

Helen of Troy And Other Poems

by

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MesaView Classic Series

MesaView, Inc.



Published by

MesaView, Inc.

Nashua, NH

For information, contact
publisher@mesaview.com
<http://www.mesaview.com>

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ISBN:1-58515-free-474

Table of Contents

[Helen of Troy](#)

Beatrice

Sappho

Marianna Alcoforando

Guenevere

Erinna

The Rose and the Bee

The Song Maker

Wild Asters

When Love Goes

The Princess in the Tower

When Love Was Born

The Shrine

The Blind

Love Me

The Song for Colin

Four Winds

Roundel

Dew

A Maiden

"I Love You"

But Not to Me

Hidden Love

Snow Song

Youth and the Pilgrim

The Wanderer

Would Live in Your Love

May

Rispetto

Less than the Cloud to the Wind

Buried Love

Song

Pierrot

At Night

Song

Love in Autumn

The Kiss

November

A Song of the Princess

The Wind

A Winter Night

The Metropolitan Tower

Gramercy Park

In the Metropolitan Museum

Coney Island

Union Square

Central Park at Dusk

Young Love

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

Primavera Mia

Soul's Birth

Love and Death

FOR Anniversary of John Keats' Death

Silence

The Return

Fear

Anadyomene

Galahad in the Castle of the Maidens

To an Aeolian Harp

To Erinna

To Cleis

Paris in Spring

Madeira from the Sea

City Vignettes

I

II

III

By the Sea

On the Death of Swinburne

Triolets

VOX CORPORIS

A Ballad of Two Knights

Christmas Carol

The Faery Forest

A Fantasy

A Minuet of Mozart's

Twilight

The Prayer

Two Songs for a Child

On the Tower

On the Tower

Helen of Troy

Wild flight on flight against the fading
dawn The flames' red wings soar
upward duskily. This is the funeral pyre
and Troy is dead That sparkled so the
day I saw it first, And darkened slowly
after. I am she Who loves all beauty --
yet I wither it. Why have the high gods
made me wreak their wrath -- Forever
since my maidenhood to sow Sorrow
and blood about me? Lo, they keep Their
bitter care above me even now. It was
the gods who led me to this lair, That
tho' the burning winds should make me
weak, They should not snatch the life
from out my lips. Olympus let the other

women die; They shall be quiet when the day is done And have no care to-morrow. Yet for me There is no rest. The gods are not so kind To her made half immortal like themselves. It is to you I owe the cruel gift, Leda, my mother, and the Swan, my sire, To you the beauty and to you the bale; For never woman born of man and maid Had wrought such havoc on the earth as I, Or troubled heaven with a sea of flame That climbed to touch the silent whirling stars And blotted out their brightness ere the dawn. Have I not made the world to weep enough? Give death to me. Yet life is more than death; How could I leave the sound of singing winds, The strong sweet scent that breathes from off the

sea, Or shut my eyes forever to the
spring? I will not give the grave my
hands to hold, My shining hair to light
oblivion. Have those who wander
through the ways of death, The still wan
fields Elysian, any love To lift their
breasts with longing, any lips To thirst
against the quiver of a kiss? Lo, I shall
live to conquer Greece again, To make
the people love, who hate me now. My
dreams are over, I have ceased to cry
Against the fate that made men love my
mouth And left their spirits all too deaf
to hear The little songs that echoed
through my soul. I have no anger now.
The dreams are done; Yet since the
Greeks and Trojans would not see Aught
but my body's fairness, till the end, In all

the islands set in all the seas, And all the
lands that lie beneath the sun, Till light
turn darkness, and till time shall sleep,
Men's lives shall waste with longing
after me, For I shall be the sum of their
desire, The whole of beauty, never seen
again. And they shall stretch their arms
and starting, wake With "Helen!" on
their lips, and in their eyes The vision of
me. Always I shall be Limned on the
darkness like a shaft of light That
glimmers and is gone. They shall behold
Each one his dream that fashions me
anew; -- With hair like lakes that glint
beneath the stars Dark as sweet
midnight, or with hair aglow Like
burnished gold that still retains the fire.
Yea, I shall haunt until the dusk of time

The heavy eyelids filled with fleeting
dreams.

I wait for one who comes with sword to
slay -- The king I wronged who searches
for me now; And yet he shall not slay
me. I shall stand With lifted head and
look within his eyes, Baring my breast to
him and to the sun. He shall not have the
power to stain with blood That
whiteness -- for the thirsty sword shall
fall And he shall cry and catch me in his
arms, Bearing me back to Sparta on his
breast. Lo, I shall live to conquer
Greece again!

Beatrice

Send out the singers -- let the room be still; They have not eased my pain nor brought me sleep. Close out the sun, for I would have it dark That I may feel how black the grave will be. The sun is setting, for the light is red, And you are outlined in a golden fire, Like Ursula upon an altar-screen. Come, leave the light and sit beside my bed, For I have had enough of saints and prayers. Strange broken thoughts are beating in my brain, They come and vanish and again they come. It is the fever driving out my soul, And Death stands waiting by the arras there.

Ornella, I will speak, for soon my lips
Shall keep a silence till the end of time.
You have a mouth for loving -- listen
then: Keep tryst with Love before Death
comes to tryst; For I, who die, could
wish that I had lived A little closer to the
world of men, Not watching always thro'
the blazoned panes That show the world
in chilly greens and blues And grudge
the sunshine that would enter in. I was
no part of all the troubled crowd That
moved beneath the palace windows
here, And yet sometimes a knight in
shining steel Would pass and catch the
gleaming of my hair, And wave a mailed
hand and smile at me, Whereat I made no
sign and turned away, Affrighted and yet
glad and full of dreams. Ah, dreams and

dreams that asked no answering! I
should have wrought to make my dreams
come true, But all my life was like an
autumn day, Full of gray quiet and a hazy
peace.

What was I saying? All is gone again. It
seemed but now I was the little child
Who played within a garden long ago.
Beyond the walls the festal trumpets
blared. Perhaps they carried some
Madonna by With tossing ensigns in a
sea of flowers, A painted Virgin with a
painted Child, Who saw for once the
sweetness of the sun Before they shut her
in an altar-niche Where tapers smoke
against the windy gloom. I gathered
roses redder than my gown And played

that I was Saint Elizabeth, Whose wine
had turned to roses in her hands. And as
I played, a child came thro' the gate, A
boy who looked at me without a word,
As tho' he saw stretch far behind my
head Long lines of radiant angels, row
on row. That day we spoke a little,
timidly, And after that I never heard the
voice That sang so many songs for love
of me. He was content to stand and
watch me pass, To seek for me at matins
every day, Where I could feel his eyes
the while I prayed. I think if he had
stretched his hands to me, Or moved his
lips to say a single word, I might have
loved him -- he had wondrous eyes.

Ornella, are you there? I cannot see -- Is

every one so lonely when he dies?

The room is filled with lights -- with waving lights -- Who are the men and women 'round the bed? What have I said, Ornella? Have they heard? There was no evil hidden in my life, And yet, and yet, I would not have them know --

Am I not floating in a mist of light? O lift me up and I shall reach the sun!

