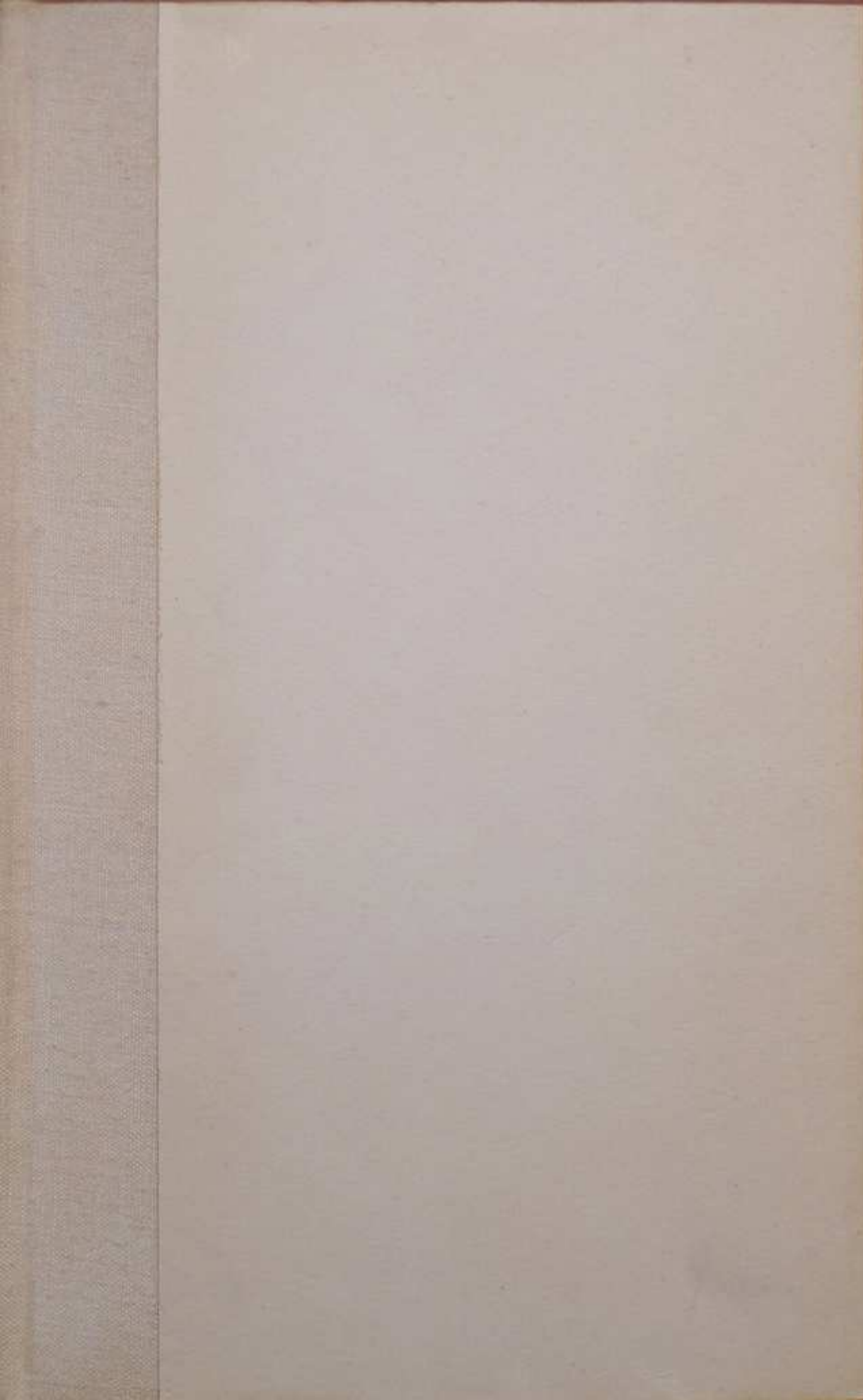




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A LYRICAL LEGEND**

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# ORPHEUS

## A LYRICAL LEGEND BY ALEISTER CROWLEY

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

SOCIETY  
FOR THE  
PROPAGATION  
OF  
RELIGIOUS  
TRUTH

BOLESKINE  
FOYERS  
INVERNESS  
1905

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## WARNING

MAY I who know so bitterly the tedium of this truly dreadful poem be permitted to warn all but the strongest and most desperate natures from the task of reading or of attempting to read it? I have spent more than three years in fits of alternate enthusiasm for, and disgust of, it. My best friends have turned weeping away when I introduced its name into conversation; my most obsequious sycophants (including myself) were revolted when I approached the subject, even from afar.

I began Book I. in San Francisco one accursed day of May 1901. I was then a Qabalist, deeply involved in ceremonial magic, with a Pantheon of Egypto-Christian colour, in fact, the mere bouillon of which my "Tannhäuser" was the froth. The idea was to do the "biggest thing ever done in lyrics." I bound myself by an oath to admit no rhyme unless three times repeated; to average some high percentage of double rhymes—in brief, to perform a gigantic juggle with the unhappy English language. The whole of this first book is technically an ode (! ! ! ) and was so designed. So colossal an example of human fatuity truly deserves, and shall have, a complete exposure.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the Contents. Can the Spirit of Perversity attribute the unwieldiness of the structure to its formal symmetry and perfection?

Book I. was finished in Hawaii, ere June expired, and Book II. begun.

I had just begun to study the Theosophic writings—their influence, though slight, is apparent. So intent was I on producing a *big* book that the whole of my “Argonauts” (published separately, 1904) was written for the shadow-play by which Orpheus wins Eurydice to an interest in mortal joys and sorrows. Also—believe it!—I had proposed a similar play in Book III., to be called “Heracles” or “Theseus,” by performance of which Persephone should be moved, or Hades overwhelmed.

But luckily I was myself overwhelmed first, and it never got a chance at Hades. Book II., then, and its Siamese twin, were written in Hawaii, Japan, China, Ceylon, and South India, where also I began Book III. That also I finished in the Burmese jungle and at Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung at Akyab.

During this period I was studying the Buddhist law; and its influence on the philosophy of the poem is as apparent as that of Hinduism on Book II.

The summer of 1902 asked another kind of philosophy—the kind that goes with glacier travel in the Mustagh Tagh. Orpheus slept.

Book IV. was begun in Cairo on my way to England, and bears marks of confirmed Buddhism up to the death of Orpheus.

But a year's rest, and a certain advance in Scientific Knowledge, gave me, as I hope, a direct and definite view—no longer a philosophy—of the nature of things, so that the Agnosticism which is the good wine of

Buddhism sat rather tightly on shoulders broadened by responsibility, and the first part of Book IV. is flatly contradicted by its climax.

This is a pitiable sort of confession for a man to make !

What was I to do ? I could not rewrite the whole in order to give it a philosophic unity. Gerald Kelly forcibly prevented me from throwing it into the river at Marlotte, though he admitted quite frankly that he could not read even through Book I. and did not see how any one could. Tell me, he said, conjuring the friendship of years, can *you* read it ? Even a poet should be honest ; I confessed that I could not !

Taking it in sections, with relays and an ambulance, we could see no fault in it, however. It is clumsily built ; it is all feet and face ; but you cannot make a Monster symmetrical by lopping at him.

Still, we cut down every possible excrescence, doctored up the remains so as to look as much like a book as possible (until it is examined), and are about to let it loose on society.

The remaining books all share this fatal lack of Architecture ; but they are not so long ; there is some incident, though not much ; and they are proportionately less dull. Further, the scheme is no longer so ambitious, and the failure is therefore less glaring.

I might have done like Burton and his *Kasidah*, and kept the MS. for twenty years (if I live so long), ever revising it. But (a) I should certainly not live twenty years if I had the accursed manuscript in all sorts and sizes of type and colour of ink and pencil to stalk my

footsteps, and (b) I am literally not the man who wrote it, and, despise him as I may, I have no right to interfere with his work.

But I will not be haunted by the ghost of a Banquo that another man has failed to lay; and this kind of ghost knows but one exorcism.

One should bury him decently in fine fat type, and erect nice boards over him, and collect the criticisms of an enlightened press, and inscribe them on the tomb.

Then he is buried beyond resurrection; oblivion takes him, and he will never haunt the author or anybody else again.

So I have asked Messrs Turnbull & Spears to dig the grave and provide the coffin; the S.P.R.T. will oblige with the funeral service.

Old Man of the Sea, these three years you have drummed your black misshapen heels upon me; I have had no ease because of you; I am bepissed and conskited of your beastliness; and now you are drunk with the idea that you are finished and perfect, I shall roll you off and beat your brains out upon that hardest of flints, the head of the British Public. I am shut of thee. Allah forget thee in the day when he remembereth his friends!

*August 14, 1904.*

## EXORDIUM

FROM darkness of fugitive thought,  
From problems bewildering the brain,  
Deep lights beyond heaven unsought,  
Dead faces seen dimly in rain ;  
From the depths of Mind's caverns, the fire  
Reclaims the old magical lyre ;  
The ways of creation are nought,  
If only, O mother, O Muse, I may measure Thy melodies  
in me again !

How wayward, how feeble the child  
Three watched from the stars at his birth ;  
Erato the fierce and the mild ;  
Polymnia grave ; and the girth  
Broad-girdled of gold and desire,  
Melpomene's terrible lyre,  
That lifts up her life in the wild,  
The star-piercing pæan, and floats in mid-ether, and  
sinks to the earth.

These three of the Muses were mine ;  
They nurtured and knew me and kissed.  
Erato was hidden in wine ;  
Polymnia dawned in the mist :

Melpomene shone in the pyre  
Of terrors that burned in her lyre ;  
But all of their passion divine  
I lost in the life and the stress of the world ere ever the  
soul of me wist.

But, Orpheus, thy splendider light  
Was the veil of thyself the more splendid.  
Thou leapedst as a fountain in flight,  
As a bird in the rainbow descended !  
From the sweet single womb risen higher  
Did Calliope string thee her lyre,  
Thy mother : and veiled her in night :—  
For thyself to Herself art a veil till the veils of the Heaven  
be rended and ended.

Now, single myself as thy soul,  
I pray to Apollo indeed !  
Fling forth to the starriest goal  
My spirit, invoking his rede ;  
Care nought for his mercy or ire ;  
Reach impious hands to his lyre.  
Determined to die or control  
Those strings the immortal at last, though the strings of  
this heart of me bleed.

Come life, or come death ; come disdain  
Or honour from mutable men,  
I cry in this passionate pain—  
My blood be poured out in the pen !

Euterpe ! Espouse me ! inspire  
My life looking up to Thy lyre !  
Of thy love, thine alone, am I fain !  
Be with me, possess me, reveal me the melodies never  
yet given to men.

The starry and heavenly wheels,  
The earth and her glorious dye,  
The light that the darkness reveals,  
The river, the sea, and the sky ;  
All nature, or joyful or dire,  
Life, death, let them throng to the lyre,  
All sealed with the marvellous seals !  
Let them live in my sob, let them love in my song,  
let them even be I !

Let me in most various song  
Be seasons, be rivers that roll,  
Be stars, the untameable throng,  
All parts of the ultimate whole ;  
All nature in various attire  
Be woven to one tune of the lyre,  
One tune where a million belong—  
Multitudinous murmur and moan, melodious, one  
soul with my soul !

One soul with the wail of distress  
The ravished Persephone flung ;  
One soul with the song of success,  
Demeter's, that found her and sung ;

One soul with all spirits drawn nigher  
From invisible worlds to the lyre ;—  
They throng me and silently press  
The strings as I need them, and quicken my fingers  
and loosen my tongue !

And thou, O supreme, O Apollo !  
I have lived in Thy lands for a year,  
Under skies, where the azure was hollow,  
The vault of black midnight was clear.  
Think ! I who have borne Thee, nor tire—  
May I not lift up on Thy lyre  
Most reverent fingers, and follow  
Thy path, take Thy reins, drive Thy chariot and  
horses of song without fear ?

Let the lightning be harnessed before me,  
The thunder be chained to my car,  
The sea roll asunder that bore me,  
The sky peal my clarion of war !  
As a warrior's my chariot shall gyre !  
As a lord I will sharpen the lyre !  
The stars and the moon shall adore me,  
Not seeing mean me, but Thyself in the glory, the  
splendidest star.

Around me the planets shall thunder,  
And earth lift her voice to the sea ;  
The moon shall be smitten with wonder,  
The starlight look love unto me.

Comets, meteors, storms shall admire,  
Be mingled in tune to my lyre,  
The universe broken in sunder,—  
And I—shall I burn, pass away? Having been for a  
moment the shadow of Thee !



# LIBER PRIMUS VEL CARMINUM



TO OSCAR ECKENSTEIN,  
WITH WHOM I HAVE WANDERED IN SO MANY SOLITUDES OF  
NATURE, AND THEREBY LEARNT THE WORDS AND  
SPELLS THAT BIND HER CHILDREN.

Τάχα δ' ἐν ταῖς πολυδένδροισιν Ὀλύμπου  
θαλάμαις, ἐνθα ποτ' Ὀρφεὺς κιθαρίζων  
ξύναγεν δένδρεα μούσαις, ξύναγεν θήρας ἀγρώτας.

—Βακχαι.

Orpheus with his lute made trees,  
And the mountain tops that freeze  
Bow themselves when he did sing.  
To his music plants and flowers  
Ever sprung, as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play,  
Even the billows of the sea,  
Hung their heads, and then lay by.  
In sweet music is such art,  
Killing care and grief of heart—  
Fall asleep, or hearing die.

—Henry VIII.

. . . vocalem temere insecutæ  
Orphea sylvæ,  
Arte materna rapidos morantem  
Fluminum lapsus, celeresque ventos,  
Blandum et auritas fidibus canoris  
Ducere quercus.

—Hor. Carm., Lib. I. xii.

## INTRODUCTORY ODE

CALLIOPE, ORPHEUS

*Str. a*

CALLIOPE

IN the days of the spring of my being,  
When maidenly bent I above  
The head of the poet, and, seeing  
Not love, was the lyre of his love ;  
When laurels I bore to the harper,  
When bays for the lyrist I bore,  
My life was diviner and sharper,  
My name in the Muses was more ;  
When virgin I came to him stainless,  
When love was a pleasure and painless !  
What Destiny dreams and discovers  
The fragrance men know for a lover's ?  
Peace turned into laughter and tears,  
Borne down the cold stream of the years !

*Ant. a*

ORPHEUS

O mother, O queen many-minded,  
More beauty than beauty may be,

More light than the Sun ; I am blinded,  
Sink, tremble, am lost in the sea.  
The voice of thy singing descended,  
Rolled round me and wrapped me in mist,  
Some sense of thy being, borne splendid ;  
I dreamed, I desired, I was kissed.  
Some breath from thy music hath bound me ;  
Some tune from thy lyre hath found me.  
Thy words are as rushing of fire ;  
But I know not the lilt of thy lyre :—  
Thy voice is as deep as the sea ;  
Thy music is darkness to me.

*Str. β*

CALLIOPE

Child of Thracian sire, on me begotten,  
Knowest thou not the laughter and the life ?  
Knowest thou not how all things are forgotten,  
Being with a maiden wife ?  
How a subtle sense of inmost being  
Wraps thee in, and cuts the world away ;  
Sight and sound lose hearing and lose seeing,  
All the night is one with all the day ?  
Hearken to her sighing !  
Life droops down as dying,  
Melting in the clasp of amorous limbs and hair ;  
All the darkening world  
Round about ye furled—  
Dost thou know, or, knowing, dost thou care ?

*Ant. β*

ORPHEUS

Mother, I have lain, half dead, half slumbering,  
    Curtained in Eurydice her hair ;  
Clothed in serpent kisses, souls outnumbering  
    Dewdrops flung in spray through air. .  
I have lain and watched the night diminish,  
    Fade and fall into the arms of day,  
Caring not if earth itself should finish,  
    Caring only if my lover stay ;  
Listening to her breathing,  
Laughing, lover-weaving  
    All the silken gold and glory of her head,  
Kissing as if time  
Forgot its steeps to climb,  
    Made eternity's, one with all the dead.

