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# Kowhai Gold An Anthology Of Contemporary New Zealand Verse

*"And as your Summer slips away in Tears Spring wakes our Lovely Lady of the Bush The Kowhai; and she hastes to wrap herself All in a mantle wrought of living gold."*

DORA WILCOX.

Kowhai Gold An Anthology Of Contemporary New Zealand Verse

Chosen and Edited by Quentin Pope

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TO J. C. B.

## INTRODUCTION

"POETS are always the forerunners of a literature. Its first lisplings are done in numbers," declared H. L. Mencken when celebrating the fifth anniversary of *The American Mercury*, that magazine dedicated to mighty blows at zanies and Zion.

In New Zealand, the youngest Dominion, last, loneliest, most self-satisfied, a literature has not yet arisen. There has been a good deal of writing, dull history and amateurish fiction, but little art. Islanded twelve hundred miles from that other great province of the intellect, Australia, the New Zealanders have heard few of the echoes of modern thought. Great readers, they have written stumblingly. Living has been easy, environment kind, and the nation has become Socialistic and lazy, living in a state committed to paternalism and agriculture. One of the advertisements by which the Dominion has sought to arrest attention summed up the state of native culture. "New Zealand," it declared—"The Empire's Dairy Farm."

But if this has been the state of affairs, it is passing. The great barrier to development of a New Zealand literature, lack of intelligent interest by the country's own journals, has vanished almost everywhere. Publication has acted as a stimulus, writers have sprung up in scores and have discovered a large audience. The future no longer seems full of emptiness, and the foundations of a New Zealand literature are being laid.

Of that poetic impulse which has visited the country in the few years since the war, these poems are representative. They are, of course, uneven in merit as they are different in method. The Celtic twilight of Eileen Duggan, the intense feeling of Alison Grant seem odd beside the sentiment of A. R. D. Fairburn, the sound, so like sense, of Robin Hyde, the formlessness of Katherine Mansfield, and the patient workmanship of the wordsmith, Bartlett Adamson. But there are in this book personalities both definite and attractive. And there are, also, some poems which no future anthologist of Modern English verse can afford to ignore. That is why this book has been made.

1930

Quentin Pope.

## Acknowledgment

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## Contents

*Every vowel in Maori words is pronounced separately and receives the same quality as in Italian. The stress usually falls upon the first and alternate syllables.*

Each has his saint, and one may dream  
Of Francis walking in a field,  
Another turn where Michael dark  
Springs slim and wild to lift his shield.

A third may let his loving light  
Upon the whirling torch of Paul,  
I dream of Peter's shaggy head  
Bent blinking o'er his haul.

I smile for that old simple tongue,  
So quick, so breathless to begin,  
That, snubbed and silenced o'er and o'er,  
Could never lock its wonder in.

I kneel to those old dogged feet  
That padded on from shore to city,  
I cry for that old troubled heart  
That tried to tempt God out of pity.

And what of that poor broken soul  
That crept out sobbing from the light,  
Closing its ears against the bird  
And beating blindly through the night!

How could he know except in tales  
The majesty, the rune of law,  
An old man bred to nets and sails,  
Betrayed by ignorance and awe?

Ah dear to me! Ah dear to me!  
That fear, that flying from the rod,  
That ancient infidelity  
Rewarded by a risen God.

ONCE on a dewy morning  
With the blue sky blowing apart,  
Each bud broke on my eyelids,  
Each bird flew through my heart.

I prayed for the faith of a starling  
Under the tawny trees,  
child or a holy woman,  
What could be greater than these?

But now on a heavy morning  
With the dull sky blowing apart,  
When no flower blesses my eyelids,  
And no wing brushes my heart,

I, made surer by sorrow,  
Beg what seems more to me,  
The faith of a willow in winter,  
Or a blind hound nosing the knee.

YOUNG Christ went groaning up to Quarantana  
With His tall head flung up against the sky.  
Spring cried to Him from every bush and bramble;  
He passed her blindly by.

Oh, every tree was given up to blossom,  
And every bee burred in the broken lane,  
But as He passed the little bees and blossoms  
Were still with love and pain.

And every bird bent sideways in its sorrow,  
And whispered softly to Him as He went,  
"My brightness, are you black and lost in anguish,  
My sweetness, are you spent?"

Yea, every bird except the careless cuckoo,  
That working on in flurry and in fret,  
Hollowed a nest and cried its own name over,  
Nor saw His eyes were wet.

Young Christ came smiling down from Quarantana—  
He blessed each bird along the broken lane,  
And said, "My little pity, it is over,  
My gladness, sing again!"

And then He turned and looked upon the cuckoo,  
It gave one cry and flew off to the west,  
Since then it may not cease its haunted flying,  
Nor ever build a nest.

"HER dying look was all for you.  
It touched you to the last," they said.  
Are you not proud to think of that,  
Though she is dead?

O death alive, is that peak proud Because  
it was the last in gold?  
It only knows the sky is blind,  
And it is cold.

MY quest lies far across the hidden waters,  
The lands that touch the fairways are all charted,  
I'd sooner dock than claim another's headland,  
Though finds are few now.

I know it's somewhere lying on the sea bloom,  
As tender and as dusky as a plum-bough,—  
In cold of words and watches of the spirit,  
I'll strain unto it.

And if I fail I will have had the thunder,  
The bursting, bellying hours of rip and glory,  
When the dumb sea lifts up its myriad dewlaps  
Of lowing oxen.

But oh, the heady joy if I shall find it,  
The telling it as if a court were listening,  
And I a Spanish sailor with an island,  
'Sire, deign to take it!"

MARY, the maiden, walked out in the country,  
Telling the wheat what the angel had told her,  
The bees tumbled out of the flag-flowers to listen,  
The birds stopped their fledglings and told them to heed her.

A woman in blue with wheat to her knees,  
Mid a silence of birds, and a stillness of bees,  
Singing, "Golden, ah golden, with seedsprays unfurled,  
Ripen within me, O wheat of the world!"

Mary, bluehooded, walked out in the country,  
Telling the vine what no other must know yet,  
The butterflies flew to her hems as to harebells,  
The flowers on the bushes shook gold rain upon her.

A woman, gold-wet, with rainbow eyes,  
And a border of living butterflies,  
Singing, "Purple, ah purple, with tendrils close curled,  
Ripen within me, O vine of the world."

"HAD it been you——" my mother said,  
And put my comfort by.  
I was wept out and overspent  
To ask her why.

It's sad to see a tree in flower  
Blown over to the dust,  
And mothers love a splendid thing  
Because they must.

It did not even hurt me much,  
I was so strange and sore.  
Ah, when the sky has rained a flood,  
What's one drip more?

It is a way they have in grief;  
Not knowing what they do,  
They turn upon the nearest one,  
"Had it been you——"

Lo, how the butterfly, that paladin of air,  
To whom blue acres are baronial things,  
Who takes them as an eldest son the name—  
Or owl the night—  
Before the time of wings,  
Lies blind, without reflection,  
Entombed, enwound,  
Forgotten and alone,  
Till comes its Easter hour  
Without a sound,  
And oh, that cavalier of light,  
That breathless one,  
Bewildered by its coloured resurrection,  
Rides up into the sun!

So even I,  
When wings lift from my clod,  
Breaking the sky,  
May shimmer up to God.

THEY said she had strange ways and fed the poor,  
That she could read old books and cross the wise,  
And that she held much speech with serf and boor  
For clog and shoe were equal in her eyes.

They said that her young robes could awe the hine  
And set the proudest embassy to school,  
Yet she would close the charters of her line  
To melt in tender laughter at her fool.

They said she did not end her grace with men,  
But honoured from her birth until her death  
The smallest stirring thing within its den  
That shared with her the magic beat of breath.

All this and more they said about her there,  
And I—what was their murmuring to me,  
Who could remember but her knot of hair,  
Her eyes like Spanish shells that stoup the sea?

WHEN first I read that page I read it slow.  
I saw the woman fretting to and fro,  
And then the calm one sitting at His feet.

Why did He stop the drudge and chide her so?

I was so young that hour, so hot and kind,  
It seemed to me that Christ was blind, was blind,  
'Twas well for that one listening on the floor,  
The other had His comfort in her mind.

Why did He choose the idle one to bless?  
Why did He hold a frowning toiler less  
Than bird unbarned or haughty little flower,  
Setting a holy sign on uselessness?

But if He came tonight in by my door,  
I would, like Mary, listen on the floor,  
For oh, her heart was toiling at His praise,  
And it was I was blind, was blind before.

LIPS without law and reckless head,  
Defiant eyes and deedful hands,  
What rest for you while stars are red  
And little waves run by the lands?

Gold shells are gemstones in your hair,  
And strips of kelp your ribands be,  
Your ear-rings are the wild sea-beads,  
Your flower the sea anemone.

The salt is crusted on your feet,  
The salt that shines like all the South,  
What rebel question troubles still  
The scarlet threading of your mouth?

Is it the secret that you seek,  
The hidden hest that drives you forth,  
The wonder of your wanderings  
From singing South to birdless North?

The end of your unquiet quest  
Must ever be concealed, denied,

The riddle of your hunted race  
Lies muted in some stirless side.

Bereft of choice by your dead queens,  
Who trod through winds and suns and rains,  
The coasts of both the Sicilies,  
The shores of all the Spains.

You are condemned to wander still,  
To share with gull and mew your food,  
Your minted dower the crusted shell,  
Your acreage the broad sea-rood.

By this strange sanction in your blood,  
You leave the distaff and the keys,  
The faggot red, the lintel-stone,  
To be a beggar of the seas.

UNCONSCIENCED tyranny,  
You crouch and say to me,  
"Yield up your entity!"

Of sweet, unlessoned things,  
No starling changes wings,  
No thrush its mate's note flings.

The lovely ignorant rose  
Inalienable knows  
Each leaf wherewith she blows.

Each son of Adam's hod,  
Each warm instructed clod  
Holds tremblingly from God,

In fearful, binded trust,  
For use unjust or just,  
His own peculiar dust,



His spirit incommune;  
As tides hold from the lune  
The sway that sets their tune.

Each land in like degree,  
Must ward immutably  
Its children's liberty.

I am of mine the roll,  
The composite, the whole,  
Shall you then have my soul?

In vain your empery,  
No haulm can tendril be,  
No tarn turn to the sea!

Hark, and forever know!  
Single and sole I go,  
Bleeding, I mock your blow.

OH, the grace was on it that He chose that country—  
We have kind oxen and our straw is sweet,  
We have shepherds too now, and stables and a manger,  
Had we but one footprint of His little feet!

Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of summer,  
Through the sleepy summer, slow with streams and bees,  
Had my land been old then, here He might have lighted,  
Here have seen His first moon in the *ngaio* trees.

Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of waiting  
While our lilies open and our *tuts* sing,  
Had my Lord been born here angels might have ringed us,  
Standing round our islands wing wide to wing.

Had my Lord been born here in the time of *rata*,  
Three dark-eyed chieftains would have knelt to Him,  
With greenstone and mats and the proud *huia* feather,  
And the eyes of Mary, seeing, would grow dim.

Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of waiting,  
We too have oxen and our straw is sweet,  
We too have shepherds and stables and a manger,  
Oh, for one clear footprint of His little feet!

HARK! the bittern calls her children  
From the willow-weed and marsh-logs,  
And the lonely little swamp-bird  
Wades no more about the black bogs.  
See the kelpies of the starshine,  
Peeping each one through a blue bough,  
Hearken to the voice of *Rangi*  
Singing as I sing to thee now.  
Sleep, my bright-eyed little *weka*,  
Sleep, my *huiia*-bird of twilight, Sleep, my brown moth of the branches;  
*Ate! Ate! Ate! Ate!*

Hush—oh hush! my little wild one,  
Hear the stirring in the hollow,  
With thy restless little crying  
Thou wilt wake the small sea-swallow.  
Dearer than the bread of *raupo*,  
Dearer than the sweet *konini*,  
Dearer than the dead to *Tane*,  
Yea, so dear art thou unto me.  
Sleep, my bud of *koromiko*,  
Sleep, my wild *karaka* berry,  
Sleep, my red-lipped rata-blossom,  
*Ate! Ate! Ate! Ate!*

A VANQUISHED flax droops pennon by the pool  
That shares the sorrow of a tattered tree,  
And still is heard along the dreary cool  
An old tired bittern booming timorously.

The marsh plant slowly drips its sombre seeds,  
The very blackbird is a bird of rue;  
A barren wind rustles the *raupo* reeds,  
Breaking the silver bucklers of the dew.

God made this place for sallow twisted roots  
And winds that limp the high-roads of the air,  
For songless birds and broken-hearted fruits  
And men who never learned a prayer.

SONG comes to me  
But haltingly,  
A child that stretches hands of faith  
Then draws them back again,  
A sun that gilds me for a while,  
Then hides for fear of rain,  
I shall not sing again.  
God has so many singing birds  
To lilt from sunny throats,  
Proud birds with slow, strong notes,  
Like stately Dons of Spain;  
God has full many singing birds  
To mock on hill and plain  
The tabor of the wind, the viol of the rain.

God has so many troubadours  
With songs of March and May,  
On pipe and flageolet,  
To flute of flower and seed;  
God has so many troubadours  
To sing in court and train,  
He will not miss my bitter reed,  
I shall not sing again.

WALLED by the silver dusted night  
The hill sat hunched, a troglodyte  
Giant and grim, whose frown was bent  
Where laughs of summer lightning went.

The blackness held no moving thing,  
Nor lightest sound of whispering:  
No colour showed except the far  
Gleam of a homestead's window-star.  
It paled at last, winked once and died,  
Drowned in the eerie, lightless tide.

...Suddenly, in the clotted dark  
Awoke an impish, moving spark.  
It swayed and halted, swerved and tacked,  
A quick red sprite by mischief racked,  
But climbing all the time with zest,  
Until it reached the hooded crest.  
Here two white rocks stared in surprise:  
They were by day the hill's two eyes,  
Forbidding, cold, insatiate.  
The valley feared their stony hate  
That made the height a shape of dread—

Some vast Jurassic monster's head,  
And waveringly, beneath those eyes  
Went talk of crops and market lies.

The red spark fluttered to one rock,  
While rang an impudent, soft knock—  
Then the man stooped,—refilled his pipe,  
Scored a thin, phosphorescent stripe  
With a sly match, and cupped the flame  
In clever hands: as in a frame  
There showed a lean and merry face  
Whose wrinkles wore an outlaw grace.

"Laddie," he whispered to the ground,  
And with swift feet that made no sound  
A legged and jointed thing loped past;  
It seemed a flake the night had cast  
That snapped into the further dark,  
Stifling a low, exultant bark.

Soon near the man began to creep  
The misty forms of huddled sheep  
Like rounded drifts of silent snow;  
And though they shuddered to and fro,  
Crazed by that unseen, grim pursuit,  
Their idiot faces all were mute.

One more swift flame, a stealthy rush,  
Brought back the hill's accustomed hush:  
Like unreal things, half seen in sleep,  
Faded the man and dog and sheep.  
Forbidding, cold, the hill's two eyes  
Stared at the faintly smiling skies.

SLOW wings of giant birds of white,  
The gliding planes of morning light,  
Drove up the valley, mile on mile,  
Till, like a ghostly silver pile,  
The hill-top glowed against the sky  
Of pearl and misted lazuli.

This is the hour of quietness;  
It softly cancels all the stress

Of riot-life in leaf and limb;  
The fire of blossom-flame is dim  
And no beast stirs: even the grass  
Is motionless as graven glass.

This is the lustral hour: a pool  
Of healing moments, clear and cool.  
This is the hour of mystery:  
The spinning world seems dreamingly

To swim in pale enchantment, when  
From day-time's drone of busy men,  
To secret night's scarce-whispered calls,  
This strange white bridge of silence falls.

Now the slip-rails of faery drop,  
And from the shadowy grey hill-top,  
Wind flocks of snow-white thoughts that glow  
In the pale radiance, they go  
Softly from sight and show again,  
Dream sheep that walk a magic lane  
Where only follow those who long  
To change this charmed hour for a song.

Steeped in the wonder of it all,  
The singer passed the shadow wall,  
And, face towards the spreading light,  
Steadily climbed the silver height.

There two white rocks stared in surprise:  
They were by day the hill's two eyes,  
Insatiate, forbidding, cold,  
But now they seemed to smile, cajoled  
As one light finger of the sun  
Melted their gloom in soft, sly fun.

The singer rested by one rock  
And then there rang a tiny knock,  
As, lazily, he cleared a splash  
Of random, grey tobacco ash.  
Turning to watch the far—far gold  
That on the moving waters rolled,

He saw, in distant, jewelled spray,  
The sea-birth of the singing day:  
And ringing to his lips, a wave  
Of rapture bore this little stave:

*When lights of Port o' Morning gleam  
And high clouds laugh to coloured foam,  
My shining songs, my flocks of dream  
Go down the sunways home.*

SING a song of washing-up—shining clean plates  
Chattering together like a crowd of old mates:  
Buxom cups and saucers, and little white bowls  
Purely and demurely bright like little girl-souls.

Hear the hymn to cosiness  
The tinkling dishes chime,  
Ringing in the doziness  
Of evening time.

Mollie-of-the-wise-eyes leaves her hard sums,  
In important apron she has swept the crumbs.  
All of us are washing up: big and small folks  
Sharing and comparing all the home-sweet jokes.

Hear the speech to cosiness  
The doting kettle speaks,  
Babbling of the rosiness  
Of maiden cheeks.

Lamplight on the busy hands that fold the teacloths  
Magically turns them into flitting gold moths.  
Round me all the comfortable gods of home things  
Flick away the uses of the day with blithe wings.

Ring the chimes for cosiness  
And sweetly humdrum times,  
Passing bells for prosiness  
And high-flown rhymes.

THE gleaming shuttle of the white moon flies  
With cord aglow to slyly sew  
About the world a silver net of lies.

The moonthreads through the night air spill  
And magically float and spin,  
They change the bulging, massy hill  
To one black sheet, upright and thin,  
Of painted tin.

