numbers help thee to thine own,
Or change the winter's gramarye to spring's?

Rather beguile the tedious mourning hours
With memory of the long-forgotten bowers,
Where loves resurged from cave and grove to throne,
From nuptial banquet to the bed of flowers!

Rather forget the near catastrophe,
And turn my music toward Eurydice,
Awake in day-dream all the ancient days,
When love first blossomed on the springing tree!

Let me recall the days beyond regret,
And tune my lyre to love, sharpen and set
The strings again to the forgotten ways,
That I may tread them over, and forget!

In child-like meditative mood
I wandered in the dell,
Passed through the quiet glades of the wood,
And sought the haunted well,
Half hopeful that its solitude
Might work some miracle.

The oaks raised angry hands on high :
The willows drooped for tears :
The yews held solemn ceremony,
Magical spells of years.
I saw one cypress melancholy,
A prince among his peers.

So, turning from the arboreal seat
And midmost hollow of earth,
I followed Hamadryads' feet
That made at eve their mirth
To where the streamlet wandered fleet
To show what time was worth.

I watched the waters wake and laugh
Running o'er pebbly beaches,
Writing amazement's epitaph
With freshets, turns, and reaches :—
The only tale too short by half
That nature ever teaches.

Then growing grander as it swept
Past bulrushes and ferns,

Gathering the tears that heaven had wept,
The water glows and burns
In sunlight, where no shadows crept
Around the lazy turns.

All on a sudden silence came
Athwart some avenue
Where through the trees arrowed the flame
From the exultant blue ;
And all the water-way became
One heart of glittering dew.

The waters narrowed for a space
Between twin rocks confined,
Carven like Gods for poise and grace,
Like miracles for mind :
Each fashioned like a kissing face,
The eyes for joy being blind.

The waters widened in a pool,
Broad mirror of blue light.
The surface was as still and cool
As the broad-breasted night.
Engraven of no mortal tool,
The granite glistened white.

As if to shield from mortal gaze
A nymph's immortal limbs,

The shadow of the buttress stays
And dips its head and swims,
While moss engirdles it with grays
And greens that dew bedims.

Now, at the last, the western end,
Most miracle of all !
The groves of rock dispart and rend
Their sacred cincture-wall ;
All tunes of heaven their rapture lend
To make the waterfall.

There, steaming from the haze and mist
Where dew is dashed in spray,
Rises a halo sunrise-kissed
And kissed at close of day
From ruby unto amethyst,
Within the veil of grey.

And there within the circled light
I saw a dancing thing,
Most like the tender-leavèd night
Of moonrise seen in spring,
A shadow luminous and white
Like a ghost beckoning.

And then dim visions came to me,
Faint memories of fear :
As when the Argo put on sea
Such stories we did hear,

Stories to tremble at and flee—
And others worth a tear.

I thought of how a maiden man
Might hear a deadly song
And clasp a siren in his span,
And feel her kiss grow strong
To drag him with caresses wan
Into the House of Wrong.

Another : how the women grew
Like vines of tender grape,
And how they laughed as lovers do,
And took a lover's shape,
And how men sought them, free to woo—
To leave them, no escape !

Another : how a golden cup
A golden girl would pour,
And whoso laughed and drank it up
Grew wise and warrior :
But whoso stayed to smile and sup
Returned—ah, never more !

And yet again—a river steep,
A maiden combing light,
Her hair's enchantment—she would weep
And sing for love's delight,
Until the listener dropped to sleep
In magic of her night.

And then the maiden smoothed her tresses,
And led him to the river,
Caught him and kissed with young caresses,
And then—her cruel smiles quiver !
Beneath the waves his life represses
For ever and for ever !

I knew the danger of the deed
The while enrapt, I gladdened.
My eyes upon the dancer feed
As one by daylight saddened
After long night whose slumbers bleed,
By dreams deceived and maddened !

It might be—the delusive dance,
The shadowy form I saw,
Apollo's misty quivering lance
Thrown to elude God's law ;
It might be—doth the maid advance,
Evanish, or withdraw ?

So stung by certainty's mistrust,
Or tranced in dream of sin,
Or blinded by some Panic dust,
By Dionysian din
Deafened, arose the laughing lust
To fling my body in !

I stood upon the rock, and cried,
And held my body high

(Not caring if I lived or died)
Erect against the sky :
Then plunged into the wheeling tide,
And vanished utterly.

