

THE ROSARY
OF PAN
A·M·STEPHEN



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OF PAN
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Shadows

SING me a song of the shadows thrown
By the Light which shone on high
On a lonely hill in a skull-strewn land,
And the lean years passing by.

Sing me a song of the ghostly bands
Who harvest their sheaves of dead—
Of the hungry eyes of a passing age
Whence the hope of love has fled.

Sing me a song of a faith which failed,
In a rood as frail as breath—
Of a gray nun's veil which strangled life
And the love which conquers death.

“Sweet!” we cry as the rose leaves fall,
Blown by the heedless breath
Of a wind from out of a darkling sky,
Chill as the hands of death.

“Bitter!” we moan as we place the leaves,
Faded and brown and sere,
In the folded page of the ancient book
Of memories gray and drear.

For this is the quest of a soul which dared
To stake his life for a song,
For the vagrant gleam of a star that paled
When the sun of Love waxed strong.

Who recked not of the dreams which pass
Or of battles lost or won,
Since lives as leaves from the Rose of Life
Are scattered one by one.

Arcady

GIVE me an autumn day, a sky of blue,
 Massed clouds asleep above a hill,
A roof of leaves the sunlight filters through,
 My cup of joy to fill.

Give me the music of a sun-flecked stream,
 A symphony in golden browns and green,
Murmuring like myriad voices in a dream,
 Whispering of things unseen.

Give me a cove within the curvèd arms
 Of mossy banks with lush grass spread,
Whose cloistered silence stills the world's alarms,
 Whence cares and fears have fled.

Give me a nut-brown maid, with lips that hold
 The scarlet of the berries in the brake,
Whose gypsy tresses steal the fairy gold
 And weave it for my sake

Into a veil for glamourie of eyes agleam
 With soft allurements, spells of ancient love
When earth was young and life a dream
 Of beauty from above.

Give me a voice whose cadence as a lute
 Blown by some lonely wood god blent
With magic of the wind's caress, to suit
 The measure of my heart's content.

To cleanse my soul of smaller memories,
 Give me an hour again like this to free
Me quite,—I fain would be beneath the trees
 A prince again in Arcady.

A Memory

DEEP coolness of dim woodland cloisters,
Where the feverish heat of the day,
Transmuted to sibilant softness,
Is as foam from the breast of the bay—

In thy mystic alembic is mingled
The madness of moonbeams with fire
From the sun, and melodious echoes
Windswept from the sevenfold lyre.

Here twilight and dawn meet forever,
Untouched by the tide of the years,
Change or Death enter not through thy portals,
Nor desire of the flesh nor its fears.

Commingled with odors of tresses,
There are memories, fragrant and dim,
Of the lure of the breasts of our mother—
Faint perfume of body and limb.

We, Children of Morning, salute Thee!
Thy voice is not new to our ears.
Great God of the water and woodlands,
We greet Thee with laughter not tears.

For in dawns, far-distant and hoary,
When all life was a flame and a song,
We were Thine and Thy love was our guerdon,
Ere earth was bereft of its strong.

Ere the meek and the lowly, triumphant,
Bound our Mother with bondage of sin—
The Star not the Serpent ascendant—
We praised Thee with paeon and hymn.

The shrine is re-built. Thine altars

Await but the touch of Thy breath,
Cold flame of the Spirit to sunder
The bondage of Darkness and Death.

Thy presence is felt, though unspoken
The word that would call on thy name.
From the green gloom of silence unbroken
Comes—a motion, a breath or a flame?

Woman

THIS want of you is like no other thing.
It hammers at my heart the whole night through.
It smites my soul with sudden sickening,
As primal pain that birth begins anew—
This want of you.

'Tis Trishna—thirst of life in form to dwell,
To touch, to taste, to smell, to hear, to view
This mother veil of matter, wrought so well
And cunningly to make the false seem true—
For want of you.

Before the gods or worlds it was. As Space,
Parent invisible of forms, it threw
Its vast illusion over all Creation's face.
The heart of Being broke—the One made Two,
For want of you.

The tide of life that ever godward flows
Was forced to grope and hunger through
The rock, the plant, the beast and then it rose
To man. Who more than dust-born Adam knew
This want of you?

In Eve and Lilith's lure, your sweet embrace
Was still the Spirit's veil that softly drew
Its primal beauty o'er the Pilgrim's face.
In Eden, Death was born to bring anew
This want of you.

The witchery of moonlit nights, soft summer skies,
Young birds in spring, sunlight or wind or dew;
All of earth, air or water or the fire that flies
Like serpents' tongues, eternally renew
This want of you.

From Thee we come and back to Thee we go
To rest and dream a little and undo
The tangled patterns of our lives that grow
Beyond our strength to mend or make anew—
Thro' want of you.

O Mother Substance—soul and sense, in fine,
Of God's own thought, whence stars and atoms grew,
We call Thee Earth or Woman. Why not divine?
Has God forgotten that He always knew
This want of you?

The Face

I REFT my soul from out the strife of things.
The self-forged fetters broken then set free
That which the ages fashioned, in the dark,
And lo, a tired child's face looked forth at me.

Curls tangled in a ghostly crown of thorns,
Lips that knew not of laughter but of lies;
'Neath lashes dim with unshed tears, there slept
The shadow of Golgotha in his eyes.

This man-made image of the Son in Heaven
Was Death incarnate, not the radiant Life
That pulses in the stars thro' endless aeons,
Rising triumphant over pain and strife.

Small wonder that with pangs of hell re-born,
Earth pays the debt and with its withering breath
Red war doth cleanse the nations, heavy laden,
With Calvary's cross—the harbinger of Death.

Memories dim of times remote and golden
Gleaming like fire thro' mists that veil the day,
Gods manifold there are and not forgotten.
The flowerage of a fairer time were they.

To break the bondage barren faiths have builded,
To show the splendour of the larger plan,
These greater Gods shall bring the old, new message—
One name for Son of God and child of Man.

Reverie

DOWN by the sea-beach, where the breeze
 Makes melodies mid lichened trees,
Of woodland haunts of flowers and bees,
 Murmuring its low love litanies,

I sit at eve and think what gain,
 What larger Life—surcease of pain,
Earth's souls in sorrow could attain
 Were pain and pleasure one—not twain.

Round rocky point and lone gray isle,
 The lengthening shadows creep the while
Pan's myriad moods in turn beguile
 My sated senses with their smile.

'Tis all a dream. And yet, O heart,
 Of this vast Whole thou art the Part!
"I am!" though sea and sky depart.
 Sunlit, the soul replies, "Thou Art!"

Love and Power

THE velvet magic of your lips' caress
Awoke the Self encased in soul and ran
Through throbbing veins, pouring their wine to bless
The golden gift that makes a god of man.

In that supernal moment, golden, rare,
A blossom on the thorny stem of Time,
The veil was lifted, leaving written there
Before my eyes, the cosmic truth, sublime,

That Power and Love, twin-flames that twine
And bind the broken circle of the years,
Are One, forever, in the plan Divine,
Blending eternally our hopes and fears.

The bitter hours, the loneliness, the pain,
The soul's dark night, when on the mundane cross
Of matter broken, mortal strength seems vain
To purge the spirit's gold of earthly dross;

All these and more, transmuted, are the power
To scale the heights and wrest the sacred fire
Prometheus stole from heaven, for an hour
Immortal,—crown of all our heart's desire.

'Twas not the Love, self-slain, bathed in tears
Of blood, that hung on Calvary's high hill;
Not sweat of slaves or fruit of cringing fears,
Too weak for speech nor strong enough to kill.

Pure as the radiant breath of primal dawn
When Love first blossomed and brought forth a world;
Strong as the warring hosts from heaven withdrawn
And proud as they from high Olympus hurled,

This Love is Power, akashic, fiery force

Whose rose-gold flame wreathes round Creation's rim
The circle of infinity—its course
Divine, omnipotent, till stars grow dim.

You Will Not Dream

YOU will not dream? Self-centred in the mire
And paltry dross of perishable clay,
Proud of your shame and pitiful desire
To shun the message of the larger day
That bids you be and spurn Illusion's sway.

You will not dream? Nay, rather, purchase pain,
Shadow of joy, with gold and blood as fee,
Building a prison for the soul, in vain
Attempt to stem the surging, crimson sea
Of primal life that wills you to be free.

You will not dream? Your unctuous priests have slain
The song eternal welling in your heart,
Love, Fount of Life, no law can curb or chain,
Is cursed, outcast, a thing unclean, apart,
A chattel bound and sold in street or mart.

You will not dream? Can you not hear the tune
Of tides eternal thunder in your ears
Nor know how, ever, led by sun or moon,
The seasons sing the rhythm of the years—
That Joy is stronger than our utmost fears?

You will not dream? Alas! then Love, the king,
Destroyer of all fleeting forms that bind
The spirit's splendour in the souls that sing
Love's ancient paean, slays your sons to find
For them, in death, the freedom you declined.

You will not dream? Then withering fire shall flame
Again to make you clean. The God of War
Shall claim more millions in the sacred name
Of Her, the Queen, beneath whose bleeding star
Earth's bravest legions died on fields afar.

You will not dream? Then know what poets see,
What sages teach and little children tell
The birds and flowers in play—that Love is free!
And only it endures. Though systems fell
The Spirit lives and Love and all is well.

The Wanderer

THE *Wanderer* am I, outcast of the starry ways,
Self-doomed through devious infinite paths
And twice ten million human years to seek
That which is I. From mine own self divorced,
Desolate, I strive to find my heart's desire.

Not in the radiant realms of bliss immutable,
Devoid of form that dims the spirit's light
Shall I find Thee, mine own immortal Love.
The roseate splendour of that undimmed flame
Shed from the altar of the primal sacrifice
In matter's mystic veil is clothed and hidden.

Through ages vast, in myriad ways, I sought thy face.
In rocky adamant, in plant and beast and bird—
In rubies, blood from the gentle bosom of the Earth,
I found Thee prisoned for a passing age.
I felt Thee call me in the crimson rose. Curves
Tender folded thy beauty in a golden shrine.
Thy petalled lips were mine. Thy fragrance
Warm and sweet thrilled through my branches. Breezes,
Soft harbingers of love, wafted my gold to thee.
Thy lissome strength sprang forth, a leaping pard,
A red-gold flame that flashed through tropic glades.
I knew Thee then, beneath soft summer moons,
My royal mate, untamed and swift. Then came
The glorious hour when clay immortalized was *Man*—
Fit temple of the living God, and Spirit first
Was clothed in flesh. The cyclic fruit of Time
Stood naked, gleaming, white, a palace fair
With marbled columns, crowned with sculptured grace—
A glittering symbol of the starry worlds—
A Universe enthralled in mortal form—presage
Of futures dim and vast when Time shall cease.

Thy beauty drew me, Wanderer, forth to find
Thee, waking or asleep. Life after life, my quest
On land and sea, in storm or strife was still to win
The golden gift thy hand alone can give—
The knowledge of mine own divine estate.
The lean, gray years, striving with shadowy things,
With phantom fears that poison soul and sense
Were all for Thee, God meshed in human form.
The virus priests have bred, the subtle skein
Of thought, philosophers have spun to tangle
Human flies, strove with Satanic force to bind me
Hand and feet—to veil thy glory from my hungry eyes.
Through perils vast, on land or sea, in worlds unseen,
My warrior soul sought ever for thy light.

Time was, when wandering far from Thee,
In mystic lore, in parchment pale and dusty tomes,
In liturgies and cloistered cell, I lost my Self.
My soul was reft from me and pallid Gods
Were mine. Thy shrine was desecrate. Ashes gray
On thy altar quenched the roseate flame of life.

