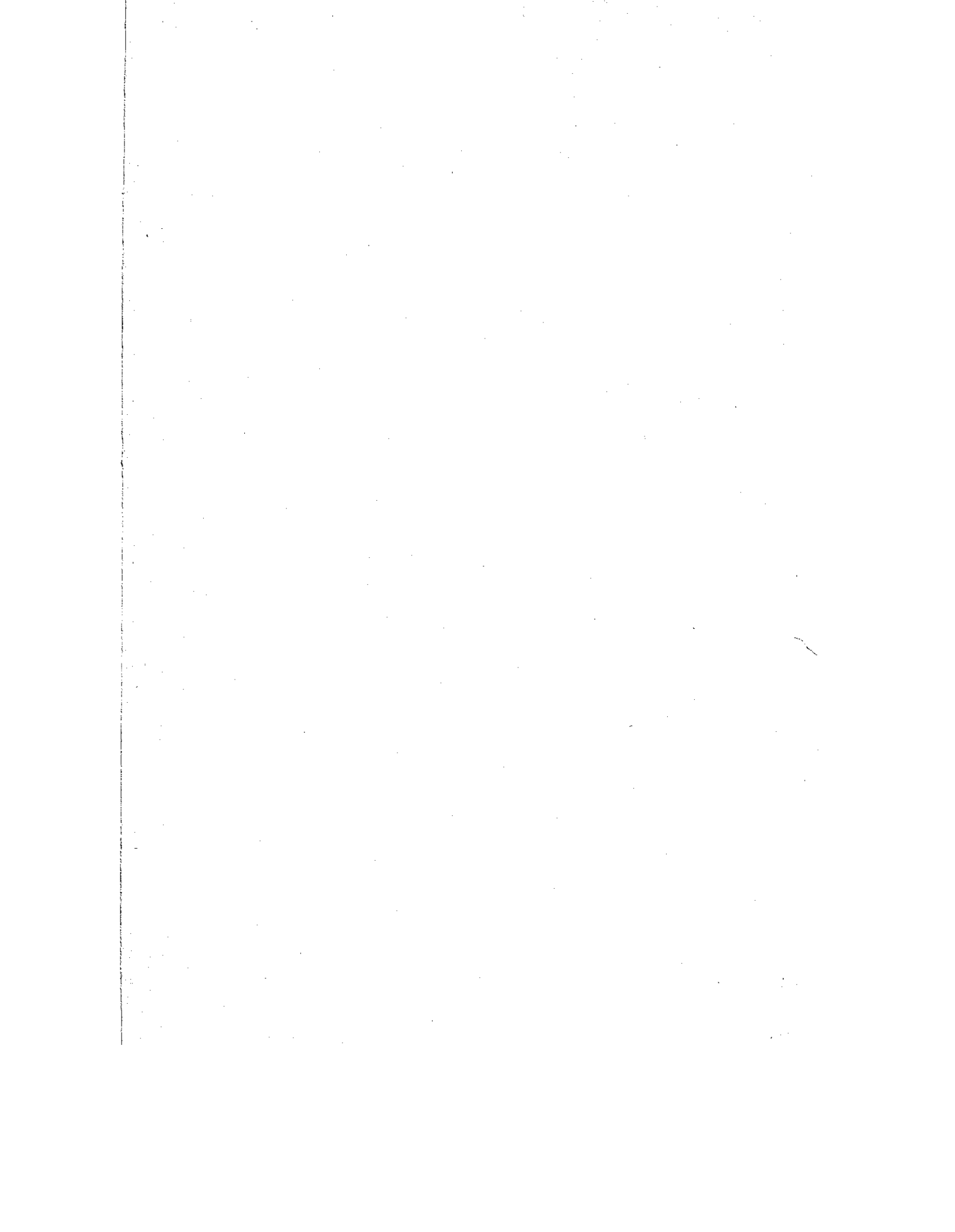
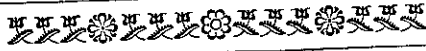


