

ORPHEUS:
A LYRICAL LEGEND

ORPHEUS

A LYRICAL LEGEND BY
ALEISTER CROWLEY

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

SOCIETY
FOR THE
PROPAGATION
OF
RELIGIOUS
TRUTH

**BOLESKINE
FOYERS
INVERNESS
1905**

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CONTENTS

BOOK III.

	PAGE
Orpheus recounts his journey to Hades—" <i>As I pass in my flight</i> "	13
Invokes the guardians—" <i>Hail to ye, wardens</i> "	19
Continues his voyage—" <i>The phantoms diminish</i> "	19
Invokes Hecate—" <i>O triple form of darkness! Sombre splendour!</i> "	22
Continues his voyage—" <i>The night falls back</i> "	23
Trio: Minos, Æacus, Rhadamanthus—" <i>Substantial, stern, and strong</i> "	37
Orpheus' plea—" <i>O iron, bow to silver's piercing note!</i> "	42
Trio: Minos, Æacus, Rhadamanthus—" <i>Brethren, what need of wonder</i> "	48
Orpheus continues his voyage—" <i>Ah me! I find ye but ill counsellors</i> "	54
Invokes Hades—" <i>Now is the gold gone of the year, and gone</i> "	57
Invokes Persephone—" <i>In Asia, on the Nysian plains, she played</i> "	62
Persephone awakes—" <i>Ah me! I feel a stirring in my blood</i> "	66
Orpheus pleads with her—" <i>And therefore, O most beautiful and mild</i> "	66
Persephone invokes Hades—" <i>Ah me! no fruit for guerdon</i> "	66
Orpheus invokes the Furies—" <i>In vain, O thou veiled</i> "	68
Septet: The Furies, Orpheus, Hades, Persephone, Echidna—" <i>Ha! who invokes? What horror rages</i> "	73
Orpheus invokes Hermes—" <i>O Light in Light! O flashing wings of fire!</i> "	89
Orpheus' song of triumph—" <i>The magical task and the labour is ended</i> "	91

	PAGE
Continues to recount his journey—"So singing I make reverence and retire"	92
Sings his triumph—"O light of Apollo"	93
Sings, but with misgiving—"Alas! that ever the dark place"	96

BOOK IV.

Company of Mænads—"Evoe! Evoe Ho! Iacche! Iacche!"	103
Song—"Hail, O Dionysus! Hail"	103
"Evoe Ho! Give me to drink"	105
Hymn to Dionysus—"Hail, child of Semelè"	109
"He is here! He is here!"	110
Dionysus—"I bring ye wine from above"	114
Mænads—"O sweet soul of the waters! Chase me not"	116
Orpheus his spell—"Unity uttermost showed"	121
His allocution—"Worship with due rite, orderly attire"	125
His hymn to Pan—"In the spring, in the loud lost places"	128
His alarm—"What have I said? What have I done?"	132
Lament for Orpheus—Quartet: a Spirit, the River Hebrus, Calliope, the Lesbian Shore—"What is? what chorus swells"	134
Sappho's song—"Woe is me! the brow of a brazen morning"	138
Duet: Calliope, the Lesbian Shore—"Silence. I hear a voice"	142
Finale. Nuith—"Enough. It is ended, the story."	143

LIBER TERTIUS VEL LABORIS

**TO THE MEMORY OF IEHI AOUR,
WITH WHOM I WALKED THROUGH HELL, AND COMPELLED IT.**

Neither were his hopes frustrated: For having appeased them with the melodious sound of his voice and touch, prevailed at length so far, as that they granted him leave to take her away with him; but on this condition, that she should follow him, and he not to look back upon her, till he came to the light of the upper World; which he (impatient of, out of love and care, and thinking that he was in a manner past all danger) nevertheless violated, insomuch that the Covenant is broken, and she forthwith tumbles back again headlong into Hell.—*The Wisdom of the Ancients.*

Moody Pluto winks while Orpheus plays.—*Rape of Lucrece.*

ORPHEUS TRAVELS TO HADES

As I pass in my flight
On the awed storm cloud,
Steeps steeper than sleep,
Depths deeper than night,
I have furrowed and ploughed
(Deep calling to deep !)
Through the spaces of light,
The heads of them bowed
For the fears that weep,
And the joys that smite,
And the loves disallowed.
They are risen ; they leap ;
They wing them in white,
Crying aloud
Words widowed that keep
The frost of their fires forgotten and faded from Memory's
steep.

As I pass in my glory
O'er sea and land,
I smite the loud tune
From a fervid hand,
By the promontory,
The mountainous moon.

Vivid and hoary,
Twin birds, as I hark,
Take fire, understand
The ways of the dark,
As an angel did guide me,
Waving the brand
Of the dawn's red spark.
My measures mark
The influence fine
Of the voyage divine
Of the airy bark
Wherein I travel
O'er mountain and level.
The land, and the sea,
And the beings of air,
And the lives of the land,
And the daughters of fire,
And the sons of the Ocean,
Come unto me ;
My chariot bear,
My tunes understand,
My love desire,
Share my emotion.
They gather, they gather,
Apollo, O father !
They gather around ;
They echo the sound
Of the tune that rejoices,
The manifold measure
Of feet tuned to voices

Of terrible pleasure.
We pass in our courses
Above the grey treasure
Of seas in Earth's forces,
Her girdle, her splendour.
We bridle the horses
Of sea as we lend her
Tunes subtle and tender
To sink in her sources.
The air's love? We rend her!
We pass to the West,
We sink on the breast
Of the Ocean to rest.

As I pass, as I madden
In fury of flight,
The sea's billows gladden
Invoking the light.
The depths of her sadden
Not seeing the sight
Of the glorious one,
Whose steed is the Sun,
Whose journey is certain,
Who speeds to the gate,
The visible curtain
Of visible fate.
My soul takes no hurt in
Their gloom: I await
The portals to rise
In the desolate skies.

I trust to my song
Irresistibly strong
 To sunder and shatter
 Those towers of matter.
They rise! Oh! They rise,
 The terrible towers
 Of Hades: they lift
Across the white skies
 Those terrible-cliffed
 Rocks, where the hours
Beat vainly: where lies
 The horrible rift
 Of the earth's green bowers
 Where the wan ships drift,
 And the sun's rays shift,
And the river runs
 Whose banks have no flowers,
Whose waves have no suns.
 Sheer to the terror
Of heaven, the walls
 Strike; and the mirror
Of water recalls
 No truth, but dim error.
The soul of me falls
 Down to the glamour
Of dream; and fear
 Beats like a hammer.
Here! it is here!
 Lost are my friends;
The elements shrink

Where the life-world ends
On the icy brink
Of the sunless river ;
Ends, and for ever !

I pass to the portals
Of death in my flight.
I sound at the gates.
I call the immortals
Of death and of night.
I call on the Fates
By the summons of light.
The gates are rended ;
The rocks divide ;
My soul hath descended
Abreast of the tide.
I, single and splendid,
Death have defied !

I pass by the terrible gates and the guardians dragon-
eyed.

I thunder adown
The vast abyss.
(The journey's crown
Is a woman's kiss !),
What terrors to master !
What fear and disaster
To gain the renown
And the fadeless bliss !

I thunder aloud
On the rocks as I fly,
Borne on a cloud
In the gloomy sky.
Shaped like a shroud,
Draped like a pall,
I shrink not ; I fall
To the blackness below
With my soul aglow.
No taint of a fear !
For I know, I know
Eurydice near,
Eurydice here !
The purpose divine
Thrills my soul as wine.

Now I pass to the soul of the dark, confronting the inner-
most shrine.

Hail to ye, warders
That guard the borders
Of Hades ! All hail to ye, dwellers of night !
But I am the soul
In a man's control.
Ye have nought to do with the dweller of
light !

Hail to ye, hail
In the hollow vale,
Your weapons are lifted against me in vain.
My lyre shall charm ye,

My voice disarm ye,
For I am the soul overshadowed of
pain!

Hail to ye, wardens
Of Death's grey gardens!
O flowerless and vineless your bowerless
vale!
But I must alone
To the wonderful throne.
Let fall the vain spears, shadows! Hail
to ye! Hail!

The phantoms diminish,
The shadows fall back.
Lost is the vision
In fires that finish
Stark and black
With lust and derision;
And all the illusion
Is fallen to the ground.
The warders are beaten;
They go in confusion;
Their place is not found.
The air hath eaten
With wide-gaping jaws
A furious folk.
Lost is the cause
In Tartarean smoke.

I, through the wall
Of impassable gloom,
Apart from the sun,
Pass as a ghost,
Bearing the lyre.
The sad notes fall
To the sorrowful womb ;
One after one
They leap as a host
With weapons of fire
On a desolate coast,
Where love is lost
And the bitterness clings of fear, and the sadness dogs
of desire!

Thrice girded with brass,
Thrice bound with iron,
The gate is in three
Pillars of gold.
But I will pass
(My heart as a lion,
My lyre as a key!)
To the gates of old,
To the place of despair
And the walls of dread,
The halls of the doomed,
The homes of the dead,
The houses where
The beautiful air
Is as air entombed.

Nothing can shake
Those terrible walls.
No man can wake
With silver calls
The home of the lost and the lone, the gate of the
Stygian thralls.

But thou, O Titan!
O splendour triform!
Gloomiest dweller
Of uttermost night!
My journey enlighten!
O soul of the storm!
Waker and queller
Of sombre delight,
Hecate! hearken
The soul of my prayer!
Glitter and darken
Through sulphurous air!
Let the sacrifice move thee to joy, the invoker thy glory
declare
In words that shall please
Thy terrible peace,
O speedy to save,
In flames of fine fire that bedew the deepest Tartarean
cave!

[*Invoking Hecate*]

O triple form of darkness! Sombre splendour!
Thou moon unseen of men! Thou huntress dread!
Thou crownèd demon of the crownless dead!
O breasts of blood, too bitter and too tender!
Let me the offering
Unseen of gentle spring
Bring to thy shrine's sepulchral glittering!
I slay the swart beast! I bestow the bloom
Sown in the dusk, and gathered in the gloom
Under the waning moon,
At midnight hardly lightening the East;
And the black lamb from the black ewe's dead womb
I bring, and stir the slow infernal tune
Fit for thy chosen priest.

Here where the band of Ocean breaks the road
Black-trodden, deeply-stooping, to the abyss,
I shall salute thee with the nameless kiss
Pronounced toward the uttermost abode
Of thy supreme desire.
I shall illumine the fire
Whence thy wild stryges shall obey the lyre,
Whence thy Lemurs shall gather and spring round,
Girdling me in the sad funereal ground
With faces turnèd back,
My face averted! I shall consummate
The awful act of worship, O renowned
Fear upon earth, and fear in hell, and black
Fear in the sky beyond Fate!

I hear the whining of thy wolves! I hear
The howling of the hounds about thy form,
Who comest in the terror of thy storm,
And night falls faster ere thine eyes appear
Glittering through the mist.
O face of woman unkissed
Save by the dead whose love is taken ere they wist!
Thee, thee I call! O dire one! O divine!
I, the sole mortal, seek thy deadly shrine,
Pour the dark stream of blood,
A sleepy and reluctant river
Even as thou drawest, with thine eyes on mine,
To me across the sense-bewildering flood
That holds my soul for ever!

The night falls back ;
The shadows give place ;
The threefold form
Appears in the black,
As a direful face
Half seen in the storm.

I worship, I praise
The wonderful ways
Where the smitten rays
Of darkness sunder.
The hand is lifted ;
The gates are rifted ;
The sound is as thunder!
She comes to the summons,
Her face as a woman's,

Her feet as a Fear's,
Turned back on her path
For a sign of wrath :—
She appears, she appears !
I step to the river.
The lyre-strings quiver ;
The limbs of me shudder ;
So cold is the mist ;
So dark is the stream ;
So fearful the boat ;
So horrid the rudder ;
So black is the tryst ;
So frightful the beam ;
So fearing to float ;
The steersman so dread,
The shadowy shape of a ghost that guides the bark of
the dead !

Agèd and foul,
His locks wreath about him.
Horrid his scowl !
Haggard his soul !
My songs control
While they fear him and doubt him.
I step in the boat,
And the waters ache,
And the old boards shake.
I shall hardly float,
So heavy the soul
Of a living man

On those waters that roll
Nine times around
The fatal ground ;
Yet still to my singing we move on the river Tartarean.

