

AC #24
Pg 2

AMBERGRIS

PREFACE

IN response to a widely-spread lack of interest in my writings, I have consented to publish a small and unrepresentative selection from the same. With characteristic cunning I have not included any poems published later than the Third Volume of my Collected Works.

The selection has been made by a committee of seven competent persons, sitting separately.

Only those poems have been included which obtained a majority vote.

This volume, thus almost ostentatiously democratic, is therefore now submitted to the British Public with the fullest confidence that it will be received with exactly the same amount of acclamation as that to which I have become accustomed.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

Ag #24
pg. 4

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FROM 'THE TALE OF ARCHAIS'	
SONG	1
IN HOLLOW STONES, SCAWFELL	3
FROM 'SONGS OF THE SPIRIT'	
THE GOAD	7
ASTROLOGY	11
FROM 'JEPHTHAH'	
CHORUS OF MAIDENS	14
FROM 'MYSTERIES'	
DE PROFUNDIS	20
BESIDE THE RIVER	32
PERDURABO	34
IN THE WOODS WITH SHELLEY	35
FROM 'THE FATAL FORCE'	
CHORUS	39
CHORUS	41
CHORUS	46

	PAGE
FROM 'THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST'	
THE MAY QUEEN	50
THE REAPER	54
THE PALACE OF THE WORLD	57
THE ROSICRUCIAN	62
THE ATHANOR	66
A DEATH IN THESSALY	82
FROM 'TANNHÄUSER'	
SHEPHERD BOY'S SONG	76
TANNHÄUSER'S SONG	77
FROM 'ORACLES'	
THE HERMIT'S HYMN TO SOLITUDE	88
ON WAIKIKI BEACH	94
FROM 'ALICE: AN ADULTERY'	
MARGARET	99
RED POPPY	102
ALICE	107

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FROM 'THE ARGONAUTS'	
CHORUS OF SHIPBUILDERS	109
AT WAIKIKI	111
THE HARBOUR, VERA CRUZ	113
THE SONG OF THE SIREN	
LEUCOSIA	117
HONG KONG HARBOUR	120
AT PROME	123
FROM 'THE STAR AND THE GARTER'	
SONG	126
SONG	127
ROSA MUNDI	130
OTHER LOVE SONGS	
DORA	147
NORAH	149
EDITH	151
ROSE	152
EILEEN	153
HÉLÈNE	154
FROM 'GARGOYLES'	
SONG . . . . .	. . . . .
SAID . . . . .	. . . . .
PRAYER . . . . .	. . . . .
THE KING-GHOST . . . . .	. . . . .
FROM 'RODIN IN RIME'	
TÊTE DE FEMME (MUSÉE DU LUXEMBOURG) . . . . .	. . . . .
RÉVEIL D'ADONIS . . . . .	. . . . .
ACROBATES . . . . .	. . . . .
FAUNESSE . . . . .	. . . . .
BALZAC . . . . .	. . . . .
FROM 'ORPHEUS'	
THE HOURS . . . . .	. . . . .
AUTUMN . . . . .	. . . . .
INVOCATION OF HECATE . . . . .	. . . . .
THE REGAINING OF EURYDICE . . . . .	. . . . .
THE MÆNADS INVOKE DIONYSUS . . . . .	. . . . .
ORPHEUS INVOKES THE LORDS OF KHEM . . . . .	. . . . .
THE STAR-GODDESS SINGS OF ORPHEUS DEAD . . . . .	. . . . .

AMBERGRIS

FROM 'THE TALE OF ARCHAIS'

Song

ERE the grape of joy is golden
With the summer and the sun,
Ere the maidens un beholden
Gather one by one,
To the vineyard comes the shower,
No sweet rain to fresh the flower,
But the thunder rain that cleaves,
Rends and ruins tender leaves.

Ere the wine of perfect pleasure
From a perfect chalice poured,
Swells the veins with such a measure
As the garden's lord
Makes his votaries dance to, death
Draws with soft delicious breath
To the maiden and the man.
Love and life are both a span.

E

AC # 24
Pg 5

AMBERGRIS

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E

AMBERGRIS

Ere the crimson lips have planted
Paler roses, warmer grapes,
Ere the maiden breasts have panted,
And the sunny shapes
Flit around to bless the hour,
Comes men know not what false flower :
Ere the cup is drained, the wine
Grows unsweet, that was divine.

All the subtle airs are proven
False at dewfall ; at the dawn
Sin and sorrow, interwoven,
Like a veil are drawn
Over love and all delight.
Grey desires invade the white.
Love and life are but a span ;
Woe is me ! and woe is man !

In Hollow Stones, Scarfell

BLIND the iron pinnacles edge the twilight ;
Blind and black the ghylls of the mountain clefted,
Crag and snow-clad slope in a distant vision
Rise as before me.

Here (it seems) my feet by a tiny torrent
Press the moss with a glad delight of being :
Here my eyes look up to the riven mountain
Split by the thunder,

Rent and rifted, shattered of wind and lightning,
Smitten, scarred, and stricken of sun and tempest,
Seamed with wounds, like adamant, shod with iron,
Torn by the earthquake.

Still through all the stresses of doubtful weather
Hold the firm old pinnacles, sky-defying ;
Still the icy feet of the wind relentless.
Walk in their meadows.

Fields that flower not, blossom in no new spring-
tide ;

Fields where grass nor herb nor abounding darnel
Flourish ; fields more barren, devoid, than ocean's
Pasture ungarnered.

Deserts, stone as arid as sand, savannahs
Black with wrecks, a wilderness evil, fruitless ;
Still, to me, a land of the bluest heaven
Studded with silver.

Castles bleak and bare as the wrath of ocean,
Wasted wall and tower, as the blast had risen,
Taken keep and donjon, and hurled them earth-
ward,
Rent and uprooted.

Such rock-ruins people me tribes and nations,
Kings and queens and princes as pure as dawning,
Brave as day and true ; and a happy people
Lulled into freedom ;

Nations past the stormier times of tyrants,
Past the sudden spark of a great rebellion,
Past the iron gates that are thrust asunder
Not without bloodshed :

IN HOLLOW STONES, CAMEL

Past the rule of might and the rule of lying,
 Past the rule of might and the rule of lying,
 Free from gold's illusion, and free to cherish
 Joys of life diviner than war and passion--
 Falsest of phantoms.

of lying,
 Free from
 gold's illusion,
 and free to
 cherish

Only now true love, like a sun of molten
 Glory, surging up from a sea of liquid
 Silver, golden, exquisite, overflowing,
 Soars into starland.

Sphere on sphere unite in the chant of wonder ;
 Star to star must add to the glowing chorus ;
 Sun and moon must mingle and speed the echo
 Flaming through heaven.

Night and day divide, and the music strengthens,
 Gathers roar of seas and the dirge of moorlands ;
 Tempest, thunder, birds, and the breeze of summer
 Join to augment it.

So the sound-world, filled of the fire of all things,
 Rolls majestic torrents of mighty music
 Through the stars where dwell the avenging spirits
 Bound in the whirlwind . . .

So the cliffs their Song . . . For the mist re-
gathers,
Girds them bride-like, fit for the sun to kiss them ;
Darkness falls like dewfall about the hill-sides ;
Night is upon me.

Now to me remain in the doubtful twilight
Stretches bare of flower, but touched with whispers,
Grey with huddled rocks, and a space of wood-
land,
Pine-tree and poplar.

Now a stream to ford and a stile to clamber ;
Last the inn, a book, and a quiet corner . . .
Fresh as Spring, there kisses me on the forehead
Sleep, like a sister.

FROM 'SONGS OF THE SPIRIT'

The Goad

ἀν' ὑγρὸν ἀμπαίην
αἰθέρα πρόσω γαίας Ἑλλανίας
ἀστέρας ἐσπέρους
οἶον, οἶον ἄλγος ἔπαθον, φίλαι.

EURIPIDES.

AMSTERDAM, December 23rd, 1897.

LET me pass out beyond the city gate.
All day I loitered in the little streets
Of black worn houses tottering, like the fate
That hangs above my head even now, and meets
Prayer and defiance as not hearing it.
They lean, these old black streets! a little sky
Peeps through the gap, the rough stone path is lit
Just for a little by the sun, and I
Watch his red face pass over, fade away
To other streets, and other passengers,
See him take pleasure where the heathen pray,
See him relieve the hunter of his furs,

All the wide world awaiting him, all folk
Glad at his coming, only I must weep :
Rise he or sink, my weary eyes invoke
Only the respite of a little sleep ;
Sleep, just a little space of sleep, to rest
The fevered head and cool the aching eyes ;
Sleep for a space, to fall upon the breast
Of the dear God, that He may sympathise.
Long has the day drawn out ; a bitter frost
Sparkles along the streets ; the shipping heaves
With the slow murmur of the sea, half lost
In the last rustle of forgotten leaves.
Over the bridges pass the throngs ; the sound,
Deep and insistent, penetrates the mist—
I hear it not ; I contemplate the wound
Stabbed in the flanks of my dear silver Christ.
He hangs in anguish there ; the crown of thorns
Pierces that palest brow ; the nails drip blood ;
There is the wound ; no Mary by Him mourns,
There is no John beside the cruel wood.
I am alone to kiss the silver lips ;
I rend my clothing for the temple veil ;
My heart's black night must act the sun's eclipse ;
My groans must play the earthquake, till I
quail

THE GOAD

At my own dark imagining. And now
The wind is bitterer; the air breeds snow;
I put my Christ away; I turn my brow
Towards the south stedfastly; my feet must go
Some journey of despair. I dare not turn
To meet the sun; I will not follow him:
Better to pass where sand and sulphur burn,
And days are hazed with heat, and nights are
dim

With some malarial poison. Better lie
Far and forgotten on some desert isle,
Where I may watch the silent ships go by,
And let them share my burden for awhile.
Let me pass out beyond the city gate
Where I may wander by the water still,
And see the faint few stars immaculate
Watch their own beauty in its depth, and chill
Their own desire within its icy stream.

Let me move on with vacant eyes, as one
Lost in the labyrinth of some ill dream,
Move and move on, and never see the sun
Lap all the mist with orange and red gold,
Throw some lank windmill into iron shade,
And stir the chill canal with manifold
Rays of clear morning; never grow afraid

When he dips down beyond the far fiat land,
Know never more the day and night apart,
Know not where frost has laid his iron hand
Save only that it fastens on my heart ;
Save only that it grips with icy fire
These veins no fire of hell could satiate ;
Save only that it quenches this desire.
Let me pass out beyond the city gate.

Astrology

A LONELY spirit seeks the midnight hour,
When souls have power
To cast away one moment bonds of clay,
And touch the day
With pallid, wistful lips beyond the earth,
And bring to birth
New thoughts with which life long has travailed ;
As if one dead
Should rise and utter secrets of the tomb,
And from hell's womb
Or heaven's breast bring all the load of fears,
Toils of long years,
Sorrows of life and agonies of death,
Hard caught-up breath,
The labouring hands of love, the cheeks of shame,
The gloomy flame
Of lust, the cruel torment of desire
More than hell fire,
And bid them fade, as if the bryony
Let her flower die,

And banished them through space, as if a star
Dropped through the far
Vault of the sky, and, as a lamp extinct
With blood-red tinct,
Went out. So lonely in mysterious night
A wild, strange light
Flickers around the sacred head of man,
And bids him scan
The scroll of heaven, and see if there be not,
Black with no blot
Of cloud, but golden lettered on the blue
That mothers dew,
This message of good hope, good trust, good fate,
And good estate :
'Work on, hope ever, let your faith be built
Of gold ungilt ;
Your love exceed the starry vault for height,
The heaven for might ;
Your faith wax firmer than a ship at sleep
On the grey deep,
Anchored in some most certain anchorage
From ocean's rage ;
Your patience stand when mountains shake and
quail
Before the gale

AC #24
pg 11

ASTROLOGY

Of God's great tribulation. Make thee sure
Thou canst endure!
And work, work ever, sleep not, gird thy head
With garlands red
Of blood from swollen veins forced in bitter toil
To win some spoil
Of knowledge from the caverns of the deep!
So shall the steep
Pathways of heaven gleam with loftier fires
Than earth's desires.
So shalt thou conquer Space, and lastly climb
The walls of Time,
And by the golden path the great have trod
Reach up to God!'

*FROM 'JEPHTHAH**Chorus of Maidens*

O THE time of dule and teen!
O the dove the hawk has snared!
Would to God we had not been,
We, who see our maiden queen,
Love has slain whom hate had spared.
Sorrow for our sister sways
All our maiden bosoms bared
To the dying vesper rays,
Where the sun below the bays
Of the West is stooping;
All our hearts together drooping,
Flowers the ocean bears.
All the garb that gladness wears
To a rent uncouth attire
Changed with cares;
Happy songs our love had made
Ere the sun had sunk his fire,
In the moonrise fall and fade,

CHORUS OF MAIDENS

15

And the dregs of our desire
Fall away to death.
Tears divide our labouring breath
That our sister—O our sister !
Moon and sun and stars have kissed her!—
She must touch the lips of death,
Touch the lips whose coldness saith :
Thou art clay.
Let us fare away, away
To the ice whose ocean gray
Tumbles on the beach of rock,
Where the wheeling vultures mock
Our distress with horrid cries ;
Where the flower relenting dies,
And the sun is sharp to slay ;
Where the ivory dome above
Glimmers like the dawn of love
On the weary way ;
Where the ibex chant and call
Over tempest's funeral ;
Where the hornèd beast is shrill,
And the eagle hath its will,
And the shadows fall
Sharp and black, till day is passed
Over to the ocean vast ;

Where the barren rocks resound
Only to the rending roar
Of the shattering streams that pour
Rocks by ice eternal bound,
Myriad cascades that crowned
Once the far resounding throne
Of the mountain spirits strong,
All the treacherous souls that throng
Desolate abodes of stone,
Barren of all comely things,
Given to the splendid kings,
Gloomy state, and glamour dark,
Swooping jewel-feathered wings,
Eyes translucent with a spark
Of the world of fire, that swings
Gates of adamant below
Lofty minarets of snow.
Thence the towering flames arise,
Where the flashes white and wise
Find their mortal foe.
Let us thither, caring not
Anything, or any more,
Since the sorrow of our lot
Craves to pass the abysmal door.
Never more for us shall twine

CHORUS OF MAIDENS

17

Rosy fingers on the vine.
Never maiden lips shall cull
Myriad blossoms beautiful.
Never cheeks shall dimple over
At the perfume of the clover.
Never bosoms bright and round
Shall be garlanded and bound
With the chain of myrtle, wreathed
By the fingers of the maid
Each has chosen for a mate,
When the west wind lately breathed
Murmurs in the wanton glade
Of the day that dawneth late
In a maiden's horoscope,
Dawning faith and fire and hope
On the spring that only knew
Flowers and butterflies and dew,
Skies and seas and mountains blue,
On the spring that wot not of
Fruit and falling leaves and love.
Never dew-dashed foreheads fair
Shall salute the idle air.
Never shall we wander deep
Where the fronds of fern, asleep,
Kiss her rosy feet that pass

AMBERGRIS

On the spangled summer grass,
Half awake, and drowse again.
Never more our feet shall stain
Purple with the joyous grape,
Whence there rose a fairy shape
In the fume and must and juice,
Singing lest our eyes escape
All his tunic wried and loose
With the feet that softly trod
In the vat the fairy god.
Never more our eyes shall swim
Looking for the love of him
In the magic moon that bent
Over maidens moon-content,
When the summer woods were wet
With our dewy songs, that set
Quivering all seas and snows,
Stars and tender winds that fret
Lily, lily, laughing rose,
Sighing, sighing violet,
Dusky pansy, swaying rush,
And the stream that flows
Singing, ringing softly : Hush !
Listen to the bird that goes
Wooping to the brown mate's bough ;

CHORUS OF MAIDENS

19

Listen to the breeze that blows
Over cape and valley now
At the silence of the noon,
Or the slumber hour
Of the white delicious moon
Like a lotus-flower !
Let us sadly, slowly, go
To the silence of the snow !

*FROM 'MYSTERIES'**De Profundis*

BLOOD, mist, and foam, then darkness. On my eyes
Sits heaviness, the poor worn body lies
Devoid of nerve and muscle; it were death
Save for the heart that throbs, the breast that sighs.

The brain reels drowsily, the mind is dulled,
Deadened and drowned by noises that are lulled
By the harsh poison of the hateful breath.
All sense and sound and seeing is annulled.

Within a body dead a deadened brain
Beats with the burden of a shameful pain,
The sullen agony that dares to think,
And think through sleep, and wake to think again.

Fools! bitter fools! Our breaths and kisses seem
Constrained in devilry, debauch, and dream:
Lives logged in the morass of meat and drink,
Loves dipped in Phlegethon, the perjured stream.

AC # 24
Pg 15

DE PROFUNDIS

Behold we would that hours and minutes pass,
Watch the sands falling in the eager glass ;
 To wile their weariness is pleasure's bliss ;
But ah! the years! like smoke They fade, alas!

We weep them as they slip away ; we gaze
Back on the likeness of the former days—
 The hair we fondle and the lips we kiss—
Roses grow yellow, and no purple stays.