PART IV

NEW POEMS





## CONFIDANTS

Rejoice, my heart, that the stars do not comprehend you,  
That they march on their mighty courses, serene and terrible,  
Unvexed by your sorrow, untarnished by your desires.  
You may spread your pain like a purple cloth before them  
And their silver and golden feet will brush it lightly  
As they brush the cloths of the grass which is more beautiful.  
You may cry aloud to them your dolor and desolation,  
And though your cry were intolerable and keen as Israfel's,  
They will not heed it, high-hearted in the roar of ebbing chaos.  
Even your self-pity, shining like a gift and shameless,  
You may bring them without evil, for they, they only of your  
comrades,  
Resist the infection of sorrow, the contagion of tears.

RECOGNITION

Quietly, silently passing, at twilight, when streets are crowded,  
Ah, the faces I see, the sad beautiful faces of men,  
With the haze of their dream or their love or their sorrow tenderly on  
    them,  
With the charmed wistful shadows and hollows on cheek and temple,  
Strangers to me, passing from dark into dark, unreturning!  
Would I could lay on their twilight lids the kiss of peace,  
But they pass, and I can only call after them " Brother, brother."

## THREE APRIL NOCTURNES

## 1. THE BREEZE

This night of air like warm finger-tips touching  
Sleepily my cheek or asleep in my shoulder's hollow,  
I remember the kisses they gave me in tenderness or passion,  
Never in love, the ones they could spare me, forgetful,  
And I am thankful for each, regretting nothing,  
Only wishing they lay on my mouth again  
To-night when the moist buds are uncrinkling in starlight  
And the air is touching my cheek like finger-tips warm and  
sleepy.

## 2. THE MOCKING-BIRDS

All night they wake and sing on the cold branches,  
Sometimes a mere cadenza of delight, a phrase,  
Or hours long of glittering bravado.  
The silver-breasted stars in their long swarming,  
Endlessly migratory, lighting never  
Spring after spring, float over them unheeding;  
Under the eaves, in the cautious green of the myrtle  
No lover-bird rouses from sleep to listen:  
All but the singers sleep, and the dark is deaf.  
Nights when the jonquils bloom and the April iris  
They wake and sing their cold rash ecstasy  
To their own hearts, girded with terrors and lonely —  
And I in the spring night listening blush for a coward.

3. THE RAIN

The rain has come and gone, and the night is breathing:  
There is humble joy in the little things that grow,  
The slow trees meditate and burgeon,  
Far off the tiny frogs are happy in chorus,  
The last rain-drops tap like fairy hammers,  
Slowly the air sweetens with stealthy perfume.  
So it will always be when the night is April:  
Sorrow is never strong and tears are ended;  
Only the heart is untroubled, that soon will sleep.

## STIRRUP CUP

I whisper to my heart words of courage  
And it hears and arises and fares on again —  
Not like a soldier striding to battle,  
But like a pilgrim old and weary.  
I say to my heart very softly and tenderly:  
“ Truly the shrine that we sought is a sepulchre,  
But holy, perhaps, as we have been told.  
It is ignoble that we, you and I,  
Should sit in the dust of the roadside and weep.  
We have seen stars and sunsets,  
We have heard birds and thunder,  
Many have been the travellers,  
We have had noble companions.  
Perhaps again (but the end is soon)  
We will see, and hear, and hold lofty converse.  
But even alone, in darkness and silence,  
Remember we haughtily draw  
The ice-silver of pride from far sources:  
We come not of weaklings and weepers.  
And there is no weakness to conquer  
Till strength is taken away.  
We are strengthless, unweaponed, but we will go on.”

## AT SEA

Endure, my heart, endure: that is the ultimate courage.  
So much is taken, and the rest seems better gone;  
And in the hurly of the dissolute and dreadful world  
Little remains of fair and wise, of just and simple.  
Break but the shackles and the quailing sound is heard  
Of anchor chains that break. The harbors of the past,  
Silted, have grown too shallow for our deepening keels,  
Or we have lost the star that guided to their entrance.  
Nothing is compass to our destinies, unless  
The very fortitude of that cursed mariner  
Who knows no port but death, yet fights the sail and sweats  
And holds the rudder true, be of itself a chart  
To guide at last his haggard bark, amazedly,  
Beneath the samite wall of some moon-vestured town  
Where towers stand, more tranquil than somnambulists.  
Be brother to the mighty mariners, my heart:  
So stoutly sail that there should be a silver port.



