

CITY TIDES



Archie Austin Coates

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CITY TIDES

ARCHIE AUSTIN COATES

CITY TIDES

BY

ARCHIE AUSTIN COATES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

*"What hurrying human tides, or day or night!
What passions, winnings, losses, ardors swim thy waters!
What whirls of evil, bliss and sorrow, stem thee!
What curious questioning glances—glints of love!"*

W. W.



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TO
FIVE FELLOW-TRAVELERS
WHO POINTED OUT THE WAY

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The late Richard Watson Gilder once wrote a poem in which he told of the joy the world feels when the voice of a new singer is heard. I knew what he meant when I discovered Masefield one Autumn day as I sat in a park in Chester. I was on my way to Liverpool to catch a steamer, and in a little book-stall I bought a copy of the *English Review*, and read for the first time "The Everlasting Mercy." I remember that I was alone; and of course one's first impulse at such a time is to spread the good tidings. I could scarcely wait to reach the boat; and there, luckily, I found a host of appreciative companions. That copy of the *English Review* looked as if it had been through many a storm when we finally reached home.

Now I do not mean to preface this sheaf of song by young Mr. Coates with any such rash statement that here is a great poet, that a new planet is swimming into our ken, or that life has found an original interpreter. But I do mean to declare very emphatically that here is an authentic voice; a young man with much to say, who knows how to say it; a maker of free verse, who knows the value of pause

INTRODUCTION

and tone and stress; a youth who may go far if the poison of the city does not eat his heart away too soon. And I want to share my delight in him with the lovers of beauty and truth.

It has not always been possible for me to shout the praises of *vers libre*. My quarrel with the imagists, the vorticists, and the other "ists" has been their seeming inability to say simple things simply. I have always thought of them as running away from life rather than toward it; and with few exceptions—always I except Miss Amy Lowell, who is a real force in our literature—I passed by their opaque lines as one might pass an empty board fence.

To have something to say about this strange business of living; to be a part of the "city tides" that overtake us every day and carry us to mysterious regions—that is Mr. Coates. His poems sometimes—perhaps too often—are mere fragments; but one has the sense that they have come from a whole heart, and that, like a flame, there is still plenty left to draw upon. He is not always sustained; but he is always compelling. His moods are not only his moods, but yours, and mine; and in some swift, penetrating phrase he lets us into the circle of his vision, and we find ourselves expressed through him. Then, too, and best of all, he has that deep pity for the poor which is so essential a quality if one is to

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interpret the hive of Manhattan. It is not the passing pity of youth—a pity which will be swallowed up in “business” before the poet has reached the antique age of thirty. It is the enduring pity of a boy who sees not only around and through life, but clairvoyantly underneath it. He understands the pathos of a vagrant on a park bench; but he is saved from maudlin and effeminate rhapsodising through the divine grace of humour. His vagabond speaks, and while one retains his pity for him, the spell has somehow been broken, and we discover that there are two sides of this human shield, after all, and we smile where we might have wept indiscriminating tears.

In that portion of the volume labeled “A Magazine Publishing Office,” a surprising and daring originality is shown. To extract poetry out of this commonplace work-room is something that any of us might have been proud to accomplish. I see and know *Stockton*, *Hutchins*, *Sampson*, and the rest, as if I had met them only this morning. They are as real as Mr. Masters’ Spoon River folk—indeed, they seem to me, while in no way an imitation, to take rank with those immortal dead of our great Chicago poet; to be as articulate as they. “The Office Confrère” might almost have been included in this group; the stupid fellow whose heart could not be reached by the simple poem, and who all the while the

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young poet was leaning over him, hoping he was touched, was at last found to be only studying the Cheltenham type! It is little short of amazing to get this upon paper, and to make it seem as real as the event itself.

A young poet's flirtations are always an interesting indication; and "A Resumé of Ladies" is perhaps more illuminating than it was intended to be. We must not be too hard on these light loves, however, for they pave the way to the greater glory. "Through the many to the one," you remember; and while these foolish adventures in a pasteboard world of love-making are not to be taken at all seriously, they have their value. They are a study in self-revelation. They show that the poet is clean-minded, though he is always frankly and humanly curious about women and love.

Mr. Coates can turn from free verse without the slightest trouble and write a deft sonnet or a rhymed couplet or a musical lyric. These experiments are the most annoying thing in the collection; for they only serve to prove that Mr. Coates is even more of a poet than he reveals on a first reading, and they will drive the abhorrrers of *vers libre* frantic with the thought that a genuine singer has purposely lost himself in a tangle of unrhymed, chopped-off stanzas.

But it is not true! There is a language between

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Poetry and Prose where one finds, oftentimes, his best means of expression. There is a middle ground between earth and heaven where none should go but the true poet; for he can make even those arid wastes bloom with something akin to roses and drifts of applebloom. Through his mere venturing into the mysterious and frequently exasperating country of *vers libre* he makes it magical and musical, if he does not make it glorious and great.

On such a pilgrimage Mr. Coates has gone; and I am glad that I was fortunate enough to go with him. He is a new poet of the city, wise with a wisdom beyond his years, blest with vision and comprehension.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

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PART ONE: CITY TIDES

PART ONE: CITY TIDES

THE TICKET-SELLER

ALL day the crowds go up and down by me
And slip their dirty coins across the glass,
And mutter, "Two," or "Three."
I see their hands—just hands—and then they pass.

I tear long strips of green, and sort the change,
And stack bright metal columns on the board;
Seldom the face that comes within my range
Amid the horde.

I watch the hands; I do not lift my eyes,
But fix them on the grasping fingers . . . so.

Once I beheld the soft white hand of Love,
A hand all made for lips, made to be kissed,
And glancing thru the wicket up above,
I saw—a grey-robed sister, floating by in a shroud-
like mist.

They take the small green slips and then
They go, a motley mass of unknown men.
Here mothers come, and maids, and pass again;

THE TICKET-SELLER (*Continued*).

Here murderers, perhaps, upon whose hands
The recent blood invisible still lingers,
And here a labourer, fresh from foreign lands,
Gripping a spade . . . but with an artist's fingers!

“COMMON”

THEY used to call him “common”
In the office where we worked.

They were all smug and sleek, and wore nice neck-
ties—

He wore neck-ties too, but his were always a little—
Well, *hors de la mode*.

But I liked him.

He used to come to my desk and hang over me
With a longing in his eyes,

As if I were something he would like to be.

Yet I wasn't any one in particular—

I wasn't even “common.”

And he used to help himself to my cigarettes—

Every day three or four, sometimes as many as ten.

But on pay-day he bought cigarettes himself,

And he used to come to my desk then, and empty half
the pack out on my blotter,

And leave them for me.

By and by they found out he had served a few months
Somewhere, where many “common” people serve—

CITY TIDES

“COMMON” (*Continued*).

And a few of the better ones, who are not careful
enough.

So they “had to let him go.”

Yet it seemed to me they might have kept him.

He was just “common” enough to break the deadly
monotony

Of nice neck-ties.

Now nobody dumps cigarettes on my blotter.

WASTE

I KNOW a girl who lives on the West Side,
In a seven-room and elevator, thank you, flat!
She sleeps till eleven every day,
And then she puts on a wide-skirted gown
(She weighs one hundred and sixty)
And boots that lace up the back,
And goes out and airs her dog in the Park.
In the afternoon she goes to the movies,
And cries over the poor heroine.
In the evening she goes out under the moon,
In a taxicab, and watches a performance of the
"Happytown Girls."
And then, after a salad in a stuffy and close cabaret-
place,
She goes home to bed.

Every day she does this.

And because I write free verse,
And manage to sell only enough to keep me fed,
She thinks my life is wasted!

MUSETTA

SHE said to me once
When we sat in the smoke and the phantasy
Of dusk:
“Sometimes I go along the street
Where the lights are so bright they hurt my heart
And I am restless and uneasy . . . deep down.
And many young men pass me,
Ruddy-cheeked, clean-eyed young men,
And they glance curiously, often longingly, into my
eyes,
Sending arrows of wishfulness to me;
And I know that they want me—
I do not care for how long,
But I know they would be fair and kind to me
In the mellow sweetness of their desire.
Yet I must not return their glances,
Tho my arms are secretly stretched towards them,
And all the emptiness of me calls wistfully for them,
Their arms and their lips . . .
I hasten on: I must not see them.

For I am staying

MUSETTA (*Continued*).

For one who may come to me with the love men call
‘with honour,’

And yet he does not come.

The one I know sees me only with cold eyes,

And a strange deaf soul that shall never hear me
speak.

Yet I wait

And shun the rest

For what perhaps I shall never have.

And sometimes I wonder if I do right

To save the gold of me for one who has the key

But leaves it to hang rusty on the ring,

When I might have love

And all the fire of youth and joy in stranger arms.”

And I too wondered if she did right.

GRIEG . . . OPUS 46, NO. 3

ÅSE'S DEATH

THEY were playing a purple dirge,
Sobbing, sweeping,
Delicately stabbing with saccharine knives
Deep into human souls.
Thru the music the grey wind swayed over stones and
the sparse grass,
And all the sky was grey.

Like the wail of disillusioned love,
Seeing the end when it thought there would be no end,
The cadence slipped and glided.

Some of those who listened heard . . .
Faces were drawn, and dry lips were pressed tight,
Till the last note was twisted in the wound,
And it was over.

Then a woman stirred;
Her fevered fan rested a moment . . .
And she turned a red face to her neighbour.
"It's kind of monotonous, that tune,"
She said.

BACKS

FOR years I have come every evening
And potted around in this atelier
Helping with things,
And doing a little work myself, now and then.
I don't make much progress,
But I care little,
For I am old, and easily tired,
And the curious bend of spine and lump on my back
Keep me from getting a good job.
So I help around here, call "time" for the model,
And thumb at a bit of work myself
In a corner, alone.

And every time I shape broad shoulder-blades
With swelling muscles, rippling under firm flesh,
And sweep my wrinkled thumbs down the swift curve
Of an athlete's arched back
Stilled into clay . . .
I wonder if it *is* so bad to have a curious hump
Between one's shoulders,
After all,

CITY TIDES

BACKS (*Continued*).

When you can realise so keenly
The beauty of another's build.

I shouldn't wonder if that was why
I am quite contented here, pottering about,
Enjoying vicariously
What I can never have myself.

LAST THURSDAY

I CAME to the place which was home to me
And I found her gone . . .
And this was the note, lying like a blade of white steel
On the table:

“It is not that I love you less
But that I loved you too—too much.
As if I saw in you a rare old vase,
Greek-formed, and graven with fair dancing forms,
Yet withal . . . still clay.
I loved you, enshrined you in all the golden glow
Of love-flames;
Decked you with flowers,
Laid my lips to you as I were touching a sacred
thing—
Forgetting you were still . . . all clay.
And time and time I dared not feel
What I had feared—
That there were times when I did not suffice,
When I gave all, for little.
But that were not so hard,
Until to-day

CITY TIDES

LAST THURSDAY (*Continued*).

One of our friends said lightly:

‘Your devotion is a rare thing;

I wonder why you lavish it on *him!*

Altho he loves you, of course, more than it might
seem.’

So . . . oh, try to understand! Good-bye.”

And I, standing there dumb,

With my heart’s life ebbing from me,

Wondered why I had not armoured her with love

Against the well-meant stabbings of “our friends.”

THE OFFICE CONFRÈRE

I LAID a printed card upon his desk,
Printed with a poem, the cry of some lonely heart
Who had spun his longing and his tears into brave,
bald words
And sold them for gold
(Small gold at that),
Because it is not beautiful to starve.