*Str. γ*

CALLIOPE

Listen, then listen, O Thracian !  
    Oeager lay on the lea :  
I, from my heavenly station ;  
I, from my house of creation,  
    Stooped, as a mortal to be  
Passionate, mother and bride ;  
Flashed on wide wing to his side,  
    Caught him and drew him to me.

Kisses not mortal I lavished ;  
Out of the life of him ravished  
    Life for the making of thee.  
Son, did I lose in the deed ?  
Son, did the breasts of me bleed,  
    Bleed for pure love ? Did I see  
Zeus with his face through the thunder  
Frowning with fury and wonder ?  
    Love in Olympus is free—  
I have created a god, not a mortal of mortal degree.

*Ant. γ*

ORPHEUS

Hear me, O mother, descended  
    To earth, from the sisterly shrine !  
Hear me, a mortal unfriended,  
Save thou, in thy purity splendid  
    Indwell me, invoke the divine !  
As sunlight enkindles the ocean,  
As moonlight shakes earth with emotion,  
    As starlight shoots trembling in wine,  
So be thy soul for a man !  
Teach my young fingers to span  
    That musical lyre of thine !  
Passion and music and peace,  
Teach me the singing of these !  
    Teach me the tune of the vine !  
Teach me the stars to resemble,

As tide-stricken sea-cliffs to tremble  
Thy strings, as the wind-shaken pine !  
Let these and their fruits and the soul of their  
being be mine, very mine !

## EPODE

### CALLIOPE

As the tides invisible of ocean,  
Sweeping under the dark star-gemmed sea ;  
As the frail Caduceus' serpent-motion  
Moves the deep waves of eternity ;  
As the star-space lingers and moves on ;  
As the comet flashes and is gone ;  
As the light, the music, and the thunder  
Of moving worlds retire ;  
As the hoarse sounds of the heaven wonder  
When Zeus flings forth his fire ;  
As the clang of swords in battle ;  
As the low of home-driven cattle ;  
As the wail of mothers children-losing ;  
As the clamorous cries of darkening death ;  
As the joy-gasp of love's chosen choosing ;  
As the babe's first voluntary breath ;  
As the storm and tempest fallen at even ;  
As the crack and hissing of the levin ;  
As the soft sough of tree-boughs wind-shaken ;  
As the fearful cry of souls in hell,  
When past death and blinder life they waken,  
Seeing Styx before their vision swell,

When the bands of earth are broken  
As the spirit's spell is spoken  
On the vast and barren places  
Where the unburied wander still ;  
As the laughter of young faces ;  
As the Word that is the will ;  
As the life of wells and fountains,  
Of the old deep-seated mountains ;  
As the forest's desolate sighing ;  
As the moaning of the earth  
Where her seeds are black and dying ;  
As the earthquake's sudden birth ;  
As the vast volcano rending  
Its own breasts ; as music blending  
With young maiden's loving laughter,  
With the joy of fatherhood,  
With the cry of Mænads after  
Sacrifice by well or wood ;  
As the grave religious throng  
Moving silently along,  
Leading heifers, snowy-footed,  
Into glades and sacred groves,  
Where the altar-stone is suited  
To commemorate the Loves ;  
As the choir's most seemly chanting ;  
As the women's whispers haunting  
Silent woods, or chaster spaces,  
Where the river's water wends ;  
As the sound, when the white faces  
Burn from space, and all earth ends

In the presence of the Gods ;  
These and all their periods ;  
These, and all that of them is,  
I bestow on thee, and this  
Also, mine eternal kiss !  
In one melody of bliss  
These and thou and I will mingle,  
Till all Nature's pulses tingle,  
Hear and follow and obey thee,  
    Thee, the lyrist ; thee, the lyre !  
These shall hear and not gainsay thee,  
    Follow in the extreme desire,  
Mingling, tingling, mixed with thee  
Even to all Eternity.  
These, and all that of them is,  
Take from Calliope in this  
Single-hearted, many mouthèd, kiss.



*Orpheus, seated upon Olympus, tunes his lyre.*

ORPHEUS

FIRST word of my song,  
First tune of my lyre,  
Muse, loved of me long,  
Be near and inspire!  
Bright heart! Mother strong!  
Sweet sense of desire!

Be near as I lift the first notes impassioned of fervour  
and fire!

Not ever before  
Since Nature began  
Hath one cloven her core,  
Found the soul of her span;  
No son that she bore  
Her spirit might scan;

But I, being born beyond Nature, have known her and yet  
am a man.

Ye fieriest flowers,  
Life-stream of the world,  
In passionate bowers  
Of mystery curled,

Come forth ! for the powers  
Of my crying are hurled :—  
Come forth ! O ye souls of the fire, where the sound of  
my singing is whirled !

Ye blossoms of lightning,  
Bare boughs of the tree  
Of life, where the brightening  
Abysses of sea  
Reveal ye, the whitening  
Swords kindled of me.  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O lightning, the flames of the  
Gods flung free !

#### THE LIGHTNING

The wand of Hermes, the caduceus wonder-  
working,  
Sweeps in mid-æther—  
Where we are lurking  
It finds us and gathers.  
By our mother the amber  
In her glorious chamber ;  
By the flames that enwreathe her ;  
By the tombs of our fathers ;  
Awake ! let us fly, the compeller is nigh.  
Strike ! let us die !

#### ORPHEUS

Ye powers volcanic,  
Cyclopean forces,

Workers Titanic,  
I know your courses.  
By fury and panic,  
By Dis and his horses,  
Come forth! I invoke ye, volcanoes, arise from your  
cavernous sources!

#### THE VOLCANOES

The Hephæstian hammer on the anvil of hell,  
In the hollows accurst,  
Falls for the knell  
Of the children of earth.  
By the strength of our fires,  
The fierce force of our sires,  
Let us roar, let us burst!  
By the wrath of our birth,  
Up! and boil over in rivers of lava!  
Uncover! Uncover!

#### ORPHEUS

Lift up thine amber  
Lithe limber limbs,  
Lissome that clamber  
Like god-reaching hymns;  
The flame in its chamber  
Of glory that swims,  
The spirit and shape of the fire, mine eyes with fine dew  
that bedims!

Exempt from the bond  
All others that binds,  
As a flowery frond  
The spark of thee blinds,  
Within and beyond  
As a thought of the mind's  
In all, and about, and above! I invoke thee, my word as  
the wind's.

### THE FIRE

I, raging and lowering,  
I, flying and cowering,  
I, weaving and woven,  
Budding and flowering,  
Spiring and showering,  
Cleaving and cloven!  
My being encloses  
Fountains of roses,  
Lilies, and light!  
I wrap and I sunder!  
I am lightning and thunder!  
The world-souls wonder  
At me and my might!

All-piercing, all-winding,  
All-moving, all-blinding,  
All shaken in my hissing;  
My life's light finding  
All spirits, and binding  
Their love with my kissing;

Ruthless, fearless,  
Imperial, peerless,  
    Creep I or climb.  
Nought withstands me,  
Bursts me or brands me ;  
Nor Heaven commands me,  
    Nor Space, nor Time.

Above, the Supernal !  
Below, the infernal !  
    Of all am I master.  
On Earth, the diurnal !  
In all things eternal !  
    Life, love, or disaster !  
Abiding unshaken,  
I sleep and I waken  
    On wonderful wings ;  
In depth and in height,  
In darkness and light,  
In weakness and might,  
In blindness and sight,  
In mercy and spite,  
In day and in night,  
Averse or aright,  
For dule or delight,  
    I am master of things.

#### ORPHEUS

O mother, I fear me !  
    The might of the lyre !

They tremble to hear me,  
The powers of the fire.  
Come near me to cheer me!  
Be near and inspire!  
Be strength in my heart and good courage, and speed in  
the single desire!

The fire knows its master!  
They flicker and flare,  
Dread dogs of disaster,  
Wild slaves of despair.  
Faster and faster—  
My soul is aware  
Of a sound that is dimmer and duller, wide wings adrift  
of the air.

Their forces that wander  
No God-voice know they!  
Their bridals they squander!  
Unknown is their way!  
The sky's heart? beyond her  
Sweet bosom they stray.  
Shall these then obey me and hear? Shall the tameless  
ones hear and obey?

From secretest places  
Whence darkness is drawn,  
Where terrible faces  
Enkindle the dawn,

From wordless wide spaces,  
The ultimate lawn,  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O wind, come forth to me  
fleet as a fawn.

#### THE WINDS

From fourfold quarters,  
The depth and the height,  
We come, the bright daughters  
Of day shed on night ;  
The sun and the waters  
Have brought us to light ;  
The sound of him slaughters  
Our soul in his sight.  
We hear the loud murmur ; we know  
him ; we rest ;  
We breathe in his breast.

#### ORPHEUS

By sunlight up-gathered  
As dust of his cars,  
By moonlight unfathered,  
Unmothered of stars,  
Unpastured, untethered,  
Unstricken of scars,  
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O clouds ! ye veils ! ye divine  
avatars !

### THE CLOUDS

Sun's spirit is calling !  
We gather together,  
White wreaths, as appalling  
Pale ghosts of dead weather,  
The veil of us falling  
On snow-height and heather,  
Or hovering and scrawling  
Strange signs in the æther.  
We hear the still voice, and we know him :  
we come !  
We are sightless and dumb.

### ORPHEUS

More frail than your friends,  
The clouds borne above,  
The light of thee blends  
With the moon and her love.  
Thy spirit descends  
As a white-throated dove.  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O mist, and make me a  
sharer thereof !

### THE MIST

From valleys of violet  
My shadow hath kissed,  
From low-lying islet,  
A vision of mist,

The voice of my pilot  
Steals soft to insist.  
O azure of sky, let  
Me pass to the tryst !  
I hear the low voice of my love ; and I rest  
A maid on his breast.

#### ORPHEUS

Thou child of soft wind  
And the luminous air,  
Thou, stealing behind  
As a ghost, as a rare  
Soft dew, as a blind  
Fierce lion from his lair,  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O rain, look forth with thy  
countenance fair !

#### THE RAIN

From highland far drifted,  
From river-fed lawn,  
From clouds thunder-rifted,  
I leap as a fawn.  
The voice is uplifted,  
The lord of my dawn ;  
My spirit is shifted,  
My love is withdrawn.  
I hear the sweet feet of my God ; I know him ; I fall  
In tears at his call.

ORPHEUS

Cold lips and chaste eyes  
Of frost-fall that leap,  
That shake from the skies  
On the earth in her sleep  
Kiss nuptial, arise  
As the lyre-strings sweep !  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O frost, the valleys await  
thee and weep.

THE FROST

So silent and wise  
In her cerement clothes,  
So secretly lies  
My soul in my snows ;  
I awake, I arise,  
For my spirit now knows  
The first time in her eyes  
That a voice may uncloset  
My petals : I hear it ; I come ; I clasp the warm ground  
In my passion profound.

ORPHEUS

In valleys heaped high,  
In drifts lying low,  
Swift slopes to the sky,  
Come forth to me, snow !

Thy beauty and I  
Are of old even so  
As lover and lover. Come forth ! I invoke thee ! the hills  
are aglow.

#### THE SNOW

Bright breasts I uncover,  
Heart's heart to thy gaze ;  
O lyre of my lover,  
I know thee, thy praise.  
Black heavens that hover,  
Blind air that obeys,  
I come to thee over  
The mountainous ways  
As a bride to the bridegroom : I blush, but I come  
And bow to thee dumb.

#### ORPHEUS

O blacker than hell,  
O bluer than heaven,  
O green as the dell  
Lit of sunlight at even !  
O strong as a spell !  
O bright as the levin !  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O ice, by their anguish, the  
rocks thou hast riven !

#### THE ICE

My steep-lying masses,  
Mine innermost sheen,

My soundless crevasses,  
My rivers unseen,  
My glow that surpasses  
In azure and green  
The rocks and the grasses.  
Above, I am queen.  
These know thee ; I know thee, O master, I hear and obey.  
I follow thy lyrical sway.

#### ORPHEUS

O tenderest child  
And phantom of day !  
Gleam fitful and wild  
On the flowery way !  
Blue skies reconciled  
To the kisses of clay !  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O dew ! The maiden must  
hear and obey.

#### THE DEW

Life trembling on leaves,  
Sunrise shed in tears,  
Love's arrow that cleaves  
The veil of the years,  
Light gathered in sheaves  
Of tenderest fears  
As dayspring enweaves  
My soul into spheres—  
I hear, and I nestle upon thee, O lyrist supreme,  
Light loves in a dream.

### ORPHEUS

Child of sweet rain,  
O fathered of frost !  
Bitterest pain  
The birth of thee cost.  
Passion is slain  
When wished of thee most.  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O hail, thou lord of a terrible  
host !

### THE HAIL

My father was glad of me  
In places unseen ;  
My mother was sad of me,  
Where wind came between ;  
Winter is mad of me,  
Earth is my queen ;  
Meadows are clad of me,  
Nestled in green.  
As pearls in the cloudland I slept ; but I hear the loud  
call ;  
I obey it and fall !

### ORPHEUS

Rain's guerdon and daughter  
By sunlight's spies  
Divided in water,  
O light-stream, arise !

Seven petals that slaughter  
The menace of Dis,  
Come forth ! I invoke thee, O rainbow, thou maid of the  
myriad eyes !

#### THE RAINBOW

In multiple measure  
The flowers of us fold  
The scarlet and azure  
And olive and gold,  
Hyperion his treasure  
Of light that is rolled  
In music and pleasure  
Unheard and untold.  
We are kisses of light and of tears, love's triumph on  
fear.  
We obey : I am here !

#### ORPHEUS

Dim lights shed around me  
In many a form  
Like lovers surround me :—  
O tender and warm !  
They hunt me, they hound me ;  
They struggle and swarm—  
Come forth ! I invoke ye united, the manifold shape of  
the storm !

### THE TEMPEST

Wide-winged, many-throated,  
Colossal, sublime,  
I come and am coated  
With feathers of Time.  
I hear the deep note, head  
My pinions to climb,  
The roar of devoted  
Large limbs of the mine  
That mocks the loud lords of Olympus ; we mingle ; I  
wake.  
I come with the sound of a snake.

### ORPHEUS

O storm many-winded,  
O life of the air,  
Thou angry and blinded  
Hast sky for thy share.  
O mother deep-minded,  
My lyre to my prayer  
Responds, and the elements answer or ever my soul is aware.  
  
Ye powers of deep water  
And sea-running bays,  
Earth's fugitive daughter  
In deep-riven ways,  
Enamoured of slaughter,  
A mirage of grays,  
Deep blues, and pale greens unbegotten, I turn to your  
lyrical praise.

I tune the loud lyre  
To the haunts of the vale  
As a sea-piercing fire  
On the wings of the gale.  
I lift my desire,  
I madden, I wail !  
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O powers, in the waters that  
purple and pale.

Come forth in your pleasure,  
O fountains and springs !  
Come dance me a measure  
Unholpen of wings !  
Show, show the deep treasure,  
Unspeakable things !  
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O fountains, I sweep the in-  
vincible strings.

#### THE FOUNTAINS

In the heather deeply hidden,  
From the caverns darkly drawn,  
In the woodlands man-forbidden,  
In the gateways of the dawn,  
In the glad sweet glades descended,  
On the stark hills gathered high,  
Where the snows and trees are blended,  
Kissed at birth by sun and sky ;  
We have heard the summons : we are open to the day-  
spring's eye.

ORPHEUS

O broad-bosomed lakes  
Whence the mist-tears uprise,  
That shed in sweet flakes  
The gleam of the skies,  
Whose countenance takes  
The bird as he flies  
In kisses, come forth ! I invoke ye, O lakes, where the love  
of me lies !

THE LAKES

In the hollow of the mountain,  
In the bosom of the plain,  
Fed by river, stream, and fountain,  
Slain by sun, reborn of rain ;  
In the desert green-engirded,  
Lying lone in waste and wood,  
To my breast the many-herded  
Lowing kine in gracious mood  
Come, drink deeply, and are glad of me, my pleasant  
solitude.

ORPHEUS

From the breast of the snow  
As a life-swollen stream,  
Your love-rivers flow  
Soft hued as a dream,  
Adrift and aglow  
With the sunlight supreme.  
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O torrents that fall in the  
mazes and gleam !

