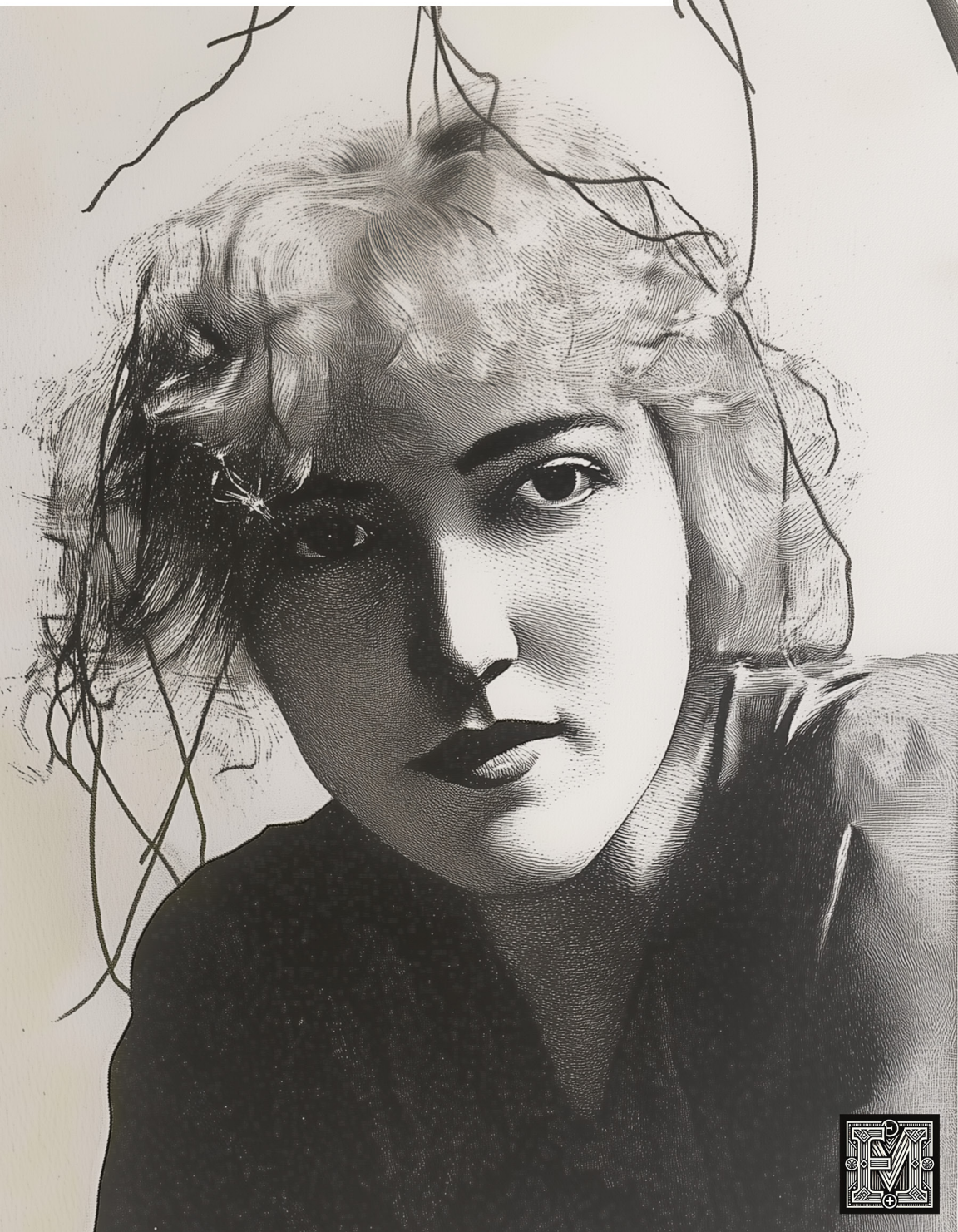


# Nora May French

## Selected Poems



# Nora May French

April 16, 1881 [Aurora, New York] –  
November 13, 1907 [Carmel, California]