So darker and colder
The stream as we float :
Blacker and bleaker,
The mist on the river !
Stronger the shoulder
Impels the sad boat.
Sadder and weaker
Shudder and quiver
The notes of the lyre.
Quenched is my fire
In the fog of the air.
Dim my desire
Cuts through the snare.
The cold confounds me ;
The mist surrounds me ;
Life trembles and lowers ;
Earth fades from my life.
The love of my wife,
The light of the flowers,
Earth's beautiful bowers,
Pass, and are not.
I am awed by the soul of the place, the hopeless, the
desolate spot.

Here is the wharf
Wearily standing,

Misshapen and dwarf,
Well fit for such landing!
Darker the bloom
Of the night-flowers glows,
Shadowing the tomb,
The indicible woes.
Dark and unlovely the cypress still grows
Deformed and blistered,
Stunted and blackened,
Where the dead gleams glistened,
The dusk-lights slackened.
Such is the shore
Who reacheth may never
Return o'er the river!
Here pace evermore
The terrible ghosts
Malignant of men,
Whose airless hosts
In wars unjust
Went down to the den;
Whose fury and lust
Turned poison or steel
On their own bad lives.
Here whirls the grim wheel
Where the dead soul strives
Ever to climb
To the iron nave,
Find Space and Time,
Or a God to save,
Or a way o'er the wave.

The Fate contrives
That he never thrives.
Revolving anon,
The gleam is gone,
And the shadowy smile
Of Hecate darkens.
My sad soul hearkens ;
Moves fearfully on :—

O place of all places discrowned ! Lamenting, I linger
awhile !

But fronting me tearful,
Me full of lament,
Shoots up the fearful
Den of the hound.
Ages they spent,
Gods, in the graving
That cavern profound,
That temple of hate
Of horror and craving :—
O who shall abate
The moaning, the raving ?
Dark the dull flame
Of the altar, the flood
Of the black lamb's blood !
But who shall proclaim
That his soul can descry

The depth of that cavern immense where the guardian of
Orcus may lie ?

Sleepest thou, devil ?
Monster of evil !

Spawn of Typhon
By Echidna's lust!
The hateful revel
In blood and dust!
The obscene crone
And the monster's terror!
The hideous thrust
Of an unclean thirst
In the halls of error!
Expunged and accurst,
A lapping of hate,
A bride-bed rotten,
And thou, miscreate
And misbegotten!

O Hecate, hear me!
The terrors awaken,
The cavern is shaken
With horrible groanings.
Cryings and moanings
And howlings draw near me.
I tremble, I fear me!
My lyre is forsaken.
The air of the hollow
Is helpless to bear
The notes of Apollo
Through Stygian air.

But heavier shrieking
Revolves and resounds

In the ghastly profound ;
And the voice unspeaking
Of the hound of the damned
Runs eager, and bounds,
Malignantly crammed
In my ears, and the noise
Of infernal joys
In the houses of sin :—
Let me pass to a direr place, to the terrors unspoken
within !

Dead silence succeeds
The sound of the prayer.
Again the loud lyre
Shudders and bleeds
In the desolate air
With a sound as of fire !
The hound recedes ;
But the gates stand there,
Barring desire,
Barring the way
Of the dead unburied,
Unshrived, and unblessed ;
They stand and pray
In legions serried,
Beating the breast,
Tearing the hair,
Rending the raiment.
There is none to care,
No golden payment

Availleth at all.
There is none to call ;
 There is none to pity :
They stand in their pain
 At the gate of the city.
 There is none to feel
 Or give relief ;
They are lost ; they are vain ;
 They are eaten of grief.
They are sore afraid,
 They are weary with care.
There is none to aid.
 There is none to pity.
 They wail in despair
 At the gate of the city.

But I, shall I halt
 At the thrice-barred portal
In the lampless vault,
 I, half an immortal ?
By love of my mother,
 By might of my lyre,
 By Nature's assistance,
I, I, not another
 Demand my desire,
 Rebuke your resistance,
By mighty Apollo
 Whose power yet abides,
Though his light may not follow
 Through Stygian tides !

By my power over things
Both living and dead,
By my influence splendid
In heavenly court,
The song of me springs.
My favour is dread.
Be your portals rended !
Your bolts be as nought !
The ethereal kings
Encompass my head.
My soul hath transcended
The limits of thought !
Unbar me the gates !
Revolve me the hinges !
Mine be the Fate !
Mine be the springes
Wherein ye have taken
The spirits forsaken !
But I, shall I quail at a nod ?
Shall I fail for a God ?
Is the soul of me shaken ?

Darklier winding
And steeper the way,
Baffling and blinding'
Eyes used to the day.
Rocks cloven by thunder
And shattered by storm
Awry or asunder
Rise and reform

In marvellous coils
Round the adamant road
Whose tangles and toils
Lead on the abode,
Where dwell in the light
Of justice infernal
The judges that smite,
That judge men aright,
Whose laws are eternal !
Those kings that in reigning
For bribing or feigning
Swerved never an hair
From justice and truth ;
Turned never a care
To wrath or to ruth ;
Did justice, and died.

Thither I haste
To face the austere
Faces of peace.
Shall the lyre cease ?
Its music be waste ?
Themselves not hear ?
I stride to the presence and sing : and my soul is not
conquered of fear.

Now the road widens and grows darker still
As if the shadow of some ancient tower
Cast its deep spell on the reluctant will.

Still tortuous winds the deep descent ; the hour
Lies bitterer on my soul : I fear to fail,
To loose in vain the lyre's dissolving power

On the white souls armed in that triple mail
Of justice, virtue, truth : percipience
Beyond the mute and melancholy veil

That covers from the drowsy eye of sense
The subtle thought that hides behind the mask,
I fear indeed : but now the soul intense

Of truth precedes me and informs the task
Of the steep ways : I gladden and go on
Ready to sing, to answer, or to ask

As all may happen : now the stern light shone
Vivid across the blackness, and the rock
Recedes : the narrow stair is changed and gone

And the wide air invades : a mighty shock
To my numbed senses void of vital air
And to my lyre reverberate to mock

With clanging echoes and discordant, where
The dome reached up, almost to earth, so high
Rolled back the pillars and the walls, aglare

With iron justice' frightful symmetry
Blazoned in blood-like flame, gushing from springs
Unseen, unguessed, incredible! There fly

The dreaded banners of the demon kings
In fearful colours, and the vast inane
Dome catches music from my mouth, and rings

Back iron curses to the blessings vain
I pour in desperate fervour from the lyre.
So, baffled by the echoes of hell's pain,

Blinded by grisly glamour of hell's fire,
I take my refuge in the solitude
And grandeur of that irony of ire,

That mockery of mercy: thus I brood
Apart, alone, upon the cause of Things
And wait those fearful Three. A lifeless mood

Stirs my grey being: ay! no passion springs
In flowerless halls as these: awhile the mind
Wanders on void unprofitable wings

No whither: gains new strength at last to find
Custom breed sight and hearing: in the hall
The sounds grow clear, the black fires fail to blind.

I see the mighty buttress of the wall
Lost in its mighty measure : hear again
The lyre's low notes and light distinctly fall

A gentle influence in the place of pain.
Oh now the central glory of the place
Falls splendid on the unbewildered brain,

And I am found contemplating a face
More passionless than mortals' : central sits
Throned on pure iron, with brass for carapace,

Minos : and either side of him befits
The mighty Rhadamanthus throned on gold
And canopied with silver : sternly knits

His brows the awful Æacus, in cold
Splendour of justice throned on carven lead ;
And o'er his head twin dragons bend and hold

A cobra's hood made of some metal dread
Impossible on earth : how calm, how keen
Flash their wise eyes, those judges of the dead,

In silent state : how eager, how serene
Are the broad brows : the heart shrinks up and sinks,
Seeing no gallery to slip between

And pass those aged ones—oft a man thinks
He faces truth! I know this hour, alas!
That face to face with naked truth he shrinks.

His web of woven fiction may not pass
(He who believes it to be truth) with them
Who see his mind as though it were a glass

Without a shadow. Yet the ninefold gem
And million-facet glory of my song
Glittering, made splendid in the diadem

Of flashing music shall assoil the wrong,
A finer truth interpret. Though the heart
And core of music hold a poisonous throng

Of lies—yet, sing it to sufficient Art,
The lie abolishes itself—the tune
Redeems the darkness—the keen flashes start

Of truth availing though the midnight moon
Darken, the stars be quenched in utter cloud,
And the high sun eclipsed at very noon.

So flash I back the glory calm and proud
Irradiating the Three. So shall my lyre
Sweep the vast courts with acclamation loud

Of splashing music, of exulting fire
That revels in its penetrating cover
Of azure life that smites its flickering spire

Of sworded splendour inwards, to discover
Not justice, not discernment, not desire,
Not passion, but the sheer will of a lover!

MINOS

Substantial, stern, and strong,
Who lifts an alien lyre?
Confounds our echoes dire
With strange and stubborn song?

ÆACUS

Here in the House of Dole
Where shadows hardly dare
Stand, who doth deem to fare
Forth from the outer air
Mortal, a strenuous soul?

RHADAMANTHUS

The large and lordly land
Fertile of earth hath sent
With dolorous intent
Some shape or element.
What spell of might hath rent
The veil of Hell, and bent
Death's purpose to his hand?

MINOS

What shaft from the bow of Apollo ?

ÆACUS

**What quiver of wonder
Hath cleft the black walls of the hollow ?**

RHADAMANTHUS

What terror ?

MINOS

**What thunder
Hath shaken Hell's gates to the base ?**

ÆACUS

Hath mockèd the guards to their face ?

RHADAMANTHUS

**Hath rent him asunder
The portals of Dis in his wrath ?**

MINOS

**Hath made for his will
An arrow of light for his path ?**

ÆACUS

Left stagnant and chill
The waters of Styx unappeased?
The keys of our prison hath he seized,

RHADAMANTHUS

A mortal!

MINOS

An ill
Most alien to Heaven, by Zeus!

ÆACUS

But impiety's doom,
By Poseidon, shall fill for his use
No well-omened tomb.

RHADAMANTHUS

By Hades, our dogs let us loose!
Let death in the gloom
Bring peace to the Hall of the Dead!

MINOS

A passionate being!
No weal to the light of his head
In the place of the seeing!

ÆACUS

Awake, wild justice of dread!
Lest shadows be fleeing
In fear of the portent to lurk
In a deeper-detested
Cave, ere we wake to the work.

RHADAMANTHUS

Black snakes many-crested,
Arise! lest the calm of the murk
From our places be wrested.

MINOS

Who art thou?

ÆACUS

What ails thee to irk
From earth tender-breasted
To the milkless dug of the grave
And the iron breasts of the pit?

RHADAMANTHUS

Can a bodily presence save
Against a shadowy wit?

MINOS

Thy hope doth dwell, O slave,
Where thy mother fashioned it,
Oh heart of a fool, in thy breast.

ÆACUS

Away, away to the skies!

RHADAMANTHUS

That our dead may take their rest.

MINOS

Arise to the air, arise!

ÆACUS

Away to the mountain crest!

RHADAMANTHUS

Veil, veil from the awful eyes!

MINOS

Endure thy heart as it may,
And steel thine heart,
Thou shalt hear and know and obey
As I say "Depart";
Lest the arrow find its way
And the sternly-shapen dart.

ÆACUS

A second our justice waits.

RHADAMANTHUS

It falleth anon.

MINOS

O fool of hopes and hates
Arise and begone!

ÆACUS

O toy of the mirthless fates!
Who art thou to con
The mysteries of the dead in the black-souled
bastion?

MINOS, ÆACUS, RHADAMANTHUS

Away! away! to the light of day!
Now as it may: then as it must.
We are loath to pardon, and loath to slay,
Void of greed and anger and lust,—
But we are iron and thou art clay;
We are marble and thou but dust.

ORPHEUS

O iron, bow to silver's piercing note!
O marble, see the shape of ivory!
My justice fountains from a sweeter throat
My death is bound beyond eternity.

O wise and just, hear ye the voice of man,
Not seeking to involve in woven spells
Or trickery the decree Tartarean,
By words to blink that justice which is Hell's!

I came indeed before this awful throne
To seek a party favour, but I wait
Shuddering and silent, stedfast and alone,
And change my music at the call of Fate.

For while ye spake in tumult, in this ear
A music rang from earth's remotest mine,
From star and comet, flaming wheel and sphere,
From Hell's deep vault and from the House divine.

A voice diverse, a voice identical
Called me this hour from bitterest woes and black,
Constraining eloquence and mighty thrall
Of cosmic agony, and wrung me back

From my poor plea to challenge in my song
The whole domain of deeply-seated law,
Launch thunders not Olympic at the strong
Bars of the Order backed with strength and awe

That men call Will of Zeus: the after scheme
And primal fate and most primordial plan
Shaped from the earth's first protoplasmic dream
Up to the last great mischief that is man.

