

THE COMPLETE  
POEMS OF  
EMILY  
DICKINSON

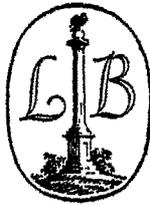
EDITED BY THOMAS H. JOHNSON

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF  
Emily Dickinson

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Thomas H. Johnson



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SECOND PRINTING

*Published simultaneously in Canada  
by Little, Brown & Company (Canada) Limited*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## Introduction

### THE CREATIVE YEARS

THERE are certain significant dates in American literary history during the nineteenth century. One was August 21, 1837, when Emerson, before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge, Massachusetts, delivered in the presence of Thoreau's graduating class his "American Scholar" address, immediately hailed by young Oliver Wendell Holmes as "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." One was the day early in July, 1855, when Whitman "for the convenience of private reading only" began circulating printed copies of his *Leaves of Grass*. A third is surely April 15, 1862, when Thomas Wentworth Higginson received a letter from Emily Dickinson enclosing four of her poems.

Emily Dickinson, then thirty-one years old, was writing a professional man of letters to inquire whether her verses "breathed." Higginson was still living at Worcester, Massachusetts, where he had recently resigned his pastorate of a "free" church, and was beginning to establish a reputation as essayist and a lecturer in the cause of reforms. She dared bring herself to his attention because she had just read his "Letter to a Young Contributor," practical advice for those wishing to break into print, and the lead article in the current issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. "Charge your style with life," he commented, and went on to declare that the privilege of bringing forward "new genius" was fascinating. His article happened to appear exactly at the moment that Emily Dickinson was ready to seek criticism. She knew him to be a liberal thinker, interested in the status of women in general and women writers in particular. Though the article drew responses, all of

which Higginson judged "not for publication," he sensed some quality in the enclosures of the letter posted at Amherst which elicited a reply. He asked for more verses, inquired her age, her reading and her companionships

The importance of the correspondence with Higginson thus initiated, and continuing throughout Emily Dickinson's life, cannot be exaggerated. In the first place, the four poems she initially selected reveal that in 1862 the poet was no longer a novice but an artist whose strikingly original talent was fully developed. She enclosed "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers" (216), "I'll tell you how the Sun rose" (318), "The nearest Dream recedes—unrealized" (319), and "We play at Paste" (320). What embarrassed Higginson about the poems was his inability to classify them. In 1891 he wrote an article describing this early correspondence. "The impression of a wholly new and original poetic genius," he said, "was as distinct on my mind at the first reading of these four poems as it is now, after thirty years of further knowledge; and with it came the problem never yet solved, what place ought to be assigned in literature to what is so remarkable, yet so elusive of criticism." Higginson's problem was compounded by the fact that during Emily Dickinson's lifetime he was never convinced that she wrote poetry. As he phrased his opinion to a friend, her verses were "remarkable, though odd . . . *too delicate* — not strong enough to publish."

A representative mid-nineteenth-century traditionalist was being asked to judge the work of a "wholly new" order of craftsman. His reply to the first letter (implied in her second letter to him — his letters do not survive) must have told her that the "Alabaster" poem lacked form, that it was imperfectly rhymed and its metric beat spasmodic, a judgment which would have been shared at the time by most of the fraternity of literary appraisers. The unorthodoxy of melodic pattern controlled by key words, wherein the parts express the whole, the altering of metric beat to slow or speed the nature of time itself (the theme of the "Alabaster" poem), give it dimensions which he was not equipped to estimate. He was trying to measure a cube by the rules of plane geometry.

The first weeks of this letter exchange were critical in Emily Dickinson's literary life. Putting aside for the moment the issue whether she wished to see her poetry published (though the fact that she wrote in response to an article on how to contribute to magazines suggests

the possibility), one sees that she clearly is asking whether a professional critic thinks her way of writing poetry is valid. His answer must have implied that it was scarcely comprehensible. The nature of decisions thus forced upon her becomes clear. In the first place, when she wrote the letter, she had composed no fewer than three hundred poems. (Her comment to Higginson that she had written "no verse — but one or two — until this winter" was her answer to his query about her age!) She was so possessed by creative forces that within another year she had doubled that number. For the moment she is pausing to inquire whether she is alone in believing that what she has been striving for is worth attempting.

The second letter to Higginson, written ten days later, enclosed three poems: "South Winds jostle them" (86), "Of all the Sounds despatched abroad" (321), and "There came a Day at Summer's full" (322). Like the previous four they were selected for their range of theme and prosodic variety. The lapse of six weeks before she wrote again, in view of the nature of the third letter, suggests that between April 25 and June 7 she accepted her destiny as an artist who in her lifetime would remain unknown, for in assenting to his verdict she unwaveringly charts her course:

I smile when you suggest that I delay "to publish" — that being foreign to my thought, as Firmament to Fin.

If fame belonged to me, I could not escape her — if she did not, the longest day would pass me on the chase — and the approbation of my Dog, would forsake me — then. My Barefoot-Rank is better.

You think my gait "spasmodic." I am in danger, Sir.

You think me "uncontrolled." I have no Tribunal. . . .

The Sailor cannot see the North, but knows the Needle can.

Though Emily Dickinson kept up the fiction of being Higginson's "scholar" for the rest of her life, she would never expect Higginson or anyone else to think her a poet, or do more than thank her, as at one time he pointedly did, for her "beautiful thoughts and words." Thenceforth she contented herself by enclosing or incorporating verses from time to time in letters to friends. The number thus communicated was but a minuscule fraction of what she was writing, and since the selections were made for particular occasions, they seldom reveal the intellectual and emotional depths she could plumb. Her growing preoccupation with the subject of fame is a striking characteristic of

the poems written between 1862 and 1865. The dedication to her art had begun before she wrote to Higginson. It was a dedication that led to renunciation of fame in her lifetime and, as the wellsprings of her creativeness dried up after 1865, to increasing seclusion. There is strong evidence, nonetheless, that she came to think of herself as a public name in the fact that six times, between the years 1866 and 1872, she signed letters to Higginson simply "Dickinson." Among the most interesting of her poems on the subject of renown are "Some work for Immortality" (406), "Publication is the Auction/ Of the Mind of Man" (709), and "Fame of Myself, to justify" (713).

Marshaling the data, one observes a pattern somewhat as follows. From her youth Emily Dickinson had been writing poetry, and the realization of her destiny as a poet who must during her lifetime expect to maintain a "Barefoot-Rank" came in 1862. Meanwhile, probably in 1858, she winnowed her earlier verses, transcribing those she chose to save into the earliest of the famous packets. Always in ink, the packets are gatherings of four, five, or six sheets of folded stationery loosely held together by thread looped through them in the spine, at two points equidistant from the top and bottom. Of the forty-nine packets, forty-six appear to include all the verses written between 1858 and 1865, the years of great creativeness. Three were assembled later (about 1866, 1871, and 1872). All of the packet poems are either fair copies or semifinal drafts (mostly fair copies), and they constitute two thirds of the entire body of her poetry. The increasing momentum after 1860 reached its peak in 1862 and sustained its full power for three more years.\* Thereafter throughout her life Emily Dickinson continued to write poetry, but never again with the urgency she experienced in the early 1860's, when she fully developed her "flood subjects" on the themes of living and dying. With paradoxes of extraor-

\* The assigning of packets to a given year must always remain tentative, for, in want of other evidence, it is based upon a study of the characteristic changes of the handwriting, analyzed fully in the introduction to *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (3 vols., 1955). The number of packet poems for the years 1858-1865 at present is estimated as follows:

|      |     |
|------|-----|
| 1858 | 51  |
| 1859 | 93  |
| 1860 | 63  |
| 1861 | 85  |
| 1862 | 366 |
| 1863 | 140 |
| 1864 | 172 |
| 1865 | 84  |

dinary insight she repeatedly gives relationship to the ideas and experience which exist in time but never are a part of it.

#### THE PRESENT TEXT

AT the time of her death in 1886, Emily Dickinson left in manuscript a body of verse far more extensive than anyone imagined. Cared for by a servant, Emily and her sister Lavinia had been living together in the Amherst house built by their grandfather Dickinson, alone after their mother's death in 1882. On going through her sister's effects, Lavinia discovered a small box containing about 900 poems. These were the sixty little "volumes," as Lavinia called them, "tied together with twine," that constitute the packets. Determined that she must find a publisher for them, she persuaded Mabel Loomis Todd, the wife of an Amherst professor, to undertake the task of transcribing them. Mrs. Todd enlisted the aid of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and together they made a selection of 115 poems for publication. But Colonel Higginson was apprehensive about the willingness of the public to accept the poems as they stood. Therefore in preparing copy for the printer he undertook to smooth rhymes, regularize the meter, delete provincialisms, and substitute "sensible" metaphors. Thus "folks" became "those," "heft" became "weight," and occasionally line arrangement was altered.

The publication of *Poems by Emily Dickinson* by Roberts Brothers of Boston nevertheless proved to be one of the literary events of 1890, and the reception of the slender volume encouraged the editors to select 166 more verses, issued a year later as *Poems, Second Series*. These likewise were warmly received. In 1896 Mrs. Todd alone edited *Poems, Third Series*, bringing the total number published to 449, and together with 102 additional poems and parts of poems included in Mrs. Todd's edition of *Letters of Emily Dickinson* (1894), they constituted the Dickinson canon until 1914, when Emily Dickinson's niece and literary heir, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, issued *The Single Hound*.

By now the public had come to appreciate the quality of Dickinson's originalities, and alterations in the text of *The Single Hound* are refreshingly few. But Mrs. Bianchi sometimes had trouble reading the manuscripts, and on occasion words or phrases were misread, in that volume and in the two later ones which completed publication of all the verses in Mrs. Bianchi's possession: *Further Poems* (1929) and

*Unpublished Poems* (1935). The appearance of *Bolts of Melody* (1945), from texts prepared by Mrs. Todd and her daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham, virtually completed publication of all the Dickinson poetry, and marked a new era in textual fidelity. It presented 668 poems and fragments, deriving from transcripts made by Mrs. Todd, or from manuscripts which had remained among her papers.

Clearly the time had come to present the Dickinson poetry in an unreconstructed text and with some degree of chronological arrangement, and that opportunity was presented in 1950 when ownership of Emily Dickinson's literary estate was transferred to Harvard University. Editing then began on the variorum text of *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, which I prepared for the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (3 vols., 1955), comprising a total of 1775 poems and fragments.

The text for this edition of *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* reproduces solely and completely that of the 1955 variorum edition, but intended as a reading text, it selects but one form of each poem. Inevitably therefore one is forced to make some editorial decisions about a text which never was prepared by the author as copy for the printer. Rare instances exist, notably in the poem "Blazing in gold" (228), where no text can be called "final." That poem describes a sunset which in one version stoops as low as "the kitchen window"; in another, as low as an "oriel window"; in a third, as low as "the Otter's Window." These copies were made over a period of five years, from 1861 to 1866, and one text is apparently as "final" as another. The reader may make the choice.

Selection becomes mandatory for the semifinal drafts. Though by far the largest number of packet copies exist in but a single fair-copy version, several exist in semifinal form: those for which marginally the poet suggested an alternate reading for one word or more. In order to keep editorial construction to a bare minimum, I have followed the policy of adopting such suggestions only when they are underlined, presumably Emily Dickinson's method of indicating her own preference.

Rough drafts, of which there are relatively few, are allowed to stand as such, with no editorial tinkering.

I have silently corrected obvious misspelling (*withheld, visiter, etc.*), and misplaced apostrophes (*does'nt*). Punctuation and capitalization remain unaltered. Dickinson used dashes as a musical device, and though some may be elongated end stops, any "correction" would be

gratuitous Capitalization, though often capricious, is likewise untouched.

The date at the left, following each poem, is that conjectured for the earliest known manuscript; that to the right is the date of first publication. The order of the poems is that of the Harvard (variorum) edition. There, where all copies of poems are reproduced, fair copies to recipients are chosen for principal representation. Thus, in this volume, for instance, the poems sent to T. W. Higginson in 1862 (nos 318-327) range in date from 1858 to 1862. This seeming irregularity is necessary to preserve the numerical order of the poems.

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THE COMPLETE POEMS OF  
Emily Dickinson

*Valentine week, 1850*

Awake ye muses nine, sing me a strain divine,  
Unwind the solemn twine, and tie my Valentine!

Oh the Earth was *made* for lovers, for damsel, and hopeless swain,  
For sighing, and gentle whispering, and *unity* made of *twain*  
All things do go a courting, in earth, or sea, or air,  
God hath made nothing single but *thee* in His world so fair!  
The *bride*, and then the *bridegroom*, the *two*, and then the *one*,  
Adam, and Eve, his consort, the moon, and then the sun,  
The life doth prove the precept, who obey shall happy be,  
Who will not serve the sovereign, be hanged on fatal tree.  
The high do seek the lowly, the great do seek the small,  
None cannot find who *seeketh*, on this terrestrial ball;  
The bee doth court the flower, the flower his suit receives,  
And they make merry wedding, whose guests are hundred leaves;  
The wind doth woo the branches, the branches they are won,  
And the father fond demandeth the maiden for his son.  
The storm doth walk the seashore humming a mournful tune,  
The wave with eye so pensive, looketh to see the moon,  
Their spirits meet together, they make them solemn vows,  
No more he singeth mournful, her sadness she doth lose.  
The *worm* doth woo the *mortal*, death claims a living bride,  
Night unto day is married, morn unto eventide,  
*Earth* is a merry damsel, and *heaven* a knight so true.  
And Earth is quite coquettish, and beseemeth in vain to sue.  
*Now* to the *application*, to the reading of the roll,  
To bringing thee to justice, and marshalling thy soul:  
Thou art a *human* solo, a being cold, and lone,  
Wilt have no kind companion, thou *reap'st* what thou hast *sown*.  
Hast never silent hours, and minutes all too long,  
And a deal of sad reflection, and *wailing* instead of song?

There's *Sarah*, and *Eliza*, and *Emeline* so fair,  
 And *Harriet*, and *Susan*, and she with *curling hair*!  
 Thine eyes are sadly blinded, but yet thou mayest see  
*Six* true, and comely maidens sitting upon the tree,  
 Approach that tree with caution, then up it boldly climb,  
 And seize the one thou lovest, nor care for *space*, or *time*!  
 Then bear her to the greenwood, and build for her a bower,  
 And give her what she asketh, jewel, or bird, or flower –  
 And bring the fife, and trumpet, and beat upon the drum –  
 And bid the world Goodmorrow, and go to glory home!

1850

1894

2

There is another sky,  
 Ever serene and fair,  
 And there is another sunshine,  
 Though it be darkness there;  
 Never mind faded forests, Austin,  
 Never mind silent fields –  
*Here* is a little forest,  
 Whose leaf is ever green;  
 Here is a brighter garden,  
 Where not a frost has been;  
 In its unfading flowers  
 I hear the bright bee hum;  
 Prithee, my brother,  
 Into *my* garden come!

1851

1894

3

“Sic transit gloria mundi,”  
 “How doth the busy bee,”  
 “Dum vivimus vivamus,”  
 I stay mine enemy!  
 Oh “veni, vidi, vici!”  
 Oh caput cap-a-pie!

And oh "memento mori"  
When I am *far* from thee!

Hurrah for Peter Parley!  
Hurrah for Daniel Boone!  
Three cheers, sir, for the gentleman  
Who first observed the moon!

Peter, put up the sunshine;  
Patti, arrange the stars,  
Tell Luna, *tea* is waiting,  
And call your brother Mars!

Put down the apple, Adam,  
And come away with me,  
So shalt thou have a *pippin*  
From off my father's tree!

I climb the "Hill of Science,"  
I "view the landscape o'er;"  
Such transcendental prospect,  
I nc'er beheld before!

Unto the Legislature  
My country bids me go;  
I'll take my *india rubbers*,  
In case the *wind* should blow!

During my education,  
It was announced to me  
That *gravitation*, *stumbling*,  
Fell from an *apple* tree!

The earth upon an axis  
Was once supposed to turn,  
By way of a *gymnastic*  
In honor of the sun!

It *was* the brave Columbus,  
A sailing o'er the tide,  
Who notified the nations  
Of where I would reside!

Mortality is fatal –  
Gentility is fine,  
Rascality, heroic,  
*Insolvency, sublime!*

Our Fathers being weary,  
Laid down on Bunker Hill;  
And tho' full many a morning,  
Yet they are sleeping still, –

The trumpet, sir, shall wake them,  
In dreams I see them rise,  
Each with a solemn musket  
A marching to the skies!

A coward will remain, Sir,  
Until the fight is done,  
But an *immortal hero*  
Will take his hat, and run!

Good bye, Sir, I am going;  
My country calleth me;  
Allow me, Sir, at parting,  
To wipe my weeping e'e.

In token of our friendship  
Accept this "Bonnie Doon,"  
And when the hand that plucked it  
Hath passed beyond the moon,

The memory of my ashes  
Will consolation be,  
Then, farewell, Tuscarora,  
And farewell, Sir, to thee!

St. Valentine – '52

1852

4

On this wondrous sea  
Sailing silently,  
Ho! Pilot, ho!

[ 6 ]

Knowest thou the shore  
Where no breakers roar –  
Where the storm is o'er?

In the peaceful west  
Many the sails at rest –  
The anchors fast –  
Thither I pilot *thee* –  
Land Ho! Eternity!  
Ashore at last!

1853

1896

5

I have a Bird in spring  
Which for myself doth sing –  
The spring decoys.  
And as the summer nears –  
And as the Rose appears,  
Robin is gone.

Yet do I not repine  
Knowing that Bird of mine  
Though flown –  
Learneth beyond the sea  
Melody new for me  
And will return.

Fast in a safer hand  
Held in a truer Land  
Are mine –  
And though they now depart,  
Tell I my doubting heart  
They're thine.

In a serener Bright,  
In a more golden light  
I see  
Each little doubt and fear,  
Each little discord here  
Removed.

Then will I not repine,  
Knowing that Bird of mine  
Though flown  
Shall in a distant tree  
Bright melody for me  
Return.

1854

1932

6

Frequently the woods are pink –  
Frequently are brown  
Frequently the hills undress  
Behind my native town.  
Oft a head is crested  
I was wont to see –  
And as oft a cranny  
Where it used to be –  
And the Earth – they tell me –  
On its Axis turned!  
Wonderful Rotation!  
By but *twelve* performed!

c. 1858

1891

7

The feet of people walking home  
With gayer sandals go –  
The Crocus – till she rises  
The Vassal of the snow –  
The lips at Hallelujah  
Long years of practise bore  
Till bye and bye these Bargemen  
Walked singing on the shore.  
  
Pearls are the Diver's farthings  
Extorted from the Sea –  
Pinions – the Seraph's wagon  
Pedestrian once – as we –

Night is the morning's Canvas  
Larceny – legacy –  
Death, but our rapt attention  
To Immortality.

My figures fail to tell me  
How far the Village lies –  
Whose peasants are the Angels –  
Whose Cantons dot the skies –  
My Classics veil their faces –  
My faith that Dark adores –  
Which from its solemn abbeys  
Such resurrection pours.

c. 1858

1914

8

There is a word  
Which bears a sword  
Can pierce an armed man –  
It hurls its barbed syllables  
And is mute again –  
But where it fell  
The saved will tell  
On patriotic day,  
Some epauletted Brother  
Gave his breath away.

Wherever runs the breathless sun –  
Wherever roams the day –  
There is its noiseless onset –  
There is its victory!  
Behold the keenest marksman!  
The most accomplished shot!  
Time's sublimest target  
Is a soul "forgot!"

c. 1858

1896

Through lane it lay – through bramble –  
 Through clearing and through wood –  
 Banditti often passed us  
 Upon the lonely road.

The wolf came peering curious –  
 The owl looked puzzled down –  
 The serpent's satin figure  
 Glid stealthily along –

The tempests touched our garments –  
 The lightning's poinards gleamed –  
 Fierce from the Crag above us  
 The hungry Vulture screamed –

The satyr's fingers beckoned –  
 The valley murmured "Come" –  
*These* were the mates –  
*This* was the road  
 These children fluttered home.

c. 1858

1924

My wheel is in the dark!  
 I cannot see a spoke  
 Yet know its dripping feet  
 Go round and round.

My foot is on the Tide!  
 An unfrequented road –  
 Yet have all roads  
 A clearing at the end –

Some have resigned the Loom –  
 Some in the busy tomb  
 Find quaint employ –

Some with new – stately feet –  
 Pass royal through the gate –

Flinging the problem back  
At you and I!

c. 1858

1914

11

I never told the buried gold  
Upon the hill – that lies –  
I saw the sun – his plunder done  
Crouch low to guard his prize.

He stood as near  
As stood you here –  
A pace had been between –  
Did but a snake bisect the brake  
My life had forfeit been.

That was a wondrous booty –  
I hope 'twas honest gained.  
Those were the fairest ingots  
That ever kissed the spade!

Whether to keep the secret –  
Whether to reveal –  
Whether as I ponder  
Kidd will sudden sail –

Could a shrewd advise me  
We might e'en divide –  
Should a shrewd betray me –  
Atropos decide!

c. 1858

1914

12

The morns are meeker than they were –  
The nuts are getting brown –  
The berry's cheek is plumper –  
The Rose is out of town.

The Maple wears a gayer scarf –  
The field a scarlet gown –

Lest I should be old fashioned  
I'll put a trinket on.

c. 1858

1890

13

Sleep is supposed to be  
By souls of sanity  
The shutting of the eye.

Sleep is the station grand  
Down which, on either hand  
The hosts of witness stand!

Morn is supposed to be  
By people of degree  
The breaking of the Day

Morning has not occurred!

That shall Aurora be –  
East of Eternity –  
One with the banner gay –  
One in the red array –  
*That* is the break of Day!

c. 1858

1890

14

One Sister have I in our house,  
And one, a hedge away.  
There's only one recorded,  
But both belong to me.

One came the road that I came –  
And wore my last year's gown –  
The other, as a bird her nest,  
Builted our hearts among.

She did not sing as we did –  
It was a different tune –

Herself to her a music  
As Bumble bee of June

Today is far from Childhood –  
But up and down the hills  
I held her hand the tighter –  
Which shortened all the miles –

And still her hum  
The years among,  
Deceives the Butterfly,  
Still in her Eye  
The Violets lie  
Mouldered this many May.

I spilt the dew –  
But took the morn –  
I chose this single star  
From out the wide night's numbers –  
Sue – forevermore!

1858

1914

15

The Guest is gold and crimson –  
An Opal guest and gray –  
Of Ermine is his doublet –  
His Capuchin gay –

He reaches town at nightfall –  
He stops at every door –  
Who looks for him at morning  
I pray him too – explore  
The Lark's pure territory –  
Or the Lapwing's shore!

c. 1858

1932

16

I would distil a cup,  
And bear to all my friends,

Drinking to her no more astring,  
By beck, or burn, or moor!

c 1858

1894

17

Baffled for just a day or two –  
Embarrassed – not afraid –  
Encounter in my garden  
An unexpected Maid.

She beckons, and the woods start –  
She nods, and all begin –  
Surely, such a country  
I was never in!

c 1858

1945

18

The Gentian weaves her fringes –  
The Maple's loom is red –  
My departing blossoms  
Obviate parade.

A brief, but patient illness –  
An hour to prepare,  
And one below this morning  
Is where the angels are –  
It was a short procession,  
The Bobolink was there –  
An aged Bee addressed us –  
And then we knelt in prayer –  
We trust that she was willing –  
We ask that we may be.  
Summer – Sister – Seraph!  
Let us go with thee!

In the name of the Bee –  
And of the Butterfly –  
And of the Breeze – Amen!

c. 1858

1891

A sepal, petal, and a thorn  
 Upon a common summer's morn –  
 A flask of Dew – A Bee or two –  
 A Breeze – a caper in the trees –  
 And I'm a Rose!

c. 1858

1896

Distrustful of the Gentian –  
 And just to turn away,  
 The fluttering of her fringes  
 Chid my perfidy –  
 Weary for my ———  
 I will singing go –  
 I shall not feel the sleet – then –  
 I shall not fear the snow  
  
 Flees so the phantom meadow  
 Before the breathless Bee –  
 So bubble brooks in deserts  
 On Ears that dying lie –  
 Burn so the Evening Spires  
 To Eyes that Closing go –  
 Hangs so distant Heaven –  
 To a hand below.

c. 1858

1945

We lose – because we win –  
 Gamblers – recollecting which  
 Toss their dice again!

c. 1858

1945

All these my banners be.  
 I sow my pageantry  
 In May –  
 It rises train by train –  
 Then sleeps in state again –  
 My chancel – all the plain  
 Today.

To lose – if one can find again –  
 To miss – if one shall meet –  
 The Burglar cannot rob – then –  
 The Broker cannot cheat.  
 So build the hillocks gaily  
 Thou little spade of mine  
 Leaving nooks for Daisy  
 And for Columbine –  
 You and I the secret  
 Of the Crocus know –  
 Let us chant it softly –  
 “*There is no more snow!*”

To him who keeps an Orchis’ heart –  
 The swamps are pink with June.

c. 1858

1945

I had a guinea golden –  
 I lost it in the sand –  
 And tho’ the sum was simple  
 And pounds were in the land –  
 Still, had it such a value  
 Unto my frugal eye –  
 That when I could not find it –  
 I sat me down to sigh.

I had a crimson Robin –  
 Who sang full many a day  
 But when the woods were painted,  
 He, too, did fly away –

Time brought me other Robins –  
Their ballads were the same –  
Still, for my missing Troubadour  
I kept the “house at home.”

I had a star in heaven –  
One “Pleiad” was its name –  
And when I was not heeding,  
It wandered from the same  
And tho’ the skies are crowded –  
And all the night ashine –  
I do not care about it –  
Since none of them are mine.

My story has a moral –  
I have a missing friend –  
“Pleiad” its name, and Robin,  
And guinea in the sand.  
And when this mournful ditty  
Accompanied with tear –  
Shall meet the eye of traitor  
In country far from here –  
Grant that repentance solemn  
May seize upon his mind –  
And he no consolation  
Beneath the sun may find.

c. 1858

1896

24

There is a morn by men unseen –  
Whose maids upon remoter green  
Keep their Seraphic May –  
And all day long, with dance and game,  
And gambol I may never name –  
Employ their holiday.

Here to light measure, move the feet  
Which walk no more the village street –  
Nor by the wood are found –

Here are the birds that sought the sun  
When last year's distaff idle hung  
And summer's brows were bound.

Ne'er saw I such a wondrous scene –  
Ne'er such a ring on such a green –  
Nor so serene array –  
As if the stars some summer night  
Should swing their cups of Chrysolite –  
And revel till the day –

Like thee to dance – like thee to sing –  
People upon the mystic green –  
I ask, each new May Morn  
I wait thy far, fantastic bells –  
Announcing me in other dells –  
Unto the different dawn!

c. 1858

1945

25

She slept beneath a tree –  
Remembered but by me.  
I touched her Cradle mute –  
She recognized the foot –  
Put on her carmine suit  
And see!

c. 1858

1896

26

It's all I have to bring today –  
This, and my heart beside –  
This, and my heart, and all the fields –  
And all the meadows wide –  
Be sure you count – should I forget  
Some one the sum could tell –

This, and my heart, and all the Bees  
Which in the Clover dwell.

c. 1858

1896

27

Morns like these – we parted –  
Noons like these – she rose –  
Fluttering first – then firmer  
To her fair repose.

Never did she lisp it –  
It was not for me –  
She – was mute from transport –  
I – from agony –

Till – the evening nearing  
One the curtains drew –  
Quick! A Sharper rustling!  
And this linnet flew!

c. 1858

1891

28

So has a Daisy vanished  
From the fields today –  
So tiptoed many a slipper  
To Paradise away –

Oozed so in crimson bubbles  
Day's departing tide –  
Blooming – tripping – flowing –  
Are ye then with God?

c. 1858

1945

29

If those I loved were lost  
The Crier's voice would tell me –  
If those I loved were found  
The bells of Ghent would ring –

Did those I loved repose  
The Daisy would impel me  
Philip – when bewildered  
Bore his riddle in!

c. 1858

1945

30

Adrift! A little boat adrift!  
And night is coming down!  
Will *no* one guide a little boat  
Unto the nearest town?

So Sailors say – on yesterday –  
Just as the dusk was brown  
One little boat gave up its strife  
And gungled down and down.

So angels say – on yesterday –  
Just as the dawn was red  
One little boat – o'erspent with gales –  
Retrimmed its masts – redecked its sails –  
And shot – exultant on!

c. 1858

1896

31

Summer for thee, grant I may be  
When Summer days are flown!  
Thy music still, when Whippoorwill  
And Oriole – are done!

For thee to bloom, I'll skip the tomb  
And row my blossoms o'er!  
Pray gather me –  
Anemone –  
Thy flower – forevermore!

c. 1858

1896

When Roses cease to bloom, Sir,  
 And Violets are done –  
 When Bumblebees in solemn flight  
 Have passed beyond the Sun –  
 The hand that paused to gather  
 Upon this Summer's day  
 Will idle lie – in Auburn –  
 Then take my flowers – pray!

c. 1858

1896

If recollecting were forgetting,  
 Then I remember not  
 And if forgetting, recollecting,  
 How near I had forgot.  
 And if to miss, were merry,  
 And to mourn, were gay,  
 How very blithe the fingers  
 That gathered this, Today!

c. 1858

1894

Garlands for Queens, may be –  
 Laurels – for rare degree  
 Of soul or sword.  
 Ah – but remembering me –  
 Ah – but remembering thee –  
 Nature in chivalry –  
 Nature in charity –  
 Nature in equity –  
 The Rose ordained!

c. 1858

1945

Nobody knows this little Rose –  
 It might a pilgrim be  
 Did I not take it from the ways  
 And lift it up to thee  
 Only a Bee will miss it –  
 Only a Butterfly,  
 Hastening from far journey –  
 On its breast to lie –  
 Only a Bird will wonder –  
 Only a Breeze will sigh –  
 Ah Little Rose – how easy  
 For such as thee to die!

c. 1858

1891

Snow flakes.

I counted till they danced so  
 Their slippers leaped the town,  
 And then I took a pencil  
 To note the rebels down.  
 And then they grew so jolly  
 I did resign the prig,  
 And ten of my once stately toes  
 Are marshalled for a jig!

c. 1858

1945

Before the ice is in the pools –  
 Before the skaters go,  
 Or any cheek at nightfall  
 Is tarnished by the snow –  
 Before the fields have finished,  
 Before the Christmas tree,  
 Wonder upon wonder  
 Will arrive to me!

What we touch the hems of  
On a summer's day –  
What is only walking  
Just a bridge away –  
That which sings so – speaks so –  
When there's no one here –  
Will the frock I wept in  
Answer me to wear?

c. 1858

1896

38

By such and such an offering  
To Mr So and So,  
The web of life woven –  
So martyrs albums show!

c. 1858

1945

39

It did not surprise me –  
So I said – or thought –  
She will stir her pinions  
And the nest forgot,  
Traverse broader forests –  
Build in gayer boughs,  
Breathe in Ear more modern  
God's old fashioned vows –  
This was but a Birdling –  
What and if it be  
One within my bosom  
Had departed me?  
This was but a story –  
What and if indeed  
There were just such coffin  
In the heart instead?

c. 1858

1945

When I count the seeds  
That are sown beneath,  
To bloom so, bye and bye –

When I con the people  
Lain so low,  
To be received as high –

When I believe the garden  
Mortal shall not see –  
Pick by faith its blossom  
And avoid its Bee,  
I can spare this summer, unreluctantly.

c. 1858

1945

I robbed the Woods –  
The trusting Woods.  
The unsuspecting Trees  
Brought out their Burs and mosses  
My fantasy to please.  
I scanned their trinkets curious –  
I grasped – I bore away –  
What will the solemn Hemlock –  
What will the Oak tree say?

c. 1858

1955

A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!  
Your prayers, oh Passer by!  
From such a common ball as this  
Might date a Victory!  
From marshallings as simple  
The flags of nations swang.  
Steady – my soul: What issues  
Upon thine arrow hang!

c. 1858

1945

Could live – *did* live –  
 Could die – *did* die –  
 Could smile upon the whole  
 Through faith in one he met not,  
 To introduce his soul.

Could go from scene familiar  
 To an untraversed spot –  
 Could contemplate the journey  
 With unpuzzled heart –

Such trust had one among us,  
 Among us *not* today –  
 We who saw the launching  
 Never sailed the Bay!

c. 1858

1945

If she had been the Mistletoe  
 And I had been the Rose –  
 How gay upon your table  
 My velvet life to close –  
 Since I am of the Druid,  
 And she is of the dew –  
 I'll deck Tradition's buttonhole –  
 And send the Rose to you.

c. 1858

1894

There's something quieter than sleep  
 Within this inner room!  
 It wears a sprig upon its breast –  
 And will not tell its name.

Some touch it, and some kiss it –  
 Some chafe its idle hand –

It has a simple gravity  
I do not understand!

I would not weep if I were they –  
How rude in one to sob!  
Might scare the quiet fairy  
Back to her native wood!

While simple-hearted neighbors  
Chat of the "Early dead" –  
We – prone to periphrasis,  
Remark that Birds have fled!

c. 1858

1896

46

I keep my pledge.  
I was not called –  
Death did not notice me.  
I bring my Rose.  
I plight again,  
By every sainted Bee –  
By Daisy called from hillside –  
By Bobolink from lane  
Blossom and I –  
*Her* oath, and mine –  
Will surely come again.

c. 1858

1945

47

Heart! We will forget him!  
You and I – tonight!  
You may forget the warmth he gave –  
I will forget the light!

When you have done, pray tell me  
That I may straight begin!  
Haste! lest while you're lagging  
I remember him!

c. 1858

1896

Once more, my now bewildered Dove  
 Bestirs her puzzled wings  
 Once more her mistress, on the deep  
 Her troubled question flings –

Thrice to the floating casement  
 The Patriarch's bird returned,  
 Courage! My brave Columba!  
 There may yet be *Land!*

c. 1858

1945

I never lost as much but twice,  
 And that was in the sod.  
 Twice have I stood a beggar  
 Before the door of God!

Angels – twice descending  
 Reimbursed my store –  
 Burglar! Banker – Father!  
 I am poor once more!

c. 1858

1890

I haven't told my garden yet –  
 Lest that should conquer me.  
 I haven't quite the strength now  
 To break it to the Bee –

I will not name it in the street  
 For shops would stare at me –  
 That one so shy – so ignorant  
 Should have the face to die.

The hillsides must not know it –  
 Where I have rambled so –  
 Nor tell the loving forests  
 The day that I shall go –

Nor lisp it at the table –  
Nor heedless by the way  
Hint that within the Riddle  
One will walk today –

c 1858

1891

51

I often passed the village  
When going home from school –  
And wondered what they did there –  
And why it was so still –

I did not know the year then –  
In which my call would come –  
Earlier, by the Dial,  
Than the rest have gone

It's stiller than the sundown.  
It's cooler than the dawn –  
The Daisies dare to come here –  
And birds can flutter down –

So when you are tired –  
Or perplexed – or cold –  
Trust the loving promise  
Underneath the mould,  
Cry "it's I," "take Dollie,"  
And I will enfold!

c 1858

1945

52

Whether my bark went down at sea –  
Whether she met with gales –  
Whether to isles enchanted  
She bent her docile sails –

By what mystic mooring  
She is held today –

This is the errand of the eye  
Out upon the Bay.

c. 1858

1890

53

Taken from men – this morning –  
Carried by men today –  
Met by the Gods with banners –  
Who marshalled her away –

One little maid – from playmates –  
One little mind from school –  
There must be guests in Eden –  
All the rooms are full –

Far – as the East from Even –  
Dim – as the border star –  
Courtiers quaint, in Kingdoms  
Our departed are.

c. 1858

1891

54

If I should die,  
And you should live –  
And time should gurgle on –  
And morn should beam –  
And noon should burn –  
As it has usual done –  
If Birds should build as early  
And Bees as bustling go –  
One might depart at option  
From enterprise below!  
'Tis sweet to know that stocks will stand  
When we with Daisies lie –  
That Commerce will continue –  
And Trades as briskly fly –  
It makes the parting tranquil  
And keeps the soul serene –

That gentlemen so sprightly  
Conduct the pleasing scene!

c. 1858

1891

55

By Chivalrics as tiny,  
A Blossom, or a Book,  
The seeds of smiles are planted –  
Which blossom in the dark.

c. 1858

1945

56

If I should cease to bring a Rose  
Upon a festal day,  
'Twill be because *beyond* the Rose  
I have been called away –

If I should cease to take the names  
My buds commemorate –  
'Twill be because *Death's* finger  
Claps my murmuring lip!

c. 1858

1945

57

To venerate the simple days  
Which lead the seasons by,  
Needs but to remember  
That from you or I,  
They may take the trifle  
Termed *mortality!*

c. 1858

1896

58

Delayed till she had ceased to know –  
Delayed till in its vest of snow  
Her loving bosom lay –

An hour behind the fleeting breath –  
Later by just an hour than Death –  
Oh lagging Yesterday!

Could she have guessed that it would be –  
Could but a crier of the joy  
Have climbed the distant hill –  
Had not the bliss so slow a pace  
Who knows but this surrendered face  
Were undefeated still?

Oh if there may departing be  
Any forgot by Victory  
In her imperial round –  
Show them this meek appareled thing  
That could not stop to be a king –  
Doubtful if it be crowned!

c. 1859

1890

59

A little East of Jordan,  
Evangelists record,  
A Gymnast and an Angel  
Did wrestle long and hard –

Till morning touching mountain –  
And Jacob, waxing strong,  
The Angel begged permission  
To Breakfast – to return –

Not so, said cunning Jacob!  
“I will not let thee go  
Except thou bless me” – Stranger!  
The which acceded to –

Light swung the silver fleeces  
“Peniel” Hills beyond,  
And the bewildered Gymnast  
Found he had worsted God!

c. 1859

1914

Like her the Saints retire,  
 In their Chapeaux of fire,  
 Martial as she!

Like her the Evenings steal  
 Purple and Cochineal  
 After the Day!

"Departed" – both – they say!  
 i.e. gathered away,  
 Not found,

Argues the Aster still –  
 Reasons the Daffodil  
 Profound!

c. 1859

1932

Papa above!  
 Regard a Mouse  
 O'erpowered by the Cat!  
 Reserve within thy kingdom  
 A "Mansion" for the Rat!

Snug in seraphic Cupboards  
 To nibble all the day,  
 While unsuspecting Cycles  
 Wheel solemnly away!

c. 1859

1914

"Sown in dishonor"!  
 Ah! Indeed!  
 May *this* "dishonor" be?  
 If I were half so fine myself  
 I'd notice nobody!

"Sown in corruption"<sup>1</sup>  
Not so fast!  
Apostle is askew!  
Corinthians 1. 15. narrates  
A Circumstance or two!

c 1859

1914

63

If pain for peace prepares  
Lo, what "Augustan" years  
Our feet await!

If springs from winter rise,  
*Can* the Anemones  
Be reckoned up?

If night stands first – *then* noon  
To gird us for the sun,  
What gaze!

When from a thousand skies  
On our *developed* eyes  
Noons blaze!

c. 1859

1914

64

Some Rainbow – coming from the Fair!  
Some Vision of the World Cashmere –  
I confidently see!  
Or else a Peacock's purple Train  
Feather by feather – on the plain  
Fritters itself away!

The dreamy Butterflies bestir!  
Lethargic pools resume the whir  
Of last year's Sundered tune!  
From some old Fortress on the sun  
Baronial Bees – march – one by one –  
In murmuring platoon!

The Robins stand as thick today  
As flakes of snow stood yesterday –  
On fence – and Roof – and Twig!  
The Orchis binds her feather on  
For her old lover – Don the Sun!  
Revisiting the Bog!

Without Commander! Countless! Still!  
The Regiments of Wood and Hill  
In bright detachment stand!  
Behold! Whose Multitudes are these?  
The children of whose turbaned seas –  
Or what Circassian Land?

c 1859

1890

65

I can't tell you – but you feel it –  
No! can you tell me –  
Saints, with ravished slate and pencil  
Solve our April Day!

Sweeter than a vanished frolic  
From a vanished green!  
Swifter than the hoofs of Hoisemen  
Round a Ledge of dream!

Modest, let us walk among it  
With our faces veiled –  
As they say polite Archangels  
Do in meeting God!

Not for me – to prate about it!  
Not for you – to say  
To some fashionable Lady  
“Charming April Day”!

Rather – Heaven's “Peter Parley”!  
By which Children slow  
To sublimer Recitation  
Are prepared to go!

c. 1859

1914

So from the mould  
 Scarlet and Gold  
 Many a Bulb will rise –  
 Hidden away, cunningly,  
 From sagacious eyes.

So from Cocoon  
 Many a Worm  
 Leap so Highland gay,  
*Peasants* like me,  
 Peasants like Thee  
 Gaze perplexedly!

c. 1859

1914

Success is counted sweetest  
 By those who ne'er succeed.  
 To comprehend a nectar  
 Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host  
 Who took the Flag today  
 Can tell the definition  
 So clear of Victory

As he defeated – dying –  
 On whose forbidden ear  
 The distant strains of triumph  
 Burst agonized and clear!

c. 1859

1878

Ambition cannot find him.  
 Affection doesn't know  
 How many leagues of nowhere  
 Lie between them now.

Yesterday, undistinguished!  
Eminent Today  
For our mutual honor,  
Immortality!

c. 1859

1914

69

Low at my problem bending,  
Another problem comes –  
Larger than mine – Serene! –  
Involving statelier sums.

I check my busy pencil,  
My figures file away  
Wherefore, my baffled fingers  
Thy perplexity?

c. 1859

1914

70

“Arcturus” is his other name –  
I’d rather call him “Star.”  
It’s very mean of Science  
To go and interfere!

I slew a worm the other day –  
A “Savant” passing by  
Murmured “Resurgam” – “Centipede”!  
“Oh Lord – how frail are we”!

I pull a flower from the woods –  
A monster with a glass  
Computes the stamens in a breath –  
And has her in a “class”!

Whereas I took the Butterfly  
Aforetime in my hat –  
He sits erect in “Cabinets” –  
The Clover bells forgot.

What once was "Heaven"  
Is "Zenith" now –  
Where I proposed to go  
When Time's brief masquerade was done  
Is mapped and charted too

What if the poles should frisk about  
And stand upon their heads!  
I hope I'm ready for "the worst" –  
Whatever prank betides!

Perhaps the "Kingdom of Heaven's" changed –  
I hope the "Children" there  
Won't be "new fashioned" when I come –  
And laugh at me – and stare –

I hope the Father in the skies  
Will lift his little girl –  
Old fashioned – naughty – everything –  
Over the stile of "Pearl."

c. 1859

1891

71

A throe upon the features –  
A hurry in the breath –  
An ecstasy of parting  
Denominated "Death" –

An anguish at the mention  
Which when to patience grown,  
I've known permission given  
To rejoin its own.

c. 1859

1891

72

Glowing is her Bonnet,  
Glowing is her Cheek,  
Glowing is her Kirtle,  
Yet she cannot speak.

Better as the Daisy  
From the Summer hill  
Vanish unrecorded  
Save by tearful rill –

Save by loving sunrise  
Looking for her face  
Save by feet unnumbered  
Pausing at the place.

c. 1859

1914

73

Who never lost, are unprepared  
A Coronet to find!  
Who never thirsted  
Flagons, and Cooling Tamarind!

Who never climbed the weary league –  
Can such a foot explore  
The purple territories  
On Pizarro's shore?

How many Legions overcome –  
The Emperor will say?  
How many Colors taken  
On Revolution Day?

How many *Bullets* bearest?  
Hast Thou the Royal scar?  
Angels! Write "Promoted"  
On this Soldier's brow!

c. 1859

1891

74

A Lady red – amid the Hill  
Her annual secret keeps!  
A Lady white, within the Field  
In placid Lily sleeps!

The tidy Breezes, with their Brooms –  
Sweep vale – and hill – and tree!  
Prithee, My pretty Housewives!  
Who may expected be?

The Neighbors do not yet suspect!  
The Woods exchange a smile!  
Orchard, and Buttercup, and Bird –  
In such a little while!

And yet, how still the Landscape stands!  
How nonchalant the Hedge!  
As if the “Resurrection”  
Were nothing very strange!

c. 1859

1896

75

She died at play,  
Gambolled away  
Her lease of spotted hours,  
Then sank as gaily as a Turk  
Upon a Couch of flowers.

Her ghost strolled softly o'er the hill  
Yesterday, and Today,  
Her vestments as the silver fleece –  
Her countenance as spray.

c. 1859

1914

76

Exultation is the going  
Of an inland soul to sea,  
Past the houses – past the headlands –  
Into deep Eternity –

Bred as we, among the mountains,  
Can the sailor understand

The divine intoxication  
Of the first league out from land?

c. 1859

1890

77

I never hear the word "escape"  
Without a quicker blood,  
A sudden expectation,  
A flying attitude!

I never hear of prisons broad  
By soldiers battered down,  
But I tug childish at my bars  
Only to fail again!

c. 1859

1891

78

A poor – torn heart – a tattered heart –  
That sat it down to rest –  
Nor noticed that the Ebbing Day  
Flowed silver to the West –  
Nor noticed Night did soft descend –  
Nor Constellation burn –  
Intent upon the vision  
Of latitudes unknown.

The angels – happening that way  
This dusty heart espied –  
Tenderly took it up from toil  
And carried it to God –  
There – sandals for the Barefoot –  
There – gathered from the gales –  
Do the blue havens by the hand  
Lead the wandering Sails.

c. 1859

1891

Going to Heaven!  
 I don't know when –  
 Pray do not ask me how!  
 Indeed I'm too astonished  
 To think of answering you!  
 Going to Heaven!  
 How dim it sounds!  
 And yet it will be done  
 As sure as flocks go home at night  
 Unto the Shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you're going too!  
 Who knows?  
 If you should get there first  
 Save just a little space for me  
 Close to the two I lost –  
 The smallest "Robe" will fit me  
 And just a bit of "Crown" –  
 For you know we do not mind our dress  
 When we are going home –

I'm glad I don't believe it  
 For it would stop my breath –  
 And I'd like to look a little more  
 At such a curious Earth!  
 I'm glad they did believe it  
 Whom I have never found  
 Since the mighty Autumn afternoon  
 I left them in the ground.

1859

1891

Our lives are Swiss –  
 So still – so Cool –  
 Till some odd afternoon  
 The Alps neglect their Curtains  
 And we look farther on!

*Italy* stands the other side!  
While like a guard between –  
The solemn Alps –  
The siren Alps  
Forever intervene!

c. 1859

1896

81

We should not mind so small a flower –  
Except it quiet bring  
Our little garden that we lost  
Back to the Lawn again.

So spicy her Carnations nod –  
So drunken, reel her Bees –  
So silver steal a hundred flutes  
From out a hundred trees –

That whoso sees this little flower  
By faith may clear behold  
The Bobolinks around the throne  
And Dandelions gold.

c. 1859

1914

82

Whose cheek is this?  
What rosy face  
Has lost a blush today?  
I found her – “pleiad” – in the woods  
And bore her safe away.

Robins, in the tradition  
Did cover such with leaves,  
But which the cheek –  
And which the pall  
My scrutiny deceives.

c. 1859

1932

Heart, not so heavy as mine  
 Wending late home –  
 As it passed my window  
 Whistled itself a tune –  
 A careless snatch – a ballad –  
 A ditty of the street –  
 Yet to my irritated Ear  
 An Anodyne so sweet –  
 It was as if a Bobolink  
 Sauntering this way  
 Carolled, and paused, and carolled –  
 Then bubbled slow away!  
 It was as if a chirping brook  
 Upon a dusty way –  
 Set bleeding feet to minuets  
 Without the knowing why!  
*Tomorrow*, night will come again –  
 Perhaps, weary and sore –  
 Ah Bugle! By my window  
 I pray you pass once more.

c. 1859

1891

Her breast is fit for pearls,  
 But I was not a "Diver" –  
 Her brow is fit for thrones  
 But I have not a crest.  
 Her heart is fit for *home* –  
 I – a Sparrow – build there  
 Sweet of twigs and twine  
 My perennial nest.

c. 1859

1894

"They have not chosen me," he said,  
 "But I have chosen them!"

Blave – Broken hearted statement –  
Uttered in Bethlehem!

I could not have told it,  
But since *Jesus dared* –  
Sovereign! Know a Daisy  
Thy dishonor shared!

c. 1859

1894

86

South Winds jostle them –  
Bumblebees come –  
Hover – hesitate –  
Drink, and are gone –

Butterflies pause  
On their passage Cashmere –  
I – softly plucking,  
Present them here!

c. 1859

1891

87

A darting fear – a pomp – a tear –  
A waking on a morn  
To find that what one waked for,  
Inhales the different dawn.

c. 1859

1945

88

As by the dead we love to sit,  
Become so wondrous dear –  
As for the lost we grapple  
Tho' all the rest are here –

In broken mathematics  
We estimate our prize

Vast – in its fading ratio  
To our penurious eyes!

c. 1859

1891

89

Some things that fly there be –  
Birds – Hours – the Bumblebee –  
Of these no Elegy.

Some things that stay there be –  
Grief – Hills – Eternity –  
Nor this behooveth me.

There are that resting, rise.  
Can I expound the skies?  
How still the Riddle lies!

c. 1859

1890

90

Within my reach!  
I could have touched!  
I might have chanced that way!  
Soft sauntered thro' the village –  
Sauntered as soft away!  
So unsuspected Violets  
Within the meadows go –  
Too late for striving fingers  
That passed, an hour ago!

c. 1859

1890

91

So bashful when I spied her!  
So pretty – so ashamed!  
So hidden in her leaflets  
Lest anybody find –  
So breathless till I passed her –  
So helpless when I turned

And bore her struggling, blushing,  
Her simple haunts beyond!

For whom I robbed the Dingle –  
For whom betrayed the Dell –  
Many, will doubtless ask me,  
But I shall never tell!

c. 1859

1890

92

My friend must be a Bird –  
Because it flies!  
Mortal, my friend must be,  
Because it dies!  
Barbs has it, like a Bee!  
Ah, curious friend!  
Thou puzzlest me!

c 1859

1896

93

Went up a year this evening!  
I recollect it well!  
Amid no bells nor bravoes  
The bystanders will tell!  
Cheerful – as to the village –  
Tranquil – as to repose –  
Chastened – as to the Chapel  
This humble Tourist rose!  
Did not talk of returning!  
Alluded to no time  
When, were the gales propitious –  
We might look for him!  
Was grateful for the Roses  
In life's diverse bouquet –  
Talked softly of new species  
To pick another day;  
Beguiling thus the wonder  
The *wondrous* nearer drew –

Hands bustled at the moorings –  
The crowd respectful grew –  
Ascended from our vision  
To Countenances new!  
A Difference – A Daisy –  
Is all the rest I knew!

c. 1859

1891

94

Angels, in the early morning  
May be seen the Dews among,  
Stooping – plucking – smiling – flying –  
Do the Buds to them belong?

Angels, when the sun is hottest  
May be seen the sands among,  
Stooping – plucking – sighing – flying –  
Parched the flowers they bear along.

c. 1859

1890

95

My nose-gays are for Captives –  
Dim – long expectant eyes,  
Fingers denied the plucking,  
Patient till Paradise.

To such, if they should whisper  
Of morning and the moor,  
They bear no other errand,  
And I, no other prayer.

c. 1859

1891

96

Sexton! My Master's sleeping here.  
Pray lead me to his bed!  
I came to build the Bird's nest,  
And sow the Early seed –

That when the snow creeps slowly  
From off his chamber door –  
Daisies point the way there –  
And the Troubadour.

c. 1859

1935

97

The rainbow never tells me  
That gust and storm are by,  
Yet is she more convincing  
Than Philosophy.

My flowers turn from Forums –  
Yet eloquent declare  
What Cato couldn't prove me  
Except the *birds* were here!

c. 1859

1929

98

One dignity delays for all –  
One mixed Afternoon –  
None can avoid this purple –  
None evade this Crown!

Coach, it insures, and footmen –  
Chamber, and state, and throng –  
Bells, also, in the village  
As we ride grand along!

What dignified Attendants!  
What service when we pause!  
How loyally at parting  
Their hundred hats they raise!

How pomp surpassing ermine  
When simple You, and I,  
Present our meek escutcheon  
And claim the rank to die!

c. 1859

1890

New feet within my garden go –  
 New fingers stir the sod –  
 A Troubadour upon the Elm  
 Betrays the solitude.

New children play upon the green –  
 New Weary sleep below –  
 And still the pensive Spring returns –  
 And still the punctual snow<sup>1</sup>

c. 1859

1890

A science – so the Savants say,  
 “Comparative Anatomy” –  
 By which a single bone –  
 Is made a secret to unfold  
 Of some rare tenant of the mold,  
 Else perished in the stone –

So to the eye prospective led,  
 This meekest flower of the mead  
 Upon a winter’s day,  
 Stands representative in gold  
 Of Rose and Lily, manifold,  
 And countless Butterfly!

c. 1859

1929

Will there really be a “Morning”?  
 Is there such a thing as “Day”?  
 Could I see it from the mountains  
 If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like Water lilies?  
 Has it feathers like a Bird?  
 Is it brought from famous countries  
 Of which I have never heard?

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!  
Oh some Wise Man from the skies!  
Please to tell a little Pilgrim  
Where the place called "Morning" lies!

c. 1859

1891

102

Great Caesar! Condescend  
The Daisy, to receive,  
Gathered by Cato's Daughter,  
With your majestic leave!

c. 1859

1932

103

I have a King, who does not speak –  
So – wondering – thro' the hours meek  
I trudge the day away –  
Half glad when it is night, and sleep,  
If, haply, thro' a dream, to peep  
In parlors, shut by day.

And if I do – when morning comes –  
It is as if a hundred drums  
Did round my pillow roll,  
And shouts fill all my Childish sky,  
And Bells keep saying "Victory"  
From steeples in my soul!

And if I don't – the little Bird  
Within the Orchard, is not heard,  
And I omit to pray  
"Father, thy will be done" today  
For my will goes the other way,  
And it were perjury!

c. 1859

1896

Where I have lost, I softer tread –  
 I sow sweet flower from garden bed –  
 I pause above that vanished head  
 And mourn.

Whom I have lost, I pious guard  
 From accent harsh, or ruthless word –  
 Feeling as if their pillow heard,  
 Though stone!

When I have lost, you'll know by this –  
 A Bonnet black – A dusk surplice –  
 A little tremor in my voice  
 Like this!

Why, I have lost, the people know  
 Who dressed in frocks of purest snow  
 Went home a century ago  
 Next Bliss!

. 1859

1932

To hang our head – ostensibly –  
 And subsequent, to find  
 That such was not the posture  
 Of our immortal mind –  
 Affords the sly presumption  
 That in so dense a fuzz –  
 You – too – take Cobweb attitudes  
 Upon a plane of Gauze!

. 1859

1896

The Daisy follows soft the Sun –  
 And when his golden walk is done –  
 Sits shyly at his feet –

He – waking – finds the flower there –  
Wherefore – Marauder – art thou here?  
Because, Sir, love is sweet!

We are the Flower – Thou the Sun!  
Forgive us, if as days decline –  
We nearer steal to Thee!  
Enamored of the parting West –  
The peace – the flight – the Amethyst –  
Night's possibility!

c. 1859

1890

107

'Twas such a little – little boat  
That toddled down the bay!  
'Twas such a gallant – gallant sea  
That beckoned it away!  
'Twas such a greedy, greedy wave  
That licked it from the Coast –  
Nor ever guessed the stately sails  
My little craft was *lost*!

c. 1859

1890

108

Surgeons must be very careful  
When they take the knife!  
Underneath their fine incisions  
Stirs the Culpit – *Life*!

c. 1859

1891

109

By a flower – By a letter –  
By a numble love –  
If I weld the Rivet faster –  
Final fast – above –  
Never mind my breathless Anvil!  
Never mind Repose!

Never mind the sooty faces  
Tugging at the Forge!

c. 1859

1932

110

Artists wrestled here!  
Lo, a tint Cashmere!  
Lo, a Rose!  
Student of the Year!  
For the easel here  
Say Repose!

c. 1859

1945

111

The Bee is not afraid of me.  
I know the Butterfly  
The pretty people in the Woods  
Receive me cordially –  
  
The Brooks laugh louder when I come –  
The Breezes madder play,  
Wherefore mine eye thy silver mists,  
Wherefore, Oh Summer's Day?

c. 1859

1890

112

Where bells no more affright the morn –  
Where scrabble never comes –  
Where very nimble Gentlemen  
Are forced to keep their rooms –  
  
Where tired Children placid sleep  
Thro' Centuries of noon  
This place is Bliss – this town is Heaven –  
Please, Pater, pretty soon!  
  
"Oh could we climb where Moses stood,  
And view the Landscape o'er".

Not Father's bells – nor Factories,  
Could scare us any more!

c. 1859

1945

113

Our share of night to bear –  
Our share of morning –  
Our blank in bliss to fill  
Our blank in scorning –

Here a star, and there a star,  
Some lose their way!  
Here a mist, and there a mist,  
Afterwards – Day!

c. 1859

1890

114

Good night, because we must,  
How intricate the dust!  
I would go, to know!  
Oh incognito!  
Saucy, Saucy Scraph  
To elude me so!  
Father! they won't tell me,  
Won't you tell them to?

c. 1859

1945

115

What Inn is this  
Where for the night  
Peculiar Traveller comes?  
Who is the Landlord?  
Where the maids?  
Behold, what curious rooms!  
No ruddy fires on the hearth –  
No brimming Tankards flow –

Necromancer! Landlord!  
Who are these below?

c. 1859

1891

116

I had some things that I called mine –  
And God, that he called his,  
Till, recently a rival Claim  
Disturbed these amities.

The property, my garden,  
Which having sown with care,  
He claims the pretty acre,  
And sends a Bailiff there.

The station of the parties  
Forbids publicity,  
But Justice is sublimer  
Than arms, or pedigree.

I'll institute an "Action" –  
I'll vindicate the law –  
Jove! Choose your counsel –  
I retain "Shaw"!

c. 1859

1945

117

In rags mysterious as these  
The shining Courtiers go –  
Veiling the purple, and the plumes –  
Veiling the ermine so.

Smiling, as they request an alms –  
At some imposing door!  
Smiling when we walk barefoot  
Upon their golden floor!

c. 1859

1945

My friend attacks my friend!  
 Oh Battle picturesque!  
 Then I turn Soldier too,  
 And he turns Satirist!  
 How martial is this place!  
 Had I a mighty gun  
 I think I'd shoot the human race  
 And then to glory run!

c. 1859

1945

Talk with prudence to a Beggar  
 Of "Potosi," and the mines!  
 Reverently, to the Hungry  
 Of your viands, and your wines!  
  
 Cautious, hint to any Captive  
 You have passed enfranchised feet!  
 Anecdotes of air in Dungeons  
 Have sometimes proved deadly sweet!

c. 1859

1891

If this is "fading"  
 Oh let me immediately "fade"!  
 If this is "dying"  
 Bury me, in such a shroud of red!  
 If this is "sleep,"  
 On such a night  
 How proud to shut the eye!  
 Good Evening, gentle Fellow men!  
*Peacock* presumes to die!

c. 1859

1945

As Watchers hang upon the East,  
 As Beggars revel at a feast  
 By savory Fancy spread –  
 As brooks in deserts babble sweet  
 On ear too far for the delight,  
 Heaven beguiles the tired.

As that same watcher, when the East  
 Opens the lid of Amethyst  
 And lets the morning go –  
 That Beggar, when an honored Guest,  
 Those thirsty lips to flagons pressed,  
 Heaven to us, if true.

c 1859

1945

A something in a summer's Day  
 As slow her flambeaux burn away  
 Which solemnizes me.

A something in a summer's noon –  
 A depth – an Azure – a perfume –  
 Transcending ecstasy.

And still within a summer's night  
 A something so transporting bright  
 I clap my hands to see –

Then veil my too inspecting face  
 Lest such a subtle – shimmering grace  
 Flutter too far for me –

The wizard fingers never rest –  
 The purple brook within the breast  
 Still chafes its narrow bed –

Still rears the East her amber Flag –  
 Guides still the Sun along the Crag  
 His Caravan of Red –

So looking on – the night – the morn  
Conclude the wonder gay –  
And I meet, coming thro' the dews  
Another summer's Day!

c. 1859

1890

123

Many cross the Rhine  
In this cup of mine.  
Sip old Frankfort air  
From my brown Cigar.

c. 1859

1945

124

In lands I never saw – they say  
Immortal Alps look down –  
Whose Bonnets touch the firmament –  
Whose Sandals touch the town –  
  
Meek at whose everlasting feet  
A Myriad Daisy play –  
Which, Sir, are you and which am I  
Upon an August day?

c. 1859

1891

125

For each ecstatic instant  
We must an anguish pay  
In keen and quivering ratio  
To the ecstasy.

For each beloved hour  
Sharp pittances of years –  
Bitter contested farthings –  
And Coffers heaped with Tears!

c. 1859

1891

To fight aloud, is very brave –  
 But *gallanter*, I know  
 Who charge within the bosom  
 The Cavalry of Woe –

Who win, and nations do not see –  
 Who fall – and none observe –  
 Whose dying eyes, no Country  
 Regards with patriot love –

We trust, in plumed procession  
 For such, the Angels go –  
 Rang after Rank, with even feet –  
 And Uniforms of Snow.

c. 1859

1890

“Houses” – so the Wise Men tell me –  
 “Mansions”! Mansions must be warm!  
 Mansions cannot let the tears in,  
 Mansions must exclude the storm!

“Many Mansions,” by “his Father,”  
 I don’t know him; snugly built!  
 Could the Children find the way there –  
 Some, would even trudge tonight!

c. 1859

1945

Bring me the sunset in a cup,  
 Reckon the morning’s flagons up  
 And say how many Dew,  
 Tell me how far the morning leaps –  
 Tell me what time the weaver sleeps  
 Who spun the breadths of blue!

Write me how many notes there be  
In the new Robin's ecstasy  
Among astonished boughs --  
How many trips the Tortoise makes --  
How many cups the Bee partakes,  
The Debauchee of Dews!

Also, who laid the Rainbow's piers,  
Also, who leads the docile spheres  
By withes of supple blue?<sup>2</sup>  
Whose fingers string the stalactite --  
Who counts the wampum of the night  
To see that none is due?

Who built this little Alban House  
And shut the windows down so close  
My spirit cannot see?  
Who'll let me out some gala day  
With implements to fly away,  
Passing Pomposity?

c. 1859

1891

129

Cocoon above! Cocoon below!  
Stealthy Cocoon, why hide you so  
What all the world suspect?  
An hour, and gay on every tree  
Your secret, perched in ecstasy  
Defies imprisonment!

An hour in Chrysalis to pass,  
Then gay above receding grass  
A Butterfly to go!  
A moment to interrogate,  
Then wiser than a "Surrogate,"  
The Universe to know!

c. 1859

1935

These are the days when Birds come back –  
 A very few – a Bird or two –  
 To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies resume  
 The old – old sophistries of June –  
 A blue and gold mistake.

Oh fraud that cannot cheat the Bee –  
 Almost thy plausibility  
 Induces my belief.

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear –  
 And softly thro' the altered air  
 Hurries a timid leaf.

Oh Sacrament of summer days,  
 Oh Last Communion in the Haze –  
 Permit a child to join.

Thy sacred emblems to partake –  
 Thy consecrated bread to take  
 And thine immortal wine!

c. 1859

1890

Besides the Autumn poets sing  
 A few prosaic days  
 A little this side of the snow  
 And that side of the Haze –

A few incisive Mornings –  
 A few Ascetic Eves –  
 Gone – Mr. Bryant's "Golden Rod" –  
 And Mr Thomson's "sheaves "

Still, is the bustle in the Brook –  
 Sealed are the spicy valves –  
 Mesmeric fingers softly touch  
 The Eyes of many Elves –

Perhaps a squirrel may remain –  
My sentiments to share –  
Grant me, Oh Lord, a sunny mind –  
Thy windy will to bear!

c. 1859

1891

132

I bring an unaccustomed wine  
To lips long parching  
Next to mine,  
And summon them to drink,

Crackling with fever, they Essay,  
I turn my brimming eyes away,  
And come next hour to look.

The hands still hug the tardy glass –  
The lips I would have cooled, alas –  
Are so superfluous Cold –

I would as soon attempt to warm  
The bosoms where the frost has lain  
Ages beneath the mould –

Some other thirsty there may be  
To whom this would have pointed me  
Had it remained to speak –

And so I always bear the cup  
If, haply, mine may be the drop  
Some pilgrim thirst to slake –

If, haply, any say to me  
"Unto the little, unto me,"  
When I at last awake.

c. 1859

1891

133

As Children bid the Guest "Good Night"  
And then reluctant turn –

[ 62 ]

My flowers raise their pretty lips –  
Then put their nightgowns on  
As children caper when they wake  
Merry that it is Morn –  
My flowers from a hundred cribs  
Will peep, and prance again.

c. 1859

1890

134

Perhaps you'd like to buy a flower,  
But I could never sell –  
If you would like to *borrow*,  
Until the Daffodil

Unties her yellow Bonnet  
Beneath the village door,  
Until the Bees, from Clover rows  
Their Hock, and Sherry, draw,

Why, I will lend until just then,  
But not an hour more!

c. 1859

1890

135

Water, is taught by thirst.  
Land – by the Oceans passed.  
Transport – by throe –  
Peace – by its battles told –  
Love, by Memorial Mold –  
Birds, by the Snow.

c. 1859

1896

136

Have you got a Brook in your little heart,  
Where bashful flowers blow,  
And blushing birds go down to drink,  
And shadows tremble so –

And nobody knows, so still it flows,  
That any brook is there,  
And yet your little draught of life  
Is daily drunken there –

Why, look out for the little brook in March,  
When the rivers overflow,  
And the snows come hurrying from the hills,  
And the bridges often go –

And *later*, in *August* it may be –  
When the meadows parching lie,  
Beware, lest this little brook of life,  
Some burning noon go dry!

c. 1859

1890

137

Flowers – Well – if anybody  
Can the ecstasy define –  
Half a transport – half a trouble –  
With which flowers humble men:  
Anybody find the fountain  
From which floods so contra flow –  
I will give him all the Daisies  
Which upon the hillside blow.

Too much pathos in their faces  
For a simple breast like mine –  
Butterflies from St. Domingo  
Cruising round the purple line –  
Have a system of aesthetics –  
Far superior to mine.

c. 1859

1945

138

Pigmy seraphs – gone astray –  
Velvet people from Vevay –  
Belles from some lost summer day –  
Bees exclusive Coterie –

Paris could not lay the fold  
Belted down with Emerald –  
Venice could not show a cheek  
Of a tint so lustrous meek –  
Never such an Ambuscade  
As of briar and leaf displayed  
For my little damask maid –

I had rather wear her grace  
Than an Earl's distinguished face –  
I had rather dwell like her  
Than be "Duke of Exeter" –  
Royalty enough for me  
To subdue the Bumblebee.

c. 1859

1891

139

Soul, Wilt thou toss again?  
By just such a hazard  
Hundreds have lost indeed –  
But tens have won an all –

Angel's breathless ballot  
Lingers to record thee –  
Imps in eager Caucus  
Raffle for my Soul!

c. 1859

1890

140

An altered look about the hills –  
A Tyrian light the village fills –  
A wider sunrise in the morn –  
A deeper twilight on the lawn –  
A print of a vermilion foot –  
A purple finger on the slope –  
A flippant fly upon the pane –  
A spider at his trade again –  
An added strut in Chanticleer –  
A flower expected everywhere –

An axe shrill singing in the woods –  
Fern odors on untravelled roads –  
All this and more I cannot tell –  
A furtive look you know as well –  
And Nicodemus' Mystery  
Receives its annual reply!

c. 1859

1891

141

Some, too fragile for winter winds  
The thoughtful grave encloses –  
Tenderly tucking them in from frost  
Before their feet are cold.

Never the treasures in her nest  
The cautious grave exposes,  
Building where schoolboy dare not look,  
And sportsman is not bold.

The covert have all the children  
Early aged, and often cold,  
Sparrows, unnoticed by the Father –  
Lambs for whom time had not a fold.

c. 1859

1891

142

Whose are the little beds, I asked  
Which in the valleys lie?  
Some shook their heads, and others smiled –  
And no one made reply.

Perhaps they did not hear, I said,  
I will inquire again –  
Whose are the beds – the tiny beds  
So thick upon the plain?

'Tis Daisy, in the shortest –  
A little further on –

Nearest the door – to wake the 1st –  
Little Leontodon.

'Tis Iris, Sir, and Aster –  
Anemone, and Bell –  
Bartsia, in the blanket red –  
And chubby Daffodil.

Meanwhile, at many cradles  
Her busy foot she plied –  
Humming the quaintest lullaby  
That ever rocked a child.

Hush! Epigea wakens!  
The Crocus stirs her lids –  
Rhodora's cheek is crimson,  
She's dreaming of the woods!

Then turning from them reverent –  
Their bedtime 'tis, she said –  
The Bumble bees will wake them  
When April woods are red.

c. 1859

1891

143

For every Bird a Nest –  
Wherefore in timid quest  
Some little Wren goes seeking round –

Wherefore when boughs are free –  
Households in every tree –  
Pilgrim be found?

Perhaps a home too high –  
Ah Aristocracy!  
The little Wren desires –

Perhaps of twig so fine –  
Of twine e'en superfine,  
Her pride aspires –

The Lark is not ashamed  
To build upon the ground  
Her modest house –

Yet who of all the throng  
Dancing around the sun  
Does so rejoice?

c. 1859

1929

144

She bore it till the simple veins  
Traced azure on her hand –  
Till pleading, round her quiet eyes  
The purple Crayons stand.

Till Daffodils had come and gone  
I cannot tell the sum,  
And then she ceased to bear it –  
And with the Saints sat down.

No more her patient figure  
At twilight soft to meet –  
No more her timid bonnet  
Upon the village street –

But Crowns instead, and Courtiers –  
And in the midst so fair,  
Whose but her shy – immortal face  
Of whom we're whispering here?

c. 1859

1935

145

This heart that broke so long –  
These feet that never flagged –  
This faith that watched for star in vain,  
Give gently to the dead –

Hound cannot overtake the Hare  
That fluttered panting, here –

Nor any schoolboy rob the nest  
Tenderness builded there.

c. 1859

1935

146

On such a night, or such a night,  
Would anybody care  
If such a little figure  
Slipped quiet from its chair –

So quiet – Oh how quiet,  
That nobody might know  
But that the little figure  
Rocked softer – to and fro –

On such a dawn, or such a dawn –  
Would anybody sigh  
That such a little figure  
Too sound asleep did lie

For Chanticleer to wake it –  
Or stirring house below –  
Or giddy bird in orchard –  
Or early task to do?

There was a little figure plump  
For every little knoll –  
Busy needles, and spools of thread –  
And trudging feet from school –

Playmates, and holidays, and nuts –  
And visions vast and small –  
Strange that the feet so precious charged  
Should reach so small a goal!

c. 1859

1891

147

Bless God, he went as soldiers,  
His musket on his breast –

[ 69 ]

Grant God, he charge the bravest  
Of all the martial blest!

Please God, might I behold him  
In epauletted white –  
I should not fear the foe then –  
I should not fear the fight!

c. 1859

1896

148

All overgrown by cunning moss,  
All interspersed with weed,  
The little cage of "Currel Bell"  
In quiet "Haworth" laid.

Gathered from many wanderings –  
Gethsemane can tell  
Thro' what transporting anguish  
She reached the Asphodel!

Soft fall the sounds of Eden  
Upon her puzzled ear –  
Oh what an afternoon for Heaven,  
When "Bronte" entered there!

c. 1859

1896

149

She went as quiet as the Dew  
From an Accustomed flower.  
Not like the Dew, did she return  
At the Accustomed hour!

She dropt as softly as a star  
From out my summer's Eve –  
Less skillful than Le Verriere  
It's sorer to believe!

c. 1859

1890

She died – *this* was the way she died.  
 And when her breath was done  
 Took up her simple wardrobe  
 And started for the sun  
 Her little figure at the gate  
 The Angels must have spied,  
 Since I could never find her  
 Upon the mortal side.

c. 1859

1891

Mute thy Coronation –  
 Meek my Vive le roi,  
 Fold a tiny courtier  
 In thine Ermine, Sir,  
 There to rest revering  
 Till the pageant by,  
 I can murmur broken,  
 Master, It was I –

c. 1859

1945

The Sun kept stooping – stooping – low!  
 The Hills to meet him rose!  
 On his side, what Transaction!  
 On their side, what Repose!  
 Deeper and deeper grew the stain  
 Upon the window pane –  
 Thicker and thicker stood the feet  
 Until the Tyrian  
 Was crowded dense with Armies –  
 So gay, so Brigadier –  
 That I felt martial stirrings  
 Who once the Cockade wore –

Charged, from my chimney corner –  
But Nobody was there!

c. 1860

1945

153

Dust is the only Secret –  
Death, the only One  
You cannot find out all about  
In his “native town.”

Nobody knew “his Father” –  
Never was a Boy –  
Hadn’t any playmates,  
Or “Early history” –

Industrious! Laconic!  
Punctual! Sedate!  
Bold as a Brigand!  
Stiller than a Fleet!

Builds, like a Bird, too!  
Christ robs the Nest –  
Robin after Robin  
Smuggled to Rest!

c. 1860

1914

154

Except to Heaven, she is nought.  
Except for Angels – lone.  
Except to some wide-wandering Bee  
A flower superfluous blown

Except for winds – provincial.  
Except by Butterflies  
Unnoticed as a single dew  
That on the Acre lies.

The smallest Housewife in the grass,  
Yet take her from the Lawn

And somebody has lost the face  
That made Existence – Home!

c. 1860

1890

155

The Murmur of a Bee  
A Witchcraft – yieldeth me –  
If any ask me why –  
'Twere easier to die –  
Than tell –

The Red upon the Hill  
Taketeth away my will –  
If anybody sneer –  
Take care – for God is here –  
That's all.

The Breaking of the Day  
Addeth to my Degree –  
If any ask me how –  
Artist – who drew me so –  
Must tell!

c. 1860

1890

156

You love me – you are sure –  
I shall not fear mistake –  
I shall not *cheated* wake –  
Some grinning morn –  
To find the Sunrise left –  
And Orchards – unbereft –  
And Dollie – gone!

I need not start – you're sure –  
That night will never be –  
When frightened – home to Thee I run –  
To find the windows dark –  
And no more Dollie – mark –  
Quite none?

Be sure you're sure – you know –  
I'll bear it better now –  
If you'll just tell me so –  
Than when – a little dull Balm grown –  
Over this pain of mine –  
You sting – again!

c. 1860

1945

157

Musicians wrestle everywhere –  
All day – among the crowded air  
I hear the silver strife –  
And – waking – long before the morn –  
Such transport breaks upon the town  
I think it that “New Life”!

It is not Bird – it has no nest –  
Nor “Band” – in brass and scarlet – drest –  
Nor Tamborin – nor Man –  
It is not Hymn from pulpit read –  
The “Morning Stars” the Treble led  
On Time's first Afternoon!

Some – say – it is “the Spheres” – at play!  
Some say that bright Majority  
Of vanished Dames – and Men!  
Some – think it service in the place  
Where we – with late – celestial face –  
Please God – shall Ascertain!

c. 1860

1891

158

Dying! Dying in the night!  
Won't somebody bring the light  
So I can see which way to go  
Into the everlasting snow?

And “Jesus”! Where is *Jesus* gone?  
They said that *Jesus* – always came –

[ 74 ]

Perhaps he doesn't know the House –  
This way, Jesus, Let him pass!

Somebody run to the great gate  
And see if Dollie's coming! Wait!  
I hear her feet upon the stair!  
Death won't hurt – now Dollie's here!

c. 1860

1945

159

A little bread – a crust – a crumb –  
A little trust – a demijohn –  
Can keep the soul alive –  
Not portly, mind! but breathing – warm –  
Conscious – as old Napoleon,  
The night before the Crown!

A modest lot – A fame petite –  
A brief Campaign of sting and sweet  
Is plenty! Is enough!  
A *Sailor's* business is *the shore*!  
A *Soldier's* – *balls*! Who asketh more,  
Must seek the neighboring life!

c. 1860

1896

160

Just lost, when I was saved!  
Just felt the world go by!  
Just girt me for the onset with Eternity,  
When breath blew back,  
And on the other side  
I heard recede the disappointed tide!

Therefore, as One returned, I feel  
Odd secrets of the line to tell!  
Some Sailor, skirting foreign shores –  
Some pale Reporter, from the awful doors  
Before the Seal!

Next time, to stay!  
Next time, the things to see  
By Ear unheard,  
Unscrutinized by Eye –

Next time, to tarry,  
While the Ages steal –  
Slow tramp the Centuries,  
And the Cycles wheel!

c. 1860

1891

161

A feather from the Whippoorwill  
That everlasting – sings!  
Whose galleries – are Sunrise –  
Whose Opera – the Springs –  
Whose Emerald Nest the Ages spin  
Of mellow – murmuring thread –  
Whose Beryl Egg, what Schoolboys hunt  
In “Recess” – Overhead!

c. 1860

1894

162

My River runs to thee –  
Blue Sea! Wilt welcome me?  
My River waits reply –  
Oh Sea – look graciously –  
I'll fetch thee Brooks  
From spotted nooks –  
Say – Sea – Take Me!

c. 1860

1890

163

Tho' my destiny be Fustian –  
Hers be damask fine –  
Tho' she wear a silver apron –  
I, a less divine –

Still, my little Gypsy being  
I would far prefer,  
Still, my little sunburnt bosom  
To her Rosier,

For, when Fiests, their punctual fingers  
On her forehead lay,  
You and I, and Dr. Holland,  
Bloom Eternally!

Roses of a steadfast summer  
In a steadfast land,  
Where no Autumn lifts her pencil –  
And no Reapers stand!

c. 1860

1894

164

Mama never forgets her birds,  
Though in another tree –  
She looks down just as often  
And just as tenderly  
As when her little mortal nest  
With cunning care she wove –  
If either of her "sparrows fall,"  
She "notices," above.

c. 1860

1945

165

A *Wounded* Deer – leaps highest –  
I've heard the Hunter tell –  
'Tis but the Ecstasy of *death* –  
And then the Brake is still!

The *Smitten* Rock that gushes!  
The *trampled* Steel that springs!  
A Cheek is always redder  
Just where the Hectic stings!

[ 77 ]

Mirth is the Mail of Anguish –  
In which it Cautious Arm,  
Lest anybody spy the blood  
And “you’re hurt” exclaim!

c. 1860

1890

166

I met a King this afternoon!  
He had not on a Crown indeed,  
A little Palmleaf Hat was all,  
And he was barefoot, I’m afraid!

But sure I am he Ermine wore  
Beneath his faded Jacket’s blue –  
And sure I am, the crest he bore  
Within that Jacket’s pocket too!

For ’twas too stately for an Earl –  
A Marquis would not go so grand!  
’Twas possibly a Czar petite –  
A Pope, or something of that kind!

If I must tell you, of a Horse  
My freckled Monarch held the rein –  
Doubtless an estimable Beast,  
But not at all disposed to run!

And such a wagon! While I live  
Dare I presume to see  
Another such a vehicle  
As then transported me!

Two other ragged Princes  
His royal state partook!  
Doubtless the first excursion  
These sovereigns ever took!

I question if the Royal Coach  
Round which the Footmen wait

Has the significance, on high,  
Of this Barefoot Estate!

c 1860

1893

167

To learn the Transport by the Pain –  
As Blind Men learn the sun!  
To die of thirst – suspecting  
That Brooks in Meadows run!

To stay the homesick – homesick feet  
Upon a foreign shore –  
Haunted by native lands, the while –  
And blue – beloved air!

