

MADELEINE

Oh, the cool white neck of her:
 The ivory column: oh, the velvet skin.
Little I reckon of her
 Save the curve from breast to chin.
Oh, the rising rounded throat,
Pain's subtle antidote.
To sit and watch the pulses of it beat,
And guess the passionate heat
Of the blood that flows within!
I see it swelling with her even breath
 And long to make it throb
 With a love as strong as death.
To cause the sharp and sudden-catching sob
 And the swift dark flood,
 Showing the instant blood,
Quick mantling up where I had made it throb
With love as strong as death.

Oh, the pure, pale face of her;
 The chiselled outline, chaste as starlit snows.
The ineffable grace of her;
 The distant, perfect grace of her repose.
 Her mouth the waiting redness of a rose
 A rose too nearly cloyed
 With its own secret sweetness unalloyed:
That waits in scented silence, stately-sad,
 Wed to a guarded passion thro' long days,
But lifts the proud head, saying "I am glad,"
 Haughty receives as due the word of praise,
And flings her perfumed wonders on the air:
 "Afar," she says, "fall down and gaze; for I am fair."

Oh the dark, sweet hair of her,
 Burnished cascade of heavy-tressed black:
Nothing's more rare of her
 Than its thick massed glory over breast and back.
It rolls and ripples, silver flecked,
 Like moonlight on a misty sea,
Whose lifting surfaces reflect
 A sombre, ever-changing radiancy.
I would compare
The dusk, soft-stealing perfume of her hair
 To breezes on a Southern Summer eve,
When the night-scented stock hangs drowsing on the air.
 Its languid incense bids me half believe
I pass the dreamy day in reveries,
By some sleep-haunted shore of the Hesperides.
Oh, the deep, dark eyes of her,
 Half slumbrous depths of heavy lidded calm:
There's naught I prize of her
 More than the shrouded silence they embalm.
There's all the mystery of an enchanted pool,
Hid in brown woodlands cool;
Profound, untroubled, where the lilies grow
 And the pale lotus sheds her stealing charm:
Dappled where silent shadows come and go,
 And all the air is warm
With the low melody of the Sacred Bird
 Sobbing his soul out to the waiting wood,
And over all a hushèd voice is heard:
 This place is consecrate to Love in solitude.

ARTHUR B. GRIMBLE.