Rivers to the Sea

by Sara Teasdale

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Rivers to the Sea

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Rivers to the Sea

Author: Sara Teasdale

Release date: July 1, 1996 [eBook #596] Most recently updated: January 1, 2021

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/596

Credits: Produced by Judith Boss

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RIVERS TO THE SEA ***

Produced by Judith Boss

RIVERS TO THE SEA

BY

SARA TEASDALE

To ERNST

CONTENTS

PART I

SPRING NIGHT THE FLIGHT NEW LOVE AND OLD THE LOOK SPRING THE LIGHTED WINDOW THE KISS SWANS THE OLD MAID FROM THE WOOLWORTH TOWER AT NIGHT THE YEARS PEACE APRIL COME MOODS APRIL SONG MAY DAY CROWNED TO A CASTILIAN SONG BROADWAY A WINTER BLUEJAY IN A RESTAURANT JOY IN A RAILROAD STATION IN THE TRAIN TO ONE AWAY SONG DEEP IN THE NIGHT THE INDIA WHARF I SHALL NOT CARE DESERT POOLS LONGING PITY AFTER PARTING ENOUGH ALCHEMY FEBRUARY MORNING MAY NIGHT DUSK IN JUNE LOVE-FREE SUMMER NIGHT, RIVERSIDE IN A SUBWAY STATION AFTER LOVE DOORYARD ROSES A PRAYER

PART II

INDIAN SUMMER THE SEA WIND THE CLOUD THE POOR HOUSE NEW YEAR'S DAWN-BROADWAY THE STAR DOCTORS THE INN OF EARTH IN THE CARPENTER'S SHOP THE CARPENTER'S SON THE MOTHER OF A POET IN MEMORIAM F. O. S TWILIGHT SWALLOW FLIGHT THOUGHTS TO DICK, ON HIS SIXTH BIRTHDAY TO ROSE THE FOUNTAIN THE ROSE DREAMS "I AM NOT YOURS" PIERROT'S SONG NIGHT IN ARIZONA DUSK IN WAR TIME SPRING IN WAR TIME WHILE I MAY DEBT FROM THE NORTH THE LIGHTS OF NEW YORK SEA LONGING THE RIVER LEAVES THE ANSWER

PART III

OVER THE ROOFS A CRY CHANCE IMMORTAL AFTER DEATH TESTAMENT GIFTS

PART IV

FROM THE SEA VIGNETTES OVERSEAS

PART V

SAPPHO

I

SPRING NIGHT

THE park is filled with night and fog, The veils are drawn about the world, The drowsy lights along the paths Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets, Gold and gleaming the misty lake, The mirrored lights like sunken swords, Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be Here with this beauty over me? My throat should ache with praise, and I Should kneel in joy beneath the sky. Oh, beauty are you not enough?

Why am I crying after love With youth, a singing voice and eyes To take earth's wonder with surprise? Why have I put off my pride, Why am I unsatisfied, I for whom the pensive night Binds her cloudy hair with light, I for whom all beauty burns Like incense in a million urns? Oh, beauty, are you not enough? Why am I crying after love?

THE FLIGHT

LOOK back with longing eyes and know that I will follow, Lift me up in your love as a light wind lifts a swallow, Let our flight be far in sun or windy rain— BUT WHAT IF I HEARD MY FIRST LOVE CALLING ME AGAIN?

Hold me on your heart as the brave sea holds the foam, Take me far away to the hills that hide your home; Peace shall thatch the roof and love shall latch the door—

BUT WHAT IF I HEARD MY FIRST LOVE CALLING ME ONCE MORE?

NEW LOVE AND OLD

IN my heart the old love Struggled with the new; It was ghostly waking All night thru.

Dear things, kind things, That my old love said, Ranged themselves reproachfully Round my bed.

But I could not heed them, For I seemed to see The eyes of my new love Fixed on me.

Old love, old love, How can I be true? Shall I be faithless to myself Or to you?

THE LOOK

STREPHON kissed me in the spring, Robin in the fall, But Colin only looked at me And never kissed at all.

Strephon's kiss was lost in jest, Robin's lost in play, But the kiss in Colin's eyes Haunts me night and day.

SPRING

IN Central Park the lovers sit, On every hilly path they stroll, Each thinks his love is infinite, And crowns his soul.

But we are cynical and wise, We walk a careful foot apart, You make a little joke that tries To hide your heart.

Give over, we have laughed enough; Oh dearest and most foolish friend, Why do you wage a war with love To lose your battle in the end?

THE LIGHTED WINDOW

HE SAID: "In the winter dusk When the pavements were gleaming with rain, I

walked thru a dingy street Hurried, harassed, Thinking of all my problems that never are solved. Suddenly out of the mist, a flaring gas-jet Shone from a huddled shop. I saw thru the bleary window A mass of playthings: False-faces hung on strings, Valentines, paper and tinsel, Tops of scarlet and green, Candy, marbles, jacks— A confusion of color Pathetically gaudy and cheap. All of my boyhood Rushed back. Once more these things were treasures Wildly desired. With covetous eyes I looked again at the marbles, The precious agates, the pee-wees, the chinies— Then I passed on.

In the winter dusk, The pavements were gleaming with rain; There in the lighted window I left my boyhood."

THE KISS

BEFORE YOU kissed me only winds of heaven Had kissed me, and the tenderness of rain— Now you have come, how can I care for kisses Like theirs again?

I sought the sea, she sent her winds to meet me, They surged about me singing of the south— I turned my head away to keep still holy Your kiss upon my mouth.

And swift sweet rains of shining April weather Found not my lips where living kisses are; I bowed my head lest they put out my glory As rain puts out a star.

I am my love's and he is mine forever, Sealed with a seal and safe forevermore— Think you that I could let a beggar enter Where a king stood before?

SWANS

NIGHT is over the park, and a few brave stars Look on the lights that link it with chains of gold, The lake bears up their reflection in broken bars That seem too heavy for tremulous water to hold.

We watch the swans that sleep in a shadowy place, And now and again one wakes

and uplifts its head; How still you are—your gaze is on my face— We watch the swans and never a word is said.

THE OLD MAID

I SAW her in a Broadway car, The woman I might grow to be; I felt my lover look at her And then turn suddenly to me.

Her hair was dull and drew no light And yet its color was as mine; Her eyes were strangely like my eyes Tho' love had never made them shine.

Her body was a thing grown thin, Hungry for love that never came; Her soul was frozen in the dark Unwarmed forever by love's flame.

I felt my lover look at her And then turn suddenly to me,— His eyes were magic to defy The woman I shall never be.

FROM THE WOOLWORTH TOWER

VIVID with love, eager for greater beauty Out of the night we come Into the corridor, brilliant and warm. A metal door slides open, And the lift receives us. Swiftly, with sharp unswerving flight The car shoots upward, And the air, swirling and angry, Howls like a hundred devils. Past the maze of trim bronze doors, Steadily we ascend. I cling to you Conscious of the chasm under us, And a terrible whirring deafens my ears.