Ah! the old years! Come back, ye vanished hours
We wasted ; come, grow red, ye faded flowers!
 What boots the weariness of olden time
Now, when old age, a tempest-fury, lowers?

Up to high God beyond the weary land
The days drift mournfully ; His hoary hand
 Gathers them. Is it so? My foolish rime
Dreams they are links upon an endless band.

The planets draw in endless orbits round
The sun ; itself revolves in the profound
 Black wells of space ; the comet's mystic track
By the strong rule of a closed curve is bound.

Why not with time? To-morrow we may see
The circle ended—if to-morrow be—

And gaze on chaos, and a week bring back
Adam and Eve beneath the apple tree.

Or, like the comet, the wild race may end
Out into darkness, and our circle bend

Round to all glory, in a sudden sweep,
And speed triumphant with the sun to friend.

Love will not leave my home. She knows my
tears,

My angers and caprices ; still my ears

Listen to singing voices, till I weep
Once more, less sadly, and set hounds on fears.

She will not leave me comfortless. And why?
Through the dimmed glory of my clouded eye

She catches one sharp glint of love for her ;
She will not leave me ever till I die ;—

Nay, though I die ! Beyond the distant gloom
Heaven springs, a fountain, out of Change's womb

Time would all men within the grave inter :—
For Time himself shall no god find a tomb ?

DE PROFUNDIS

Glory and love and work precipitate
The end of man's desire—so sayeth Fate.

Man answers: Love is stronger, work more sure,
Glory more fadeless than her shafts abate.

Though all worlds fail, the pulse of Life be still,
God fall, all darken, she hath not her will

Of deeds beyond recall, that shall endure :
For us, these three divinest glasses fill,

Fill to the brim with lustrous dew, nor fail
To leave the blossom and the nightingale,

Love's earlier kiss, and manhood's glowing
prime!
Let these suffice. Shall man or Fate prevail?

Lo, we are blind, and dubious fingers grope
In Despair's dungeon for the key of Hope ;

Lo, we are chained, and with a broken rhyme
Would file our fetters and enlarge our scope.

Yet ants may move the mountain ; none is small!
But he who stretches out no arm at all :

Toadstools have wrecked fair cities in a night :
One poets' song may bid a kingdom fall.

Add to thy fellow-men one ounce of aid—
The block begins to shift, the start is made :
The rest is thine ; with overwhelming might
The balance changes, and the task is paid.

Join'st thou thy feeble hands in foolish prayer
To him thy brain hath moulded and set there
In thy brain's heaven? Such a god replies
As thy fears move. So men pray everywhere.

What God there be, is real. By His might
Begot the universe within the night ;
If He had prayed to His own mind's weak lies
Think'st thou the heaven and earth had stood
upright?

Remember Him, but smite! No workman hews
His stone aright whose nervy arms refuse
To ply the chisel, but are raised to ask
A visionary foreman he may choose

From the distortions of a sodden mind.
God did first work on earth when womankind
He chipped from Adam's rib—a thankless task
I wot his wisdom has long since repined.

DE PROFUNDIS

25

Christ touched the leper and the widow's son ;
And thou wouldst serve the work the Perfect One
Began, by folding arms and gazing up
To heaven, as if thy work were rightly done.

I tell thee, He should say, if ye were met :
'Thou hadst a talent—ah, thou hast it yet
Wrapped in a napkin! thou shalt drain the cup
Of that damnation that may not forget

'The wasted hours!' Ah, bitter interest
Of our youth's capital—forgotten zest
In all the pleasures of o'erflowing life,
Wine tasteless, tired the brain, and cold the breast!

Ah! but if with it is one good deed wrought,
One kind word spoken, one immortal thought
Born in thee, all is paid : the weary strife
Grows victory. 'Love is all and Death is nought!'

Such an one wrote that word as I would meet,
Lay my life's burden at his silver feet,
Have him give ear if I say 'Master.' Yea!
I know no heaven, no honour, half so sweet!

He passed before me on the wheel of Time,
 He who knows no Time—the intense sublime
 Master of all philosophy and play,
 Lord of all love and music and sweet rime.

Follow thou him! Work ever, if thy heart
 Be fervent with one hope, thy brain with art,
 Thy lips with song, thine arm with strength to
 smite :

Achieve some act ; its name shall not depart.

Christ laid Love's corner-stone, and Cæsar built
 The tower of glory ; Sappho's life was spilt
 From fervent lips the torch of song to ignite :
 Thou mayst add yet a stone—if but thou wilt.

And yet the days stream by ; night shakes the day
 From his pale throne of purple, to allay
 The tremors of the earth ; day smiteth dark
 With the swift poignard dipped in Helios' ray.

The days stream by ; with lips and cheeks grow
 pale

On their indomitable breast we sail.

There is a favouring wind ; our idle bark
 Lingers, we raise no silk to meet the gale.

DE PROFUNDIS

27

The bank slips by; we gather not its fruit,
We plant no seed, we irrigate no root
True men have planted; and the tare and thorn
Spring to rank weedy vigour; poisons shoot

Into the overspreading foliage;
So as days darken into weary age
The flowers are fewer; the weeds are stronger
born,
And hands are grown too feeble to assuage

Their venom; then, the unutterable sea!
Is she green-cinctured with the earlier tree
Of Life? Do blossoms blow, or weeds create
A foul rank undergrowth of misery?

From the deep water of the bitterest brine
Drowned children raise their arms; their lips
combine

To force a shriek; bid them go contemplate
The cold philosophy of Zeno's shrine?

Nay, stretch a hand! Although their eagle clutch
O'erturn thy skiff, yet it is overmuch

To grieve for that: life is not so divine—
I count it little grief to part with such!

We are wild serpents in a ring of fire ;
Our necks stretch out, our haggard eyes asp
In desperation ; from the fearful line
Our coils revulse in impotence and ire.

An idle song it was the poet sang,
A quavering note—no brazen kettle's clang,
But gentle, drooping, tearful. Nay, achi
I can remember how the finish rang

Clear, sharp, and loud ; the harp is glad to
And give the clarion one note silver-high.
It was too sweet for music, and I weave
In vain the tattered woof of memory.

Ashes and dust !
Cold cinders dead !
Our swords are rust ;
Our lives are fled
Like dew on glass.
In vain we lust ;
Our hopes are sped,
Alas ! alas !
From heaven we are thrust, we have no mo
Alas !

DE PROFUNDIS

Gold hairs and gray!
Red lips and white!
Warm hearts, cold clay!
Bright day, dim night!
Our spirits pass
Like the hours away.
We have no light,
Alas! alas!
We have no more day, we are fain to say
Alas!

In Love's a cure
For Fortune's hate;
In Love's a lure
Shall laugh at Fate;
We have tolled Death's knell;
All streams are pure;
We are new-create;
All's well, all's well!
We have God to endure, we are very sure
All's well!

In such wise rang the challenge unto Death
With clear high eloquence and happy breath;
So did a brave sad heart grow glad again
And mock the riddle that the dead Sphinx saith.

When I am dead, remember me for this
 That I bade workers work, and lovers kiss ;
 Laughed with the Stoic at the dream of pain
 And preached with Jesus the evangel—bliss.

When I am dead, think kindly. rail my song
 'Twas the poor utterance of an eager tongue ;
 I stutter in my rime? my heart was full
 Of greater longings, more divinely wrung

By love and pity and regret and trust,
 High hope from heaven that God will be just,
 Spurn not the child because his mind was dull
 Still less condemn him for his father's lust.

Yet I think priests shall answer Him in vain :
 Their gospel of disgrace, disease, and pain,
 Shall move His heart of Love to such a wrat
 O Heart! Turn back and look on Love again

Behold, I have seen visions, and dreamed dream
 My verses eddy in slow wandering streams,
 Veer like the wind, and know no certain path
 Yet their worst shades are tinged with dawn
 beams.

DE PROFUNDIS

31

I have dreamed life a circle or a line,
Called God, and Fate, and Chance, and Man,
divine :

I know not all I say, but through it all
Mark the dim hint of ultimate sunshine !

Remember me for this ! And when I go
To sleep the last sleep in the slumberous snow,
Let child and man and woman yet recall
One little moment that I loved you so !

Let some high pinnacle my tombstone be,
My epitaph the murmur of the sea,
The clouds of heaven be fleeces for my pall,
My unknown grave the cradle of the free.

Beside the River

RAIN, rain in May. The river sadly flows,
A sullen silver crossed with sable bars,
Damp, gloomy, shivering, while reluctant stars
Between swart masses of thick clouds that close,
Drive with drooped plumes their wingèd cars
Towards sleep, the scythe of woes.

Woes, woes in Spring. Ere summer deepeneth
The pink of roses to a purpler tint ;
Ere ripening corn shafts back the sudden glint
Of sunshine that brings healing with the breath
Of western winds that sigh, they hint
Of sleep, twin soul with death.

Death, death ere dawn. The night is over dark
Trees are grown terrible ; the shadows wan
Make shudder all the tense desires of man ;
No gleam of moonlight bears the golden mark

BESIDE THE RIVER

33

Love, love to-night. To-night is all we know,
Is all our care ; lips joined to lips we lie,
Tender hands touching, hearts in tune to die,
With willing kiss reluctant to let go ;
So sweet love's last enduring sigh
For sleep, so sure, so slow.

Sleep, sleep to-night. Our arms are intertwined ;
Breath desires breath and hand imprisons hand ;
Breezes cool faces, rosy with the brand
Of long sweet kisses ; sun shall dawn and find
Two lovers who have passed the land
Of sleep—and found Death kind.

Perdurabo

EXILE from humankind! The snow's fresh flak
Are warmer than men's hearts. My mind is
wrought

Into dark shapes of solitary thought
That loves and sympathises, but awakes
No answering love or pity. What a pang
Hath this strange solitude to aggravate
The self-abasement and the blows of Fate!
No snake of hell hath so severe a fang!

I am not lower than all men—I feel
Too keenly. Yet my place is not above,
Though I have this—unalterable Love
In every fibre. I am crucified
Apart on a lone burning crag of steel,
Tortured, cast out; and yet—I shall abide

In the Woods with Shelley

SING, happy nightingale, sing ;
Past is the season of weeping ;
Birds in the wood are on wing,
Lambs in the meadow are leaping.
Can there be any delight still in the buttercups
sleeping?

Dawn, paler daffodil, dawn ;
Smile, for the winter is over ;
Sunlight makes golden the lawn,
Spring comes and kisses the clover ;
All the wild woodlands await poet and songster and
lover.

Linger, dew, linger ! and gem
All the fresh flowers in the garland !
Blossom, leaf, bud and green stem
Flash with your light to some far land,
Where men shall wonder if you be not a newly-

Ah! the sweet scents of the woods!

Ah! the sweet sounds of the heaven!

Sights of impetuous floods,

Foam like the daisy at even,

Folding o'er passionate gold petals that sunrise had
riven!

See, like my life is the stream

Now its desire is grown quiet;

Life was a passionate dream

Once, when light fancy ran riot,

Now, ere youth fades, flows in peace past woody
bank and green eyot.

Highest, white heather and rock,

Mountain and pine, with young laughter,

Breezes that murmur and mock

Duller delights to come after,

Wild as a swallow that dives whither the sea wind
would waft her.

Lower, an ocean of flowers,

Trees that are warmer and leafier,

Starrier, sunnier hours

Spurning the stain of all grief here,

Bringing a quiet delight to us, beyond our belief

IN THE WOODS WITH SHELLEY 37

Lastly, the uttermost sea,
 Starred with the flakes of spray sunlit,
 Blue as its caverns that be
 Crystal, resplendent, yet unlit ;
 So like a mother receives the kiss of the dainty-lip
 runlet.

Here the green moss is my seat,
 Beech is the canopy o'er me,
 Calm and content the retreat ;
 Man, my worst foe, cannot bore me ;
 Life is a closed book behind—Shelley an open before
 me.

Shelley's own birds are above
 Close to me (why should they fear me?)
 May I believe it—that love
 Brings his bright spirit so near me
 That, should I whisper one word—Shelley's swift
 spirit would hear me?

Heaven is not very far ;
 Soul unto soul may be calling
 When a swift meteor star

Through the quick vista is falling
 Loose but your soul—shall its wings find the
 white

Heaven, as I understand,
Nearer than some folk would make it!
God—should you stretch out a hand,
Who can be quicker to take it?
Then you have pacted an oath—judge you if H
will forsake it!

I have had hope in the spring—
Trust that the God who has given
Flowers, and the thrushes that sing
Dawnwards all night, and at even
Year after year, will be true now we are speakin
of heaven.

AC #24

F24

pg 24

23

37

FROM 'THE FATAL FORCE'

Chorus

In the ways of the North and the South
Whence the dark and the dayspring are drawn,
We pass with the song of the mouth
Of the notable Lord of the Dawn.
Unto Ra, the desire of the East, let the clamour
of singing proclaim
The fire of his name!

In the ways of the East and the West
Whence the night and the day are discrowned,
We pass with the beat of his breast,
And the breath of his crying is bound.
Unto Toun, the low Lord of the West, let the
noise of our chant be the breath

In the ways of the depth and the height,
Where the multitude stars are at ease,
There is music and terrible light,
And the violent song of the seas.
Unto Mou, the most powerful Lord of the South,
let our worship declare
Him Lord of the Air!

In the mutable fields that are sown
Of a seed that is whiter than noon
Whose harvest is beaten and blown
By the magical rays of the moon,
In the caverns and wharves of the wind, in the
desolate seas of the air,
Revolveth our prayer!

In the sands and the desert of death,
In the horrible flowerless lands,
In the fields that the rain and the breath
Of the sun make as gold as the sands
With ripening wheat, in the earth, in the infinite
realm of its seed,

CHORUS

417

In the wonderful flowers of the foam,
Blue billows and breakers grown grey,
When the storm sweeps triumphantly home
From the bed of the violate day,
In the furious waves of the sea, wild world of
tempestuous night,
Our song is as light !

In the tumult of manifold fire,
Multitudinous mutable feet
That dance to an infinite lyre
On the heart of the world as they beat,
In the flowers of the bride of the flame, in the
warrior Lord of the Fire,
There burns our desire !

Chorus

Slow wheels of unbegotten hate
And changeless circles of desire,
Formless creations uncreate,
Swift fountains of ungathered fire,
The misty counterpoise of time,
Dim ~~brims~~ of ~~posen~~ and sublime

Pyramids of forgotten foam
Whirling, vague cones of shapeless sleep
And infinite dreams, and stars that roam,
And comets moving through the deep
Unfathomable skies,
Darker for moonlight, and the glow-worm eyes
Of dusky women that were stars,
And paler curves of the immutable bars
That line the universe with light,
Great eagle-flights of mystic moons
That dip, while the dull midnight swoons
About the skirts of Night :
These bowed and shaped themselves and said :
' It shall be thus !'
And the intolerable luminous
Death that is god bent down his head
And answered : ' Thus, immutably,
Above all days and deeds, shall be !'
And the great Light that is above all gods
Lifted his calm brow, spake, and all the seas,
And all the air, and all the periods
Of seasons and of stars gave ear, and these
Vaults of the heaven heard
The great white light that shaped its secrecies
Into one holy, terrible word.

CHORUS

43

Higher than all words spoken ; for He said :
 ' Death is made change, and only change is
 dead.'

For the most holy spirit of a man
 Burns through the limit of the wheels that ran
 Through all the unrelenting skies
 When Icarus died,
 And leaps, the flight of wise omnipotent eyes,
 When Dædalus espied
 An holy habitation for the shrine
 Solitary, 'mid the night of broken brine
 That foamed like starlight round the desolate
 shore.

So to the mine of that crystalline ore
 Golden, the electric spark of man is drawn
 Deep in the bosom of the world, to soar
 New-fledged, an eagle to the dazzling dawn
 With lidless eyes undazzled, to arise,
 Son of the morning, to the Southern skies ;
 And fling its wild chant higher at the fall
 Of even, and of bright Hyperion ;
 To mix its fire with dew, to call
 The spirit of the limitless air, made one
 In the amazing essence of all light.

Limitless, emanation of the might :: Archives :: Page 48 of 142

Of the great Light above all gods, the fire
Of our supreme desire.
So out of grievous labyrinths of the mind
The soul's desire may find
Some passionate thread, the clear note of a bird,
To make the dark ways of the gods as light,
To bring forth music from slow chants unheard,
And visions from the fathomless night.
So is the spirit of the loftier man
Made holy and most strong against his fate :
So is the desolate visage of the wan
Lord of Amenti covered, and the gate
Of Ra made perfect. So the waters flow
Over the earth, throughout the sea,
Till all its deserts glow,
And all its salt springs vanish, and night flee
The pinions of the day wide-spread, and pure
Fresh fountains of sweet water that endure
Assume the crown of the wide world, and lend
A star of many summits to his head
That rules his fate and compasses his end,
And seeks the holy mountain of the dead
To draw dead fire, and breathe, and give it life

CHORUS

-5

But thou, be strong for strife,
And, as a god, cry out, and let there be
The mark of many footsteps on the sea
Of angels hastening to fulfil
Thy supreme, single will!
Alone, intense, unmoved, not made for change,
Let thy one godhead rise
To move like morning, and like day to range,
A furnace for the skies,
That all men cry: 'The uncreated God!
Formless, ineffable, just, whose period
Is as his name, Eternity!' So bear
The sceptre of the air!
So mayest thou avenge, all-seeing, blind,
The wrath of this consuming fire, that licks
The rafters and the portals of the house,
The gateways of the kingdom, where behind
Lurk ruinous fates and consequence; where fix
Their fangs the scorpions; where hide their
brows
The shamed protectors of the Egyptian land.
Go forth avenging; men shall understand
And worship, seeing justice as a spouse
Lean on thine iron hand.

