



POETRY

EDGAR ALLAN POE

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TAMERLANE¹

Kind solace in a dying hour!

Such, father, is not (now) my theme—
I will not madly deem that power
Of Earth may shrive me of the sin
Unearthly pride hath revelled in—
I have no time to dote or dream:
You call it hope—that fire of fire!
It is but agony of desire:
If I *can* hope—O God! I can—
Its fount is holier—more divine—
I would not call thee fool, old man,
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit
Bowed from its wild pride into shame.
O yearning heart! I did inherit
Thy withering portion with the fame,
The searing glory which hath shone
Amid the Jewels of my throne,
Halo of Hell! and with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again—
O craving heart, for the lost flowers
And sunshine of my summer hours!

Th' undying voice of that dead time,
With its interminable chime,
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,
Upon thy emptiness—a knell.

I have not always been as now:
The fevered diadem on my brow
 I claimed and won usurpingly—
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given
 Rome to the Caesar—this to me?
 The heritage of a kingly mind,
And a proud spirit which hath striven
 Triumphantly with human kind.
On mountain soil I first drew life:
 The mists of the Taglay have shed
 Nightly their dews upon my head,
And, I believe, the wingèd strife
And tumult of the headlong air
Have nestled in my very hair.

So late from Heaven—that dew—it fell
 ('Mid dreams of an unholy night)
Upon me with the touch of Hell,
 While the red flashing of the light
From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er,
 Appeared to my half-closing eye
 The pageantry of monarchy;
And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar
 Came hurriedly upon me, telling
 Of human battle, where my voice,
My own voice, silly child!—was swelling
 (O! how my spirit would rejoice,

And leap within me at the cry)
The battle-cry of Victory!

The rain came down upon my head
Unsheltered—and the heavy wind
Rendered me mad and deaf and blind.
It was but man, I thought, who shed
Laurels upon me: and the rush—
The torrent of the chilly air
Gurgled within my ear the crush
Of empires—with the captive's prayer—
The hum of suitors—and the tone
Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,
Usurped a tyranny which men
Have deemed since I have reached to power,
My innate nature—be it so:
But, father, there lived one who, then,
Then—in my boyhood—when their fire
Burned with a still intenser glow
(For passion must, with youth, expire)
E'en *then* who knew this iron heart
In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words—alas!—to tell
The loveliness of loving well!
Nor would I now attempt to trace
The more than beauty of a face
Whose lineaments, upon my mind,
Are ——— shadows on th' unstable wind:
Thus I remember having dwelt

Some page of early lore upon,
With loitering eye, till I have felt
The letters—with their meaning—melt
To fantasies—with none.

O, she was worthy of all love!
Love as in infancy was mine—
'Twas such as angel minds above
Might envy; her young heart the shrine
On which my ev'ry hope and thought
Were incense—then a goodly gift,
For they were childish and upright—
Pure—as her young example taught:
Why did I leave it, and, adrift,
Trust to the fire within, for light?

We grew in age—and love—together—
Roaming the forest, and the wild;
My breast her shield in wintry weather—
And, when the friendly sunshine smiled.
And she would mark the opening skies,
I saw no Heaven—but in her eyes.
Young Love's first lesson is—the heart:
For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,
When, from our little cares apart,
And laughing at her girlish wiles,
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,
And pour my spirit out in tears—
There was no need to speak the rest—
No need to quiet any fears
Of her—who asked no reason why,
But turned on me her quiet eye!

Yet *more* than worthy of the love
My spirit struggled with, and strove,
When, on the mountain peak, alone,
Ambition lent it a new tone—
I had no being—but in thee:
 The world, and all it did contain
In the earth—the air—the sea—
 Its joy—its little lot of pain
That was new pleasure—the ideal,
 Dim, vanities of dreams by night—
And dimmer nothings which were real—
 (Shadows—and a more shadowy light!)
Parted upon their misty wings,
 And, so, confusedly, became
 Thine image, and—a name—a name!
Two separate—yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious—have you known
 The passion, father? You have not:
A cottager, I marked a throne
Of half the world as all my own,
 And murmured at such lowly lot—
But, just like any other dream,
 Upon the vapor of the dew
My own had past, did not the beam
 Of beauty which did while it thro'
The minute—the hour—the day—oppress
My mind with double loveliness.
We walked together on the crown
Of a high mountain which looked down
Afar from its proud natural towers
 Of rock and forest, on the hills—

The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers
And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,
But mystically—in such guise
That she might deem it naught beside
The moment's converse; in her eyes
I read, perhaps too carelessly—
A mingled feeling with my own—
The flush on her bright cheek, to me
Seemed to become a queenly throne
Too well that I should let it be
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapped myself in grandeur then,
And donned a visionary crown—
Yet it was not that Fantasy
Had thrown her mantle over me—
But that, among the rabble—men,
Lion ambition is chained down—
And crouches to a keeper's hand—
Not so in deserts where the grand—
The wild—the terrible conspire
With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand!—
Is not she queen of Earth? her pride
Above all cities? in her hand
Their destinies? in all beside
Of glory which the world hath known
Stands she not nobly and alone?
Falling—her veriest stepping-stone

Shall form the pedestal of a throne—
And who her sovereign? Timour—he
Whom the astonished people saw
Striding o'er empires haughtily
A diademed outlaw!

O, human love! thou spirit given,
On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven!
Which fall'st into the soul like rain
Upon the Siroc-withered plain,
And, failing in thy power to bless
But leav'st the heart a wilderness!
Idea! which bindest life around
With music of so strange a sound
And beauty of so wild a birth—
Farewell! for I have won the Earth.

When Hope, the eagle that towered, could see
No cliff beyond him in the sky,
His pinions were bent droopingly—
And homeward turned his softened eye.
'Twas sunset: when the sun will part
There comes a sullenness of heart
To him who still would look upon
The glory of the summer sun.
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist,
So often lovely, and will list
To the sound of the coming darkness (known
To those whose spirits hearken) as one
Who, in a dream of night, *would* fly,
But *can not*, from a danger nigh.

What tho' the moon—tho' the white moon
Shed all the splendor of her noon,
Her smile is chilly—and *her* beam,
In that time of dreariness, will seem
(So like you gather in your breath)
A portrait taken after death.

And boyhood in a summer sun
Whose waning is the dreariest one—
For all we live to know is known,
And all we seek to keep hath flown—
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall
With the noonday beauty—which is all.
I reached my home—my home no more—
For all had flown who made it so.

I passed from out its mossy door,
And, tho' my tread was soft and low,
A voice came from the threshold stone
Of one whom I had earlier known—
O! I defy thee, Hell, to show
On beds of fire that burn below,
A humbler heart—a deeper woe.

Father, I firmly do believe—
I *know*—for Death, who comes for me
From regions of the blest afar,
Where there is nothing to deceive,
Hath left his iron gate ajar,
And rays of truth you cannot see
Are flashing thro' Eternity—
I do believe that Eblis hath
A snare in every human path—
Else how, when in the holy grove

I wandered of the idol, Love—
Who daily scents his snowy wings
With incense of burnt-offerings
From the most unpolluted things,
Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven
Above with trellised rays from Heaven
No mote may shun—no tiniest fly—
The light'ning of his eagle eye—
How was it that Ambition crept,
 Unseen, amid the revels there,
Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt
 In the tangles of Love's very hair?

SONG

I saw thee on thy bridal day—
 When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
 The world all love before thee:

And in thine eye a kindling light
 (Whatever it might be)
Was all on Earth my aching sight
 Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame—
 As such it well may pass—
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
 In the breast of him, alas!

Who saw thee on that bridal day,
 When that deep blush *would* come o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
 The world all love before thee.

