

---

*Collected Poems,*  
**1934-1952**

---



**by Dylan Thomas**

Styled by **LimpidSoft**

# Contents

<b>Author's Prologue</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I see the boys of summer</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>When once the twilight locks no longer</b>	<b>17</b>

<b>A process in the weather of the heart</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Before I knocked</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>The force that through the green fuse drives the flower</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>My hero bares his nerves</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Where once the waters of your face</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>If I were tickled by the rub of love</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Our eunuch dreams</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Especially when the October wind</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>When, like a running grave</b>	<b>55</b>

<b>From love's first fever to her plague</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>In the beginning</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Light breaks where no sun shines</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>I fellowed sleep</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>I dreamed my genesis</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>My world is pyramid</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>All all and all the dry worlds lever</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>I, in my intricate image</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>This bread I break</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Incarnate devil</b>	<b>107</b>

<b>To-day, this insect</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>The seed-at-zero</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Shall gods be said to thump the clouds</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Here in this spring</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Do you not father me</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Out of the sighs</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Hold hard, these ancient minutes in the cuckoo's month</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Was There A Time</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Now</b>	<b>139</b>

<b>Why east wind chills</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>A grief ago</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>How soon the servant sun</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Ears in the turrets hear</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Foster the light</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>The hand that signed the paper</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Should lanterns shine</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>I have longed to move away</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Find meat on bones</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Grief thief of time</b>	<b>174</b>

<b>And death shall have no dominion</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Then was my neophyte</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>Altarwise by owl-light</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>Because the pleasure-bird whistles</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>I make this in a warring absence</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>When all my five and country senses see</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>We lying by seasand</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>O make me a mask</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>The spire cranes</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>After the funeral</b>	<b>227</b>

Once it was the colour of saying	232
Not from this anger	234
How shall my animal	236
The tombstone told when she died	241
On no work of words	244
A saint about to fall	246
'If my head hurt a hair's foot'	252
Twenty-four years	256
The Conversation of Prayer	258
Poem in October	263



<b>This Side of the Truth</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>To Others than You</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>Love in the Asylum</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Unluckily for a Death</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>The Hunchback in the Park</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>Into her Lying Down Head</b>	<b>289</b>
<b>Do not go gentle into that good night</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>Deaths and Entrances</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>A Winter's Tale</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>On a Wedding Anniversary</b>	<b>318</b>

<b>There was a Saviour</b>	<b>320</b>
<b>On the Marriage of a Virgin</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>In my Craft or Sullen Art</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>Ceremony After a Fire Raid</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Once below a time</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>When I Woke</b>	<b>341</b>
<b>Among those Killed in the Dawn Raid was a Man Aged a Hundred</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>Lie Still, Sleep Becalmed</b>	<b>347</b>
<b>Vision and Prayer</b>	<b>350</b>

<b>Ballad of the Long-legged Bait</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Holy Spring</b>	<b>383</b>
<b>Fern Hill</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>In country sleep</b>	<b>392</b>
<b>Over Sir John's hill</b>	<b>405</b>
<b>Poem on his birthday</b>	<b>411</b>
<b>Lament</b>	<b>420</b>
<b>In the white giant's thigh</b>	<b>427</b>

The present document was derived from text of a Project Gutenberg of Australia eBook 0400381.txt, which was made available free of charge. This document is also free of charge.

## AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

*To Caitlin*

*The prologue in verse, written for this collected edition of my poems, is intended as an address to my readers, the strangers.*

*This book contains most of the poems I have written, and all, up to*

*the present year, that I wish to preserve. Some of them I have revised a little, but if I went on revising everything that I now do not like in this book I should be so busy that I would have no time to try to write new poems.*

*I read somewhere of a shepherd who, when asked why he made, from within fairy rings, ritual observances to the moon to protect his flocks, replied: 'I'd be a damn' fool if I didn't!' These poems, with all their crudities, doubts, and confusions, are written for the love of Man and in praise of God, and I'd be a damn' fool if they weren't.*

*November 1952.*

## AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

---

This day winding down now  
At God speeded summer's end  
In the torrent salmon sun,  
In my seashaken house  
On a breakneck of rocks 5  
Tangled with chirrup and fruit,  
Froth, flute, fin, and quill  
At a wood's dancing hoof,  
By scummed, starfish sands  
With their fishwife cross

10

Gulls, pipers, cockles, and sails,  
Out there, crow black, men  
Tackled with clouds, who kneel  
To the sunset nets,  
Geese nearly in heaven, boys

15

Stabbing, and herons, and shells  
That speak seven seas,

## AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

---

Eternal waters away  
From the cities of nine  
Days' night whose towers will  
catch 20

In the religious wind  
Like stalks of tall, dry straw,  
At poor peace I sing  
To you strangers (though song  
Is a burning and crested act,  
25

The fire of birds in  
The world's turning wood,  
For my swan, splay sounds),  
Out of these seathumbed leaves  
That will fly and fall 30  
Like leaves of trees and as soon  
Crumble and undie  
Into the dogdayed night.  
Seaward the salmon, sucked sun



## AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

---

slips,  
And the dumb swans drub blue  
35

My dabbed bay's dusk, as I hack  
This rumpus of shapes  
For you to know  
How I, a spining man,  
Glory also this star, bird  
40

Roared, sea born, man torn, blood  
blest.

Hark: I trumpet the place,  
From fish to jumping hill! Look:  
I build my bellowing ark  
To the best of my love 45  
As the flood begins,  
Out of the fountainhead  
Of fear, rage read, manalive,  
Molten and mountainous to stream

## AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

---

Over the wound asleep

50

Sheep white hollow farms

To Wales in my arms.

Hoo, there, in castle keep,

50

You king singsong owls, who  
moonbeam

The flickering runs and dive

The dingle furred deer dead!

Huloo, on plumbed bryns,

O my ruffled ring dove

45

In the hooting, nearly dark

With Welsh and reverent rook,

Coo rooning the woods' praise,

Who moons her blue notes from  
her nest

## AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

---

Down to the curlew herd!  
40

Ho, hullaballoing clan  
Agape, with woe  
In your beaks, on the gabbing  
capes!

Heigh, on horseback hill, jack  
Whisking hare! who 35  
Hears, there, this fox light, my  
flood ship's

Clangour as I hew and smite  
(A clash of anvils for my  
Hubbub and fiddle, this tune  
On a tounged puffball) 30

But animals thick as theives  
On God's rough tumbling grounds  
(Hail to His beasthood!).  
Beasts who sleep good and thin,  
Hist, in hogback woods! The

## AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

---

haystacked 25

Hollow farms in a throng  
Of waters cluck and cling,  
And barnroofs cockcrow war!  
O kingdom of neighbors finned  
Felled and quilled, flash to my  
patch 20

Work ark and the moonshine  
Drinking Noah of the bay,  
With pelt, and scale, and fleece:  
Only the drowned deep bells  
Of sheep and churches noise  
15

Poor peace as the sun sets  
And dark shoals every holy field.  
We will ride out alone, and then,  
Under the stars of Wales,  
Cry, Multiudes of arks! Across  
10

## AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

---

The water lidded lands,  
Manned with their loves they'll  
    move,  
Like wooden islands, hill to hill.  
Huloo, my prowed dove with a  
    flute!  
Ahoy,    old,    sea-legged    fox,  
                    5  
Tom tit and Dai mouse!  
My ark sings in the sun  
At God speeded summer's end  
And the flood flowers now.

## I SEE THE BOYS OF SUMMER

I

I see the boys of summer in their  
ruin

Lay the gold tithings barren,  
Setting no store by harvest, freeze  
the soils;

There in their heat the winter

## I SEE THE BOYS OF SUMMER

---

floods  
Of frozen loves they fetch their  
girls,  
And drown the cargoes in  
their tides.

These boys of light are curdlers in  
their folly,  
Sour the boiling honey;  
The jacks of frost they finger in the  
hives;  
There in the sun the frigid threads  
Of doubt and dark they feed their  
nerves;  
The signal moon is zero in their  
voids.

I see the summer children in their  
mothers  
Split up the brawned womb's

weathers,  
Divide the night and day with fairy  
thumbs;  
There in the deep with quartered  
shades  
Of sun and moon they paint their  
dams  
As sunlight paints the shelling of  
their heads.

I see that from these boys shall men  
of nothing  
Stature by seedy shifting,  
Or lame the air with leaping from  
its heats;  
There from their hearts the dog-  
dayed pulse  
Of love and light bursts in their  
throats.



## I SEE THE BOYS OF SUMMER

---

O see the pulse of summer in the  
ice.

II

But seasons must be challenged or  
they totter

Into a chiming quarter

Where, punctual as death, we ring  
the stars;

There, in his night, the black-  
tongued bells

The sleepy man of winter pulls,

Nor blows back moon-and-  
midnight as she blows.

We are the dark deniers, let us  
summon

Death from a summer woman,

A muscling life from lovers in their  
cramp,

## I SEE THE BOYS OF SUMMER

---

From the fair dead who flush the  
    sea  
The bright-eyed worm on Davy's  
    lamp,  
And from the planted womb the  
    man of straw.

We summer boys in this four-  
    winded spinning,  
Green of the seaweeds' iron,  
Hold up the noisy sea and drop her  
    birds,  
Pick the world's ball of wave and  
    froth  
To choke the deserts with her tides,  
And comb the county gardens for a  
    wreath.

In spring we cross our foreheads  
    with the holly,

## I SEE THE BOYS OF SUMMER

---

Heigh ho the blood and berry,  
And nail the merry squires to the  
trees;  
Here love's damp muscle dries and  
dies,  
Here break a kiss in no love's  
quarry.  
O see the poles of promise in the  
boys.

### III

I see you boys of summer in your  
ruin.  
Man in his maggot's barren.  
And boys are full and foreign in the  
pouch.  
I am the man your father was.  
We are the sons of flint and pitch.  
O see the poles are kissing as they

# I SEE THE BOYS OF SUMMER

---

CROSS.

WHEN ONCE THE TWILIGHT  
LOCKS NO LONGER

Locked in the long worm of my fin-  
ger  
Nor damned the sea that sped  
about my fist,  
The mouth of time sucked, like a  
sponge,

# WHEN ONCE THE TWILIGHT LOCKS NO LONGER

---

The milky acid on each hinge,  
And swallowed dry the waters of  
the breast.

When the galactic sea was sucked  
And all the dry seabed unlocked,  
I sent my creature scouting on the  
globe,  
That globe itself of hair and bone  
That, sewn to me by nerve and  
brain,  
Had stringed my flask of matter to  
his rib.

My fuses timed to charge his heart,  
He blew like powder to the light  
And held a little sabbath with the  
sun,  
But when the stars, assuming  
shape,

# WHEN ONCE THE TWILIGHT LOCKS NO LONGER

---

Drew in his eyes the straws of  
sleep,  
He drowned his father's magics in  
a dream.

All issue armoured, of the grave,  
The redhaired cancer still alive,  
The cataracted eyes that filmed  
their cloth;  
Some dead undid their bushy jaws,  
And bags of blood let out their  
flies;  
He had by heart the Christ-cross-  
row of death.

Sleep navigates the tides of time;  
The dry Sargasso of the tomb  
Gives up its dead to such a work-  
ing sea;  
And sleep rolls mute above the

# WHEN ONCE THE TWILIGHT LOCKS NO LONGER

---

beds

Where fishes' food is fed the  
shades

Who periscope through flowers to  
the sky.

When once the twilight screws  
were turned,

And mother milk was stiff as sand,  
I sent my own ambassador to light;  
By trick or chance he fell asleep  
And conjured up a carcass shape  
To rob me of my fluids in his heart.

Awake, my sleeper, to the sun,  
A worker in the morning town,  
And leave the popped pickthank  
where he lies;

The fences of the light are down,  
All but the briskest riders thrown



WHEN ONCE THE TWILIGHT LOCKS  
NO LONGER

---

And worlds hang on the trees.

A PROCESS IN THE WEATHER OF  
THE HEART

A process in the weather of the  
heart

Turns damp to dry; the golden shot  
Storms in the freezing tomb.

A weather in the quarter of the  
veins

# A PROCESS IN THE WEATHER OF THE HEART

---

Turns night to day; blood in their  
suns

Lights up the living worm.

A process in the eye forwarns  
The bones of blindness; and the  
womb

Drives in a death as life leaks out.

A darkness in the weather of the  
eye

Is half its light; the fathomed sea  
Breaks on unangled land.

The seed that makes a forest of the  
loin

Forks half its fruit; and half drops  
down,

Slow in a sleeping wind.

A weather in the flesh and bone  
Is damp and dry; the quick and

# A PROCESS IN THE WEATHER OF THE HEART

---

dead  
Move like two ghosts before the  
eye.  
A process in the weather of the  
world  
Turns ghost to ghost; each moth-  
ered child  
Sits in their double shade.  
A process blows the moon into the  
sun,  
Pulls down the shabby curtains of  
the skin;  
And the heart gives up its dead.

## BEFORE I KNOCKED

Before I knocked and flesh let enter,  
With liquid hands tapped on the  
womb,  
I who was shapeless as the water  
That shaped the Jordan near my  
home  
Was brother to Mnetha's daughter

## BEFORE I KNOCKED

---

And sister to the fathering worm.

I who was deaf to spring and summer,  
Who knew not sun nor moon by

name,  
Felt thud beneath my flesh's ar-

mour,  
As yet was in a molten form

The leaden stars, the rainy hammer  
Swung by my father from his  
dome.

I knew the message of the winter,  
The darted hail, the childish snow,  
And the wind was my sister suitor;  
Wind in me leaped, the hellborn  
dew;

My veins flowed with the Eastern  
weather;

## BEFORE I KNOCKED

---

Ungotten I knew night and day.

As yet ungotten, I did suffer;  
The rack of dreams my lily bones  
Did twist into a living cipher,  
And flesh was snipped to cross the  
    lines  
Of gallow crosses on the liver  
And brambles in the wringing  
    brains.

My throat knew thirst before the  
    structure  
Of skin and vein around the well  
Where words and water make a  
    mixture  
Unfailing till the blood runs foul;  
My heart knew love, my belly  
    hunger;  
I smelt the maggot in my stool.

## BEFORE I KNOCKED

---

And time cast forth my mortal  
creature  
To drift or drown upon the seas  
Acquainted with the salt adventure  
Of tides that never touch the  
shores.

I who was rich was made the richer  
By sipping at the vine of days.

I, born of flesh and ghost, was neither  
A ghost nor man, but mortal ghost.  
And I was struck down by death's  
feather.

I was a mortal to the last  
Long breath that carried to my father  
The message of his dying christ.



## BEFORE I KNOCKED

---

You who bow down at cross and altar,  
Remember me and pity Him  
Who took my flesh and bone for armour  
And doublecrossed my mother's  
womb.

**THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE  
GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER**

The force that through the green  
fuse drives the flower  
Drives my green age; that blasts  
the roots of trees  
Is my destroyer.  
And I am dumb to tell the crooked

THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE  
GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER

---

rose

My youth is bent by the same win-  
try fever.

The force that drives the water  
through the rocks  
Drives my red blood; that dries the  
mouthing streams  
Turns mine to wax.

And I am dumb to mouth unto my  
veins  
How at the mountain spring the  
same mouth sucks.

The hand that whirls the water in  
the pool  
Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the  
blowing wind  
Hauls my shroud sail.  
And I am dumb to tell the hanging

THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE  
GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER

---

man

How of my clay is made the hang-  
man's lime.

The lips of time leech to the foun-  
tain head;

Love drips and gathers, but the  
fallen blood

Shall calm her sores.

And I am dumb to tell a weather's  
wind

How time has ticked a heaven  
round the stars.

And I am dumb to tell the lover's  
tomb

How at my sheet goes the same  
crooked worm.

## MY HERO BARES HIS NERVES

My hero bares his nerves along my  
wrist  
That rules from wrist to shoulder,  
Unpacks the head that, like a  
sleepy ghost,  
Leans on my mortal ruler,  
The proud spine spurning turn and

## MY HERO BARES HIS NERVES

---

twist.

And these poor nerves so wired to  
the skull

Ache on the lovelorn paper

I hug to love with my unruly  
scrawl

That utters all love hunger

And tells the page the empty ill.

My hero bares my side and sees his  
heart

Tread, like a naked Venus,

The beach of flesh, and wind her  
bloodred plait;

Stripping my loin of promise,

He promises a secret heat.

He holds the wire from this box of  
nerves

Praising the mortal error

## MY HERO BARES HIS NERVES

---

Of birth and death, the two sad  
knaves of thieves,  
And the hunger's emperor;  
He pulls that chain, the cistern  
moves.

WHERE ONCE THE WATERS OF  
YOUR FACE

Where once the waters of your face  
Spun to my screws, your dry ghost  
    blows,  
The dead turns up its eye;  
Where once the mermen through  
    your ice



# WHERE ONCE THE WATERS OF YOUR FACE

---

Pushed up their hair, the dry wind  
steers  
Through salt and root and roe.

Where once your green knots sank  
their splice  
Into the tided cord, there goes  
The green unraveller,  
His scissors oiled, his knife hung  
loose  
To cut the channels at their source  
And lay the wet fruits low.

Invisible, your clocking tides  
Break on the lovebeds of the  
weeds;  
The weed of love's left dry;  
There round about your stones the  
shades  
Of children go who, from their

# WHERE ONCE THE WATERS OF YOUR FACE

---

voids,  
Cry to the dolphined sea.  
Dry as a tomb, your coloured lids  
Shall not be latched while magic  
glides  
Sage on the earth and sky;  
There shall be corals in your beds,  
There shall be serpents in your  
tides,  
Till all our sea-faiths die.

**IF I WERE TICKLED BY THE RUB  
OF LOVE**

If I were tickled by the rub of love,  
A rooking girl who stole me for her  
side,  
Broke through her straws, break-  
ing my bandaged string,  
If the red tickle as the cattle calve

# IF I WERE TICKLED BY THE RUB OF LOVE

---

Still set to scratch a laughter from  
my lung,  
I would not fear the apple nor the  
flood  
Nor the bad blood of spring.

Shall it be male or female? say the  
cells,  
And drop the plum like fire from  
the flesh.  
If I were tickled by the hatching  
hair,  
The winging bone that sprouted in  
the heels,  
The itch of man upon the baby's  
thigh,  
I would not fear the gallows nor  
the axe  
Nor the crossed sticks of war.

# IF I WERE TICKLED BY THE RUB OF LOVE

---

Shall it be male or female? say the  
fingers

That chalk the walls with green  
girls and their men.

I would not fear the muscling-in of  
love

If I were tickled by the urchin  
hungers

Rehearsing heat upon a raw-edged  
nerve.