All this I challenge: that the suns and stars
Work in due order and procession meet
Without caprice in viewless, changeless bars,
Nor self-determinate in their wingless feet.

All nature and all consciousness and thought
He hath thrown asunder and divided them ;
Fixing a gulf of agony athwart,
Where rolls a tide no soul of man may stem.

Himself fixed high, he mocked us with his name
Of "reconciler," and of "one beyond all" ;
And cast his shadow to the deep, to shame
That oneness in its own division's thrall ;

So that Himself appears in cloud and fire
Distorted in the world's distorted mirror ;
And dark convulsion and confusion dire
Stands for his form of error and of terror.

But I perceive, I Orpheus, Lord of Song,
And every Lord of Song that me shall follow
Down steep of time's own agony and wrong,
Shall see the lightning bridge the dreadful hollow

With jagged flame of master-music, hear
The blind curse thunder forth against in vain
When the swift glory of the rolling sphere
Of song pours forth its utterance, keen with pain,

Mad with delight, and calm beyond woe and pleasure.
Yea, every son of this my soul shall know
In the swift concourse of his music's measure
One thing impatient of this to and fro

March of hell's dancers. I perceive a key
To lock the prison of the world on him
That built the iron walls and made decree
Long past in æons now grown gray and dim,

Like halls ancestral whence their folk have fled,
The marbles all are broken, and the weeds
Grown o'er the bones of the unquiet dead,
And time's remorse avails not on its deeds.

I see that time is one : future and past
Are but one present ; space is one, the North
And South and all the sixfold shame holds fast
No more : the poet's fiat hath gone forth

And tamed the masters of division. Me
Nor sun can burn, nor moon make mad, nor time
Alter : I drown not in the deepest sea,
Nor choke where icy mountain ridges climb

The steps of heaven : but these, these children, cry
Their bitter cry for justice. Mighty Ones,
Lords of the Dusk, incline ye, mercifully,
Rightly, to misery of all stars and suns

And planets and all grains of dust that sorrow—
Hark! from grim Tartarus, most doleful bound,
Their throats of anguish notes of triumph borrow
At my loud strain's unprofitable sound.

For who are ye? Poor judges of the dead,
In your stern eyes the sadness is mine own,
Mingled with sense that all your forces dread
Are vain to take the spirit from one stone.

I would have called to ye in wild strong joy;
“Arise, O Lords of Justice, and be girt
With lightnings, and be ardent to destroy
This Fool's creation and to heal its hurt

With swift annihilation!” Ye are vain,
Alas! poor powers! But yet the damned rejoice
Hearing the splendour, prophet in my strain,
And certain comfort in my mighty voice.

For this shall be, that in the utter end
Shall be an end, that in the vast of time
Shall come a ceasing, and the steel bar bend
Of the God's will, himself from his sublime

Pinnacled house in heaven headlong cast
Like his own thunder to the abyss of nought
When space and time and being shall be past,
And the grim thinker perish with his thought.

Therefore I leave in hands unshakable
The destinies of being, and care not
For all the miseries of the damned in hell,
Or the vain gods' unenviable lot.

I leave the cry of chaos, and recall
My private pang and woe particular,
One drop of water by mischance let fall
From some white slave's divinely carven jar.

O Lords of Justice, universal woe
Hath yet its shadows in a singer's soul,
He feels the arrow from a party bow
Who yet hath strength to struggle with the whole.

I love my wife. The many-coloured throne
Of Grecian meadows hath nor charm nor lure
Now she is gone. Lamenting and alone
My dulled heart aches, most that it must endure.

Give this decree, O masters! Few the days
And light the hours since Heracles descended
The dusky steep, the intolerable ways,
And one prey—Theseus—from your prisons rended

By might of godhead and the skill of man.
But now with music from a Muse's breast
Sweetened with milk of tenderness, I scan
Your eyes with hope, and with a man's unrest

And a man's purpose I appeal. Be just,
O ye whom greater justice baulks and bars!
Return my lover from the unkind dust
To the sweet light of the eternal stars!

Be kind, and from the unjust place of fear
Return by kindness her, the innocent one,
From the grey places to the waters clear
And meadows fair, and light of moon and sun!

Relent. Reverse the doom. I see your eyes
Quiver despite ye : but your hands ye wring ;
Little by little bitter tears arise
Like stubborn water from a frozen spring,

And deep unrest is seated in your limbs.
Ye pity me. Ye pity. Mute and weak
With the long trouble of persistent hymns
I bow myself and listen while ye speak.

MINOS

Brethren, what need of wonder
That Hell is burst asunder
Shaken from base to brow, as if with Zeus' own
thunder?

What wonder if our peace
Broke, and our mysteries
Quaked at the prescience of these solemnities?

ÆACUS

Child of the earth and heaven,
Our spirits thou hast riven
With words we must admit, with power of song—whence
given?

Neither of God nor man,
Thy song's amazing span
Hath caused strange joy among the woes Tartarean.

RHADAMANTHUS

Never in the centuries
Till godlike Heracles
Burst the wild bonds, hath mortal found the fatal
knees;

Nor hath the bitter cry
Of worlds in agony
Answered the groans of those who weep, and cannot die.

MINOS

Iron of heart and strong,
We also suffer wrong.
We know these words are just. We avail not. Though
thy song

Were the sole word of Zeus,
Should that avail to loose

The bands of being firm, invulnerable dews
Tincturing its bitter brass,
Shielding its vital mass
From every word that cries, "Thus, and thy day shall
pass."

ÆACUS

Typhon ! Typhon ! Typhon !
Heard ye that awful moan
Leap through the blackness from the miserable throne ?
Vain as each pallid ghost,
Where is thy fatal boast,
Destroyer named of old on Khem's disastrous coast ?
Old power of evil curled
Below the phantom world,
Canst thou destroy, whose might to misery is hurled ?

RHADAMANTHUS

What god beyond these twain
Abides or may remain
Seated, too strong to quell, the Lord of Being's pain.
Aloof from time and chance
Fate, will and circumstance,
Canst Thou not wither Life with one indignant glance ?
Thy name we know not ; Thine
Is the unbuilted shrine.
We doubt us if Thou be among the powers divine !

MINOS

Bound by strict line and law,
Fearful with might and awe,
We hold the powerless power
For many an aged hour.
We move not from our place.
We ask nor give not grace,
Nor change our lordly looks before a suppliant's face.

ÆACUS

Stern in all justice, we
Assent aloud to thee,
We affirm thy cause as right :
We put forth all the might
Of aid : and all is done.
Our utmost power is none
To lift one soul to live and look upon the sun.

RHADAMANTHUS

For righteous thought and deed
Apportioning its meed ;
For evil act and mind
Rewarding in its kind ;
So sit we : but our power
Apportions not an hour
To light the dying lamp, revive the faded flower.

MINOS

But thou, be strong to sing !

ÆACUS

Loose arrows from the string!

RHADAMANTHUS

Bid the wild word take wing!

MINOS

Hades hath evil fame
To suppliants—bitter shame!—
Inexorable.

ÆACUS

Aim

Yet the swift prayer, abide
His word whate'er betide.
What worse?

RHADAMANTHUS

The Gods thy guide!
Go and assail him!

MINOS

Stay,

The Queen of Hell!

ÆACUS

That way
Leads to the light of day.

RHADAMANTHUS

A woman's heart may yearn,
To a man's love may turn.

MINOS

Should she, the ravished, spurn
A man whose love is reft ?

ÆACUS

Meadows and flowers she left
To Him—O bosom cleft
With a wife's loss!—a wife.

RHADAMANTHUS

Too doubtful is the strife.

MINOS

Yet go ! perchance to life.

ÆACUS

Go ! and the Gods above
Guard thee, O soul of love !

RHADAMANTHUS

I doubt me much thereof.

ORPHEUS

Ah me! I find ye but ill counsellors.
For I will conquer. Have I spent these stores
Of will and song for nought? Hell's heart may rend,
But mine endureth even to the end.

Severe and righteous Lords, O fare ye well!
Are not my feet forced forward on a road
Leading to innermost abodes of Hell

Exalted as above the green abode
Of nymphs on broad Olympus, raises high
Its head the kingly snow, gigantic load

Of sombre whiteness cleaving through the sky
For gods to dwell in—so I pass the hall
And seek the gloomy thrones of majesty,

Where I may pledge my last despairing call
Unto the mightiest of the House of Dread,
And loosen Death's inexorable thrall

And bring my lover from among the dead.
Now in the blackness of the rocks that span
The dolorous way I spy a golden thread

Veined in the strength of the obsidian
Flowing and growing, joining vein to vein,
Like fresh blood in the arteries of man,

Up to the very heart. And as I go
Loosen the knees of anguish and grow dim
The shattering flames of pain : the songs of woe

Flicker and alter to a solemn hymn
Chanted in slowest measure in deep awe:
Now as a yew-tree sends a mighty limb

Shooting to sunset, the black road's black maw
Gapes to the westward ; the great trunk divides
And all the armies of infernal law

Stand ranked about the venerable sides
Of the black cave : they speak not ; dumb they stand
And all the frost of all the air abides

Upon them, as a vampire stooped and spanned
The white throat of a maiden and held still
Her powers by virtue of its hate's command,

Somewhat like love's : so all the solemn chill
Invades those statued ranks of warriors,
And I pass through, the lightning of my will

A steady stream of flame : high instinct pours
Its limpid light of water on my mind,
So that I range inhospitable shores

Assured of Her I shall most surely find
Ere the end be : awake, O living lyre,
Since in the narrow way and pass confined

I see a darkness infinite as fire,
Clear as all spirit vision, lustrous yet
As ebony shows in caverns rendered dire

By dreadful magic, or as if pure jet
Had taken of itself an inner light,
And its own blackness filled night's coronet

With a new jewel : so I see aright
Where no light is like earth's. The path grows broad
And lofty, till the whole hall springs to sight,

And I am standing where the dreaded Lord
And Lady of the region of the lost
Hold awful sway : yet here the flaming sword

Of sight is broken by the deadly frost
That clusters round their thrones : a mist of fire
Congealed to vital darkness : yet exhaust

Like a seer's magic glass of air : expire
The dumb black hours in fear : but I am ware,
Well ware, by instinct surer still and higher

Than the own sight of soul that they are there,
No mockery of their presence : so even hither
My mother's might is on me, on I flare

Into wild war of song : my keen notes wither
The flowers of frost about me and I turn
Ever the strength and mastering frenzy thither

With energy of madness : yea, I burn !
My soul burns up upon the lyre ! I lend
My whole life's vigour to one song, to earn

Their guerdon of the gods, a god to friend,
And seek through devious ways a single end.

[Invoking Hades

Str. I

Now is the gold gone of the year, and gone
The glory of the world, and gathered close
The silver of the frost. Far splendid snows
Shine where the bright anemone once shone.
Ay ! for the laughter live
Of youths and maids that strive
In amorous play, the ancient saws of eld
And wisdom mystical
From bearded lips must fall,

Old eyes behold what young eyes ne'er beheld :
Namely, the things beyond the triple veil
 Of space and time and cause, eternal woof
 Of misery overproof :
And aged thoughts assail
 The younger hopes, and passion stands aloof,
And silence takes possession, and the tale
 Of earth is told and done.
Then from the Sire of all the Gods, from War
 And Love and Wisdom and the eternal Sun
Worship is torn afar :
 While unto Thee, O Hades, turn we now,
 Awful of breast and brow,
And hear thee in the sea, behold thee in the Star.

Ant. 1 [Echo of the Damned]

Ay! is the earth and upper ether gone,
 And all the joy of earth, and gathered close
 The darkness and the death-wind and the snows
On us on whom the sun of air once shone.
 What souls are left alive
 Vainly lament and strive,
For they shall join the dead of utmost eld ;
 The concourse mystical
 Who see the seasons fall
Shall soon behold what all we have beheld :—
The accursed stream, the intolerable veil
 Of night and death and hell, disastrous woof
 Of anguish overproof

That fruitless wills assail
Ever in vain : good fortune stands aloof
And all kind gods : we, taking up the tale
Of dead men past and done,
Declare that ceaseless is the eternal war,
And victory stedfast set against the Sun.
Yet we perceive afar
Even in Hades, at the end, not now,
Some light upon his brow,
Some comfort in the sea, some refuge in the Star.

