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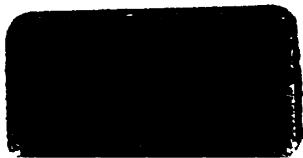
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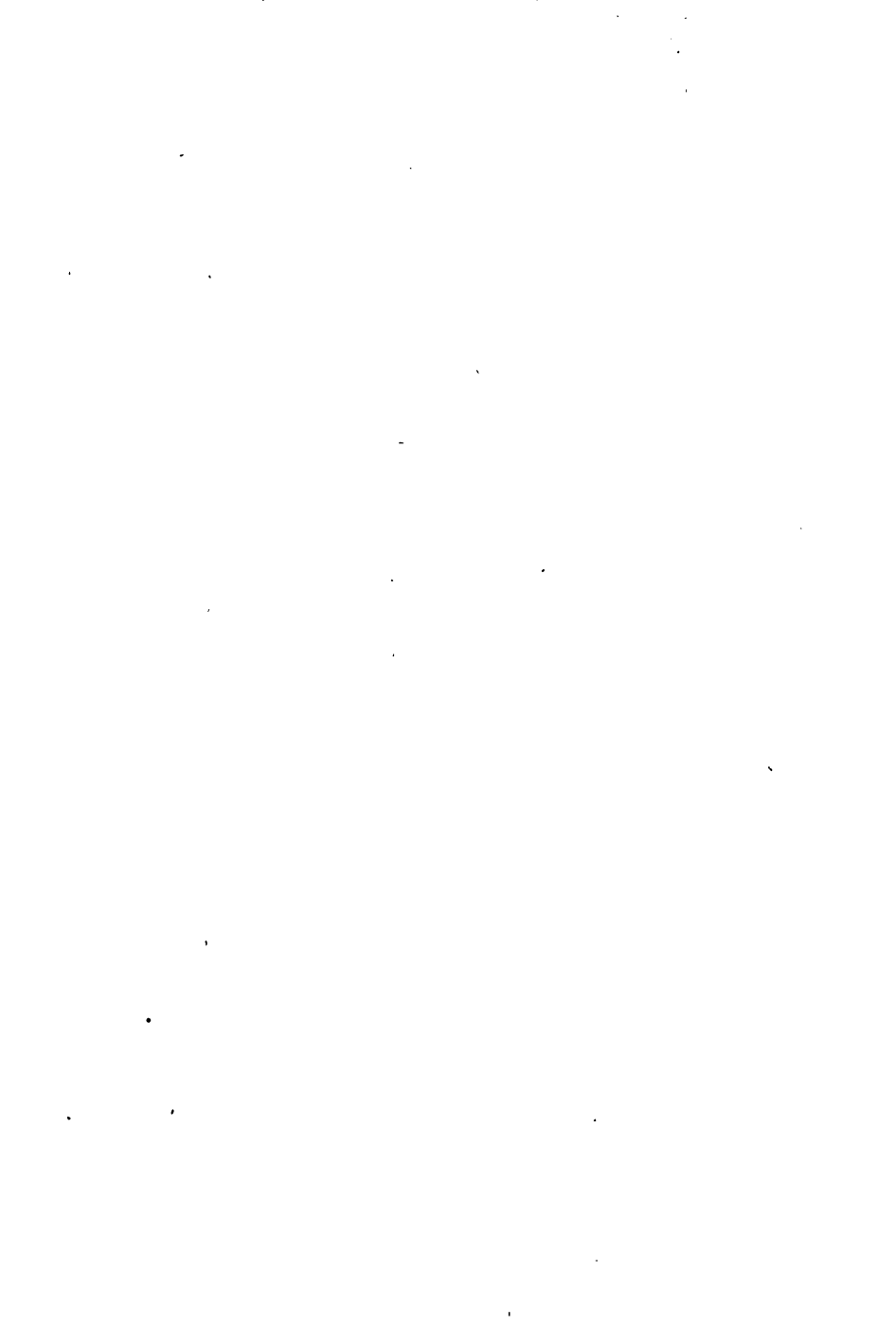
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RESURRECTING LIFE

New Poetry: Spring 1921

IN AMERICAN

by John V. A. Weaver

UNACCUSTOMED AS I AM

by Morrie Ryskind

THE MYSTIC WARRIOR

by James Oppenheim

PUNCH: THE IMMORTAL LIAR

by Conrad Aiken

MEDALLIONS IN CLAY

by Richard Aldington





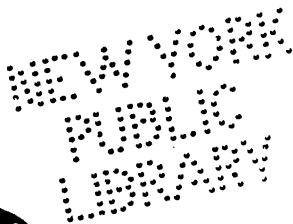
"And a flashing wand of supreme melody—
Furling back all space—
Before the great vibrating entry
For eternal union."

R E S U R R E C T I N G L I F E
M I C H A E L S T R A N G E

WITH DRAWINGS BY
JOHN BARRYMORE

“If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me, and the heart appoints.”

From Emerson, "Self-Reliance."

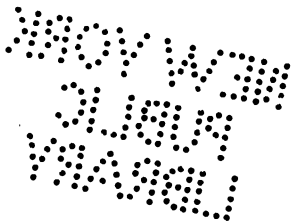


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Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good fortune — I myself am good fortune;
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

“The Song of the Open Road.”

—WALT WHITMAN.

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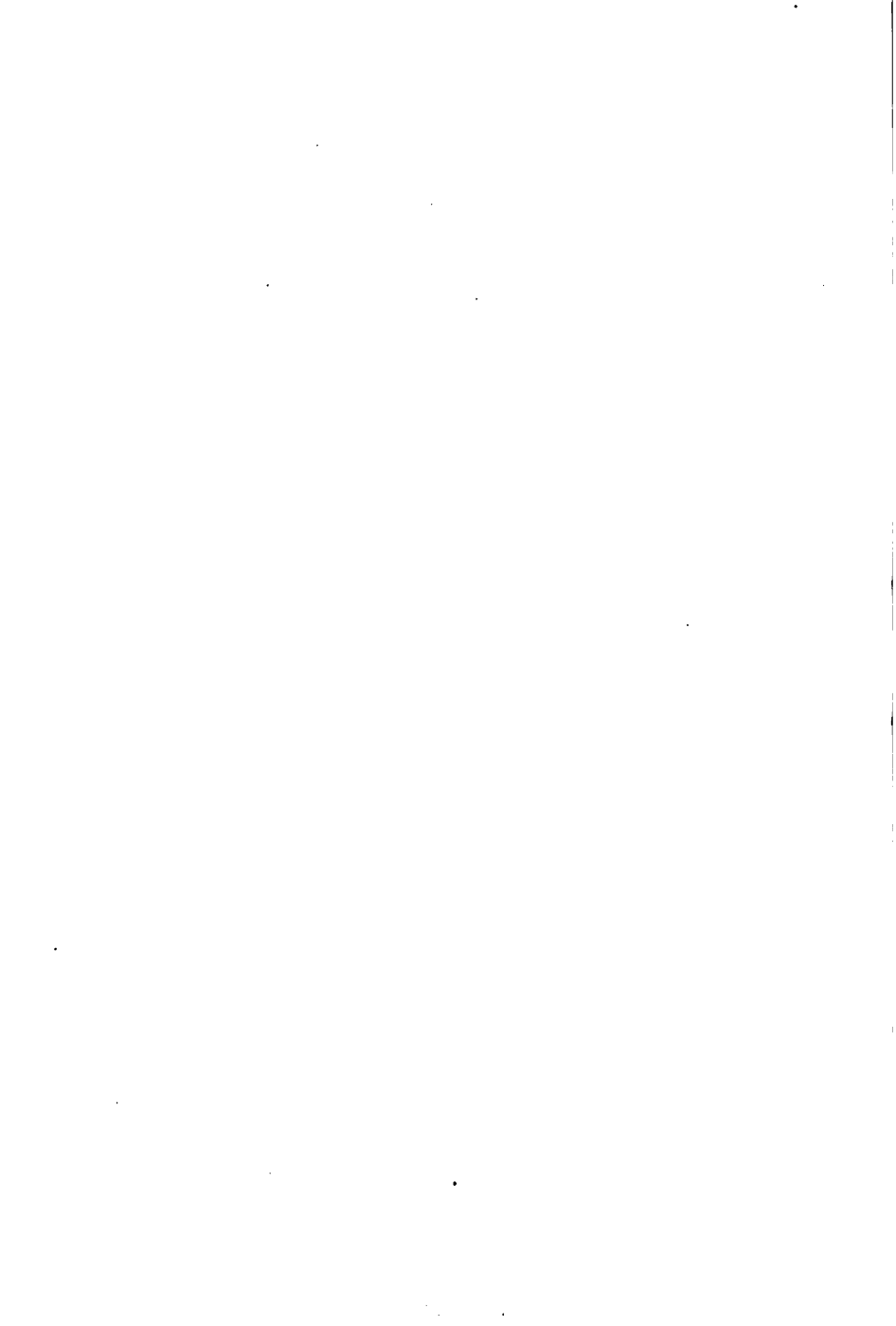
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RESURRECTING LIFE

