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THE CITY OF THE SOUL

SONNETS BY
LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

Author of "The City of the Soul." Fcap. 8vo.
Printed by the Arden Press on hand-made
paper, 2s. 6d. net. Second Edition.

The DAILY TELEGRAPH says:

"The 'Sonnets' . . . combine at once richness and simplicity, both in the similes used and in the diction; while most are marked by that apparent ease which is no small part of the sonnet-writer's art."

The SPECTATOR says:

"There is no crudeness in the slender volume of sonnets which Lord Alfred Douglas has published. He does not make the mistake of overloading his sonnets with thought, and giving them a burden which bows them. There is nothing tortuous or crabbed or obscure in them, nor do they sin in the other extreme and fall into mellifluous banality. Almost all equally deserve quotation."

The SATURDAY REVIEW says:

"The 'Sonnets' of Lord Alfred Douglas need little by way of appreciation, and less by way of criticism. There is no man living able to produce a book of sonnets quite so flawless in their grace and music."

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THE
CITY OF THE SOUL

BY

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

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PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

THIS volume of poetry has been out of print since the middle of the year 1900, and the present edition has been issued in response to a steady demand, from both public and private sources, extending over the intervening years. My first impulse would have driven me to make large revisions in the text and to cut out altogether several pieces, but on further consideration I have decided to leave the text practically unaltered and to cut out nothing. These poems are the poems of extreme and comparative youth, and the interest they possess would, I believe, be impaired by revisions which

a more matured technical knowledge and a great alteration in point of view would dictate. Chronologically the order of the poems, left exactly as in the former editions, should be, roughly speaking, reversed. That is to say, the first fifteen poems down to *Le Balcon* (page 53) were written at a considerably later period of time than the remainder, some of which were written while I was still an undergraduate at Oxford.

Poetry is the expression of that which cannot be said in prose. The only excuse for writing poetry is that one has something to say which cannot possibly be said in prose. To write or attempt to write poetry for any other reason is to sin against the high muses. A rigid application of this touchstone

to the mass of contemporary poetry would have the result of wiping out at least ninety per cent. of it from the necessity of consideration, which would be a very good thing indeed. I am quite prepared to accept the consequences of its application to my own poetry, and to admit that some of the pieces in the latter part of this volume would not survive it. That is not to say that even the first fifteen poems in the book, and the survivors from the remainder, may not contain certain blemishes. But it is no part of my duty to point them out ; and having abandoned the idea of revision and excision I must leave the whole book to stand or fall, that is, live or die, on its merits. I am under no temptation to make any effort to disarm criticism

This book was originally published anonymously, and it was received by the critics in a way which at the time pleased me and astonished me, and if I add a few remarks upon certain aspects of my own work, and poetry generally, I beg that it may not be counted to me either for egotism or for protest against anticipated judgments. Merely as a matter of fact I wish to say that all the good poetry in this book was written in absolute sincerity, and in response to an intolerable craving to give expression to certain feelings and emotions which could not be expressed in prose. I have never in my life deliberately sat down to try to *épater* the multitude either by shocking them or by pandering to their taste. Again, in

writing poetry I have never attempted to perform what certain persons would have one believe to be the essential task of a "great" poet as opposed to a "minor" poet, namely, to "strike a new note." I do not believe that any real poet since the days of the Elizabethans has tried to do it. Why should he? What the poet wishes to do is to go on writing poetry where the last poet left off. He wishes to strike beautiful notes, not new notes. He can well afford to leave the new note-striking business to Mr Bernard Shaw. Needless to say I am not trying to praise or defend plagiarism. What I mean is that the medium of poetry remains eternally the same once a language has arrived at

its highest point. It is impossible to improve on the language of Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan poets, nor is it at all necessary even to vary their subject-matter. Just as all the plays that have ever been written are different variations of some dozen well-defined and easily recognised plots, so all poetry is eternally occupied with variations on the same themes of Love, Joy, Sorrow, Desire, Regret, Remorse and the rest. People who try to strike a new note in poetry invariably strike the wrong note. The same holds good in music and painting, but I have no space to elaborate my theory—surely a very obvious one—in this preface, and must simply crystallise it by saying that to ask or expect a poet to

strike a new note in poetry is exactly like asking or expecting the Nightingale to strike a new note in her perennial song. In conclusion I should like to say that, although I did not know it and would not have believed it when I wrote these poems, it is my firm conviction that all good art is necessarily on the side of the angels, and that the true poet, whether he knows it or not at the time he is writing, is always on the side of the angels.

ALFRED BRUCE DOUGLAS.

PROEM FOR THE THIRD EDITION

How have we fared my soul across the days,
Through what green valleys, confident and fleet,
Along what paths of flint with how tired feet?
Anon we knew the terror that dismays
At noonday; and when night made dark the ways
We bought delight and found remembrance sweet.
Though in our ears we heard the wide wings beat
Ever we kept dumb mouths to prayer and praise.

Yet never lost or spurned or cast aside,
And never sundered from the love of God,
Through how-so wayward intricate deceits
Lured by what shining toys our charmed feet trod,
On the swift winds we saw bright angels ride,
And strayed into the moon-made silver streets.

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THE CITY OF THE SOUL

THE CITY OF THE SOUL

I

IN the salt terror of a stormy sea
There are high attitudes the mind forgets ;
And undesired days are hunting nets
To snare the souls that fly Eternity.
But we being gods will never bend the knee,
Though sad moons shadow every sun that sets,
And tears of sorrow be like rivulets
To feed the shallows of Humility.

Within my soul are some mean gardens found
Where drooped flowers are, and unsung
melodies,

And all companioning of piteous things.

But in the midst is one high terraced ground,
Where level lawns sweep through the stately
trees
And the great peacocks walk like painted
kings.

II

What shall we do, my soul, to please the
King?

Seeing he hath no pleasure in the dance,
And hath condemned the honeyed utterance
Of silver flutes and mouths made round to
sing.

Along the wall red roses climb and cling,
And oh! my prince, lift up thy countenance,
For there be thoughts like roses that entrance
More than the languors of soft lute-playing.

Think how the hidden things that poets see
In amber eyes or mornings crystalline,
Hide in the soul their constant quenchless light,

Till, called by some celestial alchemy,
Out of forgotten depths, they rise and shine
Like buried treasure on Midsummer night.

III

The fields of Phantasy are all too wide,
My soul runs through them like an untamed
thing.

It leaps the brooks like threads, and skirts the
ring

Where fairies danced, and tenderer flowers hide.

The voice of music has become the bride

Of an imprisoned bird with broken wing.

What shall we do, my soul, to please the
King,

We that are free, with ample wings untied ?

We cannot wander through the empty fields

Till beauty like a hunter hurl the lance.

There are no silver snares and springes set,
Nor any meadow where the plain ground yields.
O let us then with ordered utterance,
Forge the gold chain and twine the silken net.

