

# *In Memoriam*



**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**

**1850**

# In Memoriam

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

1850

*DjVu Editions*



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# Contents

PROLOGUE . . . . .	vi
DEDICATION . . . . .	viii
I. . . . .	1
II. . . . .	2
III. . . . .	3
IV. . . . .	4
V. . . . .	5
VI. . . . .	6
VII. . . . .	8
VIII. . . . .	9
IX. . . . .	10
X. . . . .	11
XI. . . . .	12
XII. . . . .	13
XIII. . . . .	14
XIV. . . . .	15
XV. . . . .	16
XVI. . . . .	17
XVII. . . . .	18
XVIII. . . . .	19
XIX. . . . .	20
XX. . . . .	21
XXI. . . . .	22
XXII. . . . .	23
XXIII. . . . .	24
XXIV. . . . .	25
XXV. . . . .	26
XXVI. . . . .	27

---

XXVII. . . . .	28
XXVIII. . . . .	29
XXIX. . . . .	30
XXX. . . . .	31
XXXI. . . . .	33
XXXII. . . . .	34
XXXIII. . . . .	35
XXXIV. . . . .	36
XXXV. . . . .	37
XXXVI. . . . .	38
XXXVII. . . . .	39
XXXVIII. . . . .	40
XXXIX. . . . .	41
XL. . . . .	43
XLI. . . . .	44
XLII. . . . .	45
XLIII. . . . .	46
XLIV. . . . .	47
XLV. . . . .	48
XLVI. . . . .	49
XLVII. . . . .	50
XLVIII. . . . .	51
XLIX. . . . .	52
L. . . . .	53
LI. . . . .	54
LII. . . . .	55
LIII. . . . .	56
LIV. . . . .	57
LV. . . . .	58
LVI. . . . .	59
LVII. . . . .	60
LVIII. . . . .	61
LIX. . . . .	62
LX. . . . .	63
LXI. . . . .	64
LXII. . . . .	65
LXIII. . . . .	66
XLIV. . . . .	67

---

LXV. . . . .	68
LXVI. . . . .	69
LXVII. . . . .	70
LXVIII. . . . .	71
LXIX. . . . .	72
LXX. . . . .	73
LXXI. . . . .	74
LXXII. . . . .	75
LXXIII. . . . .	76
LXXIV. . . . .	77
LXXV. . . . .	78
LXXVI. . . . .	79
LXXVII. . . . .	80
LXXVIII. . . . .	81
LXXIX. . . . .	82
LXXX. . . . .	83
LXXXI. . . . .	84
LXXXII. . . . .	85
LXXXIII. . . . .	86
LXXXIV. . . . .	88
LXXXV. . . . .	92
LXXXVI. . . . .	93
LXXXVII. . . . .	95
LXXXVIII. . . . .	96
LXXXIX. . . . .	98
XC. . . . .	99
XCI. . . . .	100
XCII. . . . .	101
XCIII. . . . .	102
XCIV. . . . .	103
XCV. . . . .	106
XCVI. . . . .	107
XCVII. . . . .	109
XCVIII. . . . .	111
XCIX. . . . .	112
C. . . . .	113
CI. . . . .	114
CII. . . . .	115

---

CIII. . . . .	117
CIV. . . . .	118
CV. . . . .	119
CVI. . . . .	121
CVII. . . . .	122
CVIII. . . . .	123
CIX. . . . .	124
CX. . . . .	125
CXI. . . . .	126
CXII. . . . .	127
CXIII. . . . .	128
CXIV. . . . .	129
CXV. . . . .	130
CXVI. . . . .	131
CXVII. . . . .	132
CXVIII. . . . .	133
CXIX. . . . .	134
CXX. . . . .	135
CXXI. . . . .	136
CXXII. . . . .	137
CXXIII. . . . .	138
CXXIV. . . . .	139
CXXV. . . . .	140
CXXVI. . . . .	141
CXXVII. . . . .	142
CXXVIII. . . . .	143
CXXIX. . . . .	144
CXXX. . . . .	145
EPILOGUE . . . . .	146



## PROLOGUE

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade; 5  
Thou madest Life in man and brute;  
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why; 10  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:  
Our wills are ours, we know not how; 15  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be:  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they. 20

We have but faith: we cannot know;  
For knowledge is of things we see;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more, 25  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;  
    We mock thee when we do not fear:                   30  
    But help thy foolish ones to bear;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me  
    What seem'd my worth since I began;  
    For merit lives from man to man,                   35  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
    Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
    I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.                   40

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
    Confusions of a wasted youth;  
    Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H.

OBIT MDCCCXXXIII.

## I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
    To one clear harp in divers tones,  
    That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years 5  
    And find in loss a gain to match?  
    Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
    Let darkness keep her raven gloss: 10  
    Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
    The long result of love, and boast,  
    'Behold the man that loved and lost, 15  
But all he was is overworn.'

**II.**

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again, 5  
And bring the firstling to the flock;  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom, 10  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood, 15  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.



## IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;  
 My will is bondsman to the dark;  
 I sit within a helmless bark,  
 And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now, 5  
 That thou should'st fail from thy desire,  
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
 'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost, 10  
 Some pleasure from thine early years.  
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
 That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
 All night below the darken'd eyes;  
 With morning wakes the will, and cries, 15  
 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

## V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain, 5  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er, 10  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;  
But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.