" O shape half seen of love, and lost
Beneath time's sightless tide,
What obolus of the vital cost
Remains, or may abide ?
Or what perception memory steal,
Once passed upon the whirling wheel ?

" O hope half held of love, and fled
Beyond the ivory gate,
A dream gone from the hapless head
By fury of a fate !
What image of the hope returns
But stings with agony that which yearns ?

" O face half kissed in faith and fear,
Eager and beautiful !
Drop for mortality one tear !
For life one smile recall !
There is no passion made for me—
Else were my water-well the sea."

Such tune my falling body snapped
Within the sacred sides,
While the warm waves with laughter lapped,
And changed their tuned tides,

And all my being was enwrapped,
A bridegroom's in a bride's.

Deep in the hollow of the place
A starry bed I saw,
Gemmed with strange stones in many a space
Of godlike rune and law.
Such fancies as the fiery face
Of living Art might draw.

But rising up I lift my head
Beyond the ripples clean :
My arms with spray dew-diamonded
Stretched love-wise to my queen
That danced upon the light, and shed
Her own sweet light between.

But never a mortal joy might know,
Hold never a mortal lover !
Whose limbs like moonshine glint and glow,
Throb, palpitate, and hover :—
Pale sunrise woven with the snow
Athwart a larchen cover !

So danced she in the rainbow mist,
A fairy frail and chaste,
By moon caressed, by sunlight kissed,
A guerdon vain and waste ;
And the misery of her thankless tryst
Stole on me as she paced.

For never her lips should be caressed
By love's exulting stings,
Whose starry shape shone in the west,
Held of the glimmering wings.
Her shadowy soul perceived the jest
Of man and mortal things.

And there I vowed a solemn oath
To Aphrodite fair,
Sealing that sacramental troth
With a long curl of hair,
And the strange prayer's reiterant growth
Sent shining through the air.

(Invoking Aphrodite)

Daughter of Glory, child
Of Earth's Dione mild
By the Father of all, the Ægis-bearing King!
Spouse, daughter, mother of God,
Queen of the blest abode
In Cyprus' splendour singly glittering.
Sweet sister unto me,
I cry aloud to thee!
I laugh upon thee laughing, O dew caught up
from sea!

Drawn by sharp sparrow and dove
And swan's wide plumes of love,
And all the swallow's swifter vehemence,

And, subtler than the Sphinx,
The ineffable iynx
Heralds thy splendour swooning into sense,
When from the bluest bowers
And greenest-hearted hours
Of Heaven thou smilest toward earth, a miracle of
flowers !

Down to the loveless sea
Where lay Persephone
Violate, where the shade of earth is black,
Crystalline out of space
Flames the immortal face !
The glory of the comet-tailèd track
Blinds all black earth with tears.
Silence awakes and hears
The music of thy moving come over the starry
spheres.

Wrapped in rose, green and gold,
Blues many and manifold,
A cloud of incense hides thy splendour of light ;
Hides from the prayer's distress
Thy loftier loveliness
Till thy veil's glory shrouds the earth from night ;
And silence speaks indeed,
Seeing the subtler speed
Of its own thought than speech of the Pandean reed !

There no voice may be heard !
No place for any word !

The heart's whole fervour silently speeds to thee,
Immaculate! and craves
Thy kisses or the grave's,
Till, knowing its unworthiness to woo thee,
Remembers, grows content
With the old element,
And asks the lowlier grace its earlier music meant.

So, Lady of all power!
Kindle this firstling flower
The rainbow nymph above the waterfall
Into a mortal shade
Of thee, immortal maid,
That in her love I gather and recall
Some memory mighty and mute
In love's poor substitute
Of thee, thy Love too high, the impossible pursuit!

Then from the cloud a golden voice
Great harmonies persuade,
That all the cosmic lawns rejoice
Like laughter of a maid;
Till evolution had no choice,
But heard it, and obeyed.

"Show by thy magic art
The hero-story!
Awake the maiden heart
With tunes of glory!

With mortal joys and tears,
Keen woes and blisses,
Awake her faiths and fears,
Her tears and kisses !”

I caught the lavish lyre, and sate
Hard by the waterfall,
Twisting its sweetness intimate
Into the solemn call
Of many dead men that were great,
The plectron's wizard thrall.

Thus as she danced, nor ceased, nor cared,
I set the sacred throng
Of heroes into acts that fared
In Argo light and long,
The foes they fought, the feats they dared,
In shadow-show and song.