The flight is ended.

We pass thru a door leading onto the ledge— Wind, night and space Oh terrible height Why have we sought you? Oh bitter wind with icy invisible wings Why do you beat us? Why would you bear us away? We look thru the miles of air, The cold blue miles between us and the city, Over the edge of eternity we look On all the lights, A thousand times more numerous than the stars; Oh lines and loops of light in unwound chains That mark for miles and miles The vast black mazy cobweb of the

streets; Near us clusters and splashes of living gold That change far off to bluish steel Where the fragile lights on the Jersey shore Tremble like drops of wind-stirred dew. The strident noises of the city Floating up to us Are hallowed into whispers. Ferries cross thru the darkness Weaving a golden thread into the night, Their whistles weird shadows of sound.

We feel the millions of humanity beneath us,— The warm millions, moving under the roofs, Consumed by their own desires; Preparing food, Sobbing alone in a garret, With burning eyes bending over a needle, Aimlessly reading the evening paper, Dancing in the naked light of the café, Laying out the dead, Bringing a child to birth— The sorrow, the torpor, the bitterness, the frail joy Come up to us Like a cold fog wrapping us round. Oh in a hundred years Not one of these blood-warm bodies But will be worthless as clay. The anguish, the torpor, the toil Will have passed to other millions Consumed by the same desires. Ages will come and go, Darkness will blot the lights And the tower will be laid on the earth. The sea will remain Black and unchanging, The stars will look down Brilliant and unconcerned.

Beloved, Tho' sorrow, futility, defeat Surround us, They cannot bear us down. Here on the abyss of eternity Love has crowned us For a moment Victors.

AT NIGHT

WE are apart; the city grows quiet between us, She hushes herself, for midnight makes heavy her eyes, The tangle of traffic is ended, the cars are empty, Five streets divide us, and on them the moonlight lies.

Oh are you asleep, or lying awake, my lover? Open your dreams to my love and your heart to my words, I send you my thoughts-the air between us is laden, My thoughts fly in at your window, a flock of wild birds.

THE YEARS

TO-NIGHT I close my eyes and see A strange procession passing me— The years before I saw your face Go by me with a wistful grace; They pass, the sensitive shy years, As one who strives to dance, half blind with tears.

The years went by and never knew That each one brought me nearer you; Their path was narrow and apart And yet it led me to your heart— Oh sensitive shy years, oh lonely years, That strove to sing with voices drowned in tears.

PEACE

PEACE flows into me AS the tide to the pool by the shore; It is mine forevermore, It ebbs not back like the sea.

I am the pool of blue That worships the vivid sky; My hopes were heaven-high, They are all fulfilled in you.

I am the pool of gold When sunset burns and dies,— You are my deepening skies, Give me your stars to hold.

APRIL

THE roofs are shining from the rain, The sparrows twitter as they fly, And with a windy April grace The little clouds go by.

Yet the back-yards are bare and brown With only one unchanging tree— I could not be so sure of Spring Save that it sings in me.

COME

COME, when the pale moon like a petal Floats in the pearly dusk of spring, Come with arms outstretched to take me, Come with lips pursed up to cling.

Come, for life is a frail moth flying Caught in the web of the years that pass, And soon we two, so warm and eager Will be as the gray stones in the grass.

MOODS

I AM the still rain falling, Too tired for singing mirth— Oh, be the green fields calling, Oh, be for me the earth! I am the brown bird pining To leave the nest and fly— Oh, be the fresh cloud shining, Oh, be for me the sky!

APRIL SONG

WILLOW in your April gown Delicate and gleaming, Do you mind in years gone by All my dreaming?

Spring was like a call to me That I could not answer, I was chained to loneliness, I, the dancer.

Willow, twinkling in the sun, Still your leaves and hear me, I can answer spring at last, Love is near me!

MAY DAY

THE shining line of motors, The swaying motor-bus, The prancing dancing horses Are passing by for us.

The sunlight on the steeple, The toys we stop to see, The smiling passing people Are all for you and me.

"I love you and I love you!"— "And oh, I love you, too!"— "All of the flower girl's lilies Were only grown for you!"

Fifth Avenue and April And love and lack of care— The world is mad with music Too beautiful to bear.

CROWNED

I WEAR a crown invisible and clear, And go my lifted royal way apart Since you have crowned me softly in your heart With love that is half ardent, half austere; And

as a queen disguised might pass anear The bitter crowd that barters in a mart, Veiling her pride while tears of pity start, I hide my glory thru a jealous fear. My crown shall stay a sweet and secret thing Kept pure with prayer at evensong and morn, And when you come to take it from my head, I shall not weep, nor will a word be said, But I shall kneel before you, oh my king, And bind my brow forever with a thorn.

TO A CASTILIAN SONG

WE held the book together timidly, Whose antique music in an alien tongue Once rose among the dew-drenched vines that hung Beneath a high Castilian balcony. I felt the lute strings' ancient ecstasy, And while he read, my love-filled heart was stung, And throbbed, as where an ardent bird has clung The branches tremble on a blossomed tree. Oh lady for whose sake the song was made, Laid long ago in some still cypress shade, Divided from the man who longed for thee, Here in a land whose name he never heard, His song brought love as April brings the bird, And not a breath divides my love from me!

BROADWAY

THIS is the quiet hour; the theaters Have gathered in their crowds, and steadily The million lights blaze on for few to see, Robbing the sky of stars that should be hers. A woman waits with bag and shabby furs, A somber man drifts by, and only we Pass up the street unwearied, warm and free, For over us the olden magic stirs. Beneath the liquid splendor of the lights We live a little ere the charm is spent; This night is ours, of all the golden nights, The pavement an enchanted palace floor, And Youth the player on the viol, who sent A strain of music thru an open door.

A WINTER BLUEJAY

CRISPLY the bright snow whispered, Crunching beneath our feet; Behind us as we walked along the parkway, Our shadows danced, Fantastic shapes in vivid blue. Across the lake the skaters Flew to and fro, With sharp turns weaving A frail invisible net. In ecstasy the earth Drank the silver sunlight; In ecstasy the skaters Drank the wine of speed; In ecstasy we laughed Drinking the wine of love. Had not the music of our joy Sounded its highest note? But no, For suddenly, with lifted eyes you said, "Oh look!" There, on the black bough of a snow flecked maple, Fearless and gay as our love, A bluejay cocked his crest! Oh who can tell the range of joy Or set the bounds of beauty?

IN A RESTAURANT

THE darkened street was muffled with the snow, The falling flakes had made your shoulders white, And when we found a shelter from the night Its glamor fell upon us like a blow. The clash of dishes and the viol and bow Mingled beneath the fever of the light. The heat was full of savors, and the bright Laughter of women lured the wine to flow. A little child ate nothing while she sat Watching a woman at a table there Lean to a kiss beneath a drooping hat. The hour went by, we rose and turned to go, The somber street received us from the glare, And once more on your shoulders fell the snow.

