

## THE TWO SECRETS

*To Mary Waska*

SHE used to lie, superbly bare  
Wrapped in her harvest flame of hair,  
And shooting from her steel-grey eyes  
Inexorable destinies :  
Mute oracles—mysterious—  
A soul in a sarcophagus !  
For I, through all my life astrain,  
Through all the pulsing of my brain,  
Through all the wisdom I had won  
From this one and the other one  
Saw nothing. Nothing. Had I known  
And loved some Sphinx of steel or stone  
While countless chiliads rolled, may be  
I had not guessed her mystery.

So there she lay, regarding me.  
And I?—I gave the riddle up.  
I drank the wine, admired the cup ;  
As I suppose a wise man does  
Unless he be the Man of Uz  
To scrape with shards a sore that grows  
The more he irks it. I suppose  
All men are fools who seek the truth  
At such a price as joy and youth.  
. . . So there she used to lie. May be  
Correggio's Antiope  
Best paints you how she lay. And I  
Loved her, and passed the matter by ;  
Ending at last, one may dare say,  
In thinking that those eyes of grey  
Meant naught, suspected naught, were blind,  
Expressed the vacancy behind.

So life went on. One winter day  
So silent and so still she lay  
That I took cold, regarding her.  
I rose, I wrapped myself in fur ;  
Then came to her, my thought untold  
Being that she, too, might be cold.  
I laid my hand upon her breast.  
Cold! Icy cold! Ah you have guessed.  
Right. She was dead, quite dead.

And so

You see, friend, I shall never know.  
She kept her secret.

—Leave me alone!

Or—I shall hardly keep my own!