VISIONARY



I

RESURRECTING LIFE

It is midday and the wind off the desert
Is choked, flattened down
In a glaring pulse of heavily beating sunlight —

And my angel sleeping beside the well,
His grave brow half hidden
In the curve of a mighty arm —

Nor is there a sound,
Since all grading energies are sucked into this yellow gape
Of heavily pouring silence —

Only I am restless — indeterminate —
And feeling along my limbs for the birth of wings.
Only I am turned aside
From partaking in general consciousness —
And because of confusion shielding some dream
I dare not remember —

It is still —
And the olive-trees stand like bereaved mothers
Gnarled — intercessional — awaiting a Messiah.
O how still it is —
And the whole sky is like an indrawn breath
Oppressing my breast in azure vice —

O I am compelled to reduce this restlessness —
To steal out from under the wing of my angel —
And away from the crowned shades along his brow —

And powdered with jasmine — lute-haunted —
Sandalled in myrrh — in eagerness —
Go to you — there — reaching your listless length
Significantly toward me —
Through those close oval aisles of the olive-trees —
To you there — stretching toward me in vague, half-awakened
rhythms —

O let our kiss be conclusive —
Let the spheres heave tides of anguished music
Over us —
And a swirl of volcanic spirits frown the air
Into pelting storm —
Until — until — those purple shields of terrible exhaustion
Muttering down upon us —
And painting across our swooning inward eye —
Stars — suns — Medusa-haired —
Aye, until I am free to stir — to detach — and arise
Passing back into the presence of my angel — my love —
For maybe he still is sleeping beside the well —
His grave brow half hidden —
In the curve of a mighty arm.

Yet sadness — bleakness of satiety
Making wilderness of the inner room —
And my depths only unpinched in this inner room —
I without sufficient weakness for rejecting my necessities —
Or sufficient strength to spiritually profit through repletion —
O darkness — O chaos of ice-worms coiling shut
Over my fall between two mainstays — the wing — the claw —
And both sighted perfectly —
O listlessness —
And dizzy prick of divided paths under my feet —
O darkening and twisting — and languor against amending —
Stupefying all reaction — into the calm of void.

Nevertheless approaching me now — such multitudes of exhal-
ing lilies

Sheafed under the surpliced arm —

Beneath the laced slim arm of acolytes —

They passing me by a long pale spray —

Upon the thunder boom of chaunting —

While behind them — outlined in violet dusk —

And as some purple waterfall erupting from the moon's vague
crescent

The vast straight shadow of my pensive angel —

And a white foam of delight

Bursting the surface of my skin —

And forming into patches of silken fleece

Expanding into curves — dilating into plumes —

Concurring — spreading — into pinions — wings —

Soaring me up out of these long entangling earth grasses —

Into ether — opalescent — faintly barred in gold —

And finally toward the luminous breast of my angel — my
love —

Awaiting me — with such mightily outstretched arms —

And the tender-breasted clouds

Breaking from their weight of music —

And pouring heaven-bright wine down into our ascending
hearts —

And a flashing wand of supreme melody —

Furling back all space —

Before the great vibrating entry

Of our eternal union.

II

THOUGHT

How beautiful is thought
Staining me with gusts of pulsating flushes —
Even as the wind whipping up into towering descendant waves
All garden fragrance.

O thought is beautiful —
A jewel through which appearing to me in a most precious
light
All of humanity annexing — avoiding — toward inevitably
spreading
Into forms more vast —

O thought — a various lover jetting into life
Evermore our identity —
And closing away the personal
With kindly smile.

So thought — a depth of extreme polish
Ever expanding in circles
And into which are reflected and measured exactly
Our mortal reactions.

For thought is a titan's rod thrown wide
Hooking and hauling toward the surface —
Those turgid coil-sprawled inmates of sea-bottom.

And again thought is a hand flung up into paradise —
For grasping those birds athunder
Round the brow of God.

III

FOR EVER gathering among these tidal washes of my latest depth
Waves — forming — rearing — thundering colossally down —
Until finally extant upon the surface —
Merely the edge of my meaning — and this —
Hissing freshly — and toward the degree of your understanding
With moist — fluctuating — fingers.

IV

WALKING DOWN TO THE PACIFIC

I, COMING to weave a lasting garland
From the perfume of these trellised roses —
And to preserve the effulgent glare of this summer noon-
tide —
So redolent of hay new-mown — so besought with the breath
of clover —
So slashed with cool salt rays
Drifting up from the panting sea.

I, coming to recall the smell of hot sand
Draped with panelled sea-grass —
And to review the flocked shadows of swooping gulls
Above rushing patterns of foam —
And to converse with the dabbling pout of tides
Slipping wistfully backward into Pacific calm.

While just beside me glittering — earth dunes —
Garlanded with arrested waterfalls of purple flowers —
While just behind these mountains —
Their rhythmic mauve unfolding
Sharply cutting the sky's humid azure
In strange titanic profile.

Ah these mountains — appearing — disappearing for me —
Among their drifting symphonies of clouds
So persuading me of peace —
So pervading me with glances
From that mysterious grail-like countenance
Of eternal aspiration.

V

FROM where do I waken — from where —
 To be wrung by the breath of intimacies
 Just evaporating from before my pursuing arms —
 To be flattened back aghast from the swift streaking by
 Of forms in profile — poignantly akin —
 Clouded phosphorescent with grief — joy —
 And surely all lately fastened upon me
 In keenest various intercourse —
 Mother — lover — child — O all go by —
 Leaving me the echo of a chord vast in pathos —
 For this morning my soul sheathed amongst tattered banners —
 (And the legend across Sundered — scorched —
 From struggles invisible to memory — yet none the less present —)
 And shreds of these — blowing up into the day — titanic mist-
 ribbons
 Arresting — abstracting — encompassing me —
 Until my whole being growing aware of slanting mournfully
 backwards
 For a last look — at what — at what —
 Until I am contorted from desiring to step away
 Out of my own proceeding step —
 Away from this alien day and so catching up at last
 With that mystic swirl envisaging — chaunting —
 The History of Me
 Along spherical alley-ways of unspoken age.

VI

O KEENLY aware this morning of my Inward God —
And sense emanating from Him —
A bristling halo of irradiant paths —

And placing my feet trustingly amongst these
Yet behold — how they scorch — confuse me —
Folding up — disappearing — before my already started
step —
Aye leaving me nauseate — dangling over chaos —
And with a vast burden pressing out through me —
While a voice chilling my fear-scaled skin — and proclaiming
For what other purpose your perpetual Recurrence —
Save to become further impregnate with Spirit —
And toward a Birth for ever more fatal —
To the flesh.

VII

So much of me still turning back and dancing
In that red glare of promiscuous praise —
So much of me still eloquent with bitterness
Against my oppressors —

Yet so much of me vigil-haunted
Arrested in outstretching worshipping attitude
Toward welcoming some radiance —
Some lustre vastly forming in contour divinely familiar
Against the horizon —
Some splendour — inclining — stepping down —
Saluting — enfolding —
To ascend with me again.

VIII

VISION

I WILL follow the inward chime
Back through empurpling cups of concave hills —
Back through a swaying clot of drowned faces —
(All fastened and by nightmare pain into the sedge of memory)
Back beyond those negative rivers stilled past egress —
And out at last among brightening grasses —
Grasses rushing up into hills — peaks —
And up from these through a fume of clouds — aye at last into
ether —
Ether — bright with those silver tracks of planet-visiting
angels —
And austere-ly fragrant from the trailing of their doom-lined
scarves —
Aye — out into ether humming from the dart of stars
Shaken by a choral thunder —
Until at last appearing among arching naves —
These ascending in architectural jet —
And arrested in vast foaming coils of livid lace —
And where — enlarging at the farthest end of distance —
The Eucharist — chromatic-rayed
And holding forth its Mystic Tenant —
Of Transfigured Rest.

IX

O THOSE vast limbs containing in the chrysalis of me —
O this titanic aerial being so fettered yet
In the slime of my defective understanding —
This God with spheres nestling in His palm
Asleep in me yet —
And veiled in the stupor of my fear of things
Concerning this one tiny world.

