

# AMBERGRIS

A SELECTION FROM THE POEMS

OF

ALEISTER CROWLEY

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREEM

MCMX

Keyed and proofread  
by Fra. A.B.N.

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## PREFACE

IN response to a widely-spread lack of interest in my writings, I have consented to publish a small and unrepresentative selection from the same. With characteristic cunning I have not included any poems published later than the Third Volume of my Collected Works.

The selection has been made by a committee of seven competent persons, sitting separately.

Only those poems have been included which obtained a majority vote.

This volume, thus almost ostentatiously de-mocratic, is therefore now submitted to the British Public with the fullest confidence that it will be received with exactly the same amount of acclamation as that to which I have become accustomed.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

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## AMBERGRIS

FROM THE TALE OF ARCHAIS

Song

Ere the grape of joy is golden  
    With the summer and the sun,  
Ere the maidens un beholden  
    Gather one by one,  
To the vineyard comes the shower,  
No sweet rain to fresh the flower  
    But the thunder rain that cleaves,  
    Rends and ruins tender leaves.

Ere the wine of perfect pleasure  
    From a perfect chalice poured,  
Swells the veins with such a measure  
    As the garden s lord  
Makes his votaries dance to, death  
Draws with soft delicious breath  
    To the maiden and the man.  
    Love and life are both a span.

AMBERGRIS--2

Ere the crimson lips have planted  
    Paler roses, warmer grapes,  
Ere the maiden breasts have panted,  
    And the sunny shapes  
Flit around to bless the hour,  
Comes men know not what false flower :  
    Ere the cup is drained, the wine  
    Grows unsweet, that was divine.

All the subtle airs are proven  
    False at dewfall ; at the dawn  
Sin and sorrow, interwoven,  
    Like a veil are drawn  
Over love and all delight.  
Grey desires invade the white.  
    Love and life are but a span ;  
    Woe is me ! and woe is man !



## In Hollow Stones, Scawfell

Blind the iron pinnacles edge the twilight ;  
Blind and black the ghylls of the mountain clefted,  
Crag and snow-clad slope in a distant vision  
Rise as before me.

Here (it seems) my feet by a tiny torrent  
Press the moss with a glad delight of being :  
Here my eyes look up to the riven mountain  
Split by the thunder,

Rent and rifted, shattered of wind and lightning,  
Smitten, scarred, and stricken of sun and tempest,  
Seamed with wounds, like adamant, shod with iron,  
Torn by the earthquake.

Still through all the stresses of doubtful weather  
Hold the firm old pinnacles, sky-defying ;  
Still the icy feet of the wind relentless.  
Walk in their meadows.

#### 4--AMBERGRIS

Fields that flower not, blossom in no new springtide;  
Fields where grass nor herb nor abounding darnel  
Flourish ; fields more barren, devoid, than ocean s  
Pasture ungarnered.

Deserts, stone as arid as sand, savannahs  
Black with wrecks, a wilderness evil, fruitless ;  
Still, to me, a land of the bluest heaven  
Studded with silver.

Castles bleak and bare as the wrath of ocean,  
Wasted wall and tower, as the blast had risen,  
Taken keep and donjon, and hurled the earthward,  
Rent and uprooted.

Such rock-ruins people me tribes and nations,  
Kings and queens and princes as pure as dawning,  
Brave as day and true ; and a happy people  
Lulled into freedom ;

Nations past the stormier times of tyrants,  
Past the sudden spark of a great rebellion,  
Past the iron gates that are thrust asunder  
Not without bloodshed :

IN HOLLOW STONES, SCAWFELL--5

Past the rule of might and the rule of lying,  
Free from gold's illusion, and free to cherish  
Joys of life diviner than war and passion--  
    Falsest of phantoms.

Only now true love, like a sun of molten  
Glory, surging up from a sea of liquid  
Silver, golden, exquisite, overflowing,  
    Soars into starland.

Sphere on sphere unite in the chant of wonder  
Star to star must add to the glowing chorus ;  
Sun and moon must mingle and speed the echo  
    Flaming through heaven.

Night and day divide, and the music strengthens,  
Gathers roar of seas and the dirge of moorlands ;  
Tempest, thunder, birds, and the breeze of summer  
    Join to augment it.

So the sound-world, filled of the fire of all things,  
Rolls majestic torrents of mighty music  
Through the stars where dwell the avenging spirits  
    Bound in the whirlwind . . .

6--AMBERGRIS

So the cliffs their Song . . . For the mist regathers,  
Girds them bride-like, fit for the sun to kiss them ;  
Darkness falls like dewfall about the hill-sides ;  
    Night is upon me.

Now to me remain in the doubtful twilight  
Stretches bare of flower, but touched with whispers,  
Grey with huddled rocks, and a space of woodland,  
    Pine-tree and poplar.

Now a stream to ford and a stile to clamber ;  
Last the inn, a book, and a quiet corner . . .  
Fresh as Spring, there kisses me on the forehead  
    Sleep, like a sister.

FROM SONGS OF THE SPIRIT

The Goad

ajñ uJgro n a;mp̄taivhn  
ai;qe ra pu rsw gai as JEllani a\_  
ajste ra\_ eJsp̄le rou\_  
oi{on, oi{on a[lgo\_ e[paqon, fivlai.  
Euripides.

Amsterdam, December 23rd, 1897.

Let me pass out beyond the city gate.  
All day I loitered in the little streets  
Of black worn houses tottering, like the fate  
That hangs above my head even now, and meets  
Prayer and defiance as not hearing it.  
They lean, these old black streets ! a little sky  
Peeps through the gap, the rough stone path is lit  
Just for a little by the sun, and I  
Watch his red face pass over, fade away  
To other streets, and other passengers,  
See him take pleasure where the heathen pray,  
See him relieve the hunter of his furs,

## 8--AMBERGRIS

All the wide world awaiting him, all folk  
Glad at his coming, only I must weep :  
Rise he or sink, my weary eyes invoke  
Only the respite of a little sleep ;  
Sleep, just a little space of sleep, to rest  
The fevered head and cool the aching eyes ;  
Sleep for a space, to fall upon the breast  
Of the dear God, that He may sympathise.  
Long has the day drawn out ; a bitter frost  
Sparkles along the streets ; the shipping heaves  
With the slow murmur of the sea, half lost  
In the last rustle of forgotten leaves.  
Over the bridges pass the throngs ; the sound,  
Deep and insistent, penetrates the mist  
I hear it not ; I contemplate the wound  
Stabbed in the flanks of my dear silver Christ.  
He hangs in anguish there ; the crown of thorns  
Pierces that palest brow ; the nails drip blood ;  
There is the wound ; no Mary by Him mourns,  
There is no John beside the cruel wood.  
I am alone to kiss the silver lips ;  
I rend my clothing for the temple veil ;  
My heart s black night must act the sun s eclipse ;  
My groans must play the earthquake, till I quail

THE GOAD--9

At my own dark imagining. And now  
    The wind is bitterer : the air breeds snow ;  
I put my Christ away ; I turn my brow  
    Towards the south stedfastly ; my feet must go  
Some journey of despair. I dare not turn  
    To meet the sun ; I will not follow him :  
Better to pass where sand and sulphur burn,  
    And days are hazed with heat, and nights are dim  
With some malarial poison. Better lie  
    Far and forgotten on some desert isle,  
Where I may watch the silent ships go by,  
    And let them share my burden for awhile.  
Let me pass out beyond the city gate  
    Where I may wander by the water still,  
And see the faint few stars immaculate  
    Watch their own beauty in its depth, and chill  
Their own desire within its icy stream.  
    Let me move on with vacant eyes, as one  
Lost in the labyrinth of some ill dream,  
    Move and move on, and never see the sun  
Lap all the mist with orange and red gold,  
    Throw some lank windmill into iron shade,  
And stir the chill canal with manifold  
    Rays of clear morning ; never grow afraid

10--AMBERGRIS

When he dips down beyond the far fiat land,  
    Know never more the day and night apart,  
Know not where frost has laid his iron hand  
    Save only that it fastens on my heart ;  
Save only that it grips with icy fire  
    These veins no fire of hell could satiate ;  
Save only that it quenches this desire.  
    Let me pass out beyond the city gate.



## Astrology

A lonely spirit seeks the midnight hour,  
    When souls have power  
To cast away one moment bonds of clay,  
    And touch the day  
With pallid, wistful lips beyond the earth,  
    And bring to birth  
New thoughts with which life long has travail d ;  
    As if one dead  
Should rise and utter secrets of the tomb,  
    And from hell s womb  
Or heaven s breast bring all the load of fears,  
    Toils of long years,  
Sorrows of life and agonies of death,  
    Hard caught-up breath,  
The labouring hands of love, the cheeks of shame,  
    The gloomy flame  
Of lust, the cruel torment of desire  
    More than hell fire,  
And bid them fade, as if the bryony  
    Let her flower die,

12--AMBERGRIS

And banished them through space, as if a star  
Dropped through the far  
Vault of the sky, and, as a lamp extinct  
With blood-red tinct,  
Went out. So lonely in mysterious night  
A wild, strange light  
Flickers around the sacred head of man,  
And bids him scan  
The scroll of heaven, and see if there be not,  
Black with no blot  
Of cloud, but golden lettered on the blue  
That mothers dew,  
This message of good hope, good trust, good fate,  
And good estate :  
Work on, hope ever, let your faith be built  
Of gold ungilt ;  
Your love exceed the starry vault for height,  
The heaven for might ;  
Your faith wax firmer than a ship at sleep  
On the grey deep,  
Anchored in some most certain anchorage  
From ocean s rage ;  
Your patience stand when mountains shake and quail  
Before the gale

ASTROLOGY--13

Of God's great tribulation. Make thee sure  
Thou canst endure!  
And work, work ever, sleep not, gird thy head  
With garlands red  
Of blood from swollen veins forced in bitter toil  
To win some spoil  
Of knowledge from the caverns of the deep!  
So shall the steep  
Pathways of heaven gleam with loftier fires  
Than earth's desires.  
So shall thou conquer Space, and lastly climb  
The walls of Time,  
And by the golden path the great have trod  
Reach up to God!

14--AMBERGRIS

FROM JEPHTHAH

Chorus of Maidens

O the time of dule and teen !  
O the dove the hawk has snared !  
Would to God we had not been,  
We, who see our maiden queen,  
Love has slain whom hate had spared.  
Sorrow for our sister sways  
All our maiden bosoms bared  
To the dying vesper rays,  
Where the sun below the bays  
Of the West is stooping ;  
All our hearts together drooping,  
Flowers the ocean bears.  
All the garb that gladness wears  
To a rent uncouth attire  
Changed with cares ;  
Happy songs our love had made  
Ere the sun had sunk his fire,  
In the moonrise fall and fade,

CHORUS OF MAIDENS--15

And the dregs of our desire  
Fall away to death.  
Tears divide our labouring breath  
That our sister O our sister !  
Moon and sun and stars have kissed her !  
She must touch the lips of death,  
Touch the lips whose coldness saith :  
Thou art clay.  
Let us fare away, away  
To the ice whose ocean gray  
Tumbles on the beach of rock,  
Where the wheeling vultures mock  
Our distress with horrid cries ;  
Where the flower relenting dies,  
And the sun is sharp to slay ;  
Where the ivory dome above  
Glimmers like the dawn of love  
On the weary way ;  
Where the ibex chant and call  
Over tempest's funeral ;  
Where the horned beast is shrill,  
And the eagle hath its will,  
And the shadows fall  
Sharp and black, till day is passed  
Over to the ocean vast ;

16--AMBERGRIS

Where the barren rocks resound  
Only to the rending roar  
Of the shattering streams that pour  
Rocks by ice eternal bound,  
Myriad cascades that crowned  
Once the far resounding throne  
Of the mountain spirits strong,  
All the treacherous souls that throng  
Desolate abodes of stone,  
Barren of all comely things,  
Given to the splended kings,  
Gloomy state, and glamour dark,  
Swooping jewel-feathered wings,  
Eyes translucent with a spark  
Of the world of fire, that swings  
Gates of adamant below  
Lofty minarets of snow.  
Thence the towering flames arise,  
Where the flashes white and wise  
Find their mortal foe.  
Let us thither, caring not  
Anything, or any more,  
Since the sorrow of our lot  
Craves to pass the abysmal door.  
Never more for us shall twine

CHORUS OF MAIDENS--17

Rosy fingers on the vine.  
Never maiden lips shall cull  
Myriad blossoms beautiful.  
Never cheeks shall dimple over  
At the perfume of the clover.  
Never bosoms bright and round  
Shall be garlanded and bound  
With the chain of myrtle, wreathed  
By the fingers of the maid  
Each has chosen for a mate,  
When the west wind lately breathed  
Murmurs in the wanton glade  
Of the day that dawneth late  
In a maiden's horoscope,  
Dawning faith and fire and hope  
On the spring that only knew  
Flowers and butterflies and dew,  
Skies and seas and mountains blue,  
On the spring that wot not of  
Fruit and falling leaves and love.  
Never dew-dashed foreheads fair  
Shall salute the idle air.  
Never shall we wander deep  
Where the fronds of fern, asleep,  
Kiss her rosy feet that pass

18--AMBERGRIS

On the spangled summer grass,  
Half awake, and drowse again.  
Never more our feet shall stain  
Purple with the joyous grape,  
Whence there rose a fairy shape  
In the fume and must and juice,  
Singing lest our eyes escape  
All his tunic wried and loose  
With the feet that softly trod  
In the vat the fairy god.  
Never more our eyes shall swim  
Looking for the love of him  
In the magic moon that bent  
Over maidens moon-content,  
When the summer woods were wet  
With our dewy songs, that set  
Quivering all seas and snows,  
Stars and tender winds that fret  
Lily, lily, laughing rose,  
Sighing, sighing violet,  
Dusky pansy, swaying rush,  
And the stream that flows  
Singing, ringing softly : Hush !  
Listen to the bird that goes  
Wooping to the brown mate's bough ;



CHORUS OF MAIDENS--19

Listen to the breeze that blows  
Over cape and valley now  
At the silence of the noon,  
Or the slumber hour  
Of the white delicious moon  
Like a lotus-flower !  
Let us sadly, slowly, to  
To the silence of the snow !

20--AMBERGRIS

FROM MYSTERIES

De Profundis

Blood, mist, and foam, then darkness. On my eyes  
Sits heaviness, the poor worn body lies  
    Devoid of nerve and muscle; it were death  
Save for the heart that throbs, the breast that sighs.

The brain reels drowsily, the mind is dulled,  
Deadened and drowned by noises that are lulled  
    By the harsh poison of the hateful breath.  
All sense and sound and seeing is annulled.

Within a body dead a deadened brain  
Beats with the burden of a shameful pain,  
    The sullen agony that dares to think,  
And think through sleep, and wake to think again.

Fools ! bitter fools ! Our breaths and kisses seem  
Constrained in devilry, debauch, and dream :  
    Lives logged in the morass of meat and drink,  
Loves dipped in Phlegethon, the perjured stream.

DE PROFUNDIS--21

Behold we would that hours and minutes pass,  
Watch the sands falling in the eager glass ;  
    To wile their weariness is pleasure s bliss ;  
But ah ! the years ! like smoke They fade, alas !

We weep them as they slip away ; we gaze  
Back on the likeness of the former days  
    The hair we fondle and the lips we kiss  
Roses grow yellow, and no purple stays.

Ah ! the old years ! Come back, ye vanished hours  
We wasted ; come, grow red, ye faded flowers !  
    What boots the weariness of olden time  
Now, when old age, a tempest-fury, lowers?

Up to high God beyond the weary land  
The days drift mournfully ; His hoary hand  
    Gathers them. Is it so ? My Foolish rime  
Dreams they are links upon an endless band.

The planets draw in endless orbits round  
The sun ; itself revolves in the profound  
    Black wells of space ; the comet s mystic track  
By the strong rule of a closed curve is bound.

22--AMBERGRIS

Why not with time? To-morrow we may see  
The circle ended if to-morrow be  
    And gaze on chaos, and a week bring back  
Adam and Even beneath the apple tree.

Or, like the comet, the wild race may end  
Out into darkness, and our circle bend  
    Round to all glory, in a sudden sweep,  
And speed triumphant with the sun to friend.

Love will not leave my home. She knows my tears,  
My angers and caprices ; still my ears  
    Listen to singing voices, till I weep  
Once more, less sadly, and set hounds on fears.

She will not leave me comfortless. And why?  
Through the dimmed glory of my clouded eye  
    She catches one sharp glint of love for her ;  
She will not leave me ever till I die ;

Nay, though I die ! Beyond the distant gloom  
Heaven springs, a fountain, out of Change s womb !  
    Time would all men within the grave inter :  
For Time himself shall no god find a tomb?

DE PROFUNDIS--23

Glory and love and work precipitate  
The end of man's desire so sayeth Fate.

Man answers: Love is stronger, work more sure,  
Glory more fadeless than her shafte abate.

Though all worlds fail, the pulse of Life be still,  
God fall, all darken, she hath not her will

Of deeds beyond recall, that shall endure :  
For us, these three divinest glasses fill,

Fill to the brim with lustrous dew, nor fail  
To leave the blossom and the nightingale,  
Loves earlier kiss, and manhood's glowing prime!  
Let these suffice. Shall man or Fate prevail?

Lo, we are blind, and dubious fingers grope  
In Despair's dungeon for the key of Hope ;

Lo, we are chained, and with a broken rhyme  
Would file our fetters and enlarge our scope.

Yet ants may move the mountain ; none is small  
But he who stretches out no arm at all :

Toadstools have wrecked fair cities in a night :  
One poet's song may bid a kingdom fall.

24--AMBERGRIS

Add to thy fellow-men one ounce of aid  
The block begins to shift, the start is made :  
    The rest is thine ; with overwhelming might  
The balance changes, and the task is paid.

