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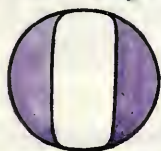




I.



WHEN LILACS last in the doorway bloomed, And the great star early drooped in the western sky in the night, I mourned, & yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.



EVER - RETURNING spring! trinity sure to me you bring; Lilac blooming perennial, and drooping star in the west, And thought of him I love.

II.



POWERFUL, western, fallen star! O shades of night! O moody, tearful night! O great star disappeared! O the black murk that hides the star! O cruel hands that hold me powerless! O helpless soul of me! O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul!

III.



**I**N the door-yard fronting  
an old farm-house near  
the white-washed palings,  
Stands the lilac bush tall-  
growing with heart-shap-  
ed leaves of rich green,  
With many a pointed blossom rising deli-  
cate, with the perfume strong I love, With  
every leaf a miracle—and from this bush  
in the door-yard, With delicate-coloured  
blossoms, and heart-shaped leaves of rich  
green, A sprig with its flower, I break.

IV.



**I**N the swamp in secluded recesses,  
A shy and hidden bird is warbling  
a song.

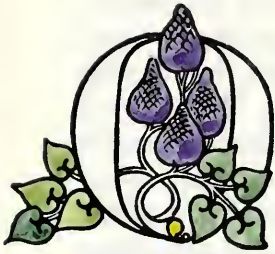


**S**OLITARY the thrush, The  
hermit withdrawn to himself,  
avoiding the settlements, Sings  
by himself a song.



**S**ONG of the bleeding throat,  
Death's outlet song of life, (for  
well dear brother, I know, If  
thou wast not gifted to sing, thou  
wouldst surely die.)

V.



VER the breast of the  
spring, the land, amid cit-  
ies, Amid lanes & through  
old woods, where lately the  
violets peeped from the  
ground, spotting the grey  
debris, Amid the grass in the fields each  
side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,  
Passing the yellow-speared wheat, every  
grain from its shroud in the dark-brown  
fields uprisen, Passing the apple-tree blows  
of white & pink in the orchards, Carrying  
a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,  
Night and day journeys a coffin.

VI.



OFFIN THAT passes  
through lanes and streets,  
Through day and night,  
with the great cloud dark-  
ening the land, With the  
pomp of the inlooped flags  
with the cities draped in black, With the  
show of the States themselves as of crape-  
veiled women standing, With processions  
long and winding and the flambeaus of the

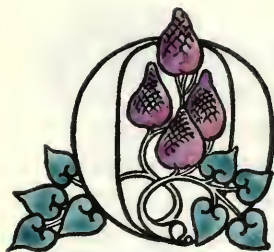
the night, With the countless torches lit,  
 with the silent sea of faces and the unbared  
 heads, With the waiting depot, the arriving  
 coffin, and the sombre faces, With dirges  
 through the night, with the thousand voices  
 rising strong & solemn, With all the mourn-  
 ful voices of the dirges, poured around the  
 coffin, The dim-lit churches & the shudder-  
 ing organs—Where amid these you jour-  
 ney, With the tolling, tolling bells' perpet-  
 ual clang, Here, coffin that slowly passes,  
 I give you my sprig of lilac.

## VII.




**N**OT for you, for one, alone;  
 Blossoms and branches green  
 to coffins all I bring: For fresh  
 as the morning, thus would I  
 chant a song for you, O sane and sacred  
 Death. All over bouquets of roses, O Death!  
 I cover you over with roses and early lilies;  
 But mostly and now the lilac that blooms  
 the first, Copious, I break, I break the  
 sprigs from the bushes! With loaded arms  
 I come, pouring for you, For you and the  
 coffins all of you, O Death.

## VIII.





WESTERN orb, sailing  
the heaven! Now I know  
what you must have meant,  
as a month since we walk-  
ed, As we walked up and  
down in the dark blue so  
mystic, As we walked in silence the trans-  
parent shadowy night, As I saw you had  
something to tell, as you bent to me night  
after night, As you drooped from the sky  
low down, as if to my side, while the other  
stars all looked on; As we wandered toge-  
ther the solemn night, (for something, I  
know not what, kept me from sleep,) As the  
night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the  
west, ere you went, how full you were of  
woe; As I stood on the rising ground in the  
breeze, in the cool transparent night, As  
I watched where you passed and was lost  
in the netherward black of the night, As  
my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as  
where you, sad orb, Concluded, dropped in  
the night, and was gone.