I would not fear the devil in the  
loin

Nor the outspoken grave.

If I were tickled by the lovers' rub  
That wipes away not crow's-foot  
nor the lock

Of sick old manhood on the fallen  
jaws,

# IF I WERE TICKLED BY THE RUB OF LOVE

---

Time and the crabs and the sweet-  
hearting crib  
Would leave me cold as butter for  
the flies,  
The sea of scums could drown me  
as it broke  
Dead on the sweethearts' toes.

This world is half the devil's and  
my own,  
Daft with the drug that's smoking  
in a girl  
And curling round the bud that  
forks her eye.  
An old man's shank one-  
marrowed with my bone,  
And all the herrings smelling in the  
sea,  
I sit and watch the worm beneath

# IF I WERE TICKLED BY THE RUB OF LOVE

---

my nail  
Wearing the quick away.  
And that's the rub, the only rub  
that tickles.  
The knobbly ape that swings along  
his sex  
From damp love-darkness and the  
nurse's twist  
Can never raise the midnight of a  
chuckle,  
Nor when he finds a beauty in the  
breast  
Of lover, mother, lovers, or his six  
Feet in the rubbing dust.  
And what's the rub? Death's  
feather on the nerve?  
Your mouth, my love, the thistle in  
the kiss?

IF I WERE TICKLED BY THE RUB OF  
LOVE

---

My Jack of Christ born thorny on  
the tree?

The words of death are dryer than  
his stiff,

My wordy wounds are printed  
with your hair.

I would be tickled by the rub that  
is:

Man be my metaphor.



## OUR EUNUCH DREAMS

I

Our eunuch dreams, all seedless in  
the light,  
Of light and love, the tempers of  
the heart,  
Whack their boys' limbs,  
And, winding-footed in their

## OUR EUNUCH DREAMS

---

shawl and sheet,  
Groom the dark brides, the wid-  
ows of the night  
Fold in their arms.

The shades of girls, all flavoured  
from their shrouds,  
When sunlight goes are sundered  
from the worm,  
The bones of men, the broken in  
their beds,  
By midnight pulleys that unhouse  
the tomb.

### II

In this our age the gunman and his  
moll,  
Two one-dimensional ghosts, love  
on a reel,  
Strange to our solid eye,

## OUR EUNUCH DREAMS

---

And speak their midnight nothings  
as they swell;  
When cameras shut they hurry to  
their hole  
down in the yard of day.  
They dance between their ar-  
clamps and our skull,  
Impose their shots, showing the  
nights away;  
We watch the show of shadows  
kiss or kill  
Flavoured of celluloid give love the  
lie.

### III

Which is the world? Of our two  
sleepings, which  
Shall fall awake when cures and  
their itch

## OUR EUNUCH DREAMS

---

Raise up this red-eyed earth?  
Pack off the shapes of daylight and  
    their starch,  
The sunny gentlemen, the Welsh-  
    ing rich,  
Or drive the night-gear'd forth.  
The photograph is married to the  
    eye,  
Grafts on its bride one-sided skins  
    of truth;  
The dream has sucked the sleeper  
    of his faith  
That shrouded men might marrow  
    as they fly.

### IV

This is the world: the lying likeness  
    of  
Our strips of stuff that tatter as we

## OUR EUNUCH DREAMS

---

move

Loving and being loth;  
The dream that kicks the buried  
from their sack  
And lets their trash be honoured as  
the quick.

This is the world. Have faith.

For we shall be a shouter like the  
cock,

Blowing the old dead back; our  
shots shall smack

The image from the plates;  
And we shall be fit fellows for a  
life,

And who remains shall flower as  
they love,

Praise to our faring hearts.

**ESPECIALLY WHEN THE  
OCTOBER WIND**

Especially when the October wind  
With frosty fingers punishes my  
hair,  
Caught by the crabbing sun I walk  
on fire  
And cast a shadow crab upon the

ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OCTOBER  
WIND

---

land,  
By the sea's side, hearing the noise  
of birds,  
Hearing the raven cough in winter  
sticks,  
My busy heart who shudders as  
she talks  
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains  
her words.

Shut, too, in a tower of words, I  
mark  
On the horizon walking like the  
trees  
The wordy shapes of women, and  
the rows  
Of the star-gestured children in the  
park.  
Some let me make you of the vow-

ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OCTOBER  
WIND

---

elled beeches,  
Some of the oaken voices, from the  
roots  
Of many a thorny shire tell you  
notes,  
Some let me make you of the wa-  
ter's speeches.

Behind a pot of ferns the wagging  
clock  
Tells me the hour's word, the neu-  
ral meaning  
Flies on the shafted disk, declaims  
the morning  
And tells the windy weather in the  
cock.  
Some let me make you of the  
meadow's signs;  
The signal grass that tells me all I



# ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OCTOBER WIND

---

know  
Breaks with the wormy winter  
through the eye.  
Some let me tell you of the raven's  
sins.

Especially when the October wind  
(Some let me make you of autumnal  
spells,  
The spider-tongued, and the loud  
hill of Wales)  
With fists of turnips punishes the  
land,  
Some let me make of you the heart-  
less words.  
The heart is drained that, spelling  
in the scurry  
Of chemic blood, warned of the  
coming fury.

ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OCTOBER  
WIND

---

By the sea's side hear the dark-  
vowelled birds.

## WHEN, LIKE A RUNNING GRAVE

When, like a running grave, time  
tracks you down,  
Your calm and cuddled is a scythe  
of hairs,  
Love in her gear is slowly through  
the house,  
Up naked stairs, a turtle in a

## WHEN, LIKE A RUNNING GRAVE

---

hearse,  
Hauled to the dome,  
Comes, like a scissors stalking, tai-  
lor age,  
Deliver me who timid in my tribe,  
Of love am barer than Cadaver's  
trap  
Robbed of the foxy tongue, his  
footed tape  
Of the bone inch  
Deliver me, my masters, head and  
heart,  
Heart of Cadaver's candle waxes  
thin,  
When blood, spade-handed, and  
the logic time  
Drive children up like bruises to  
the thumb,

## WHEN, LIKE A RUNNING GRAVE

---

From maid and head,  
For, sunday faced, with dusters in  
my glove,  
Chaste and the chaser, man with  
the cockshut eye,  
I, that time's jacket or the coat of ice  
May fail to fasten with a virgin o  
In the straight grave,  
Stride through Cadaver's country  
in my force,  
My pickbrain masters morsing on  
the stone  
Despair of blood, faith in the  
maiden's slime,  
Halt among eunuchs, and the nitric  
stain  
On fork and face.  
Time is a foolish fancy, time and

## WHEN, LIKE A RUNNING GRAVE

---

fool.

No, no, you lover skull, descend-  
ing hammer

Descends, my masters, on the en-  
tered honour.

You hero skull, Cadaver in the  
hangar

Tells the stick, 'fail.'

Joy is no knocking nation, sir and  
madam,

The cancer's fashion, or the sum-  
mer feather

Lit on the cuddled tree, the cross of  
fever,

Not city tar and subway bored to  
foster

Man through macadam.

I dump the waxlights in your

## WHEN, LIKE A RUNNING GRAVE

---

tower dome.  
Joy is the knock of dust, Cadaver's  
shoot  
Of bud of Adam through his boxy  
shift,  
Love's twilit nation and the skull of  
state,  
Sir, is your doom.

Everything ends, the tower ending  
and,  
(Have with the house of wind), the  
leaning scene,  
Ball of the foot depending from the  
sun,  
(Give, summer, over), the ce-  
mented skin,  
The actions' end.

All, men my madmen, the un-

## WHEN, LIKE A RUNNING GRAVE

---

wholesome wind  
With whistler's cough contages,  
time on track  
Shapes in a cinder death; love for  
his trick,  
Happy Cadaver's hunger as you  
take  
The kissproof world.



FROM LOVE'S FIRST FEVER TO  
HER PLAGUE

From love's first fever to her  
    plague, from the soft second  
And to the hollow minute of the  
    womb,  
From the unfolding to the scissored  
    caul,

## FROM LOVE'S FIRST FEVER TO HER PLAGUE

---

The time for breast and the green  
apron age  
When no mouth stirred about the  
hanging famine,  
All world was one, one windy  
nothing,  
My world was christened in a  
stream of milk.  
And earth and sky were as one airy  
hill.  
The sun and mood shed one white  
light.

From the first print of the unshod-  
den foot, the lifting  
Hand, the breaking of the hair,  
From the first secret of the heart,  
the warning ghost,  
And to the first dumb wonder at

# FROM LOVE'S FIRST FEVER TO HER PLAGUE

---

the flesh,  
The sun was red, the moon was  
grey,  
The earth and sky were as two  
mountains meeting.

The body prospered, teeth in the  
marrowed gums,  
The growing bones, the rumour of  
the manseed  
Within the hallowed gland, blood  
blessed the heart,  
And the four winds, that had long  
blown as one,  
Shone in my ears the light of  
sound,  
Called in my eyes the sound of  
light.  
And yellow was the multiplying

# FROM LOVE'S FIRST FEVER TO HER PLAGUE

---

sand,  
Each golden grain spat life into its  
fellow,  
Green was the singing house.

The plum my mother picked ma-  
tured slowly,  
The boy she dropped from dark-  
ness at her side  
Into the sided lap of light grew  
strong,  
Was muscled, matted, wise to the  
crying thigh,  
And to the voice that, like a voice  
of hunger,  
Itched in the noise of wind and  
sun.

And from the first declension of the  
flesh

## FROM LOVE'S FIRST FEVER TO HER PLAGUE

---

I learnt man's tongue, to twist the  
    shapes of thoughts  
Into the stony idiom of the brain,  
To shade and knit anew the patch  
    of words  
Left by the dead who, in their  
    moonless acre,  
Need no word's warmth.  
The root of tongues ends in a  
    spentout cancer,  
That but a name, where maggots  
    have their X.

I learnt the verbs of will, and had  
    my secret;  
The code of night tapped on my  
    tongue;  
What had been one was many  
    sounding minded.

## FROM LOVE'S FIRST FEVER TO HER PLAGUE

---

One wound, one mind, spewed out  
the matter,  
One breast gave suck the fever's is-  
sue;  
From the divorcing sky I learnt the  
double,  
The two-framed globe that spun  
into a score;  
A million minds gave suck to such  
a bud  
As forks my eye;  
Youth did condense; the tears of  
spring  
Dissolved in summer and the hun-  
dred seasons;  
One sun, one manna, warmed and  
fed.

## IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning was the three-  
pointed star,  
One smile of light across the empty  
face;  
One bough of bone across the root-  
ing air,  
The substance forked that mar-

## IN THE BEGINNING

---

rowed the first sun;  
And, burning ciphers on the round  
of space,  
Heaven and hell mixed as they  
spun.

In the beginning was the pale sig-  
nature,  
Three-syllabled and starry as the  
smile,  
And after came the imprints on the  
water,  
Stamp of the minted face upon the  
moon;  
The blood that touched the  
crosstree and the grail  
Touched the first cloud and left a  
sign.

In the beginning was the mounting



## IN THE BEGINNING

---

fire

That set alight the weathers from a  
spark,

A three-eyed, red-eyed spark,  
blunt as a flower;

Life rose and spouted from the  
rolling seas,

Burst in the roots, pumped from  
the earth and rock

The secret oils that drive the grass.

In the beginning was the word, the  
word

That from the solid bases of the  
light

Abstracted all the letters of the  
void;

And from the cloudy bases of the  
breath

## IN THE BEGINNING

---

The word flowed up, translating to  
the heart  
First characters of birth and death.  
In the beginning was the secret  
brain.  
The brain was celled and soldered  
in the thought  
Before the pitch was forking to a  
sun;  
Before the veins were shaking in  
their sieve,  
Blood shot and scattered to the  
winds of light  
The ribbed original of love.

**LIGHT BREAKS WHERE NO SUN  
SHINES**

Light breaks where no sun shines;  
Where no sea runs, the waters of  
the heart  
Push in their tides;  
And, broken ghosts with glow-  
worms in their heads,

# LIGHT BREAKS WHERE NO SUN SHINES

---

The things of light  
File through the flesh where no  
flesh decks the bones.

A candle in the thighs  
Warms youth and seed and burns  
the seeds of age;  
Where no seed stirs,  
The fruit of man unwrinkles in the  
stars,  
Bright as a fig;  
Where no wax is, the candle shows  
its hairs.

Dawn breaks behind the eyes;  
From poles of skull and toe the  
windy blood  
Slides like a sea;  
Nor fenced, nor staked, the gush-  
ers of the sky

# LIGHT BREAKS WHERE NO SUN SHINES

---

Spout to the rod  
Divining in a smile the oil of tears.

Night in the sockets rounds,  
Like some pitch moon, the limit of  
the globes;  
Day lights the bone;  
Where no cold is, the skinning  
gales unpin  
The winter's robes;  
The film of spring is hanging from  
the lids.

Light breaks on secret lots,  
On tips of thought where thoughts  
smell in the rain;  
When logics die,  
The secret of the soil grows  
through the eye,  
And blood jumps in the sun;

# LIGHT BREAKS WHERE NO SUN SHINES

---

Above the waste allotments the  
dawn halts.

## I FELLOWED SLEEP

I followed sleep who kissed me in  
the brain,  
Let fall the tear of time; the  
sleeper's eye,  
Shifting to light, turned on me like  
a moon.  
So, planning-heeled, I flew along

## I FELLOWED SLEEP

---

my man  
And dropped on dreaming and the  
upward sky.

I fled the earth and, naked, climbed  
the weather,  
Reaching a second ground far from  
the stars;  
And there we wept, I and a ghostly  
other,  
My mothers-eyed, upon the tops of  
trees;  
I fled that ground as lightly as a  
feather.

'My fathers' globe knocks on its  
nave and sings.'  
'This that we tread was, too, your  
father's land.'  
'But this we tread bears the angelic



## I FELLOWED SLEEP

---

gangs,  
Sweet are their fathered faces in  
their wings.'  
'These are but dreaming men.  
Breathe, and they fade.'

Faded my elbow ghost, the  
mothers-eyed,  
As, blowing on the angels, I was  
lost  
On that cloud coast to each grave-  
grabbing shade;  
I blew the dreaming fellows to  
their bed  
Where still they sleep unknowing  
of their ghost.

Then all the matter of the living air  
Raised up a voice, and, climbing on  
the words,

## I FELLOWED SLEEP

---

I spelt my vision with a hand and  
hair,  
How light the sleeping on this soily  
star,  
How deep the waking in the  
worlded clouds.

There grows the hours' ladder to  
the sun,  
Each rung a love or losing to the  
last,  
The inches monkeyed by the blood  
of man.  
An old, mad man still climbing in  
his ghost,  
My fathers' ghost is climbing in the  
rain.

## I DREAMED MY GENESIS

I dreamed my genesis in sweat of  
sleep, breaking  
Through the rotating shell, strong  
As motor muscle on the drill, driv-  
ing  
Through vision and the girdered  
nerve.

## I DREAMED MY GENESIS

---

From limbs that had the measure of  
the worm, shuffled  
Off from the creasing flesh, filed  
Through all the irons in the grass,  
metal  
Of suns in the man-melting night.

Heir to the scalding veins that hold  
love's drop, costly  
A creature in my bones I  
Rounded my globe of heritage,  
journey  
In bottom gear through night-  
geared man.

I dreamed my genesis and died  
again, shrapnel  
Rammed in the marching heart,  
hole  
In the stitched wound and clotted

## I DREAMED MY GENESIS

---

wind, muzzled  
Death on the mouth that ate the  
gas.

Sharp in my second death I marked  
the hills, harvest  
Of hemlock and the blades, rust  
My blood upon the tempered  
dead, forcing  
My second struggling from the  
grass.

And power was contagious in my  
birth, second  
Rise of the skeleton and  
Rerobing of the naked ghost. Man-  
hood  
Spat up from the resuffered pain.  
I dreamed my genesis in sweat of  
death, fallen

## I DREAMED MY GENESIS

---

Twice in the feeding sea, grown  
Stale of Adam's brine until, vision  
Of new man strength, I seek the  
sun.

## MY WORLD IS PYRAMID

I

Half of the fellow father as he dou-  
bles

His sea-sucked Adam in the hol-  
low hulk,

Half of the fellow mother as she  
dabbles

## MY WORLD IS PYRAMID

---

To-morrow's diver in her horny  
milk,  
Bisected shadows on the thunder's  
bone  
Bolt for the salt unborn.

The fellow half was frozen as it  
bubbled  
Corrosive spring out of the ice-  
berg's crop,  
The fellow seed and shadow as it  
babbled  
The swing of milk was tufted in the  
pap,  
For half of love was planted in the  
lost,  
And the unplanted ghost.

The broken halves are fellowed in  
a cripple,



## MY WORLD IS PYRAMID

---

The crutch that marrow taps upon  
their sleep,  
Limp in the street of sea, among the  
rabble  
Of tide-tongued heads and blad-  
ders in the deep,  
And stake the sleepers in the sav-  
age grave  
That the vampire laugh.

The patchwork halves were cloven  
as they scudded  
The wild pigs' wood, and slime  
upon the trees,  
Sucking the dark, kissed on the  
cyanide,  
And loosed the braiding adders  
from their hairs,  
Rotating halves are horning as they

## MY WORLD IS PYRAMID

---

drill

The arterial angel.

What colour is glory? death's  
feather? tremble

The halves that pierce the pin's  
point in the air,

And prick the thumb-stained  
heaven through the thimble.

The ghost is dumb that stammered  
in the straw,

The ghost that hatched his havoc as  
he flew

Blinds their cloud-tracking eye.

II

My world is pyramid. The padded  
mummer

Weeps on the desert ochre and the  
salt

## MY WORLD IS PYRAMID

---

Incising summer.  
My Egypt's armour buckling in its  
sheet,  
I scrape through resin to a starry  
bone  
And a blood parhelion.

My world is cypress, and an En-  
glish valley.  
I piece my flesh that rattled on the  
yards  
Red in an Austrian volley.  
I hear, through dead men's drums,  
the riddled lads,  
Screwing their bowels from a hill of  
bones,  
Cry Eloi to the guns.

My grave is watered by the cross-  
ing Jordan.

## MY WORLD IS PYRAMID

---

The Arctic scut, and basin of the  
South,  
Drip on my dead house garden.  
Who seek me landward, marking  
in my mouth  
The straws of Asia, lose me as I  
turn  
Through the Atlantic corn.

The fellow halves that, cloven as  
they swivel  
On casting tides, are tangled in the  
shells,  
Bearding the unborn devil,  
Bleed from my burning fork and  
smell my heels.  
The tongue's of heaven gossip as I  
glide  
Binding my angel's hood.

## MY WORLD IS PYRAMID

---

Who blows death's feather? What  
glory is colour?