IV

Each new hour's passage is the acolyte
Of inarticulate song and syllable,
And every passing moment is a bell,
To mourn the death of undiscerned delight.
Where is the sun that made the noon-day
 bright,
And where the midnight moon? O let us tell,
In long carved line and painted parable,
How the white road curves down into the
 night.

Only to build one crystal barrier
Against this sea which beats upon our days ;
To ransom one lost moment with a rhyme !

Or if fate cries and grudging gods demur,
To clutch Life's hair, and thrust one naked
 phrase
Like a lean knife between the ribs of Time.

THE BALLAD OF SAINT VITUS

VITUS came tripping over the grass
When all the leaves in the trees were green,
Through the green meadows he did pass
On the day he was full seventeen.

The lark was singing up over his head,
As he went by so lithe and fleet,
And the flowers danced in white and red
At the treading of his nimble feet.

His neck was as brown as the brown earth is
When first the young brown plough-boys
delve it,

And his lips were as red as mulberries
And his eyes were like the soft black velvet.

His silk brown hair was touched with bronze,
And his brown cheeks had the tender hue
That like a dress the brown earth dons
When the pink carnations bloom anew.

He was slim as the reeds that sway all along
The banks of the lake, and as straight as a
 rush,
And as he passed he sang a song,
And his voice was as sweet as the voice of a
 thrush.

He sang of the Gardens of Paradise,
And the light of God that never grows dim,

And the Cherubim with their radiant eyes,
And the rainbow wings of the Seraphim.

And the host as countless as all days,
That worships there, and ceases not,
Singing and praising God always,
With lute and flute and angelot.

And the blessed light of Mary's face
As she sits among these pleasant sounds,
And Christ that is the Prince of Grace,
And the five red flowers that be His wounds.

And so he went till he came to the doors
Of the ivory house of his father the King,
And all through the golden corridors,
As he passed along, he ceased to sing.

But a pagan priest had seen him pass,
And heard his voice as he went along
Through the fields of the bending grass,
And he heard the words of the holy
song.

And he sought the King where he sat on his
throne,

And the tears of wrath were in his eyes,

And he said, "O Sire, be it known

That thy son singeth in this wise :

"Of the blessed light of Mary's face

As she sits amidst sweet pleasant sounds,

And how that Christ is the Prince of
Grace,

And hath five flowers that be His wounds."

And when the King had heard this thing,
His brow grew black as a winter night,
And he bade the pages seek and bring
Straightway the prince before his sight.

And Vitus came before the King,
And the King cried out, "I pray thee, Son,
Sing now the song that thou didst sing
When thou cam'st through the fields anon."

And the face of the prince grew white as milk,
And he answered nought, but under the band
That held his doublet of purple silk
Round his slight waist, he thrust his hand.

And the King picked up a spear, and cried,
"What hast thou there? by the waters of Styx,

Speak or I strike, and the boy replied,
“Sweet Sire, it is a crucifix.”

And the King grew black with rage and grief,
And for full a moment he spake no word.
And the spear in his right hand shook like a leaf,
And the vein on his brow was a tight blue cord.

Then he laughed and said, in bitter scorn,
“Take me this Christian fool from my sight,
Lock him in the turret till the morn,
And let him dance alone to-night.

“He shall sit in the dark while the courtly ball
All the gay night sweeps up and down
On the polished floor of the golden hall,
And thus shall he win his martyr’s crown.”

Thus spake the King, and the courtiers
smiled,

And Vitus hung his head for shame ;

And he thought, "I am punished like a
child,

That would have died for Christ's dear Name."

And so 'twas done, and on that night,

While silk and sword, with fan and flower,

Danced in the hall in the golden light,

Prince Vitus sat in the lone dark tower.

But the King bethought him, and was moved,

Ere the short summer night was done,

And his heart's blood yearned for the son he
loved,

His dainty prince, his only son.

And all alone he climbed the stair,
With the tired feet of a sceptred King,
And came to the door, and lo! he was
 'ware
Of the sound of flute and lute-playing.

And as the King stood there amazed,
The iron door flew open wide,
And the King fell down on his knees as he
 gazed
At the wondrous thing he saw inside.

For the room was filled with a soft sweet
 light
Of ambergris and apricot,
And round the walls were angels bright,
With lute and flute and angelot.

On lute and angelot they played,
With their gold heads bowed upon the strings,
And the soft wind that the slim flutes made,
Stirred in the feathers of their wings.

And in the midst serene and sweet
With God's light on his countenance
Was Vitus, with his gold shod feet,
Dancing in a courtly dance.

And round him were archangels four,
Michael, who guards God's citadel,
Raphael, whom children still implore,
And Gabriel and Uriel.

Thus long ago was Christ's behest,
And the saving grace that His red wounds be,

Unto this king made manifest,
And all his land of Sicily.

God sits within the highest Heaven,
His mercy neither tires nor faints,
All good gifts that may be given,
He gives unto His holy Saints.

This was the joy that Vitus gat ;
To dance with Angels knee by knee,
Before he came to man's estate :
God send us all such Company.

Amen.

THE TRAVELLING COMPANION

INTO the silence of the empty night

I went, and took my scornèd heart with
me

And all the thousand eyes of heaven were
bright ;

But Sorrow came and led me back to
thee.

I turned my weary eyes towards the sun,

Out of the leaden East like smoke came he.

I laughed and said, " The night is past and
done " ;

But Sorrow came and led me back to thee.

I turned my face towards the rising moon,
Out of the south she came most sweet to see,
She smiled upon my eyes that loathed the
noon ;

But Sorrow came and led me back to thee.

I bent my eyes upon the summer land,
And all the painted fields were ripe for me,
And every flower nodded to my hand ;
But Sorrow came and led me back to thee.

O Love ! O Sorrow ! O desired Despair !
I turn my feet towards the boundless sea,
Into the dark I go and heed not where,
So that I come again at last to thee.

A TRIAD OF THE MOON

I

LAST night my window played with one moon-
beam,

And I lay watching till sleep came, and stole
Over my eyelids, and she brought a shoal
Of hurrying thoughts that were her troubled
team,

And in the weary ending of a dream
I found this word upon a candid scroll :
“ The nightingale is like a poet’s soul,
She finds fierce pain in miseries that seem.”

Ah me, methought, that she should so devise !
To seek for pain and sing such doleful bars,

That the wood aches and simple flowers cry,

And sea-green tears drench mortal lovers'
eyes,

She that is made the lure of those young
stars

That hang like golden spiders in the sky.

II

That she should so devise, to find such lore
Of sighful song and piteous psalmody,
While Joy runs on through summer greenery,
And all Delight is like an open door.
Must then her liquid notes for evermore
Repeat the colour of sad things, and be
Distilled like cassia drops of agony,
From the slow anguish of a heart's bruised
core ?

Nay, she weeps not because she knows sad
songs,
But sings because she weeps ; for wilful food

Of her sad singing, she will still decoy
The sweetness that to happy things belongs.
All night with artful woe she holds the wood,
And all the summer day with natural joy.

