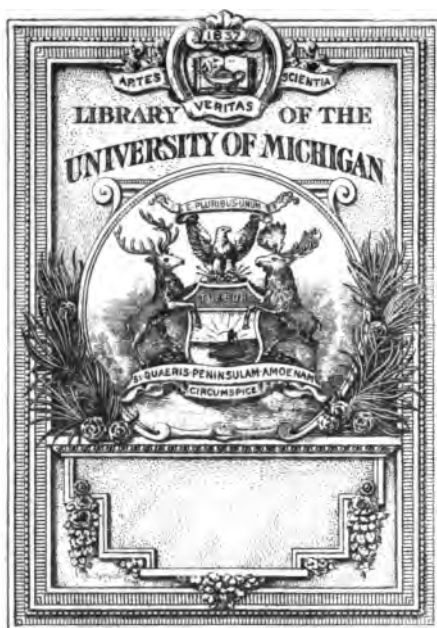


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Actæon's Defense

www.litool.com.cn
and Other Poems by

Alice Wilson



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ACTÆON'S DEFENSE

- “ Nay, thou wilt hear me, dazzling Artemis?
“ Stay but a while, my goddess! stay and hear!
“ Surely thou know'st no wilful passion drove
“ Me in desire to this sight of thee?
“ Not more than some unthinking sheep that sees
“ The rim of pasture greener o'er the ridge
“ And goes impelled by instinct to the best,
“ Came I upon thee in thy mystery.
“ Thou know'st my happy life; how with the
 youths
“ I chased and sported, sang, and wore the wreaths
“ The maidens wove, with careless victory?
“ Count them, these years! Were they not fault-
 lessly
“ Thine own, oh Maiden Huntress? fit to adorn
“ The marble of thy temple with a frieze
“ Of carven scenes whereon thy tameless gaze
“ Might rest in exultation?
 “ Thus I lived,
“ 'Til once — whether a world of seasons past —
“ One autumn,— nay, or whether one brief morn,
“ I know not! — suddenly my horn fell dumb.
“ I answered not my friends, nor stirred — and all
“ The chase died out in echo. Still I stood,

“ Hushed by a dream and blind. And as a vase
“ Of alabaster shows the glowing flame
“ So burned the dream within me. Ah! no more
“ The same, but now as one apart
“ Who feels a farther wonder than he sees,
“ I wandered, and my feet came carelessly
“ Unto the door of Spring.

“ Yea, ever fair
“ This birth beneath the sod, that wakens death
“ To life, and bids the buried roots to break
“ Into a coronal of budding things;—
“ That bids the waters woo the empyrean blue
“ To mate with them, and lie in lakes and streams
“ Like sleeping Godhood veiled in loveliness;—
“ That decks the morning hills with dew-fed
 beauty
“ And sends a thousand sparkling points of light
“ To jewel all the morning!

“ So adown
“ Unending vistas trembling into green
“ Where scarcely yet the tender thought of nest
“ Had entered, or the stillness broken yet
“ With earliest song, and over virgin fields
“ That lay yet wrapped in lovely harvest dreams,
“ Under the young trees’ arches, past the glades,
“ I came. And oft when lying by a pool

“ Of wood-deep stillness, I have heard afar
“ Beyond the young wood-river’s echoing course
“ The rhythmed movement of some hidden sea
“ That called me dimly; and my bosom’s dream
“ Like some strange master bid me follow. Or,
“ When rousing flights of eager-winged birds
“ Out of their quiet, over miles of sky,
“ Ever my burning sight would yearn to them
“ With this too great desire. And oft I plunged
“ Into a shadowed pool to quench at once
“ My body’s heat and this fierce flame within,—
“ In vain! Like to the stag I oft have seen
“ Trample the fairness of an hostile copse
“ To reach a farther shelter, while each move
“ Doubled its danger; so through all the spring
“ I came.

“ At last one morn I woke and found
“ The earth all summer, beauteous, wide and full.
“ Within me woke twin-gladness to my world!
“ I leapt, and gave the brimming call of old
“ Delight, and felt the dream, the spell
“ That held me, surge toward its goal.
“ Hunter again! Again the glorious chase
“ Re-echoed through the silence! I turned aside
“ Wondering to hear my heart-beats; — Lo!
“ Full-crowned with glory of divinity

"Thou stoodst incarnate! Oh All Beautiful!
"Who led me to the brink of thee? Who dared
"Reveal the wonder of my dream's desire?
"I burn! my sight is flame! and all my being
"Suffuses in effulgence! Ah, forbear,
"Thou holy human! Thine unimpassioned gaze
"Devours me! That once moon-marble light
"That led me softly through the scented dark
"Now grasps me in a blaze of awful scorn!
"Farewell, my silvery hopes, that fall as stars
"Around me in this sudden glare of day!
"My senses fail!

"Ho! sound the hunter's horn!

"Let the dark night be wakened by the chase!
"What though the pale, far goddess fail? Per-
chance
"Beyond the dark, the forest passed, she waits
"Within the delicate dawn, above a slope
"Of grassy mildness bathed in blushful light
"To crown us with her service virginal.
"Come, my companions! —

"Hark! Whence comes this fear?

"Oh anguish! Hunted, even I, once lord
"Of all the chase? Dian, Goddess! hear!"

TO A PINE-TREE AT NIGHT

Oh thou dreaming pine-tree, how my spirit loves
thee!

Calls thee its companion across the silent night!
Thou in dreams art folded beyond the Summer's
presence,
Deaf to all her music, dumb to her delight!

Are thy dreams as tender, as exquisite as mine are,
Infinitely subtler than the lightest breeze?

Ship's wing, earth's scent, pulse of languid sea-
wave

My dreams are made of, but fairer far than these.

Dear to me the sailing ships, filled with graceful
breezes —

Songs of the sea, flung out to greet the shore;—

Sweet are the odors of the earth and ocean,

Sweeter for nestling under deep sea roar.

When the morning calls me out of tender slumber,

Calls me to run to the young dawn's verge,

Sometimes I hasten with pulses beating gladly

Ready all my being in the morning's joy to merge.

