

THE FIVE STUDENTS

The sparrow dips in his wheel-rut bath,
The sun grows passionate-eyed,
And boils the dew to smoke by the paddock-path;
As strenuously we stride, -
Five of us; dark He, fair He, dark She, fair She, I,
All beating by.

The air is shaken, the high-road hot,
Shadowless swoons the day,
The greens are sobered and cattle at rest; but not
We on our urgent way, -
Four of us; fair She, dark She, fair He, I, are there,
But one--elsewhere.

Autumn moulds the hard fruit mellow,
And forward still we press
Through moors, briar-meshed plantations, clay-pits yellow,
As in the spring hours--yes,
Three of us: fair He, fair She, I, as heretofore,
But--fallen one more.

The leaf drops: earthworms draw it in

At night-time noiselessly,
The fingers of birch and beech are skeleton-thin,
And yet on the beat are we, -
Two of us; fair She, I. But no more left to go
The track we know.

Icicles tag the church-aisle leads,
The flag-rope gibbers hoarse,
The home-bound foot-folk wrap their snow-flaked heads,
Yet I still stalk the course, -
One of us . . . Dark and fair He, dark and fair She, gone:
The rest--anon.