This is the Sovereign Anguish!  
This – the signal woe!  
These are the patient “Laureates”  
Whose voices – trained – below –

Ascend in ceaseless Carol –  
Inaudible, indeed,  
To us – the duller scholars  
Of the Mysterious Bard!

c. 1860

1891

168

If the foolish, call them “flowers” –  
Need the wiser, *tell?*  
If the Savants “Classify” them  
It is just as well!

Those who read the “Revelations”  
Must not criticize  
Those who read the same Edition –  
With beclouded Eyes!

Could we stand with that Old “Moses” –  
“Canaan” denied –

Scan like him, the stately landscape  
On the other side –

Doubtless, we should deem superfluous  
Many Sciences,  
Not pursued by learned Angels  
In scholastic skies!

Low amid that glad Belles lettres  
Grant that we may stand,  
Stars, amid profound *Galaxies* –  
At that grand “Right hand”!

c. 1860

1896

169

In Ebon Box, when years have flown  
To reverently peer,  
Wiping away the velvet dust  
Summers have sprinkled there!

To hold a letter to the light –  
Grown Tawny now, with time –  
To con the faded syllables  
That quickened us like Wine!

Perhaps a Flower's shrivelled cheek  
Among its stores to find –  
Plucked far away, some morning –  
By gallant – mouldering hand!

A curl, perhaps, from foreheads  
Our Constancy forgot –  
Perhaps, an Antique trinket –  
In vanished fashions set!

And then to lay them quiet back –  
And go about its care –  
As if the little Ebon Box  
Were none of our affair!

c. 1860

1935

Portraits are to daily faces  
 As an Evening West,  
 To a fine, pedantic sunshine –  
 In a satin Vest!

c. 1860

1891

Wait till the Majesty of Death  
 Invests so mean a brow!  
 Almost a powdered Footman  
 Might dare to touch it now!

Wait till in Everlasting Robes  
 That Democrat is dressed,  
 Then prate about "Preferment" –  
 And "Station," and the rest!

Around this quiet Courtier  
 Obsequious Angels wait!  
 Full royal is his Retinue!  
 Full purple is his state!

A Lord, might dare to lift the Hat  
 To such a Modest Clay  
 Since that My Lord, "the Lord of Lords"  
 Receives unblushingly!

c. 1860

1891

'Tis so much joy! 'Tis so much joy!  
 If I should fail, what poverty!  
 And yet, as poor as I,  
 Have ventured all upon a throw!  
 Have gained! Yes! Hesitated so –  
 This side the Victory!

Life is but Life! And Death, but Death!  
 Bliss is, but Bliss, and Breath but Breath!  
 And if indeed I fail,

At least, to know the worst, is sweet!  
Defeat means nothing *but* Defeat,  
No drearier, can befall!

And if I gain! Oh Gun at Sea!  
Oh Bells, that in the Steeples be!  
At first, repeat it slow!  
For Heaven is a different thing,  
Conjectured, and waked sudden in –  
And might extinguish me!

c. 1860

1890

173

A fuzzy fellow, without feet,  
Yet doth exceeding run!  
Of velvet, is his Countenance,  
And his Complexion, dun!

Sometime, he dwelleth in the grass!  
Sometime, upon a bough,  
From which he doth descend in plush  
Upon the Passer-by!

All this in summer.  
But when winds alarm the Forest Folk,  
He taketh *Damask* Residence –  
And struts in sewing silk!

Then, finer than a Lady,  
Emerges in the spring!  
A Feather on each shoulder!  
You'd scarce recognize him!

By Men, yclept Caterpillar!  
By me! But who am I,  
To tell the pretty secret  
Of the Butterfly!

c. 1860

1929

At last, to be identified!  
 At last, the lamps upon thy side  
 The rest of Life to see!

Past Midnight! Past the Morning Star!  
 Past Sunrise!  
 Ah, What leagues there *were*  
 Between our feet, and Day!

c. 1860

1890

I have never seen "Volcanoes" –  
 But, when Travellers tell  
 How those old – phlegmatic mountains  
 Usually so still –

Bear within – appalling Ordnance,  
 Fire, and smoke, and gun,  
 Taking Villages for breakfast,  
 And appalling Men –

If the stillness is Volcanic  
 In the human face  
 When upon a pain Titanic  
 Features keep their place –

If at length the smouldering anguish  
 Will not overcome –  
 And the palpitating Vineyard  
 In the dust, be thrown?

If some loving Antiquary,  
 On Resumption Morn,  
 Will not cry with joy "Pompeii!"  
 To the Hills return!

c. 1860

1945

I'm the little "Heart's Ease"<sup>1</sup>  
 I don't care for pouting skies!  
 If the Butterfly delay  
 Can I, therefore, stay away?

If the Coward Bumble Bee  
 In his chimney corner stay,  
 I, must resoluter be!  
 Who'll apologize for me?

Dear, Old fashioned, little flower!  
 Eden is old fashioned, too!  
 Birds are antiquated fellows!  
 Heaven does not change her blue  
 Nor will I, the little Heart's Ease --  
 Ever be induced to do!

c. 1860

1893

Ah, Necromancy Sweet!  
 Ah, Wizard erudite!  
 Teach me the skill,

That I instil the pain  
 Surgeons assuage in vain,  
 Nor Herb of all the plain  
 Can heal!

c. 1860

1929

I cautious, scanned my little life --  
 I winnowed what would fade  
 From what would last till Heads like mine  
 Should be a-dreaming laid.

I put the latter in a Barn --  
 The former, blew away.

I went one winter morning  
And lo -- my priceless Hay

Was not upon the "Scaffold" --  
Was not upon the "Beam" --  
And from a thriving Farmer --  
A Cynic, I became.

Whether a Thief did it --  
Whether it was the wind --  
Whether Deity's guiltless --  
My business is, to find!

So I begin to ransack!  
How is it Hearts, with Thee?  
Art thou within the little Barn  
Love provided Thee?

c 1860

1929

179

If I could bribe them by a Rose  
I'd bring them every flower that grows  
From Amherst to Cashmere!  
I would not stop for night, or storm --  
Or frost, or death, or anyone --  
My business were so dear!

If they would linger for a Bird  
My Tambourin were soonest heard  
Among the April Woods!  
Unwearied, all the summer long,  
Only to break in wilder song  
When Winter shook the boughs!

What if they hear me!  
Who shall say  
That such an impertunity  
May not at last avail?

That, weary of this Beggar's face –  
They may not finally say, Yes –  
To drive her from the Hall?

c. 1860

1935

180

As if some little Arctic flower  
Upon the polar hem –  
Went wandering down the Latitudes  
Until it puzzled came  
To continents of summer –  
To firmaments of sun –  
To strange, bright crowds of flowers –  
And birds, of foreign tongue!  
I say, As if this little flower  
To Eden, wandered in –  
What then? Why nothing,  
Only, your inference therefrom!

c. 1860

1890

181

I lost a World – the other day!  
Has Anybody found?  
You'll know it by the Row of Stars  
Around its forehead bound.

A Rich man – might not notice it –  
Yet – to my frugal Eye,  
Of more Esteem than Ducats –  
Oh find it – Sir – for me!

c. 1860

1890

182

If I shouldn't be alive  
When the Robins come,  
Give the one in Red Cravat,  
A Memorial crumb.

If I couldn't thank you,  
Being fast asleep,  
You will know I'm trying  
With my Granite lip!

c. 1860

1890

183

I've heard an Organ talk, sometimes  
In a Cathedral Aisle,  
And understood no word it said –  
Yet held my breath, the while –  
And risen up – and gone away,  
A more Bernardine Girl –  
Yet – know not what was done to me  
In that old Chapel Aisle.

c. 1860

1935

184

A transport one cannot contain  
May yet a transport be –  
Though God forbid it lift the lid –  
Unto its Ecstasy!

A Diagram – of Rapture!  
A sixpence at a Show –  
With Holy Ghosts in Cages!  
The *Universe* would go!

c. 1860

1935

185

"Faith" is a fine invention  
When Gentlemen can *see* –  
But *Microscopes* are prudent  
In an Emergency.

c. 1860

1891

What shall I do – it whimpers so –  
 This little Hound within the Heart  
 All day and night with bark and start –  
 And yet, it will not go –  
 Would you *untie* it, were you me –  
 Would it stop whining – if to Thee –  
 I sent it – even now?

It should not tease you –  
 By your chair – or, on the mat –  
 Or if it dare – to climb your dizzy knee –  
 Or – sometimes at your side to run –  
 When you were willing –  
 Shall it come?  
 Tell Carlo –  
*He'll tell me!*

c. 1860

1945

How many times these low feet staggered –  
 Only the soldered mouth can tell –  
 Try – can you stir the awful rivet –  
 Try – can you lift the hasps of steel!

Stroke the cool forehead – hot so often –  
 Lift – if you care – the listless hair –  
 Handle the adamantine fingers  
 Never a thimble – more – shall wear –

Buzz the dull flies – on the chamber window –  
 Brave – shines the sun through the freckled pane –  
 Fearless – the cobweb swings from the ceiling –  
 Indolent Housewife – in Daisies – lain!

c. 1860

1890

Make me a picture of the sun –  
 So I can hang it in my room –  
 And make believe I'm getting warm  
 When others call it "Day"!

Draw me a Robin – on a stem –  
 So I am hearing him, I'll dream,  
 And when the Orchards stop their tune –  
 Put my pretense – away –

Say if it's really – warm at noon –  
 Whether it's Buttercups – that "skim" –  
 Or Butterflies – that "bloom"?  
 Then – skip – the frost – upon the lea –  
 And skip the Russet – on the tree –  
 Let's play those – never come!

c. 1860

1945

It's such a little thing to weep –  
 So short a thing to sigh –  
 And yet – by Trades – the size of *these*  
 We men and women die!

c. 1860

1896

He was weak, and I was strong – then –  
 So He let me lead him in –  
 I was weak, and He was strong then –  
 So I let him lead me – Home.

'Twasn't far – the door was near –  
 'Twasn't dark – for He went – too –  
 'Twasn't loud, for He said nought –  
 That was all I cared to know.

Day knocked – and we must part –  
 Neither – was strongest – now –

He strove – and I strove – too –  
We didn't do it – tho'!

c. 1860

1945

191

The Skies can't keep their secret!  
They tell it to the Hills –  
The Hills just tell the Orchards –  
And they – the Daffodils!

A Bird – by chance – that goes that way –  
Soft overhears the whole –  
If I should bribe the little Bird –  
Who knows but *she* would tell?

I think I won't – however –  
It's finer – not to know –  
If Summer were *an Axiom* –  
What sorcery had *Snow*?

So keep your secret – Father!  
I would not – if I could,  
Know what the Sapphire Fellows, do,  
In your new-fashioned world!

c. 1860

1891

192

Poor little Heart!  
Did they forget thee?  
Then dinna care! Then dinna care!

Proud little Heart!  
Did they forsake thee?  
Be debonnaire! Be debonnaire!

Frail little Heart!  
I would not break thee –  
Could'st credit *me*? Could'st credit me?

Gay little Heart –  
Like Morning Glory!  
Wind and Sun – wilt thee array!

c. 1860

1896

193

I shall know why – when Time is over –  
And I have ceased to wonder why –  
Christ will explain each separate anguish  
In the fair schoolroom of the sky –

He will tell me what “Peter” promised –  
And I – for wonder at his woe –  
I shall forget the drop of Anguish  
That scalds me now – that scalds me now!

c. 1860

1890

194

On this long storm the Rainbow rose –  
On this late Morn – the Sun –  
The clouds – like listless Elephants –  
Horizons – straggled down –

The Birds rose smiling, in their nests –  
The gales – indeed – were done –  
Alas, how heedless were the eyes –  
On whom the summer shone!

The quiet nonchalance of death –  
No Daybreak – can bestir –  
The slow – Archangel’s syllables  
Must awaken *her!*

c. 1860

1890

195

For this – accepted Breath –  
Through it – compete with Death –  
The fellow cannot touch this Crown –

By it – my title take –  
Ah, what a royal sake  
To my necessity – stooped down!

No Wilderness – can be  
Where this attendeth me –  
No Desert Noon –  
No fear of frost to come  
Haunt the perennial bloom –  
But Certain June!

Get Gabriel – to tell – the royal syllable –  
Get Saints – with new – unsteady tongue –  
To say what trance below  
Most like their glory show –  
Fittest the Crown!

c. 1860

1935

196

We don't cry – Tim and I,  
We are far too grand –  
But we bolt the door tight  
To prevent a friend –

Then we hide our brave face  
Deep in our hand –  
Not to cry – Tim and I –  
We are far too grand –

Nor to dream – he and me –  
Do we condescend –  
We just shut our brown eye  
To see to the end –

Tim – see Cottages –  
But, Oh, so high!  
Then – we shake – Tim and I –  
And lest I – cry –

Tim – reads a little Hymn –  
And we both pray –

[ 92 ]

Please, Sir, I and Tim –  
Always lost the way!

We must die – by and by –  
Clergymen say –  
Tim – shall – if I – do –  
I – too – if he –

How shall we arrange it –  
Tim – was – so – shy?  
Take us simultaneous – Lord –  
I – “Tim” – and – Me!

c. 1860

1945

197

Morning – is the place for Dew –  
Corn – is made at Noon –  
After dinner light – for flowers –  
Dukes – for Setting Sun!

c. 1860

1896

198

An awful Tempest mashed the air –  
The clouds were gaunt, and few –  
A Black – as of a Spectre’s Cloak  
Hid Heaven and Earth from view.

The creatures chuckled on the Roofs –  
And whistled in the air –  
And shook their fists –  
And gnashed their teeth –  
And swung their frenzied hair.

The morning lit – the Birds arose –  
The Monster’s faded eyes  
Turned slowly to his native coast –  
And peace – was Paradise!

c. 1860

1891

I'm "wife" – I've finished that –  
 That other state –  
 I'm Czar – I'm "Woman" now –  
 It's safer so –

How odd the Girl's life looks  
 Behind this soft Eclipse –  
 I think that Earth feels so  
 To folks in Heaven – now –

This being comfort – then  
 That other kind – was pain –  
 But why compare?  
 I'm "Wife"! Stop there!

c. 1860

1890

I stole them from a Bee –  
 Because – Thee –  
 Sweet plea –  
 He pardoned me!

c. 1860

1894

Two swimmers wrestled on the spar –  
 Until the morning sun –  
 When One – turned smiling to the land –  
 Oh God! the Other One!

The stray ships – passing –  
 Spied a face –  
 Upon the waters borne –  
 With eyes in death – still begging raised –  
 And hands – beseeching – thrown!

c. 1860

1890

My Eye is fuller than my vase –  
*Her Cargo* – is of Dew –  
 And still – my Heart – my Eye outweighs –  
 East India – for you!

c. 1860

1945

He forgot – and I – remembered –  
 'Twas an everyday affair –  
 Long ago as Christ and Peter –  
 "Warmed them" at the "Temple fire."  
 "Thou wert with him" – quoth "the Damsel"  
 "No" – said Peter, 'twasn't me –  
 Jesus merely "looked" at Peter –  
 Could I do aught else – to Thee?

c. 1860

1945

A slash of Blue –  
 A sweep of Gray –  
 Some scarlet patches on the way,  
 Compose an Evening Sky –  
 A little purple – slipped between –  
 Some Ruby Trousers hurried on –  
 A Wave of Gold –  
 A Bank of Day –  
 This just makes out the Morning Sky.

c. 1860

1935

I should not dare to leave my friend,  
 Because – because if he should die  
 While I was gone – and I – too late –  
 Should reach the Heart that wanted me –

If I should disappoint the eyes  
That hunted – hunted so – to see –  
And could not bear to shut until  
They “noticed” me – they noticed me –

If I should stab the patient faith  
So sure I’d come – so sure I’d come –  
It *listening* – listening – went to sleep –  
Telling my tardy name –

My Heart would wish it broke before –  
Since breaking then – since breaking then –  
Were useless as next morning’s sun –  
Where midnight frosts – had lain!

c 1860

1891

206

The Flower must not blame the Bee –  
That seeketh his felicity  
Too often at her door –

But teach the Footman from Vevay –  
Mistress is “not at home” – to say –  
To people – any more!

c 1860

1935

207

Tho’ I get home how late – how late –  
So I get home – ’twill compensate –  
Better will be the Ecstasy  
That they have done expecting me –  
When Night – descending – dumb – and dark –  
They hear my unexpected knock –  
Transporting must the moment be –  
Brewed from decades of Agony!

To think just how the fire will burn –  
Just how long-cheated eyes will turn –  
To wonder what myself will say,

And what itself, will say to me –  
Beguiles the Centuries of way!

c. 1860

1891

208

The Rose did caper on her cheek –  
Her Bodice rose and fell –  
Her pretty speech – like drunken men –  
Did stagger pitiful –

Her fingers fumbled at her work –  
Her needle would not go –  
What ailed so smart a little Maid –  
It puzzled me to know –

Till opposite – I spied a cheek  
That bore *another* Rose –  
*Just* opposite – Another speech  
That like the Drunkard goes –

A Vest that like her Bodice, danced –  
To the immortal tune –  
Till those two troubled – little Clocks  
Ticked softly into one.

c. 1860

1891

209

With thee, in the Desert –  
With thee in the thirst –  
With thee in the Tamarind wood –  
Leopard breathes – at last!

c. 1860

1945

210

The thought beneath so slight a film –  
Is more distinctly seen –

As laces just reveal the surge –  
Or Mists – the Apennine

c. 1860

1891

211

Come slowly – Eden!  
Lips unused to Thee –  
Bashful – sip thy Jessamines –  
As the fainting Bee –

Reaching late his flower,  
Round her chamber hums –  
Counts his nectars –  
Enters – and is lost in Balms.

c 1860

1890

212

Least Rivers – docile to some sea.  
My Caspian – thee.

c. 1860

1945

213

Did the Harebell loose her girdle  
To the lover Bee  
Would the Bee the Harebell *hallow*  
Much as formerly?

Did the “Paradise” – persuaded –  
Yield her moat of pearl –  
Would the Eden *be* an Eden,  
Or the Earl – an *Earl*?

c. 1860

1891

214

I taste a liquor never brewed –  
From Tankards scooped in Pearl –

Not all the Vats upon the Rhine  
Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of Air – am I –  
And Debauchee of Dew –  
Reeling – thro endless summer days –  
From inns of Molten Blue –

When “Landlords” turn the drunken Bee  
Out of the Foxglove’s door –  
When Butterflies – renounce their “drams” –  
I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats –  
And Saints – to windows run –  
To see the little Tippler  
Leaning against the – Sun –

c. 1860

1861

215

What is – “Paradise” –  
Who live there –  
Are they “Farmers” –  
Do they “hoe” –  
Do they know that this is “Amherst” –  
And that I – am coming – too –

Do they wear “new shoes” – in “Eden” –  
Is it always pleasant – there –  
Won’t they scold us – when we’re homesick –  
Or tell God – how cross we are –

You are sure there’s such a person  
As “a Father” – in the sky –  
So if I get lost – there – ever –  
Or do what the Nurse calls “die” –  
I shan’t walk the “Jasper” – barefoot –  
Ransomed folks – won’t laugh at me –  
Maybe – “Eden” a’n’t so lonesome  
As New England used to be!

c. 1860

1945

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers –  
 Untouched by Morning  
 And untouched by Noon –  
 Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection –  
 Rafter of satin,  
 And Roof of stone.

Light laughs the breeze  
 In her Castle above them –  
 Babbles the Bee in a stolid Ear,  
 Pipe the Sweet Birds in ignorant cadence –  
 Ah, what sagacity perished here!

*version of 1859*

1862

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers –  
 Untouched by Morning –  
 And untouched by Noon –  
 Lie the meek members of the Resurrection –  
 Rafter of Satin – and Roof of Stone!

Grand go the Years – in the Crescent – above them –  
 Worlds scoop their Arcs –  
 And Firmaments – row –  
 Diadems – drop – and Doges – surrender –  
 Soundless as dots – on a Disc of Snow –

*version of 1861*

1890

Savior! I've no one else to tell –  
 And so I trouble *thee*.  
 I am the one forgot thee so –  
 Dost thou remember me?  
 Nor, for myself, I came so far –  
 That were the little load –  
 I brought thee the imperial Heart  
 I had not strength to hold –

The Heart I carried in my own –  
Till mine too heavy grew –  
Yet – strangest – *heavier* since it went –  
Is it too large for *you*?

1861

1929

218

Is it true, dear Sue?  
Are there *two*?  
I shouldn't like to come  
For fear of joggling Him!  
If I could shut him up  
In a Coffee Cup,  
Or tie him to a pin  
Till I got in –  
Or make him fast  
To "Toby's" fist –  
Hist! Whist! I'd come!

1861

1924

219

She sweeps with many-colored Brooms –  
And leaves the Shreds behind –  
Oh Housewife in the Evening West –  
Come back, and dust the Pond!

You dropped a Purple Ravelling in –  
You dropped an Amber thread –  
And now you've littered all the East  
With Duds of Emerald!

And still, she plies her spotted Brooms,  
And still the Aprons fly,  
Till Brooms fade softly into stars –  
And then I come away –

c. 1861

1891

Could I – then – shut the door –  
 Lest *my* beseeching face – at last –  
 Rejected – be – of *Her*?

c. 1861

1932

It can't be "Summer"!  
 That – got through!  
 It's early – yet – for "Spring"!  
 There's that long town of White – to cross –  
 Before the Blackbirds sing!  
 It can't be "Dying"!  
 It's too Rouge –  
 The Dead shall go in White –  
 So Sunset shuts my question down  
 With Cuffs of Chrysolite!

c. 1861

1891

When Katie walks, this simple pair accompany her side,  
 When Katie runs unwearied they follow on the road,  
 When Katie kneels, their loving hands still clasp her pious knee –  
 Ah! Katie! Smile at Fortune, with *two* so knit to thee!

c. 1861?

1931

I Came to buy a smile – today –  
 But just a single smile –  
 The smallest one upon your face  
 Will suit me just as well –  
 The one that no one else would miss  
 It shone so very small –  
 I'm pleading at the "counter" – sir –  
 Could you afford to sell –

I've *Diamonds* – on my fingers –  
You know what *Diamonds* are?  
I've Rubies – like the Evening Blood –  
And Topaz – like the star!  
"Twould be "a Bargain" for a Jew!  
Say – may I have it – Sir?

c. 1861

1929

224

I've nothing else – to bring, You know –  
So I keep bringing These –  
Just as the Night keeps fetching Stars  
To our familiar eyes –  
Maybe, we shouldn't mind them –  
Unless they didn't come –  
Then – maybe, it would puzzle us  
To find our way Home –

c. 1861

1929

225

Jesus! thy Crucifix  
Enable thee to guess  
The smaller size!

Jesus! thy second face  
Mind thee in Paradise  
Of ours!

c. 1861

1945

226

Should you but fail at – Sea –  
In sight of me –  
Or doomed lie –  
Next Sun – to die –  
Or rap – at Paradise – unheard

I'd *harass* God  
Until he let you in!

1861

1955

227

Teach Him – When He makes the *names* –  
Such an one – to say –  
On his babbling – Berry – lips –  
As should sound – to me –  
Were my Ear – as near his nest –  
As my *thought* – today –  
As should sound –  
“Forbid us not” –  
Some like “Emily.”

1861

1894

228

Blazing in Gold and quenching in Purple  
Leaping like Leopards to the Sky  
Then at the feet of the old Horizon  
Laying her spotted Face to die  
Stooping as low as the Otter's Window  
Touching the Roof and tinting the Barn  
Kissing her Bonnet to the Meadow  
And the Juggler of Day is gone

c. 1861

1864

229

A Burdock – clawed my Gown –  
Not *Burdock's* – blame –  
But *mine* –  
Who went too near  
The Burdock's *Den* –  
  
A *Bog* – affronts my shoe –  
What *else* have Bogs – *to do* –

The only Trade they *know* –  
The *splashing Men!*  
Ah, *pity – then!*

'Tis *Minnows can despise!*  
The *Elephant's* – calm eyes  
Look *further on!*

1861

1945

230

We – Bee and I – live by the quaffing –  
'Tisn't *all Hock* – with us –  
Life has its *Ale* –  
But it's many a lay of the Dim Burgundy –  
We chant – for cheer – when the Wines – fail –

Do we “get drunk”?  
Ask the jolly Clovers!  
Do we “beat” our “Wife”?  
I – never wed –  
Bee – pledges *his* – in minutes flagons –  
Dainty – as the tress – on her deft Head –

While runs the Rhine –  
He and I – revel –  
First – at the vat – and latest at the Vine –  
Noon – our last Cup –  
“Found dead” – “of Nectar” –  
By a humming Coroner –  
In a By-Thyme!

c. 1861

1929

231

God permits industrious Angels –  
Afternoons – to play –  
I met one – forgot my Schoolmates –  
All – for Him – straightway –

[ 105 ]

God calls home – the Angels – promptly –  
At the Setting Sun –  
I missed mine – how dreary – Marbles –  
After playing *Crown!*

c. 1861

1890

232

The *Sun* – just touched the Morning –  
The *Morning* – Happy thing –  
Supposed that He had come to  *dwell* –  
And Life would all be *Spring!*

She felt herself *supremes* –  
A *Raised* – *Ethereal Thing!*  
Henceforth – for Her – *What Holiday!*  
Meanwhile – Her wheeling King –  
Trailed – slow – along the Orchards –  
His *haughty* – *spangled* Hems –  
Leaving a *new necessity!*  
The *want* of *Diadems!*

The Morning – *fluttered* – *staggered* –  
*Felt feebly* – for Her *Crown* –  
Her *unanoointed forehead* –  
*Henceforth* – Her *only One!*

c. 1861

1891

233

The Lamp burns sure – within –  
Tho' Serfs – supply the Oil –  
It matters not the busy Wick –  
At her phosphoric toil!

The Slave – forgets – to fill –  
The Lamp – burns golden – on –  
Unconscious that the oil is out –  
As that the Slave – is gone.

c. 1861

1935

You're right – “the way is narrow” –  
 And “difficult the Gate” –  
 And “few there be” – Correct again –  
 That “enter in – thereat” –

'Tis Costly – So are *purples!*  
 'Tis just the price of *Breath* –  
 With but the “Discount” of the *Grave* –  
 Termed by the *Brokers* – “*Death*”!

And after *that* – there's Heaven –  
 The *Good Man's* – “*Dividend*” –  
 And *Bad Men* – “go to Jail” –  
 I guess –

c. 1861

1945

The Court is far away –  
 No Umpire – have I –  
 My Sovereign is offended –  
 To gain his grace – I'd die!

I'll seek his royal feet –  
 I'll say – Remember – King –  
 Thou shalt – thyself – one day – a Child –  
 Implore a *larger* – thing –

*That Empire* – is of Czars –  
 As small – they say – as I –  
 Grant *me* – that day – the royalty –  
 To *intercede* – for *Thee* –

c. 1861

1945

If *He dissolve* – then – there is *nothing* – *more* –  
*Eclipse* – at *Midnight* –  
 It was *dark* – *before* –

*Sunset* – at *Easter* –  
*Blindness* – on the *Dawn* –  
*Faint Star* of *Bethlehem* –  
*Gone down!*

*Would* but some *God* – *inform Him* –  
Or it be *too late!*  
*Say* – that the pulse *just lisps* –  
The *Chariots wait* –

*Say* – that a *little life* – for *His* –  
*Is leaking* – *red* –  
*His little Spaniel* – tell *Him!*  
*Will He heed?*

c. 1861

1935

237

I think just how my shape will rise –  
When I shall be “*forgiven*” –  
Till *Hair* – and *Eyes* – and *timid Head* –  
*Are out of sight* – in *Heaven* –

I think just how my lips will weigh –  
With *shapeless* – *quivering* – *prayer* –  
That you – *so late* – “*Consider*” *me* –  
The “*Sparrow*” of your *Care* –

I mind me that of *Anguish* – sent –  
*Some drifts* were moved away –  
Before my *simple bosom* – broke –  
And why not *this* – if *they?*

And so I con that thing – “*forgiven*” –  
Until – *delirious* – borne –  
By my long bright – and *longer* – *trust* –  
I *drop* my *Heart* – *unshriven!*

c. 1861

1891

Kill your Balm – and its Odors bless you –  
 Bare your Jessamine – to the storm –  
 And she will fling her maddest perfume –  
 Haply – your Summer night to Charm –  
 Stab the Bird – that built in your bosom –  
 Oh, could you catch her last Refrain –  
 Bubble! “forgive” – “Some better” – Bubble!  
 “Carol for Him – when I am gone”!

c. 1861

1945

“Heaven” – is what I cannot reach!  
 The Apple on the Tree –  
 Provided it do hopeless – hang –  
 That – “Heaven” is – to Me!  
 The Color, on the Cruising Cloud –  
 The interdicted Land –  
 Behind the Hill – the House behind –  
 There – Paradise – is found!  
 Her teasing Purples – Afternoons –  
 The credulous – decoy –  
 Enamored – of the Conjuror –  
 That spurned us – Yesterday!

c. 1861

1896

Ah, Moon – and Star!  
 You are very far –  
 But were no one  
 Farther than you –  
 Do you think I'd stop  
 For a Firmament –  
 Or a Cubit – or so?

I could borrow a Bonnet  
Of the Lark –  
And a Chamois' Silver Boot –  
And a stirrup of an Antelope –  
And be with you – Tonight!

But, Moon, and Star,  
Though you're very far –  
There is one – farther than you –  
He – is more than a firmament – from Me –  
So I can never go!

c. 1861

1935

241

I like a look of Agony,  
Because I know it's true –  
Men do not sham Convulsion,  
Nor simulate, a Throe –

The Eyes glaze once – and that is Death –  
Impossible to feign  
The Beads upon the Forehead  
By homely Anguish strung.

c. 1861

1890

242

When we stand on the tops of Things –  
And like the Trees, look down –  
The smoke all cleared away from it –  
And Mirrors on the scene –

Just laying light – no soul will wink  
Except it have the flaw –  
The Sound ones, like the Hills – shall stand –  
No Lightning, scares away –

The Perfect, nowhere be afraid –  
They bear their dauntless Heads,

Where others, dare not go at Noon,  
Protected by their deeds –

The Stars dare shine occasionally  
Upon a spotted World –  
And Suns, go surer, for their Proof,  
As if an Axle, held –

c. 1861

1945

243

I've known a Heaven, like a Tent –  
To wrap its shining Yards –  
Pluck up its stakes, and disappear –  
Without the sound of Boards  
Or Rip of Nail – Or Carpenter –  
But just the mules of Stare –  
That signalize a Show's Retreat –  
In North America –

No Trace – no Figment of the Thing  
That dazzled, Yesterday,  
No Ring – no Marvel –  
Men, and Feats –  
Dissolved as utterly –  
As Bird's far Navigation  
Discloses just a Hue –  
A splash of Oars, a Gaiety –  
Then swallowed up, of View.

c. 1861

1929

244

It is easy to work when the soul is at play –  
But when the soul is in pain –  
The hearing him put his playthings up  
Makes work difficult – then –

It is simple, to ache in the Bone, or the Rind –  
But Gimlets – among the nerve –

[ 111 ]

Mangle daintier – terrbler –  
Like a Panther in the Glove –

c 1861

1945

245

I held a Jewel in my fingers –  
And went to sleep –  
The day was warm, and winds were prosy –  
I said “ ’Twill keep ” –

I woke – and chid my honest fingers,  
The Gem was gone –  
And now, an Amethyst remembrance  
Is all I own –

c 1861

1891

246

Forever at His side to walk –  
The smaller of the two!  
Brain of His Brain –  
Blood of His Blood –  
Two lives – One Being – now –

Forever of His fate to taste –  
If grief – the largest part –  
If joy – to put my piece away  
For that beloved Heart –

All life – to know each other –  
Whom we can never learn –  
And bye and bye – a Change –  
Called Heaven –  
Rapt Neighborhoods of Men –  
Just finding out – what puzzled us –  
Without the lexicon!

c. 1861

1929

What would I give to see his face?  
 I'd give – I'd give my life – of course –  
 But *that* is not enough!  
 Stop just a minute – let me think!  
 I'd give my biggest Bobolink!  
 That makes *two* – *Him* – and *Life*!  
 You know who "*June*" is –  
 I'd give *her* –  
 Roses a day from Zanzibar –  
 And Lily tubes – like Wells –  
 Bees – by the furlong –  
 Straits of Blue  
 Navies of Butterflies – sailed thro' –  
 And dappled Cowslip Dells –  
  
 Then I have "shares" in Primrose "Banks" –  
 Daffodil Dowries – spicy "Stocks" –  
 Dominions – broad as Dew –  
 Bags of Doubloons – adventurous Bees  
 Brought me – from firmamental seas –  
 And Purple – from Peru –  
  
 Now – have I bought it –  
 "Shylock"? Say!  
 Sign me the Bond!  
 "I vow to pay  
 To Her – who pledges *this* –  
*One hour* – of her Sovereign's face"!  
 Ecstatic Contract!  
 Niggard Grace!  
 My Kingdom's worth of Bliss!

c. 1861

1929

Why – do they shut Me out of Heaven?  
 Did I sing – too loud?  
 But – I can say a little "Minor"  
 Timid as a Bird!

Wouldn't the Angels try me –  
Just – once – more –  
Just – see – if I troubled them –  
But don't – shut the door!

Oh, if I – were the Gentleman  
In the "White Robe" –  
And they – were the little Hand – that knocked –  
Could – I – forbid?

c. 1861

1929

249

Wild Nights – Wild Nights!  
Were I with thee  
Wild Nights should be  
Our luxury!

Futile – the Winds –  
To a Heart in port –  
Done with the Compass –  
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden –  
Ah, the Sea!  
Might I but moor – Tonight –  
In Thee!

c. 1861

1891

250

I shall keep singing!  
Birds will pass me  
On their way to Yellower Climes –  
Each – with a Robin's expectation –  
I – with my Redbreast –  
And my Rhymes –

Late – when I take my place in summer –  
But – I shall bring a fuller tune –

Vespers – are sweeter than Matins – Signor –  
Morning – only the seed of Noon –

c. 1861

1935

251

Over the fence –  
Strawberries – grow –  
Over the fence –  
I could climb – if I tried, I know –  
Berries are nice!

But – if I stained my Apron –  
God would certainly scold!  
Oh, dear, – I guess if He were a Boy –  
He'd – climb – if He could!

c. 1861

1945

252

I can wade Grief –  
Whole Pools of it –  
I'm used to that –  
But the least push of Joy  
Breaks up my feet –  
And I tip – drunken –  
Let no Pebble – smile –  
'Twas the New Liquor –  
That was all!

Power is only Pain –  
Stranded, thro' Discipline,  
Till Weights – will hang –  
Give Balm – to Giants –  
And they'll wilt, like Men –  
Give Himmaleh –  
They'll Carry – Him!

c. 1861

1891

You see I cannot see – your lifetime –  
 I must guess –  
 How many times it ache for me – today – Confess –  
 How many times for my far sake  
 The brave eyes film –  
 But I guess guessing hurts –  
 Mine – get so dim!  
  
 Too vague – the face –  
 My own – so patient – covers –  
 Too far – the strength –  
 My timidness enfolds –  
 Haunting the Heart –  
 Like her translated faces –  
 Teasing the want –  
 It – only – can suffice!

c. 1861

1929

“Hope” is the thing with feathers –  
 That perches in the soul –  
 And sings the tune without the words –  
 And never stops – at all –  
  
 And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –  
 And sore must be the storm –  
 That could abash the little Bird  
 That kept so many warm –  
  
 I’ve heard it in the chillest land –  
 And on the strangest Sea –  
 Yet, never, in Extremity,  
 It asked a crumb – of Me.

c. 1861

1891

To die – takes just a little while –  
 They say it doesn’t hurt –

It's only fainter – by degrees –  
And then – it's out of sight –  
A darker Ribbon – for a Day –  
A Crape upon the Hat –  
And then the pretty sunshine comes –  
And helps us to forget –  
The absent – mystic – creature –  
That but for love of us –  
Had gone to sleep – that soundest time –  
Without the weariness –

c. 1861

1935

256

If I'm lost – now  
That I was found –  
Shall still my transport be –  
That once – on me – those Jasper Gates  
Blazed open – suddenly –  
That in my awkward – gazing – face –  
The Angels – softly peered –  
And touched me with their fleeces,  
Almost as if they cared –  
I'm banished – now – you know it –  
How foreign that can be –  
You'll know – Sir – when the Savior's face  
Turns so – away from you –

c. 1861

1945

257

Delight is as the flight –  
Or in the Ratio of it,  
As the Schools would say –  
The Rainbow's way –  
A Skein  
Flung colored, after Rain,

Would suit as bright,  
Except that flight  
Were Aliment –

“If it would last”  
I asked the East,  
When that Bent Stripe  
Struck up my childish  
Firmament –  
And I, for glee,  
Took Rainbows, as the common way,  
And empty Skies  
The Eccentricity –

And so with Lives –  
And so with Butterflies –  
Seen magic – through the fright  
That they will cheat the sight –  
And Dower latitudes far on –  
Some sudden morn –  
Our portion – in the fashion –  
Done –

c. 1861

1929

258

There's a certain Slant of light,  
Winter Afternoons –  
That oppresses, like the Heft  
Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –  
We can find no scar,  
But internal difference,  
Where the Meanings, are –

None may teach it – Any –  
'Tis the Seal Despair –  
An imperial affliction  
Sent us of the Air –

[ 118 ]

When it comes, the Landscape listens –  
Shadows – hold their breath –  
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance  
On the look of Death –

c. 1861

1890

259

Good Night! Which put the Candle out?  
A jealous Zephyr – not a doubt –  
Ah, friend, you little knew  
How long at that celestial wick  
The Angels – labored diligent –  
Extinguished – now – for you!

It might – have been the Light House spark –  
Some Sailor – rowing in the Dark –  
Had importuned to see!  
It might – have been the waning lamp  
That lit the Drummer from the Camp  
To purer Reveille!

c. 1861

1891

260

Read – Sweet – how others – strove –  
Till we – are stouter –  
What they – renounced –  
Till we – are less afraid –  
How many times they – bore the faithful witness –  
Till we – are helped –  
As if a Kingdom – cared!

Read then – of faith –  
That shone above the fagot –  
Clear strains of Hymn  
The River could not drown –  
Brave names of Men –  
And Celestial Women –

[ 119 ]

Passed out – of Record  
Into – Renown!

c. 1861

1890

261

Put up my lute!  
What of – my Music!  
Since the sole ear I cared to charm –  
Passive – as Granite – laps My Music –  
Sobbing – will suit – as well as psalm!  
  
Would but the “Memnon” of the Desert –  
Teach me the strain  
That vanquished Him –  
When He – surrendered to the Sunrise –  
Maybe – that – would awaken – them!

c. 1861

1935

262

The lonesome for they know not What –  
The Eastern Exiles – be –  
Who strayed beyond the Amber line  
Some madder Holiday –  
  
And ever since – the purple Moat  
They strive to climb – in vain –  
As Birds – that tumble from the clouds  
Do fumble at the strain –  
  
The Blessed Ether – taught them –  
Some Transatlantic Morn –  
When Heaven – was too common – to miss –  
Too sure – to dote upon!

c. 1861

1929

263

A single Screw of Flesh  
Is all that pins the Soul

That stands for Deity, to Mine,  
Upon my side the Veil –

Once witnessed of the Gauze –  
Its name is put away  
As far from mine, as if no plight  
Had printed yesterday,

In tender – solemn Alphabet,  
My eyes just turned to see,  
When it was smuggled by my sight  
Into Eternity –

More Hands – to hold – These are but Two –  
One more new-mailed Nerve  
Just granted, for the Peril's sake –  
Some striding – Giant – Love –

So greater than the Gods can show,  
They slink before the Clay,  
That not for all their Heaven can boast  
Will let its Keepsake – go

c. 1861

1935

264

A Weight with Needles on the pounds –  
To push, and pierce, besides –  
That if the Flesh resist the Heft –  
The puncture – coolly tries –

That not a pore be overlooked  
Of all this Compound Frame –  
As manifold for Anguish –  
As Species – be – for name –

c. 1861

1935

265

Where Ships of Purple – gently toss –  
On Seas of Daffodil –

[ 121 ]

Fantastic Sailors – mingle –  
And then – the Wharf is still!

c. 1861

1891

266

This – is the land – the Sunset washes –  
These – are the Banks of the Yellow Sea –  
Where is rose – or whither it rushes –  
These – are the Western Mystery!

Night after Night  
Her purple traffic  
Strews the landing with Opal Bales –  
Merchantmen – poise upon Horizons –  
Dip – and vanish like Orioles!

c. 1861

1890

267

Did we disobey Him?  
Just one time!  
Charged us to forget Him –  
But we couldn't learn!

Were Himself – such a Dunce –  
What would we – do?  
Love the dull lad – best –  
Oh, wouldn't you?

c. 1861

1945

268

Me, change! Me, alter!  
Then I will, when on the Everlasting Hill  
A Smaller Purple grows –  
At sunset, or a lesser glow  
Flickers upon Cordillera –  
At Day's superior close!

c. 1861

1945

Bound – a trouble –  
 And lives can bear it!  
 Limit – how deep a bleeding go!  
 So – many – drops – of vital scarlet –  
 Deal with the soul  
 As with Algebra!

Tell it the Ages – to a cypher –  
 And it will ache – contented – on –  
 Sing – at its pain – as any Workman –  
 Notching the fall of the Even Sun!

c. 1861

1935

*One Life* of so much Consequence!  
 Yet I – for it – would pay –  
 My Soul's *entire income* –  
 In ceaseless – salary –

*One Pearl* – to me – so signal –  
 That I would instant dive –  
 Although – I *knew* – to *take* it –  
 Would *cost* me – *just a life!*

The Sea is full – I know it!  
 That – does not blur *my Gem!*  
 It burns – distinct from all the row –  
*Intact – in Diadem!*

The life is thick – I know it!  
 Yet – not so dense a crowd –  
 But *Monarchs* – are *perceptible* –  
 Far down the dustiest Road!

c. 1861

1929

A solemn thing – it was – I said –  
 A woman – white – to be –

And wear – if God should count me fit –  
Her blameless mystery –

A hallowed thing – to drop a life  
Into the purple well –  
Too plummetless – that it return –  
Eternity – until –

I pondered how the bliss would look –  
And would it feel as big –  
When I could take it in my hand –  
As hovering – seen – through fog –

And then – the size of this “small” life –  
The Sages – call it small –  
Swelled – like Horizons – in my vest –  
And I sneered – softly – “small”!

c. 1861

1896

272

I breathed enough to take the Trick –  
And now, removed from Air –  
I simulate the Breath, so well –  
That One, to be quite sure –

The Lungs are stirless – must descend  
Among the Cunning Cells –  
And touch the Pantomime – Himself,  
How numb, the Bellows feels!

c. 1861

1896

273

He put the Belt around my life –  
I heard the Buckle snap –  
And turned away, imperial,  
My Lifetime folding up –  
Deliberate, as a Duke would do  
A Kingdom’s Title Deed –

Henceforth, a Dedicated sort –  
A Member of the Cloud.

Yet not too far to come at call –  
And do the little Toils  
That make the Circuit of the Rest –  
And deal occasional smiles  
To lives that stoop to notice mine –  
And kindly ask it in –  
Whose invitation, know you not  
For Whom I must decline?

c. 1861

1891

274

The only Ghost I ever saw  
Was dressed in Mechlin – so –  
He wore no sandal on his foot –  
And stepped like flakes of snow –  
  
His Gait – was soundless, like the Bird –  
But rapid – like the Roe –  
His fashions, quaint, Mosaic –  
Or haply, Mistletoe –  
  
His conversation – seldom –  
His laughter, like the Breeze –  
That dies away in Dimples  
Among the pensive Trees –  
  
Our interview – was transient –  
Of me, himself was shy –  
And God forbid I look behind –  
Since that appalling Day!

c. 1861

1891

275

Doubt Me! My Dim Companion!  
Why, God, would be content  
With but a fraction of the Life –  
Poured thee, without a stint –

The whole of me – forever –  
What more the Woman can,  
Say quick, that I may dower thee  
With last Delight I own!

It cannot be my Spirit –  
For that was thine, before –  
I ceded all of Dust I knew –  
What Opulence the more  
Had I – a freckled Maiden,  
Whose farthest of Degree,  
Was – that she might –  
Some distant Heaven,  
Dwell timidly, with thee!

Sift her, from Brow to Barefoot!  
Strain till your last Surmise –  
Drop, like a Tapestry, away,  
Before the Fire's Eyes –  
Winnow her finest fondness –  
But hallow just the snow  
Intact, in Everlasting flake—  
Oh, Caviler, for you!

c. 1861

1890

276

Many a phrase has the English language –  
I have heard but one –  
Low as the laughter of the Cricket,  
Loud, as the Thunder's Tongue –

Murmuring, like old Caspian Choirs,  
When the Tide's a' lull –  
Saying itself in new inflection –  
Like a Whippoorwill –

Breaking in bright Orthography  
On my simple sleep –

[ 126 ]

Thundering its Prospective –  
Till I stir, and weep –

Not for the Sorrow, done me –  
But the push of Joy –  
Say it again, Saxon!  
Hush – Only to me!

c. 1861

1935

277

What if I say I shall not wait!  
What if I burst the fleshly Gate –  
And pass escaped – to thee!

What if I file this Mortal – off –  
See where it hurt me – That's enough –  
And wade in Liberty!

They cannot take me – any more!  
Dungeons can call – and Guns implore  
Unmeaning – now – to me –

As laughter – was – an hour ago –  
Or Laces – or a Travelling Show –  
Or who died – yesterday!

c. 1861

1891

278

A shady friend – for Torrid days –  
Is easier to find –  
Than one of higher temperature  
For Frigid – hour of Mind –

The Vane a little to the East –  
Scares Muslin souls – away –  
If Broadcloth Hearts are firmer –  
Than those of Organdy –

Who is to blame? The Weaver?  
Ah, the bewildering thread!

{ 127 }

The Tapestries of Paradise  
So notelessly – are made!

c. 1861

1891

279

Tie the Strings to my Life, My Lord,  
Then, I am ready to go!  
Just a look at the Horses –  
Rapid! That will do!

Put me in on the firmest side –  
So I shall never fall –  
For we must ride to the Judgment –  
And it's partly, down Hill –

But never I mind the steepest –  
And never I mind the Sea –  
Held fast in Everlasting Race –  
By my own Choice, and Thee –

Goodbye to the Life I used to live –  
And the World I used to know –  
And kiss the Hills, for me, just once –  
Then – I am ready to go!

c. 1861

1896

280

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,  
And Mourners to and fro  
Kept treading – treading – till it seemed  
That Sense was breaking through –

And when they all were seated,  
A Service, like a Drum –  
Kept beating – beating – till I thought  
My Mind was going numb –

And then I heard them lift a Box  
And creak across my Soul

[ 128 ]

With those same Boots of Lead, again,  
Then Space – began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,  
And Being, but an Ear,  
And I, and Silence, some strange Race  
Wrecked, solitary, here –

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,  
And I dropped down, and down –  
And hit a World, at every plunge,  
And Finished knowing – then –

c. 1861

1896

281

'Tis so appalling – it exhilarates –  
So over Horror, it half Captivates –  
The Soul stares after it, secure –  
A Sepulchre, fears frost, no more –

To scan a Ghost, is faint –  
But grappling, conquers it –  
How easy, Torment, now –  
Suspense kept sawing so –

The Truth, is Bald, and Cold –  
But that will hold –  
If any are not sure –  
We show them – prayer –  
But we, who know,  
Stop hoping, now –

Looking at Death, is Dying –  
Just let go the Breath –  
And not the pillow at your Cheek  
So Slumbereth –

Others, Can wrestle –  
Yours, is done –  
And so of Woe, bleak dreaded – come,  
It sets the Fright at liberty –

[ 129 ]

And Terror's free –  
Gay, Ghastly, Holiday!

c. 1861

1935

282

How noteless Men, and Pleiads, stand,  
Until a sudden sky  
Reveals the fact that One is rapt  
Forever from the Eye –

Members of the Invisible,  
Existing, while we stare,  
In Leagueless Opportunity,  
O'ertakeless, as the Air –

Why didn't we detain Them?  
The Heavens with a smile,  
Sweep by our disappointed Heads  
Without a syllable –

c. 1861

1929

283

A Mien to move a Queen –  
Half Child – Half Heroine –  
An Orleans in the Eye  
That puts its manner by  
For humbler Company  
When none are near  
Even a Tear –  
Its frequent Visitor –

A Bonnet like a Duke –  
And yet a Wren's Puke  
Were not so shy  
Of Goer by –  
And Hands – so slight –  
They would elate a Sprite  
With Merriment –

A Voice that Alters – Low  
And on the Ear can go  
Like Let of Snow –  
Or shift supreme –  
As tone of Realm  
On Subjects Diadem –

Too small – to fear –  
Too distant – to endear –  
And so Men Compromise –  
And just – revere –

c. 1861

1935

284

The Drop, that wrestles in the Sea –  
Forgets her own locality –  
As I – toward Thee –

She knows herself an incense small –  
Yet *small* – she sighs – if *All* – is *All* –  
How *larger* – be?

The Ocean – smiles – at her Conceit –  
But *she*, forgetting Amphitrite –  
Pleads – “Me”?

c 1861

1945

285

The Robin’s my Criterion for Tune –  
Because I grow – where Robins do –  
But, were I Cuckoo born –  
I’d swear by him –  
The ode familiar – rules the Noon –  
The Buttercup’s, my Whim for Bloom –  
Because, we’re Orchard sprung –  
But, were I Britain born,  
I’d Daisies spurn –  
None but the Nut – October fit –  
Because, through dropping it,

[ 131 ]

The Seasons flit – I'm taught –  
Without the Snow's Tableau  
Winter, were lie – to me –  
Because I see – New Englandly –  
The Queen, discerns like me –  
Provincially –

c. 1861

1929

286

That after Horror – that 'twas *us* –  
That passed the mouldering Pier –  
Just as the Granite Crumb let go –  
Our Savior, by a Hair –

A second more, had dropped too deep  
For Fisherman to plumb –  
The very profile of the Thought  
Puts Recollection numb –

The possibility – to pass  
Without a Moment's Bell –  
Into Conjecture's presence –  
Is like a Face of Steel –  
That suddenly looks into ours  
With a metallic grin –  
The Cordiality of Death –  
Who drills his Welcome in –

c. 1861

1935

287

A Clock stopped –  
Not the Mantel's –  
Geneva's farthest skill  
Can't put the puppet bowing –  
That just now dangled still –

An awe came on the Trinket!  
The Figures hunched, with pain –

Then quivered out of Decimals –  
Into Degreeless Noon –

It will not stir for Doctors –  
This Pendulum of snow –  
This Shopman importunes it –  
While cool – concernless No –

Nods from the Gilded pointers –  
Nods from the Seconds slim –  
Decades of Arrogance between  
The Dial life –  
And Him –

c. 1861

1896

288

I'm Nobody! Who are you?  
Are you – Nobody – Too?  
Then there's a pair of us?  
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!  
How public – like a Frog –  
To tell one's name – the livelong June –  
To an admiring Bog!

c 1861

1891

289

I know some lonely Houses off the Road  
A Robber'd like the look of –  
Wooden barred,  
And Windows hanging low,  
Inviting to –  
A Portico,  
Where two could creep –  
One – hand the Tools –  
The other peep –  
To make sure All's Asleep –

[ 133 ]

Old fashioned eyes –  
Not easy to surprise!

How orderly the Kitchen'd look, by night,  
With just a Clock –  
But they could gag the Tick –  
And Mice won't bark –  
And so the Walls – don't tell –  
None – will –

A pair of Spectacles ajar just stir –  
An Almanac's aware –  
Was it the Mat – winked,  
Or a Nervous Star?  
The Moon – slides down the stair,  
To see who's there!

There's plunder – where –  
Tankard, or Spoon –  
Earring – or Stone –  
A Watch – Some Ancient Brooch  
To match the Grandmama –  
Staid sleeping – there –

Day – rattles – too  
Stealth's – slow –  
The Sun has got as far  
As the third Sycamore –  
Screams Chanticleer  
"Who's there"?

And Echoes – Trains away,  
Sneer – "Where"!  
While the old Couple, just astir,  
Fancy the Sunrise – left the door ajar!

c. 1861

1890

290

Of Bronze – and Blaze –  
The North – Tonight –  
So adequate – it forms –

[ 134 ]

So preconcerted with itself --  
So distant -- to alarms --  
An Unconcern so sovereign  
To Universe, or me --  
Infects my simple spirit  
With Taints of Majesty --  
Till I take vaster attitudes --  
And strut upon my stem --  
Disdaining Men, and Oxygen,  
For Arrogance of them --

My Splendors, are Menagerie --  
But their Competeless Show  
Will entertain the Centuries  
When I, am long ago,  
An Island in dishonored Grass --  
Whom none but Beetles -- know

c. 1861

1896

291

How the old Mountains drip with Sunset  
How the Hemlocks burn --  
How the Dun Brake is draped in Cinder  
By the Wizard Sun --

How the old Steeples hand the Scarlet  
Till the Ball is full --  
Have I the lip of the Flamingo  
That I dare to tell?

Then, how the Fire ebbs like Billows --  
Touching all the Grass  
With a departing -- Sapphire -- feature --  
As a Duchess passed --

How a small Dusk crawls on the Village  
Till the Houses blot  
And the odd Flambeau, no men carry  
Glimmer on the Street --

How it is Night – in Nest and Kennel –  
And where was the Wood –  
Just a Dome of Abyss is Bowing  
Into Solitude –

These are the Visions fitted Guido –  
Titian – never told –  
Domenichino dropped his pencil –  
Paralyzed, with Gold –

c. 1861

1896

292

If your Nerve, deny you –  
Go above your Nerve –  
He can lean against the Grave,  
If he fear to swerve –

That's a steady posture –  
Never any bend  
Held of those Brass arms –  
Best Giant made –

If your Soul seesaw –  
Lift the Flesh door –  
The Poltroon wants Oxygen –  
Nothing more –

c. 1861

1935

293

I got so I could take his name –  
Without – Tremendous gain –  
That Stop-sensation – on my Soul –  
And Thunder – in the Room –

I got so I could walk across  
That Angle in the floor,  
Where he turned so, and I turned –.how –  
And all our Sinew tore –

I got so I could stir the Box –  
In which his letters grew  
Without that forcing, in my breath –  
As Staples – driven through –

Could dimly recollect a Grace –  
I think, they call it “God” –  
Renowned to ease Extremity –  
When Formula, had failed –

And shape my Hands –  
Petition’s way,  
Tho’ ignorant of a word  
That Ordination – utters –

My Business, with the Cloud,  
If any Power behind it, be,  
Not subject to Despair –  
It care, in some remoter way,  
For so minute affair  
As Misery –  
Itself, too vast, for interrupting – more –

c. 1861

1929

294

The Doomed – regard the Sunrise  
With different Delight –  
Because – when next it burns abroad  
They doubt to witness it –

The Man – to die – tomorrow –  
Harks for the Meadow Bird –  
Because its Music stirs the Axe  
That clamors for his head –

Joyful – to whom the Sunrise  
Precedes Enamored – Day –  
Joyful – for whom the Meadow Bird  
Has ought but Elegy!

c. 1861

1929

Unto like Story – Trouble has enticed me –  
 How Kinsmen fell –  
 Brothers and Sister – who preferred the Glory –  
 And their young will  
 Bent to the Scaffold, or in Dungeons – chanted –  
 Till God's full time –  
 When they let go the ignominy – smiling –  
 And Shame went still –

Unto guessed Crests, by moaning fancy, leads me,  
 Worn fair  
 By Heads rejected – in the lower country –  
 Of honors there –  
 Such spirit makes her perpetual mention,  
 That I – grown bold –  
 Step martial – at my Crucifixion –  
 As Trumpets – rolled –

Feet, small as mine – have marched in Revolution  
 Firm to the Drum –  
 Hands – not so stout – hoisted them – in witness –  
 When Speech went numb –  
 Let me not shame their sublime deportments –  
 Drilled bright –  
 Beckoning – Etruscan invitation –  
 Toward Light –

c. 1861

1935

One Year ago – jots what?  
 God – spell the word! I – can't –  
 Was't Grace? Not that –  
 Was't Glory? That – will do –  
 Spell slower – Glory –

Such Anniversary shall be –  
 Sometimes – not often – in Eternity –  
 When farther Parted, than the Common Woe –

Look – feed upon each other’s faces – so –  
In doubtful meal, if it be possible  
Their Banquet’s true –

I tasted – careless – then –  
I did not know the Wine  
Came once a World – Did you?  
Oh, had you told me so –  
This Thirst would blister – easier – now –  
You said it hurt you – most –  
Mine – was an Acorn’s Breast –  
And could not know how fondness grew  
In Shaggier Vest –  
Perhaps – I couldn’t –  
But, had you looked in –  
A Giant – eye to eye with you, had been –  
No Acorn – then –

So – Twelve months ago –  
We breathed –  
Then dropped the Air –  
Which bore it best?  
Was this – the patientest –  
Because it was a Child, you know –  
And could not value – Air?

If to be “Elder” – mean most pain –  
I’m old enough, today, I’m certain – then –  
As old as thee – how soon?  
One – Birthday more – or Ten?  
Let me – choose!  
Ah, Sir, None!

c. 1861

1945

297

It’s like the Light –  
A fashionless Delight –  
It’s like the Bee –  
A dateless – Melody –

[ 139 ]

It's like the Woods –  
Private – Like the Breeze –  
Phraseless – yet it stirs  
The proudest Trees –

It's like the Morning –  
Best – when it's done –  
And the Everlasting Clocks –  
Chime – Noon!

c 1861

1896

298

Alone, I cannot be –  
For Hosts – do visit me –  
Recordless Company –  
Who baffle Key –

They have no Robes, nor Names –  
No Almanacs – nor Climes –  
But general Homes  
Like Gnomes –

Their Coming, may be known  
By Couriers within –  
Their going – is not –  
For they're never gone –

c 1861

1932

299

Your Riches – taught me – Poverty.  
Myself – a Millionaire  
In little Wealths, as Girls could boast  
Till broad as Buenos Ayre –

You drifted your Dominions –  
A Different Peru –  
And I esteemed All Poverty  
For Life's Estate with you –

[ 140 ]

Of Mines, I little know – myself –  
But just the names, of Gems –  
The Colors of the Commonest –  
And scarce of Diadems –

So much, that did I meet the Queen –  
Her Glory I should know –  
But this, must be a different Wealth –  
To miss it – beggars so –

I'm sure 'tis India – all Day –  
To those who look on You –  
Without a stint – without a blame,  
Might I – but be the Jew –

I'm sure it is Golconda –  
Beyond my power to deem –  
To have a smile for Mine – each Day,  
How better, than a Gem!

At least, it solaces to know  
That there exists – a Gold –  
Altho' I prove it, just in time  
Its distance – to behold –

Its far – far Treasure to surmise –  
And estimate the Pearl –  
That slipped my simple fingers through –  
While just a Girl at School.

1862

1891

300

“Morning” – means “Milking” – to the Farmer –  
Dawn – to the Teneriffe –  
Dice – to the Maid –  
Morning means just Risk – to the Lover –  
Just revelation – to the Beloved –

Epicures – date a Breakfast – by it –  
Brides – an Apocalypse –  
Worlds – a Flood –

[ 141 ]

Faint-going Lives – Their Lapse from Sighing –  
Faith – The Experiment of Our Lord –

c 1862

1914

301

I reason, Earth is short –  
And Anguish – absolute –  
And many hurt,  
But, what of that?

I reason, we could die –  
The best Vitality  
Cannot excel Decay,  
But, what of that?

I reason, that in Heaven –  
Somehow, it will be even –  
Some new Equation, given –  
But, what of that?

c 1862

1890

302

Like Some Old fashioned Miracle  
When Summertime is done –  
Seems Summer's Recollection  
And the Affairs of June

As infinite Tradition  
As Cinderella's Bays –  
Or Little John – of Lincoln Green –  
Or Blue Beard's Galleries –

Her Bees have a fictitious Hum –  
Her Blossoms, like a Dream –  
Elate us – till we almost weep –  
So plausible – they seem –

Her Memories like Strains – Review –  
When Orchestra is dumb –

The Violin in Baize replaced –  
And Ear – and Heaven – numb –

c. 1862

1914

303

The Soul selects her own Society –  
Then – shuts the Door –  
To her divine Majority –  
Present no more –

Unmoved – she notes the Chariots – pausing –  
At her low Gate –  
Unmoved – an Emperor be kneeling  
Upon her Mat –

I've known her – from an ample nation –  
Choose One –  
Then – close the Valves of her attention –  
Like Stone –

c 1862

1890

304

The Day came slow – till Five o'clock –  
Then sprang before the Hills  
Like Hindered Rubies – or the Light  
A Sudden Musket – spills –

The Purple could not keep the East –  
The Sunrise shook abroad  
Like Breadths of Topaz – packed a Night –  
The Lady just unrolled –

The Happy Winds – their Timbrels took –  
The Birds – in docile Rows  
Arranged themselves around their Prince  
The Wind – is Prince of Those –

The Orchard sparkled like a Jew –  
How mighty 'twas – to be

[ 143 ]

A Guest in this stupendous place –  
The Parlor – of the Day –

c. 1862

1891

305

The difference between Despair  
And Fear – is like the One  
Between the instant of a Wreck –  
And when the Wreck has been –  
The Mind is smooth – no Motion –  
Contented as the Eye  
Upon the Forehead of a Bust –  
That knows – it cannot see –

c. 1862

1914

306

The Soul's Superior instants  
Occur to Her – alone –  
When friend – and Earth's occasion  
Have infinite withdrawn –  
Or She – Herself – ascended  
To too remote a Height  
For lower Recognition  
Than Her Omnipotent –  
This Mortal Abolition  
Is seldom – but as fair  
As Apparition – subject  
To Autocratic Air –  
Eternity's disclosure  
To favorites – a few –  
Of the Colossal substance  
Of Immortality

c. 1862

1914

The One who could repeat the Summer day –  
 Were greater than itself – though He  
 Minutest of Mankind should be –  
 And He – could reproduce the Sun –  
 At period of going down –  
 The Lingering – and the Stain – I mean –  
 When Orient have been outgrown –  
 And Occident – become Unknown –  
 His Name – remain –

c. 1862

1891

I send Two Sunsets –  
 Day and I – in competition ran –  
 I finished Two – and several Stars –  
 While He – was making One –  
 His own was ampler – but as I  
 Was saying to a friend –  
 Mine – is the more convenient  
 To Carry in the Hand –

c. 1862

1914

For largest Woman's Heart I knew –  
 'Tis little I can do –  
 And yet the largest Woman's Heart  
 Could hold an Arrow – too –  
 And so, instructed by my own,  
 I tenderer, turn Me to.

c. 1862

1932

Give little Anguish –  
 Lives will fret –

Give Avalanches –  
And they'll slant –  
Straighten – look cautious for their Breath –  
But make no syllable – like Death –  
Who only shows his Marble Disc –  
Sublimer sort – than Speech –

c. 1862

1924

311

It sifts from Leaden Sieves –  
It powders all the Wood.  
It fills with Alabaster Wool  
The Wrinkles of the Road –  
  
It makes an Even Face  
Of Mountain, and of Plain –  
Unbroken Forehead from the East  
Unto the East again –  
  
It reaches to the Fence –  
It wraps it Rail by Rail  
Till it is lost in Fleeces –  
It deals Celestial Vail  
  
To Stump, and Stack – and Stem –  
A Summer's empty Room –  
Acres of Joints, where Harvests were,  
Recordless, but for them –  
  
It Ruffles Wrists of Posts  
As Ankles of a Queen –  
Then stills its Artisans – like Ghosts –  
Denying they have been –

c. 1862

1891

312

Her – “last Poems” –  
Poets – ended –  
Silver – perished – with her Tongue –

Not on Record – bubbled other,  
 Flute – or Woman –  
 So divine –  
 Not unto its Summer – Morning  
 Robin – uttered Half the Tune –  
 Gushed too free for the Adoring –  
 From the Anglo-Florentine –  
 Late – the Praise –  
 'Tis dull – conferring  
 On the Head too High to Crown –  
 Diadem – or Ducal Showing –  
 Be its Grave – sufficient sign –  
 Nought – that We – No Poet's Kinsman –  
 Suffocate – with easy woe –  
 What, and if, Ourselves a Bridegroom –  
 Put Her down – in Italy?

1862

1914

313

I should have been too glad, I see –  
 Too lifted – for the scant degree  
 Of Life's penurious Round –  
 My little Circuit would have shamed  
 This new Circumference – have blamed –  
 The homelier time behind.

I should have been too saved – I see –  
 Too rescued – Fear too dim to me  
 That I could spell the Prayer  
 I knew so perfect – yesterday –  
 That Scalding One – Sabachthani –  
 Recited fluent – here –

Earth would have been too much – I see –  
 And Heaven – not enough for me –  
 I should have had the Joy  
 Without the Fear – to justify –  
 The Palm – without the Calvary –  
 So Savior – Crucify –

[ 147 ]

Defeat – whets Victory – they say –  
The Reefs – in old Gethsemane –  
Endear the Coast – beyond!  
'Tis Beggars – Banquets – can define –  
'Tis Parching – vitalizes Wine –  
“Faith” bleats – to understand!

c. 1862

1891

314

Nature – sometimes sears a Sapling –  
Sometimes – scalps a Tree –  
Her Green People recollect it  
When they do not die –  
Fainter Leaves – to Further Seasons –  
Dumbly testify –  
We – who have the Souls –  
Die oftener – Not so vitally –

c 1862

1945

315

He fumbles at your Soul  
As Players at the Keys  
Before they drop full Music on –  
He stuns you by degrees –  
Prepares your brittle Nature  
For the Ethereal Blow  
By fainter Hammers – further heard –  
Then nearer – Then so slow  
Your Breath has time to straighten –  
Your Brain – to bubble Cool –  
Deals – One – imperial – Thunderbolt –  
That scalps your naked Soul –  
When Winds take Forests in their Paws –  
The Universe – is still –

c. 1862

1896

The Wind didn't come from the Orchard – today –  
 Further than that –  
 Nor stop to play with the Hay –  
 Nor joggle a Hat –  
 He's a transitive fellow – very –  
 Rely on that –

If He leave a Bur at the door  
 We know He has climbed a Fir –  
 But the Fir is Where – Declare –  
 Were you ever there?

If He brings Odors of Clovers –  
 And that is His business – not Ours –  
 Then He has been with the Mowers –  
 Whetting away the Hours  
 To sweet pauses of Hay –  
 His Way – of a June Day –

If He fling Sand, and Pebble –  
 Little Boys Hats – and Stubble –  
 With an occasional Steeple –  
 And a hoarse "Get out of the way, I say,"  
 Who'd be the fool to stay?  
 Would you – Say –  
 Would you be the fool to stay?

c. 1862

1932

Just so – Jesus – raps –  
 He – doesn't weary –  
 Last – at the Knocker –  
 And first – at the Bell.  
 Then – on divinest tiptoe – standing –  
 Might He but spy the lady's soul –  
 When He – retires –  
 Chilled – or weary –  
 It will be ample time for – me –

Patient – upon the steps – *until* then –  
Heart! I am knocking – low at thee

c. 1861

1914

318

I'll tell you how the Sun rose –  
A Ribbon at a time –  
The Steeples swam in Amethyst –  
The news, like Squirrels, ran –  
The Hills untied their Bonnets –  
The Bobolinks – begun –  
Then I said softly to myself –  
"That must have been the Sun"<sup>1</sup>  
But how he set – I know not –  
There seemed a purple stile  
That little Yellow boys and girls  
Were clumby all the while –  
Till when they reached the other side,  
A Dominie in Gray –  
Put gently up the evening Bars –  
And led the flock away –

c. 1860

1890

319

The nearest Dream recedes – unrealized –  
The Heaven we chase,  
Like the June Bee – before the School Boy,  
Invites the Race –  
Stoops – to an easy Clover –  
Dips – evades – teases – deploys –  
Then – to the Royal Clouds  
Lifts his light Pinnacle –  
Heedless of the Boy –  
Staring – bewildered – at the mocking sky –

[ 150 ]

Homesick for steadfast Honey –  
Ah, the Bee flies not  
That brews that rare variety!

c. 1861

1891

320

We play at Paste –  
Till qualified, for Pearl –  
Then, drop the Paste –  
And deem ourself a fool –

The Shapes – though – were similar –  
And our new Hands  
Learned *Gem*-Tactics –  
Practicing *Sands* –

c. 1862

1891

321

Of all the Sounds despatched abroad,  
There's not a Charge to me  
Like that old measure in the Boughs –  
That phraseless Melody –  
The Wind does – working like a Hand,  
Whose fingers Comb the Sky –  
Then quiver down – with tufts of Tune –  
Permitted Gods, and me –

Inheritance, it is, to us –  
Beyond the Art to Earn –  
Beyond the trait to take away  
By Robber, since the Gain  
Is gotten not of fingers –  
And inner than the Bone –  
Hid golden, for the whole of Days,  
And even in the Urn,  
I cannot vouch the merry Dust  
Do not arise and play  
In some odd fashion of its own,  
Some quainter Holiday,

[ 151 ]

When Winds go round and round in Bands –  
And thrum upon the door,  
And Birds take places, overhead,  
To bear them Orchestra

I crave Him grace of Summer Boughs,  
If such an Outcast be –  
Who never heard that fleshless Chant –  
Rise – solemn – on the Tree,  
As if some Caravan of Sound  
Off Deserts, in the Sky,  
Had parted Rank,  
Then knit, and swept –  
In Seamless Company –

c 1862

1890

322

There came a Day at Summer's full,  
Entirely for me –  
I thought that such were for the Saints,  
Where Resurrections – be –

The Sun, as common, went abroad,  
The flowers, accustomed, blew,  
As if no soul the solstice passed  
That maketh all things new –

The time was scarce profaned, by speech –  
The symbol of a word  
Was needless, as at Sacrament,  
The Wardrobe – of our Lord –

Each was to each The Sealed Church,  
Permitted to commune this – time –  
Lest we too awkward show  
At Supper of the Lamb.

The Hours slid fast – as Hours will,  
Clutched tight, by greedy hands –

So faces on two Decks, look back,  
Bound to opposing lands –

And so when all the time had leaked,  
Without external sound  
Each bound the Other's Crucifix –  
We gave no other Bond –

Sufficient troth, that we shall rise –  
Deposed – at length, the Grave –  
To that new Marriage,  
Justified – through Calvaries of Love –

c. 1861

1890

323

As if I asked a common Alms,  
And in my wondering hand  
A Stranger pressed a Kingdom,  
And I, bewildered, stand –  
As if I asked the Orient  
Had it for me a Morn –  
And it should lift its purple Dikes,  
And shatter me with Dawn!

c. 1858

1891

324

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –  
I keep it, staying at Home –  
With a Bobolink for a Chorister –  
And an Orchard, for a Dome –

Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice –  
I just wear my Wings –  
And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,  
Our little Sexton – sings.

God preaches, a noted Clergyman –  
And the sermon is never long,

So instead of getting to Heaven, at last –  
I'm going, all along.

c. 1860

1864

325

Of Tribulation, these are They,  
Denoted by the White –  
The Spangled Gowns, a lesser Rank  
Of Victors – designate –

All these – did conquer –  
But the ones who overcame most times –  
Wear nothing commoner than Snow –  
No Ornament, but Palms –

Surrender – is a sort unknown –  
On this superior soil –  
Defeat – an outgrown Anguish –  
Remembered, as the Mile

Our panting Ankle barely passed –  
When Night devoured the Road –  
But we – stood whispering in the House –  
And all we said – was "Saved"!

c. 1861

1891

326

I cannot dance upon my Toes –  
No Man instructed me –  
But oftentimes, among my mind,  
A Glee possesseth me,

That had I Ballet knowledge –  
Would put itself abroad  
In Pirouette to blanch a Troupe –  
Or lay a Prima, mad,

And though I had no Gown of Gauze –  
No Ringleet, to my Hair,

Nor hopped to Audiences – like Birds,  
One Claw upon the Air,

Nor tossed my shape in Eider Balls,  
Nor rolled on wheels of snow  
Till I was out of sight, in sound,  
The House encore me so –

Nor any know I know the Art  
I mention – easy – Here –  
Nor any Placard boast me –  
It's full as Opera –

c. 1862

1929

327

Before I got my eye put out  
I liked as well to see –  
As other Creatures, that have Eyes  
And know no other way –

But were it told to me – Today –  
That I might have the sky  
For mine – I tell you that my Heart  
Would split, for size of me –

The Meadows – mine –  
The Mountains – mine –  
All Forests – Stintless Stars –  
As much of Noon as I could take  
Between my finite eyes –

The Motions of the Dipping Birds –  
The Morning's Amber Road –  
For mine – to look at when I liked –  
The News would strike me dead –

So safer – guess – with just my soul  
Upon the Window pane –  
Where other Creatures put their eyes –  
Incautious – of the Sun –

c. 1862

1891

A Bird came down the Walk –  
 He did not know I saw –  
 He bit an Angeworm in halves  
 And ate the fellow, raw,

And then he drank a Dew  
 From a convenient Grass –  
 And then hopped sidewise to the Wall  
 To let a Beetle pass –

He glanced with rapid eyes  
 That hurried all around –  
 They looked like frightened Beads, I thought –  
 He stirred his Velvet Head

Like one in danger, Cautious,  
 I offered him a Crumb  
 And he unrolled his feathers  
 And rowed him softer home –

Than Oars divide the Ocean,  
 Too silver for a seam –  
 Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon  
 Leap, plashless as they swim.

c. 1862

1891

So glad we are – a Stranger'd deem  
 'Twas sorry, that we were –  
 For where the Holiday should be  
 There publishes a Tear –  
 Nor how Ourselves be justified –  
 Since Grief and Joy are done  
 So similar – An Optizan  
 Could not decide between –

c. 1862

1894

The Juggler's *Hat* her Country is –  
The Mountain Gorse – the *Bee's!*

c. 1861

1894

While Asters –  
On the Hill –  
Their Everlasting fashions – set –  
And Covenant Gentians – Frill!

c. 1861

1894

There are two Ripenings – one – of sight –  
Whose forces Spheric wind  
Until the Velvet product  
Drop spicy to the ground –  
A homelier maturing –  
A process in the Bur –  
That teeth of Frosts alone disclose  
In far October Air.

c. 1862

1894

The Grass so little has to do –  
A Sphere of simple Green –  
With only Butterflies to brood  
And Bees to entertain –  
And stir all day to pretty Tunes  
The Breezes fetch along –  
And hold the Sunshine in its lap  
And bow to everything –  
And thread the Dews, all night, like Pearls –  
And make itself so fine

A Duchess were too common  
For such a noticing –  
And even when it dies – to pass  
In Odors so divine –  
Like Lowly spices, lain to sleep –  
Or Spikenards, perishing –  
And then, in Sovereign Barns to dwell –  
And dream the Days away,  
The Grass so little has to do  
I wish I were a Hay –

c 1862

1890

334

All the letters I can write  
Are not fair as this –  
Syllables of Velvet –  
Sentences of Plush,  
Depths of Ruby, undrained,  
Hid, Lip, for Thee –  
Play it were a Humming Bird –  
And just sipped – me –

1862

1929

335

'Tis not that Dying hurts us so –  
'Tis Living – hurts us more –  
But Dying – is a different way –  
A Kind behind the Door –  
The Southern Custom – of the Bird –  
That ere the Frosts are due –  
Accepts a better Latitude –  
We – are the Birds – that stay.  
The Shiverers round Farmers' doors –  
For whose reluctant Crumb –

We stipulate – till pitying Snows  
Persuade our Feathers Home.

c. 1862

1945

336

The face I carry with me – last –  
When I go out of Time –  
To take my Rank – by – in the West –  
That face – will just be thine –

I'll hand it to the Angel –  
That – Sir – was my Degree –  
In Kingdoms – you have heard the Raised –  
Refer to – possibly.

He'll take it – scan it – step aside –  
Return – with such a crown  
As Gabriel – never capered at –  
And beg me put it on –

And then – he'll turn me round and round –  
To an admiring sky –  
As one that bore her Master's name –  
Sufficient Royalty!

c. 1862

1945

337

I know a place where Summer strives  
With such a practised Frost –  
She – each year – leads her Daisies back –  
Recording briefly – “Lost” –

But when the South Wind stirs the Pools  
And struggles in the lanes –  
Her Heart misgives Her, for Her Vow –  
And she pours soft Refrains

Into the lap of Adamant –  
And spices – and the Dew –

[ 159 ]

That stiffens quietly to Quartz –  
Upon her Amber Shoe –

c. 1862

1891

338

I know that He exists  
Somewhere – in Silence –  
He has hid his rare life  
From our gross eyes.

'Tis an instant's play.  
'Tis a fond Ambush –  
Just to make Bliss  
Earn her own surprise!

But – should the play  
Prove piercing earnest –  
Should the glee – glaze –  
In Death's – stiff – stare –

Would not the fun  
Look too expensive!  
Would not the jest –  
Have crawled too far!

c. 1862

1891

339

I tend my flowers for thee –  
Bright Absentee!  
My Fuchsia's Coral Seams  
Rip – while the Sower – dreams –

Geraniums – tint – and spot –  
Low Daisies – dot –  
My Cactus – splits her Beard  
To show her throat –

Carnations – tip their spice –  
And Bees – pick up –  
A Hyacinth – I hid –

[ 160 ]

Puts out a Ruffled Head –  
And odors fall  
From flasks – so small –  
You marvel how they held –

Globe Roses – break their satin flake –  
Upon my Garden floor –  
Yet – thou – not there –  
I had as lief they bore  
No Crimson – more –

Thy flower – be gay –  
Her Lord – away!  
It ill becometh me –  
I'll dwell in Calyx – Gray –  
How modestly – always –  
Thy Daisy –  
Draped for thee!

c. 1862

1929

34°

Is Bliss then, such Abyss,  
I must not put my foot amiss  
For fear I spoil my shoe?

I'd rather suit my foot  
Than save my Boot –  
For yet to buy another Pair  
Is possible,  
At any store –

But Bliss, is sold just once.  
The Patent lost  
None buy it any more –  
Say, Foot, decide the point –  
The Lady cross, or not?  
Verdict for Boot!

c. 1862

1896

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –  
 The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –  
 The stiff Heart questions was it He, that bore,  
 And Yesterday, or Centuries before?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –  
 Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –  
 A Wooden way  
 Regardless grown,  
 A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –  
 Remembered, if outlived,  
 As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –  
 First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go –

c. 1862

1929

It will be Summer – eventually.  
 Ladies – with parasols –  
 Sauntering Gentlemen – with Canes –  
 And little Girls – with Dolls –

Will tint the pallid landscape –  
 As 'twere a bright Bouquet –  
 Tho' drifted deep, in Parian –  
 The Village lies – today –

The Lilacs – bending many a year –  
 Will sway with purple load –  
 The Bees – will not despise the tune –  
 Their Forefathers – have hummed –

The Wild Rose – redden in the Bog –  
 The Aster – on the Hill  
 Her everlasting fashion – set –  
 And Covenant Gentians – frill –

Till Summer folds her miracle –  
 As Women – do – their Gown –

Or Priests – adjust the Symbols –  
When Sacrament – is done –

c. 1862

1929

343

My Reward for Being, was This.  
My premium – My Bliss –  
An Admiralty, less –  
A Sceptre – penniless –  
And Realms – just Dross –  
  
When Thrones accost my Hands –  
With “Me, Miss, Me” –  
I’ll unroll Thee –  
Dominions dowerless – beside this Grace –  
Election – Vote –  
The Ballots of Eternity, will show just that

c. 1862

1945

344

’Twas the old – road – through pain –  
That unfrequented – one –  
With many a turn – and thorn –  
That stops – at Heaven –  
  
This – was the Town – she passed –  
There – where she – rested – last –  
Then – stepped more fast –  
The little tracks – close prest –  
Then – not so swift –  
Slow – slow – as feet did weary – grow –  
Then – stopped – no other track!  
  