Sappho

The twilight's inner flame grows blue
and deep, And in my Lesbos, over
leagues of sea, The temples glimmer
moonwise in the trees. Twilight has
veiled the little flower face Here on my
heart, but still the night is kind And
leaves her warm sweet weight against
my breast. Am I that Sappho who would
run at dusk Along the surges creeping up
the shore When tides came in to ease the
hungry beach, And running, running, till
the night was black, Would fall forespent
upon the chilly sand And quiver with the
winds from off the sea? Ah, quietly the
shingle waits the tides Whose waves are

stinging kisses, but to me Love brought
no peace, nor darkness any rest. I crept
and touched the foam with fevered hands
And cried to Love, from whom the sea is
sweet, From whom the sea is bitterer
than death. Ah, Aphrodite, if I sing no
more To thee, God's daughter, powerful
as God, It is that thou hast made my life
too sweet To hold the added sweetness
of a song. There is a quiet at the heart of
love, And I have pierced the pain and
come to peace. I hold my peace, my
Cleis, on my heart; And softer than a
little wild bird's wing Are kisses that
she pours upon my mouth. Ah, never any
more when spring like fire Will flicker
in the newly opened leaves, Shall I steal
forth to seek for solitude Beyond the lure

of light Alcaeus' lyre, Beyond the sob
that stilled Erinna's voice. Ah, never
with a throat that aches with song,
Beneath the white uncaring sky of spring,
Shall I go forth to hide awhile from Love
The quiver and the crying of my heart.
Still I remember how I strove to flee The
love-note of the birds, and bowed my
head To hurry faster, but upon the ground
I saw two winged shadows side by side,
And all the world's spring passion
stifled me. Ah, Love, there is no fleeing
from thy might, No lonely place where
thou hast never trod, No desert thou hast
left uncarpeted With flowers that spring
beneath thy perfect feet. In many guises
didst thou come to me; I saw thee by the
maidens while they danced, Phaon

allured me with a look of thine, In
Anactoria I knew thy grace, I looked at
Cercolas and saw thine eyes; But never
wholly, soul and body mine, Didst thou
bid any love me as I loved. Now I have
found the peace that fled from me; Close,
close, against my heart I hold my world.
Ah, Love that made my life a lyric cry,
Ah, Love that tuned my lips to lyres of
thine, I taught the world thy music, now
alone I sing for one who falls asleep to
hear.

Marianna Alcoforando

(The Portuguese Nun -- 1640-1723)

The sparrows wake beneath the convent
eaves; I think I have not slept the whole
night through. But I am old; the aged
scarcely know The times they wake and
sleep, for life burns down; They breathe
the calm of death before they die. The
long night ends, the day comes creeping
in, Showing the sorrows that the
darkness hid, The bended head of Christ,
the blood, the thorns, The wall's gray
stains of damp, the pallet bed Where

little Sister Marta dreams of saints,
Waking with arms outstretched
imploringly That seek to stay a vision's
vanishing. I never had a vision, yet for
me Our Lady smiled while all the
convent slept One winter midnight
hushed around with snow -- I thought she
might be kinder than the rest, And so I
came to kneel before her feet, Sick with
love's sorrow and love's bitterness. But
when I would have made the blessed
sign, I found the water frozen in the font,
And touched but ice within the carved
stone. The saints had hid themselves
away from me, Leaving the windows
black against the night; And when I sank
upon the altar steps, Before the Virgin
Mother and her Child, The last, pale,

low-burnt taper flickered out, But in the
darkness, smooth and fathomless, Still
twinkled like a star the holy lamp That
cast a dusky glow upon her face. Then
through the numbing cold peace fell on
me, Submission and the gracious gift of
tears, For when I looked, Oh! blessed
miracle, Her lips had parted and Our
Lady smiled! And then I knew that Love
is worth its pain And that my heart was
richer for his sake, Since lack of love is
bitterest of all.

The day is broad awake -- the first long
beam Of level sun finds Sister Marta's
face, And trembling there it lights a
timid smile Upon the lips that say so
many prayers, And have no words for

hate and none for love. But when she
passes where her prayers have gone,
Will God not smile a little sadly then,
And send her back with gentle words to
earth That she may hold a child against
her breast And feel its little hands upon
her hair? We weep before the Blessed
Mother's shrine, To think upon her
sorrows, but her joys What nun could
ever know a tithing of? The precious
hours she watched above His sleep
Were worth the fearful anguish of the
end. Yea, lack of love is bitterest of all;
Yet I have felt what thing it is to know
One thought forever, sleeping or awake;
To say one name whose sweetness
grows so strange That it might work a
spell on those who weep; To feel the

weight of love upon my heart So heavy
that the blood can scarcely flow. Love
comes to some unlooked-for, quietly, As
when at twilight, with a soft surprise,
We see the new-born crescent in the
blue; And unto others love is planet-like,
A cold and placid gleam that wavers not,
And there are those who wait the call of
love Expectant of his coming, as we
watch To see the east grow pallid ere the
moon Lifts up her flower-like head
against the night. Love came to me as
comes a cruel sun, That on some rain-
drenched morning, when the leaves Are
bowed beneath their clinging weight of
drops, Tears through the mist, and burns
with fervent heat The tender grasses and
the meadow flowers; Then suddenly the

heavy clouds close in And through the
dark the thunder's muttering Is drowned
amid the dashing of the rain.

But I have seen my day grow calm again.
The sun sets slowly on a peaceful world,
And sheds a quiet light across the fields.

Guenevere

I was a queen, and I have lost my crown;
A wife, and I have broken all my vows;
A lover, and I ruined him I loved: --
There is no other havoc left to do. A
little month ago I was a queen, And
mothers held their babies up to see
When I came riding out of Camelot. The
women smiled, and all the world smiled
too. And now, what woman's eyes would
smile on me? I still am beautiful, and yet
what child Would think of me as some
high, heaven-sent thing, An angel, clad in
gold and miniver? The world would run
from me, and yet am I No different from
the queen they used to love. If water,

flowing silver over stones, Is forded,
and beneath the horses' feet Grows
turbid suddenly, it clears again, And men
will drink it with no thought of harm. Yet
I am branded for a single fault.

I was the flower amid a toiling world,
Where people smiled to see one happy
thing, And they were proud and glad to
raise me high; They only asked that I
should be right fair, A little kind, and
gowned wondrously, And surely it were
little praise to me If I had pleased them
well throughout my life.

I was a queen, the daughter of a king.
The crown was never heavy on my head,
It was my right, and was a part of me.

The women thought me proud, the men
were kind, And bowed right gallantly to
kiss my hand, And watched me as I
passed them calmly by, Along the halls I
shall not tread again. What if, to-night, I
should revisit them? The warders at the
gates, the kitchen-maids, The very
beggars would stand off from me, And I,
their queen, would climb the stairs
alone, Pass through the banquet-hall, a
loathed thing, And seek my chambers for
a hiding-place, And I should find them
but a sepulchre, The very rushes rotted
on the floors, The fire in ashes on the
freezing hearth. I was a queen, and he
who loved me best Made me a woman
for a night and day, And now I go
unqueen'd forevermore. A queen should

never dream on summer eves, When
hovering spells are heavy in the dusk: --
I think no night was ever quite so still,
So smoothly lit with red along the west,
So deeply hushed with quiet through and
through. And strangely clear, and deeply
dyed with light, The trees stood straight
against a paling sky, With Venus burning
lamp-like in the west.

