

Poems

By Williams B. Yeats

ADAM'S CURSE

WE sat together at one summer's end,
That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,
And you and I, and talked of poetry.
I said, "A line will take us hours maybe;
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.
Better go down upon your marrow-bones
And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones
Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather;
For to articulate sweet sounds together
Is to work harder than all these, and yet
Be thought an idler by the noisy set
Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen
The martyrs call the world.'
And thereupon
That beautiful mild woman for whose sake
There's many a one shall find out all heartache
On finding that her voice is sweet and low
Replied, "To be born woman is to know --
Although they do not talk of it at school --
That we must labour to be beautiful.'
I said, "It's certain there is no fine thing
Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring.
There have been lovers who thought love should be
So much compounded of high courtesy
That they would sigh and quote with learned looks
precedents out of beautiful old books;
Yet now it seems an idle trade enough.'
We sat grown quiet at the name of love;
We saw the last embers of daylight die,
And in the trembling blue-green of the sky
A moon, worn as if it had been a shell
Washed by time's waters as they rose and fell
About the stars and broke in days and years.
I had a thought for no one's but your ears:
That you were beautiful, and that I strove
To love you in the old high way of love;
That it had all seemed happy, and yet we'd grown
As weary-hearted as that hollow moon.

IN MEMORY OF ALFRED POLLEXFEN

FIVE-AND-TWENTY years have gone
Since old William pollexfen
Laid his strong bones down in death
By his wife Elizabeth
In the grey stone tomb he made.
And after twenty years they laid
In that tomb by him and her

His son George, the astrologer;
And Masons drove from miles away
To scatter the Acacia spray
Upon a melancholy man
Who had ended where his breath began.
Many a son and daughter lies
Far from the customary skies,
The Mall and Eades's grammar school,
In London or in Liverpool;
But where is laid the sailor John
That so many lands had known,
Quiet lands or unquiet seas
Where the Indians trade or Japanese?
He never found his rest ashore,
Moping for one voyage more.
Where have they laid the sailor John?
And yesterday the youngest son,
A humorous, unambitious man,
Was buried near the astrologer,
Yesterday in the tenth year
Since he who had been contented long.
A nobody in a great throng,
Decided he would journey home,
Now that his fiftieth year had come,
And "Mr. Alfred" be again
Upon the lips of common men
Who carried in their memory
His childhood and his family.
At all these death-beds women heard
A visionary white sea-bird
Lamenting that a man should die;
And with that cry I have raised my cry.

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

i{Epilogue to "A Vision"}

MIDNIGHT has come, and the great Christ Church Bell
And may a lesser bell sound through the room;
And it is All Souls' Night,
And two long glasses brimmed with muscatel
Bubble upon the table. A ghost may come;
For it is a ghost's right,
His element is so fine
Being sharpened by his death,
To drink from the wine-breath
While our gross palates drink from the whole wine.
I need some mind that, if the cannon sound
From every quarter of the world, can stay
Wound in mind's pondering
As mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound;
Because I have a marvellous thing to say,
A certain marvellous thing
None but the living mock,
Though not for sober ear;
It may be all that hear
Should laugh and weep an hour upon the clock.
Horton's the first I call. He loved strange thought
And knew that sweet extremity of pride
That's called platonic love,
And that to such a pitch of passion wrought

Nothing could bring him, when his lady died,
Anodyne for his love.
Words were but wasted breath;
One dear hope had he:
The inclemency
Of that or the next winter would be death.
Two thoughts were so mixed up I could not tell
Whether of her or God he thought the most,
But think that his mind's eye,
When upward turned, on one sole image fell;
And that a slight companionable ghost,
Wild with divinity,
Had so lit up the whole
Immense miraculous house
The Bible promised us,
It seemed a gold-fish swimming in a bowl.
On Florence Emery I call the next,
Who finding the first wrinkles on a face
Admired and beautiful,
And knowing that the future would be vexed
With 'minished beauty, multiplied commonplace,
preferred to teach a school
Away from neighbour or friend,
Among dark skins, and there
permit foul years to wear
Hidden from eyesight to the unnoticed end.
Before that end much had she ravelled out
From a discourse in figurative speech
By some learned Indian
On the soul's journey. How it is whirled about,
Wherever the orbit of the moon can reach,
Until it plunge into the sun;
And there, free and yet fast,
Being both Chance and Choice,
Forget its broken toys
And sink into its own delight at last.
And I call up MacGregor from the grave,
For in my first hard springtime we were friends.
Although of late estranged.
I thought him half a lunatic, half knave,
And told him so, but friendship never ends;
And what if mind seem changed,
And it seem changed with the mind,
When thoughts rise up unbid
On generous things that he did
And I grow half contented to be blind!
He had much industry at setting out,
Much boisterous courage, before loneliness
Had driven him crazed;
For meditations upon unknown thought
Make human intercourse grow less and less;
They are neither paid nor praised.
but he d object to the host,
The glass because my glass;
A ghost-lover he was
And may have grown more arrogant being a ghost.
But names are nothing. What matter who it be,
So that his elements have grown so fine
The fume of muscatel
Can give his sharpened palate ecstasy

No living man can drink from the whole wine.
I have mummy truths to tell
Whereat the living mock,
Though not for sober ear,
For maybe all that hear
Should laugh and weep an hour upon the clock.
Such thought -- such thought have I that hold it tight
Till meditation master all its parts,
Nothing can stay my glance
Until that glance run in the world's despite
To where the damned have howled away their hearts,
And where the blessed dance;
Such thought, that in it bound
I need no other thing,
Wound in mind's wandering
As mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound.

AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

I WALK through the long schoolroom questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and histories,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way -- the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man.
I dream of a Ledaean body, bent
Above a sinking fire. a tale that she
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to tragedy --
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
Into the yolk and white of the one shell.

III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age --
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler's heritage --
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.
Her present image floats into the mind --
Did Quattrocento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?
And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once -- enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow.
What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her Son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,

Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?
Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
Solider Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But thos the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts -- O presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolise --
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise;

VIII

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul.
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

FOR ANNE GREGORY

"NEVER shall a young man,
Thrown into despair
By those great honey-coloured
Ramparts at your ear,
Love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair.'
"But I can get a hair-dye
And set such colour there,
Brown, or black, or carrot,
That young men in despair
May love me for myself alone
And not my yellow hair.'
"I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."

AN APPOINTMENT

BEING out of heart with government
I took a broken root to fling
Where the proud, wayward squirrel went,
Taking delight that he could spring;
And he, with that low whinnying sound
That is like laughter, sprang again
And so to the other tree at a bound.
Nor the tame will, nor timid brain,

Nor heavy knitting of the brow
Bred that fierce tooth and cleanly limb
And threw him up to laugh on the bough;
No government appointed him.

AN IRISH AIRMAN FORESEES HIS DEATH

I KNOW that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My county is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

ARE YOU CONTENT?

I CALL on those that call me son,
Grandson, or great-grandson,
On uncles, aunts, great-uncles or great-aunts,
To judge what I have done.
Have I, that put it into words,
Spoilt what old loins have sent?
Eyes spiritualised by death can judge,
I cannot, but I am not content.
He that in Sligo at Drumcliff
Set up the old stone Cross,
That red-headed rector in County Down,
A good man on a horse,
Sandymount Corbets, that notable man
Old William pollexfen,
The smuggler Middleton, Butlers far back,
Half legendary men.
Infirm and aged I might stay
In some good company,
I who have always hated work,
Smiling at the sea,
Or demonstrate in my own life
What Robert Browning meant
By an old hunter talking with Gods;
But I am not content.

AT THE ABBEY THEATRE

DEAR Craoibhin Aoibhin, look into our case.
When we are high and airy hundreds say
That if we hold that flight they'll leave the place,
While those same hundreds mock another day
Because we have made our art of common things,
So bitterly, you'd dream they longed to look
All their lives through into some drift of wings.

You've dandled them and fed them from the book
And know them to the bone; impart to us --
We'll keep the secret -- a new trick to please.
Is there a bridle for this Proteus
That turns and changes like his draughty seas?
Or is there none, most popular of men,
But when they mock us, that we mock again?

A CRAZED GIRL

THAT crazed girl improvising her music.
Her poetry, dancing upon the shore,

Her soul in division from itself
Climbing, falling She knew not where,
Hiding amid the cargo of a steamship,
Her knee-cap broken, that girl I declare
A beautiful lofty thing, or a thing
Heroically lost, heroically found.

No matter what disaster occurred
She stood in desperate music wound,
Wound, wound, and she made in her triumph
Where the bales and the baskets lay
No common intelligible sound
But sang, "O sea-starved, hungry sea."

A DIALOGUE OF SELF AND SOUL

i{My Soul} I summon to the winding ancient stair;
Set all your mind upon the steep ascent,
Upon the broken, crumbling battlement,
Upon the breathless starlit air,
"Upon the star that marks the hidden pole;
Fix every wandering thought upon
That quarter where all thought is done:
Who can distinguish darkness from the soul
i{My Self}. The consecrated blade upon my knees
Is Sato's ancient blade, still as it was,
Still razor-keen, still like a looking-glass
Unspotted by the centuries;
That flowering, silken, old embroidery, torn
From some court-lady's dress and round
The wooden scabbard bound and wound
Can, tattered, still protect, faded adorn
i{My Soul.} Why should the imagination of a man
Long past his prime remember things that are
Emblematical of love and war?
Think of ancestral night that can,
If but imagination scorn the earth
And intellect is wandering
To this and that and t'other thing,
Deliver from the crime of death and birth.
i{My self.} Montashigi, third of his family, fashioned it
Five hundred years ago, about it lie
Flowers from I know not what embroidery --
Heart's purple -- and all these I set
For emblems of the day against the tower
Emblematical of the night,
And claim as by a soldier's right

A charter to commit the crime once more.
 i{My Soul.} Such fullness in that quarter overflows
 And falls into the basin of the mind
 That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,
 For intellect no longer knows
 i{Is} from the i{Ought,} or i{knewer} from the i{Known -- }
 That is to say, ascends to Heaven;
 Only the dead can be forgiven;
 But when I think of that my tongue's a stone.
 i{My Self.} A living man is blind and drinks his drop.
 What matter if the ditches are impure?
 What matter if I live it all once more?
 Endure that toil of growing up;
 The ignominy of boyhood; the distress
 Of boyhood changing into man;
 The unfinished man and his pain
 Brought face to face with his own clumsiness;
 The finished man among his enemies? --
 How in the name of Heaven can he escape
 That defiling and disfigured shape
 The mirror of malicious eyes
 Casts upon his eyes until at last
 He thinks that shape must be his shape?
 And what's the good of an escape
 If honour find him in the wintry blast?
 I am content to live it all again
 And yet again, if it be life to pitch
 Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch,
 A blind man battering blind men;
 Or into that most fecund ditch of all,
 The folly that man does
 Or must suffer, if he woos
 A proud woman not kindred of his soul.
 I am content to follow to its source
 Every event in action or in thought;
 Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot!
 When such as I cast out remorse
 So great a sweetness flows into the breast
 We must laugh and we must sing,
 We are blest by everything,
 Everything we look upon is blest.

A FRIEND'S ILLNESS

SICKNESS brought me this
 Thought, in that scale of his:
 Why should I be dismayed
 Though flame had burned the whole
 World, as it were a coal,
 Now I have seen it weighed
 Against a soul?

A MEDITATION IN TIME OF WAR

FOR one throb of the artery,
 While on that old grey stone I Sat
 Under the old wind-broken tree,
 I knew that One is animate,
 Mankind inanimate fantasy'.

A POET TO HIS BELOVED

I BRING you with reverent hands
The books of my numberless dreams,
White woman that passion has worn
As the tide wears the dove-grey sands,
And with heart more old than the horn
That is brimmed from the pale fire of time:
White woman with numberless dreams,
I bring you my passionate rhyme.

A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER

ONCE more the storm is howling, and half hid
Under this cradle-hood and coverlid
My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle
But Gregory's wood and one bare hill
Whereby the haystack- and roof-levelling wind.
Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;
And for an hour I have walked and prayed
Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.
I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour
And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,
And-under the arches of the bridge, and scream
In the elms above the flooded stream;
Imagining in excited reverie
That the future years had come,
Dancing to a frenzied drum,
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.
May she be granted beauty and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,
Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,
Being made beautiful overmuch,
Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.
Helen being chosen found life flat and dull
And later had much trouble from a fool,
While that great Queen, that rose out of the spray,
Being fatherless could have her way
Yet chose a bandy-legged smith for man.
It's certain that fine women eat
A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of plenty is undone.
In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful;
Yet many, that have played the fool
For beauty's very self, has charm made wisc.
And many a poor man that has roved,
Loved and thought himself beloved,
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.
May she become a flourishing hidden tree
That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,
And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound,
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,

Nor but in merriment a quarrel.
O may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.
My mind, because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have approved,
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.
An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman born
Out of the mouth of plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind?
Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
The soul recovers radical innocence
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;
She can, though every face should scowl
And every windy quarter howl
Or every bellows burst, be happy Still.
And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
For arrogance and hatred are the wares
Peddled in the thoroughfares.
How but in custom and in ceremony
Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

A SONG

I THOUGHT no more was needed
Youth to polong
Than dumb-bell and foil
To keep the body young.
i{O who could have foretold
That thc heart grows old?}
Though I have many words,
What woman's satisfied,
I am no longer faint
Because at her side?
i{O who could have foretold
That the heart grows old?}
I have not lost desire
But the heart that I had;
I thOught 'twould burn my body
Laid on the death-bed,
i{For who could have foretold
That the heart grows old?}

BAILE AND AILLINN

ARGUMENT. Baile and Aillinn were lovers, but Aengus, the Master of Love, wishing them to be happy in his own land among the dead, told to each a story of the other's death, so that their hearts were broken and they died.

I HARDLY hear the curlew cry,
Nor the grey rush when the wind is high,
Before my thoughts begin to run
On the heir of Uladh, Buan's son,
Baile, who had the honey mouth;
And that mild woman of the south,
Aillinn, who was King Lugaidh's heir.
Their love was never drowned in care
Of this or that thing, nor grew cold
Because their hodies had grown old.
Being forbid to marry on earth,
They blossomed to immortal mirth.>1
About the time when Christ was born,
When the long wars for the White Horn
And the Brown Bull had not yet come,
Young Baile Honey Mouth, whom some
Called rather Baile Little-Land,
Rode out of Emain with a band
Of harpers and young men; and they
Imagined, as they struck the way
To many-pastured Muirthemne,
That all things fell out happily,
And there, for all that fools had said,
Baile and Aillinn would be wed.
They found an old man running there:
He had ragged long grass-coloured hair;
He had knees that stuck out of his hose;
He had puddle-water in his shoes;
He had half a cloak to keep him dry,
Although he had a squirrel's eye.
O wandering hirs and rushy beds,
You put such folly in our heads
With all this crying in the wind,
No common love is to our mind,
And our poor kate or Nan is less
Than any whose unhappiness
Awoke the harp-strings long ago.
Yet they that know all things hut know
That all this life can give us is
A child's laughter, a woman's kiss.
Who was it put so great a scorn
In the grey reeds that night and morn
Are trodden and broken by the herds,
And in the light bodies of birds
The north wind tumbles to and fro
And pinches among hail and snow?>1
That runner said: "I am from the south;
I run to Baile Honey-Mouth,
To tell him how the girl Aillinn
Rode from the country of her kin,
And old and young men rode with her:
For all that country had been astir
If anybody half as fair
Had chosen a husband anywhere
But where it could see her every day.
When they had ridden a little way

An old man caught the horse's head
With: "'You must home again, and wed
With somebody in your own land.''
A young man cried and kissed her hand,
"'O lady, wed with one of us'';
And when no face grew piteous
For any gentle thing she spake,
She fell and died of the heart-break.'
Because a lover's heart s worn out,
Being tumbled and blown about
By its own blind imagining,
And will believe that anything
That is bad enough to be true, is true,
Baile's heart was broken in two;
And he, being laid upon green boughs,
Was carried to the goodly house
Where the Hound of Uladh sat before
The brazen pillars of his door,
His face bowed low to weep the end
Of the harper's daughter and her friend
For although years had passed away
He always wept them on that day,
For on that day they had been betrayed;
And now that Honey-Mouth is laid
Under a cairn of sleepy stone
Before his eyes, he has tears for none,
Although he is carrying stone, but two
For whom the cairn's but heaped anew.
We hold, because our memory is
Sofull of that thing and of this,
That out of sight is out of mind.
But the grey rush under the wind
And the grey bird with crooked bill
rave such long memories that they still
Remember Deirdre and her man;
And when we walk with Kate or Nan
About the windy water-side,
Our hearts can Fear the voices chide.
How could we be so soon content,
Who know the way that Naoise went?
And they have news of Deirdre's eyes,
Who being lovely was so wise --
Ah! wise, my heart knows well how wise.>1
Now had that old gaunt crafty one,
Gathering his cloak about him, mn
Where Aillinn rode with waiting-maids,
Who amid leafy lights and shades
Dreamed of the hands that would unlace
Their bodices in some dim place
When they had come to the matriage-bed,
And harpers, pacing with high head
As though their music were enough
To make the savage heart of love
Grow gentle without sorrowing,
Imagining and pondering
Heaven knows what calamity;
'Another's hurried off,' cried he,
'From heat and cold and wind and wave;
They have heaped the stones above his grave
In Muirthemne, and over it

In changeless Ogham letters writ --
Baile, that was of Rury's seed.
But the gods long ago decreed
No waiting-maid should ever spread
Baile and Aillinn's marriage-bed,
For they should clip and clip again
Where wild bees hive on the Great Plain.
Therefore it is but little news
That put this hurry in my shoes.'
Then seeing that he scarce had spoke
Before her love-worn heart had broke.
He ran and laughed until he came
To that high hill the herdsmen name
The Hill Seat of Laighen, because
Some god or king had made the laws
That held the land together there,
In old times among the clouds of the air.
That old man climbed; the day grew dim;
Two swans came flying up to him,
Linked by a gold chain each to each,
And with low murmuring laughing speech
Alighted on the windy grass.
They knew him: his changed body was
Tall, proud and ruddy, and light wings
Were hovering over the harp-strings
That Edain, Midhir's wife, had wove
In the hid place, being crazed by love.
What shall I call them? fish that swim,
Scale rubbing scale where light is dim
By a broad water-lily leaf;
Or mice in the one wheaten sheaf
Forgotten at the threshing-place;
Or birds lost in the one clear space
Of morning light in a dim sky;
Or, it may be, the eyelids of one eye,
Or the door-pillars of one house,
Or two sweet blossoming apple-boughs
That have one shadow on the ground;
Or the two strings that made one sound
Where that wise harper's finger ran.
For this young girl and this young man
Have happiness without an end,
Because they have made so good a friend.
They know all wonders, for they pass
The towery gates of Gorias,
And Findrias and Falias,
And long-forgotten Murias,
Among the giant kings whose hoard,
Cauldron and spear and stone and sword,
Was robbed before earth gave the wheat;
Wandering from broken street to street
They come where some huge watcher is,
And tremble with their love and kiss.
They know undying things, for they
Wander where earth withers away,
Though nothing troubles the great streams
But light from the pale stars, and gleams
From the holy orchards, where there is none
But fruit that is of precious stone,
Or apples of the sun and moon.

