Helen of Troy and Other Poems

by Sara Teasdale

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[Note on text: Italicized stanzas are indented 5 spaces. Italicized words or phrases are capitalized. Lines longer than 78 characters are broken, and the continuation is indented two spaces. Some obvious errors may be corrected.]

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Helen of Troy And Other Poems

By

Sara Teasdale

[American (Missouri & New York) Poet]

Author of "Sonnets to Duse, and Other Poems"

To Marion Cummings Stanley

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On the Tower

Helen of Troy and Other Poems

Helen of Troy

Wild flight on flight against the fading dawn The flames' red wings soar upward duskily. This is the funeral pyre and Troy is dead That sparkled so the day I saw it first, And darkened slowly after. I am she Who loves all beauty—yet I wither it. Why have the high gods made me wreak their wrath— Forever since my maidenhood to sow Sorrow and blood about me? Lo, they keep Their bitter care above me even now. It was the gods who led me to this lair, That tho' the burning winds should make me weak, They should not snatch the life from out my lips. Olympus let the other women die; They shall be quiet when the day is done And have no care to-morrow. Yet for me There is no rest. The gods are not so kind To her made half immortal like themselves. It is to you I owe the cruel gift, Leda, my mother, and the Swan, my sire, To you the beauty and to you the bale; For never woman born of man and maid Had wrought such havoc on the earth as I, Or troubled heaven with a sea of flame That climbed to touch the silent whirling stars And blotted out their brightness ere the dawn. Have I not made the world to weep enough? Give death to me. Yet life is more than death; How could I leave the sound of singing winds, The strong sweet scent that breathes from off the sea, Or shut my eyes forever to the spring? I will not give the grave my hands to hold, My shining hair to light oblivion. Have those who wander through the ways of death, The still wan fields Elysian, any love To lift their breasts with longing, any lips To thirst against the quiver of a kiss? Lo, I shall live to conquer Greece again, To make the

people love, who hate me now. My dreams are over, I have ceased to cry Against the fate that made men love my mouth And left their spirits all too deaf to hear The little songs that echoed through my soul. I have no anger now. The dreams are done; Yet since the Greeks and Trojans would not see Aught but my body's fairness, till the end, In all the islands set in all the seas, And all the lands that lie beneath the sun, Till light turn darkness, and till time shall sleep, Men's lives shall waste with longing after me, For I shall be the sum of their desire, The whole of beauty, never seen again. And they shall stretch their arms and starting, wake With "Helen!" on their lips, and in their eyes The vision of me. Always I shall be Limned on the darkness like a shaft of light That glimmers and is gone. They shall behold Each one his dream that fashions me anew;— With hair like lakes that glint beneath the stars Dark as sweet midnight, or with hair aglow Like burnished gold that still retains the fire. Yea, I shall haunt until the dusk of time The heavy eyelids filled with fleeting dreams.

I wait for one who comes with sword to slay— The king I wronged who searches for me now; And yet he shall not slay me. I shall stand With lifted head and look within his eyes, Baring my breast to him and to the sun. He shall not have the power to stain with blood That whiteness—for the thirsty sword shall fall And he shall cry and catch me in his arms, Bearing me back to Sparta on his breast. Lo, I shall live to conquer Greece again!

Beatrice

Send out the singers—let the room be still; They have not eased my pain nor brought me sleep. Close out the sun, for I would have it dark That I may feel how black the grave will be. The sun is setting, for the light is red, And you are outlined in a golden fire, Like Ursula upon an altar-screen. Come, leave the light and sit beside my bed, For I have had enough of saints and prayers. Strange broken thoughts are beating in my brain, They come and vanish and again they come. It is

the fever driving out my soul, And Death stands waiting by the arras there.

Ornella, I will speak, for soon my lips Shall keep a silence till the end of time. You have a mouth for loving—listen then: Keep tryst with Love before Death comes to tryst; For I, who die, could wish that I had lived A little closer to the world of men, Not watching always thro' the blazoned panes That show the world in chilly greens and blues And grudge the sunshine that would enter in. I was no part of all the troubled crowd That moved beneath the palace windows here, And yet sometimes a knight in shining steel Would pass and catch the gleaming of my hair, And wave a mailed hand and smile at me, Whereat I made no sign and turned away, Affrighted and yet glad and full of dreams. Ah, dreams and dreams that asked no answering! I should have wrought to make my dreams come true, But all my life was like an autumn day, Full of gray quiet and a hazy peace.

What was I saying? All is gone again. It seemed but now I was the little child Who played within a garden long ago. Beyond the walls the festal trumpets blared. Perhaps they carried some Madonna by With tossing ensigns in a sea of flowers, A painted Virgin with a painted Child, Who saw for once the sweetness of the sun Before they shut her in an altar-niche Where tapers smoke against the windy gloom. I gathered roses redder than my gown And played that I was Saint Elizabeth, Whose wine had turned to roses in her hands. And as I played, a child came thro' the gate, A boy who looked at me without a word, As tho' he saw stretch far behind my head Long lines of radiant angels, row on row. That day we spoke a little, timidly, And after that I never heard the voice That sang so many songs for love of me. He was content to stand and watch me pass, To seek for me at matins every day, Where I could feel his eyes the while I prayed. I think if he had stretched his hands to me, Or moved his lips to say a single word, I might have loved him—he had wondrous eyes.

Ornella, are you there? I cannot see— Is every one so lonely when he dies?

The room is filled with lights—with waving lights— Who are the men and women 'round the bed? What have I said, Ornella? Have they heard? There was no evil hidden in my life, And yet, and yet, I would not have them know—

Am I not floating in a mist of light? O lift me up and I shall reach the sun!

Sappho

The twilight's inner flame grows blue and deep, And in my Lesbos, over leagues of sea, The temples glimmer moonwise in the trees. Twilight has veiled the little flower face Here on my heart, but still the night is kind And leaves her warm sweet weight against my breast. Am I that Sappho who would run at dusk Along the surges creeping up the shore When tides came in to ease the hungry beach, And running, running, till the night was black, Would fall forespent upon the chilly sand And quiver with the winds from off the sea? Ah, quietly the shingle waits the tides Whose waves are stinging kisses, but to me Love brought no peace, nor darkness any rest. I crept and touched the foam with fevered hands And cried to Love, from whom the sea is sweet, From whom the sea is bitterer than death. Ah, Aphrodite, if I sing no more To thee, God's daughter, powerful as God, It is that thou hast made my life too sweet To hold the added sweetness of a song. There is a quiet at the heart of love, And I have pierced the pain and come to peace. I hold my peace, my Cleis, on my heart; And softer than a little wild bird's wing Are kisses that she pours upon my mouth. Ah, never any more when spring like fire Will flicker in the newly opened leaves, Shall I steal forth to seek for solitude Beyond the lure of light Alcaeus' lyre, Beyond the sob that stilled Erinna's voice. Ah, never with a throat that aches with song, Beneath the white uncaring sky of spring, Shall I go forth to hide awhile from Love The quiver and the crying of my heart. Still I remember how I strove to flee The love-note of the birds, and bowed my head To hurry faster, but upon the ground I saw two winged shadows side by side, And all the world's spring passion stifled me. Ah, Love, there is no fleeing from thy might, No lonely place where thou hast