For Murder walks by night, and hides her face,
 But righteous Wrath in the light, and knows his
 place ;

For hate of a mother is ill, and the lightning
 flashes

But foil a harlot's will, burn the earth to ashes,
 Cleanse the incestuous sty of a whore's desire,
 Scatter the dung to the sky, and burn her with fire
 So the avenging master shall cleanse his fate
 shame,

Set his seal of disaster, a royal seal to his name.

Chorus

THROUGH fields of foam ungarnered sweeps

The fury of the wind of dawn ;

Through fiery desolation creeps

The water of the wind withdrawn.

With fire and water consecrate

The foam and fire are recreate.

With air uniting fire and water,

The springtide's unbegotten daughter

Blossoms in oceans of blue air,

Flowers of new spring to bear.

CHORUS

The sorrowful twin fishes glide
Silent and sacred into sleep ;
The joyful Ram exalts his pride,
Seeing the forehead of the deep
Glow from his palace, as the sun
Leaps to the spring, whose coursers run
Flaming before their golden master,
As death and winter and disaster
Fall from the Archer's bitter kiss
Fast to their mute abyss.

The pale sweet blooms of lotus burn ;
The scent of spring is in the soul ;
Men's spirits to the loftiest turn ;
Light is extended and made whole.
The waters of the whispering Nile
Lisp of their loves a little while,
Then break, like songsters, into sighing,
Because the lazy days are dying ;
And swift and tawny streams must rise
World's world to fertilise.

But in its bosom, fed thereof,

Lust, like a child, will have his will
Immortal fervour, strangely blent.
With mystic sensual sacrament,
Fills up its cup, its petals tremble
With faint desires that dissemble
The fierce intention to be used
I ne with the spring sun's head.

The fountains of the river yearn
Toward the sacred temple walls;
They foam upon the sands that burn
With spring's delirious festivals.
They flash upon the gleaming ways;
They cry, they chant aloud the praise
Of Isis; and our temple kisses
Their flowery water-wildernesses,
Whose foamheads nestle to the stones
With slumberous antiphones.

All birds and beasts and fish are fair
To mingle passion with the hope
All creatures hold, that cyclic pain
May make its stream the wider scope
Of many lines and changing law,
Till to the sacred fountains draw

Essence of div being, mated
With lofty substance uncreated,
Concluding the full period.
That makes all being God.

FROM 'THE TEMPLE OF THE
HOLY GHOST'

The May Queen

(OLD STYLE)

It is summer and sun on the sea,
The twilight is drawn to the world :
We linger and laugh on the lea,
The light of my spirit with me,
Sharp limbs in close agony curled.

The noise of the music of sleep,
The breath of the wings of the night,
The song of the magical deep,
The sighs of the spirits that weep,
Make murmur to tune our delight.

Slow feet are our measures that move ;
Swift songs are more soft than the breeze ;
Our mouths are made mute for our love ;
Our eyes are made soft as the dove ;

We mingle and move as the seas.

THE MAY QUEEN

51

The light of the passionate dawn
That kissed us, and would not awaken,
Grew golden and bold on the lawn;
The rays of the sun are withdrawn
At last, and the blossoms are shaken.

Oh, fragrant the breeze is that stirs
The grasses around us that lean!
Oh, sweet is the whisper that purrs
From those wonderful lips that are hers,
From the passionate lips of a queen.

A queen is my lover, I say,
With a crown of the lilies of light—
For a maiden they crowned her in May,
For the Queen of the Daughters of Day
That are flowers of the forest of Night.

They crowned her with lilies and blue,
They crowned her with yellow and roses;
They gave her a sceptre of rue,
And a girdle of laurel and yew,
And a basket of pansies in posies.

They led her with songs by the stream ;
They brought her with tears to the river ;
They danced as the maze of a dream ;
They kissed her to roses and cream,
And they cried, ' Let the queen live for ever ! '

They took her, with all of the flowers
They had girded her with for God's daughter ;
They cast her from amorous bowers
To the river, the horrible powers
Of the Beast that lurks down by the Water !

My way was more swift than a bow
That flings out its barb to the night :
My sword struck the infinite blow
That smote him, and blackened the flow
Of the amorous river of light.

I plunged in the stream, and I drew
My queen from the clasp of the water ;
I crowned her with roses and blue,
With yellow and lilies anew ;
I called her my love and God's daughter !

Ac #24

pg 32

THE MAY QUEEN

53

I gave her a sceptre of may ;
I gave her a girdle of green ;
I drew her to music and day ;
I led her the beautiful way
To the land where the Winds lie between.

So still lingers sun upon sea ;
Still twilight draws down to the world ;
The light of my spirit is she ;
The soul of her love is in me ;
Lithe kisses with music are curled.

Like light on the meadows we dwell ;
Like twilight clings heart unto heart ;
Like midnight the depth of the spell
Our love weaves, and stronger than hell
The guards of our palace of art.

We are one as the dew that is drawn
By the sun from the sea : we are curled
In curves of delight and of dawn,
On the lone, the immaculate lawn,
Beyond the wild way of the world.

The Reaper

IN middle music of Apollo's corn
She stood, the reaper, challenging a kiss ;
The lips of her were fresher than the morn,
The perfume of her skin was ambergris ;
The sun had kissed her body into brown ;
Ripe breasts thrown forward to the summer
breeze ;
Warm tints of red lead fancy to the crown,
Her coils of chestnut, in abundant ease,
That bound the stately head. What joy of youth
Lifted her nostril to respire the wind ?
What pride of being ? What triumphal truth
Acclaimed her queen to her imperial mind ?

I watched, a leopard, stealthy in the corn,
As if a tigress held herself above ;
My body quivered, eager to be torn,
Stung by the snake of some convulsive love !

THE REAPER

55

The leopard changed his spots ; for in me leapt
The mate, the tiger. Murderous I sprang
Across the mellow earth : my senses swept,
One torrent flame, one soul-dissolving pang.
How queenly bent her body to the grip !
How lithe it slips, her bosom to my own !
The throat leans back, to tantalise the lip :—
The sudden shame of her is overthrown !
O maiden of the spirit of the wheat,
One ripening sunbeam thrills thee to the soul,
Electric from red mane to amber feet !
The blue skies focus, as a burning bowl,
The restless passion of the universe
Into our mutual anger and distress,
To be forbidden (the Creator's curse)
To comprehend the other's loveliness.
We cannot grasp the ecstasy of this ;
Only we strain and struggle and renew
The utter bliss of the unending kiss,
The mutual pang that shudders through and
through,
Repeated and repeated, as the light
Can build a partial palace of the day.
So, in our anguish for the infinite,
One moment gives, the other takes away.

(I, the mere rimer, she, the queen of rime,
 As sweeps her sickle in the falling wheat,
 Her body's sleek intoxicating time,
 The music of the motion of her feet !)

I swoon in that imperial embrace—
 Lay we asleep till evening, or dead?
 I knew not, but the wonder of her face
 Grew as the dawn and never satiated.
 She knew not in her strong imperial soul
 How hopeless was the slavery of life,
 How by the part man learns to love the whole
 How each man's mistress calls herself a wife
 I tired not of the tigress limbs and lips—
 Only, my soul was weary of itself,
 Being so impotent, who only sips
 The dewdrops from the flower-cup of an el
 Not comprehending the mysterious sea
 Of black swift waters that can drink it up
 Not trusting life to its own ecstasy,
 Not mixing poison with the loving-cup.
 I, maker of mad rimes, the reaper she !

The Palace of the World

THE fragrant gateways of the dawn
Teem with the scent of flowers.
The mother, Midnight, has withdrawn
Her slumberous kissing hours :
Day springs, with footsteps as a fawn,
Into her rosy bowers.

The pale and holy maiden horn
In highest heaven is set.
My forehead, bathed in her forlorn
Light, with her lips is met ;
My lips, that murmur in the morn,
With lustrous dew are wet.

My prayer is mighty with my will ;
My purpose as a sword
Flames through the adamant, to fill
The gardens of the Lord
With music that the air be still
Dumb to its mighty chord.

I stand above the tides of time
And elemental strife ;
My figure stands above, sublime,
Shadowing the Key of Life,
And the passion of my mighty rime
Divides me as a knife.

For secret symbols on my brow,
And secret thoughts within,
Compel eternity to Now,
Draw the Infinite within.
Light is extended. I and Thou
Are as they had not been.

So on my head the light is one,
Unity manifest ;
A star more splendid than the sun
Burns for my crownèd crest ;
Burns, as the murmuring orison
Of waters in the west.

What angel from the silver gate
Flames to my fierier face?
What angel, as I contemplate
The unsubstantial space,

THE PALACE OF THE WORLD 59

Move with my lips the laws of Fate
That bind earth's carapace?

No angel, but the very light
And fire and spirit of Her,
Unmitigated, eremite,
The unmanifested myrrh,
Ocean, and night that is not night,
The mother-mediator.

O sacred spirit of the Gods!
O triple tongue! Descend,
Lapping the answering flame that nods,
Kissing the brows that bend,
Uniting all earth's periods
To one exalted end!

Still on the mystic Tree of Life
My soul is crucified;
Still strikes the sacrificial knife
Where lurks some serpent-eyed
Fear, passion, or man's deadly wife
Desire, the suicide!

Before me dwells the Holy One
Anointed Beauty's King ;
Behind me, mightier than the Sun,
To whom the cherubs sing,
A strong archangel, known of none,
Comes crowned and conquering.

An angel stands on my right hand
With strength of ocean's wrath ;
Upon my left the fiery brand,
Charioted fire smites forth :
Four great archangels to withstand
The furies of the path.

Flames on my front the fiery star,
About me and around.
Pillared, the sacred sun, afar,
Six symphonies of sound ;
Flames, as the Gods themselves that are ;
Flames, in the abyss profound.

The spread arms drop like thunder ! So
Rings out the lordlier cry,
Vibrating through the streams that flow
In ether to the sky,

AC #24

pg 36

THE PALACE OF THE WORLD 61

The moving archipelago,
Stars in their seignery.

Thine be the kingdom! Thine the power!
The glory triply thine!
Thine, through Eternity's swift hour
Eternity, thy shrine—
Yea, by the holy lotus-flower,
Even mine!

The Rosicrucian

I SEE the centuries wax and wane.
I know their mystery of pain,
The secrets of the living fire,
The key of life : I live : I reign :
For I am master of desire.

Silent, I pass amid the folk
Caught in its mesh, slaves to its yoke.
Silent, unknown, I work and will
Redemption, godhead's master-stroke,
And breaking of the wands of ill.

No man hath seen beneath my brows
Eternity's exultant house.

No man hath noted in my brain
The knowledge of my mystic spouse.

THE ROSICRUCIAN

63

Poor, in the kingdom of strong gold,
My power is swift and uncontrolled.

Simple, amid the maze of lies ;
A child, among the cruel old,
I plot their stealthy destinies.

So patient, in the breathless strife ;
So silent, under scourge and knife ;
So tranquil, in the surge of things ;
I bring them from the well of Life,
Love, from celestial water-springs !

From the shrill fountain-head of God
I draw out water with the rod
Made luminous with light of power.
I seal each æon's period,
And wait the moment and the hour.

Aloof, alone, unloved, I stand
With love and worship in my hand.

I commune with the Gods : I wait
Their summons, and I fire the brand.

I speak their Words, and share in Fate

I know no happiness, no pain,
No swift emotion, no disdain,
No pity : but the boundless light
Of the Eternal Love, unslain,
Flows through me to redeem the night.

Mine is a sad slow life : but I,
I would not gain release, and die
A moment ere my task be done.
To falter now were treachery—
I should not dare to greet the sun !

Yet, in one hour I dare not hope,
The mighty gate of Life may ope,
And call me upwards to unite
(Even my soul within the scope)
With That Unutterable Light.

Steady of purpose, girt with Truth,
I pass, in my eternal youth,
And watch the centuries wax and wane :
Untouched by Time's corroding tooth,
Silent, immortal, unprofane !

THE ROSICRUCIAN

65

My empire changes not with time.
Men's kingdoms cadent as a rime
Move me as waves that rise and fall.
They are the parts, that crash or climb ;
I only comprehend the All.

I sit, as God must sit ; I reign.
Redemption from the threads of pain
I weave, until the veil be drawn.
I burn the chaff, I glean the grain ;
In silence I await the dawn.

The Athanor

LIBERTINE touches of small fingers creep
 Among my curls to-night : pale ghastly kisses,
 Like mournful ghosts roused from their ruine
 sleep

By clamorous cries of murder. Strange abysse
 Loom in the vista keen eyes penetrate,
 Vague forecasts of immeasurable fate.

O thou belovèd blood, that wells and weeps !
 O thou belovèd mouth, that beats and bleeds !
 O mystic bosom where some serpent sleeps,
 Sweet mockery of a thousand saintlier creeds !
 Even I, that breathe your perfume, taste you
 breath,
 Know, even this hour, ye are not life, but death !

No death ye bring more godlike than desire,

When seas roar tempest-lashed, and foam
 flung

THE ATHANOR

67

Raging on pitiless crags, and gloomy fire
Lurks in the master-cloud ; corpses are swung
Helpless and horrible in trough and crest—
That death were music, and the lord of rest.

No death ye bring as when the storm is rolled,
An imminent giant on the sun-ripped snows,
Where icy fingers grip the overbold
Son of their secrets, and like springs close
On his choked throat and frozen body—Nay!
That death were twilight, and the gate of Day!

No death ye bring as his, that grips the flag
In desperate fingers, and with bloody sword
Flames up the thundering breach, while bastioned
crag,
Glacis, and pent-house belch their monstrous
horde
Of hideous engines shattering—this strife
Clears the straight road of Glory and of Life!

Nay : but the hateful death that stings the soul
Into rebellion ; the insensate death

That chokes its own delight with words that roll
Mightier-mouthed than the archangel's breath ;

The death that murders courage ere it drink
The soul's own life-blood on the desperate brink!

So, from the languid fingers in my curls
And dreamy worship of a woman's eyes,
I look beyond the miserable whirls
Of foolish measures woven in the skies ;
Beyond the thoughtless stars : beyond God's sleep :
Beyond the deep : beneath the deadly deep !

Infinite rings of luminous ether move
At first amid the blackness that I seek :
Infinite motion and amazing love
Deaden the lustre of the night. I speak
The cry of silence, that is heard unspoken ;
That, being heard, rings evermore unbroken.

Silence, deep silence. Not a shudder stirs
The vast demesne of unforgetful space,
No comet's lunatic rush : no meteor whirls,
No star dares breathe, no planet knows his place
In that supreme unquiet quietude.

THE ATHANOR

69

I am the master. Yea, no doubt I rule
The whole mad universe by will extended—
Who whispers then, 'O miserable fool!

This night thy might and majesty are ended ;
Thy soul shall be required of thee' ? I heard
This voice, and knew it for my proper word !

Yea, mine own voice : the higher spirit speaks,
Stemming the hands that guide, the arms that
hold,

Even the infinite brain : that spirit seeks
A loftier dawn of more ephemeral gold—
Ephemeral, and eternal. Droop thine head,
O God ! for thou must suffer this, I said.

Droop thy wide pinions, O thou mortal God !
Sink thy vast forehead, and let Life consume
The miserable life thy feet have trod
Beneath them, that thine own life in its doom
Fall, in its resurrection to arise ;
Stoop, that its holier hope may cleave the skies.

Power, power, and power ! O single sacrifice
On thine own altar : let thy savour steam

Up, through the domes of broken Paradise ;
Up, by Euphrates' unimagined stream ;
Up, by strange river and mysterious lawn
To some impossible diadem of dawn !

So the mere orderly ruling of events
Shall change and blossom to a finer flower,
Until it serve to worlds and elements
For aspiration in the nobler hour—
Not mere repression, but the hope and crown
Of fallen hierarchies no more cast down.

O misery of triple love and grief
And hope ! O joy of hatred and despair
And happiness ! The little hour is brief,
And the lithe fingers soothe the listless hair
Less, and the kisses swoon to tenderer sighs
And little sobs of sleeping ecstasies.

No ! for the envy of the infinite
Crushes the juice from out the poppy's stem,
And brown-stained fingers wring the petals white,
And weary lips seek lotus-life in them
Vainly : the lotus burns above the tomb—
Yea, but in thought's unfathomable womb !

THE ATHANOR

71

For spiritual life and love and light

Climb the swayed ladder of our various fate ;
 The steep rude stair that mocks the hero's might,
 Casts off the wise, and crumbles with the great.
 Yet from the highest crown no blossom fell,
 Save one, to bring salvation unto Hell.

