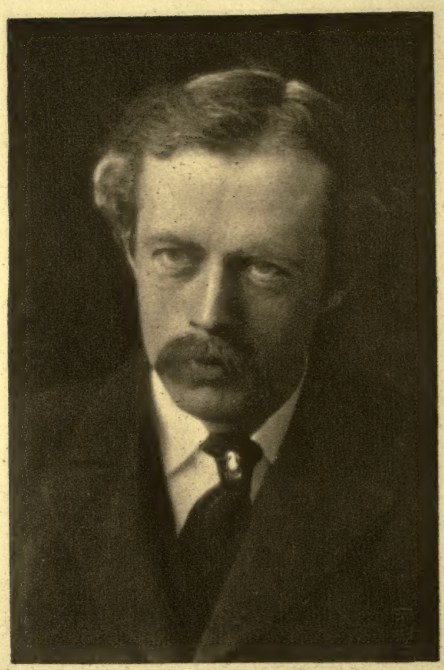

Arthur Symons

1886 199

POEMS BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

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This edition contains all that I care to preserve out of the five volumes of verse which I have published. These are:

"Days and Nights," 1889.
"Silhouettes," 1892.
"London Nights," 1895.
"Amoris Victima," 1897.
"Images of Good and Evil," 1899.

From "Days and Nights" I have retained only a few pieces; the other books are reprinted from their latest editions, though with numerous alterations. Six pieces have been omitted from "Silhouettes," and one piece has been added; five pieces have been omitted from "London Nights," and seven added; both volumes have been revised. "Amoris Victima" and "Images of Good and Evil" are reprinted almost without alteration. The translations scattered throughout three of these books have been put together at the end of the first volume. The second volume contains a collection of poems called "The Loom of Dreams," written during the last three years, which has not hitherto been published.

1901.

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DAYS AND NIGHTS.

To Walter Pater.
1889.

The Opium-Smoker.

I am engulfed, and drown deliciously.
Soft music like a perfume, and sweet light
Golden with audible odours exquisite,
Swathe me with cerements for eternity.
Time is no more. I pause and yet I flee.
A million ages wrap me round with night.
I drain a million ages of delight.
I hold the future in my memory.

Also I have this garret which I rent,
This bed of straw, and this that was a chair,
This worn-out body like a tattered tent,
This crust, of which the rats have eaten part,
This pipe of opium ; rage, remorse, despair ;
This soul at pawn and this delirious heart.

The Nun.

She lies upon the cold stone of her cell,
And the night deepens ; and the night is chill.
Fasting and faint, she nerves her flagging will,
Remembering the inevitable hell.
Yet still her lover's voice she hears too well,
And "Love, Love, Love," she hears and answers still.
The Christ looms high against an angry hill,
Her heart and Love would roam a lowly dell.

Fasting and faint she lies. The shepherd Night
Leads the calm stars across his plains like sheep.
Earth slumbers. When shall slumber seal her eyes,
Who, crying with lamentations infinite,
"Heaven, heaven!" yet, ineradicably deep,
Hides in her heart an alien Paradise?

The Street-Singer.

She sings a pious ballad wearily;
Her shivering body creeps on painful feet
Along the muddy runlets of the street;
The damp is in her throat: she coughs to free
The cracked and husky notes that tear her chest;
From side to side she looks with eyes that grope,
Feverishly hungering in a hopeless hope,
For pence that will not come; and pence mean rest,
The rest that pain may steal at night from sleep,
The rest that hunger gives when satisfied;
Her fingers twitch to handle them; she sings
Shriller; her eyes, too hot with tears to weep,
Fasten upon a window, where, inside,
A sweet voice mocks her with its carollings.

The Abandoned.

The moonlight touched the sombre waters white.
Beneath the bridge 'twas darker. Was she cold?
She shivered. Her poor shawl was worn and old,
And she was desolate, and it was night.
The slow canal crept onward; to her sight
It seemed to beckon, and the lapping told
Of rest and quiet sleep: how sweet to fold
The hands from toil and close the eyes from light,
And so shut out all memory, and go
There where men sleep, and dreams, perhaps, are not.
O never any dreams, she murmured; so,
Longing for sleep, the sleep that comes with death,
She fell, she felt the water, and forgot
All, save the drowning agony of breath.

Satiety.

I have outlived my life, and linger on,
Knowing myself the ghost of one that was.
Come, kindly death, and let my flesh, being grass,
Nourish some beast's sad life when I am gone.
What joy is left in all I look upon ?
I cannot sin, it wearies me. Alas !
I loathe the laggard moments as they pass ;
I tire of all but swift oblivion.

Yet, if all power to taste the dear deceit
Be not outworn and perished utterly,
If it could be, then surely it were sweet :
I go down on my knees and pray : O God,
Send me some last illusion, ere I be
A clod, perhaps at rest, within a clod.

Of Charity.

A beggar died last night; his soul
Went up to God, and said:
"I come uncalled, forgive it, Lord;
I died for want of bread."

Then answered him the Lord of heaven:
"Son, how can this thing be?
Are not my saints on earth? and they
Had surely succoured thee."

"Thy saints, O Lord," the beggar said,
"Live holy lives of prayer;
How should they know of such as we?
We perish unaware.

"They strive to save our wicked souls
And fit them for the sky;
Meanwhile, not having bread to eat,
(Forgive!) our bodies die."

Then the Lord God spake out of heaven
In wrath and angry pain:
"O men, for whom my Son hath died,
My Son hath lived in vain!"

A Brother of the Battuti.

Shed, sinful flesh, these tears of blood,
For all thy vileness all too few ;
Wash out, O holy healing flood,
The sins that alway in God's view
Stand as a mountain day and night,
A mountain growing up from hell ;
Smite, deluge of my torments, smite
Upon the burrowing base, and swell
Up, upward to the very brow.
Shall God no mercy have for me
When thou art shaken, even thou,
Hurled down and cast into the sea ?
No mercy ? Yea, doth God require
These cruel pangs, and all in vain
To save me from the flaming fire ?
Shall all my blood pour forth like rain,
Nor fructify the barren sod,
Nor cleanse my scarlet sins like wool,
Nor turn the burning wrath of God ?
Lo, all these years my hours are full
Of sorer suffering than of old
His martyrs bore, that triumphed still,
Gained grace, and heard the harps of gold,
And saw the city on the hill.
I have not tasted flesh, nor fed
On dainty fare, nor known the touch
Of joyous wine, nor bitten bread,
Save mouldy, and of that not much,
Sour crusts, with water old and stale,

And herbs and roots ; no rest I take
Save when these vile limbs faint and fail,
But roaming all the night awake
I think on my exceeding sin.
God knows I take no rest at all,
Who haply, resting not, shall win
The final goal before I fall.
Yea, and not these alone ; yea, these
Might all men do for heaven ; but I,
In suns that scorch, in moons that freeze,
About my shuddering shoulders ply
This biting scourge of knotted cord,
And shout to feel the blood run down.
Wilt thou not think on this, dear Lord ?
Yea, when the jewels of thy crown
Thou countest up remembering,
Wilt thou not, Lord, remember this,
That is not, Lord, a little thing,
And let me see thy heaven of bliss ?
O Lord, my Love, my Life, my Love,
I swoon in ecstasy divine ;
Take, take my blood and drink thereof,
A drink-offering of costly wine
Poured out into a sacred cup ;
Take, take my blood poured freely out
And drain the winepress' fruitage up.
O Lord, I parch with burning drought,
I, whom the streams may not refresh ;
Give me, my Lord, my Love, give me
Thy spirit, as I give my flesh
A living sacrifice to thee.

The Fisher's Widow.

The boats go out and the boats come in
Under the wintry sky ;
And the rain and foam are white in the wind,
And the white gulls cry.

She sees the sea when the wind is wild
Swept by the windy rain ;
And her heart's a-weary of sea and land
As the long days wane.

She sees the torn sails fly in the foam,
Broad on the sky-line grey ;
And the boats go out and the boats come in.
But there's one away.

Night and Wind.

The night is light and chill,
Stars are awake in the sky,
There's a cloud over the moon;
Round the house on the hill
The wind creeps with its cry
Between a wail and a croon.

I hear the voice of the wind,
The voice of the wind in the night,
Cry and sob and weep,
As the voice of one that hath sinned
Moaning aloud in its might
In the night when he cannot sleep.

Sleep? No sleep is about.
What remembering sin
Wakes and watches apart?
The wind wails without,
And my heart is wailing within,
And the wind is the voice of my heart.

SILHOUETTES.

To Katherine Willard.
Paris, May, 1892.

At Dieppe:

I. After Sunset.

The sea lies quieted beneath
The after-sunset flush
That leaves upon the heaped grey clouds
The grape's faint purple blush.

Pale, from a little space in heaven
Of delicate ivory,
The sickle-moon and one gold star
Look down upon the sea.

II. On the Beach.

Night, a grey sky, a ghostly sea,
The soft beginning of the rain ;
Black on the horizon, sails that wane
Into the distance mistily.

The tide is rising, I can hear
The soft roar broadening far along ;
It cries and murmurs in my ear
A sleepy old forgotten song.

Softly the stealthy night descends,
The black sails fade into the sky :
Is not this, where the sea-line ends,
The shore-line of infinity ?

I cannot think or dream ; the grey
Unending waste of sea and night,
Dull, impotently infinite,
Blots out the very hope of day.

III. Rain on the Down.

Night, and the down by the sea,
And the veil of rain on the down ;
And she came through the mist and the rain to me
From the safe warm lights of the town.

The rain shone in her hair,
And her face gleamed in the rain ;
And only the night and the rain were there
As she came to me out of the rain.

IV. Before the Squall.

The wind is rising on the sea,
The windy white foam-dancers leap;
And the sea moans uneasily,
And turns to sleep, and cannot sleep.

Ridge after rocky ridge uplifts
Wild hands, and hammers at the land,
Scatters in liquid dust, and drifts
To death among the dusty sand.

On the horizon's nearing line,
Where the sky rests, a visible wall,
Grey in the offing, I divine
The sails that fly before the squall.

V. Under the Cliffs.

Bright light to windward on the horizon's verge;
To leeward, stormy shadows, violet-black,
And the wide sea between
A vast unfurrowed field of windless green;
The stormy shadows flicker on the track
Of phantom sails that vanish and emerge.

I gaze across the sea, remembering her;
I watch the white sun walk across the sea,
This pallid afternoon,
With feet that tread as whitely as the moon,
And in his fleet and shining feet I see
The footsteps of another voyager.

VI. Requies.

O is it death or life
That sounds like something strangely known
In this subsiding out of strife,
This slow sea-monotone?

A sound, scarce heard through sleep,
Murmurous as the August bees
That fill the forest hollows deep
About the roots of trees.

O is it life or death,
O is it hope or memory,
That quiets all things with this breath
Of the eternal sea?

Pastel.

The light of our cigarettes
Went and came in the gloom:
It was dark in the little room.

Dark, and then, in the dark,
Sudden, a flash, a glow,
And a hand and a ring I know.

And then, through the dark, a flush
Ruddy and vague, the grace
(A rose!) of her lyric face.

Eyes.

Under the heaven of her brows'
Unclouded noon of peace, there lies
A leafy heaven of hazel boughs
In the seclusion of her eyes ;

Her troubling eyes that cannot rest ;
And there's a little flame that dances,
A firefly in a grassy nest,
In the green circle of her glances ;

A frolic faun that must be hid,
Shyly, in some fantastic shade,
Where pity droops a tender lid
On laughter of itself afraid.

Morbidezza.

White girl, your flesh is lilies
Under a frozen moon,
So still is
The rapture of your swoon
Of whiteness, snow or lilies.

Virginal in revealment,
Your bosom's wavering slope,
Concealment,
In fainting heliotrope,
Of whitest white's revealment,

Is like a bed of lilies,
A jealous-guarded row,
Whose will is
Simply chaste dreams : but oh,
The alluring scent of lilies !

Maquillage.

The charm of rouge on fragile cheeks,
Pearl-powder, and, about the eyes,
The dark and lustrous eastern dyes ;
A voice of violets that speaks
Of perfumed hours of day, and doubtful night
Of alcoves curtained close against the light.

Gracile and creamy white and rose,
Complexioned like the flower of dawn,
Her fleeting colours are as those
That, from an April sky withdrawn,
Fade in a fragrant mist of tears away
When weeping noon leads on the altered day.

Impression.

To M. C.

The pink and black of silk and lace,
Flushed in the rosy-golden glow
Of lamplight on her lifted face;
Powder and wig, and pink and lace,

And those pathetic eyes of hers;
But all the London footlights know
The little plaintive smile that stirs
The shadow in those eyes of hers.

Outside, the dreary church-bell tolled,
The London Sunday faded slow;
Ah, what is this? what wings unfold
In this miraculous rose of gold?

An Angel of Perugino.

Have I not seen your face before
Where Perugino's angels stand
In those calm circles, and adore
With singing throat and lifted hand,

And pale hair folded crescent-wise,
About the placid forehead curled,
And the pale piety of eyes
Steadfast with peace upon the world?

I pause and watch you as you lean
Out of the doorway of your house,
With eyes grown happier to have seen
The Umbrian halo on your brows.

At Fontainebleau.

It was a day of sun and rain,
Uncertain as a child's quick moods;
And I shall never pass again
So blithe a day among the woods.

The forest knew you and was glad,
And laughed for very joy to know
Her child was with her; then, grown sad,
She wept, because her child must go.

And you would spy and you would capture
The shyest flower that lit the grass;
The joy I had to watch your rapture
Was keen as even your rapture was.

The forest knew you and was glad,
And laughed and wept for joy and woe.
This was the welcome that you had
Among the woods of Fontainebleau.

On the Heath.

Her face's wilful flash and glow
Turned all its light upon my face
One bright delirious moment's space,
And then she passed ; I followed slow

Across the heath, and up and round,
And watched the splendid death of day
Upon the summits far away,
And in her fateful beauty found

The fierce wild beauty of the light
That startles twilight on the hills,
And lightens all the mountain rills,
And flames before the feet of night.

In an Omnibus.

Your smile is like a treachery,
A treachery adorable ;
So smiles the siren where the sea
Sings to the unforgetting shell.

Your fleeting Leonardo face,
Parisian Monna Lisa, dreams
Elusively, but not of streams
Born in a shadow-haunted place.

Of Paris, Paris is your thought,
Of Paris robes, and when to wear
The latest bonnet you have bought
To match the marvel of your hair.

Yet that fine malice of your smile,
That faint and fluctuating glint
Between your eyelids, does it hint
Alone of matters mercantile ?

Close lips that keep the secret in,
Half spoken by the stealthy eyes,
Is there indeed no word to win,
No secret, from the vague replies

Of lips and lids that feign to hide
That which they feign to render up ?
Is there, in Tantalus' dim cup,
The shadow of water, nought beside ?