III

My soul is like a silent nightingale
Devising sorrow in a summer night.
Closed eyes in blazing noon put out the light,
And Hell lies in the thickness of a veil.
In every voiceless moment sleeps a wail,
And all the lonely darknesses are bright,
And every dawning of the day is white
With shapes of sorrow fugitive and frail.

My soul is like a flower whose honey-bees
Are pains that sting and suck the sweets
untold,

My soul is like an instrument of strings ;

I must stretch these to capture harmonies,
And to find songs like buried dust of
gold,
Delve with the nightingale for sorrowful
things.

SONNET ON THE SONNET

To see the moment holds a madrigal,
To find some cloistered place, some hermitage
For free devices, some deliberate cage
Wherein to keep wild thoughts like birds in
 thrall ;
To eat sweet honey and to taste black
 gall,
To fight with form, to wrestle and to rage,
Till at the last upon the conquered page
The shadows of created Beauty fall.

This is the sonnet, this is all delight
Of every flower that blows in every Spring,

And all desire of every desert place ;
This is the joy that fills a cloudy night
When, bursting from her misty following,
A perfect moon wins to an empty space.

THE LEGEND OF SPINELLO OF
AREZZO

SPINELLO of Arezzo long ago,
A cunning painter, made a large design
To grace the choir of St Angelo.
Therein he pictured the exploits divine
Of the Archangel Michael, beautiful
Exceedingly, in wrath most terrible,
Until at last that holy place was full
Of warring angels ; and that one who fell
From the high places of the highest Heaven
Into the deep abyss of lowest Hell,
He pictured too, in mad disaster driven
Before the conquering hosts of Paradise.

And him the painter drew in uncouth shape,
A foul misshappen monster with fierce eyes,
Of hideous form, half demon and half ape.

And lo ! it fell out as he slept one night,
His soul, in the sad neutral land of dreams
That lies between the darkness and the light,
Was 'ware of one whose eyes were soft as
beams

Of summer moonlight, and withal as sad.
Dark was his colour, and as black his hair
As hyacinths by night, his sweet lips had
A curve as piteous as sweet lovers wear
When they have lost their loves ; so fair was he,
So melancholy, yet withal so proud,
He seemed a prince whose woes might move
a tree

To find a tearful voice and weep aloud.
He spoke, his voice was tunable and mellow,
But soft as are the western winds that stir
The summer leaves, and thus he said, "Spinello,
Why dost thou wrong me? I am Lucifer."

SPRING

WAKE up again, sad heart, wake up again !
(I heard the birds this morning singing sweet.)
Wake up again ! The sky was crystal clear,
 And washed quite clean with rain ;
And far below my heart stirred with the
 year,
Stirred with the year and sighed. O pallid
 feet
Move now at last, O heart that sleeps with
 pain
 Rise up and hear
The voices in the valleys, run to meet
The songs and shadows. O wake up again !

Put out green leaves, dead tree, put out green
leaves!

(Last night the moon was soft and kissed the
air.)

Put out green leaves! The moon was in the
skies,

All night she wakes and weaves.

The dew was on the grass like fairies' eyes,
Like fairies' eyes. O tree so black and bare,
Remember all the fruits the full gold sheaves ;

For nothing dies,

The songs that are, are silences that were,
Summer was Winter. O put out green leaves

Break through the earth, pale flower, break
through the earth!

(All day the lark has sung a madrigal.)

Break through the earth that lies not lightly
yet

And waits thy patient birth,
Waits for the jonquil and the violet,
The violet. Full soon the heavy pall
Will be a bed, and in the noon of mirth

Some rivulet
Will bubble in my wilderness, some call
Will touch my silence. O break through the
earth.

ENNUI

ALAS! and oh that Spring should come
again

Upon the soft wings of desired days,
And bring with her no anodyne to pain,
And no discernment of untroubled ways.
There was a time when her yet distant feet,
Guessed by some prescience more than half
divine,
Gave to my listening ear such happy warning,
That fresh, serene, and sweet,
My thoughts soared up like larks into the
morning,
From the dew-sprinkled meadows crystalline.

Soared up into the heights celestial,
And saw the whole world like a ball of fire,
Fashioned to be a monster playing ball
For the enchantment of my young desire.
And yesterday they flew to this black cloud,
(Missing the way to those ethereal spheres.)
And saw the earth a vision of affright,
 And men a sordid crowd,
And felt the fears and drank the bitter
 tears,
And saw the empty houses of Delight.

The sun has sunk into a moonless sea,
And every road leads down from Heaven to
 Hell,
The pearls are numbered on youth's rosary,
I have outlived the days desirable.

What is there left? And how shall dead men
sing

Unto the loosened strings of Love and Hate,
Or take strong hands to Beauty's ravishment?

Who shall devise this thing,
To give high utterance to Miscontent,
Or make Indifference articulate?

WINE OF SUMMER

THE sun holds all the earth and all the sky
From the gold throne of this midsummer
day.

In the soft air the shadow of a sigh
Breathes on the leaves and scarcely makes them
sway.

The wood lies silent in the shimmering heat,
Save where the insects make a lazy drone,
And ever and anon from some tree near,

A dove's enamoured moan,
Or distant rook's faint cawing harsh and
sweet,

Comes dimly floating to my listening ear.

Right in the wood's deep heart I lay me down,
And look up at the sky between the leaves,
Through delicate lace I see her deep blue
gown.

Across a fern a scarlet spider weaves
From branch to branch a slender silver thread,
And hangs there shining in the white sun-
beams,

A ruby tremulous on a streak of light.

And high above my head

One spray of honeysuckle sways and dreams
With one wild honey-bee for acolyte.

My nest is all untrod and virginal,
And virginal the path that led me here,
For all along the grass grew straight and tall,
And live things rustled in the thicket near :

And briar rose stretched out to sweet briar rose
Wild slender arms, and barred the way to me
With many a flowering arch, rose-pink or white,
 As bending carefully,
Leaving unbroken all their blossoming bows,
I passed along, a reverent neophyte.

The air is full of soft imaginings,
They float unseen beneath the hot sunbeams,
Like tired moths on heavy velvet wings.
They droop above my drowsy head like dreams.
The hum of bees, the murmuring of doves,
The soft faint whispering of unnumbered trees,
Mingle with unreal things, and low and deep
 From visionary groves,
Imagined lutes make voiceless harmonies,
And false flutes sigh before the gates of sleep.

O rare sweet hour ! O cup of golden wine !

The night of these my days is dull and
dense,

And stars are few, be this the anodyne !

Of many woes the perfect recompense.

I thought that I had lost for evermore

The sense of this ethereal drunkenness,

This fierce desire to live, to breathe, to be ;

But even now, no less

Than in the merry noon that danced before

My tedious night, I taste its ecstasy.

Taste, and remember all the summer days

That lie, like gold reflections in the lake

Of vanished years, unreal but sweet always ;

Soft luminous shadows that I may not take

Into my hands again, but still discern

Drifting like gilded ghosts before my eyes,
Beneath the waters of forgotten things,

Sweet with faint memories,

And mellow with old loves that used to burn
Dead summer days ago, like fierce red kings.