O angel of my spiritual desire !

O luminous master of the silver feet !
 O passionate rose of infinite white fire !
 O cross of sacrifice made bitter-sweet !
 O wide-wing, star-brow, veritable lord !
 O mystic bearer of the flaming sword !

O brows half seen, O visionary star

Seen in the fragrant breezes of the East !
 O lover of my love, O avatar
 Of the All-One, O mystical High Priest !
 O thou before whose eyes my weak eyes fail,
 Wonderful warden of the Holy Grail !

O thou, mine angel, whom these eyes have seen,

These hands have handled, and this mouth has
 kissed !

O thou, the very tongue of fire, the clean
 Sweet-scented presence of a holier Christ!
 Listen, and answer, and behold! My wings
 Droop, O thou stronger than the immortal kings!

My flame burns dim! O bring the broken jar
 And alabaster casket, and dispense
 The oil that flows from that supernal star,
 And holy fountains of the Influence.
 Bring peace, and strength, and quicken in my heart
 Mastery of night-fear and the day-flung dart.

Yea! from the limit of the fallen day,
 And barren ocean of ungathered Time,
 Bring Night, and bring Eternity, and stay
 With white wings pointing where tired feet may
 climb:
 Even the pathway where shed blood ran deep
 To build red roses in the land of Sleep.

O guardian of the pallid hours of night!
 O tireless watcher of the smitten noon!

O sworded with the majesty of light,
 O girded with the glory of the moon!

AC #24

pg 42

THE ATHANOR

73

Angel of absolute splendour! Link of mine
Old weary spirit with the All-Divine!

Ship that shalt carry me by many winds
Driven on the limitless ocean! Mighty sword,
By which I force that barrier of the mind's
Miscomprehension of its own true lord!
Listen, and answer, and behold my brow
Fiery with hope! Bend down, and touch it now!

Press the twin dawn of thy desirous lips
In the swart masses of my hair; bend close,
And shroud all earth in masterless eclipse,
While my heart's murmur through thy being
flows,
To carry up the prayer, as incense teems
Skyward, to those immeasurable streams!

Breathe the creative Sigh upon my mouth
That even the body may become the soul:
Cry, as the chained Eagle of the South,
'A house of death,' and make my spirit whole!
Touch with pure balm the five mysterious wounds!
Come! come away, but not you!

O wind of all the world! O silent river!
 O sea of seas! O flower of all the flowers!
 O fire! O spirit! Beam thou on for ever
 Through æons of illimitable hours!
 Kiss thou my forehead, let thy tender breath
 Woo me to life, and my desire to death!

I shall be ready for it by-and-by,
 That sharp initiation, when the whole
 Body is torn with sundering pangs, and I,
 The very conscious essence of the soul,
 Am rent with agony, as when the pale
 Christ heard the shriek of the dividing veil.

That awful mystery, its heart torn out,
 Palpitates on the altar-stone of life:
 That broken self, that hears the triumph-shout
 Of its own voice beneath the falling knife,
 When, like a bad dream changing, swiftly grows
 A new soul's joy, a fuller-petalled rose.

'Many the spirits broken for one man;
 Many the men that perish to create
 One God the more, and many and wan
 Old Gods that die to constitute a Fate:

THE ATHANOR

75

How many Fates then, think you, must control
The stainless aspiration of the soul?

Not one. I tell you, destiny is sure,
Yet moves no finger: though it tune my tongue,
My tongue shall tune it too: my words endure
As destiny decays: my hands are flung
In prayer to Heaven—nay, to mine own crown,
To raise myself, and not to drag it down!

O holiest Lord of the divine white flame
Of brilliance sworded in the temple sky!
O thou who knowest my most secret name,
Who whisperest when only thou and I
Make up our universe: bestow thy kiss:
Arise! Come, let us pierce the old abyss!

Rise! Move! Appear! Let us go forth together,
Into the solemn passionless profound,
Into the darkness, and the thrilling weather,
Into the silence louder than all sound,
Into the vast implacable inane!

Come, let us journey thither once again!

FROM 'TANNHÄUSER'

Shepherd Boy's Song

O GRETCHEN, when the morn is gray,
Forsake thy flocks and steal away
To that low bank where, shepherds say,
The flowers eternal are.
Thine eyes should gleam to see me there,
As fixed upon a star.
And yet thy lips should take a tune,
And match me unaware—
So steals the sun beside the moon
And hides her lustre rare.
The bloom upon the peach is fine ;
The blossom on thy cheek is mine !
O kiss me—if you dare !
I called thee by the name of love
That mothers fear and gods approve,
And maidens blush to say—
O Gretchen, meet me in the dell
We know and love, who love so well,

Ac #24

pg 44

SHEPHERD BOY'S SONG

77

So, match thy blushes to the dawn ;
Thy bosom to the rising moon,
Until our loves to earth have drawn
Some new bewitching tune.
Come, Gretchen, in the dusk of day,
Where nymphs and dryads creep away
Beneath the oaks, to laugh and play
And sink in lover's swoon.
We'll sing them sister songs, and show
What secrets mortal lovers know.

Tannhäuser's Song

IN the Beginning God began,
And saw the Night of Time begin ;
Chaos, a speck ; and space, a span ;
Ruinous cycles fallen in,
And Darkness on the Deep of Time.
Murmurous voices call and climb ;
Faces, half-formed, arise ; and He
Looked from the shadow of His throne,

AC #14
Pg 46

80 AMBERGRIS

Each to its proper soul ; the wide wheels flow,
Orderly streams, and lose the rushing speed,
Meet, mingle, marry. Fire and air express
Their dews and winds of molten loveliness,
Fine flakes of arrowy light, the dawn's first deed,
Metallic showers and smoke self-glittering
For many an aeon. Wild the pennons spring
Of streaming flame ! Then, surging from the
tide,

Grew the desirable, the golden one,
Separate from the sun.
Now fire and air no more exult, exceed,
Are balanced in the sphere. The waters wide
Glow on the bosom of fixed earth ; and Need,
The Lady of Beginning, also was.
Thus was the firmament a vital glass,
The waters as the vessel of the soul ;
Thus earth, the mystic basis of the whole,
Was smitten through with fire, as chrysoptas,
Blending, uniting and dividing it,
Volcanic, airy, and celestial.

I rose within the elemental ball,
And lo ! the Ancient One of Days did sit !
His head and hair were white as wool, His eyes

TANNHAUSER'S SONG 81

A flaming fire : and from the splendid mouth
Flashed the Eternal Sword !
Lo ! Lying at his feet as dead, I saw
The leaping-forth of Law :
Division of the North wind and the South,
The lightning of the armies of the Lord ;
East rolled asunder from the rended West ;
Height clove the depth : the Voice begotten said :
' Divided be thy ways and limited !'
Answered the reflux and the indrawn breath :
' Let there be Life, and Death !'

Ac #24
Pg 45

He looked—and saw Himself alone,
And on the sombre sea, the primal one,
Faint faces, that might not abide ;
Flicker, and are fordome.
So were they caught within the spacious tide,
The sleepy waters that encased the world.
Monsters rose up, and turned themselves, and curled
Into the deep again.

The darkness brooded, and the bitter pain
Of chaos twisted the vast limbs of time
In horrid rackings : then the spasm came :
The Serpent rose, the servant of the slime,
In one dark miracle of flame
Unluminous and void : the silent claim
Of that which was, to be : the cry to climb,
The bitter birth of Nature : uttermost Night
Dwelt, inaccessible to sound and sight ;
Shielded from Voice, impervious to Light.

Lo! on the barren bosom, on the brine,
The spirit of the Mighty One arose,
A flickering light, a formless triple flame,
The self-begotten, the impassive shrine,
The seat of Heaven's archipelagoes ;

Yet lighted not the glory whence it came,
Nor shone upon the surface of the sea.
Time, and the Great One, and the Nameless Name,
Held in their grip the child, Eternity.
Silence and Darkness in their womb withheld
That spiritual fire, and brooded still :
Nature and Time, their soleness undispeled,
Ever awaiting the eternal Will.
And Law was unbegotten : uttermost Night
Dwelt, inaccessible to sound and sight ;
Shielded from Voice, impervious to Light.

Then grew within the barren womb of this
The Breath of the Eternal and the Vast,
Softer than dawn, and closer than a kiss—
And lo! the chaos and the darkness passed !
At the creative sigh the Light became.
Chaos rolled back in the abundant flame.
The vast and mystic Soul,
The Firmament, a living coal,

Flamed 'twixt the glory and the sea below.
The whirling force began. The atom whirled
In vortices of flashing matter : wild as snow
On mountain tops by the wind-spirits hurled,
Blinding and blind, the sparks of spirit curled

AC#24
Pg 47

A Death in Thessaly

Μόνος θεῶν γὰρ θάνατος οὐ δάριων ἴσσι.

Æsch., Fr. Niobe.

FAREWELL! O Light of day, O torch Althæan!

The strange fruits lure me of Persephone;

I raise the last, the memorable psalm,

Storm-throated, mouthed as the cave-rolling sea;

I lift the cup: deep draughts of blue Lethean!

My wine to me.

O lamentable season of Apollo,

When swoops his glory to the golden wave!

As all his children, so their lord shall follow!

The flower he slew, the maiden he would save,

As Itylus, light woven, tuned! O swallow,

Bewail their grave!

The gracious breast of Artemis may light me

To men—yet loved I ever Artemis?

Surely the vine-song and the dance delight me,

The sea-blue bowers where Aphrodite is.

Terrible gods and destinies excite me,

The strange sad kiss.

Thus may no moon tell Earth my story after,

No virgin sing my fame as virginal.

Yet some night-leaves the southern stream may

waft her,

Some amorous nymph across the wood may call

A loud mad chant; love, tears, harsh sombre

laughter.

No more at all.

Oh, mother, Oh, Demeter, in my burthen

Let me assume my sorrow singular;

A branching temple and an altar earthen,

A fire of herbs, a clayen water-jar;

An olive grove to bind the sacred girth in

Lone woods afar.

Let life burn gently thence, as when the ember

In one faint incense-puff to shrineward dies.

84 AMBERGRIS

No care, no pain, no craving to remember,
One leap toward the knees and destinies,
Where shine Her lips like flames, Her breasts
like amber,
Like moons Her eyes.

For my heart turns—ah still!—in Sorrow's traces,
Where sad chill footprints push the sodden
leaves;
Where ranged around me are the cold, gray faces;
Fallen on the stubble are the rotten sheaves;
The vicious ghosts abound; and Chronos' paces
No soul deceives.

Yet my heart looks to Madness as its mother,
Remembering who once caught me by the well;
And the strange loves of that misshapen Other,
The feast of blood, the cold enchanted dell,
Where fire was filtered up through earth to
smother
Sick scents of hell.
And that wild night when vine-leaves wooed and
clustered
Round my wild limbs, and like a woman I went

A DEATH IN THESSALY 85

Over the mountains — how the Northwind
blustered!—
And slew with them the beast, and was content.
The madness:—Oh! the dreadful light that lustrated
The main event.

Ay! the wild whirlings in the woodland reaches;
The ghastly smile upon the Stone God's lip;
The rigid tremors, anguish that beseeches
From eye to eye fresh fervours of the whip;
The mounded moss below the swaying beeches—
Kiss me and clip!

Why! the old madness grows!—how feebly lying
Smooth by this bay where waves are tender
flowers.
Winds, soft as the old kisses were, are sighing.
Clouds drift across the sun for silken bowers.
The moon is up—an hastening nymph! I, dying,
Await the Hours.

And thou, Persophone, I know thy story,
That I must taste the terror of thy wrong:
How Hades ride across the promontory,
Snatch my pale body in mid over-song,

FROM 'ORACLES'

The Hermit's Hymn to Solitude

I.

MIGHTIEST Self! Supreme in Self-Contentment!
 Sole Spirit gyring in its own ellipse;
 Palpable, formless, infinite presentment
 Of thine own light in thine own soul's eclipse!
 Let thy chaste lips
 Sweep through the empty æthers guarding thee
 (As in a fortress girded by the sea
 The raging winds and wings of air
 Lift the wild waves and bear
 Innavigable foam to seaward), bend thee down,
 Touch, draw me with thy kiss
 Into thine own deep bliss,
 Into thy sleep, thy life, thy imperishable crown!
 Let that young godhead in thine eyes
 Pierce mine, fulfil me of their secrecies,
 Thy peace, thy purity, thy soul impenetrably wise.

THE HERMIT'S HYMN TO SOLITUDE . . . 89

II.

All things which are complete are solitary;
 The circling moon, the inconstant drift of stars,
 The central systems. Burn they, change they,
 vary?

Theirs is no motion beyond the eternal bars.
 Seasons and scars

Stain not the planets, the unfathomed home,
 The spaceless, unformed faces in the dome
 Brighter and blacker than all things,
 Borne under the eternal wings
 No whither: solitary are the winter woods
 And caves not habited,
 And that supreme grey head

Watching the groves: single the foaming amber
 floods,

And O! most lone
 The melancholy mountains shrine and throne,
 While far above all things God sits, the ultimate
 alone!

III.

I sate upon the mossy promontory
 Where the cascade cleft not his mother rock,

AC # 24
Pg 49

86

AMBERGRIS

Drag me from sight of my Apollo's glory
With horses strong.

Nay ! as Apollo half the day is shrouded,

As Artemis twice seven nights is dark ;

Surely he shines in other lands unclouded,

Surely her shaft shall find another mark.

So dawns the day on Acheron ghost-crowded,

And on my bark.

I know not how you world may prove, nor
whither

Hermes conduct me to what farther end.

Yet if these bays abide, this heart not wither,

It cannot be I shall not find a friend.

Some pale immortal lover draw me thither !

To kiss me bend !

Moreover, as Apollo re-arisen

Flames, with a roaring of the morning sea,

Up from the stricken gray, the iron-barred prison,

Flashes his face again upon the lea,

And diamond dew the woodland ones bedizen ;

So—so for me !

A DEATH IN THESSALY 87

SOME
Some forty years this earth knew song and passion
Pour from my lips, saw gladness in mine eyes !

Some forty shall I sing some other fashion,
Dance in strange measures, change the key of
sighs.

Then rise in Thessaly again, Thalassian !

Only, more wise.

THE HERMIT'S HYMN TO SOLITUDE 91

The sun and moon beheld, stood still.
Only the spirit's axis, will,
Considered its own soul and sought a deadlier deep,
And in its monotone mood
Of supreme solitude
Was neither glad nor sad because it did not sleep;
But with calm eyes abode
Patient, its leisure the galactic load,
Abode alone, nor even rejoiced to know that it was
God.

v.

All change, all motion, and all sound, are weakness!
Man cannot bear the darkness which is death.
Even that calm Christ, manifest in meekness,
Cried on the cross and gave his ghostly breath,
On the prick of death,
Voice, for his passion could not bear nor dare
The interlunar, the abundant air
Darkened, and silence on the shuddering
Hill, and the unbeating wing
Of the legions of His Father, and so died.
But I, should I be still,
Poised between fear and will?
Should I be silent, I, and be unsatisfied?

AMBERGRIS

90

But swept in whirlwind lightning foam and glory,
Vast circling with unwearying luminous shock
To lure and lock
Marvellous eddies in its wild caress;
And there the solemn echoes caught the stress,
The strain of that impassive tide,
Shook it and flung it high and wide,
Till all the air took fire from that melodious roar;
All the mute mountains heard,
Bowed, laughed aloud, concurred,
And passed the word along, the signal of wide war.
All earth took up the sound,
And, being in one tune securely bound,
Even as a star became the soul of silence most
profound.

IV.

Thus there, the centre of that death that darkened,
I sat and listened, if God's voice should break
And pierce the hollow of my ear that hearkened,
Lest God should speak and find me not awake—
For his own sake.
No voice, no song might pierce or penetrate
That enviable universal state.

For solitude shall bend
 Self to all selffulness, and have one friend,
 Self, and behold one God, and be, and look beyond
 the End.

vi.

O Solitude! how many have mistaken
 Thy name for Sorrow's, or for Death's or Fear's!
 Only thy children lie at night and waken—
 How shouldst thou speak and say that no man
 hears?

O soul of Tears!
 For never hath fallen as dew thy word,
 Nor is thy shape showed, nor as Wisdom's heard
 Thy crying about the city
 In the house where is no pity
 But in the desolate halls and lonely vales of sand:
 Not in the laughter loud,
 Nor crying of the crowd,
 But in the farthest sea, the yet untravelled land.
 Where thou hast trodden, I have trod;
 Thy folk have been my folk, and thine abode
 Mine, and thy life my life, and thou, who art thy
 God, my God.

vii.

Draw me with cords that are not; witch me chanted
 Spells never heard nor open to the ear,
 Woven of silence, moulded in the haunted
 Houses where dead men linger year by year.
 I have no fear
 To tread thy far irremovable way
 Beyond the paths and palaces of day,
 Beyond the night, beyond the skies,
 Beyond eternity's
 Tremendous gate; beyond the immanent miracle.
 O secret self of things!
 I have nor feet nor wings
 Except to follow far beyond Heaven and Earth
 and Hell,
 Until I mix my mood
 And being in thee, as in my hermit's hood
 I grow the thing I contemplate—that selfless
 solitude!