*(The play of Argonautae is shadowed before
them by Orpheus' magical might.)*

So faded all the dream : so stole
Some fearful fondness in her soul ;
Even as a cloud thrilled sharply through
With lightning's temper keen and true,
Splitting the ether : so again
Grew on me the ecstatic pain,
Seeing her tremble in mid-air.
No flower so exquisitely fair
Shakes out its petals at the dawn ;
No breath so beautiful is drawn

At even by the listening vale.
For oh! she trembled! Frail and pale,
Her look's surpassing loveliness
Lulled its own light to fond distress,
As if the soul were hardly yet
Fit to remember or forget
New-born! and though the goddess bade
The nymph-bud blossom to a maid,
And soulless immortality
Reach to a soul, at last to die,
For love's own sake, bliss dearly bought
For change's altering coin ill-wrought,
It seemed as though the soul were strange,
Not fledged, not capable to range
At random through the world of sense
Opened so swift and so intense
Unto the being. Thus she stood
Impatient on the patient flood
With wonder waking in her eyes.
Thus the young dove droops wing, and dies,
In wonder why the winged thing
Loosed from yon twanging silver string
Should strike, should hurt. But now she wakes,
Wreathes like a waterfall of snakes
The golden fervour of her hair
About the body brave and bare
Starred in the sunlight by the spray,
And laughed upon me as I lay
Watching the change: First dawn of fire
First ghost of nightfall's grey desire

First light of moonrise ! Then, as June
Leaps out of May, her lips took tune
To song most soft, a spiral spell,
A siren breathing in a shell.
The notes were clustered round the well
Like angels clustering round a god.
Let memory wake from its abode
Of dim precision lost for long
The grace and grandeur of the song !

Who art thou, love, by what sweet name I quicken ?
By whom, O love, my soul is subtly stricken ?

O Love, O Love, I linger

On the dear word and know not any meaning,
Nor why I chant ; there is a whisper weaning
My soul from depths I knew to depths I guess,
Centred in two words only : " Love " and " Yes."

What lyrist's gentle finger

Strikes out a note, a key, a chord unheard of ?
What voice intones a song I know no word of ?

Who am I, Love, and where ?

What is the wonder of this troublous singing ?
What is the meaning of my spirit's clinging
Still to the two sweet words : repeat, repeat !
" Yes, Love " and " Yes, Love ! " Oh the murmur sweet !

The fragrance in the air !

I know not, I ; amid the choral gladness
Steals an essential tremor as of sadness,

A grace-note to the bosom

Of music's spell that binds me, as in Panic
Dance to some grasp unthinkable, Titanic,
Unto the words fresh flowers that distil
Uttermost fragrance in the mind and will,
The unsuspected blossom!

What is the change—new birth of spring-time kisses
Alone in all these water-wildernesses?

What change? what loveliness!
Comes this to all? I heard my sisters crying
No tale like this—O! were I only lying
Asleep amid the ferns, my soul would weep
Over and over in its endless sleep;
“Yes, love!” and “yes!” and “yes!”

So by some spell divinely drawn
She came to me across the dawn,
With open arms to me; and sobbed
“Yes, love!” and “Yes, love!” O how throbbed
The giant glory at my heart!
And I? I drew away, apart,
Lest by mere chance to me she came.
But curling as a wind-blown flame
She turned, she found me. As the dew
Melts in the lake's dissolving blue
So to my arms she came. And now,
Now, now I hold her!

Broke the brow
Of all wide heaven in thunder! Hear
Tremendous vortices of fear
Swirl in the ether. What new terror

Darkens the blue pool's silver mirror?
How bursts the mountain-chasm asunder?
Whose voice reverberates in thunder
Muttering what curse? The sun dissolves
In anguish; the mad moon revolves
Like a wild thing about its cage;
The stars are shaken in the rage
Of—who but Zeus? Before our gaze,
(My love's in shuddering amaze,
Of birth deceived and death forlorn,
And mine in anger, ay! and scorn!)
He stood—the mighty One! So earth
And heaven proclaimed that fearful birth:
So they grew silent lest he curse.
Dead silence hushed the universe;
And then in clear calm tones he spoke:
“Fools! who have meddled, and awoke
The inmost forces of the world!
One lightning from my hand had hurled
Both to annihilation's brink.
What foolish goddess bade ye think
Ye thus could play with thunder, roll
Your wheels upon the world, control
The stately being of a soul?
Just am I ever! Therefore know
The unvengeful law of woe
That ye invoke. Thou seekest life,
Child of my water! Thou a wife,
Child of my sun! Draw living breath,
Maiden, and gain the guerdon—death!