French was born in 1881 in Aurora, New York to Edward French, a professor at Wells College and Mary Wells French, the sister of the founder of Wells Fargo, Henry Wells. Her family moved to a ranch outside of Los Angeles in 1888, and though French was raised wealthy, a house fire and failed fruit crop brought the family to financial ruins. She published several poems in her teens and studied briefly at the Arts Students League in New York city. French joined the Charles Lummis Arroyo Seco, a group of Los Angeles writers and poets, and published in Lummis' *Out West* magazine. She later became involved with Henry Anderson Lafler, an assistant editor on *The Argonaut*, and moved to San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake where she became part of the bohemian literary circles of the Carmel Arts and Crafts Club led by George Sterling. In 1907 she joined Sterling and his wife at their home in Carmel. On November 11, tried to kill herself unsuccessfully with a gunshot to the head. The bullet took off a lock of her hair, but Nora missed her mark due to her shaky hand. Two days later, during the night of November 13–14, Nora ended her life in Sterling's home by ingesting cyanide while Mrs. Sterling slept beside her. Three of her friends posthumously published French's *Poems* in 1910, the only compilation of her work ever widely distributed until 2009's *The Outer Gate: The Collected Poems Of Nora May French*.

*Poems*. San Francisco, The Strange Company, 1910.

*Nora May French: Her Poems*. Mary Rudge (Introduction). Oakland: Star Rover House, 1986.

*The Outer Gate: The Collected Poems*. New York: Hippocampus Press, 2009

# The Outer Gate

Life said: "My house is thine with all its store;  
Behold, I open shining ways to thee—  
Of every inner portal make thee free:  
O child, I may not bar the outer door.  
Go from me if thou wilt, to come no more;  
But all thy pain is mine, thy flesh of me;  
And must I hear thee, faint and woefully,  
Call on me from the darkness and implore?"

Nay, mother, for I follow at thy will.  
But oftentimes thy voice is sharp to hear,  
Thy trailing fragrance heavy on the breath;  
Always the outer hall is very still,  
And on my face a pleasant wind and clear  
Blows straitly from the harrow gate of Death.

# Rain

The rain was grey before it fell,  
    And through a world where light had died  
There ran a mournful little wind  
    That shook the trees and cried.

The rain was brown upon the earth,  
    In turbid stream and tiny seas—  
In swift and slender shafts that beat  
    The flowers to their knees.

The rain is mirror to the sky,  
    To leaning grass in image clear,  
And drifting in the shining pools  
    The clouds are white and near.

# By The Hospital

Who goes to meet the windy night  
    With unseen comrades shouting by,  
Who grips a bough in swift delight  
    To let it dip and loose and fly;

Who runs for rest that running gives,  
    Runs till his throbbing muscles speak;  
Who bends to feel how keenly lives  
    The joyous grass beneath his cheek—

With sudden tears his eyes shall fill,  
    With quick-drawn breath he sees them plain  
Those bodies that must lie so still,  
    So tired—in the House of Pain.

# Music in the Pavilion

Faces that throng and stare and come and go—  
    The air a-quiver as the voices meet;  
And loud Humanity in mingled flow  
    Passes with jarring tread of many feet.

But over all the chatter of the crowd  
    (The background for its delicate relief)  
Now trembling in a thread, now wild and loud,  
    The violin laughs and sings, and cries its grief.

Then, through it all, and round it all, the sea;  
    A solemn heart with never-ceasing beat,  
Bearing an undertone of mystery  
    The harsh and lovely notes, the shrill and sweet.

Surely it is my life—of plodding days,  
    With one Ideal holding clear and good;  
And sounding over, under, through my ways,  
    Something apart—and never understood.