A ribbon of the moonstuff lies  
Against the *rata's* shadowed feet,  
And black its scarlet flowers rise,  
While on the hill the yellow wheat  
Sways, white as sleet.

And there is knit a sorcery  
Of relics in the picnic place,  
A gleaming jam jar dons with glee  
A cozen-gown of jewelled lace  
With tricky grace.

I walk with Maud in ecstasy.  
Her love-drenched eyes are lustral wells  
That purely shine with modesty,  
I seem to hear the tinkling swells  
Of sanctus bells.

The creekstones ring like little gongs  
Tapped softly by the fishes' fins,  
And trees lilt airs of greenwood songs—  
The purl of pixie mandolins  
Far off begins.

And then I light a cigarette!—  
The match flame is a searing spark.  
It burns away the moonlight net  
And Maud's a drab—the park's a park!  
Lord—where's the dark?

THE harbour was a dreaming lake

Of quiet water brimming,  
Where, all alone, a kittiwake  
Was delicately swimming.  
Her quick feet made a double fret,  
Dark threads upon a coverlet,  
Whose level blue was overset  
With points of silver trimming.

*The blue eyes of the sleepy sea  
Smiled lazily.*

The kittiwake swum here and there  
With purposeful endeavour;  
Her dainty consequential air  
Showed pride in being clever;  
Her breast, she knew without a doubt,  
Had rubbed the ocean wrinkles out,  
And all the waters round about  
Would now be smooth for ever.

*The grey eyes of the watching sea  
Smiled thoughtfully.*

The hurrying dawn was pale with pain.  
Wind-furies, harshly crying,  
Tossed on the pier a draggled skein  
Of feathers, slackly lying.  
Like a street hag whose hideous sleep  
Marks the drear end that high days reap,  
The kittiwake lay still—a heap  
Of brave dreams, drably dying.

*The green eyes of the wanton sea  
Smiled carelessly.*

BLACK is the master of the crowded hall  
Where all the colours meet; he is the Head,  
For mauve is tame, magenta badly bred,  
Purple and brown to languid vapours fall,

And pink and meretricious yellow brawl;



Sly blue and lissom green and lazy red  
Are only friends in some chance flower-bed;  
Grey, but the toneless echo of them all.

Black is the regal, universal friend,  
Who softly brings to humankind his store  
Of quiet amity and comfort deep;  
Who kisses mother night and makes her lend  
The sable fabric from her wardrobe door  
To veil the sweet half-death that men call sleep.

As a tree splintered on the heath  
A Somme lagoon rocked underneath  
The roaring ceiling of the world,  
And noises hurled  
About the air, set up a quaking,  
Tilting the banks, till dried ooze flaking  
Spattered the swaying pool all over  
And drove the gauzy flies to cover.

A sedgy corner thus far quiet  
From work of that corroding riot  
Held frogs in council, earnest, rapt:

Portly and calm, their leader mapped  
The course of their enquiry on  
The "Whence" and "Why," the pro and con,  
Whence came the noise, unequalled by  
The imagined croak of all frogs? Why  
The marshroof's turbulence?  
Could He in truth be praised or blamed?

An underfed and thin one claimed  
The mystery brought punishment,  
And all should speedily repent  
Desertion of the old lagoon.  
His croak of warning ceased, and soon  
Another showed the obvious good,  
The bounteous insect crop of food  
That strewed the surface of the pool;

And one said "Fool,  
This is the last that may befall;

This is the end, the end of all,  
Rich slime and waterweed and logs,  
All ended ... even frogs."

And thus and thus they wrought,  
Weighing each word, counting each thought;  
When down the feeding rivulet,  
By turn and deep and fret,  
Slow tiny clots of red came drifting  
Dissolving, spraying, rifting,  
To scarlet filaments that laced  
And writhed and broke in spectral haste.

Without surcease, the flocculent  
And delicate masses glowed; and spent  
Till all that smooth green water-lawn  
Was tinted like a rosy dawn.  
And joyously the Council saw  
That wonder-change; and hushed in awe!  
Their answer had evolved!  
Enigma solved!  
Forever, now, their soft green sides  
Would lave in gracious, soft pink tides.

Their loud, full-throated anthem rang;  
"Oh, Great Suffuser! Hail!" they sang;  
"Blessings Always  
Are Thine... *Non Nobis Domine.*"

Now it is Loneliness who comes at night  
Instead of Sleep, to sit beside my bed.  
Like a tired child I lie and wait her tread,  
I watch her softly blowing out the light.  
Motionless sitting, neither left nor right  
She turns, and weary, weary droops her head.  
She, too, is old; she, too, has fought the fight.  
So with the laurel she is garlanded.

Through the sad dark the slowly ebbing tide  
Breaks on a barren shore, unsatisfied.  
A strange wind flows... then silence. I am fain  
To turn to Loneliness, to take her hand,  
Cling to her, waiting, till the barren land  
Fills with the dreadful monotone of rain.

INTO the world you sent her, mother,  
Fashioned her body of coral and foam,  
Combed a wave in her hair's warm smother,  
And drove her away from home.

In the dark of the night she crept to the town  
And under a doorway she laid her down,  
The little blue child in the foam-fringed gown.

And never a sister and never a brother  
To hear her call, to answer her cry.  
Her face shone out from her hair's warm smother  
Like a moonkin up in the sky.

She sold her corals; she sold her foam;  
Her rainbow heart like a singing shell  
Broke in her body; she crept back home.

Peace, go back to the world, my daughter,  
Daughter, go back to the darkling land;  
There is nothing here but sad sea water,  
And a handful of sifting sand.

I WILL think no more of the sea!  
Of the big green waves  
And the hollowed shore,  
Of the brown rock caves

No more, no more  
Of the swell and the weed  
And the bubbling foam.

Memory dwells in my far-away home,  
She has nothing to do with me.

She is old and bent  
With a pack  
On her back.  
Her tears all spent,

Her voice, just a crack.  
With an old thorn stick  
She hobbles along,  
And a crazy song  
Now slow, now quick,  
Wheeks in her throat,

And every day  
While there's light on the shore  
She searches for something,  
Her withered claw  
Tumbles the seaweed;  
She pokes in each shell  
Groping and mumbling  
Until the night  
Deepens and darkens,  
And covers her quite,  
And bids her be silent,  
And bids her be still.

The ghostly feet  
Of the whispery waves  
Tiptoe beside her.  
They follow, follow  
To the rocky caves  
In the white beach hollow....  
She hugs her hands,  
She sobs, she shrills,  
And the echoes shriek  
In the rocky hills.  
She moans: "It is lost!  
Let it be! Let it be!  
I am old. I'm too cold.  
I am frightened ... the sea  
Is too loud ... it is lost,  
It is gone...." Memory  
Wails in my far-away home.

THE farther the little girl leaped and ran,  
The farther she longed to be;  
The white, white fields of jonquil flowers  
Danced up as high as her knee  
And flashed and sparkled before her eyes  
Until she could hardly see.  
So into the wood went she.

It was quiet in the wood,

It was solemn and grave;  
A sound like a wave  
Sighed in the tree-tops  
And then sighed no more.

But she was brave,  
And the sky showed through  
A bird's-egg blue,  
And she saw  
A tiny path that was running away  
Over the hills to—who can say?  
She ran, too.  
But then the path broke,  
Then the path ended  
And wouldn't be mended.

A little old man  
Sat on the edge,  
Hugging the hedge.  
He had a fire  
And two eggs in a pan  
And a paper poke  
Of pepper and salt;  
So she came to a halt  
To watch and admire:  
Cunning and nimble was he!  
"May I help, if I can, little old man?"  
"Bravo!" he said,  
"You may dine with me.  
I've two old eggs  
From two white hens  
And a loaf from a kind ladie:  
Some fresh nutmegs,  
Some cutlet ends  
In pink and white paper frills:  
And—I've—got  
A little hot-pot  
From the town between the hills."  
He nodded his head  
And made her a sign  
To sit under the spray  
Of a trailing vine.

But when the little girl joined her hands  
And said the grace she had learned to say,  
The little old man gave two dreadful squeals  
And she just saw the flash of his smoking heels  
As he tumbled, tumbled  
With his two old eggs

From two white hens,  
His loaf from a kind ladie,  
The fresh nutmegs,  
The cutlet-ends,  
In the pink and white paper frills.  
And away rumbled  
The little hot-pot,  
So much too hot,  
From the town between the hills.

BUT when there comes that moment rare  
When, for no cause that I can find,  
The little voices of the air  
Sound above all the sea and wind.

The sea and wind do then obey  
And sighing, sighing double notes  
Of double basses, content to play  
A droning chord for the little throats—

The little throats that sing and rise  
Up into the light with lovely ease  
And a kind of magical, sweet surprise  
To hear and know themselves for these—

For these little voices: the bee, the fly,  
The leaf that taps, the pod that breaks,  
The breeze on the grass-tops bending by,  
The shrill quick sound that the insect makes.

HER little hot room looked over the bay  
Through a stiff palisade of glinting palms,  
And there she would lie in the heat of the day,  
Her dark head resting upon her arms,  
So quiet, so still, she did not seem  
To think, to feel, or even to dream.

The shimmering, blinding web of the sea  
Hung from the sky, and the spider sun  
With busy frightening cruelty  
Crawled over the sky and spun and spun.  
She could see it still when she shut her eyes,  
And the little boats caught in the web like flies.

Down below at this idle hour  
Nobody walked in the dusty street  
A scent of dying mimosa flower  
Lay on the air, but sweet—too sweet.

LAST night for the first time since you were dead  
I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.  
We were at home again beside the stream  
Fringed with tall berry bushes, white and red.  
"Don't touch them: they are poisonous," I said.  
But your hand hovered, and I saw a beam  
Of strange, bright laughter flying round your head,  
And as you stopped I saw the berries gleam.  
"Don't you remember? We called them Dead Man's Bread!"  
I woke and heard the wind moan and the roar  
Of the dark water tumbling on the shore.  
Where—where is the path of my dream for *my* eager feet?  
By the remembered stream my brother stands  
Waiting for me with berries in his hands..."  
These are my body. Sister, take and eat."

THERE is a solemn wind to-night  
That sings of solemn rain;  
The trees that have been quiet so long  
Flutter and start again.

The slender trees, the heavy trees,  
The fruit trees laden and proud,  
Lift up their branches to the wind  
That cries to them so loud.

The little bushes and the plants  
Bow to the solemn sound,  
And every tiniest blade of grass  
Shakes on the quiet ground.

OUT in the garden,  
Out in the windy, swinging dark,  
Under the trees and over the flower-beds,  
Over the grass and under the hedge border,  
Someone is sweeping, sweeping,  
Some old gardener.  
Out in the windy, swinging dark,  
Someone is secretly putting in order,  
Someone is creeping, creeping.

Now folds the Tree of Day its perfect flowers,  
And every bloom becomes a bud again,  
Shut and sealed up against the golden showers  
Of bees that hover in the velvet hours....  
Now a strain  
Wild and mournful blown from shadow towers,  
Echoed from shadow ships upon the foam,  
Proclaims the Queen of Night.  
From their bowers  
The dark Princesses fluttering, wing their flight  
To their old Mother, in her huge old home.

AND again the flowers are come  
And the light shakes,  
And no tiny voice is dumb,  
And a bud breaks  
On the humble bush and the proud restless tree.  
Come with me!

Look, this little flower is pink,  
And this one white.  
Here's a pearl cup for your drink,  
Here's for your delight  
A yellow one, sweet with honey,  
Here's fairy money  
Silver bright  
Scattered over the grass  
As we pass.

Here's moss. How the smell of it lingers  
On my cold fingers!  
You shall have no moss. Here's a frail  
Hyacinth, deathly pale.  
Not for you! Not for you!  
And the place where they grew  
You must promise me not to discover,  
My sorrowful lover!  
Shall we never be happy again?  
Never again play?  
In vain—in vain!  
Come away!

It seemed that Time had died,  
And all the ghosts came wandering from the shades—  
From Heaven's blue hills and from the darkling glades  
Of unborn years, from Hell's rose-tinted tombs....



And by the poppied side  
Of a slow stream that lies with limbs soft-curved  
In the green darkness of an intangible world  
Far beyond space, the living and the dead,  
The fruits of unborn wombs,  
All the bright souls of unknown, fathomless ages  
Past and yet to be, were suddenly bound  
Into a moment's compass, trapped and caught  
(Lovers and fools, voluptuaries and sages),  
And with them all the things that they had sought  
Of loveliness and joy, were prisoned fast—  
Fair orchards, blossom-crowned,  
All singing and all sound,  
All love and laughter, touch and taste and scent,  
And all things men had found,  
Had gathered, stored and spent  
In markets of the soul to buy delight;  
The ocean and her moon, the myriad stars,  
And the still-shining sun;  
All things, unknown and known, all were made one  
In one immortal moment, crowned with content,  
Timeless and immutable, wreathed with flowers  
Of brief, far-gathered hours, of mouldering centuries and unborn years....  
For Time, the old grey Robber-god, lay dead,

With his unnumbered host  
Gathered about him, cold and quiet and still.  
Age was a tavern-jest, an olden dread  
Long buried; change a half-remembered ghost  
Haunting a ruined town;  
Eternity the shadow of thistledown  
Blowing upon a windy, timeless hill.

LOVELIER are her words  
Than the exquisite notes  
That speak the souls of flutes.  
The songs of birds

At dusk, when the first-born star  
Swims in the willow tree,  
Are not more dear to me  
Than her words are.

When she speaks, all sound begins  
To tremble and melt  
In music rarer than the lilt  
Of violins.

Her voice is more delicate  
Than the croon of wind in the coppice;  
All the world's songs are poppies  
Under her feet.

THERE is grave beauty here  
In this orchard valley  
Where no storms sully  
The rich, purple gloom where the lilies are.

And there is quietness here  
Now, as of old,  
Where great trees fold  
Their dark limbs round the coolness of the air.

The pearls of the sky still gleam  
Through the branches of the trees,  
And the little, wandering breeze  
That ruffles the feathers of the grass is still the same.

Yet there is loneliness  
More stark than I have known  
As I stray alone  
Through the dim grass....

O blue-grey dusk, where have you hidden my lover?  
She who would steal softly to this place  
Unbidden, in other days,  
And lie in my arms in the haven of the clover.

Now there is left to me nothing  
But frail lilies of evening, and her face  
Is only a shadow in the gloom of this place,  
And a memory her bosom pressed against mine, soft-breathing.

THE years have stolen  
all her loveliness,  
her days are fallen  
in the long wet grass  
like petals broken  
from the lilac blossom,

when the winds have shaken  
its tangled bosom.

Her youth like a dim  
cathedral lies  
under the seas  
of her life's long dream,  
yet she hears still  
in her heart, sometimes,  
the far, sweet chimes  
of a sunken bell.

Now evening shakes her wings  
And the feathers of darkness  
Flutter upon the world  
Like finished songs.

And like music that is still  
After soft playing,  
The dead sun's petals are lying  
On the seaward hill.

Heaped in their rose-red riot  
Of dusky flames:  
Bright as the feverish dreams  
Of an old mad poet.

The sea has brimmed the bay  
To the sand's edge  
Along the windless beach;  
The small craft lie

On her pearl breast asleep  
Like old ships' ghosts  
Long-drowned, with their ropes and masts  
Mirrored deep.

All the world's in the water:  
See where it lies—  
Grey cliffs and trees and skies  
Softly a-glitter.

With the new-born gleaming stars  
Of Heaven's meadows  
Lost in wet shadows  
With silver planet-flowers....

Now from the darkened sky  
The last light has drained:  
All the world is drowned  
In the ancient sea.

I have heard soft lutes  
sob their ecstasies,  
and the thrush's notes  
tumble from the rain-wet trees.

I have heard the ocean's song  
rise like a flame  
with cold blue tongue  
from the swirling foam,

And from the sky far whispers,  
not tunes, not words,  
the dim, mournful vespers  
of homing birds.

Sea-chime, and fluting bird,  
and tune from smitten strings,  
all these are lovely, but I have heard  
more lovely things:

There are songs that beat  
and throb along the blood  
when our flying feet  
on the greensward thud,

And pipes that shrill  
as with labouring step  
we clamber up the hill,  
pause, and then dip

Down through the sweet  
grass-scented air,  
with flying feet  
and flying hair

Lovely are the birds and the sobbing  
of lutes, but braver far  
is the voiceless music throbbing  
in the runner's ear.

THROUGH the long night  
of fifty hundred years  
Shub-Ad  
the Queen  
has lain with her slim hands  
folded across her small Sumerian breasts....  
awhile kissed warm  
by Babylonian suns,  
now quiet and passionless  
and wrapped about  
by the magnificent blue cloak of death.

Beads of a restless beauty  
worked in ways  
a hundred tireless eyes had dimmed to find  
make pattern o'er her now...  
and precious rings  
fall in close fringe from every jewelled edge.  
On that far day  
they chimed a molten note  
that ran in flame  
along the Assyrian hills  
and fell to silence  
in the purple sea.  
Now pins of gold and lapis lazuli  
hold them forever dumb...  
On the wide-lidded eyes of this smooth mask,  
brittle with centuries  
and sheathed with dust,  
that king set kisses,  
that had power to close  
days for a million such...

Now lies this head  
banded and coiled with gold  
and set about with wreaths  
of mulberry leaves

so rarely worked  
with gems of ancient worth,  
beaten and wrought and veined with filigree,  
as to be treasure  
in a city of state  
and riches known to Abraham...  
and at the door  
guarding her way to death  
lie  
in their impotent might  
six sentinels...  
while, side by side,  
secret and still as she,  
eleven maidens bear her company.

O their deep eyes had drowned  
in those last tears  
that burned their cheeks  
and stung their silent lips  
ere the great dark  
had closed about their youth.  
Not all Euphrates stream or Tigris tide  
were half enough  
to wash away the grief  
that untried strength  
and living loveliness  
found in that following of majesty.

I GATHERED all my treasure...  
nights and days...  
trees...  
bare hills in summer...  
flowers in the rain.  
sun-drench...  
green shadow...  
birds' songs ... and their ways  
when the night lifts and it is day again.

