

### III - LOVE POEMS

#### GLENCOE

The star-crowned cliffs seem hinged upon the sky,    The clouds are floating  
rags across them curled,    They open to us like the gates of God    Cloven in  
the last great wall of all the world.

I looked, and saw the valley of my soul    Where naked crests fight to achieve  
the skies,    Where no grain grows nor wine, no fruitful thing,    Only big words  
and starry blasphemies.

But you have clothed with mercy like a moss    The barren violence of its  
primal wars,    Sterile although they be and void of rule,    You know my  
shapeless crags have wed the stars.

How shall I thank you, O courageous heart.    That of this wasteful world you  
had no fear;    But bade it blossom in clear faith and sent    Your fair flower-  
feeding rivers: even as here

The peat burns brimming from their cups of stone    Glow brown and blood-  
red down the vast decline    As if Christ stood on yonder clouded peak    And  
turned its thousand waters into wine.

## **LOVE'S TRAPPIST**

There is a place where lute and lyre are broken.      Where scrolls are torn and  
on a wild wind go,      Where tablets stand wiped naked for a token,      Where  
laurels wither and the daisies grow.

Lo: I too join the brotherhood of silence,      I am Love's Trappist and you ask  
in vain,      For man through Love's gate, even as through Death's gate,      Goeth  
alone and comes not back again.

Yet here I pause, look back across the threshold.      Cry to my brethren,  
though the world be old,      Prophets and sages, questioners and doubters,      O  
world, old world, the best hath ne'er been told!

## **CONFSSIONAL**

Now that I kneel at the throne, O Queen, Pity and pardon me. Much  
have I striven to sing the same, Brother of beast and tree; Yet when the  
stars catch me alone Never a linnet sings-- And the blood of a man is a  
bitter voice And cries for foolish things.

Not for me be the vaunt of woe; Was not I from a boy Vowed with the  
helmet and spear and spur To the blood-red banner of joy? A man may  
sing his psalms to a stone, Pour his blood for a weed, But the tears of a  
man are a sudden thing, And come not of his creed.

Nay, but the earth is kind to me, Though I cry for a Star, Leaves and  
grasses, feather and flower, Cover the foolish scar, Prophets and saints and  
seraphim Lighten the load with song, And the heart of a man is a heavy  
load For a man to bear along.

**MUSIC**

Sounding brass and tinkling cymbal,      He that made me sealed my ears,  
And the pomp of gorgeous noises,      Waves of triumph, waves of tears,

Thundered empty round and past me,      Shattered, lost for ever more,  
Ancient gold of pride and passion,      Wrecked like treasure on a shore.

But I saw her cheek and forehead      Change, as at a spoken word,      And I  
saw her head uplifted      Like a lily to the Lord.

Nought is lost, but all transmuted,      Ears are sealed, yet eyes have seen;  
Saw her smiles (O soul be worthy!),      Saw her tears (O heart be clean!).

## **THE DELUGE**

Though giant rains put out the sun,      Here stand I for a sign.      Though  
Earth be filled with waters dark,      My cup is filled with wine.      Tell to the  
trembling priests that here      Under the deluge rod,      One nameless, tattered,  
broken man      Stood up and drank to God.

Sun has been where the rain is now,      Bees in the heat to hum,      Haply a  
humming maiden came,      Now let the Deluge come:      Brown of aureole,  
green of garb,      Straight as a golden rod,      Drink to the throne of thunder  
now!      Drink to the wrath of God.

High in the wreck I held the cup,      I clutched my rusty sword,      I cocked  
my tattered feather      To the glory of the Lord.      Not undone were the heaven  
and earth,      This hollow world thrown up,      Before one man had stood up  
straight!      And drained it like a cup.

## **THE STRANGE MUSIC**

Other loves may sink and settle, other loves may loose and slack,     But I  
wander like a minstrel with a harp upon his back,     Though the harp be on my  
bosom, though I finger and I fret,     Still, my hope is all before me: for I cannot  
play it yet.

In your strings is hid a music that no hand hath ere let fall,     In your soul is  
sealed a pleasure that you have not known at all;     Pleasure subtle as your  
spirit, strange and slender as your frame,     Fiercer than the pain that folds you,  
softer than your sorrow's name.

Not as mine, my soul's anointed, not as mine the rude and light     Easy mirth  
of many faces, swaggering pride of song and fight;     Something stranger,  
something sweeter, something waiting you afar,     Secret as your stricken  
senses, magic as your sorrows are.

But on this, God's harp supernal, stretched but to be stricken once.     Hoary  
Time is a beginner, Life a bungler, Death a dunce.     But I will not fear to match  
them--no, by God, I will not fear,     I will learn you, I will play you and the stars  
stand still to hear.

## **THE GREAT MINIMUM**

It is something to have wept as we have wept,    It is something to have done  
as we have done,    It is something to have watched when all men slept,    And  
seen the stars which never see the sun.

It is something to have smelt the mystic rose,    Although it break and leave  
the thorny rods,    It is something to have hungered once as those    Must  
hunger who have ate the bread of gods.

To have seen you and your unforgotten face,    Brave as a blast of trumpets  
for the fray.    Pure as white lilies in a watery space,    It were something,  
though you went from me to-day.