## VI.

- ONE writes, that 'Other friends remain,'  
 That 'Loss is common to the race'—  
 And common is the commonplace,  
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.
- That loss is common would not make 5  
 My own less bitter, rather more:  
 Too common! Never morning wore  
 To evening, but some heart did break.
- O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son; 10  
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.
- O mother, praying God will save  
 Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,  
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud 15  
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.
- Ye know no more than I who wrought  
 At that last hour to please him well;  
 Who mused on all I had to tell,  
 And something written, something thought; 20
- Expecting still his advent home;  
 And ever met him on his way  
 With wishes, thinking, here to-day,  
 Or here to-morrow will he come.
- O somewhere, meek unconscious dove, 25  
 That sittest ranging golden hair;  
 And glad to find thyself so fair,  
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

---

For now her father's chimney glows  
    In expectation of a guest;                   30  
    And thinking 'this will please him best,'  
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;  
    And with the thought her colour burns;  
    And, having left the glass, she turns           35  
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
    Had fallen, and her future Lord  
    Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.           40

O what to her shall be the end?  
    And what to me remains of good?  
    To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

## VII.

DARK house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more— 5  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away 10  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## VIII.

A HAPPY lover who has come  
     To look on her that loves him well,  
     Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,  
 And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light                     5  
     Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
     And all the place is dark, and all  
 The chambers emptied of delight;

So find I every pleasant spot                     10  
     In which we two were wont to meet,  
     The field, the chamber and the street,  
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there                     15  
     In those deserted walks, may find  
     A flower beat with rain and wind,  
 Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
     O my forsaken heart, with thee  
     And this poor flower of poesy  
 Which little cared for fades not yet.                     20

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
     I go to plant it on his tomb,  
     That if it can it there may bloom,  
 Or dying, there at least may die.

**IX.**

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore  
     Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
     With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him oe'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn           5  
     In vain; a favourable speed  
     Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex   10  
     Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
     As our pure love, thro' early light  
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;  
     Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;  
     Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,                   15  
 My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
     Till all my widow'd race be run;  
     Dear as the mother to the son,  
 More than my brothers are to me.                                       20

**X.**

I HEAR the noise about thy keel;  
I hear the bell struck in the night;  
I see the cabin-window bright;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife, 5  
And travell'd men from foreign lands;  
And letters unto trembling hands;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:  
This look of quiet flatters thus 10  
Our home-bred fancies: O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains 15  
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells. 20

**XI.**

CALM is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chesnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold, 5  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on you great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers, 10  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall;  
And in my heart, if calm at all, 15  
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep. 20





## XIII.

TEARS of the widower, when he sees  
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
 Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new, 5  
 A void where heart on heart reposed;  
 And, where warm hands have prest and clos'd,  
 Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
 An awful thought, a life removed, 10  
 The human-hearted man I loved,  
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
 I do not suffer in a dream;  
 For now so strange do these things seem, 15  
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
 And glance about the approaching sails,  
 As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,  
 And not the burthen that they bring. 20



**XV.**

TO-NIGHT the winds begin to rise  
    And roar from yonder dropping day:  
    The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,                     5  
    The cattle huddled on the lea;  
    And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver  
    That all thy motions gently pass                     10  
    Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;  
    And but for fear it is not so,  
    The wild unrest that lives in woe                     15  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
    And onward drags a labouring breast,  
    And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.                     20

## XVI.

WHAT words are these have fall'n from me?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take 5  
The touch of change in calm or storm;  
But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven? 10  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
And stunn'd me from my power to think 15  
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan? 20

## XVII.

THOU comest, much wept for: such a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move 5  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week: the days go by:  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam, 10  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars 15  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done, 20  
Such precious relics brought by thee;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth 5  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head 10  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart 15  
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again. 20

**XIX.**

THE Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills; 5  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all, 10  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls;  
My deeper anguish also falls, 15  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX.

THE lesser grief that may be said,  
     That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
     Are but as servants in a house  
 Where lies the master newly dead;  
  
 Who speak their feeling as it is,                         5  
     And weep the fullness from the mind:  
     'It will be hard' they say 'to find  
 Another service such as this.'  
  
 My lighter moods are like to these,  
     That out of words a comfort win;                         10  
     But there are other griefs within,  
 And tears that at their fountain freeze;  
  
 For by the hearth the children sit  
     Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
     And scarce endure to draw the breath,                         15  
 Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:  
  
 But open converse is there none,  
     So much the vital spirits sink  
     To see the vacant chair, and think,  
 'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'                         20



## XXI.

I SING to him that rests below,  
 And, since the grasses round me wave,  
 I take the grasses of the grave,  
 And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then, 5  
 And sometimes harshly will he speak;  
 'This fellow would make weakness weak,  
 And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,  
 He loves to make parade of pain, 10  
 That with his piping he may gain  
 The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth, 'Is this an hour  
 For private sorrow's barren song,  
 When more and more the people throng 15  
 The chairs and thrones of civil power?'

A time to sicken and to swoon,  
 When Science reaches forth her arms  
 To feel from world to world, and charms  
 Her secret from the latest moon?' 20

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:  
 Ye never knew the sacred dust:  
 I do but sing because I must,  
 And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay, 25  
 For now her little ones have ranged;  
 And one is sad; her note is changed,  
 Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII.

THE path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way, 5  
And, crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope, 10  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
And wrapt thee formless in the fold, 15  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
And think, that somewhere in the waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me. 20

**XXIII.**

NOW, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
 Or breaking into song by fits,  
 Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
 The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,                    5  
 I wander, often falling lame,  
 And looking back to whence I came,  
 Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, 'how changed from where it ran  
 Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;                    10  
 But all the lavish hills would hum  
 The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,  
 And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
 And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought                    15  
 Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,  
 And all was good that Time could bring,  
 And all the secret of the Spring  
 Moved in the chambers of the blood;                    20

And many an old philosophy  
 On Argive heights divinely sang,  
 And round us all the thicket rang  
 To many a flute of Arcady.