DREAMS

Oh! that my young life were a lasting dream!
My spirit not awakening, till the beam
Of an Eternity should bring the morrow.
Yes! though that long dream were of hopeless sorrow,
'Twere better than the cold reality
Of waking life, to him whose heart must be,
And hath been still, on the lovely earth,
A chaos of deep passion, from his birth.
But should it be—that dream eternally
Continuing—as dreams have been to me
In my young boyhood—should it thus be given,
'Twere folly still to hope for higher Heaven.
For I have revelled when the sun was bright
I' the summer sky, in dreams of living light,
And loveliness—have left my very heart
Inclines of my imaginary apart²
From mine own home, with beings that have been
Of mine own thought—what more could I have seen?
'Twas once—and only once—and the wild hour
From my remembrance shall not pass—some power
Or spell had bound me—'twas the chilly wind
Came o'er me in the night, and left behind
Its image on my spirit—or the moon

Shone on my slumbers in her lofty noon
Too coldly—or the stars—howe'er it was
That dream was as that night-wind—let it pass.
I have been happy—though in a dream.
I have been happy—and I love the theme:
Dreams! in their vivid coloring of life
As in that fleeting, shadowy, misty strife
Of semblance with reality which brings
To the delirious eye, more lovely things
Of Paradise and Love—and all my own!—
Than young Hope in his sunniest hour hath known.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

Thy soul shall find itself alone
'Mid dark thoughts of the gray tombstone—
Not one, of all the crowd, to pry
Into thine hour of secrecy.
Be silent in that solitude
 Which is not loneliness—for then
The spirits of the dead who stood
 In life before thee are again
In death around thee—and their will
Shall then overshadow thee: be still.
For the night—tho' clear—shall frown—
And the stars shall not look down
From their high thrones in the Heaven,
With light like Hope to mortals given—
But their red orbs, without beam,
To thy weariness shall seem
As a burning and a fever
Which would cling to thee forever.
Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish—
Now are visions ne'er to vanish—
From thy spirit shall they pass
No more—like dew-drops from the grass.
The breeze—the breath of God—is still—

And the mist upon the hill
Shadowy—shadowy—yet unbroken,
Is a symbol and a token—
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries!

EVENING STAR

'Twas noontide of summer,
And midtime of night,
And stars, in their orbits,
Shone pale, through the light
Of the brighter, cold moon.
'Mid planets her slaves,
Herself in the Heavens,
Her beam on the waves.

I gazed awhile
On her cold smile;
Too cold—too cold for me—
There passed, as a shroud,
A fleecy cloud,
And I turned away to thee,
Proud Evening Star,
In thy glory afar
And dearer thy beam shall be;
For joy to my heart
Is the proud part
Thou bearest in Heaven at night,
And more I admire
Thy distant fire,

Than that colder, lowly light.

IMITATION

A dark unfathomed tide
Of interminable pride—
A mystery, and a dream,
Should my early life seem;
I say that dream was fraught
With a wild and waking thought
Of beings that have been,
Which my spirit hath not seen,
Had I let them pass me by,
With a dreaming eye!
Let none of earth inherit
That vision on my spirit;
Those thoughts I would control,
As a spell upon his soul:
For that bright hope at last
And that light time have past,
And my worldly rest hath gone
With a sigh as it passed on:
I care not though it perish
With a thought I then did cherish.

STANZAS

*How often we forget all time, when lone
Admiring Nature's universal throne;
Her woods—her wilds—her mountains—the
intense
Reply of Hers to Our intelligence!*

I

In youth I have known one with whom the Earth
In secret communing held—as he with it,
In daylight, and in beauty, from his birth:
Whose fervid, flickering torch of life was lit
From the sun and stars, whence he had drawn forth
A passionate light such for his spirit was fit—
And yet that spirit knew—not in the hour
Of its own fervor—what had o'er it power.

II

Perhaps it may be that my mind is wrought
To a fever³ by the moonbeam that hangs o'er,
But I will half believe that wild light fraught
With more of sovereignty than ancient lore
Hath ever told—or is it of a thought
The unembodied essence, and no more
That with a quickening spell doth o'er us pass
As dew of the night-time, o'er the summer grass?

III

Doth o'er us pass, when, as th' expanding eye
To the loved object—so the tear to the lid
Will start, which lately slept in apathy?
And yet it need not be—(that object) hid
From us in life—but common—which doth lie
Each hour before us—but then only bid
With a strange sound, as of a harp-string broken
T' awake us—'Tis a symbol and a token—

IV

Of what in other worlds shall be—and given
In beauty by our God, to those alone
Who otherwise would fall from life and Heaven
Drawn by their heart's passion, and that tone,
That high tone of the spirit which hath striven
Though not with Faith—with godliness—whose throne
With desperate energy 't hath beaten down;
Wearing its own deep feeling as a crown.

A DREAM

In visions of the dark night
I have dreamed of joy departed—
But a waking dream of life and light
Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah! what is not a dream by day
To him whose eyes are cast
On things around him with a ray
Turned back upon the past?

That holy dream—that holy dream,
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam,
A lonely spirit guiding.

What though that light, thro' storm and night,
So trembled from afar—
What could there be more purely bright
In Truth's day-star?

“THE HAPPIEST DAY”

I

The happiest day—the happiest hour
My seared and blighted heart hath known,
The highest hope of pride and power,
I feel hath flown.

II

Of power! said I? Yes! such I ween
But they have vanished long, alas!
The visions of my youth have been—
But let them pass.

III

And pride, what have I now with thee?
Another brow may ev'n inherit
The venom thou hast poured on me—
Be still my spirit!

IV

The happiest day—the happiest hour
Mine eyes shall see—have ever seen
The brightest glance of pride and power
I feet have been:

V

But were that hope of pride and power
Now offered with the pain
Ev'n *then* I felt—that brightest hour
I would not live again:

VI

For on its wing was dark alloy
And as it fluttered—fell
An essence—powerful to destroy
A soul that knew it well.

THE LAKE

In spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less—
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,
And the tall pines that towered around.

But when the Night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,
And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody—
Then—ah, then, I would awake
To the terror of the lone lake.

Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight—
A feeling not the jewelled mine
Could teach or bribe me to define—
Nor Love—although the Love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
And in its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring

To his lone imagining—
Whose solitary soul could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

TO THE RIVER ———

Fair river! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty—the unhidden heart—
The playful mazziness of art
In old Alberto's daughter;

But when within thy wave she looks—
Which glistens then, and trembles—
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
Her worshipper resembles;
For in my heart, as in thy stream,
Her image deeply lies
His heart which trembles at the beam
Of her soul-searching eyes.

ALONE

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring—
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow—I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone—
And all I loved—I loved alone—
Thou—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From every depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still—
From the torrent, or the fountain—
From the red cliff of the mountain—
From the sun that round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it passed me flying by—
From the thunder, and the storm—
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.

SONNET—TO SCIENCE

Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

AN ACROSTIC

Elizabeth it is in vain you say
"Love not"—thou sayest it in so sweet a way:
In vain those words from thee or L. E. L.
Zantippe's talents had enforced so well:
Ah! if that language from thy heart arise,
Breathe it less gently forth—and veil thine eyes.
Endymion, recollect, when Luna tried
To cure his love—was cured of all beside—
His folly—pride—and passion—for he died.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth—it surely is most fit
[Logic and common usage so commanding]
In thy own book that *first* thy name be writ,
Zeno⁴ and other sages notwithstanding;
And *I* have other reasons for so doing
Besides my innate love of contradiction;
Each poet—*if* a poet—in pursuing
The muses thro' their bowers of Truth or Fiction,
Has studied very little of his part,
Read nothing, written less—in short 's a fool
Endued with neither soul, nor sense, nor art,
Being ignorant of one important rule,
Employed in even the theses of the school—
Called—I forget the heathenish Greek name
[Called anything, its meaning is the same]
“Always write *first* things uppermost in the heart.”