Wait! Look! Her little Book –  
The leaf – at love – turned back –  
Her very Hat –  
And this worn shoe just fits the track –  
Herself – though – fled!

[ 163 ]

Another bed – a short one –  
Women make – tonight –  
In Chambers bright –  
Too out of sight – though –  
For our hoarse Good Night –  
To touch her Head!

c. 1862

1929

345

Funny – to be a Century –  
And see the People – going by –  
I – should die of the Oddity –  
But then – I'm not so staid – as He –  
  
He keeps His Secrets safely – very –  
Were He to tell – extremely sorry  
This Bashful Globe of Ours would be –  
So dainty of Publicity –

c. 1862

1929

346

Not probable – The barest Chance –  
A smile too few – a word too much  
And far from Heaven as the Rest –  
The Soul so close on Paradise –  
  
What if the Bird from journey far –  
Confused by Sweets – as Mortals – are –  
Forget the secret of His wing  
And perish – but a Bough between –  
Oh, Groping feet –  
Oh Phantom Queen!

c. 1862

1935

347

When Night is almost done –  
And Sunrise grows so near

That we can touch the Spaces –  
It's time to smooth the Hair –  
And get the Dimples ready –  
And wonder we could care  
For that old – faded Midnight –  
That frightened – but an Hour –

c. 1862

1890

348

I dreaded that first Robin, so,  
But He is mastered, now,  
I'm some accustomed to Him grown,  
He hurts a little, though –

I thought if I could only live  
Till that first Shout got by –  
Not all Pianos in the Woods  
Had power to mangle me –

I dared not meet the Daffodils –  
For fear their Yellow Gown  
Would pierce me with a fashion  
So foreign to my own –

I wished the Grass would hurry –  
So – when 'twas time to see –  
He'd be too tall, the tallest one  
Could stretch – to look at me –

I could not bear the Bees should come,  
I wished they'd stay away  
In those dim countries where they go,  
What word had they, for me?

They're here, though; not a creature failed –  
No Blossom stayed away  
In gentle deference to me –  
The Queen of Calvary –

Each one salutes me, as he goes,  
And I, my childish Plumes,

[ 165 ]

Lift, in bereaved acknowledgment  
Of their unthinking Drums –

c. 1862

1891

349

I had the Glory – that will do –  
An Honor, Thought can turn her to  
When lesser Fames invite –  
With one long “Nay” –  
Bliss’ early shape  
Deforming – Dwindling – Gulging up –  
Time’s possibility.

c. 1862

1945

350

They leave us with the Infinite.  
But He – is not a man –  
His fingers are the size of fists –  
His fists, the size of men –  
  
And whom he foundeth, with his Arm  
As Himmaleh, shall stand –  
Gibraltar’s Everlasting Shoe  
Poised lightly on his Hand,  
  
So trust him, Comrade –  
You for you, and I, for you and me  
Eternity is ample,  
And quick enough, if true.

c. 1862

1945

351

I felt my life with both my hands  
To see if it was there –  
I held my spirit to the Glass,  
To prove it possibler –

I turned my Being round and round  
And paused at every pound  
To ask the Owner's name –  
For doubt, that I should know the Sound –

I judged my features – jarred my hair –  
I pushed my dimples by, and waited –  
If they – twinkled back –  
Conviction might, of me –

I told myself, "Take Courage, Friend –  
That – was a former time –  
But we might learn to like the Heaven,  
As well as our Old Home!"

c. 1862

1945

352

Perhaps I asked too large –  
I take – no less than skies –  
For Earths, grow thick as  
Berries, in my native town –

My Basket holds – just – Firmaments –  
Those – dangle easy – on my arm,  
But smaller bundles – Cram.

c. 1862

1945

353

A happy lip – breaks sudden –  
It doesn't state you how  
It contemplated – smiling –  
Just consummated – now –  
But this one, wears its merriment  
So patient – like a pain –  
Fresh gilded – to elude the eyes  
Unqualified, to scan –

c. 1862

1955

From Cocoon forth a Butterfly  
 As Lady from her Door  
 Emerged – a Summer Afternoon –  
 Repairing Everywhere –

Without Design – that I could trace  
 Except to stray abroad  
 On Miscellaneous Enterprise  
 The Clovers – understood –

Her pretty Parasol be seen  
 Contracting in a Field  
 Where Men made Hay –  
 Then struggling hard  
 With an opposing Cloud –

Where Parties – Phantom as Herself –  
 To Nowhere – seemed to go  
 In purposeless Circumference –  
 As 'twere a Tropic Show –

And notwithstanding Bee – that worked –  
 And Flower – that zealous blew –  
 This Audience of Idleness  
 Disdained them, from the Sky –

Till Sundown crept – a steady Tide –  
 And Men that made the Hay –  
 And Afternoon – and Butterfly –  
 Extinguished – in the Sea –

c. 1862

1891

'Tis Opposites – entice –  
 Deformed Men – ponder Grace –  
 Bright fires – the Blanketless –  
 The Lost – Day's face –

The Blind – esteem it be  
 Enough Estate – to see –

The Captive – strangles new –  
For deeming – Beggars – play –  
To lack – enamor Thee –  
Tho' the Divinity –  
Be only  
Me –

c. 1862

1929

356

The Day that I was crowned  
Was like the other Days –  
Until the Coronation came –  
And then – 'twas Otherwise –

As Carbon in the Coal  
And Carbon in the Gem  
Are One – and yet the former  
Were dull for Diadem –

I rose, and all was plain –  
But when the Day declined  
Myself and It, in Majesty  
Were equally – adorned –

The Grace that I – was chose –  
To Me – surpassed the Crown  
That was the Witness for the Grace –  
'Twas even that 'twas Mine –

c. 1862

1935

357

God is a distant – stately Lover –  
Woos, as He states us – by His Son –  
Verily, a Vicarious Courtship –  
“Miles”, and “Priscilla”, were such an One –

But, lest the Soul – like fair “Priscilla”  
Choose the Envoy – and spurn the Groom –

Vouches, with hyperbolic archness –  
“Miles”, and “John Alden” were Synonym –

c. 1862

1891

358

If any sink, assure that this, now standing –  
Failed like Themselves – and conscious that it rose –  
Grew by the Fact, and not the Understanding  
How Weakness passed – or Force – arose –

Tell that the Worst, is easy in a Moment –  
Dread, but the Whizzing, before the Ball –  
When the Ball enters, enters Silence –  
Dying – annuls the power to kill.

c. 1862

1935

359

I gained it so –  
By Climbing slow –  
By Catching at the Twigs that grow  
Between the Bliss – and me –  
It hung so high  
As well the Sky  
Attempt by Strategy –

I said I gained it –  
This – was all –  
Look, how I clutch it  
Lest it fall –  
And I a Pauper go –  
Unfitted by an instant's Grace  
For the Contented – Beggar's face  
I wore – an hour ago –

c. 1862

1891

360

Death sets a Thing significant  
The Eye had hurried by

[ 170 ]

Except a perished Creature  
Entreat us tenderly

To ponder little Workmanships  
In Crayon, or in Wool,  
With "This was last Her fingers did" –  
Industrious until –

The Thimble weighed too heavy –  
The stitches stopped – themselves –  
And then 'twas put among the Dust  
Upon the Closet shelves –

A Book I have – a friend gave –  
Whose Pencil – here and there –  
Had notched the place that pleased Him –  
At Rest – His fingers are –

Now – when I read – I read not –  
For interrupting Tears –  
Obliterate the Etchings  
Too Costly for Repairs.

c. 1862

1891

361

What I can do – I will –  
Though it be little as a Daffodil –  
That I cannot – must be  
Unknown to possibility –

c. 1862

1929

362

It struck me – every Day –  
The Lightning was as new  
As if the Cloud that instant slit  
And let the Fire through –

It burned Me – in the Night –  
It Blistered to My Dream –

[ 171 ]

It sickened fresh upon my sight –  
With every Morn that came –

I thought that Storm – was brief –  
The Maddest – quickest by –  
But Nature lost the Date of This –  
And left it in the Sky –

c. 1862

1896

363

I went to thank Her –  
But She Slept –  
Her Bed – a funneled Stone –  
With Nosegays at the Head and Foot –  
That Travellers – had thrown –

Who went to thank Her –  
But She Slept –  
'Twas Short – to cross the Sea –  
To look upon Her like – alive –  
But turning back – 'twas slow –

c. 1862

1890

364

The Morning after Woe –  
'Tis frequently the Way –  
Surpasses all that rose before –  
For utter Jubilee –

As Nature did not care –  
And piled her Blossoms on –  
And further to parade a Joy  
Her Victim stared upon –

The Birds declaim their Tunes –  
Pronouncing every word  
Like Hammers – Did they know they fell  
Like Litanies of Lead –

On here and there – a creature –  
They'd modify the Glee  
To fit some Crucifical Clef –  
Some Key of Calvary –

c. 1862

1935

365

Dare you see a Soul *at the White Heat*?  
Then crouch within the door –  
Red – is the Fire's common tint –  
But when the vivid Ore  
Has vanquished Flame's conditions,  
It quivers from the Forge  
Without a color, but the light  
Of unanointed Blaze.  
Least Village has its Blacksmith  
Whose Anvil's even ring  
Stands symbol for the finer Forge  
That soundless tugs – within –  
Refining these impatient Ores  
With Hammer, and with Blaze  
Until the Designated Light  
Repudiate the Forge –

c. 1862

1891

366

Although I put away his life –  
An Ornament too grand  
For Forehead low as mine, to wear,  
This might have been the Hand  
  
That sowed the flower, he preferred –  
Or smoothed a homely pain,  
Or pushed the pebble from his path –  
Or played his chosen tune –  
  
On Lute the least – the latest –  
But just his Ear could know

[ 173 ]

That whatsoever delighted it,  
I never would let go –

The foot to bear his errand –  
A little Boot I know –  
Would leap abroad like Antelope –  
With just the grant to do –

His weariest Commandment –  
A sweeter to obey,  
Than “Hide and Seek” –  
Or skip to Flutes –  
Or All Day, chase the Bee –

Your Servant, Sir, will weary –  
The Surgeon, will not come –  
The World, will have its own – to do –  
The Dust, will vex your Fame –

The Cold will force your tightest door  
Some February Day,  
But say my apron bring the sticks  
To make your Cottage gay –

That I may take that promise  
To Paradise, with me –  
To teach the Angels, avarice,  
You, Sir, taught first – to me.

c 1862

1929

367

Over and over, like a Tune –  
The Recollection plays –  
Drums off the Phantom Battlements  
Cornets of Paradise –

Snatches, from Baptized Generations –  
Cadences too grand  
But for the Justified Processions  
At the Lord's Right hand.

c 1862

1929

How sick – to wait – in any place – but thine –  
 I knew last night – when someone tried to twine –  
 Thinking – perhaps – that I looked tired – or alone –  
 Or breaking – almost – with unspoken pain –

And I turned – ducal –  
*That* right – was thine –  
*One port* – suffices – for a Brig – like *mine* –

Ours be the tossing – wild though the sea –  
 Rather than a Mooring – unshared by thee  
 Ours be the Cargo – *unladen* – *here* –  
 Rather than the “*spicy isles* –”  
 And thou – not there –

c. 1862

1945

She lay as if at play  
 Her life had leaped away –  
 Intending to return –  
 But not so soon –

Her merry Arms, half dropt –  
 As if for lull of sport –  
 An instant had forgot –  
 The Trick to start –

Her dancing Eyes – ajar –  
 As if their Owner were  
 Still sparkling through  
 For fun – at you –

Her Morning at the door –  
 Devising, I am sure –  
 To force her sleep –  
 So light – so deep –

c. 1862

1935

Heaven is so far of the Mind  
 That were the Mind dissolved –  
 The Site – of it – by Architect  
 Could not again be proved –

'Tis vast – as our Capacity –  
 As fair – as our idea –  
 To Him of adequate desire  
 No further 'tis, than Here –

c. 1862

1929

A precious – mouldering pleasure – 'tis –  
 To meet an Antique Book –  
 In just the Dress his Century wore –  
 A privilege – I think –

His venerable Hand to take –  
 And warming in our own –  
 A passage back – or two – to make –  
 To Times when he – was young –

His quaint opinions – to inspect –  
 His thought to ascertain  
 On Themes concern our mutual mind –  
 The Literature of Man –

What interested Scholars – most –  
 What Competitions ran –  
 When Plato – was a Certainty –  
 And Sophocles – a Man –

When Sappho – was a living Girl –  
 And Beatrice wore  
 The Gown that Dante – deified –  
 Facts Centuries before

He traverses – familiar –  
 As One should come to Town –

And tell you all your Dreams – were true –  
He lived – where Dreams were born –

His presence is Enchantment –  
You beg him not to go –  
Old Volumes shake their Vellum Heads  
And tantalize – just so –

c. 1862

1890

372

I know lives, I could miss  
Without a Misery –  
Others – whose instant's wanting –  
Would be Eternity –

The last – a scanty Number –  
'T would scarcely fill a Two –  
The first – a Gnat's Horizon  
Could easily outgrow –

c 1862

1929

373

I'm saying every day  
"If I should be a Queen, tomorrow" –  
I'd do this way –  
And so I deck, a little,

If it be, I wake a Bourbon,  
None on me, bend supercilious –  
With "This was she –  
Begged in the Market place –  
Yesterday."

Court is a stately place –  
I've heard men say –  
So I loop my apron, against the Majesty  
With bright Pins of Buttercup –  
That not too plain –  
Rank – overtake me –

And perch my Tongue  
On Twigs of singing – rather high –  
But this, might be my brief Term  
To qualify –

Put from my simple speech all plain word –  
Take other accents, as such I heard  
Though but for the Cricket – just,  
And but for the Bee –  
Not in all the Meadow –  
One accost me –

Better to be ready –  
Than did next morn  
Meet me in Aragon –  
My old Gown – on –

And the surprised Air  
Rustics – wear –  
Summoned – unexpectedly –  
To Exeter –

c. 1862

1935

374

I went to Heaven –  
’Twas a small Town –  
Lit – with a Ruby –  
Lathed – with Down –

Stiller – than the fields  
At the full Dew –  
Beautiful – as Pictures –  
No Man drew.  
People – like the Moth –  
Of Mechlin – frames –  
Duties – of Gossamer –  
And Eider – names –  
Almost – contented –  
I – could be –

[ 178 ]

'Mong such unique  
Society –

c. 1862

1891

375

The Angle of a Landscape –  
That every time I wake –  
Between my Curtain and the Wall  
Upon an ample Crack –

Like a Venetian – waiting –  
Accosts my open eye –  
Is just a Bough of Apples –  
Held slanting, in the Sky –

The Pattern of a Chimney –  
The Forehead of a Hill –  
Sometimes – a Vane's Forefinger –  
But that's – Occasional –

The Seasons – shift – my Picture –  
Upon my Emerald Bough,  
I wake – to find no – Emeralds –  
Then – Diamonds – which the Snow

From Polar Caskets – fetched me –  
The Chimney – and the Hill –  
And just the Steeple's finger –  
These – never stir at all –

c. 1862

1945

376

Of Course – I prayed –  
And did God Care?  
He cared as much as on the Air  
A Bird – had stamped her foot –  
And cried "Give Me" –  
My Reason – Life –  
I had not had – but for Yourself –

'Twere better Charity  
To leave me in the Atom's Tomb –  
Merry, and Nought, and gay, and numb –  
Than this smart Misery.

c. 1862

1929

377

To lose one's faith – surpass  
The loss of an Estate –  
Because Estates can be  
Replenished – faith cannot –

Inherited with Life –  
Belief – but once – can be –  
Annihilate a single clause –  
And Being's – Beggary –

c. 1862

1896

378

I saw no Way – The Heavens were stitched –  
I felt the Columns close –  
The Earth reversed her Hemispheres –  
I touched the Universe –

And back it slid – and I alone –  
A Speck upon a Ball –  
Went out upon Circumference –  
Beyond the Dip of Bell –

c. 1862

1935

379

Rehearsal to Ourselves  
Of a Withdrawn Delight –  
Affords a Bliss like Murder –  
Omnipotent – Acute –

We will not drop the Dirk –  
Because We love the Wound

The Dirk Commemorate – Itself  
Remind Us that we died.

1862

1929

380

There is a flower that Bees prefer –  
And Butterflies – desire –  
To gain the Purple Democrat  
The Humming Bird – aspire –

And Whatsoever Insect pass –  
A Honey bear away  
Proportioned to his several dearth  
And her – capacity –

Her face be rounder than the Moon  
And ruddier than the Gown  
Of Orchis in the Pasture –  
Or Rhododendron – worn –

She doth not wait for June –  
Before the World be Green –  
Her sturdy little Countenance  
Against the Wind – be seen –

Contending with the Grass –  
Near Kinsman to Herself –  
For Privilege of Sod and Sun –  
Sweet Litigants for Life –

And when the Hills be full –  
And newer fashions blow –  
Doth not retract a single spice  
For pang of jealousy –

Her Public – be the Noon –  
Her Providence – the Sun –  
Her Progress – by the Bee – proclaimed –  
In sovereign – Swerveless Tune –

The Bravest – of the Host –  
Surrendering – the last –

[ 181 ]

Nor even of Defeat – aware –  
When cancelled by the Frost –

c 1862

1890

381

A Secret told –  
Ceases to be a Secret – then –  
A Secret – kept –  
That – can appal but One –  
Better of it – continual be afraid –  
Than it –  
And Whom you told it to – beside –

c 1862

1929

382

For Death – or rather  
For the Things 'twould buy –  
This – put away  
Life's Opportunity –  
The Things that Death will buy  
Are Room –  
Escape from Circumstances –  
And a Name –  
With Gifts of Life  
How Death's Gifts may compare –  
We know not –  
For the Rates – lie Here –

c. 1862

1914

383

Exhilaration – is within –  
There can no Outer Wine  
So royally intoxicate  
As that diviner Brand

[ 182 ]

The Soul achieves – Herself –  
To drink – or set away  
For Visitor – Or Sacrament –  
'Tis not of Holiday

To stimulate a Man  
Who hath the Ample Rhine  
Within his Closet – Best you can  
Exhale in offering.

c. 1862

1935

384

No Rack can torture me –  
My Soul – at Liberty –  
Behind this mortal Bone  
There knits a bolder One –

You cannot prick with saw –  
Nor pierce with Scimitar –  
Two Bodies – therefore be –  
Bind One – The Other fly –

The Eagle of his Nest  
No easier divest –  
And gain the Sky  
Than mayest Thou –

Except Thyself may be  
Thine Enemy –  
Captivity is Consciousness –  
So's Liberty.

c. 1862

1890

385

Smiling back from Coronation  
May be Luxury –  
On the Heads that started with us –  
Being's Peasantry –

[ 183 ]

Recognizing in Procession  
Ones We former knew –  
When Ourselves were also dusty –  
Centuries ago –

Had the Triumph no Conviction  
Of how many be –  
Stimulated – by the Contrast –  
Unto Misery –

c. 1862

1945

386

Answer July –  
Where is the Bee –  
Where is the Blush –  
Where is the Hay?

Ah, said July –  
Where is the Seed –  
Where is the Bud –  
Where is the May –  
Answer Thee – Me –

Nay – said the May –  
Show me the Snow –  
Show me the Bells –  
Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay –  
Where be the Maize –  
Where be the Haze –  
Where be the Bur?  
Here – said the Year –

c. 1862

1935

387

The Sweetest Heresy received  
That Man and Woman know –

[ 184 ]

Each Other's Convert –  
Though the Faith accommodate but Two –  
The Churches are so frequent –  
The Ritual – so small –  
The Grace so unavoidable –  
To fail – is Infidel –

c. 1862

1929

388

Take Your Heaven further on –  
This – to Heaven divine Has gone –  
Had You earlier blundered in  
Possibly, e'en You had seen  
An Eternity – put on –  
Now – to ring a Door beyond  
Is the utmost of Your Hand –  
To the Skies – apologize –  
Nearer to Your Courtesies  
Than this Sufferer polite –  
Dressed to meet You –  
See – in White!

c 1862

1935

389

There's been a Death, in the Opposite House,  
As lately as Today –  
I know it, by the numb look  
Such Houses have – always –  
The Neighbors rustle in and out –  
The Doctor – drives away –  
A Window opens like a Pod –  
Abrupt – mechanically –  
Somebody flings a Mattress out –  
The Children hurry by –  
They wonder if it died – on that –  
I used to – when a Boy –

[ 185 ]

The Minister – goes stiffly in –  
As if the House were His –  
And He owned all the Mourners – now –  
And little Boys – besides –

And then the Milliner – and the Man  
Of the Appalling Trade –  
To take the measure of the House –

There'll be that Dark Parade –  
Of Tassels – and of Coaches – soon –  
It's easy as a Sign –  
The Intuition of the News –  
In just a Country Town –

c. 1862

1896

390

It's coming – the postponeless Creature –  
It gains the Block – and now – it gains the Door –  
Chooses its latch, from all the other fastenings –  
Enters – with a "You know Me – Sir"?

Simple Salute – and certain Recognition –  
Bold – were it Enemy – Brief – were it friend –  
Dresses each House in Crape, and Icicle –  
And carries one – out of it – to God –

c. 1862

1929

391

A Visitor in Marl –  
Who influences Flowers –  
Till they are orderly as Busts –  
And Elegant – as Glass –

Who visits in the Night –  
And just before the Sun –  
Concludes his glistening interview –  
Caresses – and is gone –

[ 186 ]

But whom his fingers touched –  
And where his feet have run –  
And whatsoever Mouth he kissed –  
Is as it had not been –

c. 1862

1935

392

Through the Dark Sod – as Education –  
The Lily passes sure –  
Feels her white foot – no trepidation –  
Her faith – no fear –

Afterward – in the Meadow –  
Swinging her Beryl Bell –  
The Mold-life – all forgotten – now –  
In Ecstasy – and Dell –

c. 1862

1929

393

Did Our Best Moment last –  
'T would supersede the Heaven –  
A few – and they by Risk – procure –  
So this Sort – are not given –

Except as stimulants – in  
Cases of Despair –  
Or Stupor – The Reserve –  
These Heavenly Moments are –

A Grant of the Divine –  
That Certain as it Comes –  
Withdraws – and leaves the dazzled Soul  
In her unfurnished Rooms

c. 1862

1935

394

'T was Love – not me –  
Oh punish – pray –

[ 187 ]

The Real one died for Thee –  
Just Him – not me –

Such Guilt – to love Thee – most!  
Doom it beyond the Rest –  
Forgive it – last –  
'Twas base as Jesus – most!

Let Justice not mistake –  
We Two – looked so alike –  
Which was the Guilty Sake –  
'Twas Love's – Now Strike!

c. 1862

1945

395

Reverse cannot befall  
That fine Prosperity  
Whose Sources are interior –  
As soon – Adversity

A Diamond – overtake  
In far – Bolivian Ground –  
Misfortune hath no implement  
Could mar it – if it found –

c. 1862

1914

396

There is a Languor of the Life  
More imminent than Pain –  
'Tis Pain's Successor – When the Soul  
Has suffered all it can –

A Drowsiness – diffuses –  
A Dimness like a Fog  
Envelops Consciousness –  
As Mists – obliterate a Crag.

The Surgeon – does not blanch – at pain –  
His Habit – is severe –

But tell him that it ceased to feel –  
The Creature lying there –

And he will tell you – skill is late –  
A Mightier than He –  
Has ministered before Him –  
There's no Vitality.

c. 1862

1929

397

When Diamonds are a Legend,  
And Diadems – a Tale –  
I Brooch and Earrings for Myself,  
Do sow, and Raise for sale –

And tho' I'm scarce accounted,  
My Art, a Summer Day – had Patrons –  
Once – it was a Queen –  
And once – a Butterfly –

c 1862

1935

398

I had not minded – Walls –  
Were Universe – one Rock –  
And far I heard his silver Call  
The other side the Block –

I'd tunnel – till my Groove  
Pushed sudden thro' to his –  
Then my face take her Recompense –  
The looking in his Eyes –

But 'tis a single Hair –  
A filament – a law –  
A Cobweb – wove in Adamant –  
A Battlement – of Straw –

A limit like the Veil  
Unto the Lady's face –

But every Mesh -- a Citadel --  
And Dragons -- in the Crease --

c. 1862

1929

399

A House upon the Height --  
That Wagon never reached --  
No Dead, were ever carried down --  
No Peddler's Cart -- approached --  
  
Whose Chimney never smoked --  
Whose Windows -- Night and Morn --  
Caught Sunrise first -- and Sunset -- last --  
Then -- held an Empty Pane --  
  
Whose fate -- Conjecture knew --  
No other neighbor -- did --  
And what it was -- we never hisped --  
Because He -- never told --

c. 1862

1945

400

A Tongue -- to tell Him I am true!  
Its fee -- to be of Gold --  
Had Nature -- in Her monstrous House  
A single Ragged Child --  
  
To earn a Mine -- would run  
That Interdicted Way,  
And tell Him -- Charge thee speak it plain --  
That so far -- Truth is True?  
  
And answer What I do --  
Beginning with the Day  
That Night -- begun --  
Nay -- Midnight -- 'twas --  
Since Midnight -- happened -- say --  
  
If once more -- Pardon -- Boy --  
The Magnitude thou may

[ 190 ]

Enlarge my Message – If too vast  
Another Lad – help thee –

Thy Pay – in Diamonds – be –  
And His – in solid Gold –  
Say Rubies – if He hesitate –  
My Message – must be told –

Say – last I said – was This –  
That when the Hills – come down –  
And hold no higher than the Plain –  
My Bond – have just begun –

And when the Heavens – disband –  
And Deity conclude –  
Then – look for me. Be sure you say –  
Least Figure – on the Road –

c. 1862

1945

401

What Soft – Cherubic Creatures –  
These Gentlewomen are –  
One would as soon assault a Plush –  
Or violate a Star –

Such Dimity Convictions –  
A Horror so refined  
Of freckled Human Nature –  
Of Deity – ashamed –

It's such a common – Glory –  
A Fisherman's – Degree –  
Redemption – Brittle Lady –  
Be so – ashamed of Thee –

c. 1862

1896

402

I pay – in Satin Cash –  
You did not state – your price –

[ 191 ]

A Petal, for a Paragraph  
Is near as I can guess –

c. 1862

1929

403

The Winters are so short –  
I'm hardly justified  
In sending all the Birds away –  
And moving into Pod –  
Myself – for scarcely settled –  
The Phoebes have begun –  
And then – it's time to strike my Tent –  
And open House – again –  
It's mostly, interruptions –  
My Summer – is despoiled –  
Because there was a Winter – once –  
And all the Cattle – starved' –  
And so there was a Deluge –  
And swept the World away –  
But Ararat's a Legend – now –  
And no one credits Noah –

c. 1862

1935

404

How many Flowers fail in Wood –  
Or perish from the Hill –  
Without the privilege to know  
That they are Beautiful –  
How many cast a nameless Pod  
Upon the nearest Breeze –  
Unconscious of the Scarlet Freight –  
It bear to Other Eyes –

c. 1862

1929

It might be lonelier  
 Without the Loneliness –  
 I'm so accustomed to my Fate –  
 Perhaps the Other – Peace –

Would interrupt the Dark –  
 And crowd the little Room –  
 Too scant – by Cubits – to contain  
 The Sacrament – of Him –

I am not used to Hope –  
 It might intrude upon –  
 Its sweet parade – blaspheme the place –  
 Ordained to Suffering –

It might be easier  
 To fail – with Land in Sight –  
 Than gain – My Blue Peninsula –  
 To perish – of Delight –

c. 1862

1935

Some – Work for Immortality –  
 The Chief part, for Time –  
 He – Compensates – immediately –  
 The former – Checks – on Fame –

Slow Gold – but Everlasting –  
 The Bullion of Today –  
 Contrasted with the Currency  
 Of Immortality –

A Beggar – Here and There –  
 Is gifted to discern  
 Beyond the Broker's insight –  
 One's – Money – One's – the Mine –

c. 1862

1929

If What we could – were what we would –  
 Criterion – be small –  
 It is the Ultimate of Talk –  
 The Impotence to Tell –

c. 1862

1914

Unit, like Death, for Whom?  
 True, like the Tomb,  
 Who tells no secret  
 Told to Him –  
 The Grave is strict –  
 Tickets admit  
 Just two – the Bearer –  
 And the Borne –  
 And seat – just One –  
 The Living – tell –  
 The Dying – but a Syllable –  
 The Coy Dead – None –  
 No Chatter – here – no tea –  
 So Babblers, and Bohea – stay there –  
 But Gravity – and Expectation – and Fear –  
 A tremor just, that All's not sure.

c. 1862

1947

They dropped like Flakes –  
 They dropped like Stars –  
 Like Petals from a Rose –  
 When suddenly across the June  
 A wind with fingers – goes –  
 They perished in the Seamless Grass –  
 No eye could find the place –

But God can summon every face  
On his Repealless – List.

c. 1862

1891

410

The first Day's Night had come –  
And grateful that a thing  
So terrible – had been endured –  
I told my Soul to sing –

She said her Strings were snapt –  
Her Bow – to Atoms blown –  
And so to mend her – gave me work  
Until another Morn –

And then – a Day as huge  
As Yesterdays in pairs,  
Unrolled its horror in my face –  
Until it blocked my eyes –

My Brain – begun to laugh –  
I mumbled – like a fool –  
And tho' 'tis Years ago – that Day –  
My Brain keeps giggling – still.

And Something's odd – within –  
That person that I was –  
And this One – do not feel the same –  
Could it be Madness – this?

c 1862

1947

411

The Color of the Grave is Green –  
The Outer Grave – I mean –  
You would not know it from the Field –  
Except it own a Stone –

To help the fond – to find it –  
Too infinite asleep

[ 195 ]

To stop and tell them where it is –  
But just a Daisy – deep –

The Color of the Grave is white –  
The outer Grave – I mean –  
You would not know it from the Drifts –  
In Winter – till the Sun –

Has furrowed out the Aisles –  
Then – higher than the Land  
The little Dwelling Houses rise  
Where each – has left a friend –

The Color of the Grave within –  
The Duplicate – I mean –  
Not all the Snows could make it white –  
Not all the Summers – Green –

You've seen the Color – maybe –  
Upon a Bonnet bound –  
When that you met it with before –  
The Ferret – cannot find –

c 1862

1935

412

I read my sentence – steadily –  
Reviewed it with my eyes,  
To see that I made no mistake  
In its extremest clause –  
The Date, and manner, of the shame –  
And then the Pious Form  
That “God have mercy” on the Soul  
The Jury voted Him –  
I made my soul familiar – with her extremity –  
That at the last, it should not be a novel Agony –  
But she, and Death, acquainted –  
Meet tranquilly, as friends –  
Salute, and pass, without a Hint –  
And there, the Matter ends –

c 1862

1891

I never felt at Home – Below –  
 And in the Handsome Skies  
 I shall not feel at Home – I know –  
 I don't like Paradise –

Because it's Sunday – all the time –  
 And Recess – never comes –  
 And Eden'll be so lonesome  
 Bright Wednesday Afternoons –

If God could make a visit –  
 Or ever took a Nap –  
 So not to see us – but they say  
 Himself – a Telescope

Perennial beholds us –  
 Myself would run away  
 From Him – and Holy Ghost – and All –  
 But there's the "Judgment Day"<sup>1</sup>

1929

'Twas like a Maelstrom, with a notch,  
 That nearer, every Day,  
 Kept narrowing its boiling Wheel  
 Until the Agony

Toyed coolly with the final inch  
 Of your delirious Hem –  
 And you dropt, lost,  
 When something broke –  
 And let you from a Dream –

As if a Goblin with a Gauge –  
 Kept measuring the Hours –  
 Until you felt your Second  
 Weigh, helpless, in his Paws –

And not a Sinew – stirred – could help,  
 And sense was setting numb –

When God – remembered – and the Fiend  
Let go, then, Overcome –

As if your Sentence stood – pronounced –  
And you were frozen led  
From Dungeon's luxury of Doubt  
To Gibbets, and the Dead –

And when the Film had stitched your eyes  
A Creature gasped "Reprieve"<sup>1</sup>  
Which Anguish was the utterest – then –  
To perish, or to live?

c 1862

1945

415

Sunset at Night – is natural –  
But Sunset on the Dawn  
Reverses Nature – Master –  
So Midnight's – due – at Noon.

Eclipses be – predicted –  
And Science bows them in –  
But do one face us suddenly –  
Jehovah's Watch – is wrong.

c 1862

1929

416

A Murrmur in the Trees – to note –  
Not loud enough – for Wind –  
A Star – not far enough to seek –  
Nor near enough – to find –

A long – long Yellow – on the Lawn –  
A Hubbub – as of feet –  
Not audible – as Ours – to Us –  
But dapperer – More Sweet –

A Hurrying Home of little Men  
To Houses unperceived –

[ 198 ]

All this – and more – if I should tell –  
Would never be believed –

Of Robins in the Trundle bed  
How many I espy  
Whose Nightgowns could not hide the Wings –  
Although I heard them try –

But then I promised ne'er to tell –  
How could I break My Word?  
So go your Way – and I'll go Mine –  
No fear you'll miss the Road

c. 1862

1896

417

It is dead – Find it –  
Out of sound – Out of sight –  
“Happy”? Which is wiser –  
You, or the Wind?  
“Conscious”? Won't you ask that –  
Of the low Ground?

“Homesick”? Many met it –  
Even through them – This  
Cannot testify –  
Themselves – as dumb –

c. 1862

1929

418

Not in this World to see his face –  
Sounds long – until I read the place  
Where this – is said to be  
But just the Primer – to a life –  
Unopened – rare – Upon the Shelf –  
Clasped yet – to Him – and me –

And yet – My Primer suits me so  
I would not choose – a Book to know  
Than that – be sweeter wise –

Might some one else – so learned – be –  
And leave me – just my A – B – C –  
Himself – could have the Skies –

c. 1862

1890

419

We grow accustomed to the Dark –  
When Light is put away –  
As when the Neighbor holds the Lamp  
To witness her Goodbye –

A Moment – We uncertain step  
For newness of the night –  
Then – fit our Vision to the Dark –  
And meet the Road – erect –

And so of larger – Darknesses –  
Those Evenings of the Brain –  
When not a Moon disclose a sign –  
Or Star – come out – within –

The Bravest – grope a little –  
And sometimes hit a Tree  
Directly in the Forehead –  
But as they learn to see –

Either the Darkness alters –  
Or something in the sight  
Adjusts itself to Midnight –  
And Life steps almost straight.

c. 1862

1935

420

You'll know it – as you know 'tis Noon –  
By Glory –  
As you do the Sun –  
By Glory –  
As you will in Heaven –  
Know God the Father – and the Son.

[ 200 ]

By intuition, Mightiest Things  
Assert themselves – and not by terms –  
“I’m Midnight” – need the Midnight say –  
“I’m Sunrise” – Need the Majesty?

Omnipotence – had not a Tongue –  
His lisp – is Lightning – and the Sun –  
His Conversation – with the Sea –  
“How shall you know”?  
Consult your Eye!

c. 1862

1935

421

A Charm invests a face  
Imperfectly beheld –  
The Lady dare not lift her Veil  
For fear it be dispelled –

But peers beyond her mesh –  
And wishes – and denies –  
Lest Interview – annul a want  
That Image – satisfies –

c 1862

1891

422

More Life – went out – when He went  
Than Ordinary Breath –  
Lit with a finer Phosphor –  
Requiring in the Quench –

A Power of Renowned Cold,  
The Climate of the Grave  
A Temperature just adequate  
So Anthracite, to live –

For some – an Ampler Zero –  
A Frost more needle keen  
Is necessary, to reduce  
The Ethiop within.

[ 201 ]

Others – extinguish easier –  
A Gnat's minutest Fan  
Sufficient to obliterate  
A Tract of Citizen –

Whose Peat lift – amply vivid –  
Ignores the solemn News  
That Popocatapel exists –  
Or Etna's Scarlets, Choose –

c 1862

1935

423

The Months have ends – the Years – a knot –  
No Power can untie  
To stretch a little further  
A Skein of Misery –

The Earth lays back these tired lives  
In her mysterious Drawers –  
Too tenderly, that any doubt  
An ultimate Repose –

The manner of the Children –  
Who weary of the Day –  
Themselves – the noisy Plaything  
They cannot put away –

c 1862

1935

424

Removed from Accident of Loss  
By Accident of Gain  
Befalling not my simple Days –  
Myself had just to earn –

Of Riches – as unconscious  
As is the Brown Malay  
Of Pearls in Eastern Waters,  
Marked His – What Holiday

Would stir his slow conception –  
Had he the power to dream  
That but the Dower's fraction –  
Awaited even – Him –

c. 1862

1935

425

Good Morning – Midnight –  
I'm coming Home –  
Day – got tired of Me –  
How could I – of Him?

Sunshine was a sweet place –  
I liked to stay –  
But Morn – didn't want me – now –  
So – Goodnight – Day!

I can look – can't I –  
When the East is Red?  
The Hills – have a way – then –  
That puts the Heart – abroad –

You – are not so fair – Midnight –  
I chose – Day –  
But – please take a little Girl –  
He turned away!

c. 1862

1929

426

It don't sound so terrible – quite – as it did –  
I run it over – “Dead”, Brain, “Dead.”  
Put it in Latin – left of my school –  
Seems it don't shriek so – under rule.

Turn it, a little – full in the face  
A Trouble looks bitterest –  
Shift it – just –  
Say “When Tomorrow comes this way –  
I shall have waded down one Day.”

[ 203 ]

I suppose it will interrupt me some  
Till I get accustomed – but then the Tomb  
Like other new Things – shows largest – then –  
And smaller, by Habit –

It's shrewder then  
Put the Thought in advance – a Year –  
How like “a fit” – then –  
Murder – wear!

c 1862

1945

427

I'll clutch – and clutch –  
Next – One – Might be the golden touch –  
Could take it –  
Diamonds – Wait –  
I'm diving – just a little late –  
But stars – go slow – for night –

I'll string you – in fine Necklace –  
Tiaras – make – of some –  
Wear you on Hem –  
Loop up a Countess – with you –  
Make – a Diadem – and mend my old One –  
Count – Hoard – then lose –  
And doubt that you are mine –  
To have the joy of feeling it – again –

I'll show you at the Court –  
Bear you – for Ornament  
Where Women breathe –  
That every sigh – may lift you  
Just as high – as I –

And – when I die –  
In meek array – display you –  
Still to show – how rich I go –  
Lest Skies impeach a wealth so wonderful –  
And banish me –

c. 1862

1945

Taking up the fair Ideal,  
 Just to cast her down  
 When a fracture – we discover –  
 Or a splintered Crown –  
 Makes the Heavens portable –  
 And the Gods – a lie –  
 Doubtless – “Adam” – scowled at Eden –  
 For *his* perjury!

Cherishing – our poor Ideal –  
 Till in purer dress –  
 We behold her – glorified –  
 Comforts – search – like this –  
 Till the broken creatures –  
 We adored – for whole –  
 Stains – all washed –  
 Transfigured – mended –  
 Meet us – with a smile –

1945

The Moon is distant from the Sea –  
 And yet, with Amber Hands –  
 She leads Him – docile as a Boy –  
 Along appointed Sands –

He never misses a Degree –  
 Obedient to Her Eye  
 He comes just so far – toward the Town –  
 Just so far – goes away –

Oh, Signor, Thine, the Amber Hand –  
 And mine – the distant Sea –  
 Obedient to the least command  
 Thine eye impose on me –

1891

It would never be Common – more – I said –  
 Difference – had begun –  
 Many a bitterness – had been –  
 But that old sort – was done –

Or – if it sometime – showed – as 'twill –  
 Upon the Downiest – Morn –  
 Such bliss – had I – for all the years –  
 'T would give an Easier – pain –

I'd so much joy – I told it – Red –  
 Upon my simple Cheek –  
 I felt it publish – in my Eye –  
 'T was needless – any speak –

I walked – as wings – my body bore –  
 The feet – I former used –  
 Unnecessary – now to me –  
 As boots – would be – to Birds –

I put my pleasure all abroad –  
 I dealt a word of Gold  
 To every Creature – that I met –  
 And Dowered – all the World –

When – suddenly – my Riches shrank –  
 A Goblin – drank my Dew –  
 My Palaces – dropped tenantless –  
 Myself – was beggared – too –

I clutched at sounds –  
 I groped at shapes –  
 I touched the tops of Films –  
 I felt the Wilderness roll back  
 Along my Golden lines –

The Sackcloth – hangs upon the nail –  
 The Frock I used to wear –  
 But where my moment of Brocade –  
 My – drop – of India?

Me – come! My dazzled face  
 In such a shining place!  
 Me – hear! My foreign Ear  
 The sounds of Welcome – there!

The Saints forget  
 Our bashful feet –

My Holiday, shall be  
 That They – remember me –  
 My Paradise – the fame  
 That They – pronounce my name –

c. 1862

1896

Do People moulder equally,  
 They bury, in the Grave?  
 I do believe a Species  
 As positively live

As I, who testify it  
 Deny that I – am dead –  
 And fill my Lungs, for Witness –  
 From Tanks – above my Head –

I say to you, said Jesus –  
 That there be standing here –  
 A Sort, that shall not taste of Death –  
 If Jesus was sincere –

I need no further Argue –  
 That statement of the Lord  
 Is not a controvertible –  
 He told me, Death was dead –

c. 1862

1945

Knows how to forget!  
 But could It teach it?

Easiest of Arts, they say  
 When one learn how  
  
 Dull Hearts have died  
 In the Acquisition  
 Sacrifice for Science  
 Is common, though, now –  
  
 I went to School  
 But was not wiser  
 Globe did not teach it  
 Nor Logarithm Show  
  
 “How to forget”<sup>1</sup>  
 Say – some – Philosopher!  
 Ah, to be erudite  
 Enough to know!  
  
 Is it in a Book?  
 So, I could buy it –  
 Is it like a Planet?  
 Telescopes would know –  
  
 If it be invention  
 It must have a Patent.  
 Rabbi of the Wise Book  
 Don’t you know?

c. 1865

1945

434

To love thee Year by Year –  
 May less appear  
 Than sacrifice, and cease –  
 However, dear,  
 Forever might be short, I thought to show –  
 And so I pieced it, with a flower, now.

c. 1862

1914

Much Madness is divinest Sense –  
 To a discerning Eye –  
 Much Sense – the starkest Madness –  
 'Tis the Majority  
 In this, as All, prevail –  
 Assent – and you are sane –  
 Demur – you're straightway dangerous –  
 And handled with a Chain –

c. 1862

1890

The Wind – tapped like a tired Man –  
 And like a Host – “Come in”  
 I boldly answered – entered then  
 My Residence within  
 A Rapid – footless Guest –  
 To offer whom a Chair  
 Were as impossible as hand  
 A Sofa to the Air –  
 No Bone had He to bind Him –  
 His Speech was like the Push  
 Of numerous Humming Birds at once  
 From a superior Bush –  
 His Countenance – a Billow –  
 His Fingers, as He passed  
 Let go a music – as of tunes  
 Blown tremulous in Glass –  
 He visited – still fitting –  
 Then like a timid Man  
 Again, He tapped – 'twas flurriedly –  
 And I became alone –

c. 1862

1891

Prayer is the little implement  
 Through which Men reach  
 Where Presence – is denied them.  
 They fling their Speech  
 By means of it – in God's Ear –  
 If then He hear –  
 This sums the Apparatus  
 Comprised in Prayer –

c. 1862

1891

Forget! The lady with the Amulet  
 Forget she wore it at her Heart  
 Because she breathed against  
 Was Treason twixt?

Deny! Did Rose her Bee –  
 For Privilege of Play  
 Or Wile of Butterfly  
 Or Opportunity – Her Lord away?

The lady with the Amulet – will fade –  
 The Bee – in Mausoleum laid –  
 Discard his Bride –  
 But longer than the little Rill –  
 That cooled the Forehead of the Hill –  
 While Other – went the Sea to fill –  
 And Other – went to turn the Mill –  
 I'll do thy Will –

c. 1862

1935

Undue Significance a starving man attaches  
 To Food –  
 Far off – He sighs – and therefore – Hopeless –  
 And therefore – Good –

Partaken – it relieves – indeed –  
But proves us  
That Spices fly  
In the Receipt – It was the Distance –  
Was Savory –

c. 1862

1891

440

'Tis customary as we part  
A trinket – to confer –  
It helps to stimulate the faith  
When Lovers be afar –

'Tis various – as the various taste –  
Clematis – journeying far –  
Presents me with a single Curl  
Of her Electric Hair –

c. 1862

1945

441

This is my letter to the World  
That never wrote to Me –  
The simple News that Nature told –  
With tender Majesty

Her Message is committed  
To Hands I cannot see –  
For love of Her – Sweet – countrymen –  
Judge tenderly – of Me

c. 1862

1890

442

God made a little Gentian –  
It tried – to be a Rose –  
And failed – and all the Summer laughed –  
But just before the Snows

There rose a Purple Creature –  
That ravished all the Hill –  
And Summer hid her Forehead –  
And Mockery – was still –

The Frosts were her condition –  
The Tyrian would not come  
Until the North – invoke it –  
Creator – Shall I – bloom?

c. 1862

1891

443

I tie my Hat – I crease my Shawl –  
Life's little duties do – precisely –  
As the very least  
Were infinite – to me –

I put new Blossoms in the Glass –  
And throw the old – away –  
I push a petal from my Gown  
That anchored there – I weigh  
The time 'twill be till six o'clock  
I have so much to do –  
And yet – Existence – some way back –  
Stopped – struck – my ticking – through –  
We cannot put Ourselves away  
As a completed Man  
Or Woman – When the Errand's done  
We came to Flesh – upon –  
There may be – Miles on Miles of Nought –  
Of Action – sicker far –  
To simulate – is stinging work –  
To cover what we are  
From Science – and from Surgery –  
Too Telescopic Eyes  
To bear on us unshaded –  
For their – sake – not for Ours –

'Twould start them –  
We – could tremble –  
But since we got a Bomb –  
And held it in our Bosom –  
Nay – Hold it – it is calm –  
Therefore – we do life's labor –  
Though life's Reward – be done –  
With scrupulous exactness –  
To hold our Senses – on –

c. 1862

1929

444

It feels a shame to be Alive –  
When Men so brave – are dead –  
One envies the Distinguished Dust –  
Permitted – such a Head –  
The Stone – that tells defending Whom  
This Spartan put away  
What little of Him we – possessed  
In Pawn for Liberty –  
The price is great – Sublimely paid –  
Do we deserve – a Thing –  
That lives – like Dollars – must be piled  
Before we may obtain?  
Are we that wait – sufficient worth –  
That such Enormous Pearl  
As life – dissolved be – for Us –  
In Battle's – horrid Bowl?  
It may be – a Renown to live –  
I think the Man who die –  
Those unsustained – Saviors –  
Present Divinity –

c. 1862

1929

'T was just this time, last year, I died.  
 I know I heard the Corn,  
 When I was carried by the Farms –  
 It had the Tassels on –

I thought how yellow it would look –  
 When Richard went to mill –  
 And then, I wanted to get out,  
 But something held my will.

I thought just how Red – Apples wedged  
 The Stubble's joints between –  
 And the Carts stooping round the fields  
 To take the Pumpkins in –

I wondered which would miss me, least,  
 And when Thanksgiving, came,  
 If Father'd multiply the plates –  
 To make an even Sum –

And would it blur the Christmas glee  
 My Stocking hang too high  
 For any Santa Claus to reach  
 The Altitude of me –

But this sort, grieved myself,  
 And so, I thought the other way,  
 How just this time, some perfect year –  
 Themselves, should come to me –

c. 1862

1896

I showed her Heights she never saw –  
 "Would'st Climb," I said?  
 She said – "Not so" –  
 "With *me* –" I said – With *me*?  
 I showed her Secrets – Morning's Nest –  
 The Rope the Nights were put across –  
 And *now* – "Would'st have me for a Guest?"

She could not find her Yes –  
And then, I brake my life – And Lo,  
A Light, for her, did solemn glow,  
The larger, as her face withdrew –  
And *could* she, further, “No”?

c. 1862

1914

447

Could – I do more – for Thee –  
Wert Thou a Bumble Bee –  
Since for the Queen, have I –  
Nought but Bouquet?

c. 1862

1929

448

This was a Poet – It is That  
Distills amazing sense  
From ordinary Meanings –  
And Attar so immense

From the familiar species  
That perished by the Door –  
We wonder it was not Ourselves  
Arrested it – before –

Of Pictures, the Discloser –  
The Poet – it is He –  
Entitles Us – by Contrast –  
To ceaseless Poverty –

Of Portion – so unconscious –  
The Robbing – could not harm –  
Himself – to Him – a Fortune –  
Exterior – to Time –

c. 1862

1929

I died for Beauty – but was scarce  
 Adjusted in the Tomb  
 When One who died for Truth, was lain  
 In an adjoining Room –

He questioned softly “Why I failed”?  
 “For Beauty”, I replied –  
 “And I – for Truth – Themselves are One –  
 We Brethren, are”, He said –

And so, as Kinsmen, met a Night –  
 We talked between the Rooms –  
 Until the Moss had reached our lips –  
 And covered up – our names –

c. 1862

1890

Dreams – are well – but Waking’s better,  
 If One wake at Morn –  
 If One wake at Midnight – better –  
 Dreaming – of the Dawn –

Sweeter – the Surmising Robins –  
 Never gladdened Tree –  
 Than a Solid Dawn – confronting –  
 Leading to no Day –

c. 1862

1935

The Outer – from the Inner  
 Derives its Magnitude –  
 ’Tis Duke, or Dwarf, according  
 As is the Central Mood –

The fine – unvarying Axis  
 That regulates the Wheel –  
 Though Spokes – spin – more conspicuous  
 And fling a dust – the while.

The Inner – paints the Outer –  
The Brush without the Hand –  
Its Picture publishes – precise –  
As is the inner Brand –

On fine – Arterial Canvas –  
A Cheek – perchance a Brow –  
The Star's whole Secret – in the Lake –  
Eyes were not meant to know.

c. 1862

1935

452

The Malay – took the Pearl –  
Not – I – the Earl –  
I – feared the Sea – too much  
Unsanctified – to touch –

Praying that I might be  
Worthy – the Destiny –  
The Swarthy fellow swam –  
And bore my Jewel – Home –

Home to the Hut! What lot  
Had I – the Jewel – got –  
Borne on a Dusky Breast –  
I had not deemed a Vest  
Of Amber – fit –

The Negro never knew  
I – wooed it – too –  
To gain, or be undone –  
Alike to Him – One –

c. 1862

1945

453

Love – thou art high –  
I cannot climb thee –  
But, were it Two –  
Who knows but we –

[ 217 ]

Taking turns – at the Chimborazo –  
Ducal – at last – stand up by thee –

Love – thou art deep –  
I cannot cross thee –  
But, were there Two  
Instead of One –  
Rower, and Yacht – some sovereign Summer –  
Who knows – but we'd reach the Sun?

Love – thou art Veiled –  
A few – behold thee –  
Smile – and alter – and prattle – and die –  
Bliss – were an Oddity – without thee –  
Nicknamed by God –  
Eternity –

c. 1862

1929

454

It was given to me by the Gods –  
When I was a little Girl –  
They give us Presents most – you know –  
When we are new – and small.  
I kept it in my Hand –  
I never put it down –  
I did not dare to eat – or sleep –  
For fear it would be gone –  
I heard such words as “Rich” –  
When hurrying to school –  
From lips at Corners of the Streets –  
And wrestled with a smile.  
Rich! 'Twas Myself – was rich –  
To take the name of Gold –  
And Gold to own – in solid Bars –  
The Difference – made me bold –

c. 1862

1945

Triumph – may be of several kinds –  
 There's Triumph in the Room  
 When that Old Emperor – Death –  
 By Faith – be overcome –

There's Triumph of the finer Mind  
 When Truth – affronted long –  
 Advance unmoved – to Her Supreme –  
 Her God – Her only Throng –

A Triumph – when Temptation's Bribe  
 Be slowly handed back –  
 One eye upon the Heaven renounced –  
 And One – upon the Rack –

Severer Triumph – by Himself  
 Experienced – who pass  
 Acquitted – from that Naked Bar –  
 Jehovah's Countenance –

c. 1862

1891

So well that I can live without –  
 I love thee – then How well is that?  
 As well as Jesus?  
 Prove it me  
 That He – loved Men –  
 As I – love thee –

c. 1862

1929

Sweet – safe – Houses –  
 Glad – gay – Houses –  
 Sealed so stately tight –  
 Lids of Steel – on Lids of Marble –  
 Locking Bare feet out –

Brooks of Plush – in Banks of Satin  
 Not so softly fall  
 As the laughter – and the whisper –  
 From their People Pearl –

No Bald Death – affront their Parlors –  
 No Bold Sickness come  
 To deface their Stately Treasures –  
 Anguish – and the Tomb –

Hum by – in Muffled Coaches –  
 Lest they – wonder Why –  
 Any – for the Press of Smiling –  
 Interrupt – to die –

c. 1862

1945

458

Like Eyes that looked on Wastes –  
 Incredulous of Ought  
 But Blank – and steady Wilderness –  
 Diversified by Night –

Just Infinites of Nought –  
 As far as it could see –  
 So looked the face I looked upon –  
 So looked itself – on Me –

I offered it no Help –  
 Because the Cause was Mine –  
 The Misery a Compact  
 As hopeless – as divine –

Neither – would be absolved –  
 Neither would be a Queen  
 Without the Other – Therefore –  
 We perish – tho' We reign –

c. 1862

1945

A Tooth upon Our Peace  
 The Peace cannot deface –  
 Then Wherefore be the Tooth?  
 To vitalize the Grace –  
 The Heaven hath a Hell –  
 Itself to signalize –  
 And every sign before the Place  
 Is Gilt with Sacrifice –

c. 1862

1935

I know where Wells grow – Droughtless Wells –  
 Deep dug – for Summer days –  
 Where Mosses go no more away –  
 And Pebble – safely plays –  
 It's made of Fathoms – and a Belt –  
 A Belt of jagged Stone –  
 Inlaid with Emerald – half way down –  
 And Diamonds – jumbled on –  
 It has no Bucket – Were I rich  
 A Bucket I would buy –  
 I'm often thirsty – but my lips  
 Are so high up – You see –  
 I read in an Old fashioned Book  
 That People "thirst no more" –  
 The Wells have Buckets to them there –  
 It must mean that – I'm sure –  
 Shall We remember Parching – then?  
 Those Waters sound so grand –  
 I think a little Well – like Mine –  
 Dearer to understand –

c. 1862

1935

A Wife – at Daybreak I shall be –  
 Sunrise – Hast thou a Flag for me?  
 At Midnight, I am but a Maid,  
 How short it takes to make a Bride –  
 Then – Midnight, I have passed from thee  
 Unto the East, and Victory –

Midnight – Good Night! I hear them call,  
 The Angels bustle in the Hall –  
 Softly my Future climbs the Stair,  
 I fumble at my Childhood's prayer  
 So soon to be a Child no more –  
 Eternity, I'm coming – Sir,  
 Savior – I've seen the face – before!

c. 1862

1929

Why make it doubt – it hurts it so –  
 So sick – to guess –  
 So strong – to know –  
 So brave – upon its little Bed  
 To tell the very last They said  
 Unto Itself – and smile – And shake –  
 For that dear – distant – dangerous – Sake –  
 But – the Instead – the Pinching fear  
 That Something – it did do – or dare –  
 Offend the Vision – and it flee –  
 And They no more remember me –  
 Nor ever turn to tell me why –  
 Oh, Master, This is Misery –

c. 1862

1929

I live with Him – I see His face –  
 I go no more away

For Visitor – or Sundown –  
Death's single privacy

The Only One – forestalling Mine –  
And that – by Right that He  
Presents a Claim invisible –  
No wedlock – granted Me –

I live with Him – I hear His Voice –  
I stand alive – Today –  
To witness to the Certainty  
Of Immortality –

Taught Me – by Time – the lower Way –  
Conviction – Every day –  
That Life like This – is stopless –  
Be Judgment – what it may –

c. 1862

1896

464

The power to be true to You,  
Until upon my face  
The Judgment push His Picture –  
Presumptuous of Your Place –

Of This – Could Man deprive Me –  
Himself – the Heaven excel –  
Whose invitation – Yours reduced  
Until it showed too small –

c. 1862

1929

465

I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –  
The Stillness in the Room  
Was like the Stillness in the Air –  
Between the Heaves of Storm –

The Eyes around – had wrung them dry –  
And Breaths were gathering firm

For that last Onset – when the King  
Be witnessed – in the Room –

I willed my Keepsakes – Signed away  
What portion of me be  
Assignable – and then it was  
There interposed a Fly –

With Blue – uncertain stumbling Buzz –  
Between the light – and me –  
And then the Windows failed – and then  
I could not see to see –

c. 1862

1896

466

'Tis little I – could care for Pearls –  
Who own the ample sea –  
Or Brooches – when the Emperor –  
With Rubies – pelteth me –

Or Gold – who am the Prince of Mines –  
Or Diamonds – when have I  
A Diadem to fit a Dome –  
Continual upon me –

c. 1862

1896

467

We do not play on Graves –  
Because there isn't Room –  
Besides – it isn't even – it slants  
And People come –

And put a Flower on it –  
And hang their faces so –  
We're fearing that their Hearts will drop –  
And crush our pretty play –

And so we move as far  
As Enemies – away –

Just looking round to see how far  
It is – Occasionally –

c. 1862

1945

468

The Manner of its Death  
When Certain it must die –  
'Tis deemed a privilege to choose –  
'Twas Major André's Way –  
When Choice of Life – is past –  
There yet remains a Love  
Its little Fate to stipulate –  
How small in those who live –  
The Miracle to tease  
With Babble of the styles –  
How "they are Dying mostly – now" –  
And Customs at "St. James"!

c. 1862

1945

469

The Red – Blaze – is the Morning –  
The Violet – is Noon –  
The Yellow – Day – is falling –  
And after that – is none –  
But Miles of Sparks – at Evening –  
Reveal the Width that burned –  
The Territory Argent – that  
Never yet – consumed –

c. 1862

1945

470

I am alive – I guess –  
The Branches on my Hand

Are full of Morning Glory –  
And at my finger's end –

The Carmine – tangles warm –  
And if I hold a Glass  
Across my Mouth – it blurs it –  
Physician's – proof of Breath –

I am alive – because  
I am not in a Room –  
The Parlor – Commonly – it is –  
So Visitors may come –

And lean – and view it sidewise –  
And add "How cold – it grew" –  
And "Was it conscious – when it stepped  
In Immortality?"

I am alive – because  
I do not own a House –  
Entitled to myself – precise –  
And fitting no one else –

And marked my Girlhood's name –  
So Visitors may know  
Which Door is mine – and not mistake –  
And try another Key –

How good – to be alive!  
How infinite – to be  
Alive – two-fold – The Birth I had –  
And this – besides, in – Thee!

c. 1862

1945

471

A Night – there lay the Days between –  
The Day that was Before –  
And Day that was Behind – were one –  
And now – 'twas Night – was here –

Slow – Night – that must be watched away –  
As Grains upon a shore –

Too imperceptible to note –  
Till it be night – no more –

c. 1862

1945

472

I am ashamed – I hide –  
What right have I – to be a Bride –  
So late a Dowerless Girl –  
Nowhere to hide my dazzled Face –  
No one to teach me that new Grace –  
Nor introduce – my Soul –

Me to adorn – How – tell –  
Trinket – to make Me beautiful –  
Fabrics of Cashmere –  
Never a Gown of Dun – more –  
Raiment instead – of Pompadour –  
For Me – My soul – to wear –

Fingers – to frame my Round Hair  
Oval – as Feudal Ladies wore –  
Far Fashions – Fair –  
Skill – to hold my Brow like an Earl –  
Plead – like a Whippoorwill –  
Prove – like a Pearl –  
Then, for Character –

Except the Heaven had come so near –  
So seemed to choose My Door –  
The Distance would not haunt me so –  
I had not hoped – before –

But just to hear the Grace depart –  
I never thought to see –  
Afflicts me with a Double loss –  
'Tis lost – And lost to me –

c. 1862

1891

473

[ 227 ]

Fashion My Spirit quaint – white –  
Quick – like a Liquor –  
Gay – like Light –  
Bring Me my best Pride –  
No more ashamed –  
No more to hide –  
Meek – let it be – too proud – for Pride –  
Baptized – this Day – A Bride –

c. 1862

1929

474

They put Us far apart –  
As separate as Sea  
And Her unsown Peninsula –  
We signified “These see” –  
They took away our Eyes –  
They thwarted Us with Guns –  
“I see Thee” each responded straight  
Through Telegraphic Signs –  
With Dungeons – They devised –  
But through their thickest skill –  
And their opaquest Adamant –  
Our Souls saw – just as well –  
They summoned Us to die –  
With sweet alacrity  
We stood upon our stapled feet –  
Condemned – but just – to see –  
Permission to recant –  
Permission to forget –  
We turned our backs upon the Sun  
For perjury of that –  
Not Either – noticed Death –  
Of Paradise – aware –  
Each other’s Face – was all the Disc  
Each other’s setting – saw –

c. 1862

1935

Doom is the House without the Door –  
 'Tis entered from the Sun –  
 And then the Ladder's thrown away,  
 Because Escape – is done –  
 'Tis varied by the Dream  
 Of what they do outside –  
 Where Squirrels play – and Berries die –  
 And Hemlocks – bow – to God –

c 1862

1929

I meant to have but modest needs –  
 Such as Content – and Heaven –  
 Within my income – these could lie  
 And Life and I – keep even –  
 But since the last – included both –  
 It would suffice my Prayer  
 But just for One – to stipulate –  
 And Grace would grant the Pair –  
 And so – upon this wise – I prayed –  
 Great Spirit – Give to me  
 A Heaven not so large as Yours,  
 But large enough – for me –  
 A Smile suffused Jehovah's face –  
 The Cherubim – withdrew –  
 Grave Saints stole out to look at me –  
 And showed their dimples – too –  
 I left the Place, with all my might –  
 I threw my Prayer away –  
 The Quiet Ages picked it up –  
 And Judgment – twinkled – too –  
 That one so honest – be extant –  
 It take the Tale for true –

That "Whatsoever Ye shall ask –  
Itself be given You" –

But I, grown shrewder – scan the Skies  
With a suspicious Air –  
As Children – swindled for the first  
All Swindlers – be – infer –

c. 1862

1891

477

No Man can compass a Despair –  
As round a Goalless Road  
No faster than a Mile at once  
The Traveller proceed –

Unconscious of the Width –  
Unconscious that the Sun  
Be setting on His progress –  
So accurate the One

At estimating Pain –  
Whose own – has just begun –  
His ignorance – the Angel  
That pilot Him along –

c. 1862

1935

478

I had no time to Hate –  
Because  
The Grave would hinder Me –  
And Life was not so  
Ample I  
Could finish – Enmity –

Nor had I time to Love –  
But since  
Some Industry must be –

The little Toil of Love –  
I thought  
Be large enough for Me –

c. 1862

1890

479

She dealt her pretty words like Blades –  
How glittering they shone –  
And every One unbared a Nerve  
Or wanted with a Bone –

She never deemed – she hurt –  
That – is not Steel's Affair –  
A vulgar grimace in the Flesh –  
How ill the Creatures bear –

To Ache is human – not polite –  
The Film upon the eye  
Mortality's old Custom –  
Just locking up – to Die.

c 1862

1929

480

"Why do I love" You, Sir?  
Because –  
The Wind does not require the Grass  
To answer – Wherefore when He pass  
She cannot keep Her place.

Because He knows – and  
Do not You –  
And We know not –  
Enough for Us  
The Wisdom it be so –

The Lightning – never asked an Eye  
Wherefore it shut – when He was by –  
Because He knows it cannot speak –  
And reasons not contained –

-Of Talk-

There be - preferred by Daintier Folk -

The Sunrise - Sir - compelleth Me -

Because He's Sunrise - and I see -

Therefore - Then -

I love Thee -

c. 1862

1929

481

The Himmaleh was known to stoop

Unto the Daisy low -

Transported with Compassion

That such a Doll should grow

Where Tent by Tent - Her Universe

Hung out its Flags of Snow -

c. 1862

1935

482

We Cover Thee - Sweet Face -

Not that We tire of Thee -

But that Thyself fatigue of Us -

Remember - as Thou go -

We follow Thee until

Thou notice Us - no more -

And then - reluctant - turn away

To Con Thee o'er and o'er -

And blame the scanty love

We were Content to show -

Augmented - Sweet - a Hundred fold -

If Thou would'st take it - now -

c. 1862

1896

483

A Solemn thing within the Soul

To feel itself get ripe -

[ 232 ]

And golden hang – while farther up –  
The Maker's Ladders stop –  
And in the Orchard far below –  
You hear a Being – drop –

A Wonderful – to feel the Sun  
Still toiling at the Cheek  
You thought was finished –  
Cool of eye, and critical of Work –  
He shifts the stem – a little –  
To give you Core – a look –

But solemnest – to know  
Your chance in Harvest moves  
A little nearer – Every Sun  
The Single – to some lives.

c. 1862

1945

484

My Garden – like the Beach –  
Denotes there be – a Sea –  
That's Summer –  
Such as These – the Pearls  
She fetches – such as Me

c. 1862

1935

485

To make One's Toilette – after Death  
Has made the Toilette cool  
Of only Taste we cared to please  
Is difficult, and still –

That's easier – than Braid the Hair –  
And make the Bodice gay –  
When eyes that fondled it are wrenched  
By Decalogues – away –

c. 1862

1935

I was the slightest in the House –  
 I took the smallest Room –  
 At night, my little Lamp, and Book –  
 And one Geranium –

So stationed I could catch the Mint  
 That never ceased to fall –  
 And just my Basket –  
 Let me think – I'm sure  
 That this was all –

I never spoke – unless addressed –  
 And then, 'twas brief and low –  
 I could not bear to live – aloud –  
 The Racket shamed me so –

And if it had not been so far –  
 And any one I knew  
 Were going – I had often thought  
 How noteless – I could die –

c. 1862

1945

You love the Lord – you cannot see –  
 You write Him – every day –  
 A little note – when you awake –  
 And further in the Day.

An Ample Letter – How you miss –  
 And would delight to see –  
 But then His House – is but a Step –  
 And Mine's – in Heaven – You see

c. 1862

1945

Myself was formed – a Carpenter –  
 An unpretending time

My Plane – and I, together wrought  
Before a Builder came –

To measure our attainments –  
Had we the Art of Boards  
Sufficiently developed – He'd hire us  
At Halves –

My Tools took Human – Faces –  
The Bench, where we had toiled –  
Against the Man – persuaded –  
We – Temples build – I said –

c. 1862

1935

489

We pray – to Heaven –  
We prate – of Heaven –  
Relate – when Neighbors die –  
At what o'clock to Heaven – they fled –  
Who saw them – Wherefore fly?

Is Heaven a Place – a Sky – a Tree?  
Location's narrow way is for Ourselves –  
Unto the Dead  
There's no Geography –

But State – Endowal – Focus –  
Where – Omnipresence – fly?

c. 1862

1929

490

To One denied to drink  
To tell what Water is  
Would be acuter, would it not  
Than letting Him surmise?

To lead Him to the Well  
And let Him hear it drip

[ 235 ]

Remind Him, would it not, somewhat  
Of His condemned lip?

c. 1862

1945

491

While it is alive  
Until Death touches it  
While it and I lap one Air  
Dwell in one Blood  
Under one Sacrament  
Show me Division can split or pare –  
  
Love is like Life – merely longer  
Love is like Death, during the Grave  
Love is the Fellow of the Resurrection  
Scooping up the Dust and chanting "Live"!

c. 1862

1945

492

Civilization – spurns – the Leopard!  
Was the Leopard – bold?  
Deserts – never rebuked her Satin –  
Ethiop – her Gold –  
Tawny – her Customs –  
She was Conscious –  
Spotted – her Dun Gown –  
This was the Leopard's nature – Signor –  
Need – a keeper – frown?  
  
Pity – the Pard – that left her Asia –  
Memories – of Palm –  
Cannot be stifled – with Narcotic –  
Nor suppressed – with Balm –

c. 1862

1945

The World – stands – solemn – to me –  
 Since I was wed – to Him –  
 A modesty befits the soul  
 That bears another's – name –  
 A doubt – if it be fair – indeed –  
 To wear that perfect – pearl –  
 The Man – upon the Woman – binds –  
 To clasp her soul – for all –  
 A prayer, that it more angel – prove –  
 A whiter Gift – within –  
 To that munificence, that chose –  
 So unadorned – a Queen –  
 A Gratitude – that such be true –  
 It had esteemed the Dream –  
 Too beautiful – for Shape to prove –  
 Or posture – to redeem!

1862

1945

Going to Him! Happy letter!  
 Tell Him –  
 Tell Him the page I didn't write –  
 Tell Him – I only said the Syntax –  
 And left the Verb and the pronoun out –  
 Tell Him just how the fingers hurried –  
 Then – how they waded – slow – slow –  
 And then you wished you had eyes in your pages –  
 So you could see what moved them so –  
 Tell Him – it wasn't a Practised Writer –  
 You guessed – from the way the sentence toiled –  
 You could hear the Bodice tug, behind you –  
 As if it held but the might of a child –  
 You almost pitied it – you – it worked so –  
 Tell Him – no – you may quibble there –  
 For it would split His Heart, to know it –  
 And then you and I, were silenter.

Tell Him – Night finished – before we finished –  
And the Old Clock kept neighing “Day”!  
And you – got sleepy – and begged to be ended –  
What could it hinder so – to say?  
Tell Him – just how she sealed you – Cautious!  
But – if He ask where you are hid  
Until tomorrow – Happy letter!  
Gesture Coquette – and shake your Head!

*Version I*

c 1862

1891

Going – to – Her!  
Happy – Letter! Tell Her –  
Tell Her – the page I never wrote!  
Tell Her, I only said – the Syntax –  
And left the Verb and the Pronoun – out!  
Tell Her just how the fingers – hurried –  
Then – how they – stammered – slow – slow –  
And then – you wished you had eyes – in your pages –  
So you could see – what moved – them – so –

Tell Her – it wasn’t a practised writer –  
You guessed –  
From the way the sentence – toiled –  
You could hear the Bodice – tug – behind you –  
As if it held but the might of a child!  
You almost pitied – it – you – it worked so –  
Tell Her – No – you may quibble – there –  
For it would split Her Heart – to know it –  
And then – you and I – were silenter!

Tell Her – Day – finished – before we – finished –  
And the old Clock kept neighing – “Day”!  
And you – got sleepy – and begged to be ended –  
What could – it hinder so – to say?  
Tell Her – just how she sealed – you – Cautious!  
But – if she ask “where you are hid” – until the evening –  
Ah! Be bashful!

Gesture Coquette –  
And shake your Head!

Version II  
c 1862

1955

495

It's thoughts – and just One Heart –  
And Old Sunshine – about –  
Make frugal – Ones – Content –  
And two or three – for Company –  
Upon a Holiday –  
Crowded – as Sacrament –

Books – when the Unit –  
Spare the Tenant – long eno' –  
A Picture – if it Care –  
Itself – a Gallery too rare –  
For needing more –

Flowers – to keep the Eyes – from going awkward –  
When it snows –  
A Bird – if they – prefer –  
Though Winter fire – sing clear as Plover –  
To our – ear –

A Landscape – not so great  
To suffocate the Eye –  
A Hill – perhaps –  
Perhaps – the profile of a Mill  
Turned by the Wind –  
Tho' *such* – are *luxuries* –

It's thoughts – and just two Heart –  
And Heaven – about –  
At least – a Counterfeit –  
We would not have Correct –  
And Immortality – can be almost –  
Not quite – Content –

c. 1862

1935

As far from pity, as complaint –  
 As cool to speech – as stone –  
 As numb to Revelation  
 As if my Trade were Bone –

As far from Time – as History –  
 As near yourself – Today –  
 As Children, to the Rainbow's scarf –  
 Or Sunset's Yellow play

To eyelids in the Sepulchre –  
 How dumb the Dancer lies –  
 While Color's Revelations break –  
 And blaze – the Butterflies!

c. 1862

1896

He strained my faith –  
 Did he find it supple?  
 Shook my strong trust –  
 Did it then – yield?

Hurled my belief –  
 But – did he shatter – it?  
 Racked – with suspense –  
 Not a nerve failed!

Wrung me – with Anguish –  
 But I never doubted him –  
 'Tho' for what wrong  
 He did never say –

Stabbed – while I sued  
 His sweet forgiveness –  
 Jesus – it's your little "John"!  
 Don't you know – me?

c. 1862

1945

I envy Seas, whereon He rides –  
 I envy Spokes of Wheels  
 Of Chariots, that Him convey –  
 I envy Crooked Hills

That gaze upon His journey –  
 How easy All can see  
 What is forbidden utterly  
 As Heaven – unto me!

I envy Nests of Sparrows –  
 That dot His distant Eaves –  
 The wealthy Fly, upon His Pane –  
 The happy – happy Leaves –

That just abroad His Window  
 Have Summer's leave to play –  
 The Ear Rings of Pizarro  
 Could not obtain for me –

I envy Light – that wakes Him –  
 And Bells – that boldly ring  
 To tell Him it is Noon, abroad –  
 Myself – be Noon to Him –

Yet interdict – my Blossom –  
 And abrogate – my Bee –  
 Lest Noon in Everlasting Night –  
 Drop Gabriel – and Me –

1862

1896

Those fair – fictitious People –  
 The Women – plucked away  
 From our familiar Lifetime –  
 The Men of Ivory –

Those Boys and Girls, in Canvas –  
 Who stay upon the Wall

In Everlasting Keepsake –  
Can Anybody tell?

We trust – in places perfecter –  
Inheriting Delight  
Beyond our faint Conjecture –  
Our dizzy Estimate –

Remembering ourselves, we trust –  
Yet Blesseder – than We –  
Through Knowing – where We only hope –  
Receiving – where we – pray –

Of Expectation – also –  
Anticipating us  
With transport, that would be a pain  
Except for Holiness –

Esteeming us – as Exile –  
Themselves – admitted Home –  
Through easy Miracle of Death –  
The Way ourself, must come –

c. 1862

1929

500

Within my Garden, rides a Bird  
Upon a single Wheel –  
Whose spokes a dizzy Music make  
As 'twere a travelling Mill –

He never stops, but slackens  
Above the Ripest Rose –  
Partakes without alighting  
And praises as he goes,

Till every spice is tasted –  
And then his Fairy Gig  
Reels in remoter atmospheres –  
And I rejoin my Dog,

And He and I, perplex us  
If positive, 'twere we –

[ 242 ]

Or bore the Garden in the Brain  
This Curiosity—

But He, the best Logician,  
Refers my clumsy eye—  
To just vibrating Blossoms!  
An Exquisite Reply!

c. 1862

1929

501

This World is not Conclusion.  
A Species stands beyond—  
Invisible, as Music—  
But positive, as Sound—  
It beckons, and it baffles—  
Philosophy—don't know—  
And through a Riddle, at the last—  
Sagacity, must go—  
To guess it, puzzles scholars—  
To gain it, Men have borne  
Contempt of Generations  
And Crucifixion, shown—  
Faith slips— and laughs, and rallies—  
Blushes, if any see—  
Plucks at a twig of Evidence—  
And asks a Vane, the way—  
Much Gesture, from the Pulpit—  
Strong Hallelujahs roll—  
Narcotics cannot still the Tooth  
That nibbles at the soul—

c 1862

1896

502

At least— to pray— is left— is left—  
Oh Jesus— in the Air—  
I know not which thy chamber is—  
I'm knocking— everywhere—

[ 243 ]

Thou settest Earthquake in the South –  
And Maelstrom, in the Sea –  
Say, Jesus Christ of Nazareth –  
Hast thou no Arm for Me?

c. 1862

1891

503

Better – than Music! For I – who heard it –  
I was used – to the Birds – before –  
This – was different – 'Twas Translation –  
Of all tunes I knew – and more –

'Twasn't contained – like other stanza –  
No one could play it – the second time –  
But the Composer – perfect Mozart –  
Perish with him – that Keyless Rhyme!

So – Children – told how Brooks in Eden –  
Bubbled a better – Melody –  
Quaintly infer – Eve's great surrender –  
Urging the feet – that would – not – fly –

Children – matured – are wiser – mostly –  
Eden – a legend – dimly told –  
Eve – and the Anguish – Grandame's story –  
But – I was telling a tune – I heard –

Not such a strain – the Church – baptizes –  
When the last Saint – goes up the Aisles –  
Not such a stanza splits the silence –  
When the Redemption strikes her Bells –

Let me not spill – its smallest cadence –  
Humming – for promise – when alone –  
Humming – until my faint Rehearsal –  
Drop into tune – around the Throne –

c. 1862

1945

You know that Portrait in the Moon --  
 So tell me who 'tis like --  
 The very Brow -- the stooping eyes --  
 A-fog for -- Say -- Whose Sake?

The very Pattern of the Cheek --  
 It varies -- in the Chin --  
 But -- Ishmael -- since we met -- 'tis long --  
 And fashions -- intervene --

When Moon's at full -- 'Tis Thou -- I say --  
 My lips just hold the name --  
 When crescent -- Thou art worn -- I note --  
 But -- there -- the Golden Same --

And when -- Some Night -- Bold -- slashing Clouds  
 Cut Thee away from Me --  
 That's easier -- than the other film  
 That glazes Holiday --

c. 1862

1935

I would not paint -- a picture --  
 I'd rather be the One  
 Its bright impossibility  
 To dwell -- delicious -- on --  
 And wonder how the fingers feel  
 Whose rare -- celestial -- stir --  
 Evokes so sweet a Torment --  
 Such sumptuous -- Despair --

I would not talk, like Comets --  
 I'd rather be the One  
 Raised softly to the Ceilings --  
 And out, and easy on --  
 Through Villages of Ether --  
 Myself endued Balloon  
 By but a lip of Metal --  
 The pier to my Pontoon --

Nor would I be a Poet –  
It's finer – own the Ear –  
Enamored – impotent – content –  
The License to revere,  
A privilege so awful  
What would the Dower be,  
Had I the Art to stun myself  
With Bolts of Melody!

c. 1862

1945

506

He touched me, so I live to know  
That such a day, permitted so,  
I groped upon his breast –  
It was a boundless place to me  
And silenced, as the awful sea  
Puts minor streams to rest.

And now, I'm different from before,  
As if I breathed superior air –  
Or brushed a Royal Gown –  
My feet, too, that had wandered so –  
My Gypsy face – transfigured now –  
To tenderer Renown –

Into this Port, if I might come,  
Rebecca, to Jerusalem,  
Would not so ravished turn –  
Nor Persian, baffled at her shrine  
Lift such a Crucifical sign  
To her imperial Sun.

c. 1862

1896

507

She sights a Bird – she chuckles –  
She flattens – then she crawls –  
She runs without the look of feet –  
Her eyes increase to Balls –

[ 246 ]

Her Jaws stir – twitching – hungry –  
Her Teeth can hardly stand –  
She leaps, but Robin leaped the first –  
Ah, Pussy, of the Sand,

The Hopes so juicy ripening –  
You almost bathed your Tongue –  
When Bliss disclosed a hundred Toes –  
And fled with every one –

c. 1862

1945

508

I'm ceded – I've stopped being Theirs –  
The name They dropped upon my face  
With water, in the country church  
Is finished using, now,  
And They can put it with my Dolls,  
My childhood, and the string of spools,  
I've finished threading – too –

Baptized, before, without the choice,  
But this time, consciously, of Grace –  
Unto supremest name –  
Called to my Full – The Crescent dropped –  
Existence's whole Arc, filled up,  
With one small Diadem.