All the small things that dwell in the tall field grasses  
and have their miracle being under the sod...  
all the incredible life that wakes and passes  
with the swift breathing of Spring...  
all these were God.

So ... for their wonder and their loveliness.'...  
I built  
far in my heart's last deep recess

a secret shrine.  
These things ... these things were mine.

How should I know that one already came  
armed with a still white peace and shod with flame...  
how should I know love ... how should I know your name?

To dance!  
To the pipes of you ... dance!  
till the holiest earth  
break into flower ... into brilliance ... for joy in our mirth!

To sing!  
till your music shall ring  
through the uttermost glade  
and awaken an echo in Heaven of song that we made!

To run!  
till our limbs are outdone...  
from the wisdom of years  
with our pulses a-flame and the blood ringing sweet in our ears!

To laugh!  
till we shatter the stars!  
To laugh ... and to die  
with the Love and the Mirth and the Music of you for our cry!

LITTLE singing mother  
with the happy eyes...  
does the grass grow green  
on the lawns of Paradise?

Did your feet go blithely  
in that holy hour  
when you searched the ways of Heaven  
for the sweetest flower?

Did the light flow softly  
in a silver stream

as you turned you homeward  
down the slopes of dream?

Little singing mother  
with the happy eyes...  
does the grass grow green  
on the lawns of Paradise?

SOMETIMES when we wait silently and long  
she drifts into a little perfect song  
that she has made herself ... all wistful notes  
from small and perfect throats.

There is a part  
that is her innermost heart.

And she says always that the music sings  
of all the small brave tempest-wearied wings  
that seek a trackless way over the sea  
to some shore older than their memory  
that weaken, and falter, and fail, and drop in the foam  
and never reach home.

She says it is their courage and their fear  
and their unswerving faith. But all I hear  
is little children with pale quenchless eyes  
and faces purer than the first sunrise  
calling ... with the voice of Dorothea.

SOME day we two shall stand again  
and seek...  
deeply and long...  
the thing we knew and valued less than pain.

We shall not speak.  
But, sure and strong,  
we shall stand so...  
till slowly we shall see  
each in the other's eyes  
a dumb surprise...  
a hurt a misery.



Terribly in that moment we shall know  
that the days go  
not all unburdened....  
We shall find  
no rare exquisite knowledge in the mind  
and in the brain  
only a memory of pain.

So ... wise and stern...  
we shall look once and turn  
each to our separate ways ... new ways apart  
from an old youth-time agony of heart.

AND shall I suffer deepest woe  
because you came...  
because you go?  
Shall my heart know dark distress  
because of your great loveliness?

Beauty loved...  
Beauty gone...

is Beauty yet to ponder on.  
And thought of you  
can only start  
joy singing in my heart.

HE stands so still...  
so still...  
with quiet folded hands  
and eyes so big with half-forgotten things.  
Does he yet glimpse the shining hosts of Heaven  
and hear the Angels' wings?

Motionless now he stands  
at the brink of Paradise...  
then turns to me where I wait ... and his eyes are wise.

How shall I tell him now of loveliness  
and the frail heart's distress?  
How shall I speak of love...

love that is pain...  
when Wisdom turns and looks at me again?

I HAVE been back to the no-places...  
to the grey viewless regions whence I came...  
out of the memory of hands and faces  
and warmth and the friendly flame.

I have been back to the no-places ... to the wan half-light...  
where is no black oblivion of night  
nor hope of any dawn...  
beyond the memory of hands and faces...  
and your voices borne  
to me are the wordless winds that wander the waste spaces...  
desolate ... forlorn...  
or the restless sorrowless sighing of waters far out at sea  
in the grey hour when life goes heavily.

I have been back ... back to the drear no-places  
beyond my knowledge of you...  
beyond the fear of Life's or of Death's embraces...  
to the things I knew.

And so ... one morning delicate with Spring  
when all the hills about her little town  
shone golden in the sun...  
and scent of gorse and broomflower drifted down....  
and sorrowing  
seemed very far away...  
one day  
with the sweet breath  
of Summer all about ... and Winter done...  
and all the sea  
silvered and strange and still...  
she ... who had never known serenity  
but only body's ill  
and heart's distress...  
lifted her arms to a new loveliness  
and looked upon the quiet face of Death.

Sweet, and sweeter, comes to me  
one small and fragile memory...

Your cheek is smooth and soft...

Often it comes, and more oft...

Soft as a moth-wing in the night...  
soft and white...  
white and cool  
as waters in a dawnlit pool...  
and pale...  
and as this memory is ... so sweetly frail.

BACK!  
Back through the clean sweet airs  
to the clear-swinging stars!  
What has the Earth given ever beyond its years  
that take...  
take  
till the human heart break?

Nothing endures  
beyond the desire.  
Back!  
Back to the Fire  
that kindled you ... back to the Flame!

Leap!  
Shake from your eyes the last garment of Sleep...  
High  
through the no-coloured wonder of brilliance illumined, the Sky...  
till the gold of your hair  
burns, star-entangled ... a sun ... in the quivering air!

Leap  
to the Sun!  
To the Sun whence you came...  
to the glorious Giver of Life...  
and be lost in its Flame!

TURN down the light...  
And all about the room  
faces like pale lost moons

show through the gloom.

We are at ease.  
And she sits motionless.

And now she bends  
to the white keys...  
till her whiter fingers free  
with their soft, slow caress  
some melody  
all truth, and purity, and loveliness.

She bends...  
and her white fingers leap in the shade.  
And her white  
pure face is alight  
with the song she has made.  
And her soul  
hovers a moment ... white ... over the whole.

And the music ends.

We are afraid.  
Turn up the light.

She drops her head.  
And her hands lie motionless ... dead  
of their own delight.

Turn up the light.

And sudden her cheeks burn red  
because of the things ... the exquisite, secret things ... her fingers have said.

NOISELESS, unnursed, the country rose  
Is born, and quietly it goes:  
The unheard bright anemone

Blooms for the eye alone to see.

Never a sigh, never a groan  
Utters this unmarked casual stone,  
There breaks no breath from this dull wood  
To hear, I know, nor ever should.

Yet do I know that stone, wood, flower  
Travail and sicken every hour—  
Deep, deep about the hidden core  
A thousand systems meet at war.

A thousand suns are brought to birth  
And shattered in the very earth  
Beneath my feet; without a sound  
Pulses the long-tormented ground.

And yet, I think, could I but hear  
Once, suddenly, with quickened ear,  
Might I not start, as saw my eye  
A petal fall, to catch a cry?

DANCE, little one, dance!  
Poised delicately  
Upon your crystal-shimmering world:  
What whim or chance  
Makes you to dance this young and sweet-breathing morn,  
Wings furled—  
Sporting there,  
Limbs lightly tossing in the lucent air  
In happy scorn  
Of all earth's bitter troubles, trouble born?  
We are sunk deep,  
Deep in despondencies, and even in sleep  
Troubled, we toss—  
Count o'er the petty gain, the mighty loss  
Of all we dearest hold, love hardliest....  
You simple one,  
Look on the world and weep,  
See all the things men do—  
None,  
None, but maketh the rest  
Of all God's creatures shun  
Them for their greater shame.  
But you

Having no name, nor fame,  
Nor trouble, nor sad thought  
Wearily to think on, leap,  
Higher you leap  
Into the morning-sweet air, and fall  
Back to the shining globe of your dancing-stage.  
Ah! do you wage  
Desolate war in your land? Do you call  
Desolation peace?  
Answerless? Mute?...  
Well, do you dance,  
Having the better part—  
Dance to the flute  
Of the wind, as it breathes without cease:  
Dance delicately tip-toed, dance—  
Toss each limb  
Airily, to the whim  
That lightly takes your happy, happy heart...  
Then leap, cling  
To a bee's wing  
Float on his 'broidered back to a purple flower—  
Enter and sing  
The sweet-scented hour....  
Now delicately, daintily,  
Dance!

STRIVING, breast to the wind, on the desolate hill,  
This, do I think, is the end and the summit of life—  
Ever to strive with the fateful implacable will  
Of the Invisible: strive, nor lose heart in the strife.

Blow, wind of heaven! buffeting, cleansing and strong-  
Steep and more steep, O hill, do you rise in your might!

Never the blast nor the steepness shall stagger me long,  
Turn me from quest of the uttermost, starriest height.  
Blow, wind, O blow! be your strength as the strength of a giant  
Yet face I you; nor all your strength wielded and thrown  
At my body shall batter it back: for ever defiant  
I make the ascent, till I stand on the summit alone.

AH! would to God that I were lying  
Alone in some lonely place,  
With only the wind blowing and the clouds flying,  
And the rain in my face.

Ah! would to God that I should never  
Hear sound of voice again,  
But only the wind in clashing tree-tops ever,  
Ever the plashing rain.

And the noise of distant sea-waves slowly breaking  
On passive shore—  
These only hear, these feel, and while earth's making  
Hear, feel no more.

THEN suddenly we came into a gloom...  
I think the jubilant stars in heaven sang  
Indeed when those strong lovely columns sprang  
Up and forever up and made a room  
Infinity; I think the flaming choir  
Folded their wings and trembled with the sense  
Of men who borrowed God's omnipotence  
Of beauty and made seen their great desire.

For here arch rose on arch, arched over all  
The roof that lifted up the troubled heart  
Of centuries; here light and darkness grown  
Divine shed mystery from wall to wall—  
Aisle lost in aisle were passion-moulded art  
Of men no more; here stood the Word made stone.

THESE laughing and chattering children among the old dead!  
Smirched faces and grubby knees sidle and mock, this dull day,  
At the still marble emperors, those who threw world upon world.

Or sunk in a grave quietude, they go hand in hand  
Among the portentous great gods of the sources of time,  
The casual river which washed them up here and passed on.

The gods brood abandoned and Hadrian's empire is shrunk  
To a pedestal carved with his name; but the children go yet  
Like sunlight and dawn in the midst of the ages of man.

YES, it is beautiful, this old, old land:  
These houses root their being in the earth,  
These walls, these stones, share in a larger birth

With strong-set trees and painted blades that stand  
About the slopes, the russet furrows, and  
Join in the deep impulse that through the girth  
Of hill and valley's limit, moulds its worth—  
So meet for love, to hold within the hand!

I tread these roads, and know once more the race  
Of blood, the tissue's balance with the bones;  
A wind strikes—and my opened eyes are blind  
With gazing on an unseen distant place;  
My deaf ears hear Orongo-rongo's stones—  
Bloom bursts on wind-swept hills within my mind.

I have seen  
The naked, knotted limbs of trees inked in against  
the sky,  
And suddenly they held the whole  
Unquiet restless soul  
Of sunset. Between the thin black lips of twigs  
colour ran like fire.  
And two still boughs held all the sky, held all the  
sunset.  
And I have seen  
Within the slow pools of your eyes the goblin moon,  
the gleaming moon,  
Softly swinging on those shadowy mirroring waters.

And I know that as one tree can hold the sunset,  
And your eyes the quietness of the moon,  
So can my one heart  
Hold the miracles of the universe.

SUDDENLY, after wastes of wild  
Grey and sullen brown,  
We came upon a quiet field  
Where the sheep lay down.  
Snow-white sheep on a wet, dark field,  
With a still tree beyond,  
And the fat bodies of four ducks  
Ruffling a golden pond.

All suddenly, out of the hushed  
Thick darkness of night,  
A carillon of bells we heard  
In a gleaming flight,



Shaking their rhythm down the sky  
In a bright cloud of sound,  
Like the soft beat of breasting doves  
Over the muffled ground.

And suddenly all else was gone  
Save Beauty aching on and on.

HE dragged beside her in the crowd  
With hanging mouth and idiot eyes,  
Dead to the wind's soft clouded gold  
And the birds pointing down the skies.

Dowdy and stooped, with work-worn hands,  
She held him gently, close the while:  
Unknown, unnoticed, though there stood  
A very Christ within her smile.

DARKNESS eddying, swirling round,  
And in that profound,  
Soft surging tide even the light of my match drowned.

Only the silence thick with sound,  
And darkness eddying, swirling round.

Suddenly, dancingly, your voice came,  
A secret, lovely flame.  
There was no night: for the night was silver with your name...  
As in old days, the same,  
Suddenly, dancingly, your voice came...

Came and was gone, and the thick tides of darkness beat me back,  
And your voice was the voice of the wind, and my heart was black.

TREES, they're funny things—  
They hurt somehow;  
I've seen the whole sky caught  
In one black bough.

Pines I've loved best.  
You hear the sea,  
All swelling soft and hoarse  
In just one tree.

They stand all black and tall,  
With stars between  
Their strong dark boughs some nights.  
I know, I've seen.

I've watched trees drag and droop;  
Seems they weren't meant  
For towns—all crying 'gainst  
The sky, and bent.

That hurt a bit, but pines—  
They stir me deep,  
That soft, lost roar of theirs;  
They never sleep.

They hurt somehow, do trees.  
I've loved them all,  
But pines, they twist my heart  
With their wild call.

HE talked, the learned man, for hours,  
Of this growth-travailed world of ours,  
Of whirling earths in darkness flung—  
The cataclysmic bells Time's rung.

Most glibly, on his certain tongue,  
Dim centuries like beads he strung,  
And as he talked he carefully  
Dissected every mystery.

Until at last he'd pigeonholed  
Each blinding phrase that earth has told,  
Most neatly cataloguing each  
In dry, staccato human speech.

And then he made complacent pause  
Amidst preoccupied applause....  
I turned my head, and like a book  
I held the ages in a look.

THE world is charted out from Pole to Pole,  
Measured and docketed and filed away;  
And old Adventure, portly grown and grey,  
Sits in his office. But his fiery soul  
Yearns for the magic seas that used to roll,  
The dragon terrors that were once to slay,  
The perilous journeys past the rim of day  
In joyous quest of some forbidden goal.

Yet there remains to him one land untrod,  
One venture beckoning still, one keen surmise  
To fan the wanderlust and fire his eyes,  
To spur his pulses and to rouse his breath,  
One vision still to stir his rover-blood:  
The panorama from the peaks of Death.

WITHIN this pulsing artery called space,  
Filled with the living liquid of the sky,  
A million million stars go flaring by,  
Whirled in some seeming-sempiternal chase.  
And on one star we stand, an insect race,  
And gaze across the voids, and vainly try  
To solve the secret of the sun, or pry  
Beyond the boundaries of time and place.

So, the living liquid of our blood,  
The microbes on some atom-asteroid  
May live, unconscious of the swirling flood,  
And wonder at the sun that lights their day,  
Across an unimaginable void,  
A million-millionth of an inch away.

HE dreamed of glory through his boyhood years:  
Thousands of lancers in the morning light  
Charging behind him with tumultuous might—  
A thundering cataract of cavaliers.  
He dreamed of glory. Silver swords and spears;  
Banners of gold and purple, and the bright  
Meadows of waving hats to left and right;  
His tall plumes tossing in a gale of cheers.

He dreamed of glory; but he dreams no more.  
Glory has made him her ambassador,  
And there, erect among the rotten-ripe  
Corpses that snuggle in their beds of blood,  
He stands unconquerable, knee-deep in mud,  
And fumbles for a match to light his pipe.

THE ladies walk the garden pair and pair,  
Loiter and nod to this and that great rose,  
And softly say how beautifully it grows,  
And move away, content and unaware  
What deeds of death awoke those blossoms there;  
What lives are squandered where the gardener goes;  
What insect-towns he sacks and overthrows,  
Caring for naught if that his flowers be fair.

So War goes gardening; and men are torn,  
And towns are sacked and nations overthrown;  
While pair and pair, in parks of paradise,  
The goddesses go sauntering through the morn,  
And praise the roses that old War has grown:  
Roses of courage and self-sacrifice.

AT dusk in Akaroa town  
When embered sunset smoulders down  
And softly wreathes the evening mist  
In whorls of tender amethyst,  
The air is charmed with old-world spell  
Of chanting bird and chiming bell;  
And garden plots are redolent  
Of poignant, unforgotten scent,  
Where gillyflower and fleur de lys  
Bloom underneath the cabbage tree,  
And crimson *rata* strives to choke  
With amorous arms the hoary oak,  
And jonquil mocks the *kowhai's* gold—  
Ah, sweet it is ... so young, so old!  
So young, so old! So old, so new!  
I wonder, at the fall of dew,  
When from the evening's grey cocoon  
Comes glimmering forth the moth-like moon,  
And winds, upon the brooding trees  
Strum soft, nocturnal symphonies,  
If kindly ghosts move up and down  
In tranquil Akaroa town;  
If voyageurs from storied France  
Walk still the streets of old romance,  
If laughing lads and girls come yet  
To dance a happy minuet,

If grandpere muses still upon  
The fortunes of Napoleon,  
And grandmere, by the walnut tree,  
Sits dreaming with her rosary?

And when, across the arch of night  
The moon wings forth in radiant flight,  
Do ghostly whalers sail the bay  
And ghostly crews make holiday,  
With ribald mirth, to drink or sup,  
Or set a phantom try-pot up?  
Do shades of natives ever come  
To barter pigs for nails and rum,  
And dusky nymphs disport them still  
About the bows of *Gauge* or *Nil*?  
If so, 'tis sure they fade away  
When rose and silver comes the day,  
For never a phantom steals there down  
To sunlit Akaroa town;  
Yet chanting bird and chiming bell  
Weave yet the charm, the old-world spell,  
And still in gardens there are set  
The gillyflower, the mignonette,  
The *rata*, on the oak-tree hung—  
Ah, sweet it is ... so old, so young!  
The jonquil, mocking *kowhai's* gold—  
So blithe, so new! So triste, so old!

*Flow in, O tide, O tide of wistful eve!  
(The thin blue dusk across the sungold steals)  
Grieve, grieve,  
O little wind, and softly sigh  
Along the line of sea and sky  
To where the blackened coal-hulks lie  
With rotting beams and rusted keels.*

Along the line of sea and sky,  
In silhouette, inanimate,  
The melancholy coal-hulks lie,  
Most dolorous and desolate.