# Rebuke

The tortured river-banks, the toiling piers—  
    I walked thereby as older grew the day,  
And sick with sorry clamor in mine ears,  
    Heart-weary turned my steps and went my way.

“O place full-voiced of wretchedness!” I cried.  
    (The sun had set, the dusk was closing in)  
“O place where laboring Life goes heavy-eyed,  
    Compound of grime and discord, strife and sin!”

I turned me back, and lo, a miracle!  
    For misty violet lay along the land.  
The shining river in mysterious spell  
    (Divinely touched by some transmuting hand)

A path of wonder was, and on it stirred,  
    (Black-shaped, and jeweled with a crimson spark)  
A ship that slowly moved; and, faintly heard,  
    A cheery song rose blithely to the dark.

# The Nymph

From forest paths we turned us, nymphs, new made,  
And, lifting eyes abashed with great desire  
Before high Jove, the gift of souls we prayed.

Whereat he said: "O perfect as new leaves  
Now glossed and veined with blood of perfect days  
And stirred to murmured speech in fragrant eves,

"Still ask ye souls? Behold, I give instead  
Into each breast a bird with fettered wings,  
A bird fast holden with a silken thread:

"To fall from trial of flight with strength swift spent,  
To sing of mating and the brooding grass,  
To turn thy being earthward to content."

Within me sudden wrath and terror strove,  
And, casting forth his gift I cried aloud:  
"I pray thee for a soul in truth, great Jove!"

Then smiled he slowly, lifting to my look  
A fabric where the rippled lustre played  
And shifted like the humor of a brook—

All prism-hued, as upward eyes may see  
The sun through dazzled lashes. Straight I cried:  
"I know not this!" "Thy soul," he answered me.

But when my joy had seized it, "Nay," he said,  
And cast it gleaming to the scattering wind—  
Hues green and golden, blue and fervent red.

Within his hand the brightest shred of all—  
The very heart and secret of the web—  
That held he fast and loosed he not at all;

But to me said: "O thou who scorned the dole  
That gave thee peace of days and long content,  
Do now my will. Go forth and find thy soul."

To earth we went, nor knew I from that hour  
My sister's joy or pain; but on great morns  
When low light slept above a world in flower,

Through drowsing noons where heat and color lie  
In ever wavering tides of airy seas,  
Winged by the darting ships of dragon-flies—

Through these and twilight peace I went, and rid  
My steps of comrades. Lonely must I find  
The silent places where my soul was hid.

In sheltered ways with summer showers sweet  
I wandered on a day, and singing found  
The very green I sought beneath my feet.

In leafing forests when the year was new,  
And heaven ribboned in the crossing boughs,  
I gathered marvelous strip on strip of blue.

When on a stream the moon was bright,  
A Naiad from her treasure plucked me forth  
Such gold as bound my web with threads of light.

And red. Ah, love! thou knowest how I came  
Unto thy fluting in the breathless eve,  
And burned my heart's pale flower to scarlet flame!

One morn I found within a drop of dew  
My very soul: a crystal world it was  
Wherein the varied earth and heaven's blue

And myself gazing glassed in perfect sphere—  
But long above it was my wonder bent,

And lo! It dried more swiftly than a tear.

Now is this truth, O Jove, that I have won  
    And worn all the shreds thou gav'st the wind?  
But how, I pray thee, can my task be done

Unless thou ope thine hand, unless thou loose  
    The very heart and secret of the web  
Where every thread may end and know its use?

Joy hast thou not withheld, nor love denied  
    Nor any beauty dimmed on earth or sky,  
Yet by thy will I roam unsatisfied.

But couldst thou hear again that earliest plea,  
    Again my choice would flout the lesser gift,  
And willing take this task thou grantest me—

To search the heart and secret of the whole,  
    To twine the eager hues of varied days,  
And to its bright perfection weave a soul.

# Vivisection

We saw unpitying skill

    In curious hands put living flesh apart,

    Till, bare and terrible, the tiny heart

Pulsed, and was still.

