

BOOKXXXV. GOOD-BYE MY FANCY

Sail out for Good, Eidolon Yacht!

Heave the anchor short!

Raise main-sail and jib--steer forth,

O little white-hull'd sloop, now speed on really deep waters,

(I will not call it our concluding voyage,

But outset and sure entrance to the truest, best, maturest;)

Depart, depart from solid earth--no more returning to these shores,

Now on for aye our infinite free venture wending,

Spurning all yet tried ports, seas, hawsers, densities, gravitation,

Sail out for good, eidolon yacht of me!

Lingering Last Drops

And whence and why come you?

We know not whence, (was the answer,)

We only know that we drift here with the rest,

That we linger'd and lagg'd--but were wafted at last, and are now here,

To make the passing shower's concluding drops.

Good-Bye My Fancy

Good-bye my fancy--(I had a word to say,
But 'tis not quite the time--The best of any man's word or say,
Is when its proper place arrives--and for its meaning,
I keep mine till the last.)

On, on the Same, Ye Jocund Twain!

On, on the same, ye jocund twain!
My life and recitative, containing birth, youth, mid-age years,
Fitful as motley-tongues of flame, inseparably twined and merged in
 one--combining all,
My single soul--aims, confirmations, failures, joys--Nor single soul alone,
I chant my nation's crucial stage, (America's, haply humanity's)--
 the trial great, the victory great,
A strange eclaireissement of all the masses past, the eastern world,
 the ancient, medieval,
Here, here from wanderings, strayings, lessons, wars, defeats--here

at the west a voice triumphant--justifying all,
A gladsome pealing cry--a song for once of utmost pride and satisfaction;
I chant from it the common bulk, the general average horde, (the
best sooner than the worst)--And now I chant old age,
(My verses, written first for forenoon life, and for the summer's,
autumn's spread,
I pass to snow-white hairs the same, and give to pulses
winter-cool'd the same;)
As here in careless trill, I and my recitatives, with faith and love,
wafting to other work, to unknown songs, conditions,
On, on ye jocund twain! continue on the same!

MY 71st Year

After surmounting three-score and ten,
With all their chances, changes, losses, sorrows,
My parents' deaths, the vagaries of my life, the many tearing
passions of me, the war of '63 and '4,
As some old broken soldier, after a long, hot, wearying march, or
haply after battle,
To-day at twilight, hobbling, answering company roll-call, Here,
with vital voice,
Reporting yet, saluting yet the Officer over all.

Apparitions

A vague mist hanging 'round half the pages:
(Sometimes how strange and clear to the soul,
That all these solid things are indeed but apparitions, concepts,
non-realities.)

The Pallid Wreath

Somehow I cannot let it go yet, funeral though it is,
Let it remain back there on its nail suspended,
With pink, blue, yellow, all blanch'd, and the white now gray and ashy,
One wither'd rose put years ago for thee, dear friend;
But I do not forget thee. Hast thou then faded?
Is the odor exhaled? Are the colors, vitalities, dead?
No, while memories subtly play--the past vivid as ever;
For but last night I woke, and in that spectral ring saw thee,
Thy smile, eyes, face, calm, silent, loving as ever:
So let the wreath hang still awhile within my eye-reach,

It is not yet dead to me, nor even pallid.

An Ended Day

The soothing sanity and blitheness of completion,
The pomp and hurried contest-glare and rush are done;
Now triumph! transformation! jubilate!

Old Age's Ship & Crafty Death's

From east and west across the horizon's edge,
Two mighty masterful vessels sailers steal upon us:
But we'll make race a-time upon the seas--a battle-contest yet! bear
 lively there!
(Our joys of strife and derring-do to the last!)
Put on the old ship all her power to-day!
Crowd top-sail, top-gallant and royal studding-sails,
Out challenge and defiance--flags and flaunting pennants added,
As we take to the open--take to the deepest, freest waters.

To the Pending Year

Have I no weapon-word for thee--some message brief and fierce?
(Have I fought out and done indeed the battle?) Is there no shot left,
For all thy affectations, lisps, scorns, manifold silliness?
Nor for myself--my own rebellious self in thee?

Down, down, proud gorge!--though choking thee;
Thy bearded throat and high-borne forehead to the gutter;
Crouch low thy neck to eleemosynary gifts.

Shakspere-Bacon's Cipher

I doubt it not--then more, far more;
In each old song bequeath'd--in every noble page or text,
(Different--something unreck'd before--some unsuspected author,)
In every object, mountain, tree, and star--in every birth and life,
As part of each--evolv'd from each--meaning, behind the ostent,
A mystic cipher waits infolded.