On Meeting After.

Her eyes are haunted, eyes that were
Scarce sad when last we met.
What thing is this has come to her
That she may not forget?

They loved, they married: it is well!
But ah, what memories
Are these whereof her eyes half tell,
Her haunted eyes?

Emmy.

Emmy's exquisite youth and her virginal air,
Eyes and teeth in the flash of a musical smile,
Come to me out of the past, and I see her there
As I saw her once for a while.

Emmy's laughter rings in my ears, as bright,
Fresh and sweet as the voice of a mountain brook,
And still I hear her telling us tales that night,
Out of Boccaccio's book.

There, in the midst of the villainous dancing-hall,
Leaning across the table, over the beer,
While the music maddened the whirling skirts of the ball,
As the midnight hour drew near,

There with the women, haggard, painted and old,
One fresh bud in a garland withered and stale,
She, with her innocent voice and her clear eyes, told
Tale after shameless tale.

And ever the witching smile, to her face beguiled,
Paused and broadened, and broke in a ripple of fun,
And the soul of a child looked out of the eyes of a child,
Or ever the tale was done.

O my child, who wronged you first, and began
First the dance of death that you dance so well?
Soul for soul: and I think the soul of a man
Shall answer for yours in hell.

Emmy at the Eldorado.

To meet, of all unlikely things,
Here, after all one's wanderings!
But, Emmy, though we meet,
What of this lover at your feet?

For, is this Emmy that I see?
A fragile domesticity
I seem to half surprise
In the evasions of those eyes.

Once a child's cloudless eyes, they seem
Lost in the blue depths of a dream,
As though, for innocent hours,
To stray with love among the flowers.

Without regret, without desire,
In those old days of love on hire,
Child, child, what will you do,
Emmy, now love is come to you?

Already, in so brief a while,
The gleam has faded from your smile;
This grave and tender air
Leaves you, for all but one, less fair.

At the Cavour.

Wine, the red coals, the flaring gas,
Bring out a brighter tone in cheeks
That learn at home before the glass
The flush that eloquently speaks.

The blue-grey smoke of cigarettes
Curls from the lessening ends that glow;
The men are thinking of the bets,
The women of the debts, they owe.

Then their eyes meet, and in their eyes
The accustomed smile comes up to call,
A look half miserably wise,
Half heedlessly ironical.

In the Haymarket.

I danced at your ball a year ago,
To-night I pay for your bread and cheese,
"And a glass of bitter, if you please,
For you drank my best champagne, you know!"

Madcap ever, you laugh the while,
As you drink your bitter and munch your bread;
The face is the same, and the same old smile
Came up at a word I said.

A year ago I danced at your ball,
I sit by your side in the bar to-night;
And the luck has changed, you say: that's all!
And the luck will change, you say: all right!

For the men go by, and the rent's to pay,
And you haven't a friend in the world to-day;
And the money comes and the money goes:
And to-night, who cares? and to-morrow, who knows?

At the Lyceum.

Her eyes are brands that keep the angry heat
Of fire that crawls and leaves an ashen path.
The dust of this devouring flame she hath
Upon her cheeks and eyelids. Fresh and sweet
In days that were, her sultry beauty now
Is pain transfigured, love's impenitence,
The memory of a maiden innocence,
As a crown set upon a weary brow.

She sits, and fain would listen, fain forget;
She smiles, but with those tragic, waiting eyes,
Those proud and piteous lips that hunger yet
For love's fulfilment. Ah, when Landry cries
"My heart is dead!" with what a wild regret
Her own heart feels the throb that never dies!

The Blind Beggar.

He stands, a patient figure, where the crowd
Heaves to and fro ; a sound is in his ears
As of a vexed sea roaring, and he hears
In darkness, as a dead man in his shroud.
Patient he stands, with age and sorrow bowed,
And holds a piteous hat of ancient years ;
And in his face and gesture there appears
The desperate humbleness of poor men proud.

What thoughts are his, as, with the inward sight,
He sees the glad unheeding Fair go by?
Is the long darkness darker for that light,
And sorrow nearer when such mirth is nigh?
Patient, alone, he stands from morn to night,
Pleading in his reproachful misery.

The Old Labourer.

His fourscore years have bent a back of oak,
His earth-brown cheeks are full of hollow pits;
His gnarled hands wander idly as he sits
Bending above the hearthstone's feeble smoke.
Threescore and ten slow years he tilled the land;
He wrung his bread out of the stubborn soil;
He saw his masters flourish through his toil;
He held their substance in his horny hand.

Now he is old: he asks for daily bread:
He who has sowed the bread he may not taste
Begs for the crumbs: he would do no man wrong.
The Parish Guardians, when his case is read,
Will grant him, yet with no unseemly haste,
Just seventeen pence to starve on, seven days long.

The Absinthe-Drinker.

Gently I wave the visible world away.
Far off, I hear a roar, afar yet near,
Far off and strange, a voice is in my ear,
And is the voice my own ? the words I say
Fall strangely, like a dream, across the day ;
And the dim sunshine is a dream. How clear,
New as the world to lovers' eyes, appear
The men and women passing on their way !

The world is very fair. The hours are all
Linked in a dance of mere forgetfulness.
I am at peace with God and man. O glide,
Sands of the hour-glass that I count not, fall
Serenely : scarce I feel your soft caress,
Rocked on this dreamy and indifferent tide.

Javanese Dancers.

Twitched strings, the clang of metal, beaten drums,
Dull, shrill, continuous, disquieting ;
And now the stealthy dancer comes
Undulantly with cat-like steps that cling ;

Smiling between her painted lids a smile,
Motionless, unintelligible, she twines
Her fingers into mazy lines,
The scarves across her fingers twine the while.

One, two, three, four glide forth, and, to and fro,
Delicately and imperceptibly,
Now swaying gently in a row,
Now interthreading slow and rhythmically,

Still, with fixed eyes, monotonously still,
Mysteriously, with smiles inanimate,
With lingering feet that undulate,
With sinuous fingers, spectral hands that thrill

In measure while the gnats of music whirr,
The little amber-coloured dancers move,
Like painted idols seen to stir
By the idolaters in a magic grove.

Love in Spring.

Good to be loved and to love for a little, and then
Well to forget, be forgotten, ere loving grow life!
Dear, you have loved me, but was I the man among men?
Sweet, I have loved you, but scarcely as mistress or wife.

Message of Spring in the hearts of a man and a maid,
Hearts on a holiday: ho! let us love: it is Spring.
Joy in the birds of the air, in the buds of the glade,
Joy in our hearts in the joy of the hours on the wing.

Well, but to-morrow? To-morrow, good-bye: it is over.
Scarcely with tears shall we part, with a smile who had met.
Tears? What is this? But I thought we were playing at lover.
Play-time is past. I am going. And you—love me yet!

Gipsy Love.

The gipsy tents are on the down,
The gipsy girls are here ;
And it's O to be off and away from the town
With a gipsy for my dear !

We'd make our bed in the bracken
With the lark for a chambermaid ;
The lark would sing us awake in the morning,
Singing above our head.

We'd drink the sunlight all day long
With never a house to bind us ;
And we'd only flout in a merry song
The world we left behind us.

We would be free as birds are free
The livelong day, the livelong day ;
And we would lie in the sunny bracken
With none to say us nay.

The gipsy tents are on the down,
The gipsy girls are here ;
And it's O to be off and away from the town
With a gipsy for my dear !

In Kensington Gardens.

Under the almond tree,
Room for my love and me !
Over our heads the April blossom ;
April-hearted are we.

Under the pink and white,
Love in her eyes alight ;
Love and the Spring and Kensington Gardens :
Hey for the heart's delight !

Rewards.

Because you cried, I kissed you, and,
Ah me! how should I understand
That piteous little you were fain
To cry and to be kissed again?

Because you smiled at last, I thought
That I had found what I had sought;
But soon I found, without a doubt,
No man can find a woman out.

I kissed your tears, and did not stay
Till I had kissed them all away;
Ah, hapless me! ah, heartless child!
She would not kiss me when she smiled.

Perfume.

Shake out your hair about me, so,
That I may feel the stir and scent
Of those vague odours come and go
The way our kisses went.

Night gave this priceless hour of love,
But now the dawn steals in apace,
And amorously bends above
The wonder of your face.

"Farewell" between our kisses creeps,
You fade, a ghost, upon the air;
Yet ah! the vacant place still keeps
The odour of your hair.

Souvenir.

How you haunt me with your eyes!
Still that questioning persistence,
Sad and sweet, across the distance
Of the days of love and laughter,
Those old days of love and lies.

Not reproaching, not reproving,
Only, always, questioning,
Those divinest eyes can bring
Memories of certain summers,
Nights of dreaming, days of loving,

When I loved you, when your kiss,
Shyer than a bird to capture,
Lit a sudden heaven of rapture;
When we neither dreamt that either
Could grow old in heart like this.

Do you still, in love's December,
Still remember, still regret
That sweet unavailing debt?
Ah, you haunt me, to remind me
You remember, I forget!

In Carnival.

Out of the multitudinous hours
Of life sealed fast for us by fate
Are any hours that yet await
Our coming worthy to be ours?

Life in her motley sheds in showers
The rose of hours still delicate,
But you and I have come too late
Into the Carnival of Flowers.

For us the roses are scarce sweet,
And scarcely swift the flying feet
Where masque to masque the moments call;

All has been ours that we desired,
And now we are a little tired
Of the eternal carnival.

Love in Dreams.

I lie on my pallet bed,
And I hear the drip of the rain ,
The rain on my garret roof is falling,
And I am cold and in pain.

I lie on my pallet bed,
And my heart is wild with delight ;
I hear her voice through the midnight calling,
As I lie awake in the night.

I lie on my pallet bed,
And I see her bright eyes gleam ;
She smiles, she speaks, and the world is ended,
And made again in a dream.

Music and Memory.

To K. W.

Across the tides of music, in the night,
Her magical face,
A light upon it as the happy light
Of dreams in some delicious place
Under the moonlight in the night.

Music, soft throbbing music in the night,
Her memory swims
Into the brain, a carol of delight;
The cup of music overbrims
With wine of memory, in the night.

Her face across the music, in the night,
Her face a refrain,
A light that sings along the waves of light,
A memory that returns again,
Music in music, in the night.

Spring Twilight.

To K. W.

The twilight droops across the day,
I watch her portrait on the wall
Palely recede into the grey
That palely comes and covers all.

The sad Spring twilight, dull, forlorn,
The menace of the dreary night;
But in her face, more fair than morn,
A sweet suspension of delight.

In Winter.

Pale from the watery west, with the pallor of winter a-cold,
Rays of the afternoon sun in a glimmer across the trees ;
Glittering moist underfoot, the long alley. The firs, one by one,
Catch and conceal, as I saunter, and flash in a dazzle of gold
Lower and lower the vanishing disc ; and the sun alone sees
As I wait for my love in the fir-tree alley alone with the sun.

Quest.

I chase a shadow through the night,
A shadow unavailingly ;
Out of the dark, into the light,
I follow, follow : is it she ?

Against the wall of sea outlined,
Outlined against the windows lit,
The shadow flickers, and behind
I follow, follow after it.

The shadow leads me through the night
To the grey margin of the sea ;
Out of the dark, into the light,
I follow unavailingly.

To a Portrait.

A pensive photograph
Watches me from the shelf:
Ghost of old love, and half
Ghost of myself!

How the dear waiting eyes
Watch me and love me yet:
Sad home of memories,
Her waiting eyes!

Ghost of old love, wronged ghost,
Return, though all the pain
Of all once loved, long lost,
Come back again.

Forget not, but forgive!
Alas, too late I cry.
We are two ghosts that had their chance to live,
And lost it, she and I.

Second Thoughts.

When you were here, ah foolish then!
I scarcely knew I loved you, dear.
I know it now, I know it when
You are no longer here.

When you were here, I sometimes tired,
Ah me! that you so loved me, dear.
Now, in these weary days desired,
You are no longer here.

When you were here, did either know
That each so loved the other, dear?
But that was long and long ago:
You are no longer here.

April Midnight.

Side by side through the streets at midnight,
Roaming together,
Through the tumultuous night of London,
In the miraculous April weather.

Roaming together under the gaslight,
Day's work over,
How the Spring calls to us, here in the city,
Calls to the heart from the heart of a lover!

Cool the wind blows, fresh in our faces,
Cleansing, entrancing,
After the heat and the fumes and the footlights,
Where you dance and I watch your dancing.

Good it is to be here together,
Good to be roaming,
Even in London, even at midnight,
Lover-like in a lover's gloaming.

You the dancer and I the dreamer,
Children together,
Wandering lost in the night of London,
In the miraculous April weather.

During Music.

The music had the heat of blood,
A passion that no words can reach ;
We sat together, and understood
Our own heart's speech.

We had no need of word or sign,
The music spoke for us, and said
All that her eyes could read in mine
Or mine in hers had read.

On the Bridge.

Midnight falls across hollow gulfs of night
As a stone that falls in a sounding well ;
Under us the Seine flows through dark and light,
While the beat of time (hark !) is audible.

Lights on bank and bridge glitter gold and red,
Lights upon the stream glitter red and white ;
Under us the night, and the night o'erhead,
We together, we alone together in the night.

Dreams.

I dream of her the whole night long,
The pillows with my tears are wet.
I wake, I seek amid the throng
The courage to forget.

Yet still, as night comes round, I dread,
With unavailing fears,
The dawn that finds, beneath my head,
The pillows wet with tears.

Tears.

O hands that I have held in mine,
That knew my kisses and my tears,
Hands that in other years
Have poured my balm, have poured my wine;

Women, once loved, and always mine,
I call to you across the years,
I bring a gift of tears,
I bring my tears to you as wine.

The Last Exit.

Our love was all arrayed in pleasantness,
A tender little love that sighed and smiled
At little happy nothings, like a child,
A dainty little love in fancy dress.

But now the love that once was half in play
Has come to be this grave and piteous thing.
Why did you leave me all the suffering
For all your memory when you went away ?

You might have played the play out, O my friend,
Closing upon a kiss our comedy.
Or is it, then, a fault of taste in me,
Who like no tragic exit at the end ?

After Love.

O to part now, and, parting now,
Never to meet again ;
To have done for ever, I and thou,
With joy, and so with pain.

It is too hard, too hard to meet
If we must love no more ;
Those other meetings were too sweet
That went before.

And I would have, now love is over,
An end to all, an end :
I cannot, having been your lover,
Stoop to become your friend !

Alla Passeretta Bruna.

If I bid you, you will come,
If I bid you, you will go,
You are mine, and so I take you
To my heart, your home;
Well, ah, well I know
I shall not forsake you.

I shall always hold you fast,
I shall never set you free,
You are mine, and I possess you
Long as life shall last;
You will comfort me,
I shall bless you.