Sometimes I seek a sister in desire
By the drawn sea-tide, far and lone, and low;
Now something draws me onward, to reach a
 higher level,
Now it draws me backward, to and fro.

Gifts are lying for me, on the motionless horizon,
Songs I cannot hear arise from all the buds of
 earth;
Darkly, and sweetly, and full of stirring mystery
Some rapture, cradled in my heart, is trembling
 into birth.

What is this strange rapture, that wakens through
 my dreaming
Reaching out for something the meadows cannot
 give?
Is it this, oh silent pine-tree, that draws thee from
 the summer
This delight in whose embrace alone thou car'st to
 live?

Yet I will not ask thee for thy secret's dear di-
 vulgence!
All its sweetness would be spent, its mystery would
 die.
Only, tell me softly, if amid thy dreaming,
Thou dost ever wish for some more dear reality?

VOICE AND STAR

Star shining down from the heaven,
Passionless, pure, and far;—
Full of the fervor of living,
Voice ringing out to the star.

Voice ringing out to the star
In an ecstasy sweet and divine;
Breaking out over the silent
Horizon of time.

Star, in the calmness of vision,
Dumb, comprehending the whole,
Gathers the wordless wonder
Into its soul.

Each to the other out-reaching
Over the æons of air,
Striving to stamp their image
Somehow, somewhere.

Somehow, somewhere to be gathered,
Never ceasing to be,
Till they dwell in the perfect plenum
Of eternal infinity.

TO IPHIGENIA

Ah Iphigenia ! to be waiting there,
Expectant, chosen, doomed, a tragic bride
Of fate, with ~~sad~~ ~~blind~~ bound sacrificial hair
And blighted loveliness, and tearful pride!

Was it not sweet, to feel thy young death meant
The triumph of a nation's answered want?
Did not thy soul bud forth in wonderment
And full of ecstasy, arise and chant?

I could so share the trembling of thy form
That shrank from parting with its gift of life!
To thy soul's terror, too, I could conform
And loathe the deadly vision of the knife.

But, could'st thou plead and weep against thy lot?
Against the high demand of sacrifice?
Could'st strive to 'scape, with futile plan and plot
Paying the one sublime atonement price?

Would'st thou not render life's young sweetness up
With happy cadence into deathless skies?
Not drink, unfaltering, the silent cup
Filled with the draught of future victories?

Most exquisite, in temple column-reared,
Upon a shore sea-bordered, still and blue,
Where without wonder, happy Gods appeared
Their deathless dreams of beauty to pursue,

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To die; while countless warriors waited still
For thy sweet breath to fail, thy form so fair
To lie in marble death, beyond the thrill
That lifted mighty hearts to worship there.

I would my life might gather its spent force
And blossom into so divine a death,
Could I but purchase such an evil course
Of ills with price of my one body's breath!

But now there is no temple by the sea;
No altar carved in marble delicate;
No oracle enwrapped in mystery;
No virgin called, a victim unto fate!

Instead, an open world beneath the day
Where men are herded in a stricken mass
To watch in grief, along the mourning way
The solemn countenance of sorrow pass.

I see men stand beside the silent dead
No touch can lift to life, no voice awake,
I feel their hearts' deep weight of tears unshed,
I hear the grief no human words e'er spake.

And I, my Iphigenia, unlike thee
Whom the stern voice of oracle bade come,
I can but weep, un comforted, to see
Our holy Altars lying chaste and dumb.

Oh daughter of a deathless century,
Rejoice in thine old-world belief
That let thee dying look abroad and see
Thy people saved from such a bitter grief!

While we must seek with more awakened minds,
With more of spirits' lonely prophecy
A consolation not to be defined,
Which gives us prescience of eternity.

Written in memory of William McKinley.

ST. AGNES' DREAMS

There is no moon aloft, and yet its light
Like guilty creature from a silent wold
Creeps out upon the open moor of night
And aureoles the darkness with its gold.

The happy maidens gather in a throng
With offering and charm and lurid spell
To break the bonds of magic and with awe
The names of future fate and lovers tell.

And now a laugh ascends, a happy jest,
Half broken by sweet terror and the cry
Of one who stumbles nearer on the truth,
And well believes her own mind's fantasy.

The hour chimes, and sudden silence reigns.
Now all have sped to seek the charmed sleep
When dreams are blest with life and visions dear
Awake and live and move and softly speak.

All still! Now noiselessly the magic hour
Steals phantom-like across my solitude,
And lo! from stress of love, I kneel and pray
To lowly Agnes, saint of maidenhood.

She sends no charmèd sleep encrowned with
dreams,

But only touches my own waking thought
To happy hope, and draws to clearer sight
The one dear image which my heart hath wrought.

There is no moon, no spell, no augury,
The spirits slumber still in silent rest.
All still! my quiet heart with closèd eyes
Lies as a lily on the river's breast.

VOICES

Tonight my spirit wakes and will not rest,
Nor may the silence soothe its care away,
For o'er the mountain's long, unlighted crest
I seem to see the shadow of the day.

I seem to hear the brown wood-rivers' singing
Of other scenes, unslumbering and free;
To see the eager birds their long flight winging
Along the margin of a level sea;

To hear, as oft mid-winter silences,
The whisper of an uncreated spring;
To feel the presence of dim potencies
Elude my touch like some half-startled thing.

I know not if these are some once-known lands
Revisiting my waking memory,
Toward which I reach my spirit's yearning hands
With eager wish for proving constancy.

Or still the same dim dream of the ideal,
The Circe-call of worlds that never were,
Which ever, through the universe of the real,
Like sudden star-worlds nebulously stir.

Nor stilled, nor ever found, these mystic feelings
Appear like phantom spirits in the mind,
Omniscient in their infinite revealings
Although, for all their wide-eyed vision, blind.

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Akin to lonely tides that rise and fall
As moved by that high power unproved, un-
guessed,
Around life's shores these voices move and call
And urge our thoughts upon eternal quest.

