And music unto sleepless eyes doth bring
The lonely solace of unloosed tears.
But most, you morning choristers, that haunt the caves,
Whose little voices like a hundred stars
Shine just before the sun, tapping with dreams,
The lazy sleep that lingers on our lids,
Fail not to keep your matins clear for us;
And should you know, by some bird craft of yours,
The room wherein an almost mother lies,
Choir your sweetest there, as tho' the babe to come
Were son of God — for so he is!
Again, farewell!

I cannot leave ye thus!
O Father, I have failed!
What truth can they recall
That I have given them?
None, none! And now the hour is past!
Birds, birds, stay yet and harken this last word,
Too simple to be long remembered; but, forgot,
Taking the shining and the wings
And all seraphic meaning from the life we know —
And you that glisten through the lovely blue,
Not singly, but in shoals and multitudes,
Bear witness to the truth that I would tell:
That child of God, man-child or bird-child
Or silver-wingèd star-child of the night,
That lives apart, unto himself,
Unsharing, unsolicitous, and free,
Hath vainly lived; for life, this present life,
Is but the three to brotherhood!
Behold our hearts, which we forget to hide,  
Are fashioned so in likeness to His own,  
That only joy of all can bring them bliss,  
And every special woe must bring them pain.  
So long as one,  
But one of all His children knoweth grief,  
So long we sorrow too. Nor can there be a heaven  
Till hell be tenantless.

The love we bear hath neither gates nor walls  
To keep men out, but tendereth itself  
A refuge city to the shelterless,  
Calling across the tempest-shadowed plain  
Unceasingly, “Come in, come in!”  
And, for they will not come, but scatter far,  
Grieving and hurt and blind into the storm,  
There is no peace for us, and all our days  
Are hungered for the sight of them that stray,  
Are empty to the cry that sounds in vain,  
“Come in, come in!”

So must it be—now.  
But I perceive another day not too far off;  
And in that day there shall not one remain  
Uncleansed of tears and sin and every stain;  
And in that day, behold, the golden droves  
Of His light creatures shall invade the dawn,  
Shall stream across the hush beyond all stars,  
And people those celestial places He hath planned.

Some day. . . But now . . .

I go to them that have the greater need.
God's blessing steep your hearts in peace,
And all your deeds in patient tenderness.

My name! . . . They call me through the woods!
Quick, quick! away! . . . Here, Egidio! I come!
Up, up into the leaves lest seeing you
They say there was a miracle!
Go! But birds, my birds, come back to me!
ARCADY LOST

The cherry bloom and robin time of year
Again is come; and we that shepherd still
Among less heavenly pastures feel the fear
Of spring again, and all the tears that thrill
But never fall. Last night, across the shine
Of iris-tinted skies, I heard the dim
Enraptured song we knew, the dire divine
Music, that once, beyond the violet rim
Of pain, could waft us clear to where, our own,
Th' unstable faery shores of ecstasy
Burn in the twilight of an April sea.
Our music came last night to me alone.

No more may song nor petalled fluttering
Upbreathe frail, frail delight as in the days
We clung together here. Instead, they bring
The pain of hearts that, glamourous still with spring,
Break, and the dread of star-lit, lonely ways
Where once, O comrade mine, we heard them sing.
ON LEAVING TAORMINA

O almond trees, beneath whose fruited shade,
I lay these summer days and saw the sea,
The hills of Mola, and Calabria's jade,
Good-bye! Perhaps the god that yielded me
Such luxury of happiness, these clear
And brimming hours with you, will, in his grace,
Yield none again; and, summer, finding here
Your branches green, will find again the place
I love, not me. Thro' all the leafy years,
Others will come and love your loveliness;
Love with a heart as gay and free of fears
As mine, and, leaving, leave their souls no less.
But, ah, for me, when spring stands in the door,
Take on, I pray, one shade of pink the more.
DUSK: ASSUAN

Serene, he mounts the minaret of day;
Where purple spreads the world his footsteps pause.
Splendors from whence he rose still flame his grey
And amethystine robes to golden gauze.
Priestly and pure, he stands within the curve
Precipitous that fronts the chasmed west.
The blowing birds that wove his hem in swerve
And arabesque of jet, flicker to rest.
And now his voice, a tide of silence, pours
Across the desert's pallor and the palms:
"Come forth to God from all your darkened doors."
Who pause for prayer? Partake the sacred calms?
Pass and repass the women with their jars;
But faithful come those worshipers, the stars.
THE COAST OF BOHEMIA