I blow the stammel feather in the  
vein.

The loin is glory in a working pal-  
lor.

My clay unsuckled and my salt un-  
born,

The secret child, I sift about the sea  
Dry in the half-tracked thigh.

**ALL ALL AND ALL THE DRY  
WORLDS LEVER**

I

All all and all the dry worlds lever,  
Stage of the ice, the solid ocean,  
All from the oil, the pound of lava.  
City of spring, the governed

ALL ALL AND ALL THE DRY WORLDS  
LEVER

---

flower,  
Turns in the earth that turns the  
    ashen  
Towns around on a wheel of fire.  
How now my flesh, my naked fel-  
    low,  
Dug of the sea, the glanded mor-  
    row,  
Worm in the scalp, the staked and  
    fallow.  
All all and all, the corpse's lover,  
Skinny as sin, the foaming marrow,  
All of the flesh, the dry worlds  
    lever.

II

Fear not the waking world, my  
    mortal,  
Fear not the flat, synthetic blood,

ALL ALL AND ALL THE DRY WORLDS  
LEVER

---

Nor the heart in the ribbing metal.  
Fear not the tread, the seeded  
    milling,  
The trigger and scythe, the bridal  
    blade,  
Nor the flint in the lover's mauling.  
Man of my flesh, the jawbone  
    riven,  
Know now the flesh's lock and  
    vice,  
And the cage for the scythe-eyed  
    raven.  
Know, O my bone, the jointed  
    lever,  
Fear not the screws that turn the  
    voice,  
And the face to the driven lover.

III



ALL ALL AND ALL THE DRY WORLDS  
LEVER

---

All all and all the dry worlds couple,  
Ghost with her ghost, contagious man  
With the womb of his shapeless people.  
All that shapes from the caul and suckle,  
Stroke of mechanical flesh on mine,  
Square in these worlds the mortal circle.

Flower, flower the people's fusion,  
O light in zenith, the coupled bud,  
And the flame in the flesh's vision.  
Out of the sea, the drive of oil,  
Socket and grave, the brassy blood,  
Flower, flower, all all and all.

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

I

I, in my intricate image, stride on  
two levels,

Forged in man's minerals, the  
brassy orator

Laying my ghost in metal,  
The scales of this twin world tread

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

on the double,  
My half ghost in armour hold hard  
in death's corridor,  
To my man-iron side.

Beginning with doom in the bulb,  
the spring unravels,  
Bright as her spinning-wheels, the  
colic season

Worked on a world of petals;  
She threads off the sap and needles,  
blood and bubble  
Casts to the pine roots, raising man  
like a mountain  
Out of the naked entrail.

Beginning with doom in the ghost,  
and the springing marvels,  
Image of images, my metal phantom

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

Forcing forth through the harebell,  
My man of leaves and the bronze  
    root, mortal, unmortal,  
I, in my fusion of rose and male  
    motion,  
Create this twin miracle.

This is the fortune of manhood: the  
    natural peril,  
A steeplejack tower, bonerailed  
    and masterless,  
No death more natural;  
Thus the shadowless man or ox,  
    and the pictured devil,  
In seizure of silence commit the  
    dead nuisance:  
The natural parallel.

My images stalk the trees and the  
    slant sap's tunnel,

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

No tread more perilous, the green  
steps and spire  
Mount on man's footfall,  
I with the wooden insect in the tree  
of nettles,  
In the glass bed of grapes with  
snail and flower,  
Hearing the weather fall.

Intricate manhood of ending, the  
invalid rivals,  
Voyaging clockwise off the sym-  
boled harbour,  
Finding the water final,  
On the consumptives' terrace tak-  
ing their two farewells,  
Sail on the level, the departing ad-  
venture,  
To the sea-blown arrival.

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

### II

They climb the country pinnacle,  
Twelve winds encounter by the  
white host at pasture,  
Corner the mounted meadows in  
the hill corral;  
They see the squirrel stumble,  
The haring snail go giddily round  
the flower,  
A quarrel of weathers and trees in  
the windy spiral.

As they dive, the dust settles,  
The cadaverous gravels, falls thick  
and steadily,  
The highroad of water where the  
seabear and mackerel  
Turn the long sea arterial  
Turning a petrol face blind to the

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

enemy  
Turning the riderless dead by the  
channel wall.

(Death instrumental,  
Splitting the long eye open, and the  
spiral turnkey,  
Your corkscrew grave centred in  
navel and nipple,  
The neck of the nostril,  
Under the mask and the ether, they  
making bloody  
The tray of knives, the antiseptic  
funeral;

Bring out the black patrol,  
Your monstrous officers and the  
decaying army,  
The sexton sentinel, garrisoned un-  
der thistles,

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

A cock-on-a-dunghill  
Crowing to Lazarus the morning is  
vanity,  
Dust be your saviour under the  
conjured soil.)

As they drown, the chime travels,  
Sweetly the diver's bell in the  
steeple of spindrift  
Rings out the Dead Sea scale;  
And, clapped in water till the triton  
dangles,  
Strung by the flaxen whale-weed,  
from the hangman's raft,  
Hear they the salt glass breakers  
and the tongues of burial.

(Turn the sea-spindle lateral,  
The grooved land rotating, that the  
stylus of lightning



## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

Dazzle this face of voices on the  
    moon-turned table,  
Let the wax disk babble  
Shames and the damp dishonours,  
    the relic scraping.  
These are your years' recorders.  
    The circular world stands still.)

### III

They suffer the undead water  
    where the turtle nibbles,  
Come unto sea-stuck towers, at the  
    fibre scaling,  
The flight of the carnal skull  
And the cell-stepped thimble;  
Suffer, my topsy-turvies, that a  
    double angel  
Sprout from the stony lockers like  
    a tree on Aran.

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

Be by your one ghost pierced, his  
pointed ferrule,  
Brass and the bodiless image, on a  
stick of folly  
Star-set at Jacob's angle,  
Smoke hill and hophead's valley,  
And the five-fathomed Hamlet on  
his father's coral,  
Thrusting the tom-thumb vision  
up the iron mile.

Suffer the slash of vision by the fin-  
green stubble,  
Be by the ships' sea broken at the  
manstring anchored  
The stoved bones' voyage down-  
ward  
In the shipwreck of muscle;  
Give over, lovers, locking, and the

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

seawax struggle,  
Love like a mist or fire through the  
bed of eels.

And in the pincers of the boiling  
circle,  
The sea and instrument, nicked in  
the locks of time,  
My great blood's iron single  
In the pouring town,  
I, in a wind on fire, from green  
Adam's cradle,  
No man more magical, clawed out  
the crocodile.

Man was the scales, the death birds  
on enamel,  
Tail, Nile, and snout, a saddler of  
the rushes,  
Time in the hourless houses

## I, IN MY INTRICATE IMAGE

---

Shaking the sea-hatched skull,  
And, as for oils and ointments on  
the flying grail,  
All-hollowed man wept for his  
white apparel.

Man was Cadaver's masker, the  
harnessing mantle,  
Windily master of man was the rot-  
ten fathom,  
My ghost in his metal neptune  
Forged in man's mineral.  
This was the god of beginning in  
the intricate seawhirl,  
And my images roared and rose on  
heaven's hill.

## THIS BREAD I BREAK

This bread I break was once the oat,  
This wine upon a foreign tree  
Plunged in its fruit;  
Man in the day or wine at night  
Laid the crops low, broke the  
grape's joy.

Once in this time wine the summer

## THIS BREAD I BREAK

---

blood  
Knocked in the flesh that decked  
the vine,  
Once in this bread  
The oat was merry in the wind;  
Man broke the sun, pulled the  
wind down.

This flesh you break, this blood  
you let  
Make desolation in the vein,  
Were oat and grape  
Born of the sensual root and sap;  
My wine you drink, my bread you  
snap.

## INCARNATE DEVIL

Incarinate devil in a talking snake,  
The central plains of Asia in his  
garden,  
In shaping-time the circle stung  
awake,  
In shapes of sin forked out the  
bearded apple,

## INCARNATE DEVIL

---

And God walked there who was a  
fiddling warden  
And played down pardon from the  
heavens' hill.

When we were strangers to the  
guided seas,  
A handmade moon half holy in a  
cloud,  
The wisemen tell me that the gar-  
den gods  
Twined good and evil on an east-  
ern tree;  
And when the moon rose windily  
it was  
Black as the beast and paler than  
the cross.

We in our Eden knew the secret  
guardian



## INCARNATE DEVIL

---

In sacred waters that no frost could  
    harden,  
And in the mighty mornings of the  
    earth;  
Hell in a horn of sulphur and the  
    cloven myth,  
All heaven in the midnight of the  
    sun,  
A serpent fiddled in the shaping-  
    time.

## TO-DAY, THIS INSECT

To-day, this insect, and the world I  
breathe,  
Now that my symbols have outel-  
bowed space,  
Time at the city spectacles, and half  
The dear, daft time I take to nudge  
the sentence,

## TO-DAY, THIS INSECT

---

In trust and tale I have divided  
    sense,  
Slapped down the guillotine, the  
    blood-red double  
Of head and tail made witnesses to  
    this  
Murder of Eden and green genesis.  
The insect certain is the plague of  
    fables.

This story's monster has a serpent  
    caul,  
Blind in the coil scrams round the  
    blazing outline,  
Measures his own length on the  
    garden wall  
And breaks his shell in the last  
    shocked beginning;  
A crocodile before the chrysalis,

## TO-DAY, THIS INSECT

---

Before the fall from love the flying  
heartbone,  
Winged like a sabbath ass this chil-  
dren's piece  
Uncredited blows Jericho on Eden.  
The insect fable is the certain  
promise.

Death: death of Hamlet and the  
nightmare madmen,  
An air-drawn windmill on a  
wooden horse,  
John's beast, Job's patience, and  
the fibs of vision,  
Greek in the Irish sea the ageless  
voice:  
'Adam I love, my madmen's love is  
endless,  
No tell-tale lover has an end more

## TO-DAY, THIS INSECT

---

certain,  
All legends' sweethearts on a tree  
of stories,  
My cross of tales behind the fabu-  
lous curtain.'

## THE SEED-AT-ZERO

The seed-at-zero shall not storm  
That town of ghosts, the trodden  
womb,  
With her rampart to his tapping,  
No god-in-hero tumble down  
Like a tower on the town  
Dumbly and divinely stumbling

## THE SEED-AT-ZERO

---

Over the manwaging line.

The seed-at-zero shall not storm  
That town of ghosts, the man-  
waged tomb

With her rampart to his tapping,  
No god-in-hero tumble down  
Like a tower on the town  
Dumbly and divinely leaping  
Over the warbearing line.

Through the rampart of the sky  
Shall the star-flanked seed be rid-  
dled,

Manna for the rumbling ground,  
Quickening for the riddled sea;  
Settled on a virgin stronghold  
He shall grapple with the guard  
And the keeper of the key.

Through the rampart of the sky

## THE SEED-AT-ZERO

---

Shall the star-flanked seed be riddled,  
Manna for the guarded ground,  
Quickening for the virgin sea;  
Settling on a riddled stronghold  
He shall grapple with the guard  
And the loser of the key.

May a humble village labour  
And a continent deny?  
A hemisphere may scold him  
And a green inch be his bearer;  
Let the hero seed find harbour,  
Seaports by a drunken shore  
Have their thirsty sailors hide him.

May a humble planet labour  
And a continent deny?  
A village green may scold him  
And a high sphere be his bearer;



## THE SEED-AT-ZERO

---

Let the hero seed find harbour,  
Seaports by a thirsty shore  
Have their drunken sailors hide  
him.

Man-in-seed, in seed-at-zero,  
From the foreign fields of space,  
Shall not thunder on the town  
With a star-flanked garrison,  
Nor the cannons of his kingdom  
Shall the hero-in-tomorrow  
Range on the sky-scraping place.

Man-in-seed, in seed-at-zero,  
From the star-flanked fields of  
space,  
Thunders on the foreign town  
With a sand-bagged garrison,  
Nor the cannons of his kingdom  
Shall the hero-in-to-morrow

## THE SEED-AT-ZERO

---

Range from the grave-groping  
place.

SHALL GODS BE SAID TO THUMP  
THE CLOUDS

Shall gods be said to thump the  
clouds  
When clouds are cursed by thun-  
der,  
Be said to weep when weather  
howls?

# SHALL GODS BE SAID TO THUMP THE CLOUDS

---

Shall rainbows be their tunics'  
colour?

When it is rain where are the gods?  
Shall it be said they sprinkle water  
From garden cans, or free the  
floods?

Shall it be said that, venuswise,  
An old god's dugs are pressed and  
pricked,  
The wet night scolds me like a  
nurse?

It shall be said that gods are stone.  
Shall a dropped stone drum on the  
ground,  
Flung gravel chime? Let the stones  
speak  
With tongues that talk all tongues.

## HERE IN THIS SPRING

Here in this spring, stars float  
along the void;  
Here in this ornamental winter  
Down pelts the naked weather;  
This summer buries a spring bird.  
Symbols are selected from the  
years'

## HERE IN THIS SPRING

---

Slow rounding of four seasons'  
coasts,  
In autumn teach three seasons'  
fires  
And four birds' notes.

I should tell summer from the  
trees, the worms  
Tell, if at all, the winter's storms  
Or the funeral of the sun;  
I should learn spring by the cuck-  
ooing,  
And the slug should teach me de-  
struction.

A worm tells summer better than  
the clock,  
The slug's a living calendar of  
days;  
What shall it tell me if a timeless in-

## HERE IN THIS SPRING

---

sect  
Says the world wears away?

## DO YOU NOT FATHER ME

Do you not father me, nor the  
erected arm  
For my tall tower's sake cast in her  
stone?  
Do you not mother me, nor, as I  
am,  
The lovers' house, lie suffering my



## DO YOU NOT FATHER ME

---

stain?

Do you not sister me, nor the  
erected crime

For my tall turrets carry as your  
sin?

Do you not brother me, nor, as you  
climb,

Adore my windows for their sum-  
mer scene?

Am I not father, too, and the as-  
cending boy,

The boy of woman and the wanton  
starrer

Marking the flesh and summer in  
the bay?

Am I not sister, too, who is my  
saviour?

Am I not all of you by the directed

## DO YOU NOT FATHER ME

---

sea

Where bird and shell are babbling  
in my tower?

Am I not you who front the tidy  
shore,

Nor roof of sand, nor yet the tow-  
ering tiler?

You are all these, said she who  
gave me the long suck,

All these, he said who sacked the  
children's town,

Up rose the Abraham-man, mad  
for my sake,

They said, who hacked and hu-  
moured, they were mine.

I am, the tower told, felled by a  
timeless stroke,

Who razed my wooden folly

## DO YOU NOT FATHER ME

---

stands aghast,  
For man-begetters in the dry-as-  
paste,  
The ringed-sea ghost, rise grimly  
from the wrack.

Do you not father me on the de-  
stroying sand?  
You are your sisters' sire, said sea-  
weedy,  
The salt sucked dam and darlings  
of the land  
Who play the proper gentleman  
and lady.  
Shall I still be love's house on the  
widdershin earth,  
Woe to the windy masons at my  
shelter?  
Love's house, they answer, and the

## DO YOU NOT FATHER ME

---

    tower death  
Lie all unknowing of the grave sin-  
    eater.

## OUT OF THE SIGHS

Out of the sighs a little comes,  
But not of grief, for I have knocked  
    down that  
Before the agony; the spirit grows,  
Forgets, and cries;  
A little comes, is tasted and found  
    good;

## OUT OF THE SIGHS

---

All could not disappoint;  
There must, be praised, some certainty,  
If not of loving well, then not,  
And that is true after perpetual defeat.

After such fighting as the weakest  
know,  
There's more than dying;  
Lose the great pains or stuff the  
wound,  
He'll ache too long  
Through no regret of leaving  
woman waiting  
For her soldier stained with spilt  
words  
That spill such acrid blood.  
Were that enough, enough to ease

## OUT OF THE SIGHS

---

the pain,  
Feeling regret when this is wasted  
That made me happy in the sun,  
How much was happy while it  
lasted,  
Were vagueness enough and the  
sweet lies plenty,  
The hollow words could bear all  
suffering  
And cure me of ills.

Were that enough, bone, blood,  
and sinew,  
The twisted brain, the fair-formed  
loin,  
Groping for matter under the dog's  
plate,  
Man should be cured of distemper.  
For all there is to give I offer:

## OUT OF THE SIGHS

---

Crumbs, barn, and halter.



**HOLD HARD, THESE ANCIENT  
MINUTES IN THE CUCKOO'S  
MONTH**

Hold hard, these ancient minutes  
in the cuckoo's month,  
Under the lank, fourth folly on  
Glamorgan's hill,

HOLD HARD, THESE ANCIENT  
MINUTES IN THE CUCKOO'S MONTH

---

As the green blooms ride upward,  
to the drive of time;  
Time, in a folly's rider, like a  
county man  
Over the vault of ridings with his  
hound at heel,  
Drives forth my men, my children,  
from the hanging south.

Country, your sport is summer,  
and December's pools  
By crane and water-tower by the  
seedy trees  
Lie this fifth month unskated, and  
the birds have flown;  
Holy hard, my country children in  
the world of tales,  
The greenwood dying as the deer  
fall in their tracks,

HOLD HARD, THESE ANCIENT  
MINUTES IN THE CUCKOO'S MONTH

---

The first and steepled season, to  
the summer's game.

And now the horns of England, in  
the sound of shape,

Summon your snowy horsemen,  
and the four-stringed hill,

Over the sea-gut loudening, sets a  
rock alive;

Hurdles and guns and railings, as  
the boulders heave,

Crack like a spring in vice, bone  
breaking April,

Spill the lank folly's hunter and the  
hard-held hope.

Down fall four padding weathers  
on the scarlet lands,

Stalking my children's faces with a  
tail of blood,

HOLD HARD, THESE ANCIENT  
MINUTES IN THE CUCKOO'S MONTH

---

Time, in a rider rising, from the  
harnessed valley;  
Hold hard, my country darlings,  
for a hawk descends,  
Golden Glamorgan straightens, to  
the falling birds.  
Your sport is summer as the spring  
runs angrily.

## WAS THERE A TIME

Was there a time when dancers  
with their fiddles  
In children's circuses could stay  
their troubles?  
There was a time they could cry  
over books,  
But time has set its maggot on their

## WAS THERE A TIME

---

track.

Under the arc of the sky they are  
unsafe.

What's never known is safest in  
this life.

Under the skysigns they who have  
no arms

Have cleanest hands, and, as the  
heartless ghost

Alone's unhurt, so the blind man  
sees best.