Str. 2

O thou ! because thy chariot is golden,
And beautiful thy coursers, and their manes
Flecked with such foam as once upon the sea
Bore Aphrodite, and thy face is olden,
Worn with dim thought and unsuspected pains,
And all thy soul fulfilled of majesty ;
Because the silence of thy house is great,
And thy word second spoken after Fate,
And thy light stricken of thine own grim hand ;
Because thy whisper exceedeth the command
Of Zeus ; thy dim light far outshines his glory ;
Because, as He the first is, Thou the last :—
Therefore I take up sorrow in my hands,
And ply thine ear with my most doleful story,
Asking a future, who have lost a past :
A guerdon of my singing like the land's
When spring breaks forth from winter, and the blood
Of the old earth laughs in every new-born bud.

Ant. 2 [Echo of the Damned]

O thou ! because thy lyre is keen and golden,
And beautiful thy numbers through our veins
Pouring delight, as on the starry sea
Burn gems of rapture ; though the houses olden
Relax awhile their unredeeming pains,
And through dead slaves thrill bounteous majesty ?
Though the strong music of thy soul be great :—
Shall thy desire avail to alter Fate ?
Or impious hands unloose the awful hand ?
Or futile words reverse the great command ?
Or what availeth ? Though great Hades' glory
Stoop to thy prayer, and answer thee at last,
Should Clotho catch the thread in weaving hands,
Respin what Atropos once cut—that story
Were vain for thee—that which is past is past,
Nor can Omnipotence avail the land's
Death—Spring's is alien though ancestral blood,
And a new birth is current in the bud.

Str. 3

Think, then, the deed impossible is done
Since Theseus fared forth to the ambient air !
His thread once cut—was that indeed respun
Or patched by witchery ? a deceit ? a snare ?
I tell ye ; past and future are but one,
And present—nothing ; shall not Hades dare
His own omnipotence against the Sun,
And let no tittle of his glory share

With all the earth's recuperating wheel,
And every dawn's sure falchion-flash of steel?

Ant. 3 [Echo of the Damned]

Indeed, a deed impossible was done
Were the new Theseus heavier than the air.
Nay! but a new thread phantom-frail was spun
And men's blind eyes discovered not the snare,
Else were that elder cord and this yet one,
Cut but in fancy. Yet, shall mortal dare
To fling a wanton word against the Sun,
And stand forth candidate for lot and share
Where hangs Prometheus, rolls Ixion's wheel,
And the stone rolls upon the limbs of steel?

Epode

These echoes, in my mind foul torturers,
Present my fears, and image my distrust.
No answer comes, no voice the silence stirs
With joyful "may" or melancholy "must."
Nor, though the gloom requicken, may I see
Hades enthroned, my prayers who heedeth nought
Nor glowing tear of bowed Persephone
Drooped earthward for the ninefold misery wrought.
In utter sorrow ever bound she stays,
Hears not my song, nor heedeth anything,
Whose mind lamenting turns to ancient days
And Nysian meadows and the hour of spring

Yea, but perchance to touch that secret chord
Were to awake that sorrow into life ;
Sting, as a wound a deep-venomed sword,
The inmost soul of the Aidonean wife.
Listen ! I tune my music to that hour ;
The careless maidens and the virgin laughter,
The bloom of springtide and the fatal flower,
And all that joy the sorrow echoing after.
So that, dread Hades, thou mayst hear and yield,
Thyself unmastered and inexorable,
The gentle maid as crying in that field,
Now thy soul's keeper on the throne of Hell !
Hail, Hades ! Thou who hearest not my song,
Repealest not the heaven's unjust decree,
Revengest not for me the woe and wrong,
Shalt glean my sorrow from Persephone.
Hail, Hades ! In the gloom the echoing cry
Swells, and the chorus darkens as I sing,
And all the fibres of Eternity
Shake as I loose the loud indignant string.
Hail, Hades ! hear thy wrong proclaimed aloud,
And thou the wronger safe because too great.
To like offence harden thy neck, and proud
Blow thou the dismal challenge unto Fate !

In Asia, on the Nysian plains, she played,
A slender maid,
With the deep-bosomed Oceanides ;
Where the tall trees

Girded the meadow with grave walls of green.
Alone, unseen,
The tender little lady strayed,
Moving across the breeze.

It was a meadow of soft grass and flowers,
Where the sweet hours
Lingered and laughed awhile ere noon reposes.
There were red roses
And crocus, and flag-flowers, and violets,
And hyacinth, regrets
Of the ill-fortuned God, the quoit-player ;
And soft cool air
Stirred all the field—and there were jessamines
And snaky columbines.
So all these maidens played, and gathered them
From sad green stem
Rejoicing blooms with sunlight mixed therein.
But she, for sin
And iron heart of the ill-minded Zeus,
Caught up the dews
Deep on her ankles, and went noiselessly
Toward the laughing sea,
And sought new blossoms—O the traitor, Earth,
That brought to birth
That day, as favouring the desire that swelled
Beneath her heart of eld,
Where dwelt the lonely, the detested one
Intolerant of the sun,

Hades! But Earth for love of him, for spite
Of the young girl's delight,
And shame of her own age, brought forth that
hour
The fatal flower,
Narcissus—which what soul of man shall smell
Goes down to hell,
Caught in the scent of sin—for such a doom
Demeter's flying loom
Hath woven for revenge and punishment.
The bright child went
Thither; an hundred heads of blossom sprang;
The green earth sang,
And the skies laughed, and danced the sea's young
feet
For joy of it.
So the child went across that fairest plain
To pluck, to strain
That blossom of all blossoms to her heart.
Her long hands dart,
Exceeding delicate and fair, to cull
That bloom too beautiful,
Eager to gather the fresh floral birth.
The grim black earth
Gaped; roared athwart the gulf the golden car;
And flaming far
The four white horses with their flashing manes!
The might-resisting reins
Lay in the ghastly hands, the arms of fear
Of that dread charioteer,

Death ; and great Hades armed stood glittering,
 Stooped to his spring,
And whirled the child to the beneath abode.
 O heavy load !
O bitter harvest of rich-rolling tears !
 What cry who hears ?
A shrill shrill cry to father Zeus cried she,
 Forlorn Persephone !
Heard was that agony of grief by none
 Save only by the Sun,
And Her who sat within her awful cave,
 Contemplative and grave,
Hecate, veiled with a shining veil
 Utterly frail
As the strange web of dainty thoughts she wove,
 Somewhat like love.
She heard, and great Apollo : neither stayed
 Hades, nor stretched to aid
A pitying hand. O pitiful ! O grief
 Baffling belief !
The gentle child—the cruel god—Ah me !
 Persephone !
Thus of thy grace, thy sorrow, thy young way
 Torn from the day
Of all thy memory of soft shining flowers
 And happy-hearted hours,
Mayst thou be very pitiful to me
 Who aye have pitied thee,
 Persephone !

PERSEPHONE

Ah me ! I feel a stirring in my blood.
Pours through my veins a delicate pale flood
Of memory. Not the pale and terrible
Goddess whose throne is manifest in Hell
—I am again a child, a playful child.

ORPHEUS

And therefore, O most beautiful and mild
Sweet mother ! art the girl beloved again
Of Hades mighty on the Nysian plain.
And therefore are thine eyes with sorrow dim
For me, and thy word powerful with Him.

PERSEPHONE

Ah me ! no fruit for guerdon,
Who bore the blossom's burden ;
There shines no sunlight toward Persephone.
Ravished, O iron-eyed !
From my young sister's side,
Torn and dragged down below the Sundered sea,
No joy is mine in all thy bed,
And all thy sorrow shaken on my head.

Cursed above gods be thou
Whose blind unruffled brow
Rules the grim place of unsubstantial things !
Hated, to me thy face

Turns not the glance of grace.
I rule unloved above the infernal kings,
And only thee in all deep Hell
I charm in vain, despair my royal spell.

By might of famine long
And supplication strong
Demeter won the swift Hermetic word :
In bitter days of eld
Thus by great force compelled
The glad earth saw me, careless of my lord,
Rise to her crystal streams and sapphire seas,
And Theseus thus owed life to Heracles.

Thou mockest me with power ;
Thy sceptre's awful dower
Avails me nothing. Shall a mortal bring
Such pity wrapped in song
And Echo's choral throng
Of all things live and dead to hear me sing ;—
And I by pity moved and love
Have not thy voice to grant him grace thereof ?

Inexorable Lord !
Accursèd and abhorred
Of men, begin in Hell to show thy grace !
Not to a man's weak life,
Not to thy shuddering wife,
But to the queen's unfathomable face
Dread beyond sorcery and prayer,
And fearful even because it is so fair !

Yea ! from the ghastly throne
Unchallenged and unknown
Let the fierce accents roll athwart the skies !
My voice is given, my power
Fares forth to save the flower
Broken but plucked not by these fingers wise.
I love the song—be thou not mute,
But turn a lucky lot towards the suit !

ORPHEUS

In vain, O thou veiled
Immutable queen !
Thy strong voice bewailed,
Thy fair face was seen !
It flushed up and paled ;
The song echoed clean—
But alas ! for the veil of the night and the fear that is
ever between !

Of pity unfilled
And void of remorse,
He moves unappealed
In the terrible course.
But the lyre is unchilled :—
By force unto force
He shall answer me power unto power at the source of
its source !

Dost thou hear how the weight
Of the earth and the moon

Shudder, as if fate
Were involved in the tune?
The portals of hate
Shake at the rune
Of the magical nature-cry, the song from the mountains
hewn!

To the horrible hollow
In Tartarus steep,
O song of me, follow!
I flee to the deep.
That word of Apollo
Shall shudder and leap;
That word in the uttermost night shall awake them who
know not of sleep.

Hear, O ye Three,
In the innermost pit
Dwellers that be!
Tartarus, split!
Arise unto me
For I call ye with wit
Of the words that constrain and compel, of the summons
ordered and fit!

O daughter of Earth,
Tisiphone dread,
The ophidian girth,
And the blood-dripping head,

In hideous mirth
Bring living and dead
To torture! Arise! I conjure by the might of the words
I have said.

Megæra, thou terror,
O daughter of Night
Whose sight in a mirror
Is death of affright,
Wingèd with error,
I chain thee, and cite
The words that thy soul must obey if a mortal but say
them aright!

Alecto! I call thee,
My words ring thee round.
My spells enwall thee.
My lyre is crowned
With might to appal thee
With terror profound.
Arise! O Alecto, arise! for my song hath compelled
thee and bound.

Ye furies of Hell!
Ye terrors in Heaven!
The strength of the spell
Is as thunder at even
The rocks of the fell
That hath blasted and riven.
Come forth! I invoke ye, Erinyes, the charm of the One
that is seven.

By the Five that be One,
And the One that is Ten ;
By the snake in the sun
And her mirror in men ;
By the Four that run
And return them again ;
By the fire that is lit in the Lion, the wave in the Scorpion
den !

By the One that is Seven,
The whirling eyes ;
The Two made Eleven,
The dragon's devise ;
The Eight against Heaven,
All crowns of lies ;
Come forth ! I invoke ye, Erinyes ! Move, answer, take
shape and arise !

By the cross and the wheel
I call ye to hear ;
By the dagger of steel
I command ye, give ear !
By the word that ye feel,
The summons of Fear ;
Come forth ! I invoke ye, Erinyes, move, answer, arise
and appear !

For my purpose is swift,
And my vengeance strong ;

I shall not shift ;
I shall cry the wrong.
My voice I uplift
In terrible song
As your forms take shape before me in the likeness for
which ye long.

The shape of my passion
And bitter distress
Shall clothe ye, and fashion
An equal dress.
Ye shall force compassion
With awful stress
From the soul that hath mocked me, and turned his heart
from my song's excess.

The ruler of Hell,
The invisible Lord,
Hath laughed at my spell,
Hath slept at my word.
He hath heard me well—
Awake, O Sword !
Shall he flout a suppliant thus and no answer of favour
accord ?

If mercy be sundered
From splendour and power ;
If he answer with thunder
The plaint of a flower ;

Shall justice wonder
If Furies devour
So bitter a heart, set a term to his date that was aye but
an hour?

Avenge me, ye forces
Of horror and wrath!
Clear the dread courses!
Split open the path!
With cruel remorse is
His heart brought to scath.
And a terror is on him at last, the seed of his hate's
aftermath.

MEGÆRA

Ha! who invokes? What horror rages
Here, to compel our murderous hands to smite?

ALECTO

What mortal summons? Who his battle wages
So strongly as to call the seed of Night?

TISIPHONE

Ha! The grim tyrant of despair engages
Our deadly anguish with his useless might.