AL AARAAF⁵

I

O! nothing earthly save the ray
(Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye,
As in those gardens where the day
Springs from the germs of Circassy—
O! nothing earthly save the thrill
Of melody in woodland rill—
Or (music of the passion-hearted)
Joy's voice so peacefully departed
That like the murmur in the shell,
Its echo dwelleth and will dwell—
O! nothing of the dross of ours—
Yet all the beauty—all the flowers
That list our Love, and deck our bowers—
Adorn yon world afar, afar—
The wandering star.

'Twas a sweet time for Nesace—for there
Her world lay lolling on the golden air,
Near four bright suns—a temporary rest—

An oasis in desert of the blest.
Away—away—'mid seas of rays that roll
Empyrean splendor o'er th' unchained soul—
The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)
Can struggle to its destin'd eminence—
To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode,
And late to ours, the favor'd one of God—
But, now, the ruler of an anchor'd realm,
She throws aside the sceptre—leaves the helm,
And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,
Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, loveliest in yon lovely Earth,
Whence sprang the "Idea of Beauty" into birth,
(Falling in wreaths thro' many a startled star,
Like woman's hair 'mid pearls, until, afar,
It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt),
She look'd into Infinity—and knelt.
Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled—
Fit emblems of the model of her world—
Seen but in beauty—not impeding sight—
Of other beauty glittering thro' the light—
A wreath that twined each starry form around,
And all the opal'd air in color bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed
Of flowers: of lilies such as rear'd the head
On the fair Capo Deucato,⁶ and sprang
So eagerly around about to hang
Upon the flying footsteps of—deep pride—
Of her who lov'd a mortal—and so died.⁷
The Sephalica, budding with young bees,

Uprear'd its purple stem around her knees:
And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnam'd—⁸
Inmate of highest stars, where erst it sham'd
All other loveliness: its honied dew
(The fabled nectar that the heathen knew)
Deliriously sweet, was dropp'd from Heaven,
And fell on gardens of the unforgiven
In Trebizond—and on a sunny flower
So like its own above that, to this hour,
It still remaineth, torturing the bee
With madness, and unwonted reverie:
In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf
And blossom of the fairy plant, in grief
Disconsolate linger—grief that hangs her head,
Repenting follies that full long have fled,
Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,
Like guilty beauty, chasten'd, and more fair:
Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light
She fears to perfume, perfuming the night:
And Clytia⁹ pondering between many a sun,
While pettish tears adown her petals run:
And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth—¹⁰
And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,
Bursting its odorous heart in spirit to wing
Its way to Heaven, from garden of a king:
And Valisnerian lotus thither flown¹¹
From struggling with the waters of the Rhone:
And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante!¹²
Isola d'oro!—Fior di Levante!
And the Nelumbo bud that floats forever.¹³
With Indian Cupid down the holy river—

Fair flowers, and fairy! to whose care is given
To bear the Goddess' song, in odors up to Heaven.¹⁴

“Spirit! that dwellest where,
 In the deep sky,
The terrible and fair,
 In beauty vie!
Beyond the line of blue—
 The boundary of the star
Which turneth at the view
 Of thy barrier and thy bar—
Of the barrier overgone
 By the comets who were cast
From their pride, and from their throne
 To be drudges till the last—
To be carriers of fire
 (The red fire of their heart)
With speed that may not tire
 And with pain that shall not part—
Who livest—*that* we know—
 In Eternity—we feel—
But the shadow of whose brow
 What spirit shall reveal?
Tho' the beings whom thy Nesace,
 Thy messenger hath known
Have dream'd for thy Infinity
 A model of their own—¹⁵
Thy will is done, O, God!
 The star hath ridden high
Thro' many a tempest, but she rode
 Beneath thy burning eye;
And here, in thought, to thee—

In thought that can alone
Ascend thy empire and so be
A partner of thy throne—
By wingèd Fantasy,¹⁶
My embassy is given,
Till secrecy shall knowledge be
In the environs of Heaven.”

She ceas'd—and buried then her burning cheek
Abash'd, amid the lilies there, to seek
A shelter from the fervor of His eye;
For the stars trembled at the Deity.
She stirr'd not—breath'd not—for a voice was there
How solemnly pervading the calm air!
A sound of silence on the startled ear
Which dreamy poets name “the music of the sphere.”
Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
“Silence”—which is the merest word of all.
All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things
Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings—
But ah! not so when, thus, in realms on high
The eternal voice of God is passing by,
And the red winds are withering in the sky!

“What tho' in worlds which sightless cycles run,¹⁷
Link'd to a little system, and one sun—
Where all my love is folly, and the crowd
Still think my terrors but the thunder cloud,
The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean-wrath—
(Ah! will they cross me in my angrier path?)
What tho' in worlds which own a single sun
The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run,

Yet thine is my resplendency, so given
To bear my secrets thro' the upper Heaven.
Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,
With all thy train, athwart the moony sky—
Apart—like fire-flies in Sicilian night,¹⁸
And wing to other worlds another light!
Divulge the secrets of thy embassy
To the proud orbs that twinkle—and so be
To ev'ry heart a barrier and a ban
Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man!"

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,
The single-moonèd eve!—on Earth we plight
Our faith to one love—and one moon adore—
The birthplace of young Beauty had no more.
As sprang that yellow star from downy hours,
Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,
And bent o'er sheeny mountain and dim plain
Her way—but left not yet her Therasaeon reign.¹⁹

II

High on a mountain of enamell'd head—
Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed
Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,
Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees
With many a mutter'd "hope to be forgiven"
What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven—

Of rosy head, that towering far away
Into the sunlit ether, caught the ray
Of sunken suns at eve—at noon of night,
While the moon danc'd with the fair stranger light—
Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile
Of gorgeous columns on th' unburden'd air,
Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile
Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,
And nursled the young mountain in its lair.
Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall²⁰
Thro' the ebon air, besilvering the pall
Of their own dissolution, while they die—
Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.
A dome, by linkèd light from Heaven let down,
Sat gently on these columns as a crown—
A window of one circular diamond, there,
Look'd out above into the purple air,
And rays from God shot down that meteor chain
And hallow'd all the beauty twice again,
Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,
Some eager spirit flapp'd his dusky wing.
But on the pillars Seraph eyes have seen
The dimness of this world: that grayish green
That Nature loves the best for Beauty's grave
Lurk'd in each cornice, round each architrave—
And every sculptur'd cherub thereabout
That from his marble dwelling peerèd out,
Seem'd earthly in the shadow of his niche—
Achaian statues in a world so rich?
Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis—²¹
From Balbec, and the stilly, clear abyss

Of beautiful Gomorrah! Oh, the wave²²
Is now upon thee—but too late to save!

Sound loves to revel in a summer night:
Witness the murmur of the gray twilight
That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,²³
Of many a wild star-gazer long ago—
That stealeth ever on the ear of him
Who, musing, gazeth on the distance dim.
And sees the darkness coming as a cloud—
Is not its form—its voice—most palpable and loud?²⁴

But what is this?—it cometh—and it brings
A music with it—'tis the rush of wings—
A pause—and then a sweeping, falling strain,
And Nesace is in her halls again.
From the wild energy of wanton haste
Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips apart;
The zone that clung around her gentle waist
Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart.
Within the centre of that hall to breathe
She paus'd and panted, Zanthé! all beneath,
The fairy light that kiss'd her golden hair
And long'd to rest, yet could but sparkle there!