## Now

Now  
Say nay,  
Man dry man,  
Dry lover mine  
The deadrock base and blow the  
    flowered anchor,  
Should he, for centre sake, hop in

the dust,  
Forsake, the fool, the hardiness of  
anger.

Now  
Say nay,  
Sir no say,  
Death to the yes,  
the yes to death, the yesman and  
the answer,  
Should he who split his children  
with a cure  
Have brotherless his sister on the  
handsaw.

Now  
Say nay,  
No say sir  
Yea the dead stir,  
And this, nor this, is shade, the



landed crow,  
He lying low with ruin in his ear,  
The cockrel's tide upcasting from  
the fire.

Now  
Say nay,  
So star fall,  
So the ball fail,  
So solve the mystic sun, the wife of  
light,  
The sun that leaps on petals  
through a nought,  
The come-a-cropper rider of the  
flower.

Now  
Say nay  
A fig for  
The seal of fire,

## NOW

---

Death hairy-heeled and the tapped  
ghost in wood,  
We make me mystic as the arm of  
air,  
The two-a-vein, the foreskin, and  
the cloud.

## WHY EAST WIND CHILLS

Why east wind chills and south  
wind cools  
Shall not be known till windwell  
dries  
And west's no longer drowned  
In winds that bring the fruit and  
rind

## WHY EAST WIND CHILLS

---

Of many a hundred falls;  
Why silk is soft and the stone  
    wounds  
The child shall question all his  
    days,  
Why night-time rain and the  
    breast's blood  
Both quench his thirst he'll have a  
    black reply.

When cometh Jack Frost? the chil-  
    dren ask.  
Shall they clasp a comet in their  
    fists?  
Not till, from high and low, their  
    dust  
Sprinkles in children's eyes a long-  
    last sleep  
And dusk is crowded with the chil-

## WHY EAST WIND CHILLS

---

dren's ghosts,  
Shall a white answer echo from the  
rooftops.

All things are known: the stars' ad-  
vice  
Calls some content to travel with  
the winds,  
Though what the stars ask as they  
round  
Time upon time the towers of the  
skies  
Is heard but little till the stars go  
out.

I hear content, and 'Be Content'  
Ring like a handbell through the  
corridors,  
And 'Know no answer,' and I  
know

## WHY EAST WIND CHILLS

---

No answer to the children's cry  
Of echo's answer and the man of  
frost  
And ghostly comets over the raised  
fists.

## A GRIEF AGO

A grief ago,  
She who was who I hold, the fats  
    and the flower,  
Or, water-lammed, from the  
    scythe-sided thorn,  
Hell wind and sea,  
A stem cementing, wrestled up the

## A GRIEF AGO

---

tower,  
Rose maid and male,  
Or, master venus, through the pad-  
dler's bowl  
Sailed up the sun;  
Who is my grief,  
A chrysalis unwrinkling on the  
iron,  
Wrenched by my fingerman, the  
leaden bud  
Shot through the leaf,  
Was who was folded on the rod the  
aaron  
Road east to plague,  
The horn and ball of water on the  
frog  
Housed in the side.  
And she who lies,



## A GRIEF AGO

---

Like exodus a chapter from the garden,  
Brand of the lily's anger on her ring,  
Tugged through the days  
Her ropes of heritage, the wars of pardon,  
On field and sand  
The twelve triangles of the cherub wind  
Engraving going.

Who then is she,  
She holding me? The people's sea  
drives on her,  
Drives out the father from the caesared camp;  
The dens of shape  
Shape all her whelps with the long

## A GRIEF AGO

---

voice of water,  
That she I have,  
The country-handed grave boxed  
into love,  
Rise before dark.

The night is near,  
A nitric shape that leaps her, time  
and acid;  
I tell her this: before the suncock  
cast  
Her bone to fire,  
Let her inhale her dead, through  
seed and solid  
Draw in their seas,  
So cross her hand with their grave  
gipsy eyes,  
And close her fist.

## HOW SOON THE SERVANT SUN

How soon the servant sun,  
(Sir morrow mark),  
Can time unriddle, and the cup-  
board stone,  
(Fog has a bone  
He'll trumpet into meat),  
Unshelve that all my gristles have

## HOW SOON THE SERVANT SUN

---

a gown  
And the naked egg stand straight,  
Sir morrow at his sponge,  
(The wound records),  
The nurse of giants by the cut sea  
basin,  
(Fog by his spring  
Soaks up the sewing tides),  
Tells you and you, my masters, as  
his strange  
Man morrow blows through food.

All nerves to serve the sun,  
The rite of light,  
A claw I question from the mouse's  
bone,  
The long-tailed stone  
Trap I with coil and sheet,  
Let the soil squeal I am the biting

## HOW SOON THE SERVANT SUN

---

man

And the velvet dead inch out.

How soon my level, lord,

(Sir morrow stamps

Two heels of water on the floor of  
seed),

Shall raise a lamp

Or spirit up a cloud,

Erect a walking centre in the  
shroud,

Invisible on the stump

A leg as long as trees,

This inward sir,

Mister and master, darkness for his  
eyes,

The womb-eyed, cries,

And all sweet hell, deaf as an  
hour's ear,

## HOW SOON THE SERVANT SUN

---

Blasts back the trumpet voice.

## EARS IN THE TURRETS HEAR

Ears in the turrets hear  
Hands grumble on the door,  
Eyes in the gables see  
The fingers at the locks.  
Shall I unbolt or stay  
Alone till the day I die  
Unseen by stranger-eyes

## EARS IN THE TURRETS HEAR

---

In this white house?  
Hands, hold you poison or grapes?

Beyond this island bound  
By a thin sea of flesh  
And a bone coast,  
The land lies out of sound  
And the hills out of mind.  
No birds or flying fish  
Disturbs this island's rest.

Ears in this island hear  
The wind pass like a fire,  
Eyes in this island see  
Ships anchor off the bay.  
Shall I run to the ships  
With the wind in my hair,  
Or stay till the day I die  
And welcome no sailor?  
Ships, hold you poison or grapes?



## EARS IN THE TURRETS HEAR

---

Hands grumble on the door,  
Ships anchor off the bay,  
Rain beats the sand and slates.  
Shall I let in the stranger,  
Shall I welcome the sailor,  
Or stay till the day I die?

Hands of the stranger and holds of  
the ships,  
Hold you poison or grapes?

## FOSTER THE LIGHT

Foster the light nor veil the man-  
shaped moon,  
Nor weather winds that blow not  
down the bone,  
But strip the twelve-winded mar-  
row from his circle;  
Master the night nor serve the

## FOSTER THE LIGHT

---

snowman's brain  
That shapes each bushy item of the  
air  
Into a polestar pointed on an icicle.  
Murmur of spring nor crush the  
cockerel's eggs,  
Nor hammer back a season in the  
figs,  
But graft these four-fruited ridings  
on your country;  
Farmer in time of frost the burning  
leagues,  
By red-eyed orchards sow the  
seeds of snow,  
In your young years the vegetable  
century.  
And father all nor fail the fly-lord's  
acre,

## FOSTER THE LIGHT

---

Nor sprout on owl-seed like a  
goblin-sucker,  
But rail with your wizard's ribs the  
heart-shaped planet;  
Of mortal voices to the ninnies'  
choir,  
High lord esquire, speak up the  
singing cloud,  
And pluck a mandrake music from  
the marrowroot.

Roll unmanly over this turning  
tuft,  
O ring of seas, nor sorrow as I shift  
From all my mortal lovers with a  
starboard smile;  
Nor when my love lies in the cross-  
boned drift  
Naked among the bow-and-arrow

## FOSTER THE LIGHT

---

birds  
Shall you turn cockwise on a tufted  
axle.  
Who gave these seas their colour in  
a shape,  
Shaped my clayfellow, and the  
heaven's ark  
In time at flood filled with his  
coloured doubles;  
O who is glory in the shapeless  
maps,  
Now make the world of me as I  
have made  
A merry manshape of your walk-  
ing circle.

## THE HAND THAT SIGNED THE PAPER

The hand that signed the paper  
felled a city;  
Five sovereign fingers taxed the  
breath,  
Doubled the globe of dead and  
halved a country;

## THE HAND THAT SIGNED THE PAPER

These five kings did a king to  
death.

The mighty hand leads to a sloping  
shoulder,

The finger joints are cramped with  
chalk;

A goose's quill has put an end to  
murder

That put an end to talk.

The hand that signed the treaty  
bred a fever,

And famine grew, and locusts  
came;

Great is the hand that holds domin-  
ion over

Man by a scribbled name.

The five kings count the dead but  
do not soften

## THE HAND THAT SIGNED THE PAPER

The crusted wound nor pat the  
brow;  
A hand rules pity as a hand rules  
heaven;  
Hands have no tears to flow.



## SHOULD LANTERNS SHINE

Should lanterns shine, the holy  
face,  
Caught in an octagon of unaccus-  
tomed light,  
Would wither up, and any boy of  
love  
Look twice before he fell from

## SHOULD LANTERNS SHINE

---

grace.

The features in their private dark  
Are formed of flesh, but let the  
false day come  
And from her lips the faded pig-  
ments fall,  
The mummy cloths expose an an-  
cient breast.

I have been told to reason by the  
heart,  
But heart, like head, leads help-  
lessly;  
I have been told to reason by the  
pulse,  
And, when it quickens, alter the ac-  
tions' pace  
Till field and roof lie level and the  
same

## SHOULD LANTERNS SHINE

---

So fast I move defying time, the  
quiet gentleman  
Whose beard wags in Egyptian  
wind.

I have heard many years of telling,  
And many years should see some  
change.

The ball I threw while playing in  
the park  
Has not yet reached the ground.

## I HAVE LONGED TO MOVE AWAY

I have longed to move away  
From the hissing of the spent lie  
And the old terrors' continual cry  
Growing more terrible as the day  
Goes over the hill into the deep sea;  
I have longed to move away  
From the repetition of salutes,

## I HAVE LONGED TO MOVE AWAY

---

For there are ghosts in the air  
And ghostly echoes on paper,  
And the thunder of calls and notes.

I have longed to move away but  
am afraid;

Some life, yet unspent, might ex-  
plode

Out of the old lie burning on the  
ground,

And, crackling into the air, leave  
me half-blind.

Neither by night's ancient fear,

The parting of hat from hair,

Pursed lips at the receiver,

Shall I fall to death's feather.

By these I would not care to die,

Half convention and half lie.

## FIND MEAT ON BONES

'Find meat on bones that soon have  
    none,  
And drink in the two milked crags,  
The merriest marrow and the dregs  
Before the ladies' breasts are hags  
And the limbs are torn.  
Disturb no winding-sheets, my

## FIND MEAT ON BONES

---

son,  
But when the ladies are cold as  
stone  
Then hang a ram rose over the  
rags.

'Rebel against the binding moon  
And the parliament of sky,  
The kingcrafts of the wicked sea,  
Autocracy of night and day,  
Dictatorship of sun.  
Rebel against the flesh and bone,  
The word of the blood, the wily  
skin,  
And the maggot no man can slay.'

'The thirst is quenched, the hunger  
gone,  
And my heart is cracked across;  
My face is haggard in the glass,

## FIND MEAT ON BONES

---

My lips are withered with a kiss,  
My breasts are thin.

A merry girl took me for man,  
I laid her down and told her sin,  
And put beside her a ram rose.

'The maggot that no man can kill  
And the man no rope can hang  
Rebel against my father's dream  
That out of a bower of red swine  
Howls the foul fiend to heel.  
I cannot murder, like a fool,  
Season and sunshine, grace and  
girl,  
Nor can I smother the sweet wak-  
ing.'

Black night still ministers the  
moon,  
And the sky lays down her laws,



## FIND MEAT ON BONES

---

The sea speaks in a kingly voice,  
Light and dark are no enemies  
But one companion.  
'War on the spider and the wren!  
War on the destiny of man!  
Doom on the sun!'  
Before death takes you, O take  
back this.

## GRIEF THIEF OF TIME

Grief thief of time crawls off,  
The moon-drawn grave, with the  
    seafaring years,  
The knave of pain steals off  
The sea-halved faith that blew time  
    to his knees,  
The old forget the cries,

## GRIEF THIEF OF TIME

---

Lean time on tide and times the  
wind stood rough,  
Call back the castaways  
Riding the sea light on a sunken  
path,  
The old forget the grief,  
Hack of the cough, the hanging al-  
batross,  
Cast back the bone of youth  
And salt-eyed stumble bedward  
where she lies  
Who tossed the high tide in a time  
of stories  
And timelessly lies loving with the  
thief.

Now Jack my fathers let the time-  
faced crook,  
Death flashing from his sleeve,

## GRIEF THIEF OF TIME

---

With swag of bubbles in a seedy  
sack  
Sneak down the stallion grave,  
Bull's-eye the outlaw through a eu-  
nuch crack  
And free the twin-boxed grief,  
No silver whistles chase him down  
the weeks'  
Dayed peaks to day to death,  
These stolen bubbles have the bites  
of snakes  
And the undead eye-teeth,  
No third eye probe into a rain-  
bow's sex  
That bridged the human halves,  
All shall remain and on the grave-  
ward gulf  
Shape with my fathers' thieves.

AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO  
DOMINION

And death shall have no dominion.  
Dead men naked they shall be one  
With the man in the wind and the  
west moon;  
When their bones are picked clean  
and the clean bones gone,

AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO  
DOMINION

---

They shall have stars at elbow and  
foot;  
Though they go mad they shall be  
sane,  
Though they sink through the sea  
they shall rise again;  
Though lovers be lost love shall  
not;  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
Under the windings of the sea  
They lying long shall not die  
windily;  
Twisting on racks when sinews  
give way,  
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall  
not break;  
Faith in their hands shall snap in

AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO  
DOMINION

---

two,  
And the unicorn evils run them  
through;  
Split all ends up they shan't crack;  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
No more may gulls cry at their ears  
Or waves break loud on the  
seashores;  
Where blew a flower may a flower  
no more  
Lift its head to the blows of the  
rain;  
Though they be mad and dead as  
nails,  
Heads of the characters hammer  
through daisies;  
Break in the sun till the sun breaks

AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO  
DOMINION

---

down,  
And death shall have no dominion.



## THEN WAS MY NEOPHYTE

Then was my neophyte,  
Child in white blood bent on its  
    knees  
Under the bell of rocks,  
Ducked in the twelve, disciple seas  
The winder of the water-clocks  
Calls a green day and night.

## THEN WAS MY NEOPHYTE

---

My sea hermaphrodite,  
Snail of man in His ship of fires  
That burn the bitten decks,  
Knew all His horrible desires  
The climber of the water sex  
Calls the green rock of light.

Who in these labyrinths,  
This tidethread and the lane of  
    scales,  
Twine in a moon-blown shell,  
Escapes to the flat cities' sails  
Furled on the fishes' house and  
    hell,  
Nor falls to His green myths?  
Stretch the salt photographs,  
The landscape grief, love in His  
    oils  
Mirror from man to whale

## THEN WAS MY NEOPHYTE

---

That the green child see like a grail  
Through veil and fin and fire and  
coil  
Time on the canvas paths.

He films my vanity.  
Shot in the wind, by tilted arcs,  
Over the water come  
Children from homes and chil-  
dren's parks  
Who speak on a finger and thumb,  
And the masked, headless boy.  
His reels and mystery  
The winder of the clockwise scene  
Wound like a ball of lakes  
Then threw on that tide-hoisted  
screen  
Love's image till my heartbone  
breaks

## THEN WAS MY NEOPHYTE

---

By a dramatic sea.  
Who kills my history?  
The year-hedged row is lame with  
    flint,  
Blunt scythe and water blade.  
'Who could snap off the shapeless  
    print  
From your to-morrow-treading  
    shade  
With oracle for eye?'  
Time kills me terribly.  
'Time shall not murder you,' He  
    said,  
'Nor the green nought be hurt;  
Who could hack out your un-  
    sucked heart,  
O green and unborn and undead?'  
I saw time murder me.

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

I

Altarwise by owl-light in the half-  
way house

The gentleman lay graveward with  
his furies;

Abaddon in the hangnail cracked  
from Adam,

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

And, from his fork, a dog among  
the fairies,  
The atlas-eater with a jaw for news,  
Bit out the mandrake with to-  
morrow's scream.  
Then, penny-eyed, that gentlemen  
of wounds,  
Old cock from nowheres and the  
heaven's egg,  
With bones unbuttoned to the half-  
way winds,  
Hatched from the windy salvage  
on one leg,  
Scraped at my cradle in a walking  
word  
That night of time under the  
Christward shelter:  
I am the long world's gentleman,  
he said,

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

And share my bed with Capricorn  
and Cancer.

### II

Death is all metaphors, shape in  
one history;  
The child that sucketh long is  
shooting up,  
The planet-ducted pelican of cir-  
cles  
Weans on an artery the gender's  
strip;  
Child of the short spark in a shape-  
less country  
Soon sets alight a long stick from  
the cradle;  
The horizontal cross-bones of  
Abaddon,  
You by the cavern over the black

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

stairs,  
Rung bone and blade, the verticals  
of Adam,  
And, manned by midnight, Jacob  
to the stars.  
Hairs of your head, then said the  
hollow agent,  
Are but the roots of nettles and of  
feathers  
Over these groundworks thrusting  
through a pavement  
And hemlock-headed in the wood  
of weathers.

### III

First there was the lamb on knock-  
ing knees  
And three dead seasons on a climb-  
ing grave



## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

That Adam's wether in the flock of  
horns,  
Butt of the tree-tailed worm that  
mounted Eve,  
Horned down with skullfoot and  
the skull of toes  
On thunderous pavements in the  
garden time;  
Rip of the vaults, I took my  
marrow-ladle  
Out of the wrinkled undertaker's  
van,  
And, Rip Van Winkle from a time-  
less cradle,  
Dipped me breast-deep in the de-  
scending bone;  
The black ram, shuffling of the  
year, old winter,  
Alone alive among his mutton

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

fold,  
We rung our weathering changes  
on the ladder,  
Said the antipodes, and twice  
spring chimed.

### IV

What is the metre of the dictionary?  
The size of genesis? the short  
spark's gender?  
Shade without shape? the shape of  
Pharaoh's echo?  
(My shape of age nagging the  
wounded whisper).  
Which sixth of wind blew out the  
burning gentry?  
(Questions are hunchbacks to the  
poker marrow).

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

What of a bamboo man among  
your acres?  
Corset the boneyards for a crooked  
boy?  
Button your bodice on a hump of  
splinters,  
My camel's eyes will needle  
through the shroud.  
Love's reflection of the mushroom  
features,  
Stills snapped by night in the  
bread-sided field,  
Once close-up smiling in the wall  
of pictures,  
Arc-lamped thrown back upon the  
cutting flood.