And this hour too must die, even now the sun
Droops to the sea, and with untroubled feet
The quiet evening comes : the day is done.

The air that throbbed beneath the passionate
heat

Grows calm and cool and virginal again.

The colour fades and sinks to sombre tones,
As when in youthful cheeks a blush grows dim.

Hushed are the monotones

Of doves and bees, and the long flowery lane
Rustles beneath the wind in playful whim.

Gone are the passion and the pulse that beat
With fevered strokes, and gone the unseen things
That clothed the hour with shining raiment meet
To deck enchantments and imaginings.
No joy is here but only neutral peace
And loveless languor and indifference,
And faint remembrance of lost ecstasy.

 The darkening shades increase,
My dreams go out like tapers—I must hence.
Far off I hear Night calling to the sea.

ODE TO AUTUMN

THOU sombre lady of down-bended head,
And weary lashes drooping to the cheek,
With sweet sad fold of lips uncomforted,
And listless hands more tired with strife than
meek ;

Turn here thy soft brown feet, and to my
heart,

Unmatched to Summer's golden minstrelsy,
Or Spring's shrill pipe of joy, sing once again
Sad songs, and I to thee

Well tuned, will answer that according part
That jarred with those young seasons' gladder
strain.

Give me thy empty branches for the biers
Of perished joys, thy winds to sigh my sighs,
Thy falling leaves to count my falling tears,
And all thy mists to dim my aching eyes.
There is no comfort in thy lips, and none
In thy cold arms, nor pity in thy breast,
But better 'tis in gray hours to have grief,
 Than to affront the sun
With sunless woe, when every flower and leaf
Conspires to make the season merriest.

The drip of rain-drops on the sodden earth,
The trampled mud-stained grass, the shifting
 leaves,
The silent hurrying birds, the sickly birth
Of the red sun in misty skies, the sheaves
Of rotting ruined corn, the sudden gusts

Of angry winds, the clouds that fly all night
Before the stormy moon, thy desolate moans,
All thy decays and rusts,
Thy deaths and dirges, these are tuned aright
To my unquiet soul that sorrow owns.

But ah! thy gentler mood, the honeyed kiss
Of thy faint watery sunshine, thy pale gold,
Thy dark red berries, and the ambergris
That paints the lingering leaves, while on the
mould,
Their dead make bronze and sepia carpetings
That lightly rustle in thy quiet breath.
These are the shadows of departed smiles,
The ghosts of happy things :
These break again the broken heart, the whiles
Thou goest on to winter, I to Death.

TWO TRANSLATIONS FROM
BAUDELAIRE

HARMONIE DU SOIR

Voici venir le temps

Now is the hour when, swinging in the breeze,
Each flower, like a censer, sheds its sweet.
The air is full of scents and melodies,
O languorous waltz ! O swoon of dancing feet !

Each flower, like a censer, sheds its sweet,
The violins are like sad souls that cry,
O languorous waltz ! O swoon of dancing feet !
A shrine of Death and Beauty is the sky.

The violins are like sad souls that cry,
Poor souls that hate the vast black night of
Death ;

A shrine of Death and Beauty is the sky.
Drowned in red blood, the Sun gives up his
breath.

This soul that hates the vast black night of
Death
Takes all the luminous past back tenderly.
Drowned in red blood, the Sun gives up his
breath.

Thine image like a monstrance shines in me.

LE BALCON

Mère des souvenirs maîtresse des maîtresses

MOTHER of Memories! O mistress-queen!

Oh! all my joy and all my duty thou!

The beauty of caresses that have been,

The evenings and the hearth remember now,

Mother of Memories! O mistress-queen!

The evenings burning with the glowing fire,

And on the balcony, the rose-stained nights!

How sweet, how kind you were, my soul's
 desire.

We said things wonderful as chrysolites,

When evening burned beside the glowing fire.

How fair the Sun is in the evening !

How strong the soul, how high the heaven's tower !

O first and last of every worshipped thing,

Your odorous heart's-blood filled me like a flower.

How fair the sun is in the evening !

The night grew deep between us like a pall,

And in the dark I guessed your shining eyes,

And drank your breath, O sweet, O honey-gall !

Your little feet slept on me sister-wise.

The night grew deep between us like a pall.

I can call back the days desirable,

And live all bliss again between your knees,

For where else can I find that magic spell

Save in your heart and in your Mysteries.

I can call back the days desirable.

These vows, these scents, these kisses infinite,
Will they like young suns climbing up the skies,
Rise up from some unfathomable pit,
Washed in the sea from all impurities?
O vows, O scents, O kisses infinite !

PERKIN WARBECK

I

AT Turney in Flanders I was born
Fore-doomed to splendour and sorrow,
For I was a king when they cut the corn,
And they strangle me to-morrow.

II

Oh! why was I made so red and white,
So fair and straight and tall?
And why were my eyes so blue and
bright,
And my hands so white and small?

III

And why was my hair like the yellow silk,
 And curled like the hair of a king?
And my body like the soft new milk
 That the maids bring from milking?

IV

I was nothing but a weaver's son,
 I was born in a weaver's bed ;
My brothers toiled and my sisters spun,
 And my mother wove for our bread.

V

I was the latest child she had,
 And my mother loved me the best.
She would laugh for joy and anon be sad
 That I was not as the rest.

VI

For my brothers and sisters were black as the
gate

Whereby I shall pass to-morrow,
But I was white and delicate,
And born to splendour and sorrow.

VII

And my father the weaver died full soon,
But my mother lived for me ;
And I had silk doublets and satin shoon
And was nurtured tenderly.

VIII

And the good priests had much joy of me,
For I had wisdom and wit ;
And there was no tongue or subtlety
But I could master it.

IX

And when I was fourteen summers old
 There came an English knight,
With purple cloak and spurs of gold,
 And sword of chrysolite.

X

He rode through the town both sad and slow,
 And his hands lay in his lap ;
He wore a scarf as white as the snow,
 And a snow-white rose in his cap.

XI

And he passed me by in the market-place,
 And he reined his horse and stared,
And I looked him fair and full in the face
 And he stayed with his head all bared.

XII

And he leaped down quick and bowed his knee,
And took hold on my hand ;
And he said, " Is it ghost or wraith that I see,
Or the White Rose of England ? "

XIII

And I answered him in the Flemish tongue,
" My name is Peter Warbeckke,
From Katherine de Faro I am sprung
And my father was John Osbeckke.

XIV

" My father toiled and weaved with his hand
And bare neither sword nor shield
And the White Rose of fair England
Turned red on Bosworth field."

XV

And he answered, "What matter for anything?

For God hath given to thee

The voice of the king and the face of the king,

And the king thou shalt surely be."

XVI

And he wrought on me till the vesper bell,

And I rode forth out of the town :

And I might not bid my mother farewell,

Lest her love should seem more than a crown.

XVII

And the sun went down, and the night waxed
black,

And the wind sang wearily ;

And I wept and turned, and was fain to go
back,

But he would not suffer me.