Like some still angel who, in toilless might,
The empyrean cleaves with un stirred wings,
Heedless of his proud speed save where it springs
About his feet like blown, quick-cur ling light —
So passed our ship in soft, gloom-charmed flight,
Midmost a huge, drear shade of sea and air,
Voiceless, indissoluble, saving where
Prowards awoke two folds of fiery white.
The wash of dim infinity, the swoon
Of vasty quiet hushed us. Then the least
Dawn quivered — nay, the east dreamed of the moon.
Breathless, we watched. Again! Ah, elfin east!
The white day leaped upon the world. The miles
Of sea flamed loose — and then we saw those isles.
INTO THE MISSISSIPPI

They came from fierce, burnt Spain to seek for gold
Upon thy shores, and with superb, strange prows
Dazzled the wilderness. Their proud, swarth brows
With gorgeous lust of gems and trove made bold.

The river folk feared as the gods of old,
But, lo! thy gods awaking, the deep drowse unfold.
Of death their chief assuaged of quests and vows,
And him, not disillusioned, thou didst fold.

No dreams of gold or jeweled glebe now force;
Thy stream with ships adventuring; and tho’
Thy flood in yellowed opulence doth flow,
‘Tis not from stain of deep, corroded treasure.

Imperial indolence is thine and pleasure;
Of hot, long listlessness and moody course.
IN DALMATIA

A brotherhood of bleached, air-scourged peaks
In desolation watch the Illyrian sea.
Them twice the lidless day brings ecstasy;
Their leperous fronts but twice a splendor freaks.
Once, when the anguish-heedful dawn unspeaks
Their woe with rich, deep-blushed divinity;
Again, when 'neath eve's balm they tower free
Like Tyrian tents of purple-amorous sheiks.
As they with light, so man with vision twice
Scorns pain. First, when the bowl of life in bliss
Youth holds, sees all — grape, dregs, and sleepy spice —
Then stoops his head to drink as tho' to kiss.
And last, when to the verge of death he strifes,
Pauses to gaze adown, and, smiling, dives.
INVOCATION

Sleep of the coolèd lids and breath of flowers,
O sleep of youth, dew-sandaled from the leas,
Throated with music of ensilvered showers,
And silken winds that flash against the trees;
O summer sleep of passionate innocence,
Clean as the morning stars of doubt and pain,
If dreamful, not, oh, not at the expense
Of tears, but fresh with news from fancy’s Spain —
Revisit with thy trançèd healing sweet
These eyes that have forgot almost thy spell,
Sail back with all thy joyous-freighted fleet
Down the long azure of my spirit’s swell.
And for thy traffic with that brooding stream
Bring back the purple to my hills of dream.
TO CHATTERTON

Immortal boy! whose years scarce reached my own,
And yet were filled with all the kinless grief
Devolving on old age, without relief
Of stagnant brain, of nerveless blood and bone —
At dusk, when wind-swept autumn woods are lone,
I, who of Fortune's bounty am the thief,
Gold-filled, I muse upon thy life, so brief,
So passionate, and, envying thee, I moan.
For dreaming thus, there comes a specter thought
Which fastens on my soul and leaves it grey
With fear. If Death, who found thy field so fraught
With golden harvest, now to me should say
"Enough, 'tis Autumn" — God! no harvest yet
Have I, and still my fields are green and wet.
THE SILENT SINGERS

And Proserpine, still fragrant of the air
And upper brightness, bore him children — him
Whose heart, not knowing Sicily, was bare
Of songs, whose sunless mouth was dumb. That grim
Illimitable cold was alien
Always; and always, hopeful of the song
Of birds, she leaned and thought to find again
Those blooms that watch the tearless stars so long
They weep. When to her kingdom came the dead,
Still glistening with tears and asphodel,
Forgetting all save home, their eyes she read,
Wherein the sweet, far earth seemed yet to dwell.

Behold, the blue South in our hearts like wine —
But Pluto's mouth, O Mother Proserpine!
WILD GEELSE

When naked winter on the midnight falls
With icy macerations, hook and flail,
They come — with rush of wings and signal calls —
The mighty birds that home the north, full sail!
Upon the blast. Their unseen cohorts high,
Breasting the stars, make purpose proud to shun
All pausing, till beneath them, tranquil, lie
Day and the silver marshes of the sun.
But should the floor of darkness festal grow,
As far beneath some town unbraids its lights,
Routed, deceived, heart-set to gain the glow,
They drop; nor join again the sunward flights.