HADES

Detested fiends! avaunt!

MEGÆRA

He speaks !

ALECTO

He thunders !

TISIPHONE

His lightnings split the living rock.

MEGÆRA

Hell sunders
The livid walls and iron-bound prisons of death.

HADES

Thus ! to your towers and wail !

ALECTO

He speaks !

TISIPHONE

His breath
Is cold as ours.

HADES

Depart ! Due silence keep,
Lest I enchain ye in a fouler deep
Than aught your horror pictures !

MEGÆRA

Dost thou hear,

Sister ?

ALECTO

Sweet sister !

TISIPHONE

Dost thou think we fear

Who are all fear ? or feel, who are but pain ?

MEGÆRA

Creep round his heart, and cluster in his brain,
Ye serpents of my hair !

ALECTO

His blood shall drip
For sweet warm juice on my decaying lip.

TISIPHONE

My fearful wings enfold him !

ALECTO

My foul eyes
Hold his in terror !

MEGÆRA

All my agonies
Crawl in his vitals!

TISIPHONE

He is mine, mine, mine!
Pour forth of Thebes' abominable wine!
Mine, O thou god, detested and adored!

MEGÆRA

Mine! he is mine! my lover and my lord!

ALECTO

Mine! I am in his shape!

MEGÆRA

Despair! Dispute
Never my passion!

TISIPHONE

Sisters! Be ye mute!
I am the livid agony that starts
Damp on his brow; the horror in his heart's
Envenomed arteries! and I the fear,
The torment, and the hate!

MEGÆRA

Be of good cheer!
Rend him apart! Hunger and lust we sate,
Equal in terror on that heart of hate.

ALECTO

Hell's throne be kingless !

TISIPHONE

Mortal ! is it well,
Our vengeance on the impious lord of Hell ?

ORPHEUS

Well ! it is well ! And yet my eyes are wet
To see such anguish.

MEGÆRA

Tear the fatal net !

ALECTO

Bite with strong acid his congealing blood !

TISIPHONE

Rend out the bowels !

MEGÆRA

Pour the monstrous flood
Of unclean wisdom in his soul !

PERSEPHONE

Desist !

ALECTO

O face of woman wretched and unkissed,
What hast thou here to do with us?

TISIPHONE

Be quiet!

MEGÆRA

Quench not the fire of murder!

ALECTO

Loose the riot
Of worms beneath the skull!

TISIPHONE

Tear wide apart
The jaws!

MEGÆRA

Force fear against the inmost heart!

PERSEPHONE

Mercy! I plead, sweet sisters!

ORPHEUS

And I plead
Vengeance, and help in my extremest need.

Pile up the torture! Had he not the power,
And silence mocked me?

MEGÆRA

Urge us hour by hour,
Thou couldst not add one particle of pain.

ALECTO

He speaks not! Bid his torture speak again!

TISIPHONE

Speak, murderer!

MEGÆRA

Hades! answer us!

ALECTO

Expel
These torments from thy being, us from Hell,
Or Zeus from Heaven!

TISIPHONE

Or else obey!

MEGÆRA

Obey!

ALECTO

Obey!

HADES

O throne of Hell! O night! O day
Of anguish exquisite beyond control,
Fibre and substance of my inmost soul!
There is a power not mine, and yet in me
Burning its cold and cruel agony
With icy flames, its cutting poison fangs
Striking my being with detested pangs.
Alas! of me and not to be expelled,
Conjured, assuaged, averted. Grey as eld
The juice of blood that stagnates in my veins,
Appals their current with avenging pains :—
O pain! O pitiful and hateful sense
Of agony and grief and impotence!
O misery of the day when Orpheus bore
First his loud lyre across the Stygian shore!
Hath Hell no warders? Is the threefold gate
Brazen in vain against the foot of Fate?
Now is but little choice—abase my pride,
Or sink for ever to the gloomy tide
Of fire beneath the utmost reach and span
Of Stygian deeps and walls Tartarean.
Yet I abide.

MEGÆRA

Fall! Fall!

ALECTO

Descend the abyss!

TISIPHONE

Answer!

ALECTO

Arise!

MEGÆRA

Awake from the profound!

TISIPHONE

Here is a worthy partner unto thee
To wake thy womb with monstrous progeny
Yet more detested and detestable
Than all the shapeless brood of hate and Hell.

ECHIDNA

Ha! rose-lipped lover! Welcome to this bed!

MEGÆRA

She plays with words of love!

ALECTO

Her black eyes shed
Disease for tears.

TISIPHONE

Her fangs and lips are red
With gouts of putrid blood.

MEGÆRA

Her guile employs
The sweet soft shape of words of upper joys
More bitterly to rack his soul.

ALECTO

Ha, sister,
The embrace!

TISIPHONE

She conquers.

MEGÆRA

He hath moved.

ALECTO

He hath kissed her!

TISIPHONE

Ha! the worse hate of hate in love's white dress.

MEGÆRA

And lewdness tricked to look like loveliness.

ALECTO

Uttermost pain in pleasure's hour supreme.

MEGÆRA

Hate's nightmare waking love's unreal dream.

ALECTO

Claws, teeth, and poison !

TISIPHONE

How she plies her pest !

MEGÆRA

Strangling she holds him.

ALECTO

In the inmost breast
Her hands defile him.

TISIPHONE

In his rotting brain
Her teeth, her breath, pass all imagined pain.

MEGÆRA

Sisters !

ALECTO

We conquer !

TISIPHONE

Have we power ?

MEGÆRA

The king
Endures, and is not moved at anything.

ALECTO

He will not now relent.

TISIPHONE

He's ours for ever!

HADES

Ai! Ai!

MEGÆRA

Hark!

ALECTO

Listen!

TISIPHONE

Now he yields—or never!

HADES

Release! Relent!

ECHIDNA

Fair lover, let my embrace
Still gladden thee to rapture! let my face
Be like a garden of fresh flowers to cull,

And all thy being and thy body full
As mine of gentle love—then sink to sleep!

MEGÆRA

Ha! Ha! She mocks him! In the utter deep,
Her house of evil, sleep is stranger there.

ALECTO

She sings!

TISIPHONE

The final misery! Beware!

ECHIDNA

O tender lover!
My wings still cover
Thy face, and my lips
Are on thine, and my tresses
Like Zephyr's caresses
When the twilight dips.

HADES

This passes all. Relent. Release! Depart!
I yield: my power is broken, and my heart
Riven, and all my pride ruined, and me
Compelled to earth to loose Eurydice.

ORPHEUS

Depart!

ERINYES

Baffled! O misery! Bethink,
Proud Hades, ere thy torture gar thee drink
Humiliation's utmost dregs!

HADES

I spake.
Depart ye! lest my power regained awake,
And smite ye with a terror more than ye.

MEGÆRA

We are borne on bitter winds.

ALECTO

We sink.

TISIPHONE

We flee!

MEGÆRA

To the abyss!

ALECTO

Descend!

TISIPHONE

Nor hope in vain
The ill-hearted one shall feel our fangs again.

MEGÆRA

Murder and violation, deafened ear
To suppliant, these our friends are.

ALECTO

Hate and fear
Leave not for long that bosom.

TISIPHONE

Now away!
Back from this night more splendid than our day

MEGÆRA

We may not drag him down this chance.

ALECTO

Despair
Not, O my sisters!

TISIPHONE

The next suppliant's prayer
Rejected—

MEGÆRA

Come, my sisters, we'll be there.

HADES

Well, be it so. O wizard, by this strength
Thou hast availed in deepest Hell at length.
I grant thy prayer. Eurydice be given
To the sweet light and pleasant air of heaven!

Even on this wise. With Hermes for a guide
Up the dread steeps there followeth thee thy bride,
And thou before them singing. If thou yearn
Towards her, if thy purpose change or turn
While in these realms ; if thou thy face revert ;
That shall be hostage unto me for hurt
Of further magic : she shall fade and flee
A phantom frail throughout Eternity,
Driven on my winds, adrift upon my seas !
These are thy favours, and thy duties these.
Invoke thou Hermes, and thy lyre restring !

ORPHEUS

This I accept and this shall be, O king !

[Invoking Hermes]

O Light in Light ! O flashing wings of fire !
The swiftest of the moments of the sea
Is unto thee
Even as some slow-foot Eternity
With limbs that drag and wheels that tire.
O subtle-minded flame of amber gyre,
It seems a spark of gold
Grown purple, and behold !
A flame of gray !
Then the dark night-wings glow
With iridescent indigo,
Shot with some violet ray ;

And all the vision flames across the horizon
The millionth of no time—and when we say ;
Hail !—Thou art gone !

The moon is dark beside thy crown ; the Sun
Seems a pale image of thy body bare ;
And for thine hair
Flash comets lustrous with the dewfall rare
Of tears of that most memorable One,
The radiant Queen, the veiled Paphian.
The wings of light divine
Beneath thy body shine ;
The invisible
Rayed with some tangible flame,
Seeking to formulate a name,
A citadel ;
And the winged heels are fiery with enormous
speed,
One spurning heaven ; the other trampling hell ;
And thou—recede !

O Hermes ! Messenger of inmost thought !
Descend ! Abide ! Swift coursing in my veins
Shoot dazzling pains,
The Word of Selfhood integrate of Nought,
The Ineffable Amen ! the Wonder wrought.
Bring death if life exceed !
Bid thy pale Hermit bleed,
Yet Life exude ;
And Wisdom and the Word of Him

Drench the mute mind grown dim
With quietude!
Fix thy sharp lightnings in my night! My spirit free!
Mix with my breath and life and name thy mood
And self of Thee.]

Hermes appears : Orpheus departs.

The magical task and the labour is ended ;
The toils are unwoven, the battle is done ;
My lover comes back to my arms, to the splendid
Abyss of the air and abode of the sun.
The sword be assuaged, and the bow be unbended !
The labour is past, and the victory won.

The arrows of song through Hell cease to hurtle.
Away to the passionate gardens of Greece,
Where the thrush is awake, and the voice of the turtle
Is soft in the amorous places of peace,
And the tamarisk groves and the olive and myrtle
Stir ever with love and content and release.

O bountiful bowers and O beautiful gardens !
O isles in the azure Ionian deep !
Ere ripens the sun, ere the spring-wind hardens
Your fruits once again ye shall have me to keep.
The sleep-god laments, and the love-goddess pardons,
When love at the last sinks unwearied to sleep.

The green-hearted hours shall burst into flowers.
The winds shall waft roses from uttermost Ind.

Our nuptial dowers shall be birds in our bowers,
Our couches the delicate heaps of the wind,
Where the lily-bloom showers all its light, and the powers
Of earth in our twinning are wedded and twinned.

So singing I make reverence and retire ;
Not with high words of worship fairly flung
To that sad monarch from the magic lyre,

And half the triumphs in my heart unsung,
Surpassing, as such triumphs must, all praise
Of golden strings and human-fashioned tongue.

But now I follow the uprising ways
By secret paths indubitably drawn
Straight from the centre of the trackless maze

To light of earth and beauty of the dawn,
A sure swift passage taught of wit divine
To the wide ocean, the Achæan lawn.

For, wit ye well, not easy is that shrine
Of access to the mortal, as some tell,
Not knowing, : easy and exact the line

Of light to upper air : but awful spell
And dire demand the inward journey needs :
That is the labour, that the work : for Hell

Is not designed for men's aspiring deeds.
The air is fatal, and the fear unspanned,
Even ere the traveller fronts the Stygian meads

And utmost edge of the detested land.
Wherefore already doth the light appear
Shaped in the image of a little hand

Far up the rocky cavern : warm and clear
The good air sends its fragrance : glory then
To the great work accomplished even here,

Promise and purpose unto little men
Bound in life's limits : death indeed I sever
By will's efficiency and speechless ken

Of power not God's but man's. Forget this never,
O mortals chained in life's detested den !
I leave this heritage to you for ever.

O light of Apollo !
O joy of the sky !
We see thee, we follow,
We draw to thee nigh.
We see thee unclouded,
Whose hearts have been thinned,
Whose souls have been shrouded,
Whose ears are bedinned,

By hell's clamour. How did
The strength that has sinned
Avail in the crowded
Abodes of the wind ?

By lightning of rapture
The soul of my song
My love doth recapture ;
Lead up to the long
Years in blithe measure
Of summer and ease ;
Linger at leisure
For passion and peace.
Sadness and pleasure
Relent and release :—
A torrent, a treasure,
A garden of Greece !