O this God with His crown of stars
And breath reminiscent of heavenly gardens —
And eyes closed over unearthly clarities —
And eyes closed in considerate love for me —
Comprehending I am unable to meet so far
His open look.

Yet it is a weight — an ever-present significance —
A wing upon my one shoulder already —
This feeling myself pregnant
With such dim horizon stretching form —
Such form —
Flinging up before me like a tent pole
And lowering down the clouds in festoons around it —
Such form one day springing out of me — out of you —
And sheaved in the hauteur of an image
We have worshipped through centuries.

X

O DEATH, I am secretly in love with you —
For will you not be that arm about me
Embracing — sustaining — my long desiring to lean back —
O will there not be across your face a fused glow of resemblance
To all the beloveds lost — searched for —
Along those mighty roads of the ages —

O will you not hold between your hands
A deific forge beaten cup of luminous wine —
For acclaiming the victory of great quests —
O between your hands — gentle as the hushed flutter of wings —
Will you not bear this wine —
And brought from its source a holy fount
Over which the image of the sun perpetually rising — shedding down —
And at the very end of flashing ranks of angels triumphal
Whose helmets for ever turning to mirror —
This diffusing — rearing Grail of pouring iridescence —

O Death, will you not fill me with Love again —
With Love in its resonant morning mood —
With Love once more for all those
For whom I have lost love in anguish —
O shall not those blasted holes of my wounds
With their stark-twisted clumps of raw nerve —

Be filled in — be pleated down
With joyous sprays of blossom acutely fragrant — and by
you —

O Death, I am secretly in love with you —
Your motions suggesting — undulating — receding for me —
Like a ribbon of birds fading across the sky —
Your motions touching — evaporating — over me —
Like the poignancy of invisible flowers through evening mists —
O your movements are absorbing to watch —
And exhaling a vastly fresh perfume —
Like moon-glossed rushes and water-lilies floating — wavering
scarcely —
Along the dreaming stir of the tides.

XI

At dawn You will give me a robe wet from the spring of
heaven

For keeping me refreshed going up —

Yet maybe it will be cold against me at first —

Blown around by those sharp slurring winds

Cutting so acutely at the slender thread between body and
soul —

During half lights —

O maybe I shall be very cold until the sun rising

And sucking the moisture off my garment into roseate smoke-
wreaths —

Ere the risen sun swathing in flames of definite glory

My celestial mantle —

Yet already Your eyes pouring shafts of insistent beckoning
light

From behind the rifted fleece of storm-hurried clouds —

Already Your voice breathing up through the rhythmic boom
of invisible seas —

Already benediction drifting down towards me — a recessional
choir tone

Through the groined shadows of these cathedral trees —

And all this drawing me invincibly — inexorably — after —

Your eternal passing beyond.

Yet — yet — let me rest longer among these great candles

Cataracting their wax like an avalanche of leprous bones —

Among these subtle glasses blown from the cold honey-breath
of stars —

Among these rapture-tilted angels clawing their lutes
In passion-haunted reverie —

Among these rare velvets that are like sin caught naked at
sunrise —

That are like the twitching blush of a bride under her gilded
veil

(At the horned caress of some unholy thought.)

Yet — yet — let me rest longer —

Near my love coming — going — with his singing limbs —

His solicitous leaning over me —

His feather-gentle etching across my heart with flame —

His abrupt dimness of breathless drawing away —

Ere the dazzling swim of our blinded gesture towards one an-
other —

Ere the flooding anguish of our eyes meeting in a divine tide

Whispering — breaking against demand for release from
desire —

O we so terribly locked — yet with feet growing ever more
transparent

In this black swarm of receding sensuous necessity —

O our lips already bathed in a staggering vapour of bending
clouds —

O a curious chill seeming to spray our blood

Like effusion of glittering snow silence —

And all of these phenomena merely chiming Your approach —

Your advent —

And down Your sturdy stair of hyacinth twilight-hued —

And in Your wistful robes of tenderest invitation.

Ah who could deny Your pure essence

Beckoning toward the gleam of a rest final —

And I — I turning swiftly to depart from my love
To disentangle me from the minute pressure of his hands —
To cut my glance away from his half smile flickering up
(Echoes humming from summer dreams perhaps)
But my love is so fast asleep
Nor can I depart from him while he is still sleeping —
O I charge You tarry a little for me until he wakens
So that I may come to You unharassed —
And after directing the widely-open eyes of my love
Toward that point where I shall cease to adhere —
And pass — acclaiming in the lure of Your upward streak.



**"O through what unperceived and monster doorway
And out unto the airy porticos of my youth
Could there have stepped a shape so Titan as this melancholy—"**

XII

THE paths of my spirit are darkened, O Lord.
They are moiled with infernal thunders —
They are drowned in poisonous rains —
They are divided and turned aside from a veiled centre —

Somewhere was a white bird once
And singing upon a golden bough —
Nevertheless have I lost the last ray from its glittering,
Yea even have I mislaid the direction
From whence came its shrill sweet voice —

The ways of my spirit are darkened, O Lord.
The clairvoyant shadows of all purpose are waylaid — murdered —

In these iron fists of numbness —
O through what unperceived and monster doorway
And out unto the airy porticos of my youth —
Could there have stepped a shape so Titan as this melancholy —

Through what hideous gash at the sea's limpid base
Could there have swollen up such raw sinews of ice —
And rending the belly of my ship —
And spilling her entrails in blotchy tracks through the water —
And crunching her dancing gallantry of masts
Into a rusty mess of spars —
Aye directing — pushing her entire bulk of wreckage
Against those jagged rotting coasts of fruitlessness — decay —
Despair — horrible — animal — because unclassified.

The ways of my spirit are darkened, O Lord,
And my loneliness — my ignorance crying out
[19]

Like a child who is being struck in his sleep —
And just when he was commencing to dream of the door
 opening
Onto blue celestial —
(And framing those entwined figures of the divine fairy-
 tale —)
Since only lately measuring the twisted slant of my own recum-
 bent spirit —
Since only lately the humility — clarity — of self-knowing
Kissing back those austere lashes of my spirit
Into a tender sidelong glancing at me —

And, how swiftly — greedily
I basked in the shine of that regard —
Unknowing where there is hurry there is pretence —
Unknowing the manner of receiving a thing
Changes it —
Unknowing there are myriad convictions of right
Rumours of peace —
That can suddenly silence — like a sparrow's singing through
 thunder
Along this devious road toward invincible rest —

This road so continually made — so continually washed
 away —
By storm floods of sand rearing — showering down —
By winds of dust and ashes erupting —
From that mysterious desert of What Has Been.

O it is long now since there was a white bird
And singing upon a golden bough —
For the paths of my spirit are darkened, O Lord —
They are moiled with infernal thunders —
They are drowned in poisonous rains —
They are divided and turned aside from a veiled centre.

XIII

My life flowing out into new channels —
O I feel the farewell jar of the old wharves
Against the sides of this newly launching boat —
O the shock of these listing giving wharves thumping my
heart
As well as the lithe gleaming flanks
Of this vigorous eager ship of mine —
Faces deeply familiar dimming there on the shore —
Never mind I both fear — desire —
They shall become eternally polished — distinct — arrested —
In that shattering glare of memory —

O my ship was growing for a long time —
Built stalwart and curious by invisible labor —
Nor could her vast swelling lines submit any longer to dry-
dock —
Nor be kept from flinging out their robustness
Across the undulant body of the sea —
Nor her gilded beak be prevented from plunging — tangling
deeply
In the foam-mained throat of the storm —

And now standing for ever inseparable to her deck —
Watching her strike at the shining gums of the sea —
To be spewed back again —
Upon the twisting celestial-white teeth of the ocean —
I — becoming so close interwoven with visible wonders
(Throbbing salt air

Vibrating with the festive shriek of sun-drunken gulls —
Or these cloud battalions forming into monstrous ramparts —
Thinning into recumbent gods —
Shredding out into children's pin-wheels —)
That somehow the invisible blurring into gradual plainness —
Like a sublime dream appearing
From around those abysmal curvings of night —
Onto the plain of day.

XIV

It is Your thirst after my righteousness
Calling up to me in that most remote tower where I sit —
And combing out my hair toward the rising moon —
And musing upon my page —
Who makes answer unto my glance with a tightening of his
fingers
Across the harp —

O it is Your great voice small with a yearning
Rushing up — ceasing abruptly — and at the very folds of my
silver hangings
Like one who running to a door yet hesitates to enter —
From excessive wish —

And a wanness falling between me and my page
Through which the burn of his glance is put out —
And a drooping passing over these banks of blue delphinium
Like a sudden sheet of silence falling across water —

O illumined, I am convinced You are near —
O already Your whispers commencing to drop in eddies of
dazzle about me —
Infinite — golden — as the breeze-rippled drifts of sun and
moon shine
Fencing in dazzling chains those gentle boundaries of para-
dise —
O already Your words causing an aching — twitching clamour
in my heart —

As upon regarding some infant's hand leaning over his cradle
And clutching the air at dusk.