What were our praise to them? They eat
Quiet's wild heart, like daily meat;
Who when night thickens are afloat
On dappled skins in a glass boat,
Far out under a windless sky;
While over them birds of Aengus fly,
And over the tiller and the prow,
And waving white wings to and fro
Awaken wanderings of light air
To stir their coverlet and their hair.
And poets found, old writers say,
A yew tree where his body lay;
But a wild apple hid the grass
With its sweet blossom where hers was,
And being in good heart, because
A better time had come again
After the deaths of many men,
And that long fighting at the ford,
They wrote on tablets of thin board,
Made of the apple and the yew,
All the love stories that they knew.
Let rush and hird cry out their fill
Of the harper's daughter if they will,
Beloved, I am not afraid of her.
She is not wiser nor lovelier,
And you are more high of heart than she,
For all her wanderings over-sea;
But I'd have bird and rush forget
Those other two; for never yet
Has lover lived, but longed to wive
Like them that are no more alive.

BEAUTIFUL LOFTY THINGS

BEAUTIFUL lofty things: O'Leary's noble head;
My father upon the Abbey stage, before him a raging crowd:
"This Land of Saints," and then as the applause died out,
"Of plaster Saints"; his beautiful mischievous head thrown back.
Standish O'Grady supporting himself between the tables
Speaking to a drunken audience high nonsensical words;
Augusta Gregory seated at her great ormolu table,
Her eightieth winter approaching: "Yesterday he threatened my life.
I told him that nightly from six to seven I sat at this table,
The blinds drawn up"; Maud Gonne at Howth station waiting a train,
Pallas Athene in that straight back and arrogant head:
All the Olympians; a thing never known again.

THE BLACK TOWER

SAY that the men of the old black tower,
Though they but feed as the goatherd feeds,
Their money spent, their wine gone sour,
Lack nothing that a soldier needs,
That all are oath-bound men:
Those banners come not in.

i{There in the tomb stand the dead upright,}
i{But winds come up from the shore:}
i{They shake when the winds roar,}
i{Old bones upon the mountain shake.}

Those banners come to bribe or threaten,
Or whisper that a man's a fool
Who, when his own right king's forgotten,
Cares what king sets up his rule.
If he died long ago
Why do you dread us so?

i{There in the tomb drops the faint moonlight,}
i{But wind comes up from the shore:}
i{They shake when the winds roar,}
i{Old bones upon the mountain shake.}

The tower's old cook that must climb and clamber
Catching small birds in the dew of the morn
When we hale men lie stretched in slumber
Swears that he hears the king's great horn.
But he's a lying hound:
Stand we on guard oath-bound!

i{There in the tomb the dark grows blacker,}
i{But wind comes up from the shore:}
i{They shake when the winds roar,}
i{Old bones upon the mountain shake.}

BROKEN DREAMS

THERE is grey in your hair.
Young men no longer suddenly catch their breath
When you are passing;
But maybe some old gaffer mutters a blessing
Because it was your prayer
Recovered him upon the bed of death.
For your sole sake -- that all heart's ache have known,
And given to others all heart's ache,
From meagre girlhood's putting on
Burdensome beauty -- for your sole sake
Heaven has put away the stroke of her doom,
So great her portion in that peace you make
By merely walking in a room.
Your beauty can but leave among us
Vague memories, nothing but memories.
A young man when the old men are done talking
Will say to an old man, "Tell me of that lady
The poet stubborn with his passion sang us
When age might well have chilled his blood.'
Vague memories, nothing but memories,
But in the grave all, all, shall be renewed.
The certainty that I shall see that lady
Leaning or standing or walking
In the first loveliness of womanhood,
And with the fervour of my youthful eyes,
Has set me muttering like a fool.
You are more beautiful than any one,
And yet your body had a flaw:
Your small hands were not beautiful,
And I am afraid that you will run
And paddle to the wrist
In that mysterious, always brimming lake
Where those What have obeyed the holy law

paddle and are perfect. Leave unchanged
The hands that I have kissed,
For old sake's sake.
The last stroke of midnight dies.
All day in the one chair
From dream to dream and rhyme to rhyme I have
ranged
In rambling talk with an image of air:
Vague memories, nothing but memories.

BROWN PENNY

I WHISPERED, "I am too young,"
And then, "I am old enough";
Wherefore I threw a penny
To find out if I might love.
"Go and love, go and love, young man,
If the lady be young and fair."
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,
I am looped in the loops of her hair.
O love is the crooked thing,
There is nobody wise enough
To find out all that is in it,
For he would be thinking of love
Till the stars had run away
And the shadows eaten the moon.
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,
One cannot begin it too soon.

TO SOME I HAVE TALKED WITH BY THE FIRE

WHILE I wrought out these fitful Danaan rhymes,
My heart would brim with dreams about the times
When we bent down above the fading coals
And talked of the dark folk who live in souls
Of passionate men, like bats in the dead trees;
And of the wayward twilight companies
Who sigh with mingled sorrow and content,
Because their blossoming dreams have never bent
Under the fruit of evil and of good:
And of the embattled flaming multitude
Who rise, wing above wing, flame above flame,
And, like a storm, cry the Ineffable Name,
And with the clashing of their sword-blades make
A rapturous music, till the morning break
And the white hush end all but the loud beat
Of their long wings, the flash of their white feet.

CHURCH AND STATE

HERE is fresh matter, poet,
Matter for old age meet;
Might of the Church and the State,
Their mobs put under their feet.
O but heart's wine shall run pure,
Mind's bread grow sweet.
That were a cowardly song,
Wander in dreams no more;
What if the Church and the State

Are the mob that howls at the door!
Wine shall run thick to the end,
Bread taste sour.

MEDITATIONS IN TIME OF CIVIL WAR

I

i{Ancestral Houses}

SURELY among a rich man's flowering lawns,
Amid the rustle of his planted hills,
Life overflows without ambitious pains;
And rains down life until the basin spills,
And mounts more dizzy high the more it rains
As though to choose whatever shape it wills
And never stoop to a mechanical
Or servile shape, at others' beck and call.
Mere dreams, mere dreams! Yet Homer had not Sung
Had he not found it certain beyond dreams
That out of life's own self-delight had sprung
The abounding glittering jet; though now it seems
As if some marvellous empty sea-shell flung
Out of the obscure dark of the rich streams,
And not a fountain, were the symbol which
Shadows the inherited glory of the rich.
Some violent bitter man, some powerful man
Called architect and artist in, that they,
Bitter and violent men, might rear in stone
The sweetness that all longed for night and day,
The gentleness none there had ever known;
But when the master's buried mice can play.
And maybe the great-grandson of that house,
For all its bronze and marble, 's but a mouse.
O what if gardens where the peacock strays
With delicate feet upon old terraces,
Or else all Juno from an urn displays
Before the indifferent garden deities;
O what if levelled lawns and gravelled ways
Where slippered Contemplation finds his ease
And Childhood a delight for every sense,
But take our greatness with our violence?
What if the glory of escutcheoned doors,
And buildings that a haughtier age designed,
The pacing to and fro on polished floors
Amid great chambers and long galleries, lined
With famous portraits of our ancestors;
What if those things the greatest of mankind
Consider most to magnify, or to bless,
But take our greatness with our bitterness?

II

i{My House}

An ancient bridge, and a more ancient tower,
A farmhouse that is sheltered by its wall,
An acre of stony ground,
Where the symbolic rose can break in flower,
Old ragged elms, old thorns innumerable,
The sound of the rain or sound
Of every wind that blows;
The stilted water-hen
Crossing Stream again

Scared by the splashing of a dozen cows;
A winding stair, a chamber arched with stone,
A grey stone fireplace with an open hearth,
A candle and written page.
i{Il Penseroso's} Platonist toiled on
In some like chamber, shadowing forth
How the daemonic rage
Imagined everything.
Benighted travellers
From markets and from fairs
Have seen his midnight candle glimmering.
Two men have founded here. A man-at-arms
Gathered a score of horse and spent his days
In this tumultuous spot,
Where through long wars and sudden night alarms
His dwindling score and he seemed castaways
Forgetting and forgot;
And I, that after me
My bodily heirs may find,
To exalt a lonely mind,
Befitting emblems of adversity.

III

i{My Table}
Two heavy trestles, and a board
Where Sato's gift, a changeless sword,
By pen and paper lies,
That it may moralise
My days out of their aimlessness.
A bit of an embroidered dress
Covers its wooden sheath.
Chaucer had not drawn breath
When it was forged. In Sato's house,
Curved like new moon, moon-luminous
It lay five hundred years.
Yet if no change appears
No moon; only an aching heart
Conceives a changeless work of art.
Our learned men have urged
That when and where 'twas forged
A marvellous accomplishment,
In painting or in pottery, went
From father unto son
And through the centuries ran
And seemed unchanging like the sword.
Soul's beauty being most adored,
Men and their business took
Me soul's unchanging look;
For the most rich inheritor,
Knowing that none could pass Heaven's door,
That loved inferior art,
Had such an aching heart
That he, although a country's talk
For silken clothes and stately walk.
Had waking wits; it seemed
Juno's peacock screamed.

IV

i{My Descendants}
Having inherited a vigorous mind
From my old fathers, I must nourish dreams

And leave a woman and a man behind
As vigorous of mind, and yet it seems
Life scarce can cast a fragrance on the wind,
Scarce spread a glory to the morning beams,
But the torn petals strew the garden plot;
And there's but common greenness after that.
And what if my descendants lose the flower
Through natural declension of the soul,
Through too much business with the passing hour,
Through too much play, or marriage with a fool?
May this laborious stair and this stark tower
Become a roofless min that the owl
May build in the cracked masonry and cry
Her desolation to the desolate sky.
The primum Mobile that fashioned us
Has made the very owls in circles move;
And I, that count myself most prosperous,
Seeing that love and friendship are enough,
For an old neighbour's friendship chose the house
And decked and altered it for a girl's love,
And know whatever flourish and decline
These stones remain their monument and mine.

V

i{The Road at My Door}
An affable Irregular,
A heavily-built Falstaffian man,
Comes cracking jokes of civil war
As though to die by gunshot were
The finest play under the sun.
A brown Lieutenant and his men,
Half dressed in national uniform,
Stand at my door, and I complain
Of the foul weather, hail and rain,
A pear-tree broken by the storm.
I count those feathered balls of soot
The moor-hen guides upon the stream.
To silence the envy in my thought;
And turn towards my chamber, caught
In the cold snows of a dream.

VI

i{The Stare's Nest by My Window}
The bees build in the crevices
Of loosening masonry, and there
The mother birds bring grubs and flies.
My wall is loosening; honey-bees,
Come build in the empty house of the state.
We are closed in, and the key is turned
On our uncertainty; somewhere
A man is killed, or a house burned,
Yet no cleat fact to be discerned:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.
A barricade of stone or of wood;
Some fourteen days of civil war;
Last night they trundled down the road
That dead young soldier in his blood:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.
We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More Substance in our enmities
Than in our love; O honey-bees,

Come build in the empty house of the stare.

VII

i{I see Phantoms of Hatred and of the Heart's}
i{Fullness and of the Coming Emptiness}
I climb to the tower-top and lean upon broken stone,
A mist that is like blown snow is sweeping over all,
Valley, river, and elms, under the light of a moon
That seems unlike itself, that seems unchangeable,
A glittering sword out of the east. A puff of wind
And those white glimmering fragments of the mist
sweep by.
Frenzies bewilder, reveries perturb the mind;
Monstrous familiar images swim to the mind's eye.
"Vengeance upon the murderers," the cry goes up,
"Vengeance for Jacques Molay." In cloud-pale rags, or
in lace,
The rage-driven, rage-tormented, and rage-hungry troop,
Trooper belabouring trooper, biting at arm or at face,
Plunges towards nothing, arms and fingers spreading
wide
For the embrace of nothing; and I, my wits astray
Because of all that senseless tumult, all but cried
For vengeance on the murderers of Jacques Molay.
Their legs long, delicate and slender, aquamarine their
eyes,
Magical unicorns bear ladies on their backs.
The ladies close their musing eyes. No prophecies,
Remembered out of Babylonian almanacs,
Have closed the ladies' eyes, their minds are but a pool
Where even longing drowns under its own excess;
Nothing but stillness can remain when hearts are full
Of their own sweetness, bodies of their loveliness.
The cloud-pale unicorns, the eyes of aquamarine,
The quivering half-closed eyelids, the rags of cloud or
of lace,
Or eyes that rage has brightened, arms it has made lean,
Give place to an indifferent multitude, give place
To brazen hawks. Nor self-delighting reverie,
Nor hate of what's to come, nor pity for what's gone,
Nothing but grip of claw, and the eye's complacency,
The innumerable clanging wings that have put out the
moon.
I turn away and shut the door, and on the stair
Wonder how many times I could have proved my
worth
In something that all others understand or share;
But O! ambitious heart, had such a proof drawn forth
A company of friends, a conscience set at ease,
It had but made us pine the more. The abstract joy,
The half-read wisdom of daemonic images,
Suffice the ageing man as once the growing boy.

COLONEL MARTIN

THE Colonel went out sailing,
He spoke with Turk and Jew,
With Christian and with Infidel,
For all tongues he knew.
"O what's a wifeless man?" said he,

And he came sailing home.
He rose the latch and went upstairs
And found an empty room.
i{The Colonel went out sailing.}
"I kept her much in the country
And she was much alone,
And though she may be there,' he said,
"She may be in the town.
She may be all alone there,
For who can say?' he said.
"I think that I shall find her
In a young man's bed.'
i{The Colonel went out sailing.}

III

The Colonel met a pedlar,
Agreed their clothes to swop,
And bought the grandest jewelry
In a Galway shop,
Instead of thread and needle
put jewelry in the pack,
Bound a thong about his hand,
Hitched it on his back.
i{The Colonel went out sailing.}
The Colonel knocked on the rich man's door,
"I am sorry,' said the maid,
"My mistress cannot see these things,
But she is still abed,
And never have I looked upon
Jewelry so grand.'
"Take all to your mistress,'
And he laid them on her hand.
i{The Colonel went out sailing.}
And he went in and she went on
And both climbed up the stair,
And O he was a clever man,
For he his slippers wore.
And when they came to the top stair
He ran on ahead,
His wife he found and the rich man
In the comfort of a bed.
i{The Colonel went out sailing.}
The Judge at the Assize Court,
When he heard that story told,
Awarded him for damages

Three kegs of gold.
The Colonel said to Tom his man,
"Harness an ass and cart,
Carry the gold about the town,
Throw it in every patt.'
i{The Colonel went out sailing.}

VII

And there at all street-corners
A man with a pistol stood,
And the rich man had paid them well
To shoot the Colonel dead;
But they threw down their pistols
And all men heard them swear
That they could never shoot a man

Did all that for the poor.
i{The Colonel went out sailing.}

VIII

"And did you keep no gold, Tom?
You had three kegs,' said he.
'I never thought of that, Sir.'
'Then want before you die.'
And want he did; for my own grand-dad
Saw the story's end,
And Tom make out a living
From the seaweed on the strand.
i{The Colonel went out sailing.}

THE COMING OF WISDOM WITH TIME

THOUGH leaves are many, the root is one;
Through all the lying days of my youth
I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
Now I may wither into the truth.