Long, Long Hence

After a long, long course, hundreds of years, denials,
Accumulations, rous'd love and joy and thought,
Hopes, wishes, aspirations, ponderings, victories, myriads of readers,
Coating, compassing, covering--after ages' and ages' encrustations,
Then only may these songs reach fruition.

Bravo, Paris Exposition!

Add to your show, before you close it, France,
With all the rest, visible, concrete, temples, towers, goods,
 machines and ores,
Our sentiment wafted from many million heart-throbs, ethereal but solid,
(We grand-sons and great-grandsons do not forget your grandsires,)
From fifty Nations and nebulous Nations, compacted, sent oversea to-day,
America's applause, love, memories and good-will.

Interpolation Sounds

Over and through the burial chant,
Organ and solemn service, sermon, bending priests,
To me come interpolation sounds not in the show--plainly to me,
 crowding up the aisle and from the window,
Of sudden battle's hurry and harsh noises--war's grim game to sight
 and ear in earnest;
The scout call'd up and forward--the general mounted and his aides
 around him--the new-brought word--the instantaneous order issued;
The rifle crack--the cannon thud--the rushing forth of men from their
 tents;
The clank of cavalry--the strange celerity of forming ranks--the
 slender bugle note;
The sound of horses' hoofs departing--saddles, arms, accoutrements.

To the Sun-Set Breeze

Ah, whispering, something again, unseen,
Where late this heated day thou enterest at my window, door,
Thou, laving, tempering all, cool-freshing, gently vitalizing
Me, old, alone, sick, weak-down, melted-worn with sweat;

Thou, nestling, folding close and firm yet soft, companion better
than talk, book, art,
(Thou hast, O Nature! elements! utterance to my heart beyond the
rest--and this is of them,)
So sweet thy primitive taste to breathe within--thy soothing fingers
my face and hands,
Thou, messenger--magical strange bringer to body and spirit of me,
(Distances balk'd--occult medicines penetrating me from head to foot,)
I feel the sky, the prairies vast--I feel the mighty northern lakes,
I feel the ocean and the forest--somehow I feel the globe itself
swift-swimming in space;
Thou blown from lips so loved, now gone--haply from endless store,
God-sent,
(For thou art spiritual, Godly, most of all known to my sense,)
Minister to speak to me, here and now, what word has never told, and
cannot tell,
Art thou not universal concrete's distillation? Law's, all
Astronomy's last refinement?
Hast thou no soul? Can I not know, identify thee?

Old Chants

An ancient song, reciting, ending,

Once gazing toward thee, Mother of All,
Musing, seeking themes fitted for thee,
Accept me, thou saidst, the elder ballads,
And name for me before thou goest each ancient poet.

(Of many debts incalculable,
Haply our New World's chieftest debt is to old poems.)

Ever so far back, preluding thee, America,
Old chants, Egyptian priests, and those of Ethiopia,
The Hindu epics, the Grecian, Chinese, Persian,
The Biblic books and prophets, and deep idyls of the Nazarene,
The Iliad, Odyssey, plots, doings, wanderings of Eneas,
Hesiod, Eschylus, Sophocles, Merlin, Arthur,
The Cid, Roland at Roncesvalles, the Nibelungen,
The troubadours, minstrels, minnesingers, skalds,
Chaucer, Dante, flocks of singing birds,
The Border Minstrely, the bye-gone ballads, feudal tales, essays, plays,
Shakespeare, Schiller, Walter Scott, Tennyson,
As some vast wondrous weird dream-presences,
The great shadowy groups gathering around,
Darting their mighty masterful eyes forward at thee,
Thou! with as now thy bending neck and head, with courteous hand
and word, ascending,
Thou! pausing a moment, drooping thine eyes upon them, blent
with their music,

Well pleased, accepting all, curiously prepared for by them,
Thou interest at thy entrance porch.

A Christmas Greeting

Welcome, Brazilian brother--thy ample place is ready;
A loving hand--a smile from the north--a sunny instant hall!
(Let the future care for itself, where it reveals its troubles,
impedimentas,
Ours, ours the present throe, the democratic aim, the acceptance and
the faith;)
To thee to-day our reaching arm, our turning neck--to thee from us
the expectant eye,
Thou cluster free! thou brilliant lustrous one! thou, learning well,
The true lesson of a nation's light in the sky,
(More shining than the Cross, more than the Crown,)
The height to be superb humanity.

Sounds of the Winter

Sounds of the winter too,
Sunshine upon the mountains--many a distant strain
From cheery railroad train--from nearer field, barn, house,
The whispering air--even the mute crops, garner'd apples, corn,
Children's and women's tones--rhythm of many a farmer and of flail,
An old man's garrulous lips among the rest, Think not we give out yet,
Forth from these snowy hairs we keep up yet the lilt.