O You say — make way for yourself to follow me
For I have need of your following —
In order to be that which you search so relentlessly —

But in all things beautiful trembling upon the edge of celestial
adventure are You —

In the swaying masts of outgoing ships at dusk —

In the suddenly loosened peal of the organ shooting up
through nave — vaults

And bringing down at my feet a quarry of scarlet-blue sun
motes —

From the rose-windows high — beyond —

And in the milk-pure breath of the morning moist over the
land —

O above all in the clover damp breath of the morning beading
the earth

And I aware of Your beckoning —

And of Your loosening back toward my oncoming arms

A flock of doves interpreters of rare caresses between us —

For a while — only for a while.

O indeed, You are that regard inseparable — prophetic of me
Wherefrom I am refreshed — reminded

Of my infinite expansion — affiliation with all —

And it is because I know You are close — ever closer to me —

That everything shall be awarded and again forsaken

And for the scent of your shadow —

Drifting back — reassuring — through enormous conflicting
shades —

Shades — that are strung a wilful ornament

Upon Your invisible Sword of Light Eternal.

XV

O THE setting moonlight is floating in a globe
Across this wavering lake-water —
It is like a chinese lantern —
Poked by the languid fingers of a ghost —
And far beyond a spray of moonlight — wreathing the water —
And that is like scintillant rifts
Commencing in some sky —
About to be furled completely backward and away —
Before the blazing Advent
Of a Promised God.

XVI

O MY spirit, longing for that moment
When the songs of the flesh are subdued eternally —
My spirit straining after the dawn —
After those pale tapering fingers
Aslant and beckoning in the sky
And suggesting a hand — prodigal of star-runged ladders —
O my fragile spirit, stretching — yearning
Towards this luminous gash spreading among the cloud-banks
(Just as in autumn young birds shuddering — lifting their
wings —
Toward an orange flare of southern gardens —)
Aye, I am weary—wary of this bronze berry-pelted carnival
of health — youth —
Through which my spirit so incessantly wandering —
And for ever clipping those purple shadows —
Quilting my amorous exuberance —
With a sudden downfall of disturbing azure light.

XVII

TO WALT WHITMAN

Do you stand by me, O my brother —
Educating beyond impatience insolence or violence
Toward the multitude,—
So far from — but ever straining after winged heels —

Do you impale within my tongue
Those dagger flutes cutting melodiously
Towards the soul's most vivid source —
Through which the unslaked night —
The dawn deflowering towards sunrise —
And the replete noon then pouring themselves completely out.

O let no shyest attitude of remote flower
Fail to reflect a beautiful future through me —
Nor any murmuring glance of men
Leave me unshivered with responsive song —

For who leaning
Across the toe mark of the race's end —
With pliant arms flung out toward those darting arrivals
(Momentarily so exhausted from whispers
Scorching — exigent — revelatory — of passionate truth —)
If not ourselves, O my brother —

Nor who yearning — moving — out from their stars —
And down those cryptic shimmering stairs

Bloom bannistered —
With hosanna and blessing of petals
And still down into that smouldering hush —
Consuming depression —
Of the eternal night valleys
(And for searching after those of their kind)
If not ourselves, O my brother —

We so excellently knowing how dreams may flutter away
From hands gnawed too stark by the fangs of imaginary
isolation —
Nor how deadly cold becoming a man
Left amidst the sudden silence of his brain —
(Aye no more than a scarecrow form
Turning rapidly shadow upon the waning moon-crescent —)

And we — we only — with ever sufficient vigor
For beating the sunlight from our wings
Behind such fearfully brooding brows —
And we — we only —
With voices sufficiently vigorous to penetrate — suffuse —
And with clean-heard proclamation — announcing —
That out of perpetual labour alone —
Arriving that joy invulnerable
Which asks of futurity no hostage.

XVIII

O DO not speak to me in the half voice of poetry
For Your sonority ringing out only thinly through poetry
And like an organ pealing under tides —
And like some litany recited in a sublime voice —
From far behind the choir stalls
Deep within sanctuary.

O do not speak to me in the half tones of music —
For only sad spirits stretching up their misty lengths in
music —
And from out those shadow-locked seas of my innumerable
endings —
And so garlanding in extremest melancholy
My already drooping head.

O speak to me in prayer —
Speak to me rather in a prayer —
A prayer fusing those rhapsodies of my heart
Into rocketing phrases —
Phrases that are like eagles — spiral — fleet
Pecking upon the tracks
Of Your sun-stained heels.

O let a prayer shoot up
Like a rocket of lilies sheathed in golden fire —
And bursting a puff of rippling petals —
And thus a mantle of supreme perfume cast down before
You —

And You turning — mollified at last into sublime condescension

Toward my hot clamouring eyes —

Since almost am I beyond loneliness — O Inner Voice —

And already a pity — a humour hammering — caressing my heart

Demanding for a love to come out of it —

Giving — giving — beyond returns — beyond loss of hope.

O I wonder, Inner Voice —

Shall it be long now ere your outline

Eternally blanching my shadow along this dusty road —

Ere the sense and heavenly jar of you against me —

Ere your lashes sweeping my cheek —

And of your grave voice whispering to me higher — higher —

Until swelling out of my art entirely —

And into a vast draught of sound

Blowing out from the blue-white open door

Of paradise.

XIX

WHO could be near to me
As this something I need so sharply
During those long hours before dawn —

I have laid aside my book —
And reverie is smoothing back my hair
With her mist-scented fingers —
And her mysterious look
Is clutching my eyes aloft toward her glance — infinite —
Vaulted with a million inscriptions of memory —

Yet I gaze profoundly without discovering
This clarity I am searching —

It is not love since a lover is satisfied at best
In finding lyric names for his appetites —
And worst of all in falling asleep before laughing over him-
self.

It is not oblivion
For after oblivion I am oppressed with a sense
Of having neglected pain —
Pain — then surely sending lethargy to waken me up
And stare at me out of her waxen lids —
And suffocate me with the maul
Of her glutenous unkempt hands —

Nor is it madness — for madness reversing me all too soon
Out from her conch of wine-soaked roses —

Yet somewhere near — unmistakably — are waterfalls of
music —

Disgorging a fresh and solemn wildness through the air —
And somewhere near — unmistakably —
A blistering splendour of intensely flying robes —