Young flowers were whispering in melody²⁵
To happy flowers that night—and tree to tree;
Fountains were gushing music as they fell
In many a starlit grove, or moonlit dell;
Yet silence came upon material things—
Fair flowers, bright waterfalls and angel wings—
And sound alone that from the spirit sprang

Bore burden to the charm the maiden sang:

“Neath blue-bell or streamer—
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps, from the dreamer,
The moonbeam away—²⁶
Bright beings! that ponder,
With half-closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro’ the shade, and
Come down to your brow
Like—eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now—
Arise! from your dreaming
In violet bowers,
To duty beseeming
These starlitten hours—
And shake from your tresses
Encumber’d with dew
The breath of those kisses
That cumber them too—
(O! how, without you, Love!
Could angels be blest?)
Those kisses of true love
That lull’d ye to rest!
Up! shake from your wing
Each hindering thing:
The dew of the night—
It would weigh down your flight;
And true love caresses—
O! leave them apart!

They are light on the tresses,
But lead on the heart.

“Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
O! is it thy will
On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,
Like the lone Albatross,²⁷
Incumbent on night
(As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?

“Ligeia! wherever
Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
In a dreamy sleep—
But the strains still arise
Which *thy* vigilance keep—
The sound of the rain
Which leaps down to the flower,
And dances again
In the rhythm of the shower—
The murmur that springs²⁸
From the growing of grass
Are the music of things—
But are modell’d, alas!—

Away, then, my dearest,
O! hie thee away
To springs that lie clearest
Beneath the moon-ray—
To lone lake that smiles,
In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles
That enjewel its breast—
Where wild flowers, creeping,
Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping
Full many a maid—
Some have left the cool glade, and
Have slept with the bee—²⁹
Arouse them, my maiden,
On moorland and lea—
Go! breathe on their slumber,
All softly in ear,
The musical number
They slumber'd to hear—
For what can awaken
An angel so soon
Whose sleep hath been taken
Beneath the cold moon,
As the spell which no slumber
Of witchery may test,
The rhythmical number
Which lull'd him to rest?"

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view,
A thousand seraphs burst th' Empyrean thro'.
Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight—

Seraphs in all but "Knowledge," the keen light
That fell, refracted, thro' thy bounds afar
O Death! from eye of God upon that star:
Sweet was that error—sweeter still that death—
Sweet was that error—ev'n with *us* the breath
Of Science dims the mirror of our joy—
To them 'twere the Simoom, and would destroy—
For what (to them) availeth it to know
That Truth is Falsehood—or that Bliss is Woe?
Sweet was their death—with them to die was rife
With the last ecstasy of satiate life—
Beyond that death no immortality—
But sleep that pondereth and is not "to be"—
And there—oh! may my weary spirit dwell—
Apart from Heaven's Eternity—and yet how far from Hell!³⁰
What guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,
Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn?
But two: they fell: for Heaven no grace imparts
To those who hear not for their beating hearts.
A maiden-angel and her seraph-lover—
O! where (and ye may seek the wide skies over)
Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known?
Unguided Love hath fallen—'mid "tears of perfect moan."³¹

He was a goodly spirit—he who fell:
A wanderer by mossy-mantled well—
A gazer on the lights that shine above—
A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love:
What wonder? For each star is eye-like there,
And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair—
And they, and ev'ry mossy spring were holy
To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.

The night had found (to him a night of woe)
Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo—
Beetling it bends athwart the solemn sky,
And scowls on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.
Here sate he with his love—his dark eye bent
With eagle gaze along the firmament:
Now turn'd it upon her—but ever then
It trembled to the orb of EARTH again.

“Ianthe, dearest, see! how dim that ray!
How lovely 'tis to look so far away!
She seem'd not thus upon that autumn eve
I left her gorgeous halls—nor mourned to leave.
That eve—that eve—I should remember well—
The sun-ray dropped, in Lemnos with a spell
On th' Arabesque carving of a gilded hall
Wherein I sate, and on the draperied wall—
And on my eyelids—O, the heavy light!
How drowsily it weighed them into night!
On flowers, before, and mist, and love they ran
With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan:
But O, that light!—I slumbered—Death, the while,
Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle
So softly that no single silken hair
Awoke that slept—or knew that he was there.

“The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon
Was a proud temple called the Parthenon;³²
More beauty clung around her columned wall
Than even thy glowing bosom beats withal,³³
And when old Time my wing did disenthral
Thence sprang I—as the eagle from his tower,

And years I left behind me in an hour.
What time upon her airy bounds I hung,
One half the garden of her globe was flung
Unrolling as a chart unto my view—
Tenantless cities of the desert too!
Ianthe, beauty crowded on me then,
And half I wish'd to be again of men.”

“My Angelo! and why of them to be?
A brighter dwelling-place is here for thee—
And greener fields than in yon world above,
And women’s loveliness—and passionate love.”

“But, list, Ianthe! when the air so soft
Failed, as my pennoned spirit leapt aloft.³⁴
Perhaps my brain grew dizzy—but the world
I left so late was into chaos hurled,
Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,
And rolled a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart.
Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar,
And fell—not swiftly as I rose before,
But with a downward, tremulous motion thro’
Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto!
Nor long the measure of my falling hours,
For nearest of all stars was thine to ours—
Dread star! that came, amid a night of mirth,
A red Daedalion on the timid Earth.”

“We came—and to thy Earth—but not to us
Be given our lady’s bidding to discuss:
We came, my love; around, above, below,
Gay fire-fly of the night we come and go,

Nor ask a reason save the angel-nod
She grants to us, as granted by her God—
But, Angelo, than thine gray Time unfurled
Never his fairy wing o'er fairer world!
Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be
Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea—
But when its glory swell'd upon the sky,
As glowing Beauty's bust beneath man's eye,
We paused before the heritage of men,
And thy star trembled—as doth Beauty then!"

Thus, in discourse, the lovers whiled away
The night that waned and waned and brought no day.
They fell: for Heaven to them no hope imparts
Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

ROMANCE³⁵

Romance, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say—
To lisp my very earliest word
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings—
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

To ———

“THE BOWERS WHEREAT, IN DREAMS, I SEE”

The bowers whereat, in dreams, I see

 The wantonest singing birds,
Are lips—and all thy melody
 Of lip-begotten words—

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined

 Then desolately fall,
O God! on my funereal mind
 Like starlight on a pall—

Thy heart—*thy* heart!—I wake and sigh,

 And sleep to dream till day
Of truth that gold can never buy—
 Of the bawbles that it may.

To ———

“I HEED NOT THAT MY EARTHLY LOT”

I heed not that my earthly lot
Hath—little of Earth in it—
That years of love have been forgot
In the hatred of a minute:—
I mourn not that the desolate
Are happier, sweet, than I,
But that *you* sorrow for *my* fate
Who am a passer-by.

TO MARIE LOUISE

Not long ago, the writer of these lines,
In the mad pride of intellectuality,
Maintained "the power of words"—denied that ever
A thought arose within the human brain
Beyond the utterance of the human tongue:
And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
Two words—two foreign soft dissyllables—
Italian tones, made only to be murmured
By angels dreaming in the moonlit "dew
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill,"—
Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
Richer, far wider, far diviner visions
Than even the seraph harper, Israfil,
(Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's creatures")
Could hope to utter. And I! my spells are broken.
The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
I can not write—I can not speak or think—
Alas, I can not feel; for 'tis not feeling,
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams,
Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,

And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
Upon the left, and all the way along,
Amid empurpled vapors, far away
To where the prospect terminates—*thee only!*

FAIRYLAND

Dim vales—and shadowy floods—
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover
For the tears that drip all over.
Huge moons there wax and wane—
Again—again—again—
Every moment of the night—
Forever changing places—
And they put out the star-light
With the breath from their pale faces.
About twelve by the moon-dial
One more filmy than the rest
(A kind which, upon trial,
They have found to be the best)
Comes down—still down—and down
With its centre on the crown
Of a mountain's eminence,
While its wide circumference
In easy drapery falls
Over hamlets, over halls,
Wherever they may be—
O'er the strange woods—o'er the sea—
Over spirits on the wing—

Over every drowsy thing—
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light—
And then, how deep!—O, deep!
Is the passion of their sleep.
In the morning they arise,
And their moony covering
Is soaring in the skies,
With the tempests as they toss,
Like—almost anything—
Or a yellow Albatross.
They use that moon no more
For the same end as before—
Videlicet a tent—
Which I think extravagant:
Its atomies, however,
Into a shower dissever,
Of which those butterflies,
Of Earth, who seek the skies,
And so come down again
(Never-contented things!)
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy Heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes interwine

The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gayly-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,

Shall do it reverence.