He gazed long and silent at it,
Drinking in the strophes,
Its metric sobs, the short sighs and poignant despair.
"Ah, he is moved," I thought.
And I shook hands with myself to think
That I could have found aught to thrill him.

Then he turned to me.
There was a glow of discontent in his eyes.
"I never cared much for that Cheltenham type; do
you?"
He said.

THE LONG TERMER

A FLAT grey wall,
Maddening in its flatness,
Pushes itself up before my eyes.
Flat floors . . . flat roof,
And in the flat window, flat bars.
There are no dimensions to anything
As I sit here—
And I feel as if my mind should writhe and curl
Under all this leaden flatness.

Day and day,
And a dead night in between—
Flat footsteps down the corridor,
And somewhere stale water drips
Flatly and hopelessly into a sink.
This is my life, and this shall be my life
For twenty long grey years.

On my knees lies a flat book
Which they let me have from the Library,
And just to keep myself from screaming

THE LONG TERMER (*Continued*).

I pore over it, worming my way thru its flat pages,
As a blinded mole gropes slowly thru dark soil.

It is the Universal Dictionary,
And I am searching out errors in it.
I have located eight hundred and twelve
In the last five years!

BLIND

TRAVELLING home from work at sunset,
Into the maze that men call Brooklyn,
I cross a bridge midway 'twixt sky and sea.
But I never behold the sky,
Nor the water in green folds far below me.
I never see the sun on gilded domes,
Nor ivory towers, nor spires all hung with gems
From the sun's red crucible.
I never see the still green shadows shake
Broad arrows deep into the heated rifts
Of streets.
I have no time for that . . .
Nor soul for seeing. . . .

I always have to read the evening paper,
And learn if stocks have risen,
Or if, perchance,
The ball-team's won another game.

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE

(A Gallery of Self-portraits)

I

STOCKTON, THE OWNER

MY mind is a golden flower in a tight steel box,
Wired and bound fast, that the sun may
never enter.

There are days when it puts forth a bloom,
But the wires close in and it is straightway choked,
And I am saved from smiling.

Day long and night long I toil
To build up a great work, that my name may be
sounded

And that the gold of power may rattle in my pockets.
I toil and struggle in the long twilight of thought,
And I wrinkle my soul under the burden of projects
As I wrinkle my brow.

And I never shall come to the end of my struggle
Because I have set no end to it.
There is nothing else in Life for me,

CITY TIDES

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

Nothing else is worth the trouble—
But I shall have glory, and glory;
And the silly yellow flowers that spring from my soul,
And that flood other men's land where they might be
 plowing,
Will continue to be choked out by iron wires,
And I shall be saved from smiling.

II

MARTIN, THE BUSINESS MANAGER

I have earned some of the fun I know
And I am glad to have it.
For years I worked, as a boy, trying hard
To do all I knew to get ahead and retire.
Nowadays I am what they call successful.
I come and work at the desk every day;
Usually I arrive early.
But don't give me credit for that, because at my age
 and habits it's easier to keep on coming early
 than to be late.
I lunch well every day, and some days I quit early
 and go to the ball game.
It's really the way to live.
I have not shut other things from my life.

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

I have brought the things in and bent them to my
pleasure.

I have seen good in all men; I have never refused to
listen,

And to some I appear to learn much.

For I have discovered that if one appears to learn,
one will learn, as they say, something to his ad-
vantage.

I have had a good deal of life,

But I have never sold myself for it,

So that now it is my slave, not my master.

III

FARTHINGDON, THE EDITOR

Ah, my dear boy, you should see me here,
Working every day just as if I were a hard-headed
business man.

But I manage to keep an artistic atmosphere about
me

All the time.

I don't know how I'd get along without it.

It keeps me from becoming too sordid.

For after all, business—all work, is sordid.

CITY TIDES

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

It's a horrible necessary evil which we must do our
best with.

But outside of work I get much out of life;
There is variety and interest, not to say thrill,
To town life, with just enough work
To leaven it.

The hours are not bad, tho of course I don't keep
them anyway,

And I have plenty of time for luncheon
At the best hotels.

It is really not quite half bad, you know,
Dear boy,
After all.

IV

HERTS, THE ASSISTANT EDITOR

It's all in knowing how to work, you know.
I have a thousand ways to get mine done
So it will please.

I often talk to Farthingdon and say,
"Now here's a great idea," and then I tell him,
And he always agrees with me;
He knows so little about ideas.

That is the way to get your ideas over.

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

I work very hard, in spurts,
So hard that some one is sure to say,
"Boy, you're killing yourself. Let up a bit."
And then I make up for it by taking my time in other
hours.

But they don't know that. So they say I'm a valu-
able man.

It is the only way to get along—
Just to know how to work.

V

VARICK, THE ADVERTISING MANAGER

"Bully for you, old top," I say in my genial tones;
Life is so very genial for me.

I am sparkling and gay to all men, it's well to jolly
them;

They like you for it, and they will help you out some-
time on the strength of it.

I am what they call enthusiastic—

I bubble over with enthusiasm for a plan,

My interest is infectious; that's personality!

I have a very strong personality; I make men fall
naturally into step with me.

I believe in laughter, lots of it.

CITY TIDES

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

I believe in geniality and "Good stuff!" shouted out,
And slapping of shoulders, and—ah, have you seen
my smile?

My best persuasive smile?

My smile is almost as good as my personality,
Almost as valuable. (I often think of those old days
In Chicago, before I learned how to smile.)

Now it all gets me a great deal, all one could want in
Life;

I have everything in Life—everything,
Which shows one must be genial.

VI

HUTCHINS, THE ASSISTANT MANAGER

"I am very busy, but I can give you a moment or
two—"

I love to bite out these words to a caller,
For it impresses him,
And that is everything.

Once, you see, I went to business college,
And there I learned that a business man was always
busy,

And always hurried,
And so I try always to hurry,

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

You've got to be busy if you would get ahead.
In business, as I once very cleverly told a young cub
Whom I rather liked,
You must give everybody the impression
That you are working night and day
For the company;
That you are thinking and dreaming of business—
They must be led to believe it.
I sometimes feel that this is bluffing,
And sometimes that perhaps some one suspects it,
But I speed on; they shall never be quite sure of it,
And ahead of me is ever the president's desk,
And you can't get that without making the right im-
pression.

VII

RIDGELY, THE STAFF ARTIST

I think it is not worth while to bend all day
Over a sunless desk, in a sunless room,
And trifle with scarlet and blue and green
In sticky tubes,
When there is scarlet and blue and green to blow to
the winds
Outside in the fields.

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

It is better to sit on a hill
And watch sheep, or to bend in the sun hoeing melons,
Than to bend here painting them on silly cardboard
For some one else.

It is not worth while to be a cog in a machine,
To grind out power for some other man,
No better man than myself.

Watching on the hillside, I may wear my own wool,
Or hoeing, eat my own melons,
But here another takes all the melons,
And I must eat what he sees fit to give me.

I cannot have the flowers of the world out there
Because I must paint flowers all day upon cardboard,
So that *he* may have the flowers out there.

It is not worth while—or rather,
If I hadn't four mouths to feed,
I should think it was not worth while.

VIII

SAMPSON, THE ADVERTISEMENT WRITER

I am an old man, forty years in the business,
And I know advertising copy from A to Z.
I could give the Boss lessons in English, if he wished,
Because I have been forty years in the business.

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

All the rules the young cubs learn are wrong;
They do not fit the case.

For forty years I have gone my own gait,
Made my own traditions,

And now I know the rules are all wrong.

Appeal is everything . . . the appearance of the
card, bosh!

Not one cares for the appearance.

I work slowly, because after forty years, tho I am
full of many ideas,

They don't come out readily.

Yet if I do take a long time, it is very thoroly done.

It may not please you, but it is thoro.

Because I know how it should be done, and do it.

I have been forty years at this,

And I know.

IX

CARDOGAN, THE STATISTICIAN

Juggling figures all day is a dog's life,

Yet it is rather pleasant sometimes to be precise

And to forget that there are other things which might
interest

Beside the slide-rule.

CITY TIDES

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

Often I think,

“What good does it do you to know Hegel and
Rossetti

If all day you think only of two plus two?”

And often into my mind come little memories of April
days,

Of green slopes, and the thin lisp of a stream,

And me reclining, with Plato bound in covers be-
side me, and the history of the immortal soul
seems more important to me than our circula-
tion in the provinces;

Until I rouse myself,

And go back to figures, for I hear his Highness ap-
proaching,

I hear the Boss.

He is carping and irascible, and gets on my nerves.

Yet I do have to laugh secretly and subtly to myself

When he looks at me, and says in his metallic rasp,

“Mr. Cardogan, you’re too slow a worker;

Your mind needs training!”

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

X

HILL, THE SUPPLIES CLERK

Rules are rules, and we must all obey them.

I am a believer in regulations, for everything on
earth

Goes by rules.

Often I'd like to stretch a point to ease matters,
Or to simplify an operation, or save time,
But then it always occurs to me that it is more fun
To enforce the rules and see 'em fume.

I am a worshipper of regulations,
They are my life.

Rules do not in themselves appeal to me,
Save where they conflict with efficiency and speed;
Then I dote upon them.

I give out supplies to the office,
And I must have a slip, duly filled out and endorsed,
for all.

True, I always basket the slips after they are filled,
But that is neither here nor there.

Without the proper method, just so,
The slip is void, and I may gleefully

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

Withhold the supplies.

I am entrusted with this function by the Boss;

I have full charge of all the materials!

This is not so dull a job as you might think;

I may always liven it up by being

A vigorous enforcer of routine.

XI

RIGGS, THE ORDER CLERK

When I had to quit school to work

I made up my mind not to work with my hands.

So I got me a good suit—I've a pretty good build,
you know—

And I landed this job on my looks.

And I work with my head here,

Matching paper, and inks, ordering cuts and borders,

And it's all interesting, and I learn a lot.

I haven't got much education, but I go to night-
school right along,

And some day I will try at Columbia

For a course or two in English, for I think

One ought to know their own language, isn't it so?

It's pretty good working like this,

A MAGAZINE-PUBLISHING OFFICE (*Continued*).

Better than busting trunks or running trolleys for
a living.

I've done both. And I get two weeks' vacation,
When I go up to the country and loaf with the rich.
Why, 'most all of them have autos.

It takes most of what I've saved up,
But it's worth it, for some of the people are very
stylish,

The kind anybody'd be glad to go with,
And some time I'm going to go with them,
Because I'm foxy enough to work with my head.

FLOWERS

TEMPESTS of blossoms in darkling streets,
Roses—the squares are full of roses
And orchids, shaken loose by the dusk,
Hang from every wall.

And yet, near by, within very sight of all these,
Within hearing of men,
Tucked away in his garret,
A poet is weaving garlands
Of paper . . . posies!

FACES

EVERY morning on my way to work

I see faces,

Myriads of faces; God, what faces!

Blotched, dead-eyed and gaunt faces—

Faces with fear in them (they have seen something
of which they dare not think),

Faces, young women's faces, with joy, and desire,
and pain, and love in them—

And they have in them that which I cannot under-
stand;

I can only look and marvel at those faces.

And young men's faces, some vacant with the empti-
ness of dull wit,

Some sinister with thoughts that I do not express—

And I see some faces dreamily reviewing the yester-
night,

Some keenly alert at the world about them,

Some gazing questioningly into to-morrow.