Thou take the wife, and risk the fate
Æons could hardly culminate
To lose thy soul ! Not two but one
Are ye. Together, as the stone,
The oak, the river, or the sea,
Mere elements of mine be ye,
Or both resolve the dreadful life,
And take death's prize ! Take thou the wife,
Thou, who didst know. Her ignorance
Resolve itself upon a chance !
She shall decide the double fate.
Be still, my child, and meditate !
This is an hour in heaven." He ceased
And I was silent. She released
Her soul from that tremendous birth
Of fear in gentle-minded mirth.
"Great Sir !" she cried, "the choice is made !
An hour ago I was afraid,
Knew nothing, and loved not. But I
Know now not this you say—to die.
Some doubtful change ? An hour ago
I was a nymph. I did not know
This change : but now for death or life
I care not. Am I not his wife ?
I love him. Now I would not leave
That joy once tasted ; shall not grieve
If even that should ever cease,
So great a pleasure (and a peace !)
I have therein. And by the sense
Of love's intuitive influence

I know he wills me to remain
Woman." "How frivolous and vain,
O Zeus," I cried, "art thou to rise
Out of Olympus' ecstasies!
Omnipotent! but to control
The first breath of a human soul!—"
The thunder rolled through heaven again,
Void was the spring-delighted plain
Of that gigantic phantasy.
I turned to my Eurydice
Even as she turned. The faint breath glows,—
The lightning of a living rose.
The bright eyes gleam—night's spotless stars
Glimmering through folded nenuphars.
The red mouth moves, still to the word:
"Yes, love!" and "yes, love!" Then I heard
No sound and saw no sight—the world
Folded its mighty wings, and curled
Its passion round us; bade forget
The joy with which our eyes were wet.
All faded, folded in the bliss;
Unfolded the first fadeless kiss.

Then my soul woke, not sundering lips,
But winged against the black eclipse
Of sense: my soul on wings did poise
Her glory in the vast turquoise
Of the whole sky: expanded far
Beyond the farthest sun or star,
Beyond all space, all time. I saw

The very limits of the law
That hath no bounds : beheld the bliss
Of that first wonder of the kiss
In its true self : how very love
Is God, and hath its substance of
Pure light : and how love hath its cause
Beyond religions, worlds, and laws ;
Is in itself the first : and moves
All evolution, and disproves
God in affirming God : all this
In that one rapture of the kiss
I knew, and all creation's pain
Fell into nothing in my brain,
As I, remaining man, involved
All life's true purpose, and dissolved
The phantoms (of itself create)
In a mysterious sweet state,
Wherein some tune began to move
Whose likeness and whose life was love.

Roll, strong life-current of these very veins,
 Into my lover's soul, my soul that is !
Thrill, mighty life of nerves, exultant strains
 Triumphant of all music in a kiss !
 Fade ! fade ! O strenuous sense
 Into the soul intense
Of life beyond your weak imagining !
 And, O thou thought, dissever
 Thy airy life for ever

While the bright sounds are lifted up to spring
 Beyond this tide of being,
 Shadows and sense far fleeing
 Into a shadow deeper than the Ocean
 When passes all the mind's commotion
To a serener sky, a mighty calm emotion !

The whole world fades, folds over its wide pinions
 Into a darkness deeper than its own.
Silence hath shattered all the dream-dominions
 Of life and light : the grey bird's soul is flown
 Into a soundless night,
 Lampless : a vivid flight
Beyond the thrones and stars of heaven down
 hurled,
 Till the great blackness heaves
 An iron breast, and cleaves
The womb of night, another mightier world.
 Lost is my soul, and faded
 The light of life that braided
 Its comet tresses into golden fire.
 Fade, fade, the phantoms of desire !
Speed, speed the song of love upon the living lyre !

Lo ! I abide not, and my lover's glory
 Abides not : in the swaying of those tides
Gathers beneath some mighty promontory
 One mightier wave, deep drowns it, and abides.
 Save that one wave alone
 Nought in the void is known,

That wave of love, that sole exultant splendour
Throned o'er all being, supreme,
A single-shining beam
Burning with love, unutterably tender.
Ah! the calm wave retires.
Down all the fearful fires
Go thundering to darkness, so dis sever
Their being from pure being, that the river
Of love is waveless now, and is pure love for
ever.