ISRAFEL 36

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
 “Whose heart-strings are a lute”;
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy Stars (so legends tell)
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
 Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
 In her highest noon,
 The enamored Moon
Blushes with love,
 While, to listen, the red levin
 (With the rapid Pleiads, even,
 Which were seven),
 Pauses in Heaven
And they say (the starry choir
 And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
 By which he sits and sings—
The trembling living wire
 Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
 Where deep thoughts are a duty—
Where Love's a grown-up God—
 Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
 Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,
 Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
 Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live and long!

The ecstasies above
 With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
 With the fervor of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
 Is a world of sweets and sour;
 Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
 Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
 Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
 A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
 From my lyre within the sky.

A PAEAN

I

How shall the burial rite be read?
The solemn song be sung?
The requiem for the loveliest dead,
That ever died so young?

II

Her friends are gazing on her,
And on her gaudy bier,
And weep!—oh! to dishonor
Dead beauty with a tear!

III

They loved her for her wealth—
And they hated her for her pride—
But she grew in feeble health,
And they *love* her—that she died.

IV

They tell me (while they speak
Of her “costly broider’d pall”)
That my voice is growing weak—
That I should not sing at all—

V

Or that my tone should be
Tun’d to such solemn song
So mournfully—so mournfully,
That the dead may feel no wrong.

VI

But she is gone above,
With young Hope at her side,
And I am drunk with love
Of the dead, who is my bride.—

VII

Of the dead—dead who lies
All perfum'd there,
With the death upon her eyes,
And the life upon her hair.

VIII

Thus on the coffin loud and long
I strike—the murmur sent
Through the gray chambers to my song,
Shall be the accompaniment.

IX

Thou diedst in thy life's June—
But thou didst not die too fair:
Thou didst not die too soon,
Nor with too calm an air.

X

From more than friends on earth,
Thy life and love are riven,
To join the untainted mirth
Of more than thrones in heaven.—

XII

Therefore, to thee this night
I will no requiem raise,
But waft thee on thy flight,
With a Paean of old days.

THE SLEEPER

At midnight in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
(Her casement open to the skies)
Irene, with her Destinies!

Oh, lady bright! can it be right—
This window open to the night?
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop—

The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully—so fearfully—
Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid
That o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all-solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep;
Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold—
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And wingèd panels fluttering back,

Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,
Of her grand family funerals—
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood many an idle stone—
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!
It was the dead who groaned within.

To HELEN³⁷

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece,
To the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window niche
How statue-like I me thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

Once it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sun-light lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless—
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!

They wave:—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep:—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.

THE COLISEUM

Type of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power!
At length—at length—after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!
I feel ye now—I feel ye in your strength—
O spells more sure than e'er Judaeen king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!

Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the hornèd moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones!

But stay! these walls—these ivy-clad arcades—
These mouldering plinths—these sad and blackened shafts—
These vague entablatures—this crumbling frieze—
These shattered cornices—this wreck—this ruin—
These stones—alas! these gray stones—are they all—
All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?
“Not all”—the Echoes answer me—“not all!
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.
We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent—we pallid stones.
Not all our power is gone—not all our fame—
Not all the magic of our high renown—
Not all the wonder that encircles us—
Not all the mysteries that in us lie—
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory.”

SERENADE

So sweet the hour—so calm the time,
I feel it more than half a crime,
When Nature sleeps and stars are mute,
To mar the silence ev'n with lute.
At rest on ocean's brilliant dyes
An image of Elysium lies:
Seven Pleiades entranced in Heaven,
Form in the deep another seven:
Endymion nodding from above
Sees in the sea a second love.
Within the valleys dim and brown,
And on the spectral mountain's crown,
The wearied light is dying down;
And earth, and stars, and sea, and sky
Are redolent of sleep, as I
Am redolent of thee and thine
Enthralling love, my Adeline.
But list, O list—so soft and low
Thy lover's voice tonight shall flow,
That, scarce awake, thy soul shall deem
My words the music of a dream.
Thus, while no single sound too rude,
Upon thy slumber shall intrude,

Our thoughts, our souls—O God above!
In every deed shall mingle, love.

TO ONE IN PARADISE

Thou wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine—
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
“On! on!”—but o’er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o’er!
“No more—no more—no more”—
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams!

Alas! for that accursèd time
They bore thee o'er the billow,
From love to titled age and crime,
And an unholy pillow!—
From me, and from our misty clime,
Where weeps the silver willow!

HYMN

At morn—at noon—at twilight dim—
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and woe—in good and ill—
Mother of God, be with me still!
When the Hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee;
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

THE BRIDAL BALLAD

The ring is on my hand,
 And the wreath is on my brow;
Satins and jewels grand
Are all at my command
 And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well;
 But, when first he breathed his vow,
I felt my bosom swell—
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed *his* who fell
In the battle down the dell,
 And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,
 And he kissed my pallid brow,
While a reverie came o'er me,
And to the churchyard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
 "O*h*, I am happy now!"

And thus the words were spoken,

And thus the plighted vow,
And, though my faith be broken,
And, though my heart be broken,
Behold the golden token
That *proves* me happy now!

Would to God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how,
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken—
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.

TO ZANTE

Fair isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take!
How many memories of what radiant hours
At sight of thee and thine at once awake!
How many scenes of what departed bliss!
How many thoughts of what entombèd hopes!
How many visions of a maiden that is
No more—no more upon thy verdant slopes!
No more! alas, that magical sad sound
Transforming all! Thy charms shall please *no more*—
Thy memory *no more!* Accursèd ground
Henceforward I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
O hyacinthine isle! O purple Zante!
"Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!"

THE HAUNTED PALACE

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion—
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting

(Porphyrogene!)

In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh—but smile no more.

SILENCE

There are some qualities—some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a two-fold *Silence*—sea and shore—
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's "No More."
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not!
No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)
Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man), commend thyself to God!

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo! 'tis a gala night
 Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
 In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
 A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
 The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
 Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly—
 Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
 That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings
 Invisible Woe!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
 It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased forevermore,
 By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in

To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And the angels sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, “Man,”
And its Hero the Conqueror Worm.

EULALIE

I dwelt alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride—
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride.
Ah, less—less bright
The stars of the night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
And never a flake
That the vapor can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded curl—
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble and
careless curl.
Now Doubt—now Pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
And all day long
Shines, bright and strong,
Astarté within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye—
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

LENORE

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll!—a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river.
And, Guy de Vere, hast *thou* no tear?—weep now or never more!
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
Come! let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be sung!—
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young—
A dirge for her, the doubly dead in that she died so young.

“Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her
pride,
And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her—that she
died!
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read?—the requiem how be sung
By you—by yours, the evil eye—by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?”

Peccavimus; but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong!
The sweet Lenore hath “gone before,” with Hope, that flew
beside
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been thy
bride—
For her, the fair and *débonnaire*, that now so lowly lies,

The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes—
The life still there, upon her hair—the death upon her eyes.

“Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a paeon of old days!
Let *no* bell toll!—lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note, as it doth float up from the damnèd
Earth.