We saw Grief's sudden knife

    Strip through the pleasant flesh of soul-disguise

    Lay for a second's space before our eyes

A naked life.

# The Panther Woman

I face the tranquil day with tranquil eyes  
On high sea-hills my cheeks are cold with mist,  
In white foam-fingers quick desire dies.

Dies as a strangled bird the wave has torn—  
Ay, drowns and dies this winged desire of mine  
In white sea fingers of the tidal morn.

But I would kill the restless silken night  
And I would still the wings that beat the dark,  
And grasp the little throat of heart-delight,

And drown the savage will that understands  
How love would laugh to clasp your bending head,  
How love would hold your face in her two hands,

How love would press your angry lips apart,  
And leave the willful bruising of her kiss  
In the sweet satin flesh above your heart.

# Just A Dog

So many times in those dark days,  
    Instinct with sudden hope he crept,  
(When sad, infrequent hands would raise  
    The startled notes where sound had slept)  
Seeking the voice he used to hear,  
    Close-crouching at his master's knees,  
Hoping to find again the dear  
    Familiar hand upon the keys.

In very truth there was a soul  
    Behind his brown and faithful eyes.  
There live some mortals, on the whole  
    Less loving, tender, loyal, wise;  
And though we give it to decay,  
    His poor old body, worn and scarred;  
Yet He who judges soul and clay  
    Will give one dog his just reward.

And that would be to let him come  
    Toward dim-heard music, far and sweet;  
Seeking with eyes rejoiced and dumb;  
    Seeking with swift, unerring feet,  
With love supreme to guide him true,  
    Across the misty ways of space,—  
Until he found the one he knew,  
    And looked into his master's face.

# The Spanish Girl

## PART I

### I. THE VINE

To screen this depth of shade that sleeps,  
    Beyond the garden s shine,  
On Jose's careful strings there creeps  
    A little slender vine.

Jose is kind ... but age is cold:  
    My laughter meets his sigh.  
The house is old, the garden old  
    Oh, young, the vine and I!

I love the web of light it weaves  
    Across my half-drawn thread;  
It s speech to me of waking leaves,  
    While Jose hears his Dead.

So, ever reaching, tendril-fine,  
    My eager visions run;  
So, as the long day passes, twine  
    My thoughts, shot through with sun.

### II. THE CHAPEL

The vanished women of my race,  
    The daughters of a moldering year,  
Set often in this quiet place  
    Their votive tapers burning clear.

The patient waxen wreaths they wove,  
    They hung before the Virgin's shrine;  
To them it was a work of love,  
    Jos decrees it task of mine!

They glimmer where a portrait swings—

Women as proud and white as death—  
Ah, they could mold those lifeless things;  
They had no blood, they had no breath.

”For holiness and meekness strive”  
(Jos would have me pray their prayers).  
Now, Mary, warm and all alive,  
You shall not think me child of theirs.

So many waxen prayers you heard!  
If I should heap your altar high  
With boughs that knew the nesting bird,  
With flowers that bloomed against the sky,

And let my wondering soul ascend  
In vivid question, swift surmise—  
I think your shadowy face would bend,  
And look at me with startled eyes.

### III. THE GARDEN

They planted lilies where they might,  
A drift of Vestals slim and tall,  
That lined these winding paths with white,  
That filled the court from wall to wall.

They shrank from savage, splendid heat,  
As from their teasing fires of Hell—  
Only when morns and eves were sweet  
They walked and liked their garden well.

Slow moving through a pallid mist,  
Always in black, in black they came,  
With busy rosary on wrist . . .  
And all the summer world aflame!

I planted flowers that know the sun,  
I bought them in from field and stream,  
I passed not by the smallest one

That pleased me with a yellow gleam;

Then in a hidden chest I found  
The marvel of an old brocade—  
Strange figures on an azure ground,  
With threads of crimson overlaid,

And when the noon is fierce and bright,  
Along the garden, fold on fold,  
My silken splendor like a light  
I trail between the aisles of gold.