A Twilight Song

As I sit in twilight late alone by the flickering oak-flame,
Musing on long-pass'd war-scenes--of the countless buried unknown
soldiers,
Of the vacant names, as unindented air's and sea's--the unreturn'd,
The brief truce after battle, with grim burial-squads, and the
deep-fill'd trenches
Of gather'd from dead all America, North, South, East, West, whence
they came up,
From wooded Maine, New-England's farms, from fertile Pennsylvania,
Illinois, Ohio,
From the measureless West, Virginia, the South, the Carolinas, Texas,
(Even here in my room-shadows and half-lights in the noiseless
flickering flames,

Again I see the stalwart ranks on-filing, rising--I hear the
rhythmic tramp of the armies;)
You million unwrit names all, all--you dark bequest from all the war,
A special verse for you--a flash of duty long neglected--your mystic
roll strangely gather'd here,
Each name recall'd by me from out the darkness and death's ashes,
Henceforth to be, deep, deep within my heart recording, for many
future year,
Your mystic roll entire of unknown names, or North or South,
Embalm'd with love in this twilight song.

When the Full-Grown Poet Came

When the full-grown poet came,
Out spake pleased Nature (the round impassive globe, with all its
shows of day and night,) saying, He is mine;
But out spake too the Soul of man, proud, jealous and unreconciled,
Nay he is mine alone;
--Then the full-grown poet stood between the two, and took each
by the hand;
And to-day and ever so stands, as blender, uniter, tightly holding hands,
Which he will never release until he reconciles the two,
And wholly and joyously blends them.

Osceola

When his hour for death had come,
He slowly rais'd himself from the bed on the floor,
Drew on his war-dress, shirt, leggings, and girdled the belt around
his waist,
Call'd for vermilion paint (his looking-glass was held before him,)
Painted half his face and neck, his wrists, and back-hands.
Put the scalp-knife carefully in his belt--then lying down, resting
moment,
Rose again, half sitting, smiled, gave in silence his extended hand
to each and all,
Sank faintly low to the floor (tightly grasping the tomahawk handle,)
Fix'd his look on wife and little children--the last:

(And here a line in memory of his name and death.)

A Voice from Death

A voice from Death, solemn and strange, in all his sweep and power,
With sudden, indescribable blow--towns drown'd--humanity by
 thousands slain,
The vaunted work of thrift, goods, dwellings, forge, street, iron bridge,
Dash'd pell-mell by the blow--yet usher'd life continuing on,
(Amid the rest, amid the rushing, whirling, wild debris,
A suffering woman saved--a baby safely born!)

Although I come and unannounc'd, in horror and in pang,
In pouring flood and fire, and wholesale elemental crash, (this
 voice so solemn, strange,)
I too a minister of Deity.

Yea, Death, we bow our faces, veil our eyes to thee,
We mourn the old, the young untimely drawn to thee,
The fair, the strong, the good, the capable,
The household wreck'd, the husband and the wife, the engulfed forger
 in his forge,
The corpses in the whelming waters and the mud,
The gather'd thousands to their funeral mounds, and thousands never
 found or gather'd.

Then after burying, mourning the dead,
(Faithful to them found or unfound, forgetting not, bearing the
 past, here new musing,)
A day--a passing moment or an hour--America itself bends low,

Silent, resign'd, submissive.

War, death, cataclysm like this, America,
Take deep to thy proud prosperous heart.

E'en as I chant, lo! out of death, and out of ooze and slime,
The blossoms rapidly blooming, sympathy, help, love,
From West and East, from South and North and over sea,
Its hot-spurr'd hearts and hands humanity to human aid moves on;
And from within a thought and lesson yet.

Thou ever-darting Globe! through Space and Air!
Thou waters that encompass us!
Thou that in all the life and death of us, in action or in sleep!
Thou laws invisible that permeate them and all,
Thou that in all, and over all, and through and under all, incessant!
Thou! thou! the vital, universal, giant force resistless, sleepless, calm,
Holding Humanity as in thy open hand, as some ephemeral toy,
How ill to e'er forget thee!

For I too have forgotten,
(Wrapt in these little potencies of progress, politics, culture,
wealth, inventions, civilization,)
Have lost my recognition of your silent ever-swaying power, ye
mighty, elemental throes,
In which and upon which we float, and every one of us is buoy'd.

A Persian Lesson

For his o'erarching and last lesson the greybeard sufi,
In the fresh scent of the morning in the open air,
On the slope of a teeming Persian rose-garden,
Under an ancient chestnut-tree wide spreading its branches,
Spoke to the young priests and students.

"Finally my children, to envelop each word, each part of the rest,
Allah is all, all, all--immanent in every life and object,
May-be at many and many-a-more removes--yet Allah, Allah, Allah is there.