CHOICE

The lithesome willow wooes the earth
With delicate caresses;
While up for the mere touch of sky
The trembling poplar presses.

Which choosest thou, oh rapturous heart
Ready-winged with song —
The sweetness near of budding earth,
Or sky-flights dim and long?

Or art thou gifted as a bird
With equal happy share
Of friendship for the nesting earth
And passion for the air?

Be quick, my heart, my happy bird,
For life is full and sweet,
And I would follow on thy way —
Thy choice I wait to greet.

Then spake my heart: "I dare not choose
Or either earth or sky
Lest by my choice I lose indeed
Some share of ecstasy."

"Like willow-bough I'd woo the earth
With touch of tender love,
Like trembling poplar yearn I for
The haunting height above."

"Yet if I start on singing flight
To make each rapture mine,
For love's possession of a part
I must the whole resign."

" 'Tis now, upon the brimming verge
I drink of all delight.
My wing is glad with prophecy
Of all the joy of flight."

TO THE QUEEN, DYING

Now hath the gray and starry moor
All wind-dismantled grown —
A whisper low, of wondering woe,
A lily, overblown.

Queen and Woman! proud of life!
So Mother-meek with love!
I saw thee late in robes of state
In majesty to move.

And all my life I heard the song
Thy full heart chanted loud,
I knew thee blest in every breast,
So gracious and so proud.

In silent awe we watch and wait
With deep implanted faith,
Thy closing hour, thine ending power,
The Angelus of Death.

The pure star waneth in the light,
Our eyes no longer see;
We greet forlorn the new, strange morn
Unheralded by thee!

THOUGHTS ON WATCHING A SNOW-STORM

Through a vast, aerial sea
It sinketh slow, and awfully; —
Mute with unseen mystery.

Sinks and masses, deep and still,
A slumb'rous wayfarer, until
It yields unto the north wind's will.

Then it sweeps like phantom sand
Blighting by its leprous hand
All the blooming of the land.

Pity, oh ye powers then
For the erstwhile master men
Locked like cattle in their pen!

No Theseus have they in this
Labyrinthian wilderness,
Horror-wrought and merciless.

All their actions stricken are;
E'en their visions hold no star
Nor their stammering speech a prayer.

But their souls in wonderment
Beat against the blind intent
That steals their dower, the firmament.

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And they strain their sightless eyes
To pierce the ever-darkening skies
With cold Philosophy's surmise.

Until the pitying touch of night
Bids them cease such falcon flight
And softly hoods their troubled sight.

TO A SCARLET TANAGER.

At noon, when quiet reigns among
The bird-deserted trees,
When eyes, earth-weary, upward turn
A glimpse of sky to seize,

I see thee light with wildwood grace
Upon a waving tree,
I watch thee flash from sun to shade
In fearless liberty.

In proud delight the sun's rich blaze
Gives challenge to thy sheen
As, breasting the soft winds of May
Thou swing'st in rapture keen.

No tie of nest and mate withholds
Thy new created wing;
Life beckons thee on virgin flight,
Thou blithe, unfettered thing!

Such dower of beauty needs no song
To meet perfection's test;
Thy scarlet flashes through the soul,
Thy muteness stills the breast.

RHAPSODY TO ETHEL

Gentians blue,
Am I thinking thus of you
As I kneel in meadows fair
Blown by golden autumn air,
Culling you with quickened breath
E'er you fade my touch beneath,
Gentians radiant and rare?

Beauty surely were enough
For a heart that sought
Haven for its thought!
What else led me o'er the rough
Close-reaped meadows, save
Your sudden distant color-wave
That ran the oozy pasture through
Like a maiden's dream come true?

As I crouch in grasses wet,
Where the newly shining sun
Works in fine equality
With the rains that buried yet
In the gloom of under-earth
Knead and mold you to your birth,
Gentians blue, you hand me on
In a ringing tone,

To the memory of one
Who hath called from morning zone
Unto me,

All her mating ecstasy!

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Waking heart to wakened flower

Out from west to east,

Each a dawning for a dower

With the light to be increased.

Here for dawn-guest, as I ween,

Musing all unseen,

Lies my hidden heart between.

Fair your petals' fringed outline

Cut in delicate design,

Folded outward royally!

I have never seen you so

Wholly open, glad to throw

All your store's intensity

In the surge of light divine.

So my maid hath ever been

Sought but rarely seen,

Like the shade your own fringe throws

O'er your petals' beauteous blue,

Lie the shadows for repose

O'er her nature true.

They who seek you in the mist
Under sullen skies
Find you folded up
In your spiral cup,
Still a wonder to the eyes,
But your hearts' blue all unkissed.

They the many who have known
All my maiden's folded charms,
Court her for grace,
Or her loveliness of face,
Seekers in the mist, they pass
Half her worth too soon.
Would they only wait this time
When the glory of the day —
Love-day for my lass —
Wooes her spirit wide and calms
All her wilfulness away,
In the dawning of her prime
They would win their boon.

Gentians blue,
Thinking thus of her and you,
I hear the earth-pulse beat,
I feel the divine fire

Beating, glowing to unite
In the earth and air and ocean,
Between hearts and eyes alight
With the joy of high emotion
Wrought to whiteness of desire.
Set a wing,
Thus my heart goes caroling
In the meadow at your feet,
Gentians blue and rare and sweet.

VISION

Time is not long to me:
Its gifts of days are like strong rivers flowing,
Glad, because of unpent, outward going
Unto a dreamed of sea.

To me Time is not long:
The still nights lead in silvern rhapsody
To morning hills where one awaiteth me
With golden-fluted song.

TO N. W. AND A. E. W.

I lie and dream of love. And thus I see
But dimly through my fancy's hidden eyes
The distant spire of my Ideal rise
Far beyond life, unsure and falteringly.
And as a mother-bird distressfully
Beholds her nestling's weakness as it flies,
I see mine yearn in vain toward the skies —
I hear its bell-tones ring a wail to me.
My vision fades. Then through the silence gray
I hear the echo of Life's resonant speech:
"Turn thee and see beside thee Life's strong way,
Nor build thy Love beyond Love's very reach."
I turn and see, across the sound of day
Two lives that lean in silence each to each.