Yes, and some are drawn faces, haunted faces—

They tell of scourging, and repressed senses,

And forbidden impulses, bridled. Futile faces!

FACES (*Continued*).

And old men's faces, some sodden, some sage;
And old women's faces, books of human history,
Bearing the tales of a thousand battles.

The old faces are like poems,
And every hollow, every wrinkle the strophe of
psalm.

All about me faces—

Faces mingled in the woven chant of a world-chorus
Faces like multitudinous spirit-wraiths abroad—

Oh, faces, who has not read your legend?
And yet, who dares to read your legend? •

THE MILL

A MORNINGS when the sun laughs on the city
 towers,
 standing tip-toe, warming from the eastern hills,
 go with the hordes of men into the maw
 of the mill.
 into its black mouth with the living stream
 of souls.
 and there am I ground,
 soul and body wracked,
 and squeezed dry.
 and the divine essence called labour
 is taken from me.
 all day am I ground, and shredded, and trampled
 out,
 Worked over, and pressed out . . . pressed to the
 last small grain,
 that the miller may have his share.
 His share is the best of us, the best of the grist of
 men.)
 and at even
 We are sent forth, the chaff . . .

THE MILL (*Continued*).

The shells of the souls that went in of the mornin
All hollow are we, and empty; lifeless, inert are w
And we go home
To the darkness, the mothering night, and perhaps
The white breast of the moon-flame
(Which we never see . . .)
Tired . . .
Too tired to rest,
Too tired to see the glory of it all,
Too empty and broken the shell, to hold the whi
 jewel of the moon
In its hollow cup.

So . . . we go promptly to sleep, from nothing int
 nothing,
To make ready for the yawning mill of the morrow
And the miller who must have his share.
His share!

LAVENDER

THE twilight hangs like smoke in the streets,
Pearly, veiling all the stretches in illusion,
And the new-lit lamps are the glow of hearts
That grope unseeing and unseen.

At the corner a lean girl offers me lavender,
Offers me Youth and Romance to hold in my palm,
Closed—thus.

She gives dreams to the world,
She who knows naught of dreams—
Gives gardens, and waters, and the young shy moon
Hung in the laurels;
Gives the smoke of eve enmeshed in the willows,
And the stream complaining *sotto voce*,
Gives the lavender, scattering purple fragrance
With Sheba's hand,
And the subtle reawakening of dreams.

These, all these she gives me, this lean, young girl—
(A shawl is over her head and her eyes look into the
darkness).

CITY TIDES

LAVENDER (*Continued*).

What does *she* know of dreams?

How more happy is she than I who have dreamed,

And may dream no more?

CHANGELINGS

ONCE I saw a flowering plant,
Breaking into a blaze of scarlet bloom,
Clutched in the thin arms of a tenement child
On its way to a dark, lone room,
Bereft of sun—
On its way to a few weeks of service.

I saw a gladdened child
And days when a visible song
Should hang in the desolate grey room—
And then a handful of withered twigs
On a dust heap.
Service . . . but, oh, the plant!

Once I saw a youth
In his college halls,
Ruddy and straight,
Smiling and clean, and lusty of thews.

Then he told me he had landed a job
In the Bethlehem Steel Mills—
Service . . . but oh, the youth!

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES

PROLOG

LIFE is a chain of women,"
Somebody said once, somewhere in something
or other,

And when we have given them that tribute

We have given them much,

And answered, perhaps,

The Eternal Question.

They come like the dawn, women,

Silent and sure, on silver feet,

Into a dark life,

And they drive away Night, and the desert-sense of
loneliness

And then . . . just when you think they are fairest

A great unexpected sun rises from somewhere,

And they fade . . .

And leave you alone again,

With only the glory of their memory.

Oh, for a résumé of ladies,

A tabulation of the dreams we have known,

A catalog of memories,

Memories of mornings!

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

I

CELIA

CELIA was tall and slim,
Slender and young as a reed
That leaps from the thicketed rim
Of a pool.

Her eyes burned like the thoughts of a vision seen
In some past incarnation.

She loved the forest; she herself was the flower of it,
Fresh as pale woodlilies fraught with dew-glister.

And we loved, *et ego in Arcadia vixi*—
Until—well, she came to the city,
Where I lived, and moved in the mélange of men,
And she hated it all, and she withered,
And one day she sent me a note—"I have gone—
Back. I cannot live in the city you love;
Your life is too full—or too empty;
You are living a symphony,
And I—I am humming a folk-song!"

And I never saw her again.

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

II

MARIAN

Once I taught Latin to a millionaire's son
For a season, and at his country place
I met Marian, his kinswoman.

We used to go canoeing on the river, in my off-
hours—

And the night hung turquoise over the pallid stream
Splashed and brocaded with the sheen of an August
moon.

And the last night (she was going to Lenox in the
morning),

She told me how empty her life was—

And how hard it was for a *débutante* to learn to *live*.

And coming home—

(It was late, and Rogers had left only the low hall-
lamp alight)

I looked deep into her eyes,

And she swayed—a little—towards me.

Then she—

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

Broke into an incoherent "Good night," and ran up
the stairs,
And left me alone in the darkness, with a thousand
dreams.

I saw her six months after at the Horse Show,
And she looked unseeing when I raised my hat.
(A new one it was too, the latest model,
For I like to be well dressed)
And she looked quite thru me, to some silly horses
capering in the arena!

III

AGNES

We met on a liner, in the midst of fog,
Bumped into one another on the hurricane deck;
And she laughed
When the scarf she wore blew out
Across my mouth,
And I, apologising, untangled it.

For four days, on the deep,
We loved—
And we built strange castles under the stars,

CITY TIDES

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

Far up in the bow, with the surge foaming just below
and beside us,
And the faint spray blowing about us.
And there we made bubbles of dreams—
Until—once
I asked her casually if she came from Chicago.
And the bubble
Went out!
She glanced at her feet—
And then—
She told me I had no sense of humour,
And she *hated* a man who thought he was funny!

IV

JEANNETTE

Down in Washington Square
She chanced to sit at my table in a café,
And I, being "broad-minded," offered her a cigarette,
Which she took with a smile, and we chatted.

Later, somehow, I told her I liked her,
And for two weeks we loved,
Dwelt in a land where men sojourn
Perhaps only once in a lifetime.

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

And one night—

As she sat crossed-legged on her striped divan

And squinted at the low lamp thru a highball,

She told me she'd been thinking

How wonderful it would be to have a eugenic child,

As a famous dancer had done.

And I—I blushed!

So she sent me out into the depressing night

Of the Square,

For she had no place in her life for a mid-Victorian.

V

MIMI

There was Mimi—with whom I used to go

To the Metropolitan.

We went “Dutch,” and we stood thru the “Ring,”

And I used to find her hand in the darkness,

And more lyrics than Shelley ever wrote passed thru
my fingers into hers.

We loved the crash of Titanic music,

And I rather think I loved *her* singing better

Than *Brunhilde's*.

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

But just when I began to forget I had no money,
And was planning a lot of things
For "us," rather than for "me,"
She told me she was engaged to Harold Swift-Ogden,
The packer's son—who hated music, but was very
rich and had *anged* the Chicago Opera Com-
pany,
Where she was going to get a hearing.
And she said she was telling me first of all,
Because I had always been so good a pal.
Pal—bah!

VI

ELISE

Elise had the heart of creation—
It held all things, and all things thrived in it.
And she had long, slow fingers that wound about my
life
Until I was moved to sing her many songs,
And spun out all the foolish plans a fellow has
And most unwisely tells to women.
And one day on a bus top—
When I'd been telling her of plodding over a manu-
script,

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

And hoped and dreamed it would be the Great American Novel

Which some publisher would buy

(And I felt secretly that she should be very proud of me,

As a coming genius—),

She said—

“Tell me again that story of how you wept on hearing *Butterfly*.

I want to use it in Chapter Ten

Of ‘Sentimental Studies.’

You know Scribners have taken it;

I got an advance cheque this morning.”

Lord—I have always hated women who are after literary material!

VII

VIRGINIA

Eyes are mostly just eyes, but hers were as rare and unreal

As jade from the mystic glades of the Flowery Kingdom

Where the gaunt waterfowls stalk in the marshes,

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

And the yellow Yang-tse meanders endlessly thru the
scented dusk.

Her eyes I saw in a painting, and I knew the artist,
And he promised a meeting,
For he swore the picture was a true image of her
beauty.

So I went home, and for days I lived in that veiled
sheen

From her eyes, and their mystery shrouded me close.
It wrapped me like the magic cloak of a forgotten
age,

Dropped into my life by the wraith of some long dead
queen.

I wrote sonnets and songs,
And lambent rhapsodies, as pellucid as her gaze,
And at last, at the studio,
I met her.

She was a deaf mute.

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

VIII

MARGARET

And there was Margaret—
Her I called “Peg.”
Peggie was sturdy and short,
Hardy, and built like a boy,
With hair that she flung to the breeze in the wood-
land;
Gave free to the winds, as we scuffled the leaves
By the Autumn-gilded road.
I liked Peg—well, pretty much,
But we never talked of it, that way.
Often we joked about it, but I found her such a good
pal
That it seemed to be silly.

Until—once I recounted a meeting
In Washington Square,
With a little blonde cabaret singer.
And the next day—
Peg wrote me a line saying, as she always said things,
Crisply and to the point, without gush,

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

That I was a bum friend,
And she was tired of me!

IX

BEATRICE

At a dance I met her,
And in the midst of a fox-trot, I who had been read-
ing Oscar Wilde
Told her there were two sorts of women:
The pretty ones who were empty above,
And the brainy ones who were frumps.
And she hated me—
Because she knew she was comely—and brilliant;
And she dared not ask me which of the two I had
failed to see.
And she planned for my scalp—"just to show me."

I forget what became of her—
It was after everybody had begun to notice how
much we were together;
And she gave me the "Grand Sidetrack,"
Ditched me good and proper—"just to show me."
But everybody—funny how they make mistakes—
Said it was my fault, that I'd trifled with her—

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

And that I lied to protect myself,
When I only told them the truth.

X

OLGA

Olga was one of the strangest of all.
I never got to any conclusion about her way of think-
ing;
Her mind hung great and voluminous before one,
Dimly lighted,
Like a lofty, graceful stage curtain.
And I knew there was a paroxysmic activity behind
it—
But the curtain never rose;
The play never began.
I met her as you meet many people;
She had a friend who introduced us.
And that very night I took her to dance at "Vicar's."

And all that evening, as we floated about the floor
together,
She, melted in my arms,
I, moving in a Nirvana of melody and motion,

CITY TIDES

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

Half-conscious, knew only that there was a song
somewhere

Which we might sing together.

And all the time she looked at me with questioning
eyes,

And back of the curtain the scenery was shifted
And stage-hands ran briskly, noiselessly to and fro.

And on the front door-step, under a half-hearted
moon

That burned a pale and flabby port-hole in the sky,
She said: "Good-bye, lad, this is the end of it,

You will not see me again;

I am not what you think I am—

You do not even know my name—

Why, I am—"

And bending so low that the warm wisps of her hair
Clung to my eye-lids,

She whispered a name that stopped my heart a beat.

The name of the greatest dancer in the world!