THE COUNTESS CATHLEEN IN PARADISE

ALL the heavy days are over;
Leave the body's coloured pride
Underneath the grass and clover,
With the feet laid side by side.
Bathed in flaming founts of duty
She'll not ask a haughty dress;
Carry all that mournful beauty
To the scented oaken press.
Did the kiss of Mother Mary
Put that music in her face?
Yet she goes with footstep wary,
Full of earth's old timid grace.
'Mong the feet of angels seven
What a dancer glimmering!
All the heavens bow down to Heaven,
Flame to flame and wing to wing.

CRAZY JANE ON THE MOUNTAIN

I AM tired of cursing the Bishop,
(Said Crazy Jane)
Nine books or nine hats
Would not make him a man.
I have found something worse
To meditate on.
A King had some beautiful cousins.
But where are they gone?
Battered to death in a cellar,
And he stuck to his throne.
Last night I lay on the mountain.
(Said Crazy Jane)
There in a two-horsed carriage
That on two wheels ran
Great-bladdered Emer sat.
Her violent man
Cuchulain sat at her side;

Thereupon'
Propped upon my two knees,
I kissed a stone
I lay stretched out in the dirt
And I cried tears down.

CUCHULAIN COMFORTED

A MAN that had six mortal wounds, a man
Violent and famous, strode among the dead;
Eyes stared out of the branches and were gone.

Then certain Shrouds that muttered head to head
Came and were gone. He leant upon a tree
As though to meditate on wounds and blood.

A Shroud that seemed to have authority
Among those bird-like things came, and let fall
A bundle of linen. Shrouds by two and three

Came creeping up because the man was still.
And thereupon that linen-carrier said:
"Your life can grow much sweeter if you will

"Obey our ancient rule and make a shroud;
Mainly because of what we only know
The rattle of those arms makes us afraid.

"We thread the needles' eyes, and all we do
All must together do.' That done, the man
Took up the nearest and began to sew.

"Now must we sing and sing the best we can,
But first you must be told our character:
Convicted cowards all, by kindred slain

"Or driven from home and left to die in fear.'
They sang, but had nor human tunes nor words,
Though all was done in common as before;

They had changed their throats and had the throats of
birds.

THE CURSE OF CROMWELL

YOU ask what -- I have found, and far and wide I go:
Nothing but Cromwell's house and Cromwell's mur-
derous crew,
The lovers and the dancers are beaten into the clay,
And the tall men and the swordsmen and the horsemen,
where are they?
And there is an old beggar wandering in his pride -- -
His fathers served their fathers before Christ was
crucified.

i{O what of that, O what of that,}
"i{What is there left to say?}

All neighbourly content and easy talk are gone,
But there's no good complaining, for money's rant is
on.

He that's mounting up must on his neighbour mount,
And we and all the Muses are things of no account.

They have schooling of their own, but I pass their
schooling by,
What can they know that we know that know the
time to die?
i{O what of that, O what of that,}
i{What is there left to say?}

But there's another knowledge that my heart destroys,
As the fox in the old fable destroyed the Spartan boy's
Because it proves that things both can and cannot be;
That the swordsmen and the ladies can still keep com-
pany,
Can pay the poet for a verse and hear the fiddle sound,
That I am still their setvant though all are under-
ground.
i{O what of that, O what of that,}
i{What is there left to say?}
I came on a great house in the middle of the night,
Its open lighted doorway and its windows all alight,
And all my friends were there and made me welcome
too;
But I woke in an old ruin that the winds. howled
through;
And when I pay attention I must out and walk
Among the dogs and horses that understand my talk.
i{O what of that, O what of that,}
i{What is there left to say?}

THE DEDICATION TO A BOOK OF STORIES
SELECTED FROM THE IRISH NOVELISTS

THERE was a green branch hung with many a bell
When her own people ruled this tragic Eire;
And from its murmuring greenness, calm of Faery,
A Druid kindness, on all hearers fell.
It charmed away the merchant from his guile,
And turned the farmer's memory from his cattle,
And hushed in sleep the roaring ranks of battle:
And all grew friendly for a little while.
Ah, Exiles wandering over lands and seas,
And planning, plotting always that some morrow
May set a stone upon ancestral Sorrow!
I also bear a bell-branch full of ease.
I tore it from green boughs winds tore and tossed
Until the sap of summer had grown weary!
I tore it from the barren boughs of Eire,
That country where a man can be so crossed;
Can be so battered, badgered and destroyed
That he's a loveless man: gay bells bring laughter
That shakes a mouldering cobweb from the rafter;
And yet the saddest chimes are best enjoyed.
Gay bells or sad, they bring you memories
Of half-forgotten innocent old places:
We and our bitterness have left no traces
On Munster grass and Connemara skies.

DEMON AND BEAST

FOR certain minutes at the least
That crafty demon and that loud beast

That plague me day and night
Ran out of my sight;
Though I had long perned in the gyre,
Between my hatred and desire.
I saw my freedom won
And all laugh in the sun.
The glittering eyes in a death's head
Of old Luke Wadding's portrait said
Welcome, and the Ormondes all
Nodded upon the wall,
And even Strafford smiled as though
It made him happier to know
I understood his plan.
Now that the loud beast ran
There was no portrait in the Gallery
But beckoned to sweet company,
For all men's thoughts grew clear
Being dear as mine are dear.
But soon a tear-drop started up,
For aimless joy had made me stop
Beside the little lake
To watch a white gull take
A bit of bread thrown up into the air;
Now gyring down and perning there
He splashed where an absurd
Portly green-pated bird
Shook off the water from his back;
Being no more demoniac
A stupid happy creature
Could rouse my whole nature.
Yet I am certain as can be
That every natural victory
Belongs to beast or demon,
That never yet had freeman
Right mastery of natural things,
And that mere growing old, that brings
Chilled blood, this sweetness brought;
Yet have no dearer thought
Than that I may find out a way
To make it linger half a day.
O what a sweetness strayed
Through barren Thebaid,
Or by the Mareotic sea
When that exultant Anthony
And twice a thousand more
Starved upon the shore
And withered to a bag of bones!
What had the Caesars but their thrones?

O DO NOT LOVE TOO LONG

SWEETHEART, do not love too long:
I loved long and long,
And grew to be out of fashion
Like an old song.
All through the years of our youth
Neither could have known
Their own thought from the other's,
We were so much at one.
But O, in a minute she changed --

O do not love too long,
Or you will grow out of fashion
Like an old song.

A DREAM OF DEATH

I DREAMED that one had died in a strange place
Near no accustomed hand,
And they had nailed the boards above her face,
The peasants of that land,
Wondering to lay her in that solitude,
And raised above her mound
A cross they had made out of two bits of wood,
And planted cypress round;
And left her to the indifferent stars above
Until I carved these words:
i{She was more beautiful than thy first love,}
i{But now lies under boards.}

ON A PICTURE OF A BLACK CENTAUR BY EDMUND DULAC

YOUR hooves have stamped at the black margin of the wood,
Even where horrible green parrots call and swing.
My works are all stamped down into the sultry mud.
I knew that horse-play, knew it for a murderous thing.
What wholesome sun has ripened is wholesome food to eat,
And that alone; yet I, being driven half insane
Because of some green wing, gathered old mummy wheat
In the mad abstract dark and ground it grain by grain
And after baked it slowly in an oven; but now
I bring full-flavoured wine out of a barrel found
Where seven Ephesian toppers slept and never knew
When Alexander's empire passed, they slept so sound.
Stretch out your limbs and sleep a long Saturnian sleep;
I have loved you better than my soul for all my words,
And there is none so fit to keep a watch and keep
Unwearied eyes upon those horrible green birds.

EPHEMERA

"YOUR eyes that once were never weary of mine
Are bowed in sotrow under pendulous lids,
Because our love is waning."
And then She:
"Although our love is waning, let us stand
By the lone border of the lake once more,
Together in that hour of gentleness
When the poor tired child, passion, falls asleep.
How far away the stars seem, and how far
Is our first kiss, and ah, how old my heart!"
Pensive they paced along the faded leaves,
While slowly he whose hand held hers replied:
"Passion has often worn our wandering hearts."
The woods were round them, and the yellow leaves
Fell like faint meteors in the gloom, and once
A rabbit old and lame limped down the path;
Autumn was over him: and now they stood
On the lone border of the lake once more:
Turning, he saw that she had thrust dead leaves

Gathered in silence, dewy as her eyes,
In bosom and hair.
"Ah, do not mourn," he said,
"That we are tired, for other loves await us;
Hate on and love through unrepining hours.
Before us lies eternity; our souls
Are love, and a continual farewell."

THE WINDING STAIR AND OTHER POEMS

IN MEMORY OF EVA GORE-BOOTH AND CON MARKIEWICZ

THE light of evening, Lissadell,
Great windows open to the south,
Two girls in silk kimonos, both
Beautiful, one a gazelle.
But a raving autumn shears
Blossom from the summer's wreath;
The older is condemned to death,
Pardoned, drags out lonely years
Conspiring among the ignorant.
I know not what the younger dreams --
Some vague Utopia -- and she seems,
When withered old and skeleton-gaunt,
An image of such politics.
Many a time I think to seek
One or the other out and speak
Of that old Georgian mansion, mix
pictures of the mind, recall
That table and the talk of youth,
Two girls in silk kimonos, both
Beautiful, one a gazelle.
Dear shadows, now you know it all,
All the folly of a fight
With a common wrong or right.
The innocent and the beautiful.
Have no enemy but time;
Arise and bid me strike a match
And strike another till time catch;
Should the conflagration climb,
Run till all the sages know.
We the great gazebo built,
They convicted us of guilt;
Bid me strike a match and blow.

THE MAN WHO DREAMED OF FAERYLAND

HE stood among a crowd at Dromahair;
His heart hung all upon a silken dress,
And he had known at last some tenderness,
Before earth took him to her stony care;
But when a man poured fish into a pile,
It seemed they raised their little silver heads,
And sang what gold morning or evening sheds
Upon a woven world-forgotten isle
Where people love beside the ravelled seas;
That Time can never mar a lover's vows
Under that woven changeless roof of boughs:
The singing shook him out of his new ease.
He wandered by the sands of Lissadell;

His mind ran all on money cares and fears,
And he had known at last some prudent years
Before they heaped his grave under the hill;
But while he passed before a plashy place,
A lug-worm with its grey and muddy mouth
Sang that somewhere to north or west or south
There dwelt a gay, exulting, gentle race
Under the golden or the silver skies;
That if a dancer stayed his hungry foot
It seemed the sun and moon were in the fruit:
And at that singing he was no more wise.
He mused beside the well of Scanavin,
He mused upon his mockers: without fail
His sudden vengeance were a country tale,
When earthy night had drunk his body in;
But one small knot-grass growing by the pool
Sang where -- unnecessary cruel voice --
Old silence bids its chosen race rejoice,
Whatever ravelled waters rise and fall
Or stormy silver fret the gold of day,
And midnight there enfold them like a fleece
And lover there by lover be at peace.
The tale drove his fine angry mood away.
He slept under the hill of Lugnagall;
And might have known at last unhaunted sleep
Under that cold and vapour-turbaned steep,
Now that the earth had taken man and all:
Did not the worms that spired about his bones
proclaim with that unwearied, reedy cry
That God has laid His fingers on the sky,
That from those fingers glittering summer runs
Upon the dancer by the dreamless wave.
Why should those lovers that no lovers miss
Dream, until God burn Nature with a kiss?
The man has found no comfort in the grave.

THE FALLING OF THE LEAVES

AUTUMN is over the long leaves that love us,
And over the mice in the barley sheaves;
Yellow the leaves of the rowan above us,
And yellow the wet wild-strawberry leaves.
The hour of the waning of love has beset us,
And weary and worn are our sad souls now;
Let us patt, ere the season of passion forget us,
With a kiss and a tear on thy drooping brow.

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FRAGMENTS

I

LOCKE sank into a swoon;
The Garden died;
God took the spinning-jenny
Out of his side.

II

Where got I that truth?
Out of a medium's mouth.
Out of nothing it came,
Out of the forest loam,
Out of dark night where lay
The crowns of Nineveh.

THE GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID

KUSTA BEN LUKA is my name, I write
To Abd Al-Rabban; fellow-roysterer once,
Now the good Caliph's learned Treasurer,
And for no ear but his.
Carry this letter
Through the great gallery of the Treasure House
Where banners of the Caliphs hang, night-coloured
But brilliant as the night's embroidery,
And wait war's music; pass the little gallery;
Pass books of learning from Byzantium
Written in gold upon a purple stain,
And pause at last, I was about to say,
At the great book of Sappho's song; but no,
For should you leave my letter there, a boy's
Love-lorn, indifferent hands might come upon it
And let it fall unnoticed to the floor.
pause at the Treatise of parmenides
And hide it there, for Caiphs to world's end
Must keep that perfect, as they keep her song,
So great its fame.
When fitting time has passed
The parchment will disclose to some learned man
A mystery that else had found no chronicler
But the wild Bedouin. Though I approve
Those wanderers that welcomed in their tents
What great Harun Al-Rashid, occupied
With Persian embassy or Grecian war,
Must needs neglect, I cannot hide the truth
That wandering in a desert, featureless
As air under a wing, can give birds' wit.
In after time they will speak much of me
And speak but fantasy. Recall the year
When our beloved Caliph put to death
His Vizir Jaffer for an unknown reason:
"If but the shirt upon my body knew it
I'd tear it off and throw it in the fire.'
That speech was all that the town knew, but he
Seemed for a while to have grown young again;
Seemed so on purpose, muttered Jaffer's friends,
That none might know that he was conscience-struck --
But that s a traitor's thought. Enough for me
That in the early summer of the year
The mightiest of the princes of the world

Came to the least considered of his courtiers;
Sat down upon the fountain's marble edge,
One hand amid the goldfish in the pool;
And thereupon a colloquy took place
That I commend to all the chroniclers
To show how violent great hearts can lose
Their bitterness and find the honeycomb.
"I have brought a slender bride into the house;
You know the saying, "Change the bride with spring."
And she and I, being sunk in happiness,
Cannot endure to think you tread these paths,
When evening stirs the jasmine bough, and yet
Are brideless.'
"I am falling into years.'
"But such as you and I do not seem old
Like men who live by habit. Every day
I ride with falcon to the river's edge
Or carry the ringed mail upon my back,
Or court a woman; neither enemy,
Game-bird, nor woman does the same thing twice;
And so a hunter carries in the eye
A mimic of youth. Can poet's thought
That springs from body and in body falls
Like this pure jet, now lost amid blue sky,
Now bathing lily leaf and fish's scale,
Be mimicry?'
"What matter if our souls
Are nearer to the surface of the body
Than souls that start no game and turn no rhyme!
The soul's own youth and not the body's youth
Shows through our lineaments. My candle's bright,
My lantern is too loyal not to show
That it was made in your great father's reign,
And yet the jasmine season warms our blood.'
"Great prince, forgive the freedom of my speech:
You think that love has seasons, and you think
That if the spring bear off what the spring gave
The heart need suffer no defeat; but I
Who have accepted the Byzantine faith,
That seems unnatural to Arabian minds,
Think when I choose a bride I choose for ever;
And if her eye should not grow bright for mine
Or brighten only for some younger eye,
My heart could never turn from daily ruin,
Nor find a remedy.'
"But what if I
Have lit upon a woman who so shares
Your thirst for those old crabbed mysteries,
So strains to look beyond Our life, an eye
That never knew that strain would scarce seem bright,
And yet herself can seem youth's very fountain,
Being all brimmed with life?'
"Were it but true
I would have found the best that life can give,
Companionship in those mysterious things
That make a man's soul or a woman's soul
Itself and not some other soul.'
"That love
Must needs be in this life and in what follows
Unchanging and at peace, and it is right