never trod, No desert thou hast left uncarpeted With flowers that spring beneath thy perfect feet. In many guises didst thou come to me; I saw thee by the maidens while they danced, Phaon allured me with a look of thine, In Anactoria I knew thy grace, I looked at Cercolas and saw thine eyes; But never wholly, soul and body mine, Didst thou bid any love me as I loved. Now I have found the peace that fled from me; Close, close, against my heart I hold my world. Ah, Love that made my life a lyric cry, Ah, Love that tuned my lips to lyres of thine, I taught the world thy music, now alone I sing for one who falls asleep to hear.

Marianna Alcoforando

(The Portuguese Nun—1640-1723)

The sparrows wake beneath the convent eaves; I think I have not slept the whole night through. But I am old; the aged scarcely know The times they wake and sleep, for life burns down; They breathe the calm of death before they die. The long night ends, the day comes creeping in, Showing the sorrows that the darkness hid, The bended head of Christ, the blood, the thorns, The wall's gray stains of damp, the pallet bed Where little Sister Marta dreams of saints, Waking with arms outstretched imploringly That seek to stay a vision's vanishing. I never had a vision, yet for me Our Lady smiled while all the convent slept One winter midnight hushed around with snow— I thought she might be kinder than the rest, And so I came to kneel before her feet, Sick with love's sorrow and love's bitterness. But when I would have made the blessed sign, I found the water frozen in the font, And touched but ice within the carved stone. The saints had hid themselves away from me, Leaving the windows black against the night; And when I sank upon the altar steps, Before the Virgin Mother and her Child, The last, pale, low-burnt taper flickered out, But in the darkness, smooth and fathomless, Still twinkled like a star the holy lamp That cast a dusky glow upon her face. Then through the numbing cold peace fell on me, Submission and the gracious gift of tears, For when I looked, Oh! blessed miracle,

Her lips had parted and Our Lady smiled! And then I knew that Love is worth its pain And that my heart was richer for his sake, Since lack of love is bitterest of all.

The day is broad awake—the first long beam Of level sun finds Sister Marta's face, And trembling there it lights a timid smile Upon the lips that say so many prayers, And have no words for hate and none for love. But when she passes where her prayers have gone, Will God not smile a little sadly then, And send her back with gentle words to earth That she may hold a child against her breast And feel its little hands upon her hair? We weep before the Blessed Mother's shrine, To think upon her sorrows, but her joys What nun could ever know a tithing of? The precious hours she watched above His sleep Were worth the fearful anguish of the end. Yea, lack of love is bitterest of all; Yet I have felt what thing it is to know One thought forever, sleeping or awake; To say one name whose sweetness grows so strange That it might work a spell on those who weep; To feel the weight of love upon my heart So heavy that the blood can scarcely flow. Love comes to some unlooked-for, quietly, As when at twilight, with a soft surprise, We see the new-born crescent in the blue; And unto others love is planet-like, A cold and placid gleam that wavers not, And there are those who wait the call of love Expectant of his coming, as we watch To see the east grow pallid ere the moon Lifts up her flower-like head against the night. Love came to me as comes a cruel sun, That on some rain-drenched morning, when the leaves Are bowed beneath their clinging weight of drops, Tears through the mist, and burns with fervent heat The tender grasses and the meadow flowers; Then suddenly the heavy clouds close in And through the dark the thunder's muttering Is drowned amid the dashing of the rain.

But I have seen my day grow calm again. The sun sets slowly on a peaceful world, And sheds a quiet light across the fields.

Guenevere

I was a queen, and I have lost my crown; A wife, and I have broken all my vows; A

lover, and I ruined him I loved:— There is no other havoc left to do. A little month ago I was a queen, And mothers held their babies up to see When I came riding out of Camelot. The women smiled, and all the world smiled too. And now, what woman's eyes would smile on me? I still am beautiful, and yet what child Would think of me as some high, heaven-sent thing, An angel, clad in gold and miniver? The world would run from me, and yet am I No different from the queen they used to love. If water, flowing silver over stones, Is forded, and beneath the horses' feet Grows turbid suddenly, it clears again, And men will drink it with no thought of harm. Yet I am branded for a single fault.

I was the flower amid a toiling world, Where people smiled to see one happy thing, And they were proud and glad to raise me high; They only asked that I should be right fair, A little kind, and gowned wondrously, And surely it were little praise to me If I had pleased them well throughout my life.

I was a queen, the daughter of a king. The crown was never heavy on my head, It was my right, and was a part of me. The women thought me proud, the men were kind, And bowed right gallantly to kiss my hand, And watched me as I passed them calmly by, Along the halls I shall not tread again. What if, to-night, I should revisit them? The warders at the gates, the kitchen-maids, The very beggars would stand off from me, And I, their queen, would climb the stairs alone, Pass through the banquet-hall, a loathed thing, And seek my chambers for a hiding-place, And I should find them but a sepulchre, The very rushes rotted on the floors, The fire in ashes on the freezing hearth. I was a queen, and he who loved me best Made me a woman for a night and day, And now I go unqueened forevermore. A queen should never dream on summer eves, When hovering spells are heavy in the dusk:— I think no night was ever quite so still, So smoothly lit with red along the west, So deeply hushed with quiet through and through. And strangely clear, and deeply dyed with light, The trees stood straight against a paling sky, With Venus burning lamp-like in the west.

I walked alone amid a thousand flowers, That drooped their heads and drowsed beneath the dew, And all my thoughts were quieted to sleep. Behind me, on the walk, I heard a step— I did not know my heart could tell his tread, I did not know I loved him till that hour. Within my breast I felt a wild, sick pain, The garden reeled a little, I was weak, And quick he came behind me, caught my arms, That ached beneath his touch; and then I swayed, My head fell backward and I saw his face.

All this grows bitter that was once so sweet, And many mouths must drain the dregs of it. But none will pity me, nor pity him Whom Love so lashed, and with such cruel thongs.