I walked alone amid a thousand flowers,
That drooped their heads and drowsed
beneath the dew, And all my thoughts
were quieted to sleep. Behind me, on the
walk, I heard a step -- I did not know my
heart could tell his tread, I did not know
I loved him till that hour. Within my
breast I felt a wild, sick pain, The

garden reeled a little, I was weak, And
quick he came behind me, caught my
arms, That ached beneath his touch; and
then I swayed, My head fell backward
and I saw his face.

All this grows bitter that was once so
sweet, And many mouths must drain the
dregs of it. But none will pity me, nor
pity him Whom Love so lashed, and with
such cruel thongs.

Erinna

They sent you in to say farewell to me,
No, do not shake your head; I see your
eyes That shine with tears. Sappho, you
saw the sun Just now when you came
hither, and again, When you have left me,
all the shimmering Great meadows will
laugh lightly, and the sun Put round about
you warm invisible arms As might a
lover, decking you with light. I go
toward darkness tho' I lie so still. If I
could see the sun, I should look up And
drink the light until my eyes were blind;
I should kneel down and kiss the blades
of grass, And I should call the birds with
such a voice, With such a longing,

tremulous and keen, That they would fly
to me and on the breast Bear evermore
to tree-tops and to fields The kiss I gave
them. Sappho, tell me this, Was I not
sometimes fair? My eyes, my mouth, My
hair that loved the wind, were they not
worth The breath of love upon them? Yet
he passed, And he will pass to-night
when all the air Is blue with twilight; but
I shall not see. I shall have gone forever.
Hold my hands, Hold fast that Death may
never come between; Swear by the gods
you will not let me go; Make songs for
Death as you would sing to Love -- But
you will not assuage him. He alone Of
all the gods will take no gifts from men.
I am afraid, afraid.

Sappho, lean down. Last night the fever
gave a dream to me, It takes my life and
gives a little dream. I thought I saw him
stand, the man I love, Here in my quiet
chamber, with his eyes Fixed on me as I
entered, while he drew Silently toward
me -- he who night by night Goes by my
door without a thought of me -- Neared
me and put his hand behind my head,
And leaning toward me, kissed me on
the mouth. That was a little dream for
Death to give, Too short to take the
whole of life for, yet I woke with lips
made quiet by a kiss. The dream is
worth the dying. Do not smile So sadly
on me with your shining eyes, You who
can set your sorrow to a song And ease
your hurt by singing. But to me My songs

are less than sea-sand that the wind
Drives stinging over me and bears away.
I have no care what place the grains may
fall, Nor of my songs, if Time shall blow
them back, As land-wind breaks the
lines of dying foam Along the bright wet
beaches, scattering The flakes once more
against the laboring sea, Into oblivion.
What care have I To please Apollo since
Love hearkens not? Your words will
live forever, men will say " She was the
perfect lover " -- I shall die, I loved too
much to live. Go Sappho, go -- I hate
your hands that beat so full of life, Go,
lest my hatred hurt you. I shall die, But
you will live to love and love again. He
might have loved some other spring than
this; I should have kept my life -- I let it

go. He would not love me now tho'
Cypris bound Her girdle round me. I am
Death's, not Love's. Go from me,
Sappho, back to find the sun.

I am alone, alone. O Cyprian . . .

Love Songs

CHAPTER Song

You bound strong sandals on my feet,
You gave me bread and wine, And bade
me out, 'neath sun and stars, For all the
world was mine.

Oh take the sandals off my feet, You
know not what you do; For all my world
is in your arms, My sun and stars are

you.



The Rose and the Bee

If I were a bee and you were a rose,
Would you let me in when the gray wind
blows? Would you hold your petals
wide apart, Would you let me in to find
your heart, If you were a rose?

" If I were a rose and you were a bee,
You should never go when you came to
me, I should hold my love on my heart at
last, I should close my leaves and keep
you fast, If you were a bee. "

The Song Maker

I made a hundred little songs That told
the joy and pain of love, And sang them
blithely, tho' I knew No whit thereof.

I was a weaver deaf and blind; A
miracle was wrought for me, But I have
lost my skill to weave Since I can see.

For while I sang -- ah swift and strange!
Love passed and touched me on the
brow, And I who made so many songs
Am silent now.

Wild Asters

In the spring I asked the daisies
If his words were true,
And the clever little daisies
Always knew.

Now the fields are brown and barren,
Bitter autumn blows,
And of all the stupid asters
Not one knows.

When Love Goes

I

O mother, I am sick of love, I cannot
laugh nor lift my head, My bitter dreams
have broken me, I would my love were
dead.

" Drink of the draught I brew for thee,
Thou shalt have quiet in its stead. "

II

Where is the silver in the rain, Where is
the music in the sea, Where is the bird
that sang all day To break my heart with

melody?

" The night thou badst Love fly away, He hid them all from thee. "

CHAPTER The Wayfarer

Love entered in my heart one day, A sad, unwelcome guest; But when he begged that he might stay, I let him wait and rest.

He broke my sleep with sorrowing, And shook my dreams with tears, And when my heart was fain to sing, He stilled its joy with fears.

But now that he has gone his way, I miss the old sweet pain, And sometimes in the night I pray That he may come again.



The Princess in the Tower

I

The Princess sings:

I am the princess up in the tower And I
dream the whole day thro' Of a knight
who shall come with a silver spear And
a waving plume of blue.

I am the princess up in the tower, And I
dream my dreams by day, But sometimes
I wake, and my eyes are wet, When the
dusk is deep and gray.

For the peasant lovers go by beneath, I
hear them laugh and kiss, And I forget
my day-dream knight, And long for a
love like this.

II

The Minstrel sings:

I lie beside the princess' tower, So close
she cannot see my face, And watch her
dreaming all day long, And bending with
a lily's grace.

Her cheeks are paler than the moon That
sails along a sunny sky, And yet her
silent mouth is red Where tender words
and kisses lie.

I am a minstrel with a harp, For love of
her my songs are sweet, And yet I dare
not lift the voice That lies so far beneath
her feet.

III

The Knight sings:

O princess cease your dreams awhile
And look adown your tower's gray side -
- The princess gazes far away, Nor hears
nor heeds the words I cried.

Perchance my heart was overbold, God
made her dreams too pure to break, She
sees the angels in the air Fly to and fro
for Mary's sake.

Farewell, I mount and go my way, -- But
oh her hair the sun sifts thro' -- The tilts
and tourneys wait my spear, I am the
Knight of the Plume of Blue.

When Love Was Born

When Love was born I think he lay Right
warm on Venus' breast, And whiles he
smiled and whiles would play And
whiles would take his rest.

But always, folded out of sight, The
wings were growing strong That were to
bear him off in flight Erelong, erelong.

The Shrine

There is no lord within my heart, Left
silent as an empty shrine Where rose and
myrtle intertwine, Within a place apart.

No god is there of carven stone To watch
with still approving eyes My thoughts
like steady incense rise; I dream and
weep alone.

But if I keep my altar fair, Some morning
I shall lift my head From roses deftly
garlanded To find the god is there.

The Blind

The birds are all a-building, They say
the world's a-flower, And still I linger
lonely Within a barren bower.