Adventurers of a valiant age,  
Whose shining sails swept eager seas,  
They have a last sad anchorage  
Beyond the clamorous harbour quays.

Throughout the days their winches groan,  
The derricks work with creak and scream;  
But in the kindly dusk, alone,  
They ride a rosy flood of dream.

Their prows of vision halcyon,  
Their timbers thrilled to memory  
Of proudly setting out upon  
Old voyages of dignity.

Old journeys whose remembered quest  
Wakes yet again the old-time fire  
To glimpse known beacons, east and west,  
And sail the seas of their desire.

And each, a quickened argosy  
For whom some Eldorado gleams,  
Would sight again some radiant sea,  
The ultimate ocean of its dreams.

And in the dusk they feel again,  
In mournful majesty of pride,  
About their shrouds the deep-sea rain,  
Beneath their keels the ocean tide.

Old ships, old dreams. The sea winds sigh,  
The young ships come, the young ships go;  
The sombre hulks at anchor lie  
Through ceaseless tides that ebb and flow.

*Flow out, O tide, O darkling tide of night!  
Lap them about with kisses as you go  
Slow, slow;  
O pitying stars, rain tears of tender light.  
And peaceful moon, in benediction glow,  
And gently flow, O tide compassionate,  
Along the line of sea and sky,  
Where, dolorous and desolate,  
The melancholy coal-hulks lie.*

THE King's road is a troublous summons calling day and day;

But my feet take the cocksfoot track, the easy, vagrant way;  
Beside the restless acres and the gold of noisy gorse  
The ripple lures its lover down the dazzle of its course.

Its speech is of the yellow reaches, rich with lurking joy;  
The revel of the rapids, where gay life is death's decoy;  
My heart is with the laughing lips; I follow up and down,  
But follow not the King's white road toward the haste of town.

Afoot, the wash of waders, and aloft, the haze-veiled blue,—  
The heart it needeth nothing, so the cast fall clean and true.  
O carol of the running reel, O flash of mottled back!  
And who would take the King's white road and who the cocksfoot track?

The hour-glass fills with weather like a wine of slow content;  
I throw the world behind me as a cartridge that is spent.  
Then home by summer starlight bear my grass-cool, mottled load;  
I quit the pleasant cocksfoot track; I take the King's white road.

Ho! launch the longship down the beach,—  
The loosened bergs lift out to sea;  
The tide-rip swings adown the reach;  
The fettered waterways are free,  
March pipes athwart the swinging firs,  
And rides white horses into foam;  
The rover in the red blood stirs,  
The water laps our hearts from home.

The rover in the red blood stirs,  
The narrow seas shout to their own,  
Their call is tenfold more than hers  
That bideth by the ingle-stone;  
The stars bathe in the sea by night,  
The long coasts fleck our sail by day,  
Storehouse and barn are ours by right,—  
We harry in the Viking way!

The winter, like the Polar bear,  
Stalks down the whitened north again;  
There's frost within the Channel air,  
And hearts for pine-log fires are fain.  
There is a bench beside a hearth,  
There is a girl with yellow hair—

My soul is sick for roof and garth,  
Up where the Northern Streamers flare!

WHO seeks the Holy Grail he rides aloof.  
The lure of lips and eyes and rippled hair  
And clinging arms,—all love's white, silken snare  
He shall thrust from him for his soul's behoof;  
And when Night cowers upon Comfort's roof,  
The leaping fire and circling wine forswear,  
And follow where Adventure's clarions blare  
And spirit frets its fleshly warp and woof.

The salt of life shall mock with appetite  
His lips denied the savour and the spice  
Wherein the sons of men do take delight;  
He shall enthrone his soul beyond their price  
And follow the cold twilight of the trail,  
And in the end he shall not win the Grail.

THE night is a great jewel shot with fires,  
Milky with moonlight, murmurous with seas  
Which find an echo in the pine-tree spires,  
The lights stir like white flowers beneath the trees,  
And through the leaves the little winds go thronging,  
But my heart takes wings of longing, wings of longing.

*For it is Spring at Home,  
"Home": England.  
Of hyacinthine hills, pale skies,  
And dim, green beechwoods blown  
By winds a-glitter with the rain,  
Tremble of leafing aspens thrown  
On silver meres,  
And the long whisper of the weirs  
Flashing to foam.*

*Ever before me seems  
A far, forlornly lovely land,  
Threaded with shining streams;  
I hear larks singing in the rain,  
I see dusks filled with jewelled gleams  
Among dark trees,  
I dream of woodland ways, green leas,  
Thrush-haunted dreams.*



And so, my heart swift-winged with longing flees  
Over the night's rim, brooding, dim, star sown,  
To where, beyond a waste of chanting seas,  
It's Spring at Home.

I LOVE the tumult of the trees,  
The silvern slant of willow leaves,  
The song that falling water sings,  
These and a thousand thousand things  
I love.  
The shadowy tideways of the moon,  
The drowsy gold of afternoon,  
Blue uplands where cloud shadows flee,  
Pines calling, sea-like, to the sea,  
The clear, pale evening star alight  
Far down the windy gulf of night,  
Cloud-purpled seas of changing hue,  
And bright web-threaded drops of dew,  
The twilight song a late thrush sings,  
Sun on a soaring seagull's wings,  
These and a thousand thousand things  
I love.

CUPPED in a little valley where  
The blowing leaves  
Weave shadow tapestries  
Among the trees,  
Pale, gleaming like a gem cast down  
By some dim spirit of the mist,  
Clear, still and cool,  
There lies a pool.

All day it dreams alone  
Haunted by music of the thrushes blown  
Far down the distances.  
But still I know  
When night is trembling on the brink  
Of dawn, the shy swift winds steal here  
To drink.  
Through the white mists I hear  
Their footsteps go,  
A breath among the leaves which dies and stills,  
Fading to silence in the lonely hills.

NIGHT holds the earth in jewelled hands,  
A shadowy bowl with a broken rim,  
Brimming with waters of moonlight dim.

The liquid dusk of the sky is sown  
With paling stars far scattered and strown,  
Like moonstones slipped from a parted string.  
And the clouds, pale foam of the winds, are blown  
To a misty spindrift, a ghostly foam.  
The vast, dim cavern of night is filled  
With a dreamy sounding, a murmurous spell  
As of far-off seas in a great sea-shell.  
Light and shadow are all aswim,  
The world is flooded from brim to brim  
With laving waters of moonlight dim.

THE willows stand  
Green-misted by the dreaming pool,  
There is pale foam of blossom on the hill,  
Alternate tides of gold and shadow spill  
Across the land.

The larks have flown  
Far cloudwards up the plashing wind,  
From over sun-swept hill and dappled plain  
Their song comes tinkling down, a silver rain  
To spindrift blown.

The upland trees  
Toss green and gold upon the height,  
Through the dim gossamer of drifting showers.  
The rain-jewels lie upon the flowers,  
And on the leaves.

The earth awakes,  
All its pent loveliness bursts forth  
In leafing bough and fragile bud unfurled.  
Spring, Summer's wistful dawn, upon the world  
In beauty breaks.

THE little pools of starlight splash  
Against the poplars' slender lines;  
The moon is like a golden comb  
Caught in the tresses of the pines.

Go quietly, lest unaware,  
You find the leafless path that leads

To where an older god than God  
Makes cruel music through the reeds.

The lilies float like slender hands  
Towards a satyr-trampled brink,  
With crowns of oakleaves in their hair  
The shouting fauns come down to drink.

Not Innocency's self shall walk  
These breathless ways and shall not see  
The wine-stained lips and dangerous eyes,  
The swart-faced folk of Arcady.

And lovers who have wandered through  
The clover-purple evening's peace,  
Have glimpsed, deep-breasted, insolent,  
The mocking loveliness of Greece,

Have heard the lawless bugles sing  
From that defiant Paradise,  
And seen, like moonlight through the trees,  
The glory of unearthly eyes.

And never shall the watcher seek  
His tender human loves again,  
For marble-white, with singing lips,  
The wood-nymphs glimmer through his brain.

Go quietly. The tall gods here  
Would wear your beauty like a flower  
To crush with jests and cast aside  
In one unpitying, splendid hour.

You have made summer golden. Now you go.  
Let us have nothing but the courteous words  
Chosen by men to suit the unstirred heart  
When roadways that were friendly fall apart;  
Let neither tell he knew that in these slow  
Sweet dawns was chiming of enchanted birds.

For words are broken wings.... Let it suffice  
That in some twilight all the green and gold  
Of pausing summer suddenly shall hold  
Colour of you. The little horn of rain  
Through dripping leaves shall sound your name again,  
And all the pools where opal sunsets shine,  
Having more faithful memory than mine,  
Shall give me back the laughter of your eyes.

If it were nothing but some deep abyss  
Opened between us—if some icy sea  
Whose sword of waters clove 'twixt kiss and kiss  
Hid your small garden's dreaming face from me,  
I should have faith: and parting would have end—  
I think our feet would cross on rainbows, friend.

For Love knows patient ways of building strong  
Bridges and stairs, Love flies with secret wings,  
Love's shining wind shakes cities with a song,  
Swirls wet, pink blossoms round bewildered kings.  
But there is more to conquer—all that long  
Pageant of ghosts, in stained and tattered dress—  
The swift, mistaken word; the unmeant wrong;  
The pride, grown harsh at last for loneliness.

I SAW the little leaves that have  
So gay a dance, their tiny veins  
Skilfully painted by some grave  
Fine hand that spared not love nor pains.

And here a mystery was wrought  
In secret letters hard to find—  
Each leaf was perfect, each a thought  
Made shapely in the dreamer's mind.

In caverns deep beneath the earth  
The blind roots twist. They do not know  
How their boughs rock with April's mirth,  
Nor feel the ripening Autumn's glow.

And the swift tides of sap that pass  
From gloom to sunshine have no words  
To tell the lovely scent of grass,

The splash of rain, the call of birds.

But still the blind, brown fingers grope  
And wrench asunder rocky bars,  
For no reward but some dim hope  
And far-off knowledge of the stars.

Oh life, in caverns dark as these  
We build and break. In depths profound  
As any plumbed by ancient trees  
We wander blindly underground,

And blindly from strange soil we drink  
The very milk of Mother Earth,  
The secret rivers by whose brink  
Nor daffodil nor scent has birth.

Nor may we know how swiftly these  
Dark tides shall gift our boughs with wings,  
Shall blossom into melodies  
And starry-plumed, immortal things.

But where the tree of Man grows tall  
And soars to straightness from its clod  
Widen the flowers that shall not fall,  
Whereof the perfume pleases God.

SUDDENLY, as the Cyprian spake and smiled,  
I had a vision of a golden room  
Where sate no splendour, but a fated child  
Whose eyes were steady from the eyes of Doom.  
For all her shadows, innocency's grace,  
And youth were like white flowers in her hand;  
Her hair was bright like banners seeking war,  
And yet it framed so delicate a face,  
And through the dim blue tapestries I saw  
Menelaus, like a sworded shadow, stand.

So now the many standards are unfurled,  
The deaths of Kings I had not recked are told,  
And lowered flags stream past that I may know

What star-topped trees that blind, sweet hour laid low.  
What does it matter? Here in Troy I hold  
One flower's frailty from a hurricane world.

YOURS was no store of gleaming silks,  
Of yellow birds and Indian spice—  
Your ships were loaded with a freight  
Of purely English merchandise.

Such quiet English hopes and dreams  
As slowly widen into flower  
When faint and mellow sunshine strikes  
Against the tall cathedral tower.

And English hopes that blossom when  
Spring runs barefoot through Arden. All  
England's sweet brooks of laughter, and  
Her silences where blackbirds call.

So that when tropic nights have seen  
Your small and steadfast pennants pass  
Their silken winds have suddenly known  
The little scent of English grass.

Such cargo yours as set the world  
To whispering Devon fairy tales,  
And loosened in the phoenix woods  
The songs of English nightingales.

WE two are ghosts. Lightly we walk together  
Through wistful twilight, through young silver rain—  
There was an ominous dream that swooped: again  
Its black wings beat, its cold voice echoed "Never."

Its foul lips cried, "My hand has broken up  
The pattern of your rainbow—all the bright  
Translucent colours, all the misty light  
Like bubbles prisoned in an opal cup

"Spilled on grey soil, that grows not even flowers."  
Now the slim bluegums strain against the wind,  
A dark hill climbs before us, and behind  
Night builds her azure town, her dreaming towers.

So well we know the secret way. And ghosts  
Come home to earth are free of weariness—  
Say, did the little unseen grasses press  
Your feet so kindly, on those starry coasts?

But let this hour be earth's. Ah, let the scent  
Of cold young crescent leaves creep through my hair,  
Lie still at last; feel faintly beating near  
Heart of the friendly world. Be well content

With this beloved touch of grass and dew....  
What unfamiliar music holds the night?  
See the stars trail like shining birds their bright  
Pinions of flame, on the same sky we knew.

If there be change it lies with us. And >yet  
As of old years, held close to you, the glow  
Of joy like dawning takes me. Scarce I know  
Why words are broken, eyes and faces wet.

Look not too deep in purple sky or sea—  
For where the waves creep outward with the tide  
There waits a mist and strangeness; all the wide  
Ocean of space to sever you and me.

GOD send to-morrow a day of mist,  
Grey clouds slim and still as a crane,  
Darkening shadow of amethyst,  
And the little, quiet rain.

Send the smooth winds flying like doves  
From hollows under the hillside-breast,  
Loose on high the light that she loves,  
Ragged silver along the west.

Call the blue winds home from the deep,  
Home from the harbour of little ships;  
They will bring dreams to the heart asleep,  
And a quiver back to her lips.

Here *on* the hills her white youth dwells,  
Here by the gorse her soul keeps tryst,  
Speaks with a voice of floating bells  
Faint and far through the mist.

Seal the words she shall give you, Lord,  
Safe in Thy casket of spacious skies,  
Staunch with dews the wound of the sword,  
Heal with a star her eyes.

Let Thine earth forgive her at length  
That she forgot—that she grew old—  
And the tall hill offer her all its strength,  
And the wet gorse all its gold.

RAIN-MURMURINGS. The wind whines and snuffles, wet  
As a poor dog whose lord has ceased to care  
For faithful things like dogs; and you, Pierrette,  
With little firelit face and firegold hair,  
Curled like a kitten in an easy-chair,  
Who purrs for stroking ... velvet-soft ... and yet,  
Who knows, behind your yellow eyes, what brain  
May serve you? Hush—the little whine of rain.

Rose-red azaleas around you bend,  
Soft from your lamp the rose-red shadows fall—  
See, golden eyes, how rose and golden blend  
As panther firelight leaps along the wall.  
Outside the small wind shakes a dripping coat,  
Stifling a little whimper in its throat.

WHEN the vision is upon me  
I, that have known only these green hills,  
And the wet bush tracks, and the lonely country roads  
...See, in the spare grey light of another day,  
Waves of a sea that is only a name to me,  
Fretting against a cliff where it never stills,  
Brittle, and green, and cold.



A stony way  
I see, and a woman there with a red mouth fair  
And a chain of gold about her slender neck  
(I have only known gold on a *kowhai* flower).  
Quiet she is and still by the clashing sea,  
Her red-gold hair is heavy about her there  
(My hair is black and close-cropped short and high),  
And in some strange way, she that is there is I!  
When the vision is upon me,  
Shaking, I see the splendour in the eyes  
Of the woman that is I, and cry aloud,  
"Cha till!"

"Cha till": gaelic, "I return."

I cry, "Cha till!" in unknown tongue,  
I, who have known only red day's rise  
Upon this fresh young land, seen sun and cloud  
Within one little sky, cry out, "Cha till!"  
When the vision is upon me.

You have lost the dear delight of little things  
—Sweet sounds that do not reach to your dimmed ears,  
A red leaf on the concrete path that sings  
A little rustle as the winter nears.

You still delight in watching from the room,  
Lamp-lit, the slender spears of summer rain,  
But your fine face holds just a little gloom  
To think you'll never hear their sound again.

And if Love walks beside you silently,  
And murmurs through your hair that you are dear  
(Sweet words that must be spoken quietly),  
You do not heed him, for you cannot hear!

THE oil-lamp on the table by my bed,  
In this my quiet room,  
Makes a small circle, warm and softly red,  
Within the pressing gloom  
That floods this lonely house, waits in the night,  
Outside the glowing circle of my light.

And when I must put out this flame at last  
(This steadfast flame), I lie  
On pillows where the shaded light is cast,  
And watch it slowly die,

Fading and sinking to a tiny spark,  
One leaping gleam—and then the engulfing dark.

"So!" says a thought, "And that is how you'll die!  
And you'll be lonely, too,  
When in the dark, the folding dark, you lie."  
Ah, that isn't true!  
Now that this little lamp is out, I see  
The radiance of the skies spilt in on me.

O, EARTH beloved, the laughing waters lean,  
Russet and burnished gold, to kiss your lips,  
While from the hedge, where scarlet berries glow,  
A dragon-fly, on golden meshed wings, slips,  
O, Earth, the autumn dreams in robes of fire,  
And shining splendour of a frosted morn,  
Red berries flaunt where once the rose was gay—  
O, Earth beloved, the year has passed so soon.

O, Earth beloved, the years are placid grey,  
But Memory, with silvered fingers, swings  
Back her dark curtain, and the thoughts of youth  
Speed, like the dragon-fly,... on golden wings.  
O, Earth, and I have loved, have loved you so—  
Red berries, birds, the bronze and blue lagoon—  
And I must leave you when the winter comes—  
O, Earth beloved, the years have gone too soon!

THERE was a hidden bird  
Before the dawn  
Crying his pain towards the waking sky  
(Why should a bird know pain?) in tumbling notes,  
Crying ... and singing ... and a clean wind high  
Swept all the clouds afar, and left the day,  
And the bird flew up a shining, spearlike way,  
Singing.