And yet, O flamen of the Gods of Greece, who built
The morning stars, placing a song forever in the heart
Of Pain, I know Thee now again, thy mysteries
Invite once more my worship. Red flames of passions past,
Embers in the ashes of dead loves and lives,
Leap from thine altar. The white, chaste marbles
Of the Temple glow with living light and Lo!
The Red Gods laugh and fling a wine-red rose
To Earth—Joy, Dionysian reigns re-born—
The New Age dawns and Love and Life are one.

I, Wanderer, outcast of Fate, my goal draw nigh
And know Myself in knowing Love and Thee.

Red Roses

R OSES, red roses, from the deep, warm breast
Of Her, whose progeny in Space and Time
Are one with us, Her children,—latest, best
And fairest fruitage of her prime—

Within thy chalice heart there glows
The crimson tide of Life. The wine
Of youth, eternal, welling, flows
O'er thy curved rim, incarnadine.

The fragrance of Her tresses, sweet
As tender breezes that o'erflow
The sun-kissed hills at dawn, and meet
And whisper love to buds that blow;

A pulsing flame—a sky that burns—
A sun-god's pyre and altar blent,
Veiled by thy velvet breast that yearns
To spill its gold and be content;

The music of soft rains that beat
With pattering fingers on our doors,
In gusty, flying showers, replete
With memories of the wind-swept moors;

Of tender flesh, the keen, sweet tang;
Of fruitful earth, the warm embrace
That lured the lusty vine which sprang
To bear aloft thy virile grace—

Roses, red roses, jewelled Grails of Love
And Sex—mysterious and more divine
Thy symbols shine on high above
The lilies pale on Mary's shrine.

The rich, red torrent of thy life made bold

Since Time began, the hearts of men
To sing of freedom and of joys untold—
Inspired in turn the voice and pen

Of those who know that Love is Power
And Power is Love, beyond the reach
Of mortal minds that halt and cower
Before the truths thy roses teach.

And yet, thy fire is in the bard
Who sings of love or ruthless strife.
Thy flame is in the hearts that guard
The spirit's growth from life to life

Till forms shall fade and systems rest.
The rhythm of thy magic pulse is stilled.
Still flames thy symbol on the breast
Of Isis, Ishtar—mother, matter filled.

The snow-white wonder of Her form divine,
Stretched cruciform with upturned face,
Awaits with radiant joy the coming sign
Of Him, Creation's Lord, in Time and Space.

Her eyes, eternal wells of loving light,
The Beauty dread and high which Gods can know—
And lo—within Her mighty heart, for Him, enshrined
Roses, red roses ever-blooming glow.

The Sanctuary

A PLACE of dreams—a sun-drenched slope,
Clothed fair with tawny grasses, met
The waters of a strait which ran
Between me and the mountain-wall which lay
A rugged rampart of our Chosen Land.
Framed by the sinuous line of sea and sky,
Slim firs, lean sentinels drowsed in the glare
Of noon, while whispering winds crept stealthily
About. But all was silence saving where
The pirate bees, on pillage bent, were caught
Within the golden tangle of the broom.

A place of dreams! High hopes without despair,
And gleams of life, unmarred by pain, beauty
Above all forms, the living light of Truth,
Made manifest to eyes not sealed by doubt and fear
Lived here in mute expectancy. Dewfall and moonrise,
Dawn and noon-day's beams evoked no voice
To body forth the soul of this, their child.

A place of dreams! 'Tis man's sole gift, divine,
To mould the form, to carve with lightning thought
An image to enshrine the spirit's flame and give
To Truth and Beauty shape in space and time.
Mayhap a leaf slid down to nestle in the grass.
Perchance a spirit stooped to whisper as he passed:
"Live on as if each moment were thy last.
What we have given thee to know of Love's
Swift fire is as a spark of that great flame
Which lights the worlds. The shadows are thine own.
To *Know* is well. Hast thou the *Will* to cleave
Thy way clear to the heart of God and *Dare*
To live within the splendour of this love?"

O place of dreams! The voice, a windswept shadow,

Passed. But in my heart enshrined
Remains the vision of the days to be.
The sun-lit sanctuary waits. Life calls for Love
To fill his days. The answer lies with thee.

Spirit of Beauty

SPIRIT of Beauty, I have seen thy face
And lived to tell of it—anon,
The rapture of thy warm embrace has struck
Through every vein its hidden fire and thrilled
Like wandering music every chord of life,
Till, like a wind-blown lyre its symphony
Was one with Nature's and the heart of God.

Soft bloom of summer morns, whose smile
Breaks through the mist and grows
To laughter as the day spring floods the hills
With light—the fragrance of all roses, which
Have bloomed, in gardens old, for sweet Love's sake—
The gleam of waters under star-lit skies, that fling
Like largesse all their wealth of jewels on high
To watch them fall in broken lights below—
The yearning touch of earth in spring—the clean, sharp
Tang of leaf and bud, filled with the season's urge
To bear, in time, fulfilment—fruit and flower—
All that quick, wistful wonder that the questing soul
Feels pulsing through the world of sense—
The hidden magic at the heart of things—
All this and more are bodied in thy form,
Limned in thy features and inwrought
Into the shrine wherein thy godhead dwells.

Yet these are but the vestures of thy soul—
The clouds which veil and half reveal thy light
As those, shell-tinted, which enfold the moon
In iridescent robes. The ray that fell from darkness
Through the primal void, kindling the morning stars,
Was one with Thee. The pure, cold flame
Of deathless will glows in thy wondrous eyes.
He who has gazed into their depths will go

Forth strong to conquer. He who has heard
Thy laughter knows the primal sound
Of limitless desire that burgeoned forth
In sun and stars—the radiant flower of life.
But he, who for an hour hath held thee close
Will know himself a God—immortal as the Love
Which gave thee birth.

Sonnet

NOT from the mind—that clips the wings of fire
Whereon we reach the empyreal height
Where Will and Wisdom's blended light
Burn clear and pure as that first, great Desire,
The mighty breath which swept Apollo's lyre—
Came aught to aid us in the maze
Of pain and joy which lures and oft betrays
Our eager hearts in their swift, questing flight.
Only when Love transcendent o'er the strife
Of lesser lights, shone clear—a guiding star,
Resplendent with the larger hope, afar—
Did Gladness freely bloom—a Rose of Life,
Sunlit—the sweet, clean breath of morn
Stole softly in to greet our Joy, re-born.

Doubt Not

D OUBT not that if Love held you close
And you gazed deep into His eyes,
Some flower would blossom as the rose
Unfolds beneath blue summer skies.
Doubt not—be wise.

This pale, gray anchorite who treads
Through cloistered ways with eyes downcast,
Lacks will to rise where passion spreads
Broad wings to meet the tempest's blast,
Till storms are past.

Summer and roses meet to tune
Life's harp to sound a nobler strain.
Fear not—you heard this ageless rune
Long since, when Joy had conquered Pain.
Fear not again.

Gods from high heaven stooped to hold
A rose no rarer than the one we share.
Why then seek heaven which Gods have sold
To seek Love's face and found it fair?
'Twas here—not there.

Love lingers not where clouds are gray,
Nor brooks delay but onward flies.
Roses are born with each new day
To greet the sun 'neath warmer skies.
Doubt not—be wise.

You Ask Me Why

YOU ask me why I need you, dear?

Why Love's lone star must flame through skies
To lead Life's pilgrim feet—at last—
To where the cradled First-born lies?

To stem the bitter tide of years,
Transmuting human dross to bright
Gold, clean as primal fire that burned
On God's own altar through the Night;

To bear within one's heart the wounds
Of shackled millions, who, in this world's sty
Trample their leaders in the rout
Nor know the love they daily crucify;

To live in every prisoned pain, to bear the blows
Of those loved hands that are our very own;
To dwell with Darkness in the outer courts
And dare its legions to the fight alone—

This guerdon brought my days and laid
It in my path, already strown
With thorns my own hands planted in the past—
A barren way where never rose had blown.

And if God lived, I ceased to care.
His image marred I only saw.
And Death's gray shadow crept apace.
Yet still I trusted in the Law

Of equipoise—that somewhere Joy
Clasped hands with Pain, and Life, complete,
Stood victor crowned—his shadow, Death,
A captive bound beneath his feet.

Your hand touched mine. My soul saw God,

The dark was cleft by living light
That leaped from eyes which answered mine
As beacons on the hills of night.

Mysterious symbol of a truth divine,
That Life is Love and both in man
Are all of God that we can know
Or need to know of that great plan

Where orbèd angels fill the deeps of space
With larger lights than those that shine
Upon me from your eyes, where burns
The love-flame that is all divine.

You are to me the one sure sign
That God is Love. My cross is light,
If through its shadows I can feel
Your lips on mine before I face the night.

Memories

S O slight the veil 'twixt Then and Now,
A tress of silken hair flung back
Was magic subtle as a yogin's will.

We rode, together, in those days long passed,
Adown cool pathways, in an ancient wood.
The moss, sun-flecked, about your palfrey's hooves,
Broke like the foam before an elfin keel.
Wrapt in the silence of a summer noon
The forest slept and we, ringed round, enthralled,
Each by the other's nearness, held no speech
Save what was meet of weather, play,
The jousts and balls. For you were Queen and I
Your knight, who dared to hold you in my heart.

A wind arose which rippled through the leaves
Like rain. Sunlight and shadow merged and raced
In fragments o'er the surface of my dream,
As waves dissolving in some mountain lake
The mirrored beauty of the circling shore.

Darkness, hot, palpitant with strife and sound,
Succeeded. Cloud wracks of struggling forms,
Banners and torches, with the glint of steel,
Like firelight on the marbled walls within
A kingly hall, startled my soul, which knew
Itself and glared through damp and tangled locks,
Gripping with bleeding hands a broken sword,
As backward borne by the wild rout, I stood
At bay beneath a stair which wound aloft.

Again the vision broke and passed. Methought
I slept—but lightly—for a sudden, errant wind
Touched with a cold caress my brow. I saw
Myself beneath the stars, upon a hill. A far

The sky shone red above a blazing citadel,
Whose strong towers fell like Titans cast
From Heaven, in flames, defiant of the night
Which whelmed them. Again the night wind stirred
And blew a silken tress across my eyes.

The quick breath drawn was held—lest blood
Which sang or beating heart awake the Queen,
Who slept.

The Dryad

O SOUL, what hast thou seen,
In those enchanted lands
Where strewn by elfin hands,
And where man's foot hath seldom been,
The foam-flowers dance and pixies play
Upon the golden sands?
Proserpine's host hold nightly sway
Beneath the moonlight's silvery ray.
The night world and its shades obey
Their lightning-like commands.

A Dryad walked with me.
Her white form gleamed among
The gray-green moss which clung,
A silken web from waist to knee.
Diaphanous, golden-brown, her unbound hair,
A misty splendour, hung
O'er carven shoulders, glistening fair
As marble. Twin breast-flowers blossomed where
Her tangled tresses veiled her beauty, rare
As Love when Earth was young.

Scarce could my feet keep pace,
As through the forest glade,
She flitted like a shade
Or shaft of moonlight. Nor could I trace
Her slim, young form at times. Trees drew
And hid her, as she played.
Her white feet, twinkling, living things,
Like merry moonbeams seemed or wings
Of wood doves. Music, soft as hidden springs,
Her gentle footfalls made.

Her little hand touched mine;
Warm as a rose-bud, curled,

With tender petals furled,
Flower-soft, it lay. A light divine
That moment made my whole heart kin

With all the round, green world.
I knew no more of guilt and sin
Or loves we lose our lives to win;
Nor Pain nor Death could enter in.

The forest round us swirled——

And shapes grew gray and dim.

A great wind filled the wood.

I, gazing where she stood,
Saw every quivering limb
Grow rosy red. A fierce joy shone
Within her eyes nor could
Their lashes hide the wondrous dawn
Of an unwanted tender light. Anon,
The mists swept in and half withdrawn,
She seemed with fear imbued.

Who taught the fairy folk

To fear our mortal ways?