Selene, our sister,
Our lover and friend,
Thy light hath long missed her :
That hour hath an end.
All æons to squander
We chance at our will :
We may woo, work or wander
Through time to our fill,
Hither or yonder
By fountain or hill,
Each day growing fonder,
Each night growing still !

Bright Hermes behind me
Caduceus-armed
Guides : shall he blind me?
My spirit be charmed?
The song shall not swerve her,
Its glory shall shed
Respite, deserve her
From gulfs of the dead.
Ah me! let it nerve her
These conduits to tread
That lead to the fervour
Of earth overhead !

Fire, thou dear splendour
Of uppermost space,
Turn to me tender
Thine emerald face !
Thy rubies be blended
With diamond light !
Thy sapphires be splendid,
Extended to sight !
The portals be rended
That govern the night,
And the guardians bended
To magical night !

O air of the glorious
Garb of the globe,
Don thy victorious
Glittering robe !

The sun is before us ;
The moon is above.
Rise and adore us
Ye dwellers thereof !
The Muses restore us
To Greece : as we move
Swell the wild chorus
Of welcome and love !

Alas ! that ever the dark place
Should from its rocky base
Give up no echo of the god's strong stride,
And no one whisper steal and thrill
My heart, dissolve the ill
That gathers close and fears me for my bride

I were no worse if I were blind.
I may not look behind
To catch one glimpse of the dear face that follows,
Lest I should gain forbidden lore
And wisdom's dangerous store
Of the black secrets of those heights and hollows.

Alas ! the way is over long,
And weary of my song
I sing who yearn to catch my love, and hold
In such ten-thousandfold caress
As shall annul distress,
And from the iron hours bring the years of gold.

Alas ! my soul is filled with fear,
Is the hard conquest here ?
Where is Eurydice ? The god hath faded
Back to invisible abodes
And on these rocky roads
Comes no deep perfume of her hair light-braided.

Alas ! I listen ; and no breath
Assures the walls of death
That life remembers, that their hate is quelled.
My ears, my scent avail me nought ;
My eyes are slaved and bought
By the command wherewith I am compelled.

Alas ! my heart sinks momentarily.
Fear steals and misery.
From faith in faith of Hell my thoughts dissever.
Yet, O my heart ! abide, endure !
Seek not by sight to assure,
Or she is lost to thee and lost for ever !

Now breathes the night-air o'er the deep,
And limb-dissolving sleep
Laps my own country, and the maiden moon
Gleans silver barley from the sea,
And binds it royally
Into a sheaf that waves to the wind's tune.

The rocky portals rise above.
Here I may clasp my love,

Here Hermes shall deliver. Ah! how shook
Yon cliff at the wind's ardent kiss!
This is the hour of bliss—
The sea! The sea! Eurydice! Look, Look!

Ai! but like wind-whirled flowers of frost
The flying form is lost!
Cancelled and empty of Eurydice
The black paths where she trod!
Ai! Ai! My God! My God!
Apollo, why hast thou forsaken me?

EXPLICIT LIBER TERTIUS

LIBER QUARTUS VEL MORTIS

TO MY WIFE

LYSANDER (*reads*).

“The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.”

THESEUS.

That is an old device.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son
Whom universal Nature did lament
When by the rout that made the hideous roar
His gory body down the stream was sent
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Lycidas.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far ;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning star.
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

Another Orpheus sings again
And loves, and weeps, and dies.

Hellas.

MOUNT IDA : The company of the Mænads

MÆNADS

Evøe ! Evøe Ho ! Iacche ! Iacche !

**Hail, O Dionysus ! Hail !
Wingèd Son of Semelé !
Hail, O Hail ! The stars are pale.
Hidden the moonlight in the vale ;
Hidden the sunlight in the sea.**

**Blessed is her happy lot
Who beholdeth God ; who moves
Mighty-souled without a spot,
Mingling in the godly rout
Of the many mystic loves.**

**Holy maidens, duly weave
Dances for the mighty mother !
Bacchanal to Bacchus cleave !
Wave his narthex wand, and leave
Earthy joys to earth to smother !**

Io! Evoe! Sisters, mingle
In the choir, the dance, the revel!
He divine, the Spirit single,
He in every vein shall tingle.
Sense and sorrow to the devil!

Mingle in the laughing measure,
Hand and lip to breast and thigh!
In enthusiastic pleasure
Grasp the solitary treasure!
Laughs the untiring ecstasy!

Sisters! Sisters! Raise your voices
In the inspired divine delight!
Now the sun sets; now the choice is
Who rebels or who rejoices,
Murmuring to the mystic night.

Io! Evoe! Circle splendid!
Dance, ye maids serene and subtle!
Clotho's task is fairly ended.
Atropos, thy power is rended!
Ho, Lachesis! ply thy shuttle!

Weave the human dance together
With the life of rocks and trees!
Let the blue delirious weather
Bind all spirits in one tether,
Overwhelming ecstasies!

Io Evoe! I faint, I fall,
Swoon in purple light; the grape
Drowns my spirit in its thrall.
Love me, love me over all,
Spirit in the spirit shape!

All is one! I murmur. Distant
Sounds the shout, Evoe, Evoe!
Evoe, Iacche! Soft, insistent
Like to echo's voice persistent:—
Hail! Agave! Autonoe!

AGAVE

Evoe Ho! Iacche! Hail, O Hail!
Praise him! What dreams are these?

AUTONOE

Sisters, O sisters!

AGAVE

Say, are our brethren of the rocks awake?

AUTONOE

The lion roars.

MÆNADS

O listen to the snake!

AUTONOE

Evoe Ho! Give me to drink!

AGAVE

Run wild !
Mountain and mountain let us leap upon
Like tigers on their prey !

MÆNADS

Crush, crush the world !

AGAVE

Tread earth as 'twere a winepress !

AUTONOE

Drink its blood,
The sweet red wine !

MÆNADS

Ay, drink the old earth dry !

AGAVE

Squeeze the last drops out till the frame collapse
Like an old wineskin !

AUTONOE

So the sooner sup
Among the stars !

AGAVE

The swift, swift stars !

MÆNADS

O night!

Night, night, fall deep and sure!

AUTONOE

Fall soft and sweet!

AGAVE

Moaning for love the woods lie.

AUTONOE

Sad the land

Lies thirsty for our kisses.

MÆNADS

All wild things

Yearn towards the kiss that ends in blood.

AGAVE

Blood! Blood!

Bring wine! Ha! Bromius, Bromius!

MÆNADS

O sweet God,

Come forth and lie with us!

AUTONOE

We, maidens now

And then and ever afterwards!

107

AGAVE

Chaste, chaste !
Our madness hath no touch of bitterness,
No taste of foulness in the morning mouth.

AUTONOE

O mouth of ripe red sunny grapes ! God ! God !
Evoe ! Dwell ! Abide !

AGAVE

I feel the wings
Of love, of mystery ; they waft soft streams
Of night air to my heated breast and brow.

MÆNADS

He comes ! He comes !

AGAVE

Silence, O girls, and peace !
The God's most holy presence asks the hymn,
The solemn hymn, the hymn of agony,
Lest in the air of glory that surrounds
The child of Semelé we lose the earth,
And corporal presence of the Zeus-begot.

AUTONOE

Yea, sisters, raise the chant of riot ! Lift
Your wine-sweet voices, move your wine-stained limbs
In joyful invocation !

MÆNADS

Ay, we sing.

Hail, child of Semelé!
To her as unto thee
Be reverence, be deity, be immortality!

Shame! treachery of the spouse
Of the Olympian house,
Hera! thy grim device against the sweet carouse!

Lo! in red roar and flame
Did Zeus descend! What claim
To feel the immortal fire had then the Theban dame!

Caught in that fiery wave
Her love and life she gave
With one last kissing cry the unborn child to save.

And thou, O Zeus, the sire
Of Bromius—hunter dire!—
Didst snatch the unborn babe from that Olympian fire:

In thine own thigh most holy
That offspring melancholy
Didst hide, didst feed, on light, ambrosia, and moly.

Ay! and with serpent hair
And limbs divinely fair
Didst thou, Dionysus, leap forth to the nectar air!

Ay! thus the dreams of fate
We dare commemorate,
Twining in lovesome curls the spoil of mate and mate.

O Dionysus, hear!
Be close, be quick, be near,
Whispering enchanted words in every curving ear!

O Dionysus, start
As the Apollonian dart!
Bury thy hornèd head in every bleeding heart!

AGAVE

He is here! He is here!

AUTONOE

Tigers, appear!

AGAVE

To the clap of my hand
And the wish of my wand,
Obey!

AUTONOE

I have found
A chariot crowned
With ivy and vine,
And the laurel divine,
And the clustering smell
Of the sage asphodel,
And the Dædal flower
Of the Cretan bower ;
Dittany's force,
And larkspur's love,
And blossoms of gorse
Around and above.

AGAVE

The tiger and panther
Are here at my cry.
Ho, girls! Span there
Their sides!

MÆNADS

Here am I!
And I! We are ready.

AGAVE

Strong now and steady!

FIRST MÆNAD

The tiger is harnessed.

SECOND MÆNAD

The nightingale urges
Our toil from her far nest.

THIRD MÆNAD

Ionian surges
Roar back to our chant.

FOURTH MÆNAD

Aha! for the taunt
Of Theban sages
Is lost, lost, lost!
The wine that enrages
Our life is enforced.
We dare them and daunt.

AGAVE

The spirits that haunt
The rocks and the river,
The moors and the woods,
The fields and the floods,
Are with us for ever!

MÆNADS

Are of us for ever.
Evoe! Evoe!

AUTONOE

Agave! He cometh!

AGAVE

Cry ho! Autonoe!

ALL

Ho! Ho! Evoe Ho! Iacche! Evoe! Evoe!

The white air hummeth
With force of the spirit.
We are heirs : we inherit.
Our joys are as theirs ;
Weave with your prayers;
The joys of a kiss!
Ho! for the bliss
Of the cup and the rod.

He cometh! O lover!
O friend and O God,
Cover us, cover
Our faces, and hover
Above us, within us!
Daintily shod,
Daintily robed,
His witcheries spin us
A web of desire.
Subtle as fire
He cometh among us.
The whole sky globed
Is on fire with delight,

Delight that hath stung us,
The passion of night.
Night be our mistress !
That tress and this tress
Weave with thy wind
Into curls deep-vined !
Passionate bliss !
Rapture on rapture !
Our hymns recapture
The Bromian kiss.
Blessèd our souls !
Blessèd this even !
We reach to the goals
Of the starriest heaven.
Daphnis, and Atthis, and Chrysis, and Chloe,
Mingle, O maidens ! Evoe ! Evoe !

DIONYSUS

I bring ye wine from above,
From the vats of the storied sun ;
For every one of ye love,
And life for every one.
Ye shall dance on hill and level ;
Ye shall sing in hollow and height
In the festal mystical revel,
The rapturous Bacchanal rite !
The rocks and trees are yours,
And the waters under the hill,
By the might of that which endures,
The holy heaven of will !

I kindle a flame like a torrent
 To rush from star to star ;
Your hair as a comet's horrent,
 Ye shall see things as they are !
I lift the mask of matter ;
 I open the heart of man ;
For I am of force to shatter
 The cast that hideth—Pan !
Your loves shall lap up slaughter,
 And dabbled with roses of blood
Each desperate darling daughter
 Shall swim in the fervid flood.
I bring ye laughter and tears,
 The kisses that foam and bleed,
The joys of a million years,
 The flowers that bear no seed.
My life is bitter and sterile,
 Its flame is a wandering star.
Ye shall pass in pleasure and peril
 Across the mystical bar
That is set for wrath and weeping
 Against the children of earth ;
But ye in singing and sleeping
 Shall pass in measure and mirth !
I lift my wand and wave you
 Through hill to hill of delight :
My rosy rivers lave you
 In innermost lustral light.
I lead you, lord of the maze,
 In the darkness free of the sun ;

In spite of the spite that is day's
We are wed, we are wild, we are one!

FIRST MÆNAD

O sweet soul of the waters! Chase me not!
What would'st thou?

A VOICE AS OF RUNNING BROOKS

Love!

FIRST MÆNAD

Love, love, I give, I give.
I yield, I pant, I fall upon thy breast,
O sacred soul of water. Kiss, ah kiss,
With gentle waves like lips my breast, my two small
breasts,
Rose flames on ivory seas!

SECOND MÆNAD

Nay! Nay! O soul
Of ivy, clingst thou so for love?

A VOICE AS OF THE RUSTLING OF IVY

For love.

SECOND MÆNAD

Cling not so close! O no! cling closer then!
Let thy green coolness twine about my limbs

And still the raving blood : or closer yet,
And link about my neck, and kill me so !

