

UNDER THE PALMS.

THE woodland hollows know us, bird-enchanted,  
Likewise the spaces of the ghostly sea,  
The lake's abundant lilies, the pale slanted  
Moonlight on flowers, the wind's low minstrelsy;  
For all the tropic greenery is haunted  
By you and me.....

The tall palms bend and catch love's tender ditty  
To learn a sweeter song to lure their mate.  
The soft wind sighs in amorous self-pity,  
Having no love wherein to laugh elate,  
And turns to the cold harbour and the city,  
Wailing its fate.....

Two faces and two bosoms, breathing slowly  
In tune and time with the sea's hymn below,  
Breathing in peace of love, mighty and holy,  
Fearing to fuse, and longing—be it so!  
And the world's pulse stops, as God bends him lowly  
To hear and know.....

For not the heights of heaven shall exalt her  
Whose heart is full of love's dumb deity,  
Nor harp-strings lift me, nor the sound of psalter,  
Whose love is merged and molten into thee,  
Nor incense sweeter be by shrine or altar  
For you and me.....

But like dove's eyes where glamour lies a-dwelling,  
Like sweet well-water rising in the well,

Strong steep black currents thrust up, flooding,  
    welling,  
    Into the moonlight, swift, adorable,—  
So kisses cluster, so our bosoms swelling  
    Abide and dwell.....

Yet the twin faces, like Madonnas, meeting,  
    Fear and draw back and gaze a little space ;  
Fear, lest they lose the moonlight frail and fleeting,  
    Lose their own beauty in their own embrace,  
But feel how gladdening hearts and bosoms beating  
    Kindle the face.....

But not for long shall lilies strive with roses,  
    Nor fear be fearful, nor delight repose,  
Nor love retire ; the woodland cleaves and close  
    Round heads an aureole hides, a rainbow  
    shows.  
A swifter shape of fire cleaves us, encloses  
    Rosebud and rose.....

Mouth unto mouth ! O fairest ! Mutely lying,  
    Fire lambent laid on water,—O ! the pain !  
Kiss me, O heart, as if we both were dying !  
    Kiss, as we could not ever kiss again !  
Kiss me, between the music of our sighing,  
    Lightning and rain !

Not only as the kiss of tender lovers—  
    Let mingle also the sun's kiss to sea,  
Also the wind's kiss to the bird that hovers,  
    The flower's kiss to the earth's deep greenery.  
All elemental love closes and covers  
    Both you and me.

All shapes of silence and of sound and seeing,  
    All lives of Nature molten into this,  
The moonlight waking and the shadows fleeing,

Strange sorcery of unimagined bliss,  
All breath breathing in ours ; mingled all being  
Into the kiss.