AC# 24
Pg 53

On Waikiki Beach

UPHEAVED from chaos, through the dark sea
 hurled,
 Through the cleft heart of the amazed sea,
 Sprang, 'mid deep thunderous throats of
 majesty,
 Titanic, in the waking of the world ;
 Sprang, one vast mass of spume and molten
 fire,
 Lava, tremendous waves of earth ; sprang
 higher
 Than the sea's crest volcano-torn, to be
 Written in Cyclopean characterly,
 Hawaii. Here she stands
 Queen of all laughter's lands
 That dance for dawn, lie tranced in leisured
 noon,
 Dreaming through day towards night,
 Craving the perfumed light
 Of the stars lustrous, and the gem-born moon.

Dewy with clustered diamond,
 The long land swoons to sleep ; the sea sleeps and
 yet wakes beyond.

Here, in the crescent beach and bay, the sea,
 Curven and carven in warm shapes of dream,
 Answers the love-song of the lilled stream,
 And moves to bridal music. Stern and free,
 The lion-shapen headland guards the shore ;
 The ocean, the bull-throated, evermore
 Roars ; the vast wheel of heaven turns
 above,
 Its rim of pain, its jewelled heart of love ;
 Sun-waved, the eagle wing
 Of the air of feathered spring
 Royally sweeps, and on the musical marge
 Watches alone the man.
 O silvern shape and span
 Of moonlight, reaching over the grey, large
 Breast of the surf-bound strand,
 Life of the earth, God's child, Man's bride, the
 light of the sweet land !

Are emeralds ever a spark of this clear green,
 Or sapphires hints of this diviner blue,

ON WAIKIKI BEACH

Becometh even as God.
 The pensive period
 Of night and day beats like a waving fan
 No more, no more ; the years,
 Reft of their joys and fears,
 Pass like pale faces, leave the life of man
 Untroubled of their destinies,
 Leave him forgotten of life and time, immortal,
 calm and wise.

Only the ceaseless surf on coral towers,
 The changeless change of the unchanging
 ocean,
 Laps the bright night, with unsubstantial
 motion
 Winnowing the starlight, plumed with feathery
 flowers

Of foam and phosphor glory, the strange
 glow
 Of the day's amber fallen to indigo,
 Lit of its own depth in some subtle wise,
 A pavement for the footsteps from the
 skies
 Of angels walking thus
 Not all unseen of us,

AMBERGRIS

Or rubies shadows of this rosy hue,
 Or light itself elsewhere so clear and clean?
 For all the sparkling dews of heaven fallen far
 Crystalline, fixed, forgotten (as a star
 Forgets its nebulous virginity)
 Are set in all the sky and earth and sea.
 Shining with solar fire,
 The single-eyed desire
 Of scent and sound and sight and sense
 perfuses
 The still and lambent light
 Of the essential night ;
 And all the heart of me is fain, and muses,
 As if for ever doomed to dream
 Or pass in peace Lethean adown the grey Lethcean
 stream.

So deep the sense of beauty, and so keen !
 The calm abiding holiness of love
 Reigns ; and so fallen from the heights above
 Immeasurable, the influence unseen
 Of music and of spiritual fire,
 That the soul sleeps, forgotten of desire,
 Only remembering its God-like birth
 Reflected in the deity of earth,

AC# 24
Pg 55

AMBERGRIS

98

Nor all unknown, nor unintelligible,
 When with souls lifted up
 In the Cadmean cup,
 As incense lifted in the thurible,
 We know that God is even as we,
 Light from the sky, and life on earth, and love
 beneath the sea.

FROM 'ALICE: AN ADULTERY'

Margaret

THE moon spans Heaven's architrave;
 Stars in the deep are set;
 Written in gold on the day's grave,
 'To love, and to forget;
 And sea-winds whisper o'er the wave
 The name of Margaret.

A heart of gold, a flower of white,
 A blushing flame of snow,
 She moves like latticed moons of light—
 And O! her voice is low,
 Shell murmurs borne to Amphitrite,
 Exulting as they go.

Her stature waves, as if a flower
 Forgot the evening breeze,
 But heard the charioted hour
 Sweep from the farther seas,

AMBERGRIS

100

And kept sweet time within her bower,
And hushed mild melodies.

So grave and delicate and tall—

Shall laughter never sweep

Like a moss-guarded waterfall

Across her ivory sleep?

A tender laugh most musical?

A sigh serenely deep?

She laughs in wordless swift desire

A soft Thalassian tune;

Her eyelids glimmer with the fire

That animates the moon;

Her chaste lips flame, as flames aspire

Of poppies in mid-June.

She lifts the eyelids amethyst,

And looks from half-shut eyes,

Gleaming with miracles of mist,

Grey shadows on blue skies;

And on her whole face sunrise kissed,

Child-wonderment most wise.

The whitest arms in all the earth

Blush from the lilac bed.

MARGARET

101

Like a young star even at its birth

Shines out the golden head.

Sad violets are the maiden girth,

Pale flames night-canopied.

O gentlest lady! Lift those eyes,

And curl those lips to kiss!

Melt my young boyhood in thy sighs,

A subtler Salmacis!

Hide, in that peace, these ecstasies;

In that fair fountain, this!

She fades as starlight on the stream,

As dewfall in the dell;

All life and love, one ravishing gleam

Stolen from sleep's crucible;

That kiss, that vision is a dream:—

And I—most miserable!

Still Echo wails upon the steep,

'To love—and to forget!'

Still sombre whispers from the deep

Sob through night's golden net,

And waft upon the wings of sleep

The name of Margaret.

Red Poppy

I HAVE no heart to sing.
What offering may I bring,
Alice, to thee?
My great love's lifted wing
Weakens, unwearied,
And droops with me,
Seeing the sun-kindled hair
Close in the face more fair,
The sweet soul shining there
For God to see.
Surely some angel shed
Flowers for the maiden head,
Ephemeral flowers!
I yearn, not comforted.
My heart is vainly bled
Through age-long hours.
To thee my spirit turns ;
My bright soul aches and burns,
As a dry valley yearns
For spring and showers.

Splendid, remote, a fane
Alone and unprofane,
I know thy breast.
These bitter tears of pain
Flood me, and fall again
Not into rest.
Me, whose sole purpose is
To gain one gainless kiss,
And make a bird's my bliss,
Shrined in that nest.
O fearful firstling dove!
My dawn and spring of love,
Love's light and lure!
Look (as I bend above)
Through bright lids filled thereof
Perfect and pure,
Thy bloom of maidenhood.
I could not : if I could,
I would not : being good,
Also endure !
Cruel, to tear or mar
The chalice nenuphar ;
Cruel to press

AMBERGRIS

The rosebud ; cruel to scar
Or stain the flower-star
 With mad caress.
But crueller to destroy
The leaping life and joy
Born in a careless boy
 From lone distress.
More cruel then art thou
The calm and chaste of brow,
 If thou dost this.
Forget the feeble vow
Ill sworn ; all laws allow
 Pity, that is
Kin unto love, and mild
List to the sad and wild
Crying of the lonely child
 Who asks a kiss.
One kiss, like snow, to slip,
Cool fragrance from thy lip
 To melt on mine ;
One kiss, a white-sail ship
To laugh and leap and dip
 Her brows divine ;

RED POPPY

One kiss, a starbeam faint
With love of a sweet saint,
Stolen like a sacrament
 In the night's shrine!
One kiss, like moonlight cold
Lighting with floral gold
 The lake's low tune ;
One kiss, one flower to fold,
On its own calyx rolled,
 At night, in June !
One kiss, like dewfall, drawn
A veil o'er leaf and lawn—
Mix night, and noon, and dawn,
 Dew, flower, and moon !
One kiss, intense, supreme !
The sense of Nature's dream
 And scent of Heaven
Shown in the glint and gleam
Of the pure dawn's first beam,
 With earth for leaven ;
Moulded of fire and gold,
Water and wine to fold
Me in its life, and hold !—
 In all but seven !

AC # 24
Pg 59

AMBERGRIS

I would not kiss thee, I!
Lest my lip's charactery
 Ruin thy flower.
Curve thou one maidenly
Kiss, stooping from thy sky
 Of peace and power!
Thine only be the embrace!—
I move not from my place,
Feel the exultant face
 Mine for an hour!

Alice

THE roses of the world are sad,
 The water-lilies pale,
Because my lover takes her lad
 Beneath the moonlight veil.
No flower may bloom this happy hour—
Unless my Alice be the flower.

The stars are hidden in dark and mist,
 The moon and sun are dead,
Because my love has caught and kissed
 My body in her bed.
No light may shine this happy night—
Unless my Alice be the light.

So silent are the thrush, the lark!
 The nightingale's at rest,
Because my lover loves the dark,
 And has me in her breast.
No song this happy night be heard!—
Unless my Alice be the bird.

The sea that roared around the house
Is fallen from alarms,
Because my lover calls me spouse,
And takes me to her arms.
This night no sound of breakers be!—
Unless my Alice be the sea.
Of man and maid in all the world
Is stilled the swift caress,
Because my lover has me curled
In her own loveliness.
No kiss be such a night as this!—
Unless my Alice be the kiss.
No blade of grass awaiting takes
The dew fresh-fallen above,
Because my lover swoons, and slakes
Her body's thirst of love.
This night no dewfall from the blue!—
Unless my Alice be the dew.
This night—O never dawn shall crest
The world of wakening,
Because my lover has my breast
On hers for dawn and spring.
This night shall never be withdrawn—
Unless my Alice be the dawn.

FROM 'THE ARGONAUTS'

Chorus of Shipbuilders

THE sound of the hammer and steel!
The song of the level and line!
The whirr of the whistling wheel!
The ring of the axe on the pine!
The joy of the ended labour,
As the good ship plunges free
By sound of pipe and tabor
To front the sparkling sea!
The mystery-woven spell!
The voyage of golden gain!
The free full sails that swell
On the swell of the splendid main!
The song of the axe and the wedge!
The clang of the hammer and chain!
Keen whistle of chisel and edge!
Smooth swish of the sliding plane!

AMBERGRIS

110

Hail to the honour of toil!
 Hail! to the ship flown free!
 Hail! to the golden spoil,
 And the glamour of all the sea!

111

At Waikiki

LIGHT shed from seaward over breakers bending
 Kiss-wise to the emerald hollows : light divine
 Whereof the sun is God, the sea his shrine ;
 Light in vibrations rhythmic ; light unending ;
 Light sideways from the girdling crags ex-
 tending
 Unto this lone and languid head of mine ;
 Light, that fulfils creation as with wine,
 Flows in the channels of the deep : light, rending
 The adamantine columns of the night,
 Is laden with the love-song of the light.

Light, pearly-glimmering through dim gulf and
 hollow,
 Below the foam-kissed lips of all the sea ;
 Light shines from all the sky and up to me
 From the amber floors of sand : Light calls Apollo !
 The shafts of fire fledged of the eagle follow
 The crested surf, and strike the shore, and flee
 Far from green cover, nymph-enchanted lea,

AC #24
pg 62

112

AMBERGRIS

Fountain, and plume them white as the sea-swallow,
And turn and quiver in the ocean, seeming
The glances of a maiden kissed, or dreaming.

Light, as I swim through rollers green and gleaming,
Sheds its most subtle sense to penetrate
This heart I thought impervious to Fate.

Now the sweet light, the full delight, is beaming
Through me and burns me : all my flesh is teeming
With the live kisses of the sea, my mate,
My mistress, till the fires of life abate
And leave me languid, man-forgotten, deeming
I see in sleep, in many-coloured night,
More hope than in the flame-waves of the
light.

Light! ever light! I swim far out and follow
The footsteps of the wind, and light invades
My desolate soul, and all the cypress shades
Glow with transparent lustre, and the hollow
I thought I had hidden in my heart must swallow
The bitter draught of Truth; no Nereid maids
Even in my sea are mine: the whole sea's
glades
And hills and springs are void of my Apollo—
The Sea herself my tune and my desire!
The Sun himself my lover and my lyre!

113

The Harbour, Vera Cruz

I HEAR the waters faint and far,
And look to where the Polar Star,
Half hidden in the haze, divides
The double chanting of the tides;
But, where the harbour's gloomy mouth
Welcomes the stranger to the south,
The water shakes, and all the sea
Grows silver suddenly.

As one who standing on the moon
Sees the vast horns in silver hewn,
Himself in darkness, and beholds
How silently all space unfolds
Into her shapeless breast the spark
And sacred phantom of the dark;
So in the harbour-horns I stand
Till I forget the land.

AC # 14
Pg 63

AMBERGRIS

Who sails through all that solemn space
Out to the twilight's secret place,
The sleepy waters move below
His ship's imaginary flow.
No song, no lute, so lowly chaunts
In woods where still Arisbe haunts,
Wrapping the wanderer with her tresses
Into untold caresses.

For none of all the sons of men
That hath known Artemis, again
Turns to the warmer earth, or vows
His secrets to another spouse.
The moon resolves her beauty in
The sea's deep kisses salt and keen ;
The sea assumes the lunar light,
And he—their eremite !

In their calm intercourse and kiss
Even hell itself no longer is ;
For nothing in their love abides
That passes not beneath their tides,
And who so bathes in light of theirs,
And water, changes unawares
To be no separate soul, but be
Himself the moon and sea.

THE HARBOUR, VERA CRUZ 115

Not all the wealth that flowers shed,
And sacred streams, on that calm head ;
Not all the earth's spell-weaving dream
And scent of new-turned earth shall seem
Again indeed his mother's breast
To breathe like sleep and give him rest ;
He lives or dies in subtler swoon
Between the sea and moon.

So standing, gliding, undeterred
By any her alluring word
That calls from older forest glades,
My soul forgets the gentle maids
That wooed me in the scarlet bowers,
And golden cluster-woof of flowers ;
Forgets itself, content to be
Between the moon and sea.

No passion stirs their depth, nor moves ;
No life disturbs their sweet dead loves ;
No being holds a crown or throne ;
They are, and I in them, alone :
Only some lute-player grown star
Is heard like whispering flowers afar ;
And some divided, single tune
Sobs from the sea and moon.

116

AMBERGRIS

Amid thy mountains shall I rise,
O moon, and float about thy skies?
Beneath thy waters shall I roam,
O sea, and call thy valleys home?
Or on Dædalian oarage fare
Forth in the interlunar air?
Imageless mirror-life! to be
Sole between moon and sea.

117

The Song of the Siren, Leucosia

O LOVER, I am lonely here!
O lover, I am weeping!
Each pearl of ocean is a tear
Let fall while love was sleeping.

A tear is made of fire and dew
And saddened with a smile;
The sun's laugh in the curving blue
Lasts but a little while.

The night-winds kiss the deep: the stars
Shed laughter from above;
But night must pass dawn's prison bars:
Night hath not tasted love.

With me the night is fallen in day;
The day swoons back to night;
The white and black are woven in gray,
Faint sleep of silken light.

AC# 74
Pg 65

THE SONG OF THE SIREN, LEUCOSIA 119

A jewelled night of star and moon
Shall watch our bridal chamber,
Bending the blue rays to the tune
Of softly-sliding amber.

Dim winds shall whisper echoes of
Our slow ecstatic breath,
Telling all worlds how sweet is love,
How beautiful is death.

AMBERGRIS

118

A strange soft light about me shed
Devours the sense of time :
Hovers about my sleepy head
Some sweet persistent rime.

Beneath my breast my love may hear
Deep murmur of the billows—
O gather me to thee, my dear,
On soft forgetful pillows!

O gather me in arms of love
As maidens plucking posies,
Or mists that fold about a dove,
Or valleys full of roses!

O let me fade and fall away
From waking into sleep,
From sleep to death, from gold to gray,
Deep as the skies are deep!

O let me fall from death to dream,
Eternal monotone ;
Faint eventide of sleep supreme
With thee and love alone !

AC#24
Pg 66

120

AMBERGRIS

Hong Kong Harbour

OVER a sea like stained glass
At sunset like a chrysopras :—
Our smooth-oared vessel over-rides
Crimson and green and purple tides.
Between the rocky isles we pass,
And greener islets gay with grass ;
Between the over-arching sides
Our pinnace glides.

Just by the Mænad-haunted hill
Songs rise into the air, and thrill,
Like clustered birds at evening
When love outlingers rain and spring.
Faint faces of strange dancers spill
Their dewy scent ; and sweet and chill
The wind comes faintly whispering
On wanton wing.

HONG KONG HARBOUR 121

Between the islands sheer and steep
Our craft treads noiseless o'er the deep,
Turned to the gold heart of the west,
The sun's last sigh of love expressed
Ere the lake glimmer, borrow sleep
From clouds and tinge their edges ; weep
That night brings love not to his breast,
But only rest.

We move toward the golden track
Shed in the water : we look back
Eastward, where rose is set to warn
Promise and prophecy of dawn
Reflected, lest the ocean lack
In any space serene or slack
Some colour, blushing o'er the fawn
Dim-lighted lawn.