There was a hidden song  
Ere I was born,  
Woven of pain against a waiting heart  
(Why should a girl bear pain?), a leaping song,  
Pulsing ... and singing ... till the notes grew strong,  
And swept, triumphant, all the pain away...  
And now I lift my hands towards the day, Singing.

MAN that is born of Woman lifts his eyes  
To the unmeasured skies,  
And seeks for Beauty in a strange place;  
Not the remembered line of limb or face,  
That swiftly dies;  
But Beauty, yet ungrasped, beyond the sun,  
In which to merge his soul, when life is done.

Man that is born of Woman lifts his hands  
From the unnumbered sands  
Which are his world, and asks for something more  
Than shining streams and slim trees at his door,  
Than pastured lands...  
Searching for Beauty where it never dies,  
Lonely and still, beyond the endless skies.

Man that is born of Woman lifts his face  
From the remembered place  
Where the unknown calls with mystic lure  
To leave behind the things grown old and sure  
For the strange grace  
Of Beauty that is out beyond the ken  
And the small, dark thinking of a world of men.

Man that is born of Woman bows his head  
With the uncounted dead,  
And if he finds his vision, no one knows,  
Or if the dream ends with the daylight's close,  
The yearning fled....  
Man, seeking Beauty, asks for more than bread—  
How shall we know if this strange need is fed?

I SHALL grow old and older,  
And wise as wise can be,  
And young men and maidens  
Will love to sit with me.

I shall walk very gravely  
With slow feet on the grass,  
And young children playing  
Will hush to let me pass.

I shall sit looking outward

Over a wide sea  
And birds will flock about me  
And make small talk with me.

And these will be for jewels  
From far tropic lands,  
Two eyes of topaz  
And two ivory hands.

Time will go stepping softly,  
In cool amber days,  
And I shall step beside him  
Down undiscovered ways.

And I shall step beside him,  
Not faint or overbold,  
But bravely, very bravely,  
When I am wise and old.

EARTH hold him; he was so wise,  
The light in his eyes

Was passionless, placid and deep;  
Oh, soft be his sleep.

Earth hold him: graves are so dim,  
Be tender to him.

Enfold him, and wrap him and make  
Him warm for my sake,

Who basked in the light of his eyes.  
Some day he will rise

And step with winged feet to the wind,  
And you, left behind,

Will burgeon with samite and gold,  
Springing soft from the mould,

Because, for a light, loving whim,  
You were tender to him.

I LOVE these soft, still, pearl and opal days.  
The sun, like a shy lover, hides his face,  
Yet all his ardour filters through the haze  
Like glow-worm light in a grey shadowy place.  
The trees stand breathless. No exulting wind  
Goes singing through them loosening from their hold  
The spent, sad leaves that autumn-long have pined  
To dance a dervish-dance in showers of gold.  
There are so many days that fill my heart,  
Bronze days and blue days and the days of Spring;  
But a soft grey day is a thing apart,  
The filmy bloom upon a linnet's wing.  
There may be in the calendars of Heaven  
One pearl and opal day in every seven.

SOME day the silvery Spring-tide  
Will come on silvery feet,  
In through the little gateway  
That opens to the street,

Will come with slender fingers  
A-tapping at my door,  
And I, who loved the Spring-tide,  
Will answer her no more.

I shall not see the glory  
That shines upon her face,  
I shall be straitly lying  
In some green, quiet place.

But I shall feel her footsteps  
Light on my sleeping head,  
And there will come a stirring  
Among the sleeping dead.

Soft as the breath of roses  
Upon the scented air—  
Then will they sleep more sweetly,  
Knowing the Spring is there.

And I shall rest serenely,  
Through heat and winter rains,  
Knowing my blood runs redly  
Like wine, in other veins;

Hearing, like faintest music  
From far, slow-swinging spheres  
Voices of children's laughter  
Go singing down the years.

THEY say the streets of Heaven  
Are paved with beaten gold,  
And the white walls of Heaven  
Are marble-white and cold.  
They say the harps of Heaven  
Make tenderest melody  
That lifts and falls, unresting,  
Like waves upon the sea.  
But I shall know no Heaven  
Without a blue-domed sky,  
And the bronzed feet of Autumn  
Gallantly going by,  
And I shall know no Heaven  
Except it bring to me  
The high, tumultuous fluting  
Of birds in a windy tree.

THIS wide arc of earth and sea,  
Wrinkled hills' immensity,  
Lambent greens and flowing golds,  
Valleys which the river moulds;  
All this stir of light and shade  
Is by mine own being made;  
Patterned leaf and fretting bough  
With the birds in tumult now,  
And the stealth of sunset wind  
Have no being save in my mind.  
Forest ripples, start and sway,  
Wheeling of the brisk, blue day,  
And the gloomed, tremendous night  
Lit by moons of borrowed light,  
All are just a faery mood

Of the man-created wood.

This tall fir, so straight and young,  
From a casual seedling sprung,  
Armoured against thrust and blow,  
Clutching frost and beating snow,  
Moored in windy tides that swing  
In the swelling days of Spring,  
Takes its form and shape and scent  
From my busy brain's assent.  
I need but to turn my head,  
Shut mine eyes, and it is dead—  
Faded all its coloured pride,  
Vanished bough and leaf beside,  
Foothold where the *tui* sings,

Home of thousand creeping things.  
And the wind that tunnels through  
Whistling crack and roaring flue,  
Stop mine ears and what are you?  
But a ragged, waving tree,  
But a cloud's flight over me,  
But a straining, blind and brute,  
At my body by the root.

In that lucid void there glow  
Colours I shall never know,  
For mine eye's receptive skin  
Has no way to let them in.  
Every chord musicians make  
When the rich vibrations wake  
Beats my ears' responsive zones  
Meshed in its soft overtones,  
And the sound of any word  
Is by tumbling accents blurred.

This smooth-shaped mahogany  
To a stronger-seeing eye  
Is with giant fissures rift,  
On its shining surface lift  
Marching mountains by whose crests  
Atom eagles have their nests,  
Yet the board beneath my hand  
Is caressing, silken, bland.

Seeking truth I grope, I pry,  
Lift my anxious, unquiet eye,  
Search forgotten wisdom out,  
Calculate, and put to rout

Calculation's judgments when  
They return to me again.  
Which the real, the seeming things?  
Dark distrust its curtain flings  
On the portal of my mind,  
And I halt, benumbed and blind.

I cannot scale, I cannot flee  
This wall that bars reality.

BEAUTY has come to us from other days  
Storied and strange, in triumph and in tears,  
Cloaked in sweet quietness, clad in glory's blaze,  
Adown the viewless path of travelled years.  
Old lovers gazed upon it, felt love's sun  
Burn into brightness, saw the white steel fall  
And unremembering slept, their bodies one  
With mould and must, their names a clarion call.

Now is your own dear beauty to the world  
A voice uplifted and a trumpet blown,  
A silken splendour never idly furled  
Or listless in life's airs, a tome of truth  
For the faint earth. Oh, wondrous to have known  
Beauty in you and you in beauty's youth.

AND thus, my dear, and thus we loved,  
Hugged our contentment, languored, moved  
In a lamped mist, felt pulses ring,  
Stammered, touched hands, knew kisses' sting  
And the whole flame of nearness. We,  
Wrapped in our glowing certainty,  
Knew no pretence. Eye smiled to eve  
From a complete, unclouded sky  
Of being. Strife and mind's distress  
Could never near us; they were less  
Than unmarked fading of a star  
From heaven's lighted harbour. Far  
From the long littleness of day  
We walked a calm, resplendent way,



Alert, responsive, each to each  
Without the stumbling sounds of speech.  
Our level minds, apt parallels,  
Reached out together. Never dwells  
A look on a loved lover's face,  
Moving with fond, and transient grace,  
But we looked so; never a thought  
Of tenderness in tribute brought,  
But we have paid it—there was caught  
From some remote and slumbering sea,  
In our minds' mesh, serenity.  
Measured when others were beside,  
We were a warm, suffusing pride  
In one another, and our glance  
Shattered the wall of circumstance.

Now in this book I read and find  
All that those months have left behind,  
A tiny, tragic, mummied flower,  
Corpse of dead Springtime, hour by hour  
Tombbed in an old and mumbling book  
In which but patient scholars look—  
The violet which you leant to pull  
That day, blue-gowned and beautiful,  
We curled beside the river's brink;  
I watched the slim and spreading chink  
Until it suddenly shut and then  
The pages' straightness stood again.

You are a mood of quietness,  
Leisured remembrance, something less;  
A dry, dead flower, a faded flame  
—And what, I wonder, was your name?

LAST night we laughed beside the sea;  
Now the sea has taken him;  
Taken him and keepin' him  
Down among the terrors.

The sea that's always hunted him,  
Moon by moon been stalkin' him;  
Now the hunter's taken him  
In a mesh of shadows.

Last night he lay against my breast,

All his thought was loving me;  
So the sea is mocking me,  
Mocking me and callin'.

Slow, cold tides pass over him—  
Oh, the sea is clever!  
Even the green slanting light  
Cannot reach him ever;  
Even my poor loving words  
Go stumbling to him never.  
Day to day and night to night,  
Knowing no to-morrow,  
He is sleeping sound, no doubt,  
And I'm broke with sorrow.

GOD rest Michael,  
Who reached out to the stars,

And set his passionate eyes to peaks of dream  
Beyond our sight,

And never knew the ecstasies of life;  
Cool fingers of the wind upon his face,  
Pearled waters placid in a summer's dawn,  
The flight of seagulls and a birch's grace.

Comfort him,  
Whom stars left comfortless.

For oh, his feet walked all too restlessly;  
God quiet Michael.

THERE is no starshine in the misty skies,  
Nor any light upon the quiet sea;  
Nor any light upon an ashen world,  
Since love, with folded wings o'er his sad eyes,  
Deserted me.

No rustling, tender-fingered noon breeze blowing,

But homeless night winds through the pine trees sighing  
Nor any sunny garden spaces glowing,  
Nor little, happy singing birds athrill,  
But sea-gulls, crying,

HE came back under darkling skies;  
He took my heart with his two eyes.

He took my heart with his sweet eyes,  
Once gay, and now so deeply wise.

I would be crying him for words  
That seek my heart as homing birds;

Searching in that dream darkness dim  
The lips and loving arms of him.

But he has dreams I may not share  
Since he passed down the sea's green stair;

And I go grieving love is fled,  
Now he walks bravely with the dead;

So he is come to comfort me,  
That I may sleep all quietly.

The face of him is gone, is gone,  
That I would die for looking on.

CURSE the beggar in the street  
That he has less joy than I,  
As, at these fine old trees' feet,  
Body-satisfied, I lie.

He it is whose threne sobs thin  
All adown this lovely dale;  
Till slight pleasure grows rank sin  
'Gainst Pan's pipes his pipes prevail.

He it is, with loathsome mien,  
Gibbers by the sweeping car,  
As, for joy, we steal between  
Fields where frail pools sleeping are.

He hath damned my fine-bound book  
And my pleasantness of meat—  
Blasted, by his withering look,  
All that once I glad could greet.

Curse the beggar in the street  
Curse the beggar that he die:  
Curse him for his shrivelled feet  
And his cruel, sight-striving eye.

AND there will be just as rich fruits to cull,  
And jewels to see;  
Nor shall the moon nor the sun be any more dull;  
And there shall be flowers as fine to pull,  
And the rain will be as beautiful—  
But not for me.

And there shall be no splendour gone from the vine,  
Nor from the tree;  
And still in the heavens shall glow Jah's radiant sign,  
And the dancing sun on horses' sleek hides shall seem no less fine;  
Still shall the car sweep along with as lovely a line—  
But not for me.

And men shall cut no less curious things upon brass,  
Still sweep the sea;  
Nor no little, lustrous shadow upon the sand's mass  
Cast by the lilting ripple above shall cease to pass,  
And radiance shall still enhalo shadows on moonlit grass—  
But not for me.

TEMPLE of Twilight on a lonely hilltop,  
Towers of pale opal leaning on the sky...  
Take my soul, lying in the blue-black grasses,  
Burn it with blue flame, for to-day I die.

Here in the deep'ning drift of many petals,  
Here where the shadows pass with noiseless tread,  
Blue phantoms stealing down the silent pine-ways,  
Tenderly lay me when my life is fled.

Let only young priests bear my withered body—  
Eyes filled with wonder 'neath their azure hoods—  
Let only maidens, dancing in their frailness,  
Chant the Blue Magic of the sacred woods.

Pass by and leave me to the peace of silence  
Here in the forest, and the night's dim blue....  
Soon will the flame of the up-burning incense  
Throw its last flicker on the ghostly dew.

Only the darkness and the burnt-out torches—  
Only the blue pall of the lonely sky—  
Only the sighing round the shrouded figure—  
Only the wraiths of starlight drifting by.

Death, and a sleeping in the long blue grasses....  
Into the Twilight Temple—hush! he passes.

O MANIKIN! Let me away, away!  
Take off my bridle of magic thread  
Made from the hair of a witch's head;  
Take off my saddle of acorn leaves,  
For the moon has come up and I cannot stay.

O the moon has come up o'er the stable door,  
And keen as the golden whip when you ride,  
She lashes her moonbeams upon my side,  
Pokes in the bundles of thistle hay,  
Silters the cobbles upon the floor.

And my shoes were made from the moon's gold rind  
Forged in a restless fairy fire,  
And they burn on my feet—O my elfin sire,  
I must break at the fetters which keep me back,  
I must fly with the red, red mane behind,

Till I drop exhausted at break of day  
In some garden of flowers, on the foam of some wave,  
On the top of some hill, at the mouth of some cave....  
How the crescent-shaped shoes dance on my feet!  
O Manikin, let me away, away!

I HAVE kissed the moonlight—  
No kiss of mortal flame  
Could touch my lips so softly,  
And make them burn the same.

The moon is on the white tree,  
And the white tree's by the wall,  
And I leaned and kissed a blossom...  
So softly did it fall,

So softly and with fluttering  
Like a petal butterfly  
With ghostly wings a-tremble,  
That I, mortal-like, did cry

And press my two hands swiftly  
To cover up my kiss—  
How can I sleep, O moonlight,  
With a wakefulness like this?

"TIRAHA, Te Ra! I am Maui,—  
Maui, the bantling, the darling;—  
Maui, the fire-thief, the jester;—  
Maui, the world's fisherman!  
Thou art the Sun-God,  
Te Ra of the flaming hair.  
Heretofore man is thy moth.  
What is the life of man,  
Bound to thy rushing wings,  
Thou fire-bird of Rangi?  
A birth in a burning;

A flash and a war-word;  
A failing, a falling  
Of ash to the ashes  
Of bottomless Po!

"I am Maui!  
The great one, the little one;  
A bird that could nest  
In the hand of a woman.  
I—I have vanquished  
The Timeless, the Ancients.  
The Heavens cannot bind me,  
But I shall bind thee,  
Tiraha, Te Ra!"

Ah, the red day Of the fighting of Maui!  
How he waxed, how he grew;  
How the Earth Mother shook!  
And the sea was afraid,  
And receded and moaned  
Like a babe that is chidden.  
The rope that was spun  
In the White World of Maui  
With blessing and cursing  
Curled on the dazzling  
Neck of Te Ra.

"A pull for the living  
That gasp in the light!  
A pull for the dead  
In abysses of Po!

A pull for the babes  
That are not but shall be  
In the cool, in the dawn,  
In the calm of Hereafter!  
Tiraha, Te Ra!"

The sky was a smother  
Of flame and commotion.  
Low leaped the red fringes  
To harass the mountains,  
And Maui laughed out:  
"Hu, hu, the feathers  
Of the fire-bird of Rangi!"

But the rope of the blessing,  
The rope of the cursing,  
It shrivelled and broke.  
He stooped to the coils  
And twisted them thrice,  
And thickly he threw it  
On the neck of Te Ra.

"Twice for the living!  
And twice for the dead!  
And twice for the long Hereafter!  
All the heart of the heavens,  
The heart of the earth,  
Hung on the rope of Maui.  
But the red lizards licked it,  
The fire-knives chipped it,  
It frittered and broke.  
Then Maui stood forth  
On the moaning headlands

And looked up to Io—  
Io, the Nameless, the Father,  
To whom the eyes pray,  
But whom the tongue names not.  
And a thin voice clave the fire  
As the young moon cleaves the blue  
Like a shark's tooth in the heavens.

"O my son, my son, and why are thy hands so red?  
Wilt fight the fire with fire, or bind the Eterne with deeds?  
Shatter the strong with strength?—Nay, like to unlike is wed;  
What man goes forth to the river to smite a reed with reeds?

"Soft and wan is water, yet it is stronger than fire;  
Pale and poor is patience, yet it is stronger than pride.  
Out of the uttermost weakness cometh the heart's desire:  
Thou shalt bind the Eternal with need and naught beside.

"Plait thee a rope of rays, twist thee a cord of light;  
Twine thee a tender thread that never was bought or sold;  
Twine thee a living thread of sorrow and ruth and right,  
And were there twenty suns in Rangi, the rope shall hold."



Then Maui bowed his head  
And smote his palms together.—  
"Ina, my sister, little one, heed!  
Give me thy hair."

Ina, the Maiden of Light,  
Gave him her hair.  
Swiftly he wove it,  
Laughing out to the skies:  
"Thrice for the living!  
Thrice for the dead!  
And thrice for the long Hereafter!"

The thin little cord  
Flew fast on the wind  
Past the Eyes of the Kings  
To the neck of Te Ra.  
And then was the pull,  
The red lizards licked it,  
The fire-knives chipped it,  
But it stood, but it held!  
And measured and slow  
Evermore was the flight  
Of the fire-bird of Rangi.

NEITHER to fight nor plead, my dear,  
Home to the low long nest  
On the holy sod of the plains of God,  
And it's only to rest, to rest.

Neither to sift nor weigh, my dear,  
Neither to sow nor reap,  
For the balance is true, and the sickle is through,  
And it's only to sleep, to sleep.

Neither to will nor plan, my dear,  
Neither to smile nor sigh;  
For home is the fruit to the altar foot,  
And it's only to die, to die.