Join st thou thy feeble hands in foolish prayer  
To him thy brain hath moulded and set there  
    In thy brain s heaven ? Such a god replies  
As thy fears move. So men pray everywhere

What God there be, is real. By His might  
Begot the universe within the night ;  
    If He had prayed to His own mind s weak lies  
Think st thou the heaven and earth had stood upright?

Remember him, but smite ! No workman hews  
His stone aright whose nerve arms refuse  
    To ply the chisel, but are raised to ask  
A visionary foreman he may choose

From the distortions of a sodden mind.  
God did first work on earth when womankind  
    He chipped from Adam s rib a thankless task  
I wot his wisdom has long since repined.

DE PROFUNDIS--25

Christ touched the leper and the widow's son ;  
And thou wouldst serve the work the Perfect One  
    Began, by folding arms and gazing up  
To heaven, as if thy work were rightly done.

I tell thee, he should say, if ye were met :  
    Thou hadst a talent ah, thou hast it yet  
    Wrapped in a napkin ! thou shalt drain the cup  
Of that damnation that may not forget

The wasted hours ! Ah, bitter interest  
Of our youth's capital forgotten zest  
    In all the pleasures of overflowing life,  
Wine tasteless, tired the brain, and cold the breast !

Ah ! but if with it is one good deed wrought,  
One kind word spoken, one immortal thought  
    Born in thee, all is paid : the weary strife  
Grows victory. Love is all and Death is nought !

Such an one wrote that work as I would meet,  
Lay my life's burden at his silver feet,  
    Have him give ear if I say Master. Yea !  
I know no heaven, no honour, half so sweet !

26--AMBERGRIS

He passed before me on the wheel of Time,  
He who knows no Time the intense sublime  
    Master of all philosophy and play,  
Lord of all love and music and sweet rime.

Follow thou him ! Work ever, if thy heart  
Be fervent with one hope, thy brain with art,  
    Thy lips with song, thine arm with strength to smite :  
Achieve some act ; its name shall not depart.

Christ laid Love s corner-stone, and C sar built  
The tower of glory ; Sappho s life was spilt  
    From fervent lips the torch of song to ignite :  
Thou mayst add yet a stone if but thou wilt.

And yet the days stream by ; night shakes the day  
From his pale throne of purple, to allay  
    The tremors of the earth ; day smiteth dark  
With the swift poignard dipped in Helios ray.

The days stream by ; with lips and cheeks grown pale  
On their indomitable breast we sail.  
    There is a favouring wind ; our idle bark  
Lingers, we raise no silk to meet the gale.



DE PROFUNDIS--27

The bank slips by ; we gather not its fruit.  
We plant no seed, we irrigate no root  
    True men have planted ; and the tare and thorn  
Spring to rank weedy vigour ; poisons shoot

Into the overspreading foliage ;  
So as days darken into weary age  
    The flowers are fewer ; the weeds are stronger born,  
And hands are grown too feeble to assuage

Their venom ; then, the unutterable sea !  
Is she green-cinctured with the earlier tree  
    Of life ? Do blossoms blow, or weeds create  
A foul rank undergrowth of misery ?

From the deep water of the bitterest brine  
Drowned children raise their arms ; their lips combine  
    To force a shriek; bid them go contemplate  
The cold philosophy of Zeno s shrine ?

Nay, stretch a hand ! Although their eagle clutch  
O erturn thy skiff, yet it is overmuch  
    To grieve for that : life is not so divine  
I count it little grief to part with such !

28--AMBERGRIS

We are wild serpents in a ring of fire ;  
Our necks stretch out, our haggard eyes aspire  
    In desperation ; from the fearful line  
Our coils revulse in impotence and ire.

An idle song it was the poet sang,  
A quavering note no brazen kettle s clang,  
    But gentle, drooping, tearful. Nay, achieve !  
I can remember how the finish rang

Clear, sharp, and loud ; the harp is glad to die  
And give the clarion one note silver-high.  
    It was too sweet for music, and I weave  
In vain the tattered woof of memory.

Ashes and dust !  
    Cold cinders dead !  
Our swords are rust ;  
    Our lives are fled  
Like dew on glass.  
    In vain we lust;  
Our hopes are sped,  
    Alas ! alas !  
From heaven we are thrust, we have no more thrust.  
    Alas !

DE PROFUNDIS--29

Gold hairs and gray !  
    Red lips and white !  
Warm hearts, cold clay !  
    Bright day, dim night !  
Our spirits pass  
    Like the hours away.  
We have no light,  
    Alas ! alas !  
We have no more day, we are fain to say  
    Alas !

In Love s a cure  
    For Fortune s hate;  
In Love s a lure  
    Shall laugh at Fate ;  
We have tolled Death s knell ;  
    All streams are pure ;  
We are new-create ;  
    All s well, all s well !  
We have God to endure, we are very sure  
    All s well !

In such wise rang the challenge unto Death  
With clear high eloquence and happy breath ;  
    So did a brave sad heart grow glad again  
And mock the riddle that the dead Sphinx saith.

30--AMBERGRIS

When I am dead, remember me for this  
That I bade workers work, and lovers kiss ;  
    Laughed with the Stoic at the dream of pain,  
And preached with Jesus the evangel bliss.

When I am dead, think kindly. rail my song !  
    Twas the poor utterance of an eager tongue ;  
    I stutter in my rime ? my heart was full  
Of greater longings, more divinely wrung

By love and pity and regret and trust,  
High hope from heaven that God will be just,  
    Spurn not the child because his mind was dull,  
Still less condemn him for his father s lust.

Yet I think priests shall answer Him in vain :  
Their gospel of disgrace, disease, and pain,  
    Shall move His heart of Love to such a wrath  
O Heart ! Turn back and look on Love again !

Behold, I have seen visions, and dreamed dreams !  
My verses eddy in slow wandering streams,  
    Veer like the wind, and know no certain path  
Yet their worst shades are tinged with dawning beams !

DE PROFUNDIS--31

I have dreamed life a circle or a line,  
Called God, and Fate, and Chance, and Man, divine :  
    I know not all I say, but through it all  
Mark the dim hint of ultimate sunshine !

Remember me for this ! And when I go  
To sleep the last sleep in the slumberous snow,  
    Let child and man and woman yet recall  
One little moment that I loved you so !

Let some high pinnacle my tombstone be,  
My epitaph the murmur of the sea,  
    The clouds of heaven be fleeces for my pall,  
My unknown grave the cradle of the free.

32--AMBERGRIS

Beside the River

Rain, rain in May. The river sadly flows,  
A sullen silver crossed with sable bars,  
Damp, gloomy, shivering, while reluctant stars,  
Between swart masses of thick clouds that close,  
Drive with drooped plumes their wing'd cars  
Towards sleep, the scythe of woes.

Woes, woes in Spring. Ere summer deepeneth  
The pink of roses to a purpler tint ;  
Ere ripening corn shafts back the sudden glint  
Of sunshine that brings healing with the breath  
Of western winds that sign, they hint  
Of sleep, twin soul with death.

Death, death ere dawn. The night is over dark ;  
Trees are grown terrible ; the shadows wan  
Make shudder all the tense desires of man ;  
No gleam of moonlight bears the golden mark  
Of sunny lips, nor shines upon  
Our sleep Love's birchen bark.

BESIDE THE RIVER--33

Love, love to-night. To-night is all we know,  
Is all our care ; lips joined to lips we lie,  
Tender hands touching, hearts in tune to die,  
With willing kiss reluctant to let go ;  
So sweet love s last enduring sigh  
For sleep, so sure, so slow.

Sleep, sleep to-night. Our arms are intertwined ;  
Breath desires breath and hand imprisons hand ;  
Breezes cool faces, rosy with the brand  
Of long sweet kisses ; sun shall dawn and find  
Two lovers who have passed the land  
Of sleep and found Death kind.

34--AMBERGRIS

Perdurabo

Exile from humankind ! The snow s fresh flakes  
Are warmer than men s hearts. My mind is wrought  
Into dark shapes of solitary thought  
That loves and sympathises, but awakes  
No answering love or pity. What a pang  
Hath this strange solitude to aggravate  
The self-abasement and the blows of Fate !  
No snake of hell that so severe a fang !

I am not lower than all men I feel  
Too keenly. Yet my place is not above,  
Though I have this unalterable Love  
In every fibre. I am crucified  
Apart on a long burning crag of steel,  
Tortured, cast out; and yet I shall abide



## In the Woods with Shelley

Sing, happy nightingale, sing ;  
    Past is the season of weeping ;  
Birds in the wood are on wing,  
    Lambs in the meadow are leaping.  
Can there be any delight still in the buttercups sleeping ?

Dawn, paler daffodil, dawn ;  
    Smile, for the winter is over ;  
Sunlight makes golden the lawn,  
    Spring comes and kisses the clover ;  
All the wild woodlands await poet and songster and lover.

Linger, dew, linger ! and gem  
    All the fresh flowers in the garland !  
Blossom, leaf, bud and green stem  
    Flash with your light to some far land,  
Where men shall wonder if you be not a newly-born starland.

36--AMBERGRIS

Ah ! The sweet scents of the woods !  
    Ah ! the sweet sounds of the heaven !  
Sights of impetuous floods,  
    Foam like the daisy at even,  
Folding o'er passionate gold petals that sunrise had riven !

See, like my life is the stream  
    Now its desire is grown quiet ;  
Life was a passionate dream  
    Once, when light fancy ran riot,  
Now, ere youth fades, flows in peace past woody bank and green  
eyot.

Highest, white heather and rock,  
    Mountain and pine, with young laughter,  
Breezes that murmur and mock  
    Duller delights to come after,  
Wild as a swallow that dives whither the sea wind would waft her.

Lower, an ocean of flowers,  
    Trees that are warmer and leafier,  
Starrier, sunnier hours  
    Spurning the stain of all grief here,  
Bringing a quiet delight to us, beyond our belief here.

IN THE WOODS WITH SHELLEY--37

Lastly, the uttermost sea,  
    Starred with the flakes of spray sunlit,  
Blue as its caverns that be  
    Crystal, resplendent, yet unlit ;  
So like a mother receives the kiss of the dainty-lip runlet.

Here the green moss is my seat,  
    Beech is the canopy o'er me,  
Calm and content the retreat ;  
    Man, my worst foe, cannot bore me ;  
Life is a closed book behind Shelley an open before me.

Shelley's own birds are above  
    Close to me (why should they fear me?)  
May I believe it that love  
    Brings his bright spirit so near me  
That, should I whisper one word Shelley's swift spirit would hear  
me?

Heaven is not very far ;  
    Soul unto soul may be calling  
When a swift meteor star  
    Through the quick vista is falling.  
Loose but your soul shall its wings find the white way so appalling?

38--AMBERGRIS

Heaven, as I understand,  
Nearer than some folk would make it !  
God should you stretch out a hand,  
Who can be quicker to take it ?  
Then you have pacted an oath judge you if He will forsake it !

I have had hope in the spring  
Trust that the God who has given  
Flowers, and the thrushes that sing  
Dawnwards all night, at at even  
Year after year, will be true now we are speaking of heaven.

FROM THE FATAL FORCE

Chorus

In the ways of the North and the South  
    Whence the dark and the dayspring are drawn,  
We pass with the song of the mouth  
    Of the notable Lord of the Dawn.  
Unto Ra, the desire of the East, let the clamour of singing proclaim  
    The fire of his name !

In the ways of the East and the West  
    Whence the night and the day are discrowned,  
We pass with the beat of his breast,  
    And the breath of his crying is bound.  
Unto Toum, the low Lord of the West, let the noise of our chant be the  
breath  
    Proclaiming him Death !

40--AMBERGRIS

In the ways of the depth and the height,  
    Where the multitude stars are at ease,  
There is music and terrible light,  
    And the violent song of the seas.  
Unto Mou, the most powerful Lord of the South, let our worship  
declare  
    Him Lord of the Air !

In the mutable fields that are sown  
    Of a seed that is whiter than noon  
Whose harvest is beaten and blown  
    By the magical rays of the moon,  
In the caverns and wharves of the wind, in the desolate seas of the air,  
    Revolveth our prayer !

In the sands and the desert of death,  
    In the horrible flowerless lands,  
In the fields that the rain and the breath  
    Of the sun make as gold as the sands  
With ripening wheat, in the earth, in the infinite realm of its seed,  
    The hearts of us bleed !

CHORUS--41

In the wonderful flowers of the foam,  
    Blue billows and breakers grown grey,  
When the storm sweeps triumphantly home  
    From the bed of the violate day,  
In the furious waves of the sea, wild world of tempestuous night,  
    Our song is as light !

In the tumult of manifold fire,  
    Multitudinous mutable feet  
That dance to an infinite lyre  
    On the heart of the world as they beat,  
In the flowers of the bride of the flame, in the warrior Lord of the  
Fire,  
    There burns our desire !

Chorus

Slow wheels of unbegotten hate  
And changeless circles of desire,  
Formless creations uncreate,  
Swift fountains of ungathered fire,  
The mist counterpoise of time,  
Dim winds of ocean and sublime

42--AMBERGRIS

Pyramids of forgotten foam  
Whirling, vague cones of shapeless sleep  
And infinite dreams, and stars that roam,  
And comets moving through the deep  
Unfathomable skies,  
Darker for moonlight, and the glow-worm eyes  
Of dusky women that were stars,  
And paler curves of the immutable bars  
That line the universe with light,  
Great eagle-flights of mystic moons  
That dip, while the dull midnight swoons  
About the skirts of Night :  
These bowed and shaped themselves and said :  
It shall be thus !  
And the intolerable luminous  
Death that is god bent down his head  
And answered : Thus, immutably,  
Above all days and deeds, shall be !  
And the great Light that is above all gods  
Lifted his calm brow, spake, and all the seas,  
And all the air, and all the periods  
Of seasons and of stars gave ear, and these  
Vaults of the heaven heard  
The great white light that shaped its secrecies  
Into one holy terrible word,



CHORUS--43

Higher than all words spoken ; for he said :  
Death is made change, and only change is dead.  
For the most holy spirit of a man  
Burns through the limit of the wheels that ran  
Through all the unrelenting skies  
When Icarus died,  
And leaps, the flight of wise omnipotent eyes,  
When D dalus espied  
An holy habitation for the shrine  
Solitary, mid the night of broken brine  
That foamed like starlight round the desolate shore.  
So to the mine of that crystalline ore  
Golden, the electric spark of man is drawn  
Deep in the bosom of the world, to soar  
New-fledged, an eagle to the dazzling dawn  
With lidless eyes undazzled, to arise,  
Song of the morning, to the Southern skies ;  
And fling its wild chant higher at the fall  
Of eve, and of bright Hyperion ;  
To mix its fire with dew, to call  
The spirit of the limitless air, made one  
In the amazing essence of all light  
Limitless, emanation of the might

44--AMBERGRIS

Of the great Light above all gods, the fire  
Of our supreme desire.  
So out of grievous labyrinths of the mind  
The soul's desire may find  
Some passionate thread, the clear note of a bird,  
To make the dark ways of the gods as light,  
To bring forth music from slow chants unheard,  
And visions from the fathomless night.  
So is the spirit of the loftier man  
Made holy and most strong against his fate ;  
So is the desolate visage of the wan  
Lord of Amenti covered, and the gate  
Of Ra made perfect. So the waters flow  
Over the earth, throughout the sea,  
Till all its deserts glow,  
And all its salt springs vanish, and night flee  
The pinions of the day wide-spread, and pure  
Fresh fountains of sweet water that endure  
Assume the crown of the wide world, and lend  
A star of many summits to his head  
That rules his fate and compasses his end,  
And seeks the holy mountain of the dead  
To draw dead fire, and breathe, and give it life !

CHORUS--45

But thou, be strong for strife,  
And, as a god, cry out, and let there be  
The mark of many footsteps on the sea  
Of angels hastening to fulfil  
Thy supreme, single will !  
Alone, intense, unmoved, not made for change,  
Let thy one godhead rise  
To move like morning, and like day to range,  
A furnace for the skies,  
That all men cry : The uncreated God !  
Formless, ineffable, just, whose period  
Is as his name, Eternity ! So bear  
The sceptre of the air !  
So mayest thou avenge, all-seeing, blind,  
The wrath of this consuming fire, that licks  
The rafters and the portals of the house,  
The gateways of the kingdom, where behind  
Lurk ruinous fates and consequence ; where fix  
Their fangs the scorpions ; where hide their brows  
The shamed protectors of the Egyptian land.  
Go forth avenging ; men shall understand  
And worship, seeing justice as a spouse  
Lean on thine iron hand.

46--AMBERGRIS

For Murder walks by night, and hides her face,  
But righteous Wrath in the light, and knows his place ;  
For hate of a mother is ill, and the lightning flashes  
But foil a harlot s will, burn the earth to ashes,  
Cleanse the incestuous sty of a whore s desire  
Scatter the dung to the sky, and burn her with fire !  
So the avenging master shall cleanse his fate of shame,  
Set his seal of disaste, a royal seal to his name.

Chorus

Through fields of foam ungarnered sweeps  
    The fury of the wind of dawn ;  
Through fiery desolation creeps  
    The water of the wind withdrawn.  
With fire and water consecrate  
The foam and fire are recreate.  
    With air uniting fire and water,  
    The springtide s unbegotten daughter  
Blossoms in oceans of blue air,  
Flowers of new spring to bear.

CHORUS--47

The sorrowful twin fishes glide  
    Silent and sacred into sleep ;  
The joyful Ram exalts his pride,  
    Seeing the forehead of the deep  
Glow from his palace, as the sun  
Leaps to the spring, whose coursers run  
    Flaming before their golden master,  
    As death and winter and disaster  
Fall from the Archer's bitter kiss  
Fast to their mute abyss.