Every philosopher should praise that love.
But I being none can praise its opposite.
It makes my passion stronger but to think
Like passion stirs the peacock and his mate,
The wild stag and the doe; that mouth to mouth
Is a man's mockery of the changeless soul.'
And thereupon his bounty gave what now
Can shake more blossom from autumnal chill
Than all my bursting springtime knew. A girl
Perched in some window of her mother's house
Had watched my daily passage to and fro;
Had heard impossible history of my past;
Imagined some impossible history
Lived at my side; thought time's disfiguring touch
Gave but more reason for a woman's care.
Yet was it love of me, or was it love
Of the stark mystery that has dazed my sight,
perplexed her fantasy and planned her care?
Or did the torchlight of that mystery
Pick out my features in such light and shade
Two contemplating passions chose one theme
Through sheer bewilderment? She had not paced
The garden paths, nor counted up the rooms,
Before she had spread a book upon her knees
And asked about the pictures or the text;
And often those first days I saw her stare
On old dry writing in a learned tongue,
On old dry faggots that could never please
The extravagance of spring; or move a hand
As if that writing or the figured page
Were some dear cheek.
Upon a moonless night
I sat where I could watch her sleeping form,
And wrote by candle-light; but her form moved.
And fearing that my light disturbed her sleep
I rose that I might screen it with a cloth.
I heard her voice, "Turn that I may expound
What's bowed your shoulder and made pale your cheek
And saw her sitting upright on the bed;
Or was it she that spoke or some great Djinn?
I say that a Djinn spoke. A livelong hour
She seemed the learned man and I the child;
Truths without father came, truths that no book
Of all the uncounted books that I have read,
Nor thought out of her mind or mine begot,
Self-born, high-born, and solitary truths,
Those terrible implacable straight lines
Drawn through the wandering vegetative dream,
Even those truths that when my bones are dust
Must drive the Arabian host.
The voice grew still,
And she lay down upon her bed and slept,
But woke at the first gleam of day, rose up
And swept the house and sang about her work
In childish ignorance of all that passed.
A dozen nights of natural sleep, and then
When the full moon swam to its greatest height
She rose, and with her eyes shut fast in sleep
Walked through the house. Unnoticed and unfelt
I wrapped her in a hooded cloak, and she,

Half running, dropped at the first ridge of the desert
And there marked out those emblems on the sand
That day by day I study and marvel at,
With her white finger. I led her home asleep
And once again she rose and swept the house
In childish ignorance of all that passed.
Even to-day, after some seven years
When maybe thrice in every moon her mouth
Murmured the wisdom of the desert Djinns,
She keeps that ignorance, nor has she now
That first unnatural interest in my books.
It seems enough that I am there; and yet,
Old fellow-student, whose most patient ear
Heard all the anxiety of my passionate youth,
It seems I must buy knowledge with my peace.
What if she lose her ignorance and so
Dream that I love her only for the voice,
That every gift and every word of praise
Is but a payment for that midnight voice
That is to age what milk is to a child?
Were she to lose her love, because she had lost
Her confidence in mine, or even lose
Its first simplicity, love, voice and all,
All my fine feathers would be plucked away
And I left shivering. The voice has drawn
A quality of wisdom from her love's
Particular quality. The signs and shapes;
All those abstractions that you fancied were
From the great Treatise of parmenides;
All, all those gyres and cubes and midnight things
Are but a new expression of her body
Drunk with the bitter sweetness of her youth.
And now my utmost mystery is out.
A woman's beauty is a storm-tossed banner;
Under it wisdom stands, and I alone --
Of all Arabia's lovers I alone --
Nor dazzled by the embroidery, nor lost
In the confusion of its night-dark folds,
Can hear the armed man speak.

STREAM AND SUN AT GLENDALOUGH

THROUGH intricate motions ran
Stream and gliding sun
And all my heart seemed gay:
Some stupid thing that I had done
Made my attention stray.
Repentance keeps my heart impure;
But what am I that dare
Fancy that I can
Better conduct myself or have more
Sense than a common man?
What motion of the sun or stream
Or eyelid shot the gleam
That pierced my body through?
What made me live like these that seem
Self-born, born anew?

THE SONG OF THE HAPPY SHEPHERD

THE woods of Arcady are dead,
And over is their antique joy;
Of old the world on dreaming fed;
Grey Truth is now her painted toy;
Yet still she turns her restless head:
But O, sick children of the world,
Of all the many changing things
In dreary dancing past us whirled,
To the cracked tune that Chronos sings,
Words alone are certain good.
Where are now the warring kings,
Word be-mockers? -- By the Rood,
Where are now the warring kings?
An idle word is now their glory,
By the stammering schoolboy said,
Reading some entangled story:
The kings of the old time are dead;
The wandering earth herself may be
Only a sudden flaming word,
In clanging space a moment heard,
Troubling the endless reverie.
Then nowise worship dusty deeds,
Nor seek, for this is also sooth,
To hunger fiercely after truth,
Lest all thy toiling only breeds
New dreams, new dreams; there is no truth
Saving in thine own heart. Seek, then,
No learning from the starry men,
Who follow with the optic glass
The whirling ways of stars that pass --
Seek, then, for this is also sooth,
No word of theirs -- the cold star-bane
Has cloven and rent their hearts in twain,
And dead is all their human truth.
Go gather by the humming sea
Some twisted, echo-harboured shell.
And to its lips thy story tell,
And they thy comforters will be.
Rewording in melodious guile
Thy fretful words a little while,
Till they shall singing fade in ruth
And die a pearly brotherhood;
For words alone are certain good:
Sing, then, for this is also sooth.
I must be gone: there is a grave
Where daffodil and lily wave,
And I would please the hapless faun,
Buried under the sleepy ground,
With mirthful songs before the dawn.
His shouting days with mirth were crowned;
And still I dream he treads the lawn,
Walking ghostly in the dew,
Pierced by my glad singing through,
My songs of old earth's dreamy youth:
But ah! she dreams not now; dream thou!
For fair are poppies on the brow:
Dream, dream, for this is also sooth.

THE HARP OF AENGUS

Edain came out of Midhir's hill, and lay
Beside young Aengus in his tower of glass,
Where time is drowned in odour-laden winds
And Druid moons, and murmuring of boughs,
And sleepy boughs, and boughs where apples made
Of opal and ruhy and pale chrysolite
Awake unsleeping fires; and wove seven strings,
Sweet with all music, out of his long hair,
Because her hands had been made wild by love.
When Midhir's wife had changed her to a fly,
He made a harp with Druid apple-wood
That she among her winds might know he wept;
And from that hour he has watched over none
But faithful lovers.

HE BIDS HIS BELOVED BE AT PEACE

I HEAR the Shadowy Horses, their long manes a-shake,
Their hoofs heavy with tumult, their eyes glimmering
white;
The North unfolds above them clinging, creeping
night,
The East her hidden joy before the morning break,
The West weeps in pale dew and sighs passing away,
The South is pouring down roses of crimson fire:
O vanity of Sleep, Hope, Dream, endless Desire,
The Horses of Disaster plunge in the heavy clay:
Beloved, let your eyes half close, and your heart beat
Over my heart, and your hair fall over my breast,
Drowning love's lonely hour in deep twilight of rest,
And hiding their tossing manes and their tumultuous
feet.

HE HEARS THE CRY OF THE SEDGE

I WANDER by the edge
Of this desolate lake
Where wind cries in the sedge:
i{Until the axle break
That keeps the stars in their round,
And hands hurl in the deep
The banners of East and West,
And the girdle of light is unbound,
Your breast will not lie by the breast
Of your beloved in sleep.}

HE REMEMBERS FORGOTTEN BEAUTY

WHEN my arms wrap you round I press
My heart upon the loveliness
That has long faded from the world;
The jewelled crowns that kings have hurled
In shadowy pools, when armies fled;
The love-tales wrought with silken thread
By dreaming ladies upon cloth
That has made fat the murderous moth;
The roses that of old time were
Woven by ladies in their hair,

The dew-cold lilies ladies bore
Through many a sacred corridor
Where such grey clouds of incense rose
That only God's eyes did not close:
For that pale breast and lingering hand
Come from a more dream-heavy land,
A more dream-heavy hour than this;
And when you sigh from kiss to kiss
I hear white Beauty sighing, too,
For hours when all must fade like dew.
But flame on flame, and deep on deep,
Throne over throne where in half sleep,
Their swords upon their iron knees,
Brood her high lonely mysteries.

HE TELLS OF A VALLEY FULL OF LOVERS

I DREAMED that I stood in a valley, and amid sighs,
For happy lovers passed two by two where I stood;
And I dreamed my lost love came stealthily out of the
wood
With her cloud-pale eyelids falling on dream-dimmed
eyes:
I cried in my dream, O i{women, bid the young men lay}
i{Their heads on your knees, and drown their eyes with your fair,}
i{Or remembering hers they will find no other face fair}
i{Till all the valleys of the world have been withered away.}

HE THINKS OF HIS PAST GREATNESS WHEN A PART OF THE CONSTELLATIONS OF HEAVEN

I HAVE drunk ale from the Country of the Young
And weep because I know all things now:
I have been a hazel-tree, and they hung
The Pilot Star and the Crooked Plough
Among my leaves in times out of mind:
I became a rush that horses tread:
I became a man, a hater of the wind,
Knowing one, out of all things, alone, that his head
May not lie on the breast nor his lips on the hair
Of the woman that he loves, until he dies.
O beast of the wilderness, bird of the air,
Must I endure your amorous cries?

HE WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

HAD I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

HIGH TALK

PROCESSIONS that lack high stilts have nothing that
catches the eye.

What if my great-granddad had a pair that were
twenty foot high,
And mine were but fifteen foot, no modern Stalks
upon higher,
Some rogue of the world stole them to patch up a fence
or a fire.
Because piebald ponies, led bears, caged lions, ake
but poor shows,
Because children demand Daddy-long-legs upon This
timber toes,
Because women in the upper storeys demand a face at
the pane,
That patching old heels they may shriek, I take to
chisel and plane.

Malachi Stilt-Jack am I, whatever I learned has run wild,
From collar to collar, from stilt to stilt, from father to child.
All metaphor, Malachi, stilts and all. A barnacle goose
Far up in the stretches of night; night splits and the
dawn breaks loose;
I, through the terrible novelty of light, stalk on, stalk on;
Those great sea-horses bare their teeth and laugh at the dawn.

HIS PHOENIX

THERE is a queen in China, or maybe it's in Spain,
And birthdays and holidays such praises can be heard
Of her unblemished lineaments, a whiteness with no
stain,
That she might be that sprightly girl trodden by a
bird;
And there's a score of duchesses, surpassing woma-
kind,
Or who have found a painter to make them so for pay
And smooth out stain and blemish with the elegance
of his mind:
I knew a phoenix in my youth, so let them have their
day.
The young men every night applaud their Gaby's
laughing eye,
And Ruth St. Denis had more charm although she had
poor luck;
From nineteen hundred nine or ten, Pavlova's had the
cry
And there's a player in the States who gathers up her
cloak
And flings herself out of the room when Juliet would
be bride
With all a woman's passion, a child's imperious way,
And there are -- but no matter if there are scores beside:
I knew a phoenix in my youth, so let them have their
day.
There's Margaret and Marjorie and Dorothy and Nan,
A Daphne and a Mary who live in privacy;
One's had her fill of lovers, another's had but one,
Another boasts, "I pick and choose and have but two
or three.'
If head and limb have beauty and the instep's high and
light
They can spread out what sail they please for all I have

to say,
Be but the breakers of men's hearts or engines of
delight:
I knew a phoenix in my youth, so let them have their
day.
There'll be that crowd, that barbarous crowd, through
all the centuries,
And who can say but some young belle may walk and
talk men wild
Who is my beauty's equal, though that my heart denies,
But not the exact likeness, the simplicity of a child,
And that proud look as though she had gazed into the
burning sun,
And all the shapely body no tittle gone astray.
I mourn for that most lonely thing; and yet God's will
be done:
I knew a phoenix in my youth, so let them have their
day.

THE HOST OF THE AIR

O'DRISCOLL drove with a song
The wild duck and the drake
From the tall and the tufted reeds
Of the drear Hart Lake.
And he saw how the reeds grew dark
At the coming of night-tide,
And dreamed of the long dim hair
Of Bridget his bride.
He heard while he sang and dreamed
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay.
And he saw young men and young girls
Who danced on a level place,
And Bridget his bride among them,
With a sad and a gay face.
The dancers crowded about him
And many a sweet thing said,
And a young man brought him red wine
And a young girl white bread.
But Bridget drew him by the sleeve
Away from the merry bands,
To old men playing at cards
With a twinkling of ancient hands.
The bread and the wine had a doom,
For these were the host of the air;
He sat and played in a dream
Of her long dim hair.
He played with the merry old men
And thought not of evil chance,
Until one bore Bridget his bride
Away from the merry dance.
He bore her away in his arms,
The handsomest young man there,
And his neck and his breast and his arms
Were drowned in her long dim hair.
O'Driscoll scattered the cards
And out of his dream awoke:
Old men and young men and young girls

Were gone like a drifting smoke;
But he heard high up in the air
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay.

IMITATED FROM THE JAPANESE

A MOST astonishing thing --
Seventy years have I lived;

(Hurrah for the flowers of Spring,
For Spring is here again.)

Seventy years have I lived
No ragged beggar-man,
Seventy years have I lived,
Seventy years man and boy,
And never have I danced for joy.

THE INDIAN UPON GOD

I PASSED along the water's edge below the humid trees,
My spirit rocked in evening light, the rushes round my
knees,
My spirit rocked in sleep and sighs; and saw the moor-
fowl pace
All dripping on a grassy slope, and saw them cease to
chase
Each other round in circles, and heard the eldest speak:
i{Who holds the world between His bill and made us strong} or
i{weak}
i{Is an undying moorfowl, and He lives beyond the sky.}
i{The rains are from His dripping wing, the moonbeams from}
i{His eye.}
I passed a little further on and heard a lotus talk:
i{Who made the world and ruleth it, He hangeth on a stalk,}
i{For} I i{am in His image made, and all this tinkling tide}
i{Is but a sliding drop of rain between His petals wide.}
A little way within the gloom a roebuck raised his eyes
Brimful of starlight, and he said: i{The Stamper} of i{the}
i{Skies,}
i{He is} a i{gentle roebuck; for how else,} I i{pray, could He}
i{Conceive a thing so sad and soft, a gentle thing like me?}
I passed a little further on and heard a peacock say:
i{Who made the grass and made the worms and made my feathers}
i{gay,}
i{He is a monstrous peacock, and He waveth all the night}
i{His languid tail above us, lit with myriad spots} of i{light.}

INTO THE TWILIGHT

OUT-WORN heart, in a time out-worn,
Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;
Laugh, heart, again in the grey twilight,
Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn.
Your mother Eire is aways young,
Dew ever shining and twilight grey;
Though hope fall from you and love decay,

Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.
Come, heart, where hill is heaped upon hill:
For there the mystical brotherhood
Of sun and moon and hollow and wood
And river and stream work out their will;
And God stands winding His lonely horn,
And time and the world are ever in flight;
And love is less kind than the grey twilight,
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.

IN THE SEVEN WOODS

I HAVE heard the pigeons of the Seven Woods
Make their faint thunder, and the garden bees
Hum in the lime-tree flowers; and put away
The unavailing outcries and the old bitterness
That empty the heart. I have forgot awhile
Tara uprooted, and new commonness
Upon the throne and crying about the streets
And hanging its paper flowers from post to post,
Because it is alone of all things happy.
I am contented, for I know that Quiet
Wanders laughing and eating her wild heart
Among pigeons and bees, while that Great Archer,
Who but awaits His hour to shoot, still hangs
A cloudy quiver over Pairc-na-lee.

EASTER

I HAVE met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.
That woman's days were spent
In ignorant good-will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She rode to harriers?
This man had kept a school
And rode our winged horse;
This other his helper and friend
Was coming into his force;
He might have won fame in the end,
So sensitive his nature seemed,
So daring and sweet his thought.

This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout.
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart,
Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.
Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.
The horse that comes from the road.
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change;
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute;
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
And a horse plashes within it;
The long-legged moor-hens dive,
And hens to moor-cocks call;
Minute by minute they live:
The stone's in the midst of all.
Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse --
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

THE LAMENTATION OF THE OLD PENSIONER

ALTHOUGH I shelter from the rain
Under a broken tree,
My chair was nearest to the fire
In every company
That talked of love or politics,
Ere Time transfigured me.
Though lads are making pikes again

For some conspiracy,
And crazy rascals rage their fill
At human tyranny,
My contemplations are of Time
That has transfigured me.
There's not a woman turns her face
Upon a broken tree,
And yet the beauties that I loved
Are in my memory;
I spit into the face of Time
That has transfigured me.

LAPIS LAZULI

i{(For Harry Clifton)}

I HAVE heard that hysterical women say
They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow.
Of poets that are always gay,
For everybody knows or else should know
That if nothing drastic is done
Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out.
Pitch like King Billy bomb-balls in
Until the town lie bearen flat.