### THE MOUNTAIN TORRENTS

Falling fast or lingering love-wise,  
Gathered into mirror-lakes,  
Floating sprayed through heaven dovewise,  
Dreaming, dashing ; sunlight shakes  
Into million-coloured petals  
All our limpid drops, and wraps  
Earth with green, as water settles  
On the rocks and in their gaps,  
Mossy rainbow-tinted maidens, flowers and fernshoots in  
their laps.

### ORPHEUS

Low down in the hollows  
And vales of the earth,  
What eagle-sight follows  
Your length and green girth ?  
Your light is Apollo's,  
Diana's your mirth !  
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O rivers, I have watched your  
mysterious birth !

### THE RIVERS

In the lowland gently swelling,  
Born and risen out of rain,  
Wide the curves and arrowy dwelling  
Where we rest or roll again.

There our calm sides shield the mortal,  
Bears his bark our breast, and we  
Follow to the mystic portal  
Where we mingle with the sea.  
Every life of earth we list to : should not we then answer  
thee?

#### ORPHEUS

O sea mixt with æther  
In whirls that awake,  
Roar skywards and wreathe her  
Bright coils as a snake,  
In agony seethe her  
Sad cries for the sake  
Of peace—I invoke ye! Come forth! O spouts in the  
wave's wild wake!

#### THE WATERSPOUTS

Whirling over miles of ocean,  
Lowering o'er the solemn sea,  
Hears our life the deep commotion  
That we know—thy witchery.  
Wheeling, hating, fearing ever  
As we thunder o'er the deep,  
Death alone our path can sever,  
Death our guerdon if we weep.  
We obey thee, we are with thee! Wilt thou never let us  
sleep?

ORPHEUS

O rolled on the river  
By might of the moon,  
Ye tremble and quiver,  
Ye shudder and swoon !  
The cities ye shiver :  
The ships know your tune.  
Come forth! I invoke thee, O eagre! dread rival of  
shoal and typhoon !

THE EAGRE

Flings my single billow spuming  
Into midmost air the world,  
As the echo of my booming  
To the furthest star is hurled.  
Now I hear the lunar clashing  
That evokes me from the tide,  
Now I rise, my fury lashing,  
Rolling where the banks divide—  
I obey thee, I am with thee, Lord of Lightning, lotus-eyed !

ORPHEUS

In sacred grove,  
In silent wood,  
In calm alcove,  
In mirrored mood,

What light of love  
Your depth endued?  
Come forth! I invoke ye, O wells, ye dwellers of dim  
solitude!

#### THE WELLS

Deep and calm to heaven's mirror  
Through the cedarn grove or ashen,  
Willow-woven, or cypress terror,  
To the sky's less serene fashion  
Still we look: around our margin  
Holy priestess, longing lover,  
Poet musing, vagrant virgin,  
Nor their own mild looks discover,  
But the light and glow of that they are meditating over.

#### ORPHEUS

O curves un beholden,  
Bright glory of bays!  
Deep gulfs grown golden  
With dawn and its ways!  
With sunset enfolden  
In silvery praise!  
Come forth! I invoke ye, O gulfs, where the sea is as  
children, and plays.

#### THE BAYS

Where the hills reach to heaven behind us  
A voice is rolled over the steep,  
Some godhead whose glory would blind us,  
Reflected far-off on the deep.

We hear the low chant that may bind us,  
The song from the ultimate shore.  
We come that our lover may find us  
His bride as he found us before.  
We listen, and love ; and his voice is the voice of the  
God we adore.

#### ORPHEUS

Come forth in your gladness,  
O end of all these !  
O sorrow and madness  
And passion and ease,  
Sharp joy and sweet sadness,  
Deep life and deep peace !  
Come forth ! I invoke you, ringed round, earth's girdle,  
the manifold seas !

#### THE SEA

I hear but one voice in our voices ;  
One tune, multitudinous notes ;  
One life that burns low or rejoices,  
One song from the numberless throats.  
Where ice on my bosom is piled,  
Where palm-fronded islands begem  
My breast, where I rage in the wild  
White storms, where I lap the low hem  
Of earth's mantle, or war on her crags, I am one, and my  
soul is in them.

I am mother of earth and her daughter ;  
I am father of heaven and his son ;

I am fire in the palace of water ;  
I am God, and my glory is one !  
I am bride of the sun and the starlight ;  
The moonlight is bride unto me ;  
I am lit of my deeps with a far light,  
My heart and its flame flung free.  
I am She, the beginning and end ; I am all, and my name  
is the Sea !

ORPHEUS

Then thou, O my mother,  
Hast given to me  
The power of another,  
The watery key.  
Bright air is my brother,  
My sister the sea ;  
I have called, and they answer and come ; and their song  
is but glory to thee.

One other is left me,  
The light of the earth.  
If Fate had bereft me,  
Oh Muse, of thy birth,  
Still I had cleft me  
A way in her girth !  
I tune the loud lyre once again to the mother of men in her  
mirth.

O mighty and glad  
In spring-time and summer !  
O tearful and sad  
When the sun is grown dumber,

When the season is mad,  
And the gods overcome her,  
When the sky is fulfilled of the frost and the fingers of  
winter numb her !

O marvellous earth  
Of multiple mood  
That givest men birth  
And delicate food,  
Red wine to make mirth  
Of thine own red blood,  
And corn and green grass and sweet flowers and fruits  
most heavenly-hued !

Borne skyward in swoon  
By arrowy hours,  
Girt round of the moon  
And the girdling flowers,  
The sun for a boon,  
Sweet kisses of showers,  
O mother, O life, O desire, my soul is a bird in thy  
bowers !

My soul is caught up  
In thy green-hearted waves.  
I drink at the cup  
Of thy sweet valley graves.  
My spirit may sup  
Slow tunes in thy caves.  
O hide me, thy child, in thy bosom, that the heart in me  
yearns to and craves.

Most virginally sprung  
In the shadow of light,  
Eternally young,  
A magical sight,  
Wandering among  
Day, twilight, and night,  
As a bride in her chamber that dreams many visions of  
varied delight.

O how shall my lyre  
Divide thee, dispart  
Thy water and fire,  
Thy soul and thy heart,  
Thy hills that spring higher,  
Thy flowers that upstart,  
How quire thee, my limitless love, with a lewd and a  
limited art?

A fortress, a sphere,  
An arrow of flame ;  
Let thy children appear  
At the sound of thy name !  
In my silence uprear  
The sweet guerdon of shame !  
Be they choral to hymn thee, O mother, thy magic  
ineffable fame !

Last birth of the Sun,  
Best gift of the giver,  
Thou surely art One !  
As the moon on the river,

Whose star-blossoms run,  
Kiss, tremble, and shiver,  
And roll into ultimate space, and are lost to man's vision  
for ever.

Come forth to the sound  
Of the lightning lyre,  
Ye valleys profound  
As a man's desire,  
Ye woodlands bound  
In the hills that are higher  
Than even the note of a bird as it wings to the solar fire !

Ye fruits and corn,  
Gold, rose, and green,  
Vines purple-born,  
Pearl-hidden sheen,  
Trees waving in scorn  
Of the grass between !  
Come forth in your chorus, and chant the praise of your  
mother and queen !

Ye trees many-fronded  
That shake to the wind,  
Green leaves that have sounded  
My harp in your kind,  
Light boughs that are rounded,  
Grey tops that are shrined  
In the tears of the heaven as they fall in the blackening  
storm grown blind !

Ye fields that are flowered  
In purple and white,  
Embossed and embowered  
By the love of the light,  
Gold-sandalled and showered,  
Dew-kissed of the night,  
Your song is too faint and too joyous for mortals to hear  
it aright.

Blue pansies, and roses,  
And poppies of red,  
Pale violets in posies  
Where Hyacinth bled,  
The flower that closes  
Its dolorous head ;—  
What song may be sung, or what tune may be told, or  
what word may be said ?

All tropical scent,  
Blossom-kindled perfume,  
Love-colours new-lent  
By the infinite womb,  
Gold subtlety blent  
With the scarlet bloom ;—  
Shall ye in my melody live? Shall my song be not  
rather your tomb?

Most musical moves  
The head of the corn ;  
Strong glorious loves  
Of its being are born.

Dim shadows of groves  
Of Demeter adorn  
The waves and the woods of the earth, the heart of the  
mother forlorn.

Caves curved of the wind,  
Deep hollows of earth,  
Whence the song of the blind  
Old prophet had birth,  
The caves that confined  
Deep music of mirth,  
Thy caves, O my mother, are these not a gem in thy  
virginal girth ?

Ye mountains uplift  
As an arrow in air ;  
Ice-crowned, rock-cliffed,  
Snow-bosomed bare,  
I give ye the gift  
Of a voice more fair.  
Leave echo, and wake, and proclaim that ye stand against  
death and despair !

Ye hills where I rested  
In rapture of life,  
From dawn calm-breasted  
To evening's strife,  
Where skies were nested  
With mist for a wife !  
Leave echo, and speak for yourselves : let your song  
pierce the heaven as a knife !

Olympus alone  
Of earth's glories is taken  
For deity's throne  
Deep-frozen, storm-shaken.  
What glories are shown  
When their slumbers awaken !  
The avalanche thunders adown, and the gods of the gods  
are forsaken.

To mortals your voices  
Are mighty and glad.  
The maiden rejoices :  
The man is grown mad  
For love, and his choice is  
The choice of a lad  
When a virgin first smiles on his suit, and the summer  
for envy is sad.

Wan grows Aphrodite,  
And Artemis frail ;  
Apollo less mighty,  
Iacchus too pale.  
Dark Hades grows bright, he  
Alone may avail  
When the god and the mortal are one, as the mountain  
is one with the gale.

#### THE CHILDREN OF EARTH

Our hair deep laden with the scent of earth,  
The colour of her rosy body's birth,  
Our mother, lady and life of all that is divine ;

We gather to the sombre sound, as spring  
Had whispered, "Follow," hiding in her wing  
Her glorious head and flowing breast of wine.  
Though in the hollow of her heart be set  
So deep and awful a fire, though the net  
Of all her robes be frail as we are fine,  
We gather, listening to the living lyre  
Like falling water shot with amber fire,  
And blown aloft by winds even to heaven's desire.

Deep starry gems set in a silver sea,  
Sullen low voices of dark minstrelsy,  
Light whispers of strange loves, of silver woven,  
Dumb kisses and wild laughter following :  
All these as lives of autumn and of spring  
We are : we follow across the rainbow cloven,  
A never-fading path of golden glory,  
Whereof the lone Leucadian promontory  
Holds one divinest gate : the other troven  
Far, far beyond in interlunar skies,  
Where the Himālayas stir them, and arise  
To listen to the song that swells our arteries.

O moving labyrinth sun-crowned, dread maze  
Of starry paths, of Zeus-untrodden ways,  
Of mystic vales unfooted of the deep,  
Our mother, virgin yet in many places  
Unseen of man, beholden of the faces  
Only of elemental shapes of sleep

That are ourselves, her daughters wild and fair  
Caught nymphwise in the kisses of the air,  
That flings our songs reverberate from steep to steep,  
Songs caught in solar light, we are shed  
Even down beyond the valleys of the dead,  
And smiled upon in groves ruled by the holy head.

Great Pan hath heard us, children of his wooing,  
Great Pan, that listens to the forest, suing  
Vainly His peace that dwells even in the desolate halls.  
The delicately-chiselled flowers nod,  
Look to the skies, and see thee for a God,  
O sightless lyre that wails, O viewless voice that calls!  
Thy sound is in our depth and in her womb,  
Far in Spring's milky breast, in Autumn's gloom,  
In Summer's feast and song, in Winter's funerals.  
In the dead hollow of the hills there rings,  
Sharp song, like frost hissing on silver wings,  
Or like the swelling tune we listen to for Spring's.

We come, we mountains, crowned and incense-bringing,  
Robed as white priests, the solemn anthem singing;  
Or as an organ thundering fiery tunes.  
We come, we greener hills, and rend the sky  
With happier chorus and the songs that die  
Or mix their subtle joy and being with the moon's.  
We come, we pine-clad steeps, we feathery slopes,  
With footfalls softer than the antelope's.  
We listen and obey : the sacred slumberer swoons

More tranced than death in this far following,  
Careless of winter, not invoking spring ;  
And all the witless woods company us and sing.

But not the glades by song of thee unstricken ?  
Not they ? Shall they refuse the pulse to quicken,  
Soft smiting the low melody of light ?  
Tuned without fingers, the wild woods lift high  
The wordless chant, the murmurous melody,  
The song that dwells like moon-enkindled night.  
We draw from low palm groves and cedar hills,  
From stern grey slumbers, for thy music fills  
All earth with unimaginable delight.  
Have we not brought the leaves dew-diamonded,  
The buds fresh-gleaming, star-blossoms, and shed  
Our scent and colour and song around thy sacred head ?

We that are flowers are kindled in thy praise,  
Even as thy song shed lustre and swift rays,  
Darting to brighten and open the folded flowers.  
The violet lifts its head, the lily lightens,  
The daisy shakes its dew, the pansy brightens,  
All cups of molten light upon the twilight hours.  
The poppy flames anew, the buttercup  
Glow with fresh fire, the larkspur rouses up  
To be the lark indeed amid the azalea bowers.  
Magnolia and light blooms of roses mute  
Rouse them to gather in one golden lute  
In fairy light and song into the sky to shoot.

The laughing companies of corn awaken,  
Their wind-swept waves by Dædal music taken  
    Into a golden heaven of festal song.  
We shake and glisten in the sun, we see  
The very soul and majesty of thee  
    Thrill in the lyre and leave the lazy long  
Notes for crisp magic of sharp rustling sound,  
And thy life quickens and thy loves abound,  
    Listening the answer of our dancing throng.  
Joy, sleep, peace, laughter, thought, remembrance, came  
Even at our prelude, a death-quickenning flame,  
And earth rejoiced throughout to hear Demeter's name.

We come, in bass deep-swelling, rocks and caves,  
A hollow roar across the golden waves  
    Hidden in islands set deep in the untravelled sea.  
Across the corn from storm-cleft mountain-sides  
Our voice peals, like the thunder of the tides,  
    Into the darkling hills that fringe Eternity.  
Dire and divine our womb unfruitful bears  
Deep music darker than tempestuous airs  
    When Heaven's anger wakes : when at our own decree,  
With clanging rocks sky-piercing for our tomb,  
We call the thunder from our own black womb,  
We hear the voice and we obey—we know not whom !

We hear thee, who are cliffs and pinnacles  
Higher than heaven's base, founded far in hell's ;  
    We hear, that sunder the blue skies of heaven ;

Our voiceless clefts and spires of delicate hue,  
Changing and lost in the exultant blue,  
    By fire and whirlwind fashioned and then riven,  
Invoke fresh song, with deep solemnity  
In noble notes of mastery answering thee,  
    By some young tumult in our old hearts driven ;  
And this immortal path of splintered rock  
Shall lead the wild chant to the sky, and mock  
The nectared feast of Gods with its impassioned shock.

Deep-mouthed, I, earthquake, wake in echoing thunder.  
I break my mother's breast ; I tear asunder  
    The womb that bore me ; I arise in terror,  
Threatening to ruin her, crag, crown, and column,  
Reverberate music of that mighty and solemn  
    Call of creation, Vulcan's awful mirror.  
I rend the sky with clamour terrible,  
Shaking the thrones of earth and heaven and hell,  
    Confound the universe in universal error.  
I sound the awful note that summons mortals,  
As I awake, to pass the dreadful portals  
And face the gloom of Dis, the unnameable immortals.

Soft our mild music steals through thunderous pauses,  
A phrase made magic by the Second Causes,  
    The mighty Ones that dwell beneath the empyrean.  
We, vines and fruits and trees with autumn laden,  
Sing as the bride-song of a married maiden  
    Before the god-like vigour of the man

Breaks the frail temple-doors of love asunder,  
And wakes the new life's promise in pale wonder,  
    Shattering the moulded glass, the shape Selenian.  
Fruits of the earth, our low song joins the crowd.  
We need not (to be heard) to thunder loud.  
Our hearts are lifted up, our heads with love low bowed.