V

And from the windy West came

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

two-gunned Gabriel,  
From Jesu's sleeve trumped up the  
king of spots,  
The sheath-decked jacks, queen  
with a shuffled heart;  
Said the fake gentleman in suit of  
spades,  
Black-tongued and tipsy from sal-  
vation's bottle.  
Rose my Byzantine Adam in the  
night.  
For loss of blood I fell on Ishmael's  
plain,  
Under the milky mushrooms slew  
my hunger,  
A climbing sea from Asia had me  
down  
And Jonah's Moby snatched me by  
the hair,

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

Cross-stroked salt Adam to the  
frozen angel  
Pin-legged on pole-hills with a  
black medusa  
By waste seas where the white bear  
quoted Virgil  
And sirens singing from our lady's  
sea-straw.

### VI

Cartoon of slashes on the tide-  
traced crater,  
He in a book of water tallow-eyed  
By lava's light split through the  
oyster vowels  
And burned sea silence on a wick  
of words.  
Pluck, cock, my sea eye, said  
medusa's scripture,

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

Lop, love, my fork tongue, said the  
pin-hilled nettle;  
And love plucked out the stinging  
siren's eye,  
Old cock from nowheres lopped  
the minstrel tongue  
Till tallow I blew from the wax's  
tower  
The fats of midnight when the salt  
was singing;  
Adam, time's joker, on a witch of  
cardboard  
Spelt out the seven seas, an evil in-  
dex,  
The bagpipe-breasted ladies in the  
deadweed  
Blew out the blood gauze through  
the wound of manwax.

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

### VII

Now stamp the Lord's Prayer on a  
grain of rice,  
A Bible-leaved of all the written  
woods  
Strip to this tree: a rocking alpha-  
bet,  
Genesis in the root, the scarecrow  
word,  
And one light's language in the  
book of trees.  
Doom on deniers at the wind-  
turned statement.  
Time's tune my ladies with the  
teats of music,  
The scaled sea-sawers, fix in a  
naked sponge  
Who sucks the bell-voiced Adam

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

out of magic,  
Time, milk, and magic, from the  
world beginning.  
Time is the tune my ladies lend  
their heartbreak,  
From bald pavilions and the house  
of bread  
Time tracks the sound of shape on  
man and cloud,  
On rose and icicle the ringing  
handprint.

### VIII

This was the crucifixion on the  
mountain,  
Time's nerve in vinegar, the gallow  
grave  
As tarred with blood as the bright  
thorns I wept;



## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

The world's my wound, God's  
Mary in her grief,  
Bent like three trees and bird-  
papped through her shift,  
With pins for teardrops is the long  
wound's woman.  
This was the sky, Jack Christ, each  
minstrel angle  
Drove in the heaven-driven of the  
nails  
Till the three-coloured rainbow  
from my nipples  
From pole to pole leapt round the  
snail-waked world.  
I by the tree of thieves, all glory's  
sawbones,  
Unsex the skeleton this mountain  
minute,  
And by this blowcock witness of

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

the sun  
Suffer the heaven's children  
through my heartbeat.

### IX

From the oracular archives and the  
parchment,  
Prophets and fibre kings in oil and  
letter,  
The lamped calligrapher, the queen  
in splints,  
Buckle to lint and cloth their natron  
footsteps,  
Draw on the glove of prints, dead  
Cairo's henna  
Pour like a halo on the caps and  
serpents.  
This was the resurrection in the  
desert,

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

Death from a bandage, rants the  
mask of scholars  
Gold on such features, and the  
linen spirit  
Weds my long gentleman to dusts  
and furies;  
With priest and pharaoh bed my  
gentle wound,  
World in the sand, on the triangle  
landscape,  
With stones of odyssey for ash and  
garland  
And rivers of the dead around my  
neck.

X

Let the tale's sailor from a Chris-  
tian voyage  
Atlaswise hold half-way off the

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

dummy bay  
Time's ship-racked gospel on the  
globe I balance:  
So shall winged harbours through  
the rockbirds' eyes  
Spot the blown word, and on the  
seas I image  
December's thorn screwed in a  
brow of holly.  
Let the first Peter from a rainbow's  
quayrail  
Ask the tall fish swept from the  
bible east,  
What rhubarb man peeled in her  
foam-blue channel  
Has sown a flying garden round  
that sea-ghost?  
Green as beginning, let the garden  
diving

## ALTARWISE BY OWL-LIGHT

---

Soar, with its two bark towers, to  
that Day  
When the worm builds with the  
gold straws of venom  
My nest of mercies in the rude, red  
tree.

## BECAUSE THE PLEASURE-BIRD WHISTLES

Because the pleasure-bird whistles  
after the hot wires,  
Shall the blind horse sing sweeter?  
Convenient bird and beast lie  
lodged to suffer  
The supper and knives of a mood.

## BECAUSE THE PLEASURE-BIRD WHISTLES

---

In the sniffed and poured snow on  
the tip of the tongue of the year  
That clouts the spittle like bubbles  
with broken rooms,  
An enamoured man alone by the  
twigs of his eyes, two fires,  
Camped in the drug-white shower  
of nerves and food,  
Savours the lick of the times  
through a deadly wood of hair  
In a wind that plucked a goose,  
Nor ever, as the wild tongue breaks  
its tombs,  
Rounds to look at the red, wagged  
root.  
Because there stands, one story out  
of the bum city,  
That frozen wife whose juices drift  
like a fixed sea

## BECAUSE THE PLEASURE-BIRD WHISTLES

---

Secretly in statuary,  
Shall I, struck on the hot and rock-  
ing street,  
Not spin to stare at an old year  
Toppling and burning in the mud-  
dle of towers and galleries  
Like the mauled pictures of boys?  
The salt person and blasted place  
I furnish with the meat of a fable;  
If the dead starve, their stomachs  
turn to tumble  
An upright man in the antipodes  
Or spray-based and rock-chested  
sea:  
Over the past table I repeat this  
present grace.



**I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING  
ABSENCE**

I make this in a warring absence  
when  
Each ancient, stone-necked minute  
of love's season  
Harbours my anchored tongue,  
slips the quaystone,

## I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING ABSENCE

When, praise is blessed, her pride  
in mast and fountain  
Sailed and set dazzling by the  
handshaped ocean,  
In that proud sailing tree with  
branches driven  
Through the last vault and veg-  
etable groyne,  
And this weak house to marrow-  
columned heaven,

Is corner-cast, breath's rag,  
scrawled weed, a vain  
And opium head, crow stalk,  
puffed, cut, and blown,  
Or like the tide-looped breastknot  
reefed again  
Or rent ancestrally the roped sea-  
hymen,

## I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING ABSENCE

And, pride is last, is like a child  
alone  
By magnet winds to her blind  
mother drawn,  
Bread and milk mansion in a tooth-  
less town.

She makes for me a nettle's inno-  
cence  
And a silk pigeon's guilt in her  
proud absence,  
In the molested rocks the shell of  
virgins,  
The frank, closed pearl, the sea-  
girls' lineaments  
Glint in the staved and siren-  
printed caverns,  
Is maiden in the shameful oak,  
omens

## I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING ABSENCE

Whalebed and bulldance, the gold  
bush of lions,  
Proud as a sucked stone and huge  
as sandgrains.

These are her contraries: the beast  
who follows  
With priest's grave foot and hand  
of five assassins  
Her molten flight up cinder-  
nesting columns,  
Calls the starved fire herd, is cast in  
ice,  
Lost in a limp-treed and uneating  
silence,  
Who scales a hailing hill in her cold  
flintsteps  
Falls on a ring of summers and  
locked noons.

## I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING ABSENCE

I make a weapon of an ass's skeleton

And walk the warring sands by the  
dead town.

Cudgel great air, wreck east, and  
topple sundown,

Storm her sped heart, hang with  
beheaded veins

Its wringing shell, and let her eye-  
lids fasten.

Destruction, picked by birds, brays  
through the jaw-bone,

And, for that murder's sake, dark  
with contagion

Like an approaching wave I sprawl  
to ruin.

Ruin, the room of errors, one rood  
dropped

## I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING ABSENCE

Down the stacked sea and water-  
pillared shade,  
Weighed in rock shroud, is my  
proud pyramid;  
Where, wound in emerald linen  
and sharp wind,  
The hero's head lies scraped of ev-  
ery legend,  
Comes love's anatomist with sun-  
gloved hand  
Who picks the live heart on a dia-  
mond.

'His mother's womb had a tongue  
that lapped up mud,'  
Cried the topless, inchtaped lips  
from hank and hood  
In that bright anchorground where  
I lay lined,

## I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING ABSENCE

'A lizard darting with black  
venom's thread  
Doubled, to fork him back,  
through the lockjaw bed  
And the breath-white, curtained  
mouth of seed.'  
'See,' drummed the taut masks,  
'how the dead ascend:  
In the groin's endless coil a man is  
tangled.'

These once-blind eyes have  
breathed a wind of visions,  
The cauldron's root through this  
once-rindless hand  
Fumed like a tree, and tossed a  
burning bird;  
With loud, torn tooth and tail and  
cobweb drum

## I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING ABSENCE

The crumpled packs fled past this  
ghost in bloom,  
And, mild as pardon from a cloud  
of pride,  
The terrible world my brother  
bares his skin.

Now in the cloud's big breast lie  
quiet countries,  
Delivered seas my love from her  
proud place  
Walks with no wound, nor light-  
ning in her face,  
A calm wind blows that raised the  
trees like hair  
Once where the soft snow's blood  
was turned to ice.  
And though my love pulls the pale,  
nipped air,



## I MAKE THIS IN A WARRING ABSENCE

Prides of to-morrow suckling in  
her eyes,  
Yet this I make in a forgiving pres-  
ence.

**WHEN ALL MY FIVE AND  
COUNTRY SENSES SEE**

When all my five and country  
senses see,  
The fingers will forget green  
thumbs and mark  
How, through the halfmoon's veg-  
etable eye,

WHEN ALL MY FIVE AND COUNTRY  
SENSES SEE

---

Husk of young stars and handfull  
zodiac,  
Love in the frost is pared and win-  
tered by,  
The whispering ears will watch  
love drummed away  
Down breeze and shell to a discor-  
dant beach,  
And, lashed to syllables, the lynx  
tongue cry  
That her fond wounds are mended  
bitterly.  
My nostrils see her breath burn like  
a bush.

My one and noble heart has wit-  
nesses  
In all love's countries, that will  
grope awake;

WHEN ALL MY FIVE AND COUNTRY  
SENSES SEE

---

And when blind sleep drops on the  
  spying senses,  
The heart is sensual, though five  
  eyes break.

## WE LYING BY SEASAND

We lying by seasand, watching yellow  
And the grave sea, mock who deride  
Who follow the red rivers, hollow  
Alcove of words out of cicada  
shade,

## WE LYING BY SEASAND

---

For in this yellow grave of sand  
and sea

A calling for colour calls with the  
wind

That's grave and gay as grave and  
sea

Sleeping on either hand.

The lunar silences, the silent tide  
Lapping the still canals, the dry  
tide-master

Ribbed between desert and water  
storm,

Should cure our ills of the water  
With a one-coloured calm;

The heavenly music over the sand  
Sounds with the grains as they  
hurry

Hiding the golden mountains and  
mansions

## WE LYING BY SEASAND

---

Of the grave, gay, seaside land.  
Bound by a sovereign strip, we lie,  
Watch yellow, wish for wind to  
    blow away  
The strata of the shore and drown  
    red rock;  
But wishes breed not, neither  
Can we fend off rock arrival,  
Lie watching yellow until the  
    golden weather  
Breaks, O my heart's blood, like a  
    heart and hill.

It is the sinners' dust-tongued bell  
It is the sinners' dust-tongued bell  
    claps me to churches  
When, with his torch and hour-  
    glass, like a sulphur priest,  
His beast heel cleft in a sandal,

## WE LYING BY SEASAND

---

Time marks a black aisle kindle  
from the brand of ashes,  
Grief with dishevelled hands tear  
out the altar ghost  
And a firewind kill the candle.

Over the choir minute I hear the  
hour chant:

Time's coral saint and the salt grief  
drown a foul sepulchre  
And a whirlpool drives the prayer-  
wheel;  
Moonfall and sailing emperor, pale  
as their tide-print,  
Hear by death's accident the  
clocked and dashed-down  
spire  
Strike the sea hour through bell-  
metal.



## WE LYING BY SEASAND

---

There is loud and dark directly un-  
der the dumb flame,  
Storm, snow, and fountain in the  
weather of fireworks,  
Cathedral calm in the pulled  
house;  
Grief with drenched book and can-  
dle christens the cherub time  
From the emerald, still bell; and  
from the pacing weather-cock  
The voice of bird on coral prays.

Forever it is a white child in the  
dark-skinned summer  
Out of the font of bone and plants  
at that stone tocsin  
Scales the blue wall of spirits;  
From blank and leaking winter  
sails the child in colour,

## WE LYING BY SEASAND

---

Shakes, in crabbed burial shawl, by  
sorcerer's insect woken,  
Ding dong from the mute turrets.  
I mean by time the cast and curfew  
rascal of our marriage,  
At nightbreak born in the fat side,  
from an animal bed  
In a holy room in a wave;  
And all love's sinners in sweet  
cloth kneel to a hyleg image,  
Nutmeg, civet, and sea-parsley  
serve the plagued groom and  
bride  
Who have brought forth the urchin  
grief.

## O MAKE ME A MASK

O make me a mask and a wall to  
shut from your spies  
Of the sharp, enamelled eyes and  
the spectacled claws  
Rape and rebellion in the nurseries  
of my face,  
Gag of dumbstruck tree to block

## O MAKE ME A MASK

---

from bare enemies  
The bayonet tongue in this undefended  
prayerpiece,  
The present mouth, and the sweetly  
blown trumpet of lies,  
Shaped in old armour and oak the  
countenance of a dunce  
To shield the glistening brain and  
blunt the examiners,  
And a tear-stained widower grief  
drooped from the lashes  
To veil belladonna and let the dry  
eyes perceive  
Others betray the lamenting lies of  
their losses  
By the curve of the nude mouth or  
the laugh up the sleeve.

## THE SPIRE CRANES

The spire cranes. Its statue is an  
aviary.  
From the stone nest it does not let  
the feathery  
Carved birds blunt their striking  
throats on the salt gravel,  
Pierce the spilt sky with diving

## THE SPIRE CRANES

---

wing in weed and heel  
An inch in froth. Chimes cheat the  
prison spire, pelter  
In time like outlaw rains on that  
priest, water,  
Time for the swimmers' hands,  
music for silver lock  
And mouth. Both note and plume  
plunge from the spire's hook.  
Those craning birds are choice for  
you, songs that jump back  
To the built voice, or fly with win-  
ter to the bells,  
But do not travel down dumb wind  
like prodigals.

## AFTER THE FUNERAL

**(IN MEMORY OF ANN JONES)**

After the funeral, mule praises,  
brays,  
Windshake of sailshaped ears,  
muffle-toed tap  
Tap happily of one peg in the thick

## AFTER THE FUNERAL

---

Grave's foot, blinds down the lids,  
the teeth in black,  
The spittled eyes, the salt ponds in  
the sleeves,  
Morning smack of the spade that  
wakes up sleep,  
Shakes a desolate boy who slits his  
throat  
In the dark of the coffin and sheds  
dry leaves,  
That breaks one bone to light with  
a judgment clout,  
After the feast of tear-stuffed time  
and thistles  
In a room with a stuffed fox and a  
stale fern,  
I stand, for this memorial's sake,  
alone  
In the snivelling hours with dead,



## AFTER THE FUNERAL

---

humped Ann  
Whose hooded, fountain heart  
once fell in puddles  
Round the parched worlds of  
Wales and drowned each sun  
(Though this for her is a monstrous  
image blindly  
Magnified out of praise; her death  
was a still drop;  
She would not have me sinking in  
the holy  
Flood of her heart's fame; she  
would lie dumb and deep  
And need no druid of her broken  
body).  
But I, Ann's bard on a raised  
hearth, call all  
The seas to service that her wood-  
tongued virtue

## AFTER THE FUNERAL

---

Babble like a bellbuoy over the  
hymning heads,  
Bow down the walls of the ferned  
and foxy woods  
That her love sing and swing  
through a brown chapel,  
Bless her bent spirit with four,  
crossing birds.  
Her flesh was meek as milk, but  
this skyward statue  
With the wild breast and blessed  
and giant skull  
Is carved from her in a room with a  
wet window  
In a fiercely mourning house in a  
crooked year.  
I know her scrubbed and sour  
humble hands  
Lie with religion in their cramp,

## AFTER THE FUNERAL

---

her threadbare  
Whisper in a damp word, her wits  
drilled hollow,  
Her fist of a face died clenched on  
a round pain;  
And sculptured Ann is seventy  
years of stone.  
These cloud-sopped, marble  
hands, this monumental  
Argument of the hewn voice, ges-  
ture and psalm,  
Storm me forever over her grave  
until  
The stuffed lung of the fox twitch  
and cry Love  
And the strutting fern lay seeds on  
the black sill.

ONCE IT WAS THE COLOUR OF  
SAYING

Once it was the colour of saying  
Soaked my table the uglier side of  
a hill  
With a capsized field where a  
school sat still  
And a black and white patch of

ONCE IT WAS THE COLOUR OF  
SAYING

---

girls grew playing;  
The gentle seasides of saying I  
must undo  
That all the charmingly drowned  
arise to cockcrow and kill.  
When I whistled with mitching  
boys through a reservoir park  
Where at night we stoned the cold  
and cuckoo  
Lovers in the dirt of their leafy  
beds,  
The shade of their trees was a word  
of many shades  
And a lamp of lightning for the  
poor in the dark;  
Now my saying shall be my undo-  
ing,  
And every stone I wind off like a  
reel.

## NOT FROM THIS ANGER

Not from this anger, anticlimax af-  
ter  
Refusal struck her loin and the  
lame flower  
Bent like a beast to lap the singular  
floods  
In a land strapped by hunger

## NOT FROM THIS ANGER

---

Shall she receive a bellyful of  
weeds  
And bear those tendril hands I  
touch across  
The agonized, two seas.  
Behind my head a square of sky  
sags over  
The circular smile tossed from  
lover to lover  
And the golden ball spins out of  
the skies;  
Not from this anger after  
Refusal struck like a bell under wa-  
ter  
Shall her smile breed that mouth,  
behind the mirror,  
That burns along my eyes.