JOY

I AM wild, I will sing to the trees, I will sing to the stars in the sky, I love, I am loved, he is mine, Now at last I can die!

I am sandaled with wind and with flame, I have heart-fire and singing to give, I can tread on the grass or the stars, Now at last I can live!

IN A RAILROAD STATION

WE stood in the shrill electric light, Dumb and sick in the whirling din We who had all of love to say And a single second to say it in.

"Good-by!" "Good-by!"—you turned to go, I felt the train's slow heavy start, You thought to see me cry, but oh My tears were hidden in my heart.

IN THE TRAIN

FIELDS beneath a quilt of snow From which the rocks and stubble peep, And in the west a shy white star That shivers as it wakes from sleep.

The restless rumble of the train, The drowsy people in the car, Steel blue twilight in the world, And in my heart a timid star.

TO ONE AWAY

I HEARD a cry in the night, A thousand miles it came, Sharp as a flash of light, My name, my name!

It was your voice I heard, You waked and loved me so— I send you back this word, I know, I know!

SONG

Love me with your whole heart Or give no love to me,

Half-love is a poor thing, Neither bond nor free.

You must love me gladly Soul and body too, Or else find a new love, And good-by to you.

DEEP IN THE NIGHT

DEEP in the night the cry of a swallow, Under the stars he flew, Keen as pain was

his call to follow Over the world to you.

Love in my heart is a cry forever Lost as the swallow's flight, Seeking for you and never, never Stilled by the stars at night.

THE INDIA WHARF

HERE in the velvet stillness The wide sown fields fall to the faint horizon, Sleeping in starlight. . . .

A year ago we walked in the jangling city Together . . . . forgetful. One by one we crossed the avenues, Rivers of light, roaring in tumult, And came to the narrow, knotted streets. Thru the tense crowd We went aloof, ecstatic, walking in wonder, Unconscious of our motion. Forever the foreign people with dark, deep-seeing eyes Passed us and passed. Lights and foreign words and foreign faces, I forgot them all; I only felt alive, defiant of all death and sorrow, Sure and elated.

That was the gift you gave me. . . .

The streets grew still more tangled, And led at last to water black and glossy, Flecked here and there with lights, faint and far off. There on a shabby building was a sign "The India Wharf " . . . and we turned back.

I always felt we could have taken ship And crossed the bright green seas To dreaming cities set on sacred streams And palaces Of ivory and scarlet.

I SHALL NOT CARE

WHEN I am dead and over me bright April Shakes out her rain-drenched hair, Tho' you should lean above me broken-hearted, I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful When rain bends down the bough, And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted Than you are now.

DESERT POOLS

I LOVE too much; I am a river Surging with spring that seeks the sea, I am too generous a giver,

Love will not stoop to drink of me.

His feet will turn to desert places Shadowless, reft of rain and dew, Where stars stare down with sharpened faces From heavens pitilessly blue.

And there at midnight sick with faring, He will stoop down in his desire To slake the thirst grown past all bearing In stagnant water keen as fire.

LONGING

I AM not sorry for my soul That it must go unsatisfied, For it can live a thousand times, Eternity is deep and wide.

I am not sorry for my soul, But oh, my body that must go Back to a little drift of dust Without the joy it longed to know.

PITY

THEY never saw my lover's face, They only know our love was brief, Wearing awhile a windy grace And passing like an autumn leaf.

They wonder why I do not weep, They think it strange that I can sing, They say, "Her love was scarcely deep Since it has left so slight a sting."

They never saw my love, nor knew That in my heart's most secret place I pity them as angels do

Men who have never seen God's face.

AFTER PARTING

OH I have sown my love so wide That he will find it everywhere; It will awake him in the night, It will enfold him in the air.

I set my shadow in his sight And I have winged it with desire, That it may be a cloud by day And in the night a shaft of fire.

ENOUGH

IT is enough for me by day To walk the same bright earth with him; Enough that over us by night The same great roof of stars is dim.

I have no care to bind the wind Or set a fetter on the sea— It is enough to feel his love Blow by like music over me.

ALCHEMY

I LIFT my heart as spring lifts up A yellow daisy to the rain; My heart will be a lovely cup Altho' it holds but pain.

For I shall learn from flower and leaf That color every drop they hold, To change the lifeless wine of grief To living gold.

FEBRUARY

THEY spoke of him I love With cruel words and gay; My lips kept silent guard On all I could not say.

I heard, and down the street The lonely trees in the square Stood in the winter wind Patient and bare.

I heard . . . oh voiceless trees Under the wind, I knew The eager terrible spring Hidden in you.

MORNING

I WENT out on an April morning All alone, for my heart was high, I was a child of the shining meadow, I was a sister of the sky.

There in the windy flood of morning Longing lifted its weight from me, Lost as a sob in the midst of cheering, Swept as a sea-bird out to sea.

MAY NIGHT

THE spring is fresh and fearless And every leaf is new, The world is brimmed with moonlight, The lilac brimmed with dew.

Here in the moving shadows I catch my breath and sing— My heart is fresh and fearless And over-brimmed with spring.

DUSK IN JUNE

EVENING, and all the birds In a chorus of shimmering sound Are easing their hearts of joy For miles around.

The air is blue and sweet, The few first stars are white,— Oh let me like the birds Sing before night.

LOVE-FREE

I AM free of love as a bird flying south in the autumn, Swift and intent, asking no joy from another, Glad to forget all of the passion of April Ere it was love-free.

I am free of love, and I listen to music lightly, But if he returned, if he should look at me deeply, I should awake, I should awake and remember I am my lover's.

SUMMER NIGHT, RIVERSIDE

IN the wild soft summer darkness How many and many a night we two together Sat in the park and watched the Hudson Wearing her lights like golden spangles Glinting on black satin. The rail along the curving pathway Was low in a happy place to let us cross, And down the hill a tree that dripped with bloom Sheltered us While your kisses and the flowers, Falling, falling, Tangled my hair. . . .

The frail white stars moved slowly over the sky.

And now, far off In the fragrant darkness The tree is tremulous again with bloom For June comes back.

To-night what girl When she goes home, Dreamily before her mirror shakes from her hair This year's blossoms, clinging in its coils ?

IN A SUBWAY STATION

AFTER a year I came again to the place; The tireless lights and the reverberation, The angry thunder of trains that burrow the ground, The hunted, hurrying people were still the same— But oh, another man beside me and not you! Another voice and other eyes in mine! And suddenly I turned and saw again The gleaming curve of tracks, the bridge above— They were burned deep into my heart before, The night I watched them to avoid your eyes, When you were saying, "Oh, look up at me!" When you were saying, "Will you never love me?" And when I answered with a lie. Oh then You dropped your eyes. I felt your utter pain. I would have died to say the truth to you. After a year I came again to the place— The hunted hurrying people were still the same….

AFTER LOVE

THERE is no magic when we meet, We speak as other people do, You work no miracle for me Nor I for you.

You were the wind and I the sea— There is no splendor any more, I have grown listless as the pool Beside the shore.