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

XI

MAUDE

Great hands stole a little of the Amazon world
Out of the veiled recesses of Age,
And Maude came to live in the flat next door.
At first we used to pass in the hall,
And nod,
As neighbours do.
And then we got to going to the movies,
Or to a little cheap café near the "L" station,
Where we'd sit hours over a glass of beer
And talk of Life—and other things.
And once I sat there, telling of those things
Which one keeps hidden, often, even from oneself,
And she bent over the table, in quiet sympathy,
And listened.

When I was quite finished,
A strange, cadaverous smile spread over her face,
She laid her hand on my arm,
And fingered a ring I wore.
Then her voice came thin and metallic to me—

CITY TIDES

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*).

“I know what you mean—
When shall we be married?”

You understand now
Why love fled like a rainbow
Before the dusk.

A RÉSUMÉ OF LADIES (*Continued*)

EPILOG

And so they went—
Came, lingered, aye, and passed.
Some in a day, some saw many seasons thru,
But all faded like mist in the marshes
When the bold sun, rising, transfixes them with a
relentless ray.
I might write here: "The End."
But I tell you there *is* no end.
"Life is a chain of women,"
And as we live, so do we weld the chain,
And with the fading nights come dawns,
And with the dawning, days.
Spring succeeds snows, and e'er the night has passed
And darkness dies, languishing on the breast of hills
Deep in the bleeding West,
A new whiteness pales upon the Eastern gate,
And men smile once more, thru hardly-fallen tears,
To greet the dawn.

PART TWO: MADISON SQUARE



PART TWO: MADISON SQUARE

FOURTH AVENUE IN APRIL

DOWN in the street there's a hurdy-gurdy call-
ing,

And Italy is singing in its cadences athrill—

The orange-carts are blooming like a garden of
Sorrento

In the maze of tangled traffic that is climbing Mur-
ray Hill.

In the shadows of a doorway with her basket full of
pencils

Winter sits unnoticed, with her wares upon her knees;
And the errand-girl astrolling by the flower-laden
windows

Never sees the lonely phantom humming, crooning
in the breeze.

The Spring is in Fourth Avenue—it's gilding all the
towers

To gold and crocus-purple with the radiance of the
morn;

CITY TIDES

FOURTH AVENUE IN APRIL (*Continued*).

And jostling men are smiling, *and one was heard to
whistle!*

The woman selling pencils sits unnoticed, and for-
lorn.

SUMMER IN FOURTH AVENUE

I N the four walls of the office I am in the country—

I am in the thicket, or on the hill-side
Where the rushes quiver.

The electric fan chirring nearby is the locust in the
willow,

The myriad wood-sounds falling upon young ears.

The typewriters all about, woodpeckers rapping with
noisy beaks,

And in the hall the cry of the lift-boy
Is Daphnis calling to Damon in the rye-sea.

A telephone bell at my elbow tinkles like a bird-song,
All around is Arcadia, the mallowed slopes of Ida,
For it is summer in Fourth Avenue;

And some one, with a quaint turn of thought,
Has left a dozen daisies on my table.

SPEAKERS

A MAN stands on a soap box in Madison Square
Speaking earnestly, and gesticulating now and
then

With the sincerity of one whose soul is master of a
magic tongue.

His face, thin and sun-browned,
Is afire with that mysterious magnetism

We call personality,
As he tells an anecdote
To carry his point.

And at the end, uplifting his square hands
With stubby fingers, toil-marked and twisted,
He urges his hearers to action . . . and reform.
And as he leaves,

A fat-jowled man at the curb
Elbows a companion, chuckling,
"I wonder what he's paid for shooting that bull!"

And I, listening too, wonder
If once upon a mount, somewhere in Galilee,
When a Man spoke earnestly

CITY TIDES

SPEAKERS (*Continued*).

With a play of soul in his eyes,
Some of the city wiseacres did not say:
“What does he get for swinging all that junk
About being meek, and inheriting the earth?”

IN MADISON SQUARE

TH**ERE** is a fountain in Madison Square,
That throbs and struggles and hurtles towards
heaven,
Rising in glamour and glory
With a shout,—and a rush,
Bursting with zeal to reach the stars,
Leaping white and crystalline in the moonlight.
Whole-hearted and youthful it vaults
Abruptly,
Aloft . . .
And hangs a moment in delicious airiness
Beneath the night. Then . . .
It falls impotent, with a petty shower,
Spattering back with a murmur of futility,
And strangled ambitions.
It lies helpless a moment,
Lifeless, and still. . . .
But that does not prevent it from throbbing
And springing again with a rush and a shout.
There are men in Madison Square. . . .
Have I told you enough?

DERELICTS

(Written after the Jutland sea-fight)

CROSSING Madison Square after rainfall,
I saw the leaves sweet-scented and green,
And the flowers, drenched with heaven's tenderness,
Yearning upward and smiling at the returning sun.

And in the midst of it all, wet and bedraggled on a
soaked bench,

I saw a human thing huddled,

A derelict,

An old woman whose sorry bonnet

Wobbled, unsteady, over one red and bleary eye;

And she rolled her blank jaws aimlessly from side to
side

As she stared unseeing into the Nature-world.

And I thought of where the sea gleamed

Green and glistening,

Where, the day before, there had been a great battle;

I saw the waters smiling to the sun returning after
fog,

CITY TIDES

DERELICTS (*Continued*).

With all the thoughtless delight of a contented child;
And in the midst of this, too,

A derelict—

An iron-clad shattered, its heart gone, its beauty
shot away. . . .

The grave, too, of hopes and nurtured plans
And the dreams of vision-laden Youth.

6 P. M. IN MADISON SQUARE

THE thin blue night with turquoise wings
Floats down upon the shadowed square,
Like memories of forgotten things.
The darkness in the tree-top swings,
Caught in the leaf-land there.

Dim as the souls of men long dead,
Lights glimmer thru the travelled street,
And lost amid the dusk o'erhead
They mingle in a sickly red
And with the stars in heaven meet.

MIKE

THE other night I was sitting in the Park
And a thin, nervous-looking guy came along,
Just like you came along to-night.
And he give me a cigar, and he asked me to tell him
How I came to be here.
But I was feeling kind of glum over some rotten beer
I'd had
At Finnerty's,
And I just sat there and shook my head,
And didn't say nothing.
So he went away.

And to-day I seen in a copy of the *World*
That some bloke left on a bench
A kind of pome about me—
And he said in it how it happened
When he met me.

But then he had to go and write a whole lot more,
A lot of stuff I didn't get at all,
About throbbing hearts, and a place called Cosmos,
And he said I'd probably

MIKE (*Continued*).

“Looked into the eyes of Life and been slain”
Like a guy named Action, or something like that.
And he said I’d been in love perhaps, and been
chucked.

Lord, imagine him making all that up!
As if anything like that coulda happened to me.
Why, nothing never happened to me . . . ever.
Folks with sense don’t expect it to, nowadays.

IN AN AVENUE PRINT-SHOP

I

L'AMOUR MORT

(A lithograph by Sterner)

SO she is dead. . . .

And her young, pallid form
Lies like a white flower buried by snowflakes.

It is silent, and still

With all its beauty frozen into lasting alabaster;
Caught (to stay forever) in the wonderment of its
magic perfection.

Slim, young . . . and white,

Cold as the snow, and as frail.

Ah, she was tender as the young Spring bloom
Bending on its frail stem with the too great burden
of its loveliness.

And a grey gust came

Tearing the thin petals away, and scattering them;

IN AN AVENUE PRINT-SHOP (*Continued*).

But on the grass, even far-sprinkled,
They are beautiful.

And so she is dead,
Dead in white bloom;
Quiet and still as the wan anemone
And broken. . . .
And in all her death-silence,
Too beautiful
For tears.

II

ZAUBERLAND

(*A landscape by Enrique Serra.*)

THE stupid and solicitous day hangs in the tree-
crests,
Loth to depart,
Like a blind and beneficent husband—
And splashes its hot glory over the high stones
At the water-side;
Stupid, too well-disposed day,
Strewing its unwelcome largesse of kindness upon the
poplars
And listless willows.

CITY TIDES

IN AN AVENUE PRINT-SHOP (*Continued*).

And the pool, his bride, lies passive, apathetic,
Hiding her impatience and her longing for his going.

But her still voice, rising in her heart, cries:
"Go, all my desire is for my lover, the night,
The slim, cool youth of darkness, whose arms are
 silver,
And whose lips are heavy with mystic dreams.
I long for the night, who slips silently to my bosom.
Yet he cannot come till you are gone,
And I hate your beaming and your gifts,
For even now I hear him rustling secretly
In the sedges,
Stealing softly up towards me!"

PART THREE: UNDER SKIES

PART THREE: UNDER SKIES

DEATH OF NIGHT

THE long white fangs of dawn are fixed in the
throat of night,
And cold and death-pallid day,
Fitfully gusting with zeal,
Shakes the thin night in its jaws,
As a beast shakes a dying thing.

And out of her milky-blue throat
The blood springs forth
Dyeing all the heavens;
And to the westward
The frightened moon, livid with weeping for her per-
ishing love,
Cowers low in the hills,
And every leaf and grass-tuft gleams
Dew-spattered with her fallen tears.

SUMMER SHOWER

THIN curtains of summer rain hang in the vales
'Twixt city towers.

Blowing before the wind, they billow and bloat

Like a filled sail;

They sway and swing—

And their little turned-up edges scurry and float

In lambent folds

Like a silken arras

Drawn trailing up the streets.

There are plumes of steam floating from the tower-
tops,

Fluttering amid the rain

Like white butterflies, just a little beaten

By a flurry of August rain-drops.

And over the pellucid heavens

Jealously conscientious in their care

Are great loose curtains drawn—

Shutting out the light with full, grey-purple folds,

Save where, along the horizon,

A vein of iridescent green sky,

SUMMER SHOWER (*Continued*).

New-washed and clean, shivers tenderly,
Turning up the veil-edges with tenuous fingers,
Curiously peeping at the silver shimmer
Of the rain-curtains
Filling and blowing.

THE DESERTED GARDEN

MY heart is only sadness when I pass
With lagging footsteps down the silent ways
Of this deserted garden, and I gaze
Upon these lonely blossoms. Ah, the glass
Of Life's bright wine is brimming, but alas,
The banqueter no more his elbow lays
Upon the festive couch. The roses raise
Their lips incarnadine above the grass;
The violets burn purple by the path,
And golden poppies tremble in the wind
As if they waited for the wandering one.
The brown birds flutter in the basin-bath,
The dial casts a slender shade behind,
But all is silence—in the summer sun.

SPRING IN A WOOD

SPRING! but last Autumn's leaves beneath my
feet

Whisper of others who have walked that way
And in the purple of the October day
Have scuffled them as I do now. Then sweet
The breeze sang, and the waters hurried fleet
To sing new fields an endless roundelay.
Now it is spring—April, the dam of May,
Standing reluctant. Yet can I feel the beat
Of the pulsating renaissance of Life and Youth,
And freshened boughs, and warm, upspringing grass,
And waters loosened from the winter-cold—
And still the song of reawakened truth
Is urging on, that tho the snow-days pass
And Nature grows young, yet men—and I, grow old.

NATATORIAL RITHMS

(*Winner of the Collier Prize, 1916*)

I

DIVING

THE grown sun sleeps on thick and idle water,
Water calm—and still, and smoky green,
With little reflections of leaves splattering down
upon it.

You stand at the edge, poised,
Still-breathing and tip-toe,
Silent an instant—all seems to stand silent about. . . .

Then a leap—
The parabola of flight—
And a crash
Into deep and green and waving water
Ever widening, ever welling in broad and stately
circles towards the shore.