## XXIV.

AND was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say?  
The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met, 5  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so great? 10  
The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far;  
And orb into the perfect star 15  
We saw not, when we moved therein?

**XXV.**

I KNOW that this was Life,—the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move 5  
As light as carrier-birds in air;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in twain 10  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

**XXVI.**

STILL onward winds the dreary way;  
 I with it; for I long to prove  
 No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt 5  
 And goodness, and hath power to see  
 Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
 And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee 10  
 Or see (in Him is no before)  
 In more of life true life no more  
 And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn 15  
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
 That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
 To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII.

I ENVY not in any moods  
 The captive void of noble rage,  
 The linnets born within the cage,  
 That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes 5  
 His license in the field of time,  
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest, 10  
 The heart that never plighted troth  
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;  
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost 15  
 Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ:  
The moon is hid; the night is still;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round, 5  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease, 10  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break 15  
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule. 20



**XXIX.**

WITH such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest                     5  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight,  
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,                     10  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;  
Why should they miss their yearly due                     15  
Before their time? They too will die.

## XXX.

WITH trembling fingers did we weave  
     The holly round the Christmas hearth;  
     A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall 5  
     We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
     Of gladness, with an awful sense  
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:  
     We heard them sweep the winter land; 10  
     And in a circle hand-in-hand  
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;  
     We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
     A merry song we sang with him 15  
 Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept  
     Upon us: surely rest is meet:  
     'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'  
 And silence follow'd, and we wept. 20

Our voices took a higher range;  
     Once more we sang: 'They do not die  
     Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
 Nor change to us, although they change;

Rapt from the fickle and the frail 25  
     With gather'd power, yet the same,  
     Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.

Rise happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
    Draw forth the cheerful day from night:           30  
    O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

## XXXI.

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
    And home to Mary's home return'd,  
    Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?'           5  
    There lives no record of reply,  
    Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,           10  
    The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
    A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
    The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
    He told it not; or something seal'd           15  
The lips of that Evangelist.

**XXXII.**

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede 5  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete, 10  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure;  
What souls possess themselves so pure, 15  
Or is there blessedness like theirs?



**XXXIV.**

MY own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame, 5  
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?  
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose 10  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws 15  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV.

YET if some voice that man could trust  
 Should murmur from the narrow house,  
 'The cheeks drop in; the body bows;  
 Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:'

Might I not say? 'yet even here,                      5  
     But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
     To keep so sweet a thing alive:'  
 But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
     The sound of streams that swift or slow             10  
     Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
 The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
     'The sound of that forgetful shore  
     Will change my sweetness more and more,        15  
 Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put  
     An idle case? If Death were seen  
     At first as Death, Love had not been,  
 Or been in narrowest working shut,                   20

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
     Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
     Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,  
 And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.



## XXXVI.

THO' truths in manhood darkly join,  
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
 We yield all blessing to the name  
 Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,                         5  
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
 When truth embodied in a tale  
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought                         10  
 With human hands the creed of creeds  
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
 More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,                         15  
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
 And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
 In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII.

URANIA speaks with darken'd brow:  
     'Thou pratest here where thou art least.  
     This faith has many a purer priest,  
 And many an abler voice than thou.

Go down beside thy native rill, 5  
     On thy Parnassus set thy feet;  
     And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
 About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,  
     A touch of shame upon her cheek: 10  
     'I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
 Of thy prevailing mysteries;

For I am but an earthly Muse,  
     And owning but a little art  
     To lull with song an aching heart 15  
 And render human love his dues;

But brooding on the dear one dead,  
     And all he said of things divine,  
     (And dear to me as sacred wine  
 To dying lips is all he said), 20

I murmur'd, as I came along,  
     Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;  
     And loiter'd in the master's field,  
 And darken'd sanctities with song.'

**XXXVIII.**

WITH weary steps I loiter on,  
    Tho' always under alter'd skies  
    The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,                   5  
    The herald melodies of spring,  
    But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here                         10  
    Survive in spirits render'd free,  
    Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX.

COULD we forget the widow'd hour  
     And look on Spirits breathed away,  
     As on a maiden in the day  
 When first she wears her orange-flower?

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise                   5  
     To take her latest leave of home,  
     And hopes and light regrets that come  
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
     And tears are on the mother's face,                   10  
     As parting with a long embrace  
 She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
     Becoming as is meet and fit  
     A link among the days, to knit                   15  
 The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
     A life that bears immortal fruit  
     In such great offices as suit  
 The full-grown energies of heaven.                   20

Ay me, the difference I discern!  
     How often shall her old fireside  
     Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,                   25  
     And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
     Till even those that miss'd her most,  
 Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low;  
My paths are in the fields I know  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

30

## XL.

THY spirit ere our fatal loss  
     Did ever rise from high to higher;  
     As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
 As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,                     5  
     And I have lost the links that bound  
     Thy changes; here upon the ground,  
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—  
     That I could wing my will with might                     10  
     To leap the grades of life and light,  
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee:

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
     To that vague fear implied in death;  
     Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,                     15  
 The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
     An inner trouble I behold,  
     A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
 That I shall be thy mate no more,                     20

Tho' following with an upward mind  
     The wonders that have come to thee,  
     Thro' all the secular to-be,  
 But evermore a life behind.