I shall keep you as we keep
Flowers for memory, hid away,
Under many a newer token
Buried deep,
Roses of a gaudier day,
Rings and trinkets, bright and broken.

Other women I shall love,
Fame and fortune I may win,
But when fame and love forsake me
And the light is night above,
You will let me in,
You will take me.

Nocturne.

I may forget all mortal things,
But not that night, the dome of cloud,
The rattling wheels that made our whispers loud,
As heart-beats grew to whisperings;
The long Embankment with its lights,
The pavement glittering with fallen rain,
The magic and the mystery that are night's,
And human love without the pain.

The river shook with wavering gleams,
That softly plunged through depths that lay
Impenetrable as the grave of day,
As near and far away as dreams.
A bright train flashed with all its squares
Of warm light where the bridge lay mistily.
The night was all about us: we were free,
Free of the day and all its cares!

That was an hour of bliss too long,
Too long to last where joy is brief.
Yet one escape of souls may yield relief
To many weary seasons' wrong.
"O last for ever!" my heart cried;
It ended: heaven was done.
I had been dreaming by her side
That heaven was but begun.

The Street.

I passed your street of many memories.
A sunset, sombre pink, the flush
Of inner rose-leaves idle fingers crush,
Died softly, as the rose that dies.
All the high heaven behind the roof lay thus,
Tenderly dying, touched with pain
A little ; standing there I saw again
The sunsets that were dear to us.

I knew not if 'twere bitter or more sweet
To stand and watch the roofs, the sky.
O bitter to be there and you not nigh,
Yet this had been that blessed street.
How the name thrilled me, there upon the wall !
There was the house, the windows there
Against the rosy twilight high and bare,
The pavement-stones : I knew them all !

Days that have been, days that have fallen cold !
I stood and gazed, and thought of you,
Until remembrance sweet and mournful drew
Tears to eyes smiling as of old.
So, sad and glad, your memory visibly
Alive within my eyes, I turned ;
And, through a window, met two eyes that burned,
Tenderly questioning, on me.

On Judges' Walk.

That night on Judges' Walk the wind
Was as the voice of doom ;
The heath, a lake of darkness, lay
As silent as the tomb.

The vast night brooded, white with stars,
Above the world's unrest ;
The awfulness of silence ached
Like a strong heart repressed.

That night we walked beneath the trees,
Alone, beneath the trees ;
There was some word we could not say
Half uttered in the breeze.

That night on Judges' Walk we said
No word of all we had to say ;
But now there shall be no word said
Before the Judge's Day.

In the Night.

The moonlight had tangled the trees
Under our feet as we walked in the night,
And the shadows beneath us were stirred by the breeze
In the magical light;
And the moon was a silver fire,
And the stars were flickers of flame,
Golden and violet and red;
And the night-wind sighed my desire,
And the wind in the tree-tops whispered and said
In her ear her adorable name.

But her heart would not hear what I heard,
The pulse of the night as it beat,
Love, Love, Love, the unspeakable word,
In its murmurous repeat;
She heard not the night-wind's sigh,
Nor her own name breathed in her ear,
Nor the cry of my heart to her heart,
A speechless, a clamorous cry:
"Love! Love! will she hear? will she hear?
O heart, she will hear, by-and-by,
When we part, when for ever we part.

City Nights.
I. In the Train.

The train through the night of the town,
Through a blackness broken in twain
By the sudden finger of streets;
Lights, red, yellow, and brown,
From curtain and window-pane,
The flashing eyes of the streets.

Night, and the rush of the train,
A cloud of smoke through the town,
Scaring the life of the streets;
And the leap of the heart again,
Out into the night, and down
The dazzling vista of streets!

II. In the Temple.

The grey and misty night,
Slim trees that hold the night among
Their branches, and, along
The vague Embankment, light on light.

The sudden, racing lights !
I can just hear, distinct, aloof,
The gaily clattering hoof
Beating the rhythm of festive nights.

The gardens to the weeping moon
Sigh back the breath of tears.
O the refrain of years on years
'Neath the weeping moon !

A White Night.

The yellow moon across the clouds
That shiver in the sky ;
White, hurrying travellers, the clouds,
And, white and aching cold on high,
Stars in the sky.

Whiter, along the frozen earth,
The miracle of snow ;
Close covered as for sleep, the earth
Lies, mutely slumbering below
Its shroud of snow.

Sleepless I wander in the night,
And, wandering, watch for day ;
Earth sleeps, yet, high in heaven, the night
Awakens, faint and far away,
A phantom day.

Peace at Noon.

Here there is peace, cool peace,
Upon these heights, beneath these trees;
Almost the peace of sleep or death,
To wearying brain, to labouring breath.

Here there is rest at last,
A sweet forgetting of the past;
There is no future here, nor aught
Save this soft healing pause of thought.

In Fountain Court.

The fountain murmuring of sleep,
A drowsy tune;
The flickering green of leaves that keep
The light of June;
Peace, through a slumbering afternoon,
The peace of June.

A waiting ghost, in the blue sky,
The white curved moon;
June, hushed and breathless, waits, and I
Wait too, with June;
Come, through the lingering afternoon,
Soon, love, come soon.

At Burgos.

Miraculous silver-work in stone
Against the blue miraculous skies,
The belfry towers and turrets rise
Out of the arches that enthrone
That airy wonder of the skies.

Softly against the burning sun
The great cathedral spreads its wings;
High up, the lyric belfry sings.
Behold Ascension Day begun
Under the shadow of those wings!

At Dawn.

She only knew the birth and death
Of days, when each that died
Was still at morn a hope, at night
A hope unsatisfied.

The dark trees shivered to behold
Another day begin;
She, being hopeless, did not weep
As the grey dawn came in.

In Autumn.

Frail autumn lights upon the leaves
Beacon the ending of the year ;
The windy rains are here,
Wet nights, and blowing winds about the eaves.

Here in the valley, mists begin
To breathe about the river side
The breath of autumn-tide ;
The dark fields wait to take the harvest in.

And you, and you are far away.
Ah, this it is, and not the rain
Now loud against the pane,
That takes the light and colour from the day !

On the Roads.

The road winds onward long and white,
It curves in mazy coils, and crooks
A beckoning finger down the height;
It calls me with the voice of brooks
To thirsty travellers in the night.

I leave the lonely city street,
The awful silence of the crowd;
The rhythm of the roads I beat,
My blood leaps up, I shout aloud,
My heart keeps measure with my feet.

A bird sings something in my ear,
The wind sings in my blood a song
'Tis good at times for a man to hear;
The road winds onward white and long,
And the best of Earth is here!

Pierrot in Half-mourning.

I, that am Pierrot, pray you pity me !
To be so young, so old in misery :
See me, and how the winter of my grief
Wastes me, and how I whiten like a leaf,
And how, like a lost child, lost and afraid,
I seek the shadow, I that am a shade,
I that have loved a moonbeam, nor have won
Any Diana to Endymion.
Pity me, for I have but loved too well
The hope of the too fair impossible.
Ah, it is she, she, Columbine : again
I see her, and I woo her, and in vain.
She lures me with her beckoning finger-tips ;
How her eyes shine for me, and how her lips
Bloom for me, roses, roses, red and rich !
She waves to me the white arms of a witch
Over the world : I follow, I forget
All, but she'll love me yet, she'll love me yet !

For a Picture of Watteau.

Here the vague winds have rest;
The forest breathes in sleep,
Lifting a quiet breast;
It is the hour of rest.

How summer glides away!
An autumn pallor blooms
Upon the cheek of day.
Come, lovers, come away!

But here, where dead leaves fall
Upon the grass, what strains,
Languidly musical,
Mournfully rise and fall?

Light loves that woke with spring
This autumn afternoon
Beholds meandering,
Still, to the strains of spring.

Your dancing feet are faint,
Lovers: the air recedes
Into a sighing plaint,
Faint, as your loves are faint.

It is the end, the end,
The dance of love's decease.
Feign no more now, fair friend!
It is the end, the end.

LONDON NIGHTS.

To Paul Verlaine.
London, May 6, 1895.

Prologue: Before the Curtain.

We are the puppets of a shadow-play,
We dream the plot is woven of our hearts,
Passionately we play the self-same parts
Our fathers have played passionately yesterday,
And our sons play to-morrow. There's no speech
In all desire, nor any idle word,
Men have not said and women have not heard;
And when we lean and whisper each to each
Until the silence quickens to a kiss,
Even so the actor and the actress played
The lovers yesterday; when the lights fade
Before our feet, and the obscure abyss
Opens, and darkness falls about our eyes,
'Tis only that some momentary rage
Or rapture blinds us to forget the stage,
Like the wise actor, most in this thing wise.
We pass, and have our gesture; love and pain
And hope and apprehension and regret
Weave ordered lines into a pattern set
Not for our pleasure, and for us in vain.
The gesture is eternal; we who pass
Pass on the gesture; we, who pass, pass on
One after one into oblivion,
As shadows dim and vanish from a glass.

Prologue: In the Stalls.

My life is like a music-hall,
Where, in the impotence of rage,
Chained by enchantment to my stall,
I see myself upon the stage
Dance to amuse a music-hall.

'Tis I that smoke this cigarette,
Lounge here, and laugh for vacancy,
And watch the dancers turn; and yet
It is my very self I see
Across the cloudy cigarette.

My very self that turns and trips,
Painted, pathetically gay,
An empty song upon the lips
In make-believe of holiday:
I, I, this thing that turns and trips!

The light flares in the music-hall,
The light, the sound, that weary us;
Hour follows hour, I count them all,
Lagging, and loud, and riotous:
My life is like a music-hall.

To a Dancer.

Intoxicatingly
Her eyes across the footlights gleam,
(The wine of love, the wine of dream)
Her eyes, that gleam for me!

The eyes of all that see
Draw to her glances, stealing fire
From her desire that leaps to my desire;
Her eyes that gleam for me!

Subtly, deliciously,
A quickening fire within me, beat
The rhythms of her poising feet;
Her feet that poise to me!

Her body's melody,
In silent waves of wandering sound,
Thrills to the sense of all around,
Yet thrills alone for me!

And O, intoxicatingly,
When, at the magic moment's close,
She dies into the rapture of repose,
Her eyes that gleam for me!

Renée.

Rain, and the night, and the old familiar door,
And the archway dim, and the roadway desolate ;
Faces that pass, and faces, and more, yet more :
Renée ! come, for I wait.

Pallid out of the darkness, adorably white,
Pale as the spirit of rain, with the night in her hair,
Renée undulates, shadow-like, under the light,
Into the outer air.

Mournful, beautiful, calm with that vague unrest,
Sad with that sensitive, vaguely ironical mouth ;
Eyes a-flame with the loveliest, deadliest
Fire of passionate youth ;

Mournful, beautiful, sister of night and rain,
Elemental, fashioned of tears and fire,
Ever desiring, ever desired in vain,
Mother of vain desire ;

Renée comes to me, she the sorceress, Fate,
Subtly insensible, softly invincible, she,
Renée, who waits for another, for whom I wait,
To linger a moment with me.

Nora on the Pavement.

As Nora on the pavement
Dances, and she entrances the grey hour
Into the laughing circle of her power,
The magic circle of her glances,
As Nora dances on the midnight pavement;

Petulant and bewildered,
Thronging desires and longing looks recur,
And memorably re-incarnate her,
As I remember that old longing,
A footlight fancy, petulant and bewildered;

There where the ballet circles,
See her, but ah! not free her from the race
Of glittering lines that link and interlace;
This colour now, now that, may be her,
In the bright web of those harmonious circles.

But what are these dance-measures,
Leaping and joyous, keeping time alone
With life's capricious rhythm, and all her own,
Life's rhythm and hers, long sleeping,
That wakes, and knows not why, in these dance-measures?

It is the very Nora;
Child, and most blithe, and wild as any elf,
And innocently spendthrift of herself,
And guileless and most unbeguiled,
Herself at last, leaps free the very Nora.

It is the soul of Nora,
Living at last, and giving forth to the night,
Bird-like, the burden of its own delight,
All its desire, and all the joy of living,
In that blithe madness of the soul of Nora

Violet.

I. Prelude.

This was a sweet white wildwood violet
I found among the painted slips that grow
Where, under hot-house glass, the flowers forget
How the sun shines, and how the cool winds blow.

The violet took the orchid's colouring,
Tricked out its dainty fairness like the rest;
Yet still its breath was as the breath of Spring,
And the wood's heart was wild within its breast.

The orchid mostly is the flower I love,
And violets, the mere violets of the wood,
For all their sweetness, have not power to move
The curiosity that rules my blood.

Yet here, in this spice-laden atmosphere,
Where only nature is a thing unreal,
I found in just a violet, planted here,
The artificial flower of my ideal.

II. Christmas-Eve.

April-hearted Violet,
Was it April when we met?
Winter comes, but April violets
Linger yet.

So the fancy of an hour,
Born of sudden sun and shower,
Braves the winter, and has blossomed
Into flower.

III. Declaration.

Child, I will give you rings to wear,
And, if you love them, dainty dresses,
Flowers for your bosom and your hair,
And, if you love them, fond caresses;

And I will give you of my days,
And I will leave, when you require it,
My dreams, my books, my wonted ways,
Content if only you desire it.

Take for your own my life, my art,
And for your love's sake I forgive you;
I only ask you for your heart,
Because I have no heart to give you.

IV. Song.

What are lips, but to be kissed?
What are eyes, but to be praised?
What the fineness of a wrist,
What the slimness of a waist?
What the softness of her hair,
If not that Love be tangled there?

What are lips, not to be kissed?
What are eyes, not to be praised?
What is she, that would resist
Love's desire to be embraced?
What her heart, that will not dare
Suffer poor Love to linger there?

These are lips, fond to be kissed,
These are eyes, fain to be praised;
And I think, if Love has missed
Shelter in the wintry waste,
That this heart may soon prepare
Some nook for him to nestle there.

V. At Seventeen.

You were a child, and liked me, yesterday.
To-day you are a woman, and perhaps
Those softer eyes betoken the sweet lapse
Of liking into loving : who shall say ?
Only I know that there can be for us
No liking more, nor any kisses now,
But they shall wake sweet shame upon your brow
Sweetly, or in a rose calamitous.

Trembling upon the verge of some new dawn
You stand, as if awakened out of sleep,
And it is I who cried to you, " Arise ! "
I who would fain call back the child that's gone,
And what you lost for me would have you keep,
Fearing to meet the woman of your eyes.

VI. In the Temple.

When Violet comes I scarcely know,
If Winter wraps the world in snow,
Or if 'tis Summer strikes a-glow
The fountain in the court below,
When Violet comes.
Her flower-like eyes, her soft lips bring
The warmth and welcome of the Spring,
And round my room, a fairy ring,
See violets, violets blossoming,
When Violet comes.