XVIII

And we rode, and we rode, was it nine days or
three?

Till we heard the bells that ring
For "my cousin Margaret of Burgundy,"
And I was indeed a king.

XIX

For I had a hundred fighting-men
To come at my beck and call,
And I had silk and fine linen
To line my bed withal.

XX

They dressed me all in silken dresses,
And little I wot did they reck
Of the precious scents for my golden tresses,
And the golden chains for my neck.

XXI

And all the path for "the rose" to walk
Was strewn with flowers and posies,
I was the milk-white rose of York,
The rose of all the roses.

XXII

And the Lady Margaret taught me well,
Till I spake without lispings
Of Warwick and Clarence and Isabel,
And "my father" Edward the King.

XXIII

And I sailed to Ireland and to France,
And I sailed to fair Scotland,
And had much honour and pleasaunce,
And Katherine Gordon's hand.

XXIV

And after that what brooks it to say
Whither I went or why?
I was as loathe to leave my play
And fight, as now to die.

XXV

For I was not made for wars and strife
And blood and slaughtering,
I was but a boy that loved his life,
And I had not the heart of a king.

XXVI

Oh! why hath God dealt so hardly with me,
That such a thing should be done,
That a boy should be born with a king's body
And the heart of a weaver's son?

XXVII

I was well pleased to be at the court,
Lord of the thing that seems ;
It was merry to be a prince for sport,
A king in a kingdom of dreams.

XXVIII

But ever they said I must strive and fight
To wrest away the crown,
So I came to England in the night
And I warred on Exeter town.

XXIX

And the King came up with a mighty host
And what could I do but fly ?
I had three thousand men at the most,
And I was most loath to die.

XXX

And they took me and brought me to London
town,

And I stood where all men might see ;
I, that had wellnigh worn a crown,
In a shameful pillory !

XXXI

And I cried these words in the English tongue,
“ I am Peter Warbeckke,
From Katherine de Faro I am sprung
And my father was John Osbeckke.

XXXII

“ My father toiled and weaved with his hand,
And bare neither sword nor shield ;
And the White Rose of fair England
Turned red on Bosworth field.”

XXXIII

And they gave me my life, but they held me fast
 Within this weary place ;
But I wrought on my guards ere a month was
 past,
With my wit and my comely face.

XXXIV

And they were ready to set me free,
 But when it was almost done,
And I thought I should gain the narrow sea
 And look on the face of the sun,

XXXV

The lord of the tower had word of it,
 And, alas ! for my poor hope,
For this is the end of my face and my wit
 That to-morrow I die by the rope.

XXXVI

And the time draws nigh and the darkness
closes,

And the night is almost done.

What had I to do with their roses,

I, the poor weaver's son ?

XXXVII

They promised me a bed so rich

And a queen to be my bride,

And I have gotten a narrow ditch

And a stake to pierce my side.

XXXVIII

They promised me a kingly part

And a crown my head to deck,

And I have gotten the hangman's cart

And a hempen cord for my neck.

XXXIX

Oh! I would that I had never been born,
To splendour and shame and sorrow,
For it's ill riding to grim Tiborne,
Where I must ride to-morrow.

XL

I shall dress me all in silk and scarlet,
And the hangman shall have my ring,
For though I be hanged like a low-born varlet
They shall know I was once a king.

XLI

And may I not fall faint or sick
Till I reach at last to the goal,
And I pray that the rope may choke me quick
And Christ receive my soul.

THE GARDEN OF DEATH

THERE is an isle in an unfurrowed sea
That I wot of, whereon the whole year round
The apple-blossoms and the rosebuds be
In early blooming; and a many sound
Of ten-stringed lute, and most mellifluous breath
Of silver flute, and mellow half-heard horn,
Making unmeasured music. Thither Death
Coming like Love, takes all things in the morn
Of tenderest life, and being a delicate god,
In his own garden takes each delicate thing
Unstained, unmellowed, immature, untrod,
Tremulous betwixt the summer and the
spring :

The rosebud ere it come to be a rose,
The blossom ere it win to be a fruit,
The virginal snowdrop, and the dove that
knows

Only one dove for lover ; all the loot
Of young soft things, and all the harvest-
ing

Of unripe flowers. Never comes the moon
To matron fulness, here no child-bearing
Vexes desire, and the sun knows no noon.
But all the happy dwellers of that place
Are reckless children, gotten on Delight
By Beauty that is thrall to Death ; no
grace,

No natural sweet they lack, a chrysolite
Of perfect beauty each. No wisdom comes
To mar their early folly, no false laws

Man-made for man, no mouthing prudence
numbs

Their green unthought, or gives their licence
pause ;

Young animals, young flowers, they live and
grow,

And die before their sweet emblossomed breath
Has learnt to sigh save like a lover's. Oh !
How sweet is Youth, how delicate is Death !

THE SPHINX

I GAZE across the Nile ; flamelike and red
The sun goes down, and all the western sky
Is drowned in sombre crimson ; wearily
A great bird flaps along with wings of lead,
Black on the rose-red river. Over my head
The sky is hard green bronze, beneath me lie
The sleeping ships ; there is no sound, or
sigh
Of the wind's breath,—a stillness of the
dead.

Over a palm tree's top I see the peaks
Of the tall pyramids ; and though my eyes

Are barred from it, I know that on the sand
Crouches a thing of stone that in some wise
Broods on my heart ; and from the darkening
 land
Creeps Fear and to my soul in whisper speaks.

TO SHAKESPEARE

MOST tuneful singer, lover tenderest,
Most sad, most piteous, and most musical,
Thine is the shrine more pilgrim-worn than
all

The shrines of singers ; high above the rest
Thy trumpet sounds most loud, most mani-
fest.

Yet better were it if a lonely call
Of woodland birds, a song, a madrigal,
Were all the jetsam of thy sea's unrest.

For now thy praises have become too loud
On vulgar lips, and every yelping cur

Yaps thee a pæan ; the whiles little men,
Not tall enough to worship in a crowd,
Spit their small wits at thee. Ah ! better then
The broken shrine, the lonely worshipper.

A SUMMER STORM

ALAS! how frail and weak a little boat
I have sailed in. I call it Happiness,
And I had thought there was not storm nor
stress

Of wind so masterful but it would float
Blithely in their despite ; but lo ! one
note

Of harsh discord, one word of bitterness,
And a fierce overwhelming wilderness
Of angry waters chokes my gasping throat.

I am near drowned in this unhappy sea,
I will not strive, let me lie still and sink,

I have no joy to live. Oh! unkind love!
Why have you wounded me so bitterly?
That am as easily wounded as a dove
Who has a silver throat and feet of pink.

AMORIS VINCULA

AS a white dove that, in a cage of gold,
Is prisoned from the air, and yet more bound
By love than bars, and will not wings unfold
To fly away, though every gate be found
Unlocked and open ; so my heart was caught,
And linked to thine with triple links of love.
But soon, a dove grown wanton, false it sought
To break its chain, and faithless quite to
rove
Where thou wouldst not ; and with a painted
bird
Fluttered far off. But when a moon was
past,

Grown sick with longing for a voice unheard

And lips unkissed, spread wings and home
flew fast.

