

BY THE RIVER

To Lysa

GRAY light streams from the golden river;
Water, water, a tideless dream.
Lapped at our feet, and the lights a-quiver
Blurred themselves in the rain's dull stream.
Sodden the earth as we lay at ease,
Robed by the Mother of Mysteries
In the wonder-woof of the world's disease.

How fair she was! The dark skies' amber
Glowed around her; asleep she lay,
Virgin-souled, in the secret chamber
Of love unguessed-at, of lust at play,
Thrusting her hands on the jewelled hours
To pluck at the poisonous passion-flowers
That—O my sweetheart—had decked our bowers.

How should we guess of the olden wonder,
The virgin I bore in the heart of my breast,
That time had forgotten, that lay in sunder,
Sleeping lonely and unpossessed?
But the Sabbath dawned, and we sought our God,
Invoked by vigil and magic rod,
Called, rubbing our eyes, from the aching sod.

Oh, the lapping, lapping of dull gray water,—
The current of song whereon our dream
Floated, a vision of lust and slaughter,—
A terror of pain in a desolate stream.
Oh, the virgin-soul of that flaming hour!—
The dream that we dreamed in our secret bower,
When we slept to the rhythm of a gray night-shower.