Erinna

They sent you in to say farewell to me, No, do not shake your head; I see your eyes That shine with tears. Sappho, you saw the sun Just now when you came hither, and again, When you have left me, all the shimmering Great meadows will laugh lightly, and the sun Put round about you warm invisible arms As might a lover, decking you with light. I go toward darkness tho' I lie so still. If I could see the sun, I should look up And drink the light until my eyes were blind; I should kneel down and kiss the blades of grass, And I should call the birds with such a voice, With such a longing, tremulous and keen, That they would fly to me and on the breast Bear evermore to tree-tops and to fields The kiss I gave them. Sappho, tell me this, Was I not sometimes fair? My eyes, my mouth, My hair that loved the wind, were they not worth The breath of love upon them? Yet he passed, And he will pass to-night when all the air Is blue with twilight; but I shall not see. I shall have gone forever. Hold my hands, Hold fast that Death may never come between; Swear by the gods you will not let me go; Make songs for Death as you would sing to Love— But you will not assuage him. He alone Of all the gods will take no gifts from men. I am afraid, afraid.

Sappho, lean down. Last night the fever gave a dream to me, It takes my life and

gives a little dream. I thought I saw him stand, the man I love, Here in my quiet chamber, with his eyes Fixed on me as I entered, while he drew Silently toward me—he who night by night Goes by my door without a thought of me— Neared me and put his hand behind my head, And leaning toward me, kissed me on the mouth. That was a little dream for Death to give, Too short to take the whole of life for, yet I woke with lips made quiet by a kiss. The dream is worth the dying. Do not smile So sadly on me with your shining eyes, You who can set your sorrow to a song And ease your hurt by singing. But to me My songs are less than sea-sand that the wind Drives stinging over me and bears away. I have no care what place the grains may fall, Nor of my songs, if Time shall blow them back, As land-wind breaks the lines of dying foam Along the bright wet beaches, scattering The flakes once more against the laboring sea, Into oblivion. What care have I To please Apollo since Love hearkens not? Your words will live forever, men will say "She was the perfect lover"—I shall die, I loved too much to live. Go Sappho, go— I hate your hands that beat so full of life, Go, lest my hatred hurt you. I shall die, But you will live to love and love again. He might have loved some other spring than this; I should have kept my life—I let it go. He would not love me now tho' Cypris bound Her girdle round me. I am Death's, not Love's. Go from me, Sappho, back to find the sun.

I am alone, alone. O Cyprian . . .

Love Songs

Song

You bound strong sandals on my feet, You gave me bread and wine, And bade me out, 'neath sun and stars, For all the world was mine.

Oh take the sandals off my feet, You know not what you do; For all my world is in your arms, My sun and stars are you.

The Rose and the Bee

If I were a bee and you were a rose, Would you let me in when the gray wind blows?

Would you hold your petals wide apart, Would you let me in to find your heart, If you were a rose?

"If I were a rose and you were a bee, You should never go when you came to me, I should hold my love on my heart at last, I should close my leaves and keep you fast, If you were a bee."

The Song Maker

I made a hundred little songs That told the joy and pain of love, And sang them blithely, tho' I knew No whit thereof.

I was a weaver deaf and blind; A miracle was wrought for me, But I have lost my skill to weave Since I can see.

For while I sang—ah swift and strange! Love passed and touched me on the brow, And I who made so many songs Am silent now.

Wild Asters

In the spring I asked the daisies If his words were true, And the clever little daisies Always knew.

Now the fields are brown and barren, Bitter autumn blows, And of all the stupid asters Not one knows.

When Love Goes

I

O mother, I am sick of love, I cannot laugh nor lift my head, My bitter dreams have broken me, I would my love were dead.

"Drink of the draught I brew for thee, Thou shalt have quiet in its stead."

II

Where is the silver in the rain, Where is the music in the sea, Where is the bird that sang all day To break my heart with melody?

"The night thou badst Love fly away, He hid them all from thee."

The Wayfarer

Love entered in my heart one day, A sad, unwelcome guest; But when he begged that he might stay, I let him wait and rest.

He broke my sleep with sorrowing, And shook my dreams with tears, And when my heart was fain to sing, He stilled its joy with fears.

But now that he has gone his way, I miss the old sweet pain, And sometimes in the night I pray That he may come again.

The Princess in the Tower

I

The Princess sings:

I am the princess up in the tower And I dream the whole day thro' Of a knight who shall come with a silver spear And a waving plume of blue.

I am the princess up in the tower, And I dream my dreams by day, But sometimes I wake, and my eyes are wet, When the dusk is deep and gray.

For the peasant lovers go by beneath, I hear them laugh and kiss, And I forget my day-dream knight, And long for a love like this.

II

The Minstrel sings:

I lie beside the princess' tower, So close she cannot see my face, And watch her dreaming all day long, And bending with a lily's grace.

Her cheeks are paler than the moon That sails along a sunny sky, And yet her silent mouth is red Where tender words and kisses lie.

I am a minstrel with a harp, For love of her my songs are sweet, And yet I dare not lift the voice That lies so far beneath her feet.

III

The Knight sings:

O princess cease your dreams awhile And look adown your tower's gray side— The princess gazes far away, Nor hears nor heeds the words I cried.

Perchance my heart was overbold, God made her dreams too pure to break, She sees the angels in the air Fly to and fro for Mary's sake.

Farewell, I mount and go my way, —But oh her hair the sun sifts thro'— The tilts and tourneys wait my spear, I am the Knight of the Plume of Blue.

When Love Was Born

When Love was born I think he lay Right warm on Venus' breast, And whiles he smiled and whiles would play And whiles would take his rest.

But always, folded out of sight, The wings were growing strong That were to bear him off in flight Erelong, erelong.

The Shrine

There is no lord within my heart, Left silent as an empty shrine Where rose and myrtle intertwine, Within a place apart.

No god is there of carven stone To watch with still approving eyes My thoughts like steady incense rise; I dream and weep alone.

But if I keep my altar fair, Some morning I shall lift my head From roses deftly garlanded To find the god is there.

The Blind

The birds are all a-building, They say the world's a-flower, And still I linger lonely Within a barren bower.

I weave a web of fancies Of tears and darkness spun. How shall I sing of sunlight Who never saw the sun?

I hear the pipes a-blowing, But yet I may not dance, I know that Love is passing, I cannot catch his glance.

And if his voice should call me And I with groping dim Should reach his place of calling And stretch my arms to him,

The wind would blow between my hands For Joy that I shall miss, The rain would fall upon my mouth That his will never kiss.

Love Me

Brown-thrush singing all day long In the leaves above me, Take my love this little song, "Love me, love me, love me!"

When he harkens what you say, Bid him, lest he miss me, Leave his work or leave his play, And kiss me, kiss me, kiss me!

The Song for Colin

I sang a song at dusking time Beneath the evening star, And Terence left his latest rhyme To answer from afar.

Pierrot laid down his lute to weep, And sighed, "She sings for me," But Colin slept a careless sleep Beneath an apple tree.