But tho' the pool is safe from storm And from the tide has found surcease, It grows more bitter than the sea, For all its peace.

DOORYARD ROSES

I HAVE come the selfsame path To the selfsame door, Years have left the roses there Burning as before.

While I watch them in the wind Quick the hot tears start— Strange so frail a flame outlasts Fire in the heart.

A PRAYER

UNTIL I lose my soul and lie Blind to the beauty of the earth, Deaf tho' a lyric wind goes by, Dumb in a storm of mirth;

Until my heart is quenched at length And I have left the land of men, Oh let me love with all my strength Careless if I am loved again.

II

INDIAN SUMMER

LYRIC night of the lingering Indian Summer, Shadowy fields that are scentless but full of singing, Never a bird, but the passionless chant of insects, Ceaseless, insistent.

The grasshopper's horn, and far off, high in the maples The wheel of a locust leisurely grinding the silence, Under a moon waning and worn and broken, Tired with summer.

Let me remember you, voices of little insects, Weeds in the moonlight, fields that are tangled with asters, Let me remember you, soon will the winter be on us, Snow-hushed and heartless.

Over my soul murmur your mute benediction While I gaze, oh fields that rest after harvest, As those who part look long in the eyes they lean to, Lest they forget them.

THE SEA WIND

I AM a pool in a peaceful place, I greet the great sky face to face, I know the stars and the stately moon And the wind that runs with rippling shoon— But why does it always bring to me The far-off, beautiful sound of the sea?

The marsh-grass weaves me a wall of green, But the wind comes whispering in between, In the dead of night when the sky is deep The wind comes waking me out of sleep— Why does it always bring to me The far-off, terrible call of the sea?

THE CLOUD

I AM a cloud in the heaven's height, The stars are lit for my delight, Tireless and changeful, swift and free, I cast my shadow on hill and sea— But why do the pines on the mountain's crest Call to me always, "Rest, rest"?

I throw my mantle over the moon And I blind the sun on his throne at noon, Nothing can tame me, nothing can bind, I am a child of the heartless wind— But oh the pines on the mountain's crest Whispering always, "Rest, rest."

THE POOR HOUSE

HOPE went by and Peace went by And would not enter in; Youth went by and Health went by And Love that is their kin.

Those within the house shed tears On their bitter bread; Some were old and some

were mad, And some were sick a-bed.

Gray Death saw the wretched house And even he passed by— "They have never lived," he said, "They can wait to die."

NEW YEAR'S DAWN—BROADWAY

WHEN the horns wear thin And the noise, like a garment outworn, Falls from the night, The tattered and shivering night, That thinks she is gay; When the patient silence comes back, And retires, And returns, Rebuffed by a ribald song, Wounded by vehement cries, Fleeing again to the stars— Ashamed of her sister the night; Oh, then they steal home, The blinded, the pitiful ones With their gew-gaws still in their hands, Reeling with odorous breath And thick, coarse words on their tongues. They get them to bed, somehow, And sleep the forgiving, Comes thru the scattering tumult And closes their eyes. The stars sink down ashamed And the dawn awakes, Like a youth who steals from a brothel, Dizzy and sick.

THE STAR

A WHITE star born in the evening glow Looked to the round green world below, And saw a pool in a wooded place That held like a jewel her mirrored face. She said to the pool: "Oh, wondrous deep, I love you, I give you my light to keep. Oh, more profound than the moving sea That never has shown myself to me! Oh, fathomless as the sky is far, Hold forever your tremulous star!"

But out of the woods as night grew cool A brown pig came to the little pool; It grunted and splashed and waded in And the deepest place but reached its chin. The water gurgled with tender glee And the mud churned up in it turbidly.

The star grew pale and hid her face In a bit of floating cloud like lace.

DOCTORS

EVERY night I lie awake And every day I lie abed And hear the doctors, Pain and Death, Conferring at my head.

They speak in scientific tones, Professional and low— One argues for a speedy cure, The other, sure and slow.

To one so humble as myself It should be matter for some pride To have such noted fellows here, Conferring at my side.

. THE INN OF EARTH

I CAME to the crowded Inn of Earth, And called for a cup of wine, But the Host went by with averted eye From a thirst as keen as mine.

Then I sat down with weariness And asked a bit of bread, But the Host went by with averted eye And never a word he said.

While always from the outer night The waiting souls came in With stifled cries of sharp surprise At all the light and din.

"Then give me a bed to sleep," I said, "For midnight comes apace"— But the Host went by with averted eye And I never saw his face.

"Since there is neither food nor rest, I go where I fared before"— But the Host went by with averted eye And barred the outer door.

IN THE CARPENTER'S SHOP

MARY sat in the corner dreaming, Dim was the room and low, While in the dusk, the saw went screaming To and fro.

Jesus and Joseph toiled together, Mary was watching them, Thinking of kings in the wintry weather At Bethlehem.

Mary sat in the corner thinking, Jesus had grown a man; One by one her hopes were

sinking As the years ran.

Jesus and Joseph toiled together, Mary's thoughts were far— Angels sang in the wintry weather Under a star.

Mary sat in the corner weeping, Bitter and hot her tears— Little faith were the angels keeping All the years.

THE CARPENTER'S SON

THE summer dawn came over-soon, The earth was like hot iron at noon In Nazareth; There fell no rain to ease the heat, And dusk drew on with tired feet And stifled breath.

The shop was low and hot and square, And fresh-cut wood made sharp the air, While all day long The saw went tearing thru the oak That moaned as tho' the tree's heart broke Beneath its wrong.

The narrow street was full of cries, Of bickering and snarling lies In many keys— The tongues of Egypt and of Rome And lands beyond the shifting foam Of windy seas.

Sometimes a ruler riding fast Scattered the dark crowds as he passed, And drove them close In doorways, drawing broken breath Lest they be trampled to their death Where the dust rose.

There in the gathering night and noise A group of Galilean boys Crowding to see Gray Joseph toiling with his son, Saw Jesus, when the task was done, Turn wearily.

He passed them by with hurried tread Silently, nor raised his head, He who looked up Drinking all beauty from his birth Out of the heaven and the earth As from a cup.

And Mary, who was growing old, Knew that the pottage would be cold When he returned; He hungered only for the night, And westward, bending sharp and bright, The thin moon burned.

He reached the open western gate Where whining halt and leper wait, And came at last To the blue desert, where the deep Great seas of twilight lay asleep, Windless and vast.

With shining eyes the stars awoke, The dew lay heavy on his cloak, The world was dim; And in the stillness he could hear His secret thoughts draw very near And call to him.

Faint voices lifted shrill with pain And multitudinous as rain; From all the lands And all the villages thereof Men crying for the gift of love With outstretched hands.

Voices that called with ceaseless crying, The broken and the blind, the dying, And those grown dumb Beneath oppression, and he heard Upon their lips a single word, "Come!"

Their cries engulfed him like the night, The moon put out her placid light And black and low Nearer the heavy thunder drew, Hushing the voices . . . yet he knew That he would go.