And lo! what seemed a sword to cleave its
chain,

Was but a link to rivet it again.

IN SARUM CLOSE

TIRED of passion and the love that brings
Satiety's unrest, and failing sands
Of life, I thought to cool my burning hands
In this calm twilight of gray Gothic things :
But Love has laughed, and, spreading swifter
wings

Than my poor pinions, once again with bands
Of silken strength my fainting heart com-
mands,

And once again he plays on passionate strings.

But thou, my love, my flower, my jewel, set
In a fair setting, help me, or I die

To bear Love's burden ; for that load to share
Is sweet and pleasant, but if lonely I
Must love unloved, 'tis pain ; shine we, my fair
Two neighbour jewels in Love's coronet.

IMPRESSION DE NUIT

London

SEE what a mass of gems the city wears
Upon her broad live bosom ! row on row
Rubies and emeralds and amethysts glow.
See ! that huge circle like a necklace, stares
With thousands of bold eyes to heaven, and dares
The golden stars to dim the lamps below,
And in the mirror of the mire I know
The moon has left her image unawares.

That's the great town at night: I see her breasts,
Pricked out with lamps they stand like huge
black towers,

I think they move ! I hear her panting breath.
And that's her head where the tiara rests.
And in her brain, through lanes as dark as death,
Men creep like thoughts . . . The lamps are
like pale flowers.

A SONG

STEAL from the meadows, rob the tall green
hills,

Ravish my orchard's blossoms, let me bind
A crown of orchard flowers and daffodils,
Because my love is fair and white and kind.

To-day the thrush has trilled her daintiest
phrases,

Flowers with their incense have made drunk
the air,

God has bent down to gild the hearts of
daisies,

Because my love is kind and white and fair.

To-day the sun has kissed the rose-tree's
daughter,

And sad Narcissus, Spring's pale acolyte
Hangs down his head and smiles into the water,
Because my love is kind and fair and white.

TO L----

THOU that wast once my loved and loving
friend,

A friend no more, I had forgot thee quite,
Why hast thou come to trouble my delight
With memories? Oh! I had clean made
end

Of all that time, I had made haste to send
My soul into red places, and to light
A torch of pleasure to burn up my night.
What I have woven hast thou come to rend?

In silent acres of forgetful flowers,
Crowned as of old with happy daffodils,

Long time my wounded soul has been a-straying,
Alas ! it has chanced now on sombre hours
Of hard remembrances and sad delaying,
Leaving green valleys for the bitter hills.

IN WINTER

OH! for a day of burning noon

And a sun like a glowing ember,

Oh! for one hour of golden June,

In the heart of this chill November.

I can scarcely remember the Spring's soft breath

Or imagine the Summer hazes :

The yellow woods are so damp with death

That I have forgotten the daisies.

Oh! to lie watching the sky again,

From a nest of hot grass and clover,

Till the stars come out like golden rain

When the lazy day is over,

And crowning the night with an aureole,
As the clouds kiss and drift asunder,
The moon floats up like a luminous soul,
And the stars grow pale for wonder.

PLAINTE ETERNELLE

THE sun sinks down, the tremulous daylight
dies.

(Down their long shafts the weary sunbeams
glide.)

The white-winged ships drift with the falling
tide,

Come back, my love, with pity in your eyes !

The tall white ships drift with the falling tide.

(Far, far away I hear the seamews' cries.)

Come back, my love, with pity in your
eyes !

There is no room now in my heart for pride.

Come back, come back! with pity in your
eyes.

(The night is dark, the sea is fierce and
wide.)

There is no room now in my heart for pride,
Though I become the scorn of all the wise.

I have no place now in my heart for pride.

(The moon and stars have fallen from the
skies.)

Though I become the scorn of all the wise,
Thrust, if you will, sharp arrows in my side.

Let me become the scorn of all the wise.

(Out of the East I see the morning ride.)

Thrust, if you will, sharp arrows in my side,
Play with my tears and feed upon my sighs.

Wound me with swords, put arrows in my side.

(On the white sea the haze of noon-day lies.)

Play with my tears and feed upon my sighs,

But come, my love, before my heart has died.

Drink my salt tears and feed upon my sighs.

(Westward the evening goes with one red
stride.)

Come back, my love, before my heart has died,

Down sinks the sun, the tremulous daylight dies.

Come back ! my love, before my heart has died.

(Out of the South I see the pale moon rise.)

Down sinks the sun, the tremulous daylight
dies,

The white-winged ships drift with the falling
tide.

IN SUMMER

THERE were the black pine trees,
And the sullen hills
Frowning ; there were trills
Of birds, and the sweet hot sun,
And little rills
Of water, everyone
Singing and prattling ; there were bees

Honey-laden, tuneful, a song
Far-off, and a timid air
That sighed and kissed my hair,
My hair that the hot sun loves.

The day was very fair,
There was wooing of doves,
And the shadows were not yet long.

And I lay on the soft green grass,
And the smell of the earth was sweet,
And I dipped my feet
In the little stream ;
And was cool as a flower is cool in the
heat,
And the day lay still in a dream,
And the hours forgot to pass.

And you came, my love, so stealthily
That I saw you not
Till I felt that your arms were hot
Round my neck, and my lips were wet

With your lips, I had forgot
How sweet you were. And lo! the
sun had set,
And the pale moon came up silently.

NIGHT COMING INTO A GARDEN

ROSES red and white,

Every rose is hanging her head,

Silently comes the lady Night,

Only the flowers can hear her tread.

All day long the birds have been calling,

Calling shrill and sweet,

They are still when she comes with her long

robe falling,

Falling down to her feet.

The thrush has sung to his mate,

“ She is coming ! hush ! she is coming ! ”

She is lifting the latch at the gate,
And the bees have ceased from their
humming.

I cannot see her face as she passes
Through my garden of white and red ;
But I know she has walked where the daisies
and grasses
Are curtseying after her tread.

She has passed me by with a rustle and sweep
Of her robe (as she passed I heard it
sweeping),
And all my red roses have fallen asleep,
And all my white roses are sleeping.

NIGHT GOING OUT OF A GARDEN

THROUGH the still air of night

Suddenly comes, alone and shrill,

Like the far-off voice of the distant light,

The single piping trill

Of a bird that has caught the scent of the
dawn,

And knows that the night is over ;

(She has poured her dews on the velvet lawn

And drenched the long grass and the
clover,)

And now with her naked white feet

She is silently passing away,

Out of the garden and into the street,

Over the long yellow fields of the wheat,
Till she melts in the arms of the day.
And from the great gates of the East,
With a clang and a brazen blare,
Forth from the rosy wine and the feast
Comes the god with the flame-flaked hair ;
The hoofs of his horses ring
On the golden stones, and the wheels
Of his chariot burn and sing,
And the earth beneath him reels ;
And forth with a rush and a rout
His myriad angels run,
And the world is awake with a shout,
“ He is coming ! The sun ! The sun ! ”

JONQUIL AND FLEUR-DE-LYS

I

JONQUIL was a shepherd lad,

White he was as the curded cream,

Hair like the buttercups he had,

And wet green eyes like a full chalk stream.