The tenderest light, the deepest hidden, is shed  
Up through dark earth—your home, O happy dead!—  
    Crusted in darkness lie the secret lights.  
Formed in the agony of earth as tears,  
Clothed in the crystal mirror of the years,  
    We dwell, sweet-hearted nun-like eremites!  
Diamond and ruby, topaz and sapphire,  
Emerald and amethyst, one clear bright fire,  
    We are earth's stars below, as she above hath Night's.  
Our sweet clean song pierces the cover,  
And thin keen notes of music flit and hover  
Like spirit-birds upon the lyre of this our lover

We, children of the mountains, lying low  
On earth's own bosom, deep, embowered, flow  
    In wide soft waves of land : upon us sweep  
The mightiest rivers : in our hollows lie  
Great lakes : our voices hardly rise, but die  
    In the cold streams of air : shallow and deep :  
Leagues by the thousand, dells a minute long ;  
All we are children of the mighty throng  
    That cluster where the mountains fail, and sleep

In such cool peace that even thy lyre awakes  
Hardly a soul that tenderer music makes.  
Yet we arise and listen for our own sweet sakes.

#### THE LIVING CREATURES OF THE EARTH

The heavy hand is held,  
And the whips leave weary blows.  
The mysteries of eld  
Are cancelled and expelled,  
And the miserable throes.

All we are shapen fair  
In many forms of grace,  
But change is everywhere,  
And time is all our share  
And all the ways of space.

One lives an hour of day ;  
One even man's life exceeds ;  
One loves to chase and slay ;  
One loves to sing and play ;  
Each soul to his own deeds !

A share of joy is ours,  
A double share of grief ;  
So sum the many hours  
In many hopes and powers,  
All powers except the chief.

Emotion fills our souls,  
And love delights us well,  
And joy of sense full rolls ;  
But leads us, and controls  
Life's central citadel.

Whence we were drawn who knows ?  
Of law or Gods or chance ?  
But, as life's river flows,  
What Sea shall clasp and close  
Beyond blind circumstance ?

Such little power we own  
Of vague experience,  
And instinct to enthrone  
The life's mere needs alone,  
Nor answer " why " and " whence.

Nor wandering in the night  
Our minds may apprehend  
Reflecting in pure light  
Of soul, what sound or sight  
May lead us to some end.

We hear the dim sound roll  
From distant mountains drawn,  
We follow, but no soul  
Guesses that silver goal,  
The sunset or the dawn.

The lyre entices fast  
Our willing feet and wings,  
We wonder from the past  
What spell is overcast  
From off the sonant strings.

Awhile we deem our mates  
Are calling through the wood ;  
Awhile the tune creates  
These unfamiliar states  
Of thinking solitude.

Awhile we gather clear  
A note of promise swell,  
A song of fate and fear,  
Assuring us who hear  
Of other shapes to dwell.

A promise vast and grand,  
As is the spangled sky !  
We dimly understand ;  
We join the following band  
Of dancing greenery !

We see all Nature bend  
To high Olympus' hill.  
Our tunes we choose and send ;  
We follow to the end,  
O Orpheus, all thy will.

Our little love and hate,  
Our hunger and our fear,  
Pass to a solemn state  
Pregnant with hope and fate.  
O Orpheus, we are here !

#### THE EARTH

Life hidden in death,  
Life shrined in the soul,  
Life bright for his breath,  
Life dark for his goal,  
I am Mother, and Burier, and Friend—  
Look thou to the end !

I am Light in thy Love,  
I am Love in thy Life.  
I am cloistered above  
Where the stars are at strife.  
I am life in thy light, and thy death  
Is part of my breath.

My voices are many,  
Thy lyre is but one ;  
But thou art not as any  
Soul under the sun !  
Thou hast power for an hour  
The motherly dower.

One voice of my voices  
Uncalled and unheard,  
No song that rejoices  
Of beast or of bird,  
No sound of my children sublime,  
But the spirit of time.

Fear is his name,  
Nor flickers nor dies  
His blackening flame.  
Beware, were thou wise!  
Not him shalt thou hail from the dusk with thy breath;  
His name—it is Death!

My seasons and years,  
Shalt thou traffic with these?  
Art thou Fate? Are her shears  
Asleep or at ease?  
Though Time were no more than the shape of thy glass—  
Beware! let him pass!

#### ORPHEUS

Not these do I fear,  
O Earth, for their peace.  
I cry till they hear  
O'er the desolate seas.  
I call ye! give ear,  
O seasons, to these  
Fleet-footed, the strings of the lyre! Come forth!  
I invoke ye—and cease.

O hours of the day,  
And hours of the night,  
Pause now while ye may  
In your heavenly flight!  
Give answer and say,  
Have I called ye aright?  
Are the strings of my lyre as fire, the voice of my  
singing as light?

### THE HOURS

Darkness and daylight in divided measure  
Gather as petals of the sunflower,  
In many seasons seek the lotus-treasure,  
Following as dancing maidens, mute for pleasure,  
The fervent flying footsteps of the Hour.

The sun looks over the memorial hills,  
The trampling of his horses heard as wind;  
He leaps and turns, and all his fragrance fills  
The shade and silence; all the rocks and rills  
Ring with the triumph of his steeds behind.

The bright air winnowed by the plumeless leapers  
Laughs, and the low light pierces to the bed  
Where lovers linger, where the smiling sleepers  
Stir, and the herds unmindful of their keepers  
Low for pure love of morning's dewy head.

The morning shakes its ocean-bathèd tresses,  
The bright sun broadens over all the earth.  
The green leaves fall, fall into his caresses,  
And all the world's heart leaps, again addresses  
Its life, and girds it in the golden girth.

Then noon full-fashioned lies upon the steep.  
The large sun sighs and turns his bridle-rein,  
Thinks of the ocean, turns his heart to sleep,  
Laughing no longer, not yet prone to weep,  
Feeling the prelude of the coming pain.

The hills and dales are dumb beneath the heat,  
And all the world lies tranced or mutely dreaming,  
Save some low sigh caught up where pulses beat  
Of warm love waiting in the arboreal seat  
Till the shade lengthen on the lawn light-gleaming.

Now all the birds change tune, and all the light  
Glow lowlier, musing on departed day.  
Strange wings and sombre, heralding the night,  
Fleet far across the woods ; and gleaming bright  
The evening star looks from the orient way.

Shadow and silence deepen : all the woods  
Take on a tenderer phrase of musical  
Breezes : the stream-sought homes and solitudes  
Murmur a little where the maiden moods  
Are sadder as the evening's kisses fall.

Like silver scales of serpenthood they fall  
Across the blind air of the evening ;  
Shadowy ghosts arise funereal  
And seek unspeakable things ; and dryads call  
The satyr-company to the satyr-king.

And all the light is over ; but the sky  
Shudders with blanched light of the unrisen moon.  
The night-birds mingle their sad minstrelsy  
For daylight's requiem : and the sea's reply  
Now stirs across the land's departed tune.

The moon is up : the choral crowd of stars  
Shapen like strange or unknown animals,  
Move in their measure : beyond Æolian bars  
The clustering winds, moving as nenuphars,  
Gather and muse before the midnight calls.

The darkness is most deep in hollow dells.  
There, blacker than Cocytus, lurk the shades  
Darker than death's, more terrible than hell's,  
Uttering unwritten words : the silent wells  
Keep their sweet secret till the morning maids

Bring their carved pitchers to the moss-grown side.  
For now beyond, below the east, appears  
A hint as if a band, silvern and wide,  
The girdle of some goddess amber-eyed,  
Rose from the solemn company of the spheres

The sky is tinged, as if the amorous flesh  
Of that same queen shone through the girdle drawn  
By her own kissing fervour through its mesh.  
Last, glory of godhead ! flickers, flames the fresh  
First faint frail rose and arrow of the dawn.

### SPRING

Mild glimpses of the quiet moon, let through  
Tall groves of cedar, stain the glade ; gleams mild  
The kirtle of the unweaned spring, stained blue  
From the blue breasts that suckle to the child.  
Through the new-leavèd trees  
The hidden stranger sees  
The moon's sweet light, the shadows listening  
If a ghost-foot should fall :  
And if a ghost-voice call  
Tremble the leaves and light-streaks of the spring.  
On wavering wing  
The small clouds gallop in the windy sky :  
The hoarse rooks croak and droop them to the nest :  
One sweet small throat begins to sing,  
Becomes the song, losing identity  
Ere its wail wakes the long low-lying crest  
That rears across the west.

Spring, maiden-footed, steals across the space,  
Sandalled with tremulous light, with flickering hair  
Blown o'er the sweet looks of the fair child-face,  
Like willows drooping o'er the liquid mere,

Whence timid eyes look far,  
Even where her kisses are  
Awaited by the tender mother lips,  
Earth's, that is lonely and old,  
Grown sad, fearful, and cold  
With bitter winter and the sun's eclipse ;  
So the child slips  
From bough to bough between the weeping tress,  
And with frail fingers smooths and touches them.  
They murmur in their sleep : the moonlight dips  
And laughs, seeing how young buds catch life from  
these  
Child-kisses on the stem.

The leaves laugh low, and frosty-footed Time  
Shoulders a lighter burden ; in the dale  
Some distant notes of lovely music climb,  
Thrown from the golden-throated nightingale,  
Pale sobs of love and life  
With death and fear at strife,  
Fiercely beset and hardly conquering,  
When spring's bright eyes at last  
Flash through the sullen past,  
And tune its pain to tears, its peace to sing.  
The earth's lips cling  
To the child's bosom, and low smiles revive ;  
Love is new-born upon the golden hour,  
And all the life of all the exultant spring  
Breathes in the wind that wakes the world alive  
Into the likeness of a flower.

## SUMMER

Full is the joy of Maidenhood made strong,  
Too proud to bend to swift Apollo's kiss ;  
Rejoicing in its splendour, and the throng  
Of gaunt hounds leashless before Artemis.  
In strange exulting bliss  
The maiden stands, full-grown, with bounding breasts  
Bared to the noon, and narrow  
Keen eyes, that glance, dim fires that veil their crests  
To flame along the arrow  
Aimed at some gallant of ten tines perched high  
Branching against the sky  
His cedar-spreading horns : erect she stands,  
Holding in glimmering hands  
A silver bow across the shining weather,  
While, bound in pearl-wrought bands,  
Her bright hairstreams ; she draws the quivering feather  
Back to the small ear curved : with golden zone  
Gathering her limbs she stands alone  
Like a young antelope poised upon a spire of stone.

What tender lightning flashes in the bosom  
Heaving with vigour of young life ? What storm  
Gathers across the brow's broad lotus-blossom ?  
What sudden passion fills the fragrant form  
With subtle streams of warm  
Blood tingling to the finger-tips of rose ?  
Swiftly the maiden closes  
The lustre of her look : disdainful glows  
The fire of wreathing roses

In her bright cheeks : she darts away to find  
Like some uncovered hind  
    Shade in the forest from the stag's pursuit,  
    Ere the sun's passion shoot  
His ray, strange deeps unknown and feared to uncover.  
    But now the ancient root  
Of some wise oak betrays her to her lover :  
    She stumbles and falls prone : the forest noon  
    Guesses life's law ; all nature's tune  
    Tells that the hour is come when May must grow to June.

•Then in the broad glare of the careless sun  
    Apollo's light is on her and within ;  
His shafts of glory pierce her one by one ;  
    His kisses darken, shivering and keen,  
    Swift glories cold and clean  
Of that chaste bridal, and the earth gets gladness,  
    Till the last winter's traces  
Fall from the spring's last cold wind—shining sadness !—  
    And from the frail new faces  
Blushing through moss ; and all the world is light  
With the unsufferably bright  
    Full joy and guerdon of that sunny season  
    By Love's sweet trap of treason.  
    So the bright girl is now a woman brighter ;  
    And childhood sees a reason  
    Beneath the strong stroke of the goodly smiter  
For all the past : and love at last is hers.  
No more the bosom's pride demurs  
While in her womb the first faint pulse of motherhood  
    soft stirs.

## AUTUMN

Full amber-breasted light of harvest-moon,  
And sheaves of corn remembering the sun  
Laughing again for love of that caress  
When night is fallen, and the sleepy swoon  
Of warm waves lap the shoreland, one by one ;  
Forgetful kisses like a dream's possess  
All the low-lying land,  
And, statelier than the swaying form  
Of some loud God, lifting the storm  
In his disastrous hand,  
Steps the sweet-voiced, the mellow motherhood  
Glad of the sun's kiss, full of life, well wooed  
And won and brought to his bed,  
Proud of her rhythm in the lusty kiss,  
Triumphant and exulting in the mood  
Wherein her being is  
Crowned with a husband's head,  
And left in solitude which is not solitude.

She strides with mighty steps across the glade  
Laughing, her bosom swelling with the milk  
Born of a million kisses : leaps her womb  
Pregnant with fruits, and latter flowers, and shade  
Of the great cedar-groves : soft, soft, as silk,  
Her skin glows amber, silvered with the bloom  
Mist-like of the moon's light,  
A slumberous haze of quietude  
Shed o'er the hardy limbs, and lustihood,

And boldness, and great might.  
Earth knows her daring daughter, and the sea  
Breaks into million-folded mystery  
Of flower-like flashes in the pale moonrise,  
Exulting also, now the sun is faded,  
With joy of her supreme fertility  
And glowing masteries  
Of autumn summer-shaded,  
The golden fruit of all the blossoming sky.

And now the watcher to the bright breasts blind  
Loses the seemingly shape, the loud swift song ;  
Now the moon falls, and all the gold is gone,  
And round the storm-caught shape hard gusts of wind  
Blow, and her leaves are torn, a flying throng  
Of orange and purple and red ; the sombre sun  
Shines darkly in her breast  
But wakes no joy therein,  
And all his kisses sharp and keen  
Bring only now desire of rest,  
Not their old rapture : the warm violet eyes  
Melt into sweet hot tears : subtler the sighs  
Are interfused of death ;  
And the bright looks grow duller,  
And fear is mingled with love's ecstasies  
Again, and all her breath  
Fails, and the shape and colour  
Fade, fail, are lost in the sepulchral seas.

## WINTER

Know ye my children? From the old strong breast  
Not weary yet of life's grey change, not drawn  
Into the utter peace of death, the rest  
Of the dim hour that lingers ere the dawn,  
Spring these that laugh upon thee. In the snow  
See forests bare and gaunt,  
Where wingèd whispers haunt,  
Lighting the dull sky with a slumberous glow ;  
Hear the strange sounds of winter chaunt ;  
Feel the keen wisdom of the winter thrill  
Young hearts with passionate foretaste  
Of death in some wild waste  
Of deserts darkening at some wild god's will,  
Of frozen steppes awaiting the repose  
That only death discovers, never sleep.  
My misery is this  
That I must wake to childhood gold and rose,  
And maidenhood, and wifehood, and still keep  
Bound on Life's fatal wheel—revolving bliss.

O that worn wisdom and the age of sorrow  
Could learn its bitter lesson, and depart  
Into some nightfall guiltless of a morrow,  
Into some cave's unprofitable heart  
Beyond this curse of birth ! O that dread night  
Could come and cover all,  
Even itself to fall  
To some abyss past resurrection's might !  
For the old whispers of my old life call

Accursèd hopes, accursèd fears, accursèd pleasures.  
Long-suffering of all life !  
Changed consciousness at strife !  
No dancer treads the melancholy measures  
Unchanged for one short tune : no dancer flags,  
The hateful music luring them to move  
Weary and desolate ;  
And as the rhyme revolves and shrills and drags  
Their limbs insane they smile and call it love,  
Or, mocking, call it hatred : it is Fate.

These grey eyes close to the deceitful dream  
Of death that will not take the tired for ever.  
Again, again, revolves the orb ; the stream,  
The dew, the cloud, the ocean, and the river.  
My magic wand and cup and sword and spell  
Languish, forgotten fears.  
The cup is filled with tears ;  
The sword is red with blood ; the pentacle  
Built of flesh ; the wand its snake-head rears  
Swift energy : my labour is but lost.  
I, who thus thought all things to end,  
Find in the void no friend.  
I have but conjured up the fiend that most  
I trusted to abolish : all my toil  
Goes to give rest to life, and build anew  
These pinnacles of pain,  
Cupola upon cupola ; the soil  
To comfort, to avail, to assoil with dew,  
To build the year again.