Four Winds

"Four winds blowing thro' the sky, You have seen poor maidens die, Tell me then what I shall do That my lover may be true." Said the wind from out the south, "Lay no kiss upon his mouth," And the wind from out the west, "Wound the heart within his breast," And the wind from out the east, "Send him empty from the feast," And the wind from out the north, "In the tempest thrust him forth, When thou art more cruel than he, Then will Love be kind to thee."

Roundel

If he could know my songs are all for him, At silver dawn or in the evening glow, Would he not smile and think it but a whim, If he could know?

Or would his heart rejoice and overflow, As happy brooks that break their icy rim When April's horns along the hillsides blow?

I may not speak till Eros' torch is dim, The god is bitter and will have it so; And yet to-night our fate would seem less grim If he could know.

Dew

I dream that he is mine, I dream that he is true, And all his words I keep As rose-leaves hold the dew.

O little thirsty rose, O little heart beware, Lest you should hope to hold A hundred roses' share.

A Maiden

Oh if I were the velvet rose Upon the red rose vine, I'd climb to touch his window And make his casement fine.

And if I were the little bird That twitters on the tree, All day I'd sing my love for him Till he should harken me.

But since I am a maiden I go with downcast eyes, And he will never hear the songs That he has turned to sighs.

And since I am a maiden My love will never know That I could kiss him with a mouth More red than roses blow.

"I Love You"

When April bends above me And finds me fast asleep, Dust need not keep the secret A live heart died to keep.

When April tells the thrushes, The meadow-larks will know, And pipe the three words lightly To all the winds that blow.

Above his roof the swallows, In notes like far-blown rain, Will tell the little sparrow Beside his window-pane.

O sparrow, little sparrow, When I am fast asleep, Then tell my love the secret That I

have died to keep.

But Not to Me

The April night is still and sweet With flowers on every tree; Peace comes to them on quiet feet, But not to me.

My peace is hidden in his breast Where I shall never be, Love comes to-night to all the rest, But not to me.

Hidden Love

I hid the love within my heart, And lit the laughter in my eyes, That when we meet he may not know My love that never dies.

But sometimes when he dreams at night Of fragrant forests green and dim, It may be that my love crept out And brought the dream to him.

And sometimes when his heart is sick And suddenly grows well again, It may be that my love was there To free his life of pain.

Snow Song

Fairy snow, fairy snow, Blowing, blowing everywhere, Would that I Too, could fly Lightly, lightly through the air.

Like a wee, crystal star I should drift, I should blow Near, more near, To my dear Where he comes through the snow.

I should fly to my love Like a flake in the storm, I should die, I should die, On his lips that are warm.

Youth and the Pilgrim

Gray pilgrim, you have journeyed far, I pray you tell to me Is there a land where Love is not, By shore of any sea?

For I am weary of the god, And I would flee from him Tho' I must take a ship and go Beyond the ocean's rim.

"I know a port where Love is not, The ship is in your hand, Then plunge your sword within your breast And you will reach the land."

The Wanderer

I saw the sunset-colored sands, The Nile like flowing fire between, Where Rameses stares forth serene, And Ammon's heavy temple stands.

I saw the rocks where long ago, Above the sea that cries and breaks, Bright Perseus with Medusa's snakes Set free the maiden white like snow.

And many skies have covered me, And many winds have blown me forth, And I have loved the green bright north, And I have loved the cold sweet sea.

But what to me are north and south, And what the lure of many lands, Since you have leaned to catch my hands And lay a kiss upon my mouth.

I Would Live in Your Love

I would live in your love as the sea-grasses live in the sea, Borne up by each wave as it passes, drawn down by each wave that recedes; I would empty my soul of the dreams that have gathered in me, I would beat with your heart as it beats, I would follow your soul as it leads.

May

The wind is tossing the lilacs, The new leaves laugh in the sun, And the petals fall on the orchard wall, But for me the spring is done.

Beneath the apple blossoms I go a wintry way, For love that smiled in April Is false to me in May.

Rispetto

Was that his step that sounded on the stair? Was that his knock I heard upon the door? I grow so tired I almost cease to care, And yet I would that he might come once more.

It was the wind I heard, that mocks at me, The bitter wind that is more cruel than he;

It was the wind that knocked upon the door, But he will never knock nor enter more.

Less than the Cloud to the Wind

Less than the cloud to the wind, Less than the foam to the sea, Less than the rose to the storm Am I to thee.

More than the star to the night, More than the rain to the lea, More than heaven to earth Art thou to me.

Buried Love

I shall bury my weary Love Beneath a tree, In the forest tall and black Where none can see.

I shall put no flowers at his head, Nor stone at his feet, For the mouth I loved so much Was bittersweet.

I shall go no more to his grave, For the woods are cold. I shall gather as much of joy As my hands can hold.

I shall stay all day in the sun Where the wide winds blow, But oh, I shall weep at night When none will know.

Song

O woe is me, my heart is sad, For I should never know If Love came by like any lad, Without his silver bow.

Or if he left his arrows sharp And came a minstrel weary, I'd never tell him by his harp Nor know him for my dearie.

"O go your ways and have no fear, For tho' Love passes by, He'll come a hundred times, my dear, Before your turn to die."

Pierrot

Pierrot stands in the garden Beneath a waning moon, And on his lute he fashions A little silver tune.

Pierrot plays in the garden, He thinks he plays for me, But I am quite forgotten Under the cherry tree.

Pierrot plays in the garden, And all the roses know That Pierrot loves his music, But I love Pierrot.

At Night

Love said, "Wake still and think of me," Sleep, "Close your eyes till break of day," But Dreams came by and smilingly Gave both to Love and Sleep their way.

Song

When Love comes singing to his heart That would not wake for me, I think that I shall know his joy By my own ecstasy.

And tho' the sea were all between, The time their hands shall meet, My heart will know his happiness, So wildly it will beat.

And when he bends above her mouth, Rejoicing for his sake, My soul will sing a little song, But oh, my heart will break.

Love in Autumn

I sought among the drifting leaves, The golden leaves that once were green, To see if Love were hiding there And peeping out between.

For thro' the silver showers of May And thro' the summer's heavy heat, In vain I sought his golden head And light, fast-flying feet.

Perhaps when all the world is bare And cruel winter holds the land, The Love that finds no place to hide Will run and catch my hand.

I shall not care to have him then, I shall be bitter and a-cold— It grows too late for frolicking When all the world is old.

Then little hiding Love, come forth, Come forth before the autumn goes, And let us seek thro' ruined paths The garden's last red rose.

The Kiss

I hoped that he would love me, And he has kissed my mouth, But I am like a stricken bird That cannot reach the south.

For tho' I know he loves me, To-night my heart is sad; His kiss was not so wonderful As all the dreams I had.