All perform their tragic play,
There struts Hamlet, there is Lear,
That's Ophelia, that Cordelia;
Yet they, should the last scene be there,
The great stage curtain about to drop,
If worthy their prominent part in the play,
Do not break up their lines to weep.
They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay;
Gaiety transfiguring all that dread.
All men have aimed at, found and lost;
Black out; Heaven blazing into the head:
Tragedy wrought to its uttermost.
Though Hamlet rambles and Lear rages,
And all the drop-scenes drop at once
Upon a hundred thousand stages,
It cannot grow by an inch or an ounce.

On their own feet they came, or On shipboard,
Camel-back; horse-back, ass-back, mule-back,
Old civilisations put to the sword.
Then they and their wisdom went to rack:
No handiwork of Callimachus,
Who handled marble as if it were bronze,
Made draperies that seemed to rise
When sea-wind swept the corner, stands;
His long lamp-chimney shaped like the stem
Of a slender palm, stood but a day;
All things fall and are built again,
And those that build them again are gay.

Two Chinamen, behind them a third,
Are carved in lapis lazuli,
Over them flies a long-legged bird,
A symbol of longevity;
The third, doubtless a serving-man,
Carries a musical instrument.

Every discoloration of the stone,
Every accidental crack or dent,
Seems a water-course or an avalanche,
Or lofty slope where it still snows
Though doubtless plum or cherry-branch
Sweetens the little half-way house
Those Chinamen climb towards, and I
Delight to imagine them seated there;
There, on the mountain and the sky,
On all the tragic scene they stare.
One asks for mournful melodies;
Accomplished fingers begin to play.
Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay.

LONG-LEGGED FLY

THAT civilisation may not sink,
Its great battle lost,
Quiet the dog, tether the pony
To a distant post;
Our master Caesar is in the tent
Where the maps are spread,
His eyes fixed upon nothing,
A hand under his head.
<1Like a long-legged fly upon the stream
His mind moves upon silence.>1
That the topless towers be burnt
And men recall that face,
Move most gently if move you must
In this lonely place.
She thinks, part woman, three parts a child,
That nobody looks; her feet
Practise a tinker shuffle
Picked up on a street.
<1Like a long-legged fly upon the stream
Her mind moves upon silence.>1
That girls at puberty may find
The first Adam in their thought,
Shut the door of the Pope's chapel,
Keep those children out.
There on that scaffolding reclines
Michael Angelo.
With no more sound than the mice make
His hand moves to and fro.

Like a long-legged fly upon the stream
His mind moves upon silence.

THE MADNESS OF KING GOLL

I SAT on cushioned otter-skin:
My word was law from Ith to Emain,
And shook at Inver Amergin
The hearts of the world-troubling seamen,
And drove tumult and war away
From girl and boy and man and beast;
The fields grew fatter day by day,
The wild fowl of the air increased;

And every ancient Ollave said,
While he bent down his fading head.
"He drives away the Northern cold."
i{They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, the beech leaves old.}
I sat and mused and drank sweet wine;
A herdsman came from inland valleys,
Crying, the pirates drove his swine
To fill their dark-beaked hollow galleys.
I called my battle-breaking men
And my loud brazen battle-cars
From rolling vale and rivery glen;
And under the blinking of the stars
Fell on the pirates by the deep,
And hurled them in the gulph of sleep:
These hands won many a torque of gold.
i{They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, the beech leaves old.}
But slowly, as I shouting slew
And trampled in the bubbling mire,
In my most secret spirit grew
A whirling and a wandering fire:
I stood: keen stars above me shone,
Around me shone keen eyes of men:
I laughed aloud and hurried on
By rocky shore and rushy fen;
I laughed because birds fluttered by,
And starlight gleamed, and clouds flew high,
And rushes waved and waters rolled.
i{They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, the beech leaves old.}
And now I wander in the woods
When summer gluts the golden bees,
Or in autumnal solitudes
Arise the leopard-coloured trees;
Or when along the wintry strands
The cormorants shiver on their rocks;
I wander on, and wave my hands,
And sing, and shake my heavy locks.
The grey wolf knows me; by one ear
I lead along the woodland deer;
The hares run by me growing bold.
i{They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, the beech leaves old.}
I came upon a little town
That slumbered in the harvest moon,
And passed a-tiptoe up and down,
Murmuring, to a fitful tune,
How I have followed, night and day,
A tramping of tremendous feet,
And saw where this old tympan lay
Deserted on a doorway seat,
And bore it to the woods with me;
Of some inhuman misery
Our married voices wildly trolled.
i{They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, the beech leaves old.}
I sang how, when day's toil is done,
Orchil shakes out her long dark hair
That hides away the dying sun
And sheds faint odours through the air:
When my hand passed from wire to wire
It quenched, with sound like falling dew
The whirling and the wandering fire;
But lift a mournful ulalu,

For the kind wires are torn and still,
And I must wander wood and hill
Through summer's heat and winter's cold.
i{They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, the beech leaves old.}

THE MAN AND THE ECHO

i{Man}
IN a cleft that's christened Alt
Under broken stone I halt
At the bottom of a pit
That broad noon has never lit,
And shout a secret to the stone.
All that I have said and done,
Now that I am old and ill,
Turns into a question till
I lie awake night after night
And never get the answers right.
Did that play of mine send out
Certain men the English shot?
Did words of mine put too great strain
On that woman's reeling brain?
Could my spoken words have checked
That whereby a house lay wrecked?
And all seems evil until I
Sleepless would lie down and die.
i{Echo}

Lie down and die.

i{Man}
That were to shirk
The spiritual intellect's great work,
And shirk it in vain. There is no release
In a bodkin or disease,
Nor can there be work so great
As that which cleans man's dirty slate.
While man can still his body keep
Wine or love drug him to sleep,
Waking he thanks the Lord that he
Has body and its stupidity,
But body gone he sleeps no more,
And till his intellect grows sure
That all's arranged in one clear view,
pursues the thoughts that I pursue,
Then stands in judgment on his soul,
And, all work done, dismisses all
Out of intellect and sight
And sinks at last into the night.

i{Echo}
Into the night.

i{Man}
O Rocky Voice,
Shall we in that great night rejoice?
What do we know but that we face
One another in this place?
But hush, for I have lost the theme,
Its joy or night-seem but a dream;
Up there some hawk or owl has struck,

Dropping out of sky or rock,
A stricken rabbit is crying out,
And its cry distracts my thought.

MEN IMPROVE WITH THE YEARS

I AM worn out with dreams;
A weather-worn, marble triton
Among the streams;
And all day long I look
Upon this lady's beauty
As though I had found in a book
A pictured beauty,
pleased to have filled the eyes
Or the discerning ears,
Delighted to be but wise,
For men improve with the years;
And yet, and yet,
Is this my dream, or the truth?
O would that we had met
When I had my burning youth!
But I grow old among dreams,
A weather-worn, marble triton
Among the streams.

THE DOUBLE VISION OF MICHAEL ROBARTES

I

ON the grey rock of Cashel the mind's eye
Has called up the cold spirits that are born
When the old moon is vanished from the sky
And the new still hides her horn.
Under blank eyes and fingers never still
The particular is pounded till it is man.
When had I my own will?
O not since life began.
Constrained, arraigned, baffled, bent and unbent
By these wire-jointed jaws and limbs of wood,
Themselves obedient,
Knowing not evil and good;
Obedient to some hidden magical breath.
They do not even feel, so abstract are they.
So dead beyond our death,
Triumph that we obey.
On the grey rock of Cashel I suddenly saw
A Sphinx with woman breast and lion paw.
A Buddha, hand at rest,
Hand lifted up that blest;
And right between these two a girl at play
That, it may be, had danced her life away,
For now being dead it seemed
That she of dancing dreamed.
Although I saw it all in the mind's eye
There can be nothing solider till I die;
I saw by the moon's light
Now at its fifteenth night.
One lashed her tail; her eyes lit by the moon
Gazed upon all things known, all things unknown,
In triumph of intellect
With motionless head erect.

That other's moonlit eyeballs never moved,
Being fixed on all things loved, all things unloved.
Yet little peace he had,
For those that love are sad.
Little did they care who danced between,
And little she by whom her dance was seen
So she had outdanced thought.
Body perfection brought,
For what but eye and ear silence the mind
With the minute particulars of mankind?
Mind moved yet seemed to stop
As 'twere a spinning-top.
In contemplation had those three so wrought
Upon a moment, and so stretched it out
That they, time overthrown,
Were dead yet flesh and bone.
I knew that I had seen, had seen at last
That girl my unremembering nights hold fast
Or else my dreams that fly
If I should rub an eye,
And yet in flying fling into my meat
A crazy juice that makes the pulses beat
As though I had been undone
By Homer's Paragon
Who never gave the burning town a thought;
To such a pitch of folly I am brought,
Being caught between the pull
Of the dark moon and the full,
The commonness of thought and images
That have the frenzy of our western seas.
Thereon I made my moan,
And after kissed a stone,
And after that arranged it in a song
Seeing that I, ignorant for So long,
Had been rewarded thus
In Cormac's ruined house.

MICHAEL ROBARTES AND THE DANCER

i{He.} Opinion is not worth a rush;
In this altar-piece the knight,
Who grips his long spear so to push
That dragon through the fading light,
Loved the lady; and it's plain
The half-dead dragon was her thought,
That every morning rose again
And dug its claws and shrieked and fought.
Could the impossible come to pass
She would have time to turn her eyes,
Her lover thought, upon the glass
And on the instant would grow wise.
i{She.} You mean they argued.
i{He.} Put it so;
But bear in mind your lover's wage
Is what your looking-glass can show,
And that he will turn green with rage
At all that is not pictured there.
i{She.} May I not put myself to college?
i{He.} Go pluck Athene by the hair;
For what mere book can grant a knowledge
With an impassioned gravity

Appropriate to that beating breast,
 That vigorous thigh, that dreaming eye?
 And may the Devil take the rest.
 i{She.} And must no beautiful woman be
 Learned like a man?
 i{He.} Paul Veronese
 And all his sacred company
 Imagined bodies all their days
 By the lagoon you love so much,
 For proud, soft, ceremonious proof
 That all must come to sight and touch;
 While Michael Angelo's Sistine roof,
 His "Morning" and his "Night" disclose
 How sinew that has been pulled tight,
 Or it may be loosened in repose,
 Can rule by supernatural right
 Yet be but sinew.
 i{She.} I have heard said
 There is great danger in the body.
 i{He.} Did God in portioning wine and bread
 Give man His thought or His mere body?
 i{She.} My wretched dragon is perplexed.
 i{Hec.} I have principles to prove me right.
 It follows from this Latin text
 That blest souls are not composite,
 And that all beautiful women may
 Live in uncomposite blessedness,
 And lead us to the like -- if they
 Will banish every thought, unless
 The lineaments that please their view
 When the long looking-glass is full,
 Even from the foot-sole think it too.
 i{She.} They say such different things at school.

MOHINI CHATTERJEE

I ASKED if I should pray.
 But the Brahmin said,
 "pray for nothing, say
 Every night in bed,
 "'I have been a king,
 I have been a slave,
 Nor is there anything.
 Fool, rascal, knave,
 That I have not been,
 And yet upon my breast
 A myriad heads have lain.'"
 That he might Set at rest
 A boy's turbulent days
 Mohini Chatterjee
 Spoke these, or words like these,
 I add in commentary,
 "Old lovers yet may have
 All that time denied --
 Grave is heaped on grave
 That they be satisfied --
 Over the blackened earth
 The old troops parade,
 Birth is heaped on Birth
 That such cannonade

May thunder time away,
Birth-hour and death-hour meet,
Or, as great sages say,
Men dance on deathless feet.' 0084

THE MOTHER OF GOD

THE threefold terror of love; a fallen flare
Through the hollow of an ear;
Wings beating about the room;
The terror of all terrors that I bore
The Heavens in my womb.
Had I not found content among the shows
Every common woman knows,
Chimney corner, garden walk,
Or rocky cistern where we tread the clothes
And gather all the talk?
What is this flesh I purchased with my pains,
This fallen star my milk sustains,
This love that makes my heart's blood stop
Or strikes a Sudden chill into my bones
And bids my hair stand up?

A NATIVITY

WHAT woman hugs her infant there?
Another star has shot an ear.

What made the drapery glisten so?
Not a man but Delacroix.

What made the ceiling waterproof?
Landor's tarpaulin on the roof

What brushes fly and moth aside?
Irving and his plume of pride.

What hurries out the knave and dolt?
Talma and his thunderbolt.

Why is the woman terror-struck?
Can there be mercy in that look?

NEWS FOR THE DELPHIC ORACLE

THERE all the golden codgers lay,
There the silver dew,
And the great water sighed for love,
And the wind sighed too.
Man-picker Niamh leant and sighed
By Oisín on the grass;
There sighed amid his choir of love
Tall pythagoras.
plotinus came and looked about,
The salt-flakes on his breast,
And having stretched and yawned awhile
Lay sighing like the rest.
Straddling each a dolphin's back
And steadied by a fin,
Those Innocents re-live their death,

Their wounds open again.
The ecstatic waters laugh because
Their cries are sweet and strange,
Through their ancestral patterns dance,
And the brute dolphins plunge
Until, in some cliff-sheltered bay
Where wades the choir of love
Proffering its sacred laurel crowns,
They pitch their burdens off.

NO SECOND TROY

WHY should I blame her that she filled my days
With misery, or that she would of late
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
Or hurled the little streets upon the great.
Had they but courage equal to desire?
What could have made her peaceful with a mind
That nobleness made simple as a fire,
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
That is not natural in an age like this,
Being high and solitary and most stern?
Why, what could she have done, being what she is?
Was there another Troy for her to burn?

THE MEDITATION OF THE OLD FISHERMAN

YOU waves, though you dance by my feet like children
at play,
Though you glow and you glance, though you purr and
you dart;
In the Junes that were warmer than these are, the waves
were more gay,
i{When I was a boy with never a crack in my heart.}
The herring are not in the tides as they were of old;
My sorrow! for many a creak gave the creel in the-cart
That carried the take to Sligo town to be sold,
i{When I was a boy with never a crack in my heart.}
And ah, you proud maiden, you are not so fair when
his oar
Is heard on the water, as they were, the proud and apart,
Who paced in the eve by the nets on the pebbly shore,
i{When} I i{was} a boy i{with never} a i{crack in my heart.}

THE OLD STONE CROSS

A STATESMAN is an easy man,
He tells his lies by rote;
A journalist makes up his lies
And takes you by the throat;
So stay at home' and drink your beer
And let the neighbours' vote,
Said the man in the golden breastplate
Under the old stone Cross.
Because this age and the next age
Engender in the ditch,
No man can know a happy man
From any passing wretch;
If Folly link with Elegance

No man knows which is which,
<1Said the man in the golden breastplate
Under the old stone Cross.>1
But actors lacking music
Do most excite my spleen,
They say it is more human
To shuffle, grunt and groan,
Not knowing what unearthly stuff
Rounds a mighty scene,
<1Said the man in the golden breastplate
Under the old stone Cross.>1

ON THOSE THAT HATED "THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD",

ONCE, when midnight smote the air,
Eunuchs ran through Hell and met
On every crowded street to stare
Upon great Juan riding by:
Even like these to rail and sweat
Staring upon his sinewy thigh.

OWEN AHERNE AND HIS DANCERS

A STRANGE thing surely that my Heart, when love had come unsought
Upon the Norman upland or in that poplar shade,
Should find no burden but itself and yet should be worn out.
It could not bear that burden and therefore it went mad.

PARNELL

PARNELL came down the road, he said to a cheering man:
"Ireland shall get her freedom and you still break stone.

FROM A FULL MOON IN MARCH

PARNELL'S FUNERAL

UNDER the Great Comedian's tomb the crowd.
A bundle of tempestuous cloud is blown
About the sky; where that is clear of cloud
Brightness remains; a brighter star shoots down;
What shudders run through all that animal blood?
What is this sacrifice? Can someone there
Recall the Cretan barb that pierced a star?
Rich foliage that the starlight glittered through,
A frenzied crowd, and where the branches sprang
A beautiful seated boy; a sacred bow;
A woman, and an arrow on a string;
A pierced boy, image of a star laid low.
That woman, the Great Mother imaging,
Cut out his heart. Some master of design
Stamped boy and tree upon Sicilian coin.
An age is the reversal of an age:
When strangers murdered Emmet, Fitzgerald, Tone,
We lived like men that watch a painted stage.
What matter for the scene, the scene once gone:
It had not touched our lives. But popular rage,
i{Hysterica passio} dragged this quarry down.
None shared our guilt; nor did we play a part

Upon a painted stage when we devoured his heart.
Come, fix upon me that accusing eye.
I thirst for accusation. All that was sung.
All that was said in Ireland is a lie
Bred out of the contagion of the throng,
Saving the rhyme rats hear before they die.
Leave nothing but the things that belong
To this bare soul, let all men judge that can
Whether it be an animal or a man.
The rest I pass, one sentence I unsay.