THESE are not ours—the isles of columned whiteness,  
Set in an old and legend-whispering sea;  
Nor crowning domes that take the morning's brightness,

Praising the Lord in open majesty;  
Nor arches' hushed, eternal invocation;  
Nor windows glowing with the love of God;  
Nor slender minarets that take their station,  
Like spears ascending where the faithful trod.

There, on the hillside, is our nation's building,  
The tall dead trees so bare against the sky.  
They neither kiss the morn nor take the sunset's gilding,  
They hear no brimming prayer, no sinner's cry.  
But in the desolation of our making,  
Where prey at will the sun and wind and rain,  
They call the sky to witness of our breaking,  
They tell the stars the story of our gain.

Unranked and formless, stark they stand, unheeding  
The whisper of their brothers, soon to die.  
Their hearts are dry from the bright axe's bleeding,  
And dead the music of their leaves' long sigh.  
Mute in their misery of devastation,  
They hold between us and the living light,  
In twisted agony of revelation,  
The lifeless litter of the field of fight.

Yet if some ask: "Where is your art, your writing  
By which we know that you have aught to say?"  
We shall reply: "Yonder, the hillcrest blighting,  
There is our architecture's blazoned way.  
This monument we fashioned in our winning,  
A gibbet for the beauty we have slain;  
Behold the flower of our art's beginning,  
The jewel in the circlet of her reign!"

Yet so doth patient beauty work, subduing  
The very husks of death to gracious ends;  
The heavy, plodding days, their task pursuing,  
Slowly transmute these victims into friends.  
Dwelling with them, we take them to our living;  
Looking on them, we wed them to our sight;  
Resting with us, they grant us their forgiving,  
And creep into the round of our delight.

Less were the dawn in miracle unfolding,  
Did these return not to the breathless hill.  
Disturbed the heart, known loveliness beholding,

Did these not watch us as the hours fill.  
Strange were the hush of eve by mists enchanted,  
Did these not stand to catch the floating flowers.  
Common the moonlight by the shadows haunted  
But for the mystery of these lightless towers.

Some day our feet may walk where art is golden;  
Then round our hearts will lap the tides of time.  
We shall be one with dwellings rich and olden,  
And fragrant prospects sweet with ancient rhyme.  
Yet, though we go where memories come thronging,  
And wonder leads us wheresoe'er we roam,  
Through our delight will creep the voice of longing—  
O dear, dead timber on the hills of home!

IN Comfort Street the shop-fronts blaze;  
The well-fed people laugh and drift  
Along the smooth, enticing ways,  
And wear their fortune as a gift.

Here wheels in cushioned service purr,  
And buttons pressed command delight;  
And soft, obsequious odours stir  
The languors of an ordered night.

And in the frippery of talk  
You catch: "Here's butter down again—  
Poor farmers! "—"Yes, I think The Hawk  
Will win ... Ten quid on Lover's Lane."

Haggard he looks about his world—  
The leaning shack, the broken fence,  
The little flag of green unfurled  
Before the forest's walled defence;

The dwindling, unconditioned herd  
Nosing about the barren burn;  
The mocking of the care-free bird;  
The creeping barrage of the fern.

Without, the hidden enemy

That strikes beneath its green deceit;  
Within, the long-drawn agony  
When love and hope may never meet.

He looks along the bitter years  
To when the myriad bugles thrilled;  
When duty banked the fount of tears,  
And life with high adventure filled.

In that unfathomable pit  
Of blasting death or doom long drawn,  
Where anguish of a night was lit  
By presage of a dreadful dawn,

He saw beyond the murdered earth  
And moaning of the tortured skies,  
The promise of his place of birth,  
A dream-home to his weary eyes.

And over all the undying Cause,  
And goodly fellowship of kin.  
"If I should die 'twould make no pause  
In certainty's long reckoning."

For there death could not conquer hope,  
Master of faith was never found,  
And on the long, red battle slope  
The soldier fell, but won his ground.

But here, in this remote reward,  
No banner flies aloft to cheer;  
The arm that, stricken, drops the sword  
Sinks in a common black despair.

Resolve with love high-hearted went  
To fame this gift of wilderness;  
Now high is low and hearts are spent  
And lord of all is sharp distress.

All this he sees, and turns again  
To face dear eyes that love but dread—  
Hunger and want, the deeper pain  
That knows at last that hope is dead.

Dully by fire's caprice he reads  
In news prepared by comfort's hands,  
Of how the city over-breeds—  
"The land, young man! Go on the land!"

AT Silverstream, in Maoriland, the hours are very young;  
They dance to the measure that the cascades sing,  
And the gay days at Silverstream are little beads hung,  
Turquoise and amber, on a fine gold strings.

The soft winds of Silverstream walk down the valley aisles  
Laden with the gorse-scent and many *tui* tunes;  
They part the sweet *manuka* scrub and cross the meadow miles  
To frolic with a sea-wind tramping the dunes.

There are great hills at Silverstream, mysterious with trees;  
Here and there a plume where the *toi-toi* nods;  
And the green hills at Silverstream are down upon their knees—  
Down upon their knees, girl, like great grim gods!

'Tis fine to feel the tall reeds against the finger-tips,  
The feet dance-dancing to the white stream's strain;  
For all the air of Silverstream puts music on the lips,  
And all the hours of Silverstream go dancing through the brain—

Dancing through the brain, girl, and every strolling wind  
Crooks a rounded elbow, inviting tired hands.  
And the fragrance of Silverstream puts magic in the mind,  
The sweet winds of Silverstream lead on to magic lands.

The waters of Silverstream throw lace across the stones—  
Silver lace and silver spray all in the silver air!  
And the valley-place of Silverstream is musical with tones,  
Like an old Greek chorus on a moss-grown stair.

The hunched hills at Silverstream are ponderous with prayer,  
And the incense of Silverstream is heavy round  
their knees; But the white clouds at Silverstream are twining in the air,  
And the swift wings at Silverstream are whirling in the breeze.

White clouds and wings, girl, joyous o'er the meads,  
Slim feet and swift blood, riotous with youth,  
Take the string of gold days, tell the glowing beads,  
Where the streams and birds chant the litany of truth!

POOLS upon the pavement, round as pallid moons;  
Sobs within the doorways, tears upon the pane!  
High up in the housetops the cool wind croons;  
The dim streets of Wellington are musical with rain!

The tramcars of Wellington go droning through the hours,  
Waking fountains from the rails where rinkling rivers race;  
And each is like a brown bee amid the dewy flowers,  
For each is like a brown bee with dew upon its face.

And the tramcars of Wellington, the little weeping cars,  
Are filled with wagging round heads, like peas within the pod;  
And the wee streets of Wellington know neither sun nor stars  
When Wellington is hidden in the flowing robes of God.

But the wet folk of Wellington go laughing to and fro—  
Oh, every heart's a merry heart that's sheltered from the rain;  
And a grey phrase whispers of the storms of long ago,  
And a gay lip is singing that the wind will swing again.

The garden of the Cityside is breaking into bloom—  
Shop fronts are tulip beds, and some are daffodils;  
And lights like early primroses are showing 'mid the gloom  
Behind the swaying curtains, above the window-sills.

The swift winds of Wellington may swing into the west,  
The clouds o'er Terawhiti may break within the south;  
The rain-song of Wellington will linger in my breast,  
For the moist kiss of Wellington is music on my mouth!

THE high hills of Wellington are like a balustrade  
That the winds walk over, and the tired, dim sun;  
And the weary little city is drowsing in the shade,  
And the harbour lights of Wellington are waking, one by one.

The harbour-tide of Wellington is laving pier and bay,  
And wrinkles are upon it, and many a flowing fold;  
And the visage of the waters is very drawn and grey,  
For the harbour-tide of Wellington is very, very old.

But the young lights, the bright lights, are wonderfully  
Dancing from the shadows and twinkling here and there;  
Like little eyes that watch the tardy passing of the day;—  
Like golden slippers flashing on a dim, dark stair.

And the lights upon the steamers a-dream beside the pier!  
Red lights and green lights on many an idle boat,  
Beam through the cool shades marvellously clear  
And blithe as the singing from a deep-sea throat!

Oh, some are ruddy rich lights, and some are sere and dim;  
But each finds an echo in the dark, still wave,  
And each wakes my heart to an old-time hymn,  
And the harbour lights of Wellington are notes upon the stave.

And the night streets of Wellington are leading froms the sea,  
Twining in and winding out like little yellow ropes;  
And the street lights of Wellington are very dear to me,  
And the street lights of Wellington go winding up the slopes.

Amethysts and moonstones and ilakes of polished jade,  
Blended together with an old-world charm;  
The city lights of Wellington are showing 'mid the shade,  
A glowing heap of jewels on a negro's palm.

The hills shouldered the faint stars from the sky  
As we, descending, on the steep road went.  
The wind thrilled in the grass with a lone cry,  
And our last hour was spent.

Empty and bleak around us was the night,  
The sea spread out, a dark, illimitable plain,  
And on the shore the surf tossed flames of white  
That broke and sank again.

The sunny hill-top where we talked alone,  
Golden and scented with the late blown broom,  
Seemed like a place imagined, but not known,  
In this estranging gloom.

For the blue glory of the autumn day,  
The honey-coloured sunlight of our hill,  
Had faded wanly into dun and grey,  
And then the dark, and this invading chill.

And all the sunless unconsoling shade  
Like a cold tide into our two hearts flowed;  
A desolate dumbness on our lips was laid  
In that last hour as we went down the road.

There's a small house in a garden green and small,  
A jonquil garden, the warm haunt of bees,  
And by the door two old camellia trees  
Grow stiff and stately, fair and trim and tall.

They always bloom too early, and spring showers  
Tarnish and rob them as the cold gusts pass,  
Scattering like white rosettes upon the grass  
The lovely, formal, scentless, waxen flowers.

But O! on moonlight nights, when they are drawn  
In shining, flower-decked shapes against the sky,  
When the white billowy clouds of spring drift by,  
And lovely mystery wraps the little lawn,

They take my heart with loveliness, they look  
Like trees in some old magic woods, or more  
Like guardians set by an enchanted door,  
Or decorations from an ancient book.



With such sweet art the empty stage is set,  
One half-expects light music to begin,  
While Columbine, a dainty marionette,  
Opens the door and beckons Harlequin.

WAS it the whisper of the rain—  
The odour of drenched air—  
Unlocked some chamber of my brain,  
Brown eyes, bronze hair?  
Some sound, some odour caught my sense,  
A breathless interlude  
Held me an instant, rapt and tense,  
In strange clairvoyant mood.  
Here, just a little while ago,  
I sat with dull content  
In gloom suffused with ruddy glow  
From embers nearly spent,  
When, swift, remote as in a trance,  
Remote, but visioned plain,  
A fragment of our strained romance  
Surged back to me again.  
The wan dawn glimmered bleak and bare  
From close, rain-sodden skies,  
And lit upon the drift of hair  
Across your sleep-sealed eyes.  
Tapping a rhythmic, harsh refrain  
To my heart's monody,  
I heard, a-beat against the pane,  
The draggled lemon-tree.  
The moment's poignant vision stirred  
And went so eerily—  
The vivid light flared out and blurred;  
Dull glints of memory  
Flickered through darkness darker made.  
Now, crowding everywhere,  
Are ghosts of deeds and dreams decayed—  
Ghosts of what once we were.

Our laughing days with sun dispersed,  
Our weary days with care  
Are blown away—they are all dead,  
Brown eyes, bronze hair,  
Nothing is stable, nothing stays—  
As listless leaves are we,  
Adrift upon Time's windy ways  
Across Eternity.

"STILL there's sunshine on the wall."  
If there lacked of wine or bread

It was thus that Sancho shed  
Every care that might befall.

Are you wiser, you who call  
Sancho fool? Could you have said:  
"Still there's sunshine on the wall,"  
If there lacked of wine or bread?

Though your wisdom would appal  
Sancho Panza's clownish head,  
Wisest he who sang, instead,  
Of the cares that irk us all,  
"Still there's sunshine on the wall."

FROM Fantasy's bright isles  
Careening galleys stream;  
Hope waits through weary whiles—  
But no long-oared trireme  
Filled full with precious freight,  
Anchors where, desolate,  
She waits her ships of dream.

Though she may call and cry  
They will not pause or stay—  
Wind-fresh, they thunder by,  
Grow dim, and drive away  
To quiet seas that lave  
With faint and restless wave  
A twilight land of grey.

She sees with wistful eyes  
Great barques blow gallantly  
From where the fading skies  
Bend down to kiss the sea—  
Surging they come, and pass,  
But none draw in, alas!  
Towards her weedy quay.

To lands of legendry  
The brave ships make their way;  
In grave futility  
Hope watches night and day  
For ships that come not in....

With face and pulse grown thin  
She only waits to pray.

I HAVE an endless joy in these—  
The orange tips of willow trees;  
The rusty brown of quiet pools;  
The underneaths of mushroom stools;  
The musky scent of golden gorse;  
The stately tree-fern, and the sponginess of thick-grown moss...  
And cattle madly fleeing from a train;  
And far-off clouds that drape grey veils of rain  
Across a fading sky...  
The sound that quail make when they fly...  
The scent of rain-washed ferns, and yellow broom;  
And fluffy sprays of pollened wattle-bloom...  
And autumn leaves ... and bulbs among the grass...  
And frosted earth that crunches as you pass...  
And now, from out the honey-laden trees,  
A *tui's* burst of praise has crowned all these.

DEAREST, tuck the bed clothes in  
While I sing to thee  
Of the buds that I have found  
On the apple-tree;  
Of the violets I have seen  
Peeping through the grass—  
Hush, my little sleepy one,  
I hear the Sandman pass!

Dearest, close your dreaming eyes—  
Night is coming soon;  
Primroses shall dance for you  
Underneath the moon.  
Scent of brown and yellow broom  
Clings about the wall—  
Hush, my little sleepy one,  
I hear the Sandman call!

I WENT a-singing  
Out of the town,  
Where grey hawks were winging  
Up hill and down.  
Just for a little  
I let the world fall,  
And found myself poorer  
By nothing at all.

So you have come across the pathless skies,  
Dear migrant messenger, ordained to bring  
Greeting from other lands to our young Spring  
Here blinking sunbeams from his dewy eyes.  
The year has not forgotten, æon-wise,  
The bird that comes on swift and punctual wing  
The first green hour with votive offering  
To the old carol-haunted tree's surprise.

I listen to your song and I am old  
As infant wonder in the eyes of Eve  
Seeing young Adam on the Eden sod  
Beaming his wonder back that in such mould  
One spirit had the daring to conceive  
Woman and Spring—twin harmonies of God.

UPON our island's low and level sand,  
Where past the coral reef the swift tides run,  
Notching a foolish stick for every sun,  
With a half-eager and half-hopeless hand,  
I saw the ghost of a rude sailor stand,  
Haggard, unkempt and utterly undone—  
Trapped like a gnat within a gossamer spun  
Around the horns, as cynic Fate had planned.

Are we no more to Fate than a voice heard  
Calling the æons by creation's wheel;  
No more, no more to Time than a midge slain  
Within a sunbeam by a migrant bird,  
Or than a star, crunched under God's great heel,  
Glimmering to darkness in the vast Inane?

DAY after day I saw them gathering  
From all along the desolated tide—  
Fleet-winged old *kuakas* on pinions tried  
And strong young birds on still unproven wing.  
Day after day—and then not anything  
But empty air and ocean vast and wide,  
I knowing only how my heart had cried  
At their so seeming treason to the Spring.

Here Had They Nested; On This Tawny Shore  
They Raced Between The Foam Lines On The Sand  
Then Flew To Arctic Summer From The South.  
I Heard Them Pause; Heard, Too, The Waves Deplore

The Disavowed And Solitary Land—  
The Sea-Rime Raw And Bitter In My Mouth.

IN the valley of little red trees  
The grey dogs were hunting the hare;  
With the kirtle of green to her knees  
Came the fairy Pegeen to me there;  
With the hare running under the trees  
Pegeen made a song to me there.

Yellow girls, with the sun on their feet,  
Ran in and out of the wood;  
Sure, the air with their voices was sweet  
Around the green place where I stood—  
Och, the grass in the toes of their feet  
Was green with a laugh where they stood.

Pegeen, fairy girl, she could sing  
Till the daffodils stept to the tune,  
And a thorn-tree, in bud at the Spring,  
Let up a clean leaf to the noon.  
Pegeen, fairy girl, it was Spring,  
And the sun was just warm at the noon.

Och! dimples she had to be sure,  
With her hair like the wing of a crow,  
And the white of her neck was a cure  
For a heart that was beating too slow—  
Och, Pegeen, fairy girl! To be sure,  
Mine couldn't be beating too slow.

'Twas the laugh of the girls in the sun,  
'Twas the green on the lap of the world,  
'Twas the way my wits fluttered and spun,  
'Twas the way that her eyelashes curled  
Made me mad for a kiss in the sun,  
Where her lips at the corner were curled.

Pegeen, fairy girl, she could dance;  
'Twas not easy to come at her waist.  
Och! she puckered my soul with her glance,  
But her lips had a wonderful taste;  
Sure, the fairy girl led me a dance

Till I caught her pink mouth for a taste.

There's a fairy path over the hill,  
There's a fairy bridge over the stream;  
'Twas her song that was leading me still  
And I went like a man in a dream...  
There were little red trees on the hill,  
And the end of the road was a dream.

Sure, I dreamt like a little brown hare,  
'Twas me that the grey dogs would chase.  
Och, fur is too handy to wear!  
Give me back the red kiss on my face!  
Pegeen, I'm a little brown hare,  
Och, give a man back his poor face!

Yellow girls, with the sun on their feet,  
Run in and out of the wood.  
Troth, the sound of their voices is sweet,  
And the swish of their kirtles is good...  
There are little black toes on my feet,  
And to stop the grey dogs would be good.

WE shall walk daintily in later dew  
On sweet, far mornings speaking these grave words,  
Wearing worn silver on our garments blue  
While Spring is full of nests and cheeping birds.