I weave a web of fancies Of tears and
darkness spun. How shall I sing of
sunlight Who never saw the sun?

I hear the pipes a-blowing, But yet I may
not dance, I know that Love is passing, I
cannot catch his glance.

And if his voice should call me And I
with groping dim Should reach his place
of calling And stretch my arms to him,

The wind would blow between my
hands For Joy that I shall miss, The rain
would fall upon my mouth That his will
never kiss.

Love Me

Brown-thrush singing all day long
In the leaves above me, Take my love this little
song, " Love me, love me, love me! "

When he harkens what you say, Bid him,
lest he miss me, Leave his work or leave
his play, And kiss me, kiss me, kiss me!

The Song for Colin

I sang a song at dusking time Beneath the evening star,
And Terence left his latest rhyme To answer from afar.

Pierrot laid down his lute to weep, And sighed, " She sings for me, "
But Colin slept a careless sleep Beneath an apple tree.

Four Winds

" Four winds blowing thro' the sky, You
have seen poor maidens die, Tell me
then what I shall do That my lover may
be true. " Said the wind from out the
south, " Lay no kiss upon his mouth, "
And the wind from out the west, "
Wound the heart within his breast, " And
the wind from out the east, " Send him
empty from the feast, " And the wind
from out the north, " In the tempest thrust
him forth, When thou art more cruel than
he, Then will Love be kind to thee. "

Roundel

If he could know my songs are all for
him, At silver dawn or in the evening
glow, Would he not smile and think it but
a whim, If he could know?

Or would his heart rejoice and
overflow, As happy brooks that break
their icy rim When April's horns along
the hillsides blow?

I may not speak till Eros' torch is dim,
The god is bitter and will have it so;
And yet to-night our fate would seem
less grim If he could know.

Dew

I dream that he is mine, I dream that he is true,
And all his words I keep As rose-leaves hold the dew.

O little thirsty rose, O little heart beware,
Lest you should hope to hold A hundred roses' share.

A Maiden

Oh if I were the velvet rose Upon the red
rose vine, I'd climb to touch his window
And make his casement fine.

And if I were the little bird That twitters
on the tree, All day I'd sing my love for
him Till he should harken me.

But since I am a maiden I go with
downcast eyes, And he will never hear
the songs That he has turned to sighs.

And since I am a maiden My love will
never know That I could kiss him with a
mouth More red than roses blow.



"I Love You"

When April bends above me And finds
me fast asleep, Dust need not keep the
secret A live heart died to keep.

When April tells the thrushes, The
meadow-larks will know, And pipe the
three words lightly To all the winds that
blow.

Above his roof the swallows, In notes
like far-blown rain, Will tell the little
sparrow Beside his window-pane.

O sparrow, little sparrow, When I am
fast asleep, Then tell my love the secret

That I have died to keep.

But Not to Me

The April night is still and sweet With
flowers on every tree; Peace comes to
them on quiet feet, But not to me.

My peace is hidden in his breast Where I
shall never be, Love comes to-night to
all the rest, But not to me.

Hidden Love

I hid the love within my heart, And lit
the laughter in my eyes, That when we
meet he may not know My love that
never dies.

But sometimes when he dreams at night
Of fragrant forests green and dim, It may
be that my love crept out And brought
the dream to him.

And sometimes when his heart is sick
And suddenly grows well again, It may
be that my love was there To free his life
of pain.

Snow Song

Fairy snow, fairy snow, Blowing,
blowing everywhere, Would that I Too,
could fly Lightly, lightly through the air.

Like a wee, crystal star I should drift, I
should blow Near, more near, To my
dear Where he comes through the snow.

I should fly to my love Like a flake in the
storm, I should die, I should die, On his
lips that are warm.

Youth and the Pilgrim

Gray pilgrim, you have journeyed far, I
pray you tell to me Is there a land where
Love is not, By shore of any sea?

For I am weary of the god, And I would
flee from him Tho' I must take a ship and
go Beyond the ocean's rim.

" I know a port where Love is not, The
ship is in your hand, Then plunge your
sword within your breast And you will
reach the land. "

The Wanderer

I saw the sunset-colored sands, The Nile
like flowing fire between, Where
Rameses stares forth serene, And
Ammon's heavy temple stands.

I saw the rocks where long ago, Above
the sea that cries and breaks, Bright
Perseus with Medusa's snakes Set free
the maiden white like snow.

And many skies have covered me, And
many winds have blown me forth, And I
have loved the green bright north, And I
have loved the cold sweet sea.

But what to me are north and south, And
what the lure of many lands, Since you
have leaned to catch my hands And lay a
kiss upon my mouth.

Would Live in Your Love

I would live in your love as the sea-grasses live in the sea, Borne up by each wave as it passes, drawn down by each wave that recedes; I would empty my soul of the dreams that have gathered in me, I would beat with your heart as it beats, I would follow your soul as it leads.

May

The wind is tossing the lilacs, The new
leaves laugh in the sun, And the petals
fall on the orchard wall, But for me the
spring is done.

Beneath the apple blossoms I go a
wintry way, For love that smiled in
April Is false to me in May.

Rispetto

Was that his step that sounded on the
stair? Was that his knock I heard upon
the door? I grow so tired I almost cease
to care, And yet I would that he might
come once more.

It was the wind I heard, that mocks at
me, The bitter wind that is more cruel
than he; It was the wind that knocked
upon the door, But he will never knock
nor enter more.

Less than the Cloud to the Wind

Less than the cloud to the wind, Less
than the foam to the sea, Less than the
rose to the storm Am I to thee.

More than the star to the night, More than
the rain to the lea, More than heaven to
earth Art thou to me.

Buried Love

I shall bury my weary Love Beneath a tree,
In the forest tall and black Where none can see.

I shall put no flowers at his head, Nor stone at his feet,
For the mouth I loved so much Was bittersweet.

I shall go no more to his grave, For the woods are cold.
I shall gather as much of joy As my hands can hold.

I shall stay all day in the sun Where the wide winds blow,
But oh, I shall weep at night When none will know.



Song

O woe is me, my heart is sad, For I
should never know If Love came by like
any lad, Without his silver bow.

Or if he left his arrows sharp And came
a minstrel weary, I'd never tell him by
his harp Nor know him for my dearie.

" O go your ways and have no fear, For
tho' Love passes by, He'll come a
hundred times, my dear, Before your turn
to die. "

Pierrot

Pierrot stands in the garden Beneath a
waning moon, And on his lute he
fashions A little silver tune.

Pierrot plays in the garden, He thinks he
plays for me, But I am quite forgotten
Under the cherry tree.

Pierrot plays in the garden, And all the
roses know That Pierrot loves his music,
But I love Pierrot.

At Night

Love said, " Wake still and think of me, "
Sleep, " Close your eyes till break of
day, " But Dreams came by and
smilingly Gave both to Love and Sleep
their way.

Song

When Love comes singing to his heart
That would not wake for me, I think that
I shall know his joy By my own ecstasy.

And tho' the sea were all between, The
time their hands shall meet, My heart
will know his happiness, So wildly it
will beat.

And when he bends above her mouth,
Rejoicing for his sake, My soul will sing
a little song, But oh, my heart will break.

Love in Autumn

I sought among the drifting leaves, The
golden leaves that once were green, To
see if Love were hiding there And
peeping out between.