Their joy in life allays

All hint of pain or loss. Fear broke
My dream. To pierce the deepening night,

In vain my eager gaze.

The winds died down. The moon's white light
Revealed no trace of her swift flight.

An oak, with dewy pearls bedight,

Stood glimmering in the haze.

The Altar

SILENCE in depth as infinite
As dreams beyond the sense of time,
Flowering like words, divine, in light
Which clothes in form His thought sublime,
Palpitant, imminent, enwraps thy fane,
Where stars are born and sunsets wane.

Strange echoes from thy gray, scarred face,
Steal like a perfume of the past,
Through heart and brain. Nor can we trace
The mysteries in thy scroll sealed fast.
Locked in thy adamant soul they lie,
Scenes lived beneath some softer, alien sky.

These wheeling systems o'er thy mountain rim,
Winged messengers, in each flaming sign,
Sang, in earth's morn, the self-same hymn,
Hailing the risen Sun as Light divine,
Great Pagan Lover of the sons of song,
Light-bringer, Comrade of the free and strong.

For when thy starry altar lights were dimmed,
By this, the Sun-god's breath of fire,
A pact renewed on thy worn scarp was limned
Stronger than death and deep as that desire
Which waked the worlds from their aeonian sleep,
Thrilling as laughter through the virgin deep.

Great gods and loving, let thy red dawns light
Our ancient faith—thy clean winds rend
The sordid rags of self—arm for unending fight
Our souls downcast and all wills bend
To love as passionately pure and shining white,
As snows eternal on thine altar's height.

To My Comrade

C OMRAD E, without whom, incomplete,
Life seeks to mount with crippled wings
Where all the shining pathways meet
Of souls re-born to greater things,
Fear not. The gods, whose voice, in golden light,
Called you to worship on their altar's height
Are close at hand.

Like moonlight on half-hidden streams,
The memories of their ancient fanes
Flash through the vistaed aisle of dreams.
Flower-scented winds breathe sweeter strains
Than hymns of the pale Nazarene,
Where from gilt shrines His lilies lean
To cloy the soul.

Although they deem us mad who hear
The undines' laughter in the rills—
White-breasted nymphs, whose love notes clear
Call from a thousand pine-clad hills
To lure men from the withering curse of shame
In their own manhood and re-light the flame
Of life divine,

We hold our faith, stronger than death or gray
Ghosts, born of fear, miasmic as the mind
Of sexless anchorites, who dare not face the day.
Knowing, we face the sun nor heed what shadows blind
Souls poisoned by the serpent kiss of sin.
Heart-free, we worship at the shrine wherein
Our god-head dwells.

A Reminiscence

I STOOD last night in a garden old,
 'Neath an ivied tower, when the moon was high.
Three men were we,—our names untold,—
 But one at heart, should we live or die.

Through the starlit night we had ridden far.
 Our swords were red, but the deed was done.
At a queen's behest we had stayed a war,
 By a message brought ere the set of sun.

Soldiers of fortune and comrades three,
 We had held high stakes in the game of life.
For love and beauty, not fame or gold,
 We had risked our all in that midnight strife.

Our whispered words scarce stirred a leaf
 Of the ivy draped o'er the latticed pane,—
“She sleeps and her heart is wrung with grief,
 O'er her kingdom lost”—but our words were vain.

A beam of light o'er the balustrade,
 Shot through the dark, like a shaft of dawn—
A flutter of lace our whispers stayed—
 Three hearts beat high. Three swords were drawn,

And flashed, blue-lit, by the moonlight's glare,
 Crossed overhead—a salute of steel.
Three plumed hats doffed—our heads were bare—
 “The Queen!”—we waited but did not kneel.

No word was said but a rose, dropped down,
 Fell at my feet as my comrades two,
With bowed heads, passed—and without a crown,
 I was king for a night, if the dream were true.

A Fragment

HAD we been friends would starlit eyes meet mine,
Or roses bloom where winter's frost had paled?
Would sunlight love to banish from your hair
The silvery ghosts which mark the passing years?
The urge of Life's insistent tide rose high,
Swept Death's gray legions from the field,
And Love triumphant wrapt you in that hour
To heights where dwell the immortal gods,
Their youth eternal as the aeons vast.

Then why, Dear Heart of mine, court death?
Why fear that this small stagnant pool
Which men call life shall merge into the sea—
Lost in the shoreless waters of eternity?

One Evening

O UR prow, receding from the quay, passed through
The tremulous, golden columnade the shore-lights cast
Within the water's murky depths. So might a stately
Barge, a part of some great sea-king's carnival,
Pass through a pillared entrance wrought from woodland
Flowers and phosphorescent fire of southern seas.

Before us lay the silver strait, now veiled
By gathering mists; behind, tier upon glittering tier,
The city's lights rose upward from the shore
As if these constellations sought to merge with those
Which gemmed the twilight o'er the mountains' rim.

Silent we sat, folded within our dream,
Watching the pageant of the night's advance
Pass o'er the enchanted land, where, hand in hand,
We wandered through the summer day. Within
The shadow of the cabin's wall our forms stayed
Motionless, while we, led by Love's hand, yet unaware,
Moved to the consummation of our hearts' desire,
One with the strength and beauty of the hills.

The Rod

FROM heights empyreal hurled I turn
And strive in darkness, to discern the light
That shines in those brief hours which burn,
White-lit by Love's compelling might.

Faint through the shadows comes your voice
But not the same—not wholly mine.
The smaller world has claimed you—I alone
Press onward in the quest divine.

Thy gift bears fruit. The furrows sere
Burgeon for days with golden grain.
Life's song strikes through each vibrant chord
And for a space Joy masters Pain.

Strange faces throng about me. Hollow hands
Make plaint. The world's need fills the hours
Which once were willing captives bound
By silken chains and garlanded with flowers.

I will not wait. Why should I lie impaled
On rocks, sharp-edged as my desires—
Broken by waves of this resurgent sea
Of Life—laved in its secret fires?

I will not wait, nor fold my hands serene.
“My own will come.” Yes, when my sovran will
Shall draw it from the dark embrace
Of slow, remorseless fates that kill

The song within man's heart and still
The voice which bids him search the sky
For heavens to match the glory of his dreams.
All hells and heavens within me lie.

Why wait—a cringing slave of shibboleths,

Standing supine with downcast eyes,
Till shadows deepen and the heights are veiled?
Wait? Nay—grasp as a sword thy will and rise.

“All will be well,” I hear you say.
So said the priest, our ancient foe,
And said, “God lives on high.” He lied.
All will be well when *We* have made it so.

“Strength will be given.” Again the knell
To orisons and bended knee. The Gods
Without are deaf. For well I know
That I alone am God. The rods

That scourge are mine. The goal is mine.
I am the Path—who treads as one with me
Its thorns shall see its roses blow.
Come then my Soul—I will you to be free!

The Gods

“THEY are not dead, the young, strong Gods
Who held our love in fee,
When Life through all our pulses sang
The paean of the free?”

So sang the strong, sweet Comrade, in my heart,
Whose garnered wisdom is the flower of lives
And fruitage fair of tears and joys long past.
That elder Self brought memories multiform
With morning's light, when, in a saffron sky,
One lone, last star kept watch on high
O'er woods tumultuous with the winds of night.
Lean hands were stretched to bar my way
In through the temple doors. My soul alarmed
Looked to the fastenings of her house of clay
Nor willed to spoil the splendour of her dream,
Whose glory dimmed the light of day, now cast,
Like largesse, o'er the waking world of men.
A gleam of that high vision lingered still
Throughout the passing hours that haply bore
Their freight of common cares and joys.
But no wind thrilled a trembling flower,
And no bird gave his heart in song;
No cloudlet threw a wandering, playful shade
O'er grassy waves that ever rippling, run
In curving lines o'er fields and meadows green,
But held a portent sweet and strange—
A sign that some young God was there.

And still my Comrade whispered, “Lo!

“They are not dead—though altar smoke
No longer rises in the glade.
Their fanes are builded in the hearts
Which feel the beauty they have made.”

I wandered where the church spires point
Their thin, gaunt fingers to a God so high
That He is hidden from the hungry eyes,
Which seek His light, where heavenly light is none.
Within stone walls where Darkness only dwells,
A voice of those who wailed of sin and love
Called lust, to Christ, who, broken, idly swayed
Outstretched above his living dead who kneeled
In serried rows, was borne through arched doors.
A chill, gray fog, that froze both heart and brain,
Gave body to that sound. Fear gripped my soul,
When, lo!—the Comrade, by my side, who said,

“They are not dead! for Life is Joy,
Though shadows round it play.
Sing—for the soul of things is clean
And the gray Gods fear the Day.”

My soul was fain to leave the marts of men
And temples, where the soul grows blind and faint
For lack of food; where Truth is ever on a cross,
Built by the hands outstretched to Him in prayer;
Where fawning crowds are fed on husks and strut
In purple, dyed with tears and blood of men;
Where Love, an outcast, wanders in the streets,
Because, forsooth, she will not sell her soul
For a priest's hire to bless a marriage ring;
Where children kneel for justice and mothers
Hide, beneath a cloak of shame, the gift,
Divine, that Love's own hand hath wrought.
I wandered far to where a spit of land outflung
A slender arm, as if to clasp and hold
The bright-haired Nereids, and the sun-drenched waves
Crooned sleepily their song to ease my hurt.
Straight from my feet to that far, fiery heart
Of Being—that God, whose radiant breath
Is life to all the world, a pathway burned,

Inlaid with tracery of rainbow hues. The way
Was strown with foam-flowers, roses born to crown
Our Queen of Love, long since, in Paphian bays.
The vision came—that inner voice was raised
In trumpet tones that mingled with the seas,

“They are not dead—the glad, red Gods
 Call from the earth and sky!
Light casts a shade. The shadows pass.
 Sing—for the dawn is nigh.”

The Retreat

I N the garden of my soul, a still retreat,
 Bowered by a screen arboreal, hung
With tapestries of flower and leaf, complete
 With the awed silence of eternity among
The wheeling vortices of systems, manifold,
Draws me at times within its secret hold.

Here dwell no shadows of the outer world;
 No voice discordant in this place has sound;
No serpent lurks beneath the rose unfurled;
 No lips pour venom in the hidden wound.
Life's harp, re-tuned, breathes, freed from strife,
Harmonious echoes of a larger life.

Here there is light when darkness, like a shroud,
 Is drawn across the mirrored space
'Twi'x birth and death. Nor can the proud,
 Impassioned heart find in a human face
One kindred ray which knows that Love is all,
And only lives though lives as dead leaves fall.

Through paths once brilliant with the light of day—
 Now a dim labyrinth of the soul,—apart,
Staggering, I beat my breathless way
 With bleeding hands to this one haven of the heart,
This place of peace, where dwells that Elder One,
Ancient of Days, whose place is in the sun.

Alone, within the shrine, I ease my pain,
 Spent with the struggle. Unseen hands
Draw with light touch the fever from my veins;
 Felt but not seen, a Presence o'er me stands.
Love whispers, "Till the worlds grow cold,
Lo—I am with you and My arms enfold."

Wind, Rain and Sun

WHEN I, the wind, have borne you in my flight
On swift wings stronger than the mad desire
Of cloud-wracks battling to obscure the height
Whose snow-white summit, tipped with fire,
Is herald of the dawn within your eyes,
Of Love's soft light,
The torrent of my breath is curbed and dies,
A whispered cadence on the edge of night.

When I, the rain, have swept your circling snows
Down dark ravines and tortuous, riven ways
To gleam in sapphire spray where, flushed with rose,
The cataract spills its wealth through golden days,
Touching with magic wand the parched dust,
My largesse flows
To glad men's hearts, my riches spent, song hushed,
I softly fall, as dew, at evening's close.