A quick-spun thread of lightning burns, And for a flash the day returns— He only hears Joseph, an old man bent and white Toiling alone from morn till night Thru all the years.

Swift clouds make all the heavens blind, A storm is running on the wind— He only sees How Mary will stretch out her hands Sobbing, who never understands Voices like these.

THE MOTHER OF A POET

SHE is too kind, I think, for mortal things, Too gentle for the gusty ways of earth; God gave to her a shy and silver mirth, And made her soul as clear And softly singing as an orchard spring's In sheltered hollows all the sunny year— A spring that thru the leaning grass looks up And holds all heaven in its clarid cup, Mirror to holy

meadows high and blue With stars like drops of dew.

I love to think that never tears at night Have made her eyes less bright; That all her girlhood thru Never a cry of love made over-tense Her voice's innocence; That in her hands have lain, Flowers beaten by the rain, And little birds before they learned to sing Drowned in the sudden ecstasy of spring.

I love to think that with a wistful wonder She held her baby warm against her breast; That never any fear awoke whereunder She shuddered at her gift, or trembled lest Thru the great doors of birth Here to a windy earth She lured from heaven a half-unwilling guest.

She caught and kept his first vague flickering smile, The faint upleaping of his spirit's fire; And for a long sweet while In her was all he asked of earth or heaven— But in the end how far, Past every shaken star, Should leap at last that arrow-like desire, His full-grown manhood's keen Ardor toward the unseen Dark mystery beyond the Pleiads seven. And in her heart she heard His first dim-spoken word— She only of them all could understand, Flushing to feel at last The silence over-past, Thrilling as tho' her hand had touched God's hand. But in the end how many words Winged on a flight she could not follow, Farther than skyward lark or swallow, His lips should free to lands she never knew; Braver than white sea-faring birds With a fearless melody, Flying over a shining sea, A star-white song between the blue and blue.

Oh I have seen a lake as clear and fair As it were molten air, Lifting a lily upward to the sun. How should the water know the glowing heart That ever to the heaven lifts its fire, A golden and unchangeable desire? The water only knows The faint and rosy glows Of under-petals, opening apart. Yet in the soul of earth, Deep in the primal ground, Its searching roots are wound, And centuries have struggled toward its birth. So, in the man who sings, All of the voiceless horde From the cold dawn of things Have their reward; All in whose pulses ran Blood that is his at last, From the

first stooping man Far in the winnowed past. Out of the tumult of their love and mating Each one created, seeing life was good— Dumb, till at last the song that they were waiting Breaks like brave April thru a wintry wood.

RIVERS TO THE SEA

But what of her whose heart is troubled by it, The mother who would soothe and set him free, Fearing the song's storm-shaken ecstasy— Oh, as the moon that has no power to quiet The strong wind-driven sea.

.

IN MEMORIAM F. O. S.

You go a long and lovely journey, For all the stars, like burning dew, Are luminous and luring footprints Of souls adventurous as you.

Oh, if you lived on earth elated, How is it now that you can run Free of the weight of flesh and faring Far past the birthplace of the sun?

TWILIGHT

THE stately tragedy of dusk Drew to its perfect close, The virginal white evening star Sank, and the red moon rose.

SWALLOW FLIGHT

I LOVE my hour of wind and light, I love men's faces and their eyes, I love my spirit's veering flight Like swallows under evening skies,

THOUGHTS

WHEN I can make my thoughts come forth To walk like ladies up and down, Each

one puts on before the glass Her most becoming hat and gown.

But oh, the shy and eager thoughts That hide and will not get them dressed, Why is it that they always seem So much more lovely than the rest?

TO DICK, ON HIS SIXTH BIRTHDAY

Tho' I am very old and wise, And you are neither wise nor old, When I look far into your eyes, I know things I was never told: I know how flame must strain and fret Prisoned in a mortal net; How joy with over-eager wings, Bruises the small heart where he sings; How too much life, like too much gold, Is sometimes very hard to hold. . . . All that is talking—I know This much is true, six years ago An angel living near the moon Walked thru the sky and sang a tune Plucking stars to make his crown— And suddenly two stars fell down, Two falling arrows made of light. Six years ago this very night I saw them fall and wondered why The angel dropped them from the sky— But when I saw your eyes I knew The angel sent the stars to you.

TO ROSE

ROSE, when I remember you, Little lady, scarcely two, I am suddenly aware Of the angels in the air. All your softly gracious ways Make an island in my days Where my thoughts fly back to be Sheltered from too strong a sea. All your luminous delight Shines before me in the night When I grope for sleep and find Only shadows in my mind.

Rose, when I remember you, White and glowing, pink and new, With so swift a sense of fun Altho' life has just begun; With so sure a pride of place In your very infant face, I should like to make a prayer To the angels in the air: "If an angel ever brings Me a baby in her wings, Please be certain that it grows Very, very much like Rose."

THE FOUNTAIN

On in the deep blue night The fountain sang alone; It sang to the drowsy heart Of the satyr carved in stone.

The fountain sang and sang But the satyr never stirred— Only the great white moon In the empty heaven heard.

The fountain sang and sang And on the marble rim The milk-white peacocks slept, Their dreams were strange and dim.

Bright dew was on the grass, And on the ilex dew, The dreamy milk-white birds Were all a-glisten too.

The fountain sang and sang The things one cannot tell, The dreaming peacocks stirred And the gleaming dew-drops fell.

THE ROSE

BENEATH my chamber window Pierrot was singing, singing; I heard his lute the whole night thru Until the east was red. Alas, alas, Pierrot, I had no rose for flinging Save one that drank my tears for dew Before its leaves were dead.

I found it in the darkness, I kissed it once and threw it, The petals scattered over him, His song was turned to joy; And he will never know— Alas, the one who knew it!— The rose was plucked when dusk was dim Beside a laughing boy.

DREAMS

I GAVE my life to another lover, I gave my love, and all, and all— But over a dream the past will hover, Out of a dream the past will call.

I tear myself from sleep with a shiver But on my breast a kiss is hot, And by my bed the ghostly giver Is waiting tho' I see him not.

"I AM NOT YOURS "

I AM not yours, not lost in you, Not lost, altho' I long to be Lost as a candle lit at noon, Lost as a snow-flake in the sea.

You love me, and I find you still A spirit beautiful and bright, Yet I am I, who long to be Lost as a light is lost in light.

Oh plunge me deep in love—put out My senses, leave me deaf and blind, Swept by the tempest of your love, A taper in a rushing wind.

PIERROT'S SONG

(For a picture by Dugald Walker)

LADY, light in the east hangs low, Draw your veils of dream apart, Under the casement stands Pierrot Making a song to ease his heart. (Yet do not break the song too soon— I love to sing in the paling moon.)

The petals are falling, heavy with dew, The stars have fainted out of the sky, Come to me, come, or else I too, Faint with the weight of love will die. (She comes—alas, I hoped to make Another stanza for her sake!)

NIGHT IN ARIZONA

THE moon is a charring ember Dying into the dark;

Off in the crouching mountains Coyotes bark.