For thro' the silver showers of May And
thro' the summer's heavy heat, In vain I
sought his golden head And light, fast-
flying feet.

Perhaps when all the world is bare And
cruel winter holds the land, The Love
that finds no place to hide Will run and
catch my hand.

I shall not care to have him then, I shall
be bitter and a-cold -- It grows too late
for frolicking When all the world is old.

Then little hiding Love, come forth,
Come forth before the autumn goes, And
let us seek thro' ruined paths The
garden's last red rose.

The Kiss

I hoped that he would love me, And he
has kissed my mouth, But I am like a
stricken bird That cannot reach the south.

For tho' I know he loves me, To-night my
heart is sad; His kiss was not so
wonderful As all the dreams I had.

November

The world is tired, the year is old, The
little leaves are glad to die, The wind
goes shivering with cold Among the
rushes dry.

Our love is dying like the grass, And we
who kissed grow coldly kind, Half glad
to see our poor love pass Like leaves
along the wind.

A Song of the Princess

The princess has her lovers, A score of knights has she,
And each can sing a madrigal, And praise her gracefully.

But Love that is so bitter Hath put within her heart
A longing for the scornful knight Who silent stands apart.

And tho' the others praise and plead, She maketh no reply,
Yet for a single word from him, I ween that she would die.

The Wind

A wind is blowing over my soul, I hear
it cry the whole night thro' -- Is there no
peace for me on earth Except with you?

Alas, the wind has made me wise, Over
my naked soul it blew, -- There is no
peace for me on earth Even with you.

A Winter Night

My window-pane is starred with frost,
The world is bitter cold to-night, The
moon is cruel and the wind Is like a two-
edged sword to smite.

God pity all the homeless ones, The
beggars pacing to and fro. God pity all
the poor to-night Who walk the lamp-lit
streets of snow.

My room is like a bit of June, Warm and
close-curtained fold on fold, But
somewhere, like a homeless child, My
heart is crying in the cold.

The Metropolitan Tower

We walked together in the dusk To watch
the tower grow dimly white, And saw it
lift against the sky Its flower of amber
light.

You talked of half a hundred things, I
kept each little word you said; And
when at last the hour was full, I saw the
light turn red.

You did not know the time had come,
You did not see the sudden flower, Nor
know that in my heart Love's birth Was

reckoned from that hour.

Gramercy Park

For W. P.

The little park was filled with peace,
The walks were carpeted with snow, But
every iron gate was locked. Lest if we
entered, peace would go.

We circled it a dozen times, The wind
was blowing from the sea, I only felt
your restless eyes Whose love was like
a cloak for me.

Oh heavy gates that fate has locked To
bar the joy we may not win, Peace
would go out forevermore If we should

dare to enter in.



In the Metropolitan Museum

Within the tiny Pantheon We stood
together silently, Leaving the restless
crowd awhile As ships find shelter from
the sea.

The ancient centuries came back To
cover us a moment's space, And thro' the
dome the light was glad Because it
shone upon your face.

Ah, not from Rome but farther still,

Beyond sun-smitten Salamis, The
moment took us, till you stooped To find
the present with a kiss.

Coney Island

Why did you bring me here? The sand is
white with snow, Over the wooden
domes The winter sea-winds blow --
There is no shelter near, Come, let us go.

With foam of icy lace The sea creeps up
the sand, The wind is like a hand That
strikes us in the face. Doors that June set
a-swing Are bolted long ago; We try
them uselessly -- Alas, there cannot be
For us a second spring; Come, let us go.

Union Square

With the man I love who loves me not, I
walked in the street-lamps' flare; We
watched the world go home that night In
a flood through Union Square.

I leaned to catch the words he said That
were light as a snowflake falling; Ah
well that he never leaned to hear The
words my heart was calling.

And on we walked and on we walked
Past the fiery lights of the picture shows
-- Where the girls with thirsty eyes go by
On the errand each man knows.

And on we walked and on we walked,
At the door at last we said good-bye; I
knew by his smile he had not heard My
heart's unuttered cry.

With the man I love who loves me not I
walked in the street-lamps' flare -- But
oh, the girls who can ask for love In the
lights of Union Square.

Central Park at Dusk

Buildings above the leafless trees Loom
high as castles in a dream, While one by
one the lamps come out To thread the
twilight with a gleam.

There is no sign of leaf or bud, A hush is
over everything -- Silent as women wait
for love, The world is waiting for the
spring.

Young Love

I

I cannot heed the words they say, The
lights grow far away and dim, Amid the
laughing men and maids My eyes
unbidden seek for him.

I hope that when he smiles at me He
does not guess my joy and pain, For if he
did, he is too kind To ever look my way
again.

II

I have a secret in my heart No ears have
ever heard, And still it sings there day
by day Most like a caged bird.

And when it beats against the bars, I do
not set it free, For I am happier to know
It only sings for me.

III

I wrote his name along the beach, I love
the letters so. Far up it seemed and out
of reach, For still the tide was low.

But oh, the sea came creeping up, And
washed the name away, And on the sand
where it had been A bit of sea-grass lay.

A bit of sea-grass on the sand, Dropped
from a mermaid's hair -- Ah, had she
come to kiss his name And leave a token
there?

IV

What am I that he should love me, He
who stands so far above me, What am I?
I am like a cowslip turning Toward the
sky, Where a planet's golden burning
Breaks the cowslip's heart with
yearning, What am I that he should love
me, What am I?

V

O dreams that flock about my sleep, I
pray you bring my love to me, And let
me think I hear his voice Again ring free.

And if you care to please me well, And
live to-morrow in my mind, Let him who
was so cold before, To-night seem kind.

VI

I plucked a daisy in the fields, And there
beneath the sun I let its silver petals fall
One after one.

I said, " He loves me, loves me not, "
And oh, my heart beat fast, The flower
was kind, it let me say " He loves me, "
last.

I kissed the little leafless stem, But oh,
my poor heart knew The words the
flower had said to me, They were not
true.

VII

I sent my love a letter, And if he loves
me not, He shall not find my love for him
In any line or dot.

But if he loves me truly, He'll find it
hidden deep, As dawn gleams red thro'
chilly clouds To eyes awaked from
sleep.

VIII

The world is cold and gray and wet,
And I am heavy-hearted, yet When I am
home and look to see The place my
letters wait for me, If I should find ONE
letter there, I think I should not greatly
care If it were rainy or were fair, For all
the world would suddenly Seem like a
festival to me.

IX

I hid three words within my heart, That
longed to fly to him, At dawn they woke
me with a start, They sang till day was
dim.

And now at last I let them fly, As little
birds should do, And he will know the
first is " I " , The others " Love " and "
You " .

X

Across the twilight's violet His
curtained window glimmers gold; Oh
happy light that round my love Can fold.

Oh happy book within his hand, Oh
happy page he glorifies, Oh happy little
word beneath His eyes.

But oh, thrice happy, happy I Who love
him more than songs can tell, For in the
heaven of his heart I dwell.