THIRD MÆNAD

Soul of the rock ! Dost love me ?

A VOICE AS OF FALLING ROCK

I love thee.

THIRD MÆNAD

Woo me then !

Let all the sharp hard spikes of crystal dart,
Press hard upon my body ! O, I fall,
Fall from thy crags, still clinging, clinging so,
Into the dark. Oblivion !

A DISTANT VOICE

Io Evoe !

[Orpheus enters.]

CROWD OF MÆNADS

Evoe ! Evoe ! It is a lion !

FOURTH MÆNAD

Lion,
O lion, dost thou love me ?

FIFTH MÆNAD

 Thee I love,
O tawny king of these deep glades !

SIXTH MÆNAD

 What wood
Were worthy for thy dwelling ?

CHORUS

 Come, come, come,
O lion, and revel in our band !

ORPHEUS

 Alas !
I sorrow, seeing ye rejoice.

FIRST MÆNAD

 O lion !
That is not kind.

ORPHEUS

 Too kind. Since all is sorrow,
Sorrow implicit in the purest joy,
Sorrow the cause of sorrow ; evil still
Fertile, and sterile love and righteousness.
Eurydice, Eurydice !

SECOND MÆNAD

Drink wine!

ORPHEUS

Ay, mask the grisly head of things that are
By drowning sense. Such horror as is hid
In life no man dare look upon. Woe! Woe!

AGAVE

Call then reproach upon these maiden rites!

ORPHEUS

Nay! virtue is the devil's name for vice,
And all your righteousness is filthy rags
Wherein ye strut, and hide the one base thought.
To mask the truth, to worship, to forget ;
These three are one.

AGAVE

What art thou then? a man?

ORPHEUS

No more.

AGAVE

No longer?

ORPHEUS

Nothing.

AGAVE

What then here
Dost thou amid these sacred woods ?

ORPHEUS

I weep.

AGAVE

Weep then red wine !

AUTONOE

Or we will draw thy tears,
Red tears of blood.

AGAVE

On, girls ! this bitter fool
Would stop our revel !

ORPHEUS

Nay ! ye bid me cease
Weeping.

AGAVE

Then listen ! drink this deep full cup,
Or here we tear thee limb from limb !

ORPHEUS

Do so!

Ay, me! I am Orpheus, poor lost fool of Fate,
Orpheus, can charm the wildest to my lyre.
Beasts, rocks, obey—ah, Hades, didst thou mock,
Alone of all, my songs? Thee I praise not.
Audacious woman!

AGAVE

Tear the fool in shreds!

Then to the dance!

ORPHEUS

The old Egyptian spell!

Stir, then, poor children, if ye can! Ah me!

[Sings.

Unity uttermost showed,
I adore the might of thy breath,
Supreme and terrible God
Who makest the Gods and death
To tremble before thee :—
I, I adore thee!

O Hawk of gold with power enwalled,
Whose face is like an emerald ;
Whose crown is indigo as night ;
Smaragdine snakes about thy brow
Twine, and the disc of flaming light
Is on thee, seated in the prow

Of the Sun's bark, enthroned above
With lapis-lazuli for love
And ruby for enormous force
Chosen to seat thee, thee girt round
With leopard's pell, and golden sound
Of planets choral in their course !
O thou self-formulated sire !
Self-master of thy dam's desire !
Thine eyes blaze forth with fiery light ;
Thine heart a secret sun of flame !
I adore the insuperable might :
I bow before the unspoken Name.

For I am Yesterday, and I
To-day, and I to-morrow, born
Now and again, on high, on high
Travelling on Dian's naked horn !
I am the Soul that doth create
The Gods, and all the Kin of Breath.
I come from the sequestered state ;
My birth is from the House of Death.

Hail ! ye twin hawks high pinnacled
That watch upon the universe !
Ye that the bier of God beheld !
That bore it onwards, ministers
Of peace within the House of Wrath,
Servants of him that cometh forth
At dawn with many-coloured lights
Mounting from underneath the North,
The shrine of the celestial Heights !

He is in me, and I in Him !
Mine is the crystal radiance
That filleth æther to the brim
Wherein all stars and suns may dance.
I am the beautiful and glad,
Rejoicing in the golden day.
I am the spirit silken-clad
That fareth on the fiery way.
I have escaped from Him, whose eyes
Are closed at eventide, and wise
To drag thee to the House of Wrong :—
I am armed ! I am armed ! I am strong ! I
am strong !
I make my way : opposing horns
Of secret foemen push their lust
In vain : my song their fury scorns ;
They sink, they grovel in the dust.

Hail, self-created Lord of Night !
Inscrutable and infinite !
Let Orpheus journey forth to see
The Disk in peace and victory !
Let him adore the splendid sight,
The radiance of the Heaven of Nu ;
Soar like a bird, laved by the light,
To pierce the far eternal blue !

Hail ! Hermes ! thou the wands of ill
Hast touched with strength, and they are
shivered !

The way is open unto will !
The pregnant Goddess is delivered !

Happy, yea, happy ! happy is he
That hath looked forth upon the Bier
That goeth to the House of Rest !
His heart is lit with melody ;
Peace in his house is master of fear ;
His holy Name is in the West
When the sun sinks, and royal rays
Of moonrise flash across the day's !

I have risen ! I have risen ! as a mighty hawk of gold !
From the golden egg I gather, and my wings the world
enfold.

I alight in mighty splendour from the thronèd boats of
light ;

Companies of Spirits follow me ; adore the Lords of
Night.

Yea, with gladness did they pæan, bowing low before my
car,

In my ears their homage echoed from the sunrise to the
star.

I have risen ! I am gathered as a lovely hawk of gold,
I the first-born of the Mother in her ecstasy of old.

Lo ! I come to face the dweller in the sacred snake of
Khem ;

Come to face the Babe and Lion, come to measure force
with them !

Ah! these locks flow down, a river, as the earth's before
the Sun,
As the earth's before the sunset, and the God and I are
One.
I who entered in a Fool, gain the God by clean en-
deavour ;
I am shaped as men and women, fair for ever and for
ever.

(The Mænads stand silent and quiet.)

ORPHEUS

Worship with due rite, orderly attire,
The makers of the world, the floating souls
Whence fell these crystals we call earth. Praise
Might
The Limitless ; praise Pallas, by whose Wisdom
The One became divided. Praise ye Him,
Chronos, from whom, the third, is form perceived.
Praise ye Poseidon, his productive power,
And Juno, secret nature of all things,
On which all things are builded : praise ye Love,
Idalian Aphrodite, strong as fair,
Strong not to loosen Godhead's crown by deed
To blind eyes not a God's : and praise pure Life,
Apollo in his splendour, whom I praise
Most, being his, and this song his, and his
All my desire and all my life, and all
My love, albeit he hath forsaken me.
These are One God in many : praise ye Him !

AGAVE

We praise indeed who made the choral world
And stars the greatest, and all these the least
Flowers at our feet : but also we may praise
This Dionysus, lord of life and joy,
In whom we may perceive a subtle world
Hidden behind this masquerade of things.
O sisters, thither, thither !

ORPHEUS

All deceit.

Delusive as this world of shadows is,
That subtler world is more delusive yet,
Involving deeper and still deeper : thought,
Desire of life, in that warm atmosphere
Spring up and blossom new, rank poisonous flowers,
The enemies of peace. Nay ! matter's all,
And all is sorrow. Therefore not to be,
Not to think, love, know, contemplate, exist ;
This Not is the one hope.

AGAVE

Believe it not !

Here is true joy—the woodland revellings,
The smile, the kiss, the laughter leaping up,
And music inward, musings multiform,
Manifold, multitudinous, involved
Each in the deep bliss of the other's love ;—
Ay me ! my sisters. Thither !

AUTONOE

Wake the dance !

MÆNADS

Pour luscious wine, cool, sweet, strong wine !

Bring life,

Life overflowing from the cup !

ORPHEUS

Hush ! Hush !

I hymn the eternal matter, absolute,
Divided, chaos, formless frame of force,
Wheels of the luminous reach of space that men
Know by the name of Pan.

MÆNADS

Hail ! Hail !

Pan ! Son of Hermes ! God of Arcady
And all wild woodlands !

ORPHEUS

Neither Son, nor Sire,
Nor God : but he is all : all else in him
Is hidden : he the secret and the self
Shrined central in this orb of eyeless Fate,
Phantom, elusive, permanent. In all,
In spirit and in matter immanent,
He also is the all, and all is ill.

Three forms and functions hath the soul ; the sea
Murmurs their names repeating : *Maris* call
The soul as it engendereth things below ;
Neptune the soul that contemplateth things
Above ; and *Ocean* as itself retracts
Itself into itself : choose ye of these !
But I hymn Pan. Awake, O lyre, awake !
As if it were for the last time, awake !

[*He sings.*

In the spring, in the loud lost places,
In the groves of Arcadian green,
There are sounds and shadowy faces
And strange things dimly seen.
Though the face of the springtide as grace is,
The sown and the woodland demesne
Have a soul caught up in their spaces,
Unkenned, and unclean !

It takes up the cry of the wind.
Its eyes with weeping are blind.
A strong hate whirls it behind
As it flees for ever.
Mad, with the tokens of Fear ;
Branded, and sad, without cheer ;
Year after ghastly year,
And it endeth never.

And this is the mystical stranger,
The subtle Arcadian God

That lurks as for sorrow and danger,
 Yet rules all the earth with his rod.
Abiding in spirit and sense
 Through the manifold changes of man,
This soul is alone and intense
 And one—He is Pan.

More subtle than mass as ye deem it
 He abides in the strife that is dust.
Than spirit more keen as ye dream it,
 He is laughter and loathing and lust.
He is all. Nature's agonies scream it ;
 Her joys quire it clear ; in the must
Of the vat is His shape in the steam. It
 Is Fear, and Disgust.

For the spirit of all that is,
The light in the lover's kiss,
The shame and sorrow and bliss ;
 They are all in Pan ;
The inmost wheel of the wheels,
The feeling of all that feels,
The God and the knee that kneels,
 And the foolish man.

For Pan is the world above
 And the world that is hidden beneath ;
He grins from the mask of love ;
 His sword has a jewelled sheath.

What boots it a maiden to gird her?
Her rape ere the æons began
Was sure ; in one roar of red murder
She breaks : He is Pan.

He is strong to achieve, to forsake her ;
He is death as it clings to desire,
Ah, woe to the Earth ! If he wake her,
Air, water and spirit and fire
Rush in to uproot her and break her :—
Yet he is the broken ; the pyre,
And the flame and the victim ; the maker,
And master and sire !

And all that is, is force.
A fatal and witless course
It follows without remorse
With never an aim.
Caught in the net we strive ;
We ruin, and think we thrive ;
And we die—and remain alive :—
And Pan is our name !

For the misery catches and winds us
Deep, deep in the endless coil ;
Ourselves is the cord that binds us,
And ours is the self same toil.
We are ; we are not ; yet our date is
An age, though each life be a span ;

And ourself and our state and our fate is
The Spirit of Pan.

O wild is the maiden that dances
In the dim waned light of the moon !
Black stars are her myriad glances :
Blue night is the infinite swoon !
But in other array advances
The car of the holier tune ;
And our one one chance is in mystical trances ;—
Thessalian boon !

For swift as the wheels may turn,
And fierce as the flames may burn,
The spirit of man may discern
In the wheel of Will
A drag on the wheels of Fate,
A water the fires to abate,
A soul the soul to make straight,
And bid " be still ! "

But ye, ye invoke in your city
And call on his name on the hill
The God who is born without pity.
The horrible heart that is chill ;
The secret corruption of ages
Ye cling to, and hold as ye can,
And abandon the songs of the sages
For passion—and Pan !

O thou heart of hate and inmost terror!
O thou soul of subtle fear and lust!
Loathsome shape of infamy, thy mirror
Shown as spirit or displayed as dust!
O thou worm in every soul of matter
Crawling, feasting, rotting; slime of hell!
Beat and batter! shear and shatter!
Break the egg that hides thee well!
Pan! I call thee! Pan! I see thee in thy whirling citadel.

I alone of all men may unveil thee,
Show the ghastly soul of all that is
Unto them, that they themselves may hail thee,
Festering corruption of thy kiss!
Thou the soul of God! the soul of demon!
Soul of matter, soul of man!
Shew the gross fools, thine, that think them freemen,
What thou art, and what thy heart,
And what they are, that they are thee,
All creation, whole and part,
Thine and thee, near and far:—
Come! I call thee, I who can.
Pan! I know thee! Pan! I show thee! Burst thy
coffin open, Pan!