And when the clocks chime on and hearts forget,  
We shall be very still, as are the wise,  
Nursing the dreams that make us fairer yet  
For the wide wondering of newer eyes.

Above our heads shall soar large roof and dome,  
Long windows flaking colour through the gloom,  
Where the great music has its silent home  
And rich old bindings in the shadows bloom.

But we shall rise and go away, away  
Down happy meadows to the calling seas,  
And speak all moments of the yellow day

Or sing to moonlight in the lispings trees.

Leaves rustle brownly in the autumn wind.  
All books shall fade. But in a realm apart,  
We shall go fearlessly through all the blind,  
Green places of the ever-singing heart.

And we shall hear and know, too glad for pride,  
The hot, sweet words our rebel dreamings hurled  
Against cold Thought's despair come as a tide  
Flooding across the evening of the world.

THE blind worm spoke to Saint Francis  
From the mould of Assisi's wood:  
"What thinkest thou, Brother,  
Shall be the reward of good  
And virtuous worms  
When Death shall bar the way?  
A richer loam  
With softer, sweeter clay?  
No stone to turn the path?  
And never bird to fill the day  
With fear, when rain shall break  
In silver brightness on the lawn  
And worms are tempted  
Past their power, to rise?  
Would you, Saint Francis, say  
That such is Paradise?"

And a bird dipped  
From blue to bough:  
"Thinkest thou  
That in the Paradisal Lands  
Peaches will grow  
That will be birds' alone?  
And cherries in cool leafiness?  
And never snow  
Will hide from our fond eyes  
The Eternal Lawn  
Whose long, lush worms will rise  
Even as the appetite doth rise  
Within the bird?—Thinkest thou  
This, Brother?"

"My little Ones," Saint Francis said,

"What can mortal know,  
Save that Desire will be fulfilled  
Or that Desire will go?  
He that created worm and bird  
Would surely make it so.  
'Tis only here below  
That thirsts unquenched go."

*The tail-rods leap in their bearings—  
They rise with a rush and ring;  
They sink to the sound of laughter,  
And hurried and short they sing—  
We carry the Mails—  
His Majesty's Mails—  
Make way for the Mails of the King!*

We've swung her head for the open bay,  
And, spun by the prisoned steam,  
The screws are drumming the miles away  
Where the bright star-shadows dream.  
She lifts and sways to the ocean's swell;  
The light-house glares on high,  
And the fisher-lads in their boats will tell  
How they saw the Mail go by  
Athrill from keel to her quivering spars,  
With the screw-foam boiling white,  
And black smoke dimming the watching stars  
As it soared through the soundless night.  
"Full speed ahead!" shout the racing rods—  
"Full speed!" and spray on the rail!  
We'll heed no order to stop save God's,  
For we are the Ocean Mail.

The big fish shudder to hear the thud  
And stamp of our engine-room,  
As we thunder on, with our decks a-flood,  
Through the blind, bewildering gloom.  
A faint, hoarse hail, and a waving light—  
The whirr of our steering-gear—  
And we are staggering in our flight  
With a fishing-boat just clear.  
We carry the wealth of the world, I trow,  
And the power and fame of men,  
The angry word, and the lover's vow,  
All held in the turn of a pen.  
And stars swing out in the skies a-thrill,  
And the weary stars grow pale;  
But night and day we are driving still,  
For we are the Ocean Mail.



The sailing-craft and the clumsy tramps  
Loom up and are lost astern,  
And the stars of their bridge and mast-head lamps  
Are the only stars that burn.  
To the clash and ring of the v/hirling steel,  
And the crash and swing of the seas,  
We carry the grief that the mothers feel  
As they sob and pray on their knees.  
The cares and joys of the throbbing world  
Are measured in piston-strokes,  
When the bright prow-smother is split and hurled,  
And the hot wake steams and smokes.  
To the swinging blows of the heavy throws,  
And the slide-valve's moaning wail,  
We'll swing and soar with our flues a-roar,  
For we are the Ocean Mail,

They watch for us at the harbour-mouth,  
And wait for us on the quay,  
Looking ever to east and south  
For our head-light on the sea.  
And onward, surging, we're racing fast  
Where the shy mermaid dwells,  
And the crested kings of the deep ride past  
(Oh! the pomp of the rolling swells).  
Lone lighthouse-men, when they see our star  
Lift clear of the starry maze,  
Will watch us swagger across the bar  
And swing to the channelled ways.  
Yet never a sign or a sound we give—  
No blast of horn or a hail—  
For we must race that the world may live,  
And we are the Ocean Mail.

*The good screws, labouring under,  
Laugh loud as they lift and fling  
The eddying foam behind them,  
And muttering low they sing—  
    Make way for the Mails—  
    His Majesty's Mails—  
We carry the Mails for the King!*

OFF-SHORE I hear the great propellers thunder,  
And throb and thrash so steadily and slow;  
Their booming cadence tells of seas that plunder—  
Of Love's moon-seas and brave hearts thrown asunder,  
Of hot, red lips and battles, blow for blow;  
And as they sing my heart is filled with wonder,  
Though why—I scarcely know.

Perhaps it is because they tell a story  
And lift a deep storm-measure as they come—  
A song of old-time love and battles gory,  
When men dared hell and sailed through sunset's glory,  
With pealing trumpet tuned to rolling drum,  
To hunt and loot and sink the jewelled quarry  
In seas too deep to plumb.

I only know I watch the steamers going  
Along the Red West Road with heavy heart,  
And, when the night comes, look for head-lights showing,  
And mark their speed—the ebb-tide or the flowing;  
For loath am I to see them slew and start  
A down that path; and every deep call blowing  
Stabs like a driven dart.

The blazing west to me is always calling,  
For in the west there burns my brightest star...  
Oh, God! to hear the anchor-winch hauling,  
And feel her speeding, soaring high and falling,  
With steady swing across the brawling bar—  
To hear the stem-struck rollers tumble sprawling,  
And watch the lights afar.

To south and east and north the screws are singing  
So steadily and tunefully and slow;  
But on the Western Track they thunder, flinging  
Their wake afoam, and by their roar and ringing,  
By laughter sweet, deep in my heart, I know  
That down that Red West Road, with big screws swinging,  
Some day I'll go.

OLD man, old man, walled warmly in with peace,  
From sorrow and delight you sit apart.  
From mirth and agony at last release  
Comes, and the strange occasions of the heart  
Trouble no more the ways of your white age.

Turn in your head against the breast of time  
Old man, old man, for ended is the fight  
And quieter than an unremembered rhyme  
And quieter than day-haunted trees at night  
You shall slip into the silence and be gone.

Being dead, they'll clog your mouth lest you arise,  
Made bold by dealings with the worms and dust,

And shout, with soil still crusted on your eyes,  
How both the ploughshare and the sword are rust,  
And God as aimless as a drifted shell.

NOT for me a roof-tree, child or lover,  
But only this white room  
And all the patient stars  
Peering through the bars  
Into my prison's gloom—  
This whiteness, and the magic night for cover.

Not for me the smooth delight of leaping  
Into the water clear—  
Only the chair's restraint,  
The brilliance of white paint,  
Not sunlight like a spear  
To stab the waters and my soul from sleeping.

Not for me a roof-tree, child or lover,  
This is my fate. For me  
To grow quiet and lined  
Knowing love only kind,  
Tasting no ecstasy.  
Night, gently bend and lend me of your cover.

A time will come, a time will come,  
(Though the world will never be quite the same),  
When the people sit in the summer sun,  
Watching, watching the beautiful game.

A time will come, a time will come,  
With fifteen stars in a green heaven,  
Two to be batting, two to judge,  
And round about them the fair Eleven.

A time will come, a time will come,  
When the people sit with a peaceful heart,  
Watching the beautiful, beautiful game,

That is battle and service and sport and art.

A time will come, a time will come,  
When the crowds will gaze on the game and the green,  
Soberly watching the beautiful game,  
Orderly, decent, calm, serene.

The easy figures go out and in,  
The click of the bat sounds clear and well,  
And over the studying, critical crowds  
Cricket will cast her witching spell.

Yet a time will come, a time will come,  
Come to us all as we watch, and seem  
To be heart and soul in the beautiful game,  
When we shall remember and wistfully dream—

Dream of the boys who never were here,  
Born in the days of evil chance,  
Who never knew sport or easy days,  
But played their game in the fields of France.

WHILE the dull talk idly streams,  
He sits upon the bank and dreams,  
Till some careless word that's said  
Finds a fellow in his head.—

He with one great bound is borne  
From Dent Blanche to Matterhorn;  
And his passage is so fast  
Over that abyss so vast,  
He has not seen how blueely shines  
The deep gulf in his pelt of pines,  
Nor heard the waste and watery voice  
Wherewith the wind-washed pines rejoice.

In a moment's thousandth part,  
In the beat of the bee's heart,  
He has flown it: 'tis away  
Where the kite and eagle play.  
Tho' the chamois, lithe and fine,

Passes it 'twixt wake and dine;  
Tho' the dun geier, gaunt and lean,  
Flash across that gulf between

Sol's first footing of his bed  
And the covering of his head,  
What he's compassed in one stride  
Is two days for the Zermatt guide.

WHY should I grieve to think that on a day  
I must return again as all men must  
To my beginnings—dust to careless dust?  
For well I know that, scattered by Time's hand,  
My dust shall live in every wind that blows;  
I shall be one with each new flower that grows;  
And I shall know  
Strange places lit by shining friendly stars,  
The wonder and the beauty of far lands.  
I shall be fashioned by soft childish hands  
And be contented so.

SWIFT is the coming of sleep to the clear eyes of childhood,  
Droops your bright head to the lilt of my lullaby song,  
One strange, sweet moment I hold you  
'twixt waking and sleeping,  
Then on a breath you are gone from me—  
gone from my keeping.

What do you see, little one, with the eyes that you close to me?  
Whither and whence are the ways that your baby feet tread?  
Are other songs that you hear  
as sweet as my singing?  
Do you find arms that are tender  
as mine and as clinging?

Swift is the coming of sleep and swift too awakening,  
With the gold gleam of the morning you will come back  
From the poppy-starred meadows of dreams,  
ah, do not regret them;  
I shall enfold you with love  
and make you forget them.

IN from the sunset west,

With sunset tints on wing and snowy breast,  
Rose-coloured sky above, rose-coloured earth below,  
To some far rocky gorge, hidden and cold and grey,  
Leaving the pageant of departing day,  
Circling and sweeping out to the night they go.

Blue is the distant east  
Blue as a shadowland where life has ceased—  
Unhesitating wings speed on the lonely flight.  
Out to that cloudy east, taking the sea-gulls' way,  
My heart turns also from the hues of day,  
Out to the confines of the blue waiting night.

ALL yesterday  
They hung but phantom things, unnoticed, grey,  
Under grey skies, forerunner of night mist.  
But while we slept  
Closer the white mist round about us crept,  
And, morning-kissed,  
See how they glisten, decked with many a gem,  
Each strand a jewelled rope. The world seems full of them,  
Clinging to bush and fence and grassy stem.

The Half-Wit said: "I walked with Him—  
God—as He went His lonely way.  
Tenderly, tremulously, the slim  
Tall trees leant down to pray.

"I bent no knee, I who am I,  
A God myself, enwrapt with flame,  
Who storms all night across the sky  
And calls each star by name.

"His forehead shone incarnadin'd,  
The flowers they sang about His feet,  
His voice was like a silken wind  
From thickets summer-sweet.

"Complacently He bade me turn  
To mark His handicraft ... to note  
A hill with living glory burn,  
A fleet of clouds afloat,

"New grass up-springing after rain,  
New wings astir within the nest,  
A tired bee laden with his gain,  
A beauty-haunted West.

"I, God as He was God, stood still  
In the deep hush horizon-wide,  
Remembering a shape of ill—  
A wistful lad, wide-eyed,

"Who from his cradle crawled to know  
Whatever else the years might send,  
That like a maimed thing he must go  
Unto his desperate end."

LIKE flakes of snow when April sun laughs out,  
Like leaves caught up and dancing in the breeze,  
Behind the plough they throng, a careless rout  
Of jolly pirates that have quit the seas  
And turned inland to smell the broken earth  
And catch what booty lies in that brown wake;  
Or circling on ahead, to ring with mirth  
The ploughman's path, till he his way must take  
Through clouds of flashing wings, as though there sped  
A heavenly robber-band around his head.

IF in a thousand years my dust took form  
And in the night, beneath a thunderous storm,  
High on the wind there rode a Shade who said,  
"Cast back your mind to when you were not dead.  
I give you choice, for you have tasted both,  
Will you have life once more, or are you loath  
To break the silence where your sleep has lain  
These many years?" should I say,  
"Not again  
Can winds awaken the remembered sting,  
Or summer days their lightsome sandals bring.  
Black was the beech glade in the forest way.  
I should see vice acclaimed in open day,  
Dives in heaven and Lazarus in hell  
Until their lives were done, and both were well.  
Life gives ill measure, and, though Death gives none,

Yet Death brings justice underneath the sun.  
There is but one God, He whose name is Death,

At whose dread coming evil vanisheth.  
Him shall I worship through the lightless days  
With voiceless music and with muted praise.  
And in his service let my sleep be long,  
For in his kingdom there is done no wrong."

\* \* \* \* \*

I do not know that I should say this truth,  
For I might turn, as turned the heart of Ruth  
Homeward from labour in the stranger's corn,  
To think upon the land where I was born.  
I might remember valley, hill and plain,  
And, blinded, look upon them clear again.  
And I might watch until earth's eventide,  
As she whom, watching by her lord's bedside  
Until Death let him in that Flemish land,  
They found, her face cupped in her snowy hand,  
With wide eyes gazing on the Breton shore,  
But seeing naught, and naught; nor ever more.

LONG hours the asphalt, grimed, blistered and old,  
A haggard monotone of weary grey,  
Smoulders in dull hostility. The day  
With challenging splendour, arrogant blue and gold,  
Mocks at the humbled ugliness; a bold  
Vagabond wind flings in its face his stray  
Litter of insult; urchin dust-whirls play  
Their fitful games in the gutters. ... But behold—

The dusk falls, and along the purpling street  
Night strews her silence: cool and still, the air

Enfolds the throbbing hours in a soft  
Forgetfulness. The kindly shadows meet  
In noiseless converse, and the lamps aloft  
Caress with silver pavements suddenly fair.

FAR in the darkening east sinks Tyre o'er the shimmering waters:  
Broken her towers, and bowed 'neath the proud Persian her locks.  
Bent to the earth are her virgins, and naught the pride of her merchants;  
Furled are her sails for aye, rent her benches and looms.  
Into the west I bear me that once was captain of thousands,  
Now of forty the chief, fleeing in shame from the sword.  
Naught but the loud wind claps in the shrouds, and the manes of our horses  
Toss as they neigh to the foam, anxious, unsettled and strange.



Still is the moon and the sky mocks the wild, passionate ocean,  
E'en as the mood of my heart frets at the calm of the gods.  
Are ye laughing in scorn, that ye so tear your creation?  
Her ye built in delight, child of all pleasure, our Tyre—  
Lord of dangerous seas, and blood that throbbed at adventure,

Born to seek the unknown, build on all desolate coasts—  
Her ye give to the bent-browed Cyrus, the lover of bowmen.  
She is destroyed, my life! She is laid bare, my love!  
Tyre! Shall thy worthless sons bear naught of thee forth to the ocean,  
Yet the blood of thy heart throbs in alien lands?  
Tyre! Wherever we sail thou art, thou proud one, not fallen,  
Thou art not castles and towers, thou art our hearts and our souls.  
Wide through the world we wander and scatter thy restless endeavour,  
Build we a little Tyre e'er when our foot shall tread earth;  
E'en to the Blessed Isles sow we the seed of thy thirsting,  
Seekers of farthest lands, of Ultima Thule the lords.  
Never a lyre is wrung on the cliffs of ocean-kissed Hellas  
But a wild sound on the wind sings to the sailor at sea.  
Never a fight is fought on the brow on the Asian mountains,  
But with the milk of the bard suckles the warrior born.  
Never a city dead, but her soul on the wings of the ages  
Into the mouth of the new blows the great breath of the old.  
Shout, for Tyre shall survive, and over the years that are dawning  
Ever her spirit of quest run like a wind through the grass.

Shout, for the day that stirs is the, child of the day that is waning,  
She that is dead is born, Tyre, for the ages, Tyre!

THERE is a beauty in neglected things,—  
The violet whiteness of the settled dust  
On chair and mantel, the unchallenged rust  
On knives that cut sour lemon into rings.  
I mark the water beetle's carven wings  
Before my foot has stamped him with disgust.  
This mildewed bread, I notice, has a crust  
Of softer orange than the autumn brings.

Nay, let me brush a cobweb from the wall,  
I am a vandal to the spider's art,—  
That novel pattern crushed, what can recall?  
I cannot play the housewife's grudging part,  
Sponge out the artistry of time, with all  
The colour and the form the hours dispart.

HERE is a gulf of amber dropping down  
Like the clear gleam of honey from a jar.  
No wind moves any shallow to a frown;  
Hills sleep like an old turret clov'n with scar  
Healed by the grey romances. Will a thought  
A Greek maid dropped upon the dappled sand  
Come to our gleaming silence who have sought  
Nepenthe in this clean, untrodden land?

The sea from warm iEgina may have filled  
The watery apse behind the rock with words  
Her pained heart poured about her so they stilled  
The air with love's caress. The waves were birds  
To bear athwart the vast blue hemisphere  
Her adoration, her felicity,  
Her mournfulness, her desolating fear  
That love is never all that love can be.

Or bears the sea a vow of Pericles?  
The shining armour of his fortitude  
Glittering to memory through the centuries  
For men that love a God's similitude.  
For them that love the true, Eternity,  
Not all forgetting life's perpetual quest,  
Moves through the troubled triumph of the sea,  
And though we know it not God is confest.