NATATORIAL RITHMS (*Continued*).

II

THE CRAWL

And then you come slowly up,
Thru worlds of water. . . .

An impulse of arm and thigh,
With a thrust ahead;
A thrust—

Light-topping wave and bubble;
Deep you delve with arm,
And are shot ahead,
Ahead

With a sharp, short kick
Of feet.

The long glide, sleek thru the green wash,
Lifting the dripping arm
(The drops fleck from it
And patter brittly in the wake).

While all the sunlight glows red-gold
On shoulders gleaming
And on drab hair . . . matted and flat.

ALLA BURLA

*I*O and away . . . Bacchus and Pan!
Grapes . . . and the singing of leaves on the
breeze . . .
Soft pelting of rain, the kiss of the haze . . .
Grapes . . . and the cast-off bondage of man . . .
Io! the grain, the wisps of the oat!
The gold of the garland torn from the trees!
The shower of berries as red as the dawn,
The cantering riotry down the damp ways!
The breathless young nymph . . . *Io* . . . and the
goat,
The rustle of reeds giving way to the fawn!
Woodnotes and piping afar in the vale,
Lost melodies lingering light on the hills,
The scamper of kid and the whisper of rills,
The curve of the chase off and over the trail.
Io Bacche, and Pan . . . the press and the jar . . .
And the laughter of revellers fainter afar!

PALATE-STUDY IN GREY

ALL over the hollow vale
A dead sky broods and glowers,
And back at its fringes a struggling glow
Of sun-ray limns a kind of sorry blush
Across the clouds,
As if they were ashamed at fading summer.

And down the long slopes the grey wind glides
Like a swallow sailing down deserted plains,
Sweeping in silence on her curving flight,
While trees scarce move;
And the dead leaves keep falling . . .
And falling.

Along the crooked wall they are piled in drifts—
Bloodless and russet, loud-voiced and brisk with
cheer,
Cackling like beldames over the bier of Youth,
Rustling about Beauty's bier.

And as the full-throated requiem from a far-off
cathedral choir

CITY TIDES

PALATE-STUDY IN GREY (*Continued*).

A murmur rises from the pines—

A soft wail of wind brooding and mourning—

Wind disconsolate, empty of joy,

Sobbing in suppressed accents afar in the tree-
tops. . . .

And the dead leaves keep falling . . .

And falling.

TWILIGHT IN TOWN

THE relentless fingers of Night are at the throat
of dusk;

The deep sky bleeds, and in the narrow streets
Lights flicker and glint like tired souls taking flight,
To rest and silence after the fevered course of Day.

From the roof, as I were a muezzin of the East
I watch the slow and fateful fingers of the dark
Insinuated into the rifted streets,
Reaching deep into back courts and narrow places,
Moving in silence, driving out the day.
And in the West the low hills beyond the stream
Lie darkling, glittering with new-sprinkled lights
Like daisies flecking the deep-shaded Idan slopes.

And I think the Hudson lovelier than the Nile
And more deep-stained with purple,
The purple blood of dying day. . . .
And the hills, at noon so gaunt and bare,
Are violet-crowned, and fairer than the Acropolis
Where Romance sat throned for a thousand years.

CITY TIDES

TWILIGHT IN TOWN (*Continued*).

And I think there is no beauty, no romance
Like to the magic of the great New World;
For I am gazing with eyes of love,
And in my heart sings the old song Anacreon sang,
Translated into a newer, yet more potent, idiom.

NIGHT IN THE WOODLAND

I LOOKED into the stream and beheld the heavens,
The stars all swimming in the green depths
Like little silver fish.

And the round moon lay on the silken breast of the
pool

Like a breastplate on a Valkyrie's bosom;

The trees bent low, and all around were night-
sounds. . . .

They lulled out all turbulency, they stole away the
world

From me, stretched on the brown leaves.

They were crackling, mirthful leaves,

Scented with earth-scent, and damp with earth-tears.

I lay in the glow of the fire,

And you were beside me,

Speaking in a low, so carefully balanced voice

That your tones melted into the night-sounds,

And rustled with the leaves,

And sang with the water.

I do not know what you said. . . .

I only know we had all merged into one with the
world,

CITY TIDES

NIGHT IN THE WOODLAND (*Continued*).

You and the fire-glow and the earth-smell,
And the leaves and the moon pale with night-tears,
And the stars swimming in the water,
And I, looking deep-eyed into the stream.

NIGHT MAGIC

IT is well to have walked alone in the moonlight,
In the lambent sheen of the white night-mystery,
To linger, lips parted, searching with great eyes
In the elusive riddle of night-stillness;

To pause mid the Unseen, listening to the low
Crisp bicker of crickets, and the soft stealthy wind
Caught in the tree-tops netted against the moon;

To drink the cool balm of grasses in the night-dew
And the haunting scent of young mint in the marshes,
(The freshness and sweetness of night-slumber)
Coming like frail dead memories;

To hear
The undertone of dead limbs rustling; the faint
Message of the redolent tulip-tree blossoms
Gently, tenderly alluring to slumber;

The taste of the mystical night-breath, the murmur
Of somnolent nature—ah, to have known it
Is to have gazed in the eyes of Peace,

CITY TIDES

NIGHT MAGIC (*Continued*).

To have laid cold lips to the lips of Youth,
To have seen Rest and Contentment eternal.

Ah, it is well to have walked in the moonlight,
Alone in the sheen of the white night-mystery!

PART FOUR: TWO IN THE MIST

PART FOUR: TWO IN THE MIST

NASCENCE

SOMETIMES . . . it is like the uncertain April
days,
When Spring is struggling, spasmodically and fit-
fully,
To break from the womb of Winter—
And now and then faint spears of green appear,
And then a blast of grey-cold withers them.

Sometimes I light within, with morning glow,
And it seems as if the Spring
Were struggling for life within me,
Then comes a chill and cloudy day—
And straightway all is gloom and cold,
And blasted remnants of what might have been field-
flowers.

How difficult and how fraught with dolour
Is birth of any sort!
And that new soul, that new life springing into being
Comes by pain, and pangs, aye, and perhaps tears,

NASCENCE (*Continued*).

Into its heritage.

And so I change, swerve and change again,

And all the time, slowly,

The over-soul is blundering into life!

“*INCIPIT VITA NUOVA*”

IT seemed
That the whole world rose about me like grim cliffs
Propping the sky, pulling stars from their night-
webs,
And crushing them to their own bleak brows.
I stood alone, it seemed, in the depths of an abyss,
Beholding only the lamps of my promise
Sparkling aloft . . . shot far across the deep ex-
panse of night.

Withered trees gibbered about me,
Rank air hung like a vampire at my throat,
And as I groped,
Raw stones, blood-stained by many travelling feet,
Rattled hollowly at each step.

And then you sang. . . .

You sang, and the cliff-tops
Flung out great robes of tender green,
Dawn broke eagerly across the warming sky;

CITY TIDES

"INCIPIT VITA NUOVA" (Continued).

From the south came breaths of fresh life and joys,
The stones lay forgotten, for it was fair to move
Like a smooth stream across, along the path
Towards the goal.

Something new-washed and clean
Became my soul,
And then in Alighieri's words
I found my heart-song
And was born anew.

ALLEGRO

I AM so happy that I cannot sing—
I am so happy, I can barely sigh—
Down like a flood it rolls,
Wave upon wave,
And then follows the ever interchanging of weather
Like all seasons in one—
The blind, dead glare of torrid sun
That dries and bakes;
Then the rush of torrents—
All unseen—but I felt them tears!
Washing away the dun self
And turning all to freshness and April-green;
The white moonlight of dreams,
Faint and fast-fading, but potent as a spell.

And thru them all
I calling, calling—
Sending a still voice down the naked vale,
And then struck to silence when an answer falls—

It is no echo—
It is another soul,

CITY TIDES

ALLEGRO (Continued).

Another voice that rides the sleeping night,
And I, long groping, I so oft disheartened,
Greet, unbelieving, the onward leap of joy
Swift as the miasmic whirlwind of all weathers,
Rushing like Spring into my arid veins.
For somewhere in the mist, I have found a soul,
Like to mine own, and I stand silent
In awe.

I am so happy that I cannot sing!
I am so happy that I dare not speak!

SOMETIMES

SOMETIMES when I sit very close to you—
Quiet,

And the smoke of my cigarette curls up about you,
I think you are not real at all.

I think you are a fancy, come to me out of the
dream-haze,

A vision of one whom I should love, if you but lived.
Do you really live?

Or is it all a mirage—a smoke-dream of a night,
Of the vision-laden and illusive evening?

* * * *

I do not speak much when I am with you—

For the sweetest words are those men leave unsaid.

* * * *

When I depart from you

I do not leave you behind me,

But I carry you into the inmost halls of my soul;

Every contour of your face is graven on my spirit
And lives with me.

I cannot really leave you,

When I depart from you.

THE PLATONIST

THERE have been days when my heart was
wrenched for the love of you,
When I have been seized in huge, invisible hands
And cast at your feet. . . .
And I drew back in dismay, and cursed myself for a
weakling
Because I could not drown the desire in my soul.

Once I bent very near you,
And your smooth flesh was warm under my touch,
And hungry-eyed I followed the curve of your lips,
And the deep dark shades of your eyes
And your young brown hair. . . .
And the Hand was upon me again!

I was torn and wrenched, and I battled,
And at length I conquered, and came forth from the
combat
In laurels.
. . . But I bear long scars on my soul from the
struggle!

MERCHANDISE

I GAVE you jewels because I loved you,
And I laid gold at your feet.
You did not know that I loved you,
For you thought that I meant it when I said we were
friends.

You thought my gold the gift of friendship.

And afterward, when my blood ran high
And I hungered after you, and bit my lips
Wroth with them, because they longed for your red
mouth;

When I burned in white fire for you,
And I saw you almost willing to take me,
Then I remembered . . .
I knew it was impossible.

For I feared you would think that I had tried to buy
Your glorious love with baubles.
So I could not ask aught of you.
Ah, child, instead of buying you with my gold,
I unwittingly sold you, sold what I longed for,
And unknowingly lost you!

IN MEDIA NOCHE

DARK and empty the street,
With straggling souls that pass hither and
thither

Each . . . each alone,
Without even a dream to strain to a solitary spirit.
But oh, not I—for silently we stand,
You and I silent, yet breathing infinities of song
Thru the commingling of eyes, and the dumb pressure
of young hands.

We are singing all the songs of all the world!
Yet no one hears, only you and I.

And in the shadows where we stand
Hang multitudes of phantasies too tenuous for words
And far too tender.
Close, close we stand
And closer yet slip
As silence urges with all the impelling oratory of
heart.

Close to you, O mine, I am drawing closer;
Your arms enfold, there is no haven for me else;

CITY TIDES

IN MEDIA NOCHE (Continued).

And then the inarticulate wrench of parting
When all the world sways unnoticed in the balance—
Then are your lips laid to mine,
Warm and persuasive,
And all the wonderment and glory of you
Surges towards me.
All Life is complete, wrapt close in the pressure of
 you,
As I am wrapped in you,
And you in me;
And for a single instant there is nothing else in all
 the world
But you
And the young lips of you
And your amber eyes lost in the endless recesses of
 mine own.

And then . . .

Ah, what a fall from heaven to leave you!
Yet what a deal of heaven in my soul
As I go down the wet and shimmering street,
Down the deserted thorofare, alone.
. . . But I only *seem* to be alone!

