

But as grapes from the vines of En-Gedi are favors that fall from his hands,  
And as towers on the hill-tops of Shenir the throne of King Solomon stands.  
And for this, it were well that forever the King, who is many in one,  
Should sit, to be seen through all time, on a throne 'twixt the moon and the sun !  
For how shall one lose what he hath not ? Who hath, let him keep what he hath.  
Wherefore I to the King give this apple."

Then great was King Solomon's wrath.  
And he rose, rent his garment, and cried, "Woman, whence came this apple to thee?"

But when he was 'ware of the truth, then his heart was awakened. And he  
Knew at once that the man who, erewhile, unawares coming to him, had brought  
That Apple of Life was, indeed, God's good Angel of Death. And he thought  
"In mercy, I doubt not, when man's eyes were opened, and made to see plain  
All the wrong in himself, and the wretchedness, God sent to close them again  
For man's sake, his last friend upon earth — Death, the servant of God, who is just.  
Let man's spirit to Him whence it cometh return, and his dust to the dust !"

Then the Apple of Life did King Solomon seal in an urn that was signed  
With the seal of Oblivion : and summoned the Spirits that walk in the wind  
Unseen on the summits of mountains, where never the eagle yet flew ;  
And these he commanded to bear far away, — out of reach, out of view,  
Out of hope, out of memory, — higher than Ararat buildeth his throne,  
In the Urn of Oblivion the Apple of Life.

But on green jasper-stone  
Did the King write the story thereof for instruction. And Enoch, the seer,  
Coming afterward, searched out the meaning. And he that hath ears, let him hear.

## THE WANDERER.

### Dedication.

TO J. F.

As, in the laurel's murmurous leaves  
'T was fabled, once, a Virgin dwelt ;  
Within the poet's page yet heaves  
The poet's Heart, and loves or grieves  
Or triumphs, as it felt.

A human spirit here records  
The annals of its human strife.  
A human hand hath touched these chords.  
These songs may all be idle words :  
And yet — they once were life.

I gave my harp to Memory.  
She sung of hope, when hope was young,  
Of youth, as youth no more may be ;  
And, since she sung of youth, to thee,  
Friend of my youth, she sung.

For all youth seeks, all manhood needs,  
All youth and manhood rarely find :  
A strength more strong than codes or creeds,  
In lofty thoughts and lovely deeds  
Revealed to heart and mind ;

A staff to stay, a star to guide ;  
A spell to soothe, a power to raise ;  
A faith by fortune firmly tried ;  
A judgment resolute to preside  
O'er days at strife with days.

O large in lore, in nature sound !  
O man to me, of all men, dear !  
All these in thine my life hath found,  
And force to tread the rugged ground  
Of daily toil, with cheer.

Accept — not these, the broken cries  
Of days receding far from me —  
But all the love that in them lies,  
The man's heart in the melodies,  
The man's heart honoring thee !

Sighing I sung ; for some sublime  
Emotion made my music jar :  
The forehead of this restless time  
Pales in a fervid, passionate clime,  
Lit by a changeful star ;

And o'er the Age's threshold, traced  
In characters of hectic fire,

The name of that keen, fervent-faced  
And toiling seraph, hath been placed,  
Which men have called Desire.

But thou art strong where, even of old,  
The old heroic strength was rare,  
In high emotions self-controlled,  
And insight keen, but never cold,  
To lay all falsehood bare ;

Despising all those glittering lies  
Which in these days can fool mankind ;  
But full of noble sympathies  
For what is genuinely wise,  
And beautiful, and kind.

And thou wilt pardon all the much  
Of weakness which doth here abound,  
Till music, little prized as such,  
With thee find worth from one true touch  
Of nature in its sound.

Though mighty spirits are no more,  
Yet spirits of beauty still remain.  
Gone is the Seer that, by the shore  
Of lakes as limpid as his lore,  
Lived to one ceaseless strain

And strenuous melody of mind.  
But one there rests that hath the power  
To charm the midnight moon, and bind  
All spirits of the sweet south-wind,  
And steal from every shower

That sweeps green England cool and clear,  
The violet of tender song.  
Great Alfred ! long may England's ear  
His music fill, his name be dear  
To English bosoms long !