What have I said? What have I done?

MÆNADS

Pan! Pan!

Evoc, Iacche! Pan!

AGAVE
The victim!

AUTONOE
Rend
The sole pure thing in this impure gross lump,
The shapeless, formless horror that is us
And God—Ah! rend him limb from limb!

ORPHEUS
Apollo!
This is the night. This is the end of all,
No force detains. No power urges on.
I am free! Alas! alas!—Eurydice!

*(He is torn to pieces. A faint voice
—like his—is still heard, ever reced-
ing and failing.)*

O night!
Fade, love! Fade, light!
I pass beyond Life's law.
I melt as snow; as ice I thaw;
As mist I dissipate: I am borne, I draw
Through chasms in the mountains: stormy gusts
Of ancient sorrows and forgotten lusts
Bear me along: they touch me not: I waste.
The memory of long lives interlaced
Fades in my fading. I disintegrate,
Fall into black oblivion of Fate.
My being divides: I have forgot my name.

I am blown out as a thin subtle flame.
I am no more.

A SPIRIT

What is ? what chorus swells
Through these dark gorges and untrodden dells !
What whisper through the forest ? Far entwines
The low song with the roses and the vines,
The high song with the mountains and the pines,
The inmost song with secret fibre of light,
And in the boiling pools and quorns and chasms
Chases the stryges, Death's devote phantasms,
Into a brilliant air wherein they are lost.
Deep in the river moans the choral roar,
Till the deep murmur of the Lesbian shore
Washed of the luminous sea gives answer, while
The angry wail of Nature doth beguile
The hours, the wrath of Nature rest of one,
The sole strong spirit that was Nature's sun,
The orb she circled round, the one thing clean
From all her gross machinery, obscene
And helpless :—and the lonely mother-cry,
The Muse, her hope down-stricken. Magically
The full deep chorus stirs the sky ;
Hark ! one voice beyond all
Gives love's own call,
Not hers, Eurydice's,
But thine, thou sweet blood-breasted nightingale
Waking thy choral wail
From Mitylene to remotest seas !

THE RIVER HEBRUS

Was e'er a stream before
So sad a burden bore
Rolling a melancholy sorrow down from shore to shore?

CALLIOPE

O this is bitterness beyond belief,
Grief beyond grief.
Boots it to weep? I help him not with
force :
What should avail—remorse?

RIVER HEBRUS

Hear upon high the melancholy
Antistrophe
Matching the strophe's agony !
Tides on a terrible sea !

CALLIOPE

Bear, bear the laurelled head
Of him I loved, him dead,
O Hebrus, ever downward on thy bosom iron-red

RIVER HEBRUS

All Nature's tunes are dull.
The beautiful,
The harmony of life is null.

CALLIOPE

What unto us remains
But in these broken strains
To hymn with voices jarred the jarred world's shriek of
woe?

O! O!

RIVER HEBRUS

This discord is an agony
Shuddering harsh in me;
My waters will empoison the fair fresh-water sea!

CALLIOPE

Nay! all is ended now.
Cover the beaten brow!
Carry the brain of music into the wide
Ægean!
No priest pronounce thy pæan
Ever again, Apollo,
Thou false, thou fair, thou hollow!
Die to a groan within a shrine!
Despair thy force divine!
Thou didst achieve this ruin; let the seas
Roar o'er thy lost name of Musagetes!

THE LESBIAN SHORE

Welcome, O holy head!
Welcome, O force not dead!

Reverberating joy of music subtly shed!
Welcome, O glorious, O laurelled one!
Own offspring of the Sun,
The ancient harmony was hardly yet begun.
By thee and by thy life
Arose the Lesbian maiden.
Thou art perished as thy wife ;
My shores with magic loves and songs of life are laden.

CALLIOPE

Weep, weep no more !
O loyal Lesbian shore,
I hear a murmur sound more sweet than murmur ever
bore.

Not ocean's siren spell
Soft-sounded in a spiral shell
Were quite so exquisite, were all so admirable !

LESBIAN SHORE

Nay! but the agony of the time
Rings in the royal rhyme!
She hath touched the intimate, and chanced on the sublime.

CALLIOPE

Ay! Ay! a woman's silky tone
Makes music for eternity her own,
Till all men's victories in song seem a discordant groan.

LESBIAN SHORE

Upon my cliffs of green,
Beneath the azure skies,
She stands with looks of fire,
Sappho. Her hands between
Lies the wild world ; she flies
From agony to agony of desire.

CALLIOPE

Him, Orpheus, him she sings ;
Loosing the living strings,
Till music fledged fares forth sunward on moon-wrought
wings.

LESBIAN SHORE

Yea, by the solar name,
Orpheus her lips acclaim,
The centre and the silence ! O ! the torrent of fine flame
Like hair that shooteth forth
To the ensanguine North
Whence ran the drunken crew, Bassarids in their wrath.

SAPPHO

Woe is me ! the brow of a brazen morning
Breaks in blood on water athirst of Hebrus.
Sanguine horror starts on her hills tenebrous :
Hell hath not heard her !

Dumb and still thy birds, O Apollo, scorning
Song ; yells drown them, lecherous anthems gabbled,
Laughter splashed of Bassarids, blood-bedabbled,
Mad with their murder !

O thou many-coloured immortal maiden,
Dawn ! O dew, delight of a world ! A sorrow
Hides your holy faces awhile. To-morrow
Comes for your calling ?

Still the notes of musical Orpheus, laden
Never now of pain or of failing, follow ;
Follow up the height, or adown the hollow
Fairy are falling.

O my hopeless misery mind of longing !
O the anguish born in a breast unloved !
Women, wail the face of a God uncovered,
Brain dead and breath dumb !

Wail the sense of infinite ardours thronging
Fast and fast and faster athwart the heaven,
Keen as light and cruel as fire, as levin
Swift and as death dumb !

Freedom, rapture, victory, fill the chorus,
Dying, ever dying, among the billows ;
Whispered, ever whispered among the willows :—
Pour the libation !

Now springs up a notable age. Adore us
Masters now of music above his magic,
Lords of change, leaps pastoral up to tragic,
Thanks to the Thracian !

Ah, my pain ! what desolate female bosoms,
Smitten hearts of delicate males, uncover ;
Grip not life for poet or sage or lover,
Feed on derision.

Yea, in these mature me avenger blossoms,
Swift as swords to sever the subtle ether,
Lift the earth, see infinite space beneath her,
Swoon at the vision.

This, O Orpheus, this be a golden guerdon
Unto thee for gift of amaze and wonder !
This thy sorrow, sword of a heart asunder,
Beareth a flower.

This the heart of woman—a bitter burden !—
Thou hast filled with seed—O a seed of madness !
Seed of music ! seed of a royal sadness !—
This be our dower !

Ah ! the bitter legacy left of lyre-light !
Thou wast Nature's prophet, a wise magician ;
Magic falls, and love is a false physician :—
Deep our disease is !

Now to us the crouching over the firelight,
Eating out for hunger of love our vitals !
(Eaten out the hollower for respitals
Swift as the breeze is.)

Ay! the golden age is a broken vessel.
All the golden waters exhale, evanish.
Joy of life and laughter of love we banish :
Damned is the will dead.

Now with brass and iron we writhe and wrestle.
Now with clay the torrent of fire is tainted.
Life apes death: the lily is curled and painted ;
Gold is regilded.

Master, we lament thee, as awful anguish
Seizes on the infinite maze of mortals.
See we love that yearns to the golden portals
Bound of the grey god.

Love, thy children, laughter and sunlight, languish.
Aphrodite, miracle of the flashed foam,
Burns with beaten agony in the lashed foam ;
Down is the day-god.

Ay! this first of Lesbian lamentations
Still shall burn from æon to idle æon !
(Chorus, epithalamy, ode, and pæan
Dumb or dishevelled !)

Still my songs shall murmur across the nations,
Gain their meed of misery, praise, and yearning,
Smite their stroke on centuries foully burning,
Drunk or bedevilled.

Song? No beauty shine in a sphere of music!
Me? my voice be dull, be a void, be toneless!
Match me, sea! than me thou hast many a moan less,
Many a million.

Sun, be broken! Moon, be eclipsed; be dew sick!
Ocean flat and poisonous, earth demented!
Living souls go shuddering through the tented
Air, his pavilion!

Ay; the pectis clangs me a soulless discord:—
Let me break my visible heart a-weeping!
Loving? Drinking? Misery. Singing, sleeping
Touch not my sorrow.

Orpheus, turn the sorrow-chord to the bliss-chord!
All may rise the easier that the one set.
So our eyes from saddening at the sunset
Turn to to-morrow.

CALLIOPE

Silence. I hear a voice
That biddeth me rejoice.
I know the whole wise plan
Of Fate regarding Man.

THE LESBIAN SHORE

It is the sun's dark bride
Nuith, the azure-eyed.
No longer Sappho sings her spell;
His heart divorced, her heart insatiable.
There is deep silence. Earth hath passed
To a new kingdom. In a purpose vast
Her horoscope is cast.

NUITH

Enough. It is ended, the story
Of magical æons of song;
The sun is gone down in his glory
To the Houses of Hate and of Wrong.
Would ye see if he rise?
In Hesperian skies
Ye may look for his rising for long.

The magical æon beginneth
Of song in the heart of desire,
That smiteth and striveth and sinneth,
But burns up the soul of the lyre.
There is pain in the note:—
In the sorcerer's throat
Is a sword, and his brain is afire!

Long after (to men: but a moment
To me in my mansion of rest)

Is a sundawn to blaze what the glow meant
Seen long after death in the west ;
A magical æon !
Nor love-song nor pæan,
But a flame with a silvery crest.

There shall rise a sweet song of the soul
Far deeper than love or distress ;
Beyond mortals and gods shall it roll ;
It shall find me, and crave, and caress.
Ah ! me it shall capture
In torrents of rapture ;
It shall flood me, and fill, and possess.

For brighter from age unto age
The weary old world shall renew
Its life at the lips of the sage,
Its love at the lips of the dew.
With kisses and tears
The return of the years
Is sure as the starlight is true.

Yet the drift of the stars is to beauty,
To strength, and to infinite pleasure.
The toil and the worship and duty
Shall turn them to laughter and leisure.
Were the world understood
Ye would see it was good,
A dance to a delicate measure.

Ye fools, interweaving in passion
The lyrical light of the mind !
Go on, in your drivelling fashion !
Ye shall surely seek long and not find.
From without ye may see
All the beauty of me,
And my lips, that their kisses are kind.

For Eurydice once I lamented ;
For Orpheus I do not lament :
Her days were a span, and demented ;
His days are for aye, and content.
Mere love is as nought
To the love that is Thought,
And idea is more than event.

O lovers ! O poets ! O masters
Of me, ye may ravish my frown !
Aloof from my shocks and disasters !
Impatient to kiss me, and crown !
I am eager to yield.
In the warrior field
Ye shall fight me, and fasten me down.

O poets ! O masters ! O lovers !
Sweet souls of the strength of the sun !
The couch of eternity covers
Our loves, and our dreams are as done.
Reality closes

Our life into roses ;
We are infinite space : we are one.

There is one that hath sought me and found me
In the heart of the sand and the snow :
He hath caught me, and held me, and bound me,
In the lands where no flower may grow.
His voice is a spell,
Hath enchanted me well !
I am his, did I will it or no.

But I will it, I will it, I will it !
His speck of a soul in its cars
Shall lift up immensity ! fill it
With light of his lyrical bars.
His soul shall concentrate
All space ; he shall enter
The beautiful land of the stars.

He shall know me eternally wedded
To the splendid and subtle of mind ;
For the pious, the arrogant-headed,
He shall know they nor seek me nor find.
O afloat in me curled !
Cry aloud to the world
That I and my kisses are kind !

O lover ! O poet ! O maiden
To me in my magical way !

Be thy songs with the wilderness laden !
Thy lyre be adrift and astray :—
So to me thou shalt cling !
So to me thou shalt sing
Of the beautiful law of the day !

I forbid thee to weep or to worship ;
I forbid thee to sing or to write !
The Star-Goddess guideth us her ship ;
The sails belly out with the light.
Beautiful head !
We will sing on our bed
Of the beautiful law of the Night !

We are lulled by the whirr of the stars ;
We are fanned by the whisper, the wind ;
We are locked in unbreakable bars,
The love of the spirit and mind.
The infinite powers
Of rapture are ours ;
We are one, and our kisses are kind.

EXPLICIT LIBER QUARTUS

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