When Violet goes I hear again
The infinite despair of rain
Drip on my darkening window-pane
The tears of Winter on the wane,
When Violet goes.
Yet still about my lonely room
The visionary violets bloom,
And with her presence still perfume
The tedious page that I resume
When Violet goes.

VII. At the Stage-door.

Kicking my heels in the street,
Here at the edge of the pavement I wait, and my feet
Paw at the ground like the horses' hoofs in the street.

Under the archway sheer,
Sudden and black as a hole in the placarded wall,
Faces flicker and veer,
Wavering out of the darkness into the light,
Wavering back into night;
Under the archway, suddenly seen, the curls
And thin, bright faces of girls,
Roving eyes, and smiling lips, and the glance
Seeking, finding perchance,
Here at the edge of the pavement, there by the wall,
One face, out of them all.

Steadily, face after face,
Cheeks with the blush of the paint yet lingering, eyes
Still with their circle of black . . .
But hers, but hers?
Rose-leaf cheeks, and flower-soft lips, and the grace
Of the vanishing Spring come back,
And a child's heart blithe in the sudden and sweet surprise,
Subtly expectant, that stirs
In the smile of her heart to my heart, of her eyes to my eyes.

VIII. On the Doorstep.

Midnight long is over-past
As we loiter, and the rain falls fast,
As we loiter on your doorstep,
And the rain falls fast.

Will the watchful mother hear,
As we whisper, is your mother near,
Keeping there behind the curtain
An attentive ear ?

But we have so much to say,
As we linger, ere I go my way,
In the dark upon your doorstep,
We could talk till day.

There is no one in the street,
As I hold you in my arms, my sweet,
As I kiss you on your doorstep,
As I kiss you for good-night, my sweet.

IX. Kisses.

Sweet, can I sing you the song of your kisses?
How soft is this one, how subtle this is,
How fluttering swift as a bird's kiss that is,
As a bird that taps at a leafy lattice;
How this one clings and how that uncloses
From bud to flower in the way of roses;
And this through laughter and that through weeping
Swims to the brim where Love lies sleeping;
And this in a pout I snatch, and capture
That in the ecstasy of rapture,
When the odorous red-rose petals part
That my lips may find their way to the heart
Of the rose of the world, your lips, my rose.
But no song knows
The way of my heart to the heart of my rose.

X. Hesterna Rosa.

When a girl's fancy flutters to a man,
It is but as a bird that flies and cries;
She has a winged thing's April memories
Of sunshine, and the morning Spring began.

Love at her heart, importuning a tryst,
Finds in her senses little heed of it;
But her bright lips most girlishly admit
The simple homeliness of being kissed.

Kiss and be friends, and, when the kissing closes,
Part as we met, and be no less than friends;
Why should we weep because the summer ends,
And some sweet hours have ended with the roses?

Décor de Théâtre.

I. Behind the Scenes: Empire.

To Peppina.

The little painted angels flit,
See, down the narrow staircase, where
The pink legs flicker over it!

Blonde, and bewigged, and winged with gold,
The shining creatures of the air
Troop sadly, shivering with cold.

The gusty gaslight shoots a thin
Sharp finger over cheeks and nose
Rouged to the colour of the rose.

All wigs and paint, they hurry in:
Then, let their radiant moment be
The footlights' immortality!

II. The Primrose Dance: Tivoli.

To Minnie Cunningham.

Skirts like the amber petals of a flower,
A primrose dancing for delight
In some enchantment of a bower
That rose to wizard music in the night;

A rhythmic flower whose petals pirouette
In delicate circles, fain to follow
The vague aerial minuet,
The mazy dancing of the swallow;

A flower's caprice, a bird's command
Of all the airy ways that lie
In light along the wonder-land,
The wonder-haunted loneliness of sky:

So, in the smoke-polluted place,
Where bird or flower might never be,
With glimmering feet, with flower-like face,
She dances at the Tivoli.

III. At the Foresters.

The shadows of the gaslit wings
Come softly crawling down our way,
Before the curtain some one sings,
The music sounds from far away;
I stand beside you in the wings.

Prying and indiscreet, the lights
Illumine, if you chance to move,
The prince's dress, the yellow tights,
That fit your figure like a glove:
You shrink a little from the lights.

Divinely rosy rouged, your face
Smiles, with its painted little mouth,
Half tearfully, a quaint grimace;
The charm and pathos of your youth
Mock the mock roses of your face.

And there is something in your look
(Ambiguous, independent Flo!)
As teasing as a half-shut book;
It lures me till I long to know
The many meanings of your look:

The tired defiance of the eyes,
Pathetically whimsical,
Childish and whimsical and wise;
And now, relenting after all,
The softer welcome of your eyes.

IV. Air de Ballet.

To Cléo de Mérode.

Why is it, child, you choose to wear
That artful 1830 air
Of artlessness made artifice?
To lure all lips to long to kiss
The saint-like halo of your hair?

"I am the spirit of a fan.
Ah, once, what wanton breezes ran
Across my silk and ivory!
As a fan's breath is life to me,
I have no heart for any man.

"As a fan fluttered by a wrist,
Bright lips that now are dust have kissed,
I waken, out of other hours,
The phantoms of forgotten flowers
That hold me to a phantom tryst.

"If these calm eyes, if that pure cheek,
If this soft haloed hair, could speak
The false, fantastic, final truth,
In some remote, remembered youth
I loved Gavarni for a week."

V. La Mélinite: Moulin-Rouge.

Olivier Metra's Waltz of Roses
Sheds in a rhythmic shower
The very petals of the flower;
And all is roses,
The rouge of petals in a shower.

Down the long hall the dance returning
Rounds the full circle, rounds
The perfect rose of lights and sounds,
The rose returning
Into the circle of its rounds.

Alone, apart, one dancer watches
Her mirrored, morbid grace;
Before the mirror, face to face,
Alone she watches
Her morbid, vague, ambiguous grace

Before the mirror's dance of shadows
She dances in a dream,
And she and they together seem
A dance of shadows,
Alike the shadows of a dream.

The orange-rosy lamps are trembling
Between the robes that turn;
In ruddy flowers of flame that burn
The lights are trembling:
The shadows and the dancers turn.

And, enigmatically smiling,
In the mysterious night,
She dances for her own delight,
A shadow smiling
Back to a shadow in the night.

VI. At the Ambassadeurs.

To Yvette Guilbert.

That was Yvette. The blithe Ambassadeurs
Glitters, this Sunday of the Fête des Fleurs;
Here are the flowers, too, living flowers that blow
A night or two before the odours go;
And all the flowers of all the city ways
Are laughing, with Yvette, this day of days.
Laugh, with Yvette? But I must first forget,
Before I laugh, that I have heard Yvette.
For the flowers fade before her; see, the light
Dies out of that poor cheek, and leaves it white;
She sings of life, and mirth, and all that moves
Man's fancy in the carnival of loves;
And a chill shiver takes me as she sings
The pity of unpitied human things.

Intermezzo: Pastoral.
I. In the Vale of Llangollen.

In the fields and the lanes again!
There's a bird that sings in my ear
Messages, messages;
The green cool song that I long to hear.

It pipes to me out of a tree
Messages, messages;
This is the voice of the sunshine,
This is the voice of grass and the trees.

It is the joy of Earth
Out of the heaven of the trees:
The voice of a bird in the sunshine singing me
Messages, messages.

II. At Carbis Bay.

Out of the night of the sea,
Out of the turbulent night,
A sharp and hurrying wind
Scourges the waters white :
The terror by night.

Out of the doubtful dark,
Out of the night of the land,
What is it breathes and broods
Hoveringly at hand ?
The menace of land.

Out of the night of heaven,
Out of the delicate sky,
Pale and serene the stars
In their silence reply :
The peace of the sky.

III. At Dieppe: Grey and Green.

To Walter Sickert.

The grey-green stretch of sandy grass,
Indefinitely desolate;
A sea of lead, a sky of slate;
Already autumn in the air, alas!

One stark monotony of stone,
The long hotel, acutely white,
Against the after-sunset light
Withers grey-green, and takes the grass's tone.

Listless and endless it outlies,
And means, to you and me, no more
Than any pebble on the shore,
Or this indifferent moment as it dies.

IV. At Glan-y-Wern: White and Rose.

White-robed against the threefold white
Of shutter, glass, and curtains' lace,
She flashed into the evening light
The brilliance of her gipsy face:
I saw the evening in her light.

Clear, from the soft hair to the mouth,
Her ardent face made manifest
The sultry beauty of the South:
Below, a red rose, climbing, pressed
Against the roses of her mouth.

So, in the window's threefold white,
O'ertrailed with foliage like a bower,
She seemed, against the evening light,
Among the flowers herself a flower,
A tiger-lily sheathed in white.

V. Autumn Twilight: Grey and Gold.

The long September evening dies
In mist along the fields and lanes ;
Only a few faint stars surprise
The lingering twilight as it wanes.

Night creeps across the darkening vale ;
On the horizon tree by tree
Fades into shadowy skies as pale
As moonlight on a shadowy sea.

And, down the mist-enfolded lanes,
Grown pensive now with evening,
See, lingering as the twilight wanes,
Lover with lover wandering.

VI. On Craig Ddu.

The sky through the leaves of the bracken,
Tenderly, pallidly blue,
Nothing but sky as I lie on the mountain-top.
Hark! for the wind as it blew,

Rustling the tufts of my bracken above me,
Brought from below
Into the silence the sound of the water.
Hark! for the oxen low,

Sheep are bleating, a dog
Barks, at a farm in the vale:
Blue, through the bracken, softly enveloping,
Silence, a veil.

VII. In the Meadows at Mantua.

But to have lain upon the grass
One perfect day, one perfect hour,
Beholding all things mortal pass
Into the quiet of green grass;

But to have lain and loved the sun,
Under the shadow of the trees,
To have been found in unison,
Once only, with the blessed sun;

Ah! in these flaring London nights,
Where midnight withers into morn,
How quiet a rebuke it writes
Across the sky of London nights!

Upon the grass at Mantua
These London nights were all forgot.
They wake for me again: but ah,
The meadow-grass at Mantua!

Rosa Mundi.

An angel of pale desire
Whispered me in the ear
(Ah me, the white-rose mesh
Of the flower-soft, rose-white flesh!)
"Love, they say, is a fire:
Lo, the soft love that is here!

"Love, they say, is a pain
Infinite as the soul,
Ever a longing to be
Love's, to infinity,
Ever a longing in vain
After a vanishing goal.

"Lo, the soft joy that I give
Here in the garden of earth;
Come where the rose-tree grows,
Thine is the garden's rose,
Weave rose-garlands, and live
In ease, in indolent mirth."

Then I saw that the rose was fair,
And the mystical rose afar,
A glimmering shadow of light,
Paled to a star in the night;
And the angel whispered "Beware,
Love is a wandering star.

"Love is a raging fire,
Choose thou content instead ;
Thou, the child of the dust,
Choose thou a delicate Lust."
"Thou hast chosen !" I said
To the angel of pale desire.

Stella Maris.

Why is it I remember yet
You, of all women one has met,
In random wayfare, as one meets
The chance romances of the streets,
The Juliet of a night? I know
Your heart holds many a Romeo.
And I, who call to mind your face
In so serene a pausing-place,
Where the bright pure expanse of sea,
The shadowy shore's austerity,
Seem a reproach to you and me,
I too have sought on many a breast
The ecstasy of an unrest,
I too have had my dreams, and met
(Ah me!) how many a Juliet.
Why is it, then, that I recall
You, neither first nor last of all?
For, surely as I see to-night
The phantom of the lighthouse light,
Against the sky, across the bay,
Fade, and return, and fade away,
So surely do I see your eyes
Out of the empty night arise;
Child, you arise and smile to me
Out of the night, out of the sea,
The Nereid of a moment there,
And is it seaweed in your hair?

O lost and wrecked, how long ago,
Out of the drowning past, I know
You come to call me, come to claim
My share of your delicious shame.
Child, I remember, and can tell
One night we loved each other well,
And one night's love, at least or most
Is not so small a thing to boast.
You were adorable, and I
Adored you to infinity,
That nuptial night too briefly borne
To the oblivion of morn.
Ah! no oblivion, for I feel
Your lips deliriously steal
Along my neck, and fasten there;
I feel the perfume of your hair,
I feel your breast that heaves and dips
Desiring my desirous lips,
And that ineffable delight
When souls turn bodies, and unite
In the intolerable, the whole
Rapture of the embodied soul.

That joy was ours, we passed it by;
You have forgotten me, and I
Remember you thus strangely, won
An instant from oblivion.
And I, remembering, would declare
That joy, not shame, is ours to share,
Joy that we had the frank delight
To choose the chances of one night,

Out of vague nights, and days at strife,
So infinitely full of life.
What shall it profit me to know
Your heart holds many a Romeo?
Why should I grieve, though I forget
How many another Juliet?
Let us be glad to have forgot
That roses fade, and loves are not,
As dreams, immortal, though they seem
Almost as real as a dream.
It is for this I see you rise,
A wraith, with starlight in your eyes,
Where calm hours weave, for such a mood
Solitude out of solitude;
For this, for this, you come to me
Out of the night, out of the sea.

Dawn.

Here in the little room
You sleep the sleep of innocent tired youth,
While I, in very sooth,
Tired, and awake beside you in the gloom,
Watch for the dawn, and feel the morning make
A loneliness about me for your sake.

You are so young, so fair,
And such a child, and might have loved so well
And now, I cannot tell,
But surely one might love you anywhere,
Come to you as a lover, and make bold
To beg for that which all may buy with gold.

Your sweet, scarce lost, estate
Of innocence, the candour of your eyes,
Your childlike, pleased surprise,
Your patience : these afflict me with a weight
As of some heavy wrong that I must share
With God who made, and man who found you, fair.

Idealism.

I know the woman has no soul, I know
The woman has no possibilities
Of soul or mind or heart, but merely is
The masterpiece of flesh : well, be it so.
It is her flesh that I adore ; I go
Thirsting afresh to drain her empty kiss;
I know she cannot love : 'tis not for this
I rush to her embraces like a foe.
Tyrannously I crave, I crave alone,
Her body, now a silent instrument,
That at my touch shall wake and make for me
The strains that I have dreamed of, and not known ;
Her perfect body, Earth's most eloquent
Music, the divine human harmony.

Leves Amores.

Your kisses, and the way you curl,
Delicious and distracting girl,
Into one's arms, and round about,
Inextricably in and out
Twining luxuriously, as twine
The clasping tangles of the vine;
So loving to be loved, so gay
And greedy for our holiday;
Strong to embrace and long to kiss,
And strenuous for the sharper bliss,
A little tossing sea of sighs,
Till the slow calm seal up your eyes.
And then how prettily you sleep!
You nestle close and let me keep
My straying fingers in the nest
Of your warm comfortable breast;
And as I dream, lying awake,
Of sleep well wasted for your sake,
I feel the very pulse and heat
Of your young life-blood beat, and beat
With mine; and you are mine, my sweet!