"Has the estray wander'd far? Is the reason-why strangely hidden?
Would you sound below the restless ocean of the entire world?
Would you know the dissatisfaction? the urge and spur of every life;
The something never still'd--never entirely gone? the invisible need
of every seed?

"It is the central urge in every atom,
(Often unconscious, often evil, downfallen,
To return to its divine source and origin, however distant,
Latent the same in subject and in object, without one exception."

The Commonplace

The commonplace I sing;
How cheap is health! how cheap nobility!
Abstinence, no falsehood, no gluttony, lust;
The open air I sing, freedom, toleration,
(Take here the mainest lesson--less from books--less from the schools,)
The common day and night--the common earth and waters,
Your farm--your work, trade, occupation,
The democratic wisdom underneath, like solid ground for all.

"The Rounded Catalogue Divine Complete"

The devilish and the dark, the dying and diseases'd,
The countless (nineteen-twentieths) low and evil, crude and savage,
The crazed, prisoners in jail, the horrible, rank, malignant,
Venom and filth, serpents, the ravenous sharks, liars, the dissolute;
(What is the part the wicked and the loathesome bear within earth's
orbic scheme?)

Newts, crawling things in slime and mud, poisons,
The barren soil, the evil men, the slag and hideous rot.

Mirages

More experiences and sights, stranger, than you'd think for;
Times again, now mostly just after sunrise or before sunset,
Sometimes in spring, oftener in autumn, perfectly clear weather, in
 plain sight,
Camps far or near, the crowded streets of cities and the shopfronts,
(Account for it or not--credit or not--it is all true,
And my mate there could tell you the like--we have often confab'd
 about it,)
People and scenes, animals, trees, colors and lines, plain as could be,
Farms and dooryards of home, paths border'd with box, lilacs in corners,
Weddings in churches, thanksgiving dinners, returns of long-absent sons,
Glum funerals, the crape-veil'd mother and the daughters,
Trials in courts, jury and judge, the accused in the box,
Contestants, battles, crowds, bridges, wharves,
Now and then mark'd faces of sorrow or joy,
(I could pick them out this moment if I saw them again,)
Show'd to me--just to the right in the sky-edge,
Or plainly there to the left on the hill-tops.

L. of G.'s Purport

Not to exclude or demarcate, or pick out evils from their formidable
masses (even to expose them,)
But add, fuse, complete, extend--and celebrate the immortal and the good.
Haughty this song, its words and scope,
To span vast realms of space and time,
Evolution--the cumulative--growths and generations.

Begun in ripen'd youth and steadily pursued,
Wandering, peering, dallying with all--war, peace, day and night
absorbing,
Never even for one brief hour abandoning my task,
I end it here in sickness, poverty, and old age.

I sing of life, yet mind me well of death:
To-day shadowy Death dogs my steps, my seated shape, and has for years--
Draws sometimes close to me, as face to face.

The Unexpress'd

How dare one say it?

After the cycles, poems, singers, plays,

Vaunted Ionia's, India's--Homer, Shakspere--the long, long times'

thick dotted roads, areas,

The shining clusters and the Milky Ways of stars--Nature's pulses reap'd,

All retrospective passions, heroes, war, love, adoration,

All ages' plummets dropt to their utmost depths,

All human lives, throats, wishes, brains--all experiences' utterance;

After the countless songs, or long or short, all tongues, all lands,

Still something not yet told in poesy's voice or print--something lacking,

(Who knows? the best yet unexpress'd and lacking.)

Grand Is the Seen

Grand is the seen, the light, to me--grand are the sky and stars,

Grand is the earth, and grand are lasting time and space,

And grand their laws, so multiform, puzzling, evolutionary;

But grander far the unseen soul of me, comprehending, endowing all those,

Lighting the light, the sky and stars, delving the earth, sailing

the sea,

(What were all those, indeed, without thee, unseen soul? of what

amount without thee?)

More evolutionary, vast, puzzling, O my soul!

More multiform far--more lasting thou than they.

Unseen Buds

Unseen buds, infinite, hidden well,

Under the snow and ice, under the darkness, in every square or cubic inch,

Germinal, exquisite, in delicate lace, microscopic, unborn,

Like babes in wombs, latent, folded, compact, sleeping;

Billions of billions, and trillions of trillions of them waiting,

(On earth and in the sea--the universe--the stars there in the
heavens,)

Urging slowly, surely forward, forming endless,

And waiting ever more, forever more behind.

Good-Bye My Fancy!

Good-bye my Fancy!

Farewell dear mate, dear love!

I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last--let me look back a moment;
The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,
Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
Delightful!--now separation--Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really blended
 into one;
Then if we die we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)
If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens,
May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn something,
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs, (who
 knows?)
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning--so now finally,
Good-bye--and hail! my Fancy.