IX.

ING on there in the swamp! O singer bashful and tender! I hear your notes, I hear your call; I hear, I come presently, I understand you, But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detained me, The star, my comrade departing, holds and detains me.

X.

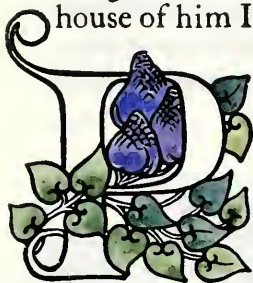
OW shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved? And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone? And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

EA-WINDS, blown from east and west, Blown from the Eastern Sea, & blown from the Western Sea, till there on the prairies meeting, These, and with these, and the breath of my chant, I perfume the grave of him I love.

XI.



WHAT shall I hang on the chamber walls? And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls, To adorn the burial-house of him I love?



PICTURES of growing spring and farms & homes, With the Fourth-month eve at sun down, and the grey smoke lucid & bright, With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air; With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, & the pale green leaves of the trees prolific, In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there, With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows, And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys, And all the scenes of life, and the workshops, & the workmen homeward returning.

XII.



O! body and soul! this land!  
Mighty Manhattan, with spires,  
and the sparkling and hurrying  
tides, and the ships, The varied  
and ample land, the South and the North  
in the light, Ohio's shores, & flashing Mis-  
souri, And ever the far-spreading prairies,  
covered with grass and corn.



O! the most excellent sun, so  
calm and haughty, The violet  
and purple morn, with just-felt  
breezes; The gentle, soft-born,  
measureless light, The miracle spreading  
bathing all, the fulfilled noon, The com-  
ing eve, delicious, the welcome night and  
the stars, Over my cities shining all, envel-  
oping man and land.

XIII.



ING on! sing on you grey-brown  
bird! Sing from the swamps, the  
recesses, pour your chant from  
the bushes, Limitless out of the  
dusk, out of the cedars & pines.





ING on, dearest brother—warble your reedy song, Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe, O liquid, and free, and tender! O wild and loose to my soul! O wondrous singer! You only I hear, . . . yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart;) Yet the lilac, with mastering odour, holds me.

XIV.



OW while I sat in the day, and looked forth, In the close of the day, with its light, and the fields of spring, & the farmer preparing his crops, In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests, In the heavenly aerial beauty, after the perturbed winds and the storms; Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children & women, The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sailed, And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labour, And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minu-

tia of daily usages, And the streets, how  
their throbbings throbbed, and the cities  
pent—lo! then & there, Falling upon them  
all, & among them all, enveloping me with  
the rest, Appeared the cloud, appeared the  
long black trail, And I knew Death, its  
thought, & the sacred knowledge of Death.


XV.




HEN with the Knowledge  
of Death as walking one side  
of me, And the Thought of  
Death close-walking the oth-  
er side of me, And I in the middle, as with  
companions, and as holding the hands of  
companions, I fled forth to the hiding re-  
ceiving night, that talks not, Down to the  
shores of the water, the path by the swamp  
in the dimness, To the solemn shadowy ce-  
dars, and ghostly pines so still.





AND the singer so shy to the rest  
received me, The grey-brown  
bird I know received us Com-  
rades three, And he sang what  
seemed the song of Death, and a verse for  
him I love.

 FROM deep secluded recesses,  
From the fragrant cedars and  
the ghostly pines so still, Came  
the carol of the bird.

 AND the charm of the singing  
rapt me, As I held, as if by their  
hands, my Comrades in the  
night; And the voice of my  
spirit tallied the song of the bird.

#### XVI.

OME, lovely and soothing  
Death, Undulate round the  
world, serenely arriving, arriv-  
ing, In the day, in the night,  
to all, to each, Sooner or later delicate  
Death.

AISED be the fathomless  
universe, For life and joy, and  
for objects & knowledge curi-  
ous; And for love, sweet love  
—But praise! praise! praise! For the  
sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding  
Death.