ORPHEUS

O hours not of day  
But of æons that roll !  
Earth stretches away  
From pole unto pole ;  
Four seasons decay,  
Ere one sound of thy soul,  
O fervent and following years, springs over the solar goal !

Come forth to the sound  
Of the seven sweet strings !  
Advance and rebound !  
Be your pomp as a king's !  
Girdled around  
With seasons and stings  
As a serpent's encompassing Time. Come forth ! on the  
heavy grey wings !

Ye arbiter lords  
That sit as for doom,  
Bright splendour of swords  
Leaps forth in your gloom !  
But stronger my chords  
Shall lift in your womb  
The love of your passage and time, immemorial ages,  
your tomb.

Ye linger for long,  
But ye pass and are done :

But I, my sweet song  
Outliveth the sun !  
Ye are many and strong ;  
I am stronger, and one !  
Come forth ! I invoke ye, O years, in my evening  
orison.

### THE YEARS

Crowned with Eternity, beyond beginning ;  
Sandalled with wings, Eternity's ; the end  
Far beyond sight of striving soul or sinning ;  
Ourselves see not, nor know, nor comprehend.  
Reeling from chaos, unto Chronos winning,  
Devoured of Him our Father and our friend,  
This is our life, lead winged or footed golden :  
We pass, and each of other is un beholden.

Ranged in dim spectral order and procession,  
We span man's thought, we limit him in time ;  
None of the souls of earth have had possession  
Of larger loves or passions more sublime.  
Where the night-caverns hide our solemn session  
The summoning word lifts up our holy rhyme.  
Even as a mighty river, bend to bend,  
We rise in turn and look toward the end.

Also, the Gods arisen from the living  
Lights of the sky, half hidden in the night,  
Vast shapes beholden of men unbelieving,  
Staggering the sense and reason with the sight.

Manifold, mighty, monstrous, no light giving  
Unto the soul that is not also light ;—  
We rise in ghastly power ; we know the token,  
The speech of silence and the song unspoken.

#### ORPHEUS

Come forth to the sound,  
Ye lustres of years  
That hide in profound  
Abysses of fears,  
Hidden and bound !  
The voice of tears  
Implores and impels ye, O lustres, with a tune that is  
strong as a seer's.

#### THE LUSTRES

Fivefold the shape sublime that lifts its head  
Uniform, self-repeating, comparable  
At last to a man's life : twice seven times dead  
Ere the light flickers in that citadel,  
Or the great whiteness lure his soul instead  
Of many-coloured earth : ere the strong spell  
Fail, and the Fates with iron-shapen shears  
Cut the frail silver, hide him from the years.

Fivefold : the year that is in darkness hidden,  
Being beginning : then the moving year,  
All change and tumult ; then the quiet unhidden  
Of deep reflection ; then the gladdening tear

Or saddening smile, the laughter not forbidden  
And love enfolding the green-woven sphere :  
Lastly, the burning year of flame and fume  
That burns men up in fire's sepulchral womb.

Fivefold : the child, the frail, the delicate :  
Then the strong laughing mischief : then the proud  
Fight toward manhood and the sense elate,  
Creative power and passion : then the loud  
Assertion of young will, the quickening rate  
And strength in blood, in youth with life endowed,  
And firmness fastening ; the last lustre's span  
Consolidates and shows the perfect man.

Fivefold : the humour changes as his child  
Calls him first " father " ; sense of strength divine  
Fills him ; then man's work in the world, and wild  
Efforts to fame : then steadier in the shrine  
Burns the full flame : then, turning, the years piled  
Seem suddenly a burden ; then the fine  
Flavour of full maturity is tasted :  
The man looks back, and asks if life be wasted.

Fivefold : delight in woman altering  
To joy of sunlight only : love of life  
Changing to fear of death : the golden spring  
Trembles ; he hates the cold, the winter strife,  
Laughs not with lust of combat : feebly cling  
His old hands : he has sepultured his wife :  
Last, palsied, shaking, drawing tremorous breath,  
He gasps—and stumbles in the pit of death.

## ORPHEUS

O girded and spanned  
By the deeds of time,  
Rocks shattered and planned  
In your depth : where climb  
The race and the land,  
And the growth sublime  
Of worlds—I invoke ye ! Come forth, ye centuries ! Come  
to the rhyme !

## THE CENTURIES

How hardly a man  
Though his strength were as a spring's  
Shall stretch out his span  
To the width of my wings !  
The years are enfolden  
In my bosom golden,  
My periods  
Are the hours of the Gods.  
They have their plan  
In my seasons ; all things  
Are woven in the span  
Of the spread of my wings.

My brazen gates cleft  
By shafts shed of time,  
Are ruined and left  
As the Gods sing their rhyme.

Buttress and joist are  
Effaced of the cloister.  
Fane after fane  
We lift us again  
To the hoarier transept  
Where ages climb,  
And ruin is left  
Where the Gods said their rhyme.

The deity-year  
(Whereof I am an hour)  
Shall be born and appear  
As the birth of a flower,  
Shall fade as they faded,  
The flower wreaths braided  
In maiden's hair.  
The Gods shall fare  
As the children of Fear  
In the Fear-God's Power,  
And their names disappear  
As the fall of a flower !

The universe-day  
(Whereof I am a second)  
Shall fall away  
And be no more reckoned ;  
Shall fall into ruin.  
(Sad garden it grew in ! )  
Ungessed at, unknown,  
Beyond them alone,

Is a space that is grey  
As it caught them, and beckoned,  
And lost them—their way  
Is nor counted nor reckoned!

Inconceivable hollow,  
Eternity's womb!  
Cataclysmal they follow,  
Tomb hidden in tomb.  
Reeled off and unspun,  
Time's fashion is done  
In the ultimate  
Abysses of fate.  
Æons they swallow,  
And swamp in the gloom,  
Where Eternities follow  
Their biers to their tomb.

#### ORPHEUS

O Mother, O hollow  
Sweet heart of the moon!  
O matchless Apollo  
That granted the tune!  
Time's children follow  
The strings that commune  
With Nature well cloven that comes to the lyre's lilt  
silver-hewn.

O bays of the wind,  
And shoreland of Thrace!

O beaten and blind  
In the light of my face !  
Heaven thunders behind,  
Hell shakes for a space,  
As I fling the loud sound to the sky, and the vaults of  
the Earth give place.

O mystical tune  
Of a magic litten  
Of music, the moon,  
The stars unsmitten,  
The sun, the unhewn  
Stones deeply bitten  
By runic fingers of time, where decrees of the Fates are  
written !

Time listens, obeys me ;  
All Nature replies ;  
Nought avoids me, nor stays me,  
Not checks, nor defies.  
Tribute she pays me  
From seas unto skies.  
But Death—shall he heed me or hear ? shall he list to the  
lyre and arise ?

O thou who art seated,  
Invisible king,  
The never-defeated,  
The shadowy thing !

What mortal hath greeted  
Thy shrine, but shall sing  
Not earthly but tunes of thine own, in the vaults of  
Aornos that ring?

Nor caring nor hearing  
For hearts that be bowed,  
Nor hating nor fearing  
Man's crying aloud,  
Solemnly spearing  
The single, the crowd,  
Thou sittest remote and alone, unprofane, with due silence  
endowed!

I call thee by Nature,  
My mother and friend!  
By every creature!  
By life and its end!  
By love, the true teacher,  
My chanting I send,  
Invoking thy stature immense, the terrible form of a fiend!

I hear not a word,  
Though my music be rolled  
As the song of a bird  
Through fields of gold.  
Hast thou not heard?  
Have I not told  
The magic that bridleth the Gods, the Gods in their  
houses of old?

Art thou elder than they  
In their mountain of light?  
Is thy fugitive way  
Lost in uttermost night?  
Shalt thou not obey,  
Or my lyre not affright,  
If I call thee by Heaven and Earth with a God's tumultu-  
ous might?

If I curse thee or chide  
Shalt thou tremble not, Thou?  
Not move thee and hide  
From the light of my brow?  
Shall my arrows divide  
Not the heart of thee now?  
Art thou cased in strong iron to mock the spells that all  
others avow?

Art thou muffled or hidden  
In adamant brass?  
Is my music forbidden  
In Orcus to pass?  
Have I cursed thee and chidden?  
My flesh being grass,  
I curse not as yet, but command thee; the names that  
avail I amass.

No sound? no whisper?  
No answer to me?  
From dawn-star to Hesper  
I call upon thee!

In the hour of vesper  
I change the key!  
I cry on Apollo to aid, I lift up my lyre on the sea.

Thou reaper of fear,  
Accurst of mankind,  
I charge thee to hear,  
Deaf horror deep-mined  
In hell! O uprear  
On the front of the wind!  
I curse thee! Thou hearest my hounds of thunder that  
mutter behind?

How strange is the dark  
And the silence around!  
Hardly the spark  
Of my silvery sound  
Moves, or may mark  
The heaven's dim bound.  
How strange! I have sought him in vain—perchance  
not in vain have I found!

No! Life thrills in me;  
Vibrates on the lyre;  
The Fates still spin me  
Their thread of desire:  
Still, woo and win me  
Soft eyes, and the dire  
Low fervour of sensual phrase, song kin to the nether-  
most fire!

In silence I wait  
For his voice to roll,  
For the coming of Fate,  
The strength of my soul.  
My words create  
One glorious whole  
From the fragments divided that seem past a man's or  
a god's control.

I, seeing the life  
Of the flowers renew,  
The victorious strife  
Of the spring run through,  
The child's birth rife  
With loftier dew—  
I know the deep truth in myself ; see acacia in cypress  
and yew.

Death is not at all !  
'Tis a mask or a dream !  
The things that befall  
Only slumber or seem !  
They fear ; they appal—  
They are not as ye deem !  
Death died when I dipped my lyre in the sweet Heli-  
conian stream !

Give praise to your lord,  
All souls that draw breath,  
All flowers of the sward !  
For the song of me saith :

“ Sound the loud chord !  
Let love be a wreath !  
Death is not for ye any more, for I am the Master of  
Death ! ”

### PARABASIS

As I sit in the sound  
Of the wash of the surf,  
On the long low ground,  
The trees and the turf ;  
In front the profound,  
The warrior seas,  
Upstirred of the breeze,  
By the far reef bound—  
I know the low music of love, I feel the sweet murmur  
in me,

My soul is in tune with the sea.

The stars are above me,  
The rocks are below me,  
The sea is around !  
Great Gods that love me  
Lead me, and show me  
Their powers profound.  
Their lightnings move me  
To stir me, to throw me  
As into a swoond,  
The song of the infinite surf that is beaten and bound  
As a fierce wolf-hound,  
The song that lures me, and lifts me, and mingles my  
soul into sound !

O Nature, my mother,  
Heart melted on heart  
At last! Not another,  
Not any shall part  
Thy soul from my art.  
How should it be otherwise,  
Sister divine,  
Lover, my mother wise,  
Wiser than wine?  
Seeing I linger  
Here on the beach—  
Let God's own finger  
Here to me reach,  
Making me singer  
Each unto each—  
Nature and Man made one  
In the light and fire of the sun,  
And the sobbing tune  
Of the moon,  
Wedded in cyclic bonds,  
Where fall the æon-fronds,  
Whose large bed bears a child  
(In its due period)  
Not merciful and not severe,  
Knowing nor love nor fear,  
But majesty most mild,  
Being indeed a God.

Yea, let the very ray-hand of Apollo  
Lead me where none may follow

Save in blind eagle-fury and full flight,  
Pythian against the light,  
Writing in all the sea, the trees, the flowers,  
The many-fruited bowers,  
The lusted lilies and arboreal scent  
And fresh young element  
Of blood in every osseous vein of time,  
New senses more sublime !  
Should it not be that the ill days are past  
And my soul lost at last,  
Lost in thy bosom who art mother of all  
Ere the first was, to fall  
After the end. And then, O soul endued  
(In this my solitude)  
With all the thousand elements of life,  
Shall I not call thee wife ?  
O Muse long wooed !  
Long called to in the forest, on the mountain,  
Reached after in the fountain,  
Grasped in the slumberous sea,  
And yet, ever, aye, ever ! escaping me !

But here where the wise pen  
And silver cadences outrunning song,  
And clear sweet clean-chiselled English, sharp and strong  
Of the one man among the latter men  
Who lived with Nature, saw her face to face,  
And died not : here in this consummate place,  
Immortal now, though the Antarctic sent  
Its mightiest coldest wave and rose and rent

The coral and annihilated land,  
Or though the swarthy hand  
Or foot misshapen of the Hephaestian,  
(Hating the air-breathing man,  
In such sweet love as dwells, above all other places  
Here, in our hearts and faces,  
Nature's and man's) if his coarse hand or foot,  
The implacable forceful brute,  
Shifted towards the bellows, and one blast  
Blew thorough all the air aghast  
And in one vast Titanic war,  
Almighty avenging roar,  
Oahu flung skywards blown in dust—and was no more—  
Even then immortal stands  
This loveliest of all lands,  
Lovelier even than they  
Know in Elysian paths, heroic bands  
Treading dim gardens brighter than the day,  
Even in his voice who is passed, and shall not pass away !  
Here therefore I know Nature ; I am filled  
With dew not earth-distilled  
As I have prayed in vain, not vainly willed.  
Now all the earth is stilled ;  
But ever the monotonous sea  
Keeps solemn symphony,  
Tuning my lyre to her own melody,  
Not understandable in colder lands  
Where no man understands  
More than the mart ; the raucous ironshod  
Feet, smashing verses ; the hard heavy hands

Of time : the hateful laugh where whoredom trod ;  
The savage snarl of man against his friend :—  
How should he (such an one) perceive the end,  
Or listen to the voice of Nature, know it for the voice of  
God ?

## EPODE

### NATURE

Lo ! in the interstellar space of night,  
Clothed with deep darkness, the majestic spaces  
Abide the dawn of deity and light,  
Vibrate before the passionless pale faces  
Shrined in exceeding glory, eremite.  
The tortoise skies in sombre carapaces  
Await the expression and the hour of birth  
In silence through the adamantine girth.

I rose in glory, gathered of the foam.  
The sea's flower folded, charioting me risen  
Where dawn's rose stole from its pearl-glimmering home,  
And heaven laughed, and earth : and mine old prison,  
The seas that lay beneath the mighty dome,  
Shone with my splendour. Light did first bedizen  
Earth with its clusters of fiery dew and spray,  
When I looked forth and cried " It is the day ! "

The stars are dewdrops on my bosom's space ;  
The sun and moon are glances through my lashes,

Long, tender, rays of night ; my subtle face  
Burns through the sky-dusk, lightens, fills, and flashes  
With solemn joy and laughter of love ; the grace  
Of all my body swaying stoops and dashes  
Swift to the daisy's dawn of love : and swiftest,  
O spirit of man, when unto me thou liftest !

Dawn shakes the molten fire of my delight  
From the fine flower and fragrance of my tresses !  
Sunset bids darken all my body's light,  
Mixing its music with the sad caresses  
Of the whole world : I wheel in wingless flight  
Through lampless space, the starless wildernesses !  
Beyond the universal bounds that roll,  
There is the shrine and image of my soul.

Nature my name is called. O fruitless veil  
Of the strange self of its own self begotten !  
O vision laughterless ! O shadowy tale !  
O brain that halts before its thought forgotten !  
Once all ye knew me—ere the earth grew pale,  
And Time began, and all its fruit lay rotten,  
Once, when thou knewest me indeed, and fed  
At these strong breasts—Ah ! but the days are dead !

Now, in the dusty corridors of Time,  
I am forgotten : Gaian language falters  
If I would teach thee half an hint sublime  
Shed of the rayless fire upon my altars.

Vain are the light and laughter of man's rhyme,  
Vain the large hymns, and soaring songs and psalters !  
My face, my breast, no soul of man uncovers,  
Nor is my bed made lovely with my lovers !