IV.

Across Jos's unending drone  
(Some ancient tale of arms and doom)  
There came a poignant sweetness blown  
From sleeping leagues of orange bloom.

And lo! the steady candles blurred  
Like shining fishes in a net,  
And Jos's kindly voice I heard—  
"But little one, thine eyes are wet."

He vowed the tale had made me weep,  
Its shadowy woes in courtly speech,  
Nor knew they passed like wraiths of sleep  
The heart a vagrant wind could reach.

How can I tell, whose fancy floats  
As swift and passionate impulses veers,  
What gust may sweep its roseleaf boats  
Adown a sudden tide of tears?

V.

Where man has marred and nature yields,  
And never plant nor beast is free,  
Along the tame and trampled fields

An old unrest has followed me.

Now walk alone the night and I  
On foaming reaches curving stark,  
And battling with a windy sky  
The stormy moon is bright and dark.

Facing the sea with streaming hair,  
My broken singing flung behind,  
Whipped by the keen exultant air  
Till lips must close and eyes are blind,

Loving the sharp and cruel spray,  
The great waves thundering, might on might,  
The pagan heart must shout and sway,  
Tossed in the passion of the night.

VI.

Oh, never wings the Sisters chide,  
Wild upward wings that shine and blur,  
Nor mourn they winds of eventide  
That bid the rhythmic garden stir,

And yet this life I cannot still,  
This winged and restless strength of flight,  
That swings me down a singing hill  
Or answers to the calling night,

They curb when I would dance, would dance!  
By all the graven Saints, it seems  
Most strange they make for my mischance  
No grim confessional of dreams!

The flower of Heart's Desire is sown  
In fields unknown to waking sight,  
Down glittering spaces, all alone  
I whirl the fire of my delight—

Then, on the music's ebb and flow,  
Pause as a poising bird is hung,  
With supple body swaying slow,  
With parted lips and arms up-flung.

VII.

Always of Heaven the Sisters tell,  
Although of earth I question most—  
I would I knew the world as well  
As Peter and the Angel host!

Jos may journey, never I.  
In all the lonely hours I spend  
He bids me tell my beads and sigh. . . .  
I wonder if the Saints attend?

For when the moon is small and thin,  
And night is fragrant on the land,  
The earth and I are so akin  
I think no Saint could understand.

Something within me sleeps by day;  
To moon and wind its petals part. . .  
It is not for my soul I pray;  
Ah Virgin!—for my untried heart.

*PART II*

I.

This weak and silken love that meshes me  
Break strand from strand, O branches of the hill!  
Brave wind that whips me breathless, tear me free!  
The witch's cobweb clings and shivers still.

Now ferns there were, and fretted sun above:  
I plunged me where the silver water fell,  
But could not drown the little singing love—

The little love that murmured like a shell.

Swift, swift, to drink my freedom at its flood,  
I ran with flying feet and lips apart,  
But love was wilder than leaping blood—  
Ah, louder than the beating of my heart.

II.

I must not yield . . . but if he would not sing!  
My stilling hands upon my breast can feel  
Its answer tremble like a muted string.  
Below the vaulted window where I kneel

He sings, he sings, to stars and listening skies.  
A white and haunted place my garden seems.—  
I see the pleading beauty of his eyes  
As faces glimmer in a pool of dreams.

So wooing wind might sweep a harp awake.  
(Oh, muting fingers on each quivering string!)  
I must not yield . . . I think my heart will break.  
Mother of Heaven, if he would not sing!

III.

Now bending like a windy stem I strive,  
Yet ever onward, step by step, descend.  
The silence is a threat, the dark alive,  
And love how far, how far, my journey's end.

It is the girlhood dream I leave behind,  
And sweeter vision never witched a maid.  
Into the threatening shades I wander blind:  
Ah, Mary, help me now! I am afraid.