And one . . . in sacred silence sheathed  
That name I keep, my verse would shame.  
The name my lips in prayer first breathed  
Was his : and prayer hath yet bequeathed  
Its silence to that name ; —

Which yet an age remote shall hear,  
Borne on the fourfold wind sublime  
By Fame, where, with some faded year  
These songs shall sink, like leaflets sere,  
In avenues of Time.



Love on my harp his finger lays ;  
His hand is held against the chords.  
My heart upon the music weighs,  
And, beating, hushes foolish praise  
From desultory words :

And Childhood steals, with wistful grace,  
"Twixt him and me ; an infant hand  
Chides gently back the thoughts that chase  
The forward hour, and turns my face  
To that remembered land

Of legend, and the Summer sky,  
And all the wild Welsh waterfalls,  
And haunts where he, and thou, and I  
Once wandered with the wandering Wye,  
And sealed the airy walls

Of Chepstow, from whose ancient height  
We watched the liberal sun go down ;  
Then onward, through the gradual night,  
Till, ere the moon was fully bright,  
We supped in Monmouth Town.

And though, dear friend, thy love retains  
The choicest sons of song in fee,  
To thee not less I pour these strains,  
Knowing that in thy heart remains  
A little place for me.

FLORENCE, September 24, 1857.

Nor wilt thou all forget the time  
Though it be past, in which together,  
On many an eve, with many a rhyme  
Of old and modern bards sublime  
We soothed the summer weather :

And, citing all he said or sung  
With praise reserved for bards like him,  
Spake of that friend who dwells among  
The Apennine, and there hath strung  
A harp of Anakim ;

Than whom a mightier master never  
Touched the deep chords of hidden things ;  
Nor error did from truth dis sever  
With keener glance ; nor made endeavor  
To rise on bolder wings

In those high regions of the soul  
Where thought itself grows dim with awe.  
But now the star of eve hath stole  
Through the deep sunset, and the whole  
Of heaven begins to draw

The darkness round me, and the dew.  
And my pale Muse doth fold her eyes.  
Adieu, my friend ; my guide, adieu !  
May never night, 'twixt me and you,  
With thoughts less fond arise !

THE AUTHOR.

## PROLOGUE.

### PART I.

SWEET are the rosy memories of the  
lips,  
That first kissed ours, albeit they kiss  
no more :  
Sweet is the sight of sunset-sailing ships,  
Although they leave us on a lonely  
shore :  
Sweet are familiar songs, though Music  
dips  
Her hollow shell in Thought's forlorn-  
est wells :  
And sweet, though sad, the sound of  
midnight bells,  
When the oped casement with the night-  
rain drips.

There is a pleasure which is born of  
pain :  
The grave of all things hath its violet.  
Else why, through days which never come  
again,

Roams Hope with that strange longing,  
like Regret ?  
Why put the posy in the cold dead hand ?  
Why plant the rose above the lonely  
grave ?  
Why bring the corpse across the salt  
sea-wave ?  
Why deem the dead more near in native  
land ?

Thy name hath been a silence in my life  
So long, it falters upon language now,  
O more to me than sister or than wife  
Once . . . and now — nothing ! It is  
hard to know  
That such things have been, and are not,  
and yet  
Life loiters, keeps a pulse at even meas-  
ure,  
And goes upon its business and its  
pleasure,  
And knows not all the depths of its re-  
gret.

Thou art not in thy picture, O my  
friend !

The years are sad and many since I  
saw thee,  
And seem with me to have survived their  
end.

Far otherwise than thus did memory  
draw thee  
I ne'er shall know thee other than thou  
wast.

Yet save, indeed, the same sad eyes  
of old,  
And that abundant hair's warm silken  
gold,  
Thou art changed, if this be like the look  
thou hast.

Changed ! There the epitaph of all the  
years

Was sounded ! I am changed too.  
Let it be.

Yet is it sad to know my latest tears  
Were faithful to a memory, — not to  
thee.

Nothing is left us ! nothing — save the  
soul.

Yet even the immortal in us alters  
too.

Who is it his old sensations can re-  
new ?