I long for purple and the holier kiss  
Of mortal lyrist ; in these arms to gladden ;  
To take him to the spring and source of bliss,  
And in his vast embrace to rouse me, madden  
Once with the light of passion, not to miss  
Uttermost rapture till the sweet loves sadden  
To sweeter peace thrilled with young ecstasy—  
Ah ! man's high spirit may not reach to Me !

I am Nature and God : I reign, I am, alone.  
None other may abide apart : they perish,  
Drawn into me, into my being grown.  
None other bosom is, to bear, to nourish,  
To be : the heart of all beneath my zone  
Of blue and gold is scarlet-bright to cherish  
My own's life being, that is, and is not other ;  
For I am God and Nature and thy Mother.

I am the thousand-breasted milky spouse,  
Virginal also : Tartarus and Gaia  
Twinned in my womb, and Chaos from my brows  
Shrank back abashed, my sister dark and dire,  
Mother of Erebus and Night, that ploughs  
With starry-sandalled feet the fields of fire ;  
My sister shrank and fell, the infernal gloom  
Changed to the hot sweet shadow of my womb.

I am : that darkness strange and uterine  
Is shot with dawn and scented with the rose ;  
The deep dim prison-house of corn and wine,  
Flowers, children, stars, with flame far subtler glows  
Formless, all-piercing, death-defying, divine,  
A sweet frail lamp whose shadow gleams and shows  
No darkness, is as light is where its rays  
Cross, interweave, and marry with the day's !

I am : the heart that flames from central Me  
Seeks out all life, and takes again, to mingle  
Its passion with my might and majesty,  
Till the vast floods of the man's being tingle  
And glow, self-lost within my soul and sea  
Of love, and sun of utter light, and single  
Keen many-veined heart : our lips and kisses  
Marry and muse on our immortal blisses.

I am : the greatest and the least : the sole  
And separate life of things. The mighty stresses  
Of worlds are my nerves twitching. Branch and bole  
Of forests waving in deep wildernesses  
Are hairs upon my body. Rivers roll  
To make one tear in my superb caresses,  
When on myself myself begets a child,  
A system of a thousand planets piled !

I am : the least, the greatest : the frail life  
Of some small coral-insect still may tremble  
With love for me, and call me queen and wife ;  
The shy plant of the water may dissemble

Its love beneath the fronds ; reply to strife  
With strife, and all its tiny being crumble  
Under my rough and warrior husband-kiss,  
Whose pain shall burn, and alter, and be bliss !

I am : no word beside that solemn one  
Reigns in sound's kingdom to express my station,  
Who, clothed and crowned with suns beyond the sun,  
Bear on the mighty breast of foam Thalassian,  
Bear on my bosom, jutting plenilune,  
Maiden, the fadeless Rose of the Creation !  
The whole flower-life of earth and sky and sea  
From me was born, and shall return to me !

I am : for men and beings passionate,  
For mine own self calm as the river-cleaving  
Lotus-borne lord of Silence : I create  
Or discreate, both in my bosom heaving :  
My lightest look is mother of a Fate :  
My fingers sapphire-ringed with sky are weaving  
Ever new flowers and lawns of life, designed  
Nobler and newer in mine olden mind.

I am : I am not, but all-changing move  
The worlds evolving in a golden ladder  
Spiral or helical, fresh gusts of love  
Filling one sphere from the last sphere grown gladder ;  
All gateways leading far to the above.  
Even as the bright coils of the emerald adder  
Climb one by one in glory of sunlight, climb  
My children to me up the steep of Time.

I am : before me all the years are dead,  
And all the fiery locks of sunrise woven  
Into the gold and scarlet of my head :  
In me all skies and seas are shaken and cloven :  
All life and light and love about me shed  
Begotten in me, in my moving moven,  
Are as my tears : all worlds that ever swam  
As dew of kisses on my lips : I am.

But thou, chief lover, in whose golden heart  
The melody and music lifts its pæan,  
Whose lyre fulfilled of me, fathered of Art  
And that Sun's song beyond the Empyréan,  
Who art myself, not any more apart,  
Having called my children by the call Pandean,  
Mellowed with Delphian gold, the Ephesian quiver,  
To float down Time for ever and for ever ;—

I am thy lyre and thou mine harper : thou  
My music, I thy spirit : thou the lover  
And I the bride : the glory of my brow  
Deeper delight, new ardour, to discover  
Stoops in thine heart ; my love and light endow  
Thy life with fervour as I bend me over  
The starry curve and surface of the sea,  
And kiss thy very life out into me.

O central fountain of my yearning veins !  
O mountain single-soaring, thou art blended  
Into my heaven : prescient of the pains  
That shall bring forth—what worlds? my heart is rended !

My womb reverberates the solar strains,  
The lyre vibrating in me : sharp and splendid  
My face glows, gladdens ; nuptial ecstasy  
Is all the guerdon and the spoil of me !

I am : the universe grown old must bear  
A scion ere it sink to dædal slumber.  
Thou art my strength, and I am only fair.  
Our kisses are as stars ; our loves encumber  
With multitude the fields of space, and where  
Our kisses tune the worlds, their lives outnumber  
The moments of eternity : apart  
I am for ever : and, in me, thou art !

EXPLICIT LIBER PRIMUS

## **LIBER SECUNDUS VEL AMORIS**



TO MARY BEATON  
WHOM I LAMENT

The Kabbalists say that when a man falls in love with a female elemental—undine, sylph, gnome, or salamandrine, as the case may be—she becomes immortal with him, or otherwise he dies with her. . . . The love of the magus for such beings is insensate, and may destroy him.—*Eliphas Levi*.

Orpheus for the love he bare to his wife, snatcht, as it were, from him by untimely Death, resolved to go down to Hell with his harp, to try if he might obtain her of the infernal power.—*The Wisdom of the Ancients*.

ORPHEUS, FINDING EURYDICE DEAD, STUNG BY A  
SERPENT, LAMENTS OVER HER.

COME back, come back, come back, Eurydice !  
Come back to me !  
Lie not so quiet, draw some faint sharp breath !  
It is not death :  
It cannot, must not be, Eurydice.  
Come back to me !  
Let me as yet lament not ! Let me stoop !—  
Those eyelids droop  
Not with mere death, but dreams, Eurydice !  
Come back to me !

O you that were my lover and my wife !  
Come back to life !  
Come back, breathe softly from the breast of gold  
These arms enfold.  
Give me your lips and kiss me once ! O wife,  
Come back to life !  
Nay, let the wind but stir the silky hair,  
(God's lesser air,  
Not His full blossom of woman's breath !) O wife,  
Come back to life !

Stir once, move once, rise once, Eurydice !  
    Be good to me !  
Rise once.—O sleep not ! Listen ! Is not all  
    Nature my thrall ?  
Once only : be not dead, Eurydice !  
    Be good to me !  
I love you—be not dead !—rise up and say  
    “ I feigned, I lay  
Thus so you kissed me ”—O Eurydice,  
    Be good to me !

There is not one sweet sigh of all the old sighs—  
    Open your eyes !  
Not one warm breath of the young breast : no sleep  
    Could be so deep.  
The last pale lotus opens to the skies.  
    Open your eyes !  
Lift the blue eyelids under the deep lashes  
    Till one light flashes !  
Wake with one supreme sigh like the old sighs !  
    Open your eyes !

I cannot leave you so, Eurydice.  
    Come back to me !  
Just in the triumph, in love's utmost hour,  
    Life's queenliest flower—  
All shattered, overblown. Eurydice,  
    Come back to me !

I cannot have you dead, and live : let death  
    Strangle my breath  
Now as I kiss you still—Eurydice !  
    Come back to me !

Fling down the foolish lyre, the witless power !  
Cast the dead laurel in the dust ! The flower  
    Of all the world is marred, the day's desire  
Distorted in the eclipse, the sun's dead hour.

Let me fall down beside thee ! Let me take  
The kisses that thou canst not give, and slake  
    Despair in purposeless caresses, dire  
Shames fang-wise fastened of the eternal snake.

Is there no warmth where beauty is so bright ?  
No soul still flickering in the lambent light  
    Still shed from all the body's excellence ?  
No lamp unhidden of the utter night ?

Cannot my life be molten into thee  
Or thy death fall with rosier arms on me  
    Or soul with soul commingle without sense,  
As the sun's rays strike deep into the sea ?

O beauty of all beauty—central flower  
Of all the blossoms in the summer's bower !  
    Fades not all Nature in thy fall ? the sun  
Not darken in the miserable hour ?

I hate all Nature's mockery of life.  
The laugh is grown a grin ; the gentle strife  
Of birds and waves and winds at play is grown  
A curse, a cruelty. My wife ! my wife !

I am broken, I cannot sleep, I cannot die.  
Pain, pain for ever ! Nature is a lie,  
The gods a lie. Myself ? but I am found  
Sole serious in the hateful comedy.

Blackness, all blackness ! How I hate the earth,  
The curse that brought my being into birth.  
I, loving more her loveliness, am bound  
And broken—thrice more bitter for my mirth !

Song, was it song I trusted in ? Or thou,  
Apollo, was it thou didst bind my brow  
With laurel for a poison-wreath of hell  
To sear my brain and blast my being now ?

A band of most corroding poison wound  
Dissolving with its venom the profound  
Deep of my spirit with its terrible  
Sense without speech and horror without sound.

A devil intertwining in my heart  
Its cold and hideous lust, a twiforked dart  
Even from the fatherly and healing hand—  
The double death without a counterpart

In hell's own deepest pit, far, far below  
Phlegethon's flame and Styx's stifling flow,  
Far below Tartarus, below the land  
Thrust lowest in the devilish vertigo.

If I could weep or slumber or forget!  
If love once left me, with his eyelids wet  
With tender memory of his own despair  
Or frozen to a statue of regret!

If but the chilling agony, that turns  
To bitter fever-heat that stings and burns  
Would freeze me, or destroy me, or impair  
My sense, that it should feel not how it yearns!

Or if this pain were only pain, and not  
A deadness deeper than all pain, a spot  
And central core of agony in me,  
One heart-worm, one plague-leprosy, one blot

Of death, one anguish deeper than control?—  
Then were I fit to gain the Olympian goal  
And fling forth fiery wailings to the sea,  
And tune the sun's ray to my smitten soul!

How should I sing who cannot even see?  
Grove through a mist of changeless misery.  
An age-long pain—no time in wretchedness!—  
As of an hammer annihilating me

With swift hard rhythm, the remorseless clang ;  
Or as a serpent loosening his fang  
    To bite more deeply—this inane distress  
More than despair or death's detested pang.

I live—that shames me ! I am not a man.  
Nothing can I to sharpen or to span  
    My throat with iron fingers, or my sword  
In my heart's acid where the blood began

Long since to leap, and now drops deadly slow,  
Clotted with salt and sulphur and strong woe.  
    I shall not die : the first sight of the sward  
Stained with the spectral corpse had stung me so,

Not stabbed me, since I saw her and survive.  
I shall not die—Ah ! shall I be alive?  
    This hath no part in either : bale and bliss  
Forget me, careless if I rot or thrive.

Heaven forgot me—or she were not dead !  
And Hades—or I should not raise my head  
    Now, and look wildly where I used to kiss,  
Gaze on the form whence all but form has fled !

I am alone in all the universe,  
Changed to the shape and image of a curse,  
    Muffled in self-confusion, and my brain  
Wakes not nor sleeps : its destiny is worse.

It thinks not, knows not, acts not, nor appeals,  
But hangs, remembers : it abides and feels  
    As if God's vulture clung to it amain,  
And furies fixed with fiery darts and wheels

Their horror, thought-exceeding, manifold,  
Vertiginous within me—and the cold  
    Of Styx splashed on me, making me immortal,  
Invulnerable in its bitter mould ;

Leaving its own ice, penetrating streams,  
Grim streaks, and dismal drops, abysmal beams  
    Thrown from the gulph thorough the place and portal,  
Each drop o'erladen with a curse that steams

Unnatural in the coldness : let me be  
Alone, inviolate of eternity !  
    Let all the winds of air leave me, nor fan :  
Nor wash me all the waves of all the sea !

Let all the sun's light and the moon's be blind,  
And all the stars be lampless to my mind,  
    Until I see the destiny of man  
And span the cruelty that lurks behind

Its beauty, and its glory, and its splendour !—  
The girl-babe's face looks up to the mother tender,  
    Looks for a kiss in dumb desire, and finds  
Her jaws closed trap-like to expunge and end her !

Let all the life and dream and death be done,  
And all the love and hate be woven in one,  
All things be broken of the winter winds,  
No soul stand up and look upon the sun !

Save only mine !—that my voice may confound  
The universe, and spell the mighty sound  
To shake all heaven and earth, to mingle hell  
In chaos, in some limitless profound ;

That it may tear Olympus from its place,  
Mix it with Hades, change the Ocean space,  
Level the tides of time that sink and swell,  
And curse my very father to his face !

O father, father Apollo, did I wrong  
Thy chariot and thy horses in my song ?  
Why clove thine arrow the unseated air,  
The heaven void of thee, why the thunder-thong

Slipped from the tether, and the fatal stone  
Sped not to my heart, not to mine alone ?  
Ah why not ? but to hers as she lay sleeping  
By hate, not fate, quelled, fallen, and overthrown ?

She lies so pitiful and pure—and I,  
Breast to her breast, mouth to her mouth, I lie,  
Hand upon hand, and foot on foot, sore weeping—  
Can she not live again or I not die ?

As the old prophet on the child I fall  
And breathe—but no breath answers me at all.  
All of my kisses stir no blush, no sigh ;  
She will not hear me ever if I call !

Let the far music of oblivious years  
Sound in the sea beneath !  
Are not its waters one with all my tears ?  
Hath Atropos no comfort in her shears ?  
No Muse for me one wreath ?

Were I now dead and free to travel far  
Whither I will, ah me !  
Not whither I must—were there no avatar  
Drawn like my love from some close kindred star ?  
No shape seen on the sea ?

Were I now free of this intense desire,  
By swift magician power  
I might fly westward shod with wings of fire  
And find my love, and in her arms expire,  
Or wed her for an hour.

(Not for an hour as man, but even as God  
Whose day is like an æon.  
Love hath nor station, stage, nor period :  
But is at once in his inane abode  
Beneath the spring Dircean.)

Alas, the will flies ere the power began.

Lo, in the Idan grove  
Invoking Zeus to swell the power of Pan,  
The prayer discomfits the demented man !  
Lust lies as still as love.

Therefore in memory only is there life,  
And in sweet shapes of art :  
The same thought for the ointment and the knife—  
Oh lightning ! blast the image of my wife  
Out of my mind and heart !

How can one hour dissolve a year's delight ?  
One arrow striking the full eagle-flight  
Drop him so swift, giving no time to die,  
No dusk to herald and delay the night ?

A serpent stung her sleeping : if the abyss  
Know any cell more dolorous than this,  
Were there a sharper tooth to destiny  
Than this that strikes me in the dead girl's kiss :—

O if aught bitterer could be, could know,  
If nine-fold Styx could gather in its flow  
Cocytus, Phlegethon, and Acheron,  
All mixed to one full flood of hate and woe :

And poisoned by all venom like to his  
Who kissed Eurydice the traitor-kiss :—  
Then let them sting me fourfold, nor atone  
Then for the eightfold misery of this !

Is not some justice somewhere? Where is he  
Hateful to God and man, a misery  
To his own vileness by exceeding it,  
Who crawls God-cursed throughout eternity?

Nay! sure he lives, and licks his slavered lips,  
Laughing to think how the sweet morsel slips,  
The breast-flower of my bride; the dainty bit  
Fit for—ah God! the pearl-smooth blossom drips

Poisonous blood that will not poison me,  
Though I drink deep its fierce intensity.  
My lips closed silent on her bosom's light,  
The stung blood springs—like pearls beneath the sea

Whose moony glimmer hath a purple vein  
Hidden—so I athirst of the sad stain  
Drink up her body's life, as if to spite  
Its quiet, as if the venom were to drain

Into my life—that hurts me not at all,  
Struck by a stronger buffet: let me call  
All deaths! they come not, seeing I am broken  
In this one horror where a man may fall.

I am alive, and live not: I am dead,  
And die not: on my desolated head  
No dew may drop, no word of God be spoken,  
None heard, if by some chance some word be said.