*HILL-TOP BY THE SEA*

Sickened and soiled, with all the lustre gone,  
I have come back to the hill-top by the sea.  
And find it beautiful still, and so I know  
Not all of me is dead. This too I know:  
For me the god is here, in loneliness,  
With an empty sea below, ribboned with wind,  
And a sunlight, grave and pure, in the olive trees —  
Here, and not down in the smoking jungles of men.  
Let me remain, O doomed brief body of mine,  
Itching for love, faithless to me you hold,  
Crying out to cup the dark head of a lover  
In the curve of your arm. It is late, late, and the light  
Has gone from your throat, the honey-scent from your hair.  
Let us remain till the long night finds us here.  
A moon will come, parting the olive branches,  
And lay on your breast, in the curve of your quiet arm,  
A wreath of light, tender as no dark head.  
But I, while yet your lids with my tears are shining,  
I will steal down without you, among the shadows,  
And come to the sea and pause. May the god be waiting.

## FOURTEEN SONNETS

Not to be naming you in all my prayers  
Has made me prayerless, pagan, atheist;  
Not to be knowing I am of your cares  
Has loosed a ghost with eyes of amethyst  
Into the regal day. The only thread,  
Now broke, that bounden me to life was you,  
So I am free now to consort with dead  
Invisible lovers in their hushed purlieu.  
O I am free now to regard the rise  
From ocean of the round and rosy moon,  
Muse on her narrow length of dragon dyes  
Like Clytemnestra's carpet — Take the boon!  
I saw as much last night, with you away:  
The moon was only round, the ocean gray.

Here life pays peace and ecstasy for tithe:  
The dissonant trumpets of the world are mute  
And God is but an old man with a scythe  
And love the faltering fancy of a flute.  
To lie with kissing lashes and confuse  
The silver olives and the golden sun,  
To sort the greens and purples from the blues  
When the lean racers of the south wind run,  
Rounding abreast the bulging Apennine,  
And burst upon the clapping bay — ah, these  
Are all the drudgeries of this demesne  
Whose boundary is music and the sea's.  
Ye starved and hurt, ye hives of busy ghosts,  
Would I could lend your ills this sea, these coasts.

Where through the olive trees I see bright shawls  
And bathers laughing in the beryl bay,  
Lovers more bold for tilted parasols  
And waters summery and cerulean, lay  
The hoarse and sweating legionnaires of Rome  
Breaking their march. When they had marched their last,  
Algerian pirates made of this their home  
And heckled Genoa from here, and passed.  
In some pale after-day of Arctic fear  
When all the glittering tribes of us have thinned,  
One of our last, perhaps, will wander here  
Beneath the sockets of the stars and wind,  
And facing seawards in the thickening night  
Pray the old prayer to the last god " More light! "

*Portofino.*

Beloved and alien, gaze with me on the sea:  
It kneels before the moon whose crimson blade  
Rests on its million shoulders. But for me  
The image of that lunar accolade  
Is not the one your eyes bring in to you:  
It varies by the flinching of a wave,  
A widening iris, or a lens more true —  
Or, if identical, the fact how prove?  
If thus the tangible we may not share,  
How hope the gorgeous fabrics of the soul  
To spread before each other, or how dare  
Another's undecipherable scroll  
To con? Even in love we must confess  
No understanding and great loneliness.

What disputations doth my spirit hold,  
Contending with itself of this and that,  
Laggard, alas, in action, but most bold  
To storm celestial citadels with chat!  
Now will it hale the villain flesh to bar,  
Condemning it for all its own transgressions,  
Holding itself a virgin winter-star,  
Eclipsed but by poor body's vile obsessions.  
Now when much weariness hath done it spite  
It calleth body as the only leech,  
Beggeth of him a music, or a sight  
Curative — leaves in rain or thundering beach —  
And ever in its loneliness it cries,  
“ Show me her hands, her mouth, her pitiful eyes.”