When I, the sun, have driven through each vein
My molten fire, have thrilled to vibrant life
The embers of your high resolve to gain,
And hold the visioned beauty 'neath the strife
Of light and shade, my cleansing flame will cleave
Through heart and brain—
Yet in my last, long ray at nightfall leave
A kiss, flower soft, upon the heart of pain.

O sad, brown earth, if I with strength triune,
Wind, rain and sun, had loved you not, indeed,
No lure of spring had brought the plenilune
Of summer noons; no flower had come to seed;
No scarlet splendour robed your autumn hills—
Your witching rune
Which weaves its magic round my heart and fills
My soul with song were stilled too soon.

The Torch Bearers

WE, earth's youngest, sons of morning,
Chant loud our paeon of the days to be.
Our daystar risen with us, as a warning,
Bids souls rejoice—Our swords make free.
Deep calls to deep and nation calls to nation;
The centuries tremble at our exultation;
Our red dawn lightens sky and sea.

Woven of dreams and dead they thought us,
Who feared our ancient might and fire,
Which shone where gods, our leaders, taught us,
Man may to their estate aspire.
Time held us captive and our light was hidden
From all men's eyes but still unbidden,
We were the flamens of a world's desire.

Conquered they called us and our words were treasons.
God was to witness that our day was done.
Nor knew they how the cycles shift or seasons
Bring spring again to banish winter's sun.
Prison and gibbet, stake and sword availed not
Nor curses veiled as prayers prevailed not.
Through myriad lives our way is won.

Life's rich, red wine we pour to lighten
Souls darkened by the sense of sin.
Roses we plant the paths of men to brighten,
Where languorous lilies pale had been,
And cancelled aisles resound with songs forbidden.
Hearts dead revive and joy, in cerements hidden,
Springs forth to greet us ere the days begin.

When soul shall wed the sense of things and leaven
Earth with the essence of the flame divine,
Life's harmony complete—the mystic seven

Full-throated strings, with chant sublime,
Shall build another tower, on Shinar founded,
Eternal, on the square deific, grounded,
Secure, inviolate on that ancient sign.

The Wall

THY love is round me as a wall,
Embattled by the days we both have known,
Rapt from this iron age and stress of Fate,
Gilded by dreams—cemented by the faith,
Stronger than time or death, that Love
Must win at last—that no rose bloomed in vain
But left some soul the richer for its birth.
Without these ramparts throng the winged hosts
Of little lusts, ignoble thoughts and worthless deeds—
Blind waves of seas o'erpast, which beat
In helpless fury at the gates of life.
Finding no entrance there, like withered leaves
Seared by the crystal splendour of your love
They drift and falling, mingle with their clay.

Within, with folded wings, brood memories,
More holy than the dawn of earth's first day—
For Love was, ere the worlds came forth—
Strong-pinioned hopes there too abide,
Patient but watchful of the hour to come
When Life shall crown them and thy soul be free.

The Opal

BENEATH the chaste, white radiance of thy veil,
Rose-tinted mysteries and slumbering flames
Gleam hotly, through thick mists which, pale
At first, are flushed with amethystine hues,
Subtle as sunshine through the morning dews.

Was it a memory or a dream which wrought
This story visioned in thy clouded depths?
Some magic curtain lifted and I caught,
From out the moonlit space, a startled cry—
The flash of white-winged feet across the sky,

And Iris, loveliest of all the immortal throng,
Fled, like a cloud, before an angry wind.
In close pursuit, some red god, strong,
A falcon from the shining lands above,
Sped like a thought, on vibrant wings of love.

Poised, for an instant, then, she stayed her flight
O'er the abysmal deep. The god's arm held
Her fast. Joy conquered fear. Her light
Form vanished, leaving undone the deed he planned.
Her soul alone remained—a tear-drop in his hand,

Which slipped and fell, a silvery thread of light,
Piercing the blackness of that sheer abyss.
Long ages passed. Time in its ceaseless flight
Cooled the primeval fires. Then man and maid
Walked in the gardens where the gods had played.

To deck the carven shoulders of some dusky queen,
Men searched for jewels. Their quest led where
Mid black-ribbed rocks and folds of serpentine,
An opal lay and held, by them unknown,
The rainbow's spirit prisoned in a stone.

The Harp

HARP of the spirit, through whose slender frame
Flows all the harmony of star and sun,
Beating upon thy silvern strings as flame,
Blending the minor chords of self in one
Sweet song of life—

Footsteps of dreams fall not so soft upon
The ear, when thro' the glimmering doors of sleep
We pass into the Unknown. Breath of summer dawn
Flushing the sombre features of the deep
With lambent gold,

Steals not so gently o'er the sense as when
A slight touch wakes thy soul which thrills
To beauty, as the illumined hearts of men
Are flooded by the light divine which stills
Their quest for God.

Grant me a master's hand—a touch so light,
The harp alone may sense my soft caress
And whisper low love litanies of pure delight,
The secrets lovers only know and may confess
To naught save one.

Grant me a master's hand that I may sweep
The sevenfold gamut of thy mystery
To swell the chorus of the souls from sleep
Awakened—triumphal paean of the deathless free
Who know not fear.

Immortelle

F AIR immortelle,
Flower of the gods,
I hold you tenderly for fear
A sunbeam snatch your soul
Away and leave me standing here
Wistful—alone.

In some far land
Love gave you birth,
And now, within our coarser air,
Unless Love watch you night and day
You languish—lose your perfume rare,
Droop low and die.

Within my heart,
No chilling wind
May blight your beauty, no swift gleam
Of passion's lightning cut the silver cord
'Twixt heaven and earth and this my dream
End in a sigh.

Love, let us guard
This flower of life,
Lest here on earth it bloom no more
For us but in some brighter sphere
May mock us as a wandering flame before
Our tear-dimmed eyes.

The Devotee

WITH head bowed low and silently, I stand
 Before the pure, white splendour of your love
As if a presence from the shining Deva land
 Had paused a moment in her flight above
Our lonely star and dipt, with wings alight,
To earth, blazing a trail of glory through the night.

So, in my youth, when passion's tide rose high
 And burned like molten lightning in my veins,
I stood, bare-browed, beneath a pulsing, sunlit sky—
 Stretched my two arms in agony. To ease my pain,
Earth breathed her fragrance and her beauty wrought
A miracle of peace, calm as an angel's thought.

The earth gods smiled, when, lying on the breast
 Of Mother Earth, I swooned—entwined
My fingers in her tresses green and pressed
 My heart to hers—drank her sweet breath, and blind
With ecstasy, I sought with fevered, groping hands,
To free my soul, enchained with verdant bands.

Nor was there less of ardour in the mood,
 When, by the swinging censer's misty beams,
I sought the carven face of Christ, who stood
 The long lost Avatar of ageless dreams,
Pale, passionately pure as ancient snow-crowned heights
Faint flushed by dawn's first, trembling lights.

Hurled by that urge titanic through the planes
 Of sentient Being, beyond the abyss of space,
Sheer to the heart of life, I sought the One who reigns
 Within the silence, there, above the changing race
Of gods, the Self, whose shadows are our nights and days,
Whose light is darkness—we His far-flung, broken rays.

And now, again, I see the face of Love divine
In yours. The flame which, wing-like, rose to blend
My spirit with its source, your soul and mine
Binds with its fiery circlet. No prayer ascends
More sacred than this swift and deep desire
To light Love's torch with passion's primal fire.

What Is This Love?

WHAT is this love?—this great heart hunger like
A hurtling sea welling for ever in the bounds
Of my own universe, whose tide-rip sweeps
Resistless through each tributary vein and breaks
In baffled agony on the cruel rocks of circumstance?
Receding, with sullen urge, in monotonous,
Chanting the battle-song of life, it flows
Back to the centre of my being, whence it came.
In the dim caverns of my soul it bides and broods,
As wistful pain and god-like discontent.

If, by some art divine, my soul could gain and hold
The freedom of the universe, would this suffice?
If in its father star that soul were merged,
If like a mist of dreams this solid flesh,
This round green earth, had faded in the night,
Which is no darkness but the light divine
Of truth eternal, would then this heartache cease?

Nay—for if love within the smaller round
Is one with life, then in the larger heart
Of cosmos must that law be imminent—
Divine diastole which peoples virgin fields
With starry multitudes—receptacles of Love—
Ministrants of the flame of life which lights
The myriad sparks that fill the depths of space.

Hold, then, thy chalice to my lips, O Love,
And I will drain its bitter dregs and sweet
Elation to the lees. Beauty divine beyond the ken
Of mortal sense will blossom as a rose
Within the labyrinth of thy circling thorns.
The one sure haven from the battling storms
Must be thine arms, since losing faith in thee
Then God is not and life a foolish dream

Spawned in the brain of some delirious Bacchanal.

Superman

UP through the mass, seething, inchoate,
Whirled by blind winds of destiny
From rim to rim of earth's horizon,
Out of the darkness rising, like plummets dropping
Into the abyss of nothingness—

Up through these forms of clay, who see the stars
Reflected in the muddy pools of self,
On wings of dreams, woven of sounds which haunt
The silences beyond our utmost thought,
We rise to know ourselves possessors of the hand
We strove to clasp and which throughout the gloom
Led us, unseen but felt, to meet the light.

“For ye shall be as gods!” The universe a song
Within our hearts, the word creative on our lips
Shall cleave as lightning through the unpeopled space.
The torrent of our swift desire shall build
New worlds to wander through the mazes of our mind
Until our hour of sleep when all shall cease.

“For ye shall be as gods!” These smaller selves shall be
Trodden as worms beneath the foot of Love
So vast that there is no more mine or thine,
Nor good nor ill, but only One Sublime Reality
Within whose mighty hand is held aloft
The candelabra of the stars and suns.

As Gods! And yet what price is this
To pay? Our heart strings rent in twain;
Sweet uses of a human love denied;
The scented chalice of the earth down-flung,
Among the shards, we build our temples
Without hands or noise of them who toil.
Seeking a changeless love, beyond, beneath

The form, we miss the eternal truth
That man is god—that when two hearts attuned are one,
The Word is flesh and all of heaven glows
Within the crucible of earthly form.

We are as gods!

The Quest

A STRAL bells, ringing through the recesses of my brain—
Always, I hear the eternal, questing wail
Of humanity in travail. Disguised
As the search for happiness, I hear the murmur
Of human flies caught in illusion's web.
Beneath the staccato notes of syncopation,
Lurking in the laughter of painted women,
Hushed in the eyes of successful men,
In the undertones of the city's maelstrom,—
Everywhere present, insistent as life, terrible as death,
I hear this plaint of myriads groping
Through a labyrinth of shadows.

.....

Yet—it was but yesterday—a voice,
Exultant, vibrant with wonderment and joy,
Met my ear. The questing cry which haunted me
Was stilled. What had he found—this man,
Whose voice spelled peace and victory?
His whispered secret is no secret now.
“Last night, I worshipped at a holier fane
Than temples built by human hands. Within
The white enchantment of Love's arms
My quest was ended.—God and I were one.”

Ad Astra

STAR of my soul, whose beacon light
Shines clear across Life's stormy sea,
Though tempests thunder through the night
And day seems far, I turn to thee!

Within my heart, a lambent flame,
Life's torch, love-lit, to answer thine,
Burns day and night and will reclaim
My kingdom and my right divine

To know my very self—to stand
Beyond illusions, in the light
Ineffable, where God's own hand
Dispels all shadows from my sight.

The long reeds shiver as the night
Wind sweeps along the ancient Nile.
Long since, it trembled with delight
To kiss thy cheek, in Karnak's pile.

Thy starlight flamed through eyes again
Which met my own through laurel boughs,
That screened the gleaming, marbled fane
Where gods smiled nightly on our vows.

Thy roseate ray shone faint and dim
Beneath a cloak of sombre due.
Love, outcast, heard thy prayer and hymn,
In cloistered aisles, beyond his view.