My second Rank – too small the first –  
Crowned – Crowing – on my Father's breast –  
A half unconscious Queen –  
But this time – Adequate – Erect,  
With Will to choose, or to reject,  
And I choose, just a Crown –

c. 1862

1890

509

If anybody's friend be dead  
It's sharpest of the theme

[ 247 ]

The thinking how they walked alive –  
At such and such a time –

Their costume, of a Sunday,  
Some manner of the Hair –  
A prank nobody knew but them  
Lost, in the Sepulchre –

How warm, they were, on such a day,  
You almost feel the date –  
So short way off it seems –  
And now – they're Centuries from that –

How pleased they were, at what you said –  
You try to touch the smile  
And dip your fingers in the frost –  
When was it – Can you tell –

You asked the Company to tea –  
Acquaintance – just a few –  
And chatted close with this Grand Thing  
That don't remember you –

Past Bows, and Invitations –  
Past Interview, and Vow –  
Past what Ourselves can estimate –  
That – makes the Quick of Woe!

c. 1862

1891

510

It was not Death, for I stood up,  
And all the Dead, lie down –  
It was not Night, for all the Bells  
Put out their Tongues, for Noon.

It was not Frost, for on my Flesh  
I felt Siroccos – crawl –  
Nor Fire – for just my Marble feet  
Could keep a Chancel, cool –

And yet, it tasted, like them all,  
The Figures I have seen

[ 248 ]

Set orderly, for Burial,  
Reminded me, of mine –

As if my life were shaven,  
And fitted to a frame,  
And could not breathe without a key,  
And 'twas like Midnight, some –

When everything that ticked – has stopped –  
And Space stares all around –  
Or Grisly frosts – first Autumn morns,  
Repeal the Beating Ground –

But, most, like Chaos – Stopless – cool –  
Without a Chance, or Spar –  
Or even a Report of Land –  
To justify – Despair.

c. 1862

1891

511

If you were coming in the Fall,  
I'd brush the Summer by  
With half a smile, and half a spurn,  
As Housewives do, a Fly.

If I could see you in a year,  
I'd wind the months in balls –  
And put them each in separate Drawers,  
For fear the numbers fuse –

If only Centuries, delayed,  
I'd count them on my Hand,  
Subtracting, till my fingers dropped  
Into Van Dieman's Land.

If certain, when this life was out –  
That yours and mine, should be  
I'd toss it yonder, like a Rind,  
And take Eternity –

But, now, uncertain of the length  
Of this, that is between,

It goads me, like the Goblin Bee –  
That will not state – its sting.

c. 1862

1890

512

The Soul has Bandaged moments –  
When too appalled to stir –  
She feels some ghastly Fright come up  
And stop to look at her –

Salute her – with long fingers –  
Caress her freezing hair –  
Sip, Goblin, from the very lips  
The Lover – hovered – o'er –  
Unworthy, that a thought so mean  
Accost a Theme – so – fair –

The soul has moments of Escape –  
When bursting all the doors –  
She dances like a Bomb, abroad,  
And swings upon the Hours,

As do the Bee – delirious borne –  
Long Dungeoned from his Rose –  
Touch Liberty – then know no more,  
But Noon, and Paradise –

The Soul's retaken moments –  
When, Felon led along,  
With shackles on the plumed feet,  
And staples, in the Song,

The Horror welcomes her, again,  
These, are not brayed of Tongue –

c. 1862

1945

513

Like Flowers, that heard the news of Dew,  
But never deemed the dripping prize  
Awaited their – low Brows –

[ 250 ]

Or Bees – that thought the Summer's name  
Some rumor of Delirium,  
No Summer – could – for Them –

Or Arctic Creatures, dimly stirred –  
By Tropic Hint – some Travelled Bird  
Imported to the Word –

Or Wind's bright signal to the Ear –  
Making that homely, and severe,  
Contented, known, before –

The Heaven – unexpected come,  
To Lives that thought the Worshipping  
A too presumptuous Psalm –

c. 1862

1890

514

Her smile was shaped like other smiles –  
The Dimples ran along –  
And still it hurt you, as some Bird  
Did hoist herself, to sing,  
Then recollect a Ball, she got –  
And hold upon the Twig,  
Convulsive, while the Music broke –  
Like Beads – among the Bog –

c. 1862

1935

515

No Crowd that has occurred  
Exhibit – I suppose  
That General Attendance  
That Resurrection – does –

Circumference be full –  
The long restricted Grave  
Assert her Vital Privilege –  
The Dust – connect – and live –

[ 251 ]

On Atoms – features place –  
All Multitudes that were  
Efface in the Comparison –  
As Suns – dissolve a star –  
  
Solemnity – prevail –  
Its Individual Doom  
Possess each separate Consciousness –  
August – Absorbed – Numb –  
  
What Duplicate – exist –  
What Parallel can be –  
Of the Significance of This –  
To Universe – and Me?

c. 1862

1929

516

Beauty – be not caused – It Is –  
Chase it, and it ceases –  
Chase it not, and it abides –  
  
Overtake the Creases  
  
In the Meadow – when the Wind  
Runs his fingers thro' it –  
Deity will see to it  
That You never do it –

c. 1862

1929

517

He parts Himself – like Leaves –  
And then – He closes up –  
Then stands upon the Bonnet  
Of Any Buttercup –  
  
And then He runs against  
And oversets a Rose –  
And then does Nothing –  
Then away upon a Jib – He goes –

[ 252 ]

And dangles like a Mote  
Suspended in the Noon –  
Uncertain – to return Below –  
Or settle in the Moon –

What come of Him – at Night –  
The privilege to say  
Be limited by Ignorance –  
What come of Him – That Day –

The Frost – possess the World –  
In Cabinets – be shown –  
A Sepulchre of quaintest Floss –  
An Abbey – a Cocoon –

c. 1862

1935

518

Her sweet Weight on my Heart a Night  
Had scarcely deigned to lie –  
When, stirring, for Belief's delight,  
My Bride had slipped away –

If 'twas a Dream – made solid – just  
The Heaven to confirm –  
Or if Myself were dreamed of Her –  
The power to presume –

With Him remain – who unto Me –  
Gave – even as to All –  
A Fiction superseding Faith –  
By so much – as 'twas real –

c. 1862

1945

519

'Twas warm – at first – like Us –  
Until there crept upon  
A Chill – like frost upon a Glass –  
Till all the scene – be gone.

The Forehead copied Stone –  
The Fingers grew too cold  
To ache – and like a Skater's Brook –  
The busy eyes – congealed –

It straightened – that was all –  
It crowded Cold to Cold –  
It multiplied indifference –  
As Pride were all it could –

And even when with Cords –  
'Twas lowered, like a Weight –  
It made no Signal, nor demurred,  
But dropped like Adamant.

c. 1862

1929

520

I started Early – Took my Dog –  
And visited the Sea –  
The Mermaids in the Basement  
Came out to look at me –

And Frigates – in the Upper Floor  
Extended Hempen Hands –  
Presuming Me to be a Mouse –  
Aground – upon the Sands –

But no Man moved Me – till the Tide  
Went past my simple Shoe –  
And past my Apron – and my Belt  
And past my Bodice – too –

And made as He would eat me up –  
As wholly as a Dew  
Upon a Dandelion's Sleeve –  
And then – I started – too –

And He – He followed – close behind –  
I felt His Silver Heel  
Upon my Ankle – Then my Shoes  
Would overflow with Pearl –

[ 254 ]

Until We met the Solid Town –  
No One He seemed to know –  
And bowing – with a Mighty look –  
At me – The Sea withdrew –

c. 1862

1891

521

Endow the Living – with the Tears –  
You squander on the Dead,  
And They were Men and Women – now,  
Around Your Fireside –

Instead of Passive Creatures,  
Denied the Cherishing  
Till They – the Cherishing deny –  
With Death's Ethereal Scorn –

c. 1862

1945

522

Had I presumed to hope –  
The loss had been to Me  
A Value – for the Greatness' Sake –  
As Giants – gone away –

Had I presumed to gain  
A Favor so remote –  
The failure but confirm the Grace  
In further Infinite –

'Tis failure – not of Hope –  
But Confident Despair –  
Advancing on Celestial Lists –  
With faint – Terrestrial power –

'Tis Honor – though I die –  
For That no Man obtain  
Till He be justified by Death –  
This – is the Second Gain –

c. 1862

1929

Sweet – You forgot – but I remembered  
 Every time – for Two –  
 So that the Sum be never hindered  
 Through Decay of You –

Say if I erred? Accuse my Farthings –  
 Blame the little Hand  
 Happy it be for You – a Beggar's –  
 Seeking More – to spend –

Just to be Rich – to waste my Guineas  
 On so Best a Heart –  
 Just to be Poor – for Barefoot Vision  
 You – Sweet – Shut me out –

c. 1862

1945

Departed – to the Judgment –  
 A Mighty Afternoon –  
 Great Clouds – like Ushers – leaning –  
 Creation – looking on –

The Flesh – Surrendered – Cancelled –  
 The Bodiless – begun –  
 Two Worlds – like Audiences – disperse –  
 And leave the Soul – alone –

c. 1862

1890

I think the Hemlock likes to stand  
 Upon a Marge of Snow –  
 It suits his own Austerity –  
 And satisfies an awe

That men, must slake in Wilderness –  
 And in the Desert – cloy –  
 An instinct for the Hoar, the Bald –  
 Lapland's – necessity –

The Hemlock's nature thrives – on cold –  
The Gnash of Northern winds  
Is sweetest nutriment – to him –  
His best Norwegian Wines –

To satin Races – he is nought –  
But Children on the Don,  
Beneath his Tabernacles, play,  
And Dnieper Wrestlers, run.

c. 1862

1890

526

To hear an Oriole sing  
May be a common thing –  
Or only a divine.

It is not of the Bird  
Who sings the same, unheard,  
As unto Crowd –

The Fashion of the Ear  
Attireth that it hear  
In Dun, or fair –

So whether it be Rune,  
Or whether it be none  
Is of within.

The "Tune is in the Tree –"  
The Skeptic – showeth me –  
"No Sir! In Thee!"

c. 1862

1891

527

To put this World down, like a Bundle –  
And walk steady, away,  
Requires Energy – possibly Agony –  
'Tis the Scarlet way

Trodden with straight renunciation  
By the Son of God –

[ 257 ]

Later, his faint Confederates  
Justify the Road –

Flavors of that old Crucifixion –  
Filaments of Bloom, Pontius Pilate sowed –  
Strong Clusters, from Barabbas' Tomb –

Sacrament, Saints partook before us –  
Patent, every drop,  
With the Brand of the Gentile Drinker  
Who indorsed the Cup –

c. 1862

1935

528

Mine – by the Right of the White Election!  
Mine – by the Royal Seal!  
Mine – by the Sign in the Scarlet prison –  
Bars – cannot conceal!

Mine – here – in Vision – and in Veto!  
Mine – by the Grave's Repeal –  
Titled – Confirmed –  
Delirious Charter!  
Mine – long as Ages steal!

c. 1862

1890

529

I'm sorry for the Dead – Today –  
It's such congenial times  
Old Neighbors have at fences –  
It's time o' year for Hay.

And Broad – Sunburned Acquaintance  
Discourse between the Toil –  
And laugh, a homely species  
That makes the Fences smile –

It seems so straight to lie away  
From all the noise of Fields –

[ 258 ]

The Busy Carts – the fragrant Cocks –  
The Mower's Metre – Steals

A Trouble lest they're homesick –  
Those Farmers – and their Wives –  
Set separate from the Farming –  
And all the Neighbors' lives –

A Wonder if the Sepulchre  
Don't feel a lonesome way –  
When Men – and Boys – and Carts – and June,  
Go down the Fields to "Hay" –

c. 1862

1929

530

You cannot put a Fire out –  
A Thing that can ignite  
Can go, itself, without a Fan –  
Upon the slowest Night –

You cannot fold a Flood –  
And put it in a Drawer –  
Because the Winds would find it out –  
And tell your Cedar Floor –

c. 1862

1896

531

We dream – it is good we are dreaming –  
It would hurt us – were we awake –  
But since it is playing – kill us,  
And we are playing – shriek –

What harm? Men die – externally –  
It is a truth – of Blood –  
But we – are dying in Drama –  
And Drama – is never dead –

Cautious – We jar each other –  
And either – open the eyes –

Lest the Phantasm – prove the Mistake –  
And the livid Surprise

Cool us to Shafts of Granite –  
With just an Age – and Name –  
And perhaps a phrase in Egyptian –  
It's pruder – to dream –

c. 1862

1935

532

I tried to think a lonelier Thing  
Than any I had seen –  
Some Polar Expiation – An Omen in the Bone  
Of Death's tremendous nearness –

I probed Retrieveless things  
My Duplicate – to borrow –  
A Haggard Comfort springs

From the belief that Somewhere –  
Within the Clutch of Thought –  
There dwells one other Creature  
Of Heavenly Love – forgot –

I plucked at our Partition  
As One should pry the Walls –  
Between Himself – and Horror's Twin –  
Within Opposing Cells –

I almost strove to clasp his Hand,  
Such Luxury – it grew –  
That as Myself – could pity Him –  
Perhaps he – pitied me –

c. 1862

1945

533

Two Butterflies went out at Noon –  
And waltzed upon a Farm –  
Then stepped straight through the Firmament  
And rested, on a Beam –

And then – together bore away  
Upon a shining Sea –  
Though never yet, in any Port –  
Their coming, mentioned – be –  
If spoken by the distant Bird –  
If met in Ether Sea  
By Frigate, or by Merchantman –  
No notice – was – to me –

c. 1862

1891

534

We see – Comparatively –  
The Thing so towering high  
We could not grasp its segment  
Unaided – Yesterday –  
This Morning's finer Verdict –  
Makes scarcely worth the toil –  
A furrow – Our Cordillera –  
Our Apennine – a Knoll –  
Perhaps 'tis kindly – done us –  
The Anguish – and the loss –  
The wrenching – for His Firmament  
The Thing belonged to us –  
To spare these Striding Spirits  
Some Morning of Chagrin –  
The waking in a Gnat's – embrace –  
Our Giants – further on –

c. 1862

1929

535

She's happy, with a new Content –  
That feels to her – like Sacrament –  
She's busy – with an altered Care –  
As just apprenticed to the Air –

She's tearful – if she weep at all –  
For blissful Causes – Most of all  
That Heaven permit so meek as her –  
To such a Fate – to Minister.

c. 1862

1935

536

The Heart asks Pleasure – first –  
And then – Excuse from Pain –  
And then – those little Anodynes  
That deaden suffering –  
  
And then – to go to sleep –  
And then – if it should be  
The will of its Inquisitor  
The privilege to die –

c. 1862

1890

537

Me prove it now – Whoever doubt  
Me stop to prove it – now –  
Make haste – the Scruple! Death be scant  
For Opportunity –  
  
The River reaches to my feet –  
As yet – My Heart be dry –  
Oh Lover – Life could not convince –  
Might Death – enable Thee –  
  
The River reaches to My Breast –  
Still – still – My Hands above  
Proclaim with their remaining Might –  
Dost recognize the Love?  
  
The River reaches to my Mouth –  
Remember – when the Sea  
Swept by my searching eyes – the last –  
Themselves were quick – with Thee!

c. 1862

1935

'Tis true – They shut me in the Cold –  
 But then – Themselves were warm  
 And could not know the feeling 'twas –  
 Forget it – Lord – of Them –

Let not my Witness hinder Them  
 In Heavenly esteem –  
 No Paradise could be – Conferred  
 Through Their beloved Blame –

The Harm They did – was short – And since  
 Myself – who bore it – do –  
 Forgive Them – Even as Myself –  
 Or else – forgive not me –

c. 1862

1945

The Province of the Saved  
 Should be the Art – To save –  
 Through Skill obtained in Themselves –  
 The Science of the Grave

No Man can understand  
 But He that hath endured  
 The Dissolution – in Himself –  
 That Man – be qualified

To qualify Despair  
 To Those who failing new –  
 Mistake Defeat for Death – Each time –  
 Till acclimated – to –

c. 1862

1935

I took my Power in my Hand –  
 And went against the World –  
 'Twas not so much as David – had –  
 But I – was twice as bold –

I aimed my Pebble – but Myself  
Was all the one that fell –  
Was it Goliath – was too large –  
Or was myself – too small?

c. 1862

1891

541

Some such Butterfly be seen  
On Brazilian Pampas –  
Just at noon – no later – Sweet –  
Then – the License closes –

Some such Spice – express and pass –  
Subject to Your Plucking –  
As the Stars – You knew last Night –  
Foreigners – This Morning –

c. 1862

1935

542

I had no Cause to be awake –  
My Best – was gone to sleep –  
And Morn a new politeness took –  
And failed to wake them up –

But called the others – clear –  
And passed their Curtains by –  
Sweet Morning – When I oversleep –  
Knock – Recollect – to Me –

I looked at Sunrise – Once –  
And then I looked at Them –  
And wishfulness in me arose –  
For Circumstance the same –

'Twas such an Ample Peace –  
It could not hold a Sigh –  
'Twas Sabbath – with the Bells divorced –  
'Twas Sunset – all the Day –

So choosing but a Gown –  
And taking but a Prayer –  
The only Raiment I should need –  
I struggled – and was There –

c. 1862

1891

543

I fear a Man of frugal Speech –  
I fear a Silent Man –  
Haranguer – I can overtake –  
Or Babbler – entertain –

But He who weigheth – While the Rest –  
Expend their furthest pound –  
Of this Man – I am wary –  
I fear that He is Grand –

c. 1862

1929

544

The Martyr Poets – did not tell –  
But wrought their Pang in syllable –  
That when their mortal name be numb –  
Their mortal fate – encourage Some –

The Martyr Painters – never spoke –  
Bequeathing – rather – to their Work –  
That when their conscious fingers cease –  
Some seek in Art – the Art of Peace –

c. 1862

1935

545

'Tis One by One – the Father counts –  
And then a Tract between  
Set Cypherless – to teach the Eye  
The Value of its Ten –

Until the peevish Student  
Acquire the Quick of Skill –

Then Numerals are dowered back –  
Adorning all the Rule –

'Tis mostly Slate and Pencil –  
And Darkness on the School  
Distracts the Children's fingers –  
Still the Eternal Rule

Regards least Cypherer alike  
With Leader of the Band –  
And every separate Urchin's Sum –  
Is fashioned for his hand –

c 1862

1945

546

To fill a Gap  
Insert the Thing that caused it –  
Block it up  
With Other – and 'twill yawn the more –  
You cannot solder an Abyss  
With Air.

c 1862

1929

547

I've seen a Dying Eye  
Run round and round a Room –  
In search of Something – as it seemed –  
Then Cloudier become –  
And then – obscure with Fog –  
And then – be soldered down  
Without disclosing what it be  
'Twere blessed to have seen –

c. 1862

1890

548

Death is potential to that Man  
Who dies – and to his friend –

Beyond that – inconspicuous  
To Anyone but God –

Of these Two – God remembers  
The longest – for the friend –  
Is integral – and therefore  
Itself dissolved – of God –

c. 1862

1945

549

That I did always love  
I bring thee Proof  
That till I loved  
I never lived – Enough –

That I shall love alway –  
I argue thee  
That love is life –  
And life hath Immortality –

This – dost thou doubt – Sweet –  
Then have I  
Nothing to show  
But Calvary –

c. 1862

1890

550

I cross till I am weary  
A Mountain – in my mind –  
More Mountains – then a Sea –  
More Seas – And then  
A Desert – find –

And My Horizon blocks  
With steady – drifting – Grains  
Of un conjectured quantity –  
As Asiatic Rains –

Nor this – defeat my Pace –  
It hinder from the West

[ 267 ]

But as an Enemy's Salute  
One hurrying to Rest –  
What merit had the Goal –  
Except there intervene  
Faint Doubt – and far Competitor –  
To jeopardize the Gain?  
At last – the Grace in sight –  
I shout unto my feet –  
I offer them the Whole of Heaven  
The instant that we meet –  
They strive – and yet delay –  
They perish – Do we die –  
Or is this Death's Experiment –  
Reversed – in Victory?

c. 1862

1935

551

There is a Shame of Nobleness –  
Confronting Sudden Pelf –  
A finer Shame of Ecstasy –  
Convicted of Itself –  
A best Disgrace – a Brave Man feels –  
Acknowledged – of the Brave –  
One More – “Ye Blessed” – to be told –  
But that's – Behind the Grave –

c. 1862

1891

552

An ignorance a Sunset  
Confer upon the Eye –  
Of Territory – Color –  
Circumference – Decay –  
Its Amber Revelation  
Exhilarate – Debase –

Omnipotence' inspection  
Of Our inferior face –  
And when the solemn features  
Confirm – in Victory –  
We start – as if detected  
In Immortality –

c. 1862

1935

553

One Crucifixion is recorded – only –  
How many be  
Is not affirmed of Mathematics –  
Or History –

One Calvary – exhibited to Stranger –  
As many be  
As persons – or Peninsulas –  
Gethsemane –

Is but a Province – in the Being's Centre –  
Judea –  
For Journey – or Crusade's Achieving –  
Too near –

Our Lord – indeed – made Compound Witness –  
And yet –  
There's newer – nearer Crucifixion  
Than That –

c. 1862

1945

554

The Black Berry – wears a Thorn in his side –  
But no Man heard Him cry –  
He offers His Berry, just the same  
To Partridge – and to Boy –

He sometimes holds upon the Fence –  
Or struggles to a Tree –

[ 269 ]

Or clasps a Rock, with both His Hands –  
But not for Sympathy –

We – tell a Hurt – to cool it –  
This Mourner – to the Sky  
A little further reaches – instead –  
Brave Black Berry –

c. 1862

1945

555

Trust in the Unexpected –  
By this – was William Kidd  
Persuaded of the Buried Gold –  
As One had testified –

Through this – the old Philosopher –  
His Talismanic Stone  
Discernéd – still withholden  
To effort undivine –

'Twas this – allured Columbus –  
When Genoa – withdrew  
Before an Apparition  
Baptized America –

The Same – afflicted Thomas –  
When Deity assured  
'Twas better – the perceiving not –  
Provided it believed –

c. 1862

1935

556

The Brain, within its Groove  
Runs evenly – and true –  
But let a Splinter swerve –  
'Twere easier for You –  
To put a Current back –  
When Floods have slit the Hills –

And scooped a Turnpike for Themselves –  
And trodden out the Mills –

. 1862

1890

557

She hideth Her the last –  
And is the first, to rise –  
Her Night doth hardly recompense  
The Closing of Her eyes –

She doth Her Purple Work –  
And putteth Her away  
In low Apartments in the Sod –  
As Worthily as We.

To imitate Her life  
As impotent would be  
As make of Our imperfect Mints,  
The Julep – of the Bee –

1935

558

But little Carmine hath her face –  
Of Emerald scant – her Gown –  
Her Beauty – is the love she doth –  
Itself – exhibit – Mine –

1935

559

It knew no Medicine –  
It was not Sickness – then –  
Nor any need of Surgery –  
And therefore – 'twas not Pain –

It moved away the Cheeks –  
A Dimple at a time –  
And left the Profile – plainer –  
And in the place of Bloom

It left the little Tint  
That never had a Name –  
You've seen it on a Cast's face –  
Was Paradise – to blame –

If momentarily ajar –  
Temerity – drew near –  
And sickened – ever afterward  
For Somewhat that it saw?

c. 1862

1935

560

It knew no lapse, nor Diminution –  
But large – serene –  
Burned on – until through Dissolution –  
It failed from Men –

I could not deem these Planetary forces  
Annulled –  
But suffered an Exchange of Territory –  
Or World –

c. 1862

1945

561

I measure every Grief I meet  
With narrow, probing, Eyes –  
I wonder if It weighs like Mine –  
Or has an Easier size.

I wonder if They bore it long –  
Or did it just begin –  
I could not tell the Date of Mine –  
It feels so old a pain –

I wonder if it hurts to live –  
And if They have to try –  
And whether – could They choose between –  
It would not be – to die –

I note that Some – gone patient long –  
At length, renew their smile –  
An imitation of a Light  
That has so little Oil –

I wonder if when Years have piled –  
Some Thousands – on the Harm –  
That hurt them early – such a lapse  
Could give them any Balm –

Or would they go on aching still  
Through Centuries of Nerve –  
Enlightened to a larger Pain –  
In Contrast with the Love –

The Grieved – are many – I am told –  
There is the various Cause –  
Death – is but one – and comes but once –  
And only nails the eyes –

There's Grief of Want – and Grief of Cold –  
A sort they call "Despair" –  
There's Banishment from native Eyes –  
In sight of Native Air –

And though I may not guess the kind –  
Correctly – yet to me  
A piercing Comfort it affords  
In passing Calvary –

To note the fashions – of the Cross –  
And how they're mostly worn –  
Still fascinated to presume  
That Some – are like My Own –

c. 1862

1896

562

Conjecturing a Climate  
Of unsuspected Suns –  
Adds poignancy to Winter –  
The Shivering Fancy turns

[ 273 ]

To a fictitious Country  
To palliate a Cold –  
Not obviated of Degree –  
Nor eased – of Latitude –

c. 1862

1929

563

I could not prove the Years had feet –  
Yet confident they run  
Am I, from symptoms that are past  
And Series that are done –

I find my feet have further Goals –  
I smile upon the Aims  
That felt so ample – Yesterday –  
Today's – have vaster claims –

I do not doubt the self I was  
Was competent to me –  
But something awkward in the fit –  
Proves that – outgrown – I see –

c. 1862

1945

564

My period had come for Prayer –  
No other Art – would do –  
My Tactics missed a rudiment –  
Creator – Was it you?

God grows above – so those who pray  
Horizons – must ascend –  
And so I stepped upon the North  
To see this Curious Friend –

His House was not – no sign had He –  
By Chimney – nor by Door  
Could I infer his Residence –  
Vast Prairies of Air

Unbroken by a Settler –  
Were all that I could see –  
Infinitude – Had'st Thou no Face  
That I might look on Thee?

The Silence condescended –  
Creation stopped – for Me –  
But awed beyond my errand –  
I worshipped – did not “pray” –

c. 1862

1929

565

One Anguish – in a Crowd –  
A Minor thing – it sounds –  
And yet, unto the single Doe  
Attempted of the Hounds

'Tis Terror as consummate  
As Legions of Alarm  
Did leap, full flanked, upon the Host –  
'Tis Units – make the Swarm –

A Small Leech – on the Vitals –  
The sliver, in the Lung –  
The Bung out – of an Artery –  
Are scarce accounted – Harms –

Yet mighty – by relation  
To that Repealless thing –  
A Being – impotent to end –  
When once it has begun –

c. 1862

1945

566

A Dying Tiger – moaned for Drink –  
I hunted all the Sand –  
I caught the Dripping of a Rock  
And bore it in my Hand –

His Mighty Balls – in death were thick –  
But searching – I could see  
A Vision on the Retina  
Of Water – and of me –

'Twas not my blame – who sped too slow –  
'Twas not his blame – who died  
While I was reaching him –  
But 'twas – the fact that He was dead –

c. 1862

1945

567

He gave away his Life –  
To Us – Gigantic Sum –  
A trifle – in his own esteem –  
But magnified – by Fame –

Until it burst the Hearts  
That fancied they could hold –  
When swift it slipped its limit –  
And on the Heavens – unrolled –

'Tis Ours – to wince – and weep –  
And wonder – and decay  
By Blossoms gradual process –  
He chose – Maturity –

And quickening – as we sowed –  
Just obviated Bud –  
And when We turned to note the Growth –  
Broke – perfect – from the Pod –

c. 1862

1935

568

We learned the Whole of Love –  
The Alphabet – the Words –  
A Chapter – then the mighty Book –  
Then – Revelation closed –

[ 276 ]

But in Each Other's eyes  
An Ignorance beheld –  
Diviner than the Childhood's –  
And each to each, a Child –  
Attempted to expound  
What Neither – understood –  
Alas, that Wisdom is so large –  
And Truth – so manifold!

c. 1862

1945

569

I reckon – when I count at all –  
First – Poets – Then the Sun –  
Then Summer – Then the Heaven of God –  
And then – the List is done –

But, looking back – the First so seems  
To Comprehend the Whole –  
The Others look a needless Show –  
So I write – Poets – All –

Their Summer – lasts a Solid Year –  
They can afford a Sun  
The East – would deem extravagant –  
And if the Further Heaven –

Be Beautiful as they prepare  
For Those who worship Them –  
It is too difficult a Grace –  
To justify the Dream –

c. 1862

1929

570

I could die – to know –  
'Tis a trifling knowledge –  
News-Boys salute the Door –  
Carts – joggle by –

[ 277 ]

Morning's bold face – stares in the window –  
Were but mine – the Charter of the least Fly –

Houses hunch the House  
With their Brick Shoulders –  
Coals – from a Rolling Load – rattle – how – near –  
To the very Square – His foot is passing –  
Possibly, this moment –  
While I – dream – Here –

c. 1862

1935

571

Must be a Woe –  
A loss or so –  
To bend the eye  
Best Beauty's way –

But – once aslant  
It notes Delight  
As difficult  
As Stalactite

A Common Bliss  
Were had for less –  
The price – is  
Even as the Grace –

Our lord – thought no  
Extravagance  
To pay – a Cross –

c. 1862

1935

572

Delight – becomes pictorial –  
When viewed through Pain –  
More fair – because impossible  
That any gain –

The Mountain – at a given distance –  
In Amber – lies –

Approached – the Amber flits – a little –  
And That's – the Skies –

c. 1862

1891

573

The Test of Love – is Death –  
Our Lord – “so loved” – it saith –  
What Largest Lover – hath –  
Another – doth –

If smaller Patience – be –  
Through less Infinity –  
If Bravo, sometimes swerve –  
Through fainter Nerve –

Accept its Most –  
And overlook – the Dust –  
Last – Least –  
The Cross' – Request –

c. 1862

1935

574

My first well Day – since many ill –  
I asked to go abroad,  
And take the Sunshine in my hands,  
And see the things in Pod –

A' blossom just when I went in  
To take my Chance with pain –  
Uncertain if myself, or He,  
Should prove the strongest One.

The Summer deepened, while we strove –  
She put some flowers away –  
And Redder cheeked Ones – in their stead –  
A fond – illusive way –

To cheat Herself, it seemed she tried –  
As if before a child

To fade – Tomorrow – Rainbows held  
The Sepulchre, could hide

She dealt a fashion to the Nut –  
She tied the Hoods to Seeds –  
She dropped bright scraps of Tint, about –  
And left Brazilian Threads

On every shoulder that she met –  
Then both her Hands of Haze  
Put up – to hide her parting Grace  
From our unfitted eyes

My loss, by sickness – Was it Loss?  
Or that Ethereal Gain  
One earns by measuring the Grave –  
Then – measuring the Sun –

c. 1862

1935

575

“Heaven” has different Signs – to me –  
Sometimes, I think that Noon  
Is but a symbol of the Place –  
And when again, at Dawn,

A mighty look runs round the World  
And settles in the Hills –  
An Awe if it should be like that  
Upon the Ignorance steals –

The Orchard, when the Sun is on –  
The Triumph of the Birds  
When they together Victory make –  
Some Carnivals of Clouds –

The Rapture of a finished Day –  
Returning to the West –  
All these – remind us of the place  
That Men call “Paradise” –

Itself be fairer – we suppose –  
But how Ourselves, shall be

Adorned, for a Superior Grace –  
Not yet, our eyes can see –

1929

576

I prayed, at first, a little Girl,  
Because they told me to –  
But stopped, when qualified to guess  
How prayer would feel – to me –

If I believed God looked around,  
Each time my Childish eye  
Fixed full, and steady, on his own  
In Childish honesty –

And told him what I'd like, today,  
And parts of his far plan  
That baffled me –  
The mingled side  
Of his Divinity –

And often since, in Danger,  
I count the force 'twould be  
To have a God so strong as that  
To hold my life for me

Till I could take the Balance  
That tips so frequent, now,  
It takes me all the while to poise –  
And then – it doesn't stay –

1929

577

If I may have it, when it's dead,  
I'll be contented – so –  
If just as soon as Breath is out  
It shall belong to me –

Until they lock it in the Grave,  
'Tis Bliss I cannot weigh –

[ 281 ]

For tho' they lock Thee in the Grave,  
Myself – can own the key –

Think of it Lover! I and Thee  
Permitted – face to face to be –  
After a Life – a Death – We'll say –  
For Death was That –  
And this – is Thee –

I'll tell Thee All – how Bald it grew –  
How Midnight felt, at first – to me –  
How all the Clocks stopped in the World –  
And Sunshine pinched me – 'Twas so cold –

Then how the Grief got sleepy – some –  
As if my Soul were deaf and dumb –  
Just making signs – across – to Thee –  
That this way – thou could'st notice me –

I'll tell you how I tried to keep  
A smile, to show you, when this Deep  
All Waded – We look back for Play,  
At those Old Times – in Calvary.

Forgive me, if the Grave come slow –  
For Coveting to look at Thee –  
Forgive me, if to stroke thy frost  
Outvisions Paradise!

c. 1862

1896

578

The Body grows without –  
The more convenient way –  
That if the Spirit – like to hide  
Its Temple stands, always,

Ajar – secure – inviting –  
It never did betray  
The Soul that asked its shelter  
In solemn honesty

c. 1862

1891

I had been hungry, all the Years –  
 My Noon had Come – to dine –  
 I trembling drew the Table near –  
 And touched the Curious Wine –

'Twas this on Tables I had seen –  
 When turning, hungry, Home  
 I looked in Windows, for the Wealth  
 I could not hope – for Mine –

I did not know the ample Bread –  
 'Twas so unlike the Crumb  
 The Birds and I, had often shared  
 In Nature's – Dining Room –

The Plenty hurt me – 'twas so new –  
 Myself felt ill – and odd –  
 As Berry – of a Mountain Bush –  
 Transplanted – to the Road –

Nor was I hungry – so I found  
 That Hunger – was a way  
 Of Persons outside Windows –  
 The Entering – takes away –

1862

1891

I gave myself to Him –  
 And took Himself, for Pay,  
 The solemn contract of a Life  
 Was ratified, this way –

The Wealth might disappoint –  
 Myself a poorer prove  
 Than this great Purchaser suspect,  
 The Daily Own – of Love

Depreciate the Vision –  
 But till the Merchant buy –

Still Fable – in the Isles of Spice –  
The subtle Cargoes – lie –  
At least – 'tis Mutual – Risk –  
Some – found it – Mutual Gain –  
Sweet Debt of Life – Each Night to owe –  
Insolvent – every Noon –

c. 1862

1891

581

I found the words to every thought  
I ever had – but One –  
And that – defies me –  
As a Hand did try to chalk the Sun  
To Races – nurtured in the Dark –  
How would your own – begin?  
Can Blaze be shown in Cochineal –  
Or Noon – in Mazarin?

c. 1862

1891

582

Inconceivably solemn!  
Things so gay  
Pierce – by the very Press  
Of Imagery –  
Their far Parades – order on the eye  
With a mute Pomp –  
A pleading Pageantry –  
Flags, are a brave sight –  
But no true Eye  
Ever went by One –  
Steadily –  
Music's triumphant –  
But the fine Ear

Winces with delight  
Are Drums too near –

c. 1862

1929

583

A Toad, can die of Light –  
Death is the Common Right  
Of Toads and Men –  
Of Earl and Midge  
The privilege –  
Why swagger, then?  
The Gnat's supremacy is large as Thine –  
Life – is a different Thing –  
So measure Wine –  
Naked of Flask – Naked of Cask –  
Bare Rhine –  
Which Ruby's mine?

c. 1862

1896

584

It ceased to hurt me, though so slow  
I could not feel the Anguish go –  
But only knew by looking back –  
That something – had benumbed the Track –  
Nor when it altered, I could say,  
For I had worn it, every day,  
As constant as the Childish frock –  
I hung upon the Peg, at night.  
But not the Grief – that nestled close  
As needles – ladies softly press  
To Cushions Cheeks –  
To keep their place –  
Nor what consoled it, I could trace –  
Except, whereas 'twas Wilderness –  
It's better – almost Peace –

c. 1862

1929

I like to see it lap the Miles –  
 And lick the Valleys up –  
 And stop to feed itself at Tanks –  
 And then – prodigious step  
 Around a Pile of Mountains –  
 And supercilious peer  
 In Shanties – by the sides of Roads –  
 And then a Quarry pare  
 To fit its Ribs  
 And crawl between  
 Complaining all the while  
 In horrid – hooting stanza –  
 Then chase itself down Hill –  
 And neigh like Boanerges –  
 Then – punctual as a Star  
 Stop – docile and omnipotent  
 At its own stable door –

c. 1862

1891

We talked as Girls do –  
 Fond, and late –  
 We speculated fair, on every subject, but the Grave –  
 Of ours, none affair –  
 We handled Destinies, as cool –  
 As we – Disposers – be –  
 And God, a Quiet Party  
 To our Authority –  
 But fondest, dwelt upon Ourselves  
 As we eventual – be –  
 When Girls to Women, softly raised  
 We – occupy – Degree –  
 We parted with a contract  
 To cherish, and to write

But Heaven made both, impossible  
Before another night.

c. 1862

1929

587

Empty my Heart, of Thee –  
Its single Artery –  
Begin, and leave Thee out –  
Simply Extinction's Date –

Much Billow hath the Sea –  
One Baltic – They –  
Subtract Thyself, in play,  
And not enough of me  
Is left – to put away –  
"Myself" meant Thee –

Erase the Root – no Tree –  
Thee – then – no me –  
The Heavens stripped –  
Eternity's vast pocket, picked –

c. 1862

1929

588

I cried at Pity – not at Pain –  
I heard a Woman say  
"Poor Child" – and something in her voice  
Convicted me – of me –

So long I fainted, to myself  
It seemed the common way,  
And Health, and Laughter, Curious things –  
To look at, like a Toy –

To sometimes hear "Rich people" buy  
And see the Parcel rolled –  
And carried, I supposed – to Heaven,  
For children, made of Gold –

[ 287 ]

But not to touch, or wish for,  
Or think of, with a sigh –  
And so and so – had been to me,  
Had God willed differently

I wish I knew that Woman's name –  
So when she comes this way,  
To hold my life, and hold my ears  
For fear I hear her say

She's "sorry I am dead" – again –  
Just when the Grave and I –  
Have sobbed ourselves almost to sleep,  
Our only Lullaby –

c 1862

1896

589

The Night was wide, and furnished scant  
With but a single Star –  
That often as a Cloud it met –  
Blew out itself – for fear –

The Wind pursued the little Bush –  
And drove away the Leaves  
November left – then clambered up  
And fretted in the Eaves –

No Squirrel went abroad –  
A Dog's belated feet  
Like intermittent Plush, he heard  
Adown the empty Street –

To feel if Blinds be fast –  
And closer to the fire –  
Her little Rocking Chair to draw –  
And shiver for the Poor –

The Housewife's gentle Task –  
How pleasanter – said she

[ 288 ]

Unto the Sofa opposite –  
The Sleet – than May, no Thee –

c. 1862

1891

590

Did you ever stand in a Cavern's Mouth –  
Widths out of the Sun –  
And look – and shudder, and block your breath –  
And deem to be alone

In such a place, what horror,  
How Goblin it would be –  
And fly, as 'twere pursuing you?  
Then Loneliness – looks so –

Did you ever look in a Cannon's face –  
Between whose Yellow eye –  
And yours – the Judgment intervened –  
The Question of "To die" –

Extemporizing in your ear  
As cool as Satyr's Drums –  
If you remember, and were saved –  
It's liker so – it seems –

c. 1862

1935

591

To interrupt His Yellow Plan  
The Sun does not allow  
Caprices of the Atmosphere –  
And even when the Snow

Heaves Balls of Specks, like Vicious Boy  
Directly in His Eye –  
Does not so much as turn His Head  
Busy with Majesty –

'Tis His to stimulate the Earth –  
And magnetize the Sea –

And bind Astronomy, in place,  
Yet Any passing by

Would deem Ourselves – the busier  
As the Minutest Bee  
That rides – emits a Thunder –  
A Bomb – to justify –

c. 1862

1929

592

What care the Dead, for Chanticleer –  
What care the Dead for Day?  
'Tis late your Sunrise vex their face –  
And Purple Ribaldry – of Morning

Pour as blank on them  
As on the Tier of Wall  
The Mason builded, yesterday,  
And equally as cool –

What care the Dead for Summer?  
The Solstice had no Sun  
Could waste the Snow before their Gate –  
And knew One Bird a Tune –

Could thrill their Mortised Ear  
Of all the Birds that be –  
This One – beloved of Mankind  
Henceforward cherished be –

What care the Dead for Winter?  
Themselves as easy freeze –  
June Noon – as January Night –  
As soon the South – her Breeze

Of Sycamore – or Cinnamon –  
Deposit in a Stone  
And put a Stone to keep it Warm –  
Give Spices – unto Men –

c 1862

1932

I think I was enchanted  
 When first a sombre Girl –  
 I read that Foreign Lady –  
 The Dark – felt beautiful –

And whether it was noon at night –  
 Or only Heaven – at Noon –  
 For very Lunacy of Light  
 I had not power to tell –

The Bees – became as Butterflies –  
 The Butterflies – as Swans –  
 Approached – and spurned the narrow Grass –  
 And just the meanest Tunes

That Nature murmured to herself  
 To keep herself in Cheer –  
 I took for Giants – practising  
 Titanic Opera –

The Days – to Mighty Metres stept –  
 The Homeliest – adorned  
 As if unto a Jubilee  
 'Twere suddenly confirmed –

I could not have defined the change –  
 Conversion of the Mind  
 Like Sanctifying in the Soul –  
 Is witnessed – not explained –

'Twas a Divine Insanity –  
 The Danger to be Sane  
 Should I again experience –  
 'Tis Antidote to turn –

To Tomes of solid Witchcraft –  
 Magicians be asleep –  
 But Magic – hath an Element  
 Like Deity – to keep –

The Battle fought between the Soul  
 And No Man – is the One  
 Of all the Battles prevalent –  
 By far the Greater One –

No News of it is had abroad –  
 Its Bodiless Campaign  
 Establishes, and terminates –  
 Invisible – Unknown –

Nor History – record it –  
 As Legions of a Night  
 The Sunrise scatters – These endure –  
 Enact – and terminate –

c. 1862

1929

Like Mighty Foot Lights – burned the Red  
 At Bases of the Trees –  
 The far Theatricals of Day  
 Exhibiting – to These –

'Twas Universe – that did applaud –  
 While Chiefest – of the Crowd –  
 Enabled by his Royal Dress –  
 Myself distinguished God –

c. 1862

1891

When I was small, a Woman died –  
 Today – her Only Boy  
 Went up from the Potomac –  
 His face all Victory

To look at her – How slowly  
 The Seasons must have turned  
 Till Bullets clipt an Angle  
 And He passed quickly round –

If pride shall be in Paradise –  
Ourselves cannot decide –  
Of their imperial Conduct –  
No person testified –

But, proud in Apparition –  
That Woman and her Boy  
Pass back and forth, before my Brain  
As even in the sky –

I'm confident that Bravoes –  
Perpetual break abroad  
For Braveries, remote as this  
In Scarlet Maryland –

1890

597

It always felt to me – a wrong  
To that Old Moses – done –  
To let him see – the Canaan –  
Without the entering –

And tho' in soberer moments –  
No Moses there can be  
I'm satisfied – the Romance  
In point of injury –

Surpasses sharper stated –  
Of Stephen – or of Paul –  
For these – were only put to death –  
While God's adroiter will

On Moses – seemed to fasten  
With tantalizing Play  
As Boy – should deal with lesser Boy –  
To prove ability.

The fault – was doubtless Israel's –  
Myself – had banned the Tribes –  
And ushered Grand Old Moses  
In Pentateuchal Robes

Upon the Broad Possession  
'Twas little – But titled Him – to see –  
Old Man on Nebo! Late as this –  
My justice bleeds – for Thee!

c. 1862

1929

598

Three times – we parted – Breath – and I –  
Three times – He would not go –  
But strove to stir the lifeless Fan  
The Waters – strove to stay.

Three Times – the Billows tossed me up –  
Then caught me – like a Ball –  
Then made Blue faces in my face –  
And pushed away a sail

That crawled Leagues off – I liked to see –  
For thinking – while I die –  
How pleasant to behold a Thing  
Where Human faces – be –

The Waves grew sleepy – Breath – did not –  
The Winds – like Children – lulled –  
Then Sunrise kissed my Chrysalis –  
And I stood up – and lived –

c. 1862

1929

599

There is a pain – so utter –  
It swallows substance up –  
Then covers the Abyss with Trance –  
So Memory can step  
Around – across – upon it –  
As one within a Swoon –  
Goes safely – where an open eye –  
Would drop Him – Bone by Bone.

c. 1862

1929

It troubled me as once I was –  
 For I was once a Child –  
 Concluding how an Atom – fell –  
 And yet the Heavens – held –

The Heavens weighed the most – by far –  
 Yet Blue – and solid – stood –  
 Without a Bolt – that I could prove –  
 Would Giants – understand?

Life set me larger – problems –  
 Some I shall keep – to solve  
 Till Algebra is easier –  
 Or simpler proved – above –

Then – too – be comprehended –  
 What sorer – puzzled me –  
 Why Heaven did not break away –  
 And tumble – Blue – on me –

c. 1862

1945

A still – Volcano – Life –  
 That flickered in the night –  
 When it was dark enough to do  
 Without erasing sight –

A quiet – Earthquake Style –  
 Too subtle to suspect  
 By natures this side Naples –  
 The North cannot detect

The Solemn – Torrid – Symbol –  
 The lips that never lie –  
 Whose hissing Corals part – and shut –  
 And Cities – ooze away –

c. 1862

1929

Of Brussels – it was not –  
 Of Kidderminster? Nay –  
 The Winds did buy it of the Woods –  
 They – sold it unto me

It was a gentle price –  
 The poorest – could afford –  
 It was within the frugal purse  
 Of Beggar – or of Bird –

Of small and spicy Yards –  
 In hue – a mellow Dun –  
 Of Sunshine – and of Sere – Composed –  
 But, principally – of Sun –

The Wind – unrolled it fast –  
 And spread it on the Ground –  
 Upholsterer of the Pines – is He –  
 Upholsterer – of the Pond –

c. 1862

1945

He found my Being – set it up –  
 Adjusted it to place –  
 Then carved his name – upon it –  
 And bade it to the East

Be faithful – in his absence –  
 And he would come again –  
 With Equipage of Amber –  
 That time – to take it Home –

c. 1862

1945

Unto my Books – so good to turn –  
 Far ends of tired Days –  
 It half endears the Abstinence –  
 And Pain – is missed – in Praise –

As Flavors – cheer Retarded Guests  
With Banquettings to be –  
So Spices – stimulate the time  
Till my small Library –

It may be Wilderness – without –  
Far feet of failing Men –  
But Holiday – excludes the night –  
And it is Bells – within –

I thank these Kinsmen of the Shelf –  
Their Countenances Kid  
Enamor – in Prospective –  
And satisfy – obtained –

c. 1862

1891

605

The Spider holds a Silver Ball  
In unperceived Hands –  
And dancing softly to Himself  
His Yarn of Pearl – unwinds –

He plies from Nought to Nought –  
In unsubstantial Trade –  
Supplants our Tapestries with His –  
In half the period –

An Hour to rear supreme  
His Continents of Light –  
Then dangle from the Housewife's Broom –  
His Boundaries – forgot –

c. 1862

1945

606

The Trees like Tassels – hit – and swung –  
There seemed to rise a Tune  
From Miniature Creatures  
Accompanying the Sun –

Far Psalteries of Summer –  
Enamoring the Ear  
They never yet did satisfy –  
Remotest – when most fair

The Sun shone whole at intervals –  
Then Half – then utter hid –  
As if Himself were optional  
And had Estates of Cloud

Sufficient to enfold Him  
Eternally from view –  
Except it were a whim of His  
To let the Orchards grow –

A Bird sat careless on the fence –  
One gossiped in the Lane  
On silver matters charmed a Snake  
Just winding round a Stone –

Bright Flowers slit a Calyx  
And soared upon a Stem  
Like Hindered Flags – Sweet hoisted –  
With Spices – in the Hem –

'Twas more – I cannot mention –  
How mean – to those that see –  
Vandyke's Delineation  
Of Nature's – Summer Day!

c. 1862

1935

607

Of nearness to her sundered Things  
The Soul has special times –  
When Dimness – looks the Oddity –  
Distinctness – easy – seems –

The Shapes we buried, dwell about,  
Familiar, in the Rooms –  
Untarnished by the Sepulchre,  
The Mouldering Playmate comes –

[ 298 ]

In just the Jacket that he wore –  
Long buttoned in the Mold  
Since we – old mornings, Children – played –  
Divided – by a world –

The Grave yields back her Robberies –  
The Years, our pilfered Things –  
Bright Knots of Apparitions  
Salute us, with their wings –

As we – it were – that perished –  
Themselves – had just remained till we rejoin them –  
And 'twas they, and not ourself  
That mourned.

c 1862

1929

608

Afraid! Of whom am I afraid?  
Not Death – for who is He?  
The Porter of my Father's Lodge  
As much abasheth me!

Of Life? 'Twere odd I fear [a] thing  
That comprehendeth me  
In one or two existences –  
As Deity decree –

Of Resurrection? Is the East  
Afraid to trust the Morn  
With her fastidious forehead?  
As soon impeach my Crown!

c. 1862

1890

609

I Years had been from Home  
And now before the Door  
I dared not enter, lest a Face  
I never saw before

Stare stolid into mine  
And ask my Business there –

“My Business but a Life I left  
Was such remaining there?”

I leaned upon the Awe –  
I lingered with Before –  
The Second like an Ocean rolled  
And broke against my ear –

I laughed a crumbling Laugh  
That I could fear a Door  
Who Consternation compassed  
And never winced before.

I fitted to the Latch  
My Hand, with trembling care  
Lest back the awful Door should spring  
And leave me in the Floor –

Then moved my Fingers off  
As cautiously as Glass  
And held my ears, and like a Thief  
Fled gasping from the House –

c 1872

1891

610

You'll find – it when you try to die –  
The Easier to let go –  
For recollecting such as went –  
You could not spare – you know.

And though their places somewhat filled –  
As did their Marble names  
With Moss – they never grew so full –  
You chose the newer names –

And when this World – sets further back –  
As Dying – say it does –  
The former love – distincter grows –  
And supersedes the fresh –

And Thought of them – so fair invites –  
It looks too tawdry Grace

[ 300 ]

To stay behind – with just the Toys  
We bought – to ease their place –

c. 1862

1929

611

I see thee better – in the Dark –  
I do not need a Light –  
The Love of Thee – a Prism be –  
Excelling Violet –

I see thee better for the Years  
That hunch themselves between –  
The Miner's Lamp – sufficient be –  
To nullify the Mine –

And in the Grave – I see Thee best –  
Its little Panels be  
Aglow – All ruddy – with the Light  
I held so high, for Thee –

What need of Day –  
To Those whose Dark – hath so – surpassing Sun –  
It deem it be – Continually –  
At the Meridian?

c. 1862

1914

612

It would have starved a Gnat –  
To live so small as I –  
And yet I was a living Child –  
With Food's necessity

Upon me – like a Claw –  
I could no more remove  
Than I could coax a Leech away –  
Or make a Dragon – move –

Nor like the Gnat – had I –  
The privilege to fly  
And seek a Dinner for myself –  
How mightier He – than I –

Nor like Himself – the Art  
Upon the Window Pane  
To gad my little Being out –  
And not begin – again –

c. 1862

1945

613

They shut me up in Prose –  
As when a little Girl  
They put me in the Closet –  
Because they liked me “still” –  
Still! Could themself have peeped –  
And seen my Brain – go round –  
They might as wise have lodged a Bird  
For Treason – in the Pound –  
Himself has but to will  
And easy as a Star  
Abolish his Captivity –  
And laugh – No more have I –

c. 1862

1935

614

In falling Timbers buried –  
There breathed a Man –  
Outside – the spades – were plying –  
The Lungs – within –  
Could He – know – they sought Him –  
Could They – know – He breathed –  
Horrid Sand Partition –  
Neither – could be heard –  
Never slacked the Diggers –  
But when Spades had done –  
Oh, Reward of Anguish,  
It was dying – Then –

[ 302 ]

Many Things – are fruitless –  
’Tis a Baffling Earth –  
But there is no Gratitude  
Like the Grace – of Death –

c 1862

1945

615

Our journey had advanced –  
Our feet were almost come  
To that odd Fork in Being’s Road –  
Eternity – by Term –

Our pace took sudden awe –  
Our feet – reluctant – led –  
Before – were Cities – but Between –  
The Forest of the Dead –

Retreat – was out of Hope –  
Behind – a Sealed Route –  
Eternity’s White Flag – Before –  
And God – at every Gate –

c 1862

1891

616

I rose – because He sank –  
I thought it would be opposite –  
But when his power dropped –  
My Soul grew straight.

I cheered my fainting Prince –  
I sang firm – even – Chants –  
I helped his Film – with Hymn –

And when the Dews drew off  
That held his Forehead stiff –  
I met him –  
Balm to Balm –

I told him Best – must pass  
Through this low Arch of Flesh –

[ 363 ]

No Casque so brave  
It spurn the Grave –

I told him Worlds I knew  
Where Emperors grew –  
Who recollected us  
If we were true –

And so with Thews of Hymn –  
And Sinew from within –  
And ways I knew not that I knew – till then –  
I lifted Him –

c. 1862

1929

617

Don't put up my Thread and Needle –  
I'll begin to Sew  
When the Birds begin to whistle –  
Better Stitches – so –

These were bent – my sight got crooked –  
When my mind – is plain  
I'll do seams – a Queen's endeavor  
Would not blush to own –

Hems – too fine for Lady's tracing  
To the sightless Knot –  
Tucks – of dainty interspersion –  
Like a dotted Dot –

Leave my Needle in the furrow –  
Where I put it down –  
I can make the zigzag stitches  
Straight – when I am strong –

Till then – dreaming I am sewing  
Fetch the seam I missed –  
Closer – so I – at my sleeping –  
Still surmise I stitch –

c. 1862

1929

At leisure is the Soul  
 That gets a Staggering Blow –  
 The Width of Life – before it spreads  
 Without a thing to do –

It begs you give it Work –  
 But just the placing Pins –  
 Or humblest Patchwork – Children do –  
 To Help its Vacant Hands –

c. 1862

1929

Glee – The great storm is over –  
 Four – have recovered the Land –  
 Forty – gone down together –  
 Into the boiling Sand –

Ring – for the Scant Salvation –  
 Toll – for the bonnie Souls –  
 Neighbor – and friend – and Bridegroom –  
 Spinning upon the Shoals –

How they will tell the Story –  
 When Winter shake the Door –  
 Till the Children urge –  
 But the Forty –  
 Did they – come back no more?

Then a softness – suffuse the Story –  
 And a silence – the Teller's eye –  
 And the Children – no further question –  
 And only the Sea – reply –

c. 1862

1890

It makes no difference abroad –  
 The Seasons – fit – the same –

The Mornings blossom into Noons –  
And split their Pods of Flame –

Wild flowers – kindle in the Woods –  
The Brooks slam – all the Day –  
No Black bird bates his Banjo –  
For passing Calvary –

Auto da Fe – and Judgment –  
Are nothing to the Bee –  
His separation from His Rose –  
To Him – sums Misery –

c. 1862

1890

621

I asked no other thing –  
No other – was denied –  
I offered Being – for it –  
The Mighty Merchant sneered –

Brazil? He twirled a Button –  
Without a glance my way –  
“But – Madam – is there nothing else –  
That We can show – Today?”

c. 1862

1890

622

To know just how He suffered – would be dear –  
To know if any Human eyes were near  
To whom He could entrust His wavering gaze –  
Until it settled broad – on Paradise –

To know if He was patient – part content –  
Was Dying as He thought – or different –  
Was it a pleasant Day to die –  
And did the Sunshine face His way –

What was His furthest mind – Of Home – or God –  
Or what the Distant say –

At news that He ceased Human Nature  
Such a Day –

And Wishes – Had He Any –  
Just His Sigh – Accented –  
Had been legible – to Me –  
And was He Confident until  
Ill fluttered out – in Everlasting Well –

And if He spoke – What name was Best –  
What last  
What One broke off with  
At the Drowsiest –

Was He afraid – or tranquil –  
Might He know  
How Conscious Consciousness – could grow –  
Till Love that was – and Love too best to be –  
Meet – and the Junction be Eternity

c. 1862

1890

623

It was too late for Man –  
But early, yet, for God –  
Creation – impotent to help –  
But Prayer – remained – Our Side –

How excellent the Heaven –  
When Earth – cannot be had –  
How hospitable – then – the face  
Of our Old Neighbor – God –

c. 1862

1890

624

Forever – is composed of Nows –  
’Tis not a different time –  
Except for Infiniteness –  
And Latitude of Home –

From this – experienced Here –  
Remove the Dates – to These –  
Let Months dissolve in further Months –  
And Years – exhale in Years –  
Without Debate – or Pause –  
Or Celebrated Days –  
No different Our Years would be  
From Anno Domini's –

c. 1862

1929

625

'Twas a long Parting – but the time  
For Interview – had Come –  
Before the Judgment Seat of God –  
The last – and second time

These Fleshless Lovers met –  
A Heaven in a Gaze –  
A Heaven of Heavens – the Privilege  
Of one another's Eyes –

No Lifetime – on Them –  
Appareled as the new  
Unborn – except They had beheld –  
Born infinitesimally – now –

Was Bridal – e'er like This?  
A Paradise – the Host –  
And Cherubim – and Seraphim –  
The unobtrusive Guest –

c. 1862

1890

626

Only God – detect the Sorrow –  
Only God –  
The Jehovahs – are no Babblers –  
Unto God –

God the Son – confide it –  
Still secure –  
God the Spirit's Honor –  
Just as sure –

c. 1862

1935

627

The Tint I cannot take – is best –  
The Color too remote  
That I could show it in Bazaar –  
A Guinea at a sight –

The fine – impalpable Array –  
That swaggers on the eye  
Like Cleopatra's Company –  
Repeated – in the sky –

The Moments of Dominion  
That happen on the Soul  
And leave it with a Discontent  
Too exquisite – to tell –

The eager look – on Landscapes –  
As if they just repressed  
Some Secret – that was pushing  
Like Chariots – in the Vest –

The Pleading of the Summer –  
That other Frank – of Snow –  
That Cushions Mystery with Tulle,  
For fear the Squirrels – know.

Their Graspless manners – mock us –  
Until the Cheated Eye  
Shuts arrogantly – in the Grave –  
Another way – to see –

c. 1862

1929

They called me to the Window, for  
 "Twas Sunset" – Some one said –  
 I only saw a Sapphire Farm –  
 And just a Single Herd –

Of Opal Cattle – feeding far  
 Upon so vain a Hill –  
 As even while I looked – dissolved –  
 Nor Cattle were – nor Soil –

But in their stead – a Sea – displayed –  
 And Ships – of such a size  
 As Crew of Mountains – could afford –  
 And Decks – to seat the skies –

This – too – the Showman rubbed away –  
 And when I looked again –  
 Nor Farm – nor Opal Herd – was there –  
 Nor Mediterranean –

c. 1862

1945

I watched the Moon around the House  
 Until upon a Pane –  
 She stopped – a Traveller's privilege – for Rest –  
 And there upon

I gazed – as at a stranger –  
 The Lady in the Town  
 Doth think no incivility  
 To lift her Glass – upon –

But never Stranger justified  
 The Curiosity  
 Like Mine – for not a Foot – nor Hand –  
 Nor Formula – had she –

But like a Head – a Guillotine  
 Slid carelessly away –

Did independent, Amber -  
Sustain her in the sky -

Or like a Stemless Flower -  
Upheld in rolling Air  
By finer Gravitations -  
Than bind Philosopher -

No Hunger - had she - nor an Inn -  
Her Toilette - to suffice -  
Nor Avocation - nor Concern  
For little Mysteries

As harass us - like Life - and Death -  
And Afterwards - or Nay -  
But seemed engrossed to Absolute -  
With shining - and the Sky -

The privilege to scrutinize  
Was scarce upon my Eyes  
When, with a Silver practise -  
She vaulted out of Gaze -

And next - I met her on a Cloud -  
Myself too far below  
To follow her superior Road -  
Or its advantage - Blue -

c. 1862

1945

630

The Lightning playeth - all the while -  
But when He singeth - then -  
Ourselves are conscious He exist -  
And we approach Him - stern -

With Insulators - and a Glove -  
Whose short - sepulchral Bass  
Alarms us - tho' His Yellow feet  
May pass - and counterpass -

Upon the Ropes - above our Head -  
Continual - with the News -

[ 311 ]

Nor We so much as check our speech –  
Nor stop to cross Ourselves –

c. 1862

1945

631

Ourselves were wed one summer – dear –  
Your Vision – was in June –  
And when Your little Lifetime failed,  
I wearied – too – of mine –

And overtaken in the Dark –  
Where You had put me down –  
By Some one carrying a Light –  
I – too – received the Sign.

'Tis true – Our Futures different lay –  
Your Cottage – faced the sun –  
While Oceans – and the North must be –  
On every side of mine

'Tis true, Your Garden led the Bloom,  
For mine – in Frosts – was sown –  
And yet, one Summer, we were Queens –  
But You – were crowned in June –

c. 1862

1945

632

The Brain – is wider than the Sky –  
For – put them side by side –  
The one the other will contain  
With ease – and You – beside –

The Brain is deeper than the sea –  
For – hold them – Blue to Blue –  
The one the other will absorb –  
As Sponges – Buckets – do –

The Brain is just the weight of God –  
For – Heft them – Pound for Pound –

[ 312 ]

And they will differ – if they do –  
As Syllable from Sound –

c 1862

1896

633

When Bells stop ringing – Church – begins –  
The Positive – of Bells –  
When Cogs – stop – that's Circumference –  
The Ultimate – of Wheels.

c. 1862

1945

634

You'll know Her – by Her Foot –  
The smallest Gamboge Hand  
With Fingers – where the Toes should be –  
Would more affront the Sand –

Than this Quaint Creature's Boot –  
Adjusted by a Stem –  
Without a Button – I could vouch –  
Unto a Velvet Limb –

You'll know Her – by Her Vest –  
Tight fitting – Orange – Brown –  
Inside a Jacket duller –  
She wore when she was born –

Her Cap is small – and snug –  
Constructed for the Winds –  
She'd pass for Barehead – short way off –  
But as She Closer stands –

So finer 'tis than Wool –  
You cannot feel the Seam –  
Nor is it Clasped unto of Band –  
Nor held upon – of Brim –

You'll know Her – by Her Voice –  
At first – a doubtful Tone –

[ 313 ]

A sweet endeavor – but as March  
To April – hurries on –

She squanders on your Ear  
Such Arguments of Pearl –  
You beg the Robin in your Bram  
To keep the other – still –

c. 1862

1945

635

I think the longest Hour of all  
Is when the Cars have come –  
And we are waiting for the Coach –  
It seems as though the Time

Indignant – that the Joy was come –  
Did block the Gilded Hands –  
And would not let the Seconds by –  
But slowest instant – ends –

The Pendulum begins to count –  
Like little Scholars – loud –  
The steps grow thicker – in the Hall –  
The Heart begins to crowd –

Then I – my timid service done –  
Tho' service 'twas, of Love –  
Take up my little Violin –  
And further North – remove.

c. 1862

1945

636

The Way I read a Letter's – this –  
'Tis first – I lock the Door –  
And push it with my fingers – next –  
For transport it be sure –

And then I go the furthest off  
To counteract a knock –

Then draw my little Letter forth  
And slowly pick the lock –

Then – glancing narrow, at the Wall –  
And narrow at the floor  
For firm Conviction of a Mouse  
Not exorcised before –

Peruse how infinite I am  
To no one that You – know –  
And sigh for lack of Heaven – but not  
The Heaven God bestow –

c. 1862

1891

637

The Child's faith is new –  
Whole – like His Principle –  
Wide – like the Sunrise  
On fresh Eyes –  
Never had a Doubt –  
Laughs – at a Scruple –  
Believes all sham  
But Paradise –

Credits the World –  
Deems His Dominion  
Broadest of Sovereignities –  
And Caesar – mean –  
In the Comparison –  
Baseless Emperor –  
Ruler of Nought,  
Yet swaying all –

Grown bye and bye  
To hold mistaken  
His pretty estimates  
Of Prickly Things  
He gains the skill  
Sorrowful – as certain –

Men – to anticipate  
Instead of Kings –

c 1862

1929

638

To my small Hearth His fire came –  
And all my House aglow  
Did fan and rock, with sudden light –  
'Twas Sunrise – 'twas the Sky –  
Impanelled from no Summer brief –  
With limit of Decay –  
'Twas Noon – without the News of Night –  
Nay, Nature, it was Day –

c. 1862

1932

639

My Portion is Defeat – today –  
A paler luck than Victory –  
Less Paeans – fewer Bells –  
The Drums don't follow Me – with tunes –  
Defeat – a somewhat slower – means –  
More Arduous than Balls –  
'Tis populous with Bone and stain –  
And Men too straight to stoop again,  
And Piles of solid Moan –  
And Chips of Blank – in Boyish Eyes –  
And scraps of Prayer –  
And Death's surprise,  
Stamped visible – in Stone –  
There's somewhat prouder, over there –  
The Trumpets tell it to the Air –  
How different Victory  
To Him who has it – and the One  
Who to have had it, would have been  
Contenteder – to die –

c. 1862

1929

I cannot live with You –  
 It would be Life –  
 And Life is over there –  
 Behind the Shelf

The Sexton keeps the Key to –  
 Putting up  
 Our Life – His Porcelain –  
 Like a Cup –

Discarded of the Housewife –  
 Quaint – or Broke –  
 A newer Sevres pleases –  
 Old Ones crack –

I could not die – with You –  
 For One must wait  
 To shut the Other's Gaze down –  
 You – could not –

And I – Could I stand by  
 And see You – freeze –  
 Without my Right of Frost –  
 Death's privilege?

Nor could I rise – with You –  
 Because Your Face  
 Would put out Jesus' –  
 That New Grace

Glow plain – and foreign  
 On my homesick Eye –  
 Except that You than He  
 Shone closer by –

They'd judge Us – How –  
 For You – served Heaven – You know,  
 Or sought to –  
 I could not –

Because You saturated Sight –  
 And I had no more Eyes . . . .

For sordid excellence  
 As Paradise  
 And were You lost, I would be –  
 Though My Name  
 Rang loudest  
 On the Heavenly fame –  
 And were You – saved –  
 And I – condemned to be  
 Where You were not –  
 That self – were Hell to Me –  
 So We must meet apart –  
 You there – I – here –  
 With just the Door ajar  
 That Oceans are – and Prayer –  
 And that White Sustenance –  
 Despair –

c 1862

1890

641

Size circumscribes – it has no room  
 For petty furniture –  
 The Giant tolerates no Gnat  
 For Ease of Gianture –  
 Repudiates it, all the more –  
 Because intrinsic size  
 Ignores the possibility  
 Of Calumnies – or Flies.

c. 1862

1935

642

Me from Myself – to banish –  
 Had I Art –  
 Impregnable my Fortress  
 Unto All Heart –

[ 318 ]

But since Myself – assault Me –  
How have I peace  
Except by subjugating  
Consciousness?

And since We're mutual Monarch  
How this be  
Except by Abdication –  
Me – of Me?

1929

643

I could suffice for Him, I knew –  
He – could suffice for Me –  
Yet Hesitating Fractions – Both  
Surveyed Infinity –  
“Would I be Whole” He sudden broached –  
My syllable rebelled –  
’Twas face to face with Nature – forced –  
’Twas face to face with God –  
Withdrew the Sun – to Other Wests –  
Withdrew the furthest Star  
Before Decision – stooped to speech –  
And then – be audibler  
The Answer of the Sea unto  
The Motion of the Moon –  
Herself adjust Her Tides – unto –  
Could I – do else – with Mine?

1935

644

You left me – Sire – two Legacies –  
A Legacy of Love  
A Heavenly Father would suffice  
Had He the offer of –

[ 319 ]

You left me Boundaries of Pain –  
Capacious as the Sea –  
Between Eternity and Time –  
Your Consciousness – and Me –

c. 1862

1890

645

Bereavement in their death to feel  
Whom We have never seen –  
A Vital Kinsmanship import  
Our Soul and theirs – between –  
  
For Stranger – Strangers do not mourn –  
There be Immortal friends  
Whom Death see first – 'tis news of this  
That paralyze Ourselves –  
  
Who, vital only to Our Thought –  
Such Presence bear away  
In dying – 'tis as if Our Souls  
Absconded – suddenly –

c. 1862

1935

646

I think to Live – may be a Bliss  
To those who dare to try –  
Beyond my limit to conceive –  
My lip – to testify –  
  
I think the Heart I former wore  
Could widen – till to me  
The Other, like the little Bank  
Appear – unto the Sea –  
  
I think the Days – could every one  
In Ordination stand –  
And Majesty – be easier –  
Than an inferior kind –

No numb alarm – lest Difference come –  
No Goblin – on the Bloom –  
No start in Apprehension's Ear,  
No Bankruptcy – no Doom –

But Certainties of Sun –  
Midsummer – in the Mind –  
A steadfast South – upon the Soul –  
Her Polar time – behind –

The Vision – pondered long –  
So plausible becomes  
That I esteem the fiction – real –  
The Real – fictitious seems –

How bountiful the Dream –  
What Plenty – it would be –  
Had all my Life but been Mistake  
Just rectified – in Thee

1935

647

A little Road – not made of Man –  
Enabled of the Eye –  
Accessible to Thill of Bee –  
Or Cart of Butterfly –

If Town it have – beyond itself –  
'Tis that – I cannot say –  
I only know – no Curricule that rumble there  
Bear Me –

1890

648

Promise This – When You be Dying –  
Some shall summon Me –  
Mine belong Your latest Sighing –  
Mine – to Belt Your Eye –

[ 321 ]

Not with Coins – though they be Minted  
From an Emperor's Hand –  
Be my lips – the only Buckle  
Your low Eyes – demand –

Mine to stay – when all have wandered –  
To devise once more  
If the Life be too surrendered –  
Life of Mine – restore –

Poured like this – My Whole Libation –  
Just that You should see  
Bliss of Death – Life's Bliss extol thro'  
Imitating You –

Mine – to guard Your Narrow Precinct –  
To seduce the Sun  
Longest on Your South, to linger,  
Largest Dews of Morn

To demand, in Your low favor  
Lest the Jealous Grass  
Greener lean – Or fonder cluster  
Round some other face –

Mine to supplicate Madonna –  
If Madonna be  
Could behold so far a Creature –  
Christ – omitted – Me –

Just to follow Your dear feature –  
Ne'er so far behind –  
For My Heaven –  
Had I not been  
Most enough – denied?

c. 1862

1935

649

Her Sweet turn to leave the Homestead  
Came the Darker Way –

[ 322 ]

Carriages – Be sure – and Guests – too –  
But for Holiday

'Tis more pitiful Endeavor  
Than did Loaded Sea  
O'er the Curls attempt to caper  
It had cast away –

Never Bride had such Assembling –  
Never kinsmen kneeled  
To salute so fair a Forehead –  
Garland be indeed –

Fitter Feet – of Her before us –  
Than whatever Brow  
Art of Snow – or Trick of Lily  
Possibly bestow

Of Her Father – Whoso ask Her –  
He shall seek as high  
As the Palm – that serve the Desert –  
To obtain the Sky –

Distance – be Her only Motion –  
If 'tis Nay – or Yes –  
Acquiescence – or Demurral –  
Whosoever guess –

He – must pass the Crystal Angle  
That obscure Her face –  
He – must have achieved in person  
Equal Paradise –

c. 1862

1935

650

Pain – has an Element of Blank –  
It cannot recollect  
When it begun – or if there were  
A time when it was not –  
It has no Future – but itself –  
Its Infinite contain

[ 323 ]

Its Past – enlightened to perceive  
New Periods – of Pain.

c. 1862

1890

651

So much Summer  
Me for showing  
Illegitimate –  
Would a Smile's minute bestowing  
Too exorbitant

To the Lady  
With the Guinea  
Look – if She should know  
Crumb of Mine  
A Robin's Larder  
Would suffice to stow –

c. 1862

1945

652

A Prison gets to be a friend –  
Between its Ponderous face  
And Ours – a Kinsmanship express –  
And in its narrow Eyes –

We come to look with gratitude  
For the appointed Beam  
It deal us – stated as our food –  
And hungered for – the same –

We learn to know the Planks –  
That answer to Our feet –  
So miserable a sound – at first –  
Nor ever now – so sweet –

As plashing in the Pools –  
When Memory was a Boy –  
But a Demurer Circuit –  
A Geometric Joy –

The Posture of the Key  
That interrupt the Day  
To Our Endeavor – Not so real  
The Cheek of Liberty –

As this Phantasm Steel –  
Whose features – Day and Night –  
Are present to us – as Our Own –  
And as escapeless – quite –

The narrow Round – the Stint –  
The slow exchange of Hope –  
For something passiver – Content  
Too steep for looking up –

The Liberty we knew  
Avoided – like a Dream –  
Too wide for any Night but Heaven –  
If That – indeed – redeem –

1929

653

Of Being is a Bird  
The likest to the Down  
An Easy Breeze do put afloat  
The General Heavens – upon –

It soars – and shifts – and whirls –  
And measures with the Clouds  
In easy – even – dazzling pace –  
No different the Birds –

Except a Wake of Music  
Accompany their feet –  
As did the Down emit a Tune –  
For Ecstasy – of it

1929

A long – long Sleep – A famous – Sleep –  
 That makes no show for Morn –  
 By Stretch of Limb – or stir of Lid –  
 An independent One –

Was ever idleness like This?  
 Upon a Bank of Stone  
 To bask the Centuries away –  
 Nor once look up – for Noon?

c. 1862

1896

Without this – there is nought –  
 All other Riches be  
 As is the Twitter of a Bird –  
 Heard opposite the Sea –

I could not care – to gain  
 A lesser than the Whole –  
 For did not this include themself –  
 As Seams – include the Ball?

I wished a way might be  
 My Heart to subdivide –  
 'Twould magnify – the Gratitude –  
 And not reduce – the Gold –

c. 1862

1935

The name – of it – is “Autumn” –  
 The hue – of it – is Blood –  
 An Artery – upon the Hill –  
 A Vein – along the Road –

Great Globules – in the Alleys –  
 And Oh, the Shower of Stain –  
 When Winds – upset the Basin –  
 And spill the Scarlet Rain –

It sprinkles Bonnets – far below –  
It gathers ruddy Pools –  
Then – eddies like a Rose – away –  
Upon Vermilion Wheels –

1892

657

I dwell in Possibility –  
A fairer House than Prose –  
More numerous of Windows –  
Superior – for Doors –  
Of Chambers as the Cedars –  
Impregnable of Eye –  
And for an Everlasting Roof  
The Gambrels of the Sky –  
Of Visitors – the fairest –  
For Occupation – This –  
The spreading wide my narrow Hands  
To gather Paradise –

1929

658

Whole Gulfs – of Red, and Fleets – of Red –  
And Crews – of solid Blood –  
Did place about the West – Tonight –  
As 'twere specific Ground –  
And They – appointed Creatures –  
In Authorized Arrays –  
Due – promptly – as a Drama –  
That bows – and disappears –

1945

659

That first Day, when you praised Me, Sweet,  
And said that I was strong –

[ 327 ]

And could be mighty, if I liked –  
That Day – the Days among –  
Glow Central – like a Jewel  
Between Diverging Golds –  
The Minor One – that gleamed behind –  
And Vaster – of the World's.

c. 1862

1935

660

'Tis good – the looking back on Grief –  
To re-endure a Day –  
We thought the Mighty Funeral –  
Of All Conceived Joy –

To recollect how Busy Grass  
Did meddle – one by one –  
Till all the Grief with Summer – waved  
And none could see the stone.

And though the Woe you have Today  
Be larger – As the Sea  
Exceeds its Unremembered Drop –  
They're Water – equally –

c. 1862

1935

661

Could I but ride indefinite  
As doth the Meadow Bee  
And visit only where I liked  
And No one visit me

And flirt all Day with Buttercups  
And marry whom I may  
And dwell a little everywhere  
Or better, run away

With no Police to follow  
Or chase Him if He do

Till He should jump Peninsulas  
To get away from me –

I said “But just to be a Bee”  
Upon a Raft of Air  
And row in Nowhere all Day long  
And anchor “off the Bar”

What Liberty! So Captives deem  
Who tight in Dungeons are.

c. 1862

1896

662

Embarrassment of one another  
And God  
Is Revelation’s limit,  
Aloud  
Is nothing that is chief,  
But still,  
Divinity dwells under seal.

c 1862

1945

663

Again – his voice is at the door –  
I feel the old *Degree* –  
I hear him ask the servant  
For such an one – as me –

I take a *flower* – as I go –  
My face to *justify* –  
He never *saw* me – *in this life* –  
I might *surprise* his eye!

I cross the Hall with *mingled* steps –  
I – silent – pass the door –  
I look on all this world *contains* –  
*Just his face* – nothing more!

We talk in *careless* – and in *toss* –  
A kind of *plummet* strain –

Each – sounding – shyly –  
Just – how – deep –  
The *other's* one – had been –

We *walk* – I leave my Dog – at home –  
A *tender* – *thoughtful* Moon  
Goes with us – just a little way –  
And – then – we are *alone* –

*Alone* – if *Angels* are “alone” –  
*First time* they *try* the *sky*!  
*Alone* – if those “veiled faces” – be –  
We cannot *count* – on High!

I'd give – to live that hour – *again* –  
The *purple* – *in my Vein* –  
But *He* must *count the drops* – *himself* –  
*My price* for *every stain*!

c. 1862

1945

664

Of all the Souls that stand create –  
I have elected – One –  
When Sense from Spirit – files away –  
And Subterfuge – is done –  
When that which is – and that which was –  
Apart – intrinsic – stand –  
And this brief Drama in the flesh –  
Is shifted – like a Sand –  
When Figures show their royal Front –  
And Mists – are carved away,  
Behold the Atom – I preferred –  
To all the lists of Clay!

c. 1862

1891

665

Dropped into the Ether Acre –  
Wearing the Sod Gown –

Bonnet of Everlasting Laces –  
Brooch – frozen on –

Horses of Blonde – and Coach of Silver –  
Baggage a strapped Pearl –  
Journey of Down – and Whip of Diamond –  
Riding to meet the Earl –

c. 1863

1914

666

Ah, Teneriffe!  
Retreating Mountain!  
Purples of Ages – pause for *you* –  
Sunset – reviews her Sapphire Regiment –  
Day – drops you her Red Adieu!

