

Poem: Libertatis Sacra Fames

Albeit nurtured in democracy,  
And liking best that state republican  
Where every man is Kinglike and no man  
Is crowned above his fellows, yet I see,  
Spite of this modern fret for Liberty,  
Better the rule of One, whom all obey,  
Than to let clamorous demagogues betray  
Our freedom with the kiss of anarchy.  
Wherefore I love them not whose hands profane  
Plant the red flag upon the piled-up street  
For no right cause, beneath whose ignorant reign  
Arts, Culture, Reverence, Honour, all things fade,  
Save Treason and the dagger of her trade,  
Or Murder with his silent bloody feet.

Poem: Roses And Rue

(To L. L.)

Could we dig up this long-buried treasure,  
Were it worth the pleasure,  
We never could learn love's song,  
We are parted too long.

Could the passionate past that is fled  
Call back its dead,  
Could we live it all over again,  
Were it worth the pain!

I remember we used to meet  
By an ivied seat,  
And you warbled each pretty word  
With the air of a bird;

And your voice had a quaver in it,  
Just like a linnet,  
And shook, as the blackbird's throat  
With its last big note;

And your eyes, they were green and grey  
Like an April day,

But lit into amethyst  
When I stooped and kissed;

And your mouth, it would never smile  
For a long, long while,  
Then it rippled all over with laughter  
Five minutes after.

You were always afraid of a shower,  
Just like a flower:  
I remember you started and ran  
When the rain began.

I remember I never could catch you,  
For no one could match you,  
You had wonderful, luminous, fleet,  
Little wings to your feet.

I remember your hair - did I tie it?  
For it always ran riot -  
Like a tangled sunbeam of gold:  
These things are old.

I remember so well the room,  
And the lilac bloom  
That beat at the dripping pane

In the warm June rain;

And the colour of your gown,

It was amber-brown,

And two yellow satin bows

From your shoulders rose.

And the handkerchief of French lace

Which you held to your face -

Had a small tear left a stain?

Or was it the rain?

On your hand as it waved adieu

There were veins of blue;

In your voice as it said good-bye

Was a petulant cry,

'You have only wasted your life.'

(Ah, that was the knife!)

When I rushed through the garden gate

It was all too late.

Could we live it over again,

Were it worth the pain,

Could the passionate past that is fled

Call back its dead!

Well, if my heart must break,  
Dear love, for your sake,  
It will break in music, I know,  
Poets' hearts break so.

But strange that I was not told  
That the brain can hold  
In a tiny ivory cell  
God's heaven and hell.

Poem: From 'The Garden Of Eros'

[In this poem the author laments the growth of materialism in the nineteenth century. He hails Keats and Shelley and some of the poets and artists who were his contemporaries, although his seniors, as the torch-bearers of the intellectual life. Among these are Swinburne, William Morris, Rossetti, and Brune-Jones.]

Nay, when Keats died the Muses still had left  
One silver voice to sing his threnody, {1}