The pale sweet blooms of lotus burn ;  
    The scent of spring is in the soul ;  
Men's spirits to the loftiest turns ;  
    Light is extended and made whole.  
The waters of the whispering Nile  
Lisp of their loves a little while,  
    Then break, like songsters, into sighing,  
    Because the lazy days are dying ;  
And swift and tawny streams must rise  
World's world to fertilise

The lotus is afire for love,  
    Its yearnings are immortal still ;

48--AMBERGRIS

But in its bosom, fed thereof,  
Lust, like a child will have his will.  
Immortal fervour, strangely blent  
With mystic sensual sacrament,  
Fills up its cup, its petals tremble  
With faint desires that dissemble  
The fierce intention to be wed  
One with the spring sun s head.

The fountains of the river yearn  
Toward the sacred temple-walls,  
They foam upon the sands that burn  
With spring s delirious festivals.  
They flash upon the gleaming ways,  
They cry, they chant aloud the praise  
Of Isis, and our temple kisses  
Their flowery water-wildernesses,  
Whose foamheads nestle to the stones  
With slumberous antiphones.

CHORUS--49

All birds and beasts and fish are fain  
    To mingle passion with the hope  
All creatures hold, that cycled pain  
    May make its stream the wider scope  
Of many lives and changing law,  
Till to the sacred fountains draw  
    Essences of dim being, mated  
    With lofty substance uncreated,  
Concluding the full period  
That makes all being God.  
50

FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE  
HOLY GHOST

The May Queen

(old style)

It is summer and sun on the sea,  
    The twilight is drawn to the world :  
We linger and laught on the lea,  
The light of my spirit with me,  
    Sharp limbs in close agony curled.

The noise of the music of sleep,  
    The breath of the wings of the night,  
The song of the magical deep,  
The sighs of the spirits that weep,  
    Make murmur to tune our delight.

Slow feet are our measures that move ;  
    Swift songs are more soft than the breeze ;  
Our mouths are made mute for our love ;  
Our eyes are made soft as the dove ;

We mingle and move as the seas.



THE MAY QUEEN--51

The light of the passionate dawn  
That kissed us, and would not awaken,  
Grew golden and bold on the lawn ;  
The rays of the sun are withdrawn  
At last, and the blossoms are shaken.

Oh, fragrant the breeze is that stirs  
The grasses around us that lean !  
Oh, sweet is the whisper that purrs  
From those wonderful lips that are hers,  
From the passionate lips of a queen.

A queen is my lover, I say,  
With a crown of the lilies of light  
For a maiden they crowned her in May,  
For the Queen of the Daughters of Day  
That are flowers of the forest of Night.

They crowned her with lilies and blue,  
They crowned her with yellow and roses ;  
They gave her a sceptre of rue,  
And a girdle of laurel and yew,  
And a basket of pansies in posies.

52--AMBERGRIS

They led her with songs by the stream ;  
    They brought her with tears to the river ;  
They danced as the maze of a dream ;  
They kissed her to roses and cream,  
    And they cried, Let the queen live for ever !

They took her, with all of the flowers  
    They had girded her with for God s daughter ;  
They cast her from amorous bowers  
To the river, the horrible powers  
    Of the Beast that lurks down by the Water !

My way was more swift than a bow  
    That flings out its barb to the night :  
My sword struck the infinite blow  
That smote him, and blackened the flow  
    Of the amorous river of light.

I plunged in the stream, and I drew  
    My queen from the clasp of the water ;  
I crowned her with roses and blue,  
With yellow and lilies anew ;  
    I called her my love and God s daughter !

THE MAY QUEEN--53

I gave her a sceptre of may ;  
    I gave her a girdle of green ;  
I drew her to music and day ;  
I led her the beautiful way  
    To the land where the Winds lie between.

So still lingers sun upon sea ;  
    Still twilight draws down to the world ;  
The light of my spirit is she ;  
The soul of her love is in me ;  
    Lithe kisses with music are curled.

Like light on the meadows we dwell ;  
    Like twilight clings heart unto heart ;  
Like midnight the depth of the spell  
Our love weaves, and stronger than hell  
    The guards of our palace of art.

We are one as the dew that is drawn  
    By the sun from the sea : we are curled  
In curves of delight and of dawn,  
On the lone, the immaculate lawn,  
    Beyond the wild way of the world.

54--AMBERGRIS

The Reaper

In middle music of Apollo's corn

    She stood, the reaper, challenging a kiss ;

The lips of her were fresher than the morn,

    The perfume of her skin was ambergris ;

The sun had kissed her body into brown ;

    Ripe breasts thrown forward to the summer breeze ;

Warm tints of red lead fancy to the crown,

    Her coils of chestnut, in abundant ease,

That bound the stately head. What joy of youth

    Lifted her nostril to respire the wind ?

What pride of being ? What triumphal truth

    Acclaimed her queen to her imperial mind ?

I watched, a leopard, stealthy in the corn,

    As if a tigress held herself above ;

My body quivered, eager to be torn,

    Stung by the snake of some convulsive love !

THE REAPER--55

The leopard changed his spots ; for in me leapt  
The mate, the tiger. Murderous I sprang  
Across the mellow earth : my senses swept,  
One torrent flame, one soul-dissolving pang.  
How queenly bent her body to the grip !  
How lithe it slips, her bosom to my own !  
The throat leans back, to tantalise the lip:  
The sudden shame of her is over thrown !  
O maiden of the spirit of the wheat,  
One ripening sunbeam thrills thee to the soul,  
Electric from red mane to amber feet !  
The blue skies focus, as a burning bowl,  
The restless passion of the universe  
Into our mutual anger and distress,  
To be forbidden (the Creator s curse)  
To comprehend the other s loveliness.  
We cannot grasp the ecstasy of this ;  
Only we strain and struggle and renew  
The utter bliss of the unending kiss,  
The mutual pang that shudders through and through,  
Repeated and repeated, as the light  
Can build a partial palace of the day.  
So in our anguish for the infinite,  
One moment gives, the other takes away.

56--AMBERGRIS

(I, the mere rimer, she, the queen of rime,  
As sweeps her sickle in the falling wheat,  
Her body's sleek intoxicating time,  
The music of the motion of her feet !)

I swoon in that imperial embrace  
Lay we asleep till evening, or dead ?  
I knew not, but the wonder of her face  
Grew as the dawn and never satiated.  
She knew not in her strong imperial soul  
How hopeless was the slavery of life,  
How by the part man learns to love the whole,  
How each man's mistress calls herself a wife.  
I tired not of the tigress limbs and lips  
Only, my soul was weary of itself,  
Being so impotent, who only sips  
The dewdrops from the flower-cup of an elf,  
Not comprehending the mysterious sea  
Of black swift waters that can drink it up,  
Not trusting life to its own ecstasy,  
Not mixing poison with the loving-cup.  
I, maker of mad rimes, the reaper she !  
We lingered but a day upon the lawn.  
O Thou, the other Reaper ! come to me !  
Thy dark embraces have a germ of Dawn !

## The Palace of the World

The fragrant gateways of the dawn  
Teem with the scent of flowers.  
The mother, Midnight, has withdrawn  
Her slumberous kissing hours :  
Day springs, with footsteps as a fawn,  
Into her rosy bowers.

The pale and holy maiden horn  
In highest heaven is set.  
My forehead, bathed in her forlorn  
Light, with her lips is met ;  
My lips, that murmur in the morn,  
With lustrous dew are wet.

My prayer is mighty with my will ;  
My purpose as a sword  
Flames through the adamant, to fill  
The gardens of the Lord  
With music, that the air be still,  
Dumb to its mighty chord.

58--AMBERGRIS

I stand above the tides of time  
And elemental strife ;  
My figure stands above, sublime,  
Shadowing the Key of Life,  
And the passion of my mighty rime  
Divides me as a knife.

For secret symbols on my brow,  
And secret thoughts within,  
Compel eternity to Now,  
Draw the Infinite within.  
Light is extended. I and Thou  
Are as they had not been.

So on my head the light is one,  
Unity manifest ;  
A star more splended than the sun  
Burns for my crown d crest ;  
Burns, as the murmuring orison  
Of waters in the west.

What angel from the silver gate  
Flames to my fierier face ?  
What angel, as I contemplate  
The unsubstantial space,



THE PALACE OF THE WORLD--59

Move with my lips the laws of Fate  
That bind earth's carapace ?

No angel, but the very light  
And fire and spirit of Her,  
Unmitigated, eremite,  
The unmanifested myrrh,  
Ocean, and night that is not night,  
The mother-mediator.

O sacred spirit of the Gods !  
O triple tongue ! Descend,  
Lapping the answering flame that nods,  
Kissing the brows that bend,  
Uniting all earth's periods  
To one exalted end !

Still on the mystic Tree of Life  
My soul is crucified :  
Still strikes the sacrificial knife  
Where lurks some serpent-eyed  
Fear, passion, or man's deadly wife  
Desire, the suicide !

60--AMBERGRIS

Before me dwells the Holy One  
Anointed Beauty's King ;  
Behind me, mightier than the Sun,  
To whom the cherubs sing,  
A strong archangel, known of none,  
Comes crowned and conquering.

An angel stands on my right hand  
With strength of ocean's wrath ;  
Upon my left the fiery brand,  
Charioted fire smites forth :  
Four great archangels to withstand  
The furies of the path.

Flames on my front the fiery star,  
About me and around.  
Pillared, the sacred sun, afar,  
Six symphonies of sound ;  
Flames, as the Gods themselves that are ;  
Flames, in the abyss profound.

The spread arms drop like thunder ! So  
Rings out the lordlier cry,  
Vibrating through the streams that flow  
In ether to the sky,

THE PALACE OF THE WORLD--61

The moving archipelago,  
Stars in their seignery.

Thine be the kingdom ! Thine the power !  
The glory triply thine !  
Thine, through Eternity's swift hour  
Eternity, thy shrine  
Yea, by the holy lotus-flower,  
Even mine !

62--AMBERGRIS

The Rosicrucian

I see the centuries wax and wane.  
I know their mystery of pain,  
    The secrets of the living fire,  
The key of life : I live : I reign :  
    For I am master of desire.

Silent, I pass amid the folk  
Caught in its mesh, slaves to its yoke.  
    Silent, unknown, I work and will  
Redemption, godhead's master-stroke,  
    And breaking of the wands of ill.

No man hath seen beneath my brows  
Eternity's exultant house.  
    No man hath noted in my brain  
The knowledge of my mystic spouse.  
    I wate the centuries wax and wane.

THE ROSICRUCIAN--63

Poor, in the kingdom of strong gold,  
My power is swift and uncontrolled.  
Simple, amid the maze of lies ;  
A child, among the cruel old,  
I plot their stealthy destinies.

So patient, in the breathless strife ;  
So silent, under scourge and knife ;  
So tranquil, in the surge of things ;  
I bring them from the well of Life,  
Love, from celestial water-springs !

From the shrill fountain-head of God  
I draw out water with the rod  
Made luminous with light of power.  
I seal each on s period,  
And wait the moment and the hours.

Aloof, alone, unloved, I stand  
With love and worship in my hand.  
I commune with the Gods : I wait  
Their summons, and I fire th brand  
I speak their Word : and there is Fate.

64--AMBERGRIS

I know no happiness, no pain,  
No swift emotion, no disdain,  
    No pits : but the boundless light  
Of the Eternal Love, unslain,  
    Flows through me to redeem the night.

Mine is a sad slow life : but I,  
I would not gain release, and die  
    A moment ere my task be done.  
To falter now were treachery  
    I should not dare to greet the sun !

Yet, in one hour I dare not hope,  
The mighty gate of Life May ope,  
    And call me upwards to unite  
(Even my soul within the scope)  
    With That Unutterable Light.

Steady of purpose, girt with Truth,  
I pass, in my eternal youth,  
    And watch the centuries wax and wane :  
Untouched by Time s corroding tooth,  
    Silent, immortal, unprofane !

THE ROSICRUCIAN--65

My empire changes not with time.  
Men's kingdoms cadent as a rime  
    Move me as waves that rise and fall.  
They are the parts, that crash or climb ;  
    I only comprehend the All.

I sit, as God must sit : I reign.  
Redemption from the threads of pain  
    I weave, until the veil be drawn.  
I burn the chaff, I glean the grain ;  
    In silence I await the dawn.

66--AMBERGRIS

The Athanor

Libertine touches of small fingers creep  
    Among my curls to-night : pale ghastly kisses,  
Like mournful ghosts roused from their ruined sleep  
    By clamorous cries of murder. Strange abysses  
Loom in the vista keen eyes penetrate,  
Vague forecases of immeasurable fate.

O thou beloved blood, that wells and weeps !  
    O thou beloved mouth, that beats and bleeds !  
O mystic bosom where some serpent sleeps,  
    Sweet mockery of a thousand saintlier creeds !  
Even I, that breathe your perfume, taste your breath,  
Know, even this hour, ye are not life, but death !

No death ye bring more godlike than desire,  
    When seas roar tempest-lashed, and foam is flung



THE ATHANOR--67

Raging on pitiless crags, and gloomy fire  
Lurks in the master-cloud; corpses are swung  
Helpless and horrible in trough and crest  
That death were music, and the lord of rest.

No death ye bring as when the storm is rolled,  
An imminent giant on the sun-ripped snows,  
Where icy fingers grip the overbold  
Son of their secrets, and like springes close  
On his choked throat and frozen body Nay !  
That death were twilight, and the gate of Day !

No death ye bring as his, that grips the flag  
In desperate fingers, and with bloody sword  
Flames up the thundering breach, while bastioned crag,  
Glacis, and pent-house belch their monstrous horde  
Of hideous engines shattering this strife  
Clears the straight road of Glory and of Life !

Nay : but the hateful death that stings the soul  
Into rebellion; the insensate death  
That chokes its own delight with words that roll  
Mightier-mouthed than the archangel's breath ;

68--AMBERGRIS

The death that murders courage ere it drink  
The soul's own life-blood on the desperate brink !

So, from the languid fingers in my curls  
And dreamy worship for a woman's eyes,  
I look beyond the miserable whirls  
Of foolish measures woven in the skies ;  
Beyond the thoughtless stars : beyond God's sleep :  
Beyond the deep : beneath the deadly deep !

Infinite rings of luminous ether move  
At first amid the blackness that I seek :  
Infinite motion and amazing love  
Deaden the lustre of the night. I speak  
The cry of silence, that is heard unspoken ;  
That, being heard, rings evermore unbroken.

Silence, deep silence. Not a shudder stirs  
The vast demesme of unforgetful space,  
No comet's lunatic rush ; no meteor whirs,  
No star dares breathe, no planet knows his place  
In that supreme unquiet quietude.  
I am the master of my own deep mood.

THE ATHANOR--69

I am the master. Yea, no doubt I rule  
The whole mad universe by will extended  
Who whispers then, O miserable fool !  
This night thy might and majesty are ended ;  
Thy soul shall be required of thee ? I heard  
This voice, and knew it for my proper word !

Yea, mine own voice : the higher spirit speaks,  
Stemming the hands that guide, the arms that hold,  
Even the infinite brain : that spirit seeks  
A loftier down of more ephemeral gold  
Ephemeral, and eternal. Droop thine head,  
O God ! for thou must suffer this, I said.

Droop thy wide pinions, O thou mortal God !  
Sink thy vast forehead, and let Life consume  
The miserable life thy feet have trod  
Beneath them, that thine own life in its doom  
Fall, in its resurrection to arise ;  
Stoop, that its holier hope may cleave the skies.

Power, power, and power ! O single sacrifice  
On thine own altar : let thy savour steam

70--AMBERGRIS

Up, through the domes of broken Paradise ;  
Up, by Euphrates unimagined stream ;  
Up, by strange river and mysterious lawn  
To some impossible diadem of dawn !

So the more orderly ruling of events  
Shall change and blossom to a finer flower,  
Until it serve to worlds and elements  
For aspiration in the nobler hour  
No mere repression, but the hope and crown  
Of fallen hierarchies no more cast down.

O misery of triple love and grief  
And hope ! O joy of hatred and despair  
And happiness ! The little hour is brief,  
And the lithe fingers soothe the listless hair  
Less, and the kisses swoon to tenderer signs  
And little sobs of sleeping ecstasies.

No ! for the envy of the infinite  
Crushes the juice from out the poppy s stem,  
And brown-stained fingers wring the petals white,  
And weary lips seek lotus-life in them  
Vainly : the lotus burns above the tomb  
Yea, but in thought s unfathomable womb !

THE ATHANOR--71

For spiritual life and love and light  
    Climb the swayed ladder of our various fate ;  
The steep rude stair that mocks the hero's might,  
    Casts off the wise, and crumbles with the great.  
Yet from the highest crown no blossom fell,  
Save one, to bring salvation unto Hell.

O angel of my spiritual desire !  
    O luminous master of the silver feet !  
O passionate rose of infinite white fire !  
    O cross of sacrifice made bitter-sweet !  
O wide-wing, star-brow, veritable lord !  
O mystic bearer of the flaming sword !

O brows half seen, O visionary star  
    Seen in the fragrant breezes of the East !  
O lover of my love, O avatar  
    Of the All-One, O mystical High Priest !  
O thou before whose eyes my weak eyes fail,  
Wonderful warden of the Holy Grail !

O thou, mine angel, whom these eyes have seen,  
    These hands have handled, and this mouth has kissed !

72--AMBERGRIS

O thou, the very tongue of fire, the clean  
Sweet-scented presence of a holier Christ !  
Listen, and answer, and behold ! My wings  
Droop, O thou stronger than the immortal kings !

My flame burns dim ! O bring the broken jar  
And alabaster casket, and dispense  
The oil that flows from that supernal star,  
And holy fountains of the Influence.  
Bring peace, and strength, and quicken in my heart  
Mastery of night-fear and the day-flung dart.

Yea ! from the limit of the fallen day,  
And barren ocean of ungathered Time,  
Bring Night, and bring Eternity, and stay  
With white wings pointing where tired feet may climb :  
Even the pathway where shed blood ran deep  
To build red roses in the land of Sleep.

O guardian of the pallid hours of night !  
O tireless watcher of the smitten noon !  
O sworded with the majesty of light,  
O girded with the glory of the moon !