**XLI.**

I VEX my heart with fancies dim:  
     He still outstript me in the race;  
     It was but unity of place  
 That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still, 5  
     And he the much-beloved again,  
     A lord of large experience, train  
 To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those 10  
     That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
     When one that loves but knows not, reaps  
 A truth from one that loves and knows?

**XLII.**

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
    And every spirit's folded bloom  
    Thro' all its intervital gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour, 5  
    Bare of the body, might it last,  
    And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man; 10  
    So that still garden of the souls  
    In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole 15  
    As when he loved me here in Time,  
    And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.



**XLIII.**

How fares it with the happy dead?  
 For here the man is more and more;  
 But he forgets the days before  
 God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint, 5  
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
 Gives out at times (he knows not whence)  
 A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years 10  
 (If Death so taste Lethean springs)  
 May some dim touch of earthly things  
 Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall, 15  
 O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;  
 My guardian angel will speak out  
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLIV.

THE baby new to earth and sky,  
     What time his tender palm is prest  
     Against the circle of the breast,  
 Has never thought that 'this is I:'

But as he grows he gathers much,   5  
     And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'  
     And finds 'I am not what I see,  
 And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind   10  
     From whence clear memory may begin,  
     As thro' the frame that binds him in  
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
     Which else were fruitless of their due,  
     Had man to learn himself anew   15  
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

## XLV.

We ranging down this lower track,  
     The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
     Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last                         5  
     In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
     But clear from marge to marge shall bloom  
 The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;  
     The fruitful hours of still increase;                         10  
     Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
     A bounded field, nor stretching far;  
     Look also, Love, a brooding star,                         15  
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVI.

THAT each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet: 5  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside;  
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good: 10  
What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
Before the spirits fade away,  
Some landing-place, to clasp and say, 15  
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

## XLVII.

IF these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
Were taken to be such as closed  
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove; 5  
She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words, 10  
But better serves a wholesome law,  
And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip 15  
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLVIII.

FROM art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,                   5  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that make                   10  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown,                   15  
The bases of my life in tears.



## L.

DO we indeed desire the dead  
     Should still be near us at our side?  
     Is there no baseness we would hide?  
 No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,                     5  
     I had such reverence for his blame,  
     See with clear eye some hidden shame  
 And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:  
     Shall love be blamed for want of faith?             10  
     There must be wisdom with great Death:  
 The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:  
     Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
     With larger other eyes than ours,                     15  
 To make allowance for us all.



**LI.**

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

‘Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,’ 5  
The Spirit of true love replied;  
‘Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

‘What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears? 10  
What record? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

‘So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash’d with flecks of sin.  
Abide: thy wealth is gather’d in, 15  
When Time hath sunder’d shell from pearl.’

## LII.

HOW many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give, 5  
That had the wild oat not been sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
The grain by which a man may live?

Oh, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth, 10  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be 15  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

**LIII.**

OH yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of all,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet; 5  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain; 10  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all, 15  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?  
An infant crying in the night:  
An infant crying for the light:  
And with no language but a cry. 20

**LIV.**

THE wish, that of the living whole  
    No life may fail beyond the grave,  
    Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife, 5  
    That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
    So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere 10  
    Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
    And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
    And falling with my weight of cares  
    Upon the great world's altar-stairs 15  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
    And gather dust and chaff, and call  
    To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope. 20

## LV.

‘So careful of the type?’ but no.  
     From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
     She cries ‘a thousand types are gone:  
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

‘Thou makest thine appeal to me: 5  
     I bring to life, I bring to death:  
     The spirit does but mean the breath:  
 I know no more.’ And he, shall be,

Man, her last work, who seem’d so fair,  
     Such splendid purpose in his eyes, 10  
     Who roll’d the psalm to wintry skies,  
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
     And love Creation’s final law—  
     Tho’ Nature, red in tooth and claw 15  
 With ravine, shriek’d against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer’d countless ills,  
     Who battled for the True, the Just,  
     Be blown about the desert dust,  
 Or seal’d within the iron hills? 20

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
     A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
     That tare each other in their slime,  
 Were mellow music match’d with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail! 25  
     O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
     What hope of answer, or redress?  
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVI.

PEACE; come away: the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song:  
Peace; come away: we do him wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale; 5  
But half my life I leave behind:  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;  
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll 10  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead;  
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said, 15  
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

## LVII.

IN those sad words I took farewell:  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace 5  
Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore grieve 10  
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

## LVIII.

O SORROW, Wilt thou live with me  
 No casual mistress, but a wife,  
 My bosom-friend and half of life;  
 As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,                      5  
 Be sometimes lovely as a bride,  
 And put thy harsher moods aside,  
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,                      10  
 Nor will it lessen from to-day;  
 But I'll have leave at times to play  
 As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,                      15  
 With so much hope for years to come,  
 That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.



**LIX.**

HE past; a soul of nobler tone:  
     My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
     Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
 On one whose rank exceeds her own,  
  
 He mixing with his proper sphere,                         5  
     She finds the baseness of her lot,  
     Half jealous of she knows not what,  
 And envying all that meet him there.  
  
 The little village looks forlorn;  
     She sighs amid her narrow days,                         10  
     Moving about the household ways,  
 In that dark house where she was born.  
  
 The foolish neighbours come and go,  
     And tease her till the day draws by:  
     At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!                         15  
 How should he love a thing so low?'