To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant ghost is
riven—

From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven—
From grief and groan to a golden throne beside the King of
Heaven.”

DREAMLAND

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule—
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the dews that drip all over;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore;
Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
Their lone waters—lone and dead,
Their still waters—still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread

Their lone waters, lone and dead—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily—
By the mountains—near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever—
By the gray woods—by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp—
By the dismal tarns and pools
Where dwell the Ghouls—
By each spot the most unholy—
In each nook most melancholy—
There the traveller meets aghast
Sheeted Memories of the Past—
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by—
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region—
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis—oh 'tis an Eldorado!
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not—dare not openly view it;
Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringed lid;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely,

Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

THE RAVEN³⁸

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping—rapping at my chamber door.
“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the
floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost
Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—

This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping—tapping at my chamber
door—

That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the
door:—

Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,
fearing,

Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream
before;

But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word,
"Lenore!"

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word,
"Lenore!"

Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon I heard again a tapping, somewhat louder than before.

"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—

'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not an instant stopped or
stayed he;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber
door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no
craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly
shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he
fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered, “Other friends have flown
before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown
before.”
Then the bird said, “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store,

Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden
bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of—'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and
door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of
yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an
unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he
hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here
ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—*is there* balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both
adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked,
upstarting—
“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my
door!”
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the
floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

To F———[39](#)

Beloved! amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path—
(Drear path, alas! where grows
Not even one lonely rose)—
My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea—
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storm—but where meanwhile
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

A VALENTINE⁴⁰

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
Brightly expressive as the twins of Leda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
Search narrowly the lines!—they hold a treasure
Divine—a talisman—an amulet
That must be worn *at heart*. Search well the measure—
The words—the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes scintillating soul, there lie *perdus*
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
Of poets by poets—as the name is a poet's, too.
Its letters, although naturally lying
Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando—
Still form a synonym for Truth—Cease trying!
You will not read the riddle, though you do the best you *can*
do.

TO MARIE LOUISE (SHEW)

Of all who hail thy presence as the morning—
Of all to whom thine absence is the night—
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun—of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope—for life—ah, above all,
For the resurrection of deep buried faith
In truth, in virtue, in humanity—
Of all who, on despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, "Let there be light!"
At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled
In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes—
Of all who owe thee most, whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship—oh, remember
The truest, the most fervently devoted,
And think that these weak lines are written by him—
By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.

ULALUME⁴¹

The skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crispèd and sere—
The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll—
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—

Our memories were treacherous and sere—
For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year—
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
We noted not the dim lake of Auber—
(Though once we had journeyed down here)—
We remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the sun-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian:
She rolls through an ether of sighs—
She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies—
To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust—
Her pallor I strangely mistrust—
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings till they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its Sybillic splendor is beaming
With Hope and in Beauty to-night—
See!—it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright—
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That can not but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume—

'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispèd and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere;
And I cried—"It was surely October
On *this* very night of last year,
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here!
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber—
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

THE BELLS⁴²

I

Hear the sledges with the bells—
 Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
 How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
 In the icy air of night!
While the stars, that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
 With a crystalline delight;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
 From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

Hear the mellow wedding bells
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten golden-notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the future! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror now their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night

How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now—now to sit or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!

What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!

In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy meaning of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.

And the people—ah, the people—
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,

And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling

On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—

They are Ghouls:
And their king it is who tolls;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls

A paeon from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the paeon of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the paeon of the bells—
 Of the bells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the throbbing of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—
 To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
 As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
 To the rolling of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—
 To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

ELDORADO⁴³

Gayly bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
"Shadow," said he,
"Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?"

"Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,

Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,"
The shade replied,
"If you seek for Eldorado!"

AN ENIGMA⁴⁴

“Seldom we find,” says Solomon Don Dunce,
“Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.
Through all the flimsy things we see at once
As easily as through a Naples bonnet—
Trash of all trash!—how *can* a lady don it?
Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff—
Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff
Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it.”
And, veritably, Sol is right enough.
The general tuckermanities are arrant
Bubbles—ephemeral and so transparent—
But *this* is, now—you may depend upon it—
Stable, opaque, immortal—all by dint
Of the dear names that lie concealed within’t.

TO HELEN⁴⁵

I saw thee once—once only—years ago:
I must not say *how* many—but *not* many.
It was a July midnight; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,
There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,
With quietude, and sultriness and slumber,
Upon the upturn'd faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe—
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That gave out, in return for the love-light,
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death—
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.
Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half-reclining; while the moon
Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturn'd—alas, in sorrow!

Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight—
Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow),

That bade me pause before that garden-gate,
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?
No footstep stirred: the hated world all slept,
Save only thee and me—(O Heaven!—O God!
How my heart beats in coupling those two words!)—
Save only thee and me. I paused—I looked—
And in an instant all things disappeared.
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted!)
The pearly lustre of the moon went out:
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
The happy flowers and the repining trees,
Were seen no more: the very roses' odors
Died in the arms of the adoring airs.
All—all expired save thee—save less than thou:
Save only the divine light in thine eyes—
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.
I saw but them—they were the world to me.
I saw but them—saw only them for hours—
Saw only them until the moon went down.
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres!
How dark a woe! yet how sublime a hope!
How silently serene a sea of pride!
How daring an ambition! yet how deep—
How fathomless a capacity for love!

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees
Didst glide away. *Only thine eyes remained.*
They *would not* go—they never yet have gone.
Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,

They have not left me (as my hopes have) since.
They follow me—they lead me through the years.
They are my ministers—yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and enkindle—
My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their elysian fire.
They fill my soul with Beauty (which is Hope),
And are far up in Heaven—the stars I kneel to
In the sad, silent watches of my night;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still—two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun!

ANNABEL LEE⁴⁶

It was many and many a year ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden lived whom you may know
 By the name of ANNABEL LEE;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea:
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
 I and my ANNABEL LEE;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful ANNABEL LEE;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my ANNABEL LEE.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE;
And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the side of the sea.

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow—
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream:
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less *gone*?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?

Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

FOR ANNIE⁴⁷

Thank Heaven! the crisis—
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last—
And the fever called “Living”
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know,
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length—
But no matter!—I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly,
Now in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead—
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing,

Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart:—ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing!

The sickness—the nausea—
The pitiless pain—
Have ceased, with the fever
That maddened my brain—
With the fever called “Living”
That burned in my brain.

And oh! of all tortures
That torture the worst
Has abated—the terrible
Torture of thirst,
For the naphthaline river
Of Passion accurst:—
I have drank of a water
That quenches all thirst:—

Of a water that flows,
With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground—
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.

And ah! let it never
Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
And narrow my bed—
For man never slept

In a different bed;
And, to *sleep*, you must slumber
In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
Regretting its roses—
Its old agitations
Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly
Lying, it fancies
A holier odor
About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odor,
Commingled with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
To sleep on her breast—
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
 She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
 To keep me from harm—
To the queen of the angels
 To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
 Now in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
 That you fancy me dead—
And I rest so contentedly,
 Now in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
 That you fancy me dead—
That you shudder to look at me,
 Thinking me dead.

But my heart it is brighter
 Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
 For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
 Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
 Of the eyes of my Annie.

To My Mother⁴⁸

Because I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you—
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you,
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

TO FRANCES S. OSGOOD⁴⁹

Thou wouldst be loved?—then let thy heart
From its present pathway part not;
Being everything which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
And love a simple duty.