Slowly the seas are changed. Slow ages  
roll

The mountains to a level. Nature  
sleeps,

And dreams her dream, and to new  
work awakes

After a hundred years are in the deeps.  
But Man is changed before a wrinkle  
breaks

The brow's serenity, or the curls are  
gray.

We stand within the flux of sense :  
the near

And far change place : and we see  
nothing clear.

That's false to-morrow which was true  
to-day.

Ah, could the memory cast her spots,  
as do

The snake's brood theirs in spring !  
and be once more

Wholly renewed, to dwell i' the time  
that's new,

With no reiteration of those pangs of  
yore.

Peace, peace ! My wild song will go  
wandering

Too wantonly, down paths a private  
pain

Hath trodden bare. What was it  
jarred the strain ?

Some crushed illusion, left with crumpled  
wing

Tangled in Music's web of twined  
strings —

That started that false note, and  
cracked the tune

In its beginning. Ah, forgotten things  
Stumble back strangely ! And the  
ghost of June

Stands by December's fire, cold, cold !  
and puts

The last spark out.

How could I sing aright  
With those old airs haunting me all  
the night

And those old steps that sound when  
daylight shuts ?

For back she comes, and moves reproach-  
fully,

The mistress of my moods, and looks  
bereft

(Cruel to the last ! ) as though 't were I,  
not she,

That did the wrong, and broke the  
spell, and left

Memory comfortless.

Away ! away !  
Phantoms, about whose brows the  
bindweed clings,

Hopeless regret !  
In thinking of these things

Some men have lost their minds, and  
others may.

Yet, O, for one deep draught in this dull  
hour !

One deep, deep draught of the depart-  
ed time ;

O, for one brief strong pulse of ancient  
power,

To beat and breathe through all the  
valves of rhyme !

Thou, Memory, with the downward eyes,  
that art

The cupbearer of gods, pour deep and  
long,

Brim all the vacant chalices of song  
With health ! Droop down thine urn.

I hold my heart.



One draught of what I shall not taste  
again,  
Save when my brain with thy dark  
wine is brimmed, —  
One draught ! and then straight onward,  
spite of pain,  
And spite of all things changed, with  
gaze undimmed,  
Love's footsteps through the waning Past  
to explore  
Undaunted ; and to carve, in the wan  
light  
Of Hope's last outposts, on Song's ut-  
most height  
The sad resemblance of an hour no more.

Midnight, and love, and youth, and  
Italy !  
Love in the land where love most lovely  
seems !  
Land of my love, though I be far from thee,  
Lend, for love's sake, the light of thy  
moonbeams,  
The spirit of thy cypress-groves, and all  
Thy dark-eyed beauty, for a little while  
To my desire. Yet once more let her  
smile  
Fall o'er me : o'er me let her long hair  
fall,

The lady of my life, whose lovely eyes  
Dreaming, or waking, lure me. I shall  
know her  
By Love's own planet o'er her in the skies,  
And Beauty's blossom in the grass be-  
low her !  
Dreaming, or waking, in her soft, sad  
gaze  
Let my heart bathe, as on that fated  
night  
I saw her, when my life took in the  
sight  
Of her sweet face for all its nights and  
days.

Her winsome head was bare : and she  
had twined  
Through its rich curls wild red anemo-  
nes ;  
One stream of her soft hair strayed un-  
confined  
Down her ripe cheek, and shadowed  
her deep eyes.  
The bunch of sword-grass fell from her  
loose hand.  
Her modest foot beneath its snowy  
skirt

Peeped, and the golden daisy was not  
hurt.  
Stately, yet slight, she stood, as fairies  
stand.

Under the blessed darkness unreprieved  
We were alone, in that blest hour of  
time,  
Which first revealed to us how much we  
loved,  
'Neath the thick starlight. The young  
night sublime  
Hung trembling o'er us. At her feet I  
knelt,  
And gazed up from her feet into her  
eyes.  
Her face was bowed : we breathed each  
other's sighs :  
We did not speak : not move : we looked :  
we felt.

The night said not a word. The breeze  
was dead.  
The leaf lay without whispering on the  
tree,  
As I lay at her feet. Droopt was her  
head :  
One hand in mine : and one still pen-  
sively  
Went wandering through my hair. We  
were together.  
How ? Where ? What matter ? Some-  
where in a dream,  
Drifting, slow drifting, down a wizard  
stream :  
Whither ? Together : then what matter  
whither ?