Still – Clad in your Mail of ices –  
Thigh of Granite – and thew – of Steel –  
Heedless – alike – of pomp – or parting

Ah, Teneriffe!  
I'm kneeling – still –

c. 1863

1914

667

Bloom upon the Mountain – stated –  
Blameless of a Name –  
Efflorescence of a Sunset –  
Reproduced – the same –

Seed, had I, my Purple Sowing  
Should endow the Day –  
Not a Tropic of a Twilight –  
Show itself away –

Who for tilling – to the Mountain  
Come, and disappear –  
Whose be Her Renown, or fading,  
Witness, is not here –

While I state – the Solemn Petals,  
Far as North – and East,  
Far as South and West – expanding –  
Culminate – in Rest –

And the Mountain to the Evening  
Fit His Countenance –  
Indicating, by no Muscle –  
The Experience –

c. 1863

1914

668

“Nature” is what we see –  
The Hill – the Afternoon –  
Squirrel – Eclipse – the Bumble bee –  
Nay – Nature is Heaven –  
Nature is what we hear –  
The Bobolink – the Sea –  
Thunder – the Cricket –  
Nay – Nature is Harmony –  
Nature is what we know –  
Yet have no art to say –  
So impotent Our Wisdom is  
To her Simplicity.

c. 1863

1914

669

No Romance sold unto  
Could so enthrall a Man  
As the perusal of  
His Individual One –  
’Tis Fiction’s – to dilute to Plausibility  
Our Novel – When ’tis small enough  
To Credit – ’Tisn’t true!

c. 1863

1914

One need not be a Chamber – to be Haunted –  
 One need not be a House –  
 The Brain has Corridors – surpassing  
 Material Place –

Far safer, of a Midnight Meeting  
 External Ghost  
 Than its interior Confronting –  
 That Cooler Host.

Far safer, through an Abbey gallop,  
 The Stones a'chase –  
 Than Unarmed, one's a'self encounter –  
 In lonesome Place –

Ourself behind ourself, concealed –  
 Should startle most –  
 Assassin hid in our Apartment  
 Be Horror's least

The Body – borrows a Revolver –  
 He bolts the Door –  
 O'erlooking a superior spectre –  
 Or More –

c. 1863

1891

She dwelleth in the Ground –  
 Where Daffodils – abide –  
 Her Maker – Her Metropolis –  
 The Universe – Her Maid –

To fetch Her Grace – and Hue –  
 And Fairness – and Renown –  
 The Firmament's – To Pluck Her –  
 And fetch Her Thee – be mine –

c. 1863

1945

The Future – never spoke –  
 Nor will He – like the Dumb –  
 Reveal by sign – a syllable  
 Of His Profound To Come –

But when the News be ripe –  
 Presents it – in the Act –  
 Forestalling Preparation –  
 Escape – or Substitute –

Indifferent to Him –  
 The Dower – as the Doom –  
 His Office – but to execute  
 Fate's – Telegram – to Him –

c. 1863

1914

The Love a Life can show Below  
 Is but a filament, I know,  
 Of that diviner thing  
 That faints upon the face of Noon –  
 And smites the Tinder in the Sun –  
 And hinders Gabriel's Wing –

'Tis this – in Music – hints and sways –  
 And far abroad on Summer days –  
 Distils uncertain pain –  
 'Tis this enamors in the East –  
 And tints the Transit in the West  
 With harrowing Iodine –

'Tis this – invites – appalls – endows –  
 Flits – glimmers – proves – dissolves –  
 Returns – suggests – convicts – enchants –  
 Then – flings in Paradise –

c. 1863

1929

674

The Soul that hath a Guest  
Doth seldom go abroad –  
Diviner Crowd at Home –  
Obliterate the need –

And Courtesy forbid  
A Host's departure when  
Upon Himself be visiting  
The Emperor of Men –

1914

675

Essential Oils – are wrung –  
The Attar from the Rose  
Be not expressed by Suns – alone –  
It is the gift of Screws –

The General Rose – decay –  
But this – in Lady's Drawer  
Make Summer – When the Lady lie  
In Ceaseless Rosemary –

1891

676

Least Bee that brew –  
A Honey's Weight  
The Summer multiply –  
Content Her smallest fraction help  
The Amber Quantity –

1945

677

To be alive – is Power –  
Existence – in itself –  
Without a further function –  
Omnipotence – Enough –

[ 335 ]

To be alive – and Will!  
'Tis able as a God –  
The Maker – of Ourselves – be what –  
Such being Finitude!

c. 1863

1914

678

Wolfe demanded during dying  
“Which obtain the Day”?  
“General, the British” – “Easy”  
Answered Wolfe “to die”

Montcalm, his opposing Spirit  
Rendered with a smile  
“Sweet” said he “my own Surrender  
Liberty’s beguile”

c 1863

1945

679

Conscious am I in my Chamber,  
Of a shapeless friend –  
He doth not attest by Posture –  
Nor Confirm – by Word –

Neither Place – need I present Him –  
Fitter Courtesy  
Hospitable intuition  
Of His Company –

Presence – is His furthest license –  
Neither He to Me  
Nor Myself to Him – by Accent –  
Forfeit Probity –

Weariness of Him, were quainter  
Than Monotony  
Knew a Particle – of Space’s  
Vast Society –

Neither if He visit Other –  
Do He dwell – or Nay – know I –  
But Instinct esteem Him  
Immortality –

c. 1863

1929

680

Each Life Converges to some Centre –  
Expressed – or still –  
Exists in every Human Nature  
A Goal –

Embodied scarcely to itself – it may be –  
Too fair  
For Credibility's presumption  
To mar –

Adored with caution – as a Brittle Heaven –  
To reach  
Were hopeless, as the Rainbow's Raiment  
To touch –

Yet persevered toward – sure – for the Distance –  
How high –  
Unto the Saints' slow diligence –  
The Sky –

Ungained – it may be – by a Life's low Venture –  
But then –  
Eternity enable the endeavoring  
Again.

c. 1863

1891

681

Soil of Flint, if steady tilled –  
Will refund the Hand –  
Seed of Palm, by Libyan Sun  
Fructified in Sand –

c. 1863

1896

'Twould ease – a Butterfly –  
 Elate – a Bee –  
 Thou'rt neither –  
 Neither – thy capacity –

But, Blossom, were I,  
 I would rather be  
 Thy moment  
 Than a Bee's Eternity –

Content of fading  
 Is enough for me –  
 Fade I unto Divinity –

And Dying – Lifetime –  
 Ample as the Eye –  
 Her least attention raise on me –

c. 1863

1945

The Soul unto itself  
 Is an imperial friend –  
 Or the most agonizing Spy –  
 An Enemy – could send –

Secure against its own –  
 No treason it can fear –  
 Itself – its Sovereign – of itself  
 The Soul should stand in Awe –

c. 1862

1891

Best Gains – must have the Losses' Test –  
 To constitute them – Gains –

c. 1863

1891

685

Not "Revelation" – 'tis – that waits,  
But our unfurnished eyes –

c. 1863

1891

686

They say that "Time assuages" –  
Time never did assuage –  
An actual suffering strengthens  
As Sinews do, with age –

Time is a Test of Trouble –  
But not a Remedy –  
If such it prove, it prove too  
There was no Malady –

c. 1863

1896

687

I'll send the feather from my Hat!  
Who knows – but at the sight of *that*  
My Sovereign will relent?  
As trinket – worn by faded Child –  
Confronting eyes long – comforted –  
Blisters the Adamant!

c. 1861

1894

688

"*Speech*" – is a prank of *Parliament* –  
"*Tears*" – a trick of the *nerve* –  
But the Heart with the heaviest freight on –  
Doesn't – always – move –

c. 1862

1894

The Zeroes – taught us – Phosphorus –  
 We learned to like the Fire  
 By playing Glaciers – when a Boy –  
 And Tinder – guessed – by power  
 Of Opposite – to balance Odd –  
 If White – a Red – must be!  
 Paralysis – our Primer – dumb –  
 Unto Vitality!

c. 1863

1894

Victory comes late –  
 And is held low to freezing lips –  
 Too rapt with frost  
 To take it –  
 How sweet it would have tasted –  
 Just a Drop –  
 Was God so economical?  
 His Table's spread too high for Us –  
 Unless We dine on tiptoe –  
 Crumbs – fit such little mouths –  
 Cherries – suit Robins –  
 The Eagle's Golden Breakfast strangles – Them –  
 God keep His Oath to Sparrows –  
 Who of little Love – know how to starve –

c. 1863

1891

Would you like summer? Taste of ours.  
 Spices? Buy here!  
 Ill! We have berries, for the parching!  
 Weary! Furloughs of down!  
 Perplexed! Estates of violet trouble ne'er looked on!  
 Captive! We bring reprieve of roses!  
 Fainting! Flasks of air!

Even for Death, a fairy medicine.  
But, which is it, sir?

1863?

1894

692

The Sun kept setting – setting – still  
No Hue of Afternoon –  
Upon the Village I perceived –  
From House to House 'twas Noon –

The Dusk kept dropping – dropping – still  
No Dew upon the Grass –  
But only on my Forehead stopped –  
And wandered in my Face –

My Feet kept drowsing – drowsing – still  
My fingers were awake –  
Yet why so little sound – Myself  
Unto my Seeming – make?

How well I knew the Light before –  
I could see it now –  
'Tis Dying – I am doing – but  
I'm not afraid to know –

c. 1863

1890

693

Shells from the Coast mistaking –  
I cherished them for All –  
Happening in After Ages  
To entertain a Pearl –

Wherefore so late – I murmured –  
My need of Thee – be done –  
Therefore – the Pearl responded –  
My Period begin

c. 1863

1945

The Heaven vests for Each  
 In that small Deity  
 It craved the grace to worship  
 Some bashful Summer's Day –

Half shrinking from the Glory  
 It importuned to see  
 Till these faint Tabernacles drop  
 In full Eternity –

How imminent the Venture –  
 As one should sue a Star –  
 For His mean sake to leave the Row  
 And entertain Despair –

A Clemency so common –  
 We almost cease to fear –  
 Enabling the minutest –  
 And furthest – to adore –

c. 1863

1935

As if the Sea should part  
 And show a further Sea –  
 And that – a further – and the Three  
 But a presumption be –

Of Periods of Seas –  
 Unvisited of Shores –  
 Themselves the Verge of Seas to be –  
 Eternity – is Those –

c. 1863

1929

Their Height in Heaven comforts not –  
 Their Glory – nought to me –  
 'Twas best imperfect – as it was –  
 I'm finite – I can't see –

The House of Supposition –  
The Glimmering Frontier that  
Skirts the Acres of Perhaps –  
To Me – shows insecure –

The Wealth I had – contented me –  
If 'twas a meaner size –  
Then I had counted it until  
It pleased my narrow Eyes –

Better than larger values –  
That show however true –  
This timid life of Evidence  
Keeps pleading – “I don't know.”

c. 1863

1891

697

I could bring You Jewels – had I a mind to –  
But You have enough – of those –  
I could bring You Odors from St. Domingo –  
Colors – from Vera Cruz –

Berries of the Bahamas – have I –  
But this little Blaze  
Flickering to itself – in the Meadow –  
Suits Me – more than those –

Never a Fellow matched this Topaz –  
And his Emerald Swing –  
Dower itself – for Bobadilo –  
Better – Could I bring?

c. 1863

1945

698

Life – is what we make it –  
Death – We do not know –  
Christ's acquaintance with Him  
Justify Him – though –

He – would trust no stranger –  
Other – could betray –  
Just His own endorsement –  
That – sufficeth Me –

All the other Distance  
He hath traversed first –  
No New Mile remaineth –  
Far as Paradise –

His sure foot preceding –  
Tender Pioneer –  
Base must be the Coward  
Dare not venture – now –

c. 1863

1929

699

The Judge is like the Owl –  
I've heard my Father tell –  
And Owls do build in Oaks –  
So here's an Amber Sill –

That slanted in my Path –  
When going to the Barn –  
And if it serve You for a House –  
Itself is not in vain –

About the price – 'tis small –  
I only ask a Tune  
At Midnight – Let the Owl select  
His favorite Refrain.

c. 1863

1945

700

You've seen Balloons set – Haven't You?  
So stately they ascend –  
It is as Swans – discarded You,  
For Duties Diamond –

[ 344 ]

Their Liquid Feet go softly out  
Upon a Sea of Blonde –  
They spurn the Air, as 'twere too mean  
For Creatures so renowned –

Their Ribbons just beyond the eye –  
They struggle – some – for Breath –  
And yet the Crowd applaud, below –  
They would not encore – Death –

The Gilded Creature strains – and spins –  
Trips frantic in a Tree –  
Tears open her imperial Veins –  
And tumbles in the Sea –

The Crowd – retire with an Oath –  
The Dust in Streets – go down –  
And Clerks in Counting Rooms  
Observe – “ 'Twas only a Balloon ” –

c. 1863

1896

701

A Thought went up my mind today –  
That I have had before –  
But did not finish – some way back –  
I could not fix the Year –

Nor where it went – nor why it came  
The second time to me –  
Nor definitely, what it was –  
Have I the Art to say –

But somewhere – in my Soul – I know –  
I've met the Thing before –  
It just reminded me – 'twas all –  
And came my way no more –

c. 1863

1891

A first Mute Coming –  
 In the Stranger's House –  
 A first fair Going –  
 When the Bells rejoice –  
 A first Exchange – of  
 What hath mingled – been –  
 For Lot – exhibited to  
 Faith – alone –

c. 1863

1935

Out of sight? What of that?  
 See the Bird – reach it!  
 Curve by Curve – Sweep by Sweep –  
 Round the Steep Air –  
 Danger! What is that to Her?  
 Better 'tis to fail – there –  
 Than debate – here –  
 Blue is Blue – the World through –  
 Amber – Amber – Dew – Dew –  
 Seek – Friend – and see –  
 Heaven is shy of Earth – that's all –  
 Bashful Heaven – thy Lovers small –  
 Hide – too – from thee –

c. 1863

1929

No matter – now – Sweet –  
 But when I'm Earl –  
 Won't you wish you'd spoken  
 To that dull Girl?  
 Trivial a Word – just –  
 Trivial – a Smile –

But won't you wish you'd spared one  
When I'm Earl?

I shan't need it – then –  
Crests – will do –  
Eagles on my Buckles –  
On my Belt – too –

Ermine – my familiar Gown –  
Say – Sweet – then  
Won't you wish you'd smiled – just –  
Me upon?

c. 1863

1945

705

Suspense – is Hostiler than Death –  
Death – tho'soever Broad,  
Is just Death, and cannot increase –  
Suspense – does not conclude –

But perishes – to live anew –  
But just anew to die –  
Annihilation – plated fresh  
With Immortality –

c. 1863

1929

706

Life, and Death, and Giants –  
Such as These – are still –  
Minor – Apparatus – Hopper of the Mill –  
Beetle at the Candle –  
Or a Fife's Fame –  
Maintain – by Accident that they proclaim –

c. 1863

1896

707

The Grace – Myself – might not obtain –  
Confer upon My flower –

[ 347 ]

Refracted but a Countenance –  
For I – inhabit Her –

c. 1863

1935

708

I sometimes drop it, for a Quick –  
The Thought to be alive –  
Anonymous Delight to know –  
And Madder – to conceive –

Consoles a Woe so monstrous  
That did it tear all Day,  
Without an instant's Respite –  
'Twould look too far – to Die –

Delirium – diverts the Wretch  
For Whom the Scaffold neighs –  
The Hammock's Motion lulls the Heads  
So close on Paradise –

A Reef – crawled easy from the Sea  
Eats off the Brittle Line –  
The Sailor doesn't know the Stroke –  
Until He's past the Pain –

c. 1863

1935

709

Publication – is the Auction  
Of the Mind of Man –  
Poverty – be justifying  
For so foul a thing

Possibly – but We – would rather  
From Our Garret go  
White – Unto the White Creator –  
Than invest – Our Snow –

Thought belong to Him who gave it –  
Then – to Him Who bear

Its Corporeal illustration – Sell  
The Royal Air –

In the Parcel – Be the Merchant  
Of the Heavenly Grace –  
But reduce no Human Spirit  
To Disgrace of Price –

c. 1863

1929

710

The Sunrise runs for Both –  
The East – Her Purple Troth  
Keeps with the Hill –  
The Noon unwinds Her Blue  
Till One Breadth cover Two –  
Remotest – still –

Nor does the Night forget  
A Lamp for Each – to set –  
Wicks wide away –  
The North – Her blazing Sign  
Erects in Iodine –  
Till Both – can see –

The Midnight's Dusky Arms  
Clasp Hemispheres, and Homes  
And so  
Upon Her Bosom – One –  
And One upon Her Hem –  
Both lie –

c. 1863

1929

711

Strong Draughts of Their Refreshing Minds  
To drink – enables Mine  
Through Desert or the Wilderness  
As bore it Sealed Wine –

To go elastic – Or as One  
The Camel's trait – attained –

[ 349 ]

How powerful the Stimulus  
Of an Hermetic Mind –

c. 1863

1929

712

Because I could not stop for Death –  
He kindly stopped for me –  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –  
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste  
And I had put away  
My labor and my leisure too,  
For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess – in the Ring –  
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –  
We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –  
The Dews drew quivering and chill –  
For only Gossamer, my Gown –  
My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed  
A Swelling of the Ground –  
The Roof was scarcely visible –  
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet  
Feels shorter than the Day  
I first surmised the Horses' Heads  
Were toward Eternity –

c. 1863

1890

713

Fame of Myself, to justify,  
All other Plaudit be

[ 350 ]

Superfluous – An Incense  
Beyond Necessity –

Fame of Myself to lack – Although  
My Name be else Supreme –  
This were an Honor honorless –  
A futile Diadem –

c. 1863

1945

714

Rests at Night  
The Sun from shining,  
Nature – and some Men –  
Rest at Noon – some Men –  
While Nature  
And the Sun – go on –

c 1863

1945

715

The World – feels Dusty  
When We stop to Die –  
We want the Dew – then –  
Honors – taste dry –  
  
Flags – vex a Dying face –  
But the least Fan  
Stirred by a friend's Hand –  
Cools – like the Rain –  
  
Mine be the Ministry  
When thy Thirst comes –  
And Hybla Balms –  
Dews of Thessaly, to fetch –

c. 1863

1929

716

The Day undressed – Herself –  
Her Garter – was of Gold –

Her Petticoat – of Purple plain –  
Her Dimities – as old

Exactly – as the World –  
And yet the newest Star –  
Enrolled upon the Hemisphere  
Be wrinkled – much as Her –

Too near to God – to pray –  
Too near to Heaven – to fear –  
The Lady of the Occident  
Retired without a care –

Her Candle so expire  
The flickering be seen  
On Ball of Mast in Bosphorus –  
And Dome – and Window Pane –

c. 1863

1935

717

The Beggar Lad – dies early –  
It's Somewhat in the Cold –  
And Somewhat in the Trudging feet –  
And haply, in the World –

The Cruel – smiling – bowing World –  
That took its Cambric Way –  
Nor heard the timid cry for "Bread" –  
"Sweet Lady – Charity" –

Among Redeemed Children  
If Trudging feet may stand –  
The Barefoot time forgotten – so –  
The Sleet – the bitter Wind –

The Childish Hands that teased for Pence  
Lifted adoring – then –  
To Him whom never Ragged – Coat  
Did supplicate in vain –

c. 1863

1945

I meant to find Her when I came –  
 Death – had the same design –  
 But the Success – was His – it seems –  
 And the Surrender – Mine –

I meant to tell Her how I longed  
 For just this single time –  
 But Death had told Her so the first –  
 And she had past, with Him –

To wander – now – is my Repose –  
 To rest – To rest would be  
 A privilege of Hurricane  
 To Memory – and Me.

c. 1863

1896

A South Wind – has a pathos  
 Of individual Voice –  
 As One detect on Landings  
 An Emigrant's address.

A Hint of Ports and Peoples –  
 And much not understood –  
 The fairer – for the farness –  
 And for the foreignhood.

c. 1863

1945

No Prisoner be –  
 Where Liberty –  
 Himself – abide with Thee –

c. 1863

1932

Behind Me – dips Eternity –  
 Before Me – Immortality –  
 Myself – the Term between –

Death but the Drift of Eastern Gray,  
Dissolving into Dawn away,  
Before the West begin –

'Tis Kingdoms – afterward – they say –  
In perfect – pauseless Monarchy –  
Whose Prince – is Son of None –  
Himself – His Dateless Dynasty –  
Himself – Himself diversify –  
In Duplicate divine –

'Tis Miracle before Me – then –  
'Tis Miracle behind – between –  
A Crescent in the Sea –  
With Midnight to the North of Her –  
And Midnight to the South of Her –  
And Maelstrom – in the Sky –

c. 1863

1929

722

Sweet Mountains – Ye tell Me no lie –  
Never deny Me – Never fly –  
Those same unvarying Eyes  
Turn on Me – when I fail – or feign,  
Or take the Royal names in vain –  
Their far – slow – Violet Gaze –

My Strong Madonnas – Cherish still –  
The Wayward Nun – beneath the Hill –  
Whose service – is to You –  
Her latest Worship – When the Day  
Fades from the Firmament away –  
To lift Her Brows on You –

c. 1863

1945

723

It tossed – and tossed –  
A little Brig I knew – o'ertook by Blast –

It spun – and spun –  
And groped delirious, for Morn –

It slipped – and slipped –  
As One that drunken – stept –  
Its white foot tripped –  
Then dropped from sight –

Ah, Brig – Good Night  
To Crew and You –  
The Ocean's Heart too smooth – too Blue –  
To break for You –

c. 1863

1891

724

It's easy to invent a Life –  
God does it – every Day –  
Creation – but the Gambol  
Of His Authority –

It's easy to efface it –  
The thrifty Deity  
Could scarce afford Eternity  
To Spontaneity –

The Perished Patterns murmur –  
But His Perturbless Plan  
Proceed – inserting Here – a Sun –  
There – leaving out a Man –

c 1863

1929

725

Where Thou art – that – is Home –  
Cashmere – or Calvary – the same –  
Degree – or Shame –  
I scarce esteem Location's Name –  
So I may Come –

What Thou dost – is Delight –  
Bondage as Play – be sweet –

Imprisonment – Content –  
And Sentence – Sacrament –  
Just We two – meet –

Where Thou art not – is Woe –  
Tho' Bands of Spices – row –  
What Thou dost not – Despair –  
Tho' Gabriel – praise me – Sir –

c. 1863

1929

726

We thirst at first – 'tis Nature's Act –  
And later – when we die –  
A little Water supplicate –  
Of fingers going by –

It intimates the finer want –  
Whose adequate supply  
Is that Great Water in the West –  
Termed Immortality –

c. 1863

1896

727

Precious to Me – She still shall be –  
Though She forget the name I bear –  
The fashion of the Gown I wear –  
The very Color of My Hair –

So like the Meadows – now –  
I dared to show a Tress of Theirs  
If haply – She might not despise  
A Buttercup's Array –

I know the Whole – obscures the Part –  
The fraction – that appeased the Heart  
Till Number's Empery –  
Remembered – as the Milliner's flower

[ 356 ]

When Summer's Everlasting Dower -  
Confronts the dazzled Bee.

c. 1863

1945

728

Let Us play Yesterday -  
I - the Girl at school -  
You - and Eternity - the  
Untold Tale -

Easing my famine  
At my Lexicon -  
Logarithm - had I - for Drink -  
'Twas a dry Wine -

Somewhat different - must be -  
Dreams tint the Sleep -  
Cunning Reds of Morning  
Make the Blind - leap -

Still at the Egg-life -  
Chafing the Shell -  
When you troubled the Ellipse -  
And the Bird fell -

Manacles be dim - they say -  
To the new Free -  
Liberty - Commoner -  
Never could - to me -

'Twas my last gratitude  
When I slept - at night -  
'Twas the first Miracle  
Let in - with Light -

Can the Lark resume the Shell -  
Easier - for the Sky -  
Wouldn't Bonds hurt more  
Than Yesterday?

Wouldn't Dungeons sorer grate  
On the Man - free -

Just long enough to taste –  
Then – doomed new –

God of the Manacle  
As of the Free –  
Take not my Liberty  
Away from Me –

c. 1863

1935

729

Alter! When the Hills do –  
Falter! When the Sun  
Question if His Glory  
Be the Perfect One –

Surfeit! When the Daffodil  
Doth of the Dew –  
Even as Herself – Sir –  
I will – of You –

c. 1863

1890

730

Defrauded I a Butterfly –  
The lawful Heir – for Thee –

c. 1863

1929

731

“I want” – it pleaded – All its life –  
I want – was chief it said  
When Skill entreated it – the last –  
And when so newly dead –

I could not deem it late – to hear  
That single – steadfast sigh –  
The lips had placed as with a “Please”  
Toward Eternity –

c. 1863

1945

She rose to His Requirement – dropt  
 The Playthings of Her Life  
 To take the honorable Work  
 Of Woman, and of Wife –

If ought She missed in Her new Day,  
 Of Amplitude, or Awe –  
 Or first Prospective – Or the Gold  
 In using, wear away,

It lay unmentioned – as the Sea  
 Develop Pearl, and Weed,  
 But only to Himself – be known  
 The Fathoms they abide –

c. 1863

1890

The Spirit is the Conscious Ear.  
 We actually Hear  
 When We inspect – that's audible –  
 That is admitted – Here –

For other Services – as Sound –  
 There hangs a smaller Ear  
 Outside the Castle – that Contain –  
 The other – only – Hear –

c. 1863

1945

If He were living – dare I ask –  
 And how if He be dead –  
 And so around the Words I went –  
 Of meeting them – afraid –

I hinted Changes – Lapse of Time –  
 The Surfaces of Years –  
 I touched with Caution – lest they crack –  
 And show me to my fears –

Reverted to adjoining Lives –  
Adroitly turning out  
Wherever I suspected Graves –  
'Twas prudent – I thought –  
And He – I pushed – with sudden force –  
In face of the Suspense –  
“Was buried” – “Buried”! “He!”  
My Life just holds the Trench –

c. 1863

1929

735

Upon Concluded Lives  
There's nothing cooler falls –  
Than Life's sweet Calculations –  
The mixing Bells and Palls –  
Makes Lacerating Tune –  
To Ears the Dying Side –  
'Tis Coronal – and Funeral –  
Saluting – in the Road –

c. 1863

1945

736

Have any like Myself  
Investigating March,  
New Houses on the Hill descried –  
And possibly a Church –  
That were not, We are sure –  
As lately as the Snow –  
And are Today – if We exist –  
Though how may this be so?  
Have any like Myself  
Conjectured Who may be  
The Occupants of the Abodes –  
So easy to the Sky –

'Twould seem that God should be  
The nearest Neighbor to –  
And Heaven – a convenient Grace  
For Show, or Company –

Have any like Myself  
Preserved the Charm secure  
By shunning carefully the Place  
All Seasons of the Year,

Excepting March – 'Tis then  
My Villages be seen –  
And possibly a Steeple –  
Not afterward – by Men –

c. 1863

1935

737

The Moon was but a Chin of Gold  
A Night or two ago –  
And now she turns Her perfect Face  
Upon the World below –

Her Forehead is of Amplest Blonde –  
Her Cheek – a Beryl hewn –  
Her Eye unto the Summer Dew  
The likest I have known –

Her Lips of Amber never part –  
But what must be the smile  
Upon Her Friend she could confer  
Were such Her Silver Will –

And what a privilege to be  
But the remotest Star –  
For Certainty She take Her Way  
Beside Your Palace Door –

Her Bonnet is the Firmament –  
The Universe – Her Shoe –

The Stars – the Trinkets at Her Belt –  
Her Dimities – of Blue –

c. 1863

1896

738

You said that I “was Great” – one Day –  
Then “Great” it be – if that please Thee –  
Or Small – or any size at all –  
Nay – I’m the size suit Thee –

Tall – like the Stag – would that?  
Or lower – like the Wren –  
Or other heights of Other Ones  
I’ve seen?

Tell which – it’s dull to guess –  
And I must be Rhinoceros  
Or Mouse  
At once – for Thee –

So say – if Queen it be –  
Or Page – please Thee –  
I’m that – or nought –  
Or other thing – if other thing there be –  
With just this Stipulus –  
I suit Thee –

c. 1863

1945

739

I many times thought Peace had come  
When Peace was far away –  
As Wrecked Men – deem they sight the Land –  
At Centre of the Sea –

And struggle slacker – but to prove  
As hopelessly as I –  
How many the fictitious Shores –  
Before the Harbor be –

c. 1863

1891

You taught me Waiting with Myself –  
 Appointment strictly kept –  
 You taught me fortitude of Fate –  
 This – also – I have learnt –

An Altitude of Death, that could  
 No bitterer debar  
 Than Life – had done – before it –  
 Yet – there is a Science more –

The Heaven you know – to understand  
 That you be not ashamed  
 Of Me – in Christ's bright Audience  
 Upon the further Hand –

c. 1863

1929

Drama's Vitallest Expression is the Common Day  
 That arise and set about Us –  
 Other Tragedy

Perish in the Recitation –  
 This – the best enact  
 When the Audience is scattered  
 And the Boxes shut –

"Hamlet" to Himself were Hamlet –  
 Had not Shakespeare wrote –  
 Though the "Romeo" left no Record  
 Of his Juliet,

It were infinite enacted  
 In the Human Heart –  
 Only Theatre recorded  
 Owner cannot shut –

c. 1863

1929

Four Trees – upon a solitary Acre –  
 Without Design  
 Or Order, or Apparent Action –  
 Maintain –

The Sun – upon a Morning meets them –  
 The Wind –  
 No nearer Neighbor – have they –  
 But God –

The Acre gives them – Place –  
 They – Him – Attention of Passer by –  
 Of Shadow, or of Squirrel, haply –  
 Or Boy –

What Deed is Theirs unto the General Nature –  
 What Plan  
 They severally – retard – or further –  
 Unknown –

c. 1863

1945

The Birds reported from the South –  
 A News express to Me –  
 A spicy Charge, My little Posts –  
 But I am deaf – Today –

The Flowers – appealed – a timid Throng –  
 I reinforced the Door –  
 Go blossom to the Bees – I said –  
 And trouble Me – no More –

The Summer Grace, for Notice strove –  
 Remote – Her best Array –  
 The Heart – to stimulate the Eye  
 Refused too utterly –

At length, a Mourner, like Myself,  
 She drew away austere –

Her frosts to ponder – then it was  
I recollected Her –

She suffered Me, for I had mourned –  
I offered Her no word –  
My Witness – was the Crape I bore –  
Her – Witness – was Her Dead –

Thenceforward – We – together dwelt –  
I never questioned Her –  
Our Contract  
A Wiser Sympathy

c. 1863

1935

744

Remorse – is Memory – awake –  
Her Parties all astir –  
A Presence of Departed Acts –  
At window – and at Door –

Its Past – set down before the Soul  
And lighted with a Match –  
Perusal – to facilitate –  
And help Belief to stretch –

Remorse is cureless – the Disease  
Not even God – can heal –  
For 'tis His institution – and  
The Adequate of Hell –

c. 1863

1891

745

Renunciation – is a piercing Virtue –  
The letting go  
A Presence – for an Expectation –  
Not now –  
The putting out of Eyes –  
Just Sunrise –  
Lest Day –

Day's Great Progenitor –  
Outvie  
Renunciation – is the Choosing  
Against itself –  
Itself to justify  
Unto itself –  
When larger function –  
Make that appear –  
Smaller – that Covered Vision – Here –

c 1863

1929

746

Never for Society  
He shall seek in vain –  
Who His own acquaintance  
Cultivate – Of Men  
Wiser Men may weary –  
But the Man within

Never knew Satiety –  
Better entertain  
Than could Border Ballad –  
Or Biscayan Hymn –  
Neither introduction  
Need You – unto Him –

c 1863

1894

747

It dropped so low – in my Regard –  
I heard it hit the Ground –  
And go to pieces on the Stones  
At bottom of my Mind –

Yet blamed the Fate that flung it – *less*  
Than I denounced Myself,  
For entertaining Plated Wares  
Upon my Silver Shelf –

c. 1863

1896

Autumn – overlooked my Knitting –  
 Dyes – said He – have I –  
 Could disparage a Flamingo –  
 Show Me them – said I –

Cochineal – I chose – for deeming  
 It resemble Thee –  
 And the little Border – Dusker –  
 For resembling Me –

c. 1863

1929

All but Death, can be Adjusted –  
 Dynasties repaired –  
 Systems – settled in their Sockets –  
 Citadels – dissolved –

Wastes of Lives – resown with Colors  
 By Succeeding Springs –  
 Death – unto itself – Exception –  
 Is exempt from Change –

c. 1863

1929

Growth of Man – like Growth of Nature –  
 Gravitates within –  
 Atmosphere, and Sun endorse it –  
 But it stir – alone –

Each – its difficult Ideal  
 Must achieve – Itself –  
 Through the solitary prowess  
 Of a Silent Life –

Effort – is the sole condition –  
 Patience of Itself –  
 Patience of opposing forces –  
 And intact Belief –

Looking on – is the Department  
Of its Audience –  
But Transaction – is assisted  
By no Countenance –

c. 1863

1929

751

My Worthiness is all my Doubt –  
His Merit – all my fear –  
Contrasting which, my quality  
Do lowlier – appear –

Lest I should insufficient prove  
For His beloved Need –  
The Chiefest Apprehension  
Upon my thronging Mind –

'Tis true – that Deity to stoop  
Inherently incline –  
For nothing higher than Itself  
Itself can rest upon –

So I – the undivine abode  
Of His Elect Content –  
Conform my Soul – as 'twere a Church,  
Unto Her Sacrament –

c. 1863

1896

752

So the Eyes accost – and sunder  
In an Audience –  
Stamped – occasionally – forever –  
So may Countenance

Entertain – without addressing  
Countenance of One  
In a Neighboring Horizon –  
Gone – as soon as known –

c. 1863

1929

My Soul – accused me – And I quailed –  
 As Tongues of Diamond had reviled  
 All else accused me – and I smiled –  
 My Soul – that Morning – was My friend –

Her favor – is the best Disdain  
 Toward Artifice of Time – or Men –  
 But Her Disdain – 'twere lighter bear  
 A finger of Enamelled Fire –

c. 1863

1929

My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –  
 In Corners – till a Day  
 The Owner passed – identified –  
 And carried Me away –

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods –  
 And now We hunt the Doe –  
 And every time I speak for Him –  
 The Mountains straight reply –

And do I smile, such cordial light  
 Upon the Valley glow –  
 It is as a Vesuvian face  
 Had let its pleasure through –

And when at Night – Our good Day done –  
 I guard My Master's Head –  
 'Tis better than the Eider-Duck's  
 Deep Pillow – to have shared –

To foe of His – I'm deadly foe –  
 None stir the second time –  
 On whom I lay a Yellow Eye –  
 Or an emphatic Thumb –

Though I than He – may longer live  
 He longer must – than I –

For I have but the power to kill,  
Without – the power to die –

c. 1863

1929

755

No Bobolink – reverse His Singing  
When the only Tree  
Ever He minded occupying  
By the Farmer be –

Clove to the Root –  
His Spacious Future –  
Best Horizon – gone –  
Whose Music be His  
Only Anodyne –  
Brave Bobolink –

c. 1863

1945

756

One Blessing had I than the rest  
So larger to my Eyes  
That I stopped gauging – satisfied –  
For this enchanted size –

It was the limit of my Dream –  
The focus of my Prayer –  
A perfect – paralyzing Bliss –  
Contented as Despair –

I knew no more of Want – or Cold –  
Phantasms both become  
For this new Value in the Soul –  
Supremest Earthly Sum –

The Heaven below the Heaven above –  
Obscured with ruddier Blue –  
Life's Latitudes leant over – full –  
The Judgment perished – too –

[ 370 ]

Why Bliss so scantily disburse –  
Why Paradise defer –  
Why Floods be served to Us – in Bowls –  
I speculate no more –

c. 1863

1896

757

The Mountains – grow unnoticed –  
Their Purple figures rise  
Without attempt – Exhaustion –  
Assistance – or Applause –  
In Their Eternal Faces  
The Sun – with just delight  
Looks long – and last – and golden –  
For fellowship – at night –

c. 1863

1929

758

These – saw Visions –  
Latch them softly –  
These – held Dimples –  
Smooth them slow –  
This – addressed departing accents –  
Quick – Sweet Mouth – to miss thee so –  
This – We stroked –  
Unnumbered Satin –  
These – we held among our own –  
Fingers of the Slim Aurora –  
Not so arrogant – this Noon –  
These – adjust – that ran to meet us –  
Pearl – for Stocking – Pearl for Shoe –  
Paradise – the only Palace  
Fit for Her reception – now –

c. 1863

1935

He fought like those Who've nought to lose –  
 Bestowed Himself to Balls  
 As One who for a further Life  
 Had not a further Use –

Invited Death – with bold attempt –  
 But Death was Coy of Him  
 As Other Men, were Coy of Death –  
 To Him – to live – was Doom –

His Comrades, shifted like the Flakes  
 When Gusts reverse the Snow –  
 But He – was left alive Because  
 Of Greediness to die –

c. 1863

1935

Most she touched me by her muteness –  
 Most she won me by the way  
 She presented her small figure –  
 Plea itself – for Charity –

Were a Crumb my whole possession –  
 Were there famine in the land –  
 Were it my resource from starving –  
 Could I such a plea withstand –

Not upon her knee to thank me  
 Sank this Beggar from the Sky –  
 But the Crumb partook – departed –  
 And returned On High –

I supposed – when sudden  
 Such a Praise began  
 'Twas as Space sat singing  
 To herself – and men –

'Twas the Winged Beggar –  
 Afterward I learned

To her Benefactor  
Making Gratitude

c. 1863

1929

761

From Blank to Blank –  
A Threadless Way  
I pushed Mechanic feet –  
To stop – or perish – or advance –  
Alike indifferent –

If end I gained  
It ends beyond  
Indefinite disclosed –  
I shut my eyes – and groped as well  
'Twas lighter – to be Blind –

c. 1863

1929

762

The Whole of it came not at once –  
'Twas Murder by degrees –  
A Thrust – and then for Life a chance –  
The Bliss to cauterize –

The Cat reprieves the Mouse  
She eases from her teeth  
Just long enough for Hope to tease –  
Then mashes it to death –

'Tis Life's award – to die –  
Contenteder if once –  
Than dying half – then rallying  
For consciouser Eclipse –

c. 1863

1945

763

He told a homely tale  
And spotted it with tears –

3.11

Upon his infant face was set  
The Cicatrice of years –

All crumpled was the cheek  
No other kiss had known  
Than flake of snow, divided with  
The Redbreast of the Barn –

If Mother – in the Grave –  
Or Father – on the Sea –  
Or Father in the Firmament –  
Or Brethren, had he –

If Commonwealth below,  
Or Commonwealth above  
Have missed a Barefoot Citizen –  
I've ransomed it – alive –

c. 1863

1945

764

Presentiment – is that long Shadow – on the Lawn –  
Indicative that Suns go down –

The Notice to the startled Grass  
That Darkness – is about to pass –

c. 1863

1890

765

You constituted Time –  
I deemed Eternity  
A Revelation of Yourself –  
'Twas therefore Deity

The Absolute – removed  
The Relative away –  
That I unto Himself adjust  
My slow idolatry –

c. 1863

1945

My Faith is larger than the Hills –  
 So when the Hills decay –  
 My Faith must take the Purple Wheel  
 To show the Sun the way –

'Tis first He steps upon the Vane –  
 And then – upon the Hill –  
 And then abroad the World He go  
 To do His Golden Will –

And if His Yellow feet should miss –  
 The Bird would not arise –  
 The Flowers would slumber on their Stems –  
 No Bells have Paradise –

How dare I, therefore, stint a faith  
 On which so vast depends –  
 Lest Firmament should fail for me –  
 The Rivet in the Bands

c. 1863

1929

To offer brave assistance  
 To Lives that stand alone –  
 When One has failed to stop them –  
 Is Human – but Divine

To lend an Ample Sinew  
 Unto a Nameless Man –  
 Whose Homely Benediction  
 No other – stopped to earn –

c. 1863

1929

When I hoped, I recollect  
 Just the place I stood –  
 At a Window facing West –  
 Roughest Air – was good –

Not a Sleet could bite me –  
Not a frost could cool –  
Hope it was that kept me warm –  
Not Merino shawl –

When I feared – I recollect  
Just the Day it was –  
Worlds were lying out to Sun –  
Yet how Nature froze –

Icicles upon my soul  
Prickled Blue and Cool –  
Bird went praising everywhere –  
Only Me – was still –

And the Day that I despaired –  
This – if I forget  
Nature will – that it be Night  
After Sun has set –  
Darkness intersect her face –  
And put out her eye –  
Nature hesitate – before  
Memory and I –

c. 1863

1929

769

One and One – are One –  
Two – be finished using –  
Well enough for Schools –  
But for Minor Choosing –  
Life – just – Or Death –  
Or the Everlasting –  
More – would be too vast  
For the Soul's Comprising –

c. 1863

1929

770

I lived on Dread –  
To Those who know

[ 376 ]

The Stimulus there is  
In Danger – Other impetus  
Is numb – and Vitalless –

As 'twere a Spur – upon the Soul –  
A Fear will urge it where  
To go without the Spectre's aid  
Were Challenging Despair.

c. 1863

1891

771

None can experience stint  
Who Bounty – have not known –  
The fact of Famine – could not be  
Except for Fact of Corn –

Want – is a meagre Art  
Acquired by Reverse –  
The Poverty that was not Wealth –  
Cannot be Indigence.

c. 1863

1945

772

The hallowing of Pain  
Like hallowing of Heaven,  
Obtains at a corporeal cost –  
The Summit is not given

To Him who strives severe  
At middle of the Hill –  
But He who has achieved the Top –  
All – is the price of All –

c. 1863

1945

773

Deprived of other Banquet,  
I entertained Myself –

At first – a scant nutrition –  
An insufficient Loaf –  
But grown by slender addings  
To so esteemed a size  
'Tis sumptuous enough for me –  
And almost to suffice  
A Robin's famine able –  
Red Pilgrim, He and I –  
A Berry from our table  
Reserve – for charity –

c. 1863

1945

774

It is a lonesome Glee –  
Yet sanctifies the Mind –  
With fair association –  
Afar upon the Wind  
A Bird to overhear  
Delight without a Cause –  
Arrestless as invisible –  
A matter of the Skies.

c. 1863

1945

775

If Blame be my side – forfeit Me –  
But doom me not to forfeit Thee –  
To forfeit Thee? The very name  
Is sentence from Belief – and Home –

c. 1863

1945

776

Purple –  
The Color of a Queen, is this –  
The Color of a Sun

At setting – this and Amber –  
Beryl – and this, at Noon –

And when at night – Auroran widths  
Fling suddenly on men –  
'Tis this – and Witchcraft – nature keeps  
A Rank – for Iodine –

c. 1863

1945

777

The Loneliness One dare not sound –  
And would as soon surmise  
As in its Grave go plumbing  
To ascertain the size –

The Loneliness whose worst alarm  
Is lest itself should see –  
And perish from before itself  
For just a scrutiny –

The Horror not to be surveyed –  
But skirted in the Dark –  
With Consciousness suspended –  
And Being under Lock –

I fear me this – is Loneliness –  
The Maker of the soul  
Its Caverns and its Corridors  
Illuminate – or seal –

c. 1863

1945

778

This that would greet – an hour ago –  
Is quaintest Distance – now –  
Had it a Guest from Paradise –  
Nor glow, would it, nor bow –

Had it a notice from the Noon  
Nor beam would it nor warm –

Match me the Silver Reticence –  
Match me the Solid Calm –

c. 1863

1945

779

The Service without Hope –  
Is tenderest, I think –  
Because 'tis unsustained  
By stint – Rewarded Work –  
  
Has impetus of Gain –  
And impetus of Goal –  
There is no Diligence like that  
That knows not an Until –

c. 1863

1945

780

The Truth – is stirless –  
Other force – may be presumed to move –  
This – then – is best for confidence –  
When oldest Cedars swerve –  
  
And Oaks untwist their fists –  
And Mountains – feeble – lean –  
How excellent a Body, that  
Stands without a Bone –  
  
How vigorous a Force  
That holds without a Prop –  
Truth stays Herself – and every man  
That trusts Her – boldly up –

c. 1863

1945

781

To wait an Hour – is long –  
If Love be just beyond –

[ 380 ]

To wait Eternity – is short –  
If Love reward the end –

c. 1863

1945

782

There is an arid Pleasure –  
As different from Joy –  
As Frost is different from Dew –  
Like element – are they –

Yet one – rejoices Flowers –  
And one – the Flowers abhor –  
The finest Honey – curdled –  
Is worthless – to the Bee –

c. 1863

1945

783

The Birds begun at Four o'clock –  
Their period for Dawn –  
A Music numerous as space –  
But neighboring as Noon –

I could not count their Force –  
Their Voices did expend  
As Brook by Brook bestows itself  
To multiply the Pond.

Their Witnesses were not –  
Except occasional man –  
In homely industry arrayed –  
To overtake the Morn –

Nor was it for applause –  
That I could ascertain –  
But independent Ecstasy  
Of Deity and Men –

By Six, the Flood had done –  
No Tumult there had been

Of Dressing, or Departure –  
And yet the Band was gone –

The Sun engrossed the East –  
The Day controlled the World –  
The Miracle that introduced  
Forgotten, as fulfilled.

c. 1863

1945

784

Bereaved of all, I went abroad –  
No less bereaved was I  
Upon a New Peninsula –  
The Grave preceded me –

Obtained my Lodgings, ere myself –  
And when I sought my Bed –  
The Grave it was reposed upon  
The Pillow for my Head –

I waked to find it first awake –  
I rose – It followed me –  
I tried to drop it in the Crowd –  
To lose it in the Sea –

In Cups of artificial Drowse  
To steep its shape away –  
The Grave – was finished – but the Spade  
Remained in Memory –

c. 1863

1896

785

They have a little Odor – that to me  
Is metre – nay – 'tis melody –  
And spiciest at fading – indicate –  
A Habit – of a Laureate –

c. 1863

1945

Severer Service of myself  
 I – hastened to demand  
 To fill the awful Vacuum  
 Your life had left behind –

I worried Nature with my Wheels  
 When Hers had ceased to run –  
 When she had put away Her Work  
 My own had just begun.

I strove to weary Brain and Bone –  
 To harass to fatigue  
 The glittering Retinue of nerves –  
 Vitality to clog

To some dull comfort Those obtain  
 Who put a Head away  
 They knew the Hair to –  
 And forget the color of the Day –

Affliction would not be appeased –  
 The Darkness braced as firm  
 As all my stratagem had been  
 The Midnight to confirm –

No Drug for Consciousness – can be –  
 Alternative to die  
 Is Nature's only Pharmacy  
 For Being's Malady –

c. 1863

1945

Such is the Force of Happiness –  
 The Least – can lift a Ton  
 Assisted by its stimulus –

Who Misery – sustain –  
 No Sinew can afford –  
 The Cargo of Themselves –

Too infinite for Consciousness'  
Slow capabilities.

c. 1863

1945

788

Joy to have merited the Pain –  
To merit the Release –  
Joy to have perished every step –  
To Compass Paradise –

Pardon – to look upon thy face –  
With these old fashioned Eyes –  
Better than new – could be – for that –  
Though bought in Paradise –

Because they looked on thee before –  
And thou hast looked on them –  
Prove Me – My Hazel Witnesses  
The features are the same –

So fleet thou wert, when present –  
So infinite – when gone –  
An Orient's Apparition –  
Remanded of the Morn –

The Height I recollect –  
'T was even with the Hills –  
The Depth upon my Soul was notched –  
As Floods – on Whites of Wheels –

To Haunt – till Time have dropped  
His last Decade away,  
And Haunting actualize – to last  
At least – Eternity –

c. 1863

1929

789

On a Columnar Self –  
How ample to rely

[ 384 ]

In Tumult – or Extremity –  
How good the Certainty  
That Lever cannot pry –  
And Wedge cannot divide  
Conviction – That Granitic Base –  
Though None be on our Side –  
Suffice Us – for a Crowd –  
Ourselves – and Rectitude –  
And that Assembly – not far off  
From furthest Spirit – God –

c. 1863

1929

790

Nature – the Gentlest Mother is,  
Impatient of no Child –  
The feeblest – or the waywardest –  
Her Admonition mild –  
In Forest – and the Hill –  
By Traveller – be heard –  
Restraining Rampant Squirrel –  
Or too impetuous Bird –  
How fair Her Conversation –  
A Summer Afternoon –  
Her Household – Her Assembly –  
And when the Sun go down –  
Her Voice among the Aisles  
Incite the timid prayer  
Of the minutest Cricket –  
The most unworthy Flower –  
When all the Children sleep –  
She turns as long away  
As will suffice to light Her lamps –  
Then bending from the Sky –  
With infinite Affection –  
And infiniter Care –

[ 385 ]

Her Golden finger on Her lip –  
Wills Silence – Everywhere –

c. 1863

1891

791

God gave a Loaf to every Bird –  
But just a Crumb – to Me –  
I dare not eat it – tho' I starve –  
My poignant luxury –  
To own it – touch it –  
Prove the feat – that made the Pellet mine –  
Too happy – for my Sparrow's chance –  
For Ampler Coveting –  
It might be Famine – all around –  
I could not miss an Ear –  
Such Plenty smiles upon my Board –  
My Garner shows so fair –  
I wonder how the Rich – may feel –  
An Indiaman – An Earl –  
I deem that I – with but a Crumb –  
Am Sovereign of them all –

c. 1863

1891

792

Through the strait pass of suffering –  
The Martyrs – even – trod.  
Their feet – upon Temptation –  
Their faces – upon God –  
A stately – shriven – Company –  
Convulsion – playing round –  
Harmless – as streaks of Meteor –  
Upon a Planet's Bond –  
Their faith – the everlasting troth –  
Their Expectation – fair –

[ 386 ]

The Needle – to the North Degree –  
Wades – so – thro' polar Air!

c 1863

1891

793

Grief is a Mouse –  
And chooses Wainscot in the Breast  
For His Shy House –  
And baffles quest –

Grief is a Thief – quick startled –  
Pricks His Ear – report to hear  
Of that Vast Dark –  
That swept His Being – back –

Grief is a Juggler – boldest at the Play –  
Lest if He flinch – the eye that way  
Pounce on His Bruises – One – say – or Three –  
Grief is a Gourmand – spare His luxury –

Best Grief is Tongueless – before He'll tell –  
Burn Him in the Public Square –  
His Ashes – will  
Possibly – if they refuse – How then know –  
Since a Rack couldn't coax a syllable – now.

c. 1863

1945

794

A Drop fell on the Apple Tree –  
Another – on the Roof –  
A Half a Dozen kissed the Eaves –  
And made the Gables laugh –

A few went out to help the Brook  
That went to help the Sea –  
Myself Conjectured were they Pearls –  
What Necklaces could be –

The Dust replaced, in Hoisted Roads –  
The Birds jocosier sung –

[ 387 ]

The Sunshine threw his Hat away –  
The Buses – spangles flung –

The Breezes brought dejected Lutes –  
And bathed them in the Glee –  
Then Orient showed a single Flag,  
And signed the Fete away –

c. 1863

1890

795

Her final Summer was it –  
And yet We guessed it not –  
If tenderer industriousness  
Pervaded Her, We thought

A further force of life  
Developed from within –  
When Death lit all the shortness up  
It made the hurry plain –

We wondered at our blindness  
When nothing was to see  
But Her Carrara Guide post –  
At Our Stupidity –

When duller than our dullness  
The Busy Darling lay –  
So busy was she – finishing –  
So leisurely – were We –

c. 1863

1891

796

Who Giants know, with lesser Men  
Are incomplete, and shy –  
For Greatness, that is ill at ease  
In minor Company –

A Smaller, could not be perturbed –  
The Summer Gnat displays –

[ 388 ]

Unconscious that his single Fleet  
Do not comprise the skies –

c. 1863

1929

797

By my Window have I for Scenery  
Just a Sea – with a Stem –  
If the Bird and the Farmer – deem it a “Pine” –  
The Opinion will serve – for them –

It has no Port, nor a “Line” – but the Jays –  
That split their route to the Sky –  
Or a Squirrel, whose giddy Peninsula  
May be easier reached – this way –

For Inlands – the Earth is the under side –  
And the upper side – is the Sun –  
And its Commerce – if Commerce it have –  
Of Spice – I infer from the Odors borne –

Of its Voice – to affirm – when the Wind is within –  
Can the Dumb – define the Divine?  
The Definition of Melody – is –  
That Definition is none –

It – suggests to our Faith –  
They – suggest to our Sight –  
When the latter – is put away  
I shall meet with Conviction I somewhere met  
That Immortality –

Was the Pine at my Window a “Fellow  
Of the Royal” Infinity?  
Apprehensions – are God’s introductions –  
To be hallowed – accordingly –

c. 1863

1929

798

She staked her Feathers – Gained an Arc –  
Debated – Rose again –

[ 389 ]

This time – beyond the estimate  
Of Envy, or of Men –

And now, among Circumference –  
Her steady Boat be seen –  
At home – among the Billows – As  
The Bough where she was born –

c 1863

1935

799

Despair's advantage is achieved  
By suffering – Despair –  
To be assisted of Reverse  
One must Reverse have bore –

The Worthiness of Suffering like  
The Worthiness of Death  
Is ascertained by tasting –

As can no other Mouth

Of Savors – make us conscious –  
As did ourselves partake –  
Affliction feels impalpable  
Until Ourselves are struck –

c 1863

1935

800

Two – were immortal twice –  
The privilege of few –  
Eternity – obtained – in Time –  
Reversed Divinity –

That our ignoble Eyes  
The quality conceive  
Of Paradise superlative –  
Through their Comparative.

c. 1863

1945

I play at Riches – to appease  
 The Clamoring for Gold –  
 It kept me from a Thief, I think,  
 For often, overbold

With Want, and Opportunity –  
 I could have done a Sin  
 And been Myself that easy Thing  
 An independent Man –

But often as my lot displays  
 Too hungry to be borne  
 I deem Myself what I would be –  
 And novel Comforting

My Poverty and I derive –  
 We question if the Man –  
 Who own – Esteem the Opulence –  
 As We – Who never Can –

Should ever these exploring Hands  
 Chance Sovereign on a Mine –  
 Or in the long – uneven term  
 To win, become their turn –

How fitter they will be – for Want –  
 Enlightening so well –  
 I know not which, Desire, or Grant –  
 Be wholly beautiful –

c. 1863

1935

Time feels so vast that were it not  
 For an Eternity –  
 I fear me this Circumference  
 Engross my Finity –

To His exclusion, who prepare  
 By Processes of Size

For the Stupendous Vision  
Of His diameters –

c. 1863

1935

803

Who Court obtain within Himself  
Sees every Man a King –  
And Poverty of Monarchy  
Is an interior thing –

No Man depose  
Whom Fate Ordain –  
And Who can add a Crown  
To Him who doth continual  
Conspire against His Own

c. 1863

1929

804

No Notice gave She, but a Change –  
No Message, but a Sigh –  
For Whom, the Time did not suffice  
That She should specify.

She was not warm, though Summer shone  
Nor scrupulous of cold  
Though Rime by Rime, the steady Frost  
Upon Her Bosom piled –

Of shrinking ways – she did not fright  
Though all the Village looked –  
But held Her gravity aloft –  
And met the gaze – direct –

And when adjusted like a Seed  
In careful fitted Ground  
Unto the Everlasting Spring  
And hindered but a Mound

Her Warm return, if so she chose –  
And We – imploring drew –

Removed our invitation by  
As Some She never knew –

c. 1863

1935

805

This Bauble was preferred of Bees –  
By Butterflies admired  
At Heavenly – Hopeless Distances –  
Was justified of Bird –

Did Noon – enamel – in Herself  
Was Summer to a Score  
Who only knew of Universe –  
It had created Her.

c. 1863

1935

806

A Plated Life – diversified  
With Gold and Silver Pain  
To prove the presence of the Ore  
In Particles – 'tis when

A Value struggle – it exist –  
A Power – will proclaim  
Although Annihilation pile  
Whole Chaoses on Him –

c. 1863

1935

807

Expectation – is Contentment –  
Gain – Satiety –  
But Satiety – Conviction  
Of Necessity

Of an Austere trait in Pleasure –  
Good, without alarm

Is a too established Fortune –  
Danger – deepens Sun –

c. 1863

1929

808

So set its Sun in Thee  
What Day be dark to me –  
What Distance – far –  
So I the Ships may see  
That touch – how seldomly –  
Thy Shore?

c. 1864

1914

809

Unable are the Loved to die  
For Love is Immortality,  
Nay, it is Deity –

Unable they that love – to die  
For Love reforms Vitality  
Into Divinity.

c. 1864

1932

810

Her Grace is all she has –  
And that, so least displays –  
One Art to recognize, must be,  
Another Art, to praise.

c. 1864

1914

811

The Veins of other Flowers  
The Scarlet Flowers are  
Till Nature leisure has for Terms  
As “Branch,” and “Jugular.”

We pass, and she abides.  
We conjugate Her Skill  
While She creates and federates  
Without a syllable.

c. 1864

1945

812

A Light exists in Spring  
Not present on the Year  
At any other period –  
When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad  
On Solitary Fields  
That Science cannot overtake  
But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,  
It shows the furthest Tree  
Upon the furthest Slope you know  
It almost speaks to you.

Then as Horizons step  
Or Noons report away  
Without the Formula of sound  
It passes and we stay –

A quality of loss  
Affecting our Content  
As Trade had suddenly encroached  
Upon a Sacrament.

c. 1864

1896

813

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies  
And Lads and Girls –  
Was laughter and ability and Sighing  
And Frocks and Curls.

[ 395 ]

This Passive Place a Summer's nimble mansion  
Where Bloom and Bees  
Exists an Oriental Circuit  
Then cease, like these –

c. 1864

1914

814

One Day is there of the Series  
Termed Thanksgiving Day.  
Celebrated part at Table  
Part in Memory.

Neither Patriarch nor Pussy  
I dissect the Play  
Seems it to my Hooded thinking  
Reflex Holiday.

Had there been no sharp Subtraction  
From the early Sum –  
Not an Acre or a Caption  
Where was once a Room –

Not a Mention, whose small Pebble  
Wrinkled any Sea,  
Unto Such, were such Assembly  
'Twere Thanksgiving Day.

c. 1864

1896

815

The Luxury to apprehend  
The Luxury 'twould be  
To look at Thee a single time  
An Epicure of Me

In whatsoever Presence makes  
Till for a further Food  
I scarcely recollect to starve  
So first am I supplied –

[ 396 ]

The Luxury to meditate  
The Luxury it was  
To banquet on thy Countenance  
A Sumptuousness bestows  
On plainer Days, whose Table far  
As Certainty can see  
Is laden with a single Crumb  
The Consciousness of Thee.

c. 1864

1914

816

A Death blow is a Life blow to Some  
Who till they died, did not alive become –  
Who had they lived, had died but when  
They died, Vitality begun.

c. 1864

1891

817

Given in Marriage unto Thee  
Oh thou Celestial Host –  
Bride of the Father and the Son  
Bride of the Holy Ghost.

Other Betrothal shall dissolve –  
Wedlock of Will, decay –  
Only the Keeper of this Ring  
Conquer Mortality –

c. 1864

1896

818

I could not drink it, Sweet,  
Till You had tasted first,  
Though cooler than the Water was  
The Thoughtfulness of Thirst.

c. 1864

1932

819

All I may, if small,  
Do it not display  
Larger for the Totalness –  
'Tis Economy

To bestow a World  
And withhold a Star –  
Utmost, is Munificence –  
Less, tho' larger, poor.

c. 1864

1914

820

All Circumstances are the Frame  
In which His Face is set –  
All Latitudes exist for His  
Sufficient Continent –

The Light His Action, and the Dark  
The Leisure of His Will –  
In Him Existence serve or set  
A Force illegible.

c. 1864

1914

821

Away from Home are some and I –  
An Emigrant to be  
In a Metropolis of Homes  
Is easy, possibly –

The Habit of a Foreign Sky  
We – difficult – acquire  
As Children, who remain in Face  
The more their Feet retire.

c. 1864

1894

This Consciousness that is aware  
 Of Neighbors and the Sun  
 Will be the one aware of Death  
 And that itself alone

Is traversing the interval  
 Experience between  
 And most profound experiment  
 Appointed unto Men -

How adequate unto itself  
 Its properties shall be  
 Itself unto itself and none  
 Shall make discovery.

Adventure most unto itself  
 The Soul condemned to be -  
 Attended by a single Hound  
 Its own identity.

c 1864

1945

Not what We did, shall be the test  
 When Act and Will are done  
 But what Our Lord infers We would  
 Had We diviner been -

c 1864

1929

The Wind begun to knead the Grass -  
 As Women do a Dough -  
 He flung a Hand full at the Plain -  
 A Hand full at the Sky -  
 The Leaves unhooked themselves from Trees -  
 And started all abroad -  
 The Dust did scoop itself like Hands -  
 And throw away the Road -

The Wagons quickened on the Street –  
The Thunders gossiped low –  
The Lightning showed a Yellow Head –  
And then a livid Toe –  
The Birds put up the Bars to Nests –  
The Cattle flung to Barns –  
Then came one drop of Giant Rain –  
And then, as if the Hands  
That held the Dams – had parted hold –  
The Waters Wrecked the Sky –  
But overlooked my Father's House –  
Just Quartering a Tree –

*first version*

c. 1864

1955

The Wind begun to rock the Grass  
With threatening Tunes and low –  
He threw a Menace at the Earth –  
A Menace at the Sky.

The Leaves unhooked themselves from Trees –  
And started all abroad  
The Dust did scoop itself like Hands  
And threw away the Road.

The Wagons quickened on the Streets  
The Thunder hurried slow –  
The Lightning showed a Yellow Beak  
And then a livid Claw.

The Birds put up the Bars to Nests –  
The Cattle fled to Barns –  
There came one drop of Giant Rain  
And then as if the Hands

That held the Dams had parted hold  
The Waters Wrecked the Sky,

But overlooked my Father's House –  
Just quartering a Tree –

*second version*

c. 1864

1891

825

An Hour is a Sea  
Between a few, and me –  
With them would Harbor be –

c. 1864

1915

826

Love reckons by itself – alone –  
“As large as I” – relate the Sun  
To One who never felt it blaze –  
Itself is all the like it has –

c. 1864

1914

827

The Only News I know  
Is Bulletins all Day  
From Immortality.

The Only Shows I see –  
Tomorrow and Today –  
Perchance Eternity –

The Only One I meet  
Is God – The Only Street –  
Existence – This traversed

If Other News there be –  
Or Admirabler Show –  
I'll tell it You –

c. 1864

1929

The Robin is the One  
 That interrupt the Morn  
 With hurried – few – express Reports  
 When March is scarcely on –

The Robin is the One  
 That overflow the Noon  
 With her cherubic quantity –  
 An April but begun –

The Robin is the One  
 That speechless from her Nest  
 Submit that Home – and Certanty  
 And Sanctity, are best

c. 1864

1891

Ample make this Bed –  
 Make this Bed with Awe –  
 In it wait till Judgment break  
 Excellent and Fair.

Be its Mattress straight –  
 Be its Pillow round –  
 Let no Sunrise' yellow noise  
 Interrupt this Ground –

c. 1864

1891

To this World she returned.  
 But with a tinge of that –  
 A Compound manner,  
 As a Sod  
 Espoused a Violet,  
 That chiefer to the Skies  
 Than to Himself, allied,

Dwelt hesitating, half of Dust,  
And half of Day, the Bride.

1864

1894

831

Dying! To be afraid of thee  
One must to thine Artillery  
Have left exposed a Friend –  
Than thine old Arrow is a Shot  
Delivered straighter to the Heart  
The leaving Love behind.

Not for itself, the Dust is shy,  
But, enemy, Beloved be  
Thy Batteries divorce.  
Fight sternly in a Dying eye  
Two Armies, Love and Certainty  
And Love and the Reverse.

c. 1864

1945

832

Soto! Explore thyself!  
Therein thyself shalt find  
The "Undiscovered Continent" –  
No Settler had the Mind.

c. 1864

1932

833

Perhaps you think me stooping  
I'm not ashamed of that  
Christ – stooped until He touched the Grave –  
Do those at Sacrament

Commemorate Dishonor  
Or love annealed of love  
Until it bend as low as Death  
Redignified, above?

c. 1864

1894

834

Before He comes we weigh the Time!  
'Tis Heavy and 'tis Light.  
When He depart, an Emptiness  
Is the prevailing Freight.

c. 1864

1894

835

Nature and God – I neither knew  
Yet Both so well knew me  
They startled, like Executors  
Of My identity.

Yet Neither told – that I could learn –  
My Secret as secure  
As Herschel's private interest  
Or Mercury's affair –

c. 1864

1894

836

Truth – is as old as God –  
His Twin identity  
And will endure as long as He  
A Co-Eternity –

And perish on the Day  
Himself is borne away  
From Mansion of the Universe  
A lifeless Deity.

c. 1864

1894

837

How well I knew Her not  
Whom not to know has been  
A Bounty in prospective, now  
Next Door to mine the Pain.

c. 1864

1894

Impossibility, like Wine  
 Exhilarates the Man  
 Who tastes it, Possibility  
 Is flavorless – Combine

A Chance's faintest Tincture  
 And in the former Dram  
 Enchantment makes ingredient  
 As certainly as Doom –

c. 1864

1945

Always Mine!  
 No more Vacation!  
 Term of Light this Day begun!  
 Failless as the fair rotation  
 Of the Seasons and the Sun.

Old the Grace, but new the Subjects –  
 Old, indeed, the East,  
 Yet upon His Purple Programme  
 Every Dawn, is first.

c. 1864

1945

I cannot buy it – 'tis not sold –  
 There is no other in the World –  
 Mine was the only one

I was so happy I forgot  
 To shut the Door And it went out  
 And I am all alone –

If I could find it Anywhere  
 I would not mind the journey there  
 Though it took all my store

But just to look it in the Eye –  
“Did'st thou?” “Thou did'st not mean,” to say,  
Then, turn my Face away.

c. 1864

1945

841

A Moth the hue of this  
Haunts Candles in Brazil.  
Nature's Experience would make  
Our Reddest Second pale.

Nature is fond, I sometimes think,  
Of Trinkets, as a Girl.

c. 1864

1945

842

Good to hide, and hear 'em hunt!  
Better, to be found,  
If one care to, that is,  
The Fox fits the Hound –

Good to know, and not tell,  
Best, to know and tell,  
Can one find the rare Ear  
Not too dull –

c. 1864

1945

843

I made slow Riches but my Gain  
Was steady as the Sun  
And every Night, it numbered more  
Than the preceding One

All Days, I did not earn the same  
But my perceiveless Gain  
Inferred the less by Growing than  
The Sum that it had grown.

c. 1864

1945

844

Spring is the Period  
Express from God.  
Among the other seasons  
Himself abide,

But during March and April  
None stir abroad  
Without a cordial interview  
With God

c. 1864

1945

845

Be Mine the Doom –  
Sufficient Fame –  
To perish in Her Hand!

c. 1864

1945

846

Twice had Summer her fair Verdure  
Proffered to the Plain –  
Twice a Winter's silver Fracture  
On the Rivers been –

Two full Autumns for the Squirrel  
Bounteous prepared –  
Nature, Had'st thou not a Berry  
For thy wandering Bird?

c. 1864

1945

847

Finite – to fail, but infinite to Venture –  
For the one ship that struts the shore  
Many's the gallant – overwhelmed Creature  
Nodding in Navies nevermore –

c. 1864

1896

Just as He spoke it from his Hands  
 This Edifice remain –  
 A Turret more, a Turret less  
 Dishonor his Design –

According as his skill prefer  
 It perish, or endure –  
 Content, soe'er, it ornament  
 His absent character.

c. 1864

1945

The good Will of a Flower  
 The Man who would possess  
 Must first present  
 Certificate  
 Of minted Holiness.

c. 1864

1945

I sing to use the Waiting  
 My Bonnet but to tie  
 And shut the Door unto my House  
 No more to do have I

Till His best step approaching  
 We journey to the Day  
 And tell each other how We sung  
 To Keep the Dark away.

c. 1864

1896

When the Astronomer stops seeking  
 For his Pleiad's Face –  
 When the lone British Lady  
 Forsakes the Arctic Race

When to his Covenant Needle  
The Sailor doubting turns –  
It will be amply early  
To ask what treason means.

c. 1864

1945

852

Apology for Her  
Be rendered by the Bee –  
Herself, without a Parliament  
Apology for Me.

c. 1864

1945

853

When One has given up One's life  
The parting with the rest  
Feels easy, as when Day lets go  
Entirely the West

The Peaks, that lingered last  
Remain in Her regret  
As scarcely as the Iodine  
Upon the Cataract.

c. 1864

1945

854

Banish Air from Air –  
Divide Light if you dare –  
They'll meet  
While Cubes in a Drop  
Or Pellets of Shape  
Fit  
Films cannot annul  
Odors return whole  
Force Flame  
And with a Blonde push

Over your impotence  
Flits Steam.

c 1864

1945

855

To own the Art within the Soul  
The Soul to entertain  
With Silence as a Company  
And Festival maintain

Is an unfurnished Circumstance  
Possession is to One  
As an Estate perpetual  
Or a reduceless Mine.

c. 1864

1945

856

There is a finished feeling  
Experienced at Graves –  
A leisure of the Future –  
A Wilderness of Size.

By Death's bold Exhibition  
Preciser what we are  
And the Eternal function  
Enabled to infer.

c 1864

1945

857

Uncertain lease – develops lustre  
On Time  
Uncertain Grasp, appreciation  
Of Sum –

The shorter Fate – is oftener the chiefest  
Because

Inheritors upon a tenure  
Prize –

c. 1864

1945

858

This Chasm, Sweet, upon my life  
I mention it to you,  
When Sunrise through a fissure drop  
The Day must follow too.

If we demur, its gaping sides  
Disclose as 'twere a Tomb  
Ourselves am lying straight wherein  
The Favorite of Doom.

When it has just contained a Life  
Then, Darling, it will close  
And yet so bolder every Day  
So turbulent it grows

I'm tempted half to stitch it up  
With a remaining Breath  
I should not miss in yielding, though  
To Him, it would be Death –

And so I bear it big about  
My Burial – before  
A Life quite ready to depart  
Can harass me no more –

c. 1864

1945

859

A doubt if it be Us  
Assists the staggering Mind  
In an extremer Anguish  
Until it footing find.

An Unreality is lent,  
A merciful Mirage

[ 411 ]

That makes the living possible  
While it suspends the lives.

c 1864

1945

860

Absence disembodies – so does Death  
Hiding individuals from the Earth  
Superstition helps, as well as love –  
Tenderness decreases as we prove –

c 1864

1945

861

Split the Lark – and you'll find the Music –  
Bulb after Bulb, in Silver rolled –  
Scantily dealt to the Summer Morning  
Saved for your Ear when Lutes be old

Loose the Flood – you shall find it patent –  
Gush after Gush, reserved for you –  
Scarlet Experiment! Sceptic Thomas!  
Now, do you doubt that your Bird was true?

c. 1864

1896

862

Light is sufficient to itself –  
If Others want to see  
It can be had on Window Panes  
Some Hours in the Day.

But not for Compensation –  
It holds as large a Glow  
To Squirrel in the Himmaleh  
Precisely, as to you.

c. 1864

1945

## 863

That Distance was between Us  
 That is not of Mile or Main –  
 The Will it is that situates –  
 Equator – never can –

c. 1864

1945

## 864

The Robin for the Crumb  
 Returns no syllable  
 But long records the Lady's name  
 In Silver Chronicle.

c. 1864

1945

## 865

He outstripped Time with but a Bout,  
 He outstripped Stars and Sun  
 And then, unjaded, challenged God  
 In presence of the Throne.

And He and He in mighty List  
 Unto this present, run,  
 The larger Glory for the less  
 A just sufficient Ring.

c. 1864

1945

## 866

Fame is the tint that Scholars leave  
 Upon their Setting Names –  
 The Iris not of Occident  
 That disappears as comes –

c. 1864

1945

## 867

Escaping backward to perceive  
 The Sea upon our place –

Escaping forward, to confront  
His glittering Embrace –

Retreating up, a Billow's height  
Retreating blinded down  
Our undermining feet to meet  
Instructs to the Divine.

c. 1864

1945

868

They ask but our Delight –  
The Darlings of the Soil  
And grant us all their Countenance  
For a penurious smile.

c. 1864

1945

869

Because the Bee may blameless hum  
For Thee a Bee do I become  
List even unto Me.

Because the Flowers unafraid  
May lift a look on thine, a Maid  
Always a Flower would be.

Nor Robins, Robins need not hide  
When Thou upon their Crypts intrude  
So Wings bestow on Me  
Or Petals, or a Dower of Buzz  
That Bee to ride, or Flower of Furze  
I that way worship Thee.

c. 1864

1945

870

Finding is the first Act  
The second, loss,  
Third, Expedition for  
The "Golden Fleece"

Fourth, no Discovery –  
Fifth, no Crew –  
Finally, no Golden Fleece –  
Jason – sham – too

c. 1864

1945

871

The Sun and Moon must make their haste –  
The Stars express around  
For in the Zones of Paradise  
The Lord alone is burned –

His Eye, it is the East and West –  
The North and South when He  
Do concentrate His Countenance  
Like Glow Worms, flee away –

Oh Poor and Far –  
Oh Hindered Eye  
That hunted for the Day –  
The Lord a Candle entertains  
Entirely for Thee –

c. 1864

1945

872

As the Starved Maelstrom laps the Navies  
As the Vulture teased  
Forces the Broods in lonely Valleys  
As the Tiger eased

By but a Crumb of Blood, fasts Scarlet  
Till he meet a Man  
Dainty adorned with Veins and Tissues  
And partakes – his Tongue

Cooled by the Morsel for a moment  
Grows a fiercer thing  
Till he esteem his Dates and Cocoa  
A Nutrition mean

[ 415 ]

I, of a finer Famine  
Deem my Supper dry  
For but a Berry of Domingo  
And a Torrid Eye.

c. 1864

1945

873

Ribbons of the Year –  
Multitude Brocade –  
Worn to Nature's Party once

Then, as flung aside  
As a faded Bead  
Or a Wrinkled Pearl  
Who shall charge the Vanity  
Of the Maker's Girl?

c 1864

1945

874

They won't frown always – some sweet Day  
When I forget to tease –  
They'll recollect how cold I looked  
And how I just said "Please."

Then They will hasten to the Door  
To call the little Girl  
Who cannot thank Them for the Ice  
That filled the lispings full.

c. 1864

1896

875

I stepped from Plank to Plank  
A slow and cautious way  
The Stars about my Head I felt  
About my Feet the Sea.

I knew not but the next  
Would be my final inch –

This gave me that precarious Gait  
Some call Experience.

c. 1864

1896

876

It was a Grave, yet bore no Stone  
Enclosed 'twas not of Rail  
A Consciousness its Acre, and  
It held a Human Soul.

Entombed by whom, for what offence  
If Home or Foreign born –  
Had I the curiosity  
'Twere not appeased of men

Till Resurrection, I must guess  
Denied the small desire  
A Rose upon its Rudge to sow  
Or take away a Briar.

c. 1864

1935

877

Each Scar I'll keep for Him  
Instead I'll say of Gem  
In His long Absence worn  
A Costlier one

But every Tear I bore  
Were He to count them o'er  
His own would fall so more  
I'll mis sum them.

c. 1864

1945

878

The Sun is gay or stark  
According to our Deed.  
If Merry, He is merrier –  
If eager for the Dead

[ 417 ]

Or an expended Day  
He helped to make too bright  
His mighty pleasure suits Us not  
It magnifies our Freight

c. 1864

1945

879

Each Second is the last  
Perhaps, recalls the Man  
Just measuring unconsciousness  
The Sea and Spar between.

To fail within a Chance –  
How terrible a thing  
Than perish from the Chance's list  
Before the Perishing!

c. 1864

1945

880

The Bird must sing to earn the Crumb  
What merit have the Tune  
No Breakfast if it guaranty

The Rose content may bloom  
To gain renown of Lady's Drawer  
But if the Lady come  
But once a Century, the Rose  
Superfluous become –

c. 1864

1945

881

I've none to tell me to but Thee  
So when Thou failest, nobody.  
It was a little tie –  
It just held Two, nor those it held  
Since Somewhere thy sweet Face has spilled  
Beyond my Boundary –

[ 418 ]

If things were opposite – and Me  
And Me it were – that ebbed from Thee  
On some unanswering Shore –  
Would'st Thou seek so – just say  
That I the Answer may pursue  
Unto the lips it eddied through –  
So – overtaking Thee –

c. 1864

1945

882

A Shade upon the mind there passes  
As when on Noon  
A Cloud the mighty Sun encloses  
Remembering  
That some there be too numb to notice  
Oh God  
Why give if Thou must take away  
The Loved?

c 1864

1945

883

The Poets light but Lamps –  
Themselves – go out –  
The Wicks they stimulate –  
If vital Light

Inhere as do the Suns –  
Each Age a Lens  
Disseminating their  
Circumference –

c. 1864

1945

884

An Everywhere of Silver  
With Ropes of Sand

[ 419 ]

To keep it from effacing  
The Track called Land.

c. 1864

1891

885

Our little Kinsmen – after Rain  
In plenty may be seen,  
A Pink and Pulpy multitude  
The tepid Ground upon

A needless life, it seemed to me  
Until a little Bird  
As to a Hospitality  
Advanced and breakfasted.

As I of He, so God of Me  
I pondered, may have judged,  
And left the little Angle Worm  
With Modesties enlarged.

c 1864

1945

886

These tested Our Horizon –  
Then disappeared  
As Birds before achieving  
A Latitude.

Our Retrospection of Them  
A fixed Delight,  
But our Anticipation  
A Dice – a Doubt –

c. 1864

1945

887

We outgrow love, like other things  
And put it in the Drawer –

Till it an Antique fashion shows –  
Like Costumes Grandsires wore.

c. 1864

1896

888

When I have seen the Sun emerge  
From His amazing House –  
And leave a Day at every Door  
A Deed, in every place –

Without the incident of Fame  
Or accident of Noise –  
The Earth has seemed to me a Drum,  
Pursued of little Boys

c 1864

1945

889

Crisis is a Hair  
Toward which the forces creep  
Past which forces retrograde  
If it come in sleep

To suspend the Breath  
Is the most we can  
Ignorant is it Life or Death  
Nicely balancing.

Let an instant push  
Or an Atom press  
Or a Circle hesitate  
In Circumference

It – may jolt the Hand  
That adjusts the Hair  
That secures Eternity  
From presenting – Here –

c. 1864

1945

From Us She wandered now a Year,  
 Her tarrying, unknown,  
 If Wilderness prevent her feet  
 Or that Ethereal Zone

No Eye hath seen and lived  
 We ignorant must be –  
 We only know what time of Year  
 We took the Mystery.

c. 1864

1896

To my quick ear the Leaves – conferred –  
 The Bushes – they were Bells –  
 I could not find Privacy  
 From Nature's sentinels –

In Cave if I presumed to hide  
 The Walls – begun to tell –  
 Creation seemed a mighty Crack –  
 To make me visible –

c. 1864

1896

Who occupies this House?  
 A Stranger I must judge  
 Since No one knows His Circumstance –  
 'Tis well the name and age

Are writ upon the Door  
 Or I should fear to pause  
 Where not so much as Honest Dog  
 Approach encourages.

It seems a curious Town –  
 Some Houses very old,  
 Some – newly raised this Afternoon,  
 Were I compelled to build

It should not be among  
Inhabitants so still  
But where the Birds assemble  
And Boys were possible.

Before Myself was born  
'Twas settled, so they say,  
A Territory for the Ghosts –  
And Squirrels, formerly.

Until a Pioneer, as  
Settlers often do  
Liking the quiet of the Place  
Attracted more unto –

And from a Settlement  
A Capital has grown  
Distinguished for the gravity  
Of every Citizen.

The Owner of this House  
A Stranger He must be –  
Eternity's Acquaintances  
Are mostly so – to me.

c. 1864

1945

893

Drab Habitation of Whom?  
Tabernacle or Tomb –  
Or Dome of Worm –  
Or Porch of Gnome –  
Or some Elf's Catacomb?

c. 1864

1896

894

Of Consciousness, her awful Mate  
The Soul cannot be rid –  
As easy the secreting her  
Behind the Eyes of God.