II

His teeth were as white as the stones that lie

Down in the depths of the sun-bright
river,

And his lashes danced like a dragon-fly

With drops on the gauzy wings that
quiver.

III

His lips were as red as round ripe cherries,
And his delicate cheeks and his rose-pink
neck,
Were stained with the colour of dog-rose berries
When they lie on the snow like a crimson fleck.

IV

His feet were all stained with the cowslips and
grass
To amber and verdigris,
And through his folds one day did pass
The young prince Fleur-de-lys.

V

Fleur-de-lys was the son of the king.
He was as white as an onyx stone,

His hair was curled like a daffodil ring,
And his eyes were like gems in the queen's
blue zone.

VI

His teeth were as white as the white pearls set
Round the thick white throat of the queen
in the hall,
And his lashes were like the dark silk net
That she binds her yellow hair withal.

VII

His lips were as red as the red rubies
The king's bright dagger-hilt that deck,
And pale rose-pink as the amethyst is
Were his delicate cheeks and his rose-pink
neck.

VIII

His feet were all shod in shoes of gold,
And his coat was as gold as a blackbird's
bill is,
With jewel on jewel manifold,
And wrought with a pattern of golden lilies.

IX

When Fleur-de-lys espied Jonquil
He was as glad as a bird in May ;
He tripped right swiftly a-down the hill,
And called to the shepherd boy to play.

X

This fell out ere the sheep-shearing,
That these two lads did sport and toy,
Fleur-de-lys the son of the king,
And sweet Jonquil the shepherd boy.

XI

And after they had played awhile,
 Thereafter they to talking fell,
And full an hour they did beguile
 While each his state and lot did tell.

XII

For Jonquil spake of the little sheep,
 And the tender ewes that know their names,
And he spake of his wattled hut for sleep,
 And the country sports and the shepherds'
 games.

XIII

And he plucked a reed from the edge that girds
 The river bank, and with his knife
Made a pipe, with a breath like the singing birds
 When they flute to their loves in a musical
 strife.

XIV

And he told of the night so long and still
When he lay awake till he heard the feet
Of the goat-foot god coming over the hill,
And the rustling sound as he passed through
the wheat.

XV

And Fleur-de-lys told of the king and the court,
And the stately dames and the slender pages,
Of his horse and his hawk and his mimic fort,
And the silent birds in their golden cages.

XVI

And the jewelled sword with the damask blade
That should be his in his fifteenth spring ;
And the silver sound that the gold horns made,
And the tourney lists and the tilting ring.

XVII

And after that they did devise

For mirth and sport, that each should wear
The other's clothes, and in this guise
Make play each other's parts to bear.

XVIII

Whereon they stripped off all their clothes,

And when they stood up in the sun,
They were as like as one white rose
On one green stalk, to another one.

XIX

And when Jonquil as a prince was shown

And Fleur-de-lys as a shepherd lad,
Their mothers' selves would not have known
That each the other's habit had.

XX

And Jonquil walked like the son of a king
 With dainty steps and proud haut look ;
And Fleur-de-lys, that sweet youngling,
 Did push and paddle his feet in the brook.

XXI

And while they made play in this wise,
 Unto them all in haste did run,
Two lords of the court, with joyful cries,
 That long had sought the young king's son.

XXII

And to Jonquil they reverence made
 And said, " My lord, we are come from the
 king,
Who is sore vexed that thou hast strayed
 So far without a following."

XXIII

Then unto them said Fleur-de-lys

“ You do mistake, my lords, for know
That I am the son of the king, and this
Is sweet Jonquil, my playfellow.”

XXIV

Whereat one of these lords replied,

“ Thou lying knave, I'll make thee rue
Such saucy words.” But Jonquil cried,
“ Nay, nay, my lord, 'tis even true.”

XXV

Whereat these lords were sore distressed,

And one made answer bending knee,
‘ My lord the prince is pleased to jest.”
But Jonquil answered, “ Thou shalt see.

XXVI

“Sure never yet so strange a thing
As this before was seen,
That a shepherd was thought the son of a king,
And a prince a shepherd boy to have been.

XXVII

“Now mark me well, my noble lord,
A shepherd’s feet go bare and cold,
Therefore they are all green from the sward,
And the buttercup makes a stain of gold.

XXVIII

“That I am Jonquil thus shalt thou know,
And that this be very Fleur-de-lys
If his feet be like the driven snow,
And mine like the amber and verdigris.”

XXIX

He lifted up the shepherd's frock
That clothed the prince, and straight did show
That his naked feet all under his smock
Were whiter than the driven snow.

XXX

He doffed the shoes and the clothes of silk
That he had gotten from Fleur-de-lys,
And all the rest was as white as milk,
But his feet were like amber and verdigris.

XXXI

With that they each took back his own,
And when this second change was done,
As a shepherd boy was Jonquil shown
And Fleur-de-lys the king's true son.

XXXII

By this the sun was low in the heaven,
And Fleur-de-lys must ride away,
But ere he left, with kisses seven,
He vowed to come another day.

A WINTER SUNSET

THE frosty sky, like a furnace burning,
The keen air, crisp and cold,
And a sunset that splashes the clouds
with gold ;
But my heart to summer turning.

Come back, sweet summer ! come back
again !

I hate the snow,
And the icy winds that the north lands
blow,
And the fall of the frozen rain.

I hate the iron ground,
 And the Christmas roses,
 And the sickly day that dies when it closes,
With never a song or a sound.

Come back ! come back ! with your passionate
 heat
 And glowing hazes,
 And your sun that shines as a lover gazes
And your day with the tired feet.

APOLOGIA

TELL me not of Philosophies,
Of morals, ethics, laws of life ;
Give me no subtle theories,
No instruments of wordy strife.
I will not forge laborious chains
Link after link, till seven times seven,
I need no ponderous iron cranes
To haul my soul from earth to heaven.
But with a burnished wing,
Rainbow-hued in the sun,
I will dive and leap and run
In the air, and I will bring
Back to the earth a heavenly thing.

I will dance through the stars
And pass the blue bars
Of heaven. I will catch hands with God
And speak with him,
I will kiss the lips of the seraphim
And the deep-eyed cherubim ;
I will pluck of the flowers that nod
Row upon row upon row,
In the infinite gardens of God,
To the breath of the wind of the sweep of the
lyres,
And the cry of the strings
And the golden wires,
And the mystical musical things
That the world may not know.