O I am insatiably lonely for This Presence
Just ahead of me —

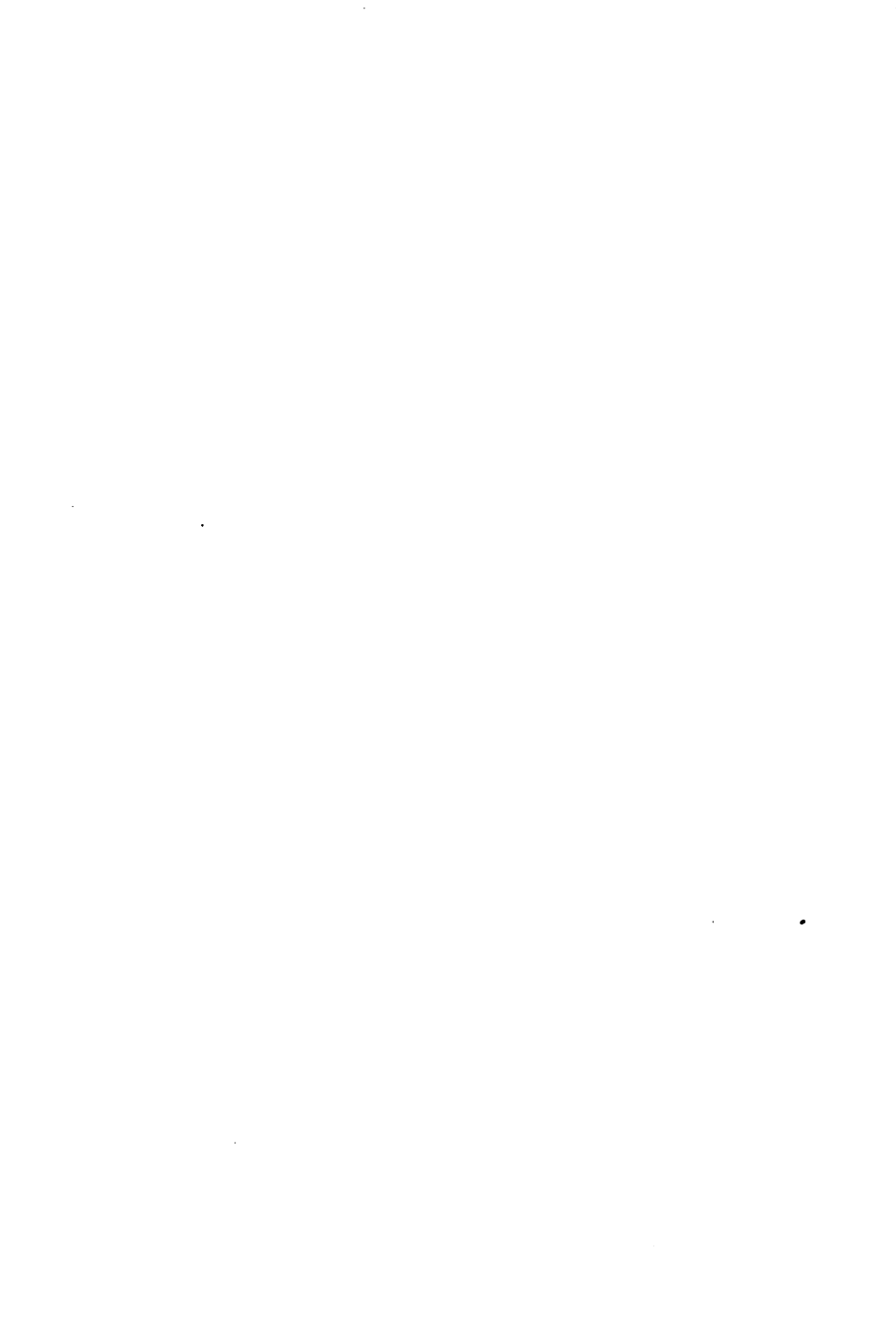
O I long to come nearer to this Upholder
Unfurling the standard of my very breath —
To this Bearer of my future resemblance
Turning back rarely — suddenly — and whitewashing my eyes
With illumination —

With a radiance throwing completely into shadow at last —
That prowling lamp of my vast weariness —

O indeed I am insatiably lonely for This Presence
Just ahead of me —

O indeed I long to come nearer to this Upholder
Unfurling the standard of my very breath.

EMOTIONAL



I

I HAVE asked of you
An almost invisible touch upon our mortal lives —
And the comrade's eyes turned — wistful — humorous —
Along with mine unto the sky —
And back again to our dilemma of passions —
I have asked of you
To revel with me in solitude so that returning from widely
 apart directions
We meet smiling — recounting at will our adventures of alone-
 ness —
O transcending without losing passion —
Is indeed to be the singer and he who listens in one —
Therefore I have asked of you
To step out and away with me from repeating the history of
 love
So dignifying — placing ourselves — in a new chapter.

II

TO CLAUDE DEBUSSY'S LA GROTTÉ

YOUR song
As the hale of mysterious exotic intention
Drifting in palpitating echoes
O'er the pallid oval
Of night-closed flowers —

Your song
As the increasing shimmer
Of some exquisite nearness —
Clad in those steel-dark foils
Of sinister fancy —

And once more your song
As the moaning hush of a human soul
Receding — from the Divine Moment.

III

O THE cool fragrant breathing of this night
Savouring my breast —
And becoming the caress of my bridegroom's
Ivory and scented fingers —

O the moon's blue veined oval
Remote — melancholy —
Even as my lover's so delicate face
Dreaming — half turned away —

O these wavering blades of moonlight
Whipping out their pallid brilliance
From scabbards of the breeze —
They are like the scintillant attenuate limbs of my lover —
Flashing upon me.

IV

YOUR face — so beautiful —
And all celestial arias
Rising — humming throughout me —
And like some mist of harping angels
Upon regarding you —

Your limbs — so beautiful —
The muscular uncoiling of a snake —
The drawn-back gums — the spring of rending frenzy —
Aye the tormented postures of inordinate demand
Are about them —

Your hands so curiously marvellous
They are languid — brutal —
Yet tentative with wonder — with worship —
As the hands of a young child
While timidly parting back those rainbow curtains —
Between himself and fairyland.

V

THEY say he is dead who is my beloved —
 Yet I know he has need of his rest only —
 And that his wakening glory
 Shall tear my lashes wide with obeisant hail
 And through innumerable epoch —

But I am desolate — O I am desolate —
 Who am not yet near enough to death
 To be enthralled by its splendour —
 Nor likely to find any footpath toward life
 Through such wreckage of weeping —

For they say he is dead who is my beloved —
 Yet I know he searches a dream for strength
 To stir — waken — and springing from his couch
 So meet my attendance among those carven shadows
 Of the endless gates —
 For I am my beloved's of yesterday — of to-morrow —
 But to-day is a rusty door I cannot shake open —
 O my grief and I are strangers yet
 Too unfamiliar for perpetual gazing —
 Nor aware of each other
 Save through sudden furtive stabs of sore —
 O my sorrow exactly like an abrupt series of shrieks
 Reverberating through nightmare —
 And awakening into a more terrible reality —

For they say he is dead who is my beloved —
 Yet I know he is only nimbly renewing himself —
 And in order to stride more vigorously a radiance

Rearing across countless horizons —
And sweeping him in galloping majesty
Toward my eternal surrender —

So let me approach swiftly unto my love
Yearning down toward him —
And flushing his ivory mask with vivid whispers
Concerning our future tryst —
And fingering his gentle hair
So soft — so limp — as the pinions
Of a wounded bird —
And smoothing my cheek along his breathless breast
Toward appointing with his heart
Our bridal hour —

And cease lathering the air with sighs
Around this stone laced couch
Where my chiselled young love sleeps so beautifully —
For I would listen to the tale of his ascension —
Descending frigidly toward me —
Through those vaporous beam-raining meadows between us —
O I would hear how the stars look now so near
And sparkling down toward his hand —
As a necklace of rockets may be —
And of how the seas seem caught to the earth —
Perhaps like pallid drops glittering upon a leaf —
And more than all, if my name beats around him
As a tumult of wings —
Above — in that silence beyond the winds —

For you say he is dead who is my beloved —
But I tell you what is loved in the soul may only increase —
And death but a cup of water along carnal roads
Restoring — reanimate —
Toward a more perfect competence — for deeper reunion.

VI

You two — loving me — tending me —
And leaning toward one another —
And across my sick-bed at twilight —
United in joy for my various recovery —
O I feel in this certain hour —
Through this blue surge of retreating light —
Your two figures to be caught and also retreating —
That your dimming faces —
Your contours fingered — covered — by the ascending dusk
To be expressing some omen of vast change assuming between
us —
On this certain night — beneath the smooth hum of evening —
And despite the tranquil lighting of our house.

VII

My foot is often started upon the mountain —
In that pungent pine-tangle at the base of the mountain —
With the damp breath of wild fern and spice of laurel
Exhaling over me —
With a gleam from the heights trickling down through the
branches
Pertinent — transparent — urging — elating me —

When suddenly the flutter of wings —
O you come to me on wings — there is the insidious part —
And your clutch hovering abruptly over me sheathed in
fleece —
That is your disarming side —
And your eyes fastening upon mine with that depth of ques-
tioning
That is spiritually extraneous —
So holding us for ever strangers —

Then a hunger rising between us never to be satisfied — I
think —
Until we can turn away —
Then blasphemy granting some strange vitality to each —
And a brief madness behaving so like joy —
When relief arriving conspicuously without peace —
And somehow like a wan grief-stricken face
We have insulted —

Yet these questions for ever continuing beyond response of
passion or relief —

O is it not our souls asking of one another —

When shall there be a loosening — a parting between us —

And a lifting up toward that divine convergence —

Where possession ceases to torture

Since all is shared by all.

VIII

O OUR love is a moist white gleaming —
As the limbs of fountainal figures
That are laved by the intermingling of moonlight and water —

O our love has a foaming stem of wan effulgent perfume —
That is like those heavy wet stalks of marsh-grown orchids —

O our love spreading a deadly coolness along our lips —
Just as perfume from the stamen of a certain orchid
Reminding — warning the traveller and suddenly —
That he is in a place of death —

O our love has hair like a shower of coins —
Heels the wind follows —
And a face eternally oval — running the scale of aspect.

Since now diademed in joy —
Now trailing into that ashen yawn of dissolution —
Now brightening under the glaze of reassurance —
Benediction — long-sought —
And again our love has those little clutching hands of forgotten children —
In dark wind-swept rooms.