The wheels of Fate are over me ; quite crushed  
Lies my pale body where her body blushed,  
Quite dead ! there is no single sob that stirs,  
No pulse of blood of all that filled and flushed

Her cheek and mine, her breast and mine : and lo !  
How sunset's bloom is faded on the snow !  
There is no laugh of all those laughs of hers,  
Those tender thrills of laughter I used to know.

Nor in all nature weep the careless eyes,  
Nor any soul of life may sympathise,  
All I once was in this is torn and rended—  
Scorned and forsaken the lone lyre lies.

Hath that not yet some sympathy with me ?  
That lyre that was myself, my heart's decree  
And ruler, subtle at the dawn, and splendid  
Noonwards, and soft at day's declivity !

I flung it in my anguish to the ground.  
I raise it, and its music hath not found  
One string or snapped or loosened, and the tune  
Is the old triumph garlanded and crowned !

Folly and hate ! Blithe mockery of sorrow !  
Shrill me no harsh lies of some sweet to-morrow !  
Soothe me no hateful mysteries of the moon,  
How one life lends what other lives may borrow !

I hate that foolish counterfoil of grief  
That one pain to its friend may give relief—  
    Eurydice replace Eurydice  
Long hence—no separation sharp and brief

But dwelling in the intermediate  
Halls between Hades and the house of Fate :  
    Atropos cut, and pass to Clotho, and she  
Respin the shuttle in some other state.

What shall it boot me now to gather flowers  
From this young hope to wile the angry hours ?  
    That many thousand years shall pass, and show  
Eurydice again amid her bowers,

Forgetting, and myself again be born,  
Clasp her grave beauty in the middle corn,  
    Forgetting also : Time as fallen snow  
Blotting the mind and memory that adorn

At least our present littleness : nor hope  
Of larger excellence, extended scope,  
    Shall help me here, forgetting : nothing skills  
Of this poor truth—to flatter with the trope !

Wooing in mockery !—nothing skills but this  
To raise her now, and resuspire the kiss,  
    United by the splendour of the will's  
Success—to marry, to be made of bliss,

I care not whether here or there : to live  
In memory and identity : to give  
    No part of self or soul to Lethe's water :  
To grapple Nature, interpose an "if"

In her machinery of conditioned mood ;  
Suspending law, suspending amplitude  
    Of all Her function ; to espouse her daughter  
In forced embrace lasciviously rude,

Indecorous, shameful to the eternal "must" !  
Law may be mercy, mercy never just !  
    Thus I would alter, and divide her ways,  
And let her wheels grind themselves down to dust.

One supernatural event—but one ! —  
Should scale Olympus, shattering the throne  
    Of the Ægis-bearing Father : and the days  
Of all the Universe be fallen and done.

Well then ? O sceptred Splendour ! dost Thou see  
How little means Thy Universe to Me ?  
    How petty looks Thy will to My desire ?  
Hebe and Hera to Eurydice ?

I, knowing all the progress of the earth,  
The dim procession, altering death and birth,  
    The Seven Stairs, the gusts of life in fire  
And Love in Life, and all the serpent girth

Of sevenfold twining worlds and sevenfold ways  
And nights made sevenfold of the sevenfold days  
All the vast scheme evolving into man,  
And upward, onward, through Olympian haze

Into the crowning spiritual mist,  
Where spirit in the spirit may subsist,  
Evolve itself in the amazing plan  
Through many planes, as shining amethyst

Melts to the sapphire's sombre indigo,  
And lifts, still sapphire, to the ocean glow ;  
Thence into emerald and the golden light,  
Till ruby crowns the river's living flow

And glory of colour in the sun's own flame—  
Beyond, to colours without sense or name,  
Impossible to man, whose vivid sight  
Would blast him with their splendour as they came

Flashing through spiritual space, withdrawn  
Now, and now flung triumphant in the dawn  
Not of mere sun's rise, but before the birth  
Of a new system on the unfolded lawn

Of space beyond the sceptre of the Gods !  
I, seeing all this, would foil Time's periods  
For one small woman on this one mean earth,  
Would spoil the plan of the inane Abodes,

Throw out of gear all Nature's enginery  
For such a grain of tinsel dust as I,  
Reluctant to be mangled in the wheel—  
Looks other meanness so contemptibly?

Yet I persist. Thou knowest, O most High Zeus,  
When Hera to thine Io did refuse  
Peace, and the gadfly bit like barbed steel  
Those limbs with dewes of love once lying loose,

When thy vast body boarded her, wrapped round  
Her senses with a mist of being profound,  
A flame-like penetration, serpentine,  
Twining and leaping without end or bound,

Inevitable as the grasp of Fate:—  
Thou, reft of her by envy of thy mate  
Didst shake the heaven with bellowings undivine,  
And rooted stars from their primeval state.

Not without law, sayest thou? Almighty Zeus,  
Am I not also mothered of a Muse?  
Let there be law! untimely to release  
This soul untinctured of the Stygian dewes,

Unsprinkled of Lethean lotus-drops!  
Life grows so steadily, so sudden stops—  
(Surely no part in Nature's moving peace!)  
Thus, when the young, like tempest-stricken crops

Unripe, are blasted in the blossoming spring—  
This is a miracle, not the other thing !

Nature insults herself, blasphemes her God,  
Thus cutting short the life's hard happening.

Nor would I suffer thus, nor she repine  
Had my wife faded (as rose-tinted wine  
Bleached in the sunlight) reached her period  
And fallen gently in the arms divine,

Caressing arms of pale Persephone,  
And bathed her in death's river tenderly,  
Washing the whole bright body, the long limbs,  
The clothing hair, the face, the witchery

Of all the smiling shape in the dark stream,  
As one who gathers the first floral beam  
Of daylight by the water, dives and swims  
Deep in cool alleys, softer than a dream :

So, rising to the other bank, aglow  
With the bright motion and the stream's young flow,  
She might discover the Elysian ground,  
And find me waiting, find me sad and slow

Pacing the green flower-lighted turf, and leap  
Into my body's kisses, into sleep :—  
Sweeter this latter bridal than we found  
The first, now lost in time's eternal deep.

It is not cruel if the ripe fruit fall—  
But never an elegy funereal  
Wept for untimely burial, but cried  
Aloud against the Fates, forbore to call

In pity or passion on the Gods of peace ;  
But cursed, but wailed, nor bade its sharp tongue cease  
Until the lightning spat, sharp to divide  
Bone from its marrow for their blasphemies !

So I should curse, unless indeed my grief  
Be not too great to yield me such relief.  
Methinks a sob must start and mar the roar  
Of loud harsh laughing bitter unbelief

Scarring the sky with poisonous foam of song.  
Also, what curse might remedy the wrong ?  
Are not all feuds forgotten in a war ?  
All stars exhausted in Astrea's throng

When the swift sun leaps skyward ? Let me speak  
Words rather of wisdom : hate may rage and wreak  
Vengeance in vain if wisdom smile beyond,  
Too high to care, too ultimate to seek.

The bitterest sorrow of all sorrow is this :  
I had no time to catch one last long kiss,  
Nor bid farewell, nor lay one lily-frond  
Of resurrection for the sign of bliss,

Remembrance of some immortality  
Affirmed if not believed : alas for me  
That might not interchange the last sad vows,  
Nor close the blue eyes clearer than the sea

Before they darkened, and the veil of death  
Shrouded their splendour : still there lingereth  
Some sad white lustre on the icy brows,  
Some breast-curve surely indicating breath,

Some misty glamour of deep love within  
The eye's cold gleam ! some dimple on the chin  
Hinting of laughter : even now she seems  
A folded rosebud, where the ivory skin

Closes the ripe warm centre flower, the mind,  
The spirit that was beautifully kind,  
The sense of beauty shadowed in deep dreams,  
Sent through the horn gates by some sleepy wind.

All lingers : all is gone : a little while,  
And all the live sweet rapture of the smile  
Of her whole being is discomfited,  
The body broken, desolated, vile,

Till nought remains but the memorial urn  
Of deep red gold, less golden than did burn  
Once the strong breast : the ash within is shed,  
Dust given for flowers : what memory shall turn

Unto the flowers, think worthy to remember  
How the dust scattered from their fading ember  
Is their own sign and seal of fatherhood,  
Grey seas of sorrow sun-kissed into amber.

Above me hangs the sun : horrid he hangs,  
A rayless globe of hell, shooting forth fangs  
Snake-wise to parch and burn my solitude,  
Nor leave me quiet lamenting, with these pangs

Tearing my liver, more Promethean  
Than ever Titan knew—the sunbright span  
Of narrow water mocks me, brightening  
Far to the indigo Ionian.

The sun hangs high, as in the Arabian tale  
Enchanted palaces defy the gale,  
Perched upon airy mountains, on the wing  
Of genii poised, souls suffering and pale

With their long labour : wizard spire and dome  
That maidens grown magicians had for home,  
Where the charmed sword and graven talisman  
Held them supremely floating on the foam

Where cloudier seas innavigably roll,  
Misty with elemental shape or soul,  
Thin grey essential nebulæ of man,  
Caught in the mesh of magical control !

All these are beautiful and shapen so  
That every bastion flames a separate glow  
Of changing colour : all detestable,  
Abhorrent, since the goodly-seeming show

Is one large lie of cruelty and lust,  
Carven from spectral images of dust,  
Founded on visions of the accursèd well,  
And built of shame and hatred and distrust,

And all things hateful and all lying things—  
O song! where wanderest on forgetful wings?  
Shall these wild numbers help thee to thine own,  
Or change the winter's gramarye to spring's?

Rather beguile the tedious mourning hours  
With memory of the long-forgotten bowers,  
Where loves resurged from cave and grove to throne,  
From nuptial banquet to the bed of flowers!

Rather forget the near catastrophe,  
And turn my music toward Eurydice,  
Awake in day-dream all the ancient days,  
When love first blossomed on the springing tree!

Let me recall the days beyond regret,  
And tune my lyre to love, sharpen and set  
The strings again to the forgotten ways,  
That I may tread them over, and forget!

In child-like meditative mood  
I wandered in the dell,  
Passed through the quiet glades of the wood,  
And sought the haunted well,  
Half hopeful that its solitude  
Might work some miracle.

The oaks raised angry hands on high :  
The willows drooped for tears :  
The yews held solemn ceremony,  
Magical spells of years.  
I saw one cypress melancholy,  
A prince among his peers.

So, turning from the arboreal seat  
And midmost hollow of earth,  
I followed Hamadryads' feet  
That made at eve their mirth  
To where the streamlet wandered fleet  
To show what time was worth.

I watched the waters wake and laugh  
Running o'er pebbly beaches,  
Writing amazement's epitaph  
With freshets, turns, and reaches :—  
The only tale too short by half  
That nature ever teaches.

Then growing grander as it swept  
Past bulrushes and ferns,

Gathering the tears that heaven had wept,  
The water glows and burns  
In sunlight, where no shadows crept  
Around the lazy turns.

All on a sudden silence came  
Athwart some avenue  
Where through the trees arrowed the flame  
From the exultant blue ;  
And all the water-way became  
One heart of glittering dew.

The waters narrowed for a space  
Between twin rocks confined,  
Carven like Gods for poise and grace,  
Like miracles for mind :  
Each fashioned like a kissing face,  
The eyes for joy being blind.

The waters widened in a pool,  
Broad mirror of blue light.  
The surface was as still and cool  
As the broad-breasted night.  
Engraven of no mortal tool,  
The granite glistened white.

As if to shield from mortal gaze  
A nymph's immortal limbs,

The shadow of the buttress stays  
And dips its head and swims,  
While moss engirdles it with grays  
And greens that dew bedims.

Now, at the last, the western end,  
Most miracle of all !  
The groves of rock dispart and rend  
Their sacred cincture-wall ;  
All tunes of heaven their rapture lend  
To make the waterfall.

There, steaming from the haze and mist  
Where dew is dashed in spray,  
Rises a halo sunrise-kissed  
And kissed at close of day  
From ruby unto amethyst,  
Within the veil of grey.

And there within the circled light  
I saw a dancing thing,  
Most like the tender-leavèd night  
Of moonrise seen in spring,  
A shadow luminous and white  
Like a ghost beckoning.

And then dim visions came to me,  
Faint memories of fear :  
As when the Argo put on sea  
Such stories we did hear,

Stories to tremble at and flee—  
And others worth a tear.

I thought of how a maiden man  
Might hear a deadly song  
And clasp a siren in his span,  
And feel her kiss grow strong  
To drag him with caresses wan  
Into the House of Wrong.

Another: how the women grew  
Like vines of tender grape,  
And how they laughed as lovers do,  
And took a lover's shape,  
And how men sought them, free to woo—  
To leave them, no escape!

Another: how a golden cup  
A golden girl would pour,  
And whoso laughed and drank it up  
Grew wise and warrior:  
But whoso stayed to smile and sup  
Returned—ah, never more!

And yet again—a river steep,  
A maiden combing light,  
Her hair's enchantment—she would weep  
And sing for love's delight,  
Until the listener dropped to sleep  
In magic of her night.

And then the maiden smoothed her tresses,  
And led him to the river,  
Caught him and kissed with young caresses,  
And then—her cruel smiles quiver !  
Beneath the waves his life represses  
For ever and for ever !

I knew the danger of the deed  
The while enrapt, I gladdened.  
My eyes upon the dancer feed  
As one by daylight saddened  
After long night whose slumbers bleed,  
By dreams deceived and maddened !

It might be—the delusive dance,  
The shadowy form I saw,  
Apollo's misty quivering lance  
Thrown to elude God's law ;  
It might be—doth the maid advance,  
Evanish, or withdraw ?

So stung by certainty's mistrust,  
Or tranced in dream of sin,  
Or blinded by some Panic dust,  
By Dionysian din  
Deafened, arose the laughing lust  
To fling my body in !

I stood upon the rock, and cried,  
And held my body high

(Not caring if I lived or died)  
Erect against the sky :  
Then plunged into the wheeling tide,  
And vanished utterly.

“ O shape half seen of love, and lost  
Beneath time's sightless tide,  
What obolus of the vital cost  
Remains, or may abide ?  
Or what perception memory steal,  
Once passed upon the whirling wheel ?

“ O hope half held of love, and fled  
Beyond the ivory gate,  
A dream gone from the hapless head  
By fury of a fate !  
What image of the hope returns  
But stings with agony that which yearns ?

“ O face half kissed in faith and fear,  
Eager and beautiful !  
Drop for mortality one tear !  
For life one smile recall !  
There is no passion made for me—  
Else were my water-well the sea.”

Such tune my falling body snapped  
Within the sacred sides,  
While the warm waves with laughter lapped,  
And changed their tuned tides,

And all my being was enwrapped,  
A bridegroom's in a bride's.

Deep in the hollow of the place  
A starry bed I saw,  
Gemmed with strange stones in many a space  
Of godlike rune and law.  
Such fancies as the fiery face  
Of living Art might draw.

But rising up I lift my head  
Beyond the ripples clean :  
My arms with spray dew-diamonded  
Stretched love-wise to my queen  
That danced upon the light, and shed  
Her own sweet light between.

But never a mortal joy might know,  
Hold never a mortal lover !  
Whose limbs like moonshine glint and glow,  
Throb, palpitate, and hover :—  
Pale sunrise woven with the snow  
Athwart a larchen cover !

So danced she in the rainbow mist,  
A fairy frail and chaste,  
By moon caressed, by sunlight kissed,  
A guerdon vain and waste ;  
And the misery of her thankless tryst  
Stole on me as she paced.

For never her lips should be caressed  
By love's exulting stings,  
Whose starry shape shone in the west,  
Held of the glimmering wings.  
Her shadowy soul perceived the jest  
Of man and mortal things.

And there I vowed a solemn oath  
To Aphrodite fair,  
Sealing that sacramental troth  
With a long curl of hair,  
And the strange prayer's reiterant growth  
Sent shining through the air.

*(Invoking Aphrodite)*

Daughter of Glory, child  
Of Earth's Dione mild  
By the Father of all, the Ægis-bearing King!  
Spouse, daughter, mother of God,  
Queen of the blest abode  
In Cyprus' splendour singly glittering.  
Sweet sister unto me,  
I cry aloud to thee!  
I laugh upon thee laughing, O dew caught up  
from sea!