To M. L. D.

Dear Garden Lady with discouraged air
Let not your spirit suffer such defeat!
If other gardens seem to be as sweet,
None can to yours in character compare.
Not only flowers make a garden fair,
Nor well-raked paths, nor borders trim and neat;
Though all be strictly ordered and complete,
Such can exist, yet no delight be there.
A Garden is a cloistered spot, enclosed
From the rough-visaged world, and walled about
With sweetness of fair thoughts and faithful toil
And touch of love upspringing from the soil.
Thus, when thy flower-nurslings blossom out,
What gifts of spirit's sweetness lie disclosed!

TO A LOVELY WOMAN

I know a soul that mocks at every thrill
Nor to itself a lofty birth will own;
But with defiant knowledge overgrown
Parries its questioning with curious skill.
I know a soul that trembles and is still:
A soul that shrinks and broods and sits alone
Staring at wrongs, and counts them, one by one,
As blighted children of a sinful will.
The while it dwells in such an habitation
As Goddess Beauty's self might deign to grace
Nor find unworthy of immortal station.
Alas! that from this heaven-designèd face
Looks forth the soul in such ill-spent vexation
'T would seem or soul or form were out of place.

WARTBURG CASTLE

*

Uplifted high above the humble earth
By the attending trees, within their hold
That stand like caryatides of old,
Thy strength of stone goes outward, into birth;—
Here scanneth thou the ages as they go
As if they were mere shadows of bird flight
Beneath thy turrets! — they, whose chief delight
Is, vassal-like, to lay their treasures low
Before thee! Oh impenetrable stone,
Imbedded with the gems of rarest lore
That, like remembered suns, has steeped thy zone
In light of buried days! What unseen shore
Absorbs thy vision? What unrisen sun
Seest thou in contemplation evermore?

**

I lean far out across the casement sill
Within the hall where Minnisingers strove
And dream myself a thousand leagues above
Yon earthly paradise of vale and hill.
I hear the lutes 'neath Minnisingers skill
In faint old echoes sing of gentle love;
I see Elizabeth, the Rose-Saint, move
Within her hallowed habitation still.
I see that other high Elizabeth
Who crowned Tannhauser with her constancy —
And, farther, o'er the courtyard's quiet gloom
I see the glimmer of an humble room
Where, stolen from an angry world away,
Luther, imprisoned, nursed the new-born faith.

Not altogether do I dream of these
Within their memorable walls of stone;
But, when I stand at casements quite alone,
And look upon the deepening vales of trees,
My dreaming sight its own new vision sees
And blossoms as a flower in the sun,
Drinking the beauty that it looks upon
In full abandonment of joy and ease.
The legends sleep: the Castle wakes and lives;
The past lies far: the present hovers near!
The Wartburg stands ablaze on mountain crest—
Oh hidden histories, seek your tranquil rest
And leave me in my full possession here
To take, in right of life, the gift it gives!

TO EGYPT

What though we break with heedless light of day
On thy sepulchral rest, so still, so vast,
And from the ruined treasury of thy past
Like thieves we bear thy buried hoard away,
Mourn not oh Egypt! Still thy vault is deep
With wealth that lies beyond our ruthless reach:
Thy wisdom, locked before our questioning speech,
Thy beauty, wrapped in its imperial sleep.
These keep as thine imperishable store,
Oh Hathor Egypt, till the world is done;
Nor grudge those things whose broken loveliness
Recalls us from the living throng and press
To seek, upon thy venerable shore,
Their priceless rescue from oblivion.

VILLA MUTI

I wandered o'er Frascati's lovely height
Intent on inward thoughts and reveries,
Beholding beauty with unseeing eyes;
When lo! there rose before my vagrant sight
A place embrasured in the mystic light
Of olden days and nursed in memories
That hung it with an aureole of sighs;
From whence I heard the stir of dead delight
Rise in a ghostly rhythm and awake
To words of soul-engendered solacement:
"There once were two who lived their early dream
Among our flowery ruins, and by our stream,
Until life called and with their love they went.
We give thee garnered sweetness for their sake."

REMEMBRANCE

The seasons pass before mine eyes: —
Budding Spring and new life caroling;
Summer's fullness: — "Take or leave" it cries;
Fire of Autumn's passionate besieging,
Then Winter's death. — All pass before mine eyes
Untouched. My heart is answering
Thy call from some dim paradise.

MAY SONG

Poplar crowned with blackbird,
Valley veiled in mist,
Fields of showery blossoms,
Air of amethyst;

Moon of moistened amber,
Waters hushed in glades,
Wistful love a'waking
In the hearts of maids.

RHYTHM

The slim moon points her will
And the swinging tides obey.
Hung on the tip of her horn
Forward and back they sway;
 With ebb that swingeth,
And flow that ringeth
To and fro everlastingly.

Under the horn of the moon
Swing, with a rhythmic tide,
Moods in the breast of man;
 With passionate pride
 Flowing in ecstasy
 Ebbing in misery,
Infinitely unsatisfied.

PEACE

'Tis milking time: the peaceful cows, knee deep
Within the fragrant clover and the grass,
Stand mutely waiting for the time to pass
Beyond the bars that lead to placid sleep.

'Tis falling eve: the fluttering birds are still,
Lulled by the finished curfew of the thrush.
'Tis ended day, and faint across the hush
From fallow fields the hopes of reapers thrill.

'Tis harbour time: the tired ships are home.
The sails that leapt to breeze on morning's quest
With finished purpose lie in evening's breast
To dream of reefs that ring with baffled foam.

'Tis holy eve: up to God's waiting hand
The fruits of human toil and thought ascend.
How still! How near us Godhead seems to bend
In this reposeful rapture of the land!

DAWN AND DAPHNE

Daphne, maiden of the youthful morning,
Racing winds with motion fleet,
Daphne, spirit of the fragile dawning
Hear thy comrades call to thee in warning!
Beware the foe!
Phœbus' bow
Follows fast thy glancing feet.