## HOW SHALL MY ANIMAL

How shall my animal  
Whose wizard shape I trace in the  
    cavernous skull,  
Vessel of abscesses and exultation's  
    shell,  
Endure burial under the spelling  
    wall,



## HOW SHALL MY ANIMAL

---

The invoked, shrouding veil at the  
cap of the face,  
Who should be furious,  
Drunk as a vineyard snail, flailed  
like an octopus,  
Roaring, crawling, quarrel  
With the outside weathers,  
The natural circle of the discovered  
skies  
Draw down to its weird eyes?

How shall it magnetize,  
Towards the studded male in a  
bent, midnight blaze  
That melts the lionhead's heel and  
horseshoe of the heart,  
A brute land in the cool top of the  
country days  
To trot with a loud mate the

## HOW SHALL MY ANIMAL

---

haybeds of a mile,  
Love and labour and kill  
In quick, sweet, cruel light till the  
    locked ground sprout out,  
The black, burst sea rejoice,  
The bowels turn turtle,  
Claw of the crabbed veins squeeze  
    from each red particle  
The parched and raging voice?

Fishermen of mermen  
Creep and harp on the tide, sinking  
    their charmed, bent pin  
With bridebait of gold bread, I with  
    a living skein,  
Tongue and ear in the thread, angle  
    the temple-bound  
Curl-locked and animal cavepools  
    of spells and bone,

## HOW SHALL MY ANIMAL

---

Trace out a tentacle,  
Nailed with an open eye, in the  
    bowl of wounds and weed  
To clasp my fury on ground  
And clap its great blood down;  
Never shall beast be born to atlas  
    the few seas  
Or poise the day on a horn.

Sigh long, clay cold, lie shorn,  
Cast high, stunned on gilled stone;  
    sly scissors ground in frost  
Clack through the thicket of  
    strength, love hewn in pillars  
    drops  
With carved bird, saint, and  
    sun, the wrackspiked maiden  
    mouth  
Lops, as a bush plumed with

## HOW SHALL MY ANIMAL

---

flames, the rant of the fierce eye,  
Clips short the gesture of breath.  
Die in red feathers when the flying  
    heaven's cut,  
And roll with the knocked earth:  
Lie dry, rest robbed, my beast.  
You have kicked from a dark den,  
    leaped up the whinnying light,  
And dug your grave in my breast.

**THE TOMBSTONE TOLD WHEN  
SHE DIED**

The tombstone told when she died.  
Her two surnames stopped me  
still.

A virgin married at rest.  
She married in this pouring place,  
That I struck one day by luck,

# THE TOMBSTONE TOLD WHEN SHE DIED

---

Before I heard in my mother's side  
Or saw in the looking-glass shell  
The rain through her cold heart  
    speak  
And the sun killed in her face.  
More the thick stone cannot tell.  
Before she lay on a stranger's bed  
With a hand plunged through her  
    hair,  
Or that rainy tongue beat back  
Through the devilish years and in-  
    nocent deaths  
To the room of a secret child,  
Among men later I heard it said  
She cried her white-dressed limbs  
    were bare  
And her red lips were kissed black,  
She wept in her pain and made  
    mouths,

# THE TOMBSTONE TOLD WHEN SHE DIED

---

Talked and tore though her eyes  
smiled.

I who saw in a hurried film  
Death and this mad heroine  
Meet once on a mortal wall  
Heard her speak through the  
chipped beak  
Of the stone bird guarding her:  
I died before bedtime came  
But my womb was bellowing  
And I felt with my bare fall  
A blazing red harsh head tear up  
And the dear floods of his hair.

## ON NO WORK OF WORDS

On no work of words now for three  
lean months in the bloody  
Belly of the rich year and the big  
purse of my body  
I bitterly take to task my poverty  
and craft:  
To take to give is all, return what is



## ON NO WORK OF WORDS

---

hungrily given  
Puffing the pounds of manna up  
through the dew to heaven,  
The lovely gift of the gab bangs  
back on a blind shaft.

To lift to leave from treasures of  
man is pleasing death  
That will rake at last all currencies  
of the marked breath  
And count the taken, forsaken  
mysteries in a bad dark.

To surrender now is to pay the ex-  
pensive ogre twice.  
Ancient woods of my blood, dash  
down to the nut of the seas  
If I take to burn or return this world  
which is each man's work.

## A SAINT ABOUT TO FALL

A saint about to fall,  
The stained flats of heaven hit and  
    razed  
To the kissed kite hems of his  
    shawl,  
On the last street wave praised  
The unwinding, song by rock,

## A SAINT ABOUT TO FALL

---

Of the woven wall  
Of his father's house in the sands,  
The vanishing of the musical ship-  
work and the chucked bells,  
The wound-down cough of the  
blood-counting clock  
Behind a face of hands,  
On the angelic etna of the last  
whirring featherlands,  
Wind-heeled foot in the hole of a  
fireball,  
Hymned his shrivelling flock,  
On the last rick's tip by spilled  
wine-wells  
Sang heaven hungry and the quick  
Cut Christbread spitting vinegar  
and all  
The mazes of his praise and en-  
vious tongue were worked in

## A SAINT ABOUT TO FALL

---

flames and shells.

Glory cracked like a flea.  
The sun-leaved holy candlewoods  
Drivelled down to one singeing  
tree  
With a stub of black buds,  
The sweet, fish-gilled boats bring-  
ing blood  
Lurched through a scuttled sea  
With a hold of leeches and straws,  
Heaven fell with his fall and one  
crooked bell beat the left air.  
O wake in me in my house in the  
mud  
Of the crotch of the squawking  
shores,  
Flicked from the carbolic city puz-  
zle in a bed of sores

## A SAINT ABOUT TO FALL

---

The scudding base of the familiar  
sky,  
The lofty roots of the clouds.  
From an odd room in a split house  
stare,  
Milk in your mouth, at the sour  
floods  
That bury the sweet street slowly,  
see  
The skull of the earth is barbed  
with a war of burning brains  
and hair.

Strike in the time-bomb town,  
Raise the live rafters of the  
eardrum,  
Throw your fear a parcel of stone  
Through the dark asylum,  
Lapped among herods wail

## A SAINT ABOUT TO FALL

---

As their blade marches in  
That the eyes are already murdered,  
The stocked heart is forced, and  
    agony has another mouth to  
    feed.

O wake to see, after a noble fall,  
The old mud hatch again, the hor-  
    rid

Woe drip from the dishrag hands  
    and the pressed sponge of the  
    forehead,

The breath draw back like a bolt  
    through white oil

And a stranger enter like iron.

Cry joy that hits witchlike midwife  
    second

Bullies into rough seas you so gen-  
    tle

## A SAINT ABOUT TO FALL

---

And makes with a flick of the  
thumb and sun  
A thundering bullring of your  
silent and girl-circled island.

'IF MY HEAD HURT A HAIR'S  
FOOT'

'If my head hurt a hair's foot  
Pack back the downed bone. If the  
unpricked ball of my breath  
Bump on a spout let the bubbles  
jump out.  
Sooner drop with the worm of the



## 'IF MY HEAD HURT A HAIR'S FOOT'

---

ropes round my throat  
Than bully ill love in the clouted  
scene.

'All game phrases fit your ring of a  
cockfight:

I'll comb the snared woods with a  
glove on a lamp,

Peck, sprint, dance on fountains  
and duck time

Before I rush in a crouch the ghost  
with a hammer, air,

Strike light, and bloody a loud  
room.

'If my bunched, monkey coming is  
cruel

Rage me back to the making house.

My hand unravel

When you sew the deep door. The

## 'IF MY HEAD HURT A HAIR'S FOOT'

---

bed is a cross place.  
Bend, if my journey ache, direction  
like an arc or make  
A limp and riderless shape to leap  
nine thinning months.'

'No. Not for Christ's dazzling bed  
Or a nacreous sleep among soft  
particles and charms  
My dear would I change my tears  
or your iron head.  
Thrust, my daughter or son, to es-  
cape, there is none, none, none,  
Nor when all ponderous heaven's  
host of waters breaks.

'Now to awake husked of gestures  
and my joy like a cave  
To the anguish and carrion, to the  
infant forever unfree,

## 'IF MY HEAD HURT A HAIR'S FOOT'

---

O my lost love bounced from a  
good home;  
The grain that hurries this way  
from the rim of the grave  
Has a voice and a house, and there  
and here you must couch and  
cry.

'Rest beyond choice in the dust-  
appointed grain,  
At the breast stored with seas. No  
return  
Through the waves of the fat  
streets nor the skeleton's thin  
ways.  
The grave and my calm body are  
shut to your coming as stone,  
And the endless beginning of  
prodigies suffers open.'

## TWENTY-FOUR YEARS

Twenty-four years remind the tears  
of my eyes.  
(Bury the dead for fear that they  
walk to the grave in labour.)  
In the groin of the natural doorway  
I crouched like a tailor  
Sewing a shroud for a journey

## TWENTY-FOUR YEARS

---

By the light of the meat-eating sun.  
Dressed to die, the sensual strut be-  
gun,  
With my red veins full of money,  
In the final direction of the elemen-  
tary town  
I advance for as long as forever is.

## THE CONVERSATION OF PRAYER

The conversation of prayers about  
to be said  
By the child going to bed and the  
man on the stairs  
Who climbs to his dying love in her  
high room,  
The one not caring to whom in his

## THE CONVERSATION OF PRAYER

---

sleep he will move  
And the other full of tears that she  
will be dead,

Turns in the dark on the sound  
they know will arise  
Into the answering skies from the  
green ground,  
From the man on the stairs and the  
child by his bed.

The sound about to be said in the  
two prayers  
For the sleep in a safe land and the  
love who dies

Will be the same grief flying.  
Whom shall they calm?  
Shall the child sleep unharmed or  
the man be crying?  
The conversation of prayers about

## THE CONVERSATION OF PRAYER

---

to be said

Turns on the quick and the dead,  
and the man on the stairs  
To-night shall find no dying but  
alive and warm

In the fire of his care his love in the  
high room.

And the child not caring to whom  
he climbs his prayer

Shall drown in a grief as deep as his  
true grave,

And mark the dark eyed wave,  
through the eyes of sleep,

Dragging him up the stairs to one  
who lies dead.

A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by  
Fire, of a Child in London

Never until the mankind making



## THE CONVERSATION OF PRAYER

---

Bird beast and flower  
Fathering and all humbling dark-  
ness  
Tells with silence the last light  
breaking  
And the still hour  
Is come of the sea tumbling in har-  
ness

And I must enter again the round  
Zion of the water bead  
And the synagogue of the ear of  
corn  
Shall I let pray the shadow of a  
sound  
Or sow my salt seed  
In the least valley of sackcloth to  
mourn

The majesty and burning of the

## THE CONVERSATION OF PRAYER

---

child's death.  
I shall not murder  
The mankind of her going with a  
grave truth  
Nor blaspheme down the stations  
of the breath  
With any further  
Elegy of innocence and youth.  
Deep with the first dead lies Lon-  
don's daughter,  
Robed in the long friends,  
The grains beyond age, the dark  
veins of her mother,  
Secret by the unmourning water  
Of the riding Thames.  
After the first death, there is no  
other.

## POEM IN OCTOBER

It was my thirtieth year to  
heaven  
Woke to my hearing from harbour  
and neighbour wood  
And the mussel pooled and the  
heron  
Priested shore

## POEM IN OCTOBER

---

The morning beckon  
With water praying and call of  
seagull and rook  
And the knock of sailing boats on  
the net webbed wall  
Myself to set foot  
That second  
In the still sleeping town and set  
forth.

My birthday began with the  
water-  
Birds and the birds of the winged  
trees flying my name  
Above the farms and the white  
horses  
And I rose  
In rainy autumn  
And walked abroad in a shower of

## POEM IN OCTOBER

---

all my days.  
High tide and the heron dived  
when I took the road  
Over the border  
And the gates  
Of the town closed as the town  
awoke.

A springful of larks in a rolling  
Cloud and the roadside bushes  
brimming with whistling  
Blackbirds and the sun of Octo-  
ber  
Summery  
On the hill's shoulder,  
Here were fond climates and sweet  
singers suddenly  
Come in the morning where I wan-  
dered and listened

## POEM IN OCTOBER

---

To the rain wringing  
Wind blow cold  
In the wood faraway under me.

Pale rain over the dwindling  
harbour  
And over the sea wet church the  
size of a snail  
With its horns through mist and  
the castle  
Brown as owls  
But all the gardens  
Of spring and summer were  
blooming in the tall tales  
Beyond the border and under the  
lark full cloud.  
There could I marvel  
My birthday  
Away but the weather turned

## POEM IN OCTOBER

---

around.

It turned away from the blithe  
country  
And down the other air and the  
blue altered sky  
Streamed again a wonder of  
summer  
    With apples  
    Pears and red currants  
And I saw in the turning so clearly  
a child's  
Forgotten mornings when he  
walked with his mother  
    Through the parables  
    Of sun light  
And the legends of the green  
chapels  
And the twice told fields of in-

## POEM IN OCTOBER

---

fancy  
That his tears burned my cheeks  
and his heart moved in mine.  
These were the woods the river  
and sea  
Where a boy  
In the listening  
Summertime of the dead whis-  
pered the truth of his joy  
To the trees and the stones and the  
fish in the tide.  
And the mystery  
Sang alive  
Still in the water and singing-  
birds.

And there could I marvel my  
birthday  
Away but the weather turned



## POEM IN OCTOBER

---

around. And the true  
Joy of the long dead child sang  
burning

In the sun.

It was my thirtieth  
Year to heaven stood there then in  
the summer noon

Though the town below lay leaved  
with October blood.

O may my heart's truth  
Still be sung

On this high hill in a year's turn-  
ing.

# THIS SIDE OF THE TRUTH

(FOR LLEWELYN)

This side of the truth,  
You may not see, my son,  
King of your blue eyes  
In the blinding country of youth,  
That all is undone,

## THIS SIDE OF THE TRUTH

---

Under the unminding skies,  
Of innocence and guilt  
Before you move to make  
One gesture of the heart or head,  
Is gathered and spilt  
Into the winding dark  
Like the dust of the dead.

Good and bad, two ways  
Of moving about your death  
By the grinding sea,  
King of your heart in the blind  
    days,  
Blow away like breath,  
Go crying through you and me  
And the souls of all men  
Into the innocent  
Dark, and the guilty dark, and  
    good

## THIS SIDE OF THE TRUTH

---

Death, and bad death, and then  
In the last element  
Fly like the stars' blood  
Like the sun's tears,  
Like the moon's seed, rubbish  
And fire, the flying rant  
Of the sky, king of your six years.  
And the wicked wish,  
Down the beginning of plants  
And animals and birds,  
Water and light, the earth and sky,  
Is cast before you move,  
And all your deeds and words,  
Each truth, each lie,  
Die in unjudging love.

## TO OTHERS THAN YOU

Friend by enemy I call you out.  
You with a bad coin in your socket,  
You my friend there with a win-  
ning air  
Who palmed the lie on me when  
you looked  
Brassily at my shyest secret,

## TO OTHERS THAN YOU

---

Enticed with twinkling bits of the  
eye  
Till the sweet tooth of my love bit  
dry,  
Rasped at last, and I stumbled and  
sucked,  
Whom now I conjure to stand as  
thief  
In the memory worked by mirrors,  
With unforgettably smiling act,  
Quickness of hand in the velvet  
glove  
And my whole heart under your  
hammer,  
Were once such a creature, so gay  
and frank  
A desireless familiar  
I never thought to utter or think  
While you displaced a truth in the

## TO OTHERS THAN YOU

---

air,

That though I loved them for their  
faults

As much as for their good,

My friends were enemies on stilts  
With their heads in a cunning  
cloud.

## LOVE IN THE ASYLUM

A stranger has come  
To share my room in the house not  
right in the head,  
A girl mad as birds  
Bolting the night of the door with  
her arm her plume.  
Strait in the mazed bed



## LOVE IN THE ASYLUM

---

She deludes the heaven-proof  
house with entering clouds

Yet she deludes with walking the  
nightmarish room,

At large as the dead,  
Or rides the imagined oceans of the  
male wards.

She has come possessed  
Who admits the delusive light  
through the bouncing wall,  
Possessed by the skies

She sleeps in the narrow trough yet  
she walks the dust

Yet raves at her will  
On the madhouse boards worn  
thin by my walking tears.

And taken by light in her arms at

## LOVE IN THE ASYLUM

---

long and dear last  
I may without fail  
Suffer the first vision that set fire to  
the stars.

## UNLUCKILY FOR A DEATH

Unluckily for a death  
Waiting with phoenix under  
The pyre yet to be lighted of my  
    sins and days,  
And for the woman in shades  
Saint carved and sensual among  
    the scudding

## UNLUCKILY FOR A DEATH

---

Dead and gone, dedicate forever to  
my self

Though the brawl of the kiss has  
not occurred

On the clay cold mouth, on the fire  
Branded forehead, that could bind  
Her constant, nor the winds of love  
broken wide

To the wind the choir and cloister  
Of the wintry nunnery of the order  
of lust

Beneath my life, that sighs for the  
seducer's coming

In the sun strokes of summer,

Loving on this sea banged guilt

My holy lucky body

Under the cloud against love is  
caught and held and kissed

## UNLUCKILY FOR A DEATH

---

In the mill of the midst  
Of the descending day, the dark  
    our folly,  
Cut to the still star in the order of  
    the quick  
But blessed by such heroic hosts in  
    your every  
Inch and glance that the wound  
Is certain god, and the ceremony of  
    souls  
Is celebrated there, and commu-  
    nion between suns.  
Never shall my self chant  
About the saint in shades while the  
    endless breviary  
Turns of your prayed flesh, nor  
    shall I shoo the bird below me:  
The death bidding two lie lonely.

## UNLUCKILY FOR A DEATH

---

I see the tigrion in tears  
In the androgynous dark,  
His striped and noon maned tribe  
    striding to holocaust,  
The she mules bear their mino-  
    taurs,  
The duck-billed platypus broody  
    in a milk of birds.  
I see the wanting nun saint carved  
    in a garb  
Of shades, symbol of desire be-  
    yond my hours  
And guilts, great crotch and giant  
Continnence. I see the unfired  
    phoenix, herald  
And heaven crier, arrow now of as-  
    piring  
And the renouncing of islands.  
All love but for the full assemblage

## UNLUCKILY FOR A DEATH

---

in flower  
Of the living flesh is monstrous or  
immortal,  
And the grave its daughters.

Love, my fate got luckily,  
Teaches with no telling  
That the phoenix' bid for heaven  
and the desire after  
Death in the carved nunnery  
Both shall fail if I bow not to your  
blessing  
Nor walk in the cool of your mortal  
garden  
With immortality at my side like  
Christ the sky.  
This I know from the native  
Tongue of your translating eyes.  
The young stars told me,

## UNLUCKILY FOR A DEATH

---

Hurling into beginning like Christ  
the child.