IX

TO MY MUSE

THE worst loneliness
When your oracular voice
Drawing no patterns in the wind —
Nor stringing into pertinent fanfares
The trumpetings of sunlight —
Nor sighing up joyously
Through some crescendo of passionate desire —
Nay between me and life nothing whatever in common
Save when you — stirring my reactions with sparkling hints
Interpret the invisible —
So causing me to effervesce into expression
Momentarily bringing events parallel —
With fancy.

X

I WISH you well — I wish you well —
Dear once-beloved —
I have hewn myself apart from you
Wounding you unto death where you stood there
Smiling — unsuspecting —
Yet you cannot think how blasted my hand
From hurling the spear —
Nor how blinded my eyes
From tearing back the curtain before yours —

O your pain from me sinking down and out of you
And falling away —
Like mist ribbons unchaining the morning —
But I shall not be there to slur my ache
In the lull and limpidness fanning invisibly back
Shadows before light —

Nor freshen — reassure — straighten myself again —
In that ever further prevailing brightness —

Since for ever I shall see the descending blow —
With something tolling frantically
About your height springing up to meet me —
Since eternally I shall perceive the swaying — tottering
Of something in your eyes —
And crashing — filling across your familiar features of anguish
In gulfs — in streaks of leaden pour —
Of agony bubbling hotly — gathering in clots along your dear
face —
And lividly brightening — accentuating your likeness —
Somehow like a man seen to be panting out his life
In a column of flame —

O once beloved, this grief —
That I have hammered so pitilessly in
Through the tender white skin of your temples —
It will haunt me for ever —
And as a child moaning out in the snow
After my retreating steps —
And as the dim sound of hands listlessly falling apart —
Exhausted from pleading — toward my averted eyes.

XI

DURING the night-tide my departed love illumining beside me
And his words like the hiss of approaching flood
Across droughted places —

And his embrace washing my fatigue
As a draught of orchard perfume
Stealing through dishevelled city curvage —

O the splendour of his dream-felt touch
Sweeping me with fanfare of rainbows —
O the splendour of our contact irradiating me
With arpeggios of colour —

As my love so delicately erasing my tears
With the plumèd sweep of his caressing lash —
As my love so tenderly dwelling against me
And praying over our inseparable future —
Until amongst those flashing corners of his wingèd mouth
My sorrow drowning for ever.

XII

NEURASTHENIA

EVEN through these chaotic fumes lit — fed —
By hours spent reversing from affinity —
Even through this tepid catastrophic blur
Brewed from continual insincerity —
Aye, despite the grinding gash of scruples
Exploding inversely to the fore —
Despite the bleating dim of appalling infirmities arraigned
Against the inquisitorial frown of ascending conscience —
Aye, despite all this am I aware of a cherished voice whispering
That joy — joy —
Shall be for ever enclosing — sustaining — producing me —
Out of her mystic heart.

XIII

THOSE times when all affections becoming too pressing —
All rooms too stifling —
And each obligation crushing further
Beneath disordered lassitude —
Ah then the mellow invitation of lonely roads —
So inflated by endless currents of reviving freshness —
Ah then the mauve-blue tidal wrap of twilight —
Descendant — beckoning —
From across those collapsing shoulders of a weary day —
And then throughout this delicate relaxing silence —
Assurance — permeating — incontestable — as the spread of
dawn —
Reassurance that in all life a future —
Continually developing in beauty and toward beginnings
Forever more sublime.

XIV

THAT I should call from you
The thirst unquenchable —
Loosening between us a secret
To be eternally approached — touched —
Yet receded from unknown —
And after all familiarities —
Since forever from me toward you
A coquetry beckoning — alluring — leading you —
And as the beautiful walking — just ahead —
Of some strange figure through semi-darkness —
Imbuing you — pensive pursuer
With accruing tenderness — sadness of desire —
O indeed I will hide forever from you, my beloved,
And in a smile glittering up from this absorbing mystery —
That I am to myself.

XV

ASCENDANT upon the mountain with a lighted candle
Just before dawn
Since I had heard the sluring roar of Your voice
(Afar — yet indubitably toward me —)
And the push of Your vast descendant draperies —
(Like an avalanche sounding momentarily different
Above racketing glacier streams —)
Since drops of scent from Your fingers
Had already feathered across me in a snow-lifting breeze —
Together with complete assurance of Your Presence drifting
out
In a current of blinding refreshment —
From the heart of adjacent pine-woods —

Then — I — pricked with intrepid vigour —
With desire for pressing upward —
For sitting in the blue-white shadow of Your wings —
For reading by the light of my own candle
In this “Book of Why” spread widely open upon Your mas-
sive knees —

For reading — while below
From the very centre of dawn’s smoking uncoiling limbs —
Recumbent darkness forming — rearing — straightening —
clarifying
Into transparent patches — golden-barred —
[52]

And these — awakening cities —
(Strung along — spangling the shore as a necklace of rain-
bows —)

For reading — while the night glazing off into distance
Until merely a pin-prick scratching the horizon with smoke —
While from below a muffled stir of wakening birds — children
— flowers —

And of their sweet exhalations of rest
Dampening into golden perfume inquisitive sun-bars —

For reading till deriving a comfort to spread
Over these wailing storming seas beneath daily thorough-
fare —

So bearing away perchance some device for enduring hour
upon hour

When no glorious conviction appearing unannounced
Across the dim portals of reverie —

Well I was ascending toward all this
When abruptly you were there
With your pallid darkness
And glittering about you of an ailing light —

O your touch upon my hand was subtle with entreaty —
You bent over running your mouth
Throughout my hair
Your kisses wove around my head a web
Entangling — crushing — blurring away from me
The transparent beckoning of my shrine —

Ah then — then — a grotesque curtain fell between me — my
temple —

The archaic flute played — to the patter of hoofs —
The air was a shower of scarves flung aside

With sobbing whining savage gesture —
Until flower-sprayed grasses grew suddenly bruised —

O it is late — it is late now
The rain is pouring heavily downward
The rain has extinguished my candle —
O in this weight of wet darkness —
In this gloom heavy as the upturned tear-soaked earth
Of every tomb fresh-made —
I feel that You have closed Your Book and risen up — be-
yond —
To greet those ardent ones
Leaning out — awaiting You —
Along the star-foaming tracks of higher spheres.

XVI

My thoughts of you a hand
Stealing across yours
No matter where you shall go —
My thoughts of you evoking in you
An haunting sense of resemblance
Between me and whatever you shall see —
My thoughts of you
Bursting the moon-locked surface
Of your stillest dream —
And figured in shrill carnival laughter
And moving grotesquely forward
Through a seething flare of balloons
And to where you standing —
Wearily straining yourself remote
From all possible ties —
Then my thoughts of you pressing upon your mouth —
Your evasive — flippant — tragic mouth
A kiss — sharp — evanescent —
And drawing you for ever after its insinuation
That you should know yourself further —
Upon tasting it again.

XVII

O COMRADE, in that strange illicit dialogue
Of our perfectly matched fancy —
O my comrade, in that eager dual spurt upward
Through the liquid pearl air of the dawn —
Upward — and hard upon those violet tracks
Of the Divine Evasion —

O it is rare — terrible — to have once greeted anything
So poignantly akin to me as you are —
To have hailed one standing so intensely out from the rest —
And with a shock of such appalling familiarity about him —
O your appearance like a shaft of lightning
Framing the exact reverse likeness of my own accumulating
image —
(And against the slow-limbed thick-featured drifting past
Of the half-awakened world-children —)
O your face like a torch flashing the myriad interiors of my
past —
Showing the innumerable actualities of you and me between
deaths —
And ere the loss of great memories
Filled us with gathering inexplicable sadness —

O it is rare — terrible — to have once greeted anything
So poignantly akin to me as you are —
You with that bewildering tragic beauty
Of a blasphemously impatient spiritual yearning —
[56]

You — with that childish drooping at the corners
Of your transparent lovely mouth —
And with your frown distorting — conflicting —
Most eloquently expressing through your eyes
The frantic upward clamouring tangle of your mind —

And again with your slender boyish body
Fountaining a jet of gracious curves at every motion —
O glancing at you loosens me completely unto myself —
O your beauties strike me with an alertness
Separating — classifying — making order — form —
From the variously straining erupting angles of my own sub-
lime vitality —

O comrade, in that strange illicit dialogue
Of our perfectly matched fancy —
O my comrade, in that eager dual spurt upward
Through the liquid pearl air of the dawn —
Upward — and hard upon those violet tracks
Of the Divine Evasion.