Softly shadows of the reeds and rushes
Swing in newly wakened bliss,
Shyly youthful field and meadow blushes,
Nature's pæan ends the long night hushes.
Dawn and Daphne
Daphne and the Morn!
In the East as sisters meet and kiss.

Daphne, maiden, hush thy laughter's ringing,
Lover hither hast thou led.
Soul of morning, still thine untamed singing!
Hide thee! Phœbus' burning shaft is winging!
He catcheth thee! —
Oh! maiden-tree
Think not that thou art Daphne — she is fled!

SOVEREIGN SPRING

Oh crocus-cup!
What fairy hand
Doth lift thee up
So daintily
And airily?
"I come in answer to the Spring's command."

Oh shyest thought!
Who bade thee start,
Uncalled, unsought,
On trembling wing?
"Love in spring
Hath called me from the quiet of the heart!"

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Swings in the rhythm of time,
 To and fro,
The mighty pendulum
 Of joy and woe.
Hung from the throne of the Holy One
It measures life from zone to zone.

Age answers age, as it swings
 To and fro,
Weighted with messages
 Of joy and woe;
Helpless and dumb, 'neath the pendulum,
Driven as slaves by its go and come.

Glorious rhythm and swing!
Thy to and fro
Touch at two points of eternity.
 This joy and woe
Is soul's breath, outstripping death —
The song swings wide, and the song is faith.

CAMOEN'S CRY

"Sweetest eyes were ever seen,"
Hide thy fire while I press
First awakened shy caress
That betrays me truthfully:
For the years that ne'er have been
When I lived unknowing thee,
For the future years apart,
Lost delight and weary heart,
Take this store for memory.

But oh eyes, close-shut beneath
Passionate fire of my breath,
Slowly toward thee I lean:
For the hours dear and dread
I have looked thee deep within —
Flaming hours quickly sped —
Love, I live, I yield, possess,
Eternity in this caress!
Thus I leave thee; all is said,
"Sweetest eyes were ever seen."

MOON MAID

The moon is Diana tonight
Forth on her maiden chase;
Controlling her mad delight
With infinite grace.

Leashed are the wondering winds
To her tameless girdle of gold;
Limitless waters she binds
With the charm of her hold.

Valleys and plains awake
And lie in a marvellous maze;
Dreams are dead, for the sake
Of her magical gaze.

Hearkens the huntress moon;
Pauses amid her gladness —
Endymion stirring soon
Will waken to sadness!

She slips from her shining sheath
Into a sea of bliss,
Wooes with her moon-born breath
Earth-lover's kiss.

Scattered the starry chase,
The tale of its glory over;
Run is the maiden race —
Diane to her lover.

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THE MINSTREL

I came along the highway
Over hill and dale
Until at summer evening
I reached a pleasant vale:

A little hermit valley
All wooded, wild, and still
Save for the wind in the high pines
And the lonely rill.

I found a little lodging
For wandering singers meet,
The world of stars above me,
The dark earth at my feet.

I took my harp for singing
As a minstrel may;
But all my dreams and cadences
Fell silently away.

For in the vale at evening
I listened and I heard
The singing revelation
Of a woodland bird.

GRIEF IN MAY

After the rain the blue bird's song
And the musical water rippling along —
Oh! well-a-day!
Strong is the promise of blossoming birth
When after April's rain the earth
Gathers herself into May.

May! May! and Winter is sped!
The children's brows are garlanded!
Oh! well-a-day!
Heavy hearts must come not here,
Dirges are muffled, madrigals clear
Herald the morn of May.

None will sing of thee, Sorrow mine!
Never a flower or leaf will pine!
Oh! well-a-day!
From the merry world I stand apart,
For my heart hath gone with another heart
Over the hills of May.

WINTER MARCHES

Wild marches, winter marches, where my heart
is hiding

The long reverberation of the hunter's tread
beneath,

Like a wild bird waiting for the call of mating
Lies and follows close, for fear of wing-swift
death;

Whither do ye lead him by your lone-voiced beauty,
Lead my own lone hunter of the hungered heart,
Lure him ever onward o'er your mutable horizons
Circean southern marches by your melancholy
art?

Stand I an outcast, all worship fallen from me —
I, your vestal, tend no more your huge calm
flame;

For the light of gray-deep eyes doth draw me from
your service
And my hidden heart must ever haunt the way
he came.

Moon-marches, mute-marches, filled with mournful
beauty
Where the wild things sweep in flight across your
open breast,

Where the longing uplands wander outward to the
sunset,
Where the brooding lowlands lie in unbound
rest;
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Far my hunter comes to woo your great untempled
spirit,
Seeks your borders whence the world like sun
drops down,
World-reft stands he ready for your dower:
Call him and crown him and render him his own!
Wild marches, southern marches, woefully your
dream-winds
Waft me wonder of desire, trellis me with bliss;
Oh to be there, beauteous marches, where my heart
is hiding
When you greet my morning hunter with auroral
kiss!

LOVE SONNETS AND LYRICS

I

Upon the world I shut my tired sight
And close in ~~such sweet company~~ of dreams
I am inclined to think the world but seems
And truth the dear deceptions of the night.
Within his lonely cell the anchorite
Stops not to ponder o'er the sun's real beams,
The warrior heeds not the dying screams,
But goes upheld by purpose through the fight.
Whate'er each sees with power of inner thought
Such lives for him, as truest truth of all,
While facts but follow in its living train.
Then why should I deny what dreams have taught
Or put from me mine unseen coronal,
My shut-in world, that dowers me with gain?

II

Oh little dost thou know, mine absent friend,
How warm a hearth-fire burns within my breast
For thee to sit by, dream, and take thy rest
Before thou journey to thy mission's end!
Each hour the embers I renew and mend
And consecrate anew to thy behest,
Sure of thy coming, yet half fearful lest
No thought of me, as torch, thy way attend.
Oft times I wonder how thou farest there,
Living thy life within the world of men
Where I am absent; and I cannot choose
But falter; 'til my heart its faith renews,
Its happy vision, of the hour when
I open wide the door and see thee there!