MARK Mother always gliding near with soft feet, Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome? Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all, I bring thee a song that, when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.



APPROACH, encompassing Death — strong deliveress! When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead, Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee, Laved in the flood of thy bliss O Death.

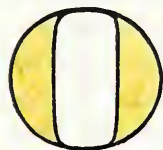


FROM me to thee glad serenades, Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee, And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky, are fitting, And life & the fields, & the huge and thoughtful night.



THE night, in silence, under many a star, The ocean shore, & the husky whispering wave whose voice I know, And the

soul turning to thee, O vast & well-veiled  
Death, And the body gratefully nestling  
close to thee.



VER the tree-tops I float thee  
a song, Over the rising & sink-  
ing waves, over the myriad  
fields and the prairies wide,  
Over the dense-packed cities all, and the  
teeming wharves & ways, I float this carol  
with joy, with joy to thee O Death!



### XVII.

O the tally of my soul, Loud  
and strong kept up the grey-  
brown bird, With pure, deli-  
berate notes spreading filling  
the night.



LOUD in the pines & cedars dim,  
Clear in the freshness moist,  
and the swamp-perfume, And  
I with my Comrades there in  
the night.



HILE my sight that was  
bound in my eyes unclosed,  
As to long panoramas of  
visions.

XVIII.



SAW the vision of armies,  
And I saw, as in noiseless  
dreams, hundreds of battle-  
flags, Borne through the  
smoke of the battles, and  
pierced with missiles, I saw  
them, And carried hither & yon through  
the smoke, and torn and bloody, And at last  
but a few shreds of the flags left on the staffs,  
(and all in silence,) And the staffs all splint-  
ered and broken.



SAW battle-corpses, my-  
riads of them, And the  
white skeletons of young  
men—I saw them; I saw  
the debris and debris of all  
the slain soldiers of the war,  
But I saw they were not as was thought;  
They themselves were fully at rest, they  
suffered not, The living remained and suf-  
fered, the mother suffered, And the wife  
and the child, and the musing comrade  
suffered, And the armies that remained  
suffered.



### XIX.

PASSING the visions, passing the night, Passing, unloosing the hold of my Comrades' hands, Passing the song of the hermit bird, & the tallying song of my soul, Victorious song, Death's outlet song, yet varying, ever altering song; As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night, Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning & warning, and yet again bursting with joy, Covering the earth & filling the spread of the heaven, As that powerful psalm in the night, I heard from recesses.

### XX.



MUST I leave thee, lilac with heart-shaped leaves? Must I leave thee there in the doorway, blooming, returning with spring?



MUST I pass from my song for thee—From my gaze on thee, in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee, O comrade lustrous, with silver face in the night?



## XXI.

ET each I keep, and all, re-  
trievements out of the night,  
The song, the wondrous  
chant of the grey-brown  
bird, And the tallying chant,  
the echo aroused in my soul,  
With the lustrous and drooping star with  
the countenance full of woe, With the lilac  
tall, and its blossoms of mastering odour,  
With the holders holding my hand near-  
ing the call of the bird, Comrades mine,  
and I in the midst, and their memory ever  
I keep, for the dead I loved so well, For  
the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and  
lands—and this for his dear sake, Lilac  
and star and bird, twined with the chant  
of my soul, With the holders holding my  
hand, nearing the call of the bird, There  
in the fragrant pines, and the cedars dusk  
and dim.

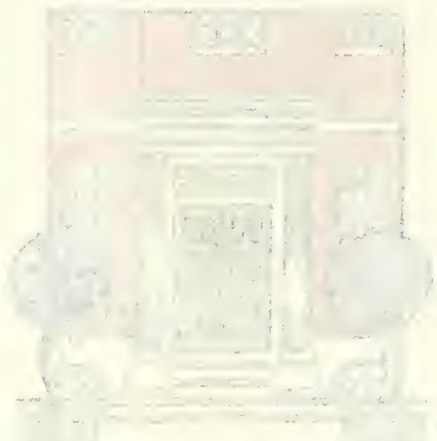


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OF THE  
TREASURY  
OF THE  
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AND IRELAND  
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TO THE YEAR 1760  
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