**LX.**

If, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below, 5  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore, 10  
Where thy first form was made a man;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

## LXI.

THO' if an eye that's downward cast  
    Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
    Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,                    5  
    When he was little more than boy,  
    On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
    His other passion wholly dies,                    10  
    Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXII.

YET pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,                     5  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So may'st thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,                     10  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

**LXIII.**

DOST thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar, 5  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known 10  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope, 15  
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream, 20

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea 25  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands;  
'Does my old friend remember me?'

## XLIV.

SWEET soul, do with me as thou wilt;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With 'Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing, 5  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me, 10  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends.

**LXV.**

YOU thought my heart too far diseased;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among ghe gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost, 5  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free, 10  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;  
His inner day can never die, 15  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVI.

WHEN on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears, 5  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies; 10  
And closing caves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost 15  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.



**LXVII.**

WHEN in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,  
Now can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn, 5  
When all our path was fresh with dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about, 10  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea 15  
I wake, and I discern the truth;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfer to thee.

## LXVIII.

I DREAM'D there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost:  
The streets were black with smoke and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town, 5  
I found a wood with thorny boughs:  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs: 10  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:  
I found an angel of the night;  
The voice was low, the look was bright; 15  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled:

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf:  
The voice was not the voice of grief,  
The words were hard to understand. 20

**LXIX.**

I CANNOT see the features right,  
    When on the gloom I strive to paint  
    The face I know; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,                   5  
    A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
    A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,  
    And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;                   10  
    Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will  
    I hear a wizard music roll,  
    And thro' a lattice on the soul                               15  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXX.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul? 5  
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong  
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change, 10  
The days that grow to something strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge, 15  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXXI.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
     And howlest, issuing out of night,  
     With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
 And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun 5  
     To pine in that reverse of doom,  
     Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
 And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour 10  
     With thy quick tears that make the rose  
     Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
 Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame 15  
     Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
     A chequer-work of beam and shade  
 Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
     Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,  
     When the dark hand struck down thro' time,  
 And cancell'd nature's best: but thou, 20

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
     Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,  
     And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound 25  
     Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;  
     Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
 And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXII.

So many worlds, so much to do,  
    so little done, such things to be,  
    How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,                     5  
    The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:  
    I curse not nature, no, nor death;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod  
    Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:                     10  
    What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
    Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
    And self-infolds the large results                     15  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXIII.

AS sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold, 5  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid, 10  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXIV.

I LEAVE thy praises unexpress'd In verse that brings myself relief, And by the measure of my grief I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;	
What practice howsoe'er expert In fitting aptest words to things, Or voice the richest-toned that sings, Hath power to give thee as thou wert?	5
I care not in these fading days To raise a cry that lasts not long, And round thee with the breeze of song To stir a little dust of praise.	10
Thy leaf has perish'd in the green, And, while we breathe beneath the sun, The world which credits what is done Is cold to all that might have been.	15
So here shall silence guard thy fame; But somewhere, out of human view, Whate'er thy hands are set to do Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.	20



## LXXV.

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,  
 And in a moment set thy face  
 Where all the starry heavens of space  
 Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'                         5  
 The secular abyss to come,  
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
 Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
 The darkness of our planet, last,                         10  
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers  
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;  
 And what are they when these remain                         15  
 The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

## LXXVI.

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain 5  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;  
Or when a thousand moons hall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells 10  
A grief, then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame, 15  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVII.

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave  
     The holly round the Christmas hearth;  
     The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,                     5  
     No wing of wind the region swept,  
     But over all things brooding slept  
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
     Again our ancient games had place,                     10  
     The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
     No single tear, no mark of pain:  
     O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?                     15  
 O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!  
     No—mixt with all this mystic frame  
     Her deep relations are the same,  
 But with long use her tears are day.                     20

## LXXVIII.

'MORE than my brothers are to me'—  
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart!  
 I know thee of what force thou art  
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,                                 5  
 As moulded like in nature's mint;  
 And hill and wood and field did print  
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
 Thro' all his eddying coves; the same                         10  
 All winds that roam the twilight came  
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd                         15  
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
 But he was rich where I was poor,  
 And he supplied my want the more  
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.                                 20

## LXXIX.

IF any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his sise,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can, 5  
The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks; 10  
He bears the burthen of the weeks,  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;  
And, influence-rich to soothe an save,  
Unused example from the grave 15  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXX.

COULD I have said while he was here  
    'My love shall now no further range;  
    There cannot come a mellow change,  
For now is love mature in ear.'

Love, then, had hope of richer store:                                 5  
    What end is here to my complaint?  
    This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
    'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:                                 10  
    'My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
    And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
It might have drawn from after-heat.'

## LXXXI.

I WAGE not any feud with Death  
     For changes wrought on form and face;  
     No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on, 5  
     From state to state the spirit walks;  
     And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I death, because he bare  
     The use of virtue out of earth: 10  
     I know transplanted human worth  
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
     The wrath that garners in my heart;  
     He put our lives so far apart 15  
 We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXII.

DIP down upon the northern shore,  
    O sweet new-year delaying long;  
    Thou doest expectant nature wrong;  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,                   5  
    Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
    Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,                   10  
    The little speedwell's darling blue,  
    Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,                         15  
    Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
    That longs to burst a frozen bud,  
And flood a fresher throat with song.



**LXXXIII.**

WHEN I contemplate all alone  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,                                 5  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;                                 10  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou should'st link thy life with one  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,                                 15  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.  
I see their unborn faces shine                                 20  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;                                 25

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

---

With promise of a morn as fair; 30  
    And all the train of bounteous hours  
    Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
    Her lavish mission richly wrought, 35  
    Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,  
    As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
    And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait 40  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
    And He that died in Holy Land  
    Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul. 45

What reed was that on which I leant?  
    Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
    The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXIV.