November

The world is tired, the year is old, The little leaves are glad to die, The wind goes shivering with cold Among the rushes dry.

Our love is dying like the grass, And we who kissed grow coldly kind, Half glad to see our poor love pass Like leaves along the wind.

A Song of the Princess

The princess has her lovers, A score of knights has she, And each can sing a madrigal, And praise her gracefully.

But Love that is so bitter Hath put within her heart A longing for the scornful knight Who silent stands apart.

And tho' the others praise and plead, She maketh no reply, Yet for a single word from him, I ween that she would die.

The Wind

A wind is blowing over my soul, I hear it cry the whole night thro'— Is there no peace for me on earth Except with you?

Alas, the wind has made me wise, Over my naked soul it blew,— There is no peace for me on earth Even with you.

A Winter Night

My window-pane is starred with frost, The world is bitter cold to-night, The moon is cruel and the wind Is like a two-edged sword to smite.

God pity all the homeless ones, The beggars pacing to and fro. God pity all the poor to-night Who walk the lamp-lit streets of snow.

My room is like a bit of June, Warm and close-curtained fold on fold, But somewhere, like a homeless child, My heart is crying in the cold.

The Metropolitan Tower

We walked together in the dusk To watch the tower grow dimly white, And saw it lift against the sky Its flower of amber light.

You talked of half a hundred things, I kept each little word you said; And when at last the hour was full, I saw the light turn red.

You did not know the time had come, You did not see the sudden flower, Nor know that in my heart Love's birth Was reckoned from that hour.

Gramercy Park

For W. P.

The little park was filled with peace, The walks were carpeted with snow, But every iron gate was locked. Lest if we entered, peace would go.

We circled it a dozen times, The wind was blowing from the sea, I only felt your restless eyes Whose love was like a cloak for me.

Oh heavy gates that fate has locked To bar the joy we may not win, Peace would go out forevermore If we should dare to enter in.

In the Metropolitan Museum

Within the tiny Pantheon We stood together silently, Leaving the restless crowd awhile As ships find shelter from the sea.

The ancient centuries came back To cover us a moment's space, And thro' the dome the light was glad Because it shone upon your face.

Ah, not from Rome but farther still, Beyond sun-smitten Salamis, The moment took us, till you stooped To find the present with a kiss.

Coney Island

Why did you bring me here? The sand is white with snow, Over the wooden domes The winter sea-winds blow— There is no shelter near, Come, let us go.

With foam of icy lace The sea creeps up the sand, The wind is like a hand That strikes us in the face. Doors that June set a-swing Are bolted long ago; We try them uselessly— Alas, there cannot be For us a second spring; Come, let us go.

Union Square

With the man I love who loves me not, I walked in the street-lamps' flare; We watched the world go home that night In a flood through Union Square.

I leaned to catch the words he said That were light as a snowflake falling; Ah well that he never leaned to hear The words my heart was calling.

And on we walked and on we walked Past the fiery lights of the picture shows— Where the girls with thirsty eyes go by On the errand each man knows.

And on we walked and on we walked, At the door at last we said good-bye; I knew by his smile he had not heard My heart's unuttered cry.

With the man I love who loves me not I walked in the street-lamps' flare— But oh, the girls who can ask for love In the lights of Union Square.

Central Park at Dusk

Buildings above the leafless trees Loom high as castles in a dream, While one by one the lamps come out To thread the twilight with a gleam.

There is no sign of leaf or bud, A hush is over everything— Silent as women wait for love, The world is waiting for the spring.

Young Love

I

I cannot heed the words they say, The lights grow far away and dim, Amid the laughing men and maids My eyes unbidden seek for him.

I hope that when he smiles at me He does not guess my joy and pain, For if he did,

he is too kind To ever look my way again.

II

I have a secret in my heart No ears have ever heard, And still it sings there day by day Most like a caged bird.

And when it beats against the bars, I do not set it free, For I am happier to know It only sings for me.

III

I wrote his name along the beach, I love the letters so. Far up it seemed and out of reach, For still the tide was low.

But oh, the sea came creeping up, And washed the name away, And on the sand where it had been A bit of sea-grass lay.

A bit of sea-grass on the sand, Dropped from a mermaid's hair— Ah, had she come to kiss his name And leave a token there?

IV

What am I that he should love me, He who stands so far above me, What am I? I am like a cowslip turning Toward the sky, Where a planet's golden burning Breaks the cowslip's heart with yearning, What am I that he should love me, What am I?

V

O dreams that flock about my sleep, I pray you bring my love to me, And let me think I hear his voice Again ring free.

And if you care to please me well, And live to-morrow in my mind, Let him who was so cold before, To-night seem kind.

VI

I plucked a daisy in the fields, And there beneath the sun I let its silver petals fall One after one.

I said, "He loves me, loves me not," And oh, my heart beat fast, The flower was kind, it let me say "He loves me," last.

I kissed the little leafless stem, But oh, my poor heart knew The words the flower had said to me, They were not true.

VII

I sent my love a letter, And if he loves me not, He shall not find my love for him In any line or dot.

But if he loves me truly, He'll find it hidden deep, As dawn gleams red thro' chilly clouds To eyes awaked from sleep.

VIII

The world is cold and gray and wet, And I am heavy-hearted, yet When I am home and look to see The place my letters wait for me, If I should find ONE letter there, I think I should not greatly care If it were rainy or were fair, For all the world would suddenly Seem like a festival to me.

IX

I hid three words within my heart, That longed to fly to him, At dawn they woke me with a start, They sang till day was dim.

And now at last I let them fly, As little birds should do, And he will know the first is "I", The others "Love" and "You".

X

Across the twilight's violet His curtained window glimmers gold; Oh happy light that round my love Can fold.

Oh happy book within his hand, Oh happy page he glorifies, Oh happy little word beneath His eyes.

But oh, thrice happy, happy I Who love him more than songs can tell, For in the heaven of his heart I dwell.

Sonnets and Lyrics

Primavera Mia

As kings who see their little life-day pass, Take off the heavy ermine and the crown, So had the trees that autumn-time laid down Their golden garments on the faded grass, When I, who watched the seasons in the glass Of mine own thoughts, saw all the autumn's brown Leap into life and don a sunny gown Of leafage such as happy April has. Great spring came singing upward from the south; For in my heart, far carried on the wind, Your words like winged seeds took root and grew, And all the world caught music from your mouth; I saw the light as one who had been blind, And knew my sun and song and spring were you.

Soul's Birth

When you were born, beloved, was your soul New made by God to match your body's flower, And were they both at one same precious hour Sent forth from heaven as a perfect whole? Or had your soul since dim creation burned, A star in some still region of the sky, That leaping earthward, left its place on high And to your little new-born body yearned? No words can tell in what celestial hour God made your soul and gave it mortal birth, Nor in the disarray of all the stars Is any place so sweet that such a flower Might linger there until thro' heaven's bars, It heard God's voice that bade it down to earth.