[ 423 ]

The deepest hid is sighted first  
And scant to Him the Crowd –  
What triple Lenses burn upon  
The Escapade from God –

c. 1864

1945

895

A Cloud withdrew from the Sky  
Superior Glory be  
But that Cloud and its Auxiliaries  
Are forever lost to me

Had I but further scanned  
Had I secured the Glow  
In an Hermetic Memory  
It had availed me now.

Never to pass the Angel  
With a glance and a Bow  
Till I am firm in Heaven  
Is my intention now.

c. 1864

1945

896

Of Silken Speech and Specious Shoe  
A Traitor is the Bee  
His service to the newest Grace  
Present continually

His Suit a chance  
His Troth a Term  
Protracted as the Breeze  
Continual Ban propoundeth He  
Continual Divorce.

c. 1864

1945

897

How fortunate the Grave –  
All Prizes to obtain –  
Successful certain, if at last,  
First Suitor not in vain

c. 1864

1945

898

How happy I was if I could forget  
To remember how sad I am  
Would be an easy adversity  
But the recollecting of Bloom  
Keeps making November difficult  
Till I who was almost bold  
Lose my way like a little Child  
And perish of the cold.

c. 1864

1945

899

Herein a Blossom lies –  
A Sepulchre, between –  
Cross it, and overcome the Bee –  
Remain – 'tis but a Rind.

c. 1864

1945

900

What did They do since I saw Them?  
Were They industrious?  
So many questions to put Them  
Have I the eagerness  
That could I snatch Their Faces  
That could Their lips reply  
Not till the last was answered  
Should They start for the Sky.

[ 425 ]

Not if Their Party were waiting,  
Not if to talk with Me  
Were to Them now, Homesickness  
After Eternity

Not if the Just suspect me  
And offer a Reward  
Would I restore my Booty  
To that Bold Person, God –

c. 1864

1945

901

Sweet, to have had them lost  
For news that they be saved –  
The nearer they departed Us  
The nearer they, restored,  
Shall stand to Our Right Hand –  
Most precious and the Dead –  
Next precious  
Those that rose to go –  
Then thought of Us, and stayed.

c. 1864

1935

902

The first Day that I was a Life  
I recollect it – How still –  
That last Day that I was a Life  
I recollect it – as well –  
’Twas stiller – though the first  
Was still –  
’Twas empty – but the first  
Was full –  
This – was my finallest Occasion –  
But then  
My tenderer Experiment  
Toward Men –

“Which choose I”?  
That – I cannot say –  
“Which choose They”?  
Question Memory!

1945

903

I hide myself within my flower,  
That fading from your Vase,  
You, unsuspecting, feel for me –  
Almost a loneliness.

1890

904

Had I not This, or This, I said,  
Appealing to Myself,  
In moment of prosperity –  
Inadequate – were Life –  
“Thou hast not Me, nor Me” – it said,  
In Moment of Reverse –  
“And yet Thou art industrious –  
No need – hadst Thou – of us”?  
My need – was all I had – I said –  
The need did not reduce –  
Because the food – exterminate –  
The hunger – does not cease –  
But diligence – is sharper –  
Proportioned to the Chance –  
To feed upon the Retrograde –  
Enfeebles – the Advance –

1935

905

Between My Country – and the Others –  
There is a Sea –

But Flowers – negotiate between us –  
As Ministry.

c. 1864

1935

906

The Admirations – and Contempts – of time –  
Show justest – through an Open Tomb –  
The Dying – as it were a Height  
Reorganizes Estimate  
And what We saw not  
We distinguish clear –  
And mostly – see not  
What We saw before –

'Tis Compound Vision –  
Light – enabling Light –  
The Finite – furnished  
With the Infinite –  
Convex – and Concave Witness –  
Back – toward Time –  
And forward –  
Toward the God of Him –

c. 1864

1929

907

Till Death – is narrow Loving –  
The scantest Heart extant  
Will hold you till your privilege  
Of Finiteness – be spent –

But He whose loss procures you  
Such Destitution that  
Your Life too abject for itself  
Thenceforward imitate –

Until – Resemblance perfect –  
Yourself, for His pursuit

[ 428 ]

Delight of Nature – abdicate –  
Exhibit Love – somewhat –

c. 1864

1929

908

'Tis Sunrise – Little Maid – Hast Thou  
No Station in the Day?  
'Twas not thy wont, to hinder so –  
Retrieve thine industry –

'Tis Noon – My little Maid –  
Alas – and art thou sleeping yet?  
The Lily – waiting to be Wed –  
The Bee – Hast thou forgot?

My little Maid – 'Tis Night – Alas  
That Night should be to thee  
Instead of Morning – Had'st thou broached  
Thy little Plan to Die –  
Dissuade thee, if I could not, Sweet,  
I might have aided – thee –

c. 1864

1896

909

I make His Crescent fill or lack –  
His Nature is at Full  
Or Quarter – as I signify –  
His Tides – do I control –

He holds superior in the Sky  
Or gropes, at my Command  
Behind inferior Clouds – or round  
A Mist's slow Colonnade –

But since We hold a Mutual Disc –  
And front a Mutual Day –  
Which is the Despot, neither knows –  
Nor Whose – the Tyranny –

c. 1864

1929

Experience is the Angled Road  
 Preferred against the Mind  
 By – Paradox – the Mind itself –  
 Presuming it to lead

Quite Opposite – How Complicate  
 The Discipline of Man –  
 Compelling Him to Choose Himself  
 His Preappointed Pain –

c. 1864

1929

Too little way the House must lie  
 From every Human Heart  
 That holds in undisputed Lease  
 A white inhabitant –

Too narrow is the Right between –  
 Too imminent the chance –  
 Each Consciousness must emigrate  
 And lose its neighbor once –

c. 1864

1935

Peace is a fiction of our Faith –  
 The Bells a Winter Night  
 Bearing the Neighbor out of Sound  
 That never did alight.

c. 1864

1945

And this of all my Hopes  
 This, is the silent end  
 Bountiful colored, my Morning rose  
 Early and sere, its end

Never Bud from a Stem  
Stepped with so gay a Foot  
Never a Worm so confident  
Bored at so brave a Root

c. 1864

1929

914

I cannot be ashamed  
Because I cannot see  
The love you offer –  
Magnitude  
Reverses Modesty

And I cannot be proud  
Because a Height so high  
Involves Alpine  
Requirements  
And Services of Snow.

c 1864

1929

915

Faith – is the Pierless Bridge  
Supporting what We see  
Unto the Scene that We do not –  
Too slender for the eye

It bears the Soul as bold  
As it were rocked in Steel  
With Arms of Steel at either side –  
It joins – behind the Veil

To what, could We presume  
The Bridge would cease to be  
To Our far, vacillating Feet  
A first Necessity.

c. 1864

1929

His Feet are shod with Gauze –  
 His Helmet, is of Gold,  
 His Breast, a Single Onyx  
 With Chrysophrase, inlaid.

His Labor is a Chant –  
 His Idleness – a Tune –  
 Oh, for a Bee's experience  
 Of Clovers, and of Noon!

c. 1864

1890

Love – is anterior to Life –  
 Posterior – to Death –  
 Initial of Creation, and  
 The Exponent of Earth –

c. 1864

1896

Only a Shrine, but Mine –  
 I made the Taper shine –  
 Madonna dim, to whom all Feet may come,  
 Regard a Nun –

Thou knowest every Woe –  
 Needless to tell thee – so –  
 But can'st thou do  
 The Grace next to it – heal?  
 That looks a harder skill to us –  
 Still – just as easy, if it be thy Will  
 To thee – Grant me –  
 Thou knowest, though, so Why tell thee?

c. 1864

1929

If I can stop one Heart from breaking  
 I shall not live in vain  
 If I can ease one Life the Aching  
 Or cool one Pain

Or help one fainting Robin  
 Unto his Nest again  
 I shall not live in Vain.

c. 1864

1890

We can but follow to the Sun –  
 As oft as He go down  
 He leave Ourselves a Sphere behind –  
 'Tis mostly – following –

We go no further with the Dust  
 Than to the Earthen Door –  
 And then the Panels are reversed –  
 And we behold – no more.

c. 1864

1955

If it had no pencil  
 Would it try mine –  
 Worn – now – and *dull* – sweet,  
 Writing much to thee.  
 If it had no word,  
 Would it make the Daisy,  
 Most as big as I was,  
 When it plucked me?

c. 1864

1945

Those who have been in the Grave the longest –  
 Those who begin Today –

Equally perish from our Practise –  
Death is the other way –

Foot of the Bold did least attempt it –  
It – is the White Exploit –  
Once to achieve annuls the power  
Once to communicate –

c. 1864

1945

923

How the Waters closed above Him  
We shall never know –  
How He stretched His Anguish to us  
That – is covered too –

Spreads the Pond Her Base of Lilies  
Bold above the Boy  
Whose unclaimed Hat and Jacket  
Sum the History –

c. 1864

1945

924

Love – is that later Thing than Death –  
More previous – than Life –  
Confirms it at its entrance – And  
Usurps it – of itself –

Tastes Death – the first – to hand the sting  
The Second – to its friend –  
Disarms the little interval –  
Deposits Him with God –

Then hovers – an inferior Guard –  
Lest this Beloved Charge  
Need – once in an Eternity –  
A smaller than the Large –

c. 1864

1945

Struck, was I, not yet by Lightning—  
 Lightning—lets away  
 Power to perceive His Process  
 With Vitality.

Maimed—was I—yet not by Venture—  
 Stone of stolid Boy—  
 Nor a Sportsman's Peradventure—  
 Who mine Enemy?

Robbed—was I—intact to Bandit—  
 All my Mansion torn—  
 Sun—withdrawn to Recognition—  
 Furthest shining—done—

Yet was not the foe—of any—  
 Not the smallest Bird  
 In the nearest Orchard dwelling  
 Be of Me—afraid.

Most—I love the Cause that slew Me.  
 Often as I die  
 Its beloved Recognition  
 Holds a Sun on Me—

Best—at Setting—as is Nature's—  
 Neither witnessed Rise  
 Till the infinite Aurora  
 In the other's eyes.

1945

Patience—has a quiet Outer—  
 Patience—Look within—  
 Is an Insect's futile forces  
 Infinites—between—

'Scaping one—against the other  
 Fruitless to fling—

Patience – is the Smile's exertion  
Through the quivering –

c. 1864

1945

927

Absent Place – an April Day –  
Daffodils a-blow  
Homesick curiosity  
To the Souls that snow –  
  
Drift may block within it  
Deeper than without –  
Daffodil delight but  
Him it duplicate –

c. 1864

1945

928

The Heart has narrow Banks  
It measures like the Sea  
In mighty – unremitting Bass  
And Blue Monotony  
  
Till Hurricane bisect  
And as itself discerns  
Its insufficient Area  
The Heart convulsive learns  
  
That Calm is but a Wall  
Of unattempted Gauze  
An instant's Push demolishes  
A Questioning – dissolves.

c. 1864

1945

929

How far is it to Heaven?  
As far as Death this way –  
Of River or of Ridge beyond  
Was no discovery.

[ 436 ]

How far is it to Hell?  
As far as Death this way –  
How far left hand the Sepulchre  
Defies Topography.

c. 1864

1945

930

There is a June when Corn is cut  
And Roses in the Seed –  
A Summer briefer than the first  
But tenderer indeed

As should a Face supposed the Grave's  
Emerge a single Noon  
In the Vermilion that it wore  
Affect us, and return –

Two Seasons, it is said, exist –  
The Summer of the Just,  
And this of Ours, diversified  
With Prospect, and with Frost –

May not our Second with its First  
So infinite compare  
That We but recollect the one  
Tho other to prefer?

c. 1864

1945

931

Noon – is the Hinge of Day –  
Evening – the Tissue Door –  
Morning – the East compelling the sill  
Till all the World is ajar –

c. 1864

1945

932

My best Acquaintances are those  
With Whom I spoke no Word –

The Stars that stated come to Town  
Esteemed Me never rude  
Although to their Celestial Call  
I failed to make reply –  
My constant – reverential Face  
Sufficient Courtesy.

c. 1864

1945

933

Two Travellers perishing in Snow  
The Forests as they froze  
Together heard them strengthening  
Each other with the words  
  
That Heaven if Heaven – must contain  
What Either left behind  
And then the cheer too solemn grew  
For language, and the wind  
  
Long steps across the features took  
That Love had touched that Morn  
With reverential Hyacinth –  
The taleless Days went on  
  
Till Mystery impatient drew  
And those They left behind  
Led absent, were procured of Heaven  
As Those first furnished, said –

c. 1864

1945

934

That is solemn we have ended  
Be it but a Play  
Or a Glee among the Garret  
Or a Holiday  
  
Or a leaving Home, or later,  
Parting with a World

[ 438 ]

We have understood for better  
Still to be explained.

c. 1864

1896

935

Death leaves Us homesick, who behind,  
Except that it is gone  
Are ignorant of its Concern  
As if it were not born.

Through all their former Places, we  
Like Individuals go  
Who something lost, the seeking for  
Is all that's left them, now –

c. 1863

1945

936

This Dust, and its Feature –  
Accredited – Today –  
Will in a second Future –  
Cease to identify –

This Mind, and its measure –  
A too minute Area  
For its enlarged inspection's  
Comparison – appear –

This World, and its species  
A too concluded show  
For its absorbed Attention's  
Remotest scrutiny –

c. 1864

1945

937\*

I felt a Cleaving in my Mind –  
As if my Brain had split –  
I tried to match it – Seam by Seam –  
But could not make them fit.

\* See poem 992.

The thought behind, I strove to join  
Unto the thought before –  
But Sequence ravelled out of Sound  
Like Balls – upon a Floor.

c. 1864

1896

938

Fairer through Fading – as the Day  
Into the Darkness dips away –  
Half Her Complexion of the Sun –  
Hindering – Haunting – Perishing –  
Rallies Her Glow, like a dying Friend –  
Teasing with glittering Amend –  
Only to aggravate the Dark  
Through an expiring – perfect – look –

c. 1864

1945

939

What I see not, I better see –  
Through Faith – my Hazel Eye  
Has periods of shutting –  
But, No lid has Memory –

For frequent, all my sense obscured  
I equally behold  
As someone held a light unto  
The Features so beloved –

And I arise – and in my Dream –  
Do Thee distinguished Grace –  
Till jealous Daylight interrupt –  
And mar thy perfectness –

c. 1864

1945

940

On that dear Frame the Years had worn  
Yet precious as the House

[ 440 ]

In which We first experienced Light  
The Witnessing, to Us –

Precious! It was conceiveless fair  
As Hands the Grave had grimed  
Should softly place within our own  
Denying that they died.

c. 1864

1945

941

The Lady feeds Her little Bird  
At rarer intervals –  
The little Bird would not dissent  
But meekly recognize

The Gulf between the Hand and Her  
And crumbless and afar  
And fainting, on Her yellow Knee  
Fall softly, and adore –

c. 1864

1945

942

Snow beneath whose chilly softness  
Some that never lay  
Make their first Repose this Winter  
I admonish Thee

Blanket Wealthier the Neighbor  
We so new bestow  
Than thine acclimated Creature  
Wilt Thou, Austere Snow?

c. 1864

1945

943

A Coffin – is a small Domain,  
Yet able to contain  
A Citizen of Paradise  
In its diminished Plane.

A Grave – is a restricted Breadth –  
Yet ampler than the Sun –  
And all the Seas He populates  
And Lands He looks upon

To Him who on its small Repose  
Bestows a single Friend –  
Circumference without Relief –  
Or Estimate – or End –

c. 1864

1945

944

I learned – at least – what Home could be –  
How ignorant I had been  
Of pretty ways of Covenant –  
How awkward at the Hymn

Round our new Fireside – but for this –  
This pattern – of the Way –  
Whose Memory drowns me, like the Dip  
Of a Celestial Sea –

What Mornings in our Garden – guessed –  
What Bees – for us – to hum –  
With only Birds to interrupt  
The Ripple of our Theme –

And Task for Both –  
When Play be done –  
Your Problem – of the Brain –  
And mine – some foolisher effect –  
A Ruffle – or a Tune –

The Afternoons – Together spent –  
And Twilight – in the Lanes –  
Some ministry to poorer lives –  
Seen poorest – thro' our gains –

And then Return – and Night – and Home –  
And then away to You to pass –  
A new – diviner – care –

Till Sunrise take us back to Scene –  
Transmuted – Vivider –

This seems a Home –  
And Home is not –  
But what that Place could be –  
Afflicts me – as a Setting Sun –  
Where Dawn – knows how to be –

c 1864

1945

945

This is a Blossom of the Brain –  
A small – italic Seed  
Lodged by Design or Happening  
The Spirit fructified –

Shy as the Wind of his Chambers  
Swift as a Freshet's Tongue  
So of the Flower of the Soul  
Its process is unknown.

When it is found, a few rejoice  
The Wise convey it Home  
Carefully cherishing the spot  
If other Flower become.

When it is lost, that Day shall be  
The Funeral of God,  
Upon his Breast, a closing Soul  
The Flower of our Lord.

c. 1864

1945

946

It is an honorable Thought  
And makes One lift One's Hat  
As One met sudden Gentlefolk  
Upon a daily Street

That We've immortal Place  
Though Pyramids decay

[ 443 ]

And Kingdoms, like the Orchard  
Flit Russetly away

c. 1864

1896

947

Of Tolling Bell I ask the cause?  
"A Soul has gone to Heaven"  
I'm answered in a lonesome tone –  
Is Heaven then a Prison?

That Bells should ring till all should know  
A Soul had gone to Heaven  
Would seem to me the more the way  
A Good News should be given.

c. 1864

1896

948

'Twas Crisis – All the length had passed –  
That dull – benumbing time  
There is in Fever or Event –  
And now the Chance had come –

The instant holding in its claw  
The privilege to live  
Or warrant to report the Soul  
The other side the Grave.

The Muscles grappled as with leads  
That would not let the Will –  
The Spirit shook the Adamant –  
But could not make it feel.

The Second poised – debated – shot –  
Another had begun –  
And simultaneously, a Soul  
Escaped the House unseen –

c. 1864

1945

Under the Light, yet under,  
 Under the Grass and the Dirt,  
 Under the Beetle's Cellar  
 Under the Clover's Root,

Further than Arm could stretch  
 Were it Giant long,  
 Further than Sunshine could  
 Were the Day Year long,

Over the Light, yet over,  
 Over the Arc of the Bird –  
 Over the Comet's chimney –  
 Over the Cubit's Head,

Further than Guess can gallop  
 Further than Riddle ride –  
 Oh for a Disc to the Distance  
 Between Ourselves and the Dead!

c. 1864

1945

The Sunset stopped on Cottages  
 Where Sunset hence must be  
 For treason not of His, but Life's,  
 Gone Westerly, Today –

The Sunset stopped on Cottages  
 Where Morning just begun –  
 What difference, after all, Thou mak'st  
 Thou supercilious Sun?

c. 1864

1945

As Frost is best conceived  
 By force of its Result –  
 Affliction is inferred  
 By subsequent effect –

If when the sun reveal,  
The Garden keep the Gash –  
If as the Days resume  
The wilted countenance

Cannot correct the crease  
Or counteract the stain –  
Presumption is Vitality  
Was somewhere put in twain.

c. 1864

1945

952

A Man may make a Remark –  
In itself – a quiet thing  
That may furnish the Fuse unto a Spark  
In dormant nature – lain –

Let us deport – with skill –  
Let us discourse – with care –  
Powder exists in Charcoal –  
Before it exists in Fire.

c. 1864

1945

953

A Door just opened on a street –  
I – lost – was passing by –  
An instant's Width of Warmth disclosed –  
And Wealth – and Company.

The Door as instant shut – And I –  
I – lost – was passing by –  
Lost doubly – but by contrast – most –  
Informing – misery –

c. 1864

1896

954

The Chemical conviction  
That Nought be lost

[ 446 ]

Enable in Disaster  
My fractured Trust –  
The Faces of the Atoms  
If I shall see  
How more the Finished Creatures  
Departed me!

c. 1864

1945

955

The Hollows round His eager Eyes  
Were Pages where to read  
Pathetic Histories – although  
Himself had not complained.  
Biography to All who passed  
Of Unobtrusive Pain  
Except for the italic Face  
Endured, unhelped – unknown.

c 1864

1945

956

What shall I do when the Summer troubles –  
What, when the Rose is ripe –  
What when the Eggs fly off in Music  
From the Maple Keep?  
What shall I do when the Skies a' chirrup  
Drop a Tune on me –  
When the Bee hangs all Noon in the Buttercup  
What will become of me?  
Oh, when the Squirrel fills His Pockets  
And the Berries stare  
How can I bear their jocund Faces  
Thou from Here, so far?  
'Twouldn't afflict a Robin –  
All His Goods have Wings –

[ 447 ]

I – do not fly, so wherefore  
My Perennial Things?

c. 1864

1945

957

As One does Sickness over  
In convalescent Mind,  
His scrutiny of Chances  
By blessed Health obscured –

As One rewalks a Precipice  
And whittles at the Twig  
That held Him from Perdition  
Sown sidewise in the Crag

A Custom of the Soul  
Far after suffering  
Identity to question  
For evidence 't has been –

c. 1864

1945

958

We met as Sparks – Diverging Flints  
Sent various – scattered ways –  
We parted as the Central Flint  
Were cloven with an Adze –  
Subsisting on the Light We bore  
Before We felt the Dark –  
A Flint unto this Day – perhaps –  
But for that single Spark.

c. 1864

1945

959

A loss of something ever felt I –  
The first that I could recollect  
Bereft I was – of what I knew not  
Too young that any should suspect

A Mourner walked among the children  
I notwithstanding went about  
As one bemoaning a Dominion  
Itself the only Prince cast out –

Elder, Today, a session wiser  
And fainter, too, as Wiseness is –  
I find myself still softly searching  
For my Delinquent Palaces –

And a Suspicion, like a Finger  
Touches my Forehead now and then  
That I am looking oppositely  
For the site of the Kingdom of Heaven –

c. 1864

1945

960

As plan for Noon and plan for Night  
So differ Life and Death  
In positive Prospective –  
The Foot upon the Earth

At Distance, and Achievement, strains,  
The Foot upon the Grave  
Makes effort at conclusion  
Assisted faint of Love.

c. 1864

1945

961

Wert Thou but ill – that I might show thee  
How long a Day I could endure  
Though thine attention stop not on me  
Nor the least signal, Me assure –

Wert Thou but Stranger in ungracious country –  
And Mine – the Door  
Thou paused at, for a passing bounty –  
No More –

Accused – wert Thou – and Myself – Tribunal –  
Convicted – Sentenced – Ermine – not to Me  
Half the Condition, thy Reverse – to follow –  
Just to partake – the infamy –

The Tenant of the Narrow Cottage, wert Thou –  
Permit to be  
The Housewife in thy low attendance  
Contenteth Me –

No Service hast Thou, I would not achieve it –  
To die – or live –  
The first – Sweet, proved I, ere I saw thee –  
For Life – be Love –

c. 1864

1945

962

Midsummer, was it, when They died –  
A full, and perfect time –  
The Summer closed upon itself  
In Consummated Bloom –

The Corn, her furthest kernel filled  
Before the coming Flail –  
When These – leaned into Perfectness –  
Through Haze of Burial –

c. 1864

1929

963

A nearness to Tremendousness –  
An Agony procures –  
Affliction ranges Boundlessness –  
Vicinity to Laws

Contentment's quiet Suburb –  
Affliction cannot stay  
In Acres – Its Location  
Is Illocality –

c. 1864

1935

"Unto Me?" I do not know you –  
Where may be your House?

"I am Jesus – Late of Judea –  
Now – of Paradise" –

Wagons – have you – to convey me?  
This is far from Thence –

"Arms of Mine – sufficient Phaeton –  
Trust Omnipotence" –

I am spotted – "I am Pardon" –  
I am small – "The Least  
Is esteemed in Heaven the Chiefest –  
Occupy my House" –

c. 1864

1929

Denial – is the only fact  
Perceived by the Denied –  
Whose Will – a numb significance –  
The Day the Heaven died –

And all the Earth strove common round –  
Without Delight, or Beam –  
What Comfort was it Wisdom – was –  
The spoiler of Our Home?

c 1864

1929

All forgot for recollecting  
Just a paltry One –  
All forsook, for just a Stranger's  
New Accompanying –

Grace of Wealth, and Grace of Station  
Less accounted than

An unknwn Esteem possessing –  
Estimate – Who can –

Home effaced – Her faces dwindled –  
Nature – altered small –  
Sun – if shone – or Storm – if shattered –  
Overlooked I all –

Dropped – my fate – a timid Pebble –  
In thy bolder Sea –  
Prove – me – Sweet – if I regret it –  
Prove Myself – of Thee –

c. 1864

1929

967

Pain – expands the Time –  
Ages coil within  
The minute Circumference  
Of a single Brain –

Pain contracts – the Time –  
Occupied with Shot  
Gamuts of Eternities  
Are as they were not –

c. 1864

1929

968

Fitter to see Him, I may be  
For the long Hindrance – Grace – to Me –  
With Summers, and with Winters, grow,  
Some passing Year – A trait bestow

To make Me fairest of the Earth –  
The Waiting – then – will seem so worth  
I shall impute with half a pain  
The blame that I was chosen – then –

Time to anticipate His Gaze –  
It's first – Delight – and then – Surprise –

The turning o'er and o'er my face  
For Evidence it be the Grace –

He left behind One Day – So less  
He seek Conviction, That – be This –

I only must not grow so new  
That He'll mistake – and ask for me  
Of me – when first unto the Door  
I go – to Elsewhere go no more –

I only must not change so fair  
He'll sigh – “The Other – She – is Where?”  
The Love, tho', will array me right  
I shall be perfect – in His sight –

If He perceive the other Truth –  
Upon an Excellenter Youth –

How sweet I shall not lack in Vain –  
But gain – thro' loss – Through Grief – obtain –  
The Beauty that reward Him best –  
The Beauty of Demand – at Rest –

c. 1864

1930

969

He who in Himself believes –  
Fraud cannot presume –  
Faith is Constancy's Result –  
And assumes – from Home –

Cannot perish, though it fail  
Every second time –  
But defaced Vicariously –  
For Some Other Shame –

c. 1864

1945

970

Color – Caste – Denomination –  
These – are Time's Affair –

[ 453 ]

Death's diviner Classifying  
Does not know they are –

As in sleep – All Hue forgotten –  
Tenets – put behind –  
Death's large – Democratic fingers  
Rub away the Brand –

If Circassian – He is careless –  
If He put away  
Chrysalis of Blonde – or Umber –  
Equal Butterfly –

They emerge from His Obscuring –  
What Death – knows so well –  
Our minuter intuitions –  
Deem unplausible –

c. 1864

1929

971

Robbed by Death – but that was easy –  
To the failing Eye  
I could hold the latest Glowing –  
Robbed by Liberty

For Her Jugular Defences –  
This, too, I endured –  
Hint of Glory – it afforded –  
For the Brave Beloved –

Fraud of Distance – Fraud of Danger,  
Fraud of Death – to bear –  
It is Bounty – to Suspense's  
Vague Calamity –

Staking our entire Possession  
On a Hair's result –  
Then – Seesawing – coolly – on it –  
Trying if it split –

c. 1864

1945

972

Unfulfilled to Observation –  
Incomplete – to Eye –  
But to Faith – a Revolution  
In Locality –

Unto Us – the Suns extinguish –  
To our Opposite –  
New Horizons – they embellish –  
Fronting Us – with Night.

c. 1864

1935

973

'Twas awkward, but it fitted me –  
An Ancient fashioned Heart –  
Its only lore – its Steadfastness –  
In Change – unerudite –

It only moved as do the Suns –  
For merit of Return –  
Or Birds – confirmed perpetual  
By Alternating Zone –

I only have it not Tonight  
In its established place –  
For technicality of Death –  
Omitted in the Lease –

c. 1864

1935

974

The Soul's distinct connection  
With immortality  
Is best disclosed by Danger  
Or quick Calamity –

As Lightning on a Landscape  
Exhibits Sheets of Place –

Not yet suspected – but for Flash –  
And Click – and Suddenness

c. 1864

1929

975

The Mountain sat upon the Plain  
In his tremendous Chair –  
His observation omnifold,  
His inquest, everywhere –

The Seasons played around his knees  
Like Children round a sire –  
Grandfather of the Days is He  
Of Dawn, the Ancestor –

c 1864

1890

976

Death is a Dialogue between  
The Spirit and the Dust.  
“Dissolve” says Death – The Spirit “Sir  
I have another Trust” –

Death doubts it – Argues from the Ground –  
The Spirit turns away  
Just laying off for evidence  
An Overcoat of Clay.

c. 1864

1890

977

Besides this May  
We know  
There is Another –  
How fair  
Our Speculations of the Foreigner!  
Some know Him whom We knew –  
Sweet Wonder –

A Nature be  
Where Saints, and our plain going Neighbor  
Keep May!

c. 1864

1945

978

It bloomed and dropt, a Single Noon –  
The Flower – distinct and Red –  
I, passing, thought another Noon  
Another in its stead

Will equal glow, and thought no More  
But came another Day  
To find the Species disappeared –  
The Same Locality –

The Sun in place – no other fraud  
On Nature's perfect Sum –  
Had I but lingered Yesterday –  
Was my retrieveless blame –

Much Flowers of this and further Zones  
Have perished in my Hands  
For seeking its Resemblance –  
But unapproached it stands –

The single Flower of the Earth  
That I, in passing by  
Unconscious was – Great Nature's Face  
Passed infinite by Me –

c. 1864

1955

979

This Merit hath the worst –  
It cannot be again –  
When Fate hath taunted last  
And thrown Her furthest Stone –

The Maimed may pause, and breathe,  
And glance securely round –

The Deer attracts no further  
Than it resists – the Hound –

c. 1864

1891

980

Purple – is fashionable twice –  
This season of the year,  
And when a soul perceives itself  
To be an Emperor.

c. 1864

1945

981

As Sleigh Bells seem in summer  
Or Bees, at Christmas show –  
So fairy – so fictitious  
The individuals do  
Repealed from observation –  
A Party that we knew –  
More distant in an instant  
Than Dawn in Timbuctoo.

c. 1864

1945

982

No Other can reduce  
Our mortal Consequence  
Like the remembering it be nought  
A Period from hence  
But Contemplation for  
Contemporaneous Nought  
Our Single Competition  
Jehovah's Estimate.

c. 1865

1914

983

Ideals are the Fairy Oil  
With which we help the Wheel

But when the Vital Axle turns  
The Eye rejects the Oil.

c. 1865

1945

984

'Tis Anguish grander than Delight  
'Tis Resurrection Pain –  
The meeting Bands of smitten Face  
We questioned to, again.

'Tis Transport wild as thrills the Graves  
When Cerements let go  
And Creatures clad in Miracle  
Go up by Two and Two.

c. 1865

1945

985

The Missing All – prevented Me  
From missing minor Things.  
If nothing larger than a World's  
Departure from a Hinge –  
Or Sun's extinction, be observed –  
'Twas not so large that I  
Could lift my Forehead from my work  
For Curiosity.

c. 1865

1914

986

A narrow Fellow in the Grass  
Occasionally rides –  
You may have met Him – did you not  
His notice sudden is –

The Grass divides as with a Comb –  
A spotted shaft is seen –  
And then it closes at your feet  
And opens further on –

He likes a Boggy Acre  
A Floor too cool for Corn –  
Yet when a Boy, and Barefoot –  
I more than once at Noon  
Have passed, I thought, a Whip lash  
Unbraiding in the Sun  
When stooping to secure it  
It wrinkled, and was gone –

Several of Nature's People  
I know, and they know me –  
I feel for them a transport  
Of cordiality –

But never met this Fellow  
Attended, or alone  
Without a tighter breathing  
And Zero at the Bone –

c. 1865

1866

987

The Leaves like Women interchange  
Exclusive Confidence –  
Somewhat of nods and somewhat  
Portentous inference.

The Parties in both cases  
Enjoining secrecy –  
Inviolable compact  
To notoriety.

c. 1865

1891

988

The Definition of Beauty is  
That Definition is none –  
Of Heaven, easing Analysis,  
Since Heaven and He are one.

c. 1865

1924

Gratitude – is not the mention  
 Of a Tenderness,  
 But its still appreciation  
 Out of Plumb of Speech.

When the Sea return no Answer  
 By the Line and Lead  
 Proves it there's no Sea, or rather  
 A remoter Bed?

c. 1865

1947

Not all die early, dying young –  
 Maturity of Fate  
 Is consummated equally  
 In Ages, or a Night –

A Hoary Boy, I've known to drop  
 Whole statured – by the side  
 Of Junior of Fourscore – 'twas Act  
 Not Period – that died.

c. 1865

1894

She sped as Petals of a Rose  
 Offended by the Wind –  
 A frail Aristocrat of Time  
 Indemnity to find –  
 Leaving on nature – a Default  
 As Cricket or as Bee –  
 But Andes in the Bosoms where  
 She had begun to lie –

c. 1865

1932

992\*

The Dust behind I strove to join  
Unto the Disk before –  
But Sequence ravelled out of Sound  
Like Balls upon a Floor –

c. 1865

1955

993

We miss Her, not because We see –  
The Absence of an Eye –  
Except its Mind accompany  
Abridge Society

As slightly as the Routes of Stars –  
Ourselves – asleep below –  
We know that their superior Eyes  
Include Us – as they go –

c. 1865

1945

994

Partake as doth the Bee,  
Abstemiously.  
The Rose is an Estate –  
In Sicily.

c. 1865

1945

995

This was in the White of the Year –  
That – was in the Green –  
Drifts were as difficult then to think  
As Daisies now to be seen –

Looking back is best that is left  
Or if it be – before –

\* See poem 937.

Retrospection is Prospect's half,  
Sometimes, almost more.

c. 1865

1894

996

We'll pass without the parting  
So to spare  
Certificate of Absence –  
Deeming where

I left Her I could find Her  
If I tried –  
This way, I keep from missing  
Those that died.

c. 1865

1894

997

Crumbling is not an instant's Act  
A fundamental pause  
Dilapidation's processes  
Are organized Decays.

'Tis first a Cobweb on the Soul  
A Cuticle of Dust  
A Borer in the Axis  
An Elemental Rust –

Ruin is formal – Devil's work  
Consecutive and slow –  
Fail in an instant, no man did  
Slipping – is Crash's law.

c. 1865

1945

998

Best Things dwell out of Sight  
The Pearl – the Just – Our Thought.

Most shun the Public Air  
Legitimate, and Rare –  
The Capsule of the Wind  
The Capsule of the Mind  
Exhibit here, as doth a Burr –  
Germ's Germ be where?

c. 1865

1945

999

Superfluous were the Sun  
When Excellence be dead  
He were superfluous every Day  
For every Day be said  
That syllable whose Faith  
Just saves it from Despair  
And whose "I'll meet You" hesitates  
If Love inquire "Where"?  
Upon His dateless Fame  
Our Periods may lie  
As Stars that drop anonymous  
From an abundant sky.

c. 1865

1896

1000

The Fingers of the Light  
Tapped soft upon the Town  
With "I am great and cannot wait  
So therefore let me in."

"You're soon," the Town replied,  
"My Faces are asleep –  
But swear, and I will let you by,  
You will not wake them up."

The easy Guest complied  
But once within the Town

The transport of His Countenance  
Awakened Maid and Man

The Neighbor in the Pool  
Upon His Hip elate  
Made loud obeisance and the Gnat  
Held up His Cup for Light.

c. 1865

1945

1001

The Stimulus, beyond the Grave  
His Countenance to see  
Supports me like imperial Drams  
Afforded Day by Day.

c. 1865

1896

1002

Aurora is the effort  
Of the Celestial Face  
Unconsciousness of Perfectness  
To simulate, to Us.

c. 1865

1945

1003

Dying at my music!  
Bubble! Bubble!  
Hold me till the Octave's run!  
Quick! Burst the Windows!  
Ritardando!  
Phials left, and the Sun!

c. 1865

1945

1004

There is no Silence in the Earth -- so silent  
As that endured

Which uttered, would discourage Nature  
And haunt the World.

c. 1865

1945

1005

Bind me – I still can sing –  
Banish – my mandolin  
Strikes true within –  
Slay – and my Soul shall rise  
Chanting to Paradise –  
Still thine.

c. 1865

1945

1006

The first We knew of Him was Death –  
The second – was – Renown –  
Except the first had justified  
The second had not been.

c. 1865

1945

1007

Falsehood of Thee could I suppose  
'Twould undermine the Sill  
To which my Faith pinned Block by Block  
Her Cedar Citadel.

c. 1865

1945

1008

How still the Bells in Steeples stand  
Till swollen with the Sky  
They leap upon their silver Feet  
In frantic Melody!

c. 1865

1896

I was a Phoebe – nothing more –  
 A Phoebe – nothing less –  
 The little note that others dropt  
 I fitted into place –

I dwelt too low that any seek –  
 Too shy, that any blame –  
 A Phoebe makes a little print  
 Upon the Floors of Fame –

c. 1865

1945

Up Life's Hill with my little Bundle  
 If I prove it steep –  
 If a Discouragement withhold me –  
 If my newest step

Older feel than the Hope that prompted –  
 Spotless be from blame  
 Heart that proposed as Heart that accepted  
 Homelessness, for Home –

c. 1865

1945

She rose as high as His Occasion  
 Then sought the Dust –  
 And lower lay in low Westminster  
 For Her brief Crest –

c. 1865

1945

Which is best? Heaven –  
 Or only Heaven to come  
 With that old Codicil of Doubt?  
 I cannot help esteem

The "Bird within the Hand"  
Superior to the one  
The "Bush" may yield me  
Or may not  
Too late to choose again.

c. 1865

1945

1013

Too scanty 'twas to die for you,  
The merest Greek could that  
The living, Sweet, is costlier –  
I offer even that –

The Dying, is a trifle, past,  
But living, this include  
The dying multifold – without  
The Respite to be dead.

c. 1865

1945

1014

Did We abolish Frost  
The Summer would not cease –  
If Seasons perish or prevail  
Is optional with Us –

c. 1865

1945

1015

Were it but Me that gained the Height –  
Were it but They, that failed!  
How many things the Dying play  
Might they but live, they would!

c. 1865

1945

1016

The Hills in Purple syllables  
The Day's Adventures tell

To little Groups of Continents  
Just going Home from School.

c. 1865

1945

1017

To die – without the Dying  
And live – without the Life  
This is the hardest Miracle  
Propounded to Belief.

c. 1865

1945

1018

Who saw no Sunrise cannot say  
The Countenance 'twould be.  
Who guess at seeing, guess at loss  
Of the Ability.

The Emigrant of Light, it is  
Afflicted for the Day.  
The Blindness that beheld and blest –  
And could not find its Eye.

c. 1865

1945

1019

My Season's furthest Flower –  
I tenderer commend  
Because I found Her Kinsmanless,  
A Grace without a Friend.

c. 1865

1945

1020

Trudging to Eden, looking backward,  
I met Somebody's little Boy  
Asked him his name – He lisped me "Trotwood" –  
Lady, did He belong to thee?

[ 469 ]

Would it comfort – to know I met him –  
And that He didn't look afraid?  
I couldn't weep – for so many smiling  
New Acquaintance – this Baby made –

c. 1865

1945

1021

Far from Love the Heavenly Father  
Leads the Chosen Child,  
Oftener through Realm of Briar  
Than the Meadow mild.

Oftener by the Claw of Dragon  
Than the Hand of Friend  
Guides the Little One predestined  
To the Native Land.

c. 1865

1896

1022

I knew that I had gained  
And yet I knew not how  
By Diminution it was not  
But Discipline unto

A Rigor unrelieved  
Except by the Content  
Another bear its Duplicate  
In other Continent.

c. 1865

1945

1023

It rises – passes – on our South  
Inscribes a simple Noon –  
Cajoles a Moment with the Spires  
And infinite is gone –

c. 1865

1945

So large my Will  
 The little that I may  
 Embarrasses  
 Like gentle infamy –  
 Affront to Him  
 For whom the Whole were small  
 Affront to me  
 Who know His Meed of all.

Earth at the best  
 Is but a scanty Toy –  
 Bought, carried Home  
 To Immortality.

It looks so small  
 We chiefly wonder then  
 At our Conceit  
 In purchasing.

c. 1865

1945

The Products of my Farm are these  
 Sufficient for my Own  
 And here and there a Benefit  
 Unto a Neighbor's Bin.

With Us, 'tis Harvest all the Year  
 For when the Frosts begin  
 We just reverse the Zodiac  
 And fetch the Acres in.

c. 1865

1945

The Dying need but little, Dear,  
 A Glass of Water's all,  
 A Flower's unobtrusive Face  
 To punctuate the Wall,

A Fan, perhaps, a Friend's Regret  
And Certainty that one  
No color in the Rainbow  
Perceive, when you are gone.

c. 1865 1896

1027

My Heart upon a little Plate  
Her Palate to delight  
A Berry or a Bun, would be,  
Might it an Apricot!

c. 1865 1945

1028

'Twas my one Glory –  
Let it be  
Remembered  
I was owned of Thee –

c. 1865 1945

1029

Nor Mountain hinder Me  
Nor Sea –  
Who's Baltic –  
Who's Cordillera?

c. 1865 1945

1030

That Such have died enable Us  
The tranquilizer to die –  
That Such have lived,  
Certificate for Immortality.

c. 1865 1896

1031

Fate slew Him, but He did not drop –  
She felled – He did not fall –  
Impaled Him on Her fiercest stakes –  
He neutralized them all –

She stung Him – sapped His firm Advance –  
But when Her Worst was done  
And He – unmoved regarded Her –  
Acknowledged Him a Man.

c. 1865

1896

1032

Who is the East?  
The Yellow Man  
Who may be Purple if He can  
That carries in the Sun.

Who is the West?  
The Purple Man  
Who may be Yellow if He can  
That lets Him out again.

c. 1865

1945

1033

Said Death to Passion  
"Give of thine an Acre unto me."  
Said Passion, through contracting Breaths  
"A Thousand Times Thee Nay."

Bore Death from Passion  
All His East  
He – sovereign as the Sun  
Resituated in the West  
And the Debate was done.

c. 1865

1945

1034

His Bill an Auger is  
His Head, a Cap and Frill  
He laboreth at every Tree  
A Worm, His utmost Goal.

c. 1865

1896

1035

Beel I'm expecting you!  
Was saying Yesterday  
To Somebody you know  
That you were due –  
The Frogs got Home last Week –  
Are settled, and at work –  
Birds, mostly back –  
The Clover warm and thick –  
You'll get my Letter by  
The seventeenth, Reply  
Or better, be with me –  
Yours, Fly.

c. 1865

1945

1036

Satisfaction – is the Agent  
Of Satiety –  
Want – a quiet Commissary  
For Infinity.  
To possess, is past the instant  
We achieve the Joy –  
Immortality contented  
Were Anomaly.

c. 1865

1945

Here, where the Daisies fit my Head  
 'Tis easiest to lie  
 And every Grass that plays outside  
 Is sorry, some, for me.

Where I am not afraid to go  
 I may confide my Flower –  
 Who was not Enemy of Me  
 Will gentle be, to Her

Nor separate, Herself and Me  
 By Distances become –  
 A single Bloom we constitute  
 Departed, or at Home –

c. 1865

1945

Her little Parasol to lift  
 And once to let it down  
 Her whole Responsibility –  
 To imitate be Mine.

A Summer further I must wear,  
 Content if Nature's Drawer  
 Present me from sepulchral Crease  
 As blemishless, as Her.

c. 1865

1945

I heard, as if I had no Ear  
 Until a Vital Word  
 Came all the way from Life to me  
 And then I knew I heard.

I saw, as if my Eye were on  
 Another, till a Thing  
 And now I know 'twas Light, because  
 It fitted them, came in.

I dwelt, as if Myself were out,  
My Body but within  
Until a Might detected me  
And set my kernel in  
  
And Spirit turned unto the Dust  
"Old Friend, thou knowest me,"  
And Time went out to tell the News  
And met Eternity

c. 1865

1945

1040

Not so the infinite Relations – Below  
Division is Adhesion's forfeit – On High  
Affliction but a Speculation – And Woe  
A Fallacy, a Figment, We knew –

c. 1865

1945

1041

Somewhat, to hope for,  
Be it ne'er so far  
Is Capital against Despair –  
  
Somewhat, to suffer,  
Be it ne'er so keen –  
If terminable, may be borne.

c. 1865

1945

1042

Spring comes on the World –  
I sight the Aprils –  
Hueless to me until thou come  
As, till the Bee  
Blossoms stand negative,  
Touched to Conditions  
By a Hum.

c. 1865

1945

1043

Lest this be Heaven indeed  
An Obstacle is given  
That always gauges a Degree  
Between Ourselves and Heaven.

c 1865

1945

1044

A Sickness of this World it most occasions  
When Best Men die.  
A Wishfulness their far Condition  
To occupy.

A Chief indifference, as Foreign  
A World must be  
Themselves forsake – contented,  
For Deity.

c 1865

1896

1045

Nature rarer uses Yellow  
Than another Hue.  
Saves she all of that for Sunsets  
Prodigal of Blue

Spending Scarlet, like a Woman  
Yellow she affords  
Only scantily and selectly  
Like a Lover's Words.

c. 1865

1891

1046

I've dropped my Brain – My Soul is numb –  
The Veins that used to run  
Stop palsied – 'tis Paralysis  
Done perfecter on stone

[ 477 ]

Vitality is Carved and cool.  
My nerve in Marble lies –  
A Breathing Woman  
Yesterday – Endowed with Paradise.

Not dumb – I had a sort that moved –  
A Sense that smote and stirred –  
Instincts for Dance – a caper part –  
An Aptitude for Bird –

Who wrought Carrara in me  
And chiselled all my tune  
Were it a Witchcraft – were it Death –  
I've still a chance to strain

To Being, somewhere – Motion – Breath –  
Though Centuries beyond,  
And every limit a Decade –  
I'll shiver, satisfied.

c. 1865

1945

1047

The Opening and the Close  
Of Being, are alike  
Or differ, if they do,  
As Bloom upon a Stalk.

That from an equal Seed  
Unto an equal Bud  
Go parallel, perfected  
In that they have decayed.

c. 1865

1945

1048

Reportless Subjects, to the Quick  
Continual addressed –  
But foreign as the Dialect  
Of Danes, unto the rest.

[ 478 ]

Reportless Measures, to the Ear  
Susceptive – stimulus –  
But like an Oriental Tale  
To others, fabulous –

c. 1865

1945

1049

Pain has but one Acquaintance  
And that is Death –  
Each one unto the other  
Society enough.

Pain is the Junior Party  
By just a Second's right –  
Death tenderly assists Him  
And then absconds from Sight.

c. 1865

1945

1050

As willing lid o'er weary eye  
The Evening on the Day leans  
Till of all our nature's House  
Remains but Balcony

c. 1865

1945

1051

I cannot meet the Spring unmoved –  
I feel the old desire –  
A Hurry with a lingering, mixed,  
A Warrant to be fair –

A Competition in my sense  
With something hid in Her –  
And as she vanishes, Remorse  
I saw no more of Her.

c. 1865

1945

1052

I never saw a Moor –  
I never saw the Sea –  
Yet know I how the Heather looks  
And what a Billow be.

I never spoke with God  
Nor visited in Heaven –  
Yet certain am I of the spot  
As if the Checks were given –

c. 1865

1890

1053

It was a quiet way –  
He asked if I was his –  
I made no answer of the Tongue  
But answer of the Eyes –  
And then He bore me on  
Before this mortal noise  
With swiftness, as of Chariots  
And distance, as of Wheels.  
This World did drop away  
As Acres from the feet  
Of one that leaneth from Balloon  
Upon an Ether street.  
The Gulf behind was not,  
The Continents were new –  
Eternity it was before  
Eternity was due.  
No Seasons were to us –  
It was not Night nor Morn –  
But Sunrise stopped upon the place  
And fastened it in Dawn.

c. 1865

1929

1054

Not to discover weakness is  
The Artifice of strength –  
Impregnability inheres  
As much through Consciousness  
Of faith of others in itself  
As Pyramidal Nerve  
Behind the most unconscious clock  
What skilful Pointers move –

c. 1865

1945

1055

The Soul should always stand ajar  
That if the Heaven inquire  
He will not be obliged to wait  
Or shy of troubling Her  
Depart, before the Host have slid  
The Bolt unto the Door –  
To search for the accomplished Guest,  
Her Visitor, no more –

c. 1865

1896

1056

There is a Zone whose even Years  
No Solstice interrupt –  
Whose Sun constructs perpetual Noon  
Whose perfect Seasons wait –  
Whose Summer set in Summer, till  
The Centuries of June  
And Centuries of August cease  
And Consciousness – is Noon.

c. 1865

1945

1057

I had a daily Bliss  
I half indifferent viewed  
Till sudden I perceived it stir –  
It grew as I pursued  
  
Till when around a Height  
It wasted from my sight  
Increased beyond my utmost scope  
I learned to estimate.

c. 1865

1896

1058

Bloom – is Result – to meet a Flower  
And casually glance  
Would scarcely cause one to suspect  
The minor Circumstance  
  
Assisting in the Bright Affair  
So intricately done  
Then offered as a Butterfly  
To the Meridian –  
  
To pack the Bud – oppose the Worm –  
Obtain its right of Dew –  
Adjust the Heat – elude the Wind –  
Escape the prowling Bee  
  
Great Nature not to disappoint  
Awaiting Her that Day –  
To be a Flower, is profound  
Responsibility –

c. 1865

1945

1059

Sang from the Heart, Sire,  
Dipped my Beak in it,  
If the Tune drip too much  
Have a tint too Red

[ 482 ]

Pardon the Cochineal –  
Suffer the Vermilion –  
Death is the Wealth  
Of the Poorest Bird.

Bear with the Ballad –  
Awkward – faltering –  
Death twists the strings –  
’Twasn’t my blame –

Pause in your Liturgies –  
Wait your Chorals –  
While I repeat your  
Hallowed name –

c. 1865

1945

1060

Air has no Residence, no Neighbor,  
No Ear, no Door,  
No Apprehension of Another  
Oh, Happy Air!

Ethereal Guest at e’en an Outcast’s Pillow –  
Essential Host, in Life’s faint, wailing Inn,  
Later than Light thy Consciousness accost me  
Till it depart, persuading Mine –

c. 1865

1945

1061

Three Weeks passed since I had seen Her –  
Some Disease had vexed  
’Twas with Text and Village Singing  
I beheld Her next

And a Company – our pleasure  
To discourse alone –  
Gracious now to me as any –  
Gracious unto none –

Borne without dissent of Either  
To the Parish night –  
Of the Separated Parties  
Which be out of sight?

c. 1865

1896

1062

He scanned it – staggered –  
Dropped the Loop  
To Past or Period –  
Caught helpless at a sense as if  
His Mind were going blind –  
Groped up, to see if God was there –  
Groped backward at Himself  
Caressed a Trigger absently  
And wandered out of Life.

c. 1865

1945

1063

Ashes denote that Fire was –  
Revere the Grayest Pile  
For the Departed Creature's sake  
That hovered there awhile –

Fire exists the first in light  
And then consolidates  
Only the Chemist can disclose  
Into what Carbonates.

c. 1865

1896

1064

To help our Bleaker Parts  
Salubrious Hours are given  
Which if they do not fit for Earth  
Drill silently for Heaven –

c. 1865

1896

1065

Let down the Bars, Oh Death –  
The tired Flocks come in  
Whose bleating ceases to repeat  
Whose wandering is done –

Thine is the stillest night  
Thine the securest Fold  
Too near Thou art for seeking Thee  
Too tender, to be told.

c. 1865

1891

1066

Fame's Boys and Girls, who never die  
And are too seldom born –

c. 1865

1945

1067

Except the smaller size  
No lives are round –  
These – hurry to a sphere  
And show and end –  
The larger – slower grow  
And later hang –  
The Summers of Hesperides  
Are long.

c. 1866

1891

1068

Further in Summer than the Birds  
Pathetic from the Grass  
A minor Nation celebrates  
Its unobtrusive Mass.

No Ordinance be seen  
So gradual the Grace

[ 485 ]

A pensive Custom it becomes  
Enlarging Loneliness.

Antiquiest felt at Noon  
When August burning low  
Arise this spectral Canticle  
Repose to typify

Remit as yet no Grace  
No Furrow on the Glow  
Yet a Druidic Difference  
Enhances Nature now

c. 1866

1891

1069

Paradise is of the option.  
Whosoever will  
Own in Eden notwithstanding  
Adam and Repeal

c. 1866

1931

1070

To undertake is to achieve  
Be Undertaking blent  
With fortitude of obstacle  
And toward encouragement

That fine Suspicion, Natures must  
Permitted to revere  
Departed Standards and the few  
Criterion Sources here

c. 1865

1932

1071

Perception of an object costs  
Precise the Object's loss –  
Perception in itself a Gain  
Replying to its Price--

The Object Absolute – is nought –  
Perception sets it fair  
And then upbraids a Perfectness  
That situates so far –

c. 1866

1914

1072

Title divine – is mine!  
The Wife – without the Sign!  
Acute Degree – conferred on me –  
Empress of Calvary!  
Royal – all but the Crown!  
Betrothed – without the swoon  
God sends us Women –  
When you – hold – Garnet to Garnet –  
Gold – to Gold –  
Born – Bridalled – Shrouded –  
In a Day –  
Tri Victory  
“My Husband” – women say –  
Stroking the Melody –  
Is *this* – the way?

c. 1862

1924

1073

Experiment to me  
Is every one I meet  
If it contain a Kernel?  
The Figure of a Nut  
  
Presents upon a Tree  
Equally plausibly,  
But Meat within, is requisite  
To Squirrels, and to Me.

c. 1865

1891

1074

Count not that far that can be had,  
Though sunset lie between –  
Nor that adjacent, that beside,  
Is further than the sun.

1866

1894

1075

The Sky is low – the Clouds are mean.  
A Travelling Flake of Snow  
Across a Barn or through a Rut  
Debates if it will go –  
A Narrow Wind complains all Day  
How some one treated him  
Nature, like Us is sometimes caught  
Without her Diadem.

c. 1866

1890

1076

Just Once! Oh least Request!  
Could Adamant refuse  
So small a Grace  
So scanty put,  
Such agonizing terms?  
Would not a God of Flint  
Be conscious of a sigh  
As down His Heaven dropt remote  
"Just Once" Sweet Deity?

c. 1862

1924

1077

These are the Signs to Nature's Inns –  
Her invitation broad  
To Whosoever famishing  
To taste her mystic Bread –

[ 488 ]

These are the rites of Nature's House –  
The Hospitality  
That opens with an equal width  
To Beggar and to Bee  
  
For Sureties of her staunch Estate  
Her undecaying Cheer  
The Purple in the East is set  
And in the North, the Star –

c. 1866

1929

1078

The Bustle in a House  
The Morning after Death  
Is solemnest of industries  
Enacted upon Earth –

The Sweeping up the Heart  
And putting Love away  
We shall not want to use again  
Until Eternity.

c. 1866

1890

1079

The Sun went down – no Man looked on –  
The Earth and I, alone,  
Were present at the Majesty –  
He triumphed, and went on –

The Sun went up – no Man looked on –  
The Earth and I and One  
A nameless Bird – a Stranger  
Were Witness for the Crown –

c. 1866

1929

1080

When they come back – if Blossoms do –  
I always feel a doubt

If Blossoms can be born again  
When once the Art is out—  
When they begin, if Robins may,  
I always had a fear  
I did not tell, it was their last Experiment  
Last Year,  
When it is May, if May return,  
Had nobody a pang  
Lest in a Face so beautiful  
He might not look again?  
If I am there— One does not know  
What Party— One may be  
Tomorrow, but if I am there  
I take back all I say—

c. 1866

1929

1081

Superiority to Fate  
Is difficult to gain  
'Tis not conferred of Any  
But possible to earn  
A pittance at a time  
Until to Her surprise  
The Soul with strict economy  
Subsist till Paradise.

c. 1866

1896

1082

Revolution is the Pod  
Systems rattle from  
When the Winds of Will are stirred  
Excellent is Bloom  
But except its Russet Base  
Every Summer be

The Entomber of itself,  
So of Liberty –

Left inactive on the Stalk  
All its Purple fled  
Revolution shakes it for  
Test if it be dead.

c. 1866

1929

1083

We learn in the Retreating  
How vast an one  
Was recently among us –  
A Perished Sun

Endear in the departure  
How doubly more  
Than all the Golden presence  
It was – before –

c. 1866

1896

1084

At Half past Three, a single Bird  
Unto a silent Sky  
Propounded but a single term  
Of cautious melody.

At Half past Four, Experiment  
Had subjugated test  
And lo, Her silver Principle  
Supplanted all the rest.

At Half past Seven, Element  
Nor Implement, be seen –  
And Place was where the Presence was  
Circumference between.

c. 1866

1891

1085

If Nature smiles – the Mother must  
I'm sure, at many a whim  
Of Her eccentric Family –  
Is She so much to blame?

c. 1866

1929

1086

What Twigs We held by –  
Oh the View  
When Life's swift River striven through  
We pause before a further plunge  
To take Momentum –  
As the Fringe  
Upon a former Garment shows  
The Garment cast,  
Our Props disclose  
So scant, so eminently small  
Of Might to help, so pitiful  
To sink, if We had labored, fond  
The diligence were not more blind  
How scant, by everlasting Light  
The Discs that satisfied Our Sight –  
How dimmer than a Saturn's Bar  
The Things esteemed, for Things that are!

c. 1866

1935

1087

We miss a Kinsman more  
When warranted to see  
Than when withheld of Oceans  
From possibility  
A Furlong than a League  
Inflicts a pricklier pain,

Till We, who smiled at Pyrenees –  
Of Parishes, complain.

c. 1866

1929

1088

Ended, ere it begun –  
The Title was scarcely told  
When the Preface perished from Consciousness  
The Story, unrevealed –

Had it been mine, to print!  
Had it been yours, to read!  
That it was not Our privilege  
The interdict of God –

c 1866

1932

1089

Myself can read the Telegrams  
A Letter chief to me  
The Stock's advance and Retrograde  
And what the Markets say

The Weather – how the Rains  
In Counties have begun.  
'Tis News as null as nothing,  
But sweeter so – than none.

c. 1866

1945

1090

I am afraid to own a Body –  
I am afraid to own a Soul –  
Profound – precarious Property –  
Possession, not optional –

Double Estate – entailed at pleasure  
Upon an unsuspecting Heir –

Duke in a moment of Deathlessness  
And God, for a Frontier.

c. 1866

1935

1091

The Well upon the Brook  
Were foolish to depend –  
Let Brooks – renew of Brooks –  
But Wells – of failless Ground!

c. 1866

1945

1092

It was not Saint – it was too large –  
Nor Snow – it was too small –  
It only held itself aloof  
Like something spiritual –

c. 1866

1929

1093

Because 'twas Riches I could own,  
Myself had earned it – Me,  
I knew the Dollars by their names –  
It feels like Poverty

An Earldom out of sight to hold,  
An Income in the Air,  
Possession – has a sweeter chink  
Unto a Miser's Ear –

c. 1866

1935

1094

Themselves are all I have –  
Myself a freckled – be –  
I thought you'd choose a Velvet Cheek

Or one of Ivory –  
Would you – instead of Me?

c 1866

1935

1095

To Whom the Mornings stand for Nights,  
What must the Midnights – be!

c 1866

1935

1096

These Strangers, in a foreign World,  
Protection asked of me –  
Befriend them, lest Yourself in Heaven  
Be found a Refugee –

c 1866

1945

1097

Dew – is the Freshet in the Grass –  
’Tis many a tiny Mill  
Turns unperceived beneath our feet  
And Artisan lies still –

We spy the Forests and the Hills  
The Tents to Nature’s Show  
Mistake the Outside for the in  
And mention what we saw.

Could Commentators on the Sign  
Of Nature’s Caravan  
Obtain “Admission” as a Child  
Some Wednesday Afternoon.

c. 1866

1914

1098

Of the Heart that goes in, and closes the Door  
Shall the Playfellow Heart complain

Though the Ring is unwhole, and the Company broke  
Can never be fitted again?

c. 1866

1945

1099

My Cocoon tightens – Colors tease –  
I'm feeling for the Air –  
A dim capacity for Wings  
Demeans the Dress I wear –

A power of Butterfly must be –  
The Aptitude to fly  
Meadows of Majesty implies  
And easy Sweeps of Sky –

So I must baffle at the Hint  
And cipher at the Sign  
And make much blunder, if at last  
I take the clue divine –

c. 1866

1890

1100

The last Night that She lived  
It was a Common Night  
Except the Dying – this to Us  
Made Nature different

We noticed smallest things –  
Things overlooked before  
By this great light upon our Minds  
Italicized – as 'twere.

As We went out and in  
Between Her final Room  
And Rooms where Those to be alive  
Tomorrow were, a Blame

That Others could exist  
While She must finish quite

A Jealousy for Her arose  
So nearly infinite –

We waited while She passed –  
It was a narrow time –  
Too jostled were Our Souls to speak  
At length the notice came.

She mentioned, and forgot –  
Then lightly as a Reed  
Bent to the Water, struggled scarce –  
Consented, and was dead –

And We – We placed the Hair –  
And drew the Head erect –  
And then an awful leisure was  
Belief to regulate –

c. 1866

1890

1101

Between the form of Life and Life  
The difference is as big  
As Liquor at the Lip between  
And Liquor in the Jug  
The latter – excellent to keep –  
But for ecstatic need  
The corkless is superior –  
I know for I have tried

c. 1866

1945

1102

His Bill is clasped – his Eye forsook –  
His Feathers wilted low –  
The Claws that clung, like lifeless Gloves  
Indifferent hanging now –  
The Joy that in his happy Throat  
Was waiting to be poured  
Gored through and through with Death, to be  
Assassin of a Bird

Resembles to my outraged mind  
The firing in Heaven,  
On Angels – squandering for you  
Their Miracles of Tune –

c. 1866

1945

1103

The spry Arms of the Wind  
If I could crawl between  
I have an errand imminent  
To an adjoining Zone –

I should not care to stop  
My Process is not long  
The Wind could wait without the Gate  
Or stroll the Town among.

To ascertain the House  
And is the soul at Home  
And hold the Wick of mine to it  
To light, and then return –

c. 1866

1945

1104

The Crickets sang  
And set the Sun  
And Workmen finished one by one  
Their Seam the Day upon.

The low Grass loaded with the Dew  
The Twilight stood, as Strangers do  
With Hat in Hand, polite and new  
To stay as if, or go.

A Vastness, as a Neighbor, came,  
A Wisdom, without Face, or Name,  
A Peace, as Hemispheres at Home  
And so the Night became.

c. 1866

1896

## 1105

Like Men and Women Shadows walk  
 Upon the Hills Today –  
 With here and there a mighty Bow  
 Or trailing Courtesy  
 To Neighbors doubtless of their own  
 Not quickened to perceive  
 Minuter landscape as Ourselves  
 And Boroughs where we live –

c. 1867

1914

## 1106

We do not know the time we lose –  
 The awful moment is  
 And takes its fundamental place  
 Among the certainties –  
 A firm appearance still inflates  
 The card – the chance – the friend –  
 The spectre of solidities  
 Whose substances are sand –

c. 1867

1932

## 1107

The Bird did prance – the Bee did play –  
 The Sun ran miles away  
 So blind with joy he could not choose  
 Between his Holiday  
 The morn was up – the meadows out  
 The Fences all but ran,  
 Republic of Delight, I thought  
 Where each is Citizen –  
 From Heavy laden Lands to thee  
 Were seas to cross to come  
 A Caspian were crowded –  
 Too near thou art for Fame –

c. 1867

1945

A Diamond on the Hand  
 To Custom Common grown  
 Subsides from its significance  
 The Gem were best unknown –  
 Within a Seller's Shrine  
 How many sight and sigh  
 And cannot, but are mad for fear  
 That any other buy.

c. 1867

1932

I fit for them –  
 I seek the Dark  
 Till I am thorough fit.  
 The labor is a sober one  
 With this sufficient sweet  
 That abstinence of mine produce  
 A purer food for them, if I succeed,  
 If not I had  
 The transport of the Aim –

c. 1867

1914

None who saw it ever told it  
 'Tis as hid as Death  
 Had for that specific treasure  
 A departing breath –  
 Surfaces may be invested  
 Did the Diamond grow  
 General as the Dandelion  
 Would you serve it so?

c. 1867

1945

Some Wretched creature, savior take  
 Who would exult to die

And leave for thy sweet mercy's sake  
Another Hour to me

c. 1867

1945

1112

That this should feel the need of Death  
The same as those that lived  
Is such a Feat of Irony  
As never was – achieved –

Not satisfied to ape the Great  
In his simplicity  
The small must die, as well as He –  
Oh the Audacity –

c. 1867

1945

1113

There is a strength in proving that it can be borne  
Although it tear –  
What are the sinews of such cordage for  
Except to bear  
The ship might be of satin had it not to fight –  
To walk on seas requires cedar Feet

c. 1867

1945

1114

The largest Fire ever known  
Occurs each Afternoon –  
Discovered is without surprise  
Proceeds without concern –  
Consumes and no report to men  
An Occidental Town,  
Rebuilt another morning  
To be burned down again.

c. 1864

1914

The murmuring of Bees, has ceased  
 But murmuring of some  
 Posterior, prophetic,  
 Has simultaneous come.  
 The lower metres of the Year  
 When Nature's laugh is done  
 The Revelations of the Book  
 Whose Genesis was June  
 Appropriate Creatures to her change  
 The Typic Mother sends  
 As Accent fades to interval  
 With separating Friends  
 Till what we speculate, has been  
 And thoughts we will not show  
 More intimate with us become  
 Than Persons, that we know.

c. 1868

1947

There is another Loneliness  
 That many die without –  
 Not want of friend occasions it  
 Or circumstance of Lot  
 But nature, sometimes, sometimes thought  
 And whoso it befall  
 Is richer than could be revealed  
 By mortal numeral –

c. 1868

1914

A Mine there is no Man would own  
 But must it be conferred,  
 Demeaning by exclusive wealth  
 A Universe beside –

Potosi never to be spent  
But hoarded in the mind  
What Misers wring their hands tonight  
For Indies in the Ground!

c. 1868

1932

1118

Exhilaration is the Breeze  
That lifts us from the Ground  
And leaves us in another place  
Whose statement is not found –

Returns us not, but after time  
We soberly descend  
A little newer for the term  
Upon Enchanted Ground –

c. 1868

1914

1119

Paradise is that old mansion  
Many owned before –  
Occupied by each an instant  
Then reversed the Door –  
Bliss is frugal of her Leases  
Adam taught her Thrift  
Bankrupt once through his excesses –

c. 1868  
(*unfinished*)

1945

1120

This slow Day moved along –  
I heard its axles go  
As if they could not hoist themselves  
They hated motion so –

I told my soul to come –  
It was no use to wait –

We went and played and came again  
And it was out of sight –

c. 1868

1945

1121

Time does go on –  
I tell it gay to those who suffer now –  
They shall survive –  
There is a sun –  
They don't believe it now –

c. 1868

1945

1122

'Tis my first night beneath the Sun  
If I should spend it here –  
Above him is too low a height  
For his Barometer  
Who Airs of expectation breathes  
And takes the Wind at prime –  
But Distance his Delights confides  
To those who visit him –

c. 1868

1945

1123

A great Hope fell  
You heard no noise  
The Ruin was within  
Oh cunning wreck that told no tale  
And let no Witness in  
  
The mind was built for mighty Freight  
For dread occasion planned  
How often foundering at Sea  
Ostensibly, on Land  
  
A not admitting of the wound  
Until it grew so wide

That all my Life had entered it  
And there were troughs beside

A closing of the simple lid  
That opened to the sun  
Until the tender Carpenter  
Perpetual nail it down –

c. 1868

1945

1124

Had we known the Ton she bore  
We had helped the terror  
But she straighter walked for Freight  
So be hers the error –

c. 1868

1945

1125

Oh Sumptuous moment  
Slower go  
That I may gloat on thee –  
'Twill never be the same to starve  
Now I abundance see –

Which was to famish, then or now –  
The difference of Day  
Ask him unto the Gallows led –  
With morning in the sky –

c. 1868

1945

1126

Shall I take thee, the Poet said  
To the propounded word?  
Be stationed with the Candidates  
Till I have finer tried –

The Poet searched Philology  
And when about to ring

For the suspended Candidate  
There came unsummoned in –  
  
That portion of the Vision  
The World applied to fill  
Not unto nomination  
The Cherubim reveal –

c. 1868

1945

1127

Soft as the massacre of Suns  
By Evening's Sabres slain

c. 1868

1945

1128

These are the Nights that Beetles love –  
From Eminence remote  
Drives ponderous perpendicular  
His figure intimate  
The terror of the Children  
The merriment of men  
Depositing his Thunder  
He hoists abroad again –  
A Bomb upon the Ceiling  
Is an improving thing –  
It keeps the nerves progressive  
Conjecture flourishing –  
Too dear the Summer evening  
Without discreet alarm –  
Supplied by Entomology  
With its remaining charm –

c. 1868

1945

1129

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant –  
Success in Circuit lies  
Too bright for our infirm Delight  
The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every man be blind –

c 1868

1945

1130

That odd old man is dead a year –  
We miss his stated Hat  
’Twas such an evening bright and stiff  
His faded lamp went out.

Who miss his antiquated Wick –  
Are any hoar for him?  
Waits any indurated mate  
His wrinkled coming Home?

Oh Life, begun in fluent Blood  
And consummated dull!  
Achievement contemplating thee –  
Feels transitive and cool.

c 1868

1945

1131

The Merchant of the Picturesque  
A Counter has and sales  
But is within or negative  
Precisely as the calls –  
To Children he is small in price  
And large in courtesy –  
It suits him better than a check  
Their artless currency –  
Of Counterfeits he is so shy  
Do one advance so near  
As to behold his ample flight –

c. 1868  
(*unfinished*)

1945

The smouldering embers blush –  
 Oh Hearts within the Coal  
 Hast thou survived so many years?  
 The smouldering embers smile –  
 Soft stirs the news of Light  
 The stolid seconds glow  
 One requisite has Fire that lasts  
 Prometheus never knew –

c. 1868  
*(unfinished)*

1945

The Snow that never drifts –  
 The transient, fragrant snow  
 That comes a single time a Year  
 Is softly driving now –

So thorough in the Tree  
 At night beneath the star  
 That it was February's Foot  
 Experience would swear –

Like Winter as a Face  
 We stern and former knew  
 Repaired of all but Loneliness  
 By Nature's Alibi –

Were every storm so spice  
 The Value could not be –  
 We buy with contrast – Pang is good  
 As near as memory –

c. 1868

1945

The Wind took up the Northern Things  
 And piled them in the south –

Then gave the East unto the West  
And opening his mouth

The four Divisions of the Earth  
Did make as to devour  
While everything to corners slunk  
Behind the awful power –

The Wind – unto his Chambers went  
And nature ventured out –  
Her subjects scattered into place  
Her systems ranged about

Again the smoke from Dwellings rose  
The Day abroad was heard –  
How intimate, a Tempest past  
The Transport of the Bird –

c. 1868

1945

1135

Too cold is this  
To warm with Sun –  
Too stiff to bended be,  
To joint this Agate were a work –  
Outstaring Masonry –

How went the Agile Kernel out  
Contusion of the Husk  
Nor Rip, nor wrinkle indicate  
But just an Asterisk.

c. 1868

1914

1136

The Frost of Death was on the Pane –  
“Secure your Flower” said he.  
Like Sailors fighting with a Leak  
We fought Mortality.

Our passive Flower we held to Sea –  
To Mountain – To the Sun –

Yet even on his Scarlet shelf  
To crawl the Frost begun –

We pried him back  
Ourselves we wedged  
Himself and her between,  
Yet easy as the narrow Snake  
He forked his way along

Till all her helpless beauty bent  
And then our wrath begun –  
We hunted him to his Ravine  
We chased him to his Den –

We hated Death and hated Life  
And nowhere was to go –  
Than Sea and continent there is  
A larger – it is Woe –

c. 1869

1945

1137

The duties of the Wind are few,  
To cast the ships, at Sea,  
Establish March, the Floods escort,  
And usher Liberty.

The pleasures of the Wind are broad,  
To dwell Extent among,  
Remain, or wander,  
Speculate, or Forests entertain.

The kinsmen of the Wind are Peaks  
Azof – the Equinox,  
Also with Bird and Asteroid  
A bowing intercourse.

The limitations of the Wind  
Do he exist, or die,  
Too wise he seems for Wakelessness,  
However, know not I.

c. 1869

1945

1138

A Spider sewed at Night  
Without a Light  
Upon an Arc of White.

If Ruff it was of Dame  
Or Shroud of Gnome  
Himself himself inform.

Of Immortality  
His Strategy  
Was Physiognomy.

c. 1869

1891

1139

Her sovereign People  
Nature knows as well  
And is as fond of signifying  
As if fallible –

c. 1869

1952

1140

The Day grew small, surrounded tight  
By early, stooping Night –  
The Afternoon in Evening deep  
Its Yellow shortness dropt –  
The Winds went out their martial ways  
The Leaves obtained excuse –  
November hung his Granite Hat  
Upon a nail of Plush –

c. 1869

1945

1141

The Face we choose to miss –  
Be it but for a Day

[ 511 ]

As absent as a Hundred Years,  
When it has rode away.

c. 1869

1914

1142

The Props assist the House  
Until the House is built  
And then the Props withdraw  
And adequate, erect,  
The House support itself  
And cease to recollect  
The Auger and the Carpenter –  
Just such a retrospect  
Hath the perfected Life –  
A past of Plank and Nail  
And slowness – then the Scaffolds drop  
Affirming it a Soul

c. 1863

1914

1143

The Work of Her that went,  
The Toil of Fellows done –  
In Ovens green our Mother bakes,  
By Fires of the Sun.

c. 1869

1955

1144

Ourselves we do inter with sweet derision.  
The channel of the dust who once achieves  
Invalidates the balm of that religion  
That doubts as fervently as it believes.

1869?

1894

1145

In thy long Paradise of Light  
No moment will there be

[ 512 ]

When I shall long for Earthly Play  
And mortal Company –

c. 1869

1945

1146

When Etna basks and purrs  
Naples is more afraid  
Than when she shows her Garnet Tooth –  
Security is loud –

c. 1869

1914

1147

After a hundred years  
Nobody knows the Place  
Agony that enacted there  
Motionless as Peace

Weeds triumphant ranged  
Strangers strolled and spelled  
At the lone Orthography  
Of the Elder Dead

Winds of Summer Fields  
Recollect the way –  
Instinct picking up the Key  
Dropped by memory –

c. 1869

1891

1148

After the Sun comes out  
How it alters the World –  
Waggons like messengers hurry about  
Yesterday is old –

All men meet as if  
Each foreclosed a news –

[ 513 ]

Fresh as a Cargo from Batize  
Nature's qualities –

c 1869

1955

1149

I noticed People disappeared  
When but a little child –  
Supposed they visited remote  
Or settled Regions wild –  
Now know I – They both visited  
And settled Regions wild  
But did because they died  
A Fact withheld the little child –

c 1869  
(*unfinished*)

1891

1150

How many schemes may die  
In one short Afternoon  
Entirely unknown  
To those they most concern –  
The man that was not lost  
Because by accident  
He varied by a Ribbon's width  
From his accustomed route –  
The Love that would not try  
Because beside the Door  
It must be competitions  
Some unsuspecting Horse was tied  
Surveying his Despair

c. 1869

1945

1151

Soul, take thy risk,  
With Death to be

[ 514 ]

Were better than be not  
With thee

c. 1869

1945

1152

Tell as a Marksman – were forgotten  
Tell – this Day endures  
Ruddy as that coeval Apple  
The Tradition bears –

Fresh as Mankind that humble story  
Though a statelier Tale  
Grown in the Repetition hoary  
Scarcely would prevail –

Tell had a son – The ones that knew it  
Need not linger here –  
Those who did not to Human Nature  
Will subscribe a Tear –

Tell would not bare his Head  
In Presence  
Of the Ducal Hat –  
Threatened for that with Death – by Gessler –  
Tyranny bethought

Make of his only Boy a Target  
That surpasses Death –  
Stolid to Love's supreme entreaty  
Not forsook of Faith –

Mercy of the Almighty begging –  
Tell his Arrow sent –  
God it is said replies in Person  
When the cry is meant –

c. 1869

1945

1153

Through what transports of Patience  
I reached the stolid Bliss

[ 515 ]

To breathe my Blank without thee  
Attest me this and this –  
By that bleak exultation  
I won as near as this  
Thy privilege of dying  
Abbreviate me this –

c. 1874

1945

1154

A full fed Rose on meals of Tint  
A Dinner for a Bee  
In process of the Noon became –  
Each bright Mortality  
The Forfeit is of Creature fair  
Itself, adored before  
Submitting for our unknown sake  
To be esteemed no more –

c. 1870

1955

1155

Distance – is not the Realm of Fox  
Nor by Relay of Bird  
Abated – Distance is  
Until thyself, Beloved.

c. 1870

1914

1156

Lest any doubt that we are glad that they were born Today  
Whose having lived is held by us in noble Holiday  
Without the date, like Consciousness or Immortality –

c. 1870

1932

1157

Some Days retired from the rest  
In soft distinction lie

The Day that a Companion came  
Or was obliged to die

c. 1870

1914

1158

Best Witchcraft is Geometry  
To the magician's mind –  
His ordinary acts are feats  
To thinking of mankind.

c. 1870

1932

1159

Great Streets of silence led away  
To Neighborhoods of Pause –  
Here was no Notice – no Dissent  
No Universe – no Laws –  
  
By Clocks, 'twas Morning, and for Night  
The Bells at Distance called –  
But Epoch had no basis here  
For Period exhaled.

c. 1870

1891

1160

He is alive, this morning –  
He is alive – and awake –  
Birds are resuming for Him –  
Blossoms – dress for His Sake.  
Bees – to their Loaves of Honey  
Add an Amber Crumb  
Him – to regale – Me – Only –  
Motion, and am dumb.

c. 1870

1955

## 1161

Trust adjusts her "Peradventure" –  
Phantoms entered "and not you."

1870

1931

## 1162

The Life we have is very great.  
The Life that we shall see  
Surpasses it, we know, because  
It is Infinity.  
But when all Space has been beheld  
And all Dominion shown  
The smallest Human Heart's extent  
Reduces it to none.

1870

1945

## 1163

God made no act without a cause,  
Nor heart without an aim,  
Our inference is premature,  
Our premises to blame.

1870?

1894

## 1164

Were it to be the last  
How infinite would be  
What we did not suspect was marked –  
Our final interview.

1870

1955

## 1165

Contained in this short Life  
Are magical extents  
The soul returning soft at night  
To steal securer thence

As Children strictest kept  
Turn soonest to the sea  
Whose nameless Fathoms slink away  
Beside infinity

c. 1870

1945

1166

Of Paul and Silas it is said  
They were in Prison laid  
But when they went to take them out  
They were not there instead

Security the same insures  
To our assaulted Minds –  
The staple must be optional  
That an Immortal binds.

c 1870

1945

1167

Alone and in a Circumstance  
Reluctant to be told  
A spider on my reticence  
Assiduously crawled

And so much more at Home than I  
Immediately grew  
I felt myself a visitor  
And hurriedly withdrew

Revisiting my late abode  
With articles of claim  
I found it quietly assumed  
As a Gymnasium  
Where Tax asleep and Title off  
The inmates of the Air  
Perpetual presumption took  
As each were special Heir –  
If any strike me on the street  
I can return the Blow –

If any take my property  
According to the Law  
The Statute is my Learned friend  
But what redress can be  
For an offense nor here nor there  
So not in Equity—  
That Larceny of time and mind  
The marrow of the Day  
By spider, or forbid it Lord  
That I should specify.