It was enough for me to clasp her hand :  
To blend with her love-looks my own :  
no more.  
Enough (with thoughts like ships that  
cannot land,  
Blown by faint winds about a magic  
shore)  
To realize, in each mysterious feeling,  
The droop of the warm cheek so near  
my own :  
The cool white arm about my shoulder  
thrown :  
Those exquisite frail feet, where I was  
kneeling.

How little know they life's divinest  
bliss,  
That know not to possess and yet re-  
frain !

Let the young Psyche roam, a fleeting  
kiss : —  
Grasp it — a few poor grains of dust  
remain.  
See how those floating flowers, the but-  
terflies,  
Hover the garden through, and take  
no root !  
Desire forever hath a flying foot.  
Free pleasure comes and goes beneath the  
skies.

Close not thy hand upon the innocent  
joy  
That trusts itself within thy reach. It  
may,  
Or may not, linger. Thou canst but de-  
stroy  
The winged wanderer. Let it go or  
stay.  
Love thou the rose, yet leave it on its  
stem.  
Think ! Midas starved by turning all  
to gold.  
Blessed are those that spare, and that  
withhold.  
Because the whole world shall be trusted  
then.

The foolish Faun pursues the unwilling  
Nymph  
That culls her flowers beside the preci-  
pice,  
Or dips her shining ankles in the lymph :  
But, just when she must perish or be  
his,  
Heaven puts an arm out. She is safe.  
The shore  
Gains some new fountain ; or the lilled  
lawn  
A rarer sort of rose : but, ah, poor  
Faun !  
To thee she shall be changed forevermore.

Chase not too close the fading rapture.  
Leave  
To Love his long auroras, slowly seen.  
Be ready to release, as to receive.  
Deem those the nearest, soul to soul,  
between  
Whose lips yet lingers reverence on a  
sigh.  
Judge what thy sense can reach not,  
most thine own,  
If once thy soul hath seized it. The  
unknown  
Is life to love, religion, poetry.

The moon had set. There was not any  
light,  
Save of the lonely legioned watch-stars  
pale  
In outer air, and what by fits made  
bright  
Hot oleanders in a rosy vale  
Searched by the lamping fly, whose little  
spark  
Went in and out, like passion's bash-  
ful hope.  
Meanwhile the sleepy globe began to  
slope  
A ponderous shoulder sunward through  
the dark,

And the night passed in beauty like a  
dream.  
Aloof in those dark heavens paused  
Destiny,  
With her last star descending in the  
gleam  
Of the cold morrow, from the emptied  
sky.  
The hour, the distance from her old  
self, all  
The novelty and liveness of the place,  
Had left a lovely awe on that fair  
face,  
And all the land grew strange and  
magical.

As droops some billowing cloud to the  
crouched hill,  
Heavy with all heaven's tears, for all  
earth's care,  
She drooped unto me, without force or  
will,  
And sank upon my bosom, murmur-  
ing there  
A woman's inarticulate, passionate words.  
O moment of all moments upon earth !  
O life's supreme ! How worth, how  
wildly worth,  
Whole worlds of flame, to know this  
world affords

What even Eternity cannot restore !  
When all the ends of life take hands,  
and meet  
Round centres of sweet fire. Ah, never  
more,  
Ah never, shall the bitter with the  
sweet  
Be mingled so in the pale after-years !  
One hour of life immortal spirits pos-  
sess.



This drains the world, and leaves but  
weariness,  
And parching passion, and perplexing  
tears.

Sad is it, that we cannot even keep  
That hour to sweeten life's last toil :  
but Youth

Grasps all, and leaves us : and, when  
we would weep,  
We dare not let our tears flow lest, in  
truth,  
They fall upon our work which must be  
done.

And so we bind up our torn hearts  
from breaking :  
Our eyes from weeping, and our brows  
from aching :  
And follow the long pathway all alone.

O moment of sweet peril, perilous sweet !  
When woman joins herself to man ;  
and man  
Assumes the full-lived woman, to com-  
plete  
The end of life, since human life be-  
gan !

