

## A NEW YEAR'S EVE IN WAR TIME

I

Phantasmal fears,  
And the flap of the flame,  
And the throb of the clock,  
And a loosened slate,  
And the blind night's drone,  
Which tiredly the spectral pines intone!

II

And the blood in my ears  
Strumming always the same,  
And the gable-cock  
With its fitful grate,  
And myself, alone.

III

The twelfth hour nears  
Hand-hid, as in shame;  
I undo the lock,

And listen, and wait  
For the Young Unknown.

IV

In the dark there careers -  
As if Death astride came  
To numb all with his knock -  
A horse at mad rate  
Over rut and stone.

V

No figure appears,  
No call of my name,  
No sound but "Tic-toc"  
Without check. Past the gate  
It clatters--is gone.

VI

What rider it bears  
There is none to proclaim;  
And the Old Year has struck,  
And, scarce animate,  
The New makes moan.

## VII

Maybe that "More Tears! -  
More Famine and Flame -  
More Severance and Shock!"  
Is the order from Fate  
That the Rider speeds on  
To pale Europe; and tiredly the pines intone.

1915-1916.

### "I MET A MAN"

I met a man when night was nigh,  
Who said, with shining face and eye  
Like Moses' after Sinai:-

"I have seen the Moulder of Monarchies,  
Realms, peoples, plains and hills,  
Sitting upon the sunlit seas! -  
And, as He sat, soliloquies

Fell from Him like an antiphonic breeze

That pricks the waves to thrills.

"Meseemed that of the maimed and dead

Mown down upon the globe, -

Their plenteous blooms of promise shed

Ere fruiting-time--His words were said,

Sitting against the western web of red

Wrapt in His crimson robe.

"And I could catch them now and then:

--'Why let these gambling clans

Of human Cockers, pit liege men

From mart and city, dale and glen,

In death-mains, but to swell and swell again

Their swollen All-Empery plans,

"When a mere nod (if my malign

Compeer but passive keep)

Would mend that old mistake of mine

I made with Saul, and ever consign

All Lords of War whose sanctuaries enshrine

Liberticide, to sleep?

"With violence the lands are spread

Even as in Israel's day,

And it repenteth me I bred  
Chartered armipotents lust-led  
To feuds . . . Yea, grieves my heart, as then I said,  
To see their evil way!

--"The utterance grew, and flapped like flame,  
And further speech I feared;  
But no Celestial tongued acclaim,  
And no huzzas from earthlings came,  
And the heavens mutely masked as 'twere in shame  
Till daylight disappeared."

Thus ended he as night rode high -  
The man of shining face and eye,  
Like Moses' after Sinai.

1916.

"I LOOKED UP FROM MY WRITING"

I looked up from my writing,  
And gave a start to see,

As if rapt in my inditing,  
The moon's full gaze on me.

Her meditative misty head  
Was spectral in its air,  
And I involuntarily said,  
"What are you doing there?"

"Oh, I've been scanning pond and hole  
And waterway hereabout  
For the body of one with a sunken soul  
Who has put his life-light out.

"Did you hear his frenzied tattle?  
It was sorrow for his son  
Who is slain in brutish battle,  
Though he has injured none.

"And now I am curious to look  
Into the blinkered mind  
Of one who wants to write a book  
In a world of such a kind."

Her temper overwrought me,  
And I edged to shun her view,  
For I felt assured she thought me

One who should drown him too.