AT DUSK

(*Stecchetti, Postuma XXVII*)

MIXED with the evening, dusky, tender, still,
Came fragrant vapours from the field new-
ploughed

And we together walked across the hill
And heard the nightingale implore the cloud.
Your eyes, uplifted to the star-shot sky,
Sent in its glance an unvoiced prayer on high,
And I, who knew what you had never spoken,
Adored you for your silence, still unbroken.

PARTOUT

YOUR golden being binds me round
As does a ring upon my hand—

I cannot escape it.

All ways I turn I am held by the great bond of you.

In the early morning I see you in the dawn,

In the white haze floating up from the salt-marshes,

In the cold wet scent of ocean-mystery

Walking amid the grey hills.

At noon I catch you in the blue depths

Of the burnished sky, all gleaming with the sun;

And you are in the grottoes too, you sing in the
cascades.

And at night . . .

You rise in the white transcendent glory of the moon,

You are diffused about me,

You bathe all my body and soul in your pale nimbus;

You are round about me, beside me, above me,

I cannot escape. . . .

And even at the end,

You fold grey winds about me as I sleep!

NOVEMBER

HOW grey the day is, and how dolorous!
Gaunt trees outside the windows tremble un-
easily
In the invisible wind . . .
As peevish sicklings twist without rest
In a comfortless chair.
A distant train bursts thru the sodden morning-
stupor;
Thoughtless of men's ears shrills a long warning,
And with a wail is gone.
The warm room is not felt;
My hands are cold, and grey silence weighs upon me
Leadenly.
I am all indecision; I walk and turn
Along the room, restless, aimless and unthinking,
Unknowing how to put a soul to rest.
Somewhere, away across the hills,
You are wrestling with your choice,
Me . . . or the things so many small folk strive for,
Yet do not call themselves quite happy in attaining.
Which will you choose?
I would that you be happy, yet, and yet . . .

CITY TIDES

NOVEMBER (*Continued*).

How I fear to lose you!

For losing you, it shall be more than if I lost just
you,

For I should lose myself, and all of mine, in you . . .

And all that both of us should ever be.

INSULATION

SOMETIMES I wonder if it is really you,
When I spin these thin messages to you
Out across a thinner space;
Just as I wonder if it is really I
Who talk to you,
Or if it is some new thing which I should wish to be.

I talk and talk
And I seem to be twisting little balls of words
And casting them off into a dark abyss,
And whether you get them, whether you really know,
I never learn.
It is as if one prayed
And felt the prayer mounting
Like tenuous threads of smoke into the heavens,
And never once knew whether the dear God hears,
Or hearing, heeds.

Yet, having prayed, they tell me there comes a sense
Of having put behind for once
The self we do not love,
And of bringing out another better one,

INSULATION (*Continued*).

Into the rare light of day.
So, when I have talked to you,
And seen your face half-lighted by my thought,
Perhaps it is enough to know
That the light of you has fallen,
Just for once,
Upon a self that otherwise would have stayed
In darkness long, unapproached, and all unseen.

CITY TIDES

TO R. H. B.

YOU are like the unknowable Spring days,
Sun-breaking, all warmth and faint breezes
For a while—

And then so chill and grey, that songs woven out of
Spring
Fall lifeless and metallic on your listless air.

It is as if a day dawns clear and lovely,
With all the smiling charm of cloudless skies,
And great green banks waving sun-swept in the
winds. . . .

Then I weave songs, and, gazing into your eyes,
As I would gaze into the endless depths of a morning
sky,
I wonder why all days are not so fair as this.

Then comes a day when all the world stands still,
Grey clouds hang low, and gusts of cutting wind
Rasp at my cheeks,
Bitingly.

The flowers droop, the roses grow brown,
And flutter, listless, away from their speckling stems,

CITY TIDES

TO R. H. B. (*Continued*).

And only a soiled glow is painted across the sky
Of your little world.

Then all my songs go flying,
And I stand, as a tree which has sung in some past
June,
But mute now. . . .
Weathering as best it can
The incomprehensible passing of things.

EXALTATION

UNDER the glow and warmth of your round
eyes

I reached and grew, and towered aloft until
The stars hung all like jewels at my cheeks,
Brushing me with their silver dust,
And in my ears
Sang the gigantic symphony of the spheres,
And all I knew was light. . . .
I stood but knee-deep in the world,
With yet my feet set fast amid the dust
Of men.

Then when I left you,
And when the morning broke
Clouded and haze-wrapt, as it grieved
For lost illusions, then amid the bald,
Uncompromising light I asked, and with dismay—
“Was I so much a fool
So foolishly to grow, growing but to return again
To small stature?
After the moment of magic, again to yearn

CITY TIDES

EXALTATION (*Continued*).

For ages long, after the lost ethereal spaces . . .?"

Then suddenly broke the answer on my brain,

For, having seen those places,

I found I was not as I had been yesterday.

FOR YOU

LONELY, the soul of me cries out for you
From the dim-slumberous silences of my soli-
tary night;
I twist and toss
And, sleepless, I strive to reach in blind awkward-
ness
My arms to you.
Back in my heart is a burning memory
Barbed and stabbing,
Of days when you were warm and dear to me,
And close upon my breast stretched your young
hands
To take my face between them, and . . .
But the memory is bitter!
I can only turn and toss again
Stirring, endlessly yearning for you,
Wondering if you may ever come again,
Or if in truth you are really gone!
Dry, listless lips of mine repeat again and again
The question which has no answer,
Are you really . . .
Gone?

CITY TIDES

FOR YOU (*Continued*).

And the repeated echo, unbelievably,
"Gone?"

O Christ, break the silence,
And tell me if I have truly lost you!

BRIEF EXILE

DISILLUSIONED and sorry, I left you . . .
Determined to forget you,
And I went into far places and mingled with men;
But from a window I passed
Your round, amber eyes looked out at me,
Sombre and deep, as I had beheld them once in the
old life.

Yet the house I saw bore a sign, "To Let,"
And as I peered into the squares of glass
I found that they were black, and bare.

So I went into the lonely places,
Where there were meads, deep-shaded, and the
pensive trickle
Of a stream. . . .

And in the sun-browned grass I saw your hair,
And from under the reeds came your low voice
Questioningly,
Asking why I had gone.
And a lone cloud, moving slowly across behind the
hills,
Went softly, thoughtfully, as you were wont to walk.

CITY TIDES

BRIEF EXILE (*Continued*).

So I saw I could not leave you,

And I came back. . . .

But boldly and silently,

To let the disillusionment and sorrow eat at my soul

By your side!

CERTAIN WORDS

CERTAIN words—

Inept, unshapen, formless

And devoid of man's art-laden touch—

Are dropped for me, as we walk.

Dropped aimlessly, by you in your striving to give
something;

Like uncut gems quarried by a clumsy hand

Rude and elemental,

Yet capable of being seen in forms of transcendent
beauty.

Men have cut coronet-gems of just such stones,

Or they have fashioned from them poison-vials.

'Tis all in the hand of the cutter;

The potentialities are always there, latent,

And so . . . I do not dare carve them as I would
have them carved,

Lest I uncover some hitherto unseen flaw,

And spoil all,

By an unwise choice of cutting-patterns.

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

I

LAST night, in the midst of many,
When there were palms, and roses, and a
lighted dome above us
And bright silver, and shining tables everywhere,
You asked me in an undertone
To give you back the token you gave me
Months and months ago.
And you said "you hoped I'd understand."

And I said slowly that I did,
And I gave it to you—
And then somewhere the music turned into the meas-
ured beat
Of a song, "Poor Butterfly."

And I recalled the first token you gave to me,
Plucked from the shoulder of your gown,
A tinselled butterfly, a bit of colour that I hid away,
As a sentimental man does, those things.

CITY TIDES

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY (*Continued*).

And I gave you the other token almost without regret

Because I knew

I need never give you the butterfly.

That should stay always . . .

A reminder of Spring and Summer. . . .

A poor solitary bit of colour, the end of—

What shall we call it?—"an experience."

And the music banged away like a wayfarer

Knocking at an empty house,

Sighing again, and again—

Poor Butterfly. . . .

Yes—I understood.

II

Last night when old dreams and close-fostered hope

Crumbled under the hard touch of reality,

I thought I felt a great cavern yawn about me,

That without the romance of you

There was little, nought worth while.

And all the roses, and tinsel, and music

Seemed to waken only deep regrets.

But to-day . . .

The sun dawns strong and white,

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY (*Continued*).

And it is clear and cold . . . all winter.

And a stray wind laughs thru the streets,

And Madison Square, below my windows, is a symphony

In black and white.

A cold, intellectual symphony,

Like the page of a book.

And romance? There is no place for romance there—

What has intellect to do with romance?

And tokens . . . why, child,

A butterfly would look silly in that frozen square

Out there!

TO A LISTENER

THRU darkness I cried to you,
But you never heard.

I watched you there, with the longing eating at my
heart of hearts,

And at last I called to you;

I touched the keys and there came music,

And my fingers sang for you, as you stood by

(I thought perhaps to listen);

Sang all my soul and body to you,

Poured out the long yearning and desire

To you, unhearing.

Ah, that song! Weeping, hungry sorrow,

Loneliness, repression, denied love and dreams,

All in one song (yet no one else could have heard it,

None but you) I poured it towards you.

It came like a great wave, slowly up the long beach
at your feet

(I was at your feet too), but you never heard.

You listened, but your thought and soul were far
away;

CITY TIDES

TO A LISTENER (*Continued*).

I do not know what you were thinking,
But I was singing under an empty window.

Only the aspect of you stood there with me—
Ah, the bitterness, the maddening futility—
All my song falling on deaf ears—
My yearning song, my heart squeezed and coined
 into a few notes,
But you never heard!

MARIONETTES

I HOLD you at arms' length . . . long, long
arms

Reaching across bleak lands and a misty span of
time,

For you are far from me, and perhaps . . .

Perhaps you *never* shall be near.

Arms' length, thinking of many things, we are.

(I am thinking of the past, while you dream on

Of what things I do not know.)

All that there is is the Past;

There is not even any Now for us,

And mayhap there shall be nothing to-morrow.

Oh, why did we not live, why did we wait and plan,

Surrendering so, so much for some vague dream to

come,

Waiting, waiting for the Future,

When we were to live?

And now, tricked, we stand dumb, at arms' length,

For there is no Future, after all.

We shall not live . . . not gain that which we bought

CITY TIDES

MARIONETTES (*Continued*).

With nights of emptiness and restless abnegation;
There is no Future for us, after all!

And back of us Life, black, malevolent,
Laughs hollowly,
And claps her bony hands with ghastly glee
At mortals who believed, and believing
Were cheated of their birthright, Happiness.

IN THE DARK GATE

CLASP my hand tight—the dark encircles me,
And all our hope in scattered ruin lies.
The way is dark. A mist before mine eyes
Shuts out the light. Oh, it is hard to see!

Clasp my hand tighter—bend, oh bend, bend low;
Your eyes are wet—I see them full of tears
I never merited. Oh, could the years
Only bring back the days we both loved so!

My hands are cold. They will not warm again
Tho yours beat hot with anguish mounting higher.
Your cheek against my own is like the fire
Against dead embers, wet with Autumn rain.

Come close—come close, it seems so long to wait
Until at length the parting hour slips—
Does the fire die down? I—closer—press your
lips—
For I am standing in the shadowed gate!

RAIN

NIGHT, and the fall of rain,
And street-lamps bleary thru the deepening
dusk,
And the smaller, dimmer lights
On the pavement, gleaming;
In the room shadow—and in my heart shadow,
And outside, the rain.