ENDNOTES

1. The earliest version of "Tamerlane" was included in the suppressed volume of 1827, but differs very considerably from the poem as now published. The present draft, besides innumerable verbal alterations and improvements upon the original, is more carefully punctuated, and, the lines being indented, presents a more pleasing appearance, to the eye at least. [↵](#)
2. In climes of mine imagining apart? —Ed. [↵](#)
3. Query "fervor"? —Ed. [↵](#)
4. It was a saying of this philosopher "that one's own name should never appear in one's own book." [↵](#)
5. A star was discovered by Tycho Brahe which appeared suddenly in the heavens attained, in a few days, a brilliancy surpassing that of Jupiter—then as suddenly disappeared, and has never been seen since.
"Al Aaraaf" first appeared, with the sonnet "To Silence" prefixed to it, in 1829, and is, substantially, as originally issued. In the edition for 1831, however, this poem, its author's longest, was introduced by the following twenty-

nine lines, which have been omitted in—all subsequent collections:

AL AARAAF

Mysterious star!
Thou wert my dream
All a long summer night—
Be now my theme!
By this clear stream,
Of thee will I write;
Meantime from afar
Bathe me in light!

Thy world has not the dross of ours,
Yet all the beauty—all the flowers
That list our love or deck our bowers
In dreamy gardens, where do lie
Dreamy maidens all the day;
While the silver winds of Circassy
On violet couches faint away.
Little—oh! little dwells in thee
Like unto what on earth we see:
Beauty's eye is here the bluest
In the falsest and untruest—
On the sweetest air doth float
The most sad and solemn note—

If with thee be broken hearts,
Joy so peacefully departs,
That its echo still doth dwell,
Like the murmur in the shell.
Thou! thy truest type of grief

Is the gently falling leaf—
Thou! thy framing is so holy
Sorrow is not melancholy.

[↩](#)

6. On Santa Maura—*olim* Deucadia. [↩](#)
7. Sappho. [↩](#)
8. This flower is much noticed by Lewenhoeck and Tournefort. The bee, feeding upon its blossom, becomes intoxicated. [↩](#)
9. Clytia—The Chrysanthemum Peruvianum, or, to employ a better-known term, the turnsol—which continually turns towards the sun, covers itself, like Peru, the country from which it comes, with dewy clouds which cool and refresh its flowers during the most violent heat of the day. —B. de St. Pierre [↩](#)
10. There is cultivated in the king's garden at Paris, a species of serpentine aloes without prickles, whose large and beautiful flower exhales a strong odor of the vanilla, during the time of its expansion, which is very short. It does not blow till towards the month of July—you then perceive it gradually open its petals—expand them—fade and die. —St. Pierre [↩](#)
11. There is found, in the Rhone, a beautiful lily of the Valisnerian kind. Its stem will stretch to the length of three or four feet—thus preserving its head above water in the swellings of the river. [↩](#)
12. The Hyacinth. [↩](#)

13. It is a fiction of the Indians, that Cupid was first seen floating in one of these down the river Ganges—and that he still loves the cradle of his childhood. ↵
14. And golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of the saints. —Rev. St. John ↵
15. The Humanitarians held that God was to be understood as having a really human form. —Vide Clarke's *Sermons*, vol. 1, page 26, fol. edit.

The drift of Milton's argument leads him to employ language which would appear, at first sight, to verge upon their doctrine; but it will be seen immediately, that he guards himself against the charge of having adopted one of the most ignorant errors of the dark ages of the church.

—Dr. Sumner's *Notes on Milton's Christian Doctrine*

This opinion, in spite of many testimonies to the contrary, could never have been very general. Andeus, a Syrian of Mesopotamia, was condemned for the opinion, as heretical. He lived in the beginning of the fourth century. His disciples were called Anthropomorphites. —Vide Du Pin

Among Milton's minor poems are these lines:—

*Dicite sacrorum præsidēs nemorum Deæ, etc.
Quis ille primus cujus ex imagine
Natura solers finxit humanum genus?
Eternus, incorruptus, æquævus polo,
Unusque et universus exemplar Dei.*

And afterwards,

*Non cui profundum Cæcitas lumen dedit
Dircæus augur vidit hunc alto sinu, etc.*



16. *Seltsamen Tochter Jovis
Seinem Schosskinde
Der Phantasie.*

—*Göethe*



17. Sightless—too small to be seen. —Legge

18. I have often noticed a peculiar movement of the fireflies;—
they will collect in a body and fly off, from a common centre,
into innumerable radii.

19. Therasaea, or Therasea, the island mentioned by Seneca,
which, in a moment, arose from the sea to the eyes of
astonished mariners.

20. Some star which, from the ruin'd roof
Of shak'd Olympus, by mischance did fall.

—*Milton.*



21. Voltaire, in speaking of Persepolis, says, "*Je connois bien
l'admiration qu' inspirent ces ruines—mais un palais érigé au
pied d'une chaine des rochers steriles—peut-il être un chef
d'œuvre des arts!*"

22. "Oh, the wave"—Ula Deguisi is the Turkish appellation; but,
on its own shores, it is called Bahar Loth, or Almotanah.
There were undoubtedly more than two cities engulfed in

the “dead sea.” In the valley of Siddim were five—Adrah, Zeboin, Zoar, Sodom and Gomorrah. Stephen of Byzantium mentions eight, and Strabo thirteen (engulfed)—but the last is out of all reason.

It is said, (Tacitus, Strabo, Josephus, Daniel of St. Saba, Nau, Maundrell, Troilo, D’Arvieux) that after an excessive drought, the vestiges of columns, walls, etc. are seen above the surface. At *any* season, such remains may be discovered by looking down into the transparent lake, and at such distances as would argue the existence of many settlements in the space now usurped by the “Asphaltites.” ↩

23. Eyraco—Chaldea. ↩

24. I have often thought I could distinctly hear the sound of the darkness as it stole over the horizon. ↩

25. Fairies use flowers for their charactery. —*Merry Wives of Windsor* ↩

26. In Scripture is this passage—“The sun shall not harm thee by day, nor the moon by night.” It is perhaps not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays, to which circumstance the passage evidently alludes. ↩

27. The Albatross is said to sleep on the wing. ↩

28. I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain and quote from memory:—“The verie essence and, as it were, springe heade and origine of all musiche is the verie pleasaunte sounde which the trees of the forest do make when they growe.” ↩

29. The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight.

The rhyme in this verse, as in one about sixty lines before, has an appearance of affectation. It is, however, imitated from Sir W. Scott, or rather from Claud Halcro—in whose mouth I admired its effect:

O! were there an island,
Tho' ever so wild
Where woman might smile, and
No man be beguil'd, etc.



30. With the Arabians there is a medium between Heaven and Hell, where men suffer no punishment, but yet do not attain that tranquil and even happiness which they suppose to be characteristic of heavenly enjoyment.

*Un no rompido sueno—
Un dia puro—allegre—libre
Quiera—
Libre de amor—de zelo—
De odio—de esperanza—de rezelo.*

—*Luis Ponce de Leon.*

Sorrow is not excluded from “Al Aaraaf,” but it is that sorrow which the living love to cherish for the dead, and which, in some minds, resembles the delirium of opium. The passionate excitement of Love and the buoyancy of spirit attendant upon intoxication are its less holy pleasures—the price of which, to those souls who make choice of “Al Aaraaf” as their residence after life, is final death and annihilation.

31. There be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon.

—Milton.



32. It was entire in 1687—the most elevated spot in Athens. 

33. Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the queen of love.

—Marlowe.



34. Pennon, for pinion. —Milton 

35. The poem styled “Romance,” constituted the Preface of the 1829 volume, but with the addition of the following lines:

Succeeding years, too wild for song,
Then rolled like tropic storms along,
Where, through the garish lights that fly
Dying along the troubled sky,
Lay bare, through vistas thunder-riven,
The blackness of the general Heaven,
That very blackness yet doth fling
Light on the lightning’s silver wing.