Now, breaking through the gloom of skies,
Storm-swept, I catch thy radiant gleam.
The proud, sweet passion of thine ageless eyes
Lights all my days and shines through every dream.

As flame meets flame, or lightning's chain

Binds earth to heaven, sky to sea,
Love blends our light. No more, in vain,
Star of my soul, I turn to thee!

The Crucible

F RAGILE and fair as those ethereal shapes,
We mould in dreams, a thought may break;
I scarce dare breathe thy name for fear
The vision pass and leave me in the dark.
And yet, I saw a great tree stand
Desolate and broken by the winter storms.
Beneath, the melting snows revealed a strip
Of cold, brown earth, whereon there bloomed
A flower of spring—its golden cup upheld
Unscathed—strong in its very tenderness.

What God, by his own ecstasy inspired,
Wrought this fair temple for the soul,
Imprisoning light within this slender vase,
As vintage meet to slake a thirst divine?

Thy lithe, sweet body as a crystal, glows
With Life's own joy and tinted as the light,
Ethereic film that veils a new-born rose.
Only when life's red wine is touched by Love,
Within this cup it burns, a clear, white flame,
Fusing in god-rapt splendour, soul and flesh.
Fragrance distilled from mossy, woodland glades,
Where filtered sunshine drips through verdurous ways,
Flows from thy presence as the radiant Breath
That thrilled through Space, enkindling stars and sun.
Soft magic of the heart's desire, I feel the fall
Of that light step ere yet thy face is seen,
Send smothered lightnings through my every vein.
All that sweet glamour of the Pan life felt
In Dryad-haunted groves where murmurous waters
Croon their ancient songs of forest love
'Twi'x tangled, scented roots and mosses green—
All this and more is in thy voice!

These strange powers blent within
This crucible of airy form,
With Love and Will—the spirit's ray—
Make Beauty one with Strength—
Fit dwelling for the God that is to be!

The Trinity

BODY and soul and spirit—triune mystery—
Earth, moon, and sun of my delight,
I love you as God loved his worlds,
Brought into being from the primal night.

No less the temple than the soul enshrined
Draws me an acolyte without its gate
To worship beauty which is more divine
Made manifest by time and wingèd fate.

In the soft labyrinth of your hair entwined
Sense rapt in ecstasy lies bound,
As one who roams Elysian meads,
Fettered by fragrance and with roses crowned.

One touch of your white hand holds all
Of earth's rich consciousness of life,
Forever welling in the urge of spring—
Mating and blossoming in eternal strife.

Your lithe, sweet grace, your voice, your eyes
Are magic which the earth gods know.
The world is good and sweet this earth—
Myself a god—I love you so.

The temple fades—earth's roses dimmed
Fade in the light of rarer hues,
Whose silvery lustre mocks the moon,
Seen sparkling through the midnight dews.

The tremulous beauty of the aerial shrine,
Woven of joys and tears, high thought
And passionate purity, a starry veil
Hiding the spirit's splendour caught

Like sunbeams in a cloud, is yours,

Dear Heart, and yet not you.
'Tis one more garment of divinity—
Another veil—a wall where through

My soul, iron-willed must pierce
To reach you. Light and sound
Are one. Silence is vocal as the choir
Of angels at creation's dawn. Around

Me falls the darkness that is light—
There in the void a hand on mine—
A face—your face or God's—at last
I hold you—one with Life Divine!

Spring

I SAW spring coming in the hills,
Her vanguard singing waters and the rout
Of burgeoning alders, which like purple mist
Flowed upward through the firs to where
The long, cold fingers of the snow
Still lay within the hollows.

I saw spring coming in the hills
Not as a maiden shy with footfalls soft
As fleeting showers, but radiant, flushed
With all the imperial beauty of the earth—
Her eyes twin stars which burned
With passionate ecstasy.

No wavering light was she which played
With woodland shadows but a lithe limbed
Dancing Bacchanal, whose golden tide
Of unbound tresses floated free—
Her supple form rose tinted as the dawn
On April skies.

And as she passed the echo of her throbbing pulses
Thrilled as music sweet within our hearts.
The world became the shadow of the love light in her eyes.

To Bliss Carman

“On the occasion of his visit to British Columbia, 1921.”

WHY have you come to be with us—
You, who were heretofore a voice, resonant with joy
And the freshness of the morning?
Is it, that being wiser than we, following
Our Western star, you come, bearing your gift of songs
To light on these great, pagan altars of the West,
The ancient flame of passionate love for beauty,
Knowing that here, where sunsets guard
Our gateway to the seas and red gods dwell,
Greek may clasp hand with Greek again?

Mayhap, when you are gone, our eyes, unsealed,
Shall see more clearly by the light you leave;
Shall see Marsyas by our woodland rills;
May glimpse thy children singing by our sea,
Or hear Pan piping from our fir-clad hills.

A. C. S.

I F wandering through some silent forest aisle,
A light wind stirred its tapestries of light and shade
And woke the myriad voices of the leaves, which swelled
To symphonies antiphonal—orchestral waves of sound,
Which beat like winged hosts in mad, tumultuous flight
Through the deep solitudes of space—
If blent with this were heard sunbursts of song,
Resplendent jewels of light divine and melodies
As soft as dewdrops falling o'er the rimmed
And curved chalice of a rose—
Then might I know the lyric power which thrilled
Through Swinburne's heart and hand,
Which gloom of English skies nor priestly ban
Could still the while he sang
In flawless music of the soul of man.

The Lesser Loves

S LIGHT petals from a full-blown flower
Lie lightly on the clay.
Frail wings of lesser loves grow faint
In the strong light of day.

A moment sweet—they turn to dust.
We, lesser grown, have lost some gleam
Of a high vision, known of old
In some past age and yet no dream.

Bodiless, these wings and incomplete,
Can bear us nowhere. Their delight
As brief as summer showers. They slake
No thirst in their swift flight.

Why do they leave us nauseate and weak,
Still hungering for a surer sign,
A rarer vintage, if we have not drained
Somewhere—sometime—a draught divine?

These lovely shadows bring but pain
And memories of the golden love;
We, having sensed the larger light,
Sink hardly from the heights above.

As Morn with crimson banner sweeps
Pale Dawn from out her fields,
To Love's all conquering might, perforce,
These passing passions yield.

But broken fragments of a whole
Are they, not Love, but wings,
Which lacking, Love forever sits,
Dull-eyed, nor ever sings.

Why gods when we have known God?

Why chains when we are free?
Body and soul and spirit—One—
Twin symbol of infinity.

Ukelele Song

WHILE the sleet with mail-clad fingers
Taps upon the window-panes,
Bleak winds bear the hymn of waters
Cloistered in their icy fanes
And the plaint of life comparing
Winter's loss with April's gains.

CHORUS:

Hear, O hear, the sirens singing
On a coral reef the rune
Of the primal tide of passion,
'Neath a flower-soft, Southern moon!
Star-eyed lilies, seaward swaying
While in chorus gently croon
Moonlit waves on sands of silver,
"Sailor, must you go—so soon?"

But the cold and creeping malice
Of the snow-bound world without
Finds no place where it can enter,
For a wizard puts to rout
All the legions of the frost-sprites
While his magic throws about

Our minds its mad enchantment
As the ukelele's strings
Fling their silver rain of music.
Fearful then, our fancy clings
For a moment to the present
Then flies out on rainbow wings,

To the land of lotus blossoms
And the lure of sunlit seas,
Wrapping in their warm caresses
Islets crowned with fronded trees

And we hear soft voices singing
Mingling with the perfumed breeze.

And the golden, keen insistence
Of the love notes softly shrilling
Beat like fire from Kilauea
Molten, maddening, swiftly thrilling
Through the blood which sings in answer
To the strain which brooks no stilling.

In the night of tresses heavy
With the lure of earth in spring
Glow the red hibiscus blossoms
And these rosy censers fling
As of old the sweet enchantment
Which seduced the hearts of kings.

Fades the vision, but the throbbing
Of the drums its message sings
In the heart which beats in tune
To the tide of life that springs
From the crimson fount of passion
In the ukelele's strings.

O, Love, My Love

O, LOVE, my love that bloomed—a rose
More fair than spring or sunlit skies
Which fade into the dusk at day's sweet close
Much have I given thee as in me lies.

White flowers of light and peace serene
Beyond desire and life's sharp pain;
Red fruit of tears and passions keen
As Death on Love's own altar slain;

The burning flush of youth; the strength
Of age; the bitter tang of blood
That beat resistless as the length
Of ravening waves in spring's wild flood;

If these avail not—if Time yield not fair
Return for all this splendid waste,
Regrets are vain. At least my heart may share
This dream and sleep by Death and it embraced.

Understanding

O, HEART of Mine, that even as God, doth hold
My life within its own in sacred trust,
How can you fail to know me as I am—
A growing flame still flickering in the dust,

But reaching still through darkness to the light
Where gemmed by sunfire glows the height
Clothed in the light that changes not—as night to us
Who trim our lamps to suit our feeble sight?

If Love as winged Desire, with thunders crowned
And shod with fire, dread as His hidden Name,
Should shake the pillars of the shrine we built
Why wonder if the spark break into flame?

Fear Life? Then strike through quivering flesh
The nails that bind Love's bleeding hands!
Fear that this little passing phase of *you*
Be whelmed by waves on unfamiliar strands?

Beneath this angry sea which erstwhile shone
With light and laughter in the sun,
Sharp-fanged rocks lie hidden, say you?
True, but Love knows them every one.

Fear loss of what? Of this small self which feeds
On pain, which mocks the light you knew
When God unveiled his glory in the hours
When you gave all nor recked the cost to you?

Love reckons not the cost but gives.
Deny his swift demand—hold back aghast—
He still must give his all nor deem aught lost—
Ask no return—trust till the storm be passed!

Via Crucis

MORE cruel than death are you we love?
Nay, Death were kinder, bringing respite from pain.
You, whom we worship, laying at your feet,
A kingdom wrested from the powers of night;
Storming the gates of heaven that you may feast
Your eyes upon the glories there;
Pouring our heart's blood to incarnadine
Your marble flesh with youth and bring
To bloom the rose of life where lilies pale
Had matched the pallor of your cerements;
Only to know, at last, the deadly thrust
Of steel within our souls when Love
Is slain by your lips—your mortal mind
Discounts Reality nor grants the boon we sought.
Blinded and faint we grope for our dead faith,
For Love is God and if Love cease to be
Then God is not—the battle vain,
And we but dust blown by the careless winds
Of chance and eyeless destiny.

Why Do You Fear Me?

WHY do you fear me—
You who are bound by fear and walk in darkness,
Woven by your own imaginings?

Why do you shrink from me and ask,
“Who is this man, whose measurements
Cannot be taken by our rules?”

Why do I stand alone—
Even when you say, “I love you
And though all should turn from you
I still would understand and wait
Within the shadows of your cross?”

Because I know the Truth, which is
As darkness to your purblind eyes—
Because I paid the price—dared make mistakes—
Held your pretence as meet for cowards,
Stripped off your cloak of lies
And walked with shameless feet
Through paths forbidden, drunk with the wine
Of dreams, scatheless and careless
Of your tears or hate.

The Pyre

O LOVE! with pitiless eyes, which close not in sleep,
Holding me fast in relentless embrace, as the night
Ebbs wearily out, through the gates of the deep
Silence of dawn, say, have I asked for respite
Or fled from your terror or quaked at the force of your might,

Knowing that darkness must merge into light
And your fierce eyes grow tender—the face of my foe
Shine with the morning, as an angel's, whose flight
Cleaves, like a scimitar's splendour, my uttermost woe
Baring the innermost joy by the strength of its blow?

I have dared you to battle. I have laughed at your fears—
Have bathed in your flames and emerged as a god,
Re-born to his kingdom. Redeemed from your tears,
I have trodden your thorns underfoot, in the sod,
Whence roses shall spring and scatter their incense abroad,

Till their breath, as a vapour suspired from the cave
Of your oracle, wraps in a vision of mantic insight
The dull brain of the sluggard. The heart of the slave
Shall thrill as a hero's who girds for the fight,
And a new day shall rise, then, re-made from the ruins of night.