THE ATHANOR--73

Angel of absolute splendour ! link of mine  
Old weary spirit with the All-Divine !

Ship that shalt carry me by many winds  
    Driven on limitless ocean ! Might sword,  
By which I force that barrier of the mind s  
    Miscomprehension of its own true lord !  
Listen, and answer, and behold my brow  
Fiery with hope ! Bend down, and touch it now !

Press the twin dawn of thy desirous lips  
    In the swart masses of my hair ; bend close,  
And shroud all earth in masterless eclipse,  
    While my heart s murmur though thy being flows,  
To carry up the prayer, as incense teems  
Skyward, to those immeasurable streams !

Breathe the creative Sigh upon my mouth  
    That even the body may become the soul :  
Cry, as the chain d Eagle of the South,  
    A house of death, and make my spirit whole !  
Touch with pure balm the five mysterious wounds !  
Come ! come away ! but not your mighty sounds !

74--AMBERGRIS

O wind of all the world ! O silent river !  
    O sea of seas ! O flower of all the flowers !  
O fire ! O spirit ! Beam thou on for ever  
    Through ons of illimitable hours !  
Kiss thou my forehead, let thy tender breath  
Woo me to life, and my desire to death !

I shall be ready for it by-and-by,  
    That sharp initiation, when the whole  
Body is torn with sundering pangs, and I  
    The very conscious essence of the soul,  
Am rent with agony, as when the pale  
Christ heard the shriek of the dividing veil.

That awful mystery, its heart torn out,  
    Palpitates on the altar-stone of life :  
That broken self, that hears the triumph-shout  
    Of its own voice beneath the falling knife,  
When, like a bad dream changing, swiftly grows  
A new soul s joy, a fuller-petalled rose.

Many the spirits broken for one man ;  
    Many the men that perish to create  
One God the more ; many the weary and wan  
    Old Gods that die to constitute a Fate :



THE ATHANOR--75

How many Fates then, think you, must control  
The staines aspiration of the soul ?

Not one. I tell you, destiny is sure,  
    Yet moves no finger : though it tune my tongue,  
My tongue shall tune it too : my words endure  
    As destiny decays : my hands are flung  
In prayer to Heaven nay, to mine own crown,  
To raise myself, and not to drag it down !

O holiest Lord of the divine white flame  
    Of brilliance sworded in the temple sky !  
O thou who knowest my most secret name,  
    Who whisperest when only thou and I  
Make up our universe : bestow thy kiss :  
Arise ! Come, let us pierce the old abyss !

Rise ! Move ! Appear ! Let us go forth together,  
    Into the solemn passionless profound,  
Into the darkness, and the thrilling weather,  
    Into the silence louder than all sound,  
Into the vast implacable inane !  
Come, let us journey thither once again !

76--AMBERGRIS

FROM TANNH USER

Shepherd Boy s Song

O Gretchen, when the morn is gray,  
Forsake thy flocks and steal away  
To that low bank where, shepherds say,  
    The flowers eternal are.  
Thine eyes should gleam to see me there,  
    As fixed upon a star.  
And yet thy lips should make a tune,  
    And match me unaware  
So steals the sun beside the moon  
    And hides her lustre rare.  
The bloom upon the peach is fine ;  
The blossom on thy cheek is mine !  
    O kiss me if you dare !  
I called thee by the name of love  
That mothers fear and gods approve,  
    And maidens blush to say  
O Gretchen, meet me in the dell  
We know and love, who love so well,  
    Wile morn is cold and gray !

SHEPHERD BOY S SONG--77

So match thy blushes to the dawn ;  
Thy bosom to the rising moon,  
Until our loves to earth have drawn  
Some new bewitching tune.  
Come, Gretchen, in the dusk of day,  
Where nymphs and dryads creep away  
Beneath the oaks, to laugh and play  
And sink in lover s swoon.  
We ll sing them sister songs, and show  
What secrets mortal lovers know.

Tannh user s Song

In the Beginning God began  
And saw the Night of Time begin ;  
Chaos, a speck ; and space, a span ;  
Ruinous cycles fallen in,  
And Darkness on the Deep of Time.  
Murmurous voices call and climb ;  
Faces, half-formed, arise ; and He  
Looked from the shadow of His throne,  
The curtain of Eternity ;

78--AMBERGRIS

He looked and saw Himself alone,  
And on the sombre sea, the primal one,  
Faint faces, that might not abide ;  
Flicker, and are fordone.  
So were they caught within the spacious tide,  
The sleepy waters that encased the world  
Monsters rose up, and turned themselves, and curled  
Into the deep again.

The darkness brooded, and the bitter pain  
Of chaos twisted the vast limbs of time  
In horrid rackings : then the spasm came :  
The :Serpent rose, the servant of the slime,  
In one dark miracle of flame  
Unluminous and void : the silent claim  
Of that which was, to be : the cry to climb,  
The bitter birth of Nature : uttermost Night  
Dwelt, inaccessible to sound and sight ;  
Shielded from Vocië, impervious to Light.

Lo ! on the barren bosom, on the brine,  
The spirit of the Mighty One arose,  
A flickering light, a formless triple flame,  
The self-begotten, the impassive shrine,  
The seat of Heaven s archipelagoes ;

TANNH USER S SONG--79

Yet lighted not the glory whence it came,  
Nor shone upon the surface of the sea.  
Time, and the Great One, and the Nameless Name,  
Held in their grip the child, Eternity.  
Silence and Darkness in their womb withheld  
That spiritual fire, and brooded still :  
Nature and Time, their soleness undispeled,  
Ever awaiting the eternal Will.  
And Law was unbegotten : uttermost Night  
Dwelt, inaccessible to sound and sight  
Shielded from Voice, impervious to Light.

The grew within the barren womb of this  
The Breath of the Eternal and the Vast,  
Softer than dawn, and closer than a kiss  
And lo! the chaos and the darkness passed !  
At the creative sigh the Light became.  
Chaos rolled back in the abundant flame.  
The vast and mystic Soul,  
The firmament, a living coal,  
Flamed twixt the glory and the sea below.  
The whirling force began. The atom whirled  
In vortices of flashing matter : wild as snow  
On mountain tops by the wind-spirits hurled,  
Blinding and blind, the sparks of spirit curled

## 80--AMBERGRIS

Each to its proper soul ; the wide wheels flow,  
Orderly streams, and lose the rushing speed,  
Meet, mingle, marry. Fire and air express  
Their dews and winds of molten loveliness,  
Fine flakes of arrowy light, the dawn's first deed,  
Metallic showers and smoke self-glittering  
For man an on. Wild the pennons spring  
Of streaming flame ! Then, surging from the tide,  
Grew the desirable, the golden one,  
Separate from the sun.  
Now fire and air no more exult, exceed,  
Are balanced in the sphere. The waters wide  
Glow on the bosom of fixed earth ; and Need,  
The Lady of Beginning, also was.  
Thus was the firmament a vital glass,  
The waters as the vessel of the soul ;  
Thus earth, the mystic basis of the whole,  
Was smitten through with fire, as chrysopras,  
Blending, uniting and dividing it,  
Volcanic, airy, and celestial.

I rose within the elemental ball,  
And lo ! the Ancient One of Days did sit !  
His head and hair were white as wool, his eyes

TANNHUSER S SONG--81

A flaming fire : and from the splendored mouth  
Flashed the Eternal Sword !  
Lo! Lying at his feet as dead, I saw  
The leaping-forth of Law :  
Division of the North wind and the South,  
The lightning of the armies of the Lord ;  
East rolled asunder from the rended West ;  
Height clove the depth : the Voice begotten said :  
Divided be thy ways and limited !  
Answered the reflux and the indrawn breath :  
Let there be Life, and Death !

82--AMBERGRIS

A Death in Thessaly

Movno\_ Qeo n ga r Qavnato\_ ou dwvrwn ejra/  
fisch., Fr. Niobe.

Farewell ! O Light of day, O torch Alth an !  
The strange fruits lure me of Persephone ;  
I raise the last, the memorable p an,  
Storm-throated, mouthed as cave-rolling sea;  
I lift the cup : deep draughts of blue Lethean !  
My wine to me.

O lamentable season of Apollo,  
When swoops his glory to the golden wave !  
As all his children, so their lord shall follow !  
The flower he slew, the maiden he would save,  
As Itylus, light woven, tuned ! O swallow,  
Bewail their grave !



A DEATH IN THESSALY--83

The gracious breast of Artemis may light me  
To men yet loved I ever Artemis ?  
Surely the vine-song and the dance delight me,  
The sea-blue bowers where Aphrodite is.  
Terrible gods and destinies excite me,  
The strange sad kiss.

Thus may no moon tell Earth my story after,  
No virgin sing my fame as virginal.  
Yet some night-leaves the southern stream may waft her,  
Some amorous nymph across the wood may call  
A loud made chant ; love, tears, harsh sombre laughter.  
No more at all.

Oh, mother, Oh, Demeter, in my burthen  
Let me assume my sorrow singular ;  
A branching temple and an altar earthen,  
A fire of herbs, a clayen water-jar ;  
An olive grove to bind the sacred girth in  
Lone woods afar.

Let life burn gently thence, as when the ember  
In one faint incense-puff to shrineward dies.

84--AMBERGRIS

No care, no pain, no craving to remember,  
    One leap toward the knees and destinies,  
Where shine Her lips like flames, Her breasts like amber,  
    Like moons Her eyes.

For my heart turns ah still ! in Sorrow s traces,  
    Where sad chill footprints pash the sodden leaves ;  
Where ranged around me are the cold, gray faces ;  
    Fallon on the stubble are the rotten sheaves ;  
The vicious ghosts abound ; and Chronos paces  
    No soul deceives.

Yet my heart looks to Madness as its mother,  
    Remembering who once caught me by the well;  
And strange loves of that misshapen Other,  
    The feast of blood, the cold enchanted dell,  
Where fire was filtered up through earth to smother  
    Sick scents of hell.

And that wild night when vine-leaves wooed and clustered  
    Round my wild limbs, and like a women I went

A DEATH IN THESSALY--85

Over the mountains how the Northwind blustered !  
And slew with them the beast, and was content.  
The madness : Oh! the dreadful light that lustred  
The main event.

Ay! the wild whirlings in the woodland reaches ;  
The ghastly smile upon the Stone God s lip ;  
The rigid tremors, anguish that beseeches  
From eye to eye fresh fervours of the whip ;  
The mounded moss below the swaying beeches  
Kiss me and clip !

Why ! the old madness grows ! how feebly lying  
Smooth by this bay where waves are tender flowers.  
Winds, soft as the old kisses were, are sighing.  
Clouds drift across the sun for silken bowers.  
The moon is up an hastening nymph ! I, dying,  
Await the Hours.

And thou, Persephone, I know thy story,  
That I must taste the terror of thy wrong :  
How Hades ride across the promontory,  
Snatch my pale body in mid over-song,

86--AMBERGRIS

Drag me from sight of my Apollo s glory  
With horses strong.

Nay ! as Apollo half the day is shrouded,  
As Artemis twice seven nights is dark ;  
Surely he shines in other lands unclouded,  
Surely her shaft shall find another mark.  
So dawns the day on Acheron ghost-crowded,  
And on my bark.

I know not how yon world may prove, nor whither  
Hermes conduct me to what farther end.  
Yet if these bays abide, this heart not wither,  
It cannot be I shall not find a friend.  
Some pale immortal lover draw me thither !  
To kiss me bend !

Moreover, as Apollo re-arisen  
Flames, with a roaring of the morning sea,  
Up from the stricken gray, the iron-barred prison,  
Flashes his face again upon the lea,  
And diamond dew the woodland ones bedized ;  
So so for me !

A DEATH IN THESSALY--87

Some forty years this earth knew song and passion

    Pour from my lips, saw gladness in mine eyes !

Some forty shall I sing some other fashion,

    Dance in strange measures, change the key of sighs.

Then rise in Thessaly again, Thalassian !

    Only, more wise.

88-AMBERGRIS

FROM ORACLES

The Hermit's Hymn to Solitude

I.

Mightiest Self! Supreme in Self-Contentment!  
Sole Spirit gyring in its own ellipse;  
Palpable, formless, infinite presentment  
Of thine own light in thine own soul's eclipse!  
Let thy chaste lips  
Sweep through the empty ethers guarding thee  
(As in a fortress girded by the sea  
The ranging winds and wings of air  
Lift the wild waves and bear  
Innavigable foam to seaward), bend thee down,  
Touch, draw me with thy kiss  
Into thine own deep bliss,  
Into thy sleep, thy life, thy imperishable crown!  
Let that young godhead in thine eyes  
Pierce mine, fulfill me of their secreties,  
Thy peace, thy purity, thy soul impenetrably wise.

THE HERMIT S HYMN TO SOLITUDE--89

II.

All things which are complete are solitary ;  
The circling moon, the inconstancy drift of stars,  
The central systems. Burn they, change they, vary?  
Theirs is no motion beyond the eternal bars.  
Seasons and scars  
Stain not the planets, the unfathomed home,  
The spaceless, unformed faces in the dome  
Brighter and blacker than all things,  
Borne under the eternal wings  
No whither ; solitary are the winter woods  
And caves not habited,  
And that supreme grey head  
Watching the groves : single the foaming amber floods,  
And O ! most lone  
The melancholy mountains shrine and throne,  
While far above all things God sits, the ultimate alone !

III.

I sate upon the mossy promontory  
Where the cascade cleft not his mother rock,

90--AMBERGRIS

But swept in whirlwind lightning foam and glory,  
Vast circling with unwearying luminous shock  
To lure and lock  
Marvellous eddies in its wild caress ;  
And there the solemn echoes caught the stress,  
The strain of that impassive tide,  
Shook it and flung it high and wide,  
Till all the air took fire from that melodious roar ;  
All the mute mountains heard,  
Bowed, laughed aloud, concurred,  
And passed the word along, the signal of wide war.  
All earth took up the sound,  
And, being in one tune securely bound,  
Even as a star became the soul of silence most profound.

IV.

Thus there, the centre of that death that darkened,  
I sat and listened, if God's voice should break  
And pierce the hollow of my ear that hearkened,  
Lest God should speak and find me not awake  
For his own sake.  
No voice, no song might pierce or penetrate  
That enviable universal state.



## THE HERMIT S HYMN TO SOLITUDE--91

The sun and moon beheld, stood still.  
Only the spirit s axis, will,  
Considered its own soul and sought a deadlier deep,  
And in its monotone mood  
Of supreme solitude  
Was neither glad nor sad because it did not sleep ;  
But with calm eyes abode  
Patient, its leisure the galactic load,  
Abode alone, nor even rejoiced to know that it was God.

V.

All change, all motion, and all sound, are weakness !  
Man cannot bear the darkness which is death.  
Even that calm Christ, manifest in meekness,  
Cried on the cross and gave his ghostly breath,  
On the prick of death,  
Voice, for his passion could not bear nor dare  
The interlunar, the abundant air  
Darkened, and silence on the shuddering  
Hill, and the unbeating wing  
Of the legions of His Father, and so died.  
But I, should I be still,  
Poised between fear and will ?  
Sould I be silent, I, and be unsatisfied ?

92--AMBERGRIS

For solitude shall bend  
Self to all selffulness, and have one friend,  
Self, and behold one God, and be, and look beyond the End.

VI,  
O Solitude ! how many have mistaken  
Thy name for Sorrow s, or for Death s or Fear s !  
Only thy children lie at night and waken  
Hou shouldst thou speak and say that no man hears ?  
O soul of Tears !  
For never hath fallen as dew thy word,  
Nor is thy shape showed, nor as Wisdom s heard  
Thy crying about the city  
In the house where is no pity  
But in the desolate halls and lonely vales of sand :  
Not in the laughter loud,  
Nor crying of the crowd,  
But in the farthest sea, the yet untravelled land.  
Where thou has trodden, I have trod ;  
Thy folk have been my folk, and thine abode  
Mine, and thy life my life, and thou, who art thy God, my God.

THE HERMIT S HYMN TO SOLITUDE--93

VII.

Draw me with cords that are not ; witch me chanted  
Spells never heard nor open to the ear,  
Woven of silence, moulded in the haunted  
Houses where dead men linger year by year.  
I have no fear  
To tread thy far irremeable way  
Beyond the paths and palaces of day,  
Beyond the night, beyond the skies,  
Beyond eternity s  
Tremendous gate ; beyond the immanent miracle.  
O secret self of things !  
I have nor feet nor wings  
Except to follow far beyond Heaven and Earth and Hell,  
Until I mix my mood  
And being in thee, as in my hermit s hood  
I grow the thing I contemplate that selfless solitude !

94--AMBERGRIS

On Waikiki Beach

Upheaved from chaos, through the dark sea hurled,  
    Through the cleft heart of the amazed sea,  
    Sprang, mid deep thunderous throats of majesty,  
Titanic, in the waking of the world ;  
    Sprang, one vast mass of spume and molten fire,  
    Lava, tremendous waves of earth ; sprang higher  
    Than the sea's crest volcano-torn, to be  
    Written in Cyclopean character,  
    Hawaii. Here she stands  
    Queen of all laughter's lands  
That dance for dawn, lie tranced in leisured noon,  
    Dreaming through day towards night,  
    Craving the perfumed light  
Of the stars lustrous, and the gem-born moon.

ON WAIKIKI BEACH--95

Dewy with clustered diamond,  
The long land swoons to sleeps : the sea sleeps and yet wakes  
beyond.

Here, in the crescent beach and bay, the sea,  
Curven and carven in warm shapes of dream,  
Answers the love-song of the liliated stream,  
And moves to bridal music. Stern and free,  
The lion-shapen headland guards the shore ;  
The ocean, the bull-throated, evermore  
Roars ; the vast wheel of heaven turns above,  
Its rim of pain, its jewelled heart of love ;  
Sun-waved, the eagle wing  
Of the air of feathered spring  
Royally sweeps, and on the musical marge  
Watches alone the man.  
O silvern shape and span  
Of moonlight, reaching over the grey, large  
Breast of the surf-bound strand,  
Life of the earth, God s child, Man s bride, the light of the sweet land  
!