Yet with my fears I sway and follow still;  
The doorway gleams, the pleading magic charms,  
Step after step, with fluttering breath and will—

Step after step . . .at last . . . into his arms.

IV.

Beyond this purple shadow glows  
My golden garden loud with bees,  
And windy grey and silver flows  
Along the slopes of olive trees.

Before a sleeping flower uncurled,  
Before the early winds were born,  
I woke for joy in such a world,  
And with the linnets shared the morn.

Remembering love, I woke and smiled,  
And heard the morning linnets sing,  
And sang for love, and they for wild  
Delight of song and sun and spring.

V.

Surely a brightness moves with me,  
For Jos gazes long and sighs,  
Above the pages dim to see  
For ghosts of youth that brush his eyes.

And gazing long, old Marta said:  
"Some new device has made thee fair,  
Yet have I often seen these red  
Pomegranate flowers against thy hair."

I would not have them understand  
The hidden thoughts that give me grace,  
Nor guess the lights that dreams have fanned,  
And read their shining in my face.

But all my heart the Virgin knows.  
Before her eyes, so wise they were,  
I laid my secret like a rose:

”Mother, I love!” I cried to her.

VI.

I had no more imagined love  
Than dreams the moonflower of its blue.  
What sun that warmed its shielding glove,—  
What long blind eve that gave it dew,  
  
Could tell that hueless folded thing  
Of shining texture silken-loomed,  
Or say what marveling birds would sing  
The morning that it thrilled and bloomed?  
  
Always it knew in groping thought  
Some end would come, some bloom must be,  
The blind fulfilment that it wrought  
Was strained from darkness restlessly;  
  
Till exquisite completion willed  
The answered bud, the dream put by,  
And left the flower all sunned, and stilled  
With sudden wonder of the sky.

VII.

My eyes are level with the grass,  
And up and down each slender steep  
I watch its tiny people pass.  
The sun has lulled me half asleep.  
  
And all beneath my breath I sing . . .  
This joy of mine is sweet to hold!  
Such treasure had the miser king  
Who brushed the very dew to gold.  
  
Deep in the sunny grass I lie  
And breathe the garden scents wind-driven,  
So happy that if I should die

They could not comfort me with Heaven.

*PART III*

I.

One time I felt the sun in all my veins,  
And bloomed on crystal mornings, flower-wise,  
And mourned as roses sadden in long rains.  
What pain is this the summer noon denies?

One time the hands of wind upon my hair  
Could heal me like a mother's touch and kiss.  
When I could give my airy griefs to the air  
I never knew so sharp a thorn as this.

The joy of flower and wind and sighing bough—  
It comes not back again for tears and rue.  
A year ago I had not sought as now,  
And found the sky a vault of empty blue.

II.

He loves no more. Upon the failing streams  
The summer burns—so burns another flame:  
I see his eyes alight with alien dreams . . .  
That long-forgotten country whence he came

Calls to him past my words; beyond my eyes  
Lost waters shine, remembered sunsets die.  
Ay, in my kiss another mouth replies,  
And speaks of kisses past, of lips put by.

Now this my heart divines, for words of love  
He gives me still (O woeful heart and bruised  
To still complain!) . . . But surely, when I move  
His eyes will never follow as they used.

III.

The soul that made love exquisite is gone,  
It is not that the word, the kiss, is changed.  
I cannot say, "Here was his thought withdrawn;  
So once was love, so now is love estranged."

But all of love that I could touch and know  
I held as one a lamp that makes his day,  
And touch it still, and see its flame burn low,  
Its shining figures fade to painted clay.

Ah, I would hold the semblance, keep the kiss;  
But watching in its heart the paling spark,  
I cry out when the shadows menace this,  
As children weep for terror in the dark.

IV.

That all tomorrows have no wound in store  
For shrinking Joy, nor any prick of dread,  
I know, who closed its eyes forevermore,  
And keep this night a vigil with my dead.