Night, and the fall of rain,
In regular dripping—cold, dismal, desolate rain.
Darkness without in the world,
And dark in the depths of my spirit—
Darkness without hope of light,
For to-night you left me!

THREE OF US

TO-NIGHT, because we were friends,
 You told me
(And there were tears in your voice
And a kind of anguish in your very posture as you
 sat)
That you had loved some one ardently,
And that that one had not loved you.
Your heart shook out its petals under my sympathy
And you wondered how I could understand.
But I knew it all e'er the first word
Had floated to me across the deep abyss
Which separates us.
I did know, because . . .
(But I suppose you never dreamed it)
Because I loved so once myself,
And shall love so,
For I loved you!

DESPAIR

DARKNESS hangs leaden, stifling,
Crushing down a pettish impotency.
Impotency crying monotonously for that which it
cannot have,
Hungry, yearning, but powerless to gain.
Blind impotency beating itself against a window,
That is closed, and locked—
(And dark and stifling is the room within)

An instant, a thin point of light breaks thru,
An instant—and then it fails
And the black is heavier than before.

BONDAGE

THERE is a kind of invisible cord
That joins my heart to you,
And somehow it can never wander far
Nor stay away, sojourning among other things.
For always you draw it back to you,
Somehow. . . .
I don't know just how.
All I know is that suddenly my thoughts desert the
fields,
Or the gardens, or the crushed-up cities where they
have been lingering
And come home to you.

Tho I am far away, and tho men call
And beckon to me, and invite me, laughing,
Into the midst of it all you come.
The thin, small cord, lighter than air, is drawn
And my thoughts are all for you,
Returning from their journeys, home . . .
To the old bondage.

VERLASSEN

THEY have all gone . . . and I am left,
Left with a rout of memories and shattered
dreams.

Shattered . . . for to-night my love smiled *kindly*
to me,

Yet drew back with an involuntary recoil
When I bent forward to touch the brown hair.
And so . . . that is gone . . . too.

There is a girl next door singing
“*Verlassen, verlassen bin ich*”—

In an endless succession of stanzas.

Fool, does she not know that when one is abandoned
One does not sing,
But remains mute . . . and dead,
While the world stands still?

A QUESTION

DID you ever, *cherie*, stand by a wide pond in
the wood,
Where every leaf and branch
Of the trees overhead
Could be picked out, mirrored in the oily waters. . . .
And did you ever pick up a stone
And toss it out upon the gleaming floor before you,
Watching it sink deep,
Sending only its circles widening and rippling to the
shore?

Then you know what it is to fling your love into the
world,
And you know that all its rings,
Widening thru life, are dear . . .
Even if, by making them,
Your heart has gone to the depths.

THANKS

FOR all the murmured words you did not say,
And all the hours beneath the star-shot blue
Unspent by us; and for the gold and gay
Midsummer noons we never shared . . . my thanks
to you.

Aye, and for all the messages of cheer
And tenderness unsent, and for the true
Deep gaze of understanding, that the drear
And grey beclouded days found not . . . my thanks
to you.

For all that might have made our few days rare,
But which you did not give, my thanks are due;
For you have made an ending I could bear,
Which otherwise had rent me, so . . . my thanks to
you.

AT THE END

I AM he whom you sold
For thirty pieces of silver—yea,
I am he who poured
The fulness of tears, and the gold
Of my blood, and my life as a day
To buy but a single smile
With my horde.

I gave you my life, gave it free—
My life full of sighs, ah, your guile!
My wakeful nights, and my day
Of hopes . . . and the dreamings of me.
But you sold them for glory; you sold
My life and my love and my pains.
And now, at the end, you hold
The silver, blood-stained, in your hand
And yet do I bend where I stand
And kiss that hand
With its stains!

PART FIVE: REGIMENTALS

PART FIVE: REGIMENTALS

SEPTEMBER, 1914

THE vintage days, and all the vintage blood—
Blood, and the frantic wine of madness, death!
All nations drunk with it, line upon line,
Long lines reeling, wild shouts, heated breath—
Stampeding Bacchic hosts, resistless flood
Trampling the vintage, maddened by the wine
Of power and the lust of reeking hands,
Lust of tearing, rending—blind, panting force—
Yet shrilling cries of “God” and “Justice done,”
Swarming from the bare and smoking lands
Drunk with blood and flesh! Is this the course
Of God’s great world to worship His meek Son?

NOËL

THE white Christ walks abroad to-night
Amid the glow of rocket fire,
'Mid guns that thunder in their ire
And shrieking death, and drunken might.
Mad hosts unseeing, wrench and rend
His still white body, as His snows
Are trampled, and the red blood flows
In rivers without bank or end.

Silent along the field He moves
Against the veil of smoke and flame;
Somewhere apart He hears His name
From trenches laid in slimy grooves.
And dying men relax and sigh
The where His garment passes by.

CONSCRIPTION

TO me, facing the draft, these things seem true:

That there are blacker things than Death,
Which is, after all, only a tavern whither we all are
bound,

Where we put up, and stretch our weary limbs
For rest and dreaming after toil;

That there are sweeter things than living,
For all the heart-dreams of unspoiled youth
Can never blossom with the fragrance
And the soft-golden petals
Which they promised, budding.

(The best of Day is Dawn. . . .

The noon-glare is a tawdry blazon after the morn-
ing smile,

Shy and virginal across the redolent hills.)

That there shall be those who mourn,

As men mourn their departed childhood;

Yet come the cryptic words a Man once said. . . .

“Except ye die, how then shall ye be saved?”

. . . Or of like portent.

CITY TIDES

CONSCRIPTION (*Continued*).

And there comes to few men half so rare a lot
In living, as in this bold hour
When man may serve, and save . . . and maybe die!

H. D. PLAYS "*AU PLAGÉ*" BY ARENSKY

THROUGH the dim hall, floating beneath the rugged
beams,
Came your music, the slow rise and fall of tides
Flung by men's hearts against the sands of sound,
And under your firm fingers given back to us.

I heard the beat and sway of measured bass,
The ripple of counter-currents, and the lowering
thick airs

Of the overspanning sky.

Full of all this, I felt that something quailed
Within me, thinking how when the great net folds
about you,

And you are ranked with many in the battle line,
The fingers now sturdy on the keys
Will spread death. . . .

Fingers which have so loved life,
And given life to us, so unstintingly.

FIELD-FLOWERS

IF I, who tried to sing so many songs
Of Life and Love, and trees and long sweet
nights

With faulty, muted pipe,
Go forth to France, and die—
These things shall come to pass:

I shall be laid, more base than even when I lived,
Beneath some dark-stained bank,
Broken clay in clay.
And from my lips, earth-turned, daisies shall spring,
To dance in their youth adown the sun-swept hill,
Swaying and jubilant in the warm airs,
Tremulous in the breeze,
As I so often have pulsated vibrantly
In the wine-spell of hot-running life.

And they shall be gathered by some dark hand,
Blended in garlands, or wound into a nosegay,
To tell a passion to a lover's eyes;
They shall carry songs that I could never sing—
I who living was mute, dead shall sing

FIELD-FLOWERS (*Continued*).

And scatter down the world

Rare songs that I have dreamed—

Songs to be sung from heart to heart,

From living age to age.

INTERVAL

STEPPING out of the light, I saw the stars
Wet-luminous, white—like lattice-hidden eyes,
And the frail moon, thin, delicately curved—
A wan saint's finger up there beckoning.
Across the pale horizon netted trees
Flung out their curling leaves to catch the dew.

“How fair is all the world!” I said within;
“How good to live! What magic from the God!”—
Then suddenly a shadowed figure came
Down the grey path, khakied, a soldier-form
Freed from the camp, smelling of man and horse. . . .
And I remembered that we were at war!

ROSA MUNDI

WHEN snow shall fall and wind shall blow
And winter darkness bite,
And hills above and vales below
Are looming still and white,
And the long lights of guns shall flaunt
Their glow upon the night ;

Then God shall walk the ways alone,
Shall walk unseen and still,
And in His holy foot-steps sown,
Across the gaunt white hill
Roses shall spring, and at His tread
The buried dead shall thrill.

Then war and cannon-hate is sped
(The roses fill the air) ;
Red blood upon the soil out-spread
Turns roses everywhere ;
And smoke-stained men shall stop to pray
With the sad Christ standing there.

PART SIX: SKETCH BOOK

PART SIX: SKETCH BOOK

THE OLD HOME

I THINK I shall never return again to the home—
The old-time home where my heart burned so in
leaving,
Years—yes, many long years ago.

I fear I should see the walls that I knew become
Gnawed by the cold of winter, or the subtle weaving
Of the woodbine waving red in the Autumn glow.

The thin young vines that peeped thru the window-
frame
Of the room where I was born, perhaps are swaying
In empty windows there to-day—alone.

And oh, if I should find it not the same,
Something within would break! And so, by staying,
I may dream of it still, nor know if it is gone.

LIFE

I THOUGHT to write a great poem,
As broad and deep as the sky
And as universal as the sea;
About Life.

And I called Life a moiling maelstrom;
And a play where men were actors;
And I said Life was a symphony,
Where the pieces played in perfect harmony,
Every harp and viol in its place,
And countless horns playing from their own scores,
With, true, here and there a single feeble flute
Slightly out of tune.

I said Life was a meadow, where we all grow as the
grass grows;
I said it was a summer tempest,
Where certain great principles were lightning and
thunder,
And deep rolling clouds,
And men all drops of water,
Some falling into flowers, some lost in the midst of
the sea.

CITY TIDES

LIFE (*Continued*).

I said it was . . .

Then I stopped.

And I wrote as a last line, one word,

As many have written before me,

Bunk!

REMEMBERING

MINGLING of dancers, music and slippered
feet,

Changing, ever changing, melodies falling sweet,
The clinging touch, the scent and the whispered
word—

Its sense uncaught, fragmentary and blurred.
Nearness, dearness, the closeness and press of you,
Laughter half-smothered, and eyes full of songs un-
sung;

Melody-mad and mystic all—and you and I
too. . . .

But oh, dear God—the glory of being young!

TO P. O.

IN MEMORIAM

THEY sent me in a little soiled box
All the stray papers that you, gathering,
Clipping from here and there, had husbanded
To read again in the long-looked-for hours
When you should smile again, less wracked by pain.

And as I, trembling, fingered all the slips—
Those pitiful mute bits of your secret mind
Which you, in passing, left like a trail of steps
Along a beach—I turned back thru the years,
Rereading all your mirrored thoughts, and all
The scenes we knew lived fresh again and sharp
To my wet eyes; it was as when one lifts
The cover from a rose-jar ages old
And fills To-day with Yesterday's dead dreams!

GOOD FRIDAY

GOOD Friday, the day of anguish and of fire!
From the lone vigils under fitful stars
The group of faithful gather on the hill
Till dawn shall broider with her silver scars
The purpled sleeve of night. Low hums the dire
Portentous murmuring from the rabble, still
In lingering clusters round Pilatus' porch.

Then bold in the dome of sky a single beam
Like a broad streamer leaps. A bloodshot ray
Flares on the brow of heaven. The red torch
Of Rome within the gateway chokes its gleam—
No more a blot of fire upon the night.
And close at hand a soldier stalks the height,
Watching three diggers knee-deep in the clay.