Rosa Alba.

The beauty of no woman to my flesh
Is intimate spirit if she be not pale ;
I love not roses that are dewy fresh
If on a cheek they tell no passionate tale ;
And passion is the after-sunset breath
That withers them, wrinkling their petals white ;
Also, since love is next of kin to death,
Let love foreshow the colours of that night.
There is a whiteness of thrice mortal fire,
And of this ardency immaculate,
Which is the seal of perfected desire,
The promise of desires yet passionate,
I would some ardent weariness should speak
If not, I praise, but do not kiss, her cheek.

Hallucination: I.

One petal of a blood-red tulip pressed
Between the pages of a Baudelaire:
No more; and I was suddenly aware
Of the white fragrant apple of a breast
On which my lips were pastured; and I knew
That dreaming I remembered an old dream.
Sweeter than any fruit that fruit did seem,
Which, as my hungry teeth devoured it, grew
Ever again, and tantalised my taste.
So, vainly hungering, I seemed to see
Eve and the serpent and the apple-tree,
And Adam in the garden, and God laying waste
Innocent Eden, because man's desire,
Godlike before, now for a woman's sake
Descended through the woman to the snake.
Then as my mouth grew parched, stung as with fire
By that white fragrant apple, once so fair,
That seemed to shrink and spire into a flame,
I cried, and wakened, crying on your name:
One blood-red petal stained the Baudelaire.

Hallucination : II.

Is it your face, is it a dream ?
Your face I dream in such a mist
Of rosy gold and amethyst ?
Is it your eyes that flicker and gleam
Like mocking stars beneath the shade
Of leafy hair that seems to have curled
Its tendrils to blot out the world ?
Dreams are the truth : let the world fade !
And these warm spires of heat that rise
Out of my heart into my brain,
Are they not flames lighted in vain
At the enchantment of your eyes ?
I shudder with the fear of hope,
Giddy expectancy consumes
My senses ; but what breath perfumes
The air with scents of heliotrope ?
I sicken with a wild desire,
I drown in sweetness, till it seems
As if the after-taste of dreams
Came back into my mouth like fire.

Hands.

The little hands too soft and white
To have known more laborious hours
Than those which die upon a night
Of kindling wine and fading flowers;

The little hands that I have kissed,
Finger by finger, to the tips,
And delicately about each wrist
Have set a bracelet with my lips;

Dear soft white little morbid hands,
Mine all one night, with what delight
Shall I recall in other lands,
Dear hands, that you were mine one night!

Mauve, Black, and Rose.

Mauve, black, and rose,
The veils of the jewel, and she, the jewel, a rose.

First, the pallor of mauve,
A soft flood flowing about the body I love.

Then, the flush of the rose,
A hedge of roses about the mystical rose.

Last, the black, and at last
The feet that I love, and the way that my love has passed.

Flora of the Eden: Antwerp.

Eyes that sought my eyes, an-hungered, as a fire;
Hands that sought and caught my hands in their desire;
Hands and eyes that clipt and lipt me as a hungering fire!

But I turned away from your ecstatic eyes,
But my heart was silent to your eager sighs,
But I turned to other eyes from your imploring eyes.

Hands that I rejected, you were fain to give;
Eyes that for their moment loved me, as I live;
Mouth that kissed me: Flora of the Eden, O forgive!

White Heliotrope.

The feverish room and that white bed,
The tumbled skirts upon a chair,
The novel flung half-open, where
Hat, hair-pins, puffs, and paints, are spread;

The mirror that has sucked your face
Into its secret deep of deeps,
And there mysteriously keeps
Forgotten memories of grace;

And you, half dressed and half awake,
Your slant eyes strangely watching me,
And I, who watch you drowsily,
With eyes that, having slept not, ache;

This (need one dread? nay, dare one hope?)
Will rise, a ghost of memory, if
Ever again my handkerchief
Is scented with White Heliotrope.

To Muriel: at the Opera.

Roses and rose-buds, red and white,
Nestled between your breasts to-night,
And, lying there with drowsy breath,
Sweetly resigned themselves to death.
Ah, cruel child! that would not so
Suffer the perfumed life to go,
But, hungering for the rose's heart
Of midmost sweetness, plucked apart
Petal from petal: "Ah!" you said
(With lips that kissed white roses red)
"To live on love and roses!"
Well,
But if the rose were Muriel?

Intermezzo: Venetian Nights.
I. Veneta Marina.

The masts rise white to the stars,
White on the night of the sky,
Out of the water's night,
And the stars lean down to them white.
Ah! how the stars seem nigh;
How far away are the stars!

And I too under the stars,
Alone with the night again,
And the water's monotone;
I and the night alone,
And the world and the ways of men
Farther from me than the stars.

II. At the Dogana.

Night, and the silence of the night,
In Venice; far away, a song;
As if the lyric water made
Itself a serenade;
As if the water's silence were a song
Sent up into the night.

Night, a more perfect day,
A day of shadows luminous,
Water and sky at one, at one with us;
As if the very peace of night,
The older peace than heaven or light,
Came down into the day.

III. On the Zattere.

Only to live, only to be
In Venice, is enough for me.
To be a beggar, and to lie
At home beneath the equal sky,
To feel the sun, to drink the night,
Had been enough for my delight;
Happy because the sun allowed
The luxury of being proud
Not to some only; but to all
The right to lie along the wall.
Here my ambition dies; I ask
No more than some half-idle task,
To be done idly, and to fill
Some gaps of leisure when I will.
I care not if the world forget
That it was ever in my debt;
I care not where its prizes fall;
I long for nothing, having all.
The sun each morning, on his way,
Calls for me at the Zattere;
I wake and greet him, I go out,
Meet him, and follow him about;
We spend the day together, he
Goes to bed early; as for me,
I make the moon my mistress, prove
Constant to my inconstant love.
For she is coy with me, will hie
To my arms amorously, and fly
Ere I have kissed her; ah! but she,

She it is, to eternity,
I adore only; and her smile
Bewilders the enchanted isle
To more celestial magic, glows
At once the crystal and the rose.
The crazy lover of the moon,
I hold her, on the still lagoon,
Sometimes I hold her in my arms;
'Tis her cold silver kiss that warms
My blood to singing, and puts fire
Into the heart of my desire.
And all desire in Venice dies
To such diviner lunacies;
Life dreams itself: the world goes on,
Oblivious, in oblivion;
Life dreams itself, content to keep
Happy immortally, in sleep.

To One in Alienation.

I.

Last night I saw you decked to meet
The coming of those most reluctant feet:
The little bonnet that you wear
When you would fain, for his sake, be more fair;
The primrose ribbons that so grace
The perfect pallor of your face;
The dark gown folded back about the throat,
The folds of lacework that denote
All that beneath them, just beneath them, lies,
Waiting his eyes.

So the man came and took you; and we lay
So near and yet so far away,
You in his arms, awake for joy, and I
Awake for very misery,
Cursing a sleepless brain that would but scrawl
Your image on the aching wall,
That would but pang me with the sense
Of that most sweet accursed violence
Of lovers' hands that weary to caress
(Those hands!) your unforbidden loveliness.

And with the dawn that vision came again
To an unrested and recurrent brain:
To think your body, warm and white,
Lay in his arms all night;
That it was given him to surprise,

With those unhallowed eyes,
The secrets of your beauty, hid from me,
That I may never (may I never ?) see :
I who adore you, he who finds in you
(Poor child !) a half-forgotten point of view.

II.

As I lay on the stranger's bed,
And clasped the stranger-woman I had hired,
Desiring only memory dead
Of all that I had once desired;

It was then that I wholly knew
How wholly I had loved you, and, my friend,
While I am I, and you are you,
How I must love you to the end.

For I lay in her arms awake,
Awake and cursing the indifferent night,
That ebbed so slowly, for your sake,
My heart's desire, my soul's delight;

For I lay in her arms awake,
Awake in such a solitude of shame,
That when I kissed her, for your sake,
My lips were sobbing on your name.

Nerves.

The modern malady of love is nerves.
Love, once a simple madness, now observes
The stages of his passionate disease,
And is twice sorrowful because he sees,
Inch by inch entering, the fatal knife.
O health of simple minds, give me your life,
And let me, for one midnight, cease to hear
The clock for ever ticking in my ear,
The clock that tells the minutes in my brain.
It is not love, nor love's despair, this pain
That shoots a witless, keener pang across
The simple agony of love and loss.
Nerves, nerves! O folly of a child who dreams
Of heaven, and, waking in the darkness, screams.

Madrigal: I.

May we not love as others do,
Dearest, because we love,
A mistress I, a husband you?
Nay, our delights must prove
Either the double or the part
Of those who love with single heart.

Sweet friend, I find not any wrong
In your divided soul;
Nor you, that mine should not belong
Entire to one control.
Let simple lovers if they will
Contemn us, we outwit them still.

For small and poor and cold indeed
Is any heart that can
Hold but the measure of the need,
The joy, of any man.
Both spare and prodigal were we,
To love but you, to love but me.

Madrigal: II.

I put my soul into your eyes;
I looked, and saw, and did not see
My own soul looking back at me;
I saw my soul without surprise
Look from your eyes.

I take my soul away from you;
I see you now, and seeing prove
How steadfast and how blind is love;
I love: what has the soul to do
With loving you?

Céleste.

I. The Prelude.

Child, in those gravely-smiling eyes,
What memory sits apart and hears
A litany of low replies,
Love's music, in a lover's ears?

Love in your heart, a guest unsought,
Unfeared, and never known for Love,
Softer than music to the thought,
Sings in an unknown tongue of love.

II. Before Meeting.

I know not how our eyes first met,
I only know that, night by night,
For one long instant we forget
All but our instant of delight.

Child, I have never heard you speak,
I know not of your face by day,
Nor if the rose upon your cheek
With night's spent roses faints away.

So far apart from me you seem,
Ever about to be so near,
I must have dreamed you in some dream,
I do but dream that you are here.

Well, no awakening may there be!
I look to you in fairy-land,
From fairy-land you look to me,
We smile, and seem to understand.

III. After Meeting.

Now that we have met at last,
Long desired!
We who, waiting, never tired,
All the past,

We who waited for to-day,
You and I,
Seeing Fortune pass us by,
On her way,

Now our love has grown with years
Three years old,
We remember and behold
Hopes and fears

Like a dream that having been
Fades and flies,
As I look into your eyes,
O my queen!

And I hold your hand for sign,
And you smile,
As if always, all the while,
You were mine;

And we seem to know each other
Far too well
To have anything to tell
One another.

All was said and overpast
Long ago;
We who love each other so
Meet at last.

IV. Fête Champêtre.

Under the shadow of the trees
We sat together, you and I;
Our hearts were sweetly ill at ease
Under the shadow of the trees.

In the green circle of the grass
We saw the fairies passing by;
The wake, the fairy wake it was
Upon the circle of green grass.

And softly with their fairy chain
They wove a circle round about,
And round our hearts; ah, not in vain
They bound us with their fairy chain!

With shadowy bonds they bound us fast,
They wove their circle in and out;
Ah, Céleste, when the fairies passed,
With what strong bonds they bound us fast!

V. Love's Paradox.

Once I smiled when I saw you, when I saw you smile I was
glad,
And the joy of my heart was as foam that the sea-wind
shakes from the sea;
But the smile of your eyes grows strange, and the smile
that my lips have had
Trembles back to my heart, and my heart trembles in me.

Once you laughed when you met me, when you met me
your voice was gay
As the voice of a bird in the dawn of the day on a sun-
shiny tree;
But the sound of your voice grows strange, and the words
that you do not say
Thrill from your heart to mine, and my heart trembles in me.

VI. The Kiss.

There's a tune in my head to-night,
As I walk, as I talk,
And it swoons in a whirl of light
(While the day fades away)
And I hear my heart as it beats
A refrain, and again
I am splashed by the mud of the streets,
And again feel the rain.

I am hushed, and I listen, and move
Far apart, to her heart,
I am lost in the arms of her love ;
Then I hear, in my ear,
Oh, what voices of men that seem
Scarce amiss to my bliss,
For I walk in a dream (a dream ?
Is it this ?) of her kiss !

VII. White Magic.

Against the world I closed my heart,
And, half in pride and half in fear,
I said to Love and Lust: Depart,
None enters here.

A gipsy witch has glided in,
She takes her seat beside my fire;
Her eyes are innocent of sin,
Mine of desire.

She holds me with an unknown spell,
She folds me in her heart's embrace;
If this be love, I cannot tell:
I watch her face.

Her sombre eyes are happier
Than any joy that found a voice;
Since I am happiness to her,
I too rejoice.

And I have closed the door again,
Against the world I close my heart;
I hold her with my spell; in vain
Would she depart.

I hold her with a surer spell,
Beyond her magic, and above:
If hers be love, I cannot tell,
But mine is love.

VIII. Love's Secret.

As a most happy mother feels the stir
Of that new life which quickens with her life,
And knows that virtue has gone forth from her
To doubly sanctify the name of wife ;
Yet, for her joy's sake, and because her pride
Is too unutterably sanctified,
And all the heaven of heavens within her breast
Too dearly and too intimately possessed,
Speaks not a word, but folds her new delight
With a rapt silence, comforting as night ;
So, when I felt the quickening life that came
To bid my life's long-slumbering currents move,
I set the seal of silence on your name,
And, for my love's sake, never told my love.

IX. Asking Forgiveness.

I did not know; child, child, I did not know,
Who now in lonely wayfare go,
Who wander lonely of you, O my child,
And by myself exiled.
I did not know, but, O white soul of youth,
So passionate of truth,
So amorous of duty, and so strong
To suffer, all but wrong,
Is there for me no pity, who am weak?
Spare me this silence, speak!
I did not know: I wronged you; I repent:
But will you not relent?
Must I still wander, outlawed, and go on
The old weary ways alone,
As in the old, intolerable days
Before I saw your face,
The doubly darkened ways since you withdraw
Your light, that was my law?
I charge you by your soul, pause, ere you hurl
Sheer to destruction, girl,
A poor soul that had midway struggled out,
Still midway clogged about,
And for the love of you had turned his back
Upon the miry track,
That had been as a grassy wood-way, dim
With violet-beds, to him.
I wronged you, but I loved you; and to me
Your love was purity;
I rose, because you called me, and I drew

Nearer to God, in you.
I fall, and if you leave me, I must fall
To that last depth of all,
Where not the miracle of even your eyes
Can bid the dead arise.
I charge you that you save not your own sense
Of lilied innocence,
By setting, at the roots of that fair stem,
A murdered thing, to nourish them.

X. Love in Autumn.

It is already Autumn, and not in my heart only,
The leaves are on the ground,
Green leaves untimely browned,
The leaves bereft of Summer, my heart of Love left lonely.