Had de Valera eaten Parnell's heart
No loose-lipped demagogue had won the day.
No civil rancour torn the land apart.
Had Cosgrave eaten Parnell's heart, the land's
Imagination had been satisfied,
Or lacking that, government in such hands.
O'Higgins its sole statesman had not died.
Had even O'Duffy -- but I name no more --
Their school a crowd, his master solitude;
Through Jonathan Swift's clark grove he passed, and there
plucked bitter wisdom that enriched his blood.

PEACE

AH, that Time could touch a form
That could show what Homer's age
Bred to be a hero's wage.
"Were not all her life but storm
Would not painters paint a form
Of such noble lines," I said,
"Such a delicate high head,
All that sternness amid charm,
All that sweetness amid strength?"
Ah, but peace that comes at length,
Came when Time had touched her form.

A SONG FROM "THE PLAYER QUEEN"

MY mother dandled me and sang,
"How young it is, how young!"
And made a golden cradle
That on a willow swung.
"He went away," my mother sang,
"When I was brought to bed,"
And all the while her needle pulled
The gold and silver thread.
She pulled the thread and bit the thread
And made a golden gown,
And wept because she had dreamt that I
Was born to wear a crown.
"When she was got," my mother sang,
I heard a sea-mew cry,
And saw a flake of the yellow foam
That dropped upon my thigh."
How therefore could she help but braid
The gold into my hair,
And dream that I should carry
The golden top of care?

POLITICS

HOW can I, that girl standing there,
My attention fix
On Roman or on Russian
Or on Spanish politics?
Yet here's a travelled man that knows
What he talks about,
And there's a politician
That has read and thought,
And maybe what they say is true
Of war and war's alarms,
But O that I were young again
And held her in my arms!

PRESENCES

THIS night has been so strange that it seemed
As if the hair stood up on my head.
From going-down of the sun I have dreamed
That women laughing, or timid or wild,
In rustle of lace or silken stuff,
Climbed up my creaking stair. They had read
All I had rhymed of that monstrous thing
Returned and yet unrequited love.
They stood in the door and stood between
My great wood lectern and the fire
Till I could hear their hearts beating:
One is a harlot, and one a child
That never looked upon man with desire.
And one, it may be, a queen.

QUARREL IN OLD AGE

WHERE had her sweetness gone?
What fanatics invent
In this blind bitter town,
Fantasy or incident
Not worth thinking of,
put her in a rage.
I had forgiven enough
That had forgiven old age.
All lives that has lived;
So much is certain;
Old sages were not deceived:
Somewhere beyond the curtain
Of distorting days
Lives that lonely thing
That shone before these eyes
Targeted, trod like Spring.

RECONCILIATION

SOME may have blamed you that you took away
The verses that could move them on the day
When, the ears being deafened, the sight of the eyes blind
With lightning, you went from me, and I could find

Nothing to make a song about but kings,
Helmets, and swords, and half-forgotten things
That were like memories of you -- but now
We'll out, for the world lives as long ago;
And while we're in our laughing, weeping fit,
Hurl helmets, crowns, and swords into the pit.
But, dear, cling close to me; since you were gone,
My barren thoughts have chilled me to the bone.

REMORSE FOR INTEMPERATE SPEECH

I RANTED to the knave and fool,
But outgrew that school,
Would transform the part,
Fit audience found, but cannot rule
My fanatic heart.
I sought my betters: though in each
Fine manners, liberal speech,
Turn hatred into sport,
Nothing said or done can reach
My fanatic heart,
Out of Ireland have we come.
Great hatred, little room,
Maimed us at the start.
I carry from my mother's womb
A fanatic heart.

THE RESULTS OF THOUGHT

ACQUAINTANCE; companion;
One dear brilliant woman;
The best-endowed, the elect,
All by their youth undone,
All, all, by that inhuman
Bitter glory wrecked.
But I have straightened out
Ruin, wreck and wrack;
I toiled long years and at length
Came to so deep a thought
I can summon back
All their wholesome strength.
What images are these
That turn dull-eyed away,
Or Shift Time's filthy load,
Straighten aged knees,
Hesitate or stay?
What heads shake or nod?

ROGER CASEMENT

I SAY that Roger Casement
Did what he had to do.
He died upon the gallows,
But that is nothing new.

Afraid they might be beaten
Before the bench of Time,
They turned a trick by forgery
And blackened his good name.

A perjurer stood ready
To prove their forgery true;
They gave it out to all the world,
And that is something new;

For Spring Rice had to whisper it,
Being their Ambassador,
And then the speakers got it
And writers by the score.

Come Tom and Dick, come all the troop
That cried it far and wide,
Come from the forger and his desk,
Desert the perjurer's side;

Come speak your bit in public
That some amends be made
To this most gallant gentleman
That is in quicklime laid.

THE ROSE OF BATTLE

ROSE of all Roses, Rose of all the World!
The tall thought-woven sails, that flap unfurled
Above the tide of hours, trouble the air,
And God's bell buoyed to be the water's care;
While hushed from fear, or loud with hope, a band
With blown, spray-dabbled hair gather at hand,
i{Turn if you may from battles never done,}
I call, as they go by me one by one,
i{Danger no refuge holds, and war no peace,}
i{For him who hears love sing and never cease,}
i{Beside her clean-swept hearth, her quiet shade:}
i{But gather all for whom no love hath made}
i{A woven silence, or but came to cast}
i{A song into the air, and singing passed}
i{To smile on the pale dawn; and gather you}
i{Who have sought more than is in rain or dew,}
i{Or in the sun and moon, or on the earth,}
i{Or sighs amid the wandering, starry mirth,}
i{Or comes in laughter from the sea's sad lips,}
i{And wage God's battles in the long grey ships.}
i{The sad, the lonely, the insatiable,}
i{To these Old Night shall all her mystery tell;}
i{God's bell has claimed them by the little cry}
i{Of their sad hearts, that may not live nor die.}
Rose of all Roses, Rose of all the World!
You, too, have come where the dim tides are hurled
Upon the wharves of sorrow, and heard ring
The bell that calls us on; the sweet far thing.
Beauty grown sad with its eternity
Made you of us, and of the dim grey sea.
Our long ships loose thought-woven sails and wait,
For God has bid them share an equal fate;
And when at last, defeated in His wars,
They have gone down under the same white stars,
We shall no longer hear the little cry
Of our sad hearts, that may not live nor die.

THE ROSE OF THE WORLD

WHO dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?
For these red lips, with all their mournful pride,
Mournful that no new wonder may betide,
Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,
And Usna's children died.

We and the labouring world are passing by:
Amid men's souls, that waver and give place
Like the pale waters in their wintry race,
Under the passing stars, foam of the sky,
Lives on this lonely face.

Bow down, archangels, in your dim abode:
Before you were, or any hearts to beat,
Weary and kind one lingered by His seat;
He made the world to be a grassy road
Before her wandering feet.

DOWN BY THE SALLEY GARDENS

DOWN by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white
feet.

She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the
tree;

But I, being young and foolish, with her would not
agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white
hand.

She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

THE SHADOWY WATERS

To Lady Gregory

I walked among the seven woods of Coole:
Shan-walla, where a willow-hordered pond
Gathers the wild duck from the winter dawn;
Shady Kyle-dortha; sunnier Kyle-na-no,
Where many hundred squirrels are as happy
As though they had been hidden by green houghs
Where old age cannot find them; Paire-na-lee,
Where hazel and ash and privet hbind the paths:
Dim Pairc-na-carraig, where the wild bees fling
Their sudden fragrances on the green air;
Dim Pairc-na-tarav, where enchanted eyes
Have seen immortal, mild, proud shadows walk;
Dim Inchy wood, that hides badger and fox
And marten-cat, and borders that old wood
Wise Buddy Early called the wicked wood:
Seven odours, seven murmurs, seven woods.
I had not eyes like those enchanted eyes,
Yet dreamed that beings happier than men
Moved round me in the shadows, and at night
My dreams were clown by voices and by fires;
And the images I have woven in this story
Of Forgael and Dectora and the empty waters
Moved round me in the voices and the fires,

And more I may not write of, for they that cleave
The waters of sleep can make a chattering tongue
Heavy like stone, their wisdom being half silence.
How shall I name you, immortal, mild, proud shadows?
I only know that all we know comes from you,
And that you come from Eden on flying feet.
Is Eden far away, or do you hide
From human thought, as hares and mice and coney
That run before the reaping-hook and lie
In the last ridge of the barley? Do our woods

And winds and ponds cover more quiet woods,
More shining winds, more star-glimmering ponds?
Is Eden out of time and out of space?
And do you gather about us when pale light
Shining on water and fallen among leaves,
And winds blowing from flowers, and whirr of feathers
And the green quiet, have uplifted the heart?
I have made this poem for you, that men may read it
Before they read of Forgael and Dectora,
As men in the old times, before the harps began,
Poured out wine for the high invisible ones.

SIXTEEN DEAD MEN

O BUT we talked at large before
The sixteen men were shot,
But who can talk of give and take,
What should be and what not
While those dead men are loitering there
To stir the boiling pot?
You say that we should still the land
Till Germany's overcome;
But who is there to argue that
Now Pearse is deaf and dumb?
And is their logic to outweigh
MacDonagh's bony thumb?
how could you dream they'd listen
That have an ear alone
For those new comrades they have found,
Lord Edward and Wolfe Tone,
Or meddle with our give and take
That converse bone to bone?

SOLOMON AND THE WITCH

AND thus declared that Arab lady:
"Last night, where under the wild moon
On grassy mattress I had laid me,
Within my arms great Solomon,
I suddenly cried out in a strange tongue
Not his, not mine."
Who understood
Whatever has been said, sighed, sung,
Howled, miau-d, barked, brayed, belled, yelled, cried, crowed,
Thereon replied: "A cockerel
Crew from a blossoming apple bough
Three hundred years before the Fall,
And never crew again till now,
And would not now but that he thought,

Chance being at one with Choice at last,
 All that the brigand apple brought
 And this foul world were dead at last.
 He that crowed out eternity
 Thought to have crowed it in again.
 For though love has a spider's eye
 To find out some appropriate pain --
 Aye, though all passion's in the glance --
 For every nerve, and tests a lover
 With cruelties of Choice and Chance;
 And when at last that murder's over
 Maybe the bride-bed brings despair,
 For each an imagined image brings
 And finds a real image there;
 Yet the world ends when these two things,
 Though several, are a single light,
 When oil and wick are burned in one;
 Therefore a blessed moon last night
 Gave Sheba to her Solomon.'
 "Yet the world stays.'
 "If that be so,
 Your cockerel found us in the wrong
 Although he thought it. worth a crow.
 Maybe an image is too strong
 Or maybe is not strong enough.'
 "The night has fallen; not a sound
 In the forbidden sacred grove
 Unless a petal hit the ground,
 Nor any human sight within it
 But the crushed grass where we have lain!
 And the moon is wilder every minute.
 O! Solomon! let us try again.'

ALTERNATIVE SONG FOR THE SEVERED HEAD
 IN "THE KING OF THE GREAT CLOCK TOWER"

SADDLE and ride, I heard a man say,
 Out of Ben Bulben and Knocknarea,
 i{What says the Clock in the Great Clock Tower?}
 All those tragic characters ride
 But turn from Rosses' crawling tide,
 The meet's upon the mountain-side.
 i{A slow low note and an iron bell.}
 What brought them there so far from their home.
 Cuchulain that fought night long with the foam,
 i{What says the Clock in the Great Clock Tower?}
 Niamh that rode on it; lad and lass
 That sat so still and played at the chess?
 What but heroic wantonness?
 i{A slow low note and an iron bell.}
 Aleel, his Countess; Hanrahan
 That seemed but a wild wenching man;
 i{What says the Clock in the Great Clock Tower?}
 And all alone comes riding there
 The King that could make his people stare,
 Because he had feathers instead of hair.
 i{A slow low note and an iron bell.}

SPILT MILK

WE that have done and thought,
That have thought and done,
Must ramble, and thin out
Like milk spilt on a stone.

THE STATESMAN'S HOLIDAY

I LIVED among great houses,
Riches drove out rank,
Base drove out the better blood,
And mind and body shrank.
No Oscar ruled the table,
But I'd a troop of friends
That knowing better talk had gone
Talked of odds and ends.
Some knew what ailed the world
But never said a thing,
So I have picked a better trade
And night and morning sing:
i{Tall dames go walking in grass-green Avalon.}

Am I a great Lord Chancellor
That slept upon the Sack?
Commanding officer that tore
The khaki from his back?
Or am I de Valera,
Or the King of Greece,
Or the man that made the motors?
Ach, call me what you please!
Here's a Montenegrin lute,
And its old sole string
Makes me sweet music
And I delight to sing:
i{Tall dames go walking in grass-green Avalon.}

With boys and girls about him.
With any sort of clothes,
With a hat out of fashion,
With Old patched shoes,
With a ragged bandit cloak,
With an eye like a hawk,
With a stiff straight back,
With a strutting turkey walk.
With a bag full of pennies,
With a monkey on a chain,
With a great cock's feather,
With an old foul tune.
i{Tall dames go walking in grass-green Avalon.}

A STICK OF INCENSE

Whence did all that fury come?
From empty tomb or Virgin womb?
Saint Joseph thought the world would melt
But liked the way his finger smelt.

SUPERNATURAL SONGS

I

i{Ribb at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn}
HDRBECAUSE you have found me in the pitch-dark night
With open book you ask me what I do.
Mark and digest my tale, carry it afar
To those that never saw this tonsured head
Nor heard this voice that ninety years have cracked.
Of Baile and Aillinn you need not speak,
All know their tale, all know what leaf and twig,
What juncture of the apple and the yew,
Surmount their bones; but speak what none ha've
heard.

The miracle that gave them such a death
Transfigured to pure substance what had once
Been bone and sinew; when such bodies join
There is no touching here, nor touching there,
Nor straining joy, but whole is joined to whole;
For the intercourse of angels is a light
Where for its moment both seem lost, consumed.
Here in the pitch-dark atmosphere above
The trembling of the apple and the yew,
Here on the anniversary of their death,
The anniversary of their first embrace,
Those lovers, purified by tragedy,
Hurry into each other's arms; these eyes,
By water, herb and solitary prayer
Made aquiline, are open to that light.
Though somewhat broken by the leaves, that light
Lies in a circle on the grass; therein
I turn the pages of my holy book.

II

i{Ribb denounces Patrick}
An abstract Greek absurdity has crazed the man --
Recall that masculine Trinity. Man, woman, child (a
daughter or a son),
That's how all natural or supernatural stories run.
Natural and supernatural with the self-same ring are
wed.
As man, as beast, as an ephemeral fly begets, Godhead
begets Godhead,
For things below are copies, the Great Smaragdine
Tablet said.
Yet all must copy copies, all increase their kind;
When the conflagration of their passion sinks, damped
by the body or the mind,
That juggling nature mounts, her coil in their em-
braces twined.
The mirror-scaled serpent is multiplicity,
But all that run in couples, on earth, in flood or air,
share God that is but three,
And could beget or bear themselves could they but
love as He.

III

i{Ribb in Ecstasy}
What matter that you understood no word!
Doubtless I spoke or sang what I had heard
In broken sentences. My soul had found
All happiness in its own cause or ground.
Godhead on Godhead in sexual spasm begot
Godhead. Some shadow fell. My soul forgot
Those amorous cries that out of quiet come

And must the common round of day resume.

IV

i{There}

There all the barrel-hoops are knit,
There all the serpent-tails are bit,
There all the gyres converge in one,
There all the planets drop in the Sun.

V

i{Ribb considers Christian Love insufficient}

Why should I seek for love or study it?
It is of God and passes human wit.
I study hatred with great diligence,
For that's a passion in my own control,
A sort of besom that can clear the soul
Of everything that is not mind or sense.
Why do I hate man, woman Or event?
That is a light my jealous soul has sent.
From terror and deception freed it can
Discover impurities, can show at last
How soul may walk when all such things are past,
How soul could walk before such things began.
Then my delivered soul herself shall learn
A darker knowledge and in hatred turn
From every thought of God mankind has had.
Thought is a garment and the soul's a bride
That cannot in that trash and tinsel hide:
Hatred of God may bring the soul to God.
At stroke of midnight soul cannot endure
A bodily or mental furniture.
What can she take until her Master give!
Where can she look until He make the show!
What can she know until He bid her know!
How can she live till in her blood He live!