When in the perfect bliss of union,  
Body and soul triumphal rapture  
claim,  
When there's a spirit in blood, in  
spirit a flame,  
And earth's lone hemispheres glow, fused  
in one !

Rare moment of rare peril ! . . . The  
bard's song,  
The mystic's musing fancy. Did there  
ever  
Two perfect souls, in perfect forms, be-  
long  
Perfectly to each other ? Never, never !  
Perilous were such moments, for a touch  
Might mar their clear perfection. Ex-  
quisite  
Even for the peril of their frail delight.  
Such things man feigns : such seeks :  
but finds not such.

No ! for 't is in ourselves our love doth  
grow :  
And, when our love is fully risen  
within us,  
Round the first object doth it overflow,  
Which, be it fair or foul, is sure to  
win us

Out of ourselves. We clothe with our  
own nature  
The man or woman its first want doth  
find.

The leafless prop with our own buds  
we bind,  
And hide in blossoms : fill the empty  
feature

With our own meanings : even prize de-  
fects  
Which keep the mark of our own  
choice upon  
The chosen : bless each fault whose spot  
protects  
Our choice from possible confusion  
With the world's other creatures : we  
believe them

What most we wish, the more we find  
they are not :  
Our choice once made, with our own  
choice we war not :  
We worship them for what ourselves we  
give them.

Doubt is this otherwise. . . . When fate  
removes  
The unworthy one from our reluctant  
arms,  
We die with that lost love to other loves,  
And turn to its defects from other  
charms.

And nobler forms, where moved those  
forms, may move  
With lingering looks : our cold fare-  
wells we wave them.  
We loved our lost loves for the love  
we gave them,  
And not for anything they gave our  
love.

Old things return not as they were in  
Time.  
Trust nothing to the recompense of  
Chance,  
Which deals with novel forms. This  
falling rhyme  
Fails from the flowery steeps of old  
romance,  
Down that abyss which Memory droops  
above,  
And, gazing out of hopelessness down  
there,  
I see the shadow creep through Youth's  
gold hair  
And white Death watching over red-  
dipped Love.

## PART II.

THE soul lives on. What lives on with  
the soul ?  
Glimpses of something better than her  
best ;  
Truer than her truest : motion to a pole  
Beyond the zones of this orb's dimness  
guest :  
And (since life dies not with the first  
dead bliss)  
Blind notions of some meaning moved  
through time,  
Some purpose in the deeps of the sub-  
lime,  
That stirs a pulse here, could we find  
out this.

Visions and noises rouse us. I discern  
Even in change some comfort, O Be-  
loved !  
Suns rise and set ; stars vanish and re-  
turn ;  
But never quite the same. And life  
is moved  
Toward new experience. Every eve and  
morn  
Descends and springs with increase on  
the world.  
And what is death but life in this life  
furled ?  
The outward cracks, the inward life is  
born.

Friends pass beyond the borders of this  
Known,  
And draw our thoughts up after them.  
We say  
"They are : but their relations now are  
done  
With Nature, and the plan of night  
and day."

If never mortal man from this world's  
light  
Did pass away to that surrounding  
gloom,  
'T were well to doubt the life beyond  
the tomb ;  
But now is Truth's dark side revealed to  
sight.

Father of spirits ! Thine all secrets be.  
I bless Thee for the light Thou hast  
revealed,  
And that Thou hidest. Part of me I see,  
And part of me Thy wisdom hath  
concealed,

Till the new life divulge it. Lord,  
imbue me  
With will to work in this diurnal  
sphere,  
Knowing myself my life's day-laborer  
here,  
Where evening brings the day's work's  
wages to me.

I work my work. All its results are  
Thine.  
I know the loyal deed becomes a fact  
Which Thou wilt deal with : nor will I  
repine  
Although I miss the value of the act.  
Thou carest for the creatures : and the  
end  
Thou seest. The world unto Thy  
hands I leave :  
And to Thy hands my life. I will not  
grieve  
Because I know not all Thou dost in-  
tend.

Something I know. Oft, shall it come  
about  
When every heart is full with hope for  
man  
The horizon straight is darkened, and a  
doubt  
Clouds all. The work the world so  
well began  
Wastes down, and by some deed of shame  
is finished.  
Ah yet, I will not be dismayed : nor  
though  
The good cause flourish fair, and Free-  
dom flow  
All round, my watch beyond shall be  
diminished.