Sonnets and Lyrics

Primavera Mia

As kings who see their little life-day
pass, Take off the heavy ermine and the
crown, So had the trees that autumn-time
laid down Their golden garments on the
faded grass, When I, who watched the
seasons in the glass Of mine own
thoughts, saw all the autumn's brown
Leap into life and don a sunny gown Of
leafage such as happy April has. Great
spring came singing upward from the
south; For in my heart, far carried on the
wind, Your words like winged seeds
took root and grew, And all the world
caught music from your mouth; I saw the
light as one who had been blind, And

knew my sun and song and spring were
you.

Soul's Birth

When you were born, beloved, was your soul
New made by God to match your
body's flower, And were they both at
one same precious hour Sent forth from
heaven as a perfect whole? Or had your
soul since dim creation burned, A star in
some still region of the sky, That leaping
earthward, left its place on high And to
your little new-born body yearned? No
words can tell in what celestial hour
God made your soul and gave it mortal
birth, Nor in the disarray of all the stars
Is any place so sweet that such a flower
Might linger there until thro' heaven's
bars, It heard God's voice that bade it

down to earth.



Love and Death

Shall we, too, rise forgetful from our
sleep, And shall my soul that lies within
your hand Remember nothing, as the
blowing sand Forgets the palm where
long blue shadows creep When winds
along the darkened desert sweep? Or
would it still remember, tho' it spanned
A thousand heavens, while the planets
fanned The vacant ether with their
voices deep? Soul of my soul, no word
shall be forgot, Nor yet alone, beloved,
shall we see The desolation of
extinguished suns, Nor fear the void
wherethro' our planet runs, For still
together shall we go and not Fare forth

alone to front eternity.

FOR Anniversary of John Keats' Death

(February 23, 1821)

At midnight when the moonlit cypress
trees Have woven round his grave a
magic shade, Still weeping the
unfinished hymn he made, There moves
fresh Maia like a morning breeze Blown
over jonquil beds when warm rains
cease. And stooping where her poet's
head is laid, Selene weeps while all the
tides are stayed And swaying seas are

darkened into peace. But they who wake
the meadows and the tides Have hearts
too kind to bid him wake from sleep
Who murmurs sometimes when his
dreams are deep, Startling the Quiet
Land where he abides, And charming
still, sad-eyed Persephone With visions
of the sunny earth and sea.

Silence

(To Eleonora Duse)

We are anhungered after solitude, Deep
stillness pure of any speech or sound,
Soft quiet hovering over pools profound,
The silences that on the desert brood,
Above a windless hush of empty seas,
The broad unfurling banners of the
dawn, A faery forest where there sleeps
a Faun; Our souls are fain of solitudes
like these. O woman who divined our
weariness, And set the crown of silence
on your art, From what undreamed-of
depth within your heart Have you sent
forth the hush that makes us free To hear

an instant, high above earth's stress, The
silent music of infinity?

The Return

I turned the key and opened wide the door
To enter my deserted room again,
Where thro' the long hot months the dust
had lain. Was it not lonely when across
the floor No step was heard, no sudden
song that bore My whole heart upward
with a joyous pain? Were not the
pictures and the volumes fain To have
me with them always as before? But
Giorgione's Venus did not deign To lift
her lids, nor did the subtle smile Of
Mona Lisa deepen. Madeleine Still wept
against the glory of her hair, Nor did the
lovers part their lips the while, But
kissed unheeding that I watched them

there.



Fear

I am afraid, oh I am so afraid! The cold black fear is clutching me to-night As long ago when they would take the light And leave the little child who would have prayed, Frozen and sleepless at the thought of death. My heart that beats too fast will rest too soon; I shall not know if it be night or noon, -- Yet shall I struggle in the dark for breath? Will no one fight the Terror for my sake, The heavy darkness that no dawn will break? How can they leave me in that dark alone, Who loved the joy of light and warmth so much, And thrilled so with the sense of sound and touch, -- How can

they shut me underneath a stone?

Anadyomene

The wide, bright temple of the world I
found, And entered from the dizzy
infinite That I might kneel and worship
thee in it; Leaving the singing stars their
ceaseless round Of silver music sound
on orb'd sound, For measured spaces
where the shrines are lit, And men with
wisdom or with little wit Implore the
gods that mercy may abound. Ah,
Aphrodite, was it not from thee My
summons came across the endless
spaces? Mother of Love, turn not thy
face from me Now that I seek for thee in
human faces; Answer my prayer or set
my spirit free Again to drift along the

starry places.

Galahad in the Castle of the Maidens

(To the maiden with the hidden face in
Abbey's painting)

The other maidens raised their eyes to
him Who stumbled in before them when
the fight Had left him victor, with a
victor's right. I think his eyes with quick
hot tears grew dim; He scarcely saw her
swaying white and slim, And trembling
slightly, dreaming of his might, Nor
knew he touched her hand, as strangely

light As a wan wraith's beside a river's
rim. The other maidens raised their eyes
to see And only she has hid her face
away, And yet I ween she loved him
more than they, And very fairly
fashioned was her face. Yet for Love's
shame and sweet humility, She dared not
meet him with their queenlike grace.

To an Aeolian Harp

The winds have grown articulate in thee,
And voiced again the wail of ancient
woe That smote upon the winds of long
ago: The cries of Trojan women as they
flee, The quivering moan of pale
Andromache, Now lifted loud with pain
and now brought low. It is the soul of
sorrow that we know, As in a shell the
soul of all the sea. So sometimes in the
compass of a song, Unknown to him who
sings, thro' lips that live, The voiceless
dead of long-forgotten lands Proclaim to
us their heaviness and wrong In

sweeping sadness of the winds that give
Thy strings no rest from weariless wild
hands.

To Erinna

Was Time not harsh to you, or was he
kind, O pale Erinna of the perfect lyre,
That he has left no word of singing fire
Whereby you waked the dreaming
Lesbian wind, And kindled night along
the lyric shore? O girl whose lips Erato
stooped to kiss, Do you go sorrowing
because of this In fields where poets
sing forevermore? Or are you glad and
is it best to be A silent music men have
never heard, A dream in all our souls
that we may say: " Her voice had all the
rapture of the sea, And all the clear cool
quiver of a bird Deep in a forest at the
break of day " ?



To Cleis

" I have a fair daughter with a form like
a golden flower, Cleis, the beloved. "
Sapphic fragment.

When the dusk was wet with dew, Cleis,
did the muses nine Listen in a silent line
While your mother sang to you?

Did they weep or did they smile When
she crooned to still your cries, She, a
muse in human guise, Who forsook her
lyre awhile?

Did you feel her wild heart beat? Did
the warmth of all the sun Thro' your little

body run When she kissed your hands
and feet?

Did your fingers, babywise, Touch her
face and touch her hair, Did you think
your mother fair, Could you bear her
burning eyes?

Are the songs that soothed your fears
Vanished like a vanished flame, Save the
line where shines your name Starlike
down the graying years?

Cleis speaks no word to me, For the
land where she has gone Lieth mute at
dusk and dawn Like a windless tideless
sea.

Paris in Spring

The city's all a-shining Beneath a fickle sun,
A gay young wind's a-blowing, The little shower is done.
But the rain-drops still are clinging And falling one by one
-- Oh it's Paris, it's Paris, And spring-time has begun.

I know the Bois is twinkling In a sort of hazy sheen,
And down the Champs the gray old arch Stands cold and still
between. But the walk is flecked with sunlight
Where the great acacias lean,
Oh it's Paris, it's Paris, And the leaves are growing green.