Love and Death

Shall we, too, rise forgetful from our sleep, And shall my soul that lies within your hand Remember nothing, as the blowing sand Forgets the palm where long blue shadows creep When winds along the darkened desert sweep? Or would it still remember, tho' it spanned A thousand heavens, while the planets fanned The vacant ether with their voices deep? Soul of my soul, no word shall be forgot, Nor yet alone, beloved, shall we see The desolation of extinguished suns, Nor fear the void wherethro' our planet runs, For still together shall we go and not Fare forth alone to

front eternity.

For the Anniversary of John Keats' Death

(February 23, 1821)

At midnight when the moonlit cypress trees Have woven round his grave a magic shade, Still weeping the unfinished hymn he made, There moves fresh Maia like a morning breeze Blown over jonquil beds when warm rains cease. And stooping where her poet's head is laid, Selene weeps while all the tides are stayed And swaying seas are darkened into peace. But they who wake the meadows and the tides Have hearts too kind to bid him wake from sleep Who murmurs sometimes when his dreams are deep, Startling the Quiet Land where he abides, And charming still, sad-eyed Persephone With visions of the sunny earth and sea.

Silence

(To Eleonora Duse)

We are anhungered after solitude, Deep stillness pure of any speech or sound, Soft quiet hovering over pools profound, The silences that on the desert brood, Above a windless hush of empty seas, The broad unfurling banners of the dawn, A faery forest where there sleeps a Faun; Our souls are fain of solitudes like these. O woman who divined our weariness, And set the crown of silence on your art, From what undreamed-of depth within your heart Have you sent forth the hush that makes us free To hear an instant, high above earth's stress, The silent music of infinity?

The Return

I turned the key and opened wide the door To enter my deserted room again, Where thro' the long hot months the dust had lain. Was it not lonely when across the floor No step was heard, no sudden song that bore My whole heart upward with a joyous pain? Were not the pictures and the volumes fain To have me with them always as before? But Giorgione's Venus did not deign To lift her lids, nor did the subtle smile Of Mona Lisa deepen. Madeleine Still wept against the glory of her hair, Nor did the

lovers part their lips the while, But kissed unheeding that I watched them there.

Fear

I am afraid, oh I am so afraid! The cold black fear is clutching me to-night As long ago when they would take the light And leave the little child who would have prayed, Frozen and sleepless at the thought of death. My heart that beats too fast will rest too soon; I shall not know if it be night or noon,— Yet shall I struggle in the dark for breath? Will no one fight the Terror for my sake, The heavy darkness that no dawn will break? How can they leave me in that dark alone, Who loved the joy of light and warmth so much, And thrilled so with the sense of sound and touch,— How can they shut me underneath a stone?

Anadyomene

The wide, bright temple of the world I found, And entered from the dizzy infinite That I might kneel and worship thee in it; Leaving the singing stars their ceaseless round Of silver music sound on orbed sound, For measured spaces where the shrines are lit, And men with wisdom or with little wit Implore the gods that mercy may abound. Ah, Aphrodite, was it not from thee My summons came across the endless spaces? Mother of Love, turn not thy face from me Now that I seek for thee in human faces; Answer my prayer or set my spirit free Again to drift along the starry places.

Galahad in the Castle of the Maidens

(To the maiden with the hidden face in Abbey's painting)

The other maidens raised their eyes to him Who stumbled in before them when the fight Had left him victor, with a victor's right. I think his eyes with quick hot tears grew dim; He scarcely saw her swaying white and slim, And trembling slightly, dreaming of his might, Nor knew he touched her hand, as strangely light As a wan wraith's beside a river's rim. The other maidens raised their eyes to see And only she has hid her face away, And yet I ween she loved him more than they, And very

fairly fashioned was her face. Yet for Love's shame and sweet humility, She dared not meet him with their queenlike grace.

To an Aeolian Harp

The winds have grown articulate in thee, And voiced again the wail of ancient woe That smote upon the winds of long ago: The cries of Trojan women as they flee, The quivering moan of pale Andromache, Now lifted loud with pain and now brought low. It is the soul of sorrow that we know, As in a shell the soul of all the sea. So sometimes in the compass of a song, Unknown to him who sings, thro' lips that live, The voiceless dead of long-forgotten lands Proclaim to us their heaviness and wrong In sweeping sadness of the winds that give Thy strings no rest from weariless wild hands.

To Erinna

Was Time not harsh to you, or was he kind, O pale Erinna of the perfect lyre, That he has left no word of singing fire Whereby you waked the dreaming Lesbian wind, And kindled night along the lyric shore? O girl whose lips Erato stooped to kiss, Do you go sorrowing because of this In fields where poets sing forevermore? Or are you glad and is it best to be A silent music men have never heard, A dream in all our souls that we may say: "Her voice had all the rapture of the sea, And all the clear cool quiver of a bird Deep in a forest at the break of day"?

To Cleis

"I have a fair daughter with a form like a golden flower, Cleis, the beloved." Sapphic fragment.

When the dusk was wet with dew, Cleis, did the muses nine Listen in a silent line While your mother sang to you?

Did they weep or did they smile When she crooned to still your cries, She, a muse in human guise, Who forsook her lyre awhile?

Did you feel her wild heart beat? Did the warmth of all the sun Thro' your little body run When she kissed your hands and feet?

Did your fingers, babywise, Touch her face and touch her hair, Did you think your mother fair, Could you bear her burning eyes?

Are the songs that soothed your fears Vanished like a vanished flame, Save the line where shines your name Starlike down the graying years?

Cleis speaks no word to me, For the land where she has gone Lieth mute at dusk and dawn Like a windless tideless sea.

Paris in Spring

The city's all a-shining Beneath a fickle sun, A gay young wind's a-blowing, The little shower is done. But the rain-drops still are clinging And falling one by one—Oh it's Paris, it's Paris, And spring-time has begun.

I know the Bois is twinkling In a sort of hazy sheen, And down the Champs the gray old arch Stands cold and still between. But the walk is flecked with sunlight Where the great acacias lean, Oh it's Paris, it's Paris, And the leaves are growing green.

The sun's gone in, the sparkle's dead, There falls a dash of rain, But who would care when such an air Comes blowing up the Seine? And still Ninette sits sewing Beside her window-pane, When it's Paris, it's Paris, And spring-time's come again.

Madeira from the Sea

Out of the delicate dream of the distance an emerald emerges Veiled in the violet folds of the air of the sea; Softly the dream grows awakening—shimmering white of a city, Splashes of crimson, the gay bougainvillea, the palms. High in the infinite blue of its heaven a quiet cloud lingers, Lost and forgotten of winds that have fallen asleep, Fallen asleep to the tune of a Portuguese song in a garden.