Drawn by sharp sparrow and dove  
And swan's wide plumes of love,  
And all the swallow's swifter vehemence,

And, subtler than the Sphinx,  
The ineffable iynx  
Heralds thy splendour swooning into sense,  
When from the bluest bowers  
And greenest-hearted hours  
Of Heaven thou smilest toward earth, a miracle of  
flowers !

Down to the loveless sea  
Where lay Persephone  
Violate, where the shade of earth is black,  
Crystalline out of space  
Flames the immortal face !  
The glory of the comet-tailèd track  
Blinds all black earth with tears.  
Silence awakes and hears  
The music of thy moving come over the starry  
spheres.

Wrapped in rose, green and gold,  
Blues many and manifold,  
A cloud of incense hides thy splendour of light ;  
Hides from the prayer's distress  
Thy loftier loveliness  
Till thy veil's glory shrouds the earth from night ;  
And silence speaks indeed,  
Seeing the subtler speed  
Of its own thought than speech of the Pandean reed !

There no voice may be heard !  
No place for any word !

The heart's whole fervour silently speeds to thee,  
Immaculate ! and craves  
Thy kisses or the grave's,  
Till, knowing its unworthiness to woo thee,  
Remembers, grows content  
With the old element,  
And asks the lowlier grace its earlier music meant.

So, Lady of all power !  
Kindle this firstling flower  
The rainbow nymph above the waterfall  
Into a mortal shade  
Of thee, immortal maid,  
That in her love I gather and recall  
Some memory mighty and mute  
In love's poor substitute  
Of thee, thy Love too high, the impossible pursuit !

Then from the cloud a golden voice  
Great harmonies persuade,  
That all the cosmic lawns rejoice  
Like laughter of a maid ;  
Till evolution had no choice,  
But heard it, and obeyed.

“Show by thy magic art  
The hero-story !  
Awake the maiden heart  
With tunes of glory !

With mortal joys and tears,  
Keen woes and blisses,  
Awake her faiths and fears,  
Her tears and kisses !”

I caught the lavish lyre, and sate  
Hard by the waterfall,  
Twisting its sweetness intimate  
Into the solemn call  
Of many dead men that were great,  
The plectron’s wizard thrall.

Thus as she danced, nor ceased, nor cared,  
I set the sacred throng  
Of heroes into acts that fared  
In Argo light and long,  
The foes they fought, the feats they dared,  
In shadow-show and song.

*(The play of Argonautae is shadowed before  
them by Orpheus’ magical might.)*

So faded all the dream : so stole  
Some fearful fondness in her soul ;  
Even as a cloud thrilled sharply through  
With lightning’s temper keen and true,  
Splitting the ether : so again  
Grew on me the ecstatic pain,  
Seeing her tremble in mid-air.  
No flower so exquisitely fair  
Shakes out its petals at the dawn ;  
No breath so beautiful is drawn

At even by the listening vale.  
For oh! she trembled! Frail and pale,  
Her look's surpassing loveliness  
Lulled its own light to fond distress,  
As if the soul were hardly yet  
Fit to remember or forget  
New-born! and though the goddess bade  
The nymph-bud blossom to a maid,  
And soulless immortality  
Reach to a soul, at last to die,  
For love's own sake, bliss dearly bought  
For change's altering coin ill-wrought,  
It seemed as though the soul were strange,  
Not fledged, not capable to range  
At random through the world of sense  
Opened so swift and so intense  
Unto the being. Thus she stood  
Impatient on the patient flood  
With wonder waking in her eyes.  
Thus the young dove droops wing, and dies,  
In wonder why the winged thing  
Loosed from yon twanging silver string  
Should strike, should hurt. But now she wakes,  
Wreathes like a waterfall of snakes  
The golden fervour of her hair  
About the body brave and bare  
Starred in the sunlight by the spray,  
And laughed upon me as I lay  
Watching the change: First dawn of fire  
First ghost of nightfall's grey desire

First light of moonrise ! Then, as June  
Leaps out of May, her lips took tune  
To song most soft, a spiral spell,  
A siren breathing in a shell.  
The notes were clustered round the well  
Like angels clustering round a god.  
Let memory wake from its abode  
Of dim precision lost for long  
The grace and grandeur of the song !

Who art thou, love, by what sweet name I quicken ?  
By whom, O love, my soul is subtly stricken ?

O Love, O Love, I linger

On the dear word and know not any meaning,  
Nor why I chant ; there is a whisper weaning  
My soul from depths I knew to depths I guess,  
Centred in two words only : " Love " and " Yes."

What lyrist's gentle finger

Strikes out a note, a key, a chord unheard of ?  
What voice intones a song I know no word of ?

Who am I, Love, and where ?

What is the wonder of this troublous singing ?  
What is the meaning of my spirit's clinging  
Still to the two sweet words : repeat, repeat !  
" Yes, Love " and " Yes, Love ! " Oh the murmur sweet !

The fragrance in the air !

I know not, I ; amid the choral gladness  
Steals an essential tremor as of sadness,

A grace-note to the bosom

Of music's spell that binds me, as in Panic  
Dance to some grasp unthinkable, Titanic,  
Unto the words fresh flowers that distil  
Uttermost fragrance in the mind and will,  
The unsuspected blossom!

What is the change—new birth of spring-time kisses  
Alone in all these water-wildernesses?

What change? what loveliness!  
Comes this to all? I heard my sisters crying  
No tale like this—O! were I only lying  
Asleep amid the ferns, my soul would weep  
Over and over in its endless sleep;  
“Yes, love!” and “yes!” and “yes!”

So by some spell divinely drawn  
She came to me across the dawn,  
With open arms to me; and sobbed  
“Yes, love!” and “Yes, love!” O how throbbed  
The giant glory at my heart!  
And I? I drew away, apart,  
Lest by mere chance to me she came.  
But curling as a wind-blown flame  
She turned, she found me. As the dew  
Melts in the lake's dissolving blue  
So to my arms she came. And now,  
Now, now I hold her!

Broke the brow  
Of all wide heaven in thunder! Hear  
Tremendous vortices of fear  
Swirl in the ether. What new terror

Darkens the blue pool's silver mirror?  
How bursts the mountain-chasm asunder?  
Whose voice reverberates in thunder  
Muttering what curse? The sun dissolves  
In anguish; the mad moon revolves  
Like a wild thing about its cage;  
The stars are shaken in the rage  
Of—who but Zeus? Before our gaze,  
(My love's in shuddering amaze,  
Of birth deceived and death forlorn,  
And mine in anger, ay! and scorn!)  
He stood—the mighty One! So earth  
And heaven proclaimed that fearful birth:  
So they grew silent lest he curse.  
Dead silence hushed the universe;  
And then in clear calm tones he spoke:  
“Fools! who have meddled, and awoke  
The inmost forces of the world!  
One lightning from my hand had hurled  
Both to annihilation's brink.  
What foolish goddess bade ye think  
Ye thus could play with thunder, roll  
Your wheels upon the world, control  
The stately being of a soul?  
Just am I ever! Therefore know  
The unvengeful law of woe  
That ye invoke. Thou seekest life,  
Child of my water! Thou a wife,  
Child of my sun! Draw living breath,  
Maiden, and gain the guerdon—death!

Thou take the wife, and risk the fate  
Æons could hardly culminate  
To lose thy soul ! Not two but one  
Are ye. Together, as the stone,  
The oak, the river, or the sea,  
Mere elements of mine be ye,  
Or both resolve the dreadful life,  
And take death's prize ! Take thou the wife,  
Thou, who didst know. Her ignorance  
Resolve itself upon a chance !  
She shall decide the double fate.  
Be still, my child, and meditate !  
This is an hour in heaven." He ceased  
And I was silent. She released  
Her soul from that tremendous birth  
Of fear in gentle-minded mirth.  
"Great Sir !" she cried, "the choice is made !  
An hour ago I was afraid,  
Knew nothing, and loved not. But I  
Know now not this you say—to die.  
Some doubtful change ? An hour ago  
I was a nymph. I did not know  
This change : but now for death or life  
I care not. Am I not his wife ?  
I love him. Now I would not leave  
That joy once tasted ; shall not grieve  
If even that should ever cease,  
So great a pleasure (and a peace !)  
I have therein. And by the sense  
Of love's intuitive influence

I know he wills me to remain  
Woman." "How frivolous and vain,  
O Zeus," I cried, "art thou to rise  
Out of Olympus' ecstasies!  
Omnipotent! but to control  
The first breath of a human soul!—"   
The thunder rolled through heaven again,  
Void was the spring-delighted plain  
Of that gigantic phantasy.  
I turned to my Eurydice  
Even as she turned. The faint breath glows,—  
The lightning of a living rose.  
The bright eyes gleam—night's spotless stars  
Glimmering through folded nenuphars.  
The red mouth moves, still to the word:  
"Yes, love!" and "yes, love!" Then I heard  
No sound and saw no sight—the world  
Folded its mighty wings, and curled  
Its passion round us; bade forget  
The joy with which our eyes were wet.  
All faded, folded in the bliss;  
Unfolded the first fadeless kiss.

Then my soul woke, not sundering lips,  
But winged against the black eclipse  
Of sense: my soul on wings did poise  
Her glory in the vast turquoise  
Of the whole sky: expanded far  
Beyond the farthest sun or star,  
Beyond all space, all time. I saw

The very limits of the law  
That hath no bounds : beheld the bliss  
Of that first wonder of the kiss  
In its true self : how very love  
Is God, and hath its substance of  
Pure light : and how love hath its cause  
Beyond religions, worlds, and laws ;  
Is in itself the first : and moves  
All evolution, and disproves  
God in affirming God : all this  
In that one rapture of the kiss  
I knew, and all creation's pain  
Fell into nothing in my brain,  
As I, remaining man, involved  
All life's true purpose, and dissolved  
The phantoms (of itself create)  
In a mysterious sweet state,  
Wherein some tune began to move  
Whose likeness and whose life was love.

Roll, strong life-current of these very veins,  
    Into my lover's soul, my soul that is !  
Thrill, mighty life of nerves, exultant strains  
    Triumphant of all music in a kiss !  
    Fade ! fade ! O strenuous sense  
    Into the soul intense  
Of life beyond your weak imagining !  
    And, O thou thought, dissever  
    Thy airy life for ever

While the bright sounds are lifted up to spring  
    Beyond this tide of being,  
    Shadows and sense far fleeing  
    Into a shadow deeper than the Ocean  
    When passes all the mind's commotion  
To a serener sky, a mighty calm emotion !

The whole world fades, folds over its wide pinions  
    Into a darkness deeper than its own.  
Silence hath shattered all the dream-dominions  
    Of life and light : the grey bird's soul is flown  
    Into a soundless night,  
    Lampless : a vivid flight  
Beyond the thrones and stars of heaven down  
    hurled,  
    Till the great blackness heaves  
    An iron breast, and cleaves  
The womb of night, another mightier world.  
    Lost is my soul, and faded  
    The light of life that braided  
    Its comet tresses into golden fire.  
    Fade, fade, the phantoms of desire !  
Speed, speed the song of love upon the living lyre !

Lo ! I abide not, and my lover's glory  
    Abides not : in the swaying of those tides  
Gathers beneath some mighty promontory  
    One mightier wave, deep drowns it, and abides.  
    Save that one wave alone  
    Nought in the void is known,

That wave of love, that sole exultant splendour  
Throned o'er all being, supreme,  
A single-shining beam  
Burning with love, unutterably tender.  
Ah! the calm wave retires.  
Down all the fearful fires  
Go thundering to darkness, so dis sever  
Their being from pure being, that the river  
Of love is waveless now, and is pure love for  
ever.

Then, mightier than all birth of stars or suns,  
Breaks the vast flood and trembles in its tide.  
Serene and splendid shine the mystic ones,  
Exult, appal, reiterate, abide.  
Timid and fleet the earth  
Comes rushing back to birth,  
Brighter and greener, radiant with gold  
Of a diviner sun,  
An exaltation  
Of life to life, of light to light untold.  
I? I remain, and see  
Across eternity  
My lover's face, and gaze, and know the worth  
Of love's life to the glowing earth,  
The kiss that wakes all life unto a better birth.

So the swoon broke. I saw the face  
(Shining with Love's reverberate grace)

Of my own love across the lawn,  
As warm and tender as the dawn  
Tinting the snows of heaven-born hills,  
Enamelling the mountain rills  
With light's chameleon-coloured dyes ;  
So shone the love-light in grey eyes,  
Changing for laughter and for tears,  
Changeless for joy of myriad years.  
This, this endures ; there is no lover,  
No loved one ; all the ages cover  
These things from sight : but this abides  
Floating above the whelming tides  
Of time and space: abides for ever  
Whether the lovers join or sever.  
There is no change : the love exists  
Beyond the moment's suns and mists  
In me, abiding : and I see  
No lover in Eurydice,  
Save that her kiss awoke in me  
This knowledge, this supreme content,  
Annihilation of the event,  
The vast eternal element  
Of utter being, bliss, and thought,  
In dissolution direly wrought  
Of sense, identity's eclipse,  
The shadow of a lover's lips.  
The awful steel of Death divides  
The alternation of the tides  
Of consciousness, and binds in bliss  
The dead man to the girl's live kiss.

So sped my wooing : now I surely think  
Suspended here upon the burning brink  
Of this dim agony, invading sense,  
That bliss should still abide : but now I shrink,

Fall from the crags of memory, and abide  
Now in this nature-life, basilisk-eyed,  
And serpent-stinging : yea, I perish thence.  
That perishes which was : and I am tied

Unto myself : the " I " springs up again  
Bound to the wheel of speedless sense and pain,  
None loosing me. Past is the utter bliss ;  
Present the strong fact of the death, the stain

Of the marred lives : I meditate awhile  
Not on the mere light of the girl, the smile  
Deepening down to the extremest kiss ;  
Not of the long joys of the little isle

Set in Ionian waters, where the years  
Passed, one long passion, too divine for tears,  
Too deep for laughter : but on that divine  
Sense beyond sense, the shadow of the spheres

Lost in the all-pervading light of love :  
That bliss all passion and all praise above ;  
Impersonal, that fervour of the shrine  
Changed to pure peace that had its substance of

Nothing but love : in vain my thoughts evoke  
That light amidst the deadly night and smoke  
Of this dread hour : there's nothing serves nor skills  
Here, since that hateful " I " of me awoke,

Making me separate from the wings of life.  
Nothing avails me of the cruel strife  
With my own being : hideous sorrow fills  
My heart—O misery ! my wife ! my wife !

Stay ! if I cannot be the Absolute,  
Let me be man ! discard the wailing lute  
And wake the lyre : the mightier than me  
Drag up the courage in me to dispute

The battle with despair : awake the strings  
Stronger than earth, than the immortal kings  
Alike of death and life : invoke the sea  
That I may cross her on the viewless wings

Of song, find out the desolating river  
That girds the earth, unloose the silver quiver,  
Choosing an arrow of sharp song to run  
Down to the waters that lament for ever :—

And cleave them ! That my song's insistent spell  
Rive the strong gates of iron-builed hell,  
And move the heart of the ill-hearted one.  
Yea ! let me break the portals terrible,

And bring her back ! come back, Eurydice !  
Come back, pale wanderer to Eternity !  
Come back, my wife, my wife, again to love !  
Come back, my wife ! come back, come back to me !

Enough ! my purpose holds : no feeble cries !  
No sob shall shake these nerves : no ecstasies  
Of hope, or fear, or love avail to move  
Those iron-hearted dooms and destinies.

I will be calm and firm as I were Zeus.  
I will descend to Hades and unloose  
My wife : prevail on pale Persephone,  
Laving her love-locks with exalted dew

Of stern grey song ; such roseate tunes espouse  
That all the echoes of that lonely house  
Answer me sob for sob, that she decree  
With love deep-seated in her lofty brows

Forth sparkling : and with Hades intercede.  
So as I stir the judgment-seat, and plead,  
The awful brows may lighten, and decree  
My wife's return—a poet's lofty meed !

EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS

END OF VOLUME I

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