As a captive, firm bound, I have knelt at your feet—
Felt the sting of your lash—ate the bitter, red fruit
Of insatiate desire—poured ichor and wine to complete
The sacrifice meet for the goddess who mocked my pursuit—
Giving words—empty symbols—would Heaven the blind god were mute!

But now I can smile in derision of pitiful deeds,
Wrought well to appease your unending desires.
I can mock as you mocked me, watch your heart as it bleeds,
Till the ashes of sorrow have smothered its fires,
Which my touch had awakened. Your altars shall blacken as pyres!

Had you loved as I loved you—held faith as I taught you to hold—
No pain could have entered, no serpent have crept,
Through the paths of our Eden, no dress soiled the gold
Of the pure flame of passion, which erstwhile had kept
The light on your altar, while, careless, the acolyte slept.

Once again, ere I leave you, I point you the way to the goal—
Offer jewels on your altar—redeemed from a life,
Rapt godward for your sake, which, making you whole,
Shall bring to you peace in the places where discord is rife,
The wisdom found only in freedom—surcease from the strife.

Would I hold you?—nay—answer the call of your clay—
The self made of shadows, which shrinks from the light
And, while you are sleeping—lo!—winged on his way
Love leaves you alone, in the gathering night
To feed on the pain you have cherished, through fear of his might!

Loneliness

PAST days are not dead days. I find
 In memory all of sheer delight,
Counting again my jewels confined
 In that dim treasure-house of night.
The wild, sweet rapture of the hours we knew—
Promethean fire—doth life's own lamp renew.

Those days alone are dead which hear
 No sound of your endearing voice,
Whose lyric spell with cadence clear
 Makes every quivering nerve rejoice,
Breathing, like incense of the spirit, peace,
Bringing from pain a sweet and sure release.

Those days are dead which end in nights,
 Sphered in the blackness of a soul apart.
Downcast, but hungering for remembered heights,
 Loveless within Love's universal heart,
I wake to know how One Lone Man could be
A whole world's symbol in Gethsemane.

Gladness

LAST night I saw my soul
Struggling, in your hands—
Soft, flower-like hands, whose grip of steel,
Coiled, serpent-like, about its throat.
I, who had given it to you to keep,
Stood helpless. In agony, I closed
My eyes. But, still, spell-bound, I saw
White hands crushing a crimson rose,
Which dripped warm blood—not only
Mine but hers whose sacrifice
Availed not. Again, I looked through
Blinding clouds of pain. I saw
Your lips move—heard laughter like a knife
Stab through the darkness and a voice
Which whispered “Gladness.”

The Rose

WANDERING, within the garden of the world, I found

A matchless rose, whose chalice splendour held
The rarest wine—elixir of a life profound—

Deeper than death's abyss. Therein beheld
I all my heart's desire, mirrored in beauty keen
As pain which as a sword's swift stroke unveiled

Glories as yet unseen,
Before whose light Life's morning sunshine paled.

Light, errant winds with trembling touch caressed

The blossom which, as if by fairy music swayed
In rhythmic, dream-like measure, ere it sank to rest

Between soft, scented coverlets of coolest shade,
Pillowed on satin leaves to dream of golden bees—
Soft, loving thieves who dared to filch a kiss,

Hoping some naughty breeze
Might bear the blame for them of this sweet, stolen bliss.

Here sheltered from Life's storms and dangers rude,

My rose dwelt carelessly and no wind came
Which dared to break her happy dream nor could

The birds or bees find heart to breathe the name
Of sorrow. "She is so lovely, it were shame," sighed they,
"That she should know what lies beyond this moss-grown wall.

Beauty must be always
For beauty's sake, and harmless live whatever else befall."

But I, unwise, and deeming Beauty's fairest boon

Might be to make the world more glad, thro' me,
Reached forth and plucked this rose, in life's high noon,

Reckless as youth is ever—beneath a sunlit sea
No reefs might lie, no rose might bear a thorn,
And Love was but a name for God. Oh, heart of Youth,

Wherein all dreams are born,
Is life then but a cloud which veils the sun of truth?

When for unending strife, thy soul, full-panoplied,
Must face the night, methinks, thy tender rose
Would scarce prove shield to meet thy urgent need.

Proudly it grew within this garden's quiet close,
Bravely its bannered petals flew to meet soft, summer days.
As gossamer upon its velvet lips, its promises were fair.

Now time nor hope allays
The pain where on thy breast it droops with languid air.

The Snake's Kiss

I F I had placed you with the sun
 In heaven and crowned you queen,
Gave you my soul to keep, and spun
 A glittering robe of golden sheen
To clothe the shrine of hopes and fears
My heart had built with fire and tears;

If with strong hands I reached to God
 And placed you at His side,
Above His hosts with white fire shod,
 Supremely fair, a stainless bride;
Then gave my heart's blood mixt with fire
Quickening the ashes of your dead desire;

If all my faith were centred in your name,
 The secret word of power to make
Me know my godhead in the flame,
 White-lit, of love for your dear sake,
And heaven bowed down to meet me in the hour
When you were mine, held by Love's tender power;

If then your eyes grew hard, your voice a sword
 Which pierced my heart and slew
The spirit's flower and stayed the word
 On lips blanched white for love of you;
If other hands defiled the sacred shrine
Of this fair temple which was wholly mine;

If you plucked down and trampled in the dust
 Of common things the jewel
Of deathless love to ease some itching lust
 Or some pale fear—pity—or man-made rule;
Would it suffice—nay—could it e'er be true—
“This was the highest and the best for you?”

Poor pitiful excuse! As well to say

For Christ's sweet sake you drove the nails
Which pierced his bleeding hands, and pray

With shining face and faltering lip which fails
To hide the lie, that God may praise the deed,
Knowing you failed Him in his hour of need.

Adieux D'Amour

L OVE was an outcast and you took
Him in. Shed not a single tear.
The stranger goes and in his stead
That which the church calls love is near.

Have no regrets. Your course is plain
And safe the harbour where you lie.
This storm will pass and charted seas
Will gleam beneath a clearer sky.

This force which thrills through throbbing veins,
This power to bend the wills of men
Is yours, dear heart. You gave me Life.
I did not ask it now nor then.

The gift is yours to take again
When it shall please you. Be it so.
Your hand may still the song and stay
The tide that once it bade to flow.

I shall not shrink, though in my heart
This hunger gnaw from year to year.
The Spartan's cloak may now be mine—
They will not know—you need not fear.

Strike swift and sure and do not spare
The life that burgeoned for your sake.
But make it swift and in your face
Be there no pity as you take

Your own again. For Love is free
And Life lives on through endless days.
My rose you bade me cast away,
Lo, in its place the sword that slays!

The Rose of Life

I N the dark night of time,
A red ember of divine passion,
Blossomed the Rose of Life.

And yet the perfumed distillate of life,
The potent essence of the primal fire,
Breathes through our being, incarnate,
In forms more perfect than the Rose of Heaven.
The archetypal beauty gleams enshrined
In temples built without the sound
Of workmen's hands upon the clay.
No rose which blossomed in the fields
Of earth, nor that celestial prototype
Can match the splendour of the human flower.
The larger seasons, cycling in their rounds
Through shade and sunshine, brought to birth
No fairer, sturdier growth. Clean as the winds
Which sweep some lonely, frozen waste;
Pure as the dew which wets the velvet lips
Of sister flowers; strong as the fostering sun
Whose rays dispel the legioned fears of night—
Thy beauty is the mirror of a universe,
Within whose glass we darkly glimpse
All that we know of God or man.

The Broken Rood

A DOOR has closed. Along the empty corridors,
The Mother's footfalls cease and I am left
Alone with God—the god, whom she, in gentler mood,
Has said is Love. A moment since, her eyes
Shone like twin points of deadly steel.
Her lips' thin curve, a poisoned blade
Whose venom chilled the sources of my life,
Has striven to murder Love and trample on the corpse
Of hopes which dared to call upon His name.
Hard-eyed and tearless, my body turned to stone,
I feel the darkness of the convent cell
Close with a vise-like grip upon my soul.
The dead god on the carven cross I hold
Knew, in Gethsemane, no darker hour.
For I have given all—have loved a son of man
Completely—have so blent his life with mine
That all his clay, transfigured, shone like gold
Cleansed in the crucible of my desire.
I have so breathed on him that soul caught fire.
My beauty sang within his heart and winged,
Immortal dreams were born within his brain.
Then, in his hand I placed the spirit's sword
To smite the ancient evil. I sent him forth a god.
Yet, this is sin! The black-veiled Mother crushed
The rose he gave me and, in its place, she pressed
This crucifix within my hand, this wooden Christ
Whose white face mocks my agony.
Alone! Yet not alone, for God is everywhere
And He is Love. No sparrow falls but its light death
Thrills through the universal heart as pain.

Long since, so long it seems a dream
Of other lives, a child, my playmates
Birds and flowers, two swallows came

And nested in our cottage eaves.
I watched them mating—saw their plumage glow
With warmer hues as life's red wine raced through
Their aery forms and lent a beauty rare
To each sweet curve of throat and wing.
I saw the roses waft their wealth of gold
From chalice breasts to slake the soft desire
Of other yearning hearts. Was this, then, sin?
I know that I, a flower of human life,
Grew, as the roses, passionately pure.
The same sun filled by veins with fire;
The same winds swept my body clean
Of poison vapours and the dews which laved
Their censers was the same clear flood
Which cooled my limbs in many a crystal pool;
The same life throbbed within my heart
And hid soft, summer lightnings in my eyes.
I knew that I was beautiful. Was this a sin?

My mother, too, was lovelier than some
And she, they said, had lured men's feet astray
In paths forbidden. That I might not incur
Her curse, they placed me here, a bride of Christ.
Of Christ? Nay—of this gaunt god impaled
On a dead tree—for He was Love incarnate.
And Love is strong and beautiful! I know,
For I have loved, and this pale anchorite
In this gray tomb, this pale-faced pietist
Whose hands have slain the babe of Bethlehem,
Blasphemes. My Christ is Lord of Life—
A radiant angel in the sun whose rays
Are all the myriad lives "He loves!"

She ceased. Without the night wind rose. The lattice,
Opening, let the moonlight flood the room
With sudden glory. Beneath her feet
Lay, crushed, the fragments of a broken rood.

The Woman Heart

O, HEART of woman, wistful as the sea
Yearning in murmurous discontent below
These cliffs, implacable as time and fate—
I hear thee call. The moon of my desire
Whose silvern fingers stirred thy sleeping tides
Flames to a sudden splendour, red as that
Which glides, full-faced, above the harvest hills.
I would possess thee wholly—match the beat
Of thy wild pulses with the primal rhythm
Of the creative urge—bear thee aloft on wings
Of crimson flame to where sense, fainting, blent
With soul, and passion, freed, is one
With the white light which men call God.

The Magdalene

I N the long vigils of the night,
Pondering upon the mystery of pain,
Standing aloof from my body
Which lay tense and quivering
Under the burning lash of desire,
As stars, framed by the encompassing darkness,
I saw the faces of women I have loved.

And all, with crossed hands, heads bowed,
Faces shining with an holy light,
Gazed into my fevered eyes and smiling, passed,
Whispering; “Never can we forget
What you have done for us.
To animate the cold ashes of our lives,
We took the fire you gave and healed,
With your tears and blood, our souls.
You did us only good, nor marred
The chaste ideal of our childhood’s dream.”

Then, one by one, they looked into my eyes
And passed—the darkness took them in.

Again night’s curtain parted and disclosed
A vision of the Saviour’s agony,
Stretched between earth and heaven
On a hill, whence all had fled.
Within the shadow of the cross there knelt
Two silent figures—women both.