The stars are heavy in heaven, Too great for the sky to hold— What if they fell and shattered The earth with gold?

No lights are over the mesa, The wind is hard and wild, I stand at the darkened window And cry like a child.

DUSK IN WAR TIME

A HALF-HOUR more and you will lean To gather me close in the old sweet way— But oh, to the woman over the sea Who will come at the close of day?

A half-hour more and I will hear The key in the latch and the strong quick tread— But oh, the woman over the sea Waiting at dusk for one who is dead!

SPRING IN WAR TIME

I FEEL the Spring far off, far off, The faint far scent of bud and leaf— Oh how can Spring take heart to come To a world in grief, Deep grief?

The sun turns north, the days grow long, Later the evening star grows bright— How can the daylight linger on For men to fight, Still fight?

The grass is waking in the ground, Soon it will rise and blow in waves— How can it have the heart to sway Over the graves, New graves?

Under the boughs where lovers walked The apple-blooms will shed their breath— But what of all the lovers now Parted by death, Gray Death?

WHILE I MAY

WIND and hail and veering rain, Driven mist that veils the day, Soul's distress and body's pain, I would bear you while I may.

I would love you if I might, For so soon my life will be Buried in a lasting night, Even pain denied to me.

DEBT

WHAT do I owe to you Who loved me deep and long? You never gave my spirit wings Or gave my heart a song.

But oh, to him I loved Who loved me not at all, I owe the little open gate
That led thru heaven's wall.

FROM THE NORTH

THE northern woods are delicately sweet, The lake is folded softly by the shore, But I am restless for the subway's roar, The thunder and the hurrying of feet. I try to sleep, but still my eyelids beat Against the image of the tower that bore Me high aloft, as if thru heaven's door I watched the world from God's unshaken seat. I would go back and breathe with quickened sense The tunnel's strong hot breath of powdered steel; But at the ferries I should leave the tense Dark air behind, and I should mount and be One among many who are thrilled to feel The first keen sea-breath from the open sea.

THE LIGHTS OF NEW YORK

THE lightning spun your garment for the night Of silver filaments with fire shot thru, A broidery of lamps that lit for you The steadfast splendor of enduring light. The moon drifts dimly in the heaven's height, Watching with wonder how the earth she knew That lay so long wrapped deep in dark and dew, Should wear upon her breast a star so white. The festivals of Babylon were dark With flaring flambeaux that the wind blew down; The Saturnalia were a wild boy's lark With rain-quenched torches dripping thru the town— But you have found a god and filched from him A fire that neither wind nor rain can dim.

SEA LONGING

A THOUSAND miles beyond this sun-steeped wall Somewhere the waves creep cool along the sand, The ebbing tide forsakes the listless land With the old murmur,

long and musical; The windy waves mount up and curve and fall, And round the rocks the foam blows up like snow,— Tho' I am inland far, I hear and know, For I was born the sea's eternal thrall. I would that I were there and over me The cold insistence of the tide would roll, Quenching this burning thing men call the soul,— Then with the ebbing I should drift and be Less than the smallest shell along the shoal, Less than the sea-gulls calling to the sea.

THE RIVER

I CAME from the sunny valleys And sought for the open sea, For I thought in its gray expanses My peace would come to me.

I came at last to the ocean And found it wild and black, And I cried to the windless valleys, "Be kind and take me back!"

But the thirsty tide ran inland, And the salt waves drank of me, And I who was fresh as the rainfall Am bitter as the sea.

LEAVES

ONE by one, like leaves from a tree, All my faiths have forsaken me; But the stars above my head Burn in white and delicate red, And beneath my feet the earth Brings the sturdy grass to birth. I who was content to be But a silken-singing tree, But a rustle of delight In the wistful heart of night— I have lost the leaves that knew Touch of rain and weight of dew. Blinded by a leafy crown I looked neither up nor down— But the little leaves that die Have left me room to see the sky; Now for the first time I know Stars above and earth below.

THE ANSWER

WHEN I go back to earth And all my joyous body Puts off the red and white That

once had been so proud, If men should pass above With false and feeble pity, My dust will find a voice To answer them aloud:

"Be still, I am content, Take back your poor compassion, Joy was a flame in me Too steady to destroy; Lithe as a bending reed Loving the storm that sways her— I found more joy in sorrow Than you could find in joy."

III

OVER THE ROOFS

I

OH chimes set high on the sunny tower Ring on, ring on unendingly, Make all the hours a single hour, For when the dusk begins to flower, The man I love will come to me! . . .

But no, go slowly as you will, I should not bid you hasten so, For while I wait for love to come, Some other girl is standing dumb, Fearing her love will go.

II

Oh white steam over the roofs, blow high! Oh chimes in the tower ring clear and free ! Oh sun awake in the covered sky, For the man I love, loves me I . . .

Oh drifting steam disperse and die, Oh tower stand shrouded toward the south,— Fate heard afar my happy cry, And laid her finger on my mouth.

III

The dusk was blue with blowing mist, The lights were spangles in a veil, And from the clamor far below Floated faint music like a wail.

It voiced what I shall never speak, My heart was breaking all night long, But when the dawn was hard and gray, My tears distilled into a song.

IV

I said, "I have shut my heart As one shuts an open door, That Love may starve therein And trouble me no more."

But over the roofs there came The wet new wind of May, And a tune blew up from the curb Where the street-pianos play.

My room was white with the sun And Love cried out in me, "I am strong, I will break your heart Unless you set me free."

A CRY

OH, there are eyes that he can see, And hands to make his hands rejoice, But to my lover I must be Only a voice.

Oh, there are breasts to bear his head, And lips whereon his lips can lie, But I must be till I am dead Only a cry.

CHANCE

How many times we must have met Here on the street as strangers do, Children of chance we were, who passed

The door of heaven and never knew.

IMMORTAL

So soon my body will have gone Beyond the sound and sight of men, And tho' it wakes and suffers now, Its sleep will be unbroken then; But oh, my frail immortal soul That will not sleep forevermore, A leaf borne onward by the blast, A wave that never finds the shore.

AFTER DEATH

Now while my lips are living Their words must stay unsaid, And will my soul remember To speak when I am dead?

Yet if my soul remembered You would not heed it, dear, For now you must not listen, And then you could not hear.

TESTAMENT

I SAID, "I will take my life And throw it away; I who was fire and song Will turn to clay."

"I will lie no more in the night With shaken breath, I will toss my heart in the air To be caught by Death."

But out of the night I heard, Like the inland sound of the sea, The hushed and terrible sob Of all humanity.

Then I said, "Oh who am I To scorn God to his face? I will bow my head and stay And suffer with my race."

GIFTS

I GAVE my first love laughter, I gave my second tears, I gave my third love silence Thru all the years.

My first love gave me singing, My second eyes to see, But oh, it was my third love Who gave my soul to me.