III

How dear thou art, my love! how more possessed
Of human sweetness, charm, and all delight,
Than aught that challenges my constant sight
Or lays strong siege to refuge in my breast!
Constrained with mutest reverence I stand
Before my garnered memories of thee:
Thy starry words, thy voice's melody,
Eternal eyes, and tender-touching hand.
While thus each single gift I contemplate
Twofold the value grows: dower of the past
In which reality is consummate;
Then, that which sends the heart-pulse trembling
fast,
Dower of the future — hidden dreams, that wait
Till they shall waken 'neath thy call at last.

IV

When, one by one, I see the names of friends
Like stars appear above me, proud and far,
While I beneath them, small and insular,
Lie dazzled by the light their radiance sends;
I can rejoice no envious thought offends,
No earlier vain and bitter longings mar
My soul's serenity. I now unbar
With scorn of all my dreamed-of aims and ends
The barriers that held me prisoner,
And let a flood of feeling overpour;
Rather a lavish giving to prefer
Than keeping as I kept a miser store
To feed self-love. Oh mine awakener!
In loving others I but love thee more!

V

When as a child I sought in simple sleep
The remedy for all my childish woes
Nor ever from its hallowed breast arose
Without new comfort, adequate and deep;
So when in maidenhood I learned to weep
And wonder at the spirit's greater throes,
Then in the world of books I sought repose
And thought through them my happiness to keep.
Mere stages were they in development
Which led me to the brink of deeper things
Where I awoke upon the world of love.
Since then nor books nor sleep my griefs remove;
But only thought of thee doth lend me wings
To reach more thought of thee, and rest content.

VI

By all the ways of life I come to thee:
Along the highroad of my common day
In the full glare of trials that betray
The frailties of my nature; I come to thee
Along the woodpaths of my fantasy
Where once my virgin spirit loved to stray
In lone delight; and when I climb to lay
My burst of rapture near eternity;
I come through vales where vespers have been
ringing,
What time my heart is touched with solemn grace;
And last, with spirit 'neath its sorrow stinging,
I reach thee in its secret mourning place.
Thou my horizon art, my life enringing
And o'er it like a star is set thy face.

VII

Now I have learned the blanching bitterness
Of roots that turn from cherished dreams of light
To seek, among earth's treasures recondite
The worth of courage and of truthfulness.
Now have I learned the stem's long quietness
That moulds its longing for a rapturous flight
To patient progress through the day and night,
Hoarding the hope it trembles to confess.
And now have learned the bud's enripening share
To hold the secret it would fain disclose
And of its grief, of gifts unrealized,
Make future sweetness. Ah, how justly prized
Will be each task, when once the perfect rose
Of spoken love enfolds upon the air!

VIII

What shall I answer thee, how give thee, dear,
Most wisely of the largesse of my store
Of true affection? Shall I give thee more
Than what thou deemest thine, as to a peer
We seek to woo and dazzle? Or, through fear
To let thee know thy fullest wealth before
Thou speak'st the need, shall I but pass thy door
With mite of offering? My heart sees clear
The second gift is best. So let me stay
Within thy hidden tower, with eager sight
To watch thy life's horizon, marking thence
The assailing dangers and thy soul's defense.
Oh, ready-armed with balms or with delight
To meet thee, crowned or conquered, on thy way!

IX

Oh thou! who to my spirit holdest up
A chalice, brimming with the sacred wine
Of love, see how my lips may not decline
To drain the contents of the invisible cup;
But lean to quaff thine offering, be the sup
Of dole or of delight! Thy gaze greets mine,
And as across the cup my hands touch thine,
A power ineffable doth seem to stoop
And breathe on us a miracle, a change
Which quickeneth our senses into flame,
And makes us part of some divinely strange
Intent. Oh Love! I question not the aim!
Lift me to look upon the boundless range
Of loving, while I whisper close thy name!

X

At first, a quiet copse inhabited
Half unbeknown within its sylvan green
By some shy living thing, my life had been,
Not guessing thee. Then, later, 'twas instead
As if thou didst a hidden lustre shed:
As when the moon at daytime, faintly seen,
Herself scarce knowing what her coming mean,
Hangs in a veiled wonder overhead.
Now as a gray-walled garden lying near,
Which only some dim mist of tears conceals,
I know thee, feel thee, 'til almost I see
Through these few words thyself in verity.
True then, my heart from such deceit appeals
And copse, and moon, and garden, disappear.

TO THE DREAM-BELOVED

Dear one, thou who lookest not on mine anguish,
Knowest not how eagerly under mine eyelids
Love-flames sparkle and heat to exquisite rapture,
Hear me invoke thee!

Ah! how tenderly now may I enfold thee!
Shower thee with all the delight of loving,
Close thine eyes with invisible stress of kisses,
Oh thou beloved!

Strong-browed hero! under thine eyes deep fire
Fell I prone as the winter snow before summer
Song-mute, stark, while the rhythm of thy being
Swept o'er me senseless!

Lark like, soaring ere the sun hath risen,
Pour I singing forth in unfettered freedom.
Quench thou, love, the sound of my soaring voice
in the
Sun of thy presence!

Send I forth upon the deep sea of loving,
White ships toward the goal of my desire;
Heart-sick, watching their sails bend under the
breezes,
Farther and farther

Fluttering outward. Oh thou tender com-
panion!
Would that I at thy strand with white wings
folded
Love weary, might be gathered to thy bosom,
Stilled and completed!

ON A PORTRAIT

I love thy portrait in the light,
When as a beggared one I stand
Drinking in a false delight
At memory's strand.
But ever deeper than at first
Grows my love-thirst.
Oh chalice of my love! thou givest such sweet pain
I turn — but ever eager, drink again!

I love thy portrait in the dark,
When o'er night's lonely sea
It is my spirit's bark
In which I sail to thee.
I sail within it through the night
But at the coming of the light,
Oh gentle bark! thou castest me forlorn
Upon the breakers of an alien morn!