Swift, in the masque of seasons, the moment of each mummer,
And even so fugitive
Love's hour, Love's hour to live :
Yet, leaves, ye have had your rapture, and thou, poor heart,
thy Summer !

XI. A Prayer to Saint Anthony of Padua.

Saint Anthony of Padua, whom I bear
In effigy about me, hear my prayer :
Kind saint who findest what is lost, I pray,
Bring back her heart : I lost it yesterday.

Variations upon Love.

I.

For God's sake, let me love you, and give over
These tedious protestations of a lover ;
We're of one mind to love, and there's no let ;
Remember that, and all the rest forget ;
And let's be happy, mistress, while we may,
Ere yet to-morrow shall be called to-day.
To-morrow may be heedless, idle-hearted :
One night's enough for love to have met and parted.
Then be it now, and I'll not say that I
In many several deaths for you would die ;
And I'll not ask you to declare that you
Will longer love than women mostly do.
Leave words to them whom words, not doings, move,
And let our silence answer for our love.

II.

O woman! I am jealous of the eyes
That look upon you; all my looks are spies
That do but lurk and follow you about,
Restless to find some guilty secret out.
I am unhappy if I see you not,
Unhappy if I see you; tell me what
That smile betokens? what close thing is hid
Beneath the half-way lifting of a lid?
Who is it, tell me, I so dread to meet,
Just as we turn the corner of the street?
Daily I search your baffling eyes to see
Who knows what new admitted company?
And, sick with dread to find the thing I seek,
I tremble at the name you do not speak.

III.

I know your lips are bought like any fruit;
I know your love, and of your love the root;
I know your kisses toll for love that dies
In kissing, to be buried in your eyes;
I know I am degraded for your sake,
And that my shame will not so much as make
Your glory, or be reckoned in the debt
Of memories you are mindful to forget.
All this I know, and, knowing it, I come
Delighted to my daily martyrdom;
And, rich in love beyond the common store,
Become for you a beggar, to implore
The broken crumbs that from your table fall,
Freely, in your indifference, on all.

IV.

I loved her ; and you say she loved me not.
Well, if I loved her ? And if she forgot,
Well, I have not forgotten even yet :
Time, and spent tears, may teach me to forget.
And so she loves another, and did then
When she was heaven and earth to me, and when,
Truly, she made me happy. It may be :
I only know how good she was to me.
Friend, to have loved, to have been made happy thus,
What better fate has life in store for us,
The dream of life from which we have to wake,
Happier, why not ? why not for a dream's sake ?
To have been loved is well, and well enough
For any man : but 'tis enough to love.

Magnificat.

Praise God, who wrought for you and me
Your subtle body made for love ;
God, who from all eternity
Willed our divided ways should move
Together, and our love should be.

I wandered all these years among
A world of women, seeking you.
Ah, when our fingers met and clung,
The pulses of our bodies knew
Each other : our hearts leapt and sung.

It was not any word of mine,
It was not any look of yours ;
Only we knew, and knew for sign
Of Love that comes, Love that endures,
Our veins the chalice of his wine.

Because God willed for us and planned
One perfect love, excelling speech
To tell, or thought to understand,
He made our bodies each for each,
Then put your hand into my hand.

Gifts.

It was not for your heart I sought,
But you, dear foolish maid, have brought
Only your heart to me.
Ah, that so rare a gift should be
The gift I wanted not!

I asked a momentary thing,
But 'tis eternity you bring;
And, with ingenuous eyes,
You offer, as the lesser prize,
This priceless offering.

O what, in Love's name, shall I do,
Who have both lost and captured you?
You will but love me: so,
Since I too cannot let you go,
I can but love you too.

Song.

Her eyes say Yes, her lips say No.
Ah, tell me, Love, when she denies,
Shall I believe the lips or eyes?
Bid eyes no more dissemble,
Or lips too tremble
The way her heart would go!

Love may be vowed by lips, although
Cold truth, in unsurrendering eyes,
The armistice of lips denies.
But can fond eyes dissemble,
Or false lips tremble
To this soft Yes in No?

Heart's Desire.

Now that the dream is vanished, and the night is fled,
And doubt is mine no more, now my desire is mine,
I hunger for the sped delight that dawn has banished,
Dawn my desire : O fool ! the night was more divine.

In sorrow did I languish, and have I not shed
Tears for untasted joys that did immortal seem ?
Now hope, with fear, lies dead, and passion, with its anguish :
O give me back my doubt again, and let me dream !

Clair de Lune.

In the moonlit room your face,
Moonlight-coloured, fainting white
And the silence of the place
Round about us in the night,
And my arms are round about you
In the silence of the night.

Lips that are not mine to kiss,
Lips how often kissed in vain,
Broken seal of memories,
Where the kisses come again
That the lips of all your lovers
Laid upon your lips in vain ;

Eyes that are not mine to keep
In the mirror of my eyes,
Where I tremble lest from sleep
Other ghosts should re-arise ;
Why enthrall me with your magic,
Haunting lips, triumphant eyes?

For the silence of the night
Swims around me like a stream,
And your eyes have caught the light
Of a moon-enchanted dream,
And your arms glide round about me,
And I fade into a dream.

Paris.

My Paris is a land where twilight days
Merge into violent nights of black and gold ;
Where, it may be, the flower of dawn is cold :
Ah, but the gold nights, and the scented ways !

Eyelids of women, little curls of hair,
A little nose curved softly, like a shell,
A red mouth like a wound, a mocking veil :
Phantoms, before the dawn, how phantom-fair !

And every woman with beseeching eyes,
Or with enticing eyes, or amorous,
Offers herself, a rose, and craves of us
A rose's place among our memories.

In the Sanctuary at Saronno.

Has not Luini writ in fire
The secret of our own desire?
Your eyelids heavy with the sense
Of some strange passionate suspense,
And your mouth subtly hungering
Who knows for what forbidden thing?
Yea, and my longings that would pierce
The obscure dividing universe,
To die into your heaven of love;
Our passion, and the end thereof,
Love, even to the death of love.
You were this martyr, I the saint
For whom your aching eyelids faint
In this pretence of chastity;
The mystic spousal that shall be
Betwixt your Lord and you, divine
And deathless, does but symbol mine;
Bride of my ultimate desires,
And equal flamelike with my fires!

This did Luini once record,
Unto the glory of the Lord,
And for us chiefly, and for all,
Upon the sanctuary wall.

Bianca.

I. Bianca.

Her cheeks are hot, her cheeks are white;
The white girl hardly breathes to-night,
So faint the pulses come and go,
That waken to a smouldering glow
The morbid faintness of her white.

What drowsing heats of sense, desire
Longing and languorous, the fire
Of what white ashes, subtly mesh
The fascinations of her flesh
Into a breathing web of fire?

Only her eyes, only her mouth,
Live, in the agony of drouth,
Athirst for that which may not be:
The desert of virginity
Aches in the hotness of her mouth.

I take her hands into my hands,
Silently, and she understands;
I set my lips upon her lips;
Shuddering to her finger-tips
She strains my hands within her hands.

I set my lips on hers ; they close
Into a false and phantom rose ;
Upon her thirsting lips I rain
A flood of kisses, and in vain ;
Her lips inexorably close.

Through her closed lips that cling to mine,
Her hands that hold me and entwine,
Her body that abandoned lies,
Rigid with sterile ecstasies,
A shiver knits her flesh to mine.

Life sucks into a mist remote
Her fainting lips, her throbbing throat ;
Her lips that open to my lips,
And, hot against my finger-tips,
The pulses leaping in her throat.

II. Benedictine.

The Benedictine scents and stains
The languor of your pallid lips;
My kiss shall be a bee that sips
A fainting roseleaf flushed with rains.

I thirst, and yet my thirst increases
With draining deep and deeper kisses;
The odour of your breath releases
Desires that dream of deeper blisses.

And on my lips your lips now pressed
Cling moist and close; your lips begin
Devouringly to gather in
Your kisses that my lips possessed.

The odour of your breath releases
Wafts of intoxicating blisses;
Yet still my thirst of you increases,
I thirst beneath your thirsty kisses.

No kisses more, this perilous day,
Or, tempting, tempt me not in vain:
This day I dare not taste again
Your lips that suck my soul away!

III. Diamonds.

Your diamonds on my finger glisten,
Still, in the dull, forsaken room ;
Alone with thoughts of you, I listen
To the rain sobbing through the gloom.

But what soft wandering light is this
Comes flooding to a ruddier glow
The warm remembrances of bliss
Your diamonds on my finger know,

When, heart to heart, we lay and listened,
And, where the tedious gaslight rests,
Your diamonds on my finger glistened
In the white hollow of your breasts?

IV. Hands.

Your hands cling softly, like a cat,
Whose loving little paws will pat
The loving hands caressing her ;
And like the velvet warmth of fur
Your soft and glowing palms compress
Desire into their daintiness.
Hold me, enfold me, let me rain
Roses of kisses on my chain ;
The throbbing of your finger-tips
Is rarer to me than your lips,
And your slow purple pulse that beats
Against my mouth in heavier heats,
Dearer, almost, than the unrest
Of your dear, hesitating breast,
That calls me, and denies me part
In the suspensions of your heart.

V. Escalade.

Tenderly as a bee that sips,
Your kisses settle on my lips,
And your soft cheek begins to creep
Like the downy wing of Sleep
Along my cheek, and nestles smiling,
As if Love's truth were but beguiling,
Too utterly content to move,
Only to smile, only to love.

But if, to tease you, as I use,
I feign, unthankful, to refuse
Your dear caresses, and turn cold,
Then the shy lips, waxing bold,
Advance to vanquish my resistance,
And, with a passionate persistence,
Clinging closer, fold on fold,
They suck my lips into their hold.

And, if, still feigning, I resist,
Fondly feigning to be kissed,
They wax still bolder and begin
Hungrily to fasten in
Upon my neck, as they would gloat
On the protesting veins that tingle
As they and your deep kisses mingle,
Your kisses burning in my throat.

But ah ! if, lastly, I should hear
Your sudden lips upon my ear

Set my brain singing and my blood
Dancing the measure of your mood,
And pouring over me and under
Scented billows of soft thunder,
I yield, I'll love you, lest it be
I die of you ere you of me!

VI. Sleep.

As if tired out with kisses,
Content to be at rest,
Here, on my breast,
Her mouth, that ached with kisses,
Drooped to my shoulder, then she sighed
A little, smiled
Then, like a happy child,
She fell asleep upon my breast.

Love comes and goes, and this is
(Love, that I once possessed !)
Love, like the rest,
And goes the way of kisses.
Yet one hour lives, of all those hours that died,
When, like a child,
She turned to me, just smiled,
And fell asleep upon my breast.

VII. Presages.

The piteousness of passing things
Haunts her beseeching eyes, the stir
Of those appealing lips, and stings
My senses, hungering for her,
With over-much delight, that brings
A presage of departing things.

Death in her lilied whiteness lives,
The shadow of Death's eternal lust
After the delicate flesh that gives
The life of lilies to the dust.
Ah, if thy lust my love forgives,
Death, spare this whitest flesh that lives!

VIII. Memory.

As a perfume doth remain
In the folds where it hath lain,
So the thought of you, remaining
Deeply folded in my brain,
Will not leave me : all things leave me :
You remain.

Other thoughts may come and go,
Other moments I may know
That shall waft me, in their going,
As a breath blown to and fro,
Fragrant memories : fragrant memories
Come and go.

Only thoughts of you remain
In my heart where they have lain,
Perfumed thoughts of you, remaining,
A hid sweetness, in my brain.
Others leave me : all things leave me :
You remain.

IX. Wine of Circe.

Circe, the wine of Circe! Sorceress, I
Have lived, but can your magic bid me die?
I would die exquisitely, of the bliss
Of one intense, intolerable kiss.
Cease these caresses, brimming at my lips,
While, fluttering, your magnetic finger-tips
Race in a maze of circles up my arm.
Silently, let your eyes begin their charm.
You lean above me, and you strain me close,
Pantingly close, against your breast: the rose
Of your lips reddens to a rose of fire,
That sinks and wavers, odorously, nigher.
And your breast beats upon me like a sea
Of warmth and perfume, ah! engulphing me
Into the softness of its waves that cover
My drowning senses amorously over.
Your eyes intoxicate me: deeper yet
Pour me oblivion! I shall soon forget
Earth holds another woman: let me drain,
Circe, the wine of Circe, once again!
The rose of fire descends, the stars of fire
Bend from the night of heaven to my desire,
And your eyes burn on mine, and your lips burn
Like living fire through all my veins that yearn,
As, with one throb of rapt, surrendering breath,
Life dies into the ecstacy of Death.

X. Liber Amoris.

What's virtue, Bianca? Have we not
Agreed the word should be forgot,
That ours be every dear device
And all the subtleties of vice,
And, in diverse imaginings,
The savour of forbidden things,
So only that the obvious be
Too obvious for you and me,
And the one vulgar final act
Remain an unadmitted fact?

And, surely, we were wise to waive
A gift we do not lose, but save.
What moment's reeling blaze of sense
Were rationally recompense
For all the ecstasies and all
The ardours demi-virginal?
Bianca, I tell you, no delights
Of long, free, unforbidden nights,
Have richlier filled and satisfied
The eager moments as they died,
Than your voluptuous pretence
Of unacquainted innocence,
Your clinging hands and closing lips
And eyes slow sinking to eclipse
And cool throat flushing to my kiss;
That sterile and mysterious bliss,
Mysterious, and yet to me
Deeper for that dubiety.

Once, but that time was long ago,
I loved good women, and to know
That lips my lips dared never touch
Could speak, in one warm smile, so much.
And it seemed infinitely sweet
To worship at a woman's feet,
And live on heavenly thoughts of her,
Till earth itself grew heavenlier.
But that rapt mood, being fed on air,
Turned at the last to a despair,
And, for a body and soul like mine,
I found the angels' food too fine.
So the mood changed, and I began
To find that man is merely man,
Though women might be angels ; so,
I let the aspirations go,
And for a space I held it wise
To follow after certainties.
My heart forgot the ways of love,
No longer now my fancy wove
Into admitted ornament
Its spider's web of sentiment.
What my hands seized, that my hands held,
I followed as the blood compelled,
And finding that my brain found rest
On some unanalytic breast,
I was contented to discover
How easy 'tis to be a lover.
No sophistries to ravel out,
No devious martyrdoms of doubt,
Only the good firm flesh to hold,
The love well worth its weight in gold,

Love, sinking from the infinite,
Now just enough to last one night.
So the simplicity of flesh
Held me a moment in its mesh,
Till that too palled, and I began
To find that man is mostly man
In that, his will being sated, he
Wills ever new variety.
And then I found you, Bianca! Then
I found in you, I found again
That chance or will or fate had brought
The curiosity I sought.
Ambiguous child, whose life retires
Into the pulse of those desires
Of whose endured possession speaks
The passionate pallor of your cheeks;
Child, in whom neither good nor ill
Can sway your sick and swaying will,
Only the aching sense of sex
Wholly controls, and does perplex,
With dubious drifts scarce understood,
The shaken currents of your blood;
It is your ambiguity
That speaks to me and conquers me,
Your capturing heats of captive bliss,
Under my hands, under my kiss,
And your strange reticences, strange
Concessions, your elusive change,
The strangeness of your smile, the faint
Corruption of your gaze, a saint
Such as Luini loved to paint.