XVIII

LEAN your mouth well over into the moonlight
So that I may kiss it full, O chance —
Press me into your pungent arms
So jagged with nightmare — so rent with spasmodic glories —
So pliant with momentary relaxing —
O your arms so compact with variety —
For now strident with triton freshness
And glossed as if by spray shaken off a burst of godliness
Out of glacier streams —
And now slippery — darkened with that moulten calm
Preceding some sinister extase —

O chance — stinging — refreshing
Like a sudden rain of flowers across my being that is ever held
So deliberately accessible —
O chance teasing with evasive glimpses of some further road
Ever lightening towards breathless eventualities —
Aye, for ever alternately veiling — disclosing —
That face approximate of Heaven — and hell.

XIX

I AM resting by the edge of the sea —
But in my arm is a curve imperceptible
For the weight of your head — lover — comrade —
My feet are damp with the vigorous jet of the sea —
My body is splashed in a sudden pour of sunlight
Spreading down now in widening — blazing torrents —
From behind the pushed-away clouds —
Yet I long to be chilled — warmed — and surpassing these —
And by our limbs co-mingling lover — comrade.

XX

I DO not care for the future —
Knowing well my capacities to deal with it
Are breeding up from the fulness of my response
To this single hour —
Therefore do not ask of me the future — beloved —
And rather let us hold gently to one another —
Courting — inviting ease —
And sending one another away benignantly refreshed —
Proud — befriended with the memory of an eternal moment.

XXI

How cruel those steps pausing at the door — passing onward —
When one is waiting —
How like knife thrusts those ordinary domestic sounds
Through which a listening concentrates in vain —
How often going to the window — back again — at the slightest
excuse —
As if motion could evoke a coming —
Then gradually the soul becoming mortally wounded
And by strokes of the clock —
Irretrievably widening a distance — between one's self and
hope.

XXII

THOU art oppressed, O my soul —
In the chill sweet air
Among the blurred grey grasses —
Aye standing in the golden pour of sunrise — even
Thou art oppressed —

For the present is a cluttered maelstrom of yesterday — to-
morrow —

And tomorrow a vapid frost of rigid impassè —
And yesterday a swim of troubled things
Fatal during some unnoticed moment —
O from where erupting this army of agonies
At whose outposts already thou art slain, O my soul —
Slain in such earliness — in such bright cool air smoking yet
With the deep-shaded perfume of night —

O my love was a child — and mad — and he rent apart our
off-shoot —

Our issue — so fair and grave with a mounting future —
So gent'le from memory —
And so vastly akin to the moment as all youth is —
And perceiving this to happen during inconsolable length —
I slanted insensible toward numbness —

O indeed some dim weight has fallen across my innermost
spring
And my eyes are sealed in sleep —
In a sleep concealing no further dream.

“ Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more — O, never more! ”

(From Shelley's "Lament.")

XXIII

ANOTHER sun — another sky — another earth out of other
tides —

And we certainly quickening toward one another again —
And once more the “Why” lost of myriad sighs — tears —
During ensuing search of each other —
And surely a vast pathos left over from this time
Invisibly striking us —
Like a harp sounding from some haunted room —
And as now so then — justice co-ordinate — all-pervading —
Minutely — spherically at work —
Inexorably sucking out the pattern
From what is drawn underneath.

But now your figure is walking off there into the vast night
With pain — age — death ahead of you — of you so familiar
to me

Who am nevertheless debarred from sharing these things with
you —

O how will contrast be sustained
Between orchards dusting the inclining spring sky
With their pink foam —
And my threadbare shivering past —
Between music rippling out across the shoulders of dancers
Reaching — inviting my excluded feet
O brightening into luminous shame
The silence of my jaded instep —

Or when — or when — upon reading some loveliness beside
the fire

I look up already speaking — into your empty chair —

O for another sun — another sky — another earth out of other
tides.

XXIV

SAD, we must find each other — ourselves — life — out
Through this impediment of love —
(With its billion toe-stubbings along the Olympian track.)

Pathetic we must exercise by falling out of the sky
And chasing our own tails for awhile —
Instead of feeling our manes tearing out behind us
Along those freezing spiral vapours of The Continuous As-
cension.

O You and I have stood poignantly close upon the edge of
perilous slanting —
And with sublime sunbeams bouncing from upturned face to
face
And measuring upon each utter equality of dazzle —
O you and I have leant fraternally together in a light
Reducing to proportionate form at last —
All those melancholy grotesques of conscious life —
Yea and together heard a conclusive goodness affirming
Through vast harp-sweet spaces —
Then — then — the reverential swoon of our knees
Before this momentary shining out of the beyond
Has been cause for a touch between us —
Ah what union in this accidental knocking of knees
Before a Shared Presence —

When suddenly — suddenly —
The thrown-back hood of vision clamping down precipitant,
And a sadness in the air as of some Divine Retreat —
When my claw stirring — waking — reaching out —
And in your answering motion a gracious shoot of reverberat-
ing “yea” —
Then your eyes becoming a liquid gale
Importunate — parting — pressing aside my branches —
And your mouth a distortion of fire skipping — falling —
Clinging strangely among my blossoms —
My blossoms opening — shedding for you in ghastly broad
abandon —
O love — love — unequipped — unaware
Of the subtle fatality in your own repletion.

“Your Love to Woman and Woman’s Love to Man, would
that it was sympathy for suffering, and veiled deities, but gen-
erally two animals light on one another.”

(*Frederick Nietzsche — “Thus Spake Zarathustra.”*)

XXV

PHOTOGRAPH of my mother

Of lines so familiar —

So intensely seen upon endless occasion —

Now in particular recalling those feverish moments of childhood

Whilst the sheet plucked in twitching chilly hands —

Whilst the coals in their grate rising into pinnacled Valhallas —

Falling into burning cities —

Whilst the blue shadow of a door noiselessly opening

Against the white wall —

And now the flowing taste of jellies —

The moist sweet feathery caress of flowers —

While always near the rhythmic gestures of my mother sewing —

And of the peaceful sound of her work

And of her gentle sigh toward me —

So commiserate — so protecting —

O how sweet and warm and clear for the pavane of dreams

Was my sick room —

And now what pathos in this picture of my mother —

Because she suffers more from me still than from any other —

And I have come to pain — through so much else.

XXVI

O OUR love is like a rainbow
Shooting up from chasms of incredibly scarlet glee —
Yet illuminating suddenly the far blonde face of a placid
star —

O our love is like a bridge fountaining its iridescent strength
From across some chaos of claw-sprawling spaces —
Yet toward a columned brightness of strangely perfected meas-
ure —

And again our love is like Death —
Seeming ever to culminate in total cessation —
As a beautiful dual merging — folding in behind shadows —
To an increasing surge of song.

XXVII

I SEE a splendid life opening out before us
O elected mate ever poignant for me
And pressing unto my effulgent crescent
The rest of the round — my circle —
And amazing me with joyous entirety —

I see a splendid life opening out before us —
I smell the sturdy salt and pine of adventure
Exhaling toward me at the thought of being lashed in flight
To the storm-courting svelte rigging of your body —

O I see a splendid life opening out before us —
Despite that cut-glass upon the bare foot of sudden anger —
Despite those creeping melancholy fingers of sustained mis-
understanding
(With their lashes drooping over smouldering flames,
With their staccato wrenchings away upon the pillow)
And again despite that abrupt reversed scarlet scrawl of jeal-
ousy
Blurring my wifely hymn-book —

Aye, despite all these existent recesses jammed with past inhibitions — license —
And self-love striving to love —
And self-pity melting humour into a glue of hatred —

Nevertheless and despite this whole tribe
Taking on the role of risks and swarming up
From our abused nuance during centuries —
Nevertheless I affirm there to be a splendid life opening out
before us
And indeed a great future flinging along far — far ahead of
us —
And with its vast muttering unclassified yet
Whether litanizing failure —
Whether swelling to a note of sublime applause —
I say who knows — who cares —
Who is competent to become inseparable from the moment —
Who is worthy to enter in — react — and faithfully record
the moment —
And I loving you with that perfect freedom
Which is replete expression of each one of my gifts —
Must surely thus love you for ever —

O indeed I see a splendid life unfolding before us,
Elected mate ever poignant for me —
And pressing unto my effulgent crescent
The rest of the round — my circle —
And amazing me with joyous entirety.