Lucklessly she must lie patient  
And the vaulting bird be still. O  
my true love, hold me.

In your every inch and glance is the  
globe of genesis spun,  
And the living earth your sons.



## THE HUNCHBACK IN THE PARK

The hunchback in the park  
A solitary mister  
Propped between trees and water  
From the opening of the garden  
lock  
That lets the trees and water enter  
Until the Sunday sombre bell at

## THE HUNCHBACK IN THE PARK

---

dark

Eating bread from a newspaper  
Drinking water from the chained  
cup

That the children filled with gravel  
In the fountain basin where I sailed  
my ship

Slept at night in a dog kennel  
But nobody chained him up.

Like the park birds he came early  
Like the water he sat down  
And Mister they called Hey mister  
The truant boys from the town  
Running when he had heard them  
clearly

On out of sound

Past lake and rockery  
Laughing when he shook his paper

## THE HUNCHBACK IN THE PARK

---

Hunchbacked in mockery  
Through the loud zoo of the willow  
    groves  
Dodging the park keeper  
With his stick that picked up  
    leaves.

And the old dog sleeper  
Alone between nurses and swans  
While the boys among willows  
Made the tigers jump out of their  
    eyes  
To roar on the rockery stones  
And the groves were blue with  
    sailors

Made all day until bell time  
A woman figure without fault  
Straight as a young elm  
Straight and tall from his crooked

## THE HUNCHBACK IN THE PARK

---

bones  
That she might stand in the night  
After the locks and chains  
All night in the unmade park  
After the railings and shrubberies  
The birds the grass the trees the  
lake  
And the wild boys innocent as  
strawberries  
Had followed the hunchback  
To his kennel in the dark.

## INTO HER LYING DOWN HEAD

I

Into her lying down head  
His enemies entered bed,  
Under the encumbered eyelid,  
Through the rippled drum of the  
hair-buried ear;  
And Noah's rekindled now unkind

## INTO HER LYING DOWN HEAD

---

dove  
    Flew man-bearing there.  
Last night in a raping wave  
Whales unreined from the green  
    grave  
In fountains of origin gave up their  
    love,  
    Along her innocence glided  
Jaun aflame and savagely young  
    King Lear,  
    Queen Catherine howling  
    bare  
    And Samson drowned in his  
    hair,  
The colossal intimacies of silent  
    Once seen strangers or shades  
    on a stair;  
There the dark blade and wanton  
    sighing her down

## INTO HER LYING DOWN HEAD

---

To a haycock couch and the scythes  
of his arms

Rode and whistled a hundred  
times

Before the crowing morning  
climbed;

Man was the burning England she  
was sleep-walking, and the en-  
amouring island

Made her limbs blind by lumi-  
nous charms,

Sleep to a newborn sleep in a swad-  
dling loin-leaf stroked and sang  
And his runaway beloved child-  
like laid in the acorned sand.

### II

There where a numberless  
tongue

## INTO HER LYING DOWN HEAD

---

Wound their room with a  
male moan,  
His faith around her flew un-  
done  
And darkness hung the walls with  
baskets of snakes,  
A furnace-nostrilled column-  
membered  
Super-or-near man  
Resembling to her dulled sense  
The thief of adolescence,  
Early imaginary half remembered  
Oceanic lover alone  
Jealousy cannot forget for all her  
sakes,  
Made his bad bed in her good  
Night, and enjoyed as he  
would.  
Crying, white gowned, from the



## INTO HER LYING DOWN HEAD

---

middle moonlit stages  
Out to the tiered and hearing  
tide,  
Close and far she announced the  
theft of the heart  
In the taken body at many ages,  
Trespasser and broken bride  
Celebrating at her side  
All blood-signed assailing and  
vanished marriages in which he  
had no lovely part  
Nor could share, for his pride,  
to the least  
Mutter and foul wingbeat of the  
solemnizing nightpriest  
Her holy unholy hours with the al-  
ways anonymous beast.

III

## INTO HER LYING DOWN HEAD

---

Two sand grains together in  
bed,

Head to heaven-circling head,  
Singly lie with the whole wide  
shore,

The covering sea their nightfall  
with no names;

And out of every domed and soil-  
based shell

One voice in chains declaims  
The female, deadly, and male  
Libidinous betrayal,  
Golden dissolving under the water  
veil.

A she bird sleeping brittle by  
Her lover's wings that fold to-  
morrow's flight,

Within the nested treefork  
Sings to the treading hawk

## INTO HER LYING DOWN HEAD

---

Carrion, paradise, chirrup my  
bright yolk.

A blade of grass longs with the  
meadow,

A stone lies lost and locked in the  
lark-high hill.

Open as to the air to the naked  
shadow

O she lies alone and still,

Innocent between two wars,

With the incestuous secret brother  
in the seconds to perpetuate the  
stars,

A man torn up mourns in the  
sole night.

And the second comers, the sever-  
ers, the enemies from the deep

Forgotten dark, rest their pulse and  
bury their dead in her faithless

## INTO HER LYING DOWN HEAD

---

sleep.

DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT  
GOOD NIGHT

Do not go gentle into that good  
night,  
Old age should burn and rave at  
close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the  
light.

# DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

---

Though wise men at their end  
know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no  
lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good  
night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying  
how bright  
Their frail deeds might have  
danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the  
light.

Wild men who caught and sang the  
sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it  
on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good  
night.

# DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

---

Grave men, near death, who see  
with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors  
and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the  
light.

And you, my father, there on the  
sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your  
fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good  
night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the  
light.

## DEATHS AND ENTRANCES

On almost the incendiary eve  
Of several near deaths,  
When one at the great least of your  
    best loved  
And always known must leave  
Lions and fires of his flying breath,  
Of your immortal friends



## DEATHS AND ENTRANCES

---

Who'd raise the organs of the  
counted dust  
To shoot and sing your praise,  
One who called deepest down  
shall hold his peace  
That cannot sink or cease  
Endlessly to his wound  
In many married London's es-  
tranging grief.

On almost the incendiary eve  
When at your lips and keys,  
Locking, unlocking, the murdered  
strangers weave,  
One who is most unknown,  
Your polestar neighbour, sun of an-  
other street,  
Will dive up to his tears.  
He'll bathe his raining blood in the

## DEATHS AND ENTRANCES

---

male sea  
Who strode for your own dead  
And wind his globe out of your  
water thread  
And load the throats of shells  
With every cry since light  
Flashed first across his thunder-  
clapping eyes.

On almost the incendiary eve  
Of deaths and entrances,  
When near and strange wounded  
on London's waves  
Have sought your single grave,  
One enemy, of many, who knows  
well  
Your heart is luminous  
In the watched dark, quivering  
through locks and caves,

## DEATHS AND ENTRANCES

---

Will pull the thunderbolts  
To shut the sun, plunge, mount  
    your darkened keys  
And sear just riders back,  
Until that one loved least  
Looms the last Samson of your zo-  
    diac.

## A WINTER'S TALE

It is a winter's tale  
That the snow blind twilight ferries  
    over the lakes  
And floating fields from the farm  
    in the cup of the vales,  
Gliding windless through the hand  
    folded flakes,

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

The pale breath of cattle at the  
stealthy sail,

And the stars falling cold,  
And the smell of hay in the snow,  
and the far owl

Warning among the folds, and the  
frozen hold

Flocked with the sheep white  
smoke of the farm house cowl  
In the river wended vales where  
the tale was told.

Once when the world turned  
old

On a star of faith pure as the drift-  
ing bread,

As the food and flames of the snow,  
a man unrolled

The scrolls of fire that burned in his

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

heart and head,  
Torn and alone in a farm house in a  
fold

Of fields. And burning then  
In his firelit island ringed by the  
winged snow  
And the dung hills white as wool  
and the hen  
Roosts sleeping chill till the flame  
of the cock crow  
Combs through the mantled yards  
and the morning men

Stumble out with their spades,  
The cattle stirring, the mousing cat  
stepping shy,  
The puffed birds hopping and  
hunting, the milkmaids  
Gentle in their clogs over the fallen

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

sky,  
And all the woken farm at its white  
trades,

He knelt, he wept, he prayed,  
By the spit and the black pot in the  
log bright light  
And the cup and the cut bread in  
the dancing shade,  
In the muffled house, in the quick  
of night,  
At the point of love, forsaken and  
afraid.

He knelt on the cold stones,  
He wept from the crest of grief, he  
prayed to the veiled sky  
May his hunger go howling on  
bare white bones  
Past the statues of the stables and

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

the sky roofed sties  
And the duck pond glass and the  
blinding byres alone

Into the home of prayers  
And fires where he should prowl  
down the cloud  
Of his snow blind love and rush in  
the white lairs.

His naked need struck him howl-  
ing and bowed  
Though no sound flowed down the  
hand folded air

But only the wind strung  
Hunger of birds in the fields of the  
bread of water, tossed  
In high corn and the harvest melt-  
ing on their tongues.  
And his nameless need bound him



## A WINTER'S TALE

---

burning and lost  
When cold as snow he should run  
the wended vales among

The rivers mouthed in night,  
And drown in the drifts of his  
need, and lie curled caught  
In the always desiring centre of the  
white  
Inhuman cradle and the bride bed  
forever sought  
By the believer lost and the hurled  
outcast of light.

Deliver him, he cried,  
By losing him all in love, and cast  
his need  
Alone and naked in the engulfing  
bride,  
Never to flourish in the fields of the

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

white seed  
Or flower under the time dying  
flesh astride.

Listen. The minstrels sing  
In the departed villages. The  
nightingale,  
Dust in the buried wood, flies on  
the grains of her wings  
And spells on the winds of the  
dead his winter's tale.  
The voice of the dust of water from  
the withered spring

Is telling. The wizened  
Stream with bells and baying water  
bounds. The dew rings  
On the gristed leaves and the long  
gone glistening  
Parish of snow. The carved mouths

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

in the rock are wind swept  
strings.

Time sings through the intricately  
dead snow drop. Listen.

It was a hand or sound  
In the long ago land that glided the  
dark door wide  
And there outside on the bread of  
the ground  
A she bird rose and rayed like a  
burning bride.  
A she bird dawned, and her breast  
with snow and scarlet downed.

Look. And the dancers move  
On the departed, snow bushed  
green, wanton in moon light  
As a dust of pigeons. Exulting, the  
grave hooved

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

Horses, centaur dead, turn and  
tread the drenched white  
Paddocks in the farms of birds. The  
dead oak walks for love.

The carved limbs in the rock  
Leap, as to trumpets. Calligraphy  
of the old  
Leaves is dancing. Lines of age on  
the stones weave in a flock.  
And the harp shaped voice of the  
water's dust plucks in a fold  
Of fields. For love, the long ago she  
bird rises. Look.

And the wild wings were  
raised  
Above her folded head, and the  
soft feathered voice  
Was flying through the house as

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

though the she bird praised  
And all the elements of the slow  
fall rejoiced  
That a man knelt alone in the cup  
of the vales,

In the mantle and calm,  
By the spit and the black pot in the  
log bright light.  
And the sky of birds in the plumed  
voice charmed  
Him up and he ran like a wind af-  
ter the kindling flight  
Past the blind barns and byres of  
the windless farm.

In the poles of the year  
When black birds died like priests  
in the cloaked hedge row  
And over the cloth of counties the

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

far hills rode near,  
Under the one leaved trees ran a  
scarecrow of snow  
And fast through the drifts of the  
thickets antlered like deer,

Rags and prayers down the  
knee-  
Deep hillocks and loud on the  
numbed lakes,  
All night lost and long wading in  
the wake of the she-  
Bird through the times and lands  
and tribes of the slow flakes.  
Listen and look where she sails the  
goose plucked sea,

The sky, the bird, the bride,  
The cloud, the need, the planted  
stars, the joy beyond

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

The fields of seed and the time dy-  
ing flesh astride,  
The heavens, the heaven, the  
grave, the burning font.  
In the far ago land the door of his  
death glided wide,

And the bird descended.  
On a bread white hill over the  
cupped farm  
And the lakes and floating fields  
and the river wended  
Vales where he prayed to come to  
the last harm  
And the home of prayers and fires,  
the tale ended.

The dancing perishes  
On the white, no longer growing  
green, and, minstrel dead,

## A WINTER'S TALE

---

The singing breaks in the snow  
shoed villages of wishes  
That once cut the figures of birds  
on the deep bread  
And over the glazed lakes skated  
the shapes of fishes

Flying. The rite is shorn  
Of nightingale and centaur dead  
horse. The springs wither  
Back. Lines of age sleep on the  
stones till trumpeting dawn.  
Exultation lies down. Time buries  
the spring weather  
That belled and bounded with the  
fossil and the dew reborn.

For the bird lay bedded  
In a choir of wings, as though she  
slept or died,



## A WINTER'S TALE

---

And the wings glided wide and he  
was hymned and wedded,  
And through the thighs of the en-  
gulfing bride,  
The woman breasted and the  
heaven headed

Bird, he was brought low,  
Burning in the bride bed of love, in  
the whirl-  
Pool at the wanting centre, in the  
folds  
Of paradise, in the spun bud of the  
world.  
And she rose with him flowering in  
her melting snow.

## ON A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The sky is torn across  
This ragged anniversary of two  
Who moved for three years in tune  
Down the long walks of their  
vows.

Now their love lies a loss

## ON A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

---

And Love and his patients roar on  
a chain;  
From every tune or crater  
Carrying cloud, Death strikes their  
house.

Too late in the wrong rain  
They come together whom their  
love parted:  
The windows pour into their heart  
And the doors burn in their brain.

## THERE WAS A SAVIOUR

There was a saviour  
Rarer than radium,  
Commoner than water, crueller  
than truth;  
Children kept from the sun  
Assembled at his tongue  
To hear the golden note turn in

## THERE WAS A SAVIOUR

---

a groove,  
Prisoners of wishes locked their  
eyes  
In the jails and studies of his key-  
less smiles.

The voice of children says  
From a lost wilderness  
There was calm to be done in his  
safe unrest,  
When hindering man hurt  
Man, animal, or bird  
We hid our fears in that murder-  
ing breath,  
Silence, silence to do, when earth  
grew loud,  
In lairs and asylums of the tremen-  
dous shout.

There was glory to hear

## THERE WAS A SAVIOUR

---

In the churches of his tears,  
Under his downy arm you  
sighed as he struck,  
O you who could not cry  
On to the ground when a man  
died  
Put a tear for joy in the un-  
earthly flood  
And laid your cheek against a  
cloud-formed shell:  
Now in the dark there is only your-  
self and myself.

Two proud, blacked brothers  
cry,  
Winter-locked side by side,  
To this inhospitable hollow year,  
O we who could not stir  
One lean sigh when we heard

## THERE WAS A SAVIOUR

---

Greed on man beating near and  
fire neighbour

But wailed and nested in the  
sky-blue wall

Now break a giant tear for the little  
known fall,

For the drooping of homes  
That did not nurse our bones,  
Brave deaths of only ones but  
never found,

Now see, alone in us,  
Our own true strangers' dust  
Ride through the doors of our  
unentered house.

Exiled in us we arouse the soft,  
Unclenched, armless, silk and  
rough love that breaks all rocks.

## ON THE MARRIAGE OF A VIRGIN

Waking alone in a multitude of  
loves when morning's light  
Surprised in the opening of her  
nightlong eyes  
His golden yesterday asleep upon  
the iris  
And this day's sun leapt up the sky



## ON THE MARRIAGE OF A VIRGIN

---

out of her thighs  
Was miraculous virginity old as  
loaves and fishes,  
Though the moment of a miracle is  
unending lightning  
And the shipyards of Galilee's  
footprints hide a navy of doves.

No longer will the vibrations of the  
sun desire on  
Her deepsea pillow where once she  
married alone,  
Her heart all ears and eyes, lips  
catching the avalanche  
Of the golden ghost who ringed  
with his streams her mercury  
bone,  
Who under the lids of her windows  
hoisted his golden luggage,

## ON THE MARRIAGE OF A VIRGIN

---

For a man sleeps where fire leapt  
down and she learns through  
his arm

That other sun, the jealous cours-  
ing of the unrivalled blood.

## IN MY CRAFT OR SULLEN ART

In my craft or sullen art  
Exercised in the still night  
When only the moon rages  
And the lovers lie abed  
With all their griefs in their arms,  
I labour by singing light  
Not for ambition or bread

## IN MY CRAFT OR SULLEN ART

---

Or the strut and trade of charms  
On the ivory stages  
But for the common wages  
Of their most secret heart.

Not for the proud man apart  
From the raging moon I write  
On these spindrift pages  
Nor for the towering dead  
With their nightingales and psalms  
But for the lovers, their arms  
Round the griefs of the ages,  
Who pay no praise or wages  
Nor heed my craft or art.

## CEREMONY AFTER A FIRE RAID

I

Myselfes

The grievers

Grieve

Among the street burned to tireless  
death

A child of a few hours

## CEREMONY AFTER A FIRE RAID

---

With its kneading mouth  
Charred on the black breast of the  
grave  
The mother dug, and its arms full  
of fires.

Begin  
With singing  
Sing  
Darkness kindled back into begin-  
ning  
When the caught tongue nodded  
blind,  
A star was broken  
Into the centuries of the child  
Myself grieve now, and miracles  
cannot atone.

Forgive  
Us forgive

## CEREMONY AFTER A FIRE RAID

---

Us your death that myselfes the  
believers  
May hold it in a great flood  
Till the blood shall spurt,  
And the dust shall sing like a bird  
As the grains blow, as your death  
grows, through our heart.

Crying  
Your dying  
Cry,  
Child beyond cockcrow, by the  
fire-dwarfed  
Street we chant the flying sea  
In the body bereft.  
Love is the last light spoken. Oh  
Seed of sons in the loin of the black  
husk left.

II

## CEREMONY AFTER A FIRE RAID

---

I know not whether  
Adam or Eve, the adorned holy  
    bullock  
Or the white ewe lamb  
Or the chosen virgin  
Laid in her snow  
On the altar of London,  
Was the first to die  
In the cinder of the little skull,  
O bride and bride groom  
O Adam and Eve together  
Lying in the lull  
Under the sad breast of the head  
    stone  
White as the skeleton  
Of the garden of Eden.

I know the legend  
Of Adam and Eve is never for a



## CEREMONY AFTER A FIRE RAID

---

second

Silent in my service  
Over the dead infants  
Over the one  
Child who was priest and servants,  
Word, singers, and tongue  
In the cinder of the little skull,  
Who was the serpent's  
Night fall and the fruit like a sun,  
Man and woman undone,  
Beginning crumbled back to dark-  
ness  
Bare as nurseries  
Of the garden of wilderness.