IN MEMORIAM

FRANCIS ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS

VISCOUNT DRUMLANRIG

*Killed by the Accidental Explosion of his gun,
October 18, 1894*

DEAR friend, dear brother, I have owed you
this

Since many days, the tribute of a song.
Shall I cheat you who never did a wrong
To any man? No, therefore though I miss
All art, all skill, in this short armistice .
From my soul's war against the bitter throng
Of present woes, let these poor lines be strong
In love enough to bear a brother's kiss.

Dear saint, true knight, I cannot weep for you,
Nor if I could would I call back the breath
To your dear body ; God is very wise,
All that this year had in its womb He knew,
And, loving you, He sent His son like Death,
To put His hand over your kind gray eyes.

A PRAYER

OFTEN the western wind has sung to me,
There have been voices in the streams and
 meres,

And pitiful trees have told me, God, of Thee :
And I heard not. Oh ! open Thou mine
 ears.

The reeds have whispered low as I passed by,
“ Be strong, O friend, be strong, put off vain
 fears,

Vex not thy soul with doubts, God cannot
 lie :”

And I heard not. Oh ! open Thou mine ears.

There have been many stars to guide my feet,
Often the delicate moon, hearing my sighs,
Has rent the clouds and shown a silver street ;
And I saw not. Oh ! open Thou mine eyes.

Angels have beckoned me unceasingly,
And walked with me ; and from the sombre
skies

Dear Christ Himself has stretched out hands
to me ;

And I saw not. Oh ! open Thou mine eyes.

AUTUMN DAYS

I HAVE been through the woods to-day,

And the leaves were falling,

Summer had crept away,

And the birds were not calling.

And the bracken was like yellow gold

That comes too late,

When the heart is sad and old,

And death at the gate.

Ah, mournful Autumn! Sad,

Slow death that comes at last,

I am mad for a yesterday, mad!

I am sick for a year that is past!

Though the sun be like blood in the sky
 He is cold as the lips of hate,
And he fires the sere leaves as they lie
 On their bed of earth, too late.

They are dead, and the bare trees weep
 Not loud as a mortal weeping,
But as sorrow that sighs in sleep,
 And as grief that is still in sleeping.

THE IMAGE OF DEATH

I CARVED an image coloured like the night,
Winged with huge wings, stern-browed and
menacing,
With hair caught back, and diademed like a
king.

The left hand held a sceptre, and the right
Grasped a short sword, the bitter marble lips
Were curled and proud ; the yellow topaz
eyes

(Each eye a jewel) stared in fearful wise ;
The hard fierce limbs were bare, and from the
hips

A scourge hung down. And on the pedestal

I wrote these words "O all things that have
breath

This is the image of the great god Death,
Pour ye the wine and bind the coronal!
Pipe unto him with pipes and flute with flutes,
Woo him with flowers and spices odorous,
Let singing boys with lips mellifluous
Make madrigals and lull his ear with lutes.
Anon bring sighs and tears of harsh distress,
And weeping wounds! so haply ye may move
A heart of stone, from breasts of hate suck love,
Or garner pity from the pitiless."

TO SLEEP

AH, Sleep, to me thou com'st not in the
guise

Of one who brings good gifts to weary men,
Balm for bruised hearts and fancies alien
To unkind truth, and drying for sad eyes.
I dread the summons to that fierce assize
Of all my foes and woes, that waits me when
Thou makest my soul the unwilling denizen
Of thy dim troubled house where unrest lies.

My soul is sick with dreaming, let it rest.
False Sleep, thou hast conspired with Wake-
fulness,

I will not praise thee, I too long beguiled
With idle tales. Where is thy soothing breast?
Thy peace, thy poppies, thy forgetfulness?
Where is thy lap for me so tired a child?

VÆ VICTIS!

HERE in this isle
The summer still lingers,
And Autumn's brown fingers
So busy the while
With the leaves in the north,
Are scarcely put forth
In this land where the sun still glows like an
ember,
In mid-November.

In England it's cold,
And the yellow and red

Of October have fled ;
 And the sun is wet gold
 Like an emperor weeping,
When Death goes a-reaping
All through his empire, merciless comer,
 The dead things of summer.

 The sky has cried so
That the earth is all sodden,
With dead leaves in-trodden,
 And the trees to and fro
 Wave their arms in the air
 In despair, in despair :
They are thinking of all the hot days that are
 over,
 And the cows in the clover.

Here the roses are out,
And the sun at high noon
Makes the birds faint and swoon.
But the cricket's about
With his song, and the hum
Of the bees as they come
To feast at the honey-board laden and groaning,
Makes musical droning.

But vainly, alas !
Do I hide in the south,
Kiss close with my mouth
Red flowers, green grass,
For Autumn has found me
And thrown her arms round me.
She has breathed on my lips and I wander apart,
Dead leaves in my heart.

Capri.

REJECTED

ALAS! I have lost my God,
My beautiful God Apollo.
Wherever his footsteps trod
My feet were wont to follow.

But oh! it fell out one day
My soul was so heavy with weeping,
That I laid me down by the way ;
And he left me while I was sleeping.

And my soul awoke in the night,
And I bowed my ear for his fluting,

And I heard but the breath of the flight
Of wings and the night-birds hooting.

And night drank all her cup,
And I went to the shrine in the hollow,
And the voice of my cry went up :
“ Apollo ! Apollo ! Apollo ! ”

But he never came to the gate,
And the sun was hid in a mist,
And there came one walking late,
And I knew it was Christ.

He took my soul and bound it
With cords of iron wire,
Seven times round He wound it
With the cords of my desire.

The cords of my desire,
 While my desire slept,
Were seven bands of wire
 To bind my soul that wept.

And He hid my soul at last
 In a place of stones and fears,
Where the hours like days went past
 And the days went by like years.

And after many days
 That which had slept awoke,
And desire burnt in a blaze,
 And my soul went up in the smoke.

And we crept away from the place
 And would not look behind,

And the angel that hides his face
Was crouched on the neck of the wind.

And I went to the shrine in the hollow
Where the lutes and the flutes were playing,
And I cried : " I am come, Apollo,
Back to thy shrine, from my straying."

But he would have none of my soul
That was stained with blood and with tears,
That had lain in the earth like a mole,
In the place of great stones and fears.

And now I am lost in the mist
Of the things that can never be,
For I will have none of Christ
And Apollo will none of me.

ODE TO MY SOUL

RISE up my soul!

Shake thyself from the dust.

Lift up thy head that wears an aureole,

Fulfil thy trust.

Out of the mire where they would trample
thee

Make images of clay,

Whereon having breathed, from thy divinity

Let them take mighty wings and soar away

Right up to God.

Out of thy broken past

Where impious feet have trod,

Build thee a golden house august and vast,

Whereto these worms of earth may some day
crawl.

Let there be nothing small

Henceforth with thee ;

Take thou unbounded scorn of all their scorn,

Eternity

Of high contempt : be thou no more forlorn

But proud in thy immortal loneliness,

And infinite distress :

And, being 'mid mortal things divinely born,

Rise up my soul !

THE CITY OF THE SOUL

BY

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

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THE CITY OF THE SOUL

SOME PRESS OPINIONS

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