EVENING REVERIE

Recollections of my dear one rise
Like wistful stars that steal upon the hour
Half sure of welcome. As the day-worn skies
Divest themselves of daylight's pomp and power
And draw these prophets of deep quietness
Unto their bosom in a mute content;
So do I speed the fruits of restlessness,
Take over me the robe of wonderment,
And draw my recollections to my breast,
All through and through suffused with happy rest.

SEA-BIRD

Oh heart! thou'rt like a sea-bird having come
Too far in river-flight from the full sea

Which is its home.

It sweeps the air with proud majestic wing
While its wild heart for waves is hungering,
Its sight for sea-horizons, wide and free.

Hadst thou, oh heart, some hunger unappeased
Which those great acres of unfeeling thought
To madness teased?

Let thy wild flight bear northward, full and strong!
There will thy silence answered be with song
In whose delight thy woe will be forgot.

For there, oh heart, thou passionate sea-bird,
Lies all thy wing's desire, lies the one voice
Thy heart hath heard.

Fly to the far and ice-washed northern strand,
Seek out thy love within that distant land
Then, happy heart-bird, mate thee with thy choice.

SONG

One dear face in my memory clear
Lies as a star in a midnight mere;
Trouble the waters, it gleameth still
Ever alluring and magical.

One dear face in my life is set -
As the crowning gem in a coronet;
High o'er the level of peer and prince
It gloweth in love's magnificence.

One dear face in my heart lies deep
Under the anguish of days that weep;
Weep as they one by one depart
From their vestal watch in the hush of the heart.

HOPES

All day a subtle feeling of unrest
Hath lodged within my breast.
All day a flock of little dreams hath striven
An audience to be given.

To such mad visitants what shall I say?
I cannot tell them nay,
They are so dear they may be partly true!
Then it would never do
To thrust them from me, they who are so dear
Merely for fear.

So since there is no better company
I take them unto me,
Even as the gods leaned sometimes from above
To take in love.

SONG

Fields and woods are inundated
With the earnest floods of spring;
And my heart o'erflows with earnest
Floods of sweet intentioning.

When the waters have subsided
Woods and fields will be at rest;
And my heart shall find its quiet
When it lies upon thy breast.

EXPECTANCY

The delicate, dancing blossoms,
Like an aerial sea,
Are thrilling under the secret
Of some new ecstasy.

The gray-walled roads are quiet;
The wistful, checkered shade
Is languid with the perfume
By lemon hedges made.

Within the waiting thickets
The silence grows to pain —
It seems 'twill ne'er be broken
Under the birds' sweet strain!

Ah me! this loveliness
That lies but now so dumb,
Would all break into rapture
If only thou didst come!

IF THOU DID'ST COME

If thou did'st come, what would this springtime be
But realization of eternity?

Would my sad heart have strength such joy to
face?

Nay love, dear love, then tarry thou a space!

What would all springtimes be, did'st thou not
come?

A birdless waste with all its rapture dumb!

Then let my heart be glad, and fit for song,

And love, dear love, oh tarry thou not long!

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COMPARISON

Bird-flights, ever wending
Farther yet and higher;
Love-thoughts ever tending
Toward their desire.

Bird-flights that safely come
To evening nest;
Love-thoughts that sadly roam
In love's unrest.

Birds, follow your flight
In the fetterless air;
Thoughts, in thy free delight
Have a care,
Lest ye from your proud height
Fall in despair!

LITTLE NEW MOON

Little new moon of Hope
High in the autumn sky,
Stay, stay, nor yet
In silvery silence set
Under the western slope,
New little moon on high!

Little new moon of Fear
Shining so calm and bright,
I weave me wonder-dreams
Out of thy wizard beams,
But ah! there falls a tear
And troubles thy wayward light!

Little new moon of Love,
Brimming with bliss,
Will ye so early go
When the heart acheth so?
Ah little moon remiss,
Far in the sky above!

JEALOUSY

Oh Love! I send my thoughts tonight

Across the sea

In such tempestuous, headlong flight

To thee —

Surely some few, with happier success

Will reach the haven of thy tenderness!

I see thine eyes delight, I feel thee start

To know them near;

I see thee take them to thy heart! —

My dear,

My own beloved! I can scarcely bear

That even they, my hostages, be there!

PLAINT

I held within my wistful hands
 Gifts for thee,
~~But winter winds have wrested them~~
 Away from me.

I sang the sweetest songs I know
 Into the air,
But silence now has scattered them
 Everywhere.

I nested visions of our joy
 Within my heart,
But they too falter, since we are
 So far apart.

Now I may only go within
 The temple dim
And there, in tears, my little lamp
 Of faith I trim.

BLOSSOMS

As frail and ghostly fruit-trees
Bloom in early spring,
My dreams of thee awaken
In virgin wondering.

In startled joy they tremble
And bloom, and reach for bliss;
They drink the heaven's wonder,
The wing of passion kiss.

I sadly watch these blossoms
So delicate and fair —
I know them doomed to perish
Like wraiths upon the air.

WINTER-GLOW

Bare is the light
In the western sky —
And the tall trees
Are bare and high.

Bare is the heaven
Where one star gleams —
Bare is the earth
Of murmuring streams.

Bare is the nest
Of its mating bird —
Bare is my heart
Of the voice it heard.

THE NORSE SPIRIT

Hearken earth-dwellers!
Mine is a strong song
Star-flung, earth-gathered,
Sweeping in rhythm
Through the world's arteries.
I am the Ice-born
Necessity-nurtured!
Long ere the earth sap
Sprang into action,
But lay in the North land
Glacier-buried,
I was created.

Here in the white world
Silent and crystal
I hoarded my man-brood.
All uncompanioned
Shone we as first stars
Through desolation.
(There was a dream
Dwelling in South land,
I smelt of its sweetness, —
The blossom was faded.)

Down the dumb ages
I led the migration
Of men in their numbers,
Dawn-reddened, mere forces
Shaped out of chaos,
Bearing their birth-rights
From the mute Maker.