And one whose dark hair veiled
His bleeding feet, lifted her face
Towards me,
Shining with no self-righteous light,
But clear-eyed as the morning star.
I knew her. She, too, had loved me—

Had given, at times, for gold, the gift
Withheld by others—more often still
For love alone had healed my pain.
Outcast, denied as He, her heart
Was all men's home. In His hour supreme
God shared the glory of the Magdalene.

Gladioli

“PEACE upon earth, goodwill to men”—
 To a little wayside inn,
Came troops of angels, bearing sheaves
 Of lilies, sweet as sin.

With faces pale, in stoles of white,
 A meek and holy brood,
Like fleecy clouds which hide the sun,
 Lilies and angels stood.

The incense of their scented breaths
 Like clouds of vapour rolled,
Hiding the Light which came to men
 In a mist of earthly gold.

And still about His shrine they weave
 Their spell of unctuous peace.
Their fragile hands have sapped the life
 Which meant a world's release.

Would that a flower of nobler mien
 Might blossom from the graves
Of these gray anchorites—these gods
 Of sycophants and slaves—

Some flower-like symbol of the word,
 “Not peace—a sword I bring.
Take it and strike unceasingly
 Till Every man be king.”

Flame from the dust of passion spent
 In the age-long questing strife,
A crimson edge of swift desire
 To serve the common life!

Give me a flower whose sex is clean

As an offering mete for Him,
Not the sickly sweet of cloistered vice
Which drips from the lily's rim.

As if in answer to my need,
Last night I saw you wear
Gladiola's scarlet sword of flame
In the dark night of your hair.

Twin Scrolls of Fate

LOOK upward, heart of mine! The shaded depths
Of eyes which bid my soul
Stand hushed before thy passionate purity,
Mysterious as the whole
Ensemble of the night, the secret holds,
As some illumined scroll,
Of all which crowns man king of fate—
The mystery of the Breath
Whose power has conquered Death—
The signet royal of his divine estate.

Voices

A LONE, head pillowed on the mother heart
Of earth, I lay upon a starlit peak.
From out the shadows of the great ravines
Strange whispers crept which seemed to speak
In runlets of enchanting rhyme
Of secrets older far than time.

Sibilant as restless waves on shores asleep,
As rain on summer leaves or grass
Beneath a sudden breeze, the voices rose
And upward flowed. I heard them pass
To mingle with the infinite
And wistful silence of the night.

And then I knew that many times, by day
And night, within the city's heart, alone,
My ears had sensed this eerie murmuring
From out the walls of brick and stone—
Beneath the din of human strife
The plaintive wail of prisoned life.

For Life is One, though mind and senses reel
Upon the steeps precipitous of time
And, trembling, shun the deep abyss surpassed—
The long, long road the soul must climb
To touch the stars—a radiant god
Born from a chrysalis of sod.

And thus to every listening soul the beat
Of angels' wings is audible as life
Strains at its bonds of clay and yearns
For the lost freedom. The endless strife
And hunger for the hidden light
Is voiced in whispers of the night.

Scarlet and Gold—The Maples

O F poppies red our poet sang, from Arras to the sea
 And gleaming
 Through our dreaming
 Their crimson hosts must flow.
The violets pale in English lanes, the daisies on the lea
 Have stirred in lyric chorus
 And cast their glamour o'er us—
Have bound us with the magic of their storied minstrelsy.
 The music of the motherlands
 Although it haply stayed our hands
 Our heart it cannot know.

There is a story written no art can ever name
 And golden
 As of olden
 The fiery heralds run.
Across the fields of Canada we trace their path of flame
 Within the dim translucent haze,
 The mellow mood of autumn days,
We catch the regal glory which outvies the elder fame
 Of all the flowers of fairyland—
 The gold and scarlet saraband
 Of maples in the sun.

To pagan eyes in Arcady before the break of day
 How fleetly
 And sweetly
 Like music on the wind
The footfalls of a dancing faun, as light as silver spray
 Turned all to gold the living green.
 And yet within our glades is seen
The writing of the exiled gods who came from far away
 To see, perchance, if there might be
 Where singing waters meet the sea,

A country to their mind.

In crimson robes and golden, here flits our forest queen

Winging

And singing—

A rainbow in a dream.

Her smile is even sweeter where the firs in sober green

Stand guard beside her flaming car.

We once had sight of her afar

Beneath the blue Aegean skies, where in the iridescent sheen

Of sunlit bays, her snowy doves,

Were driven by soft winged loves

A down the sea-blue stream.

The laurels of the southland inspire the classic theme

Clinging

And bringing

The soul of Hellas back to birth,

A chaste and solemn pageantry to gild a fading dream.

The maples stir a deeper tide,

For they in gold and scarlet ride.

The vanguards of a greater race, their blood-red banners stream

As in the white dawn of the world,

The red gods from the sky were hurled

To build a heaven on earth.

In the Pass

A CROSS the riven breast of earth we gazed
In silent wonder at the adamantine towers
Whose snow-clad battlements and mist-filled moats
Gleamed like the fabled halls of Camelot,
Titanic splendours of a wizard's dream.
Beauty and strength, twin flames of deity,
Touched with their pentecostal fire the hills
In ages past and yet within their visage glowed
The glory of the enraptured hour when born
From the dark womb of space they reached
With giant hands towards the heavens
Leaning maternal o'er their cradled forms.

Beauty and strength as yet in these gray crags
Unconscious lay as once Enceladus, entombed,
Slept in the dim embrace of Aetna's heart.
And yet—their frozen majesty held no such power
As the warm pressure of your hand in mine.
The lustre of your unbound hair held more
Of magic to enchant the soul of man
Than all the blind, unwitting loveliness of earth.

Sunset Trail

WITH dying fires of sunset flushed,
The serried rows of windows shone
Like flaming cressets on the face
Of some grey citadel of stone.
The city streets, transfigured, caught
The radiance from the sun-god's throne.

Nor could they know—this purblind crowd
Which passed along the golden way,
The stones beneath their feet were jewels,
The walls on either side not clay
But jacinth, amethyst and pearl—
The spoils of Ind and old Cathay.

And out beyond the farthest wall,
Westward, the regal pathway went
To where, upon the round world's rim,
Symbol divine from heaven sent,
Within the sky's clear crucible
Were fire and water strangely blent.

Water and fire, the primal pair
Whence sprang the starry hosts of space,
Mother and sire of aeons vast
Born from their omnipotent embrace
Here meet again. What new shapes rise?
What heralds of the coming race?

Through this last gateway of the west
A mighty impulse streams.
In this fair mountain land whereon
The old day, dying, gleams
While nations sleep, her young men walk
The sunset trail of dreams.

And ever the voice of them singing
Flows eastward on the wind
Through lonely mountain passes,
O'er plains they crossed to find
Spaces in which to break and lose
Their gods grown gray and blind.

Their feet are on the snow-clad heights.
Their eyes perceive the whole.
Sloughing the tattered rags of creeds,
The chains which bind the soul,
Following the sun's path westward
March the young men to their goal.

At the trail's end they shall gather
The gold from the shining sea.
From woof of dreams and warp of deeds,
In their stalwart hands and free
Shall grow the garment of beauty mete
For the age that is to be.

Man—The Creator

WHO are ye who would bind him with fetters,
Whose might is the measure of time,
Whose fire fashioned gods to his liking
From the depths of his infinite mind
And builded their fanes for his pleasure
And gilded their brows with his treasure?
'Tis ye who are blind!

For your ears have been deaf to the footfalls
Of the ages which guarded his growth.
Ye prated of clay and the potter—lo,
He whom ye slighted was both.
Though the dust of your withering creeds
Would clothe him with sackcloth and weeds,
Of your gods he is loth.

The form which ye draped with derision
And smirched with the kiss which betrayed
Was the holy of holies—yet ye wander unshriven
And ask where your Saviour was laid.
With the rags of dead creeds you have hidden
The sun from your eyes but unbidden
He mocks at your shade.

In the shock of the tempest, the flash of the levin,
Red glories of sunsets, the waves of the sea,
In the crisp of a leaf or the kiss of a petal
Ye sought the impress of a god who might be
Your sign of salvation—an imminent glory
Revealing in nature the time-worn story
Of truth which makes free.

In *Man's* eye sits the lightning of god-like decision;
In his voice the tumultuous song of the spray;
Through the prism of passion the ray of his willing

Glows rich as the crimson red rose of the day.
Earth, sea and sky hold no sign nor a token
Of beauty more potent than this the unbroken
Bright spell of his sway.

Long have ye toiled, but in vain, to enfold Him
In houses of cedar most wondrously wrought.
In marble and rosewood ye sought to imprison
The god who was born of your innermost thought.
And the bells of His temples are pealing
In vain o'er the worshippers kneeling
To a power which is naught.

Blind multitudes, lift up your faces,
For the god ye have sought is not dead.
In *your* hands are the prints of the nails
And the thorns have encircled *your* head.
Not marble but flesh is the temple—the crown
Of the kingdom is yours—nay—bow not down—
For *Man*—the *Creator*—is *God*!

The Gypsy Star

DANCING adown the highroad of the stars
Which move in sombre measure through the night
Comes this dear gypsy, with her face ashine
With joy of life—a winsome, wayward sprite.

And all these solemn chroniclers of time,
Stern as grave elders in their carven seats,
Bend frozen faces o'er their folded hands
As through their aisles her dainty footfall beats.

O gypsy star, fleet, wandering flame of life,
A quest I have for you this night! Somewhere
She sleeps whose soul was born of yours,
Winged with eternal youth, white fire and air.

Sometimes the radiance of the inner light,
Starborn, is lost in earthly mist.
At times the song of life is stilled
Until her lips again of love be kissed.

Fold thy bright wings, O sister star, and then,
Kneeling beside her, touch her as a breath
Lightly, and let thy heart and hers be one.
For she was not born to taste of death.

Tell her that she is light and life and love,
Immortal, kindred of the flowers and sun,
Her soul a dancing flame, a ray of purest joy.
Till time be not, her star and she are one.

The Troubadour

I N swift processional, flung by the inner light
Upon the retina of time, I see them pass.
Gay cavalcades, with clashing harness, panoplied
With gold and crimson, pennants fluttering
From clustered spears, the glint of dauntless eyes
Behind barred helmets and the pungent scent
Of sweating steeds commingled with the dust
And trampled roses on the hard won field,
Onward they sweep, a pulsing scarlet wave
Of life triumphant, as with loud acclaim
They hail, enthroned on high in silken pride,
The Queen of Beauty and all-conquering Love.

To-night, I too, would crown her Queen,
Plucking the priceless jewel of victory
From the closed teeth of pain and then,
On wings more swift than barbéd steed,
Would scale forbidden heights, unbar
The gates of heaven, and spurning fate,
Lay all the starry kingdoms at her feet.

Syncopation

E LATION—
Syncopation!

Ah! sweet the bells of freedom pealing,
In lyric love-notes softly stealing
Through the tomb
Of ages gray!
The creeping doom
We weave to-day
Of priest and king, of cross and crown.

Elation—
Syncopation!

The throbbing hum of drums which beat
Across the level waste of sand
Where brown-red limbs like copper gleam
In wild abandon—saraband
Of dusky green,
Of brown,
Of blue!
The faint, far tinkle of a bell—
A star
Above the palm-fringed pool—
A crash!
A flare of murky red—
The shadows of a forest limned
Against a wind-whipped sky,
The tom-tom's muffled thud—
The pale-face priest must die!
A shriek!
Within the gloom,
Great ape-like forms
Struggling, writhing!