IV

FROM THE SEA

ALL beauty calls you to me, and you seem, Past twice a thousand miles of shifting sea, To reach me. You are as the wind I breathe Here on the ship's sun-smitten topmost deck, With only light between the heavens and me. I feel your spirit and I close my eyes, Knowing the bright hair blowing in the sun, The eager whisper and the searching eyes.

Listen, I love you. Do not turn your face Nor touch me. Only stand and watch awhile The blue unbroken circle of the sea. Look far away and let me ease my heart Of words that beat in it with broken wing. Look far away, and if I say too much, Forget that I am speaking. Only watch, How like a gull that sparkling sinks to rest, The foam-crest drifts along a happy wave Toward the bright verge, the boundary of the world.

I am so weak a thing, praise me for this, That in some strange way I was strong enough To keep my love unuttered and to stand Altho' I longed to kneel to you that night You looked at me with ever-calling eyes. Was I not calm? And if you guessed my love You thought it something delicate and free, Soft as the sound of fir-trees in the wind, Fleeting as phosphorescent stars in foam. Yet in my heart there was a beating storm Bending my thoughts before it, and I strove To say too little lest I say too much, And from my eyes to drive love's happy shame. Yet when I heard your name the first far time It seemed like other names to me, and I Was all unconscious, as a dreaming river That nears at last its long predestined sea; And when you spoke to me, I did not know That to my life's high altar came its priest. But now I know between my God and me You stand forever, nearer God than I, And in your hands with faith and utter joy I would that I could lay my woman's soul.

Oh, my love To whom I cannot come with any gift Of body or of soul, I pass and go. But sometimes when you hear blown back to you My wistful, far-off singing touched with tears, Know that I sang for you alone to hear, And that I wondered if the wind would bring To him who tuned my heart its distant song. So might a

woman who in loneliness Had borne a child, dreaming of days to come, Wonder if it would please its father's eyes. But long before I ever heard your name, Always the undertone's unchanging note In all my singing had prefigured you, Foretold you as a spark foretells a flame. Yet I was free as an untethered cloud In the great space between the sky and sea, And might have blown before the wind of joy Like a bright banner woven by the sun. I did not know the longing in the night— You who have waked me cannot give me sleep. All things in all the world can rest, but I, Even the smooth brief respite of a wave When it gives up its broken crown of foam, Even that little rest I may not have. And yet all quiet loves of friends, all joy In all the piercing beauty of the world I would give up—go blind forevermore, Rather than have God blot from out my soul Remembrance of your voice that said my name.

For us no starlight stilled the April fields, No birds awoke in darkling trees for us, Yet where we walked the city's street that night Felt in our feet the singing fire of spring, And in our path we left a trail of light Soft as the phosphorescence of the sea When night submerges in the vessel's wake A heaven of unborn evanescent stars.

VIGNETTES OVERSEAS

I

Off Gibraltar

BEYOND the sleepy hills of Spain, The sun goes down in yellow mist, The sky is fresh with dewy stars Above a sea of amethyst.

Yet in the city of my love High noon burns all the heavens bare— For him the happiness of light, For me a delicate despair.

II

Off Algiers

Oh give me neither love nor tears, Nor dreams that sear the night with fire, Go

lightly on your pilgrimage Unburdened by desire.

Forget me for a month, a year, But, oh, beloved, think of me When unexpected beauty burns Like sudden sunlight on the sea.

III

Naples

Nisida and Prosida are laughing in the light, Capri is a dewy flower lifting into sight, Posilipo kneels and looks in the burnished sea, Naples crowds her million roofs close as close can be; Round about the mountain's crest a flag of smoke is hung— Oh when God made Italy he was gay and young!

IV

Capri

When beauty grows too great to bear How shall I ease me of its ache, For beauty more than bitterness Makes the heart break.

Now while I watch the dreaming sea With isles like flowers against her breast, Only one voice in all the world Could give me rest.

V

Night Song at Amalfi

I asked the heaven of stars What I should give my love— It answered me with silence, Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea Down where the fishers go— It answered me with silence, Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping, Or I could give him song— But how can I give silence My whole life long?

VI

Ruins of Paestum

On lowlands where the temples lie The marsh-grass mingles with the flowers, Only the little songs of birds Link the unbroken hours.

So in the end, above my heart Once like the city wild and gay, The slow white stars will pass by night, The swift brown birds by day.

VII

Rome

Oh for the rising moon Over the roofs of Rome, And swallows in the dusk Circling a darkened dome!

Oh for the measured dawns That pass with folded wings— How can I let them go With unremembered things?

VIII

Florence

The bells ring over the Anno, Midnight, the long, long chime; Here in the quivering darkness I am afraid of time.

Oh, gray bells cease your tolling, Time takes too much from me, And yet to rock and river He gives eternity.

IX

Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio

The fountain shivers lightly in the rain, The laurels drip, the fading roses fall, The marble satyr plays a mournful strain That leaves the rainy fragrance musical.

Oh dripping laurel, Phoebus sacred tree, Would that swift Daphne's lot might come to me, Then would I still my soul and for an hour Change to a laurel in the glancing shower.

X

Stresa

The moon grows out of the hills A yellow flower, The lake is a dreamy bride Who waits her hour.

Beauty has filled my heart, It can hold no more, It is full, as the lake is full, From shore to shore.

XI

Hamburg

The day that I come home, What will you find to say,— Words as light as foam With laughter light as spray?

Yet say what words you will The day that I come home; I shall hear the whole deep ocean Beating under the foam.

V

SAPPHO

SAPPHO

I

MIDNIGHT, and in the darkness not a sound, So, with hushed breathing, sleeps the autumn night; Only the white immortal stars shall know, Here in the house with the low-lintelled door, How, for the last time, I have lit the lamp. I think you are not wholly careless now, Walls that have sheltered me so many an hour, Bed that has brought me ecstasy and sleep, Floors that have borne me when a gale of joy Lifted my soul and made me half a god. Farewell! Across the threshold many feet Shall pass, but never Sappho's feet again. Girls shall come in whom love has made aware Of all their swaying beauty—they shall sing, But never Sappho's voice, like golden fire, Shall seek for heaven thru your echoing rafters. There shall be swallows bringing back the spring Over the long blue meadows of the sea, And south-wind playing on the reeds of rain, But never Sappho's whisper in the night, Never her

love-cry when the lover comes. Farewell! I close the door and make it fast.

The little street lies meek beneath the moon, Running, as rivers run, to meet the sea. I too go seaward and shall not return. Oh garlands on the doorposts that I pass, Woven of asters and of autumn leaves, I make a prayer for you: Cypris be kind, That every lover may be given love. I shall not hasten lest the paving stones Should echo with my sandals and awake Those who are warm beneath the cloak of sleep, Lest they should rise and see me and should say, "Whither goes Sappho lonely in the night?" Whither goes Sappho? Whither all men go, But they go driven, straining back with fear, And Sappho goes as lightly as a leaf Blown from brown autumn forests to the sea.