DESCRIPTIVE

I

Sonata, Op. 54 — Ornstein

MUSCULAR grotesques crowing to one another
From moon-stained minarets —
The mauve-rayed air of a classic dawn
Breezing into legato motion — virginal draperies —
When suddenly obscene juggleries
With passions combative — tentative —

Arabesque, G Major — Debussy

A million pattering feet of ballet —
The “jeux” of puppets — and with bubbles —
And across nets made of shadows rimmed by lightning —

Etude, D Flat Major. Ravel

The lisping perfection of emasculated fancy
Swerving into that self-saturated hush
Of complaining silence —

The Composer-Pianist

Greek-browed — moist-eyed — sinuous —
And about his brooding face
That gloaming light of thought ever breaking into flames
Kindling to warm into blossoming expressive —
Those strange fruits of a curious reverie.

II

THE ATLANTIC FROM MY WINDOW

WATCHING the foam draping in hissing white garlands —
This rearing coil of the waves —

Watching the tails of fish
Joyfully spouting up in sudden black dots —
Along the blue shimmer —

Watching the patterns of foam receding swiftly back —
Mounting — streaking the unbroken waves —
Like snow-spotted mountains —

And becoming absorbed then — sucked down —
Down through this rhythmic thunder —
Down — down into those vastly stirring depths of my self.

III

FRANCE — AUTUMNAL

O SAD spatter of rain —
Echoing in the court below —
And sounding somehow like the call
Of ghostly swallows —
O Autumnal France
This mournful yellow trellis
Of your falling leaves
Ever parted by Love — dual —
Ice-white with a sense of ending —
And for ever dropping The Diminutive Black Glove —
And as the living whole cloven in dead twain
And flinging blindly apart —
Then how small appearing this fading black glove —
Through the immense-breeding mantle of darkness —
O how pitifully slight a human figure anyway
Against the vast shadow-streaked horizon —
Of a great gesture.

IV

THE dawn for me is like some still-born face
Rising and reflecting a frustrated loveliness —
Over shrouded landscapes.

The dawn for me is like a silent radiance
Of irrevocable spiritual decision —
Perfuming the air with frigid splendour.

The dawn for me is like the ripple of celestial voices
Echoing away among opalescent cloud domes —
And leaving the beholder childish from comfort —
And more vulnerable far to the hot-footed hammering of a
sunlit day —

Ah then the accumulated wistfulness of memories —
Tugging abruptly as starving children
Whom one has forgotten to feed —
Ah then the sore gathering — spreading upon a heart
Congested with diverging affections —
And pallidly passing into attenuate dismemberment
Through conflicting impulse —

For such a one — the dawn is like an arpeggio of harps —
Luring — inviting — to pass backward from the day — and
for ever
Into those slurred violet and alabaster reveries —
Of half-dreams.

V

THE CIRCUS — MONTMARTRE

FACES — circling in up-flung tiers
Like livid streaks —
And at the very top silhouettes crouched
Knotted toward the pit —
Like trees becoming almost all root
In order to keep foothold against a wind
Bending them for ever gulfward —
And music jangling down
From a high cage introduced through portières of smoke —
And holding in stiff bold rhythm
The far below wound-up gestures and cries
Of acrobats — conjurors — and lady equestrians —
All appearing to me somehow through my half-shut eyes
A strange mixture of wood — brass — and painted stripes —
Yet one tragic-closed face standing out amongst them all —
(And like a murder-stained arm
Rearing starkly erect amidst a pile of cushions —)
Just so this one tragic face flaring its silent bleakness
In through that midst of row upon row — tier upon tier —
Of humour-quivered flesh —
O exactly like a blasted vine scarring the very centre of hundreds
Of breeze-tumbled roses —
This one tragic-closed face standing out amongst them all.

VI

VERBENA

VERBENA, reminding me of twittering childish feet —
Of close curls sculpted to the head in moisture —
Of the darting enthralled form of childhood
Sublimely discovering —
Through a blaze of August gardens —

Verbena, reminding me of summer luncheons
In a room cooled by lowered awnings —
Of pyramidal blackberries — raspberries — peaches —
Recalling in odour their blossoms —
While without beyond screens
Bees muttering avidly through melting heat
From fluted cup to cup of mauve pale Canterbury bells —
(These peeping in a fringe of gentle glory — across our
sill —)

Verbena — O so reminding me
Of youth's humid eyes dazzling with fitful dreams —
(As some deep pond is threaded suddenly with gems of glisten
From a trout's skimming back touched by the sun —)
And so intensely recalling youth's tanned sprawled limbs
Completely relaxed —
(From lately spearing the surf with slim clear diving —)
And so revisioning for me youth's firm berry-stained mouth
Scornful enpurpled as the lips of feasting classic warriors —
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Verbena — Verbena — reminding me of summer luncheons
In a room cooled by lowered awnings —
Of pyramidal blackberries — raspberries — peaches —
Recalling in odour their blossoms
While before me now — and looking like a knob of city sun-
shine —
A bowl of lemon-coloured glass
Quite filled with Verbena.

VII

SNOW

THE snow is falling like feathers from the wings
Of sky-bound virgins —

Is descending as that quiescent hush
Across shoulders lately brushed
By the transparent flight of death towards life —

The snow is becoming a pallid rhythmic trellis
Shimmering between me and material contours —

The snow is becoming a couch of stars freshly chiselled
Inviting me to glitter back into oblivion —

Ah this falling snow is erasing my tentative lost footsteps —
Is blurring away memory beneath meadows crystalline —
Whose surface once more commencing to be broken by the
birth of lilies —

Whose surface once more beginning to be crowded by a flare
of angels —

Preceding before that haloed loveliness
Of Spiritual Awakening.

VIII

ABRIGADA

O LOVELY house
Of chaste lines and vast openings
Unto wind-rippled grasses —
O lovely house
Of unclad walls licked into strange patterns
By furious storm-tongues —
O lovely house
Of arched windows
Framing — now a river draped through the land
Trimming the green with silver —
Now an oak forest quivering — flushing —
Like a strand of rainbows
Under the pouring glitter
Of autumnal sunset —
O lovely house
Of spacious dim hallways —
Where happiness trailing so often her draperies
Their dim hum hardly remarked —
(Even as some person whose expression is habitually glad
From the beauty of inward thought)
O lovely house — how sweet it would have been
To have once been happy —
Among your serene vague spaces.

IX

THE DOORS OF NOTRE DAME

O UNEXPECTED, vast Saints towering — emerging out of columned frames

Stained with the leprous salt of ageless weather —

And crooking premonitory fingers —

While now bells hammering the air like iron fists

Beating all aware to that metallic command of religion —

O tier upon tier of slender esthetes

Frigidly fingering their intricate symbols

Of a new “Voluptas”

So aureoled in benignant calm —

Yet — quite appropriately

Their slim conforming feet

Half-clutched amongst those wet jaws

Of late and terrible misdemeanour —

So arch upon arch —

Medallion after medallion —

Holding their virginal passivities erect —

These same inclining still — the sidelong paramours of snakes —

So row over row —

Frieze above frieze — filled with demoniac-vestal mixture

Of fang — of prayer —

Glooming up — and now through the descendant night —

From a bank of fleur-de-lys.

X

WALKING ROUND NOTRE DAME — EAST WING

GARGOYLES — with their sinister sheepish faces
Of furtive lust —
With their fat-coiled monkish-coiffed heads
Thickening into demoniac limbs —
(Just like a sausage bursting at the ends between its string)
Gargoyles — with their lithe-stretched female-breasted
Half-tiger and half-bird bodies —
And again gargoyles
Scale-skinned, carrion-winged, black-bellied —
Coroneted with ecclesiastical respect.

O pinnacled, infinitely spiked heights
Fluted by myriad galleries —
Arabesque — meandering —
O tier upon tier of terraces
Each the pedestal of innumerable buttresses
Springing — rearing sturdily with poised upon each lace-
strewn apex
Its blasphemous tomb
Of jeering slit-mouthed infernal —

Nay, all the fiendish insight of man
Into those slime-strewn lily-vaulted tendencies
Of his becoming being —
Erupting in dark heaven-odoured suggestions
Along these fountainal intricacies of Notre Dame.

XI

INSIDE NOTRE DAME

RAINBOWED ghosts single or in rows —
Tossing up their fire-edged three-cornered balls —
Enclosing countless zodiac designs
Of star — of crescent —

And now the sun setting
Behind the rose window of Notre Dame —
And casting a million opals steeped in blood
Upon the surrounding greyness —
While behind the opposite window night arising —
Infusing these vigorous colours
With a delicate deliberate insistent repression —
Until gradually they assuming
The pale grave candours of virginal splendour —
(As a lover recalling them
Upon his sable bed of death)
And now — afar — through distant vaulted gloom
A shower of arrested stars —
Prayers — importunate —
Humbly attempting to warm into noticing them
Those narrow feet of the Mother of God —
And into stepping down and granting —
Their gentle flaming need.

THE END