The sun's gone in, the sparkle's dead,
There falls a dash of rain, But who
would care when such an air Comes
blowing up the Seine? And still Ninette
sits sewing Beside her window-pane,
When it's Paris, it's Paris, And spring-
time's come again.

Madeira from the Sea

Out of the delicate dream of the distance
an emerald emerges Veiled in the violet
folds of the air of the sea; Softly the
dream grows awakening -- shimmering
white of a city, Splashes of crimson, the
gay bougainvillea, the palms. High in the
infinite blue of its heaven a quiet cloud
lingers, Lost and forgotten of winds that
have fallen asleep, Fallen asleep to the
tune of a Portuguese song in a garden.

City Vignettes

I

Dawn

The greenish sky glows up in misty reds,
The purple shadows turn to brick and
stone, The dreams wear thin, men turn
upon their beds, And hear the milk-cart
jangle by alone.

II

Dusk

The city's street, a roaring blackened
stream Walled in by granite, thro' whose
thousand eyes A thousand yellow lights
begin to gleam, And over all the pale
untroubled skies.

III

Rain at Night

The street-lamps shine in a yellow line
Down the splashy, gleaming street, And
the rain is heard now loud now blurred
By the tread of homing feet.

By the Sea

Beside an ebbing northern sea While
stars awaken one by one, We walk
together, I and he.

He woos me with an easy grace That
proves him only half sincere; A light
smile flickers on his face.

To him love-making is an art, And as a
flutist plays a flute, So does he play
upon his heart

A music varied to his whim. He has no
use for love of mine, He would not have
me answer him.

To hide my eyes within the night I watch
the changeful lighthouse gleam
Alternately with red and white.

My laughter smites upon my ears, So one
who cries and wakes from sleep Knows
not it is himself he hears.

What if my voice should let him know
The mocking words were all a sham,
And lips that laugh could tremble so?

What if I lost the power to lie, And he
should only hear his name In one low,
broken cry?

On the Death of Swinburne

He trod the earth but yesterday, And now
he treads the stars. He left us in the April
time He praised so often in his rhyme,
He left the singing and the lyre and went
his way.

He drew new music from our tongue, A
music subtly wrought, And moulded
words to his desire, As wind doth mould
a wave of fire; From strangely fashioned
harps slow golden tones he wrung.

I think the singing understands That he

who sang is still, And Iseult cries that he
is dead, -- Does not Dolores bow her
head And Fragoletta weep and wring her
little hands?

New singing now the singer hears To
lyre and lute and harp; Catullus waits to
welcome him, And thro' the twilight
sweet and dim, Sappho's forgotten songs
are falling on his ears.

Triolets

I

Love looked back as he took his flight,
And lo, his eyes were filled with tears.
Was it for love of lost delight Love
looked back as he took his flight? Only I
know while day grew night, Turning still
to the vanished years, Love looked back
as he took his flight, And lo, his eyes
were filled with tears.

II (Written in a copy of " La Vita Nuova
" . For M. C. S.)

If you were Lady Beatrice And I the

Florentine, I'd never waste my time like
this -- If you were Lady Beatrice I'd woo
and then demand a kiss, Nor weep like
Dante here, I ween, If you were Lady
Beatrice And I the Florentine.

III (Written in a copy of " The Poems of
Sappho " .)

Beyond the dim Hesperides, The girl
who sang them long ago Could never
dream that over seas, Beyond the dim
Hesperides, The wind would blow such
songs as these -- I wonder now if she
can know, Beyond the dim Hesperides,
The girl who sang them long ago?

IV

Dead leaves upon the stream And dead
leaves on the air -- All of my lost hopes
seem Dead leaves upon the stream; I
watch them in a dream, Going I know not
where, Dead leaves upon the stream And
dead leaves on the air.

VOX CORPORIS

The beast to the beast is calling, And the soul bends down to wait; Like the stealthy lord of the jungle, The white man calls his mate.

The beast to the beast is calling, They rush through the twilight sweet, But the soul is a wary hunter, He will not let them meet.

A Ballad of Two Knights

Two knights rode forth at early dawn A-
seeking maids to wed, Said one, " My
lady must be fair, With gold hair on her
head. "

Then spake the other knight-at-arms: " I
care not for her face, But she I love must
be a dove For purity and grace. "

And each knight blew upon his horn And
went his separate way, And each knight
found a lady-love Before the fall of day.

But she was brown who should have had
The shining yellow hair -- I ween the
knights forgot their words Or else they
ceased to care.

For he who wanted purity Brought home
a wanton wild, And when each saw the
other knight I ween that each knight
smiled.

Christmas Carol

The kings they came from out the south,
All dressed in ermine fine, They bore
Him gold and chrysoprase, And gifts of
precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north,
Their coats were brown and old, They
brought Him little new-born lambs --
They had not any gold.

The wise-men came from out the east,
And they were wrapped in white; The
star that led them all the way Did glorify
the night.

The angels came from heaven high, And
they were clad with wings; And lo, they
brought a joyful song The host of heaven
sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,
The wise-men entered in, The shepherds
followed after them To hear the song
begin.

And Mary held the little child And sat
upon the ground; She looked up, she
looked down, She looked all around.

The angels sang thro' all the night Until
the rising sun, But little Jesus fell asleep
Before the song was done.

The Faery Forest

The faery forest glimmered Beneath an
ivory moon, The silver grasses
shimmered Against a faery tune.

Beneath the silken silence The crystal
branches slept, And dreaming thro' the
dew-fall The cold white blossoms wept.

A Fantasy

Her voice is like clear water That drips
upon a stone In forests far and silent
Where Quiet plays alone.

Her thoughts are like the lotus Abloom
by sacred streams Beneath the temple
arches Where Quiet sits and dreams.

Her kisses are the roses That glow while
dusk is deep In Persian garden closes
Where Quiet falls asleep.

A Minuet of Mozart's

Across the dimly lighted room The
violin drew wefts of sound, Airily they
wove and wound And glimmered gold
against the gloom.

I watched the music turn to light, But at
the pausing of the bow, The web was
broken and the glow Was drowned
within the wave of night.

Twilight

Dreamily over the roofs The cold spring
rain is falling, Out in the lonely tree A
bird is calling, calling.

Slowly over the earth The wings of night
are falling; My heart like the bird in the
tree Is calling, calling, calling.

The Prayer

My answered prayer came up to me,
And in the silence thus spake he: " O you
who prayed for me to come, Your
greeting is but cold and dumb. "

My heart made answer: " You are fair,
But I have prayed too long to care. Why
came you not when all was new, And I
had died for joy of you. "

Two Songs for a Child

I Grandfather's Love

They said he sent his love to me, They
wouldn't put it in my hand, And when I
asked them where it was They said I
couldn't understand.

I thought they must have hidden it, I
hunted for it all the day, And when I told
them so at night They smiled and turned
their heads away.

They say that love is something kind,

That I can never see or touch. I wish he'd sent me something else, I like his cough-drops twice as much.

II The Kind Moon

I think the moon is very kind To take such trouble just for me. He came along with me from home To keep me company.

He went as fast as I could run; I wonder how he crossed the sky? I'm sure he hasn't legs and feet Or any wings to fly.