THIS truth came borne with bier and pall,  
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
 Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed, 5  
 Demanding, so to bring relief  
 To this which is our common grief,  
 What kind fo life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above  
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd; 10  
 And whether love for him have drain'd  
 My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
 A faithful answer from the breast,  
 Thro' light reproaches, half exprest, 15  
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
 Till on mine ear this message falls,  
 That in Vienna's fatal walls  
 God's finger touch'd him, and he slept. 20

The great Intelligences fair  
 That range above our mortal state,  
 In circle round the blessed gate,  
 Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes, 25  
 And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth, 30  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form, 35  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands  
By which we dare to live or die. 40

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd 45  
With gifts of grace, that might express  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilising intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find 50  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life, 55  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men. 60

I woo your love: I count it crime  
     To mourn for any overmuch;  
     I, the divided half of such  
 A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is 65  
     Eternal, separate from fears:  
     The all-assuming months and years  
 Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
     And Spring that swells the narrow brooks, 70  
     And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
     Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
     My old affection of the tomb, 75  
 And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,  
     A part of stillness, yearns to speak:  
     'Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
 A friendship for the years to come. 80

I watch thee from the quiet shore;  
     Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;  
     But in dear words of human speech  
 We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain 85  
     The starry clearness of the free?  
     How is it? Canst thou feel for me  
 Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;  
     'Tis hard for thee to fathom this; 90  
     I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
 And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;  
Or so methinks the dead would say;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play, 95  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend; 100

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart 105  
The promise of the golden hours?  
First love, first friendship, equal powers,  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place, 110  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with one 115  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring. 120



## LXXXVI.

I PAST beside the reverend walls  
     In which of old I wore the gown;  
     I roved at random thro' the town,  
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes 5  
     The storm their high-built organs make,  
     And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
 The prophets blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout, 10  
     The measured pulse of racing oars  
     Among the willows; paced the shores  
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
     The same, but not the same; and last  
     Up that long walk of limes I past 15  
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:  
     I linger'd; all within was noise  
     Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
 That crash'd the glass and beat the floor; 20

Where once we held debate, a band  
     Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
     And labour, and the changing mart,  
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair, 25  
     But send it slackly from the strong;  
     And one would pierce an outer ring,  
 And one an inner, here and there;



And last the master-bowman, he,  
    Would cleave the mark. A willing ear           30  
    We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace  
    And music in the bounds of law,  
    To those conclusions when we saw           35  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
    In azure orbits heavenly-wise;  
    And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.                   40

## LXXXVII.

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ                     5  
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings;                     10  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXVIII.

WITCH-ELMS that counterchange the floor  
     Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;  
     And thou, with all thy breadth and height  
 Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down, 5  
     My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
     And shook to all the liberal air  
 The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;  
     He mixt in all our simple sports; 10  
     They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts  
 And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
     Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
     To drink the cooler air, and mark 15  
 The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
     The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
     The gust that round the garden flew, 20  
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
     About him, heart and ear were fed  
     To hear him, as he lay and read  
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn: 25

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
     A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
     Or here she brought the harp and flung  
 A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods, 30  
    Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
    And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distany woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
    Discuss'd the books to love or hate, 35  
    Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,  
    He loved to rail against it still,  
    For 'ground in yonder social mill 40  
We rub each other's angles down,

And merge' he said 'in form and gloss  
    The picturesque of man and man.'  
    We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss, 45

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;  
    And last, returning from afar,  
    Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers, 50  
    We heard behind the woodbine veil  
    The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

## LXXXIX.

HE tasted love with half his mind,  
     Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
     Where nighest heaven, who first could fling  
 This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes                   5  
     Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
     They would but find in child and wife  
 An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
     To pledge them with a kindly tear,                   10  
     To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
 To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,  
     Behold their brides in other hands;  
     The hard heir strides about their lands,               15  
 And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
     Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
     Confusion worse than death, and shake  
 The pillars of domestic peace.                           20

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:  
     Whatever change the years have wrought,  
     I find not yet one lonely thought  
 That cries against my wish for thee.



**XCI.**

IF any vision should reveal  
    Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
    As but the canker of the brain;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast                   5  
    Together in the days behind,  
    I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view                   10  
    A fact within the coming year;  
    And tho' the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
    But spiritual presentiments,  
    And such refraction of events                   15  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCII.

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say  
    No spirit ever brake the band  
    That stays him from the native land,  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,                     5  
    But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
    Where all the nerve of sense is numb;  
Spirit to Sp[irit], Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range                     10  
    With gods in un conjectured bliss,  
    O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear  
    The wish too strong for words to name;  
    That in this blindness of the frame                     15  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.



**XCIII.**

HOW pure at heart and sound in head,  
    With what divine affections bold  
    Should be the man whose thought would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call 5  
    The spirits from their golden day,  
    Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast, 10  
    Imaginations calm and fair,  
    The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din, 15  
    And doubt beside the portal waits,  
    They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.