What seemed the triumph of the Fiend  
at length  
Might be the effort of some dying  
Devil,  
Permitted to put forth his fullest strength  
To lose it all forever. While, the evil  
Whose cloven crest our pæans float above  
Might have been less than what un-  
noticed lies  
'Neath our rejoicings. Which of us is  
wise ?  
We know not what we mourn : nor why  
we love.

But teach me, O Omnipotent, since strife,  
Sorrow, and pain are but occurrences



Of that condition through which flows  
 my life,  
 Not part of me, the immortal, whom  
 distress  
 Cannot retain, to vex not thought for  
 these:  
 But to be patient, bear, forbear, re-  
 strain,  
 And hold my spirit pure above my  
 pain.  
 No star that looks through life's dark  
 lattices,  
 But what gives token of a world else-  
 where.  
 I bless Thee for the loss of all things  
 here  
 Which proves the gain to be: the hand  
 of Care  
 That shades the eyes from earth, and  
 beckons near  
 The rest which sweetens all: the shade  
 Time throws  
 On Love's pale countenance, that he  
 may gaze  
 Across Eternity for better days  
 Unblinded; and the wisdom of all woes:  
 I bless Thee for the life Thou gavest,  
 albeit  
 It hath known sorrow: for the sorrow's  
 self  
 I bless Thee; and the gift of wings to  
 flee it,  
 Led by this spirit of song, — this  
 ministering elf,  
 That to sweet uses doth unwind my pain,  
 And spin his palace out of poison-  
 flowers,  
 To float, an impulse, through the live-  
 long hours,  
 From sky to sky, on Fancy's glittering  
 skein.  
 Aid me, sweet Spirit, escaping from the  
 throng  
 Of those that raise the Corybantic  
 shout,  
 And barbarous, dissonant cymbal's clash  
 prolong,  
 In fear lest any hear the God cry out,  
 Now that the night resumes her bleak  
 retreat  
 In these dear lands, footing the un-  
 wandered waste  
 Of Loss, to walk in Italy, and taste  
 A little while of what was once so sweet.

## PART III.

NURSE of an ailing world, beloved Night!  
 Our days are fretful children, weak to  
 bear  
 A little pain: they wrangle, wound, and  
 fight  
 Each other, weep, and sicken, and de-  
 spair.  
 Thou, with thy motherly hand that  
 healeth care,  
 Stillest our little noise: rebukest one,  
 Soothe another: blamest tasks un-  
 done;  
 Refreshest jaded hope; and teachest  
 prayer.  
 Thine is the mother's sweet hush-hush,  
 that stills  
 The flutterings of a plaintive heart to  
 rest.  
 Thine is the mother's medicining hand  
 that fills  
 Sleep's opiate: thine the mother's pa-  
 tient breast:  
 Thine, too, the mother's mute reproach-  
 ful eyes,  
 That gently look our angry noise to  
 shame  
 When all is done: we dare not meet  
 their blame:  
 They are so silent, and they are so wise.  
 Thou that from this lone casement, while  
 I write,  
 Seen in the shadowy upspring, swift  
 dost post  
 Without a sound the polar star to light,  
 Not idly did the Chaldee shepherds  
 boast  
 By thy stern lights man's life aright to  
 read.  
 All day he hides himself from his own  
 heart,  
 Swaggers and struts, and plays his  
 foolish part:  
 Thou only seest him as he is indeed.  
 For who could feign false worth, or give  
 the nod  
 Among his fellows, or this dust dis-  
 own,  
 With nought between him and those  
 lights of God,  
 Left awfully alone with the Alone?  
 Who vaunt high words, whose least  
 heart's beating jars