Are emeralds ever a spart of this clear green,  
Or sapphires hints of this diviner blue,

96--AMBERGRIS

Or rubies shadows of this rosy hue,  
Or light itself elsewhere so clear and clean ?  
For all the sparkling dews of heaven fallen far  
Crystalline, fixed, forgotten (as a star  
Forgets its nebulous virginity)  
Are set in all the sky and earth and sea.  
Shining with solar fire,  
The single-eyed desire  
Of scent and sound and sight and sense perfuses  
The still and lambent light  
Of the essential night ;  
And all the heart of me is fain, and muses,  
As if for ever doomed to dream  
Or pass in peace Lethean adown the grey Lethean stream.

So deep the sense of beauty, and so keen !  
The calm abiding holiness of love  
Reigns ; and so fallen from the heights above  
Immeasurable, the influence unseen  
Of music and of spiritual fire,  
That the soul sleeps, forgotten of desire,  
Only remembering its God-like birth  
Reflected in the deity of earth,

ON WAIKIKI BEACH--97

Becometh even as God.  
The pensive period  
Of night and day beats like a waving fan  
No more, no more ; the years,  
Reft of their joys and fears,  
Pass like pale faces, leave the life of man  
Untroubled of their destinies,  
Leave him forgotten of life and time, immortal, calm and wise.

Only the ceaseless surf on coral towers,  
The changeless change of the unchanging ocean,  
Laps the bright night, with unsubstantial motion  
Winnowing the starlight, plumed with feathery flowers  
Of foam and phosphor glory, the strange glow  
Of the day s amber fallen to indigo,  
Lit of its own depth in some subtle wise,  
A pavement for the footsteps from the skies  
Of angels walking thus  
Not all unseen of us,

98--AMBERGRIS

Nor all unknown, nor unintelligible,  
When with souls lifted up  
In the Cadmean cup,  
As incense lifted in the thurible,  
We know that God is even as we,  
Light from the sky, and life on earth, and love beneath the sea.  
99



FROM ALICE : AN ADULTERY

Margaret

The moon spans Heaven s architrave ;  
    Stars in the deep are set ;  
Written in gold on the day s grave,  
    To love, and to forget ;  
And sea-winds whisper o er the wave  
    The name of Margaret.

A heart of gold, a flower of white,  
    A blushing flame of snow,  
She moves like latticed moons of light  
    And O ! her voice is low,  
Shell murmurs borne to Amphitrite,  
    Exulting as they go.

Her stature waves, as if a flower  
    Forgot the evening breeze,  
But heard the charioted hour  
    Sweep from the father seas,

100--AMBERGRIS

And kept sweet time within her bower,  
And hushed mild melodies.

So grave and delicate and tall  
Shall laughter never sweep  
Like a moss-guarded waterfall  
Across her ivory sleep ?  
A tender laugh most musical ?  
A sigh serenely deep ?

She laughs in wordless swift desire  
A soft Thalassian tune ;  
Her eyelids glimmer with the fire  
That animates the moon :  
Her chaste lips flame, as flames aspire  
Of poppies in mid-June.

She lifts the eyelids amethyst,  
And looks from half-shut eyes,  
Gleaming with miracles of mist,  
Grey shadows on blue skies ;  
And on her whole face sunrise kissed,  
Child-wonderment most wise.  
The whitest arms in all the earth  
Blush from the lilac bed.

MARGARET--101

Like a young star even at its birth  
Shines out the golden head.  
Sad violets are the maiden girth,  
Pale flames night-canopied.

O gentlest lady ! Lift those eyes,  
And curl those lips to kiss !  
Melt my young boyhood in thy sighs,  
A subtler Salmacis !  
Hike, in that peace, these ecstasies ;  
In that fair fountain, this !

She fades as starlight on the stream,  
As dewfall in the dell ;  
All life and love, one ravishing gleam  
Stolen from sleep's crucible ;  
That kiss, that vision is a dream :  
And I most miserable !

Still Echo wails upon the steep,  
To love and to forget !  
Still sombre whispers from the deep  
Sob through night's golden net,  
And waft upon the wings of sleep  
The name of Margaret.

102--AMBERGRIS

Red Poppy

I have no heart to sing.  
What offering I may bring,  
    Alice, to thee ?  
My great love's lifted wing  
Weakens, unwearying,  
    And droops with me,  
Singing the sun-kindled hair  
Close in the face more fair,  
The sweet soul shining there  
    For God to see.

Surely some angel shed  
Flowers for the maiden head,  
    Ephemeral flowers !  
I yearn, not comforted.  
My heart is vainly bled  
    Through age-long hours.  
To thee my spirit turns ;  
My bright soul aches and burns,  
As a dry valley yearns  
    For spring and showers.

RED POPPY==103

Splendid, remove, a fane  
Alone and unprofane

I know thy breast.

These bitter tears of pain  
Flood me, and fall again

No into rest.

Me, whose sole purpose is  
To gain one gainless kiss,  
And make a bird's my bliss,  
Shrined in that nest.

O fearful firstling dove !

My dawn and spring of love,

Love's light and lure !

Look (as I bend above)

Through bright lids filled thereof

Perfect and pure,

Thy bloom of maidenhood.

I could not : if I could,

I would not : being good,

Also endure !

Cruel, to tear or mar

The chalice'd nenuphar ;

Cruel to press

104--AMBERGRIS

The rosebud ; cruel to scar  
Or stain the flower-star  
    With mad caress.  
But crueller to destroy  
The leaping life and joy  
Born in a careless boy  
    From lone distress.

More cruel then art thou  
The calm and chaste of brow,  
    If thou dost this.  
Forget the feeble vow  
Ill sworn ; all laws allow  
    Pity, that is  
Kin unto love, and mild  
List to the sad and wild  
Crying of the lonely child  
    Who asks a kiss.

One kiss, like snow, to slip,  
Cool fragrance from thy lip  
    To melt on mine ;  
One kiss, a white-sail ship  
To laugh and leap and dip  
    Her brows divine ;

RED POPPY--105

One kiss a starbeam faint  
With love of a sweet saint,  
Stolen like a sacrament  
    In the night s shrine !

One kiss, like moonlight cold  
Lighting with floral gold  
    The lake s low tune :  
One kiss, one flower to fold,  
On its own calyx rolled,  
    At night, in June !  
One kiss, like dewfall, drawn  
A veil o er leaf and lawn  
Mix night, and noon, and dawn,  
    Dew, flower, and moon !

One kiss, intense, supreme !  
The sense of Nature s dream  
    And scent of Heaven  
Shown lin the glint and gleam  
Of the pure dawn s first beam,  
    With earth for leaven ;  
Moulded of fire and gold,  
Water and wine to fold  
Me in its life, and hold !  
    In all but seven !

106--AMBERGRIS

I would not kiss thee, I !  
Lest my lip s charactery  
    Ruin thy flower.  
Curve thou one maidenly  
Kiss, stooping from thy sky  
    Of peace and power !  
Thine only be the embrace !  
I move not from my place,  
Feel the exultant face  
    Mine for an hour !



107

Alice

The roses of the world are sad,  
    The water-lilies pale,  
Because my lover takes her lad  
    Beneath the moonlight veil.  
No flower may bloom this happy hour  
Unless my Alice be the flower.

The stars are hidden in dark and mist,  
    The moon and sun are dead,  
Because my love has caught and kissed  
    My body in her bed.  
No light may shine this happy night  
Unless my Alice be the light.

So silent are the thrush, the lark !  
    The nightingale s at rest,  
Because my lover loves the dark,  
    And has me in her breast.  
No song this happy night be heart !  
Unless my Alice be the bird.

108--AMBERGRIS

The sea that roared around the house  
Is fallen from alarms,  
Because my lover calles me spouse,  
And takes me to her arms.  
This night no sound of breakers be !  
Unless my Alice be the sea.

Of man and maid in all the world  
Is stilled the swift caress,  
Because my lover has me curled  
In her own loveliness.  
No kiss be such a night as this !  
Unless my Alice be the kiss.

No blade of grass awaiting takes  
The dew fresh-fallen above,  
Because my lover swoons, and slakes  
Her body s thirst of love.  
This night no dewfall from the blue!  
Unless my Alice be the dew.

This night O never dawn shall crest  
The world of wakening,  
Because my lover has my breast  
On hers for dawn and spring.  
This night shall never be withdrawn  
Unless my Alice be the dawn.

FROM THE ARGONAUTS

Chorus of Shipbuilders

The sound of the hammer and steel !  
The song of the level and line !  
The whirr of the whistling wheel !  
The ring of the axe on the pine !

The joy of the ended labour,  
As the good ship plunges free  
By sound of pipe and tabor  
To front the sparkling sea!

The mystery-woven spell !  
The voyage of golden gain !  
The free full sails that swell  
On the swell of the splendid main !  
The song of the axe and the wedge!  
The clang of the hammer and chain !  
Keen whistle of chisel and edge !  
Smooth swish of the sliding plane !

110--AMBERGRIS

Hail to the honour of toil !

    Hail ! to the ship flown free !

Hail ! to the golden spoil,

    And the glamour of all the sea !

## At Waikiki

Light shed from seaward over breakers bending  
    Kiss-wise to the emerald hollows : light divine  
    Whereof the sun is God, the sea his shrine ;  
Light in vibrations rhythmic ; light unending ;  
    Light sideways from the girdling crags ex-tending  
    Unto this lone and languid head of mine ;  
    Light, that fulfils creation as with wine,  
Flows in the channels of the deep : light, rending  
    The adamantine columns of the night,  
    Is laden with the love-song of the light.

Light, pearly-glimmering through dim gulf and hollow,  
    Below the foam-kissed lips of all the sea ;  
    Light shines from all the sky and up to me  
From the amber floors of sand : Light calls Apollo !  
The shafts of fire fledged of the eagle follow  
    The crested surf, and strike the shore, and flee  
    Far from green cover, nymph-enchanted lea,

112--AMBERGRIS

Fountain, and plume them white as the sea-swallow,  
And turn and quiver in the ocean, seeming  
The glances of a maiden kissed, or dreaming.

Light, as I swim through rollers green and gleaming,  
Sheds its most subtle sense to penetrate  
This heart I thought impervious to Fate.  
Now the sweet light, the full delight, is beaming  
Through me and burns me : all my flesh is teeming  
With the live kisses of the sea, my mate,  
My mistress, till the fires of life abate  
And leave me languid, man-forgotten, deeming  
I see in sleep, in many-coloured night,  
More hope than in the flame-waves of the light.

Light ! ever light ! I swim far out and follow  
The footsteps of the wind, and light invades  
My desolate soul, and all the cypress shades  
Glow with transparent lustre, and the hollow  
I thought I had hidden in my heart must swallow  
The bitter draught of Truth ; no Nereid maids  
Even in my sea are mine : the whole sea s glades  
And hills and springs are void of my Apollo  
The Sea herself my tune and my desire !  
The Sun himself my lover and my lyre !

## The Harbour, Vera Cruz

I hear the waters faint and far,  
And look to where the Polar Star,  
Half hidden in the haze, divides  
The double chanting of the tides ;  
But, where the harbour's gloomy mouth  
Welcomes the stranger to the south,  
The water shakes, and all the sea  
Grows silver suddenly.

As one who standing on the moon  
Sees the vast horns in silver hewn,  
Himself in darkness, and beholds  
How silently all space unfolds  
Into her shapeless breast the spark  
And sacred phantom of the dark;  
So in the harbour-horns I stand  
Till I forget the land.

114--AMBERGRIS

Who sails through all that solemn space  
Out to the twilight's secret place,  
The sleepy waters move below  
His ship's imaginary flow.  
No song, no lute, so lowly chaunts  
In woods where still Arisbe haunts,  
Wrapping the wanderer with her tresses  
Into untold caresses.

For none of all the sons of men  
That hath known Artemis, again  
Turns to the warmer earth, or vows  
His secrets to another spouse.  
The moon resolves her beauty in  
The sea's deep kisses salt and keen ;  
The sea assumes the lunar light,  
And he their eremite !

In their calm intercourse and kiss  
Even hell itself no longer is ;  
For nothing in their love abides  
That passes not beneath their tides,  
And who so bathes in light of theirs,  
And water, changes unawares  
To be no separate soul, but be  
Himself the moon and sea.



THE HARBOUR, VERA CRUZ--115

Not all the wealth that flowers shed,  
And sacred streams on that calm head ;  
Not all the earth s spell-weaving dream  
And scent of new-turned earth shall seem  
Again indeed his nmother s breast  
To breathe like sleep and give him rest ;  
He lives or dies in subtler swoon  
Between the sea and moon.

So standing, gliding, undeterred  
By any her alluring word  
That calls from older forest glades,  
My soul forgets the gentle maids  
That wooed me in the scarlet bowers,  
And golden cluster-woof of flowers ;  
Forgets itself, content to be  
Between the moon and sea.

No passion stirs their depth, nor moves ;  
No life disturbs their sweet dead loves ;  
No being holds a crown or throne ;  
They are, and I in them, alone :  
Only some lute-player grown star  
Is heard like whispering flowers afar ;  
And some divided, single tune  
Sobs from the sea and moon.

116--AMBERGRIS

Amid thy mountains shall I rise,  
O moon, and float about thy skies?  
Beneath thy waters shall I roam,  
O sea, and call thy valleys home?  
Or on D dalian oarage fare  
Forth in the interlunar air ?  
Imageless mirror-life ! to be  
Sole between moon and sea.

## The Song of the Siren, Leucosia

O Lover, I am lonely here!  
O lover, I am weeping !  
Each pearl of ocean is a tear  
Let fall while love was sleeping.

A tear is made of fire and dew  
And saddened with a smile ;  
The sun s laugh in the curving blue  
Lasts but a little while.

The night-winds kiss the deep : the stars  
Shed laughter from above ;  
But night must pass dawn s prison bars :  
Night hath not tasted love.

With me the night is fallen in day ;  
The day swoons back to night ;  
The white and black are woven in gray,  
Faint sleep of silken light.

118--AMBERGRIS

A strange soft light about me shed  
    Devours the sense of time :  
Hovers about my sleepy head  
    Some sweet persistent rime.

Beneath my breast my love may hear  
    Deep murmur of the billows  
O gather me to thee, my dear,  
    On soft forgetful pillows !

O gather me in arms of love  
    As maidens plucking posies,  
Or mists that fold about a dove,  
    Or valleys full of roses !

O let me fade and fall away  
    From waking into sleep,  
From sleep to death, from gold to gray,  
    Deep as the skies are deep !

O let me fall from death to dream,  
    Eternal monotone ;  
Faint eventide of sleep supreme  
    With thee and love alone !

THE SONG OF THE SIREN, LEUCOSIA--119

A jewelled night of star and moon  
    Shall watch our bridal chamber,  
Bending the blue rays to the tune  
    Of softly-sliding amber.

Dim winds shall whisper echoes of  
    Our slow ecstatic breath,  
Telling all worlds how sweet is love,  
    How beautiful is death.

120--AMBERGRIS

Hong Kong Harbour

Over a sea like stained glass  
At sunset like a chrysopras :  
    Our smooth-oared vessel over-rides  
    Crimson and green and purple tides.  
Between the rocky isles we pass,  
And greener islets gay with grass ;  
    Between the over-arching sides  
    Our pinnace glides.

Just by the moon-haunted hill  
Songs rise into the air, and thrill,  
    Like clustered birds at evening  
    When love outlingers rain and spring.  
Faint faces of strange dancers spill  
Their dewy scent ; and sweet and chill  
    The wind comes faintly whispering  
    On wanton wing.

HONG KONG HARBOUR--121

Between the islands sheer and steep  
Our craft treads noiseless o'er the deep,  
    Turned to the gold heart of the west,  
    The sun's last sigh of love expressed  
Ere the lake glimmer, borrow sleep  
From clouds and tinge their edges ; weep  
    That night brings love not to his breast,  
    But only rest.

We move toward the golden track  
Shed in the water : we look back  
    Eastward, where rose is set to warn  
    Promise and prophecy of dawn  
Reflected, lest the ocean lack  
In any space serene or slack  
    Some colour, blusing o'er the fawn  
    Dim-lighted lawn.

And under all the shadowy shapes  
Of steep and silent bays and capes  
    The water takes its darkest hue ;  
    Catches no laughter from the blue ;  
No purple ray or god escapes,  
But dim green shadow comes and drapes  
    Its lustre : thus the night burns through  
    Tall groves of yew.

122--AMBERGRIS

Thither, ah thither ! Hollow vales  
Trembling with early nightingales !  
    Languish, O sea of sleep ! Young moon  
    Dream on above in maiden swoon !  
None daring to invoke the gales  
To shake our sea, and swell our sails.  
    Not song, but silence, were a boon  
    Save for this tune.

Round capes grown darker as night falls,  
We see at last the splendid walls  
    That ridge the bay ; the town lies there  
    Lighted (the temple s hour for prayer)  
At grave harmonious intervals.  
The grand voice of some seaman calls,  
    Just as the picture fades, aware  
    How it was fair.



## At Prome

When the chill of earth black-breasted is uplifted at the glance  
Of the red sun million-crested, and the forest blossoms dance  
With the light that stirs and lustres of the dawn, and with the bloom  
Of the wind's cheek as it clusters from the hidden valley's gloom :  
Then I walk in woodland spaces, musing on the solemn ways  
Of the immemorial places shut behind the starry rays ;  
Of the East and all its splendour, of the West and all its peace ;  
And the stubborn lights grow tender, and the hard sounds hush and  
cease.  
In the wheel of heaven revolving, mysteries of death and birth,  
In the womb of time dissolving, shape anew a heaven and earth

124--AMBERGRIS

Ever changing, ever growing, ever dwindling, ever dear,  
Ever worth the passion glowing to distil a doubtful tear.  
These are with me, these are of me, these approve me, these obey,  
Choose me, move me, fear me, love me, master of the night and day.  
These are real, these illusion : I am of them, false or frail,  
True or lasting, all is fusion in the spirit s shadow-veil,  
Till the Knowledge-Lotus flowering hides the world beneath its stem  
;  
Neither I, nor God life-showering, find a counter-part in them.  
As a spirit in a vision shows a countenance of fear,  
Laughs the looker to derision, only comes to dis-appear,  
Gods and mortals, mind and matter, in the glowing bud dissever :  
Vein from vein they rend and shatter, and are nothingness for ever.  
In the blessed, the enlightened, perfect eyes these visions pass,

AT PROME--125

Pass and cease, poor shadows frightened, leave no stain upon the  
glass.