IN GREY TIMES

O H, to be twenty. . . .
Full of the dreams and pensive wanderings
Down paths untried, untrammelled,
Where all of Life like a jewelled and broidered cloak
Lies at Youth's feet
To be taken up, and worn with brazen pirouetting,
Bobbing before mirrors of the soul
And smiling into the glass
At the illusion in its depths.

Then drink we the wine of living
And dream—dreams that like smoke-haze
Wreathe about burnished locks
Hanging, a crown as thin and elusive
As the dawning sun-rays on a purple mountain-
billow,
Soon, ah, too, too soon to fade.

For all the glory of a summer day
Is less than the timorous blush of hope
And half-framed wishes
That are the divine portion of unknowing Youth.

CITY TIDES

IN GREY TIMES (*Continued*).

Oh, to be twenty . . .

Again,

To change the hard, real dross

For Araby and Arcadia,

For the ephemeral visions of Love and Glory

Whose feet are rooted only in smoke,

And whose forms are moulded

Only of water!

MONUMENTS

THE daisies that spring from dead men's lips
And leap to the sun from the moistened clay
Are the souls of the past, as a memory slips
Thru the long grey night-mist into day.

What a man has wrought in the hour of his prime,
The work that he did, or the song he has sung,
Fades fast with the onward roll of Time,
Gives place to the songs and deeds that are young.

But his body, deep in the damp, dark mould,
Springs into flower; and in the dawn
Breaks into daisies, white and gold,
And shines on the world when his thoughts are gone.

FIFTH SYMPHONY

BEETHOVEN

A MOUNTAIN avalanche, enormous and kingly,
that sweeps from the blackness
From the footstool of the frowning sky. . . .
Swirling in a storm of sound, a maelstrom of confu-
sion. . . .

Here the pale blue-green of flutes, mystic and noc-
turnal,
The bold terra-cotta cry of the horns,
The barcarolle of viols,
And the pure fresh shepherd-song woven thru its
woof.

It bears down upon my mind as the flood upon my
body—
I am caught to its breast, I am swept into its arms,
Whirled away into chaos.

My mind is crushed, as my body. . . .
They lie limp and listless, pale on the cold stones,
But the soul is liberated and soars aloft.

CITY TIDES

FIFTH SYMPHONY (*Continued*).

The new cold air breaks in white upon its softness,
And something unknown within silently thrills with
pain.

MOTHER

MOOTHER, when I was young
And played about your knee—
Perhaps from the bed-time tales or the songs you
 sung,
You seemed so very old, and wise to me.

Then when I rose to Youth,
In boyhood's singing whirl,
You seemed to be changed somehow; to tell the truth,
You seemed to be younger, like a dreaming girl.

Now when I am a man—
Well-schooled, broad-shouldered, tall,
Tho you understand as only a mother can,
Your thoughts are grown child-like—you so slight
 and small.

Where did our journeys cross,
That I passed you on the way?
For years have brought us each a different dross,
And somehow we are different to-day.

HILL SLOPES

I TRAVELLED along the road
That wound deep into the lap of the vale. . . .
And all about me was stubble, and wailing pine,
And flaking birches.
And I lifted my arms and with dry lips
Cried for the beauty of hill-slopes
Like to those of my dreaming.

And I came to the other side of the vale,
And toiled up the mountains,
Where were desert and dry brush, and alkaline wast-
ings.
“Are these the hill-slopes?” I cried in dismay and
anger,
And clenched my hands till the blood ran white in
them.

Then I turned and beheld the far road I had travelled,
And it was fair with pines,
And young birches, and fair with grasses,
And the beauty of hill-slopes
Like to those of my dreaming!

ON HEARING DEBUSSY'S "*L'APRES-MIDI
D'UN FAUNE*"

TENDER strains of music shimmer in the air
Like young green leaves torn unwilling from
the bough;
And thru the leaf-land filters the pale sun
Melting upon the marshes;
Silently slides and wanders the thin-dripping water
White and clear, gleaming adown rock-ledges
And drenched roots
Into a still, untrammelled pool.
The sun warms along the bank, its stealthy finger
moving
Stirs grass and waving sedge into life,
Kisses them into being,
While over the still vale, placid and silent with late
springtime,
Broods the pale sky,
With the bright quiet of the lengthening day.

Then sudden across the valley crashes the lilt of
laughter,

DEBUSSY'S "L'APRES-MIDI D'UN FAUNE" (Continued).

A flash of pink palms clapped fast to fluttering folds
of veilings,
A rout in a visible arpeggio,
Young forms, white and ivory,
Disport in a mad whirl down the hills . . . and into
the shadow.

But thou shalt not have them, O faun,
For they are enamoured with Daphnis and his sleek
companions,
With Youth and waxen-armed boys whose lips are
redder than thine,
And they laugh and mock thy crude shagginess
And thy stupid hoofs rattling amid the pebbles
rudely.

Thine but a scarf—dropped by a passing dream,
Warm meshes to cling about thy fingers,
To lie tender and scented against thy rough lips,
Still redolent of that which of late it embraced.
Like a flower the wind pulls loose from a rose-tree
And drops in a white rain upon the grass,
Its petals scattered.

Thou hast but a dream, faun, and a glow of fading
fire in thy heart
And the smart of their laughter,

CITY TIDES

DEBUSSY'S "L'APRES-MIDI D'UN FAUNE" (*Continued*).

For it rings mockingly down the breeze
Light as the fragrance of distant blossoms
Growing wild and ribald in the lusty oat-fields.

Thou hast sighed for a zephyr,
Thou hast sought to embrace the wind—
Sought to catch its wonder in thy clumsy fingers. . . .
And a silken wisp is all thy gain.

Return to thy dreams, faun, lest I too mock thee.
Lie down to thy fancies and vain thoughts
Under the pale sun sifting thru the leaf-net,
Brocading the grasses and rocks
With the inarticulate glow of April afternoon;
And in thy slumber
Perhaps the harlot breeze will soothe thy empty
 longings,
Scattered silent and light across the broad meads of
 the lengthening day.

EASTWARD HO!

SINGING, let us lift the anchor, sweep across the
sapphire sea,
To the dawn that, languor-laden, shakes her dewy
pinions free;
Leave behind the tawdry towers, faintly blinking in
the dusk,
Seek the Eastern temples, heavy with their mingled
nard and musk.

In the mystic shades of Luxor, tread the broad and
painted halls,
Seek the serpent of the morning where the Nile in
tumult falls.

Eastward, eastward, ever eastward, to the plains of
Kurdistan,
To the walls of grey Damascus, to the vales of
Astrakhan.
Gather roses where the Persian waters murmur to
the slave,
Where the crimson petals shower over singing Omar's
grave.

CITY TIDES

EASTWARD HO! (*Continued*).

On to Madras, where the dark-eyed Brahman throngs
the hot bazaars,

Down the Bramaputra gliding, in the glory of the
stars.

Strip the Indies of their treasure, eat the lotus of
Romance,

Lose ye in the endless wonder of the smoky seas' ex-
panse;

In the caverns of the mystic vision, let us linger,
nay—

Sink enraptured in Nirvana, death in life, and night
in day!

GATES OF HORN

UNDER the weeping moon have I wept, lonely,
Under the darkness have I been brushed by
dream-wings.

(O dreams, the fairy-godmothers of men,
The evanescent enchantresses!)

Once in a dream I saw love, and ever after
When I came close to love by day
Its face was false to mine enchanted eyes,
For it was not like to my dreaming.

Once I touched love in a dream,
And then I learned the bitter pain of dawn
Bringing afresh the fleetness of visions,
And the inevitable awakening to reality and the ache
Of fancies, tear-sweet, hardly touched . . . then
lost!

FOR THE OPENING OF A MUSIC HALL

HERE falls the song that rose within men's
hearts

When Nature wakened unto Life and Joy.

And here the voice of those who dreamed, and wove
A panoply to gird hearts yet unborn.

Here is the long roll of the ocean's swell

Rising like a Titan's thundering chant beneath
Beethoven's manly melody; and here

The fresh wood-notes of vibrant Mendelssohn;

Here Wagner's mighty music of the spheres,

Snatched from the tempests flaming in the skies

. . . Ay, from the very foot-rests of the gods. . . .

Storms down upon the air and smites the rocks

Of hardened spirits, rending them in twain

And opening heaven to the after calm.

Then do men leave the caves of toil for rest,

And in pure sunlight are renewed; aye, cloaked

With fires of Genius, fallen from the stars,

Bound into cadences and rare harmonies,

And flung, a heaven-made garment, on the soul

To armour it for Life.

ANSWERS

OUT of the mass and maze of creeds,
Up from the devious paths that wind,
Born from men's dreams, and hopes and needs,
Burdened with altars, charms, and beads—
What is the answer I shall find?

Tired of the endless how, and why,
Tired of the questions, tired of search,
Sick of the *maya*, joys that fly
Ever ahead, when seeming nigh,
Sick of the book, and bell, and church,

Baffled, I turn to the crowded street.
Night is afoot; the deep sky broods
Green-purple, and the air is sweet
With winds deep-scented, warm and fleet—
Where now is room for creeds and feuds?

I only know that the night is rare;
I only know that the music-stuff
Of a voice long-heard, and loved, is there.
All that I know is—*Life is fair!*
It is enough . . . enough!

QUEST

OH, I have hungered and thirsted so for love,
Seeking love everywhere, in lone and in
crowded places.

I have sought love in cities,

And found laughter I could not share,

And tears I could not understand.

I have sought love in the meadows and sleeping vales

All sun-lit,

And found silences I could not bear.

I have sought love by night, down the diaphanous
steps of the mists,

And found only a mystery I could not answer.

And yet, could I only have found *love*. . . .

THE JAPANESE CHILD TO THE TREE

I AM driving a nail into thy heart, O cherry-tree,
Driving a nail to kill thee,
While all thy boughs are in scented bloom
Like pink butterflies restlessly fluttering their wings
In the Spring breezes. For I know
That soon all thy petals will fall,
And thou shalt weep in the Spring rain.

So I am killing thee now, ere thy lovely blooms de-
part.

Cruel am I, yet kind, to slay thee now,
For thou shalt never know living after love is gone
And beauty fled;
Ah, more bitter than the northern almond
Is it to outlive love!

STARS

I HAVE walked boldly into the tangled flowers and
ecstasy of Spring,
Stumbling over Beauty in the daisies at my feet;
For my eyes were fixed on the heavens
Searching thru the glare of the noon, for the white,
silent stars
I had heard of,
And which I had longed for.
So I did not see the golden earth-stars at my feet.

Who would seek stars at noon, because they shone
so fair last night?
Who but Youth?
And who, with eyes uplifted, could sweep the skies,
With Beauty so, so near . . . too near for worship?
Who but Youth?

THE DIFFERENCE

WHEN men move out of a house,
They hang up a sign, "To Let"—
And they close the windows and doors,
Leaving it empty and alone.

When Love moves out of its house
Men smile a hollow smile,
And lights are in the windows—music echoes faint—
Tho unseen crape flutters from the door.

SONG FROM THE YUCATANESE

MY days are days of dreaming,
And my nights—nights of endless yearning
When the great gold moon-god gleaming,
Lights up the wave with his burning.
My hours are slow in their going,
Like the heavy stream that glides
In easy washes flowing
To the restless tides.

Thine eyes are eyes of dreaming,
And thine arms—arms of yearning,
And thy dark locks hang gleaming,
And thy lips—thy lips are burning.
But my hours are slow in their leaving,
Yet the love that my bosom hides
Is bearing me out on its heaving
And restless tides.

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