For being an idle boy lang syne,
Who read Anacreon and drank wine,
I early found Anacreon rhymes
Were almost passionate sometimes—
And by strange alchemy of brain

His pleasures always turned to pain—
His naïveté to wild desire—
His wit to love—his wine to fire—
And so, being young and dipt in folly,
I fell in love with melancholy,
And used to throw my earthly rest
And quiet all away in jest—
I could not love except where Death
Was mingling his with Beauty's breath—
Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny,
Were stalking between her and me.

⋮

But *now* my soul hath too much room—
Gone are the glory and the gloom—
The black hath mellow'd into gray,
And all the fires are fading away.

My draught of passion hath been deep—
I revell'd, and I now would sleep—
And after drunkenness of soul
Succeeds the glories of the bowl—
An idle longing night and day
To dream my very life away.

But dreams—of those who dream as I,
Aspiringly, are damned, and die:
Yet should I swear I mean alone,
By notes so very shrilly blown,
To break upon Time's monotone,
While yet my vapid joy and grief
Are tintless of the yellow leaf—

Why not an imp the graybeard hath,
Will shake his shadow in my path—
And e'en the graybeard will o'erlook
Connivingly my dreaming-book.



36. And the angel Israfael, whose heartstrings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.

—*Koran.*



37. "To Helen" first appeared in the 1831 volume, as did also "The Valley of Unrest" (as "The Valley Nis"), "Israfael," and one or two others of the youthful pieces. [↔](#)
38. "The Raven" was first published on the 29th January, 1845, in the New York *Evening Mirror*—a paper its author was then assistant editor of. It was prefaced by the following words, understood to have been written by N. P. Willis: "We are permitted to copy (in advance of publication) from the second number of the *American Review*, the following remarkable poem by Edgar Poe. In our opinion, it is the most effective single example of 'fugitive poetry' ever published in this country, and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift and 'pokerishness.' It is one of those 'dainties bred in a book' which we feed on. It will stick to the memory of everybody who reads it." In the February number of the *American Review* the poem was published as by "Quarles," and it was

introduced by the following note, evidently suggested if not written by Poe himself.

“The following lines from a correspondent— besides the deep, quaint strain of the sentiment, and the curious introduction of some ludicrous touches amidst the serious and impressive, as was doubtless intended by the author—appears to us one of the most felicitous specimens of unique rhyming which has for some time met our eye. The resources of English rhythm for varieties of melody, measure, and sound, producing corresponding diversities of effect, having been thoroughly studied, much more perceived, by very few poets in the language. While the classic tongues, especially the Greek, possess, by power of accent, several advantages for versification over our own, chiefly through greater abundance of spondaic feet, we have other and very great advantages of sound by the modern usage of rhyme. Alliteration is nearly the only effect of that kind which the ancients had in common with us. It will be seen that much of the melody of ‘The Raven’ arises from alliteration, and the studious use of similar sounds in unusual places. In regard to its measure, it may be noted that if all the verses were like the second, they might properly be placed merely in short lines, producing a not uncommon form; but the presence in all the others of one line—mostly the second in the verse” (stanza?)—“which flows continuously, with only an aspirate pause in the middle, like that

before the short line in the Sapphic Adonic, while the fifth has at the middle pause no similarity of sound with any part besides, gives the versification an entirely different effect. We could wish the capacities of our noble language in prosody were better understood."

—*Ed. Am. Rev.*



39. "To F——" (Frances Sargeant Osgood) appeared in the *Broadway Journal* for April, 1845. These lines are but slightly varied from those inscribed "To Mary," in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for July, 1835, and subsequently republished, with the two stanzas transposed, in *Graham's Magazine* for March, 1842, as "To One Departed." ↵
40. "A Valentine," one of three poems addressed to Mrs. Osgood, appears to have been written early in 1846.
To discover the names in this poem read the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, the fourth of the fourth and so on to the end. ↵
41. This poem was first published in Colton's *American Review* for December, 1847, as "To —— ———. Ulalume: A Ballad." Being reprinted immediately in the *Home Journal*, it was copied into various publications with the name of the editor, N. P. Willis, appended, and was ascribed to him. When first published, it contained the following additional stanza which Poe subsequently, at the suggestion of Mrs. Whitman, wisely suppressed:

Said we then—we two, then—“Ah, can it
Have been that the woodlandish ghouls—
The pitiful, the merciful ghouls—
To bar up our path and to ban it
From the secret that lies in these wolds—
Had drawn up the spectre of a planet
From the limbo of lunar souls—
This sinfully scintillant planet
From the Hell of the planetary souls?”



42. The bibliographical history of “The Bells” is curious. The subject, and some lines of the original version, having been suggested by the poet’s friend, Mrs. Shew, Poe, when he wrote out the first draft of the poem, headed it, “The Bells, By Mrs. M. A. Shew.” This draft, now the editor’s property, consists of only seventeen lines, and read thus:

I

The bells!—ah, the bells!
The little silver bells!
How fairy-like a melody there floats
From their throats—
From their merry little throats—
From the silver, tinkling throats
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Of the bells!

II

The bells!—ah, the bells!

The heavy iron bells!
How horrible a monody there floats
From their throats—
From their deep-toned throats—
From their melancholy throats!
How I shudder at the notes
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Of the bells!

In the autumn of 1848 Poe added another line to this poem, and sent it to the editor of the *Union Magazine*. It was not published. So, in the following February, the poet forwarded to the same periodical a much enlarged and altered transcript. Three months having elapsed without publication, another revision of the poem, similar to the current version, was sent, and in the following October was published in the *Union Magazine*. ↩

43. Although “Eldorado” was published during Poe’s lifetime, in 1849, in the *Flag of Our Union*, it does not appear to have ever received the author’s finishing touches. ↩

44. “An Enigma,” addressed to Mrs. Sarah Anna Lewis (“Stella”), was sent to that lady in a letter, in November, 1847, and the following March appeared in Sartain’s *Union Magazine*.

To discover the names in this poem read the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, the fourth of the fourth and so on to the end. ↩

45. “To Helen” (Mrs. S. Helen Whitman) was not published until November, 1848, although written several months earlier. It

first appeared in the *Union Magazine*, and with the omission, contrary to the knowledge or desire of Poe, of the line, “Oh, God! oh, Heaven—how my heart beats in coupling those two words.” ↵

46. “Annabel Lee” was written early in 1849, and is evidently an expression of the poet’s undying love for his deceased bride, although at least one of his lady admirers deemed it a response to her admiration. Poe sent a copy of the ballad to the *Union Magazine*, in which publication it appeared in January, 1850, three months after the author’s death. While suffering from “hope deferred” as to its fate, Poe presented a copy of “Annabel Lee” to the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, who published it in the November number of his periodical, a month after Poe’s death. In the meantime the poet’s own copy, left among his papers, passed into the hands of the person engaged to edit his works, and he quoted the poem in an obituary of Poe, in the *New York Tribune*, before anyone else had an opportunity of publishing it. ↵

47. “For Annie” was first published in the *Flag of Our Union*, in the spring of 1849. Poe, annoyed at some misprints in this issue, shortly afterwards caused a corrected copy to be inserted in the *Home Journal*. ↵

48. The sonnet, “To My Mother” (Maria Clemm), was sent for publication to the short-lived *Flag of Our Union*, early in 1849, but does not appear to have been issued until after its author’s death, when it appeared in the *Leaflets of Memory* for 1850.

The poem was addressed to the poet's mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm —Ed. ↩

49. "To F——s S. O——d," a portion of the poet's triune tribute to Mrs. Osgood, was published in the *Broadway Journal* for September, 1845. The earliest version of these lines appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for September, 1835, as "Lines Written in an Album," and was addressed to Eliza White, the proprietor's daughter. Slightly revised, the poem reappeared in Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1839, as "To ——."



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