One last stroke, O heart-free master, one last certain calm of will,  
And the maker of Disaster shall be stricken and grow still.

Burn thou to the core of matter, to the spirit's utmost flame,  
Consciousness and sense to shatter, ruin sight and form and name !

Shatter, lake-reflected spectre ; lake, rise up in mist to sun ;

Sun, dissolve in showers of nectar, and the Master's work is done.

Nectar perfume gently stealing, masterful and sweet and strong,  
Cleanse the world with light of healing in the ancient House of  
Wrong !

Free a million million mortals on the wheel of being tossed !

Open wide the mystic portals, and be altogether lost !

126--AMBERGRIS

FROM THE STAR AND THE  
GARTER

Song

Make me a roseleaf with your mouth,  
And I will waft it through the air  
To some far garden of the South,  
The herald of our happening there !

Fragrant, caressing, steals the breeze ;  
Curls into kisses on your lips :  
I know interminable seas,  
Winged ardour of the stately ships,

Space of incalculable blue  
And years enwreathed in one close crown,  
And glimmering laughters echoing you  
From reverend shades of bard s renown :

FROM THE STAR & THE GARTER --127

Nature alive and glad to hymn  
Your beauty, my delight : her God  
Weary, his old eyes sad and dim  
In his intolerable abode.

All things that are, unknown and known,  
Bending in homage to your eyes ;  
We wander wondering, lift alone  
The world's grey load of agonies.

Make me a roseleaf with your mouth,  
That all the savour steal afar  
Unto the sad awaiting South,  
Where sits enthroned the answering Star.

Song

To sea ! To sea ! The ship is trim;  
The breezes bend the sails.  
They chant the necromantic hymn,  
Arouse Arabian tales !

To sea ! Before us leap the waves ;  
The wild white combers follow.  
Invoke, ye melancholy slaves,  
The morning of Apollo !

128--AMBERGRIS

There s phosphorescence in the wake,  
And starlight o er the prow ;  
One comet, like an angry snake,  
Lifts up its hooded brow.

The black grows grey toward the East :  
A hint of silver glows.  
Gods gather to the mystic feast  
On interlunar snows.

The moon is up full-orbed : she glides  
Striking a snaky ray  
Across the black resounding tides,  
The sepulchre of day.

The moon is up : upon the prow  
We stand and watch the moon.  
A star is lusted on your brow ;  
Your lips begin a tune,

A long, low tune of love that swells  
Little by little, and lights  
The overarching miracles  
Of love s desire, and Night s.

It swells, it rolls to triumph-song  
Through luminous black skies ;

FROM THE STAR & THE GARTER --129

Thrills into silence sharp and strong,  
Assumes its peace, and dies.

There is the night : it covers close  
The lilies folded fair  
Of all your beauty, and the rose  
Half hidden in your hair.

There is the night : unseen I stand  
And look to seaward still :  
We would not look upon the land  
Again, had I my will.

The ship is trim : to sea ! to sea !  
Take life in either hand,  
Crush out its wind for you and me,  
And drink, and understand !

130--AMBERGRIS

Rosa Mundi

1. Rose of the world !  
Red glory of the secret heart of love !  
Red flame, rose red, most subtly curled  
Into its own infinite flower, all flowers above !  
Its flower in its own perfumed passion,  
Its faint sweet passion, folded and furled  
In flower fashion ;  
And my deep spirit taking its pure part  
Of that voluptuous heart  
Of hidden happiness !
  
2. Arise, strong bow of the young child Eros !  
(While the maddening moonlight, the memoried caress  
Stolen of the scented rose  
Stirs me and bids each racing pulse ache, ache !)  
Bend into an agony of art  
Whose cry is ever rapture, and whose tears



ROSA MUNDI--131

For their own purity's undivided sake  
Are molten dew, as, on the lotus leaves  
Silver-coiled in the Sun  
Into green-girded spheres  
Purer than all a maiden's dream enweaves,  
Lies the unutterable beauty of  
The Waters. Yea, arise, divinest dove  
Of the Idalian, on your crimson wings  
And soft grey plumes, bear me to yon cool shrine  
Of that most softly-spoken one,  
Mine Aphrodite ! Touch the imperfect strings,  
O thou, immortal, throned above the moon !  
Inspire a holy tune  
Lighter and lovelier than flowers and wine  
Offered in gracious gardens unto Pan  
By any soul of man !

3. In vain the solemn stars pour their pale dews  
Upon my trembling spirit ; their caress  
Leaves me moon-rapt in waves of loveliness  
All thine, O rose, O wrought of many a must  
In Music, O thou strength of ecstasy  
Incarnate in a woman-form, create  
Of her own rapture, infinite, ultimate,

132--AMBERGRIS

Not to be seen, not grasped, not even imaginable,  
But known of one, by virtue of that spell  
Of thy sweet will toward him : thou, unknown,  
Untouched, grave mistress of the sunlight throne  
Of thine own nature ; known not even of me,  
But of some spark of woven eternity  
Immortal in this bosom. Phosphor paled  
And in the grey upstarted the dread veiled  
Rose light of dawn. Sun-shaped shone thy spears  
Of love forth darting into myriad spheres,  
Which I the poet called this light, that flower,  
This knowledge, that illumination, power  
This and love that, in vain, in vain, until  
Thy beauty dawned, all beauty to distil  
Into one drop of utmost dew, one name  
Choral as floral, one thin, subtle flame  
Fitted to a shaft of love, to pierce, to endue  
My trance-rapt spirit with the avenue  
Of perfect pleasures, radiating far  
Up and up yet to where thy sacred star  
Burned in its brilliance : thence the storm was shed  
A passion of great calm about this head,  
This head no more a poet's ; since the dream

ROSA MUNDI--133

Of beauty gathered close into a stream  
Of tingling light, and, gathering ever force  
From thine own love, its unextended source,  
Became the magic utterance that makes Me,  
Dissolving self into the starless sea  
That makes one lake of molten joy, one pond  
Steady as light and hard as diamond ;  
One drop, one atom of constraint intense,  
Of elemental passion corning sense,  
All the concentrated music that is I.  
O ! hear me not ! I die ;  
I am borne away in misery of dumb life  
That would in words flash forth the holiest heaven  
That to the immortal God of Gods is given,  
And, tongue-tied, stammers forth my wife !

4. I am dumb with rapture of thy loveliness.  
All metres match and mingle ; all words tire ;  
All lights, all sounds, all perfumes, all gold stress  
Of the honey-palate, all soft strokes expire  
In abject agony of broken sense  
To hymn the emotion tense  
Of somewhat higher O ! how highest ! than all  
Their mystery : fall, O fall,

134--AMBERGRIS

Ye unavailing eagle-flights of song !  
O wife ! these do thee wrong.

5. Thou knowest how I was blind ;  
How for mere minutes thy pure presence  
Was nought ; was ill defined ;  
A smudge across the mind,  
Drivelling in its brutal essence,  
Hog-wallowing in poetry,  
Incapable of thee.

6. Ah ! when the minutes grew to hours,  
And yet the beast, the fool, saw flowers  
And loved them, watched the moon rise, took delight  
In perfumes of the summer night,  
Caught in the glamour of the sun,  
Thought all the woe well won.  
How hours were days, and all the misery  
Abode, all mine : O thou ! didst thou regret ?  
Was thou asleep as I ?  
Didst thou not love me yet ?  
For, know ! the moon is not the moon until  
She hath the knowledge to fulfil  
Her music, till she know herself the moon.

ROSA MUNDI--135

So thou, so I ! The stone unhewn,  
Foursquare, the sphere of human hands immune,  
Was not yet chosen for the corner-piece  
And keystone of the Royal Arch of Sex ;  
Unsolved the ultimate x ;  
The virginal breeding breeze  
Was yet of either unstirred ;  
Unspoken the Great Word.

7. Then on a sudden, we knew. From deep to deep  
Reverberating, lightning unto lightning  
Across the sundering brightening  
Abyss of sorrow s sleep,  
There shone the sword of love, and struck, and clove  
The intolerable veil,  
The woven chain of mail  
Prudence self-called, and folly known to who  
May know. Then, O sweet drop of dew,  
Thy limpid light rolled over and was lost  
In mine, and mine is thine.  
Peace, ye who praise ! ye but disturb the shrine !  
This voice is evil over against the peace  
Here in the West, the holiest. Shaken and crossed.

136--AMBERGRIS

The threads Lachesis wove fell from her hands.  
The pale divided strands  
Were taken by thy master-hand, Eros !  
Her evil thinkings cease,  
Thy miracles begin.  
Eros ! Eros ! Be silent ! It is sin  
Thus to invoke the oracles of order  
Their iron gates to unclose.  
The gross, inhospitable warder  
Of Love s green garden of spice is well awake.  
Hell hath enough of Her three-headed hound ;  
But Love s severer bound  
Knows for His watcher a more fearful shape,  
A formidable ape  
Skilled by lack art to mock the Gods profound  
In their abyss of under ground.  
Beware ! Who hath entered hath no boast to make,  
And conscious Eden surelier breeds the snake.  
Be silent ! O ! for silence sake !

8. That asks the impossible Smite ! Smite !  
Profaned adytum of pure light,  
Smite ! but I must sing on.  
Nay ! can the orison

ROSA MUNDI--137

Of myriad fools provoke the Crowned-with-Night  
Hidden beyond sound and sight  
In the mystery of His own high essence ?  
Lo, Rose of all the gardens of the world,  
Did thy most sacred presence  
Not fill the Real, then this voice were whirled  
Away in the wind of its own folly, thrown  
Into forgotten places and unknown.  
So I sing on !

Sister and wife, dear wife  
Light of my love and lady of my life,  
Answer if thou canst from the unsullied place,  
Unveiling for one star-wink thy bright face !  
Did we leave then, once cognisant,  
Time for some Fear to implant  
His poison ? Did we hesitate ?  
Leave but one little chance to Fate ?  
For one swift second did we wait ?  
There is no need to answer : God is God,  
A jealous God and evil ; with His rod  
He smiteth fair and foul, and with His sword  
Divideth tiniest atoms of intangible time,  
That men may know He is the Lord.  
Then, with that sharp division,  
Did He divide our wit sublime ?

138--AMBERGRIS

Our knowledge bring to nought ?  
We had no need of thought.  
We brought His malice in derision.  
So thine eternal petals shall enclose  
Me, O most wonderful lady of delight,  
Immaculate, indivisible circle of night,  
Inviolate, invulnerable Rose !

9. The sound of my own voice carries me on.  
I am as a ship whose anchors are all gone,  
Whose rudder is held by Love the indomitable  
Purposeful helmsman ! Were his port high Hell,  
Who should be fool enough to care ? Suppose  
Hell's waters wash the memory of this rose  
Out of my mind, what misery matters then ?  
Or, if they leave it, all the woes of men  
Are as pale shadows in the glory of  
That passionate splendour of Love.

10. Ay ! my own voice, my own thoughts. These, then, must be  
The mutiny of some worm's misery,  
Some chained despair knotted into my flesh,  
Some chance companion, some soul damned afresh  
Since my redemption, that is vocal at all,



ROSA MUNDI--139

For I am wrapt away from light and call  
In the sweet heart of the red rose.  
My spirit only knows  
This woman and no more ; who would know more ?  
I, I am concentrate  
In the unshakable state  
Of constant rapture. Who should pour  
His ravings in the air for winds to whirl,  
Far from the central pearl  
Of all the diadem of the universe ?  
Let God take pen, rehearse  
Dull nursery tales ; then, not before, O rose,  
Red rose ! shall the beloved of thee,  
Infinite rose ! pen puerile poetry  
That turns in writing to vile prose.

11. Were this the quintessential plume of Keats  
And Shelley and Swinburne and Verlaine,  
Could I outsoar them, all their lyric feats,  
Excel their utterance vain  
With one convincing rapture, beat them hollow  
As an ass's skin ; wert thou, Apollo,  
Mere slave to me, not Lord thy fieriest flight  
And stateliest shaft of light

140--AMBERGRIS

Thyself thyself surpassing ; all were dull,  
And thou, O rose, sole, sacred, wonderful,  
Single in love and aim,  
Double in form and name,  
Triple in energy of radiant flame,  
Informing all, in all most beautiful,  
Circle and sphere, perfect in every part  
High above hope of Art :  
Though, be it said ! thou art nowhere now,  
Save in the secret chamber of my heart,  
Behind the brass of my anonymous brow.

12. Ay ! let the coward and slave who writes write on !  
He is no more harm to Love than the grey snake  
Who lurks in the dusk brake  
For the bare-legged village-boy, is to the Sun,  
The Sire of Life.  
The Lover and the Wife,  
Immune, intact, ignore. The people hear ;  
Then, be the people smitten of grey Fear,  
It is no odds !

13. I have seen the eternal Gods  
Sit, star-wed, in old Egypt by the Nile ;  
The same calm pose, the inscrutable, wan smile

ROSA MUNDI--141

On every lip alike.  
Time hath not had his will to strike  
At them ; they abide, they pass through all.  
Though their most ancient names may fall,  
They stir not nor are weary of  
Life, for with them even as with us, Life is but Love.  
They know, we know ; let, then, the writing go !  
That, in the very deed, we do not know.

14. It may be in the centuries of our life  
Since we were man and wife  
There stirs some incarnation of that love.  
Some rosebud in the garden of spices blows,  
Some offshoot from the Rose  
Of the World, the Rose of all Delight,  
The Rose of Dew, the Rose of Love and Night.  
The Rose of Silence, covering as with a vesture  
The solemn unity of things  
Beheld in the mirror of truth,  
The Rose indifferent to God s gesture,  
The Rose on moonlight wings  
That flies to the House of Fire,  
The Rose of Honey in Youth !  
Ah ! No dim mystery of desire

142--AMBERGRIS

Fathoms this gulf ! No light invades  
The mystical muscial shades  
Of a faith in the future, a dream of the day  
When athwart the dim glads  
Of the forest a ray  
Of sunlight shall flalsh and the dew die away !

15. Let there then be obscurity in this !  
There is an after rapture in the kiss.  
The fire, flesh, perfume, music that outpaced  
All time, fly off ; they are subtle : there abides  
A secret and most maiden taste ;  
Salt, as of the invisible tides  
Of the molten sea of gold  
Men may at times behold  
In the rayless scarab of the sinking sun ;  
And out of that is won  
Hardly, with labour and pain that are as pleasure,  
The first flower of the garden, the stored treasure  
That lies at the heart s heart of eternity.  
This treasure is for thee.

16. O ! but shall hope arise in happiness ?  
That may not be.  
My life is like a gholden grape ; the veins

ROSA MUNDI--143

Peep through the ecstasy  
Of the essence of ivory and silk,  
Pearl, moonlight, mother-milk  
That is her skin ;  
Its swift caress  
Flits like an angel s kiss in a dream ; remains  
The healing virtue ; from all sin,  
All ill, one touch sets free.  
My life is like a star oh fool ! oh fool !  
Is not thy back yet tender from the rod ?  
Is there no learning in the poet s school ?  
Wilt thou achieve what were too hard for God ?  
I call Him to the battle ; ask of me  
When the hinds calve ? What of eternity  
When he built chaos ? Shall Leviathan  
Be drawn out with an hook ? Enough ; I see  
This I can answer or Ernst Haeckel can !  
Now, God Almighty, rede this mystery !  
What of the love that is the heart of man ?  
Take stars and airs, and write it down !  
Fill all the interstices of space  
With myriad verse own Thy disgrace !  
Diminish Thy renown !  
Approve my riddle ! This Thou canst not do.

144--AMBERGRIS

17. O living Rose ! O dowered with subtle dew  
Of love, the tiny eternities of time,  
Caught between flying seconds, are well filled  
With these futilities of fragrant rime ;  
In Love s retort distilled,  
In sunrays of fierce loathing purified,  
In moonrays of pure longing tried,  
And gathered after many moons of labour  
Into the compass of a single day,  
And wrought into continuous tune,  
One laughter with one languor for its neighbour,  
One thought of winter with one word of June,  
Muddled and mixed in mere dismay,  
Chiselled with the cunning chisel fo despair,  
Found wanting, well aware  
Of its own fault, even insistent  
Thereon ; some fragrance rare  
Stolen from my lady s hair  
Perchance redeeming now and then the distant  
Fugitive tunes.

18.           Ah ! Love ! the hour is over !  
The moon is up, the vigil overpast.  
Call me to thee at last,  
O Rose, O perfect miracle lover,

ROSA MUNDI--145

Call me ! I hear thee though it be across  
The abyss of the whole universe,  
Though not a sigh escape, delicious loss !  
Though hardly a wish rehearse  
The imperfection underlying ever  
The perfect happiness.  
Thou knowest that not in flesh  
Lies the fair fresh  
Delight of love ; not in mere lips and eyes  
The secret of these bridal ecstasies,  
Since thou art everywhere,  
Rose of the World, Rose of the Uttermost  
Abode of Glory, Rose of the High Host  
Of Heaven, mystic, rapturous Rose !  
The extreme passion glows  
Deep in this breast ; thou knowest (and love knows)  
How every word awakes its own reward  
In a thought akin to thee, a shadow of thee ;  
And every tune evokes its musical Lrod ;  
And every rime tingles and shakes in me  
The filaments of the great web of love.