And under all the shadowy shapes
Of steep and silent bays and capes
The water takes its darkest hue ;
Catches no laughter from the blue ;
No purple ray or gold escapes,
But dim green shadow comes and drapes
Its lustre : thus the night burns through
Tall groves of yew.

AC # 24
Pg 69

FROM 'THE STAR AND THE
GARTER'

Song

MAKE me a roseleaf with your mouth,
And I will waft it through the air
To some far garden of the South,
The herald of our happening there!

Fragrant, caressing, steals the breeze;
Curls into kisses on your lips :—
I know interminable seas,
Winged ardour of the stately ships,

Space of incalculable blue
And years enwreathed in one close crown,
And glimmering laughers echoing you
From reverend shades of bard's renown :—

Nature alive and glad to hymn
Your beauty, my delight : her God
Wearied, his old eyes sad and dim
In his intolerable abode.

All things that are, unknown and known,
Bending in homage to your eyes ;
We wander wondering, lift alone
The world's grey load of agonies.

Make me a roseleaf with your mouth,
That all the savour steal afar
Unto the sad awaiting South,
Where sits enthroned the answering Star.

Song

To sea ! To sea ! The ship is trim ;
The breezes bend the sails.
They chant the necromantic hymn,
Arouse Arabian tales !

To sea ! Before us leap the waves ;
The wild white combers follow.
Invoke, ye melancholy slaves,
The morning of Apollo !

AC # 24
Pg 70

128 AMBERGRIS

There's phosphorescence in the wake,
 And starlight o'er the prow;
 One comet, like an angry snake,
 Lifts up its hooded brow.

The black grows grey toward the East:
 A hint of silver glows.
 Gods gather to the mystic feast
 On interlunar snows.

The moon is up full-orbed: she glides
 Striking a snaky ray
 Across the black resounding tides,
 The sepulchre of day.

The moon is up: upon the prow
 We stand and watch the moon.
 A star is lusted on your brow;
 Your lips begin a tune,

A long, low tune of love that swells
 Little by little, and lights
 The overarching miracles
 Of love's desire, and Night's.

It swells, it rolls to triumph-song
 Through luminous black skies;

FROM 'THE STAR & THE GARTER' 129

Thrills into silence sharp and strong,
 Assumes its peace, and dies.

There is the night: it covers close
 The lilies folded fair
 Of all your beauty, and the rose
 Half hidden in your hair.

There is the night: unseen I stand
 And look to seaward still:
 We would not look upon the land
 Again, had I my will.

The ship is trim: to sea! to sea!
 Take life in either hand,
 Crush out its wine for you and me,
 And drink, and understand!

K

AC# 24
Pg 71

AMBERGRIS

ROSA MUNDI

131

130

Rosa Mundi

1. ROSE of the world!
 Red glory of the secret heart of love!
 Red flame, rose red, most subtly curled
 Into its own infinite flower, all flowers above!
 Its flower in its own perfumed passion,
 Its faint sweet passion, folded and furled
 In flower fashion;
 And my deep spirit taking its pure part
 Of that voluptuous heart
 Of hidden happiness!

2. Arise, strong bow of the young child Eros!
 (While the maddening moonlight, the memoried
 carress
 Stolen of the scented rose
 Stirs me and bids each racing pulse ache, ache!)
 Bend into an agony of art
 Whose cry is ever rapture, and whose tears

- For their own purity's undivided sake
 Are molten dew, as, on the lotus leaves
 Silver-coiled in the Sun
 Into green-girded spheres
 Purer than all a maiden's dream enweaves,
 Lies the unutterable beauty of
 The Waters. Yea, arise, divinest dove
 Of the Idalian, on your crimson wings
 And soft grey plumes, bear me to yon cool
 shrine
 Of that most softly-spoken one,
 Mine Aphrodite! Touch the imperfect strings,
 O thou, immortal, throned above the moon!
 Inspire a holy tune
 Lighter and lovelier than flowers and wine
 Offered in gracious gardens unto Pan
 By any soul of man!
3. In vain the solemn stars pour their pale dews
 Upon my trembling spirit; their caress
 Leaves me moon-rapt in waves of loveliness
 All thine, O rose, O wrought of many a muse
 In Music, O thou strength of ecstasy
 Incarnate in a woman-form, create
 Of her own rapture, infinite, ultimate,

132

AMBERGRIS

Not to be seen, not grasped, not even imaginable,
 But known of one, by virtue of that spell
 Of thy sweet will toward him : thou, unknown,
 Untouched, grave mistress of the sunlight throne
 Of thine own nature ; known not even of me,
 But of some spark of woven eternity
 Immortal in this bosom. Phosphor paled
 And in the grey upstart the dread veiled
 Rose light of dawn. Sun - shapen shone thy
 spears
 Of love forth darting into myriad spheres,
 Which I the poet called this light, that flower,
 This knowledge, that illumination, power
 This and love that, in vain, in vain, until
 Thy beauty dawned, all beauty to distil
 Into one drop of utmost dew, one name
 Choral as floral, one thin, subtle flame
 Fitted to a shaft of love, to pierce, to endue
 My trance-rapt spirit with the avenue
 Of perfect pleasures, radiating far
 Up and up yet to where thy sacred star
 Burned in its brilliance : thence the storm was
 shed
 A passion of great calm about this head,
 This head no more a poet's ; since the dream

ROSA MUNDI

133

Of beauty gathered close into a stream
 Of tingling light, and, gathering ever force
 From thine own love, its unextended source,
 Became the magic utterance that makes Me,
 Dissolving self into the starless sea
 That makes one lake of molten joy, one pond
 Steady as light and hard as diamond ;
 One drop, one atom of constraint intense,
 Of elemental passion scorning sense,
 All the concentrated music that is I.
 O ! hear me not ! I die ;
 I am borne away in misery of dumb life
 That would in words flash forth the holiest
 heaven
 That to the immortal God of Gods is given,
 And, tongue-tied, stammers forth—my wife !
 4. I am dumb with rapture of thy loveliness.
 All metres match and mingle ; all words tire ;
 All lights, all sounds, all perfumes, all gold stress
 Of the honey-palate, all soft strokes expire
 In abject agony of broken sense
 To hymn the emotion tense
 Of somewhat higher—O ! how highest !—than all
 Their mystery : fall, O fall,

AC# 24
Pg 73

134

AMBERGRIS

Ye unavailing eagle-flights of song!
O wife! these do thee wrong.

5. Thou knowest how I was blind;
How for mere minutes thy pure presence
Was nought; was ill defined;
A smudge across the mind,
Drivelling in its brutal essence,
Hog-wallowing in poetry,
Incapable of thee.

6. Ah! when the minutes grew to hours,
And yet the beast, the fool, saw flowers
And loved them, watched the moon rise, took
delight
In perfumes of the summer night,
Caught in the glamour of the sun,
Thought all the woe well won.
How hours were days, and all the misery
Abode, all mine: O thou! didst thou regret?
Wast thou asleep as I?
Didst thou not love me yet?
For, know! the moon is not the moon until
She hath the knowledge to fulfil
Her music, till she know herself the moon.

ROSA MUNDI

135

So thou, so I! The stone unhewn,
Foursquare, the sphere of human hands immune,
Was not yet chosen for the corner-piece
And keystone of the Royal Arch of Sex;
Unsolved the ultimate x;
The virginal breeding breeze
Was yet of either unstirred;
Unspoken the Great Word.

7. Then on a sudden, we knew. From deep to
deep
Reverberating, lightning unto lightning
Across the sundering brightening
Abyss of sorrow's sleep,
There shone the sword of love, and struck, and
clove
The intolerable veil,
The woven chain of mail
Prudence self-called, and folly known to who
May know. Then, O sweet drop of dew,
Thy limpid light rolled over and was lost
In mine, and mine is thine.
Peace, ye who praise! ye but disturb the shrine!
This voice is evil over against the peace
Here in the West, the holiest. Shaken and crossed

AC#29
Pg 74

136

AMBERGRIS

The threads Lachesis wove fell from her hands.
 The pale divided strands
 Were taken by thy master-hand, Eros!
 Her evil thinkings cease,
 Thy miracles begin.
 Eros! Eros!—Be silent! It is sin
 Thus to invoke the oracles of order
 Their iron gates to unclose.
 The gross, inhospitable warder
 Of Love's green garden of spice is well awake.
 Hell hath enough of Her three-headed hound;
 But Love's severer bound
 Knows for His watcher a more fearful shape,
 A formidable ape
 Skilled by black art to mock the Gods profound
 In their abyss of under ground.
 Beware! Who hath entered hath no boast to
 make,
 And conscious Eden surelier breeds the snake.
 Be silent! O! for silence' sake!

8. That asks the impossible. Smite! Smite!
 Profaned adytum of pure light,
 Smite! but I must sing on.
 Nay! can the orison

ROSA MUNDI

137

Of myriad fools provoke the Crowned-with-Night
 Hidden beyond sound and sight
 In the mystery of His own high essence?
 Lo, Rose of all the gardens of the world,
 Did thy most sacred presence
 Not fill the Real, then this voice were whirled
 Away in the wind of its own folly, thrown
 Into forgotten places and unknown.
 So I sing on!

Sister and wife, dear wife,
 Light of my love and lady of my life,
 Answer if thou canst from the unsullied place,
 Unveiling for one star-wink thy bright face!
 Did we leave then, once cognisant,
 Time for some Fear to implant
 His poison? Did we hesitate?
 Leave but one little chance to Fate?
 For one swift second did we wait?
 There is no need to answer: God is God,
 A jealous God and evil; with His rod
 He smiteth fair and foul, and with His sword
 Divideth tiniest atoms of intangible time,
 That men may know He is the Lord.
 Then, with that sharp division,
 Did He divide our wit sublime?

AC# 24
Pg. 75

AMCERGRIS

ROSA MUNDI

139

138

Our knowledge bring to nought?

We had no need of thought.

We brought His malice in derision.

So thine eternal petals shall enclose

Me, O most wonderful lady of delight,

Immaculate, indivisible circle of night,

Inviolable, invulnerable Rose!

9. The sound of my own voice carries me on.

I am as a ship whose anchors are all gone,

Whose rudder is held by Love the indomitable—

Purposeful helmsman! Were his port high Hell,

Who should be fool enough to care? Suppose

Hell's waters wash the memory of this rose

Out of my mind, what misery matters then?

Or, if they leave it, all the woes of men

Are as pale shadows in the glory of

That passionate splendour of Love.

10. Ay! my own voice, my own thoughts.

— These, then, must be

The mutiny of some worm's misery,

Some chained despair knotted into my flesh,

Some chance companion, some soul damned afresh

Since my redemption, that is vocal at all,

For I am wrapt away from light and call
In the sweet heart of the red rose.

My spirit only knows

This woman and no more; who would know
more?

I, I am concentrate

In the unshakable state

Of constant rapture. Who should pour

His ravings in the air for winds to whirl,

Far from the central pearl

Of all the diadem of the universe?

Let God take pen, rehearse

Dull nursery tales; then, not before, O rose,

Red rose! shall the beloved of thee,

Infinite rose! pen puerile poetry

That turns in writing to vile prose.

11. Were this the quintessential plume of Keats
And Shelley and Swinburne and Verlaine,

Could I outsoar them, all their lyric feats,
Excel their utterance vain

With one convincing rapture, beat them hollow

As an ass's skin; wert thou, Apollo,

Mere slave to me, not Lord—thy fieriest flight

And stateliest shaft of light

140

AMBERGRIS

Thyself thyself surpassing ; all were dull,
 And thou, O rose, sole, sacred, wonderful,
 Single in love and aim,
 Double in form and name,
 Triple in energy of radiant flame,
 Informing all, in all most beautiful,
 Circle and sphere, perfect in every part
 High above hope of Art :
 Though, be it said ! thou art nowhere now,
 Save in the secret chamber of my heart,
 Behind the brass of my anonymous brow.

12. Ay ! let the coward and slave who writes
 write on !

He is no more harm to Love than the grey snake
 Who lurks in the dusk brake
 For the bare-legged village-boy, is to the Sun,
 The Sire of Life.
 The Lover and the Wife,
 Immune, intact, ignore. The people hear ;
 Then, be the people smitten of grey Fear,
 It is no odds !

13--I have seen the eternal Gods
 Sit, star-wed, in old Egypt by the Nile ;
 The same calm pose, the inscrutable, wan smile

ROSA MUNDI

141

On every lip alike.
 Time hath not had his will to strike
 At them ; they abide, they pass through all.
 Though their most ancient names may fall,
 They stir not nor are weary of
 Life, for with them even as with us, Life is but
 Love.

They know, we know ; let, then, the writing go !
 That, in the very deed, we do not know.

14. It may be in the centuries of our life
 Since we were man and wife
 There stirs some incarnation of that love.
 Some rosebud in the garden of spices blows,
 Some offshoot from the Rose
 Of the World, the Rose of all Delight,
 The Rose of Dew, the Rose of Love and Night,
 The Rose of Silence, covering as with a vesture
 The solemn unity of things
 Beheld in the mirror of truth,
 The Rose indifferent to God's gesture,
 The Rose on moonlight wings
 That flies to the House of Fire,
 The Rose of Honey in Youth !
 Ah ! No dim mystery of desire

AC# 24
Pg 77

142 AMBERGRIS

Fathoms this gulf! No light invades
The mystical musical shades
Of a faith in the future, a dream of the day
When athwart the dim glades
Of the forest a ray
Of sunlight shall flash and the dew die away!

15. Let there then be obscurity in this!
There is an after rapture in the kiss.
The fire, flesh, perfume, music that outpaced
All time, fly off; they are subtle: there abides
A secret and most maiden taste;
Salt, as of the invisible tides
Of the molten sea of gold
Men may at times behold
In the rayless scarab of the sinking sun;
And out of that is won
Hardly, with labour and pain that are as pleasure,
The first flower of the garden, the stored treasure
That lies at the heart's heart of eternity.
This treasure is for thee.

16. O! but shall hope arise in happiness?
That may not be.
My love is like a golden grape; the veins

ROSA MUNDI

143

Peep through the ecstasy
Of the essence of ivory and silk,
Pearl, moonlight, mother-milk
That is her skin;
Its swift caress
Flits like an angel's kiss in a dream; remains
The healing virtue; from all sin,
All ill, one touch sets free.
My love is like a star—oh fool! oh fool!
Is not thy back yet tender from the rod?
Is there no learning in the poet's school?
Wilt thou achieve what were too hard for God?
I call Him to the battle; ask of me
When the hinds calve? What of eternity
When he built chaos? Shall Leviathan
Be drawn out with an hook? Enough; I see
This I can answer—or Ernst Haeckel can!
Now, God Almighty, rede this mystery!
What of the love that is the heart of man?
Take stars and airs, and write it down!
Fill all the interstices of space
With myriad verse—own Thy disgrace!
Diminish Thy renown!
Approve my riddle! This Thou canst not do.

144

AMBERGRIS

17. O living Rose! O dowered with subtle dew
Of love, the tiny eternities of time,
Caught between flying seconds, are well filled
With these futilities of fragrant rime;
In Love's retort distilled,
In sunrays of fierce loathing purified,
In moonrays of pure longing tried,
And gathered after many moons of labour
Into the compass of a single day,
And wrought into continuous tune,
One laughter with one languor for its neighbour,
One thought of winter with one word of June,
Muddled and mixed in mere dismay,
Chiselled with the cunning chisel of despair,
Found wanting, well aware
Of its own fault, even insistent
Thereon; some fragrance rare
Stolen from my lady's hair
Perchance redeeming now and then the distant
Fugitive tunes.

18. Ah! Love! the hour is over!
The moon is up, the vigil overpast.
Call me to thee at last,
O Rose, O perfect miracle lover,

ROSA MUNDI

145

Call me! I hear thee though it be across
The abyss of the whole universe,
Though not a sigh escape, delicious loss!
Though hardly a wish rehearse
The imperfection underlying ever
The perfect happiness.
Thou knowest that not in flesh
Lies the fair fresh
Delight of love; not in mere lips and eyes
The secret of these bridal ecstasies,
Since thou art everywhere,
Rose of the World, Rose of the Uttermost
Abode of Glory, Rose of the High Host
Of Heaven, mystic, rapturous Rose!
The extreme passion glows
Deep in this breast; thou knowest (and love knows)
How every word awakes its own reward
In a thought akin to thee, a shadow of thee;
And every tune evokes its musical Lord;
And every rime tingles and shakes in me
The filaments of the great web of love.

19. O Rose all roses far above
In the garden of God's roses,
Sorrowless, thornless, passionate Rose, that lies

146 AMBERGRIS

Full in the flood of its own sympathies
And makes my life one tune that curls and closes
On its own self delight ;
A circle, never a line ! Safe from all wind,
Secure in its own pleasure-house confined,
Mistress of all its moods,
Matchless, serene, in sacred amplitudes
Of its own royal rapture, deaf and blind
To aught but its own mastery of song
And light, shown ever as silence and deep night
Secret as death and final. Let me long
Never again for aught ! This great delight
Involves me, weaves me in its pattern of bliss,
Seals me with its own kiss,
Draws me to thee with every dream that glows.
Poet, each word ! Maiden, each burden of snows
Extending beyond sunset, beyond dawn !
O Rose, inviolate, utterly withdrawn
In the truth :—for this is truth ; Love knows !
Ah ! Rose of the World ! Rose ! Rose !