Heart, drop below the horizon vague the earth  
Thou bearest evermore mid hum of men;  
Conceive immaculately a new birth,  
Thought, wonder, and delight; with power again  
To be the foster-child of magic. Soul,  
Take all the virgin forest and the hills,  
And the impetuous cataract to its goal  
The sea, for thy triumphant strength that fills  
Thy shadeless leaping forth anew: abide  
No longer with recumbent sloth that fails,  
Companion to salt tears—rise deified  
Like sleeping isle awaked by morning on far sails.

I would believe no man hath ever trod  
These altar steps fringed with the cold seaweed.  
Let me be here thy sacristan, O God,  
Sundered from Earth's low thought and lower deed.  
Power primitive is over all the beach,  
The solemn cliff leans evermore to hear,  
The cloud is like the stricken hart to reach

Seclusion of the hills—I feel anear  
Mighty emotion stifled in grey towns  
Sickening with sin, and cold and deaf and blind  
To exaltation loving old renowns  
Of men who sought the last recesses of God's mind.

I am as one who looketh on a ghost.  
Transfigured from the earth, here I am made  
Part of the secrecy withheld the most  
Of all the mighty Being hath displayed.  
The elements of carnal life are hid—  
The strife, the fall, the joy too cheaply spent;  
The selfish ecstasy—and I am bid  
Take heart for Death's awaiting complement.  
What is too pure for daily breath I breathe,  
What too magnificent for light I see;  
Thoughts chambered like a minster cloud enwreath  
My soul, no more too deep, too full, for me.

I THINK—a thousand years ago  
In some dim, Chinese dwelling-place  
Of ancient gods with smiling mouths,  
Smooth faces slit with almond eyes,  
And monstrous feet and folded hands,  
A wrinkled artist, bending low  
Over the lucent ivory,  
Chiselled this melancholy face  
With agonizing patience, till  
The shadowed visions of the soul,  
The strange calm and the wild unrest  
Which this deep musing gave to him,  
And that sad ecstasy of peace  
He knew when muted violins  
Played 'neath the silver-weeping moon—  
Or his brief pangs of happiness  
As when he saw the sighing wind  
Scatter a fountain's opal rain  
Over the thirsting lotus blooms  
At the pale ending of the day—  
And thoughts that lingered in his mind  
Like dreams remembered after sleep  
Were graven by his skilful hands  
Into this young god's weary face.  
Now in this grey-skied town of rain  
And storm-swept trees and pointed spires  
Where yet the cold stone dwellings lack  
The ripening suns of centuries  
His beauty-tortured soul lives on  
Imprisoned in this mournful face  
Of aeon-mellowed ivory.  
For hidden in the placid smile

His resignation lies, and still  
In the down-gazing, mournful eyes,  
Unshed, there stand eternal tears.

I HEARD a thrush in a bright tree,  
It sang with poignant ecstasy;  
It sang of English fields I've seen  
Oft in my dreams, dew-pearled and green;

Of primroses and daffodils  
That light the fragrant vales and hills;  
It sang of little dreaming towns  
Tucked 'neath smooth, undulating downs;

Of little cobbled streets that creep,  
Around about them, red and steep;  
It sang of houses small and thatched  
With open doors and gates unlatched;

Of English hearths and fireside nooks,  
With shelves of well-thumbed, well-loved books;  
It sang of bells, insistent, sweet,  
That bring good folk on quiet feet

To church each peaceful Sabbath day  
To worship God in their own way;  
It sang of snow that softly lights  
The countryside on winter nights.

So sweet and strange to me it seemed,  
Though long and often I have dreamed  
Of England—through a song-bird's power  
Really to roam one lovely hour  
Through English lanes, o'er English hills  
Lit up with golden daffodils.

I LOVE to think when the light fails  
And all the little ships, with folded sails,  
Are safe in port, and all the gay  
Bay-captains and the pirate-kings  
Are done with high adventurings

And gone their way—  
When the young moon, a pearly boat,  
A silver cockle-shell afloat  
In the wide spaces of the night,  
Lays down a trembling path of light  
On the pale ripples of the tideless sea,  
And the woods stir with mystery,  
Swaying together, whispering secret things  
With leafy sighs and hushed deep murmurings,  
When the dark pool is dark no more,  
But jewelled by the moon from shore to shore,  
A cup of crystal, round and tossing bright,  
Brimming with liquid flame and shimmering light—  
Ah! then! I love to think they come  
Trooping along the forest ways,  
Pixies and elves and sprites and flying fays,  
Some with wings filmy-pale and some  
Floating in airy rings from tree to tree,  
Linked with their living garlands, wild with glee,  
Or running pell-mell, shining, unafraid,  
A mazy rout across a moonlit glade,  
With flying footsteps and with gem-bright eyes,  
With wild, sweet laughter and with elfin cries.

\* \* \* \* \*

Down to the shining pool the shining rout  
Has swept with many a silvery shout,  
And all are for the water now,  
Running their fairy shallops out,  
Some like a leaf with curling prow,  
Some pearled and painted like a shell  
Rocking upon the gentle swell,  
With sails of beaten silver, fine  
As a bee's wing and all ashine  
I' the moon. So, all night long  
The fairy fleet sails far and free  
To the beat of an elfin minstrelsy  
And the sound of song,  
Till the dawn-winds wake  
And the thin sails shake  
And the pale mist creeps on the shining lake,  
And the merry tumult of shouts and cries  
And music and laughter fails and dies,  
And the lake lies lone  
To the light of day.  
But whither are all the fairies flown?  
Away—away—  
Only under the forest eaves  
Is the ghostly scurry of fleeing leaves.

WORDS dissolve in the blue,

Trees are my thoughts.  
In the heart of the woodland is a time-old song,  
Its refrain I have lost on my wandering.  
I hear only a bird's call,  
The mountain-sigh of the lake.  
My mind runs down the glades, seeking  
That song of long ago.

But in a dream is a trusting-place,  
Deeper than the heart of the woodland,  
Over the rim of time-worn time,  
Come to me there through the swift trees,  
On your lips the rhythm....  
A plumaged bird has touched your lips with flame,  
Translated you to the impenetrable mountain  
Beneath the crystal silence of its cataract.

The fire of her lips dies on the mountain,  
The ash is scattered by an unrecording wind.  
A thousand autumns hide her trace,  
Nor may we weave a spell of words to find it.

AN old man's mind is like a haunted house;  
Creaking sometimes, and swaying in the gale,  
Full of strange phantom thoughts and half-formed wraiths,  
Old, half-forgotten friends, old spirits pale.  
Who drift therein in his warped memory,  
His sad, white muddled head a-nodding slowly,  
An old man's head is like a haunted house,  
Full of poor ghosts.... An old man's head is holy.

I WOULD have songs for the singing,  
Gold for the spending,  
White birds in blue skies winging,  
A long road seaward bending.

I would have these and no other,  
And I would say to To-morrow,  
"To-day is my only brother,  
I have naught to borrow."

THESE things I love—  
A mountain etched against a sunset sky,

Waves tied with silver ribbons of moonlight;  
Cloud galleons on fleecy wings above  
Slow sailing over;  
A wild bird's vespers when the drowsy land  
Is carpeted with dusk; red blooms and white  
Of tangled clover;  
Star-dappled streams, the feathered phalanx high  
With night at hand.

My treasures these.  
And, knowing them, comes no beatitude  
Of spirit in the ordered works that make  
A city, with its graven artifices  
Of man's endeavour.  
For I have walked by wave-wet rocks, have seen  
The rising sun his jewelled arrows shake  
On sun and river;  
Have known the glory of the waking wood  
When night has been.

LORD, I have lived a lonely life  
And here I be  
Near heaven, I hope, and Thee.  
But oh! I'm loath  
To leave these little earthly things  
To bodies who'll not care....  
There is my Jacobean chair  
They say has seen the home of kings  
(But some say not). At any rate  
It was my mother's, and she gave it me.  
My shining old piano.... All its strings  
Are worn away with so much melody;  
But who will have it when I am not here  
And polish its smooth surface?...  
By the grate  
The little copper fire-dogs—but they are too dear—  
They leave a heart-ache. All my Dresden plate,  
That, I suppose, I'll give to small Annette:  
She will take care of it, I know. And yet  
I hate to think of others handling it.  
Lord, I'm a silly woman!—but I see  
Things I have lived with twenty year and more...  
Stool of mahogany...  
The Chinese cabinet with the broken door  
That rocks so in an earthquake; and the spread  
That once a silly girl made for her bed  
A score of years ago....  
Well, twenty years—and I am still a maid  
And loath to die  
Though they say death brings peace....  
But there's my bird with yellow, fluffy wings;

And the wee stand of inlaid ivory....

*I do not want to die!  
Lord, must I leave these things?*

MY mind is like a wretched room,  
So bare, so drear;  
Dull with a heavy, ugly gloom,  
No light, no cheer.

My thoughts are like the beetles black  
That creep the floor,  
Scurry and hide in yawning crack  
In wall and door.

My feelings,—like the meagre light  
My candle gives,  
So faint, so fearful of the night,  
It scarcely lives.

My outlook through a dingy pane—  
Distress and sin—  
Or if I turn around again  
To look within—

My room is but a sordid place—  
The paper torn,  
Nothing of beauty there, nor grace,  
All mean, forlorn.

I DWELL content upon the plains by day  
And see the mountains rise,  
With their snow-mantled crests like slender spires  
Against the azure skies.

Nor wish to climb their shining pinnacles  
By cliff and glacial height,  
But I am spent with envy when I watch  
The mountains in the night.



When Ruapehu speaks the Pleiades,  
And Taranaki hears a star-born croon,  
And Aorangi's gleaming brows are spanned  
By a young sickle moon.

THE Moon and I a secret share!  
See how she goes, all delicate and rare,  
So slim and fair,  
On light white feet  
Across the heavenly meadow high  
Where bloom pale daisy stars....  
With fingers long and bright  
She parts the leaves  
And peers impatient through the tall, damp grasses;

Again, she petulant throws down  
Treasure of silver and a silvern star  
Before the silent woods to bribe their secret from them.

"Ah, forest kind, hides here my young Endymion?"

But no: the trees but murmur sleepily  
And shake their nestling heads,  
The rushes by the lake but bend and sway  
And lean to see her brightness in the mirror-pool,  
As she, poor hapless one, goes questing on her way,  
Forever seeking, seeking,  
Her young Endymion.

Ah, poor wan little Moon,  
How do I know  
All your secret and your woe?

White one, I too have my love Endymion...  
And I too shall soon go eagerly seeking  
Through the knee-high bracken and over the stream,  
By the ghostly copse where the white owls hoot  
I shall go to that brown little hut in the wood  
Where dreams and waits my gipsy lover.  
Warm are his lips, and his grey eyes deep,  
And a stolen star lies drowned in each;  
His cheeks are as brown as the russet leaf,  
And smooth as a nut in the autumn weather,

And his black hair sheens like a blackbird's feather,  
And ah! how his arms are strong!...  
His head shall lie between my arms,  
And close shall I hold him and weave a charm

Lest you, Moonlady, should passing see him,  
And steal from me, you with your long bright fingers,  
His heart so wild and his love so tender....

There, in the gloom where the pine-fire smoulders,  
He stirs and wakes. Ah, my gipsy lover!...

Oh, you poor little sad white Moon!

As I sit by my cottage door  
At evening of the day,  
And watch the young folks, two by two,  
Go down the lovers' way,  
And hear from old folks passing by  
The things that old folks say,

It whirrs and clacks, my spinning-wheel,  
And seems to mock at me,  
For I am wed to crooked John  
And he has gone to sea,  
And Spring winds stir the rebel thing  
That is the heart of me.

I know that in the coppice now  
The pale blue harebells swing,  
And every linnet in the wood  
Is singing of the Spring,  
And fain would I in the woodland ways,  
A maid, go loving.

FINE fresh mornin'; a real Spring day; Alps a smother of snow,  
Sea like a jolly good laugh spread out mile upon mile below,  
*Kowhai* all yellow wi' blossom.... Nor'-east? Nor'-west it'll be, from here....  
Ay!—Sharp and sudden, an' bitter as ever, yonder the Hill stands clear.

...Nothin' to see! Nor there couldn't be anythin' now—only tongueless dust,  
Snug and deep down under the tussock.—Keep guard all the same I must!  
Never had nerve to revisit the place; nor I'll ever get nerve to quit  
Here, where I can have it before me, an' see an' make sure of it.

Snow's the safest; in storms I'm easy; days o' the runnin' fire,  
I bother a bit—but it licks the crag, an' never creeps up no higher.  
Musterin' days—that's the terrible time!—Sickish I turn an' cold....  
Men—an' dogs!—nosin' over and over ... *an' what if you up an' told?*

Well, you ain't gone back on me yet, old Hill! Nobody's ever knew,  
Only me, an' the stars an' sea, in the twenty year—an' you.  
Twenty year! an' only in rains (which I reckoned would help him rot),  
Bet you there ain't been more than ten minutes together when I've forgot.

...Winter's evenin' an' wet: an' we'd swagged it twenty-five mile an' more,  
An' there was the lights at last, but far; an' he grizzled an' growled an' swore.  
An' *I* was cold, an' *I* was starvin', an' there, on top o' the Hill,  
He angered me so as I struck—By God! but I never meant to kill!

—Here I came, for, wherever you turns, here's the view of It, up an' down,  
An' I'm near enough for the papers to tell if anythin's told in town.  
Here I've lived, way back in the Bush—dunno what the others think.  
They come, an' they go; but my *whare's* away by itself, an' I don't dare drink.

Men as I've known 'ud ha' carried it off—married, an' started sheep.  
Couldn't,—just think o' the woman. ... Besides, what if I talk asleep?  
Back in the *whare* there's none to hear, an' the wind it bellows and blows—  
Lord! it's lonesome and eerie enough—but it's safe, though. *Nobody knows!*

In the dead o' night, arthe very hour, often I wake, an'—Hark!...  
Nothin'l only the dreadful sea, tellin' the dreadful dark;  
An' they terrible stars a-pointin' at me, witnessin', layin' bare—  
An' yet, there's a kind o' little relief that they know, like the Hill: they share.

But I couldn't ha' done wi' lambs, I couldn't ha' stood the face of a child—  
There's little kiddies live hereabouts that pretty well drives me wild.  
When I have to pass by the schoolhouse door my eyes get sneakin' away;  
Turn o' themselves to their own place, *there!*—waitin' across the Bay.

It's a rummy thing, how the Spring can start, an' the sun keep shinin' still,  
Year after year,—an' all the time, *That* laid up in the Hill.  
An' the stars go on, an' the sea goes on, an' the lambs can be born an' be.  
You'd ha' thought 'twould ha' changed the world.—It has: but only for him, an' me.

Ay! him in the Hill, an' me outside,—we ain't very far apart;  
For the shade o' you shadows my eyes, old Hill, an' the weight o' you tears my heart.

I struck but once; for twenty years you've held my neck to the knife.  
Whether you tell in the end or not,—ain't he had his "life for a life"?

Was that a shake? ... Thank God, it wasn't!  
Shakes turn me silly with fright,  
For then's your chance, if you've got a grudge, to  
spit him up into the light.  
Well, what if you did, eh? Whiles I fancy hangin' could be no worse....  
Dunno if you been my best o' friends all the while, or *my* bitterest curse.

Here's the way out, now—over the Point, where the sea-birds swing and dive;  
The Hill 'ud be hidden. ... An' what do I get, anyway, by bein' alive?  
Jump over an' finish it!...  
Can't! I can't! I've never had pluck to tell.  
I haven't the pluck to hurry that smallest o' steps—from here to Hell.

Well, some day it'll finish itself. I've written it all, so then  
Everybody on earth'll know; but I shall ha' done with men.  
Poor old Jack, and his Maker to face ... but—one bit o' the torment past:  
*No Hill!* —all, everythin', known, an' open, an' public at last!

A KISS is something short and sweet,  
Which may be lengthened so discreetly  
That Love shall mock the prude's conceit,  
"A kiss is something short." And, Sweet—  
(*Exferientia docet*)—fleet  
Is youth; let's test the thing completely:  
A kiss is something short and sweet  
Which may be lengthened—so! ... *Discreetly?*

LITTLE men with red caps delving in the embers,  
Looking for the lost flame that nobody remembers;  
Looking for the Yule log, looking for the laughter,

Fearful of the grey ash soon to follow after.

Youth is like the Yule log, middle life the embers,  
Age is but the ashes of a cycle of Decembers.  
Youth is like the Yule log, lit with merry laughter,  
Careless of the grey ash soon to follow after.

Tick, tock, tick, tock, still the hours are flying,  
Twenty brave pixie men; twenty shovels plying....  
Youth is like the Yule log, but middle age remembers  
Little men with red caps delving in the embers.

THE gate. And then I step on dewy grass,  
All greenly glad and waking as I pass,  
There at *my* side slim, spreading English trees  
Quiver with tender newness to the breeze;  
The netted arches in thin silhouette,  
The tasselled larches in sweet company set,  
Pink glows of flowering cherries, nodding balls  
Of guelder roses, while on grim, green walls  
Beyond them giant firs are sentinels.

I feel the scent in tangled sweetness shed  
From daphne, hidden in a grassy bed;  
Wee, waxen heath stands straight; the bluegums' talk,  
Whisper and swish, comes to me in my walk;  
Among the creeping undergrowth below,  
Shy little hidden, smothered flowers grow,  
And as I cross the hedged and shadowy lawn  
The thin ghost breeze slips by, and now the dawn  
Comes in its chariot of cloud, sun-drawn.

IN her grey majesty of ancient stone  
She queens it proudly, though the sun's caress  
Her piteous cheeks, ravished of bloom, confess,  
And her dark eyes his bridegroom-glance have known.  
Robed in her flowing parks, serene, alone,  
She fronts the East; and with the tropic stress  
Her smooth brow ripples into weariness;  
Yet hers the sea for footstool, and for throne  
A continent predestined. Round her trails  
The turbid squalor of her streets, and dim  
Into the dark heat-haze her domes flow up;  
Her long, lean fingers, with their grey old nails  
Giving her thirsty lips to the cool brim

Of the bronze beauty of her harbour's cup.

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