19. O Rose all roses far above  
In the garden of God s roses,  
Sorrowless, thornless, passionate Rose, that lies

146--AMBERGRIS

Full in the flood of its own sympathies  
And makes my life one tune that curls and closes  
On its won self delight ;  
A circle, never a line ! Safe from all wind,  
Secure in its own pleasure-house confined,  
Mistress of all its moods,  
Matchless, serene, in sacred amplitudes  
Of its own royal rapture, deaf and blind  
To aught but its own mastery of song  
And light, shown ever as silence and deep night  
Secret as death and final. Let me long  
Never again for aught ! This great delight  
Involves me, weaves me in its pattern of bliss,  
Seals me with its own kiss,  
Draws me to thee with every dream that glows.  
Poet, each word ! Makden, each burden of snows  
Extending beyond sunset, beyond dawn !  
O Rose, inviolate, utterly wirthdrawn  
In the truth : for this is truth ; Love knows !  
Ah ! Rose of the World ! Rose! Rose !



OTHER LOVE-SONGS

Dora

Dora steals across the floor Tiptoe ;  
Opens then her rosy door, Peeps out.  
Nobody ! And where shall I Skip to ?  
Dora, diving daintily, Creeps out.

To the woodland ! Shall I find Crowtoe,  
Violet, jessamine ! I ll bind Garlands.  
Fancy I m a princess. Where Go to ?  
Persia, China, Finisterre ? Far lands !

148--AMBERGRIS

Pity Dora ! Only one Daisy  
Did she find. The sulking sun Slept still.  
Dora stamped her foot. Aurora Lazy  
Stirred not. Hush ! A footstep. Dora Kept still.

What a dreadful monster ! Shoot ! Mercy !  
( Twas a man.) Suppose the brute Ate her ?  
By-and-by the ruffian grows Percy.  
And she loves him now she knows Better.

149

Norah

Norah, my wee shy child of wonderment,  
    You are sweeter than a swallow-song at dusk !  
    You are braver than a lark that soars and trills  
    His lofty laughter of love to a hundred hills !  
    You lie like a sweet nut within the husk  
Of my big arms ; and uttermost content  
I have of you, my tiny fairy, eh ?  
Do you live in a flower, I wonder, and sleep and pray  
To the good God to send you dew at dawn  
    And rain in rain s soft season, and sun betimes,  
    And all the gladness of the afterglow  
        When you come shyly out of the folded bud,  
        Unsheathe your dainty soul, bathe it in blood  
    Of my heart ? Do you love me ? Do you know  
    How I love you ? Do you love these twitter-ing rimes  
I string you ? Is your tiny life withdrawn

150--AMBERGRIS

Into its cup for modesty when I sing  
So softly to you and hold you in my hands,  
You wild, wee wonder of wisdom ? Now I bring  
My lips to your body and touch you reverently,  
Knowing as I know what Gabriel understands  
When he spreads his wings above for canopy  
When you would sleep, you frail angelic thing  
Like a tiny snowdrop in its own life curled  
But oh ! the biggest heart in all the world !

Edith

Speak, O my sister, O my spouse, speak, speak !  
Sigh not, but utter the intense award  
Of infinite love ; arise, burn cheek by cheek !  
Dary, eyes of glory ; live, O lambent sword  
O the heart s gold rushing over mount and moor  
Of sunlit rapture ! rise all runes above,  
Dissolve thyself into one molten lure,  
Invisible core of the visible flame of love !  
Heart of the sun of rapture, whirling ever ;  
Strength of the sight of eagles, pierce the foam  
Of ecstasy s irremeable river,  
And race the rhythm of laughter to its home  
In the heart of the woman, and evoke the light  
Of love out of the fiery womb of night !

152--AMBERGRIS

Rose

Rose on the breast of the world of spring,  
    I press my breast against thy bloom,  
My subtle life drawn out to thee : to thee its moods and meanings  
cling.  
I pass from change and thought to peace, woven on love s incredible  
loom,  
Rose on the breast of the world of spring !

How shall the heart dissolved in joy take form and harmony and sing  
?  
How shall the ecstasy of light fall back to music s magic gloom ?  
O China rose without a thorn, O honey-bee with-out a sting !

The scent of all thy beauty burns upon the wind. The deep perfume  
Of our own love is hidden in our hearts, the invulnerable ring.  
No man shall know. I bear thee down unto the tomb, beyond the  
tomb,  
Rose on the breast of the world of spring !

153

Eileen

Under the stars the die was cast to win.  
The moonrays stained with pale embroidered bars  
The iridescent shimmer of your skin,  
    Under the stars.

Great angels drove their pearl-interwoven cars  
Through the night's racecourse : silence stood within  
The folded cups of passion's nenuphars.

You were my own ; sorrowless, without sin,  
That night this night. Sinks the red eye of Mars ;  
The hand of Hermes guides us as we spin  
    Under the stars.

154--AMBERGRIS

Hel ne

Could ivory blush with a stain of the sunset on highlands

Of snow : could the mind of me span

The tenderness born of the dew in immaculate islands

Virgin of maculate man :

Could I mingle the Alps and Hawaii ; Strath Ness and A apura and

Bai ;

Kashmir and Japan :

Could lilies attain to the life of the Gods : could a comet

Attain to the calm of the moon :

I would mingle them all in a kiss, and draw from it

The soul of a sensitive tune.

All lovers should hear it and know it : not needing the words of a poet

In ebony hewn.



HELENE--155

O beam of discovery under the eyelids awakening  
    The sense of delight ! O assent  
Slow dawning through cream into roses ! O white bosom shaking  
    The myrtles of magical scent  
In the groves of the heart ! O the pleasure that runs over all overmea-  
sure,  
    The wine of Event !

Overmastered the hurl of the world in the hush of our rapture ;  
    Entangled the bird of success  
In the snare of bewildering fancies. We capture Delight in the toils of  
a tress  
Rough gilded of sunlight and umber with virginal shadows of slum-  
ber  
    Ah ! sorrow, regress !

Till the idle abyss of eternity swoon to our pinions  
    With music of wings as we fly  
Through the azure of dreams, and the purple of mighty dominions  
    Exalted, afoam in the sky ;  
And to us it were wiser and sweeter to ruin the race of the metre,  
    And song were to die.  
156--AMBERGRIS

FROM GARGOYLES

Song

Dance a measure  
    Of tiniest whirls !  
Shake out your treasure  
    Of cinnamon curls !  
Tremble with pleasure,  
    O wonder of girls !

Rest is bliss,  
    And bliss is rest,  
Give me a kiss  
    If you love me best !  
Hold me like this  
    With my head on your breast !

157

Said

The spears of the night at her onset  
Are lords of the day for a while,  
The magical green of the sunset,  
The magical blue of the Nile.

    Afloat are the gales  
    In our slumberous sails  
On the beautiful breast of the Nile.

We have swooned through the midday, ex-hausted  
By the lips they are whips of the sun,  
The horizon befogged and befrosted  
By the haze and the greys and the dun  
    Of the whirlings of sand  
    Let loose on the land  
By the wind that is born of the sun.

On the water we stand as a shadow,  
A skeleton sombre and thin

158--AMBERGRIS

Erect on the watery meadow,  
As a giant, a lord of the Jinn  
Set sentinel over  
Some queen and her lover  
Beloved of the Gods and the Jinn.

We saw the moon shudder and sink  
In the furnace of tremulous blue ;  
We stood on the mystical brink  
Of the day as it sprang to us through  
The veil of the night,  
And the babe of the light  
Was begottin in the caves of the dew.

My love and I were awake  
When the noise of the dawn in our ears  
Burst out like a storm or a snake  
Or the rush of the Badawi spears.  
Dawn of desire !  
But thy kiss was as fire  
To thy lovers and princes and peers.

Then the ruin of night we beheld,  
As the sun stormed the heights of the sky

SAID--159

With his myriad swords, and compelled  
The pale tremblers, the planets, to fly.  
    He drave from their place  
    All the stars for a space,  
From their bastioned towers in the sky.

Thrilled through to the marrow with heat  
We abode (as we glode) on the river.  
Every arrow he launched from his seat,  
From the white inexhaustible quiver,  
    Smote us right through,  
    Smote us and slew,  
As we rode on the rapturous river.

Sweet sleep is perfection of love.  
To die into dreams of my lover,  
To wake with his mouth like a dove  
Kissing me over and over !  
    Better sleep so  
    Than be conscious, and know  
How death hath a charm to discover.

Ah ! float in the cool of the gloaming !  
Float wide in the lap of the stream

160--AMBERGRIS

With his mouth ever roving and homing  
To the nest where the dove is adream.

    Better wake so  
    Than be thinking, and know  
That at best it is only a dream.

So turn up thy face to the stars !  
In their peace be at peace for awhile !  
Let us pass in their luminous cars  
As a sob, as a sigh, as a smile !

    Love me and laze  
    Through the languorous days  
On the breast of the beautiful Nile !

## Prayer

The light streams stonger through the lamps of sense.  
Intelligence  
Grows as we go. Alas : its icy glimmer  
Show dimmer, dimmer  
The awful vaults we traverse. Were the sun  
Himself the one  
Glory of space, he would but illustrate  
The night of Fate.  
Are not the hosts of heaven in vain arrayed ?  
Their light dismayed  
Before the vast blind spaces of the sky ?  
O galaxy  
Of thousands upon thousands closely curled !  
Your golden world  
Incalculably small, its closest cluster  
Mere milky lustre

162--AMBERGRIS

Staining the infinite darkness ! Base and blind Our minion mind  
Seeks a great light, a light sufficient, light Insufferably bright,  
Hence hidden for an hour : imagining

    This vast vain thing,  
We call it God, and Father. Empty hand  
    And prayer unplanned  
Stretch fatuous to the void. Ah ! men my friends,

    What fury sends  
This folly to intoxicate your hearts ?

    Dread air disparts  
Your vital ways from these unsavoury follies.

    Black melancholies  
Sit straddled on your bended backs. The throne Of the unknown  
Is fit for children. We are too well ware

    How vain is prayer,  
How nought is great, since all is immanent,

    The vast content  
Of all the universe unalterable.

    We know too well  
How no one thing abides awhile at all,  
    How things fall,



PRAYER--163

Fall from their seat, the lamentable place,  
    Before their face,  
Weary and pass and are no more. So we,  
    Since hope must be,  
Look to the future, to the chance minute  
    That life may shoot  
Some flower at least to blossom in the night,  
    Since vital light  
Is sure to fail us on the hideous way.  
    What ? Must we pray ?  
Verily, O thou littlest babe, too weak  
    To stir or speak,  
Capable hardly of a thought, yet seed  
    Of word and deed ?  
To thine assured fruition we may trust  
    This weary dust.  
We who are old, and palsied, (and so wise !)  
    Lift up our eyes  
To little children, as the storm-tossed bark  
    Hails in the dark  
Some hardly visible harbour light ; we hold  
    The hours of gold  
To our own breasts, whose hours are iron and  
    brass :  
    So swift they pass

164--AMBERGRIS

And grind us down : we hold the wondrous  
light  
Our scattering sight  
Yet sees, the one star in a night of woe.  
We trust, and so  
Lift up our voices in the dying day  
Indeed to pray :  
O little hands that are so soft and stong,  
Lead us along !

## The King-Ghost

The King-Ghost is abroad. His spectre legions  
Sweep from their icy lakes and bleak ravines  
Unto these weary and untrodden regions  
Where man lies penned among his Might-have-beens.  
Keep us in safety, Lord,  
What time the King-Ghost is abroad !

The King-Ghost from his grey malefic slumbers  
Awakes the malice of his bloodless brain.  
He marshals the innumerable numbers  
Of shrieking shapes on the sepulchral plain.  
Keep us, for Jesu s sake,  
What time the King-Ghost is awake !

The King-Ghost wears a crown of hopes forgotten ;  
Dead loves are woven in his ghastly robe ;  
Bewildered wills and faiths grown old and rotten  
And deeds undared his sceptre, sword, and globe.  
Keep us, O Mary maid,  
What time the King-Ghost goes arrayed !

166--AMBERGRIS

The Hell-Wind whistles through his plumeless pinions ;  
    Clanks all that melancholy host of bones ;  
Fate s principalities and Death s dominions  
    Echo the drear discord, the tuneless tones.  
    Keep us, dear God, from ill,  
    What time the Hell-Wind whistles shrill.

The King-Ghost hath no music but their rattling ;  
    No scent but death s grown faint and fugitive ;  
No light but this their leprous pallor battling  
    Weakly with night. Lord, shall these dry bones live ?  
    O keep us in the hour  
    Wherein the King-Ghost hath his power !

The King-Ghost girds me with his gibbering creatures,  
    My dreams of old that never saw the sun.  
He shows me, in a mocking glass, their features,  
    The twin fiends Might-have-been and Should-have-done.  
    Keep us, by Jesu s ruth,  
    What time the King-Ghost grins the truth !

THE KING-GHOST--167

The King-Ghost boasts eternal usurpature ;  
For in this pool of tears his fingers fret  
I had imagined, by enduring nature,  
The twin gods Thus-will-I and May-be-yet.  
God, keep us most from ill,  
What time the King-Ghost grips the will !

Silver and rose and gold what flame resurges ?  
What living light pours forth in emerald waves ?  
What inmost Music drowns the clamorous dirges ?  
Shrieking thy fly, the King-Ghost and his slaves.  
Lord, let Thy Ghost indwell,  
And keep us from the power of Hell !  
Amen.

168--AMBERGRIS

FROM RODIN IN RIME

T te de Femme (Mus e du Luxembourg)

It shall be said, when all is done,  
    The last line written, the last mountain  
Climbed, the last look upon the sun  
    Taken, the last star in the fountain  
Shattered, that you and I were one.

What shall they say, who come apace  
    After us, heedless, gallant ? Seeing  
Our statues, hearing of our race  
    Heroic tales, half-doubted, being  
So far beyond a rime to trace.

What shall they say ? For secret we  
    Have held our love, and holy. Splendour  
Of light, and music of the sea,  
    And eyes and heart serene and tender,  
With kisses mingled utterly

These were our ways. And who shall know ?  
    What warrior bard our nuptial glories

TETE DE FEMME--169

Shall sing ? Historic shall we go  
Down through our country s golden stories ?  
Shall lovers whisper Even so

As he loved her do I love you ?  
So much they shall know, surely ; never  
The truth, how lofty and fresh as dew  
Our love began, abode for ever :  
They cannot know us through and through.

We have exceeded all the past.  
The future shall not build another.  
This is the climax, first and last.  
We stand upon the summit. Mother  
Of ages, daughter of ages, cast

The fatal die, and turn to death !  
Let evolution turn, involving  
As when the gray sun sickeneth  
Ghostly September ! so dissolving  
Into the pale eternal breath.

When all is done, shall this be said.  
When all is said, shall this be done,  
The on exhaust and finish d,  
And slumber steal upon the sun,  
My dear, when you and I are dead.

170--AMBERGRIS

Adonis, awake, it is day ; it is spring !  
It is dawn on the lea, it is light on the lake !  
The fawn s in the bush and the bird s on the wing !  
Adonis, awake !

Adonis, awake ! We are colour and song  
And for, we are muses most tender to take  
Thy life up to Art that was lost over long.  
Adonis, awake !

Adonis, awake ! thou has risen above  
The fear in the forest, the brute in the brake.  
Thou art sacred to shrines that are higher than Love !  
Adonis, awake !



171

Acrobates

My little lady light o limb  
    Twirls on her lover s twisting toes.  
    Lithe as a lynx, red as a rose,  
She spins aloft and laughs at him.  
So gay the pose, so quaint the whim,  
    One stares and stares : it grows and grows.

So swift the air she seems to skim  
    One s senses dazzle ; wonder glows  
    Warm in one s veins like love who knows ?  
One follows till one s eyes are dim  
My little lady light o limb.

172--AMBERGIS

Faunesse

The veil o th mist of the quiet wood is lifted to the seer s gaze ;  
He burns athwart the murky maze beyond into beatitude.

A solemn rapture holds the faun : an holy joy sucks up the seer  
Within its rose-revolving sphere, the orient oval of the dawn.

Light s graven old cartouche is sealed upon the forest : groves are  
gray  
With filtered glammers of the day, the steely ray flung off his shield.

She kneels, yon spirit of the earth ; she kneels and looks toward the  
east.  
In her gray eyes awakes the beast from slumber into druid mirth.

FAUNESSE--173

She is amazed, she, eager, she, exotic orchid of the glade !  
She waits the ripe, exultant blade, life tempered by eternity.

And I who witness am possessed by awe grown crimson with desire,  
It iron image wrapped in fire and branded idly on my breast.

Her face is bronze, her skin is green, as woods and suns would have it  
so.

Her secret wonders grow and glow, limned in the luminous patine.

Worship, the sculptor s, clean forgot in worship of her body lithe  
And time forgotten with his scythe, and thought, the Witenagemot,  
Confused in rapture : peace is culled a flower from the arboreal root,  
The vision dulled, the singer mute, shattered the lute, the song  
annulled.

174--AMBERGRIS

Balzac

Giant, with iron secrecies ennighted,  
Cloaked, Balzac stands and sees. Immense disdain,  
Egyptian silence, mastery of pain,  
Gargantuan laughter, shake or still the ignited  
Stature of the Master, vivid. Far, affrighted,  
The stunned air shudders on the skin. In vain  
The Master of La Com die Humaine  
Shadows the deep-set eyes, genius-lighted.

Epithalamis, birth-songs, epitaphs,  
Are written in the mystery of his lips.  
Sad wisdom, scornful shame, grand agony  
In the coffin-folds of the cloak, scarred mountains, lie,  
And pity hides i th heart. Grim knowledge grips  
The essential manhood. Balzac stands, and laughs.

## FROM ORPHEUS

## The Hours

Darkness and daylight in divided measure  
Gather as petals of the sunflower,  
In many seasons seek the lotus-treasure,  
Following as dancing maidens, mute for pleasure,  
The fervent flying footsteps of the Hour.