What's virtue, Bianca? nay, indeed,
What's vice? for I at last am freed,
With you, of virtue and of vice:
I have discovered Paradise.
And Paradise is neither heaven,
Where the spirits of God are seven,
And the spirits of men burn pure,
Nor is it hell, where souls endure
An equal ecstacy of fire,
In like repletion of desire;
Nay, but a subtlier intense
Unsatisfied appeal of sense,
Ever desiring, ever near
The goal of all its hope and fear,
Ever a hair's-breadth from the goal.

So Bianca satisfies my soul.

Epilogue: Credo.

Each, in himself, his hour to be and cease
Endures alone, but who of men shall dare,
Sole with himself, his single burden bear,
All the long day until the night's release ?
Yet ere night falls, and the last shadows close,
This labour of himself is each man's lot ;
All he has gained of earth shall be forgot,
Himself he leaves behind him when he goes.
If he has any valiancy within,
If he has made his life his very own,
If he has loved or laboured, and has known
A strenuous virtue, or a strenuous sin ;
Then, being dead, his life was not all vain,
For he has saved what most desire to lose,
And he has chosen what the few must choose,
Since life, once lived, shall not return again.
For of our time we lose so large a part
In serious trifles, and so oft let slip
The wine of every moment, at the lip
Its moment, and the moment of the heart.
We are awake so little on the earth,
And we shall sleep so long, and rise so late,
If there is any knocking at that gate
Which is the gate of death, the gate of birth.

TRANSLATIONS.

From Sophocles: Antigone.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN.
Eros invincible,
Eros, that ravishest the spoils of men,
That keepest watch upon the maiden's cheek,
Roaming the seas and among pastoral folk!
Thee none of the immortals can escape,
And none of mortals living but a day,
And he that finds thee presently goes mad.

Thou turnest just men's thoughts to thoughts of wrong,
And kinsman against kinsman dost set up;
The clear light of a lovely woman's eyes
Rules, and outmasters the eternal laws;
Unconquerable Aphrodite laughs at all.
And I too am now hurried beyond the bounds,
Nor can I stay the sources of my tears,
Seeing towards the bride-bed that gives rest to all
Advance Antigone.

ANTIGONE.
See me, O citizens of my fatherland,
Set forth on my last way, and look my last
Upon the sunlight I shall see no more.
For Hades, that gives rest to all, now leads
Me living to the shores of Acheron,
Unwedded; nor shall any sing for me
The bride-song, being bride to Acheron.

CHORUS.
Illustrious thou, and with praise,
Goest toward the secret places of the dead,
Not wasted with a sickness, finding not
The wages of the sword, but willingly,
Sole among mortals, unto Hades living.

ANTIGONE.
Yet I have heard, of old,
Of that sad ending of the Phrygian guest,
Tantalus' daughter, upon Sipyle;
How the stone sprouted to envelop her
Like tightening ivy; and the rains, men say,
Cease not about her, wasting, nor the snows
Cease ever, but her weeping eyelids bathe
Her neck in tears. Me too, most like to her,
A God shall put to sleep.

CHORUS.
She was a goddess and the child of gods,
And we are mortals and the seed of mortals;
Yet is it glorious, dying, to have endured
A fate so godlike, living and in death.

ANTIGONE.
Ah me, they mock me! By my fathers' gods,
Why do ye taunt me ere I be yet gone
Out of your sight? O city, and ye her sons
Mighty in wealth, and thou, O fount of Dirce,
And grove of many-charioted Thebes,
Ye, ye at least, be witnesses for me,

How, all unwept of friends, and by what laws,
I go to find a stony prison indeed
In this unparalleled tomb. Ah, hapless one,
Homeless among the living and the dead!

From Racine: Phèdre, I. 5.

PHÆDRA.
He comes; my blood withdraws into my heart,
And I forget what I would say to him.

ŒNONE.
Think of your son: he has no hope but you.

PHÆDRA.
My lord, you leave us: I have come to add
My tears unto your sorrows; I have come
To plead before your pity for a son.
He has no father; and the day is near
When he must lose me also; he is now,
Even in his childhood, thronged about with foes.
My son has no defender: only you.
But I am troubled by a secret fear,
I fear to have closed your ears against his cries,
I tremble lest a wrath so just avenge
On him a mother so most hate-worthy.

HIPPOLYTUS.
Lady, I harbour not so base a thought.

PHÆDRA.
Though you should hate me, I would not reproach you,
Prince; you have seen me seek to do you harm:
You could not look into my heart and read.
I have set myself to bargain for your hate,

I have not suffered you about my hearth,
I have spoken ill against you everywhere,
Desiring many seas to separate us;
I have ordained it law that no man speak
Your name before me; and yet, yet, my lord,
If the offence mete out the penalty,
If only hate could waken hate in you,
No woman ever needed pity more,
Nor any were less worthy of your hate.

HIPPOLYTUS.
A mother jealous of her children's right
Hardly forgives another woman's son,
Lady, I know; and second wedlock breeds
Causeless suspicion for its earliest fruit;
Nay, any other had borne no less a grudge,
And I perhaps had pardoned greater wrongs

PHÆDRA.
Ah no, the gods be witness to me here
If they have given me such a woman's heart,
Or if the care that bites me now be this!

HIPPOLYTUS.
Lady, your care is not yet without hope;
It may be that your lord yet sees the light,
It may be that our tears shall bring him back:
Neptune protects him, and my father's prayers
Cannot invoke that guardianship in vain

PHÆDRA.
Twice may no man behold the realms of death :
Theseus has looked upon the dreadful shore,
And there is no god that shall give him back
Or loose the prey of greedy Acheron.
What do I say ? But Theseus is not dead,
He breathes in you, I seem to see him still,
I see him, speak to him, my heart . . . Ah me,
My tongue betrays the love I would not speak.

HIPPOLYTUS.
I see the mighty workings of your love :
Theseus is dead, yet Theseus lives for you,
And love of him enkindles all your soul.

PHÆDRA.
I faint, I burn for Theseus, dear my prince ;
I love him ; not as hell has looked on him,
Unfaithful to a thousand loves, and now,
Now wantoning after the queen of the dead,
But true, but proud, even a little stern,
Young, fair, and drawing all hearts after him,
Such as they say the gods are ; such, my lord,
As I see you. He had your port, your eyes,
Your speech, the blood coloured his cheeks as nobly
When he set sail for Crete, and took the hearts
Of Minos' daughters and was worthy of love.
But you ? Why then without Hippolytus
Gathered the bravest lords of Greece together ?
Why were your feet too young to follow his
Into the ship that set him on our shores ?

You should have slain the monster, though he lay
Deep in the winding mazes of his lair
Enfolded, and my sister should have set
The fatal thread into your hand to guide
Your way in the labyrinth. Ah no, my thought
Would have outrun her thought before she found it:
Love would have lessoned me; 'tis I, 'tis I
That should have brought you forth, and set your feet
In a safe way: how many happy cares
This lovely head had cost me! for my love,
A thread were all too fragile to have held
So dear a life; I would have gone with you,
Been comrade of your perils, sharing them;
And Phædra, with you in the labyrinth,
Should have been found again, or lost, with you.

HIPPOLYTUS.
Gods! have I heard aright? Forget you, lady,
That Theseus is my father and your husband?

PHÆDRA.
Why do you dream I have forgotten it,
Prince? Have I lost the keeping of my fame?

HIPPOLYTUS.
Lady, forgive. I blush to have mistook
So innocent a discourse. My conscious shame
Cannot endure to look upon your face.
I leave you.

PHÆDRA.
Cruel, you have understood

Too well, and surely I have said enough?
Now you shall know Phædra and all her madness:
I love. Yet think not that I hold myself
Innocent in the sight of mine own eyes,
No, in the very moment that I love you;
Nor think that I have nurtured willingly
The poison of the madness of this love.
I am the prey of the avenging gods:
You do not hate me as I loathe myself.
The gods be witness, they who in my breast
Have set this fatal fire to all my blood,
And snatched a cruel glory, matching them
In might against a simple mortal heart.
Look in your soul, remember all the past:
Have I but fled? nay, I have driven you forth,
I have been unkind to you, intolerable,
Sought out your hate, that I might fight with love;
And what has all my labour profited me?
You hate me worse, I do not love you less;
Your sorrows make you lovelier in mine eyes.
I faint, I am wasted with sharp fires and tears;
See now, only look on me with your eyes,
If your eyes would but only look on me.
What do I say? Now I have spoken all,
And all my shame, think you that willingly
I speak it? For my son's sake did I come,
Trembling, to plead for him against your hate;
Alas, I am too full of that I love,
I have but spoken to you of yourself.
Slay me, and save me from my hateful love,
And be a hero's son, whose son you are,

And rid the world of a monster, slaying me.
See, Theseus' widow loves Hippolytus!
See now, so foul a monster should not live:
Here is my heart: your hand must strike me here.
I feel it leap to meet you; see, it longs
Already to be purged of its offence.
Strike; if I am unworthy of your slaying,
If your hate grudge me so desired a death,
Or if so vile blood may not stain your hand,
Hold back your hand: strike not: give me the sword:
Now.

ŒNONE.
Nay, what do you, lady? O, just gods!
Some one comes near: I pray you quit this place,
Nor let so sure a shame take hold on you.

From Calderon: La Vida es Sueño.

We live, while we see the sun,
Where life and dreams are as one;
And living has taught me this,
Man dreams the life that is his,
Until his living is done.
The king dreams he is king, and he lives
In the deceit of a king,
Commanding and governing;
And all the praise he receives
Is written in wind, and leaves
A little dust on the way
When death ends all with a breath.
Where then is the gain of a throne,
That shall perish and not be known
In the other dream that is death?
Dreams the rich man of riches and fears,
The fears that his riches breed;
The poor man dreams of his need,
And all his sorrows and tears;
Dreams he that prospers with years,
Dreams he that feigns and foregoes,
Dreams he that rails on his foes;
And in all the world, I see,
Man dreams whatever he be,
And his own dream no man knows.
And I too dream, and behold,
I dream I am bound with chains,
And I dreamed that these present pains
Were fortunate ways of old.

What is life ? a tale that is told;
What is life ? a frenzy extreme,
A shadow of things that seem ;
And the greatest good is but small,
That all life is a dream to all,
And that dreams themselves are a dream.

From San Juan de la Cruz.
I. The Obscure Night of the Soul.

Upon an obscure night,
Fevered with love in love's anxiety,
(O hapless-happy plight !)
I went, none seeing me,
Forth from my house where all things quiet be.

By night, secure from sight,
And by the secret stair, disguisedly,
(O hapless-happy plight !)
By night, and privily,
Forth from my house where all things quiet be.

Blest night of wandering,
In secret, where by none might I be spied,
Nor I see anything ;
Without a light or guide,
Save that which in my heart burnt in my side

That light did lead me on,
More surely than the shining of noontide,
Where well I knew that one
Did for my coming bide ;
Where he abode might none but he abide.

O night that didst lead thus,
O night more lovely than the dawn of light,
O night that broughtest us,
Lover to lover's sight,
Lover with loved in marriage of delight!

Upon my flowery breast,
Wholly for him, and save himself for none,
There did I give sweet rest
To my beloved one;
The fanning of the cedars breathed thereon.

When the first moving air
Blew from the tower, and waved his locks aside.
His hand, with gentle care,
Did wound me in the side,
And in my body all my senses died.

All things I then forgot,
My cheek on him who for my coming came:
All ceased, and I was not,
Leaving my cares and shame
Among the lilies, and forgetting them.

II. O Flame of Living Love.

O flame of living love,
That dost eternally
Pierce through my soul with so consuming heat,
Since there's no help above,
Make thou an end of me,
And break the bond of this encounter sweet.

O burn that burns to heal!
O more than pleasant wound!
And O soft hand, O touch most delicate,
That dost new life reveal,
That dost in grace abound,
And, slaying, dost from death to life translate!

O lamps of fire that shined
With so intense a light,
That those deep caverns where the senses live,
Which were obscure and blind,
Now with strange glories bright,
Both heat and light to his beloved give!

With how benign intent
Rememberest thou my breast,
Where thou alone abidest secretly;
And in thy sweet ascent,
With glory and good possessed,
How delicately thou teachest love to me!

From Santa Teresa.

I.

If, Lord, thy love for me is strong
As this which binds me unto thee,
What holds me from thee, Lord, so long,
What holds thee, Lord, so long from me?

O soul, what then desirest thou?
—Lord, I would see thee, who thus choose thee.
What fears can yet assail thee now?
—All that I fear is but to lose thee.

Love's whole possession I entreat,
Lord, make my soul thine own abode,
And I will build a nest so sweet
It may not be too poor for God.

A soul in God hidden from sin,
What more desires for thee remain,
Save but to love, and love again,
And, all on flame with love within,
Love on, and turn to love again?

II.

Let mine eyes see thee,
Sweet Jesus of Nazareth
Let mine eyes see thee,
And then see death.

Let them see that care
Roses and jessamine ;
Seeing thy face most fair
All blossoms are therein.
Flower of seraphin,
Sweet Jesus of Nazareth,
Let mine eyes see thee,
And then see death.

Nothing I require
Where my Jesus is ;
Anguish all desire,
Saving only this ;
All my help is his,
He only succoureth.
Let mine eyes see thee,
Sweet Jesus of Nazareth,
Let mine eyes see thee,
And then see death.

III.

Shepherd, shepherd, hark that calling!
Angels they are, and the day is dawning.

What is this ding-dong,
Or loud singing is it?
Come, Bras, now the day is here,
The shepherdess we'll visit.
Shepherd, shepherd, hark that calling!
Angels they are, and the day is dawning.

O is this the Alcalde's daughter,
Or some lady come from far?'
She is the daughter of God the Father,
And she shines like a star.
Shepherd, shepherd, hark that calling!
Angels they are, and the day is dawning.

IV.

To-day a shepherd and our kin
O Gil, to ransom us is sent,
And he is God Omnipotent.

For us hath he cast down the pride
And prison walls of Satanas;
But he is of the kin of Bras,
Of Menga, also of Llorent.
O is not God Omnipotent?

If he is God, how then is he
Come hither, and here crucified?
—With his dying sin also died,
Enduring death the innocent.
Gil, how is God Omnipotent!