To have known the things that from the weak are furled,    Perilous ancient  
passions, strange and high;    It is something to be wiser than the world,    It is  
something to be older than the sky.

In a time of sceptic moths and cynic rusts,    And fatted lives that of their  
sweetness tire,    In a world of flying loves and fading lusts,    It is something to  
be sure of a desire.

Lo, blessed are our ears for they have heard;    Yea, blessed are our eyes for  
they have seen:    Let thunder break on man and beast and bird    And the  
lightning. It is something to have been.

**THE MORTAL ANSWERS**

.....COME AWAY-- WITH THE FAIRIES, HAND IN  
HAND, FOR THE WORLD IS MORE FULL OF WEEPING THAN YOU  
CAN UNDERSTAND.

W.B. Yeats.

From the Wood of the Old Wives' Fables They glittered out of the grey,  
And with all the Armies of Elf-land I strove like a beast at bay;

With only a right arm wearied, Only a red sword worn, And the pride  
of the House of Adam That holdeth the stars in scorn.

For they came with chains of flowers And lilies lances free, There in  
the quiet greenwood To take my grief from me.

And I said, "Now all is shaken When heavily hangs the brow, When the  
hope of the years is taken The last star sunken. Now--

"Hear, you chattering cricket, Hear, you spawn of the sod, The strange  
strong cry in the darkness Of one man praising God,

"That out of the night and nothing With travail of birth he came To  
stand one hour in the sunlight Only to say her name.

"Falls through her hair the sunshine In showers; it touches, see, Her  
high bright cheeks in turning; Ah, Elfin Company,

"The world is hot and cruel, We are weary of heart and hand. But the  
world is more full of glory Than you can understand."



## A MARRIAGE SONG

Why should we reckon of hours that rend      While we two ride together?  
The heavens rent from end to end      Would be but windy weather,      The  
strong stars shaken down in spate      Would be a shower of spring,      And we  
should list the trump of fate      And hear a linnets sing.

We break the line with stroke and luck,      The arrows run like rain,      If  
you be struck, or I be struck,      There's one to strike again.      If you befriend,  
or I befriend,      The strength is in us twain,      And good things end and bad  
things end,      And you and I remain.

Why should we reckon of ill or well      While we two ride together?      The fires  
that over Sodom fell      Would be but sultry weather.      Beyond all ends to all  
men given      Our race is far and fell,      We shall but wash our feet in heaven,  
And warm our hands in hell.

Battles unborn and vast shall view      Our faltered standards stream,  
New friends shall come and frenzies new.      New troubles toil and teem;      New  
friends shall pass and still renew      One truth that does not seem,      That I am  
I, and you are you,      And Death a morning dream.

Why should we reckon of scorn or praise      While we two ride together?      The  
icy air of godless days      Shall be but wintry weather.      If hell were highest, if  
the heaven      Were blue with devils blue,      I should have guessed that all was  
even,      If I had dreamed of you.

Little I reckon of empty prides,      Of creeds more cold than clay;      To nobler  
ends and longer rides,      My lady rides to-day.      To swing our swords and  
take our sides      In that all-ending fray      When stars fall down and darkness  
hides,      When God shall turn to bay.

Why should we reckon of grin and groan      While we two ride together?      The  
triple thunders of the throne      Would be but stormy weather.      For us the  
last great fight shall roar,      Upon the ultimate plains,      And we shall turn  
and tell once more      Our love in English lanes.

**BAY COMBE**

With leaves below and leaves above,      And groping under tree and tree,      I  
found the home of my true love,      Who is a wandering home for me.

Who, lost in ruined worlds aloof,      Bore the dread dove wings like a roof;  
Who, past the last lost stars of space      Carried the fire-light on her face.

Who, passing as in idle hours,      Tamed the wild weeds to garden flowers;  
Stroked the strange whirlwind's whirring wings,      And made the comets homely  
things.

Where she went by upon her way      The dark was dearer than the day;  
Where she paused in heaven or hell,      The whole world's tale had ended well.

With leaves below and leaves above.      And groping under tree and tree,      I  
found the home of my true love,      Who is a wandering home for me.

Where she was flung, above, beneath,      By the rude dance of life and death,  
Grow she at Gotham--die at Rome,      Between the pine trees is her home.

In some strange town, some silver morn,      She may have wandered to be  
born;      Stopped at some motley crowd impressed,      And called them kinsfolk  
for a jest.

If we again En goodness thrive,      And the dead saints become alive,      Then  
pedants bald and parchments brown      May claim her blood for London town.

But leaves below and leaves above.      And groping under tree and tree,      I  
found the home of my true love,      Who is a wandering home for me.

The great gravestone she may pass by,      And without noticing, may die;  
The streets of silver Heaven may tread,      With her grey awful eyes unfed.

The city of great peace in pain      May pass, until she find again      This little  
house of holm and fir      God built before the stars for her.

Here in the fallen leaves is furled      Her secret centre of the world.      We sit  
and feel in dusk and dun      The stars swing round us like a sun.

For leaves below and leaves above.      And groping under tree and tree,      I

found the home of my true love. Who is a wandering home for me.