The hush of sentinel worlds that take  
 mute note  
 Of all beneath yon judgment plains  
 remote? —  
 A universal cognizance of stars!  
 And yet, O gentlest angel of the Lord!  
 Thou ledest by the hand the artisan  
 Away from work. Thou bringest, on  
 ship-board,  
 When gleam the dead-lights, to the  
 lonely man  
 That turns the wheel, a blessed memory  
 Of apple-blossoms, and the mountain  
 vales  
 About his little cottage in Green Wales,  
 Miles o'er the ridges of the rolling sea.  
 Thou bearest divine forgiveness amongst  
 men.  
 Relenting Anger pauses by the bed  
 Where Sleep looks so like Death. The  
 absent then  
 Return; and Memory beckons back  
 the dead.  
 Thou helpest home (thy balmy hand it is!)  
 The hard-worked husband to the pale-  
 cheeked wife,  
 And hushes up the poor day's house-  
 hold strife  
 On marriage pillows, with a good-night  
 kiss.  
 Thou bringest to the wretched and forlorn  
 Woman, that down the glimmering  
 by-street hovers,  
 A dream of better days: the gleam of  
 corn  
 About her father's field, and her first  
 lover's  
 Grave, long forgotten in the green  
 churchyard:  
 Voices, long-stilled, from purer hours,  
 before  
 The rushlight, Hope, went out; and,  
 through the door  
 Of the lone garret, when the nights were  
 hard,  
 Hunger, the wolf, put in his paw, and  
 found her  
 Sewing the winding-sheet of Youth,  
 alone;  
 And griped away the last cold comforts  
 round her: —  
 Her little bed; the mean clothes she  
 had on:

Her mother's picture — the sole saint  
 she knew:  
 Till nothing else was left for the last  
 crust  
 But the poor body, and the heart's  
 young trust  
 In its own courage: and so these went  
 too.  
 Home from the heated Ball flusht Beauty  
 stands,  
 Musing beside her costly couch alone:  
 But while she loosens, faint, with jew-  
 elled hands,  
 The diamonds from her dark hair, one  
 by one,  
 Thou whisperest in her empty heart the  
 name  
 Of one that died heart-broken for her  
 sake  
 Long since, and all at once the coiled  
 hell-snake  
 Turns stinging in his egg, — and pomp  
 is shame.  
 Thou comest to the man of many pleas-  
 ures  
 Without a joy, that, soulless, plays  
 for souls,  
 Whose life's a squandered heap of plun-  
 dered treasures,  
 While, listless loitering by, the mo-  
 ment rolls  
 From nothing on to nothing. From the  
 shelf  
 Perchance he takes a cynic book.  
 Perchance  
 A dead flower stains the leaves. The  
 old romance  
 Returns. Ere morn, perchance, he shoots  
 himself.  
 Thou comest, with a touch of scorn, to  
 me,  
 That o'er the broken wine-cup of my  
 youth  
 Sit brooding here, and pointest silently  
 To thine unchanging stars. Yes! yes!  
 in truth,  
 They seem more reachless now than when  
 of yore  
 Above the promist land I watcht them  
 shine,  
 And all among their cryptic serpentine  
 Went climbing Hope, new planets to ex-  
 plore.



Not for the flesh that fades.—although decay  
 This thronged metropolis of sense o'er-spread :  
 Not for the joys of youth, that fleet away  
 When the wise swallows to the south are fled ;  
 Not that, beneath the law which fades the flower,  
 An earthly hope should wither in the cells  
 Of this poor earthly house of life, where dwells  
 Unseen the solitary Thinking-Power ;  
 But that where fades the flower the weed should flourish ;  
 For all the baffled efforts to achieve  
 The imperishable from the things that perish,  
 For broken vows, and weakened will, I grieve.  
 Knowing that night of all is creeping on  
 Wherein can no man work, I sorrow most  
 For what is gained, and not for what is lost ;  
 Nor mourn alone what's undone, but what's done.  
 What light, from yonder windless cloud released,  
 Is widening up the peaks of yon black hills ?  
 It is the full moon in the mystic east,  
 Whose coming half the unvisited darkness fills  
 Till all among the ribbed light cloudlets pale,  
 From shore to shore of sapphrine deeps divine,  
 The orbéd splendor seems to slide and shine  
 Aslope the rolling vapors in the vale.  
 Abroad the stars' majestic light is flung,  
 And they fade brightening up the steps of Night.  
 Cold mysteries of the midnight ! that, among  
 The sleeps and pauses of this world, in sight,  
 Reveal a doubtful hope to wild Desire ;  
 Which, hungering for the sources of the suns,  
 Makes moan beyond the blue Septentrions,  
 And spidery Saturn in his webs of fire ;