This little space my out-thrown hands have stirred  
Is happy earth, for once it knew love's feet;  
Here once love stood and called the heart that heard,  
And all the garden, all the world, grew sweet.

I lay my joy within this hollowed space  
(I had not thought so blithe a thing could die!)  
And heap the happy earth upon the face  
That has no will to smile nor breath to sigh.

With dew beneath and hushing night above  
I cannot tell how long my grief has lain—  
Virgin, I will not plead you for my love,  
Only pain,—if you would ease the pain.

V.

The world below was deep in stormy cloud;  
    But high in sun we flew along the ledge,  
And to the strength I rode I cried aloud  
    And spurred it near against the trembling edge.

(I rode Ramon along the mountain wall.  
    Today he had no wilder mood than I—  
No wilder will for lawless wind to call  
    Upon the narrow trail that meets the sky.)

The sharp air flowed like water through my hands.  
    Heart, how I skirted death and laughed at pain!  
Forgotten pain in half-remembered lands  
    Below me in the valley with the rain.

VI.

What alters with my changing? Not Jos,  
    Content in little duties that he loves.  
Not Marta's dimming eyes that stare away  
    Beyond the tranquil court, the circling doves.

I, too, I float on peace, forget almost,  
    And then as drowning sight may pierce the sea  
To find the sun a green and wavering ghost,  
    And shapes of earth distorted monstrously,—

I see a mocking earth, a sun distraught,  
    I lose the buoying instant of relief  
And sink again as wearying soul and thought  
    Drown in the sick amazement of my grief.

VII.

I tilt my hollowed life and look within:  
    The wine it held has left a purple trace—  
Behold, a stain where happiness had been.  
    If I should shatter down this empty vase,

Through what abysses would my soul be tossed  
    To meet its judge in undiscovered lands?  
What sentence meted me, alone and lost,  
    Before him with fragments in my hands?

Better the patient earth that loves me still  
    Should drip her clearness on this purple stain;  
Better my life upheld to her should fill  
    With limpid dew, and gradual gift of rain.

VIII.

Some whim of Marta's shields me from the night,  
    And fretted that my curtain should be kept  
Close drawn, and wakeful candles over bright,  
    I welcomed in the quiet moon and slept;

Then woke again in fear—the night was old,  
    The witching tide of silver shut away,  
And Marta's shaking hand on mine was cold,  
    Her bending face above me strange and grey.

"Who sleeps beneath the moon," she whispered low,  
    "Must pale with her, nor noon-day sky  
Be his again whose pulses beat more slow,  
    More faint, till with waning moon... they die."

## Answered

The morn crept in and found her dead,  
The morn crept in upon our tears;  
“O life of idle days!” we said,  
“O, short young life of wasted years!  
That Death should close the laughing eyes,  
And still the lips before we knew  
If through her girlhood’s mysteries  
Shone aught of purpose strong and true.”

The Spring came to her where she slept—  
“In flowers her nature blooms,” we thought;  
For slender daisies round her crept,  
Gay, with her careless beauty fraught.  
But strange! we saw them with a start,  
We saw, and as we looked, we knew—  
For there above the girlish heart,  
With upturned faces, Pansies grew.

# Indifference

There is a thread from you to me?  
I know, I feel it drawing still,  
A cobweb on my careless thought—  
Old habit-likeness—what you will.

Because it once was strong as Fate  
To bind a life to your desire,—  
Because its knots about my heart  
Could burn me like a witch's wire,

You will not think it loosed. And I  
(Ah, woman soul that prayed "Destroy!")  
Free from the fretting of my pain,  
Have killed the fitful strength of joy.

# Growth

I twine you, little trellis, close and fond,  
And swing in wistful threads above, beyond,  
For air and space to bloom. Be it so.  
Ah me! I love you, but the plant must grow.