The sun looks over the memorial hills,  
The trampling of his horses heard as wind ;  
He leaps and turns, and all his fragrance fills  
The shade and silence ; all the rocks and rills  
Ring with the triumph of his steeds behind.

The bright air winnowed by the plumeless leapers  
Laughs, and the low light pierces to the bed  
Where lovers linger, where the smiling sleepers  
Stir, and the herds unmindful of their keepers  
Low for pure love of morning s dewy hand.

176--AMBERGRIS

The morning shakes its ocean-bathed tresses,  
    The bright sun broadens over all the earth.  
The green leaves fall, fall into his caresses,  
And all the world's heart leaps, again addresses  
    Its life, and girds it in the golden girth.

Then noon full-fashioned lies upon the steep.  
    The large sun sighs and turns his bridle-rein,  
Thinks of the ocean, turns his heart to sleep,  
Laughing no longer, not yet prone to weep,  
    Feeling the prelude of the coming pain.

The hills and dales are dumb beneath the heat,  
    And all the world lies tranced or mutely dream-ing,  
Save some low sigh caught up where pulses beat  
Of warm love waiting in the arboreal seat  
    Till the shade lengthen on the lawn light-gleaming.

Now all the birds change tune, and all the light  
    Glow lowlier, musing on departed day.  
Strange wings and sombre, heralding the night,  
Fleet far across the woods ; and gleaming bright  
    The evening star looks from the orient way.

THE HOURS--177

Shadow and silence deepen : all the woods  
Take on a tenderer phrase of musical  
Breezes : the stream-sought homes and solitudes  
Murmur a little where the maiden moods  
Are sadder as the evening's kisses fall.

Like silver scales of serpenhood they fall  
Across the blind air of the evening ;  
Shadowy ghosts arise funereal  
And seek unspeakable things ; and dryads call  
The Satyr-company to the satyr-king.

And all the light is over ; but the sky  
Shudders with blanched light of the unrisen moon.  
The night-birds mingle their sad minstrelsy  
For daylight's requiem : and the sea's reply  
Now stirs across the land's departed tune.

The moon is up : the choral crowd of stars,  
Shapen like strange or unknown animals,  
Move in their measure : beyond folian bars  
The clustering winds, moving as nenuphars,  
Gather and muse before the midnight calls.

178--AMBERGRIS

The darkness is most deep in hollow dells.

There, blacker than Cocytus, lurk the shades  
Darker than death s, more terrible than hell s,  
Uttering unwritten words : the silent wells  
Keep their sweet secret till the morning maids

Bring their carved pitchers to the moss-grown side.

For now beyond, below the east, appears  
A hint as if a band, silvern and wide,  
The girdle of some goddess amber-eyed,  
Rose from the solemn company of the spheres.

The sky is tinged, as if the amorous flesh

Of that same queen shone through the girdle drawn  
By her own kissing fevour through its mesh.  
Last, glory of godhead ! flickers, flames the fresh  
First faint frail rose and arrow of the dawn.



## Autumn

Full amber-breasted light of harvest-moon,  
    And sheaves of corn remembering the un  
    Laughing again for love of that caress  
When ight is fallen, and the sleepy swoon  
    Of warm waves lap the shoreland, one by one ;  
    Forgetful kisses like a dream s possess  
All the low-lying land,  
    And statelier than the swaying form  
    Of some loud God, lifting the storm  
In his disastrous hand,  
    Steps the sweet-voiced, the mellow motherhood  
    Glad of the sun s kiss, full of life, well wooed  
    And won and brought to his bed,  
Proud of her rhythm in the lusty kiss,  
    Triumphant and exulting in the mood  
Wherein her being is  
    Crowned with a husband s head,  
    And left in solitude which is not solitude.

180--AMBERGRIS

She strides with mighty steps across the glade  
    Laughing, her bosom swelling with the milk  
        Born of a million kisses : leaps her womb  
Pregnant with fruits, and latter flowers, and shade  
    Of the great cedar-groves : soft, soft as silk,  
        Her skin glows amber, silvered with the bloom  
Mist-like of the moon s light,  
    A slumberous haze of quietude  
    Shed o'er the hardy limbs, and lustihood,  
And boldness, and great might.  
    Earth knows her daring daughter, and the sea  
    Breaks into million-folded mystery  
        Of flower-like flashes in the pale moonrise,  
Exulting also, now the sun is faded,  
    With joy of her supreme fertility  
        And glowing masteries  
        Of autumn summer-shaded,  
    The golden fruit of all the blossoming sky.

And now the watcher to the bright breasts blind  
    Loses the seemly shape, the loud swift song ;  
        Now the moon falls, and all the gold is gone,  
And round the storm-caught shape hard gusts of wind

AUTUMN--181

Blow, and her leaves are torn, a flying throng  
Of orange and purple and red ; the sombre sun  
Shines darkly in her breast  
But wakes no joy therein,  
And all his kisses sharp and keen  
Bring only now desire of rest,  
Not their old rapture : the warm violet eyes  
Melt into sweet hot tears ; subtler the sighs  
Are interfused of death ;  
The brave bright looks grow duller,  
And fear is mingled with love s ecstasies  
Again, and all her breath  
Fails, and the shape and colour  
Fade, fail, are lost in the sepulchral sea s.

182--AMBERGRIS

Invocation of Hecate

O triple form of darkness ! Sombre splendour !  
    Thou moon unseen of men ! Thou huntress dread !  
    Thou crown'd demon of the crownless dead !  
O breasts of blood, too bitter and too tender !  
    Unseen of gentle spring,  
    Let me the offering  
    Bring to thy shrine's sepulchral glittering !  
I slay the swart beast ! I bestow the gloom  
    Under the waning moon,  
        At midnight hardly lightening the East ;  
And the black lamb from the black ewe's dead womb  
    I bring, and stir the slow infernal tune  
    Fit for thy chosen priest.

Here where the band of Ocean breaks the road  
    Black-trodden deeply-stooping to the abyss,  
    I shall salute thee with the nameless kiss  
Pronounced toward the uttermost abode.

INVOCATION OF HECATE--183

Of thy supreme desire.  
I shall illumine the fire  
Whence thy wild stryges shall obey the lyre,  
Whence thy Lemurs shall gather and spring round,  
Girdling me in the sad funereal ground  
With faces turned back,  
My face averted ! I shall consummate  
The awful act of worship, O renowned  
Fear upon earth, and fear in hell, and black  
Fear in the sky beyond Fate !

I hear the whining of thy wolves ! I hear  
The howling of the hounds about thy form,  
Who comest in the terror of thy storm,  
And night falls faster, ere thine eyes appear  
Glittering through the mist.  
O face of woman un-kissed  
Save by the dead whose love is taken ere they wist !  
Thee, thee I call ! O dire one ! O divine !  
I, the sole mortal, seek thy deadly shrine,  
Pour the dark stream of blood,  
A sleepy and reluctant river  
Even as thou drawest, with thine eyes on mine,  
To me across the sense-bewildering flood  
That holds my soul for ever !

184--AMBERGRIS

The Regaining of Eurydice

The magical task and the labour is ended ;  
    The toils are unwoven, the battle is won ;  
My lover comes back to my arms, to the splendid  
    Abyss of the air and abode of the sun.  
The sword be assuaged, and the bow be unbended !  
    The labour is past, and the victory won.

The arrows of song through Hell cease to hurtle.  
    Away to the passionate gardens of Greece,  
Where the thrush is awake, and the voice of the turtle  
    Is soft in the amorous places of peace,  
And the tamarisk groves and the olive and myrtle  
    Stir ever with love and content and release.

O bountiful bowers and O beautiful gardens !  
    O isles in the azure Ionian deep !  
Ere ripens the sun, ere the spring-wind hardens  
    Your fruits once again ye shall have me to keep.

THE REGAINING OF EURYDICE--185

The sleep-god laments, and the love-goddess pardons,  
When love at the last sinks unwearied to sleep.

The green-hearted hours shall burst into flowers.  
The winds shall waft roses from uttermost Ind.  
Our nuptial dowers shall be birds in our bowers,  
Our couches the delicate heaps of the wind,  
Where the lily-bloom showers all its light, and the powers  
Of earth in our twinning are wedded and twinned.

186--AMBERGRIS

The M nads invoke Dionysus

Hail, child of Semel !  
To her as unto thee  
Be reverence, be deity, be immortality !

Shame ! treachery of the spouse  
Of the Olympian house,  
Hera ! thy grim device against the sweet carouse !

Lo ! in red roar and flame  
Did Zeus descend ! What claim  
To feel the immortal fire had then the Theban dame!

Caught in that fiery wave  
Her love and life she gave  
With one last kissing cry the unborn child to save.

And thou, O Zeus, the sire  
Of Bromius hunter dire !  
Didst snatch the unborn babe from that Olympian fire :



THE MÏNADS INVOKE DIONYSUS--187

In thine own thigh most holy  
That offspring melancholy  
Didst hide, didst feed, on light, ambrosia, and moly.

Ay ! and with serpent hair  
And limbs divinely fair  
Didst thou, Dionysus, leap forth to the nectar air !

Ay ! thus the dreams of fate  
We dare commemorate,  
Twining in lovesome curls th' spoil of mate and mate.

O Dionysus, here !  
Be close, be quick, be near,  
Whispering enchanted words in every curving ear !

O Dionysus, start  
As the Apollonian dart !  
Bury thy horn'd head in every bleeding heart !

188--AMBERGRIS

Orpheus invokes the Lords of Khem

Unity uttermost showed,  
I adore the might of thy breath,  
Supreme and terrible God  
Who makest the Gods and death  
To tremble before thee :  
I, I adore thee !

O Hawk of gold with power enwalled,  
Whose face is like an emerald ;  
Whose crown is indigo as night ;  
Smaragdine snakes about thy brow  
Twine, and the disk of flaming light  
Is on thee, seated in the prow  
Of the Sun s bark, enthrones above  
With lapis-lazuli for love  
And ruby for enormous force  
Chosen to seat thee, thee girt round  
With leopard s pell, and golden sound  
Of planets choral in their course !

ORPHEUS--189

O thou self-formulated sire !  
Self-master of thy dam's desire !  
Thine eyes blaze forth with fiery light ;  
    Thine heart a secret sun of flame !  
I adore the insuperable might :  
    I bow before the unspoken Name.

For I am Yesterday, and I  
    To-day, and I to-morrow, born  
Now and again, on high, on high  
    Travelling on Dian's naked horn !  
I am the Soul that doth create  
    The Gods, and all the Kin of Breath.  
I come from the sequestered state ;  
    My birth is from the House of Death.

Hail ! ye twin hawks high pinnacled  
    That watch upon the universe !  
Ye that the bier of God beheld !  
    That bore it onwards, ministers  
Of peace within the House of Wrath,  
Servants of him that cometh forth  
At dawn with many coloured lights  
    Mounting from underneath the North,  
The shrine of the celestial Heights !

190--AMBERGRIS

He is in me, and I in Him !  
    Mine is the crystal radiance  
That filleth thyr to the brim  
    Wherein all stars and suns may dance.  
I am the beautiful and glad,  
    Rejoicing in the golden day.  
I am the spirit silken-clad  
    That fareth on the fiery way.  
I have escaped from Him, whose eyes  
Are closed at eventide, and wise  
To drag thee to the House of Wrong :  
I am armed ! I am armed ! I am strong ! I am strong !  
I make my way : opposing horns  
    Of secret foemen push their lust  
In vain : my song their fury scorns ;  
    They sink, they grovel in the dust.

Hail, self-created Lord of Night !  
Inscrutable and infinite !  
    Let Orpheus journey forth to see  
    The Disk in peace and victory !  
Let him adore the splendid sight,  
    The radiance of the Heaven of Nu ;

ORPHEUS--191

Soar like a bird, laved by the light,  
To pierce the far eternal blue !

Hail ! Hermes ! thou the wands of ill  
Hast touched with strength, and they are shivered !  
The way is open unto will !  
The pregnant Goddess is delivered !

Happy, yea, happy ! happy is he  
That hath looked forth upon the Bier  
That goeth to the House of Rest !  
His heart is lit with melody ;  
Peace in his house is master of fear ;  
His holy Name is in the West  
When the sun sinks, the royal rays  
Of moonrise flash across the days !

I have risen ! I have risen ! as a mighty hawk of gold !  
From the golden egg I gather, and my wings the world enfold.  
I alight in mighty splendour from the thron d boats of light ;  
Companies of Spirits follow me ; adore the Lords of Night.

192--AMBERGRIS

Yea, with gladness did they p an, bowing low be-fore my car,  
In my ears their homage echoed from the sunrise to the star.  
I have risen ! I am gathered as a lovely hawk of gold,  
I the first-born of the Mother in her ecstasy of old.  
Lo! I am come to face the dweller in the sacred snake of Khem ;  
Come to face the Babe and Lion, come to measure force with them !  
Ah ! these locks flow down, a river, as the earth s before the Sun,  
As the earth s before the sunset, and the God and I are One.  
I who entered in a Fool, gain the God by clean endeavour ;  
I am shaped as men and women, fair for ever and for ever.

The Star-Goddess sings of Orpheus dead

Enough. It is ended, the story  
Of magical tones of song ;  
The sun is gone down in his glory  
To the Houses of Hate and of Wrong.  
Would ye see if he rise ?  
In Hesperian skies  
Ye may look for his rising for long.

The magical tone beginneth  
Of song in the heart of desire,  
That smiteth and striveth and sinneth,  
But burns up the soul of the lyre :  
There is pain in the note :  
In the sorcerer's throat  
Is a sword, and his brain is afire !

194--AMBERGRIS

Long after (to men : but a moment  
To me in my mansion of rest)  
Is a sundawn to blaze what the glow meant  
Seen long after death in the west ;  
A magical on !  
Nor love-song nor p an,  
But a flame with a silvery crest.

There shall rise a sweet song of the soul  
Far deeper than love or distress ;  
Beyond mortals and gods shall it roll ;  
It shall find me, and crave, and caress.  
Ah ! me it shall capture  
In torrents of rapture ;  
It shall flood me, and fill, and possess.

For brighter from age unto age  
The weary old world shall renew  
Its life at the lips of the sage,  
Its love at the lips of the dew.  
With kisses and tears  
The return of the years  
I sure as the starlight is true.



THE STAR-GODDESS SINGS--195

Yet the drift of the stars is to beauty,  
    To strength, and to infinite pleasure.  
The toil and the worship and duty  
    Shall turn them to laughter and leisure.  
    Were the world understood  
    Ye would see it was good,  
    A dance to a delicate measure.

Ye fools, interweaving in passion  
    The lyrical light of the mind !  
Go on, in your drivelling fashion !  
    Ye shall surely seek long and not find.  
    From without ye may see  
    All the beauty of me,  
    And my lips that their kisses are kind.

For Eurydice once I lamented ;  
    For Orpheus I do not lament :  
Her days were a span, and demented ;  
    His days are for aye, and content.  
    Mere love is as nought  
    To the love that is Thought,  
    And idea is more than event.

196--AMBERGRIS

O lovers ! O poets ! O masters  
Of me, ye may ravish my frown !  
Aloof from my shocks and disasters !  
Impatient to kiss me, and crown !  
I am eager to yield.  
In the warrior field  
Ye shall fight me, and fasten me down.

O poets ! O masters ! O lovers !  
Sweet souls of the strength of the sun !  
The couch of eternity covers  
Our loves, and our dreams are as done.  
Reality closes  
Our life into roses ;  
We are infinite space : we are one.

There is one that hath sought me and found me  
In the heart of the sand and the snow :  
He hath caught me, and held me, and bound me,  
In th elands where no flower may grow  
His voice is a spell,  
Hath enchantedfme well !  
I am his, and I will it or no.

THE STAR-GODDESS SINGS--197

But I will it, I will it, I will it !

    His speck of a soul in its cars  
Shall lift up immensity ! fill it  
    With light of his lyrical bars.

    His soul shall centre  
    All space ; he shall enter  
The beautiful land of the stars.

He shall know me eternally wedded

    To the splendid and subtle of mind ;  
For thee pious, the arrogant-headed,  
    He shall know they nor seek me nor find.

    O afloat in me curled !  
    Cry aloud to the world  
That I and my kisses are kind !

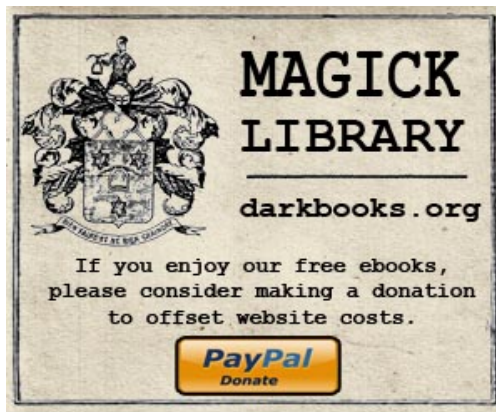
O lover ! O poet ! O maiden

    To me in my magical way !  
Be thy songs with the wilderness laden !  
    Thy lyre be adrift and astray :  
    So to me thou shalt cling !  
    So to me thou shalt sing  
Of the beautiful law of the day !

198--AMBERGRIS

I forbid thee to weep or to worship ;  
I forbid thee to sing or to write !  
The Star-Goddess guideth us her ship;  
The sails belly out with the light.  
Beautiful head !  
We will sing on our bed  
Of the beautiful law of the Night !

We are lulled by the whirr of the stars ;  
We are fanned by the whisper, the wind ;  
We are locked in unbreakable bars,  
The love of the spirit and mind.  
The infinite powers  
Of rapture are ours ;  
We are one, and our kisses are kind.



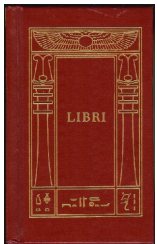
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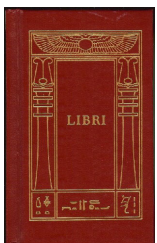
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