City Vignettes

I Dawn

The greenish sky glows up in misty reds, The purple shadows turn to brick and stone, The dreams wear thin, men turn upon their beds, And hear the milk-cart jangle by alone.

II Dusk

The city's street, a roaring blackened stream Walled in by granite, thro' whose thousand eyes A thousand yellow lights begin to gleam, And over all the pale untroubled skies.

III Rain at Night

The street-lamps shine in a yellow line Down the splashy, gleaming street, And the rain is heard now loud now blurred By the tread of homing feet.

By the Sea

Beside an ebbing northern sea While stars awaken one by one, We walk together, I and he.

He woos me with an easy grace That proves him only half sincere; A light smile flickers on his face.

To him love-making is an art, And as a flutist plays a flute, So does he play upon his heart

A music varied to his whim. He has no use for love of mine, He would not have me answer him.

To hide my eyes within the night I watch the changeful lighthouse gleam Alternately with red and white.

My laughter smites upon my ears, So one who cries and wakes from sleep Knows not it is himself he hears.

What if my voice should let him know The mocking words were all a sham, And lips that laugh could tremble so?

What if I lost the power to lie, And he should only hear his name In one low, broken

cry?

On the Death of Swinburne

He trod the earth but yesterday, And now he treads the stars. He left us in the April time He praised so often in his rhyme, He left the singing and the lyre and went his way.

He drew new music from our tongue, A music subtly wrought, And moulded words to his desire, As wind doth mould a wave of fire; From strangely fashioned harps slow golden tones he wrung.

I think the singing understands That he who sang is still, And Iseult cries that he is dead,— Does not Dolores bow her head And Fragoletta weep and wring her little hands?

New singing now the singer hears To lyre and lute and harp; Catullus waits to welcome him, And thro' the twilight sweet and dim, Sappho's forgotten songs are falling on his ears.

Triolets

I

Love looked back as he took his flight, And lo, his eyes were filled with tears. Was it for love of lost delight Love looked back as he took his flight? Only I know while day grew night, Turning still to the vanished years, Love looked back as he took his flight, And lo, his eyes were filled with tears.

II (Written in a copy of "La Vita Nuova". For M. C. S.)

If you were Lady Beatrice And I the Florentine, I'd never waste my time like this— If you were Lady Beatrice I'd woo and then demand a kiss, Nor weep like Dante here, I ween, If you were Lady Beatrice And I the Florentine.

III (Written in a copy of "The Poems of Sappho".)

Beyond the dim Hesperides, The girl who sang them long ago Could never dream

that over seas, Beyond the dim Hesperides, The wind would blow such songs as these— I wonder now if she can know, Beyond the dim Hesperides, The girl who sang them long ago?

IV

Dead leaves upon the stream And dead leaves on the air— All of my lost hopes seem Dead leaves upon the stream; I watch them in a dream, Going I know not where, Dead leaves upon the stream And dead leaves on the air.

Vox Corporis

The beast to the beast is calling, And the soul bends down to wait; Like the stealthy lord of the jungle, The white man calls his mate.

The beast to the beast is calling, They rush through the twilight sweet, But the soul is a wary hunter, He will not let them meet.

A Ballad of Two Knights

Two knights rode forth at early dawn A-seeking maids to wed, Said one, "My lady must be fair, With gold hair on her head."

Then spake the other knight-at-arms: "I care not for her face, But she I love must be a dove For purity and grace."

And each knight blew upon his horn And went his separate way, And each knight found a lady-love Before the fall of day.

But she was brown who should have had The shining yellow hair— I ween the knights forgot their words Or else they ceased to care.

For he who wanted purity Brought home a wanton wild, And when each saw the other knight I ween that each knight smiled.

Christmas Carol

The kings they came from out the south, All dressed in ermine fine, They bore Him gold and chrysoprase, And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north, Their coats were brown and old, They brought Him little new-born lambs— They had not any gold.

The wise-men came from out the east, And they were wrapped in white; The star that led them all the way Did glorify the night.

The angels came from heaven high, And they were clad with wings; And lo, they brought a joyful song The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door, The wise-men entered in, The shepherds followed after them To hear the song begin.

And Mary held the little child And sat upon the ground; She looked up, she looked down, She looked all around.

The angels sang thro' all the night Until the rising sun, But little Jesus fell asleep Before the song was done.

The Faery Forest

The faery forest glimmered Beneath an ivory moon, The silver grasses shimmered Against a faery tune.

Beneath the silken silence The crystal branches slept, And dreaming thro' the dew-fall The cold white blossoms wept.

A Fantasy

Her voice is like clear water That drips upon a stone In forests far and silent Where Quiet plays alone.

Her thoughts are like the lotus Abloom by sacred streams Beneath the temple arches Where Quiet sits and dreams.

Her kisses are the roses That glow while dusk is deep In Persian garden closes Where Quiet falls asleep.

A Minuet of Mozart's

Across the dimly lighted room The violin drew wefts of sound, Airily they wove and

wound And glimmered gold against the gloom.

I watched the music turn to light, But at the pausing of the bow, The web was broken and the glow Was drowned within the wave of night.

Twilight

Dreamily over the roofs The cold spring rain is falling, Out in the lonely tree A bird is calling, calling.

Slowly over the earth The wings of night are falling; My heart like the bird in the tree Is calling, calling, calling.

The Prayer

My answered prayer came up to me, And in the silence thus spake he: "O you who prayed for me to come, Your greeting is but cold and dumb."

My heart made answer: "You are fair, But I have prayed too long to care. Why came you not when all was new, And I had died for joy of you."

Two Songs for a Child

I Grandfather's Love

They said he sent his love to me, They wouldn't put it in my hand, And when I asked them where it was They said I couldn't understand.

I thought they must have hidden it, I hunted for it all the day, And when I told them so at night They smiled and turned their heads away.

They say that love is something kind, That I can never see or touch. I wish he'd sent me something else, I like his cough-drops twice as much.

II The Kind Moon

I think the moon is very kind To take such trouble just for me. He came along with me from home To keep me company.

He went as fast as I could run; I wonder how he crossed the sky? I'm sure he hasn't

legs and feet Or any wings to fly.

Yet here he is above their roof; Perhaps he thinks it isn't right For me to go so far alone, Tho' mother said I might.

On the Tower

Under the leaf of many a Fable lies the Truth for those who look for it. Jami.

On the Tower

(A play in one act.)

The Knight. The Lady.

Voices of men and women on the ground at the foot of the tower. The voice of the Knight's Page.