Then, mightier than all birth of stars or suns,
Breaks the vast flood and trembles in its tide.
Serene and splendid shine the mystic ones,
Exult, appal, reiterate, abide.
Timid and fleet the earth
Comes rushing back to birth,
Brighter and greener, radiant with gold
Of a diviner sun,
An exaltation
Of life to life, of light to light untold.
I? I remain, and see
Across eternity
My lover's face, and gaze, and know the worth
Of love's life to the glowing earth,
The kiss that wakes all life unto a better birth.

So the swoon broke. I saw the face
(Shining with Love's reverberate grace)

Of my own love across the lawn,
As warm and tender as the dawn
Tinting the snows of heaven-born hills,
Enamelling the mountain rills
With light's chameleon-coloured dyes ;
So shone the love-light in grey eyes,
Changing for laughter and for tears,
Changeless for joy of myriad years.
This, this endures ; there is no lover,
No loved one ; all the ages cover
These things from sight : but this abides
Floating above the whelming tides
Of time and space: abides for ever
Whether the lovers join or sever.
There is no change : the love exists
Beyond the moment's suns and mists
In me, abiding : and I see
No lover in Eurydice,
Save that her kiss awoke in me
This knowledge, this supreme content,
Annihilation of the event,
The vast eternal element
Of utter being, bliss, and thought,
In dissolution direly wrought
Of sense, identity's eclipse,
The shadow of a lover's lips.
The awful steel of Death divides
The alternation of the tides
Of consciousness, and binds in bliss
The dead man to the girl's live kiss.

So sped my wooing : now I surely think
Suspended here upon the burning brink
Of this dim agony, invading sense,
That bliss should still abide : but now I shrink,

Fall from the crags of memory, and abide
Now in this nature-life, basilisk-eyed,
And serpent-stinging : yea, I perish thence.
That perishes which was : and I am tied

Unto myself : the " I " springs up again
Bound to the wheel of speedless sense and pain,
None loosing me. Past is the utter bliss ;
Present the strong fact of the death, the stain

Of the marred lives : I meditate awhile
Not on the mere light of the girl, the smile
Deepening down to the extremest kiss ;
Not of the long joys of the little isle

Set in Ionian waters, where the years
Passed, one long passion, too divine for tears,
Too deep for laughter : but on that divine
Sense beyond sense, the shadow of the spheres

Lost in the all-pervading light of love :
That bliss all passion and all praise above ;
Impersonal, that fervour of the shrine
Changed to pure peace that had its substance of

Nothing but love : in vain my thoughts evoke
That light amidst the deadly night and smoke
Of this dread hour : there's nothing serves nor skills
Here, since that hateful " I " of me awoke,

Making me separate from the wings of life.
Nothing avails me of the cruel strife
With my own being : hideous sorrow fills
My heart—O misery ! my wife ! my wife !

Stay ! if I cannot be the Absolute,
Let me be man ! discard the wailing lute
And wake the lyre : the mightier than me
Drag up the courage in me to dispute

The battle with despair : awake the strings
Stronger than earth, than the immortal kings
Alike of death and life : invoke the sea
That I may cross her on the viewless wings

Of song, find out the desolating river
That girds the earth, unloose the silver quiver,
Choosing an arrow of sharp song to run
Down to the waters that lament for ever :—

And cleave them ! That my song's insistent spell
Rive the strong gates of iron-built hell,
And move the heart of the ill-hearted one.
Yea ! let me break the portals terrible,

And bring her back ! come back, Eurydice !
Come back, pale wanderer to Eternity !
Come back, my wife, my wife, again to love !
Come back, my wife ! come back, come back to me !

Enough ! my purpose holds : no feeble cries !
No sob shall shake these nerves : no ecstasies
Of hope, or fear, or love avail to move
Those iron-hearted dooms and destinies.

I will be calm and firm as I were Zeus.
I will descend to Hades and unloose
My wife : prevail on pale Persephone,
Laving her love-locks with exalted dew

Of stern grey song ; such roseate tunes espouse
That all the echoes of that lonely house
Answer me sob for sob, that she decree
With love deep-seated in her lofty brows

Forth sparkling : and with Hades intercede.
So as I stir the judgment-seat, and plead,
The awful brows may lighten, and decree
My wife's return—a poet's lofty meed !

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END OF VOLUME I

**PRINTED BY
TURNBULL AND SPEARS,
EDINBURGH**