147

OTHER LOVE-SONGS

Dora

DORA steals across the floor
Tiptoe ;
Opens then her rosy door,
Peeps out.
'Nobody ! And where shall I
Skip to ?'
Dora, diving daintily,
Creeps out.

'To the woodland ! Shall I find
Crowtoe,
Violet, jessamine ! I'll bind
Garlands.
Fancy I'm a princess. Where
Go to ?
Persia, China, Finisterre ?
Far lands !'

148

AMBERGRIS

Pity Dora! Only one

Daisy

Did she find. The sulking sun

Slept still.

Dora stamped her foot. Aurora

Lazy

Stirred not. Hush! A footstep. Dora

Kept still.

What a dreadful monster! Shoot!

Mercy!

(‘Twas a man.) Suppose the brute

Ate her?

By-and-by the ruffian grows

‘Percy.’

And she loves him now she knows

Better.

149

Norah

NORAH, my wee shy child of wonderment,
You are sweeter than a swallow-song at dusk!

You are braver than a lark that soars and trills

His lofty laughter of love to a hundred hills!

You lie like a sweet nut within the husk

Of my big arms; and uttermost content

I have of you, my tiny fairy, eh?

Do you live in a flower, I wonder, and sleep and

pray

To the good God to send you dew at dawn

And rain in rain’s soft season, and sun betimes,

And all the gladness of the afterglow

When you come shyly out of the folded bud,

Unsheath your dainty soul, bathe it in blood

Of my heart? Do you love me? Do you

know

How I love you? Do you love these twitter-

ing rimes

I string you? Is your tiny life withdrawn

Full in the flood of its own sympathies
 And makes my life one tune that curls and closes
 On its own self delight ;
 A circle, never a line ! Safe from all wind,
 Secure in its own pleasure-house confined,
 Mistress of all its moods,
 Matchless, serene, in sacred amplitudes
 Of its own royal rapture, deaf and blind
 To aught but its own mastery of song
 And light, shown ever as silence and deep night
 Secret as death and final. Let me long
 Never again for aught ! This great delight
 Involves me, weaves me in its pattern of bliss,
 Seals me with its own kiss,
 Draws me to thee with every dream that glows.
 Poet, each word ! Maiden, each burden of snows
 Extending beyond sunset, beyond dawn !
 O Rose, inviolate, utterly withdrawn
 In the truth :—for this is truth ; Love knows !
 Ah ! Rose of the World ! Rose ! Rose !

OTHER LOVE-SONGS

Dora

DORA steals across the floor
 Tiptoe ;
 Opens then her rosy door,
 Peeps out.
 ‘ Nobody ! And where shall I
 Skip to ?’
 Dora, diving daintily,
 Creeps out.
 ‘ To the woodland ! Shall I find
 Crowtoe,
 Violet, jessamine ! I’ll bind
 Garlands.
 Fancy I’m a princess. Where
 Go to ?
 Persia, China, Finisterre ?
 Far lands !’

AC# 24
Pg 81

150

AMBERGRIS

Into its cup for modesty when I sing

So softly to you and hold you in my hands,

You wild, wee wonder of wisdom? Now I bring

My lips to your body and touch you reverently,

Knowing as I know what Gabriel understands

When he spreads his wings above for canopy

When you would sleep, you frail angelic thing

Like a tiny snowdrop in its own life curled—

But oh! the biggest heart in all the world!

151

Edith

SPEAK, O my sister, O my spouse, speak, speak!

Sigh not, but utter the intense award

Of infinite love; arise, burn cheek by cheek!

Dart, eyes of glory; live, O lambent sword

O' the heart's gold rushing over mount and moor

Of sunlit rapture! rise all runes above,

Dissolve thyself into one molten lure,

Invisible core of the visible flame of love!

Heart of the sun of rapture, whirling ever;

Strength of the sight of eagles, pierce the foam

Of ecstasy's irremeable river,

And race the rhythm of laughter to its home

In the heart of the woman, and evoke the light

Of love out of the fiery womb of night!

Rose

ROSE on the breast of the world of spring,

I press my breast against thy bloom,

My subtle life drawn out to thee: to thee its
moods and meanings cling.

I pass from change and thought to peace, woven
on love's incredible loom,

Rose on the breast of the world of spring!

How shall the heart dissolved in joy take form and
harmony and sing?

How shall the ecstasy of light fall back to music's
magic gloom?

O China rose without a thorn, O honey-bee with-
out a sting!

The scent of all thy beauty burns upon the wind.

The deep perfume

Of our own love is hidden in our hearts, the
invulnerable ring.

No man shall know. I bear thee down unto the
tomb, beyond the tomb,

Rose on the breast of the world of spring!

*Eileen*

UNDER the stars the die was cast to win.

The moonrays stained with pale embroidered bars
The iridescent shimmer of your skin,

Under the stars.

Great angels drove their pearl-inwoven cars

Through the night's racecourse: silence stood
within

The folded cups of passion's nenuphars.

You were my own; sorrowless, without sin,

That night—this night. Sinks the red eye of Mars;

The hand of Hermes guides us as we spin

Under the stars.

AC# 24
Pg 83

154

AMBERGRIS

Could ivory blush with a stain of the sunset on
highlands
Of snow : could the mind of me span
The tenderness born of the dew in immaculate
islands
Virgin of maculate man :
Could I mingle the Alps and Hawaii ; Strath Ness
and A'pura and Baia ;
Kashmir and Japan :

Could lilies attain to the life of the Gods : could a
comet
Attain to the calm of the moon :
I would mingle them all in a kiss, and draw from it
The soul of a sensitive tune.
All lovers should hear it and know it : not needing
the words of a poet
In ebony hewn.

HÉLÈNE

155

O beam of discovery under the eyelids awaking
The sense of delight ! O assent
Slow dawning through cream into roses ! O white
bosom shaking
The myrtles of magical scent
In the groves of the heart ! O the pleasure that
runs over all overmeasure,
The wine of Event !

Overmastered the hurl of the world in the hush of
our rapture ;
Entangled the bird of success
In the snare of bewildering fancies. We capture
Delight in the toils of a tress
Rough gilded of sunlight and umber with virginal
shadows of slumber--
Ah ! sorrow, regress !

Till the idle abyss of eternity swoon to our pinions
With music of wings as we fly
Through the azure of dreams, and the purple of
mighty dominions
Exalted, afoam in the sky ;
And to us it were wiser and sweeter to ruin the
race of the metre,
And song were to die.

Ac #24

pg 84

156

AMBERGRIS

FROM 'GARGOYLES'

Song

DANCE a measure
Of tiniest whirls!
Shake out your treasure
Of cinnamon curls!
Tremble with pleasure,
O wonder of girls!

Rest is bliss,
And bliss is rest,
Give me a kiss
If you love me best!
Hold me like this
With my head on your breast!

157

Said

THE spears of the night at her onset
Are lords of the day for a while,
The magical green of the sunset,
The magical blue of the Nile.
Afloat are the gales
In our slumberous sails
On the beautiful breast of the Nile.

We have swooned through the midday, ex-
hausted
By the lips—they are whips—of the sun,
The horizon befogged and befrosted
By the haze and the greys and the dun
Of the whirlings of sand
Let loose on the land
By the wind that is born of the sun.
On the water we stand as a shadow,
A skeleton sombre and thin

158

AMBERGRIS

Erect on the watery meadow,
As a giant, a lord of the Jinn
Set sentinel over
Some queen and her lover
Beloved of the Gods and the Jinn.

We saw the moon shudder and sink
In a furnace of tremulous blue ;
We stood on the mystical brink
Of the day as it sprang to us through
The veil of the night,
And the babe of the light
Was begotten in the caves of the dew.

My lover and I were awake
When the noise of the dawn in our ears
Burst out like a storm or a snake
Or the rush of the Badawi spears.
Dawn of desire!
But thy kiss was as fire
To thy lovers and princes and peers.

Then the ruin of night we beheld,
As the sun stormed the heights of the sky

SAID

159

With his myriad swords, and compelled
The pale tremblers, the planets, to fly.
He drave from their place
All the stars for a space,
From their bastioned towers in the sky.

Thrilled through to the marrow with heat
We abode (as we glode) on the river.
Every arrow he launched from his seat,
From the white inexhaustible quiver,
Smote us right through,
Smote us and slew,
As we rode on the rapturous river.

Sweet sleep is perfection of love.
To die into dreams of my lover,
To wake with his mouth like a dove
Kissing me over and over !
Better sleep so
Than be conscious, and know
How death hath a charm to discover.

Ah ! float in the cool of the gloaming!
Float wide in the lap of the stream

AC #174
pg 86

160

AMBERGRIS

With his mouth ever roving and homing
To the nest where the dove is adream.
Better wake so
Than be thinking, and know
That at best it is only a dream.

So turn up thy face to the stars!
In their peace be at peace for awhile!
Let us pass in their luminous cars
As a sob, as a sigh, as a smile!
Love me and laze
Through the languorous days
On the breast of the beautiful Nile!

161

Prayer

THE light streams stronger through the lamps of
sense.
Intelligence
Grows as we go. Alas : its icy glimmer
Shows dimmer, dimmer
The awful vaults we traverse. Were the sun
Himself the one
Glory of space, he would but illustrate
The night of Fate.
Are not the hosts of heaven in vain arrayed?
Their light dismayed
Before the vast blind spaces of the sky?
O galaxy
Of thousands upon thousands closely curled!
Your golden world
Incalculably small, its closest cluster
Mere milky lustre

Staining the infinite darkness! Base and blind
 Our minion mind
 Seeks a great light, a light sufficient, light
 Insufferably bright,
 Hence hidden for an hour : imagining
 This vast vain thing,
 We call it God, and Father. Empty hand
 And prayer unplanned
 Stretch fatuous to the void. Ah! men my friends,
 What fury sends
 This folly to intoxicate your hearts?
 Dread air disparts
 Your vital ways from these unsavoury follies.
 Black melancholies
 Sit straddled on your bended backs. The throne
 Of the unknown
 Is fit for children. We are too well ware
 How vain is prayer,
 How nought is great, since all is immanent,
 The vast content
 Of all the universe unalterable.
 We know too well
 How no one thing abides awhile at all,
 How all things fall,

Fall from their seat, the lamentable place,
 Before their face,
 Weary and pass and are no more. So we,
 Since hope must be,
 Look to the future, to the chance minute
 That life may shoot
 Some flower at least to blossom in the night,
 Since vital light
 Is sure to fail us on the hideous way.
 What? Must we pray?
 Verily, O thou littlest babe, too weak
 To stir or speak,
 Capable hardly of a thought, yet seed
 Of word and deed!
 To thine assured fruition we may trust
 This weary dust.
 We who are old, and palsied, (and so wise!)
 Lift up our eyes
 To little children, as the storm-tossed bark
 Hails in the dark
 Some hardly visible harbour light; we hold
 The hours of gold
 To our own breasts, whose hours are iron and
 brass :—
 So swift they pass

164

AMBERGRIS

And grind us down:—we hold the wondrous
light

Our scattering sight

Yet sees, the one star in a night of woe.

We trust, and so

Lift up our voices in the dying day

Indeed to pray:

O little hands that are so soft and strong,

Lead us along!

165

The King-Ghost

THE King-Ghost is abroad. His spectre legions
Sweep from their icy lakes and bleak ravines
Unto these weary and untrodden regions
Where man lies penned among his Might-have-
beens.

Keep us in safety, Lord,

What time the King-Ghost is abroad!

The King-Ghost from his grey malefic slumbers
Awakes the malice of his bloodless brain.
He marshals the innumerable numbers
Of shrieking shapes on the sepulchral plain.

Keep us, for Jesu's sake,

What time the King-Ghost is awake!

The King-Ghost wears a crown of hopes forgotten;
Dead loves are woven in his ghastly robe;
Bewildered wills and faiths grown old and rotten
And deeds undared his sceptre, sword, and globe.

Keep us, O Mary maid,

What time the King-Ghost goes arrayed!

AC#24
Page 89

The Hell-Wind whistles through his plumeless pinions ;

Clanks all that melancholy host of bones ;

Fate's principalities and Death's dominions

Echo the drear discord, the tuneless tones.

Keep us, dear God, from ill,

What time the Hell-Wind whistles shrill.

The King-Ghost hath no music but their rattling ;

No scent but death's grown faint and fugitive ;

No light but this their leprous pallor battling

Weakly with night. Lord, shall these dry bones live?

O keep us in the hour

Wherein the King-Ghost hath his power !

The King-Ghost girds me with his gibbering creatures,

My dreams of old that never saw the sun.

He shows me, in a mocking glass, their features,

The twin fiends ' Might-have-been ' and ' Should-have-done.'

Keep us, by Jesu's ruth,

What time the King-Ghost grins the truth !

The King-Ghost boasts eternal usurpature ;

For in this pool of tears his fingers fret

I had imagined, by enduring nature,

The twin gods ' Thus-will-I ' and ' May-be-yet.'

God, keep us most from ill,

What time the King-Ghost grips the will !

Silver and rose and gold what flame resurges?

What living light pours forth in emerald waves?

What inmost Music drowns the clamorous dirges?

—Shrieking they fly, the King-Ghost and his slaves.

Lord, let Thy Ghost indwell,

And keep us from the power of Hell !

Amen.

Ac #24
Pg 90

168

AMBERGRIS

FROM 'RODIN IN RIME'

Tête de Femme (Musée du Luxembourg)

It shall be said, when all is done,
The last line written, the last mountain
Climbed, the last look upon the sun
Taken, the last star in the fountain
Shattered, that you and I were one.
What shall they say, who come apace
After us, heedless, gallant? Seeing
Our statues, hearing of our race
Heroic tales, half-doubted, being
So far beyond a rime to trace.
What shall they say? For secret we
Have held our love, and holy. Splendour
Of light, and music of the sea,
And eyes and heart serene and tender,
With kisses mingled utterly
These were our ways. And who shall know?
What warrior bard our nuptial glories

TÊTE DE FEMME

169

Shall sing? Historic shall we go
Down through our country's golden stories?
Shall lovers whisper 'Even so
As he loved her do I love you?'
So much they shall know, surely; never
The truth, how lofty and fresh as dew
Our love began, abode for ever:
They cannot know us through and through.
We have exceeded all the past.
The future shall not build another.
This is the climax, first and last.
We stand upon the summit. Mother
Of ages, daughter of ages, cast
The fatal die, and turn to death!
Let evolution turn, involving
As when the gray sun sickeneth—
Ghostly September! so dissolving
Into the pale eternal breath.
When all is done, shall this be said.
When all is said, shall this be done,
The æon exhaust and finishèd,
And slumber steal upon the sun,
My dear, when you and I are dead.

AC #24
Pg 91

Acrobatis

My little lady light o' limb
 Twirls on her lover's twisting toes.
 Lithe as a lynx, red as a rose,
 She spins aloft and laughs at him.
 So gay the pose, so quaint the whim,
 One stares and stares : it grows and grows.
 So swift the air she seems to skim
 One's senses dazzle ; wonder glows
 Warm in one's veins like love—who knows ?
 One follows till one's eyes are dim
 My little lady light o' limb.

Réveil d' Adonis

ADONIS, awake, it is day ; it is spring !
 It is dawn on the lea, it is light on the lake !
 The fawn's in the bush and the bird's on the wing !
 Adonis, awake !
 Adonis, awake ! We are colour and song
 And form, we are Muses most tender to take
 Thy life up to Art that was lost over long.
 Adonis, awake !
 Adonis, awake ! thou hast risen above
 The fear in the forest, the brute in the brake.
 Thou art sacred to shrines that are higher than Love !
 Adonis, awake !

172

AMBERGRIS

Faunesse

THE veil o' th' mist of the quiet wood is lifted to
the seer's gaze ;

He burns athwart the murky maze beyond into
beatitude.

A solemn rapture holds the faun : an holy joy sucks
up the seer

Within its rose-revolving sphere, the orient oval of
the dawn.

Light's graven old cartouche is sealed upon the
forest : groves are gray

With filtered glammers of the day, the steely ray
flung off his shield.

She kneels, yon spirit of the earth ; she kneels and
looks toward the east.

In her gray eyes awakes the beast from slumber into
druid mirth.

FAUNESSE

173

She is amazed, she, eager, she, exotic orchid of the
glade !

She waits the ripe, exultant blade, life tempered by
eternity.

And I who witness am possessed by awe grown
crimson with desire,

Its iron image wrapped in fire and branded idly on
my breast.

Her face is bronze, her skin is green, as woods and
suns would have it so.

Her secret wonders grow and glow, limned in the
luminous patine.

Worship, the sculptor's, clean forgot in worship of
her body lithe.

And time forgotten with his scythe, and thought,
the Witenagemot,

Confused in rapture : peace is culled a flower from
the arboreal root,

The vision dulled, the singer mute, shattered the
lute, the song annulled.