When I allow my schoolèd eyes to lift  
And see the beautiful ones of earth drift past  
With parted lips and scooped wings of the swift  
Along their temples — each lovelier than the last —  
Seeing the wistful hunger in their eyes,  
I love those damnèd ladies sweet of heart  
Who draw the rippling curtains at sunrise  
And watch the stranger, solaced by their art,  
Sleeping and warm and childish: I would teach  
Their kindness to my heart and solace too,  
Like Magdala and Cressid, all and each,  
To each unfaithful, but to all most true.  
But there are some whose fortune is to be  
Lonely: no beautiful one has need of me.

Let me confess I am no Launcelot —  
But not to you confess, or you, or you,  
The many I have loved, for you have got  
What share of me you asked, your every due,  
And we are quits. But to my secret soul  
I make confession — and absolve as well —  
That little parts and never the great rôle  
I've played, and often, in love's carnival.  
Well cast, no doubt. But I have read, somewhere,  
A long time since, and liked, a sadder plot  
Of two that wept or kissed on a dark stair  
Hearing the winds howl over Camelot. . . .  
Thou Maker of hearts flawed and dissonant,  
The pain left out of mine — this I resent.

Knowing you give yourself without desire —  
No golden turmoil and no fevered shame —  
I take you with a four-fold kindled fire,  
My salty torment coloring the flame.  
Your acquiescence I reward with all  
The secret riches only love should see,  
Share beauty with you, run before you call,  
Make your desires my one idolatry.  
O I have made myself so rare a lover  
That though I get from you nor praise nor blame  
The world applauds, and, seeing but the cover,  
Gives to the bawdy thing a sacred name.  
But not for you I play this zealous rôle:  
From cold-fanged lust somehow it saves the soul.

Though we be breasted shallowly, to hold  
Deciduous loves that live their sweetness out,  
Impotent by dimension to enfold  
One mighty love and single, never doubt  
But there are breasts can chalice love's full tide  
With all its weight of wind and stars and rain,  
Though lodgment for a surge so deep, so wide  
Demands the hollow where some sea has lain.  
We are but woodland pools whose shallow urns  
One summer empties and one April fills,  
Doubling a neighborhood of flowers and ferns,  
Devout for any star the great dark spills.  
We are for wayfarers to drink from and forget,  
Parting again the branches low and wet.

All that is lovely is incredible,  
No sooner seen or heard or touched than gone  
And not believed in by the mind too full  
Of mirrors to recall what has withdrawn.  
I am so filled with ghosts of loveliness  
That I could furbish out and populate  
A vacant star, so that the gods would press  
To gaze and memorize and duplicate.  
But here, alone, with fog about my heart,  
Of all the beauty I have seen so plain  
I seek to summon up so small a part  
Two hands could hold it, and I seek in vain.  
I only know your eyes and mouth and hair  
Are beauty's own: I cannot see them, dear.

With what unyielding fortitude of heart  
We tap the prison walls to find escape,  
Measure the thickness, calculate and chart, —  
As if mole eyes could read the meagre tapel  
Long after our unteemèd brain's forgot  
The hope of star or sun or crystal air,  
We fumble at the hinges of the plot  
And cipher on the whence and how and where.  
Our knowledge foots no sum: our seasoned pen  
Writes question-marks we dry with our last breath.  
Lavish in horror to the race of men,  
Thou makest a boon, O God, of horrible death, —  
Yet canst not wring this cry from minds mature  
“Let us seek anodynes, for there's no cure.”

Not the blue flagstones of eternal space,  
Sprinkled a little way with frugal fire,  
Confound my mind, for there's no mind can pace  
Our visible moiety of space entire  
From earth to moon, from moon to Formilhaut  
And out and out beyond the phosphorent weave  
Of nebulae and the last golden tow  
Of suns pulsing at anchor, that can conceive  
Ending or no beyond. A hope is here,  
Ambiguous, obscure, but still a hope:  
If mind's machinery, this thinking gear  
Boasts the eternal for its mould and scope,  
Is he eternal that I thought could die —  
This flash of dew, this frosty breath, this I?