Rung then the swords
Of Northmen as conquerors
Over the world;
Striking the death-blow,
Singing the life-song,
Strong in the struggle,
The world their arena.
Over sun-nations
Breathed they an ice-breath;
Ground the creatures
Of gilded luxury.
Under their iron,
Bearing their baubles
Like gods in mere laughter.

New homes upsprung
Under my guiding;
Men became wiser-eyed,

Stronger, self-governed;
While like a lynx-light
Watched I among them.
Oh the long thirst I bore!
This to assuage,
They fretted the rivers —
Chained the first flowing
Of fierce mountain torrents.
Slowly they sought out
The laws of the forces;
Still I demanded.
How with my hot touch
I scorched them to action,
How with unsleeping watch
Pierced I their darkness,
How I impelled them
To rise through the earth-clay
And stirred them to sense
Of the dim Possible
Whose hunted horizon
Moves ever outward; —
All this is scored
By scrivener ages
That mark and erase not.
I was the Spark
That under the embers

Kindled the life flame.
Mine was the prow
That sought out new waters.
My hand directed
The planting of standards.
Mine was the voice
That called in the conquerors
Unto heart-service.

Yet oh, earth dwellers,
Hearken my history!
As watch-fires dwindle
When watchers no longer
Care for their warning;
As war-tokens fail
When warriors weary;
So I became
Divested of power.
Looked I upon the world
Strangely unheeded;
Saw land and sea
Striving and prospering;
Saw all my own race
Scattered and multiplied;
Nations, communities,
Far past my counting,

Divided the earth-space
Each to his liking.
All whose beginning
Was under my teaching
Now had become
Self-working, marvellous.

Then as a hurt god
Brooked I no pity —
Called on Oblivion
To send me a sleep-draught —
Rose in my last strength
And uttered a prophecy:
“Desire for freedom
Shall waken among ye
Race of my choosing!
Then to our home-land
I, your spurned leader
Waking, shall lead you.”

As a spent force
Returning to chaos
Is swept past its knowing
To some immense destiny
And thence, without knowledge,
Exists in a form

Not itself but mere being;
So I was up-gathered
And ceased in my knowing.

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Long did I lie
Mere pulse-dust of ages,
While the world history
Chanted its measures;
Until through my slumber
Life-force came creeping —
And all through my being
I felt the glad vigor
Surge in and sting me.
Ha! I awakened! —
Glad as a god
I halted and hearkened.

Whence came the night-cry?
Not from the strange-throated
Millions, race mingled,
Who bear not their birth-rights!
Nay, not from aliens
Self disinherited!
Clear as the first call
Of water to water

Over the spring-time,
Trembling to enter
Resuscitation,
Came the sweet calling
Across from the home-land,
From the beloved.
I flew to the ice-nest,
Searching my man-brood.

Aye it was time
I answered your cry
Oh race of my choosing!
How came ye thus to this
Season of sorrow,
Freedomless, weaponless,
Dumb among nations?
Mind not your memories
How in dim ages
I led ye, my people,
To conquer with strong sword
The weakened sun-nations?
Now I the Re-born
Return at your calling!
As a glad eagle
Poised for his swooping
Stand I at last,

In glorious prime,
On this shore of my seeking,
Cliff-bound and torrent-swung
God-hewn and glorious.

Hark to my strong song!
I am the Norse God
Fresh from the forces,
Freedom my weapon,
Forged by the ages.
Voices of worlds
Go by me in thunder.
Time, as the dwelling
Of earth-dreams, I conquer.
Space, the unconquerable
Limit of earth sight,
I spare at my sword-point,
And bid it return to
Its birth-place in Being.
Ties of the tenderest
Making of women
Snap in my holding.
Song, with its sweetness
Floating and following
I with a wrenched blow
Shatter its sequence.

Pity I stamp out,
Yet grieve o'er the ashes.
Gain, like a star
Blown out by night-winds,
Headlong falls from me.
Stripped of the world's gifts
Stand I to conquer —
Strong and untrammelled
As the first world
Rejoicing God made!

Norway, 1899.

TO A STATUE: MADONNA AND CHILD

What immortal guest art thou,
Oh white enmarbled maid,
Who standest in such wonder unafraid
Upon the border of Time's closed abyss —
Whose buried ages molded thee to this
And left thee thus, with meek and crownless
brow?

In thy marble maidenhood,
Thy bearing proud
With lovely deprecation bowed,
Thou art the form incarnative
Wherein doth live
Eterne virginity of womanhood.

See where hands have robbed thee of thy crown!
But the attending years, that washed to white
Thy carven robes with painted hues once bright —
Have with their own true touch
Left thee fairer clad in such
A priceless patin-glow of amber brown.

Mind'st thou maid where thou wert found
Amid the broken marbles, in the gloom

Of Venice' stained and sunken room?
Thou stood'st so meekly and alone,
Thy loveliness half known,
Thy meaning still in marble dumbness bound!

When a burst of sudden light
Made the olden shadows start,
Thy quiet heart,
Noting nought of seekers near thy place,
Dreamed back upon the hallowed grace
Of hands that drew thee from the infinite.

Nay, no passing of the throng and press
Awoke thee. But thou heardest then
The slow approach of one who, among men,
Went lonely with thine image in his breast.
Thou saw'st his eyes in recognition rest
Upon thy consecrated loveliness.

So cam'st thou strangely through the centuries
Unsung as a mere violet well hid
Within the wood's recesses, where all did
Give unto thee thy slow-won store
Of cosmic beauty which endows thee more
Than sculptor's chisel, to the soul's true eyes.

Thy niche is unadorned and bare
Of votive offerings;
No perfumed censer swings
Across thy taintlessness;
No priestly holiness
Entunes its mystic ceremony there;

Yet saint enshrined hath ne'er possessed
Rarer gift of reverence
Than the flame that burns intense
In the deep heart of thine own
Priest and lord and slave in one,
Whose mute service folds thee round with
rest.

ART

Too great is love while loving
For heart to realize,
Too dear is song while singing
To treasure e'er it dies.

But lying in seclusion,
When life is overpast,
The heart its joy remembering
Creates the song at last.