The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
     On doubts that drive the coward back,                   30  
     And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
     The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
     And all at once it seem'd at last                         35  
 His living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd  
     About empyreal heights of thought,  
     And came on that which is, and caught  
 The deep pulsations of the world,                         40

Æonian music measuring out  
     The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—  
     The blows of Death. At length my trance  
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame                   45  
     In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
     Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
 Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
     The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,     50  
     The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
 Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
     A breeze began to tremble o'er  
     The large leaves of the sycamore,                         55  
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
     Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
     The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
 The lilies to and fro, and said                             60

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

**XCV.**

YOU say, but with no touch of scorn,  
     Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
     Are tender over drowning flies,  
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew 5  
     In many a subtle question versed,  
     Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
 But ever strove to make it true:

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,  
     At last he beat his music out. 10  
     There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
     He would not make his judgment blind,  
     He faced the spectres of the mind 15  
 And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;  
     And Power was with him in the night,  
     Which makes the darkness and the light,  
 And dwells not in the light alone, 20

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
     As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
     While Israel made their gods of gold,  
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVI.

MY love has talk'd with rocks and trees;  
 He finds on misty mountain-ground  
 His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;  
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life— 5  
 I look'd on these and thought of thee  
 In vastness and in mystery,  
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,  
 Their hearts of old have beat in tune, 10  
 Their meetings made December June,  
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;  
 The days she never can forget  
 Are earnest that he loves her yet, 15  
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
 He seems to slight her simple heart. 20

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
 He reads the secret of the star,  
 He seems so near and yet so far,  
 He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before, 25  
 A wither'd violet in her bliss:  
 She knows not what his greatness is;  
 For that, for all, she loves him more.



## XCVII.

YOU leave us: you will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath, 5  
That City. All her splendour seems  
No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes fo Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me: 10  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend 15  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
Her shadow on the blaze of kings:  
And yet myself have heard him say, 20

That not in any mother town  
With statelier progress to and fro  
The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content, 25  
He told me, lives in any crowd,  
When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,



Imperial halls, or open plain;  
    And wheels the circled dance, and breaks      30  
    The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.







**CI.**

WE leave the well-beloved place  
     Where first we gazed upon the sky;  
     The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,  
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home, 5  
     As down the garden-walks I move,  
     Two spirits of a diverse love  
 Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, here thy boyhood sung  
     Long since its matin song, and heard 10  
     The low love-language of the bird  
 In native hazels tassel-hung.

The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
     Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
     With thy lost friend among the bowers, 15  
 And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,  
     And each prefers his separate claim,  
     Poor rivals in a losing game,  
 That will not yield each other way. 20

I turn to go: my feet are set  
     To leave the pleasant fields and farms;  
     They mix in one another's arms  
 To one pure image of regret.

## CII.

ON that last night before we went  
     From out the doors where I was bred,  
     I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall, 5  
     And maidens with me: distant hills  
     From hidden summits fed with rills  
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang. 10  
     They sang of what is wise and good  
     And graceful. In the centre stood  
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
     The shape of him I loved, and love  
     For ever: then flew in a dove 15  
 And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go  
     They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
     To where a little shallop lay  
 At anchor in the flood below; 20

And on by many a level mead,  
     And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
     We glided winding under ranks  
 Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore, 25  
     And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
     The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
 And presence, lordlier than before;

---

And I myself, who sat apart  
    And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;           30  
    I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,  
    And one would chant the history  
    Of that great race, which is to be,           35  
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
    Began to foam, and we to draw  
    From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.           40

The man we loved was there on deck,  
    But thrice as large as man he bent  
    To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind           45  
    Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:  
    'We served thee here,' they said, 'so long  
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win  
    An answer from my lips, but he           50  
    Replying, 'Enter likewise ye  
And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
    A music out of sheet and shroud,  
    We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud           55  
That landlike slept along the deep.

## CIII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ;  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below, 5  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound, 10  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.



## CIV.

TO-NIGHT ungather'd let us leave  
     This laurel, let this holly stand:  
     We live within the stranger's land,  
 And strangely falls our Christmas eve.

Our father's dust is left alone 5  
     And silent under other snows:  
     There in due time the woodbine blows,  
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse 10  
     The genial hour with mask and mime;  
     For change of place, like growth of time,  
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
     By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
     A little spare the night I loved, 15  
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
     Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;  
     For who would keep an ancient form  
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more? 20

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;  
     Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;  
     No dance, no motion, save alone  
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood. 25  
     Long sleeps the summer in the seed;  
     Run out your measure arcs, and lead  
 The closing cycle rich in good.



Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;                    30  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVI.

IT is the day when he was born,  
 A bitter day that early sank  
 Behind a purple-frosty bank  
 Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves                   5  
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
 The blast of North and East, and ice  
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs                   10  
 Above the wood which grides and clangs  
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
 To darken on the rolling brine  
 That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,           15  
 Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
 To make a solid core of heat;  
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
 Of all things ev'n as he were by;                   20

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
 With books and music, surely we  
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVII.

I WILL not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith, 5  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns? 10  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies:  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise, 15  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CVIII.

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk  
 From household fountains never dry;  
 The critic clearness of an eye,  
 That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force 5  
 To seize and throw the doubts of men;  
 Impassion'd logic, which outran  
 The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,  
 But touch'd with no ascetic gloom; 10  
 And passion pure in snowy bloom  
 Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
 Of freedom in her regal seat  
 Of England; not the schoolboy heat, 15  
 The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace  
 In such a sort, the child would twine  
 A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
 And find his comfort in thy face; 20

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
 Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,  
 My shame is greater who remain,  
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CIX.

THY converse drew us with delight,  
 The men of rathe and riper years;  
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung, 5  
 The proud was half disarm'd of pride  
 Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
 To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
 The flippant put himself to school 10  
 And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
 Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,  
 And felt thy triumph was as mine;  
 And loved them more, that they were thine, 15  
 The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
 But mine the love that will not tire,  
 And, born of love, the vague desire  
 That spurs an imitative will. 20





**CXI.**

HIGH wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room 5  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power 10  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd 15  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.