The top of a high battlemented tower of a castle. A stone ledge, which serves as a seat, extends part way around the parapet. Small clouds float by in the blue sky, and occasionally a swallow passes. Entrance R. from an unseen stairway which is supposed to extend around the outside of the tower.

The Lady (unseen). Oh do not climb so fast, for I am faint With looking down the tower to where the earth Lies dreaming in the sun. I fear to fall.

The Knight (unseen). Lean on me, love, my love, and look not down.

L. Call me not "love", call me your conquered foe, That now, since you have battered down her gates, Gives you the keys that lock the highest tower And mounts with you to prove her homage true; Oh bid me go no farther lest I fall, My foot has slipped upon the rain-worn stones, Why are the stairs so narrow and so steep? Let us go back, my lord.

K. Are you afraid, Who were so dauntless till the walls gave way? Courage, my sweet. I would that I could climb A thousand times by wind-swept stairs like these, That lead so near to heaven.

L. Sir, you may, You are a knight and very valorous; I am a woman. I shall never

come This way but once. (The Knight and the Lady appear on the top of the tower.)

K. Kiss me at last, my love.

L. Oh, my sweet lord, I am too tired to kiss. Look how the earth is like an emerald, With rivers veined and flawed with fallow fields.

K. (Lifting her veil) Then I kiss you, a thousand thousand kisses For all the days ere I had won to you Beyond the walls and gates you barred so close. Call me at last your love, your castle's lord.

L. (After a pause) I love you.

(She kisses him. Her veil blows away like a white butterfly over the parapet. Faint cries and laughter from men and women under the tower.)

Men and Women. The veil, the lady's veil!

(The knight takes the lady in his arms.)

L. My lord, I pray you loose me from your arms Lest that my people see how much we love.

K. May they not see us? All of them have loved.

L. But you have been an enemy, my lord, With walls between us and with moss-grown moats, Now on a sudden must I kiss your mouth? I who was taught before I learned to speak That all my house was hostile unto yours, Now can I put my head against your breast Here in the sight of all who choose to come?

K. Are we not past the caring for their eyes And nearer to the heaven than to earth? Look up and see.

L. I only see your face.

(She touches his hair with her hands. Murmuring under the tower.)

K. Why came we here in all the noon-day light With only darting swallows over us To make a speck of darkness on the sun? Let us go down where walls will shut us round. Your castle has a hundred quiet halls, A hundred chambers, where the

shadows lie On things put by, forgotten long ago. Forgotten lutes with strings that Time has slackened, We two shall draw them close and bid them sing— Forgotten games, forgotten books still open Where you had laid them by at vesper-time, And your embroidery, whereon half-worked Weeps Amor wounded by a rose's thorn. Shall I not see the room in which you slept, Palpitant still and breathing of your thoughts, Where maiden dreams adown the ways of sleep Swept noiselessly with damosels and knights To tourneys where the trumpet made no sound, Blow as he might, the scarlet trumpeter, And were the dreams not sometimes brimmed with tears That waked you when the night was loneliest? Will you not bring me to your oratory Where prayers arose like little birds set free Still upward, upward without sound of flight? Shall I not find your turrets toward the north, Where you defied white winter armed for war; Your southern casements where the sun blows in Between the leaf-bent boughs the wind has lifted? Shall we not see the sunrise toward the east, Watch dawn by dawn the rose of day unfolding Its golden-hearted beauty sovereignly; And toward the west look quietly at evening? Shall I not see all these and all your treasures? In carven coffers hidden in the dark Have you not laid a sapphire lit with flame And amethysts set round with deep-wrought gold, Perhaps a ruby?

L. All my gems are yours And all my chambers curtained from the sun. My lord shall see them all, in time, in time.

(The sun begins to sink.)

K. Shall I not see them now? To-day, to-night?

L. How could I show you in one day, my lord, My castle and my treasures and my tower? Let all the days to come suffice for this Since all the past days made them what they are. You will not be impatient, my sweet lord. Some of the halls have long been locked and barred, And some have secret doors and hard to find Till suddenly you touch them unawares, And down a sable way runs silver light. We two will

search together for the keys, But not to-day. Let us sit here to-day, Since all is yours and always will be yours.

(The stars appear faintly one by one.)

K. (After a pause.) I grow a little drowsy with the dusk.

L. (Singing.) There was a man that loved a maid, (Sleep and take your rest) Over her lips his kiss was laid, Over her heart, his breast.

(The knight sleeps.)

All of his vows were sweet to hear, Sweet was his kiss to take; Why was her breast so quick to fear, Why was her heart, to break?

Why was the man so glad to woo? (Sleep and take your rest) Why were the maiden's words so few——

(She sees that he is asleep, and slipping off her long cloak-like outer garment, she pillows his head upon it against the parapet, and half kneeling at his feet she sings very softly:)

I love you, I love you, I love you, I am the flower at your feet, The birds and the stars are above you, My place is more sweet.

The birds and the stars are above you, They envy the flower in the grass, For I, only I, while I love you Can die as you pass.

(Light clouds veil the stars, growing denser constantly. The castle bell rings for vespers, and rising, the lady moves to a corner of the parapet and kneels there.)

L. Ave Maria! gratia plena, Dominus——

Voice of the Page (from the foot of the tower.) My lord, my lord, they call for you at court!

(The knight wakes. It is now quite dark.)

There is a tourney toward; your enemy Has challenged you. My lord, make haste to come!

(The knight rises and gropes his way toward the stairs.)

K. I will make haste. Await me where you are.

(To himself.) There was a lady on this tower with me——

(He glances around hurriedly but does not see her in the darkness.)

Page. My lord has far to ride before the dawn!

K. (To himself.) Why should I tarry?

(To the page.) Bring my horse and shield!

(He descends. As the noise of his footfall on the stairs dies away, the lady gropes toward the stairway, then turns suddenly, and going to the ledge where they have sat, she throws herself over the parapet.)

CURTAIN.

[End of Helen of Troy And Other Poems.]

Sara Teasdale

Sara Teasdale was born in St. Louis, Missouri, where she attended a school that was founded by the grandfather of another great poet from St. Louis—T. S. Eliot. She later associated herself more with New York City. Her first book of poems was "Sonnets to Duse" (1907), but "Helen of Troy" (1911) was the true launch of her career, followed by "Rivers to the Sea" (1915), "Love Songs" (1917), "Flame and Shadow" (1920) and more. Her final volume, "Strange Victory", is considered by many to be predictive of her suicide.

It is interesting to note that in Teasdale's Collected Works, about half of the poems in this volume—some more justly than others—have been excluded, and most of the rest have been slightly changed. Most of the poems from this volume which were selected to be included in "Love Songs" also had some minor changes. This edition preserves the original readings, but they are not to be considered authoritative.

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