Yet here he is above their roof; Perhaps he thinks it isn't right For me to go so far alone, Tho' mother said I might.

On the Tower

Under the leaf of many a Fable lies the
Truth for those who look for it. Jami.

On the Tower

(A play in one act.)

The Knight. The Lady.

Voices of men and women on the ground at the foot of the tower. The voice of the Knight's Page.

The top of a high battlemented tower of a castle. A stone ledge, which serves as a seat, extends part way around the parapet. Small clouds float by in the blue sky, and occasionally a swallow passes. Entrance R. from an unseen stairway which is supposed to extend

around the outside of the tower.

The Lady (unseen). Oh do not climb so fast, for I am faint With looking down the tower to where the earth Lies dreaming in the sun. I fear to fall.

The Knight (unseen). Lean on me, love, my love, and look not down.

L. Call me not " love " , call me your conquered foe, That now, since you have battered down her gates, Gives you the keys that lock the highest tower And mounts with you to prove her homage true; Oh bid me go no farther lest I fall, My foot has slipped upon the rain-worn stones, Why are the stairs so narrow and so steep? Let us go back, my lord.

K. Are you afraid, Who were so
dauntless till the walls gave way?
Courage, my sweet. I would that I could
climb A thousand times by wind-swept
stairs like these, That lead so near to
heaven.

L. Sir, you may, You are a knight and
very valorous; I am a woman. I shall
never come This way but once. (The
Knight and the Lady appear on the top of
the tower.)

K. Kiss me at last, my love.

L. Oh, my sweet lord, I am too tired to
kiss. Look how the earth is like an
emerald, With rivers veined and flawed
with fallow fields.

K. (Lifting her veil) Then I kiss you, a
thousand thousand kisses For all the
days ere I had won to you Beyond the
walls and gates you barred so close.
Call me at last your love, your castle's
lord.

L. (After a pause) I love you.

(She kisses him. Her veil blows away
like a white butterfly over the parapet.
Faint cries and laughter from men and
women under the tower.)

Men and Women. The veil, the lady's
veil!

(The knight takes the lady in his arms.)

L. My lord, I pray you loose me from
your arms Lest that my people see how
much we love.

K. May they not see us? All of them have
loved.

L. But you have been an enemy, my lord,
With walls between us and with moss-
grown moats, Now on a sudden must I
kiss your mouth? I who was taught
before I learned to speak That all my
house was hostile unto yours, Now can I
put my head against your breast Here in
the sight of all who choose to come?

K. Are we not past the caring for their
eyes And nearer to the heaven than to
earth? Look up and see.

L. I only see your face.

(She touches his hair with her hands.
Murmuring under the tower.)

K. Why came we here in all the noon-
day light With only darting swallows
over us To make a speck of darkness on
the sun? Let us go down where walls
will shut us round. Your castle has a
hundred quiet halls, A hundred
chambers, where the shadows lie On
things put by, forgotten long ago.

Forgotten lutes with strings that Time has
slackened, We two shall draw them
close and bid them sing -- Forgotten
games, forgotten books still open Where
you had laid them by at vesper-time,

And your embroidery, whereon half-worked Weeps Amor wounded by a rose's thorn. Shall I not see the room in which you slept, Palpitant still and breathing of your thoughts, Where maiden dreams adown the ways of sleep Swept noiselessly with damosels and knights To tourneys where the trumpet made no sound, Blow as he might, the scarlet trumpeter, And were the dreams not sometimes brimmed with tears That waked you when the night was loneliest? Will you not bring me to your oratory Where prayers arose like little birds set free Still upward, upward without sound of flight? Shall I not find your turrets toward the north, Where you defied white winter armed for war; Your

southern casements where the sun blows
in Between the leaf-bent boughs the
wind has lifted? Shall we not see the
sunrise toward the east, Watch dawn by
dawn the rose of day unfolding Its
golden-hearted beauty sovereignly; And
toward the west look quietly at evening?
Shall I not see all these and all your
treasures? In carven coffers hidden in
the dark Have you not laid a sapphire lit
with flame And amethysts set round with
deep-wrought gold, Perhaps a ruby?

L. All my gems are yours And all my
chambers curtained from the sun. My
lord shall see them all, in time, in time.

(The sun begins to sink.)

K. Shall I not see them now? To-day, to-night?

L. How could I show you in one day, my lord, My castle and my treasures and my tower? Let all the days to come suffice for this Since all the past days made them what they are. You will not be impatient, my sweet lord. Some of the halls have long been locked and barred, And some have secret doors and hard to find Till suddenly you touch them unawares, And down a sable way runs silver light. We two will search together for the keys, But not to-day. Let us sit here to-day, Since all is yours and always will be yours.

(The stars appear faintly one by one.)

K. (After a pause.) I grow a little drowsy with the dusk.

L. (Singing.) There was a man that loved a maid,
(Sleep and take your rest) Over her lips his kiss was laid,
Over her heart, his breast.

(The knight sleeps.)

All of his vows were sweet to hear,
Sweet was his kiss to take; Why was her breast so quick to fear,
Why was her heart, to break?

Why was the man so glad to woo?
(Sleep and take your rest) Why were the

maiden's words so few ----

(She sees that he is asleep, and slipping off her long cloak-like outer garment, she pillows his head upon it against the parapet, and half kneeling at his feet she sings very softly:)

I love you, I love you, I love you, I am
the flower at your feet, The birds and the
stars are above you, My place is more
sweet.

The birds and the stars are above you,
They envy the flower in the grass, For I,
only I, while I love you Can die as you
pass.

(Light clouds veil the stars, growing

denser constantly. The castle bell rings for vespers, and rising, the lady moves to a corner of the parapet and kneels there.)

L. Ave Maria! gratia plena, Dominus ----

Voice of the Page (from the foot of the tower.) My lord, my lord, they call for you at court!

(The knight wakes. It is now quite dark.)

There is a tourney toward; your enemy
Has challenged you. My lord, make
haste to come!

(The knight rises and gropes his way toward the stairs.)

K. I will make haste. Await me where you are.

(To himself.) There was a lady on this tower with me ----

(He glances around hurriedly but does not see her in the darkness.)

Page. My lord has far to ride before the dawn!

K. (To himself.) Why should I tarry?

(To the page.) Bring my horse and shield!

(He descends. As the noise of his footfall on the stairs dies away, the lady

gropes toward the stairway, then turns suddenly, and going to the ledge where they have sat, she throws herself over the parapet.)

CURTAIN.

[End of Helen of Troy And Other Poems.]

Sara Teasdale

Sara Teasdale was born in St. Louis, Missouri, where she attended a school that was founded by the grandfather of another great poet from St. Louis -- T. S. Eliot. She later associated herself more with New York City. Her first book of poems was "Sonnets to Duse" (1907),

but " Helen of Troy " (1911) was the true launch of her career, followed by " Rivers to the Sea " (1915), " Love Songs " (1917), " Flame and Shadow " (1920) and more. Her final volume, " Strange Victory " , is considered by many to be predictive of her suicide.

It is interesting to note that in Teasdale's Collected Works, about half of the poems in this volume -- some more justly than others -- have been excluded, and most of the rest have been slightly changed. Most of the poems from this volume which were selected to be included in " Love Songs " also had some minor changes. This edition preserves the original readings, but they

are not to be considered authoritative.