VI

i{He and She}

As the moon sidles up
Must she sidle up,
As trips the scared moon
Away must she trip:
"His light had struck me blind
Dared I stop'.
She sings as the moon sings:
"I am I, am I;
The greater grows my light
The further that I fly'.
All creation shivers
With that sweet cry

VII

i{What Magic Drum?}

He holds him from desire, all but stops his breathing
lest
primordial Motherhood forsake his limbs, the child no
longer rest,
Drinking joy as it were milk upon his breast.
Through light-obliterating garden foliage what magic
drum?
Down limb and breast or down that glimmering belly
move his mouth and sinewy tongue.
What from the forest came? What beast has licked its
young?

VIII

i{Whence had they come?}

Eternity is passion, girl or boy
Cry at the onset of their sexual joy
"For ever and for ever"; then awake
Ignorant what Dramatis personae spake;
A passion-driven exultant man sings out
Sentences that he has never thought;
The Flagellant lashes those submissive loins
Ignorant what that dramatist enjoins,
What master made the lash. Whence had they come,
The hand and lash that beat down frigid Rome?
What sacred drama through her body heaved
When world-transforming Charlemagne was con-
ceived?

IX

i{The Four Ages of Man}
He with body waged a fight,
But body won; it walks upright.
Then he struggled with the heart;
Innocence and peace depart.
Then he struggled with the mind;
His proud heart he left behind.
Now his wars on God begin;
At stroke of midnight God shall win.

X

i{Conjunctions}
If Jupiter and Saturn meet,
What a cop of mummy wheat!
The sword's a cross; thereon He died:
On breast of Mars the goddess sighed.

XI

i{A Needle's Eye}
All the stream that's roaring by
Came out of a needle's eye;
Things unborn, things that are gone,
From needle's eye still goad it on.

XII

i{Meru}
Civilisation is hooped together, brought
Under a mle, under the semblance of peace
By manifold illusion; but man's life is thought,
And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
Ravening through century after century,
Ravening, raging, and uprooting that he may come
Into the desolation of reality:
Egypt and Greece, good-bye, and good-bye, Rome!
Hermits upon Mount Meru or Everest,
Caverned in night under the drifted snow,
Or where that snow and winter's dreadful blast
Beat down upon their naked bodies, know
That day brings round the night, that before dawn
His glory and his monuments are gone.

SWIFT'S EPITAPH

SWIFT has sailed into his rest;
Savage indignation there
Cannot lacerate his breast.

Imitate him if you dare,
World-besotted traveller; he
Served human liberty.

THAT THE NIGHT COME

SHE lived in storm and strife,
Her soul had such desire
For what proud death may bring
That it could not endure
The common good of life,
But lived as 'twere a king
That packed his marriage day
With banneret and pennon,
Trumpet and kettledrum,
And the outrageous cannon,
To bundle time away
That the night come.

THE BLESSED

CUMHAL called out, bending his head,
Till Dathi came and stood,
With a blink in his eyes, at the cave-mouth,
Between the wind and the wood.
And Cumhal said, bending his knees,
"I have come by the windy way
And learn to pray when you pray.
"I can bring you salmon out of the streams
And heron out of the skies."
But Dathi folded his hands and smiled
With the secrets of God in his eyes.
And Cumhal saw like a drifting smoke
All manner of blessed souls,
Women and children, young men with books,
And old men with croziers and stoles.
"praise God and God's Mother,' Dathi said,
"For God and God's Mother have sent
The blessedest souls that walk in the world
To fill your heart with content."
"And which is the blessedest,' Cumhal said,
"Where all are comely and good?
Is it these that with golden thuribles
Are singing about the wood?"
"My eyes are blinking,' Dathi said,
"With the secrets of God half blind,
But I can see where the wind goes
And follow the way of the wind;
"And blessedness goes where the wind goes,
And when it is gone we are dead;
I see the blessedest soul in the world
And he nods a drunken head.
"O blessedness comes in the night and the day
And whither the wise heart knows;
And one has seen in the redness of wine
The Incorruptible Rose,
"That drowsily drops faint leaves on him
And the sweetness of desire,
While time and the world are ebbing away

In twilights of dew and of fire."

THE CAT AND THE MOON

THE cat went here and there
And the moon spun round like a top,
And the nearest kin of the moon,

The creeping cat, looked up.
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,
For, wander and wail as he would,
The pure cold light in the sky
Troubled his animal blood.
Minnaloushe runs in the grass
Lifting his delicate feet.
Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance?
When two close kindred meet.
What better than call a dance?
Maybe the moon may learn,
Tired of that courtly fashion,
A new dance turn.
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
From moonlit place to place,
The sacred moon overhead
Has taken a new phase.
Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils
Will pass from change to change,
And that from round to crescent,
From crescent to round they range?
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
Alone, important and wise,
And lifts to the changing moon
His changing eyes.

THE COLD HEAVEN

SUDDENLY I saw the cold and rook-delighting heaven
That seemed as though ice burned and was but the
more ice,
And thereupon imagination and heart were driven
So wild that every casual thought of that and this
Vanished, and left but memories, that should be out
of season
With the hot blood of youth, of love crossed long ago;
And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,
Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,
Riddled with light. Ah! when the ghost begins to
quicken,
Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent
Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken
By the injustice of the skies for punishment?

THE CRAZED MOON

CRAZED through much child-bearing
The moon is staggering in the sky;
Moon-struck by the despairing
Glances of her wandering eye
We grope, and grope in vain,

For children born of her pain.
Children dazed or dead!
When she in all her virginal pride
First trod on the mountain's head
What stir ran through the countryside
Where every foot obeyed her glance!
What manhood led the dance!
Fly-catchers of the moon,
Our hands are blenched, our fingers seem
But slender needles of bone;
Blenched by that malicious dream
They are spread wide that each
May rend what comes in reach.

THE DOLLS

A DOLL in the doll-maker's house
Looks at the cradle and bawls:
"That is an insult to us."
But the oldest of all the dolls,
Who had seen, being kept for show,
Generations of his sort,
Out-screams the whole shelf: 'Although
There's not a man can report
Evil of this place,
The man and the woman bring
Hither, to our disgrace,
A noisy and filthy thing.'
Hearing him groan and stretch
The doll-maker's wife is aware
Her husband has heard the wretch,
And crouched by the arm of his chair,
She murmurs into his ear,
Head upon shoulder leant:
"My dear, my dear, O dear.
It was an accident.'

THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY

WHEN I play on my fiddle in Dooney.
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Mocharabuiee.
I passed my brother and cousin:
They read in their books of prayer;
I read in my book of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.
When we come at the end of time
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old spirits,
But call me first through the gate;
For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle,
And the merry love to dance:
And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With "Here is the fiddler of Dooney!"
And dance like a wave of the sea.

THE FISHERMAN

ALTHOUGH I can see him still.
The freckled man who goes
To a grey place on a hill
In grey Connemara clothes
At dawn to cast his flies,
It's long since I began
To call up to the eyes
This wise and simple man.
All day I'd looked in the face
What I had hoped 'twould be
To write for my own race
And the reality;
The living men that I hate,
The dead man that I loved,
The craven man in his seat,
The insolent unreprieved,
And no knave brought to book
Who has won a drunken cheer,
The witty man and his joke
Aimed at the commonest ear,
The clever man who cries
The catch-cries of the clown,
The beating down of the wise
And great Art beaten down.
Maybe a twelvemonth since
Suddenly I began,
In scorn of this audience,
Imagining a man,
And his sun-freckled face,
And grey Connemara cloth,
Climbing up to a place
Where stone is dark under froth,
And the down-turn of his wrist
When the flies drop in the stream;
A man who does not exist,
A man who is but a dream;
And cried, "Before I am old
I shall have written him one
poem maybe as cold
And passionate as the dawn.'

THE FOOL BY THE ROADSIDE

WHEN all works that have
From cradle run to grave
From grave to cradle run instead;
When thoughts that a fool
Has wound upon a spool
Are but loose thread, are but loose thread;
When cradle and spool are past
And I mere shade at last
Coagulate of stuff
Transparent like the wind,
I think that I may find
A faithful love, a faithful love.

THE GREY ROCK

i{Poets with whom I learned my trade.}
i{Companions of the Cheshire Cheese,}
i{Here's an old story I've remade,}
i{Imagining 'twould better please}
i{Your cars than stories now in fashion,}
i{Though you may think I waste my breath}
i{Pretending that there can be passion}
i{That has more life in it than death,}
i{And though at bottling of your wine}
i{Old wholesome Goban had no say;}
i{The moral's yours because it's mine.}
When cups went round at close of day --
Is not that how good stories run? --
The gods were sitting at the board
In their great house at Slievenamon.
They sang a drowsy song, Or snored,
For all were full of wine and meat.
The smoky torches made a glare
On metal Goban 'd hammered at,
On old deep silver rolling there
Or on some still unemptied cup
That he, when frenzy stirred his thews,
Had hammered out on mountain top
To hold the sacred stuff he brews
That only gods may buy of him.
Now from that juice that made them wise
All those had lifted up the dim
Imaginations of their eyes,
For one that was like woman made
Before their sleepy eyelids ran
And trembling with her passion said,
"Come out and dig for a dead man,
Who's burrowing Somewhere in the ground
And mock him to his face and then
Hollo him on with horse and hound,
For he is the worst of all dead men.'
<1We should be dazed and terror-struck,
If we but saw in dreams that room,
Those wine-drenched eyes, and curse our luck
That emptied all our days to come.
I knew a woman none could please,
Because she dreamed when but a child
Of men and women made like these;
And after, when her blood ran wild,
Had ravelled her own story out,
And said, "In two or in three years
I needs must marry some poor lout,'
And having said it, burst in tears.
Since, tavern comrades, you have died,
Maybe your images have stood,
Mere bone and muscle thrown aside,
Before that roomful or as good.
You had to face your ends when young --
'Twas wine or women, or some curse --
But never made a poorer song
That you might have a heavier purse,>1
i{Nor gave loud service to a cause}
i{That you might have a troop of friends,}
i{You kept the Muses' sterner laws,}

i{And unrepenting faced your ends,}
i{And therefore earned the right -- and yet}
i{Dowson and Johnson most I praise -- }
i{To troop with those the world's forgot,}
i{And copy their proud steady gaze.}
"The Danish troop was driven out
Between the dawn and dusk,' she said;
"Although the event was long in doubt.
Although the King of Ireland's dead
And half the kings, before sundown
All was accomplished.
"When this day
Murrrough, the King of Ireland's son,
Foot after foot was giving way,
He and his best troops back to back
Had perished there, but the Danes ran,
Stricken with panic from the attack,
The shouting of an unseen man;
And being thankful Murrrough found,
Led by a footsole dipped in blood
That had made prints upon the ground,
Where by old thorn-trees that man stood;
And though when he gazed here and there,
He had but gazed on thorn-trees, spoke,
""Who is the friend that seems but air
And yet could give so fine a stroke?''
Thereon a young man met his eye,
Who said, ""Because she held me in
Her love, and would not have me die,
Rock-nurtured Aoife took a pin,
And pushing it into my shirt,
Promised that for a pin's sake
No man should see to do me hurt;
But there it's gone; I will not take
The fortune that had been my shame
Seeing, King's son, what wounds you have. --
'Twas roundly spoke, but when night came
He had betrayed me to his grave,
For he and the King's son were dead.
I'd promised him two hundred years,
And when for all I'd done or said --
And these immortal eyes shed tears --
He claimed his country's need was most,
I'd saved his life, yet for the sake
Of a new friend he has turned a ghost.
What does he care if my heart break?
I call for spade and horse and hound
That we may harry him.' Thereon
She cast herself upon the ground
And rent her clothes and made her moan:
"Why are they faithless when their might
Is from the holy shades that rove
The grey rock and the windy light?
Why should the faithfullest heart most love
The bitter sweetness of false faces?
Why must the lasting love what passes,
Why are the gods by men betrayed?'
But thereon every god stood up
With a slow smile and without sound,
And Stretching forth his arm and cup

To where she moaned upon the ground,
Suddenly drenched her to the skin;
And she with Goban's wine adrip,
No more remembering what had been.
Stared at the gods with laughing lip.
i{I have kept my faith, though faith was tried,}
i{To that rock-born, rock-wandering foot,}
i{And thc world's altered since you died,}
i{And I am in no good repute}
i{With the loud host before the sea,}
i{That think sword-strokes were better meant}
i{Than lover's music -- let that be,}
i{So that the wandering foot's content.}

THE HAWK

"CALL down the hawk from the air;
Let him be hooded or caged
Till the yellow eye has grown mild,
For larder and spit are bare,
The old cook enraged,
The scullion gone wild.'
"I will not be clapped in a hood,
Nor a cage, nor alight upon wrist,
Now I have learnt to be proud
Hovering over the wood
In the broken mist
Or tumbling cloud.'
"What tumbling cloud did you cleave,
Yellow-eyed hawk of the mind,
Last evening? that I, who had sat
Dumbfounded before a knave,
Should give to my friend
A pretence of wit.'

THE HOUR BEFORE DAWN

A CURSING rogue with a merry face,
A bundle of rags upon a crutch,
Stumbled upon that windy place
Called Cruachan, and it was as much
As the one sturdy leg could do
To keep him upright while he cursed.
He had counted, where long years ago
Queen Maeve's nine Maines had been nursed,
A pair of lapwings, one old sheep,
And not a house to the plain's edge,
When close to his right hand a heap
Of grey stones and a rocky ledge
Reminded him that he could make.
If he but shifted a few stones,
A shelter till the daylight broke.
But while he fumbled with the stones
They toppled over; "Were it not
I have a lucky wooden shin
I had been hurt'; and toppling brought
Before his eyes, where stones had been,
A dark deep hollow in the rock.
He gave a gasp and thought to have fled,

Being certain it was no right rock
Because an ancient history said
Hell Mouth lay open near that place,
And yet stood still, because inside
A great lad with a beery face
Had tucked himself away beside
A ladle and a tub of beer,
And snored, no phantom by his look.
So with a laugh at his own fear
He crawled into that pleasant nook.
"Night grows uneasy near the dawn
Till even I sleep light; but who
Has tired of his own company?
What one of Maeve's nine brawling sons
Sick of his grave has wakened me?
But let him keep his grave for once
That I may find the sleep I have lost."
What care I if you sleep or wake?
But I'll have no man call me ghost."
Say what you please, but from daybreak
I'll sleep another century."
And I will talk before I sleep
And drink before I talk.'
And he
Had dipped the wooden ladle deep
Into the sleeper's tub of beer
Had not the sleeper started up.
Before you have dipped it in the beer
I dragged from Goban's mountain-top
I'll have assurance that you are able
To value beer; no half-legged fool
Shall dip his nose into my ladle
Merely for stumbling on this hole
In the bad hour before the dawn."
Why beer is only beer.'
"But say
"I'll sleep until the winter's gone,
Or maybe to Midsummer Day,''
And drink and you will sleep that length.
"I'd like to sleep till winter's gone
Or till the sun is in his strength.
This blast has chilled me to the bone.'
"I had no better plan at first.
I thought to wait for that or this;
Maybe the weather was accursed
Or I had no woman there to kiss;
So slept for half a year or so;
But year by year I found that less
Gave me such pleasure I'd forgo
Even a half-hour's nothingness,
And when at one year's end I found
I had not waked a single minute,
I chose this burrow under ground.
I'll sleep away all time within it:
My sleep were now nine centuries
But for those mornings when I find
The lapwing at their foolish dies
And the sheep bleating at the wind
As when I also played the fool.'
The beggar in a rage began

Upon his hunkers in the hole,
 "It's plain that you are no right man
 To mock at everything I love
 As if it were not worth, the doing.
 I'd have a merry life enough
 If a good Easter wind were blowing,
 And though the winter wind is bad
 I should not be too down in the mouth
 For anything you did or said
 If but this wind were in the south.'
 "You cty aloud, O would 'twere spring
 Or that the wind would shift a point,
 And do not know that you would bring,
 If time were suppler in the joint,
 Neither the spring nor the south wind
 But the hour when you shall pass away
 And leave no smoking wick behind,
 For all life longs for the Last Day
 And there's no man but cocks his ear
 To know when Michael's trumpet cries
 "That flesh and bone may disappear,
 And souls as if they were but sighs,
 And there be nothing but God left;
 But, I aone being blessed keep
 Like some old rabbit to my cleft
 And wait Him in a drunken sleep.'
 He dipped his ladle in the tub
 And drank and yawned and stretched him out,
 The other shouted, "You would rob
 My life of every pleasant thought
 And every comfortable thing,
 And so take that and that." Thereon
 He gave him a great pummelling,
 But might have pummelled at a stone
 For all the sleeper knew or cared;
 And after heaped up stone on stone,
 And then, grown weary, prayed and cursed
 And heaped up stone on stone again,
 And prayed and cursed and cursed and bed
 From Maeve and all that juggling plain,
 Nor gave God thanks till overhead
 The clouds were brightening with the dawn.