1870

1945

1168

As old as Woe—  
How old is that?  
Some eighteen thousand years—  
As old as Bliss  
How old is that  
They are of equal years  
Together chiefest they are found  
But seldom side by side  
From neither of them tho' he try  
Can Human nature hide

c. 1870

1945

1169

Lest they should come— is all my fear  
When sweet incarcerated here

c. 1870

1945

1170

Nature affects to be sedate  
Upon occasion, grand  
But let our observation shut  
Her practices extend

To Necromancy and the Trades  
Remote to understand  
Behold our spacious Citizen  
Unto a Juggler turned –

c. 1870

1945

1171

On the World you colored  
Morning painted rose –  
Idle his Vermilion  
Aimless crept the Glows  
Over Realms of Orchards  
I the Day before  
Conquered with the Robin –  
Misery, how fair  
Till your wrinkled Finger  
Shored the sun away  
Midnight's awful Pattern  
In the Goods of Day –

c. 1870

1945

1172

The Clouds their Backs together laid  
The North begun to push  
The Forests galloped till they fell  
The Lightning played like mice  
  
The Thunder crumbled like a stuff  
How good to be in Tombs  
Where Nature's Temper cannot reach  
Nor missile ever comes

c. 1870

1890

1173

The Lightning is a yellow Fork  
From Tables in the sky

By inadvertent fingers dropt  
The awful Cutlery

Of mansions never quite disclosed  
And never quite concealed  
The Apparatus of the Dark  
To ignorance revealed.

c. 1870

1945

1174

There's the Battle of Burgoyne –  
Over, every Day,  
By the Time that Man and Beast  
Put their work away  
“Sunset” sounds majestic –  
But that solemn War  
Could you comprehend it  
You would chastened stare –

c 1870

1945

1175

We like a Hairbreadth 'scape  
It tingles in the Mind  
Far after Act or Accident  
Like paragraphs of Wind

If we had ventured less  
The Breeze were not so fine  
That reaches to our utmost Hair  
Its Tentacles divine.

c 1870

1945

1176

We never know how high we are  
Till we are asked to rise  
And then if we are true to plan  
Our statures touch the skies –

The Heroism we recite  
Would be a normal thing  
Did not ourselves the Cubits warp  
For fear to be a King—

c. 1870

1896

1177

A prompt—executive Bird is the Jay—  
Bold as a Bailiff's Hymn—  
Brittle and Brief in quality—  
Warrant in every line—  
  
Sitting a Bough like a Brigadier  
Confident and straight—  
Much is the mien of him in March  
As a Magistrate—

c. 1865

1914

1178

My God—He sees thee—  
Shine thy best—  
Fling up thy Balls of Gold  
Till every Cubit play with thee  
And every Crescent hold—  
Elate the Acre at his feet—  
Upon his Atom swim—  
Oh Sun— but just a Second's right  
In thy long Race with him!

c. 1871

1932

1179

Of so divine a Loss  
We enter but the Gain,  
Indemnity for Loneliness  
That such a Bliss has been.

c. 1871

1914

"Remember me" implored the Thief!  
 Oh Hospitality!  
 My Guest "Today in Paradise"  
 I give thee guaranty.

That Courtesy will fair remain  
 When the Delight is Dust  
 With which we cite this mightiest case  
 Of compensated Trust.

Of all we are allowed to hope  
 But Affidavit stands  
 That this was due where most we fear  
 Be unexpected Friends.

c. 1871

1914

When I hoped I feared –  
 Since I hoped I dared  
 Everywhere alone  
 As a Church remain –  
 Spectre cannot harm –  
 Serpent cannot charm –  
 He deposes Doom  
 Who hath suffered him –

c. 1862

1891

Remembrance has a Rear and Front –  
 'Tis something like a House –  
 It has a Garret also  
 For Refuse and the Mouse.  
 Besides the deepest Cellar  
 That ever Mason laid –

Look to it by its Fathoms  
Ourselves be not pursued –

c. 1871

1896

1183

Step lightly on this narrow spot –  
The broadest Land that grows  
Is not so ample as the Breast  
These Emerald Seams enclose.

Step lofty, for this name be told  
As far as Cannon dwell  
Or Flag subsist or Fame export  
Her deathless Syllable.

c. 1871

1891

1184

The Days that we can spare  
Are those a Function die  
Or Friend or Nature – stranded then  
In our Economy

Our Estimates a Scheme –  
Our Ultimates a Sham –  
We let go all of Time without  
Arithmetic of him –

c. 1871

1932

1185

A little Dog that wags his tail  
And knows no other joy  
Of such a little Dog am I  
Reminded by a Boy

Who gambols all the living Day  
Without an earthly cause  
Because he is a little Boy  
I honestly suppose –

The Cat that in the Corner dwells  
Her martial Day forgot  
The Mouse but a Tradition now  
Of her desireless Lot

Another class remind me  
Who neither please nor play  
But not to make a "bit of noise"  
Beseech each little Boy—

c. 1871

1945

1186

Too few the mornings be,  
Too scant the nights.  
No lodging can be had  
For the delights  
That come to earth to stay,  
But no apartment find  
And ride away.

1871

1894

1187

Oh Shadow on the Grass,  
Art thou a Step or not?  
Go make thee fair my Candidate  
My nominated Heart—  
Oh Shadow on the Grass  
While I delay to guess  
Some other thou wilt consecrate—  
Oh Unelected Face—

c. 1871

1929

1188

'Twas fighting for his Life he was—  
That sort accomplish well—  
The Ordnance of Vitality  
Is frugal of its Ball.

It aims once – kills once – conquers once –  
There is no second War  
In that Campaign inscrutable  
Of the Interior.

c. 1871

1945

1189

The Voice that stands for Floods to me  
Is sterile borne to some –  
The Face that makes the Morning mean  
Glows impotent on them –

What difference in Substance lies  
That what is Sum to me  
By other Financiers be deemed  
Exclusive Poverty!

c 1871

1945

1190

The Sun and Fog contested  
The Government of Day –  
The Sun took down his Yellow Whip  
And drove the Fog away –

c 1871

1945

1191

The pungent atom in the Air  
Admits of no debate –  
All that is named of Summer Days  
Relinquished our Estate –

For what Department of Delight  
As positive are we  
As Limit of Dominion  
Or Dams – of Ecstasy –

c. 1871

1945

## 1192

An honest Tear  
 Is durabler than Bronze –  
 This Cenotaph  
 May each that dies –  
 Reared by itself –  
 No Deputy suffice –  
 Gratitude bears  
 When Obelisk decays

c. 1871

1945

## 1193

All men for Honor hardest work  
 But are not known to earn –  
 Paid after they have ceased to work  
 In Infamy or Urn –

c. 1871

1945

## 1194

Somehow myself survived the Night  
 And entered with the Day –  
 That it be saved the Saved suffice  
 Without the Formula.  
 Henceforth I take my living place  
 As one commuted led –  
 A Candidate for Morning Chance  
 But dated with the Dead.

c. 1871

1935

## 1195

What we see we know somewhat  
 Be it but a little –  
 What we don't surmise we do  
 Though it shows so fickle

I shall vote for Lands with Locks  
Granted I can pick 'em –  
Transport's doubtful Dividend  
Patented by Adam.

c. 1871

1945

1196

To make Routine a Stimulus  
Remember it can cease –  
Capacity to Terminate  
Is a Specific Grace –  
Of Retrospect the Arrow  
That power to repair  
Departed with the Torment  
Become, alas, more fair –

c. 1871

1947

1197

I should not dare to be so sad  
So many Years again –  
A Load is first impossible  
When we have put it down –  
The Superhuman then withdraws  
And we who never saw  
The Giant at the other side  
Begin to perish now.

1871

1929

1198

A soft Sea washed around the House  
A Sea of Summer Air  
And rose and fell the magic Planks  
That sailed without a care –  
For Captain was the Butterfly  
For Helmsman was the Bee

And an entire universe  
For the delighted crew.

c. 1871

1945

1199

Are Friends Delight or Pain?  
Could Bounty but remain  
Riches were good --

But if they only stay  
Ampler to fly away  
Riches are sad.

c. 1871

1896

1200

Because my Brook is fluent  
I know 'tis dry --  
Because my Brook is silent  
It is the Sea --

And startled at its rising  
I try to flee  
To where the Strong assure me  
Is "no more Sea" --

c. 1871

1945

1201

So I pull my Stockings off  
Wading in the Water  
For the Disobedience' Sake  
Boy that lived for "or'ter"

Went to Heaven perhaps at Death  
And perhaps he didn't  
Moses wasn't fairly used --  
Ananias wasn't --

c. 1871

1945

The Frost was never seen –  
 If met, too rapid passed,  
 Or in too unsubstantial Team –  
 The Flowers notice first

A Stranger hovering round  
 A Symptom of alarm  
 In Villages remotely set  
 But search effaces him

Till some retrieveless Night  
 Our Vigilance at waste  
 The Garden gets the only shot  
 That never could be traced

Unproved is much we know –  
 Unknown the worst we fear –  
 Of Strangers is the Earth the Inn  
 Of Secrets is the Air –

To analyze perhaps  
 A Philip would prefer  
 But Labor vaster than myself  
 I find it to infer.

c. 1871

1945

The Past is such a curious Creature  
 To look her in the Face  
 A Transport may receipt us  
 Or a Disgrace –

Unarmed if any meet her  
 I charge him fly  
 Her faded Ammunition  
 Might yet reply.

c. 1871

1896

1204

Whatever it is – she has tried it –  
Awful Father of Love –  
Is not Ours the chastising –  
Do not chastise the Dove –

Not for Ourselves, petition –  
Nothing is left to pray –  
When a subject is finished –  
Words are handed away –

Only lest she be lonely  
In thy beautiful House  
Give her for her Transgression  
License to think of us –

c. 1871

1945

1205

Immortal is an ample word  
When what we need is by  
But when it leaves us for a time  
'Tis a necessity.

Of Heaven above the firmest proof  
We fundamental know  
Except for its marauding Hand  
It had been Heaven below.

c. 1872

1896

1206

The Show is not the Show  
But they that go –  
Menagerie to me  
My Neighbor be –  
Fair Play –  
Both went to see –

c. 1872

1891

1207

He preached upon "Breadth" till it argued him narrow –  
The Broad are too broad to define  
And of "Truth" until it proclaimed him a Liar –  
The Truth never flaunted a Sign –

Simplicity fled from his counterfeit presence  
As Gold the Pyrites would shun –  
What confusion would cover the innocent Jesus  
To meet so enabled a Man!

c. 1872

1891

1208

Our own possessions – though our own –  
'Tis well to hoard anew –  
Remembering the Dimensions  
Of Possibility.

c. 1872

1894

1209

To disappear enhances –  
The Man that runs away  
Is tintured for an instant  
With Immortality

But yesterday a Vagrant –  
Today in Memory lain  
With superstitious value  
We tamper with "Again"

But "Never" far as Honor  
Withdraws the Worthless thing  
And impotent to cherish  
We hasten to adorn –

Of Death the sternest function  
That just as we discern

The Excellence defies us –  
Securest gathered then

The Fruit perverse to plucking,  
But leaning to the Sight  
With the ecstatic limit  
Of unobtained Delight –

c 1872

1894

1210

The Sea said “Come” to the Brook –  
The Brook said “Let me grow” –  
The Sea said “Then you will be a Sea –  
I want a Brook – Come now”<sup>1</sup>

The Sea said “Go” to the Sea –  
The Sea said “I am he  
You cherished” – “Learned Waters –  
Wisdom is stale – to Me”

c 1872

1947

1211

A Sparrow took a Slice of Twig  
And thought it very nice  
I think, because his empty Plate  
Was handed Nature twice –

Invigorated, waded  
In all the deepest Sky  
Until his little Figure  
Was forfeited away –

c. 1872

1945

1212

A word is dead  
When it is said,  
Some say.

I say it just  
Begins to live  
That day.

1872?

1894

1213

We like March.  
His Shoes are Purple –  
He is new and high –  
Makes he Mud for Dog and Peddler,  
Makes he Forests dry.  
Knows the Adder Tongue his coming  
And presents her Spot –  
Stands the Sun so close and mighty  
That our Minds are hot  
  
News is he of all the others –  
Bold it were to die  
With the Blue Birds exercising  
On his British Sky.

*version of 1872*

1955

We like March – his shoes are Purple.  
He is new and high –  
Makes he Mud for Dog and Peddler –  
Makes he Forests Dry –  
Knows the Adder's Tongue his coming  
And begets her spot –  
Stands the Sun so close and mighty –  
That our Minds are hot  
News is he of all the others –  
Bold it were to die  
With the Blue Birds buccaneering  
On his British sky –

*version of 1878*

1896

1214

We introduce ourselves  
To Planets and to Flowers

[ 535 ]

But with ourselves  
Have etiquettes  
Embarrassments  
And awes

c. 1872

1945

1215

I bet with every Wind that blew  
Till Nature in chagrin  
Employed a Fact to visit me  
And scuttle my Balloon –

c 1872

1914

1216

A Deed knocks first at Thought  
And then – it knocks at Will –  
That is the manufacturing spot  
And Will at Home and well

It then goes out an Act  
Or is entombed so still  
That only to the ear of God  
Its Doom is audible –

c. 1872

1891

1217

Fortitude incarnate  
Here is laid away  
In the swift Partitions  
Of the awful Sea –

Babble of the Happy  
Cavil of the Bold  
Hoary the Fruition  
But the Sea is old

Edifice of Ocean  
Thy tumultuous Rooms

Suit me at a venture  
Better than the Tombs

c. 1872

1945

1218

Let my first Knowing be of thee  
With morning's warming Light –  
And my first Fearing, lest Unknowns  
Engulf thee in the night –

c. 1878

1945

1219

Now I knew I lost her –  
Not that she was gone –  
But Remoteness travelled  
On her Face and Tongue.

Alien, though adjoining  
As a Foreign Race –  
Traversed she though pausing  
Latitudeless Place.

Elements Unaltered –  
Universe the same  
But Love's transmigration –  
Somehow this had come –

Henceforth to remember  
Nature took the Day  
I had paid so much for –  
His is Penury  
Not who toils for Freedom  
Or for Family  
But the Restitution  
Of Idolatry.

c. 1872

1945

## 1220

Of Nature I shall have enough  
 When I have entered these  
 Entitled to a Bumble bee's  
 Familiarities.

c. 1872

1945

## 1221

Some we see no more, Tenements of Wonder  
 Occupy to us though perhaps to them  
 Simpler are the Days than the Supposition  
 Their removing Manners  
 Leave us to presume

That oblique Belief which we call Conjecture  
 Grapples with a Theme stubborn as Sublime  
 Able as the Dust to equip its feature  
 Adequate as Drums  
 To enlist the Tomb

c. 1872

1945

## 1222

The Riddle we can guess  
 We speedily despise –  
 Not anything is stale so long  
 As Yesterday's surprise –

c. 1870

1945

## 1223

Who goes to dine must take his Feast  
 Or find the Banquet mean –  
 The Table is not laid without  
 Till it is laid within.

For Pattern is the Mind bestowed  
 That imitating her

Our most ignoble Services  
Exhibit worthier.

c. 1872

1945

1224

Like Trains of Cars on Tracks of Plush  
I hear the level Bee –  
A Jar across the Flowers goes  
Their Velvet Masonry

Withstands until the sweet Assault  
Their Chivalry consumes –  
While He, victorious tilts away  
To vanquish other Blooms.

c. 1872

1890

1225

Its Hour with itself  
The Spirit never shows.  
What Terror would enthrall the Street  
Could Countenance disclose

The Subterranean Freight  
The Cellars of the Soul –  
Thank God the loudest Place he made  
Is licensed to be still.

c. 1872

1929

1226

The Popular Heart is a Cannon first –  
Subsequent a Drum –  
Bells for an Auxiliary  
And an Afterward of Rum –

Not a Tomorrow to know its name  
Nor a Past to stare –

Ditches for Realms and a Trip to Jail  
For a Souvenir –

c. 1872

1929

1227

My Triumph lasted till the Drums  
Had left the Dead alone  
And then I dropped my Victory  
And chastened stole along  
To where the finished Faces  
Conclusion turned on me  
And then I hated Glory  
And wished myself were They.

What is to be is best descried  
When it has also been –  
Could Prospect taste of Retrospect  
The tyrannies of Men  
Were Tenderer – diviner  
The Transitive toward.  
A Bayonet's contrition  
Is nothing to the Dead.

c. 1872

1935

1228

So much of Heaven has gone from Earth  
That there must be a Heaven  
If only to enclose the Saints  
To Affidavit given.

The Missionary to the Mole  
Must prove there is a Sky  
Location doubtless he would plead  
But what excuse have I?

Too much of Proof affronts Belief  
The Turtle will not try

Unless you leave him – then return  
And he has hauled away.

c. 1872

1947

1229

Because He loves Her  
We will pry and see if she is fair  
What difference is on her Face  
From Features others wear.

It will not harm her magic pace  
That we so far behind –  
Her Distances propitiate  
As Forests touch the Wind

Not hoping for his notice vast  
But nearer to adore  
'Tis Glory's far sufficiency  
That makes our trying poor.

c. 1872

1945

1230

It came at last but prompter Death  
Had occupied the House –  
His pallid Furniture arranged  
And his metallic Peace –

Oh faithful Frost that kept the Date  
Had Love as punctual been  
Delight had aggrandized the Gate  
And blocked the coming in.

c. 1872

1945

1231

Somewhere upon the general Earth  
Itself exist Today –  
The Magic passive but extant  
That consecrated me –

Indifferent Seasons doubtless play  
Where I for right to be –  
Would pay each Atom that I am  
But Immortality –

Reserving that but just to prove  
Another Date of Thee –  
Oh God of Width, do not for us  
Curtail Eternity!

c. 1872

1945

1232

The Clover's simple Fame  
Remembered of the Cow –  
Is better than enameled Realms  
Of notability.  
Renown perceives itself  
And that degrades the Flower –  
The Daisy that has looked behind  
Has compromised its power –

c. 1872

1945

1233

Had I not seen the Sun  
I could have borne the shade  
But Light a newer Wilderness  
My Wilderness has made –

c. 1872

1945

1234

If my Bark sink  
'Tis to another sea –  
Mortality's Ground Floor  
Is Immortality –

c. 1872

1945

## 1235

Like Rain it sounded till it curved  
 And then I knew 'twas Wind –  
 It walked as wet as any Wave  
 But swept as dry as sand –  
 When it had pushed itself away  
 To some remotest Plain  
 A coming as of Hosts was heard  
 That was indeed the Rain –  
 It filled the Wells, it pleased the Pools  
 It warbled in the Road –  
 It pulled the spigot from the Hills  
 And let the Floods abroad –  
 It loosened acres, lifted seas  
 The sites of Centres stirred  
 Then like Elijah rode away  
 Upon a Wheel of Cloud.

c. 1872

1945

## 1236

Like Time's insidious wrinkle  
 On a beloved Face  
 We clutch the Grace the tighter  
 Though we resent the crease  
  
 The Frost himself so comely  
 Dishevels every prime  
 Asserting from his Prism  
 That none can punish him

c. 1872

1945

## 1237

My Heart ran so to thee  
 It would not wait for me  
 And I affronted grew  
 And drew away

For whatso'er my pace  
He first achieve thy Face  
How general a Grace  
Allotted two –

Not in malignity  
Mentioned I this to thee –  
Had he obliquity  
Soonest to share  
But for the Greed of him –  
Boasting my Premium –  
Basking in Bethleem  
Ere I be there –

c. 1878

1945

1238

Power is a familiar growth –  
Not foreign – not to be –  
Beside us like a bland Abyss  
In every company –  
Escape it – there is but a chance –  
When consciousness and clay  
Lean forward for a final glance –  
Disprove that and you may –

c. 1872

1945

1239

Risk is the Hair that holds the Tun  
Seductive in the Air –  
That Tun is hollow – but the Tun –  
With Hundred Weights – to spare –  
  
Too ponderous to suspect the snare  
Espies that fickle chair  
And seats itself to be let go  
By that perfidious Hair –  
  
The "foolish Tun" the Critics say –  
While that delusive Hair

Persuasive as Perdition,  
Decoys its Traveller.

c. 1872

1945

1240

The Beggar at the Door for Fame  
Were easily supplied  
But Bread is that Diviner thing  
Disclosed to be denied

c 1872

1945

1241

The Lilac is an ancient shrub  
But ancients than that  
The Firmamental Lilac  
Upon the Hill tonight –  
The Sun subsiding on his Course  
Bequeaths this final Plant  
To Contemplation – not to Touch –  
The Flower of Occident  
Of one Corolla is the West –  
The Calyx is the Earth –  
The Capsules burnished Seeds the Stars  
The Scientist of Faith  
His research has but just begun –  
Above his synthesis  
The Flora unimpeachable  
To Time's Analysis –  
"Eye hath not seen" may possibly  
Be current with the Blind  
But let not Revelation  
By theses be detained –

c. 1872

1945

## 1242

To flee from memory  
 Had we the Wings  
 Many would fly  
 Inured to slower things  
 Birds with surprise  
 Would scan the cowering Van  
 Of men escaping  
 From the mind of man

c. 1872

1945

## 1243

Safe Despair it is that raves –  
 Agony is frugal.  
 Puts itself severe away  
 For its own perusal.

Garrisoned no Soul can be  
 In the Front of Trouble –  
 Love is one, not aggregate –  
 Nor is Dying double –

c. 1873

1914'

## 1244

The Butterfly's Assumption Gown  
 In Chrysoprase Apartments hung  
 This afternoon put on –

How condescending to descend  
 And be of Buttercups the friend  
 In a New England Town –

c. 1873

1890

## 1245

The Suburbs of a Secret  
 A Strategist should keep,

Better than on a Dream intrude  
To scrutinize the Sleep.

c. 1873

1914

1246

The Butterfly in honored Dust  
Assuredly will lie  
But none will pass the Catacomb  
So chastened as the Fly –

c 1873

1915

1247

To pile like Thunder to its close  
Then crumble grand away  
While Everything created hid  
This – would be Poetry –  
  
Or Love – the two coeval come –  
We both and neither prove –  
Experience either and consume –  
For None see God and live –

c. 1873

1914

1248

The incidents of love  
Are more than its Events –  
Investment's best Expositor  
Is the minute Per Cents –

c. 1873

1914

1249

The Stars are old, that stood for me –  
The West a little worn –  
Yet newer glows the only Gold  
I ever cared to earn –

Presuming on that lone result  
Her infinite disdain  
But vanquished her with my defeat  
'Twas Victory was slain.

c. 1873

1914

1250

White as an Indian Pipe  
Red as a Cardinal Flower  
Fabulous as a Moon at Noon  
February Hour –

c. 1873

1932

1251

Silence is all we dread.  
There's Ransom in a Voice –  
But Silence is Infinity.  
Himself have not a face.

1873

1932

1252

Like Brooms of Steel  
The Snow and Wind  
Had swept the Winter Street –  
The House was hooked  
The Sun sent out  
Faint Deputies of Heat –  
Where rode the Bird  
The Silence tied  
His ample – plodding Steed  
The Apple in the Cellar snug  
Was all the one that played.

c. 1873

1914

1253

Had this one Day not been,  
Or could it cease to be  
How smitten, how superfluous,  
Were every other Day!

Leſt Love should value less  
What Loss would value more  
Had it the stricken privilege,  
It cherishes before.

c. 1873

1914

1254

Elijah's Wagon knew no thill  
Was innocent of Wheel  
Elijah's horses as unique  
As was his vehicle—

Elijah's journey to portray  
Expire with him the skill  
Who justified Elijah  
In feats inscrutable—

c. 1873

1914

1255

Longing is like the Seed  
That wrestles in the Ground,  
Believing if it intercede  
It shall at length be found.

The Hour, and the Clime—  
Each Circumstance unknown,  
What Constancy must be achieved  
Before it see the Sun!

c. 1873

1929

1256

Not any higher stands the Grave  
For Heroes than for Men –  
Not any nearer for the Child  
Than numb Three Score and Ten –

This latest Leisure equal lulls  
The Beggar and his Queen  
Propitiate this Democrat  
A Summer's Afternoon –

c. 1873

1896

1257

Dominion lasts until obtained –  
Possession just as long –  
But these – endowing as they flit  
Eternally belong.

How everlasting are the Lips  
Known only to the Dew –  
These are the Brides of permanence  
Supplanting me and you.

c. 1873

1932

1258

Who were "the Father and the Son"  
We pondered when a child,  
And what had they to do with us  
And when portentous told

With inference appalling  
By Childhood fortified  
We thought, at least they are no worse  
Than they have been described.

Who are "the Father and the Son"  
Did we demand Today  
"The Father and the Son" himself  
Would doubtless specify –

[ 550 ]

But had they the felicity  
When we desired to know,  
We better Friends had been, perhaps,  
Than time ensue to be –

We start – to learn that we believe  
But once – entirely –  
Belief, it does not fit so well  
When altered frequently –

We blush, that Heaven if we achieve –  
Event ineffable –  
We shall have shunned until ashamed  
To own the Miracle –

c 1873

1914

1259

A Wind that rose  
Though not a Leaf  
In any Forest stirred  
But with itself did cold engage  
Beyond the Realm of Bird –  
A Wind that woke a lone Delight  
Like Separation's Swell  
Restored in Arctic Confidence  
To the Invisible –

c 1873

1932

1260

Because that you are going  
And never coming back  
And I, however absolute,  
May overlook your Track –  
Because that Death is final,  
However first it be,  
This instant be suspended  
Above Mortality –

Significance that each has lived  
The other to detect  
Discovery not God himself  
Could now annihilate

Eternity, Presumption  
The instant I perceive  
That you, who were Existence  
Yourself forgot to live –

The “Life that is” will then have been  
A thing I never knew –  
As Paradise fictitious  
Until the Realm of you –

The “Life that is to be,” to me,  
A Residence too plain  
Unless in my Redeemer’s Face  
I recognize your own –

Of Immortality who doubts  
He may exchange with me  
Curtailed by your obscuring Face  
Of everything but He –

Of Heaven and Hell I also yield  
The Right to reprehend  
To whoso would commute this Face  
For his less priceless Friend.

If “God is Love” as he admits  
We think that he must be  
Because he is a “jealous God”  
He tells us certainly

If “All is possible with” him  
As he besides concedes  
He will refund us finally  
Our confiscated Gods –

1261

A Word dropped careless on a Page  
May stimulate an eye  
When folded in perpetual seam  
The Wrinkled Maker lie

Infection in the sentence breeds  
We may inhale Despair  
At distances of Centuries  
From the Malaria –

c. 1873

1947

1262

I cannot see my soul but know 'tis there  
Nor ever saw his house nor furniture,  
Who has invited me with him to dwell;  
But a confiding guest consult as well,  
What raiment honor him the most,  
That I be adequately dressed,  
For he insures to none  
Lest men specifical adorn  
Procuring him perpetual drest  
By dating it a sudden feast.

1873?

1894

1263

There is no Frigate like a Book  
To take us Lands away  
Nor any Coursers like a Page  
Of prancing Poetry –  
This Traverse may the poorest take  
Without oppress of Toll –  
How frugal is the Chariot  
That bears the Human soul.

c. 1873

1894

1264

This is the place they hoped before,  
Where I am hoping now.  
The seed of disappointment grew  
Within a capsule gay,  
Too distant to arrest the feet  
That walk this plank of balm –  
Before them lies escapeless sea –  
The way is closed they came.

c. 1873

1894

1265

The most triumphant Bird I ever knew or met  
Embarked upon a twig today  
And till Dominion set  
I fawnish to behold so eminent a sight  
And sang for nothing scrutable  
But intimate Delight.  
Retired, and resumed his transitive Estate –  
To what delicious Accident  
Does finest Glory fit!

c. 1873

1894

1266

When Memory is full  
Put on the perfect Lid –  
This Morning's finest syllable  
Presumptuous Evening said –

c. 1873

1951

1267

I saw that the Flake was on it  
But plotted with Time to dispute –  
"Unchanged" I urged with a candor  
That cost me my honest Heart –

[ 554 ]

But "you" – she returned with valor  
Sagacious of my mistake  
"Have altered – Accept the pillage  
For the progress' sake" –

1873

1915

1268

Confirming All who analyze  
In the Opinion fair  
That Eloquence is when the Heart  
Has not a Voice to spare –

c 1873

1932

1269

I worked for chaff and earning Wheat  
Was haughty and betrayed.  
What right had Fields to arbitrate  
In matters ratified?

I tasted Wheat and hated Chaff  
And thanked the ample friend –  
Wisdom is more becoming viewed  
At distance than at hand.

c. 1873

1896

1270

Is Heaven a Physician?  
They say that He can heal –  
But Medicine Posthumous  
Is unavailable –  
Is Heaven an Exchequer?  
They speak of what we owe –  
But that negotiation  
I'm not a Party to –

c. 1873

1891

September's Baccalaureate  
 A combination is  
 Of Crickets – Crows – and Retrospects  
 And a dissembling Breeze

That hints without assuming –  
 An Innuendo sear  
 That makes the Heart put up its Fun  
 And turn Philosopher.

c. 1873

1892

So proud she was to die  
 It made us all ashamed  
 That what we cherished, so unknown  
 To her desire seemed –  
 So satisfied to go  
 Where none of us should be  
 Immediately – that Anguish stooped  
 Almost to Jealousy –

c. 1873

1896

That sacred Closet when you sweep –  
 Entitled "Memory" –  
 Select a reverential Broom –  
 And do it silently.

'Twill be a Labor of surprise –  
 Besides Identity  
 Of other Interlocutors  
 A probability –

August the Dust of that Domain –  
 Unchallenged – let it lie –  
 You cannot supersede itself  
 But it can silence you –

c. 1873

1945

## 1274

The Bone that has no Marrow,  
 What Ultimate for that?  
 It is not fit for Table  
 For Beggar or for Cat.

A Bone has obligations –  
 A Being has the same –  
 A Marrowless Assembly  
 Is culpabler than shame.

But how shall finished Creatures  
 A function fresh obtain?  
 Old Nicodemus' Phantom  
 Confronting us again!

c. 1873

1896

## 1275

The Spider as an Artist  
 Has never been employed –  
 Though his surpassing Merit  
 Is freely certified

By every Broom and Bridget  
 Throughout a Christian Land –  
 Neglected Son of Genius  
 I take thee by the Hand –

c. 1873

1896

## 1276

'Twas later when the summer went  
 Than when the Cricket came –  
 And yet we knew that gentle Clock  
 Meant nought but Going Home –  
 'Twas sooner when the Cricket went  
 Than when the Winter came  
 Yet that pathetic Pendulum  
 Keeps esoteric Time.

c. 1873

1890

1277

While we were fearing it, it came –  
But came with less of fear  
Because that fearing it so long  
Had almost made it fair –

There is a Fitting – a Dismay –  
A Fitting – a Despair –  
'Tis harder knowing it is Due  
Than knowing it is Here.

The Trying on the Utmost  
The Morning it is new  
Is Terrible than wearing it  
A whole existence through.

c. 1873

1896

1278

The Mountains stood in Haze –  
The Valleys stopped below  
And went or waited as they liked  
The River and the Sky.

At leisure was the Sun –  
His interests of Fire  
A little from remark withdrawn –  
The Twilight spoke the Spire,

So soft upon the Scene  
The Act of evening fell  
We felt how neighborly a Thing  
Was the Invisible.

c. 1873

1945

1279

The Way to know the Bobolink  
From every other Bird  
Precisely as the Joy of him –  
Obliged to be inferred.

[ 558 ]

Of impudent Habilitment  
Attired to defy,  
Impertinence subordinate  
At times to Majesty

Of Sentiments seditious  
Amenable to Law –  
As Heresies of Transport  
Or Puck's Apostacy.

Extrinsic to Attention  
Too intimate with Joy –  
He compliments existence  
Until allured away

By Seasons or his Children –  
Adult and urgent grown –  
Or unforeseen aggrandizement  
Or, happily, Renown –

By Contrast certifying  
The Bird of Birds is gone –  
How nullified the Meadow –  
Her Sorcerer withdrawn!

c 1873

1945

1280

The harm of Years is on him –  
The infamy of Time –  
Depose him like a Fashion  
And give Dominion room.

Forget his Morning Forces –  
The Glory of Decay  
Is a minuter Pageant  
Than least Vitality.

c. 1873

1945

A stagnant pleasure like a Pool  
 That lets its Rushes grow  
 Until they heedless tumble in  
 And make the Water slow

Impeding navigation bright  
 Of Shadows going down  
 Yet even this shall rouse itself  
 When freshets come along

c. 1873

1945

Art thou the thing I wanted?  
 Begone – my Tooth has grown –  
 Supply the minor Palate  
 That has not starved so long –  
 I tell thee while I waited  
 The mystery of Food  
 Increased till I abjured it  
 And dine without Like God –

*rough draft I*

Art thou the thing I wanted?  
 Begone – my Tooth has grown –  
 Affront a minor palate  
 Thou could'st not goad so long –  
 I tell thee while I waited –  
 The mystery of Food  
 Increased till I abjured it  
 Subsisting now like God –

*rough draft II*

c. 1873

1945

Could Hope inspect her Basis  
 Her Craft were done –

Has a fictitious Charter  
Or it has none –

Balked in the vastest instance  
But to renew –  
Felled by but one assassin –  
Prosperity –

c. 1873

1945

1284

Had we our senses  
But perhaps 'tis well they're not at Home  
So intimate with Madness  
He's liable with them

Had we the eyes within our Head –  
How well that we are Blind –  
We could not look upon the Earth –  
So utterly unmoved –

c. 1873

1945

1285

I know Suspense – it steps so terse  
And turns so weak away –  
Besides – Suspense is neighborly  
When I am riding by –

Is always at the Window  
Though lately I descry  
And mention to my Horses  
The need is not of me –

c. 1873

1945

1286

I thought that nature was enough  
Till Human nature came  
But that the other did absorb  
As Parallax a Flame –

Of Human nature just aware  
There added the Divine  
Brief struggle for capacity  
The power to contain

Is always as the contents  
But give a Giant room  
And you will lodge a Giant  
And not a smaller man

c. 1873

1945

1287

In this short Life  
That only lasts an hour  
How much – how little – is  
Within our power

c. 1873

1945

1288

Lain in Nature – so suffice us  
The enchantless Pod  
When we advertise existence  
For the missing Seed –

Maddest Heart that God created  
Cannot move a sod  
Pasted by the simple summer  
On the Longed for Dead

c. 1873

1945

1289

Left in immortal Youth  
On that low Plain  
That hath nor Retrospection  
Nor Again –  
Ransomed from years –  
Sequestered from Decay

Canceled like Dawn  
In comprehensive Day –

c. 1873

1945

1290

The most pathetic thing I do  
Is play I hear from you –  
I make believe until my Heart  
Almost believes it too  
But when I break it with the news  
You knew it was not true  
I wish I had not broken it –  
Goliath – so would you –

c. 1873

1945

1291

Until the Desert knows  
That Water grows  
His Sands suffice  
But let him once suspect  
That Caspian Fact  
Sahara dies

Utmost is relative –  
Have not or Have  
Adjacent sums  
Enough – the first Abode  
On the familiar Road  
Galloped in Dreams –

c. 1873

1945

1292

Yesterday is History,  
'Tis so far away –  
Yesterday is Poetry –  
'Tis Philosophy –

Yesterday is mystery –  
Where it is Today  
While we shrewdly speculate  
Flutter both away

c. 1873

1945

1293

The things we thought that we should do  
We other things have done  
But those peculiar industries  
Have never been begun –

The Lands we thought that we should seek  
When large enough to run  
By Speculation ceded  
To Speculation's Son –

The Heaven, in which we hoped to pause  
When Discipline was done  
Untenable to Logic  
But possibly the one –

c. 1874

1931

1294

Of Life to own –  
From Life to draw –  
But never touch the reservoir –

1874

1931

1295

Two Lengths has every Day –  
Its absolute extent  
And Area superior  
By Hope or Horror lent –  
Eternity will be  
Velocity or Pause

At Fundamental Signals  
From Fundamental Laws

To die is not to go –  
On Doom's consummate Chart  
No Territory new is staked –  
Remain thou as thou art.

c. 1874

1914

1296

Death's Waylaying not the sharpest  
Of the thefts of Time –  
There Marauds a sorer Robber,  
Silence – is his name –  
No Assault, nor any Menace  
Doth betoken him  
But from Life's consummate Cluster –  
He supplants the Balm.

c. 1874

1931

1297

Go slow, my soul, to feed thyself  
Upon his rare approach –  
Go rapid, lest Competing Death  
Prevail upon the Coach –  
Go timid, should his final eye  
Determine thee amiss –  
Go boldly – for thou paid'st his price  
Redemption – for a Kiss –

c. 1874

1894

1298

The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants –  
At Evening, it is not –  
At Morning, in a Truffled Hut  
It stop upon a Spot

[ 565 ]

As if it tarried always  
And yet its whole Career  
Is shorter than a Snake's Delay  
And fleeter than a Tare –

'Tis Vegetation's Juggler –  
The Germ of Alibi –  
Doth like a Bubble antedate  
And like a Bubble, hie –

I feel as if the Grass was pleased  
To have it intermit –  
This surreptitious scion  
Of Summer's circumspect.

Had Nature any supple Face  
Or could she one contemn –  
Had Nature an Apostate –  
That Mushroom – it is Him!

c. 1874

1891

1299

Delight's Despair at setting  
Is that Delight is less  
Than the sufficing Longing  
That so impoverish.

Enchantment's Perihelion  
Mistaken oft has been  
For the Authentic orbit  
Of its Anterior Sun.

c. 1874

1945

1300

From his slim Palace in the Dust  
He relegates the Realm,  
More loyal for the exody  
That has befallen him.

c. 1874

1945

## 1301

I cannot want it more –  
 I cannot want it less –  
 My Human Nature's fullest force  
 Expend itself on this

And yet it nothing is  
 To him who easy owns –  
 Is Worth itself or Distance  
 He fathoms who obtains.

c. 1874

1945

## 1302

I think that the Root of the Wind is Water –  
 It would not sound so deep  
 Were it a Firmamental Product –  
 Airs no Oceans keep –  
 Mediterranean intonations –  
 To a Current's Ear –  
 There is a maritime conviction  
 In the Atmosphere –

c. 1874

1914

## 1303

Not One by Heaven defrauded stay –  
 Although he seem to steal  
 He restitutes in some sweet way  
 Secreted in his will –

c. 1874

1914

## 1304

Not with a Club, the Heart is broken  
 Nor with a Stone –  
 A Whip so small you could not see it  
 I've known

To lash the Magic Creature  
Till it fell,  
Yet that Whip's Name  
Too noble then to tell.

Magnanimous as Bird  
By Boy descried –  
Singing unto the Stone  
Of which it died –

Shame need not crouch  
In such an Earth as Ours –  
Shame – stand erect –  
The Universe is yours.

c. 1874

1896

1305

Recollect the Face of me  
When in thy Felicity,  
Due in Paradise today  
Guest of mine assuredly –

Other Courtesies have been –  
Other Courtesy may be –  
We commend ourselves to thee  
Paragon of Chivalry.

c. 1874

1945

1306

Surprise is like a thrilling – pungent –  
Upon a tasteless meat  
Alone – too acrid – but combined  
An edible Delight.

c. 1874

1945

1307

That short – potential stir  
That each can make but once –

That Bustle so illustrious  
'Tis almost Consequence –  
Is the éclat of Death –  
Oh, thou unknown Renown  
That not a Beggar would accept  
Had he the power to spurn –

c. 1874

1890

1308

The Day she goes  
Or Day she stays  
Are equally supreme –  
Existence has a stated width  
Departed, or at Home –

c. 1874

1945

1309

The Infinite a sudden Guest  
Has been assumed to be –  
But how can that stupendous come  
Which never went away?

c. 1874

1945

1310

The Notice that is called the Spring  
Is but a month from here –  
Put up my Heart thy Hoary work  
And take a Rosy Chair.

Not any House the Flowers keep –  
The Birds enamor Care –  
Our salary the longest Day  
Is nothing but a Bier.

c. 1874

1945

## 1311

This dirty – little – Heart  
 Is freely mine  
 I won it with a Bun –  
 A Freckled shrine –  
  
 But eligibly fair  
 To him who sees  
 The Visage of the Soul  
 And not the knees.

c. 1874

1945

## 1312

To break so vast a Heart  
 Required a Blow as vast –  
 No Zephyr felled this Cedar straight –  
 'Twas undeserved Blast –

c. 1874

1945

## 1313

Warm in her Hand these accents lie  
 While faithful and afar  
 The Grace so awkward for her sake  
 Its fond subjection wear –

c. 1874

1945

## 1314

When a Lover is a Beggar  
 Abject is his Knee –  
 When a Lover is an Owner  
 Different is he –  
  
 What he begged is then the Beggar –  
 Oh disparity –  
 Bread of Heaven resents bestowal  
 Like an obloquy –

c. 1878

1945

Which is the best – the Moon or the Crescent?  
 Neither – said the Moon –  
 That is best which is not – Achieve it –  
 You efface the Sheen.

Not of detention is Fruition –  
 Shudder to attain.  
 Transport's decomposition follows –  
 He is Prism born.

c. 1874

1945

Winter is good – his Hoar Delights  
 Italic flavor yield –  
 To Intellects inebriate  
 With Summer, or the World –

Generic as a Quarry  
 And hearty – as a Rose –  
 Invited with Asperity  
 But welcome when he goes.

c. 1874

1945

Abraham to kill him  
 Was distinctly told –  
 Isaac was an Urchin –  
 Abraham was old –  
 Not a hesitation –  
 Abraham complied –  
 Flattered by Obeisance  
 Tyranny demurred –  
 Isaac – to his children  
 Lived to tell the tale –

Moral – with a Mastiff  
Manners may prevail.

c. 1874

1945

1318

Frigid and sweet Her parting Face –  
Frigid and fleet my Feet –  
Alien and vain whatever Clime  
Acrid whatever Fate.

Given to me without the Suit  
Riches and Name and Realm –  
Who was She to withhold from me  
Penury and Home?

c. 1874

1945

1319

How News must feel when travelling  
If News have any Heart  
Alighting at the Dwelling  
’Twill enter like a Dart!

What News must think when pondering  
If News have any Thought  
Concerning the stupendousness  
Of its perceiveless freight!

What News will do when every Man  
Shall comprehend as one  
And not in all the Universe  
A thing to tell remain?

c. 1874

1945

1320

Dear March – Come in –  
How glad I am –  
I hoped for you before –

Put down your Hat –  
You must have walked –  
How out of Breath you are –  
Dear March, how are you, and the Rest –  
Did you leave Nature well –  
Oh March, Come right up stairs with me –  
I have so much to tell –

I got your Letter, and the Birds –  
The Maples never knew that you were coming – till I called  
I declare – how Red their Faces grew –  
But March, forgive me – and  
All those Hills you left for me to Hue –  
There was no Purple suitable –  
You took it all with you –

Who knocks? That April.  
Lock the Door –  
I will not be pursued –  
He stayed away a Year to call  
When I am occupied –  
But trifles look so trivial  
As soon as you have come

That Blame is just as dear as Praise  
And Praise as mere as Blame –

c. 1874

1896

1321

Elizabeth told Essex  
That she could not forgive  
The clemency of Deity  
However – might survive –  
That secondary succor  
We trust that she partook  
When suing – like her Essex  
For a relieving Look –

c. 1874

1945

Floss won't save you from an Abyss  
 But a Rope will –  
 Notwithstanding a Rope for a Souvenir  
 Is not beautiful –  
 But I tell you every step is a Trough –  
 And every stop a Well –  
 Now will you have the Rope or the Floss?  
 Prices reasonable –

c. 1874

1945

I never hear that one is dead  
 Without the chance of Life  
 Afresh annihilating me  
 That mightiest Belief,  
 Too mighty for the Daily mind  
 That tilling its abyss,  
 Had Madness, had it once or twice  
 The yawning Consciousness,  
 Beliefs are Bandaged, like the Tongue  
 When Terror were it told  
 In any Tone commensurate  
 Would strike us instant Dead  
 I do not know the man so bold  
 He dare in lonely Place  
 That awful stranger Consciousness  
 Deliberately face –

c. 1874

1945

I send you a decrepit flower  
 That nature sent to me  
 At parting – she was going south  
 And I designed to stay –

Her motive for the souvenir  
If sentiment for me  
Or circumstance prudential  
Withheld invincibly –

c. 1874

1945

1325

Knock with tremor –  
These are Caesars –  
Should they be at Home  
Flee as if you trod unthinking  
On the Foot of Doom –  
These receded to accostal  
Centuries ago –  
Should they rend you with “How are you”  
What have you to show?

c. 1874

1945

1326

Our little secrets slink away –  
Beside God's shall not tell –  
He kept his word a Trillion years  
And might we not as well –  
But for the niggardly delight  
To make each other stare  
Is there no sweet beneath the sun  
With this that may compare –

c. 1874

1945

1327

The Symptom of the Gale –  
The Second of Dismay –  
Between its Rumor and its Face –  
Is almost Revelry –

[ 575 ]

The Houses firmer root –  
The Heavens cannot be found –  
The Upper Surfaces of things  
Take covert in the Ground –

The Mem'ry of the Sun  
Not Any can recall –  
Although by Nature's sterling Watch  
So scant an interval –

And when the Noise is caught  
And Nature looks around –  
"We dreamed it" – She interrogates –  
"Good Morning" – We propound?

c. 1874

1955

1328

The vastest earthly Day  
Is shrunken small  
By one Defaulting Face  
Behind a Pall –

c. 1874

1945

1329

Whether they have forgotten  
Or are forgetting now  
Or never remembered –  
Safer not to know –

Miseries of conjecture  
Are a softer woe  
Than a Fact of Iron  
Hardened with I know –

c. 1874

1945

1330

Without a smile – Without a Throe  
A Summer's soft Assemblies go  
To their entrancing end

Unknown – for all the times we met –  
Estranged, however intimate –  
What a dissembling Friend –

c. 1874

1945

1331

Wonder – is not precisely Knowing  
And not precisely Knowing not –  
A beautiful but bleak condition  
He has not lived who has not felt –

Suspense – is his maturer Sister –  
Whether Adult Delight is Pain  
Or of itself a new misgiving –  
This is the Gnat that mangles men –

c. 1874

1945

1332

Pink – small – and punctual –  
Aromatic – low –  
Covert – in April –  
Candid – in May –  
Dear to the Moss –  
Known to the Knoll –  
Next to the Robin  
In every human Soul –  
Bold little Beauty  
Bedecked with thee  
Nature forswears  
Antiquity –

c. 1875

1890

1333

A little Madness in the Spring  
Is wholesome even for the King,  
But God be with the Clown –

Who ponders this tremendous scene –  
This whole Experiment of Green –  
As if it were his own!

c. 1875

1914

1334

How soft this Prison is  
How sweet these sullen bars  
No Despot but the King of Down  
Invented this repose  
Of Fate if this is All  
Has he no added Realm  
A Dungeon but a Kinsman is  
Incarceration – Home.

c. 1875

1951

1335

Let me not mar that perfect Dream  
By an Auroral stain  
But so adjust my daily Night  
That it will come again.  
Not when we know, the Power accosts –  
The Garment of Surprise  
Was all our timid Mother wore  
At Home – in Paradise.

c. 1875

1947

1336

Nature assigns the Sun –  
That – is Astronomy –  
Nature cannot enact a Friend –  
That – is Astrology.

c. 1875

1951

1337

Upon a Lilac Sea  
To toss incessantly  
His Plush Alarm  
Who fleeing from the Spring  
The Spring avenging fling  
To Dooms of Balm –

c 1875

1945

1338

What tenements of clover  
Are fitting for the bee,  
What edifices azure  
For butterflies and me –  
What residences nimble  
Arise and evanesce  
Without a rhythmic rumor  
Or an assaulting guess.

1875?

1894

1339

A Bee his burnished Carriage  
Drove boldly to a Rose –  
Combinedly alighting –  
Himself – his Carriage was –  
The Rose received his visit  
With frank tranquillity  
Withholding not a Crescent  
To his Cupidity –  
Their Moment consummated –  
Remained for him – to flee –  
Remained for her – of rapture  
But the humility.

c. 1875

1945

1340

A Rat surrendered here  
A brief career of Cheer  
And Fraud and Fear.

Of Ignominy's due  
Let all addicted to  
Beware.

The most obliging Trap  
Its tendency to snap  
Cannot resist –

Temptation is the Friend  
Repugnantly resigned  
At last.

c. 1875

1945

1341

Unto the Whole – how add?  
Has “All” a further Realm –  
Or Utmost an Ulterior?  
Oh, Subsidy of Balm!

c. 1875

1945

1342

“Was not” was all the Statement.  
The Unpretension stuns –  
Perhaps – the Comprehension –  
They wore no Lexicons –

But lest our Speculation  
In inanity die  
Because “God took him” mention –  
That was Philology –

c. 1875

1945

A single Clover Plank  
 Was all that saved a Bee  
 A Bee I personally knew  
 From sinking in the sky –

'Twixt Firmament above  
 And Firmament below  
 The Billows of Circumference  
 Were sweeping him away –

The idly swaying Plank  
 Responsible to nought  
 A sudden Freight of Wind assumed  
 And Bumble Bee was not –

This harrowing event  
 Transpiring in the Grass  
 Did not so much as wring from him  
 A wandering "Alas" –

1875

1945

Not any more to be lacked –  
 Not any more to be known –  
 Denizen of Significance  
 For a span so worn –

Even Nature herself  
 Has forgot it is there –  
 Sedulous of her Multitudes  
 Notwithstanding Despair –

Of the Ones that pursued it  
 Suing it not to go  
 Some have solaced the longing  
 To accompany –

Some – rescinded the Wrench –  
 Others – Shall I say

Plated the residue of Adz  
With Monotony.

c. 1875

1929

1345

An antiquated Grace  
Becomes that cherished Face  
As well as prime  
Enjoining us to part  
We and our pouting Heart  
Good friends with time

c. 1875

1945

1346

As Summer into Autumn slips  
And yet we sooner say  
"The Summer" than "the Autumn," lest  
We turn the sun away,

And almost count it an Affront  
The presence to concede  
Of one however lovely, not  
The one that we have loved—

So we evade the charge of Years  
On one attempting shy  
The Circumvention of the Shaft  
Of Life's Declivity.

c. 1875

1894

1347

Escape is such a thankful Word  
I often in the Night  
Consider it unto myself  
No spectacle in sight  
Escape— it is the Basket  
In which the Heart is caught

When down some awful Battlement  
The rest of Life is dropt –  
'Tis not to sight the savior –  
It is to be the saved –  
And that is why I lay my Head  
Upon this trusty word –

c. 1875

1945

1348

Lift it – with the Feathers  
Not alone we fly –  
Launch it – the aquatic  
Not the only sea –  
Advocate the Azure  
To the lower Eyes –  
He has obligation  
Who has Paradise –

c 1875

1945

1349

I'd rather recollect a setting  
Than own a rising sun  
Though one is beautiful forgetting –  
And true the other one.

Because in going is a Drama  
Staying cannot confer  
To die divinely once a Twilight –  
Than wane is easier –

c. 1875

1945

1350

Luck is not chance –  
It's Toil –  
Fortune's expensive smile  
Is earned –

[ 583 ]

The Father of the Mine  
Is that old-fashioned Coin  
We spurned –

c. 1875

1945

1351

You cannot take itself  
From any Human soul –  
That indestructible estate  
Enable him to dwell –  
Impregnable as Light  
That every man behold  
But take away as difficult  
As undiscovered Gold –

c. 1875

1945

1352

To his simplicity  
To die – was little Fate –  
If Duty live – contented  
But her Confederate.

c. 1876

1931

1353

The last of Summer is Delight –  
Deterred by Retrospect.  
'Tis Ecstasy's revealed Review –  
Enchantment's Syndicate.  
To meet it – nameless as it is –  
Without celestial Mail –  
Audacious as without a Knock  
To walk within the Veil.

c. 1876

1929

1354

The Heart is the Capital of the Mind –  
The Mind is a single State –  
The Heart and the Mind together make  
A single Continent –

One – is the Population –  
Numerous enough –  
This ecstatic Nation  
Seek – it is Yourself.

c. 1876

1929

1355

The Mind lives on the Heart  
Like any Parasite –  
If that is full of Meat  
The Mind is fat.

But if the Heart omit  
Emaciate the Wit –  
The Aliment of it  
So absolute.

c. 1876

1932

1356

The Rat is the concisest Tenant.  
He pays no Rent.  
Repudiates the Obligation –  
On Schemes intent

Balking our Wit  
To sound or circumvent –  
Hate cannot harm  
A Foe so reticent –  
Neither Decree prohibit him –  
Lawful as Equilibrium

c. 1876

1891

"Faithful to the end" Amended  
 From the Heavenly Clause –  
 Constancy with a Proviso  
 Constancy abhors –

"Crowns of Life" are servile Prizes  
 To the stately Heart,  
 Given for the Giving, solely,  
 No Emolument.

*version I*  
 c. 1876

1932

"Faithful to the end" Amended  
 From the Heavenly clause –  
 Lucrative indeed the offer  
 But the Heart withdraws –

"I will give" the base Proviso –  
 Spare Your "Crown of Life" –  
 Those it fits, too fair to wear it –  
 Try it on Yourself –

*version II*  
 c. 1876

1945

The Treason of an accent  
 Might Ecstasy transfer –  
 Of her effacing Fathom  
 Is no Recoverer –

*version I*  
 c. 1876

1931

The Treason of an Accent  
 Might vilify the Joy –  
 To breathe – corrode the rapture  
 Of Sanctity to be –

*version II*  
 c. 1876

1914

1359

The long sigh of the Frog  
Upon a Summer's Day  
Enacts intoxication  
Upon the Revery –  
But his receding Swell  
Substantiates a Peace  
That makes the Ear inordinate  
For corporal release –

c 1876

1914

1360

I sued the News – yet feared – the News  
That such a Realm could be –  
“The House not made with Hands” it was –  
Thrown open wide to me –

c 1876

1931

1361

The Flake the Wind exasperate  
More eloquently he  
Than if escorted to its Down  
By Arm of Chivalry.

c. 1876

1931

1362

Of their peculiar light  
I keep one ray  
To clarify the Sight  
To seek them by –

c. 1876

1931

1363

Summer laid her simple Hat  
On its boundless Shelf –

Unobserved – a Ribbon slipt,  
Snatch it for yourself.

Summer laid her supple Glove  
In its sylvan Drawer –  
Wheresoe'er, or was she –  
The demand of Awe?

c. 1876

1947

1364

How know it from a Summer's Day?  
Its Fervors are as firm –  
And nothing in the Countenance  
But scintillates the same –  
Yet Birds examine it and flee –  
And Vans without a name  
Inspect the Admonition  
And sunder as they came –

c. 1876

1955

1365

Take all away –  
The only thing worth larceny  
Is left – the Immortality –

c. 1876

1891

1366A

Brother of Ingots – Ah Peru –  
Empty the Hearts that purchased you –

c. 1876

1945

1366B

Sister of Ophir –  
Ah, Peru –

[ 588 ]

Subtle the Sum  
That purchase you –

c. 1878

1932

1366C

Brother of Ophir  
Bright Adieu,  
Honor, the shortest route  
To you.

c. 1880

1894

1367

“Tomorrow” – whose location  
The Wise deceives  
Though its hallucination  
Is last that leaves –  
Tomorrow – thou Retriever  
Of every tare –  
Of Alibi art thou  
Or ownest where?

c. 1876

1951

1368

Love's stricken “why”  
Is all that love can speak –  
Built of but just a syllable  
The hugest hearts that break.

c. 1876

1894

1369

Trusty as the stars  
Who quit their shining working  
Prompt as when I lit them  
In Genesis' new house,  
Durable as dawn  
Whose antiquated blossom

Makes a world's suspense  
Perish and rejoice.

1876?

1894

1370

Gathered into the Earth,  
And out of story –  
Gathered to that strange Fame –  
That lonesome Glory  
That hath no omen here – but Awe –

c. 1876

1945

1371

How fits his Umber Coat  
The Tailor of the Nut?  
Combined without a seam  
Like Raiment of a Dream –  
  
Who spun the Auburn Cloth?  
Computed how the girth?  
The Chestnut aged grows  
In those primeval Clothes –  
  
We know that we are wise –  
Accomplished in Surprise –  
Yet by this Countryman –  
This nature – how undone!

c. 1876

1945

1372

The Sun is one – and on the Tare  
He doth as punctual call  
As on the conscientious Flower  
And estimates them all –

c. 1876

1945

1373

The worthlessness of Earthly things  
The Ditty is that Nature Sings –  
And then – enforces their delight  
Till Synods are inordinate –

c. 1876

1945

1374

A Saucer holds a Cup  
In sordid human Life  
But in a Squirrel's estimate  
A Saucer hold a Loaf.  
  
A Table of a Tree  
Demands the little King  
And every Breeze that run along  
His Dining Room do swing.  
  
His Cutlery – he keeps  
Within his Russet Lips –  
To see it flashing when he dines  
Do Birmingham eclipse –  
  
Convicted – could we be  
Of our Minutiae  
The smallest Citizen that flies  
Is heartier than we –

c. 1876

1945

1375

Death warrants are supposed to be  
An enginery of equity  
A merciful mistake  
A pencil in an Idol's Hand  
A Devotee has oft consigned  
To Crucifix or Block

c. 1876

1945

1376

Dreams are the subtle Dower  
That make us rich an Hour –  
Then fling us poor  
Out of the purple Door  
Into the Precinct raw  
Possessed before –

c. 1876

1945

1377

Forbidden Fruit a flavor has  
That lawful Orchards mocks –  
How luscious lies within the Pod  
The Pea that Duty locks –

c. 1876

1896

1378

His Heart was darker than the starless night  
For that there is a morn  
But in this black Receptacle  
Can be no Bode of Dawn

c. 1876

1945

1379

His Mansion in the Pool  
The Frog forsakes –  
He rises on a Log  
And statements makes –  
His Auditors two Worlds  
Deducting me –  
The Orator of April  
Is hoarse Today –  
His Mittens at his Feet  
No Hand hath he –  
His eloquence a Bubble  
As Fame should be –

Applaud him to discover  
To your chagrin  
Demosthenes has vanished  
In Waters Green –

c. 1876

1945

1380

How much the present moment means  
To those who've nothing more –  
The Fop – the Carp – the Atheist –  
Stake an entire store  
Upon a Moment's shallow Rum  
While their commuted Feet  
The Torrents of Eternity  
Do all but inundate –

c 1876

1945

1381

I suppose the time will come  
Aid it in the coming  
When the Bird will crowd the Tree  
And the Bee be booming.

I suppose the time will come  
Hinder it a little  
When the Corn in Silk will dress  
And in Chintz the Apple

I believe the Day will be  
When the Jay will giggle  
At his new white House the Earth  
That, too, halt a little –

c. 1876

1945

1382

In many and reportless places  
We feel a Joy –

[ 593 ]

Reportless, also, but sincere as Nature  
Or Deity –

It comes, without a consternation –  
Dissolves – the same –  
But leaves a sumptuous Destitution –  
Without a Name –

Profane it by a search – we cannot  
It has no home –  
Nor we who having once inhaled it –  
Thereafter roam.

c. 1876

1945

1383

Long Years apart – can make no  
Breach a second cannot fill –  
The absence of the Witch does not  
Invalidate the spell –

The embers of a Thousand Years  
Uncovered by the Hand  
That fondled them when they were Fire  
Will stir and understand –

c. 1876

1945

1384

Praise it – 'tis dead –  
It cannot glow –  
Warm this inclement Ear  
With the encomium it earned  
Since it was gathered here –  
Invest this alabaster Zest  
In the Delights of Dust –  
Remitted – since it flitted it  
In recusance august.

c. 1876

1945

1385

"Secrets" is a daily word  
Yet does not exist –  
Muffled – it remits surmise –  
Murmured – it has ceased –  
Dungeoned in the Human Breast  
Doubtless secrets lie –  
But that Grate inviolate –  
Goes nor comes away  
Nothing with a Tongue or Ear –  
Secrets stapled there  
Will emerge but once – and dumb –  
To the Sepulchre –

c. 1879

1945

1386

Summer – we all have seen –  
A few of us – believed –  
A few – the more aspiring  
Unquestionably loved –  
But Summer does not care –  
She goes her spacious way  
As eligible as the moon  
To our Temerity –  
The Doom to be adored –  
The Affluence conferred –  
Unknown as to an Ecstasy  
The Embryo endowed –

c. 1876

1945

1387

The Butterfly's Numidian Gown  
With spots of Burnish roasted on  
Is proof against the Sun  
Yet prone to shut its spotted Fan

And panting on a Clover lean  
As if it were undone –

c. 1876

1945

1388

Those Cattle smaller than a Bee  
That herd upon the eye –  
Whose tillage is the passing Crumb –  
Those Cattle are the Fly –  
Of Barns for Winter – blameless –  
Extemporaneous stalls  
They found to our objection –  
On eligible walls –  
Reserving the presumption  
To suddenly descend  
And gallop on the Furniture –  
Or odiouser offend –  
Of their peculiar calling  
Unqualified to judge  
To Nature we remand them  
To justify or scourge –

c. 1876

1945

1389

Touch lightly Nature's sweet Guitar  
Unless thou know'st the Tune  
Or every Bird will point at thee  
Because a Bard too soon –

c. 1876

1945

1390

These held their Wick above the West –  
Till when the Red declined –  
Or how the Amber aided it –  
Defied to be defined –

[ 596 ]

Then waned without disparagement  
In a dissembling Hue  
That would not let the Eye decide  
Did it abide or no –

c. 1877

1951

1391

They might not need me – yet they might –  
I'll let my Heart be just in sight –  
A smile so small as mine might be  
Precisely their necessity –

c. 1877

1894

1392

Hope is a strange invention –  
A Patent of the Heart –  
In unremitting action  
Yet never wearing out –  
Of this electric Adjunct  
Not anything is known  
But its unique momentum  
Embellish all we own –

c. 1877

1931

1393

Lay this Laurel on the One  
Too intrinsic for Renown –  
Laurel – veil your deathless tree –  
Him you chasten, that is He!

c. 1877

1891

1394

Whose Pink career may have a close  
Portentous as our own, who knows?

To imitate these Neighbors fleet  
In awe and innocence, were meet.

c. 1877

1894

1395

After all Birds have been investigated and laid aside –  
Nature imparts the little Blue-Bird – assured  
Her conscientious Voice will soar unmoved  
Above ostensible Vicissitude.

First at the March – competing with the Wind –  
Her panting note exalts us – like a friend –  
Last to adhere when Summer cleaves away –  
Elegy of Integrity.

c. 1877

1932

1396

She laid her docile Crescent down  
And this confiding Stone  
Still states to Dates that have forgot  
The News that she is gone –

So constant to its stolid trust,  
The Shaft that never knew –  
It shames the Constancy that fled  
Before its emblem flew –

c. 1877

1896

1397

It sounded as if the Streets were running  
And then – the Streets stood still –  
Eclipse – was all we could see at the Window  
And Awe – was all we could feel.

By and by – the boldest stole out of his Covert  
To see if Time was there –

Nature was in an Opal Apron,  
Mixing fresher Air.

c. 1877

1891

1398

I have no Life but this –  
To lead it here –  
Nor any Death – but lest  
Dispelled from there –  
  
Nor tie to Earths to come –  
Nor Action new –  
Except through this extent –  
The Realm of you –

c. 1877

1891

1399

Perhaps they do not go so far  
As we who stay, suppose –  
Perhaps come closer, for the lapse  
Of their corporeal clothes –  
  
It may be know so certainly  
How short we have to fear  
That comprehension antedates  
And estimates us there –

c. 1877

1947

1400

What mystery pervades a well!  
That water lives so far –  
A neighbor from another world  
Residing in a jar  
  
Whose limit none have ever seen,  
But just his lid of glass –  
Like looking every time you please  
In an abyss's face!

The grass does not appear afraid,  
I often wonder he  
Can stand so close and look so bold  
At what is awe to me.

Related somehow they may be,  
The sedge stands next the sea --  
Where he is floorless  
And does no timidity betray

But nature is a stranger yet;  
The ones that cite her most  
Have never passed her haunted house,  
Nor simplified her ghost.

To pity those that know her not  
Is helped by the regret  
That those who know her, know her less  
The nearer her they get.

1877?

1896

1401

To own a Susan of my own  
Is of itself a Bliss --  
Whatever Realm I forfeit, Lord,  
Continue me in this!

c. 1877

1932

1402

To the stanch Dust  
We safe commit thee --  
Tongue if it hath,  
Inviolate to thee --  
Silence -- denote --  
And Sanctity -- enforce thee --  
Passenger -- of Infinity --

c. 1877

1914

## 1403

My Maker – let me be  
 Enamored most of thee –  
 But nearer this  
 I more should miss –

c. 1877

1915

## 1404

March is the Month of Expectation.  
 The things we do not know –  
 The Persons of prognostication  
 Are coming now –  
 We try to show becoming firmness –  
 But pompous Joy  
 Betrays us, as his first Betrothal  
 Betrays a Boy.

c. 1877

1914

## 1405

Bees are Black, with Gilt Surcingles –  
 Buccaneers of Buzz.  
 Ride abroad in ostentation  
 And subsist on Fuzz.  
 Fuzz ordained – not Fuzz contingent –  
 Marrows of the Hill.  
 Jugs – a Universe's fracture  
 Could not jar or spill.

c. 1877

1945

## 1406

No Passenger was known to flee –  
 That lodged a night in memory –  
 That wily – subterranean Inn  
 Contrives that none go out again –

c. 1877

1945

1407

A Field of Stubble, lying sere  
Beneath the second Sun –  
Its Toils to Brindled People thrust –  
Its Triumphs – to the Bin –  
Accosted by a timid Bird  
Irresolute of Alms –  
Is often seen – but seldom felt,  
On our New England Farms –

c. 1877

1932

1408

The Fact that Earth is Heaven –  
Whether Heaven is Heaven or not  
If not an Affidavit  
Of that specific Spot  
Not only must confirm us  
That it is not for us  
But that it would affront us  
To dwell in such a place –

c. 1877

1945

1409

Could mortal lip divine  
The undeveloped Freight  
Of a delivered syllable  
'T would crumble with the weight.

c. 1877

1894

1410

I shall not murmur if at last  
The ones I loved below  
Permission have to understand  
For what I shunned them so –  
Divulging it would rest my Heart  
But it would ravage theirs –

[ 602 ]

Why, Katie, Treason has a Voice –  
But mine – dispels – in Tears.

c. 1877

1945

1411

Of Paradise' existence  
All we know  
Is the uncertain certainty –  
But its vicinity infer,  
By its Bisecting  
Messenger –

c. 1877

1945

1412

Shame is the shawl of Pink  
In which we wrap the Soul  
To keep it from infesting Eyes –  
The elemental Veil  
Which helpless Nature drops  
When pushed upon a scene  
Repugnant to her probity –  
Shame is the tint divine.

c. 1877

1945

1413

Sweet Skepticism of the Heart –  
That knows – and does not know –  
And tosses like a Fleet of Balm –  
Affronted by the snow –  
Invites and then retards the Truth  
Lest Certainty be sere  
Compared with the delicious throe  
Of transport thrilled with Fear –

c. 1877

1945

1414

Unworthy of her Breast  
Though by that scathing test  
What Soul survive?  
By her exacting light  
How counterfeit the white  
We chiefly have!

c. 1877

1945

1415

A wild Blue sky abreast of Winds  
That threatened it – did run  
And crouched behind his Yellow Door  
Was the defiant sun –  
Some conflict with those upper friends  
So genial in the main  
That we deplore peculiarly  
Their arrogant campaign –

c. 1877

1945

1416

Crisis is sweet and yet the Heart  
Upon the hither side  
Has Dowry of Prospective  
To Denizens denied  
  
Inquire of the closing Rose  
Which rapture she preferred  
And she will point you sighing  
To her rescinded Bud.

c. 1877

1914

1417

How Human Nature dotes  
On what it can't detect.

The moment that a Plot is plumbed  
Prospective is extinct –

Prospective is the friend  
Reserved for us to know  
When Constancy is clarified  
Of Curiosity –

Of subjects that resist  
Redoubtablest is this  
Where go we –  
Go we anywhere  
Creation after this?

c. 1877

1945

1418

How lonesome the Wind must feel Nights –  
When people have put out the Lights  
And everything that has an Inn  
Closes the shutter and goes in –

How pompous the Wind must feel Noons  
Stepping to incorporeal Tunes  
Correcting errors of the sky  
And clarifying scenery

How mighty the Wind must feel Morns  
Encamping on a thousand dawns  
Espousing each and spurning all  
Then soaring to his Temple Tall –

c. 1877

1945

1419

It was a quiet seeming Day –  
There was no harm in earth or sky –  
Till with the closing sun  
There strayed an accidental Red  
A Strolling Hue, one would have said  
To westward of the Town –

But when the Earth began to jar  
And Houses vanished with a roar  
And Human Nature hid  
We comprehended by the Awe  
As those that Dissolution saw  
The Poppy in the Cloud

c. 1877

1945

1420

One Joy of so much anguish  
Sweet nature has for me  
I shun it as I do Despair  
Or dear iniquity –  
Why Birds, a Summer morning  
Before the Quick of Day  
Should stab my ravished spirit  
With Dirks of Melody  
Is part of an inquiry  
That will receive reply  
When Flesh and Spirit sunder  
In Death's Immediately –

c. 1877

1945

1421

Such are the inlets of the mind –  
His outlets – would you see  
Ascend with me the eminence  
Of immortality –

c. 1877

1945

1422

Summer has two Beginnings –  
Beginning once in June –  
Beginning in October  
Affectingly again –

[ 606 ]

Without, perhaps, the Riot  
But graphicker for Grace –  
As finer is a going  
Than a remaining Face –

Departing then – forever –  
Forever – until May –  
Forever is deciduous –  
Except to those who die –

c. 1877

1945

1423

The fairest Home I ever knew  
Was founded in an Hour  
By Parties also that I knew  
A spider and a Flower –  
A manse of mechlin and of Floss –

c. 1877

1945

1424

The Gentian has a parched Corolla –  
Like azure dried  
'Tis Nature's buoyant juices  
Beatified –  
Without a vaunt or sheen  
As casual as Rain  
And as benign –

When most is past – it comes –  
Nor isolate it seems  
Its Bond its Friend –  
To fill its Fringed career  
And aid an aged Year  
Abundant end –

Its lot – were it forgot –  
This Truth endear –

Fidelity is gain  
Creation o'er –

c. 1877

1945

1425

The inundation of the Spring  
Enlarges every soul –  
It sweeps the tenement away  
But leaves the Water whole –

In which the soul at first estranged –  
Seeks faintly for its shore  
But acclimated – pines no more  
For that Peninsula –

c. 1877

1914

1426

The pretty Rain from those sweet Eaves  
Her unintending Eyes –  
Took her own Heart, including ours,  
By innocent Surprise –

The wrestle in her simple Throat  
To hold the feeling down  
That vanquished her – defeated Feat –  
Was Fervor's sudden Crown –

c. 1877

1945

1427

To earn it by disdain  
Is Fame's consummate Fee –  
He loves what spurns him –  
Look behind – He is pursuing thee.

So let us gather – every Day –  
The Aggregate of

Life's Bouquet  
Be Honor and not shame—

c. 1877

1945

1428

Water makes many Beds  
For those averse to sleep—  
Its awful chamber open stands—  
Its Curtains blandly sweep—  
Abhorrent is the Rest  
In undulating Rooms  
Whose Amplitude no end invades—  
Whose Axis never comes.

c. 1877

1945

1429

We shun because we prize her Face  
Lest sight's ineffable disgrace  
Our Adoration stain

c. 1877

1945

1430

Who never wanted—maddest Joy  
Remains to him unknown—  
The Banquet of Abstemiousness  
Defaces that of Wine—  
Within its reach, though yet ungrasped  
Desire's perfect Goal—  
No nearer—lest the Actual—  
Should disentrall thy soul—

c. 1877

1896

1431

With Pinions of Disdain  
The soul can farther fly

Than any feather specified  
in Ornithology –  
It wafts this sordid Flesh  
Beyond its dull – control  
And during its electric gale –  
The body is a soul –  
instructing by the same –  
How little work it be –  
To put off filaments like this  
for immortality

c. 1877

1945

1432

Spurn the temerity –  
Rashness of Calvary –  
Gay were Gethsemane  
Knew we of Thee –

c. 1878

1927

1433

How brittle are the Piers  
On which our Faith doth tread –  
No Bridge below doth totter so –  
Yet none hath such a Crowd.

It is as old as God –  
Indeed – 'twas built by him –  
He sent his Son to test the Plank,  
And he pronounced it firm.

c. 1878

1894

1434

Go not too near a House of Rose –  
The depredation of a Breeze  
Or inundation of a Dew  
Alarms its walls away –

Nor try to tie the Butterfly,  
Nor climb the Bars of Ecstasy,  
In insecurity to lie  
Is Joy's insuring quality.

c. 1878

1894

1435

Not that he goes – we love him more  
Who led us while he stayed.  
Beyond earth's trafficking frontier,  
For what he moved, he made.

c. 1878

1894

1436

'Than Heaven more remote,  
For Heaven is the root,  
But these the fitted seed,  
More flown indeed  
Than ones that never were,  
Or those that hide, and are.

What madness, by their side,  
A vision to provide  
Of future days  
They cannot praise.

My soul, to find them, come,  
They cannot call, they're dumb,  
Nor prove, nor woo,  
But that they have abode  
Is absolute as God,  
And instant, too.

1878?

1894

1437

A Dew sufficed itself –  
And satisfied a Leaf

And felt "how vast a destiny" –  
"How trivial is Life!"

The Sun went out to work –  
The Day went out to play  
And not again that Dew be seen  
By Physiognomy

Whether by Day Abducted  
Or emptied by the Sun  
Into the Sea in passing  
Eternally unknown

Attested to this Day  
That awful Tragedy  
By Transport's instability  
And Doom's celerity.

c. 1878

1896

1438

Behold this little Bane –  
The Boon of all alive –  
As common as it is unknown  
The name of it is Love –

To lack of it is Woe –  
To own of it is Wound –  
Not elsewhere – if in Paradise  
Its Tantamount be found –

c. 1878

1945

1439

How ruthless are the gentle –  
How cruel are the kind –  
God broke his contract to his Lamb  
To qualify the Wind –

c. 1878

1945

1440

The healed Heart shows its shallow scar  
With confidential moan –  
Not mended by Mortality  
Are Fabrics truly torn –  
To go its convalescent way  
So shameless is to see  
More genuine were Perfidy  
Than such Fidelity.

c. 1878

1914

1441

These Fevered Days – to take them to the Forest  
Where Waters cool around the mosses crawl –  
And shade is all that devastates the stillness  
Seems it sometimes this would be all –

c. 1878

1945

1442

To mend each tattered Faith  
There is a needle fair  
Though no appearance indicate –  
’Tis threaded in the Air –  
  
And though it do not wear  
As if it never Tore  
’Tis very comfortable indeed  
And spacious as before –

c. 1878

1945

1443

A chilly Peace infests the Grass  
The Sun respectful lies –  
Not any Trance of industry  
These shadows scrutinize –

Whose Allies go no more astray  
For service or for Glee –  
But all mankind deliver here  
From whatsoever sea –

c. 1878

1945

1444

A little Snow was here and there  
Disseminated in her Hair –  
Since she and I had met and played  
Decade had gathered to Decade –

But Time had added not obtained  
Impregnable the Rose  
For summer too indelible  
Too obdurate for Snows –

c. 1878

1945

1445

Death is the supple Suitor  
That wins at last –  
It is a stealthy Wooing  
Conducted first  
By pallid innuendoes  
And dim approach  
But brave at last with Bugles  
And a bisected Coach  
It bears away in triumph  
To Troth unknown  
And Kindred as responsive  
As Porcelain.

c. 1878

1945

1446

His Mind like Fabrics of the East  
Displayed to the despair

[ 614 ]

Of everyone but here and there  
An humble Purchaser –  
For though his price was not of Gold –  
More arduous there is –  
That one should comprehend the worth  
Was all the price there was –

c. 1878

1945

1447

How good his Lava Bed,  
To this laborious Boy –  
Who must be up to call the World  
And dress the sleepy Day –

c. 1878

1945

1448

How soft a Caterpillar steps –  
I find one on my Hand  
From such a velvet world it comes  
Such pluses at command  
Its soundless travels just arrest  
My slow – terrestrial eye  
Intent upon its own career  
What use has it for me –

c. 1878

1945

1449

I thought the Train would never come –  
How slow the whistle sang –  
I don't believe a peevish Bird  
So whimpered for the Spring –  
I taught my Heart a hundred times  
Precisely what to say –  
Provoking Lover, when you came  
Its Treatise flew away

[ 615 ]

To hide my strategy too late  
To wiser be too soon –  
For miseries so halcyon  
The happiness atone –

c. 1878 1945

1450

The Road was lit with Moon and star –  
The Trees were bright and still –  
Descried I – by the distant Light  
A Traveller on a Hill –  
To magic Perpendiculars  
Ascending, though Terrene –  
Unknown his shimmering ultimate –  
But he indorsed the sheen –

c. 1878 1945

1451

Whoever disenchants  
A single Human soul  
By failure of irreverence  
Is guilty of the whole.