I quiver with the call of summer heat,  
With all the wild sap stirring at my feet.  
My quiet trellis, impotent to know  
The earth and sun command me: I must grow.

You cannot share my ardent life apart,  
Nor feel the upward straining of my heart.  
In every vein the urging currents flow,  
Leaf after leaf unfolds: the plant must grow.

# Moods

I.

Sweet grasses, tasseled, bent and tall;  
    And sweet last light across the meadow—  
The wind has tangled, left them all  
    In webs of green, in silver shadow.

And to your speech my heart replies,  
    Still silvering to each word that passes,  
Until a tangled joy it lies,  
    A shining web of wind-blown grasses.

II.

A memory of tears that day,  
    Of small and piteous lives misused:  
The fallen bird we could not save,  
    The butterfly we helped—and bruised.

And last, to fill repentant eyes,  
    Most bright and frail of winged things—  
A moment's faith, an hour's love,  
    Grieving the dust with broken wings.

# Along The Track

The track has led me out beyond the town  
    To follow day across the waning fields,  
The crisping weeds and wastes of tender brown.

On either side the feathered tops are high,  
    A tracery of broken arabesques  
Upon the sullen crimson of the sky.

Into the west the narrowing rails are sped.  
    They cut the crayon softness of the dusk  
With thin converging gleams of bloody red.

## Think Not, O Liliās

Think not, O Liliās, that the love of this night will endure in the sun. Hast thou beheld fungi, white, evil, rosy-lined, poisonous, shrivel in the eyes of day?

In this wilderness of strange hearts it is not thine alone that concerns me. Many brave hearts of men are more to me than thine. The hearts of men breathe deeply. As for thy heart, it runs from me, it is quicksilver, it does not concern me greatly.

# The Suicide

The sleepless night had been a whirl of aching memory and self-hatred, huge chaotic fancies and plunges in a clotted swamp where a lake had been laughter, fed by brooks of sanity. His body had fought for its life against his brain.

There was knowledge in his very flesh of effort and weariness, heat and cold, the brush of wet reeds, the shock of a wave, the bite of a hill wind. No glory of color, no softness of touch or sweetness of scent that the man's life had known but worked on its particular sense and cried out. His body was a whimpering Earth Giant that the dominating brain was bent on swinging into nothingness, as Hercules held Anteus away from the touch of his mother until he died.

Curiously enough the man had no regret for his body. Detail by detail he planned its destruction. He loved his brain. Even as he used one deliberate thought tool after another, he laid each down caressingly. "All these will be broken," said his consciousness. "Something will live," argued the man. "But this will never have a head, or that arms."

# Yesterday

Now all my thoughts were crisped and thinned  
    To elfin threads, to gleaming browns.  
Like tawny grasses lean with wind  
    They drew your heart across the downs.  
Your will of all the winds that blew  
    They drew across the world to me  
To thread my whimsey thoughts of you  
    Along the downs, above the sea.

Beneath a pool beyond the dune—  
    So green it was and amber-walled  
A face would glimmer like a moon  
    Seen whitely through an emerald—  
And there my mermain fancy lay  
    And dreamed the light and pou were one,  
And flickered in her seaweed's sway  
    A broken largesse of the sun.

Above the world as evening fell  
    I made my heart into a sky,  
And through a twilight like a shell  
    I saw the shining seagulls fly.  
I found beneath the sea and land  
    And lost again, unwrit, unheard,  
A song that fluttered in my hand  
    And vanished like a silver bird.

# Ave Atque Vale

It gathers where the moody sky is bending.

It stirs the air along familiar ways

A sigh for strange things forever ending.

For beauty shrinking in these alien days.

Now nothing is the same; old visions move me:

I wander silent through the waning land.

And find for youth and little leaves to love me

The old, old lichen crumbling in my hand.

What shifting films of distance fold you, blind you.

The windy eve of dreams, I cannot tell.

I know they grope through some strange mist to find you.

My hands that give you Greeting and Farewell.





































































































