THE LADY'S SECOND SONG

WHAT sort of man is coming
 To lie between your feet?
 What matter, we are but women.
 Wash; make your body sweet;
 I have cupboards of dried fragrance.
 I can strew the sheet.
 i{The Lord have mercy upon us.}

He shall love my soul as though
 Body were not at all,
 He shall love your body
 Untroubled by the soul,
 Love cram love's two divisions
 Yet keep his substance whole.
 i{The Lord have mercy upon us.}

Soul must learn a love that is
proper to my breast,
Limbs a Love in common
With every noble beast.
If soul may look and body touch,
Which is the more blest?
i{The Lord have mercy upon us.}

THE LEADERS OF THE CROWD

THEY must to keep their certainty accuse
All that are different of a base intent;
Pull down established honour; hawk for news
Whatever their loose fantasy invent
And murmur it with bated breath, as though
The abounding gutter had been Helicon
Or calumny a song. How can they know
Truth flourishes where the student's lamp has shone,
And there alone, that have no Solitude?
So the crowd come they care not what may come.
They have loud music, hope every day renewed
And heartier loves; that lamp is from the tomb.

THE LOVER ASKS FORGIVENESS BECAUSE OF HIS MANY MOODS

IF this importunate heart trouble your peace
With words lighter than air,
Or hopes that in mere hoping flicker and cease;
Crumple the rose in your hair;
And cover your lips with odorous twilight and say,
"O Hearts of wind-blown flame!
O Winds, older than changing of night and day,
That murmuring and longing came
From marble cities loud with tabors of old
In dove-grey faery lands;
From battle-banners, fold upon purple fold,
Queens wrought with glimmering hands;
That saw young Niamh hover with love-lorn face
Above the wandering tide;
And lingered in the hidden desolate place
Where the last Phoenix died,
And wrapped the flames above his holy head;
And still murmur and long:
O piteous Hearts, changing till change be dead
In a tumultuous song':
And cover the pale blossoms of your breast
With your dim heavy hair,
And trouble with a sigh for all things longing for rest
The odorous twilight there.

THE LOVER PLEADS WITH HIS FRIEND FOR OLD FRIENDS

THOUGH you are in your shining days,
Voices among the crowd
And new friends busy with your praise,
Be not unkind or proud,
But think about old friends the most:
Time's bitter flood will rise,

Your beauty perish and be lost
For all eyes but these eyes.

THE LOVER'S SONG

BIRD sighs for the air,
Thought for I know not where,
For the womb the seed sighs.
Now sinks the same rest
On mind, on nest,
On straining thighs.

THE MASK

"PUT off that mask of burning gold
With emerald eyes."
"O no, my dear, you make so bold
To find if hearts be wild and wise,
And yet not cold."
"I would but find what's there to find,
Love or deceit."
"It was the mask engaged your mind,
And after set your heart to beat,
Not what's behind."
"But lest you are my enemy,
I must enquire."
"O no, my dear, let all that be;
What matter, so there is but fire
In you, in me?"

THE MOUNTAIN TOMB

POUR wine and dance if manhood still have pride,
Bring roses if the rose be yet in bloom;
The cataract smokes upon the mountain side,
Our Father Rosicross is in his tomb.
Pull down the blinds, bring fiddle and clarionet
That there be no foot silent in the room
Nor mouth from kissing, nor from wine unwet;
Our Father Rosicross is in his tomb.
In vain, in pain; the cataract still cries;
The everlasting taper lights the gloom;
All wisdom shut into his onyx eyes,
Our Father Rosicross sleeps in his tomb.

THE OLD MEN ADMIRING THEMSELVES IN THE WATER

I HEARD the old, old men say,
"Everything alters,
And one by one we drop away."
They had hands like claws, and their knees
Were twisted like the old thorn-trees
By the waters.
I heard the old, old men say,
"All that's beautiful drifts away
Like the waters."

THE PHASES OF THE MOON

i{An old man cocked his ear upon a bridge;}
i{He and his friend, their faces to the South,}
i{Had trod the uneven road. Their hoots were soiled,}
i{Their Connemara cloth worn out of shape;}
i{They had kept a steady pace as though their beds,}
i{Despite a dwindling and late-risen moon,}
i{Were distant still. An old man cocked his ear.}
i{Aherne.} What made that Sound?
i{Robartes.} A rat or water-hen
Splashed, or an otter slid into the stream.
We are on the bridge; that shadow is the tower,
And the light proves that he is reading still.
He has found, after the manner of his kind,
Mere images; chosen this place to live in
Because, it may be, of the candle-light
From the far tower where Milton's Platonist
Sat late, or Shelley's visionary prince:
The lonely light that Samuel Palmer engraved,
An image of mysterious wisdom won by toil;
And now he seeks in book or manuscript
What he shall never find.
i{Aherne.} Why should not you
Who know it all ring at his door, and speak
Just truth enough to show that his whole life
Will scarcely find for him a broken crust
Of all those truths that are your daily bread;
And when you have spoken take the roads again?
i{Robartes.} He wrote of me in that extravagant style
He had learnt from pater, and to round his tale
Said I was dead; and dead I choose to be.
i{Aherne.} Sing me the changes of the moon once more;
True song, though speech: "mine author sung it me."
i{Robartes.} Twenty-and-eight the phases of the moon,
The full and the moon's dark and all the crescents,
Twenty-and-eight, and yet but six-and-twenty
The cradles that a man must needs be rocked in:
For there's no human life at the full or the dark.
From the first crescent to the half, the dream
But summons to adventure and the man
Is always happy like a bird or a beast;
But while the moon is rounding towards the full
He follows whatever whim's most difficult
Among whims not impossible, and though scarred.
As with the cat-o'-nine-tails of the mind,
His body moulded from within his body
Grows comelier. Eleven pass, and then
Athene takes Achilles by the hair,
Hector is in the dust, Nietzsche is born,
Because the hero's crescent is the twelfth.
And yet, twice born, twice buried, grow he must,
Before the full moon, helpless as a worm.
The thirteenth moon but sets the soul at war
In its own being, and when that war's begun
There is no muscle in the arm; and after,
Under the frenzy of the fourteenth moon,
The soul begins to tremble into stillness,
To die into the labyrinth of itself!
i{Aherne.} Sing out the song; sing to the end, and sing
The strange reward of all that discipline.
i{Robartes.} All thought becomes an image and the soul

Becomes a body: that body and that soul
Too perfect at the full to lie in a cradle,
Too lonely for the traffic of the world:
Body and soul cast out and cast away
Beyond the visible world.
i{Aherne.} All dreams of the soul
End in a beautiful man's or woman's body.
i{Robartes,} Have you not always known it?
i{Aherne.} The song will have it
That those that we have loved got their long fingers
From death, and wounds, or on Sinai's top,
Or from some bloody whip in their own hands.
They ran from cradle to cradle till at last
Their beauty dropped out of the loneliness
Of body and soul.
i{Robartes.} The lover's heart knows that.
i{Aherne.} It must be that the terror in their eyes
Is memory or foreknowledge of the hour
When all is fed with light and heaven is bare.
i{Robartes.} When the moon's full those creatures of the
full
Are met on the waste hills by countrymen
Who shudder and hurry by: body and soul
Estranged amid the strangeness of themselves,
Caught up in contemplation, the mind's eye
Fixed upon images that once were thought;
For separate, perfect, and immovable
Images can break the solitude
Of lovely, satisfied, indifferent eyes.
i{And thereupon with aged, high-pitched voice}
i{Aherne laughed, thinking of the man within,}
i{His sleepless candle and lahorious pen.}
i{Robartes.} And after that the crumbling of the moon.
The soul remembering its loneliness
Shudders in many cradles; all is changed,
It would be the world's servant, and as it serves,
Choosing whatever task's most difficult
Among tasks not impossible, it takes
Upon the body and upon the soul
The coarseness of the drudge.
i{Aherne.} Before the full
It sought itself and afterwards the world.
i{Robartes.} Because you are forgotten, half out of life,
And never wrote a book, your thought is clear.
Reformer, merchant, statesman, learned man,
Dutiful husband, honest wife by turn,
Cradle upon cradle, and all in flight and all
Deformed because there is no deformity
But saves us from a dream.
i{Aherne.} And what of those
That the last servile crescent has set free?
i{Robartes.} Because all dark, like those that are all light,
They are cast beyond the verge, and in a cloud,
Crying to one another like the bats;
And having no desire they cannot tell
What's good or bad, or what it is to triumph
At the perfection of one's own obedience;
And yet they speak what's blown into the mind;
Deformed beyond deformity, unformed,
Inspid as the dough before it is baked,

They change their bodies at a word.
i{Aherne.} And then?
i{Rohartes.} When all the dough has been so kneaded up
That it can take what form cook Nature fancies,
The first thin crescent is wheeled round once more.
i{Aherne.} But the escape; the song's not finished yet.
i{Robartes.} Hunchback and Saint and Fool are the last
crescents.
The burning bow that once could shoot an arrow
Out of the up and down, the wagon-wheel
Of beauty's cruelty and wisdom's chatter --
Out of that raving tide -- is drawn betwixt
Deformity of body and of mind.
i{Aherne.} Were not our beds far off I'd ring the bell,
Stand under the rough roof-timbers of the hall
Beside the castle door, where all is stark
Austerity, a place set out for wisdom
That he will never find; I'd play a part;
He would never know me after all these years
But take me for some drunken countryman:
I'd stand and mutter there until he caught
"Hunchback and Sant and Fool," and that they came
Under the three last crescents of the moon.
And then I'd stagger out. He'd crack his wits
Day after day, yet never find the meaning.
i{And then he laughed to think that what seemed hard}
i{Should be so simple -- a bat rose from the hazels}
i{And circled round him with its squeaky cry,}
i{The light in the tower window was put out.}

THE PLAYERS ASK FOR A BLESSING ON THE PSALTERIES AND ON THEMSELVES

i{Three Voices [together].} Hurry to bless the hands that play,
The mouths that speak, the notes and strings,
O masters of the glittering town!
O! lay the shrilly trumpet down,
Though drunken with the flags that sway
Over the ramparts and the towers,
And with the waving of your wings.
i{First Voice.} Maybe they linger by the way.
One gathers up his purple gown;
One leans and mutters by the wall --
He dreads the weight of mortal hours.
i{Second Voice.} O no, O no! they hurry down
Like plovers that have heard the call.
i{Third Voice.} O kinsmen of the Three in One,
O kinsmen, bless the hands that play.
The notes they waken shall live on
When all this heavy history's done;
Our hands, our hands must ebb away.
i{Three Voices [together].} The proud and careless notes live on,
But bless our hands that ebb away.

THE RAGGED WOOD

O HURRY where by water among the trees
The delicate-stepping stag and his lady sigh,
When they have but looked upon their images --
Would none had ever loved but you and I!

Or have you heard that sliding silver-shoed
Pale silver-proud queen-woman of the sky,
When the sun looked out of his golden hood? --
O that none ever loved but you and I!
O hurty to the ragged wood, for there
I will drive all those lovers out and cry --
O my share of the world, O yellow hair!
No one has ever loved but you and I.

THE ROSE

TO THE ROSE UPON THE ROOD OF TIME

i{Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days!}
i{Come near me, while I sing the ancient ways:}
i{Cuchulain battling with the bitter tide;}
i{The Druid, grey, wood-nurtured, quiet-eyed,}
i{Who cast round Fergus dreams, and ruin untold;}
i{And thine own sadness, where of stars, grown old}
i{In dancing silver-sandalled on the sea,}
i{Sing in their high and lonely melody.}
i{Come near, that no more blinded by man's fate,}
i{I find under the boughs of love and hate,}
i{In all poor foolish things that live a day,}
i{Eternal beauty wandering on her way.}
i{Come near, come near, come near -- Ah, leave me still}
i{A little space for the rose-breath to fill!}
i{Lest I no more bear common things that crave;}
i{The weak worm hiding down in its small cave,}
i{The field-mouse running by me in the grass,}
i{And heavy mortal hopes that toil and pass;}
i{But seek alone to hear the strange things said}
i{By God to the bright hearts of those long dead,}
i{And learn to chaunt a tongue men do not know.}
i{Come near; I would, before my time to go,}
i{Sing of old Eire and the ancient ways:}
i{Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days.}

THE SAINT AND THE HUNCHBACK

i{Hunchback.} Stand up and lift your hand and bless
A man that finds great bitterness
In thinking of his lost renown.
A Roman Caesar is held down
Under this hump.

i{Saint.} God tries each man
According to a different plan.
I shall not cease to bless because
I lay about me with the taws
That night and morning I may thrash
Greek Alexander from my flesh,
Augustus Caesar, and after these
That great rogue Alcibiades.

i{Hunchback.} To all that in your flesh have stood
And blessed, I give my gratitude,
Honoured by all in their degrees,
But most to Alcibiades.

THE SECOND COMING

TURNING and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of i{Spiritus Mundi}
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at laSt,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

THE SEVEN SAGES

i{The First.} My great-grandfather spoke to Edmund Burke
In Grattan's house.
i{The Second.} My great-grandfather shared
A pot-house bench with Oliver Goldsmith once.
i{The Third.} My great-grandfather's father talked of music,
Drank tar-water with the Bishop of Cloyne.
i{The Fourth.} But mine saw Stella once.
i{The Fifth.} Whence came our thought?
i{The Sixth.} From four great minds that hated Whiggery.
i{The Fifth.} Burke was a Whig.
i{The Sixth.} Whether they knew or not,
Goldsmith and Burke, Swift and the Bishop of Cloyne
All hated Whiggery; but what is Whiggery?
A levelling, rancorous, rational sort of mind
That never looked out of the eye of a saint
Or out of drunkard's eye.
i{The Seventh.} All's Whiggery now,
But we old men are massed against the world.
i{The First.} American colonies, Ireland, France and India
Harried, and Burke's great melody against it.
i{The Second.} Oliver Goldsmith sang what he had seen,
Roads full of beggars, cattle in the fields,
But never saw the trefoil stained with blood,
The avenging leaf those fields raised up against it.
i{The Fourth.} The tomb of Swift wears it away.
i{The Third.} A voice
Soft as the rustle of a reed from Cloyne
That gathers volume; now a thunder-clap.
i{The Sixth.} What schooling had these four?
i{The Seventh.} They walked the roads
Mimicking what they heard, as children mimic;
They understood that wisdom comes of beggary.

THE SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS

I WENT out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.
When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire aflame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And some one called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.
Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lads and hilly lands.
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.

THE STATUES

PYTHAGORAS planned it. Why did the people stare?
His numbers, though they moved or seemed to move
In marble or in bronze, lacked character.
But boys and girls, pale from the imagined love
Of solitary beds, knew what they were,
That passion could bring character enough,
And pressed at midnight in some public place
Live lips upon a plummet-measured face.
No! Greater than Pythagoras, for the men
That with a mallet or a chisel" modelled these
Calculations that look but casual flesh, put down
All Asiatic vague immensities,
And not the banks of oars that swam upon
The many-headed foam at Salamis.
Europe put off that foam when Phidias
Gave women dreams and dreams their looking-glass.
One image crossed the many-headed, sat
Under the tropic shade, grew round and slow,
No Hamlet thin from eating flies, a fat
Dreamer of the Middle Ages. Empty eyeballs knew
That knowledge increases unreality, that
Mirror on mirror mirrored is all the show.
When gong and conch declare the hour to bless
Grimalkin crawls to Buddha's emptiness.
When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side.
What stalked through the post Office? What intellect,
What calculation, number, measurement, replied?
We Irish, born into that ancient sect
But thrown upon this filthy modern tide

And by its formless spawning fury wrecked,
Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace
The lineaments of a plummet-measured face.
April 9,

THE THREE MONUMENTS

THEY hold their public meetings where
Our most renowned patriots stand,
One among the birds of the air,
A stumpier on either hand;
And all the popular statesmen say
That purity built up the State
And after kept it from decay;
And let all base ambition be,
For intellect would make us proud
And pride bring in impurity:
The three old rascals laugh aloud.

THE TRAVAIL OF PASSION

WHEN the flaming lute-thronged angelic door is wide;
When an immortal passion breathes in mortal clay;
Our hearts endure the scourge, the plaited thorns, the way
Crowded with bitter faces, the wounds in palm and side,
The vinegar-heavy sponge, the flowers by Kedron stream;
We will bend down and loosen our hair over you,
That it may drop faint perfume, and be heavy with dew,
Lilies of death-pale hope, roses of passionate dream.

THE VALLEY OF THE BLACK PIG

THE dews drop slowly and dreams gather: unknown
spears
Suddenly hurtle before my dream-awakened eyes,
And then the clash of fallen horsemen and the cries
Of unknown perishing armies beat about my ears.
We who still labour by the cromlech on the shore,
The grey caim on the hill, when day sinks drowned in
dew,
Being weary of the world's empires, bow down to you.
Master of the still stars and of the flaming door.