Elation—

Syncopation!
Light—floods of light,
White light!
The song of birds, of silver streams,
Runlets of golden sound,
Laughter of rain on thirsty leaves,
Life—life and love!
Roses—
A shower of crimson fire—
Fleetly,
Sweetly.
In a garden of dreams
Is woven the garland of hopes and fears
To circle the heart of youth—
A palace of wonderful, wistful gleams
And visions of truth—
Forsooth!
A dream, you sigh,
And all dreams must die.
Then, love of mine, in your soft, white arms
Shield me from death and this—
A kiss,
A laugh,
A shout,
A rout
Of gray gods driven
Through flames, unshriven,
Of Man their Maker.
Shatter the shrines of pain—
Strike Death!
Dare Hell!
The heavens are red—
The glory of morning nigh!

Christmas—1922

T HREADING the labyrinth of the city streets,
The channelled aisles of brick and stone,
The silvery echoes of the Christmas chimes
Tell us once more that Christ is born.

Not that gaunt shape of gloom, emasculate,
Stricken by Death's pale hand,
Which hangs supine above the heads
Of these, Thy blinded worshippers—
Not that dark shadow cast across
The chill tomb of the years wherein
They prisoned Thee, O Mighty One,
Would my heart seek to-night;
But Thee, the perfect rondure—all
Of greatness in man's utmost dreams
Of strength and beauty—Risen Sun
Of manhood's might sublime!
Radiant Thy form—Thy flesh no less
Than soul shot through with light
Beyond the gleam of our dim, earthly lamps—
With fire of godhood crowned,
Yea, Thou art God. Yet God we feel
But in the ray reflected here
From the great Central Sun. It helps
Us more to know that Thou art man.

Master of Fate, of Life and Death,
In this sad time which knows not Thee,
Grant us the wisdom, power and love
To bear Thy torch as free men may!

The Awakening

I N the tangled gloom of forests,
 Through the neolithic slime,
Blind and with groping fingers,
 We searched in that olden clime
For the gleam of a hidden wonder
 Lost in the web of time.

K in of the mindless monsters
 Who slew in the misty fen
The dinosaur and mammoth,
 Our forms were those of men
But because we knew not Beauty
 Our souls were sleeping then.

Within that primal darkness
 Brooded a memory dim
Of light and love and laughter
 When on the morning's rim
The stars had sung in chorus
 Creation's wakening hymn.

At times our ears were quickened
 And we sent a quavering cry
To the ghost who flitted by us,
 A shadow on our sky.
Within our caves we chattered
 As the Presence passed us by.

And for many days thereafter
 Our eyes could sense the light.
Our awkward tongues grew sweeter.
 We tarried in our flight
As a music long forgotten
 Came trembling through the night.

Our hearts grew soft with anguish
 And the flame of hot desire
To gaze once more with open eyes
 On the splendour of the fire
Of Beauty and to hear again
 The message of her lyre.

Ensouled by Her, we dimly felt
 We need not fear to die.
Up through the cloudy silence
 Under the smouldering sky
Our grimy hands beseeching
 Were stretched to God on high.

Then Beauty touched our eyelids
 And lo! the veil was torn
Which hid the ageless wonder
 And in our hearts was born
The song which lifts us skyward
 To greet the rose of morn.

And man, the uncouth creature
 Of bloody fang and claw
Knew that his soul—immortal—
 Would thence forever draw
Its strength from Love and Beauty
 Beneath the ancient law.

A Song of Swords

WHEN manhood was a crimson flower
And Love and Beauty queens on earth,
Honour and courtesy the dower
Were held to be of highest worth.
Grant us again an age of men
When swords are mightier than the pen!

When cravens yield a facile pen
And cowards hide behind the law;
When weakness struts in sight of men
And boldly wields its rod of straw—
Grant us, O God, our swords again—
And more—to hold them, send us men!

When Love is crucified for gold,
When lies are currency of life,
When human souls are bought and sold
And priestly platitudes are rife—
Send us red war to make men feel
The cleansing song of steel on steel!

The virus in a cleric's soul
May taint the hidden springs of life.
Words are but fragments of the whole
Truth lost amid the pious strife.
Send us the sword—the first, white light
Which cleft the primal heart of night!

Symbol of that enduring Will
Whose purpose through the ages ran,
Thy hymn of battle soundeth still
As freedom in the soul of man.
Grant that we hear again, O Lord,
The ringing song of sword on sword!

Drunk and Disorderly

“Drunk and disorderly—two broken panes
Of costly glass which formed a colored screen
In the main entrance to the Mayor’s house—
He will not give his name? Back with him
To the prison cell. Ten days of breaking stone
May cool his insolence! The next case, please!”

The portly pillar of the law, inflamed
To wrath plethoric, wagged his bullet head.
The prisoner stared with red rimmed eyes
Which did not know or care. Meanwhile—
A hand upon his shoulder and a voice,
“This way!”—then the creaking rasp and clang
Of bolts and hinges. He was alone again.

And while from where he lay he strove to count
The golden motes in a stray beam of light
Which fell across his cot, the door unclosed,
Let in a friend, a chum of boyhood’s days.
The spotless linen, fur-tipped coat, the gloves,
All spoke of comfort and of well-fed ease.
The prisoner’s eyes remained entranced
By the mad dance of whirling atoms
Drunk with the sunbrewed summer wine.
Like running waters in a dream he heard
His friend’s mellifluous monotones recount
The shame that he, a model husband, father, man
Of virtue, rich, respectable, should so disgrace
His friends by this unwonted madness, shocking
Their feelings, making a nine day’s scandal—“Yes!
Yes! Too bad, indeed!”

He heard the scathing condemnation to the end
Then answered, and by some strange inward force
His broken body met the need for power

To point his words:—

“A child may dream but in his palace walls
Built of thin moonshine and translucent dew
If there appear the reflected image of his nurse
The walls will crumble and the vision cease,
And we, who pride ourselves as sane and men
Put by our dreams, bar fast the prison doors
Of hidden hopes and glories. In our hearts
The boy, who sought the gleam of high emprise
Sits mourning by his dead until the end of life
Bring freedom from the bonds of fear.

“You know, or mayhap, have forgot, in quest
Of other baubles, baser coin, the wondrous time
When, children both, we shared a common round
Of tears and sunshine. I think you never knew
The hidden world of fancy where as king
I ruled my legioned elves, ethereal sprites
Whose wands at will unlocked the golden doors
To gardens, dim and cool, where gleamed
By diamond-tinted fountains, flowers of hue
More brilliant than the fleeting rainbows traced
In tremulous beauty o’er the shining hills.
Then, as the man quickened in the boy,
Came shining visions of a queen, who rode
A milk-white charger down the forest aisles
To touch whose soft, white hand was heaven
For him, the page, who followed her afar
Hoping some danger dark might spring to light
That he might die to save her.

“Again, at times, the same fair face would bend
Above his couch. Her golden hair unbound
Swept her white shoulders in a silken shower
As perfumed tresses brushed his burning cheek
Searing, as if white flying flakes of fire
Had touched him suddenly to wakefulness.

And all his days were sweet with thoughts of her.
From trees and flowers her beauty called to him.
Her voice was in the song of birds, her eyes
Shone in the sunset and the rays of dawn.
Song stirred within his heart, in broken rhymes
He sought to catch the music of her grace.
His will grew strong and life the lists
Where he might conquer evil for her sake.

“So dreamed the boy of Love whose power
Could wed his soul with God and truth.
The man did as the world requires—
Worked in accustomed grooves, amassed
The perquisites of place, wealth, houses, lands,
A name which banks accepted on a paper scroll.
And then to cap the measure of propriety he sought
A wife to bear him heirs, to grace his bed and board.
And she, the bride, was young and beautiful, as mete
To fill the honored place, of being owned and fed
By one the world had deemed a proper man.
Think not I speak with bitterness. She was all
That good wives should be, faithful, quick
To meet the needs which all men feel
For creature comfort. When tired she brewed him drink
Fetched his furred slippers and a padded chair,
And, when his passion called, she gave herself
Complacently—as when he called for tea.
And so he might have lived and died. But wealth
Brought leisure and his mind, long used
To measure merchandise alone, was turned
To books and art. The dreamer bound
And gagged within him broke his rusty bonds.
Once more the vision and a glory seen—
Of Love which fed men’s hearts and souls
Gleamed from the page and canvas where
Inwrought were dreams immortal and his days
And nights were haunted by a doubt—

A hideous doubt—which shook with bony hands
The pillars of his house and mocked and gibed
Him as he trod the daily mill of life.
Houses and lands, a bank account, a car,
The unctuous praise of those who merely craved
His friendship as a rung on which to mount
The social ladder—and she—whose presence irked
Save when he hungered bodily—this—this
Was the measure of his manhood’s might?
He who had dreamed of noble deeds, of victories
Won in the realms of questing thought, of forms
Of beauty moulded to uplift the souls
Of other men, a life poured out like sacrificial wine
To bring to light the latent God in man!
And She—his boyhood’s queen, the flower of womanhood
Whose voice thrilled all his thoughts to music,
Whose gift of love meant strength and will
To all high deeds, whose touch transmuted flesh
To spirit and ensouled his clay with beauty—
Where was She? For he knew She lived,
Still waited for him somewhere while he strayed
And wallowed in the mire of earth.

“Could this have been—could he have met Her here
Incarnate in sweet human flesh, how then
Would life have blossomed as the Rose of Heaven!

“Something within him snapped. A crown
Of fire was pressed upon his brows. Thorns of flame
Reached in and slew the god in him.
Friend, I know that it was weak—unworthy!
You do not know the blinding pain of hearts
Hungering for the white light of Love beyond
The damned inconsequence of human life!

“No! Yet I have heard you say that God is Love!”

The Call of the Hills

A CROSS a strip of water
Bright as a bluebird's wing,
The hills are calling, calling,
Sweet with the lure of spring,
And the voices of a thousand streams
Through all my fancies sing.

Heart of the hills, I hear you!
Your systole divine,
In pulsing waves of green and gold
Merging song in sunshine,
Is sound in color written
By mightier hands than mine.

And as a bird imprisoned
Beats with impassioned wings
In vain against its iron cage,
My eager spirit springs
To meet the primal call of earth
And the spell of growing things.

The magic of the windswept heights
Soft-veiled in clinging mist
Where, dark-robed brides of sun and air,
The firs, by morning kissed,
Shine like the trooping dryads who
Go dancing as they list;

The face, gray-scarped, of ancient walls
Heaved by the Titan's hands,
Seamed by the frost of passing years,
Where the lone outpost stands—
A tumbled fragment, stark and grim,
Of strange, forgotten lands;

The shadows blue and dim which fold
 The secrets of the deep
Fraught silences of canyons dark
 Where murmuring waters sleep
Tangled in mosses cool, where through
 Their silver runlets creep;

The laughter of the wildering rout
 Of racing, madcap streams
Which leap from ledge to ledge in glee
 Like myriad dazzling gleams
Of wondrous golden light which pierce
 The darkness of our dreams;

The soft caress of velvet lips
 Of wild flowers blowing free;
The tender touch of folded leaves,
 The fingers of a tree;
The warm, rich perfume of the earth;
 Her sweet maternity—

These are the voices crying,
 The beckoning hands which call
From out the hills at daybreak.
 Their soft enchantments fall
Luring my feet to wander—
 My heart to meet them all.

The Broom

(Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, B.C., April, 1923)

I SAW God in a golden cloud
Of broom upon the green
Of hills whereon His breath awoke
Music of choirs unseen.

Our dull, insensate ears can catch
No echo of the song divine
Which thrills the heart of Being 'til,
In color clothed, the voices shine.

Then, robed in green and gold, the earth
Is vocal. Symphonies outswell
From every wayside hedge. The rocks'
Scarred lips intone a canticle.

“Awake!” the voice of Beauty cries
In words of rippling fire.
A million fragrant blossoms bend
In answer to her lyre.

And we, who see the writing traced,
Know that a hand is there
Which, clasping, we may be akin
To earth and fire and air.



TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *The Rosary of Pan* by Alexander Maitland Stephen]