Here on the rock Zeus lifted from the waves, I shall await the waking of the dawn, Lying beneath the weight of dark as one Lies breathless, till the lover shall awake. And with the sun the sea shall cover me— I shall be less than the dissolving foam Murmuring and melting on the ebbing tide; I shall be less than spindrift, less than shells; And yet I shall be greater than the gods, For destiny no more can bow my soul As rain bows down the watch-fires on the hills. Yes, if my soul escape it shall aspire To the white heaven as flame that has its will. I go not bitterly, not dumb with pain, Not broken by the ache of love—I go As one grown tired lies down and hopes to sleep. Yet they shall say: "It was for Cercolas; She died because she could not bear her love." They shall remember how we used to walk Here on the cliff beneath the oleanders In the long limpid twilight of the spring, Looking toward Lemnos, where the amber sky Was pierced with the faint arrow of a star. How should they know the wind of a new beauty Sweeping my soul had winnowed it with song? I have been glad tho' love should come or go, Happy as trees that find a wind to sway them, Happy again when it has left them rest. Others shall say, "Grave Dica wrought her death. She would not lift her lips to take a kiss, Or ever lift her eyes to take a smile. She was a pool the winter paves with ice That the wild hunter in the hills must leave With thirst unslaked in the brief southward sun." Ah Dica, it is not for thee I

go; And not for Phaon, tho' his ship lifts sail Here in the windless harbor for the south. Oh, darkling deities that guard the Nile, Watch over one whose gods are far away. Egypt, be kind to him, his eyes are deep— Yet they are wrong who say it was for him. How should they know that Sappho lived and died Faithful to love, not faithful to the lover, Never transfused and lost in what she loved, Never so wholly loving nor at peace. I asked for something greater than I found, And every time that love has made me weep, I have rejoiced that love could be so strong; For I have stood apart and watched my soul Caught in the gust of passion, as a bird With baffled wings against the dusty whirlwind Struggles and frees itself to find the sky. It is not for a single god I go; I have grown weary of the winds of heaven. I will not be a reed to hold the sound Of whatsoever breath the gods may blow, Turning my torment into music for them. They gave me life; the gift was bountiful, I lived with the swift singing strength of fire, Seeking for beauty as a flame for fuel— Beauty in all things and in every hour. The gods have given life—I gave them song; The debt is paid and now I turn to go.

The breath of dawn blows the stars out like lamps, There is a rim of silver on the sea, As one grown tired who hopes to sleep, I go.

II

Oh Litis, little slave, why will you sleep? These long Egyptian noons bend down your head Bowed like the yarrow with a yellow bee. There, lift your eyes no man has ever kindled, Dark eyes that wait like faggots for the fire. See how the temple's solid square of shade Points north to Lesbos, and the splendid sea That you have never seen, oh evening-eyed. Yet have you never wondered what the Nile Is seeking always, restless and wild with spring And no less in the winter, seeking still? How shall I tell you? Can you think of fields Greater than Gods could till, more blue than night Sown over with the stars; and delicate With filmy nets of foam that come and go? It is more cruel and more compassionate Than harried earth. It takes with

unconcern And quick forgetting, rapture of the rain And agony of thunder, the moon's white Soft-garmented virginity, and then The insatiable ardor of the sun. And me it took. But there is one more strong, Love, that came laughing from the elder seas, The Cyprian, the mother of the world; She gave me love who only asked for death— I who had seen much sorrow in men's eyes And in my own too sorrowful a fire. I was a sister of the stars, and yet Shaken with pain; sister of birds and yet The wings that bore my soul were very tired. I watched the careless spring too many times Light her green torches in a hungry wind; Too many times I watched them flare, and then Fall to forsaken embers in the autumn. And I was sick of all things—even song. In the dull autumn dawn I turned to death, Buried my living body in the sea, The strong cold sea that takes and does not give— But there is one more strong, the Cyprian. Litis, to wake from sleep and find your eyes Met in their first fresh upward gaze by love, Filled with love's happy shame from other eyes, Dazzled with tenderness and drowned in light As tho' you looked unthinking at the sun, Oh Litis, that is joy! But if you came Not from the sunny shallow pool of sleep, But from the sea of death, the strangling sea Of night and nothingness, and waked to find Love looking down upon you, glad and still, Strange and yet known forever, that is peace. So did he lean above me. Not a word He spoke; I only heard the morning sea Singing against his happy ship, the keen And straining joy of wind-awakened sails And songs of mariners, and in myself The precious pain of arms that held me fast. They warmed the cold sea out of all my blood; I slept, feeling his eyes above my sleep. There on the ship with wines and olives laden, Led by the stars to far invisible ports, Egypt and islands of the inner seas, Love came to me, and Cercolas was love.

III ¹ ¹ From " Helen of Troy and Other Poems."

The twilight's inner flame grows blue and deep, And in my Lesbos, over leagues of sea, The temples glimmer moon-wise in the trees. Twilight has veiled the little flower-face Here on my heart, but still the night is kind And leaves her warm sweet

weight against my breast. Am I that Sappho who would run at dusk Along the surges creeping up the shore When tides came in to ease the hungry beach, And running, running till the night was black, Would fall forespent upon the chilly sand And quiver with the winds from off the sea? Ah quietly the shingle waits the tides Whose waves are stinging kisses, but to me Love brought no peace, nor darkness any rest. I crept and touched the foam with fevered hands And cried to Love, from whom the sea is sweet, From whom the sea is bitterer than death. Ah, Aphrodite, if I sing no more To thee, God's daughter, powerful as God, It is that thou hast made my life too sweet To hold the added sweetness of a song. There is a quiet at the heart of love, And I have pierced the pain and come to peace I hold my peace, my Cleïs, on my heart; And softer than a little wild bird's wing Are kisses that she pours upon my mouth. Ah never any more when spring like fire Will flicker in the newly opened leaves, Shall I steal forth to seek for solitude Beyond the lure of light Alcaeus' lyre, Beyond the sob that stilled Erinna's voice. Ah, never with a throat that aches with song, Beneath the white uncaring sky of spring, Shall I go forth to hide awhile from Love The quiver and the crying of my heart. Still I remember how I strove to flee The love-note of the birds, and bowed my head To hurry faster, but upon the ground I saw two wingèd shadows side by side, And all the world's spring passion stifled me. Ah, Love there is no fleeing from thy might, No lonely place where thou hast never trod, No desert thou hast left uncarpeted With flowers that spring beneath thy perfect feet. In many guises didst thou come to me; I saw thee by the maidens while they danced, Phaon allured me with a look of thine, In Anactoria I knew thy grace, I looked at Cercolas and saw thine eyes; But never wholly, soul and body mine, Didst thou bid any love me as I loved. Now have I found the peace that fled from me; Close, close against my heart I hold my world. Ah, Love that made my life a Iyric cry, Ah, Love that tuned my lips to Iyres of thine, I taught the world thy music, now alone I sing for one who falls asleep to hear.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RIVERS TO THE SEA ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the

terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the

requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or

distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.” • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works. • You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work. • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that

provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old,

middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many

small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright

notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.