Was it their cries I heard, remote, withdrawn,
Or spirit choirs dark-flying towards some dawn?
FAILURE

For them that on the mountain light beneath
The visioned ensigns of the unknown God,
Tho' battle-anguish be their only wreath,
Failure their palm, their victory the sod —
I have no tears. Compassion not that band,
Patriots, poets, dreamers, men of prayer,
The common reachers after right. The hand
Impelling them thus blindly to lay bare
Their hearts to that unequal contest, grants
Solace divine for their divine attempt.
For them that know not strife, nor hear the chants
Precedent to the bloody end's contempt —
For them unloose your tears! Their life is sleep,
Unvigilant, unwounded; they but sleep!
EXÆTATE

Not for more hours of bliss I make demand,
O life! So many thou hast flung with hand
Of summer, Grant instead for winter’s hem
Of sunshine, certain memory of them.

TO MILTON

As well house up the homeless Bedouin stars
And tent them permanent on the night’s great desert,
As thy steep thoughts to circumscribe and fix
With human tears or home or human love;—
Thou nomad of God’s universal night!
TO LUCREZIA

Pause we within the sunset, love;
Rare is such time — so lovely and so passionless —
And sweeter far than when the proud, gold morning
Withers the dew with scorn and in his youth.

Pause here and let me speak
As lover never spoke to one he loved.
How clear the west, unpinionable, and all gold,
As tho’ to cleanse us for the coming of the stars!

Now even we are worthy of the truth; —
I, to lay bare, and thou, to hear.
But yet, the words may stab; nor am I brave —
So, pr’ythee, turn from me thine eyes,
Nor let me see thy perilous, curved mouth,
Crimson as flame, and cold as blooms at dawn.

So. (My words seem shackled —
Sluggish with frosty truth) . . .

That moment long ago when thee I saw,
And straight the whole world ’came invisible,
That time of passionate oblivion,
Once seemed to me the incarnation time
Of love, the heaven-sent, the Paraclete!
Thus have I told thee; thus believed.

But, ignorant, I lied.

No spirit of the Lord anointed paused
Within the portals of my heart on hallowed feet.
Not that, but some young god,
With blown, bright hair and fillet golden, came,
And, stretching forth the blossoming rod of beauty,
Upon me wrought a pagan spell.
Not love, not love,—nor then, nor now!
If Christ should halt beside this spot to touch my hand,
It would not be to claim my soul as friend;
But I should hear the sound of fearful things
That rush into the sea.
This fierce obsession of my waking hours,
This visioning that makes night ecstasy,
It is not love. And this the proof.—
Ah, heart's desire, should thy strong beauty fail
As fails the beauty of the fields,
Or foam blown where the seas are beachless,
To me long, sweet forgetfulness would come,
And summer's ease, once known, now long ago.

Thy words are music rich within mine ear,
But yet, I listen not if there be meaning in them.
Thine eyes, like winter seas,
Dim grey, with thought of green and fear of blue,
Thy listening eyes, immeasurably still—
Oh, are they still with dreams, and sleep
Deeper than waking? Or with the drowse
Of inner lassitude and sheer vacuity of soul?
I dare not guess,
But, careless, drink their cool, Circean sorcery.
Hast thou a heart? I cannot say;
For, where it may not be I once did watch
A thought surge, flaming all thy wintry white
To blossoming spring.
Mayhap, thy soul twines deep with God's.

Mayhap . . . I know

Thy body's whiteness and old Grecian grace . . .

As to one seeking glimpse of the huge sea,

Might come as hindrance on the slopes

An almond tree,

Leaning in ecstasy of petalled beauty, so

Betwixt thy soul and mine riseth alway

This barrier — thy loveliness!
A PAGE SINGS

Where leads my way?
By trees that flutter in the wind,
By fields half blind
With dew, by halls where I may find
At afterday,
Heathen or fay.

I pass and sing.
With cool-eyed youth and all delight
I am bedight —
From morning light to morning light
Adventuring.
One song I sing.

Beneath the blue,
The lithe trees lean my song to hear.
It is so clear
Even their blytheness it can cheer —
For fresh and true,
'Tis all of you!
WINTER—FEAR

The rain has come.
Gone the empurpled air
Which hung upon the golden wreckage of the trees.
The rain has come,
And one no longer sees
The sun. The radiance that lay upon the vair
And crimson of the earth is vanish'd with these.

The wind is up.
It greets, nor dazzles now
The quiet lanes with ruined autumn's gorgeousness.
The wind is up,
But tho' the boughs confess
Its potency, of jeweled tribute they allow
No leaf. The earth, Danaë once, is treasureless.

Winter is come—
The night-cursed, fearful days,
Stainèd and blurred with tears and querulous with pain.
Winter is come,
And if my heart refrain
Most bitterly from backward looks when pitying stays
The sun, then, God! what agony these days of rain!