Why, I have seen him born, pardie,
And of a most sweet shepherdess.
—If he is God, how can be he
With such poor folk as these content?
—Seest not he is Omnipotent?

Give over idle parleying,
And let us serve him, you and I,
And since he came on earth to die,
Let us die with him too, Llorent;
For he is God Omnipotent.

From an old French Song-book

Within a dainty garden-close
My love hath built a happy bower ;
There clove doth grow and gillyflower,
Also the lily and the rose.

This garden is so good and fair,
With every pretty flower bedight,
A man might take his pleasure there
The whole day long and all the night.

Ah me for the dear garden's guest,
The nightingale and his sweet lay,
At evening and at break of day :
When he is tired, he taketh rest.

I saw her pluck, by two and three,
Violets in a meadow green,
The fairest I did ever see,
The sweetest that were ever seen.

I gaze upon her as she goes,
O white she is, and white as cream,
And soft as any little lamb,
And rosy as a little rose.

From Joachim du Bellay: Of a Winnower of Wheat to the Winds.

To you, light troop, I bring,
(You, who with wandering wing
Over the wide world pass,
And, when your murmurings wake,
So sweetly trouble and shake
The shadow-shaken grass)

I bring these violets,
Lilies and flowerets,
I bring these roses too;
These roses rosy-red
Are freshly gatherèd;
These pinks I bring for you.

With your cool breath and sweet
This plain a-stir with heat
In passing fan, I pray;
The while I labour sore
At my wheat-winnowing floor
About the heat of day.

From Salvatore di Giacomo: The Two Blind Men.

(Neapolitan Dialect.)

Tell me one thing. Have you, within your brain,
The face of anybody in the world
You saw, before you never saw again?

—Ah yes; and you?—No, brother, I have none.
I was born blind. So, for my sins, God willed
Before my life had even been begun.

—Speak not of God! How many times I prayed,
Brother, you cannot think how many times,
And now his darkness over me is laid.

—But in the street, now, does the sun shine there?
And what is the sun like?—The sun's of gold,
And it is like my Serafina's hair.

—Who is your Serafina? Some one who'll
Come here to see you sometimes?—Yes, sometimes.
—And . . . she is beautiful?—Yes, beautiful.

Then he who had been blind when he was born
Sighed. And the other blind man sighed, and hid
His face between his hands, as one forlorn.

The first said: Do not weep; have I not known
The mother of the body that I bear,
Have I not known her by her voice alone?

And both were silent. And about them rolled
The perfume of the garden, and the sun
Shone in the sky, the sun that is of gold.

From Heine: The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar.

I.

At the window stood the mother
In bed the sick son lay;
"Will you not get up, Wilhelm,
To see them pass this way?"

"I am so sick, O mother,
I cannot hear or see;
I think of my own dead Gretchen
And my heart is sad in me."

"Get up, we will to Kevlaar,
Take book and rosary;
The Mother of God will heal thee
Thy heart so sad in thee."

They flutter the holy banners,
They sing the holy song;
'Tis at Köln upon the Rhine-bank
The pilgrims pass along.

The mother follows the people,
She leads him tenderly;
Both of them join in the chorus:
"Praise, Mary, be to thee!"

II.

The Mother of God at Kevlaar
Is drest in her best array;
To-day she has much to be doing,
For the sick folk come to-day.

The sick folk all of them bring her,
As thanksgiving most meet,
Wax limbs cunningly moulded,
Waxen hands and feet.

And he who a wax hand offers,
His hand is healed of its pain;
And he who a wax foot offers
Can walk on his feet again.

To Kevlaar went many on crutches
Who now on the tight-rope bound;
And many now play the bass-viol
Who had not a finger sound.

The mother takes a waxlight
And fashions a heart thereof:
"Take that to God's dear Mother,
And she will heal thy love."

The son took, sighing, the wax heart,
Went sighing to Our Lady so;
The tears from his eyes are flowing,
The words from his heart outflow:

"Thou blessèd among women,
Thou Maid of God most high
To thee, O Queen of Heaven,
To thee I make my cry.

"I lived alone with my mother
At Köln in the city afar,
The city where many hundreds
Of chapels and churches are.

"And near to us lived Gretchen,
But she, alas, is dead;
Mary, I bring thee a wax heart,
Heal thou my heart instead!

"Heal thou my heart of its sorrow,
And ever its song shall be,
Early and late unceasing:
'Praise, Mary, be to thee!'"

III.

The sick son and the mother
In the little chamber slept:
The Mother of God came to them,
All silently she stept.

She stooped her over the sick one,
And her hand it lightly lay
Upon the troubled heart-beats;
And she smiled and passed away.

The mother sees all in her dreaming,
And more she has seen, I trow;
She waked from out of her slumber,
The dogs were barking so.

There lay outstretched beside her
Her son, and he was dead;
On the pallid cheeks there flickered
The light of the morning-red.

She folded her hands together,
She wist not how it might be;
Devoutly sang she and softly:
"Praise, Mary, be to thee!"

From Théophile Gautier: Posthumous Coquetry.

Let there be laid, when I am dead,
Ere 'neath the coffin-lid I lie,
Upon my cheek a little red,
A little black about the eye.

For I in my close bier would fain,
As on the night his vows were made,
Rose-red eternally remain,
With khol beneath my blue eye laid.

Wind me no shroud of linen down
My body to my feet, but fold
The white folds of my muslin gown
With thirteen flounces, as of old.

This shall go with me where I go:
I wore it when I won his heart;
His first look hallowed it, and so,
For him, I laid the gown apart.

No immortelles, no broidered grace
Of tears upon my cushion be;
Lay me on my own pillow's lace,
My hair across it, like a sea.

That pillow, those mad nights of old,
Has seen our slumbering brows unite,
And 'neath the gondola's black fold
Has counted kisses infinite.

Between my hands of ivory,
Together set for prayer and rest,
Place then the opal rosary
The holy Pope at Rome has blest.

I will lie down then on that bed
And sleep the sleep that shall not cease;
His mouth upon my mouth has said
Pater and *Ave* for my peace.

From Stéphane Mallarmé.
I. Hérodiade.

HÉRODIADE.
To mine own self I am a wilderness.
You know it, amethyst gardens numberless
Enfolded in the flaming, subtle deep,
Strange gold, that through the red earth's heavy sleep
Has cherished ancient brightness like a dream,
Stones whence mine eyes, pure jewels, have their gleam
Of icy and melodious radiance, you,
Metals, which into my young tresses drew
A fatal splendour and their manifold grace!
Thou, woman, born into these evil days
Disastrous to the cavern sibylline,
Who speakest, prophesying not of one divine,
But of a mortal, if from that close sheath,
My robes, rustle the wild enchanted breath
In the white quiver of my nakedness,
If the warm air of summer, O prophetess,
(And woman's body obeys that ancient claim)
Behold me in my shivering starry shame,
I die!
The horror of my virginity
Delights me, and I would envelop me
In the terror of my tresses, that, by night,
Inviolate reptile, I might feel the white
And glimmering radiance of thy frozen fire,
Thou that art chaste and diest of desire,
White night of ice and of the cruel snow!

Eternal sister, my lone sister, lo
My dreams uplifted before thee! now, apart,
So rare a crystal is my dreaming heart,
I live in a monotonous land alone,
And all about me lives but in mine own
Image, the idolatrous mirror of my pride,
Mirroring this Hérodiade diamond-eyed.
I am indeed alone, O charm and curse!

NURSE.
O lady, would you die then?

HÉRODIADE.
No, poor nurse;
Be calm, and leave me; prithee, pardon me,
But, ere thou go, close-to the casement; see
How the seraphical blue in the dim glass smiles,
But I abhor the blue of the sky!
Yet miles
On miles of rocking waves! Know'st not a land
Where, in the pestilent sky, men see the hand
Of Venus, and her shadow in dark leaves?
Thither I go.
Light thou the wax that grieves
In the swift flame, and sheds an alien tear
Over the vain gold; wilt not say in mere
Childishness?

NURSE.
Now?

HÉRODIADE.

Farewell. You lie, O flower
Of these chill lips!
I wait the unknown hour,
Or, deaf to your crying and that hour supreme,
Utter the lamentation of the dream
Of childhood seeing fall apart in sighs
The icy chaplet of its reveries.

II. Sigh.

My soul, calm sister, towards thy brow, whereon scarce grieve
An autumn strewn already with its russet leaves,
And towards the wandering sky of thine angelic eyes,
Mounts, as in melancholy gardens may arise
Some faithful fountain sighing whitely towards the blue!
Towards the blue pale and pure that sad October knew,
When, in those depths, it mirrored languors infinite,
And agonising leaves upon the waters white,
Windily drifting, traced a furrow cold and dun,
Where, in one long last ray, lingered the yellow sun:

III. Sea-Wind.

The flesh is sad, alas! and all the books are read.
Flight, only flight! I feel that birds are wild to tread
The floor of unknown foam, and to attain the skies!
Nought, neither ancient gardens mirrored in the eyes,
Shall hold this heart that bathes in waters its delight,
O nights! nor yet my waking lamp, whose lonely light
Shadows the vacant paper, whiteness profits best,
Nor the young wife who rocks her baby on her breast.
I will depart! O steamer, swaying rope and spar,
Lift anchor for exotic lands that lie afar!
A weariness, outworn by cruel hopes, still clings
To the last farewell handkerchief's last beckonings!
And are not these, the masts inviting storms, not these
That an awakening wind bends over wrecking seas,
Lost, not a sail, a sail, a flowering isle, ere long?
But, O my heart, hear thou, hear thou the sailors' song!

IV. Anguish.

To-night I do not come to conquer thee,
O Beast that dost the sins of the whole world bear,
Nor with my kisses' weary misery
Wake a sad tempest in thy wanton hair;
It is that heavy and that dreamless sleep
I ask of the close curtains of thy bed,
Which, after all thy treacheries, folds thee deep,
Who knowest oblivion better than the dead.
For Vice, that gnaws with keener tooth than Time,
Brands me as thee, of barren conquest proud;
But while thou guardest in thy breast of stone
A heart that fears no fang of any crime,
I wander palely, haunted by my shroud,
Fearing to die if I but sleep alone.

From Paul Verlaine: Fêtes Galantes.
I. Mandoline.

The singers of serenades
Whisper their fated vows
Unto fair listening maids
Under the singing boughs.

Tircis, Aminte, are there,
Clitandre has waited long,
And Damis for many a fair
Tyrant makes many a song.

Their short vests, silken and bright,
Their long pale silken trains,
Their elegance of delight,
Twine soft blue silken chains.

And the mandolines and they,
Faintlier breathing, swoon
Into the rose and grey
Ecstasy of the moon.

II. L'allée.

As in the age of shepherd king and queen,
Painted and frail amid her nodding bows,
Under the sombre branches, and between
The green and mossy garden-ways she goes,
With little mincing airs one keeps to pet
A darling and provoking perroquet.
Her long-trained robe is blue, the fan she holds
With fluent fingers girt with heavy rings,
So vaguely hints of vague erotic things
That her eye smiles, musing among its folds.
—Blonde too, a tiny nose, a rosy mouth,
Artful as that sly patch that makes more sly,
In her divine unconscious pride of youth,
The slightly simpering sparkle of the eye.

III. Cythère.

By favourable breezes fanned,
A trellised arbour is at hand
To shield us from the summer airs;

The scent of roses, fainting sweet,
Afloat upon the summer heat,
Blends with the perfume that she wears.

True to the promise her eyes gave,
She ventures all, and her mouth rains
A dainty fever through my veins;

And, Love fulfilling all things, save
Hunger, we 'scape, with sweets and ices,
The folly of Love's sacrifices.

IV. Les Indolents.

Bah ! spite of Fate, that says us nay,
Suppose we die together, eh ?
—A rare conclusion you discover !

—What's rare is good. Let us die so,
Like lovers in Boccaccio.
—Ha ! ha ! ha ! you fantastic lover !

—Nay, not fantastic. If you will,
Fond, surely irreproachable.
Suppose, then, that we die together ?

—Good sir, your jests are fitlier told
Than when you speak of love or gold.
Why speak at all, in this glad weather ?

Whereat, behold them once again,
Tircis beside his Dorimène,
Not far from two blithe rustic rovers,

For some caprice of idle breath
Deferring a delicious death.
Ha ! ha ! ha ! what fantastic lovers !

V. Fantoches.

Scaramouche waves a threatening hand
To Pulcinella, and they stand,
Two shadows, black against the moon.

The old doctor of Bologna pries
For simples with impassive eyes,
And mutters o'er a magic rune.

The while his daughter, scarce half-dressed,
Glides slyly 'neath the trees, in quest
Of her bold pirate lover's sail ;

Her pirate from the Spanish main,
Whose passion thrills her in the pain
Of the loud languorous nightingale.

VI. Pantomime.

Pierrot, no sentimental swain,
Washes a pâté down again
With furtive flagons, white and red.

Cassandre, to chasten his content,
Greets with a tear of sentiment
His nephew disinherited.

That blackguard of a Harlequin
Pirouettes, and plots to win
His Columbine that flits and flies.

Columbine dreams, and starts to find
A sad heart sighing in the wind,
And in her heart a voice that sighs.

VII. L'Amour par Terre.

The wind the other evening overthrew
The little Love who smiled so mockingly
Down that mysterious alley, so that we,
Remembering, mused thereon a whole day through.

The wind has overthrown him! The poor stone
Lies scattered to the breezes. It is sad
To see the lonely pedestal, that had
The artist's name, scarce visible, alone,

Oh! it is sad to see the pedestal
Left lonely! and in dream I seem to hear
Prophetic voices whisper in my ear
The lonely and despairing end of all.

Oh! it is sad! And you, have you not found
One heart-throb for the pity, though your eye
Lights at the gold and purple butterfly
Brightening the littered leaves upon the ground?

VIII. A Clymène.

Mystical strains unheard,
A song without a word,
Dearest, because thine eyes,
Pale as the skies,

Because thy voice, remote
As the far clouds that float
Veiling for me the whole
Heaven of the soul,

Because the stately scent
Of thy swan's whiteness, blent
With the white lily's bloom
Of thy perfume,

Ah! because thy dear love,
The music breathed above
By angels halo-crowned,
Odour and sound,

Hath, in my subtle heart,
With some mysterious art
Transposed thy harmony,
So let it be!

IX. From Romances sans Paroles.

Tears in my heart that weeps,
Like the rain upon the town.
What drowsy languor steeps
In tears my heart that weeps?

O sweet sound of the rain
On earth and on the roofs!
For a heart's weary pain
O the song of the rain!

Vain tears, vain tears, my heart!
What, none hath done thee wrong?
Tears without reason start
From my disheartened heart.

This is the weariest woe,
O heart, of love and hate
Too weary, not to know
Why thou hast all this woe.

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Symons, Arthur
Poems

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