Whether the unconscious destinies of man  
 Move with the motions of your spheréd lights,  
 And his brief course, foredoomed ere he began,  
 Your shining symbols fixed in reachless heights,  
 Or whether all the purpose of his pain  
 Be shut in his wild heart and feverish will,  
 He knows no more than this :—that you are still,  
 But he is moved : he goes, but you remain.  
 Fooled was the human vanity that wrote  
 Strange names in astral fire on yonder pole.  
 Who and what were they—in what age remote—  
 That scrawled weak boasts on yon sidereal scroll ?  
 Orion shines. Now seek for Nimrod.  
 Where ?  
 Osiris is a fable, and no more :  
 But Sirius burns as brightly as of yore.  
 There is no shade on Berenice's hair.  
 You that outlast the Pyramids, as they  
 Outlast their founders, tell us of our doom !  
 You that see Love depart, and Error stray,  
 And Genius toiling at a splendid tomb,  
 Like those Egyptian slaves : and Hope deceived :  
 And Strength still failing when the goal is near :  
 And Passion parcht : and Rapture claspt to Fear :  
 And Trust betrayed : and Memory bereaved !  
 Vain question ! Shall some other voice declare  
 What my soul knows not of herself ?  
 Ah no !  
 Dumb patient Monster, grieving everywhere,  
 Thou answerest nothing which I did not know.  
 The broken fragments of ourselves we seek  
 In alien forms, and leave our lives behind.

In our own memories our graves we find.  
 And when we lean upon our hearts, they break.  
 I seem to see 'mid yonder glimmering spheres  
 Another world :—not that our prayers record,  
 Wherein our God shall wipe away all tears,  
 And never voice of mourning shall be heard ;  
 But one between the sunset and moon-rise :  
 Near night, yet neighboring day : a twilight land,  
 And peopled by a melancholy band—  
 The souls that loved and failed—with hopeless eyes ;  
 More like that Hades of the antique creeds ;—  
 A land of vales forlorn, where Thought shall roam  
 Regretful, void of wholesome human deeds,  
 An endless, homeless pining after home,  
 To which all sights and sounds shall minister  
 In vain :—white roses glimmering all alone  
 In an evening light, and, with his haunting tone,  
 The advancing twilight's shard-born trumpeter.  
 A world like this world's worst come back again ;  
 Still groaning 'neath the burthen of a Fall :  
 Eternal longing with eternal pain,  
 Want without hope, and memory saddening all.  
 All congregated failure and despair  
 Shall wander there, through some old maze of wrong :—  
 Ophelia drowning in her own death-song,  
 And First-Love strangled in his golden hair.  
 Ah well, for those that overcome, no doubt  
 The crowns are ready ; strength is to the strong.

But we—but we—weak hearts that grope about  
 In darkness, with a lamp that fails along  
 The lengthening midnight, dying ere we reach  
 The bridal doors ! O, what for us remains,  
 But mortal effort with immortal pains ?  
 And yet—God breathed a spirit into each !  
 I know this miracle of the soul is more  
 Than all the marvels that it looks upon.  
 And we are kings whose heritage was before  
 The spheres, and owes no homage to the sun.  
 In my own breast a mightier world I bear  
 Than all those orbs on orbs about me rolled ;  
 Nor are you kinglier, stars, though throned on gold,  
 And given the empires of the midnight-air.  
 For I, too, am undying as you are.  
 O teach me calm, and teach me self-control :—  
 To sphere my spirit like yon fixed star  
 That moves not ever in the utmost pole,  
 But whirls, and sleeps, and turns all heaven one way.  
 So, strong as Atlas, should the spirit stand,  
 And turn the great globe round in her right hand,  
 For recreation of her sovereign sway.  
 Ah yet !—For all, I shall not use my power,  
 Nor reign within the light of my own home,  
 Till speculation fades, and that strange hour  
 Of the departing of the soul is come ;  
 Till all this wrinkled husk of care falls by,  
 And my immortal nature stands upright  
 In her perpetual morning, and the light  
 Of suns that set not on Eternity !