AC #24
Pg 93

174

AMBERGRIS

Balzac

GIANT, with iron secreties enmighthed,
Cloaked, Balzac stands and sees. Immense disdain,
Egyptian silence, mastery of pain,
Gargantuan laughter, shake or still the ignited
Stature of the Master, vivid. Far, affrighted,
The stunned air shudders on the skin. In vain
The Master of 'La Comédie Humaine'
Shadows the deep-set eyes, genius-lighted.

Epithalamia, birth-songs, epitaphs,
Are written in the mystery of his lips.
Sad wisdom, scornful shame, grand agony
In the coffin-folds of the cloak, scarred mountains,
lie,

And pity hides i' th' heart. Grim knowledge grips
The essential manhood. Balzac stands, and laughs.

175

FROM 'ORPHEUS'

The Hours

DARKNESS and daylight in divided measure
Gather as petals of the sunflower,
In many seasons seek the lotus-treasure,
Following as dancing maidens, mute for pleasure,
The fervent flying footsteps of the Hour.

The sun looks over the memorial hills,
The trampling of his horses heard as wind;
He leaps and turns, and all his fragrance fills
The shade and silence; all the rocks and rills
Ring with the triumph of his steeds behind.

The bright air winnowed by the plumeless leapers
Laughs, and the low light pierces to the bed
Where lovers linger, where the smiling sleepers
Stir, and the herds unmindful of their keepers
Low for pure love of morning's dewy head.

Ac-#24
Pg 94

176

AMBERGRIS

The morning shakes its ocean-bathed tresses,
The bright sun broadens over all the earth.
The green leaves fall, fall into his caresses,
And all the world's heart leaps, again addresses
Its life, and girds it in the golden girth.

Then noon full-fashioned lies upon the steep.

The large sun sighs and turns his bridle-rein,
Thinks of the ocean, turns his heart to sleep,
Laughing no longer, not yet prone to weep,
Feeling the prelude of the coming pain.

The hills and dales are dumb beneath the heat,

And all the world lies tranced or mutely dream-
ing,

Save some low sigh caught up where pulses beat
Of warm love waiting in the arboreal seat

Till the shade lengthen on the lawn light-
gleaming.

Now all the birds change tune, and all the light
Glow lowlier, musing on departed day.

Strange wings and sombre, heralding the night,
Fleet far across the woods; and gleaming bright
The evening star looks from the orient way.

THE HOURS

177

Shadow and silence deepen: all the woods
Take on a tenderer phrase of musical
Breeces: the stream-sought homes and solitudes
Murmur a little where the maiden moods
Are sadder as the evening's kisses fall.

Like silver scales of serpenthood they fall

Across the blind air of the evening;
Shadowy ghosts arise funereal
And seek unspeakable things; and dryads call
The satyr-company to the satyr-king.

And all the light is over; but the sky
Shudders with blanched light of the unrisen
moon.

The night-birds mingle their sad minstrelsy
For daylight's requiem: and the sea's reply
Now stirs across the land's departed tune.

The moon is up: the choral crowd of stars,
Shapen like strange or unknown animals,
Move in their measure: beyond Æolian bars
The clustering winds, moving as nenuphars,
Gather and muse before the midnight calls.

N

AC# 24
Pg 95

178 AMBERGRIS

The darkness is most deep in hollow dells.
There, blacker than Cocytus, lurk the shades
Darker than death's, more terrible than hell's,
Uttering unwritten words : the silent wells
Keep their sweet secret till the morning maids

Bring their carved pitchers to the moss-grown side.
For now beyond, below the east, appears
A hint as if a band, silvern and wide,
The girdle of some goddess amber-eyed,
Rose from the solemn company of the spheres.

The sky is tinged, as if the amorous flesh
Of that same queen shone through the girdle
drawn
By her own kissing fervour through its mesh.
Last, glory of godhead ! flickers, flames the fresh
First faint frail rose and arrow of the dawn.

179

Autumn

Full amber-breasted light of harvest-moon,
And sheaves of corn remembering the sun
Laughing again for love of that caress
When night is fallen, and the sleepy swoon
Of warm waves lap the shoreland, one by one ;
Forgetful kisses like a dream's possess
All the low-lying land,
And, statelier than the swaying form
Of some loud God, lifting the storm
In his disastrous hand,
Steps the sweet-voiced, the mellow motherhood
Glad of the sun's kiss, full of life, well wooed
And won and brought to his bed,
Proud of her rhythm in the lusty kiss,
Triumphant and exulting in the mood
Wherein her being is
Crowned with a husband's head,
And left in solitude which is not solitude.

AC #24
Pg 96

180 AMBERGRIS

She strides with mighty steps across the glade
 Laughing, her bosom swelling with the milk
 Born of a million kisses : leaps her womb
 Pregnant with fruits, and latter flowers, and shade
 Of the great cedar-groves : soft, soft as silk,
 Her skin glows amber, silvered with the bloom
 Mist-like of the moon's light,
 A slumberous haze of quietude
 Shed o'er the hardy limbs, and lustihood,
 And boldness, and great might.
 Earth knows her daring daughter, and the sea
 Breaks into million-folded mystery
 Of flower-like flashes in the pale moonrise,
 Exulting also, now the sun is faded,
 With joy of her supreme fertility
 And glowing masteries
 Of autumn summer-shaded,
 The golden fruit of all the blossoming sky.

AUTUMN 181

Blow, and her leaves are torn, a flying throng
 Of orange and purple and red ; the sombre
 sun
 Shines darkly in her breast
 But wakes no joy therein,
 And all his kisses sharp and keen
 Bring only now desire of rest,
 Not their old rapture : the warm violet eyes
 Melt into sweet hot tears ; subtler the sighs
 Are interfused of death ;
 The brave bright looks grow duller,
 And fear is mingled with love's ecstasies
 Again, and all her breath
 Fails, and the shape and colour
 Fade, fail, are lost in the sepulchral sea's.

And now the watcher to the bright breasts blind
 Loses the seemly shape, the loud swift song ;
 Now the moon falls, and all the gold is gone,
 And round the storm-caught shape hard gusts of
 wind

AC #24
Pg 97

Of thy supreme desire.
I shall illumine the fire

Whence thy wild stryges shall obey the lyre,
Whence thy Lemurs shall gather and spring round,
Girdling me in the sad funereal ground
With faces turned back,

My face averted! I shall consummate
The awful act of worship, O renowned
Fear upon earth, and fear in hell, and black
Fear in the sky beyond Fate!

I hear the whining of thy wolves! I hear
The howling of the hounds about thy form,
Who comest in the terror of thy storm,
And night falls faster, ere thine eyes appear
Glittering through the mist.

O face of woman unknissed
Save by the dead whose love is taken ere they wist!
Thee, thee I call! O dire one! O divine!
I, the sole mortal, seek thy deadly shrine,
Pour the dark stream of blood,

A sleepy and reluctant river
Even as thou drawest, with thine eyes on mine,
To me across the sense-bewildering flood
That holds my soul for ever!

Invocation of Hecate.

O TRIPLE form of darkness! Sombre splendour!
Thou moon unseen of men! Thou huntress
dread!

Thou crownèd demon of the crownless dead!
O breasts of blood, too bitter and too tender!
Unseen of gentle spring,

Let me the offering
Bring to thy shrine's sepulchral glittering!
I slay the swart beast! I bestow the bloom
Sown in the dusk, and gathered in the gloom
Under the waning moon,

At midnight hardly lightening the East;
And the black lamb from the black ewe's dead
womb

I bring, and stir the slow infernal tune
Fit for thy chosen priest.

Here where the band of Ocean breaks the road
Black-trodden, deeply-stooping, to the abyss,
I shall salute thee with the nameless kiss
Pronounced toward the uttermost abode

Ac #24
Pg 98

184

AMBERGRIS

The Regaining of Eurydice

THE magical task and the labour is ended ;

The toils are unwoven, the battle is won ;

My lover comes back to my arms, to the splendid

Abyss of the air and abode of the sun.

The sword be assuaged, and the bow be unbended !

The labour is past, and the victory won.

The arrows of song through Hell cease to hurtle.

Away to the passionate gardens of Greece,

Where the thrush is awake, and the voice of the
turtle

Is soft in the amorous places of peace,

And the tamarisk groves and the olive and myrtle

Stir ever with love and content and release.

O bountiful bowers and O beautiful gardens !

O isles in the azure Ionian deep !

Ere ripens the sun, ere the spring-wind hardens

Your fruits once again ye shall have me to keep.

THE REGAINING OF EURYDICE 185

The sleep-god laments, and the love-goddess
pardons,

When love at the last sinks unwearied to sleep.

The green-hearted hours shall burst into flowers.

The winds shall waft roses from uttermost Ind.

Our nuptial dowers shall be birds in our bowers,

Our couches the delicate heaps of the wind,

Where the lily-bloom showers all its light, and
the powers

Of earth in our twinning are wedded and twinned.

AC#24
Pg 99

THE MÆNADS INVOKE DIONYSUS 187

In thine own thigh most holy
That offspring melancholy
Didst hide, didst feed, on light, ambrosia, and moly.

Ay! and with serpent hair
And limbs divinely fair
Didst thou, Dionysus, leap forth to the nectar air!

Ay! thus the dreams of fate
We dare commemorate,
Twining in lovesome curls the spoil of mate and
mate.

O Dionysus, here!
Be close, be quick, be near,
Whispering enchanted words in every curving ear!

O Dionysus, start
As the Apollonian dart!
Bury thy hornèd head in every bleeding heart!

186 AMBERGRIS

The Mænads invoke Dionysus

HAIL, child of Semelé!
To her as unto thee

Be reverence, be deity, be immortality!

Shame! treachery of the spouse
Of the Olympian house,
Hera! thy grim device against the sweet carouse!

Lo! in red roar and flame
Did Zeus descend! What claim
To feel the immortal fire had then the Theban
dame!

Caught in that fiery wave
Her love and life she gave
With one last kissing cry the unborn child to save.

And thou, O Zeus, the sire
Of Bromius—hunter dire!—
Didst snatch the unborn babe from that Olympian
fire:

Orpheus invokes the Lords of Khem

UNITY uttermost showed,

I adore the might of thy breath,
Supreme and terrible God

Who makest the Gods and death
To tremble before thee:—

I, I adore thee!

O Hawk of gold with power enwalled,
Whose face is like an emerald;

Whose crown is indigo as night;
Smaragdine snakes about thy brow
Twine, and the disk of flaming light
Is on thee, seated in the prow

Of the Sun's bark, enthroned above
With lapis-lazuli for love

And ruby for enormous force

Chosen to seat thee, thee girt round

With leopard's pell, and golden sound
Of planets choral in their course!

O thou self-formulated sire!

Self-master of thy dam's desire!

Thine eyes blaze forth with fiery light;

Thine heart a secret sun of flame!

I adore the insuperable might:

I bow before the unspoken Name.

For I am Yesterday, and I

To-day, and I to-morrow, born

Now and again, on high, on high

Travelling on Dian's naked horn!

I am the Soul that doth create

The Gods, and all the Kin of Breath.

I come from the sequestered state;

My birth is from the House of Death.

Hail! ye twin hawks high pinnacled

That watch upon the universe!

Ye that the bier of God beheld!

That bore it onwards, ministers

Of peace within the House of Wrath,

Servants of him that cometh forth

At dawn with many coloured lights

Mounting from underneath the North,

The shrine of the celestial Heights!

190

AMBERGRIS

He is in me, and I in Him!

Mine is the crystal radiance
That filleth æther to the brim

Wherein all stars and suns may dance.

I am the beautiful and glad,

Rejoicing in the golden day.

I am the spirit silken-clad

That fareth on the fiery way.

I have escaped from Him, whose eyes

Are closed at eventide, and wise

To drag thee to the House of Wrong:—

I am armed! I am armed! I am strong! I
am strong!

I make my way: opposing horns

Of secret foemen push their lust

In vain: my song their fury scorns;

They sink, they grovel in the dust.

Hail, self-created Lord of Night!

Inscrutable and infinite!

Let Orpheus journey forth to see

The Disk in peace and victory!

Let him adore the splendid sight,

The radiance of the Heaven of Nu;

ORPHEUS

191

Soar like a bird, laved by the light,
To pierce the far eternal blue!

Hail! Hermes! thou the wands of ill
Hast touched with strength, and they are
shivered!

The way is open unto will!

The pregnant Goddess is delivered!

Happy, yea, happy! happy is he

That hath looked forth upon the Bier

That goeth to the House of Rest!

His heart is lit with melody;

Peace in his house is master of fear;

His holy Name is in the West

When the sun sinks, and royal rays

Of moonrise flash across the day's!

I have risen! I have risen! as a mighty hawk of
gold!

From the golden egg I gather, and my wings the
world enfold.

I alight in mighty splendour from the thronèd boats
of light;

Companies of Spirits follow me; adore the Lords
of Night.

Ac #1
Pg 102

192

AMBERGRIS

Yea, with gladness did they paean, bowing low before my car,

In my ears their homage echoed from the sunrise to the star.

I have risen! I am gathered as a lovely hawk of gold,

I the first-born of the Mother in her ecstasy of old.

Lo! I come to face the dweller in the sacred snake of Khem;

Come to face the Babe and Lion, come to measure force with them!

Ah! these locks flow down, a river, as the earth's before the Sun,

As the earth's before the sunset, and the God and I are One.

I who entered in a Fool, gain the God by clean endeavour;

I am shaped as men and women, fair for ever and for ever.

193

The Star-Goddess sings of Orpheus dead

ENOUGH. It is ended, the story
Of magical æons of song;
The sun is gone down in his glory
To the Houses of Hate and of Wrong.
Would ye see if he rise?
In Hesperian skies
Ye may look for his rising for long.

The magical æon beginneth
Of song in the heart of desire,
That smiteth and striveth and sinneth,
But burns up the soul of the lyre:—
There is pain in the note:—
In the sorcerer's throat
Is a sword, and his brain is afire!

o

AMBERGRIS

Long after (to men : but a moment
 To me in my mansion of rest)
 Is a sundawn to blaze what the glow meant
 Seen long after death in the west ;
 A magical æon !
 Nor love-song nor pæan,
 But a flame with a silvery crest.

There shall rise a sweet song of the soul
 Far deeper than love or distress ;
 Beyond mortals and gods shall it roll ;
 It shall find me, and crave, and caress.
 Ah ! me it shall capture
 In torrents of rapture ;
 It shall flood me, and fill, and possess.

For brighter from age unto age
 The weary old world shall renew
 Its life at the lips of the sage,
 Its love at the lips of the dew.
 With kisses and tears
 The return of the years
 Is sure as the starlight is true.

THE STAR-GODDESS SINGS 195

Yet the drift of the stars is to beauty,
 To strength, and to infinite pleasure.
 The toil and the worship and duty
 Shall turn them to laughter and leisure.
 Were the world understood
 Ye would see it was good,
 A dance to a delicate measure.

Ye fools, interweaving in passion
 The lyrical light of the mind !
 Go on, in your drivelling fashion !
 Ye shall surely seek long and not find.
 From without ye may see
 All the beauty of me,
 And my lips, that their kisses are kind.

For Eurydice once I lamented ;
 For Orpheus I do not lament :
 Her days were a span, and demented ;
 His days are for aye, and content.
 Mere love is as nought
 To the love that is Thought,
 And idea is more than event.

O lovers! O poets! O masters
 Of me, ye may ravish my frown!
 Aloof from my shocks and disasters!
 Impatient to kiss me, and crown!
 I am eager to yield.
 In the warrior field
 Ye shall fight me, and fasten me down.

O poets! O masters! O lovers!
 Sweet souls of the strength of the sun!
 The couch of eternity covers
 Our loves, and our dreams are as done.
 Reality closes
 Our life into roses;
 We are infinite space : we are one.

There is one that hath sought me and found me
 In the heart of the sand and the snow :
 He hath caught me, and held me, and bound me,
 In the lands where no flower may grow.
 His voice is a spell,
 Hath enchanted me well!
 I am his, did I will it or no.

But I will it, I will it, I will it!
 His speck of a soul in its cars
 Shall lift up immensity! fill it
 With light of his lyrical bars.
 His soul shall concentrate
 All space; he shall enter
 The beautiful land of the stars.

He shall know me eternally wedded
 To the splendid and subtle of mind;
 For the pious, the arrogant-headed,
 He shall know they nor seek me nor find.
 O afloat in me curled!
 Cry aloud to the world
 That I and my kisses are kind!

O lover! O poet! O maiden
 To me in my magical way!
 Be thy songs with the wilderness laden!
 Thy lyre be adrift and astray :—
 So to me thou shalt cling!
 So to me thou shalt sing
 Of the beautiful law of the day!

Ac #24

Pg 105

KAESEBERG

198

AMBERGRIS

I forbid thee to weep or to worship ;
 I forbid thee to sing or to write !
 The Star-Goddess guideth us her ship ;
 The sails belly out with the light.
 Beautiful head !
 We will sing on our bed
 Of the beautiful law of the Night !

We are lulled by the whirr of the stars ;
 We are fanned by the whisper, the wind ;
 We are locked in unbreakable bars,
 The love of the spirit and mind.
 The infinite powers
 Of rapture are ours ;
 We are one, and our kisses are kind.

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