I have no patience, no philosophy  
To heal at all the wound that we call life:  
One after one the anodynes for me  
Have failed. Still as of old I see the strife,  
Savage and sad, but have forgot its cause  
Nor glimpse its outcome any more. The stare  
Of truth has not revealed immutable laws  
Or far beneficences or the care  
Of any intellect, alert, serene.  
Instead, these I am sure of as I wait:  
Pain, the hot-sanded heart's one evergreen;  
Ignorance, rubbing slick the cell of fate.

On, in the dark, then; cloak the decent scars:  
The cage of darkness shows, not hides the stars.



Chart back as best he might the way he'd come  
And not a turn but still seemed best to choose,  
Yet he had reached a wilderness, wherefrom  
He must escape or all the struggle lose.  
The urgency to act was thick upon him,  
But still he paused to place the past mistake:  
Inevitable blameless by-gones stun him,  
His loyalties to shaping justice break.  
At last he saw and took, like one quite tired,  
The path ahead, obscure and full of stress:  
To see was easy, but to take required  
The solemn fortitude of hopelessness.

His clothes are shiny now that once were napped:  
The liveliest beast grows somewhat seedy, trapped.

PROMETHEAN

All day the vultures sit and tear my heart  
Among the scorched unearthly tremulous peaks:  
All night it heals and grows with mystic art  
Pasture again for purple hammering beaks.

How long will days return with latticed light  
And brassy plumes upon my side like fleece?  
However long, longer still the night,  
The healing longer, and the long dark peace.

## T R E E S

I'll push the iron heavens back,  
I'll lift them from my shoulders' rack,  
And walk awhile and be at ease  
And fellow with the sober trees.  
They wear the morning's sequined wet  
As calmly as the turbulent jet  
When lavender and silver eels  
Leap from the drunken tempest's creels.  
Each battles only for the space  
Demanded by his destined grace  
And when that width of sky is got  
Envies no other tree his lot.  
No sound he makes not musical,  
No thing he has not beautiful;  
When comes what comes to each, alone,  
He stands and dies, and makes no moan . . .  
For me by useless riddles stung,  
Unwise in silence and in tongue,  
Beating at walls I think are doors,  
Neglecting mine for heaven's chores,  
Wisdom and patience might be found  
In trees content to stand their ground.

CERTAIN CASUALS

Breastful of shadow,  
How proudly they go,  
Secret in sorrow,  
Silent in woe,

Never a light  
Along lids to denote  
All of the tears  
Caught back in the throat.

Regal the place is —  
Heaven or hell —  
Fit to receive them,  
Wounded so well.

SONG

Bring them no song from Faerie,  
Lend them no dreamy lies —  
These have a dread in their bosoms,  
These have a hurt in their eyes.  
No scarlet skeins nor patterns,  
No scents nor sounds nor dyes —  
Tears make warm the bosom,  
Kisses heal the eyes.

TO A DOGWOOD IN SUMMER

They tell me that essential you  
Is just essential me —  
Electrons shifting, you'd be man  
And I a twinkling tree.

That could have happened easily  
Odd twenty years ago,  
But you, to match me, must have worn  
Your moonlight and your snow.

*CHIMES*

Her shadows are rimmed with silver,  
And there is wild beautiful sunlight in her anger;  
Her injustice is some virtue in excess,  
And the dapple of dew is on her passion.  
Because of her I am like the morning for laughter  
And like the morning-glory vine for innocence;  
Rain-washed leaves might fillet my forehead  
And a dream could hover there.  
Always I seem to be lying  
On the green soft meadow of the world  
Beneath the blue bell of heaven where the birds hurry,  
Repeating lauds and magnificats and glorias:  
The blue bell of heaven is pealing,  
The blue bells of the morning-glory ring out hosannas,  
It is Easter morning  
And my heart is a steeple with chimes.