## CXIII.

WHO loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail  
 Against her beauty? May she mix  
 With men and prosper! Who shall fix  
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire: 5  
 She sets her forward countenance  
 And leaps into the future chance,  
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain— 10  
 She cannot fight the fear of death.  
 What is she, cut from love and faith,  
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
 All barriers in her onward race  
 For power. Let her know her place; 15  
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
 If all be not in vain; and guide  
 Her footsteps, moving side by side  
 With wisdom, like the younger child: 20

For she is earthly of the mind,  
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
 O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee, 25  
 Who grewest not alone in power  
 And knowledge, but by year and hour  
 In reverence and in charity.

## CXIV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long, 5  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale, 10  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their sky 15  
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too; and my regret  
Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest. 20

**CXV.**

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air, 5  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone; 10  
And that dear voice, I once have known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
For days of happy commune dead;  
Less yearning for the friendship fled, 15  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVI.

O DAYS and hours, your work is this,  
    To hold me from my proper place,  
    A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue 5  
    Desire of nearness doubly sweet;  
    And unto meeting when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs, 10  
    And every span of shade that steals,  
    And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.



## CXVIII.

DOORS, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more; the city sleeps;  
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see 5  
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland  
And bright the friendship of thine eye; 10  
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.





## CXX.

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun  
 And ready, thou, to die with him,  
 Thou watchest all things ever dim  
 And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain, 5  
 The boat is drawn upon the shore;  
 Thou listenest to the closing door,  
 And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
 By thee the world's great work is heard 10  
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird;  
 Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,  
 And voices hail it from the brink;  
 Thou hear'st the village hammer clink, 15  
 And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
 For what is one, the first, the last,  
 Thou, like my present and my past,  
 Thy place is changed; thou art the same. 20





## CXXIII.

THAT which we dare invoke to bless;  
     Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;  
     He, They, One, All; within, without;  
 The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun, 5  
     Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;  
     Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
 The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep, 10  
     I heard a voice 'believe no more'  
     And heard an ever-breaking shore  
 That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt 15  
     The freezing reason's colder part,  
     And like a man in wrath the heart  
 Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:  
     But that blind clamour made me wise;  
     Then was I as a child that cries,  
 But, crying, knows his father near; 20

And what I am beheld again  
     What is, and no man understands;  
     And out of darkness came the hands  
 That reach thro' nature, moulding men.



**CXXV.**

LOVE is and was my Lord and King,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord, 5  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
Who moves about from place to place, 10  
And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVI.

AND all is well, tho' faith and form  
    Be sunder'd in the night of fear;  
    Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,                     5  
    And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
    The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
    And him, the lazar, in his rags:                     10  
    They tremble, the sustaining crags;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;  
    The fortress crashes from on high,  
    The brute earth lightens to the sky,                     15  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;  
    While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
    O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.                     20



## CXXVII.

THE love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood 5  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade;  
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
If all your office had to do 10  
With old results that look like new;  
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries, 15  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
To cramp the student at his desk,  
To make old bareness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower; 20

Why then my scorn might well descend  
On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil cöoperant to an end.



**CXXIX.**

THY voice is on the rolling air;  
I hear thee where the waters run;  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess; 5  
But tho' I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;  
My love is vaster passion now; 10  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
I love thee still, and I rejoice;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice; 15  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.



## EPILOGUE

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,  
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;  
 In that it is thy marriage day  
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss 5  
 Since first he told me that he loved  
 A daughter in our house; nor proved  
 Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er 10  
 Some thrice three years: they went and came,  
 Remade the blood and changed the frame,  
 And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm  
 In dying songs a dead regret,  
 But like a statue solid-set 15  
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
 Than in the summers that are flown,  
 For I myself with these have grown  
 To something greater than before; 20

Which makes appear the songs I made  
 As echoes out of weaker times,  
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower, 25  
 That must be made a wife ere noon?  
 She enters, glowing like the moon  
 Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
    And then on thee; they meet thy look  
    And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise. 30

O when her life was yet in bud,  
    He too foretold the perfect rose.  
    For thee she grew, for thee she grows 35  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;  
    As gentle; liberal-minded, great,  
    Consistent; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower. 40

But now set out: the noon is near,  
    And I must give away the bride;  
    She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear:

For I that danced her on my knee, 45  
    That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
    That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
    Her feet, my darling, on the dead; 50  
    Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
    The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again  
    The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of twain 55  
Her sweet 'I will' has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
    Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
    By village eyes as yet unborn;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead 60

- Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.
- O happy hour, and happier hours 65  
Await them, Many a merry face  
Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.
- O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave. 70  
They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.
- To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast, 75  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.
- Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France. 80
- It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.
- Nor count me all to blame if I 85  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.
- But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favour'd horses wait; 90  
They rise, but linger; it is late;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
    From little cloudlets on the grass,  
    But sweeps away as out we pass                     95  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
    And talk of others that are wed,  
    And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.                     100

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
    The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
    Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:                     105  
    Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
    And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
    Till over down and over dale                     110  
    All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
    And catch at every mountain head,  
    And o'er the friths that branch and spread             115  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
    With tender gloom the roof, the wall;  
    And breaking let the splendour fall  
To spangle all the happy shores                     120

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
    And, star and system rolling past,  
    A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,



And, moved thro' life of lower phase, 125  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge; under whose command 130  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed 135  
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God, 140

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

THE END