As guileless as a Bird  
As graphic as a star  
Till the suggestion sinister  
Things are not what they are –

c. 1878 1945

1452

Your thoughts don't have words every day  
They come a single time  
Like signal esoteric sips  
Of the communion Wine  
Which while you taste so native seems  
So easy so to be  
You cannot comprehend its price  
Nor its infrequency

c. 1878 1945

1453

A Counterfeit – a Plated Person –  
I would not be –  
Whatever strata of Iniquity  
My Nature underlie –  
Truth is good Health – and Safety, and the Sky.  
How meagre, what an Exile – is a Lie,  
And Vocal – when we die –

c. 1879

1924

1454

Those not live yet  
Who doubt to live again –  
“Again” is of a twice  
But this – is one –  
The Ship beneath the Draw  
Aground – is he?  
Death – so – the Hyphen of the Sea –  
Deep is the Schedule  
Of the Disk to be –  
Costumeless Consciousness –  
That is he –

c. 1879

1932

1455

Opinion is a flitting thing,  
But Truth, outlasts the Sun –  
If then we cannot own them both –  
Possess the oldest one –

c. 1879

1924

1456

So gay a Flower  
Bereaves the Mind  
As if it were a Woe –

[ 617 ]

Is Beauty an Affliction – then?  
Tradition ought to know –

c. 1879

1914

1457

It stole along so stealthy  
Suspicion it was done  
Was dim as to the wealthy  
Beginning not to own –

c. 1879

1915

1458

Time's wily Chargers will not wait  
At any Gate but Woe's –  
But there – so gloat to hesitate  
They will not stir for blows –

c. 1879

1932

1459

Belshazzar had a Letter –  
He never had but one –  
Belshazzar's Correspondent  
Concluded and begun  
In that immortal Copy  
The Conscience of us all  
Can read without its Glasses  
On Revelation's Wall –

c. 1879

1890

1460

His Cheek is his Biographer –  
As long as he can blush  
Perdition is Opprobrium –  
Past that, he sins in peace –

c. 1879

1914

1461

“Heavenly Father” – take to thee  
The supreme iniquity  
Fashioned by thy candid Hand  
In a moment contraband –  
Though to trust us – seem to us  
More respectful – “We are Dust” –  
We apologize to thee  
For thine own Duplicity –

c. 1879

1914

1462

We knew not that we were to live –  
Nor when – we are to die –  
Our ignorance – our cuirass is –  
We wear Mortality  
As lightly as an Option Gown  
Till asked to take it off –  
By his intrusion, God is known –  
It is the same with Life –

c 1879

1894

1463

A Route of Evanescence  
With a revolving Wheel –  
A Resonance of Emerald –  
A Rush of Cochineal –  
And every Blossom on the Bush  
Adjusts its tumbled Head –  
The mail from Tunis, probably,  
An easy Morning's Ride –

c. 1879

1891

1464

One thing of it we borrow  
And promise to return –

[ 619 ]

The Booty and the Sorrow  
Its Sweetness to have known –  
One thing of it we covet –  
The power to forget –  
The Anguish of the Avarice  
Defrays the Dross of it –

c. 1879

1894

1465

Before you thought of Spring  
Except as a Surmise  
You see – God bless his suddenness –  
A Fellow in the Skies  
Of independent Hues  
A little weather worn  
Inspiring habiliments  
Of Indigo and Brown –  
With specimens of Song  
As if for you to choose –  
Discretion in the interval  
With gay delays he goes  
To some superior Tree  
Without a single Leaf  
And shouts for joy to Nobody  
But his seraphic self –

c. 1871

1891

1466

One of the ones that Midas touched  
Who failed to touch us all  
Was that confiding Prodigal  
The reeling Oriole –  
So drunk he disavows it  
With badinage divine –  
So dazzling we mistake him  
For an alighting Mine –

[ 620 ]

A Pleader – a Dissembler –  
An Epicure – a Thief –  
Betimes an Oratorio –  
An Ecstasy in chief –

The Jesuit of Orchards  
He cheats as he enchants  
Of an entire Attar  
For his decamping wants –

The splendor of a Burmah  
The Meteor of Birds,  
Departing like a Pageant  
Of Ballads and of Bards –

I never thought that Jason sought  
For any Golden Fleece  
But then I am a rural man  
With thoughts that make for Peace –

But if there were a Jason,  
Tradition bear with me  
Behold his lost Aggrandizement  
Upon the Apple Tree –

c. 1879

1891

1467

A little overflowing word  
That any, hearing, had inferred  
For Ardor or for Tears,  
Though Generations pass away,  
Traditions ripen and decay,  
As eloquent appears –

c. 1879

1924

1468

A winged spark doth soar about –  
I never met it near

[ 621 ]

For Lightning it is oft mistook  
When nights are hot and sere –

Its twinkling Travels it pursues  
Above the Haunts of men –  
A speck of Rapture – first perceived  
By feeling it is gone –  
Rekindled by some action quaint

c. 1879

1945

1469

If wrecked upon the Shoal of Thought  
How is it with the Sea?  
The only Vessel that is shunned  
Is safe – Simplicity –

c 1879

1945

1470

The Sweets of Pillage, can be known  
To no one but the Thief –  
Compassion for Integrity  
Is his divinest Grief –

c 1879

1914

1471

Their Barricade against the Sky  
The martial Trees withdraw  
And with a Flag at every turn  
Their Armies are no more.

What Russet Halts in Nature's March  
They indicate or cause  
An inference of Mexico  
Effaces the Surmise –

Recurrent to the After Mind  
That Massacre of Air –

The Wound that was not Wound nor Scar  
But Holidays of War –

c. 1879

1945

1472

To see the Summer Sky  
Is Poetry, though never in a Book it lie –  
True Poems flee –

c. 1879

1945

1473

We talked with each other about each other  
Though neither of us spoke –  
We were listening to the seconds' Races  
And the Hoofs of the Clock –  
Pausing in Front of our Palsied Faces  
Time compassion took –  
Arks of Reprieve he offered to us –  
Ararats – we took –

c. 1879

1945

1474

Estranged from Beauty – none can be –  
For Beauty is Infinity –  
And power to be finite ceased  
Before Identity was leased.

c. 1879

1945

1475

Fame is the one that does not stay –  
Its occupant must die  
Or out of sight of estimate  
Ascend incessantly –  
Or be that most insolvent thing  
A Lightning in the Germ –

Electrical the embryo  
But we demand the Flame

c. 1879

1945

1476

His voice decrepit was with Joy –  
Her words did totter so  
How old the News of Love must be  
To make Lips elderly  
That purled a moment since with Glee –  
Is it Delight or Woe –  
Or Terror – that do decorate  
This livid interview –

c. 1879

1945

1477

How destitute is he  
Whose Gold is firm  
Who finds it every time  
The small stale Sum –  
When Love with but a Pence  
Will so display  
As is a disrespect  
To India.

c. 1879

1914

1478

Look back on Time, with kindly eyes –  
He doubtless did his best –  
How softly sinks that trembling sun  
In Human Nature's West –

c. 1879

1890

1479

The Devil – had he fidelity  
Would be the best friend –

Because he has ability –  
But Devils cannot mend –  
Perfidy is the virtue  
That would but he resign  
The Devil – without question  
Were thoroughly divine

c. 1879

1914

1480

The fascinating chill that music leaves  
Is Earth's corroboration  
Of Ecstasy's impediment –  
'Tis Rapture's germination  
In timid and tumultuous soil  
A fine – estranging creature –  
To something upper wooing us  
But not to our Creator –

c. 1879

1945

1481

The way Hope builds his House  
It is not with a sill –  
Nor Rafter – has that Edifice  
But only Pinnacle –  
  
Abode in as supreme  
This superficialities  
As if it were of Ledges smit  
Or mortised with the Laws –

c. 1879

1945

1482

'Tis whiter than an Indian Pipe –  
'Tis dimmer than a Lace –  
No stature has it, like a Fog  
When you approach the place –

[ 625 ]

Not any voice imply it here  
Or intimate it there  
A spirit – how doth it accost –  
What function hath the Air?  
This limitless Hyperbole  
Each one of us shall be –  
'Tis Drama – if Hypothesis  
It be not Tragedy –

c 1879

1896

1483

The Robin is a Gabriel  
In humble circumstances –  
His Dress denotes him socially,  
Of Transport's Working Classes –  
He has the punctuality  
Of the New England Farmer –  
The same oblique integrity,  
A Vista vastly warmer –

A small but sturdy Residence,  
A self denying Household,  
The Guests of Perspicacity  
Are all that cross his Threshold –  
As covert as a Fugitive,  
Cajoling Consternation  
By Ditties to the Enemy  
And Sylvan Punctuation –

c. 1880

1894

1484

We shall find the Cube of the Rainbow.  
Of that, there is no doubt.  
But the Arc of a Lover's conjecture  
Eludes the finding out.

c. 1880

1894

1485

Love is done when Love's begun,  
Sages say,  
But have Sages known?  
Truth adjourn your Boon  
Without Day.

c. 1880

1894

1486

Her spirit rose to such a height  
Her countenance it did inflate  
Like one that fed on awe.  
More prudent to assault the dawn  
Than merit the ethereal scorn  
That effervesced from her.

c 1880

1932

1487

The Savior must have been  
A docile Gentleman –  
To come so far so cold a Day  
For little Fellowmen –  
  
The Road to Bethlehem  
Since He and I were Boys  
Was leveled, but for that 'twould be  
A rugged billion Miles –

c. 1880

1915

1488

Birthday of but a single pang  
That there are less to come –  
Afflictive is the Adjective  
But affluent the doom –

c. 1880

1915

1489

A Dimple in the Tomb  
Makes that ferocious Room  
A Home –

c. 1880

1931

1490

The Face in evanescence lain  
Is more distinct than ours –  
And ours surrendered for its sake  
As Capsules are for Flower's –  
Or is it the confiding sheen  
Dissenting to be won  
Descending to enamor us  
Of Detriment divine?

c 1880

1931

1491

The Road to Paradise is plain,  
And holds scarce one.  
Not that it is not firm  
But we presume  
A Dimpled Road  
Is more preferred.  
The Belles of Paradise are few –  
Not me – nor you –  
But unsuspected things –  
Mines have no Wings.

c. 1880

1945

1492

“And with what body do they come?” –  
Then they *do* come – Rejoice!  
What Door – What Hour – Run – run – My Soul!  
Illuminate the House!

"Body!" Then real – a Face and Eyes –  
To know that it is them! –  
Paul knew the Man that knew the News –  
He passed through Bethlehem –

c 1880

1894

1493

Could that sweet Darkness where they dwell  
Be once disclosed to us  
The clamor for their loveliness  
Would burst the Loneliness –

?

1894

1494

The competitions of the sky  
Corrodeless ply.

1880?

1931

1495

The Thrill came slowly like a Boon for  
Centuries delayed  
Its fitness growing like the Flood  
In sumptuous solitude –  
The desolation only missed  
While Rapture changed its Dress  
And stood amazed before the Change  
In ravished Holiness –

c. 1880

1945

1496

All that I do  
Is in review  
To his enamored mind  
I know his eye  
Where e'er I ply  
Is pushing close behind

Not any Port  
Nor any flight  
But he doth there preside  
What omnipresence lies in wait  
For her to be a Bride

c. 1880

1945

1497

Facts by our side are never sudden  
Until they look around  
And then they scare us like a spectre  
Protruding from the Ground –

The height of our portentous Neighbor  
We never know –  
Till summoned to his recognition  
By an Adieu –

Adieu for whence  
The sage cannot conjecture  
The bravest die  
As ignorant of their resumption  
As you or I –

c. 1880

1945

1498

Glass was the Street – in tinsel Peril  
Tree and Traveller stood –  
Filled was the Air with merry venture  
Hearty with Boys the Road –

Shot the lithe Sleds like shod vibrations  
Emphasized and gone  
It is the Past's supreme italic  
Makes this Present mean –

c. 1880

1945

1499

How firm Eternity must look  
To crumbling men like me  
The only Adamant Estate  
In all Identity -

How mighty to the insecure  
Thy Physiognomy  
To whom not any Face cohere -  
Unless concealed in thee

c. 1880

1945

1500

It came his turn to beg -  
The begging for the life  
Is different from another Alms  
'Tis Penury in Chief -

I scanned his narrow realm  
I gave him leave to live  
Lest Gratitude revive the snake  
Though smuggled his reprieve

c. 1880

1945

1501

Its little Ether Hood  
Doth sit upon its Head -  
The millinery supple  
Of the sagacious God -

Till when it slip away  
A nothing at a time -  
And Dandelion's Drama  
Expires in a stem.

c. 1880

1945

1502

I saw the wind within her  
I knew it blew for me –  
But she must buy my shelter  
I asked Humility

c. 1880

1955

1503

More than the Grave is closed to me –  
The Grave and that Eternity  
To which the Grave adheres –  
I cling to nowhere till I fall –  
The Crash of nothing, yet of all –  
How similar appears –

c. 1880

1945

1504

Of whom so dear  
The name to hear  
Illumines with a Glow  
As intimate – as fugitive  
As Sunset on the snow –

c. 1880

1945

1505

She could not live upon the Past  
The Present did not know her  
And so she sought this sweet at last  
And nature gently owned her  
The mother that has not a knell  
for either Duke or Robin

c. 1880

1945

1506

Summer is shorter than any one –  
Life is shorter than Summer –  
Seventy Years is spent as quick  
As an only Dollar –

Sorrow – now – is polite – and stays –  
See how well we spurn him –  
Equally to abhor Delight –  
Equally retain him –

c. 1880

1945

1507

The Pile of Years is not so high  
As when you came before  
But it is rising every Day  
From recollection's Floor  
And while by standing on my Heart  
I still can reach the top  
Efface the mountain with your face  
And catch me ere I drop

c. 1880

1945

1508

You cannot make Remembrance grow  
When it has lost its Root –  
The tightening the Soil around  
And setting it upright  
Deceives perhaps the Universe  
But not retrieves the Plant –  
Real Memory, like Cedar Feet  
Is shod with Adamant –  
Nor can you cut Remembrance down  
When it shall once have grown –  
Its Iron Buds will sprout anew  
However overthrown –

c. 1880

1945

Mine Enemy is growing old –  
 I have at last Revenge –  
 The Palate of the Hate departs –  
 If any would avenge

Let him be quick – the Viand flits –  
 It is a faded Meat –  
 Anger as soon as fed is dead –  
 'Tis starving makes it fat –

c. 1881

1891

How happy is the little Stone  
 That rambles in the Road alone,  
 And doesn't care about Careers  
 And Exigencies never fears –  
 Whose Coat of elemental Brown  
 A passing Universe put on,  
 And independent as the Sun  
 Associates or glows alone,  
 Fulfilling absolute Decree  
 In casual simplicity –

c. 1881

1891

My country need not change her gown,  
 Her triple suit as sweet  
 As when 'twas cut at Lexington,  
 And first pronounced "a fit."

Great Britain disapproves, "the stars";  
 Disparagement discreet, –  
 There's something in their attitude  
 That taunts her bayonet.

c. 1881

1891

1512

All things swept sole away  
This – is immensity –

c. 1881

1931

1513

“Go traveling with us!”  
*Her* travels daily be  
By routes of ecstasy  
To Evening’s Sea –

c. 1881

1931

1514

An Antiquated Tree  
Is cherished of the Crow  
Because that Junior Foliage is disrespectful now  
To venerable Birds  
Whose Corporation Coat  
Would decorate Oblivion’s  
Remotest Consulate.

c. 1881

1945

1515

The Things that never can come back, are several –  
Childhood – some forms of Hope – the Dead –  
Though Joys – like Men – may sometimes make a Journey –  
And still abide –  
We do not mourn for Traveler, or Sailor,  
Their Routes are fair –  
But think enlarged of all that they will tell us  
Returning here –  
“Here!” There are typic “Heres” –  
Foretold Locations –  
The Spirit does not stand –

[ 635 ]

Himself – at whatsoever Fathom  
His Native Land –

c. 1881

1945

1516

No Autumn's intercepting Chill  
Appalls this Tropic Breast –  
But African Exuberance  
And Asiatic rest.

c. 1881

1914

1517

How much of Source escapes with thee –  
How chief thy sessions be –  
For thou hast borne a universe  
Entirely away.

1881

1894

1518

Not seeing, still we know –  
Not knowing, guess –  
Not guessing, smile and hide  
And half caress –

And quake – and turn away,  
Seraphic fear –  
Is Eden's innuendo  
"If you dare"?

c. 1881

1894

1519

The Dandelion's pallid tube  
Astonishes the Grass,  
And Winter instantly becomes  
An infinite Alas –

The tube uplifts a signal Bud  
And then a shouting Flower, —  
The Proclamation of the Suns  
That sepulture is o'er.

c. 1881

1894

1520

The stem of a departed Flower  
Has still a silent rank  
The Bearer from an Emerald Court  
Of a Despatch of Pink.

c. 1881

1894

1521

The Butterfly upon the Sky,  
That doesn't know its Name  
And hasn't any tax to pay  
And hasn't any Home  
Is just as high as you and I,  
And higher, I believe,  
So soar away and never sigh  
And that's the way to grieve —

c. 1881

1894

1522

His little Hearse like Figure  
Unto itself a Dirge  
To a delusive Lilac  
The vanity divulge  
Of Industry and Morals  
And every righteous thing  
For the divine Perdition  
Of Idleness and Spring —

c. 1881

1915

1523

We never know we go when we are going –  
We jest and shut the Door –  
Fate – following – behind us bolts it –  
And we accost no more –

c. 1881

1894

1524

A faded Boy – in sallow Clothes  
Who drove a lonesome Cow  
To pastures of Oblivion –  
A statesman's Embryo –

The Boys that whistled are extinct –  
The Cows that fed and thanked  
Remanded to a Ballad's Barn  
Or Clover's Retrospect –

c. 1881

1945

1525\*

He lived the Life of Ambush  
And went the way of Dusk  
And now against his subtle name  
There stands an Asterisk  
As confident of him as we –  
Impregnable we are –  
The whole of Immortality intrenched  
Within a star –

c. 1881

1945

1526

His oriental heresies  
Exhilarate the Bee,  
And filling all the Earth and Air  
With gay apostasy

\* See poem 1616.

Fatigued at last, a Clover plain  
Allures his jaded eye  
That lowly Breast where Butterflies  
Have felt it meet to die –

c. 1881

1945

1527

Oh give it Motion – deck it sweet  
With Artery and Vein –  
Upon its fastened Lips lay words –  
Affiance it again  
To that Pink stranger we call Dust –  
Acquainted more with that  
Than with this horizontal one  
That will not lift its Hat –

c. 1881

1945

1528

The Moon upon her fluent Route  
Defiant of a Road –  
The Star's Etruscan Argument  
Substantiate a God –  
If Aims impel these Astral Ones  
The ones allowed to know  
Know that which makes them as forgot  
As Dawn forgets them – now –

c. 1881

1914

1529

'Tis Seasons since the Dimpled War  
In which we each were Conqueror  
And each of us were slain  
And Centuries 'twill be and more  
Another Massacre before  
So modest and so vain –

Without a Formula we fought  
Each was to each the Pink Redoubt –

c. 1881

1945

1530

A Pang is more conspicuous in Spring  
In contrast with the things that sing  
Not Birds entirely – but Minds –  
Minute Effulgencies and Winds –  
When what they sung for is undone  
Who cares about a Blue Bird's Tune –  
Why, Resurrection had to wait  
Till they had moved a Stone –

c. 1881

1945

1531

Above Oblivion's Tide there is a Pier  
And an effaceless "Few" are lifted there –  
Nay – lift themselves – Fame has no Arms –  
And but one smile – that meagres Balms –

c. 1881

1945

1532

From all the Jails the Boys and Girls  
Ecstatically leap –  
Beloved only Afternoon  
That Prison doesn't keep  
They storm the Earth and stun the Air,  
A Mob of solid Bliss –  
Alas – that Frowns should lie in wait  
For such a Foe as this –

c. 1881

1892

1533

On that specific Pillow  
Our projects flit away –  
The Night's tremendous Morrow  
And whether sleep will stay  
Or usher us – a stranger –  
To situations new  
The effort to comprise it  
Is all the soul can do.

c. 1881

1945

1534

Society for me my misery  
Since Gift of Thee –

c. 1881

1945

1535

The Life that tied too tight escapes  
Will ever after run  
With a prudential look behind  
And spectres of the Rein –  
The Horse that scents the living Grass  
And sees the Pastures smile  
Will be retaken with a shot  
If he is caught at all –

c. 1881

1945

1536

There comes a warning like a spy  
A shorter breath of Day  
A stealing that is not a stealth  
And Summers are away –

c. 1881

1945

[ '641 ]

1537

Candor – my tepid friend –  
Come not to play with me –  
The Myrrhs, and Mochas, of the Mind  
Are its iniquity –

c. 1881

1914

1538

Follow wise Orion  
Till you waste your Eye –  
Dazzlingly decamping  
He is just as high –

c. 1882

1914

1539

Now I lay thee down to Sleep –  
I pray the Lord thy Dust to keep –  
And if thou live before thou wake –  
I pray the Lord thy Soul to make –

c. 1882

1924

1540

As imperceptibly as Grief  
The Summer lapsed away –  
Too imperceptible at last  
To seem like Perfidy –  
A Quietness distilled  
As Twilight long begun,  
Or Nature spending with herself  
Sequestered Afternoon –  
The Dusk drew earlier in –  
The Morning foreign shone –  
A courteous, yet harrowing Grace,  
As Guest, that would be gone –

[ 642 ]

And thus, without a Wing  
Or service of a Keel  
Our Summer made her light escape  
Into the Beautiful.

c. 1865

1891

1541

No matter where the Saints abide,  
They make their Circuit fair  
Behold how great a Firmament  
Accompanies a Star.

1882?

1914

1542

Come show thy Durham Breast  
To her who loves thee best,  
Delicious Robin –  
And if it be not me  
At least within my Tree  
Do the avowing –  
Thy Nuptial so minute  
Perhaps is more astute  
Than vaster suing –  
For so to soar away  
Is our propensity  
The Day ensuing –

c. 1882

1947

1543

Obtaining but our own Extent  
In whatsoever Realm –  
'Twas Christ's own personal Expanse  
That bore him from the Tomb –

c. 1882

1894

1544

Who has not found the Heaven – below –  
Will fail of it above –  
For Angels rent the House next ours,  
Wherever we remove –

c. 1883

1896

1545

The Bible is an antique Volume –  
Written by faded Men  
At the suggestion of Holy Spectres –  
Subjects – Bethlehem –  
Eden – the ancient Homestead –  
Satan – the Brigadier –  
Judas – the Great Defaulter –  
David – the Troubadour –  
Sin – a distinguished Precipice  
Others must resist –  
Boys that “believe” are very lonesome –  
Other Boys are “lost” –  
Had but the Tale a warbling Teller –  
All the Boys would come –  
Orpheus’ Sermon captivated –  
It did not condemn –

c. 1882

1924

1546

Sweet Pirate of the heart,  
Not Pirate of the Sea,  
What wrecketh thee?  
Some spice’s Mutiny –  
Some Attar’s perfidy?  
Confide in me.

c. 1882

1894

1547

Hope is a subtle Glutton –  
He feeds upon the Fair –  
And yet – inspected closely  
What Abstinence is there –

His is the Halcyon Table –  
That never seats but One –  
And whatsoever is consumed  
The same amount remain –

c. 1882

1896

1548

Meeting by Accident,  
We hovered by design –  
As often as a Century  
An error so divine  
Is ratified by Destiny,  
But Destiny is old  
And economical of Bliss  
As Midas is of Gold –

c. 1882

1945

1549

My Wars are laid away in Books –  
I have one Battle more –  
A Foe whom I have never seen  
But oft has scanned me o'er –  
And hesitated me between  
And others at my side,  
But chose the best – Neglecting me – till  
All the rest, have died –  
How sweet if I am not forgot  
By Chums that passed away –  
Since Playmates at threescore and ten  
Are such a scarcity –

c. 1882

1945

1550

The pattern of the sun  
Can fit but him alone  
For sheen must have a Disk  
To be a sun –

c. 1882

1945

1551

Those – dying then,  
Knew where they went –  
They went to God's Right Hand –  
That Hand is amputated now  
And God cannot be found –

The abdication of Belief  
Makes the Behavior small –  
Better an ignis fatuus  
Than no illume at all –

c. 1882

1945

1552

Within thy Grave!  
Oh no, but on some other flight –  
Thou only camest to mankind  
To rend it with Good night –

c. 1882

1945

1553

Bliss is the plaything of the child –  
The secret of the man  
The sacred stealth of Boy and Girl  
Rebuke it if we can

c. 1882

1945

1554

“Go tell it” – What a Message –  
To whom – is specified –  
Not murmur – not endearment –  
But simply – we – obeyed –  
Obeyed – a Lure – a Longing?  
Oh Nature – none of this –  
To Law – said sweet Thermopylae  
I give my dying Kiss –

c. 1882

1945

1555

I groped for him before I knew  
With solemn nameless need  
All other bounty sudden chaff  
For this foreshadowed Food  
Which others taste and spurn and sneer –  
Though I within suppose  
That consecrated it could be  
The only Food that grows

c. 1882

1945

1556

Image of Light, Adieu –  
Thanks for the interview –  
So long – so short –  
Preceptor of the whole –  
Coeval Cardinal –  
Impart – Depart –

c. 1882

1945

1557

Lives he in any other world  
My faith cannot reply

[ 647 ]

Before it was imperative  
"Twas all distinct to me—

c. 1882

1945

1558

Of Death I try to think like this—  
The Well in which they lay us  
Is but the Likeness of the Brook  
That menaced not to slay us,  
But to invite by that Dismay  
Which is the Zest of sweetness  
To the same Flower Hesperian,  
Decoying but to greet us—

I do remember when a Child  
With bolder Playmates straying  
To where a Brook that seemed a Sea  
Withheld us by its roaring  
From just a Purple Flower beyond  
Until constrained to clutch it  
If Doom itself were the result,  
The boldest leaped, and clutched it—

c. 1882

1945

1559

Tried always and Condemned by thee  
Permit me this reprieve  
That dying I may earn the look  
For which I cease to live—

c. 1882

1945

1560

To be forgot by thee  
Surpasses Memory  
Of other minds

[ 648 ]

The Heart cannot forget  
Unless it contemplate  
What it declines  
I was regarded then  
Raised from oblivion  
A single time  
To be remembered what –  
Worthy to be forgot  
Is my renown

c. 1883

1945

1561

No Brigadier throughout the Year  
So civic as the Jay –  
A Neighbor and a Warrior too  
With shrill felicity  
Pursuing Winds that censure us  
A February Day,  
The Brother of the Universe  
Was never blown away –  
The Snow and he are intimate –  
I've often seen them play  
When Heaven looked upon us all  
With such severity  
I felt apology were due  
To an insulted sky  
Whose pompous frown was Nutriment  
To their Temerity –  
The Pillow of this daring Head  
Is pungent Evergreens –  
His Larder – terse and Militant –  
Unknown – refreshing things –  
His Character – a Tonic –  
His Future – a Dispute –  
Unfair an Immortality  
That leaves this Neighbor out –

c. 1883

1891

1562

Her Losses make our Gains ashamed –  
She bore Life's empty Pack  
As gallantly as if the East  
Were swinging at her Back.  
Life's empty Pack is heaviest,  
As every Porter knows –  
In vain to punish Honey –  
It only sweeter grows.

c. 1883

1894

1563

By homely gift and hindered Words  
The human heart is told  
Of Nothing –  
“Nothing” is the force  
That renovates the World –

c. 1883

1955

1564

Pass to thy Rendezvous of Light,  
Pangless except for us –  
Who slowly ford the Mystery  
Which thou hast leaped across!

c. 1883

1924

1565

Some Arrows slay but whom they strike –  
But this slew all *but* him –  
Who so appared his Escape –  
Too trackless for a Tomb –

c. 1883

1932

1566

Climbing to reach the costly Hearts  
To which he gave the worth,  
He broke them, fearing punishment  
He ran away from Earth –

c. 1883

1931

1567

The Heart has many Doors –  
I can but knock –  
For any sweet “Come in”  
Impelled to hark –  
Not saddened by repulse,  
Repast to me  
That somewhere, there exists,  
Supremacy –

c. 1883

1955

1568

To see her is a Picture –  
To hear her is a Tune –  
To know her an Intemperance  
As innocent as June –  
To know her not – Affliction –  
To own her for a Friend  
A warmth as near as if the Sun  
Were shining in your Hand.

c 1883

1945

1569

The Clock strikes one that just struck two –  
Some schism in the Sum –  
A Vagabond for Genesis  
Has wrecked the Pendulum –

c. 1883

1894

1570

Forever honored be the Tree  
Whose Apple Winterworn  
Enticed to Breakfast from the Sky  
Two Gabriels Yestermorn.

They registered in Nature's Book  
As Robins – Sire and Son –  
But Angels have that modest way  
To screen them from Renown

c. 1883

1914

1571

How slow the Wind –  
how slow the sea –  
how late their Feathers be!

c. 1883

1894

1572

We wear our sober Dresses when we die,  
But Summer, frilled as for a Holiday  
Adjourns her sigh –

c. 1883

1894

1573

To the bright east she flies,  
Brothers of Paradise  
Remit her home,  
Without a change of wings,  
Or Love's convenient things,  
Enticed to come.

Fashioning what she is,  
Fathoming what she was,  
We deem we dream –

[ 652 ]

And that dissolves the days  
Through which existence strays  
Homeless at home.

c. 1883

1894

1574

No ladder needs the bird but skies  
To situate its wings,  
Nor any leader's grim baton  
Arraigns it as it sings.  
The implements of bliss are few –  
As Jesus says of *Him*,  
"Come unto me" the moiety  
That wafts the cherubim.

1883?

1894

1575

The Bat is dun, with wrinkled Wings –  
Like fallow Article –  
And not a song pervade his Lips –  
Or none perceptible.

His small Umbrella quaintly halved  
Describing in the Air  
An Arc alike inscrutable  
Elate Philosopher.

Deputed from what Firmament –  
Of what Astute Abode –  
Empowered with what Malignity  
Auspiciously withheld –

To his adroit Creator  
Ascribe no less the praise –  
Beneficent, believe me,  
His Eccentricities –

c. 1876

1896

1576

The Spirit lasts – but in what mode –  
Below, the Body speaks,  
But as the Spirit furnishes –  
Apart, it never talks –  
The Music in the Violin  
Does not emerge alone  
But Arm in Arm with Touch, yet Touch  
Alone – is not a Tune –  
The Spirit lurks within the Flesh  
Like Tides within the Sea  
That make the Water live, estranged  
What would the Either be?  
Does that know – now – or does it cease –  
That which to this is done,  
Resuming at a mutual date  
With every future one?  
Instinct pursues the Adamant,  
Exacting this Reply –  
Adversity if it may be, or  
Wild Prosperity,  
The Rumor's Gate was shut so tight  
Before my Mind was sown,  
Not even a Prognostic's Push  
Could make a Dent thereon –

c. 1883

1894

1577

Morning is due to all –  
To some – the Night –  
To an imperial few –  
The Auroral light.

c. 1883

1931

1578

Blossoms will run away,  
Cakes reign but a Day,

[ 654 ]

But Memory like Melody  
Is pink Eternally.

c. 1883

1939

1579

It would not know if it were spurned,  
This gallant little flower –  
How therefore safe to be a flower  
If one would tamper there.

To enter, it would not aspire –  
But may it not despair  
That it is not a Cavalier,  
To dare and perish there?

c. 1882

1945

1580

We shun it ere it comes,  
Afraid of Joy,  
Then sue it to delay  
And lest it fly,  
Beguile it more and more –  
May not this be  
Old Suitor Heaven,  
Like our dismay at thee?

c. 1882

1894

1581

The farthest Thunder that I heard  
Was nearer than the Sky  
And rumbles still, though torrid Noons  
Have lain their missiles by –  
The Lightning that preceded it  
Struck no one but myself –  
But I would not exchange the Bolt  
For all the rest of Life –

Indebtedness to Oxygen  
The Happy may repay,  
But not the obligation  
To Electricity –  
It founds the Homes and decks the Days  
And every clamor bright  
Is but the gleam concomitant  
Of that waylaying Light –  
The Thought is quiet as a Flake –  
A Crash without a Sound,  
How Life's reverberation  
Its Explanation found –

c. 1883

1932

1582

Where Roses would not dare to go,  
What Heart would risk the way –  
And so I send my Crimson Scouts  
To sound the Enemy –

c. 1883

1945

1583

Witchcraft was hung, in History,  
But History and I  
Find all the Witchcraft that we need  
Around us, every Day –

c. 1883

1945

1584

Expanse cannot be lost –  
Not Joy, but a Decree  
Is Deity –  
His Scene, Infinity –  
Whose rumor's Gate was shut so tight  
Before my Beam was sown,

Not even a Prognostic's push  
Could make a Dent thereon –

The World that thou hast opened  
Shuts for thee,  
But not alone,  
We all have followed thee –  
Escape more slowly  
To thy Tracts of Sheen –  
The Tent is listening,  
But the Troops are gone!

c. 1883

1955

1585

The Bud her punctual music brings  
And lays it in its place –  
Its place is in the Human Heart  
And in the Heavenly Grace –  
What respite from her thrilling toil  
Did Beauty ever take –  
But Work might be electric Rest  
To those that Magic make –

c. 1883

1955

1586

To her derided Home  
A Weed of Summer came –  
She did not know her station low  
Nor Ignominy's Name –  
Bestowed a summer long  
Upon a fameless flower –  
Then swept as lightly from disdain  
As Lady from her Bower –  
  
Of Bliss the Codes are few –  
As Jesus cites of Him –

[ 657 ]

"Come unto me" the moiety  
That wafts the Seraphim –

c. 1883

1945

1587

He ate and drank the precious Words –  
His Spirit grew robust –  
He knew no more that he was poor,  
Nor that his frame was Dust –

He danced along the dingy Days  
And this Bequest of Wings  
Was but a Book – What Liberty  
A loosened spirit brings –

c. 1883

1890

1588

This Me – that walks and works – must die,  
Some fair or stormy Day,  
Adversity if it may be  
Or wild prosperity  
The Rumor's Gate was shut so tight  
Before my mind was born  
Not even a Prognostic's push  
Can make a Dent thereon –

c. 1883

1945

1589

Cosmopolites without a plea  
Alight in every Land  
The compliments of Paradise  
From those within my Hand  
Their dappled Journey to themselves  
A compensation fair

Knock and it shall be opened  
Is their Theology

c. 1883

1945

1590

Not at Home to Callers  
Says the Naked Tree –  
Bonnet due in April –  
Wishing you Good Day –

c. 1883

1924

1591

The Bobolink is gone –  
The Rowdy of the Meadow –  
And no one swaggers now but me –  
The Presbyterian Birds  
Can now resume the Meeting  
He boldly interrupted that overflowing Day  
When supplicating mercy  
In a portentous way  
He swung upon the Decalogue  
And shouted let us pray –

c. 1883

1945

1592

The Lassitudes of Contemplation  
Beget a force  
They are the spirit's still vacation  
That him refresh –  
The Dreams consolidate in action –  
What mettle fair

c. 1883

1945

1593

There came a Wind like a Bugle –  
It quivered through the Grass

[ 659 ]

And a Green Chill upon the Heat  
So ominous did pass  
We barred the Windows and the Doors  
As from an Emerald Ghost –  
The Doom's electric Moccasin  
That very instant passed –  
On a strange Mob of panting Trees  
And Fences fled away  
And Rivers where the Houses ran  
Those looked that lived – that Day –  
The Bell within the steeple wild  
The flying tidings told –  
How much can come  
And much can go,  
And yet abide the World!

c. 1883

1891

1594

Immured in Heaven!  
What a Cell!  
Let every Bondage be,  
Thou sweetest of the Universe,  
Like that which ravished thee!

c. 1883

1914

1595

Declaiming Waters none may dread –  
But Waters that are still  
Are so for that most fatal cause  
In Nature – they are full –

c. 1884

1932

1596

Few, yet enough,  
Enough is One –  
To that ethereal throng

Have not each one of us the right  
To stealthily belong?

c. 1884

1896

1597

'Tis not the swaying frame we miss,  
It is the steadfast Heart,  
That had it beat a thousand years,  
With Love alone had bent,  
Its fervor the electric Oar,  
That bore it through the Tomb,  
Ourselves, denied the privilege,  
Consolelessly presume –

c 1884

1932

1598

Who is it seeks my Pillow Nights –  
With plain inspecting face –  
“Did you” or “Did you not,” to ask –  
'Tis “Conscience” – Childhood’s Nurse –  
With Martial Hand she strokes the Hair  
Upon my wincing Head –  
“All” Rogues “shall have their part in” what –  
The Phosphorus of God –

c. 1884

1914

1599

Though the great Waters sleep,  
That they are still the Deep,  
We cannot doubt –  
No vacillating God  
Ignited this Abode  
To put it out –

c. 1884

1894

1600

Upon his Saddle sprung a Bird  
And crossed a thousand Trees  
Before a Fence without a Fare  
His Fantasy did please  
And then he lifted up his Throat  
And squandered such a Note  
A Universe that overheard  
Is stricken by it yet –

c. 1884

1947

1601

Of God we ask one favor,  
That we may be forgiven –  
For what, he is presumed to know –  
The Crime, from us, is hidden –  
Immured the whole of Life  
Within a magic Prison  
We reprimand the Happiness  
That too competes with Heaven.

c. 1884

1894

1602

Pursuing you in your transitions,  
In other Motes –  
Of other Myths  
Your requisition be.  
The Prism never held the Hues,  
It only heard them play –

c. 1884

1931

1603

The going from a world we know  
To one a wonder still  
Is like the child's adversity  
Whose vista is a hill,

[ 662 ]

Behind the hill is sorcery  
And everything unknown,  
But will the secret compensate  
For climbing it alone?

c. 1884

1894

1604

We send the Wave to find the Wave --  
An Errand so divine,  
The Messenger enamored too,  
Forgetting to return,  
We make the wise distinction still,  
Soever made in vain,  
The sagest time to dam the sea is when the sea is gone --

c. 1884

1894

1605

Each that we lose takes part of us;  
A crescent still abides,  
Which like the moon, some turbid night,  
Is summoned by the tides.

c. 1884

1894

1606

Quite empty, quite at rest,  
The Robin locks her Nest, and tries her Wings.  
She does not know a Route  
But puts her Craft about  
For *rumored* Springs --  
She does not ask for Noon --  
She does not ask for Boon,  
Crumbless and homeless, of but one request --  
The Birds she lost --

c. 1884

1951

1607

Within that little Hive  
Such Hints of Honey lay  
As made Reality a Dream  
And Dreams, Reality—

c. 1884

1951

1608

The ecstasy to guess  
Were a receipted bliss  
If grace could talk.

1884?

1894

1609

Sunset that screens, reveals—  
Enhancing what we see  
By menaces of Amethyst  
And Moats of Mystery.

c. 1884

1945

1610

Morning that comes but once,  
Considers coming twice—  
Two Dawns upon a single Morn,  
Make Life a sudden price.

c. 1884

1945

1611

Their dappled importunity  
Disparage or dismiss—  
The Obloquies of Etiquette  
Are obsolete to Bliss—

c. 1884

1945

## 1612

The Auctioneer of Parting  
 His "Going, going, gone"  
 Shouts even from the Crucifix,  
 And brings his Hammer down –  
 He only sells the Wilderness,  
 The prices of Despair  
 Range from a single human Heart  
 To Two – not any more –

c. 1884

1945

## 1613

Not Sickness stains the Brave,  
 Nor any Dart,  
 Nor Doubt of Scene to come,  
 But an adjourning Heart –

c. 1884

1894

## 1614

Parting with Thee reluctantly,  
 That we have never met,  
 A Heart sometimes a Foreigner,  
 Remembers it forgot –

c. 1884

1931

## 1615

Oh what a Grace is this,  
 What Majesties of Peace,  
 That having breathed  
 The fine – ensuing Right  
 Without Diminuet Proceed!

c. 1884

1931

1616\*

Who abdicated Ambush  
And went the way of Dusk,  
And now against his subtle Name  
There stands an Asterisk  
As confident of him as we –  
Impregnable we are –  
The whole of Immortality  
Secreted in a Star.

c. 1884

1894

1617

To try to speak, and miss the way  
And ask it of the Tears,  
Is Gratitude's sweet poverty,  
The Tatters that he wears –  
A better Coat if he possessed  
Would help him to conceal,  
Not subjugate, the Mutineer  
Whose title is "the Soul."

c 1884

1894

1618

There are two Mays  
And then a Must  
And after that a Shall.  
How infinite the compromise  
That indicates I will!

c. 1884

1955

1619

Not knowing when the Dawn will come,  
I open every Door,

\* See poem 1525.

Or has it Feathers, like a Bird,  
Or Billows, like a Shore –

c. 1884

1896

1620

Circumference thou Bride of Awe  
Possessing thou shalt be  
Possessed by every hallowed Knight  
That dares to covet thee

c. 1884

1932

1621

A Flower will not trouble her, it has so small a Foot,  
And yet if you compare the Lasts,  
Hers is the smallest Boot –

c. 1884

1955

1622

A Sloop of Amber slips away  
Upon an Ether Sea,  
And wrecks in Peace a Purple Tar,  
The Son of Ecstasy –

c. 1884

1896

1623

A World made penniless by that departure  
Of minor fabrics begs  
But sustenance is of the spirit  
The Gods but Dregs

c. 1885

1945

1624

Apparently with no surprise  
To any happy Flower

[ 667 ]

The Frost beheads it at its play –  
In accidental power –  
The blonde Assassin passes on –  
The Sun proceeds unmoved  
To measure off another Day  
For an Approving God.

c. 1884

1890

1625

Back from the cordial Grave I drag thee  
He shall not take thy Hand  
Nor put his spacious arm around thee  
That none can understand

c. 1884

1945

1626

No Life can pompless pass away –  
The lowliest career  
To the same Pageant wends its way  
As that exalted here –

How cordial is the mystery!  
The hospitable Pall  
A “this way” beckons spaciously –  
A Miracle for all!

c. 1884

1891

1627

The pedigree of Honey  
Does not concern the Bee,  
Nor lineage of Ecstasy  
Delay the Butterfly  
On spangled journeys to the peak  
Of some perceiveless thing –

The right of way to Tripoli  
A more essential thing.

*version I*  
c. 1884

1945

The Pedigree of Honey  
Does not concern the Bee –  
A Clover, any time, to him,  
Is Aristocracy –

*version II*  
c. 1884

1890

1628

A Drunkard cannot meet a Cork  
Without a Revery –  
And so encountering a Fly  
This January Day  
Jamaicas of Remembrance stir  
That send me reeling in –  
The moderate drinker of Delight  
Does not deserve the spring –  
Of juleps, part are in the Jug  
And more are in the joy –  
Your connoisseur in Liquors  
Consults the Bumble Bee –

c. 1884

1945

1629

Arrows enamored of his Heart –  
Forgot to rankle there  
And Venoms he mistook for Balms  
disdained to rankle there –

c. 1884

1945

1630

As from the earth the light Balloon  
Asks nothing but release –

[ 669 ]

Ascension that for which it was,  
Its soaring Residence.  
The spirit looks upon the Dust  
That fastened it so long  
With indignation,  
As a Bird  
Defrauded of its song.

c. 1884

1945

1631

Oh Future! thou secreted peace  
Or subterranean woe –  
Is there no wandering route of grace  
That leads away from thee –  
No circuit sage of all the course  
Descried by cunning Men  
To balk thee of thy sacred Prey –  
Advancing to thy Den –

c. 1884

1945

1632

So give me back to Death –  
The Death I never feared  
Except that it deprived of thee –  
And now, by Life deprived,  
In my own Grave I breathe  
And estimate its size –  
Its size is all that Hell can guess –  
And all that Heaven was –

c. 1884

1945

1633

Still own thee – still thou art  
What surgeons call alive –  
Though slipping – slipping I perceive  
To thy reportless Grave –

[ 670 ]

Which question shall I clutch –  
What answer wrest from thee  
Before thou dost exude away  
In the recallless sea?

c. 1884

1945

1634

Talk not to me of Summer Trees  
The foliage of the mind  
A Tabernacle is for Birds  
Of no corporeal kind  
And winds do go that way at noon  
To their Ethereal Homes  
Whose Bugles call the least of us  
To undepicted Realms

c. 1884

1945

1635

The Jay his Castanet has struck  
Put on your muff for Winter  
The Tippet that ignores his voice  
Is impudent to nature

Of Swarthy Days he is the close  
His Lotus is a chestnut  
The Cricket drops a sable line  
No more from yours at present

c. 1884

1945

1636

The Sun in reining to the West  
Makes not as much of sound  
As Cart of man in road below  
Adroitly turning round  
That Whiffletree of Amethyst

c. 1884

1945

1637

Is it too late to touch you, Dear?  
We this moment knew –  
Love Marine and Love terrene –  
Love celestial too –

c. 1885

1894

1638

Go thy great way!  
The Stars thou meetst  
Are even as Thyself –  
For what are Stars but Asterisks  
To point a human Life?

c. 1885

1894

1639

A Letter is a joy of Earth –  
It is denied the Gods –

c 1885

1931

1640

Take all away from me, but leave me Ecstasy,  
And I am richer then than all my Fellow Men –  
Ill it becometh me to dwell so wealthily  
When at my very Door are those possessing more,  
In abject poverty –

c. 1885

1931

1641

Betrothed to Righteousness might be  
An Ecstasy discreet  
But Nature relishes the Pinks  
Which she was taught to eat –

c. 1885

1945

1642

“Red Sea,” indeed! Talk not to me  
Of purple Pharaoh –  
I have a Navy in the West  
Would pierce his Columns thro’ –  
Guileless, yet of such Glory fine  
That all along the Line  
Is it, or is it not, Marine –  
Is it, or not, divine –  
The Eye inquires with a sigh  
That Earth sh’d be so big –  
What Exultation in the Woe –  
What Wine in the fatigue!

c. 1885

1945

1643

Extol thee – could I? Then I will  
By saying nothing new –  
But just the truest truth  
That thou art heavenly.  
  
Perceiving thee is evidence  
That we are of the sky  
Partaking thee a guaranty  
Of immortality

c. 1885

1945

1644

Some one prepared this mighty show  
To which without a Ticket go  
The nations and the Days –  
  
Displayed before the simplest Door  
That all may witness it and more,  
The pomp of summer Days.

c. 1885

1945

1645

The Ditch is dear to the Drunken man  
For is it not his Bed –  
His Advocate – his Edifice?  
How safe his fallen Head  
In her disheveled Sanctity –  
Above him is the sky –  
Oblivion bending over him  
And Honor leagues away.

c. 1885

1945

1646

Why should we hurry – why indeed?  
When every way we fly  
We are molested equally  
By immortality.  
No respite from the inference  
That this which is begun,  
Though where its labors lie  
A bland uncertainty  
Besets the sight  
This mighty night –

c. 1885

1945

1647

Of Glory not a Beam is left  
But her Eternal House –  
The Asterisk is for the Dead,  
The Living, for the Stars –

c. 1886

1931

1648

The immortality she gave  
We borrowed at her Grave –

[ 674 ]

For just one Plaudit famishing,  
The Might of Human love –

c. 1886

1931

1649

A Cap of Lead across the sky  
Was tight and surly drawn  
We could not find the mighty Face  
The Figure was withdrawn –

A Chill came up as from a shaft  
Our noon became a well  
A Thunder storm combines the charms  
Of Winter and of Hell.

?

1914

1650

A lane of Yellow led the eye  
Unto a Purple Wood  
Whose soft inhabitants to be  
Surpasses solitude  
If Bird the silence contradict  
Or flower presume to show  
In that low summer of the West  
Impossible to know –

?

1955

1651

A Word made Flesh is seldom  
And tremblingly partook  
Nor then perhaps reported  
But have I not mistook  
Each one of us has tasted  
With ecstasies of stealth  
The very food debated  
To our specific strength –

[ 675 ]

A Word that breathes distinctly  
Has not the power to die  
Cohesive as the Spirit  
It may expire if He –  
“Made Flesh and dwelt among us”  
Could condescension be  
Like this consent of Language  
This loved Philology.

?

1955

1652

Advance is Life's condition  
The Grave but a Relay  
Supposed to be a terminus  
That makes it hated so –

The Tunnel is not lighted  
Existence with a wall  
Is better we consider  
Than not exist at all –

?

1955

1653

As we pass Houses musing slow  
If they be occupied  
So minds pass minds  
If they be occupied

?

1955

1654

Beauty crowds me till I die  
Beauty mercy have on me  
But if I expire today  
Let it be in sight of thee –

?

1914

1655

Conferring with myself  
My stranger disappeared  
Though first upon a berry fat  
Miraculously fared  
How paltry looked my cares  
My practise how absurd  
Superfluous my whole career  
Beside this travelling Bird

?

1955

1656

Down Time's quaint stream  
Without an oar  
We are enforced to sail  
Our Port a secret  
Our Perchance a Gale  
What Skipper would  
Incur the Risk  
What Buccaneer would ride  
Without a surety from the Wind  
Or schedule of the Tide—

?

1955

1657

Eden is that old-fashioned House  
We dwell in every day  
Without suspecting our abode  
Until we drive away.  
  
How fair on looking back, the Day  
We sauntered from the Door—  
Unconscious our returning,  
But discover it no more.

?

1914

1658

Endanger it, and the Demand  
Of tickets for a sigh  
Amazes the Humility  
Of Credibility –

Recover it to Nature  
And that dejected Fleet  
Find Consternation's Carnival  
Divested of its Meat.

?

1955

1659

Fame is a fickle food  
Upon a shifting plate  
Whose table once a  
Guest but not  
The second time is set.

Whose crumbs the crows inspect  
And with ironic caw  
Flap past it to the  
Farmer's Corn –  
Men eat of it and die.

?

1914

1660

Glory is that bright tragic thing  
That for an instant  
Means Dominion –  
Warms some poor name  
That never felt the Sun,  
Gently replacing  
In oblivion –

?

1914

1661

Guest am I to have  
Light my northern room  
Why to cordiality so averse to come  
Other friends adjourn  
Other bonds decay  
Why avoid so narrowly  
My fidelity—

?

1955

1662

He went by sleep that drowsy route  
To the surmising Inn —  
At day break to begin his race  
Or ever to remain —

?

1955

1663

His mind of man, a secret makes  
I meet him with a start  
He carries a circumference  
In which I have no part—  
  
Or even if I deem I do  
He otherwise may know  
Impregnable to inquest  
However neighborly—

?

1914

1664

I did not reach Thee  
But my feet slip nearer every day  
Three Rivers and a Hill to cross  
One Desert and a Sea  
I shall not count the journey one  
When I am telling thee.

[ 679 ]

Two deserts, but the Year is cold  
So that will help the sand  
One desert crossed –  
The second one  
Will feel as cool as land  
Sahara is too little price  
To pay for thy Right hand.

The Sea comes last – Step merry, feet,  
So short we have to go –  
To play together we are prone,  
But we must labor now,  
The last shall be the lightest load  
That we have had to draw.

The Sun goes crooked –  
That is Night  
Before he makes the bend  
We must have passed the Middle Sea –  
Almost we wish the End  
Were further off –  
Too great it seems  
So near the Whole to stand.

We step like Plush,  
We stand like snow,  
The waters murmur new.  
Three rivers and the Hill are passed –  
Two deserts and the sea!  
Now Death usurps my Premium  
And gets the look at Thee.

?

1914

1665

I know of people in the Grave  
Who would be very glad  
To know the news I know tonight  
If they the chance had had.

[ 680 ]

'Tis this expands the least event  
And swells the scantest deed –  
My right to walk upon the Earth  
If they this moment had.

?

1955

1666

I see thee clearer for the Grave  
That took thy face between  
No Mirror could illumine thee  
Like that impassive stone –

I know thee better for the Act  
That made thee first unknown  
The stature of the empty nest  
Attests the Bird that's gone.

?

1955

1667

I watched her face to see which way  
She took the awful news –  
Whether she died before she heard  
Or in protracted bruise  
Remained a few slow years with us –  
Each heavier than the last –  
A further afternoon to fail,  
As Flower at fall of Frost.

?

1914

1668

If I could tell how glad I was  
I should not be so glad –  
But when I cannot make the Force,  
Nor mould it into Word,  
I know it is a sign  
That new Dilemma be

From mathematics further off  
Than from Eternity.

?

1914

1669

In snow thou comest –  
Thou shalt go with the resuming ground,  
The sweet derision of the crow,  
And Glee's advancing sound.

In fear thou comest –  
Thou shalt go at such a gait of joy  
That man anew embark to live  
Upon the depth of thee.

?

1955

1670

In Winter in my Room  
I came upon a Worm –  
Pink, lank and warm –  
But as he was a worm  
And worms presume  
Not quite with him at home –  
Secured him by a string  
To something neighboring  
And went along.

A Trifle afterward  
A thing occurred  
I'd not believe it if I heard  
But state with creeping blood –  
A snake with mottles rare  
Surveyed my chamber floor  
In feature as the worm before  
But ringed with power –

The very string with which  
I tied him – too  
When he was mean and new  
That string was there –

I shrank – “How fair you are”!  
Propitiation’s claw –  
“Afraid,” he hissed  
“Of me”?  
“No cordiality” –  
He fathomed me –  
Then to a Rhythm *Slim*  
Secreted in his Form  
As Patterns swim  
Projected him.

That time I flew  
Both eyes his way  
Lest he pursue  
Nor ever ceased to run  
Till in a distant Town  
Towns on from mine  
I set me down  
This was a dream.

?

1914

1671

Judgment is justest  
When the Judged,  
His action laid away,  
Divested is of every Disk  
But his sincerity.

Honor is then the safest hue  
In a posthumous Sun –  
Not any color will endure  
That scrutiny can burn.

?

1955

1672

Lightly stepped a yellow star  
To its lofty place –  
Loosed the Moon her silver hat  
From her lustral Face –  
All of Evening softly lit  
As an Astral Hall –  
Father, I observed to Heaven,  
You are punctual.

?

1914

1673

Nature can do no more  
She has fulfilled her Dyes  
Whatever Flower fail to come  
Of other Summer days  
Her crescent reimburse  
If other Summers be  
Nature's imposing negative  
Nulls opportunity –

?

1955

1674

Not any sunny tone  
From any fervent zone  
Find entrance there –  
Better a grave of Balm  
Toward human nature's home –  
And Robins near –  
Than a stupendous Tomb  
Proclaiming to the Gloom  
How dead we are –

?

1914

1675

Of this is Day composed  
A morning and a noon  
A Revelry unspeakable  
And then a gay unknown  
Whose Poms allure and spurn  
And dower and deprive  
And penury for Glory  
Remedilessly leave.

?

1914

1676

Of Yellow was the outer Sky  
In Yellower Yellow hewn  
Till Saffron in Vermilion slid  
Whose seam could not be shewn.

?

1955

1677

On my volcano grows the Grass  
A meditative spot—  
An acre for a Bird to choose  
Would be the General thought—  
How red the Fire rocks below—  
How insecure the sod  
Did I disclose  
Would populate with awe my solitude.

?

1914

1678

Peril as a Possession  
'Tis Good to bear  
Danger disintegrates Satiety  
There's Basis there—  
Begets an awe

[ 685 ]

That searches Human Nature's creases  
As clean as Fire.

?

1914

1679

Rather arid delight  
If Contentment accrue  
Make an abstemious Ecstasy  
Not so good as joy –

But Rapture's Expense  
Must not be incurred  
With a tomorrow knocking  
And the Rent unpaid –

?

1955

1680

Sometimes with the Heart  
Seldom with the Soul  
Scarcer once with the Might  
Few – love at all.

?

1915

1681

Speech is one symptom of Affection  
And Silence one –  
The perfectest communication  
Is heard of none –

Exists and its indorsement  
Is had within –  
Behold, said the Apostle,  
Yet had not seen!

?

1914

1682

Summer begins to have the look  
Peruser of enchanting Book  
Reluctantly but sure perceives  
A gain upon the backward leaves –

Autumn begins to be inferred  
By millinery of the cloud  
Or deeper color in the shawl  
That wraps the everlasting hill

The eye begins its avarice  
A meditation chastens speech  
Some Dyer of a distant tree  
Resumes his gaudy industry.

Conclusion is the course of All  
At *most* to be perennial  
And then elude stability  
Recalls to immortality.

?

1914

1683

That she forgot me was the least  
I felt it second pain  
That I was worthy to forget  
Was most I thought upon.

Faithful was all that I could boast  
But Constancy became  
To her, by her innominate,  
A something like a shame.

?

1914

1684

The Blunder is in estimate.  
Eternity is there  
We say, as of a Station –  
Meanwhile he is so near

[ 687 ]

He joins me in my Ramble –  
Divides abode with me –  
No Friend have I that so persists  
As this Eternity.

?

1914

1685

The butterfly obtains  
But little sympathy  
Though favorably mentioned  
In Entomology –

Because he travels freely  
And wears a proper coat  
The circumspect are certain  
That he is dissolute –

Had he the homely scutcheon  
Of modest Industry  
'Twere fitter certifying  
For Immortality –

?

1914

1686

The event was directly behind Him  
Yet He did not guess  
Fitted itself to Himself like a Robe  
Relished His ignorance.  
Motioned itself to drill  
Loaded and Levelled  
And let His Flesh  
Centuries from His soul.

?

1955

1687

The gleam of an heroic Act  
Such strange illumination

[ 688 ]

The Possible's slow fuse is lit  
By the Imagination.

?

1914

1688

The Hills erect their Purple Heads  
The Rivers lean to see  
Yet Man has not of all the Throng  
A Curiosity.

?

1914

1689

The look of thee, what is it like  
Hast thou a hand or Foot  
Or Mansion of Identity  
And what is thy Pursuit?  
  
Thy fellows are they realms or Themes  
Hast thou Delight or Fear  
Or Longing – and is that for us  
Or values more severe?  
  
Let change transfuse all other Traits  
Enact all other Blame  
But deign this least certificate –  
That thou shalt be the same.

?

1914

1690

The ones that disappeared are back  
The Phoebe and the Crow  
Precisely as in March is heard  
The curtness of the Jay –  
Be this an Autumn or a Spring  
My wisdom loses way

[ 689 ]

One side of me the nuts are ripe  
The other side is May.

?

1914

1691

The overtakelessness of those  
Who have accomplished Death  
Majestic is to me beyond  
The majesties of Earth.

The soul her "Not at Home"  
Inscribes upon the flesh –  
And takes her fair aerial gait  
Beyond the hope of touch.

?

1914

1692

The right to perish might be thought  
An undisputed right –  
Attempt it, and the Universe  
Upon the opposite  
Will concentrate its officers –  
You cannot even die  
But nature and mankind must pause  
To pay you scrutiny.

?

1914

1693

The Sun retired to a cloud  
A Woman's shawl as big –  
And then he sulked in mercury  
Upon a scarlet log –  
The drops on Nature's forehead stood  
Home flew the loaded bees –  
The South unrolled a purple fan  
And handed to the trees.

?

1955

1694

The wind drew off  
Like hungry dogs  
Defeated of a bone –  
Through fissures in  
Volcanic cloud  
The yellow lightning shone –  
The trees held up  
Their mangled limbs  
Like animals in pain –  
When Nature falls upon herself  
Beware an Austrian.

?

1914

1695

There is a solitude of space  
A solitude of sea  
A solitude of death, but these  
Society shall be  
Compared with that profounder site  
That polar privacy  
A soul admitted to itself –  
Finite infinity.

?

1914

1696

These are the days that Reindeer love  
And pranks the Northern star –  
This is the Sun's objective,  
And Finland of the Year.

?

1914

1697

They talk as slow as Legends grow  
No mushroom is their mind  
But foliage of sterility  
Too stolid for the wind –

[ 691 ]

They laugh as wise as Plots of Wit  
Predestined to unfold  
The point with bland prevision  
Portentously untold.

?

1955

1698

'Tis easier to pity those when dead  
That which pity previous  
Would have saved –  
A Tragedy enacted  
Secures Applause  
That Tragedy enacting  
Too seldom does.

?

1955

1699

To do a magnanimous thing  
And take oneself by surprise  
If oneself is not in the habit of him  
Is precisely the finest of Joys –  
Not to do a magnanimous thing  
Notwithstanding it never be known  
Notwithstanding it cost us existence once  
Is Rapture herself spurn –

?

1955

1700

To tell the Beauty would decrease  
To state the Spell demean –  
There is a syllable-less Sea  
Of which it is the sign –  
My will endeavors for its word  
And fails, but entertains

A Rapture as of Legacies –  
Of introspective Mines –

?

1914

1701

To their apartment deep  
No ribaldry may creep  
Untumbled this abode  
By any man but God –

?

1914

1702

Today or this noon  
She dwelt so close  
I almost touched her –  
Tonight she lies  
Past neighborhood  
And bough and steeple,  
Now past surmise.

?

1914

1703

'Twas comfort in her Dying Room  
To hear the living Clock –  
A short relief to have the wind  
Walk boldly up and knock –  
Diversion from the Dying Theme  
To hear the children play –  
But wrong the more  
That these could live  
And this of ours must *die*.

?

1914

1704

Unto a broken heart  
No other one may go

Without the high prerogative  
Itself hath suffered too.

?

1955

1705

Volcanoes be in Sicily  
And South America  
I judge from my Geography -  
Volcanos nearer here  
A Lava step at any time  
Am I inclined to climb -  
A Crater I may contemplate  
Vesuvius at Home.

?

1914

1706

When we have ceased to care  
The Gift is given  
For which we gave the Earth  
And mortgaged Heaven  
But so declined in worth  
'Tis ignominy now  
To look upon -

?

1915

1707

Winter under cultivation  
Is as arable as Spring.

?

1955

1708

Witchcraft has not a Pedigree  
'Tis early as our Breath  
And mourners meet it going out  
The moment of our death -

?

1914

1709

With sweetness unabated  
Informed the hour had come  
With no remiss of triumph  
The autumn started home

Her home to be with Nature  
As competition done  
By influential kinsmen  
Invited to return –

In supplements of Purple  
An adequate repast  
In heavenly reviewing  
Her residue be past –

?

1955

1710

A curious Cloud surprised the Sky,  
'T was like a sheet with Horns;  
The sheet was Blue –  
The Antlers Gray –  
It almost touched the Lawns.

So low it leaned – then statelier drew –  
And trailed like robes away,  
A Queen adown a satin aisle  
Had not the majesty.

?

1945

1711

A face devoid of love or grace,  
A hateful, hard, successful face,  
A face with which a stone  
Would feel as thoroughly at ease  
As were they old acquaintances –  
First time together thrown.

?

1896

## 1712

A Pit – but Heaven over it –  
 And Heaven beside, and Heaven abroad,  
 And yet a Pit –  
 With Heaven over it.

To stir would be to slip –  
 To look would be to drop –  
 To dream – to sap the Prop  
 That holds my chances up.  
 Ah! Pit! With Heaven over it!

The depth is all my thought –  
 I dare not ask my feet –  
 'Twould start us where we sit  
 So straight you'd scarce suspect  
 It was a Pit – with fathoms under it –  
 Its Circuit just the same.  
 Seed – summer – tomb –  
 Whose Doom to whom?

?

1945

## 1713

As subtle as tomorrow  
 That never came,  
 A warrant, a conviction,  
 Yet but a name.

?

1945

## 1714

By a departing light  
 We see acuter, quite,  
 Than by a wick that stays.  
 There's something in the flight  
 That clarifies the sight  
 And decks the rays.

?

1945

1715

Consulting summer's clock,  
But half the hours remain.  
I ascertain it with a shock –  
I shall not look again.  
The second half of joy  
Is shorter than the first.  
The truth I do not dare to know  
I muffle with a jest.

?

1945

1716

Death is like the insect  
Menacing the tree,  
Competent to kill it,  
But decoyed may be.

Bait it with the balsam,  
Seek it with the saw,  
Baffle, if it cost you  
Everything you are.

Then, if it have burrowed  
Out of reach of skill –  
Wring the tree and leave it,  
'Tis the vermin's will.

?

1896

1717

Did life's penurious length  
Italicize its sweetness,  
The men that daily live  
Would stand so deep in joy  
That it would clog the cogs  
Of that revolving reason  
Whose esoteric belt  
Protects our sanity.

?

1945

1718

Drowning is not so pitiful  
As the attempt to rise.  
Three times, 'tis said, a sinking man  
Comes up to face the skies,  
And then declines forever  
To that abhorred abode,  
Where hope and he part company –  
For he is grasped of God.  
The Maker's cordial visage,  
However good to see,  
Is shunned, we must admit it,  
Like an adversity.

?

1896

1719

God is indeed a jealous God –  
He cannot bear to see  
That we had rather not with Him  
But with each other play.

?

1945

1720

Had I known that the first was the last  
I should have kept it longer.  
Had I known that the last was the first  
I should have drunk it stronger.  
Cup, it was your fault,  
Lip was not the liar  
No, lip, it was yours,  
Bliss was most to blame.

?

1945

1721

He was my host – he was my guest,  
I never to this day

[ 698 ]

If I invited him could tell,  
Or he invited me.

So infinite our intercourse  
So intimate, indeed,  
Analysis as capsule seemed  
To keeper of the seed.

?

1945

1722

Her face was in a bed of hair,  
Like flowers in a plot –  
Her hand was whiter than the sperm  
That feeds the sacred light.  
Her tongue more tender than the tune  
That totters in the leaves –  
Who hears may be incredulous,  
Who witnesses, believes.

?

1945

1723

High from the earth I heard a bird,  
He trod upon the trees  
As he esteemed them trifles,  
And then he spied a breeze,  
And situated softly  
Upon a pile of wind  
Which in a perturbation  
Nature had left behind.  
A joyous going fellow  
I gathered from his talk  
Which both of benediction  
And badinage partook.  
Without apparent burden  
I subsequently learned  
He was the faithful father  
Of a dependent brood.

[ 699 ]

And this untoward transport  
His remedy for care  
A contrast to our respites.  
How different we are!

?

1896

1724

How dare the robins sing,  
When men and women hear  
Who since they went to their account  
Have settled with the year! –  
Paid all that life had earned  
In one consummate bill,  
And now, what life or death can do  
Is immaterial.  
Insulting is the sun  
To him whose mortal light  
Beguiled of immortality  
Bequeaths him to the night.  
Extinct be every hum  
In deference to him  
Whose garden wrestles with the dew,  
At daybreak overcome!

?

1896

1725

I took one Draught of Life –  
I'll tell you what I paid –  
Precisely an existence –  
The market price, they said.  
  
They weighed me, Dust by Dust –  
They balanced Film with Film,  
Then handed me my Being's worth –  
A single Dram of Heaven!

?

1929

1726

If all the griefs I am to have  
Would only come today,  
I am so happy I believe  
They'd laugh and run away

If all the joys I am to have  
Would only come today,  
They could not be so big as this  
That happens to me now.

?

1945

1727

If ever the lid gets off my head  
And lets the brain away  
The fellow will go where he belonged –  
Without a hint from me,

And the world – if the world be looking on –  
Will see how far from home  
It is possible for sense to live  
The soul there – all the time.

?

1945

1728

Is Immortality a bane  
That men are so oppressed?

?

1945

1729

I've got an arrow here.  
Loving the hand that sent it  
I the dart reverse.

Fell, they will say, in "skirmish"!  
Vanquished, my soul will know

[ 701 ]

By but a simple arrow  
Sped by an archer's bow.

1896

1730

"Lethe" in my flower,  
Of which they who drink  
In the fadeless orchards  
Hear the bobolink!

Merely flake or petal  
As the Eye beholds  
Jupiter! my father!  
I perceive the rose!

1945

1731

Love can do all but raise the Dead  
I doubt if even that  
From such a giant were withheld  
Were flesh equivalent

But love is tired and must sleep,  
And hungry and must graze  
And so abets the shining Fleet  
Till it is out of gaze.

1945

1732

My life closed twice before its close—  
It yet remains to see  
If Immortality unveil  
A third event to me

So huge, so hopeless to conceive  
As these that twice befell.

[ 702 ]

Parting is all we know of heaven,  
And all we need of hell.

1896

1733

No man saw awe, nor to his house  
Admitted he a man  
Though by his awful residence  
Has human nature been.

Not deeming of his dread abode  
Till laboring to flee  
A grasp on comprehension laid  
Detained vitality.

Returning is a different route  
The Spirit could not show  
For breathing is the only work  
To be enacted now.

"Am not consumed," old Moses wrote,  
"Yet saw him face to face" –  
That very physiognomy  
I am convinced was this.

1945

1734

Oh, honey of an hour,  
I never knew thy power,  
Prohibit me  
Till my minutest dower,  
My unfrequented flower,  
Deserving be.

1945

1735

One crown that no one seeks  
And yet the highest head

[ 703 ]

Its isolation coveted  
Its stigma deified  
While Pontius Pilate lives  
In whatsoever hell  
That coronation pierces him  
He recollects it well.

?

1945

1736

Proud of my broken heart, since thou didst break it,  
Proud of the pain I did not feel till thee,  
Proud of my night, since thou with moons dost slake it,  
*Not* to partake thy passion, *my* humility.  
Thou can'st not boast, like Jesus, drunken without companion  
Was the strong cup of anguish brewed for the Nazarene  
Thou can'st not pierce tradition with the peerless puncture,  
See! I usurped *thy* crucifix to honor mine!

?

1947

1737

Rearrange a "Wife's" affection!  
When they dislocate my Brain!  
Amputate my freckled Bosom!  
Make me bearded like a man!  
Blush, my spirit, in thy Fastness –  
Blush, my unacknowledged clay –  
Seven years of troth have taught thee  
More than Wifehood ever may!  
Love that never leaped its socket –  
Trust entrenched in narrow pain –  
Constancy thro' fire – awarded –  
Anguish – bare of anodyne!  
Burden – borne so far triumphant –  
None suspect me of the crown,

[ 704 ]

For I wear the "Thorns" till *Sunset* –  
Then – my Diadem put on.

Big my Secret but it's *bandaged* –  
It will never get away  
Till the Day its Weary Keeper  
Leads it through the Grave to thee.

?

1945

1738

Softened by Time's consummate plush,  
How sleek the woe appears  
That threatened childhood's citadel  
And undermined the years.

Bisected now, by bleaker griefs,  
We envy the despair  
That devastated childhood's realm,  
So easy to repair.

?

1896

1739

Some say goodnight – at night –  
I say goodnight by day –  
Good-bye – the Going utter me –  
Goodnight, I still reply –

For parting, that is night,  
And presence, simply dawn –  
Itself, the purple on the height  
Denominated morn.

?

1929

1740

Sweet is the swamp with its secrets,  
Until we meet a snake;  
'Tis then we sigh for houses,  
And our departure take

[ 705 ]

At that enthralling gallop  
That only childhood knows.  
A snake is summer's treason,  
And guile is where it goes.

?

1896

1741

That it will never come again  
Is what makes life so sweet.  
Believing what we don't believe  
Does not exhilarate.

That if it be, it be at best  
An ablative estate –  
This instigates an appetite  
Precisely opposite.

?

1945

1742

The distance that the dead have gone  
Does not at first appear –  
Their coming back seems possible  
For many an ardent year.

And then, that we have followed them,  
We more than half suspect,  
So intimate have we become  
With their dear retrospect.

?

1896

1743

The grave my little cottage is,  
Where "Keeping house" for thee  
I make my parlor orderly  
And lay the marble tea.

For two divided, briefly,  
A cycle, it may be,

Till everlasting life unite  
In strong society.

?

1896

1744

The joy that has no stem nor core,  
Nor seed that we can sow,  
Is edible to longing,  
But ablative to show.

By fundamental palates  
Those products are preferred  
Impregnable to transit  
And patented by pod.

?

1945

1745

The mob within the heart  
Police cannot suppress  
The riot given at the first  
Is authorized as peace

Uncertified of scene  
Or signified of sound  
But growing like a hurricane  
In a congenial ground.

?

1945

1746

The most important population  
Unnoticed dwell,  
They have a heaven each instant  
Not any hell.

Their names, unless you know them,  
'Twere useless tell.

[ 707 ]

Of bumble-bees and other nations  
The grass is full.

?

1945

1747

The parasol is the umbrella's daughter,  
And associates with a fan  
While her father abuts the tempest  
And abridges the rain.

The former assists a siren  
In her serene display;  
But her father is borne and honored,  
And borrowed to this day.

?

1945

1748

The reticent volcano keeps  
His never slumbering plan –  
Confided are his projects pink  
To no precarious man

If nature will not tell the tale  
Jehovah told to her  
Can human nature not survive  
Without a listener?

Admonished by her buckled lips  
Let every babbler be  
The only secret people keep  
Is Immortality.

?

1896

1749

The waters chased him as he fled,  
Not daring look behind –  
A billow whispered in his Ear,  
"Come home with me, my friend –

[ 708 ]

My parlor is of shrunken glass,  
My pantry has a fish  
For every palate in the Year" –  
To this revolting bliss  
The object floating at his side  
Made no distinct reply

?

1945

1750

The words the happy say  
Are paltry melody  
But those the silent feel  
Are beautiful –

?

1945

1751

There comes an hour when begging stops,  
When the long interceding lips  
Perceive their prayer is vain.  
"Thou shalt not" is a kinder sword  
Than from a disappointing God  
"Disciple, call again."

?

1945

1752

This docile one inter  
While we who dare to live  
Arraign the sunny brevity  
That sparkled to the Grave  
  
On her departing span  
No wilderness remain  
As dauntless in the House of Death  
As if it were her own –

?

1945

1753

Through those old Grounds of memory,  
The sauntering alone  
Is a divine intemperance  
A prudent man would shun.  
Of liquors that are vended  
'Tis easy to beware  
But statutes do not meddle  
With the internal bar  
Pernicious as the sunset  
Permitting to pursue  
But impotent to gather,  
The tranquil perfidy  
Alloys our firmer moments  
With that severest gold  
Convenient to the longing  
But otherwise withheld.

?

1945

1754

To lose thee – sweeter than to gain  
All other hearts I knew.  
'Tis true the drouth is destitute,  
But then, I had the dew!  
  
The Caspian has its realms of sand,  
Its other realm of sea.  
Without the sterile perquisite,  
No Caspian could be.

?

1896

1755

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,  
One clover, and a bee,  
And revery.  
The revery alone will do,  
If bees are few.

?

1896

1756

'Twas here my summer paused  
What ripeness after then  
To other scene or other soul  
My sentence had begun.

To winter to remove  
With winter to abide  
Go manacle your icicle  
Against your Tropic Bride.

?

1945

1757

Upon the gallows hung a wretch,  
Too sullied for the hell  
To which the law entitled him  
As nature's curtain fell  
The one who bore him tottered in, –  
For this was woman's son.  
" 'Twas all I had," she stricken gasped –  
Oh, what a livid boon!

?

1896

1758

Where every bird is bold to go  
And bees abashless play,  
The foreigner before he knocks  
Must thrust the tears away.

?

1896

1759

Which misses most,  
The hand that tends,  
Or heart so gently borne,  
'Tis twice as heavy as it was  
Because the hand is gone?

[ 711 ]

Which blesses most,  
The lip that can,  
Or that that went to sleep  
With "if I could" endeavoring  
Without the strength to shape?

?

1945

1760

Elysium is as far as to  
The very nearest Room  
If in that Room a Friend await  
Felicity or Doom —

What fortitude the Soul contains,  
That it can so endure  
The accent of a coming Foot —  
The opening of a Door —

c. 1882

1890

1761

A train went through a burial gate,  
A bird broke forth and sang,  
And trilled, and quivered, and shook his throat  
Till all the churchyard rang;

And then adjusted his little notes,  
And bowed and sang again.  
Doubtless, he thought it meet of him  
To say good-by to men.

?

1890

1762

Were nature mortal lady  
Who had so little time  
To pack her trunk and order  
The great exchange of clime —

How rapid, how momentous –  
What exigencies were –  
But nature will be ready  
And have an hour to spare.

To make some trifle fairer  
That was too fair before –  
Enchanting by remaining,  
And by departure more.

?

1898

1763

Fame is a bee.  
It has a song –  
It has a sting –  
Ah, too, it has a wing.

?

1898

1764

The saddest noise, the sweetest noise,  
The maddest noise that grows, –  
The birds, they make it in the spring,  
At night's delicious close.

Between the March and April line –  
That magical frontier  
Beyond which summer hesitates,  
Almost too heavenly near.

It makes us think of all the dead  
That sauntered with us here,  
By separation's sorcery  
Made cruelly more dear.

It makes us think of what we had,  
And what we now deplore.  
We almost wish those siren throats  
Would go and sing no more.

An ear can break a human heart  
As quickly as a spear,

We wish the ear had not a heart  
So dangerously near.

?

1898

1765

That Love is all there is,  
Is all we know of Love;  
It is enough, the freight should be  
Proportioned to the groove

?

1914

1766

Those final Creatures, – who they are –  
That, faithful to the close,  
Administer her ecstasy,  
But just the Summer knows.

?

1914

1767

Sweet hours have perished here;  
This is a mighty room,  
Within its precincts hopes have played, –  
Now shadows in the tomb.

?

1924

1768

Lad of Athens, faithful be  
To Thyself,  
And Mystery –  
All the rest is Perjury –

c. 1883

1931

1769

The longest day that God appoints  
Will finish with the sun.

[ 714 ]

Anguish can travel to its stake,  
And then it must return.

?

1894

1770

Experiment escorts us last –  
His pungent company  
Will not allow an Axiom  
An Opportunity

c. 1870

1945

1771

How fleet – how indiscreet an one –  
How always wrong is Love –  
The joyful little Deity  
We are not scourged to serve –

c. 1881

1945

1772

Let me not thirst with this Hock at my Lip,  
Nor beg, with Domains in my Pocket –

c. 1881

1945

1773

The Summer that we did not prize,  
Her treasures were so easy  
Instructs us by departing now  
And recognition lazy –

Bestirs itself – puts on its Coat,  
And scans with fatal promptness  
For Trains that moment out of sight,  
Unconscious of his smartness.

c. 1883

1945

1774

Too happy Time dissolves itself  
And leaves no remnant by –  
'Tis Anguish not a Feather hath  
Or too much weight to fly –

c. 1870

1945

1775

The earth has many keys.  
Where melody is not  
Is the unknown peninsula.  
Beauty is nature's fact.

But witness for her land,  
And witness for her sea,  
The cricket is her utmost  
Of elegy to me.

?

1945

## Acknowledgments

*The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, from which this text derives, was made possible, first, by the gift of Gilbert H. Montague to Harvard University Library of funds for the purchase of the poet's manuscripts and other papers from the heirs to the literary estate, the late Alfred Leete Hampson and his wife Mary Landis Hampson; and second, by the courtesy of Millicent Todd Bingham in making available for study all of the large number of Dickinson manuscripts in her possession, recently transferred by her to Amherst College.

This edition makes grateful and general acknowledgment to Harvard University Press and to Houghton Mifflin Company for permission to print here the Dickinson poems which are under copyright and have been published by them.

Thomas H. Johnson

*Lawrenceville, New Jersey*  
4 April 1960

The publisher in presenting this volume acknowledges permission of the President and Fellows of Harvard College and of the Trustees of Amherst College.

## Previous Collections

The present edition derives from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (3 vols. Cambridge: the Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1955). Most of the poems here included appeared originally in the volumes named below. A few had their first publication in magazines and journals.

*Ancestors' Brocades*. By Millicent Todd Bingham. New York: Harper, 1945.

*Bolts of Melody*. Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and Millicent Todd Bingham. New York: Harper, 1945.

*The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Boston: Little, Brown, 1924.

*The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Boston: Little, Brown, 1930.

*Emily Dickinson Face to Face: Unpublished Letters with Notes and Reminiscences*. By Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932.

*Emily Dickinson's Letters to Dr. and Mrs. Josiah Gilbert Holland*. Edited by Theodora Van Wagenen Ward. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951.

*Further Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Boston: Little, Brown, 1929.

*Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd. 2 vols. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1894.

*Letters of Emily Dickinson*. New and enlarged edition. Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd. New York: Harper, 1931.

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- Poems by Emily Dickinson*, Second Series. Edited by T. W. Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd. Boston · Roberts Brothers, 1891.
- Poems by Emily Dickinson*, Third Series. Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd. Boston · Roberts Brothers, 1896.
- Poems by Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Boston · Little, Brown, 1937.
- The Single Hound*. Edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Boston · Little, Brown, 1914.
- Unpublished Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Boston · Little, Brown, 1935.

## Indexes

## Subject Index

The principal purpose of this index is to aid the reader in finding a desired poem. Since there are no titles, and the arrangement is chronological, the index of first lines alone does not provide adequate means of recognition. The subject index is not intended to fill the place of a concordance, nor should it be regarded as an attempt at interpretation of the poems. It is a classification based principally on key words in the poems themselves. In instances in which the whole content is stated in terms of imagery, the image itself, rather than the meaning, is used as a heading. An example of this is seen in the list of poems under the heading *Crown*.

It will be noted that certain large groups, such as those headed *Life*, *Love*, and *Death*, contain the bulk of the poems. In some instances, however, a poem listed under one of these headings will have also an entry under one or more categories. For example, "Death is a dialogue between/The spirit and the Dust" is entered under *Death*, *Spirit*, and *Dust*.

Under each main heading will be found first the numbers of the poems whose entire content is clearly on the subject given. These include poems of definition and description, and they are entered in numerical order, without subheadings. Following these, under separate subheadings, are the poems that represent special aspects of the main subject and those in which only a part of the content can be so classified. The order of the subheadings is governed by the numerical order of the poems they refer to, each new subheading being followed by the least number in its group, and the numerical sequence is followed also within the groups. When not more than five or six poems appear under a main subject, the subheadings have been for the most

S U B J E C T I N D E X

part eliminated, though sometimes a qualifying subheading has seemed desirable for the sake of clarity.

Another means of identification is offered under the headings *Names mentioned in the poems* and *Places mentioned in the poems*. Although names and places seldom represent the subjects of the poems, the author's use of such names as Cato and Carlo, Brazil and Hummaleh is often striking enough to linger in the memory. The heading *Names* rather than *Persons* was chosen since the list includes fictional and mythological as well as historical characters. The heading *Persons* has been used elsewhere with a more direct significance for a group of character sketches and verses dealing directly with personalities.

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