III

Into the organpipes and steeples  
Of the luminous cathedrals,  
Into the weathercocks' molten

## CEREMONY AFTER A FIRE RAID

---

mouths  
Rippling in twelve-winded circles,  
Into the dead clock burning the  
hour  
Over the urn of sabbaths  
Over the whirling ditch of day-  
break  
Over the sun's hovel and the slum  
of fire  
And the golden pavements laid in  
requiems,  
Into the bread in a wheatfield of  
flames,  
Into the wine burning like brandy,  
The masses of the sea  
The masses of the sea under  
The masses of the infant-bearing  
sea  
Erupt, fountain, and enter to utter

## CEREMONY AFTER A FIRE RAID

---

for ever  
Glory glory glory  
The sundering ultimate kingdom  
of genesis' thunder.

## ONCE BELOW A TIME

I

Once below a time,  
When my pinned-around-the-  
spirit  
Cut-to-measure flesh bit,  
Suit for a serial sum  
On the first of each hardship,

## ONCE BELOW A TIME

---

My paid-for slaved-for own too  
late

In love torn breeches and blistered  
jacket

On the snapping rims of the ashpit,  
In grottoes I worked with birds,  
Spiked with a mastiff collar,  
Tasselled in cellar and snipping  
shop

Or decked on a cloud swallower,

Then swift from a bursting sea  
with bottlecork boats

And out-of-perspective sailors,  
In common clay clothes disguised  
as scales,

As a he-god's paddling water  
skirts,

I astounded the sitting tailors,

## ONCE BELOW A TIME

---

I set back the clock faced tailors,  
Then, bushily swanked in bear wig  
and tails,  
Hopping hot leaved and feathered  
From the kangaroo foot of the  
earth,  
From the chill, silent centre  
Trailing the frost bitten cloth,  
Up through the lubber crust of  
Wales  
I rocketed to astonish  
The flashing needle rock of squat-  
ters,  
The criers of Shabby and Shorten,  
The famous stitch droppers.

II

My silly suit, hardly yet suffered  
for,

## ONCE BELOW A TIME

---

Around some coffin carrying  
Birdman or told ghost I hung.  
And the owl hood, the heel hider,  
Claw fold and hole for the rotten  
Head, deceived, I believed, my  
maker,

The cloud perched tailors' master  
with nerves for cotton.  
On the old seas from stories,  
thrashing my wings,  
Combing with antlers, Columbus  
on fire,  
I was pierced by the idol tailor's  
eyes,  
Glared through shark mask and  
navigating head,  
Cold Nansen's beak on a boat full  
of gongs,

## ONCE BELOW A TIME

---

To the boy of common thread,  
The bright pretender, the ridicu-  
lous sea dandy  
With dry flesh and earth for adorn-  
ing and bed.  
It was sweet to drown in the ready-  
made handy water  
With my cherry capped dangler  
green as seaweed  
Summoning a child's voice from a  
webfoot stone,  
Never never oh never to regret the  
bugle I wore  
On my cleaving arm as I blasted in  
a wave.  
Now shown and mostly bare I  
would lie down,  
Lie down, lie down and live  
As quiet as a bone.



## WHEN I WOKE

When I woke, the town spoke.  
Birds and clocks and cross bells  
Dinned aside the coiling crowd,  
The reptile profligates in a flame,  
Spoilers and pokers of sleep,  
The next-door sea dispelled  
Frogs and satans and woman-luck,

## WHEN I WOKE

---

While a man outside with a bill-  
hook,  
Up to his head in his blood,  
Cutting the morning off,  
The warm-veined double of Time  
And his scarving beard from a  
book,  
Slashed down the last snake as  
though  
It were a wand or subtle bough,  
Its tongue peeled in the wrap of a  
leaf.

Every morning I make,  
God in bed, good and bad,  
After a water-face walk,  
The death-stagged scatter-breath  
Mammoth and sparrowfall  
Everybody's earth.

## WHEN I WOKE

---

Where birds ride like leaves and  
boats like ducks  
I heard, this morning, waking,  
Crossly out of the town noises  
A voice in the erected air,  
No prophet-progeny of mine,  
Cry my sea town was breaking.  
No Time, spoke the clocks, no God,  
rang the bells,  
I drew the white sheet over the is-  
lands  
And the coins on my eyelids sang  
like shells.

AMONG THOSE KILLED IN THE  
DAWN RAID WAS A MAN AGED  
A HUNDRED

When the morning was waking  
over the war  
He put on his clothes and stepped  
out and he died,

AMONG THOSE KILLED IN THE DAWN  
RAID WAS A MAN AGED A HUNDRED

---

The locks yawned loose and a blast  
blew them wide,  
He dropped where he loved on the  
burst pavement stone  
And the funeral grains of the  
slaughtered floor.  
Tell his street on its back he  
stopped a sun  
And the craters of his eyes grew  
springshots and fire  
When all the keys shot from the  
locks, and rang.  
Dig no more for the chains of his  
grey-haired heart.  
The heavenly ambulance drawn by  
a wound  
Assembling waits for the spade's  
ring on the cage.  
O keep his bones away from the

AMONG THOSE KILLED IN THE DAWN  
RAID WAS A MAN AGED A HUNDRED

---

common cart,  
The morning is flying on the wings  
of his age  
And a hundred storks perch on the  
sun's right hand.

## LIE STILL, SLEEP BECALMED

Lie still, sleep becalmed,  
sufferer with the  
wound  
In the throat, burning  
and turning. All  
night afloat  
On the silent sea we

## LIE STILL, SLEEP BECALMED

---

have heard the  
sound  
That came from the  
wound wrapped in  
the salt sheet.

Under the mile off moon  
we trembled listen-  
ing  
To the sea sound flow-  
ing like blood from  
the loud wound  
And when the salt sheet  
broke in a storm of  
singing  
The voices of all the  
drowned swam on  
the wind.

Open a pathway



## LIE STILL, SLEEP BECALMED

---

through the slow  
sad sail,  
Throw wide to the wind  
the gates of the wan-  
dering boat  
For my voyage to be-  
gin to the end of my  
wound,  
We heard the sea sound  
sing, we saw the salt  
sheet tell.  
Lie still, sleep becalmed,  
hide the mouth in  
the throat,  
Or we shall obey,  
and ride with  
you through the  
drowned.

## VISION AND PRAYER

I  
Who  
Are you  
Who is born  
In the next room  
So loud to my own  
That I can hear the womb

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

Opening and the dark run  
Over the ghost and the dropped son  
Behind the wall thin as a wren's bone?  
In the birth bloody room unknown  
To the burn and turn of time  
And the heart print of man  
Bows no baptism  
But dark alone  
Blessing on  
The wild  
Child.

I  
Must lie  
Still as stone  
By the wren bone  
Wall hearing the moan  
Of the mother hidden  
And the shadowed head of pain

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

Casting to-morrow like a thorn  
And the midwives of miracle sing  
    Until the turbulent new born  
Burns me his name and his flame  
    And the winged wall is torn  
        By his torrid crown  
    And the dark thrown  
        From his loin  
            To bright  
            Light.

    When  
        The wren  
    Bone writhes down  
    And the first dawn  
    Furied by his stream  
Swarms on the kingdom come  
    Of the dazzler of heaven  
And the splashed mothering maiden

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

Who bore him with a bonfire in  
His mouth and rocked him like a storm  
I shall run lost in sudden  
Terror and shining from  
The once hooded room  
Crying in vain  
In the caldron  
Of his  
Kiss

In  
The spin  
Of the sun  
In the spuming  
Cyclone of his wing  
For I was lost who am  
Crying at the man drenched throne  
In the first fury of his stream  
And the lightnings of adoration

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

Back to black silence melt and mourn  
For I was lost who have come  
To dumbfounding haven  
And the finding one  
And the high noon  
Of his wound  
Blinds my  
Cry.

There  
Crouched bare  
In the shrine  
Of his blazing  
Breast I shall waken  
To the judge blown bedlam  
Of the uncaged sea bottom  
The cloud climb of the exhaling tomb  
And the bidden dust upsailing  
With his flame in every grain.

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

O spiral of ascension  
From the vultured urn  
Of the morning  
Of man when  
The land  
And

The  
Born sea  
Praised the sun  
The finding one  
And upright Adam  
Sang upon origin!  
O the wings of the children!  
The woundward flight of the ancient  
Young from the canyons of oblivion!  
The sky stride of the always slain  
In battle! the happening  
Of saints to their vision!

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

The world winding home!  
And the whole pain  
Flows open  
And I  
Die.

### II

In the name of the lost who glory in  
The swinish plains of carrion  
Under the burial song  
Of the birds of burden  
Heavy with the drowned  
And the green dust  
And bearing  
The ghost  
From  
The ground  
Like pollen  
On the black plume



## VISION AND PRAYER

---

And the beak of slime  
I pray though I belong  
Not wholly to that lamenting  
Brethren for joy has moved within  
The inmost marrow of my heart bone

That he who learns now the sun and moon  
Of his mother's milk may return  
Before the lips blaze and bloom  
To the birth bloody room  
Behind the wall's wren  
Bone and be dumb  
And the womb  
That bore  
For  
All men  
The adored  
Infant light or  
The dazzling prison

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

Yawn to his upcoming.  
In the name of the wanton  
Lost on the unchristened mountain  
In the centre of dark I pray him

That he let the dead lie though they moan  
For his briared hands to hoist them  
To the shrine of his world's wound  
And the blood drop's garden  
Endure the stone  
Blind host to sleep  
In the dark  
And deep  
Rock  
Awake  
No heart bone  
But let it break  
On the mountain crown  
Unbidden by the sun

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

And the beating dust be blown  
Down to the river rooting plain  
Under the night forever falling.

Forever falling night is a known  
Star and country to the legion  
Of sleepers whose tongue I toll  
    To mourn his deluging  
Light through sea and soil  
    And we have come  
        To know all  
            Places  
            Ways  
            Mazes  
            Passages  
    Quarters and graves  
    Of the endless fall.  
    Now common lazarus  
Of the charting sleepers prays

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

Never to awake and arise  
For the country of death is the heart's size

And the star of the lost the shape of the eyes.

In the name of the fatherless

In the name of the unborn

And the undesirers

Of midwiving morning's

Hands or instruments

O in the name

Of no one

Now or

No

One to

Be I pray

May the crimson

Sun spin a grave grey

And the colour of clay

Stream upon his martyrdom

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

In the interpreted evening  
And the known dark of the earth amen.

I turn the corner of prayer and burn  
In a blessing of the sudden  
Sun. In the name of the damned  
I would turn back and run  
To the hidden land  
But the loud sun  
Christens down  
The sky.

I  
Am found.  
O let him  
Scald me and drown  
Me in his world's wound.  
His lightning answers my  
Cry. My voice burns in his hand.  
Now I am lost in the blinding

## VISION AND PRAYER

---

One. The sun roars at the prayer's end.

# BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

The bows glided down, and the  
coast  
Blackened with birds took a last  
look  
At his thrashing hair and whale-  
blue eye;

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

The trodden town rang its cobbles  
for luck.

Then good-bye to the fisher-  
manned

Boat with its anchor free and fast  
As a bird hooking over the sea,  
High and dry by the top of the  
mast,

Whispered the affectionate sand  
And the bulwarks of the dazzled  
quay.

For my sake sail, and never look  
back,

Said the looking land.

Sails drank the wind, and white as  
milk

He sped into the drinking dark;  
The sun shipwrecked west on a



## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

pearl  
And the moon swam out of its  
hulk.

Funnels and masts went by in a  
whirl.

Good-bye to the man on the sea-  
legged deck

To the gold gut that sings on his  
reel

To the bait that stalked out of the  
sack,

For we saw him throw to the swift  
flood

A girl alive with his hooks through  
her lips;

All the fishes were rayed in blood,  
Said the dwindling ships.

Good-bye to chimneys and fun-

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

nels,  
Old wives that spin in the smoke,  
He was blind to the eyes of candles  
In the praying windows of waves  
But heard his bait buck in the wake  
And tussle in a shoal of loves.  
Now cast down your rod, for the  
whole  
Of the sea is hilly with whales,  
She longs among horses and an-  
gels,  
The rainbow-fish bend in her joys,  
Floated the lost cathedral  
Chimes of the rocked buoys.  
Where the anchor rode like a gull  
Miles over the moonstruck boat  
A squall of birds bellowed and fell,  
A cloud blew the rain from its

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

throat;

He saw the storm smoke out to kill  
With fuming bows and ram of ice,  
Fire on starlight, rake Jesu's  
stream;  
And nothing shone on the water's  
face

But the oil and bubble of the moon,  
Plunging and piercing in his course  
The lured fish under the foam  
Witnessed with a kiss.

Whales in the wake like capes and  
Alps  
Quaked the sick sea and snouted  
deep,  
Deep the great bushed bait with  
raining lips

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

Slipped the fins of those hump-  
backed tons

And fled their love in a weaving  
dip.

Oh, Jericho was falling in their  
lungs!

She nipped and dived in the nick  
of love,

Spun on a spout like a long-legged  
ball

Till every beast blared down in a  
swerve

Till every turtle crushed from his  
shell

Till every bone in the rushing grave  
Rose and crowed and fell!

Good luck to the hand on the rod,  
There is thunder under its thumbs;

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

Gold gut is a lightning thread,  
His fiery reel sings off its flames,  
The whirled boat in the burn of his  
    blood  
Is crying from nets to knives,  
Oh the shearwater birds and their  
    boatsized brood  
Oh the bulls of Biscay and their  
    calves  
Are making under the green, laid  
    veil  
The long-legged beautiful bait  
    their wives.  
Break the black news and paint on  
    a sail  
Huge weddings in the waves,  
Over the wakeward-flashing spray  
Over the gardens of the floor

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

Clash out the mounting dolphin's  
day,  
My mast is a bell-spire,  
Strike and smoothe, for my decks  
are drums,  
Sing through the water-spoken  
prow  
The octopus walking into her limbs  
The polar eagle with his tread of  
snow.  
From salt-lipped beak to the kick of  
the stern  
Sing how the seal has kissed her  
dead!  
The long, laid minute's bride drifts  
on  
Old in her cruel bed.  
Over the graveyard in the water

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

Mountains and galleries beneath  
Nightingale and hyena  
Rejoicing for that drifting death  
Sing and howl through sand and  
    anemone  
Valley and sahara in a shell,  
Oh all the wanting flesh his enemy  
Thrown to the sea in the shell of a  
    girl  
Is old as water and plain as an eel;  
Always good-bye to the long-  
    legged bread  
Scattered in the paths of his heels  
For the salty birds fluttered and fed  
And the tall grains foamed in their  
    bills;  
Always good-bye to the fires of the  
    face,

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

For the crab-backed dead on the  
sea-bed rose

And scuttled over her eyes,

The blind, clawed stare is cold as  
sleet.

The tempter under the eyelid

Who shows to the selves asleep

Mast-high moon-white women  
naked

Walking in wishes and lovely for  
shame

Is dumb and gone with his flame of  
brides.

Sussanah's drowned in the  
bearded stream

And no-one stirs at Sheba's side

But the hungry kings of the tides;

Sin who had a woman's shape



## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

Sleeps till Silence blows on a cloud  
And all the lifted waters walk and  
    leap.

Lucifer that bird's dropping  
Out of the sides of the north  
Has melted away and is lost  
Is always lost in her vaulted breath,

Venus lies star-struck in her wound  
And the sensual ruins make  
Seasons over the liquid world,  
White springs in the dark.

Always good-bye, cried the voices  
    through the shell,  
Good-bye always, for the flesh is  
    cast  
And the fisherman winds his reel  
With no more desire than a ghost.

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

Always good luck, praised the  
finned in the feather  
Bird after dark and the laughing  
fish  
As the sails drank up the hail of  
thunder  
And the long-tailed lightning lit his  
catch.

The boat swims into the six-year  
weather,  
A wind throws a shadow and it  
freezes fast.  
See what the gold gut drags from  
under  
Mountains and galleries to the  
crest!

See what clings to hair and skull  
As the boat skims on with drinking

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

wings!

The statues of great rain stand still,  
And the flakes fall like hills.

Sing and strike his heavy haul  
Toppling up the boatside in a snow  
of light!

His decks are drenched with mira-  
cles.

Oh miracle of fishes! The long  
dead bite!

Out of the urn a size of a man  
Out of the room the weight of his  
trouble

Out of the house that holds a town  
In the continent of a fossil

One by one in dust and shawl,  
Dry as echoes and insect-faced,  
His fathers cling to the hand of the

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

girl  
And the dead hand leads the past,  
Leads them as children and as air  
On to the blindly tossing tops;  
The centuries throw back their hair  
And the old men sing from new-  
born lips:

\_Time is bearing another son.  
Kill Time! She turns in her pain!  
The oak is felled in the acorn  
And the hawk in the egg kills the  
wren.\_

He who blew the great fire in  
And died on a hiss of flames  
Or walked the earth in the evening  
Counting the denials of the grains  
Clings to her drifting hair, and

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

climbs;  
And he who taught their lips to  
sing  
Weeps like the risen sun among  
The liquid choirs of his tribes.  
The rod bends low, divining land,  
And through the sundered water  
crawls  
A garden holding to her hand  
With birds and animals  
With men and women and water-  
falls  
Trees cool and dry in the whirlpool  
of ships  
And stunned and still on the green,  
laid veil  
Sand with legends in its virgin laps  
And prophets loud on the burned

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

dunes;  
Insects and valleys hold her thighs  
hard,  
Times and places grip her breast  
bone,  
She is breaking with seasons and  
clouds;

Round her trailed wrist fresh water  
weaves,  
with moving fish and rounded  
stones  
Up and down the greater waves  
A separate river breathes and runs;  
Strike and sing his catch of fields  
For the surge is sown with barley,  
The cattle graze on the covered  
foam,  
The hills have footed the waves

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

away,  
With wild sea fillies and soaking  
bridles  
With salty colts and gales in their  
limbs  
All the horses of his haul of mira-  
cles  
Gallop through the arched, green  
farms,  
Trot and gallop with gulls upon  
them  
And thunderbolts in their manes.  
O Rome and Sodom To-morrow  
and London  
The country tide is cobbled with  
towns  
And steeples pierce the cloud on  
her shoulder

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

And the streets that the fisherman  
combed

When his long-legged flesh was a  
wind on fire

And his loin was a hunting flame

Coil from the thoroughfares of her  
hair

And terribly lead him home alive

Lead her prodigal home to his ter-  
ror,

The furious ox-killing house of  
love.

Down, down, down, under the  
ground,

Under the floating villages,

Turns the moon-chained and  
water-wound

Metropolis of fishes,



## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

There is nothing left of the sea but  
its sound,  
Under the earth the loud sea walks,  
In deathbeds of orchards the boat  
dies down  
And the bait is drowned among  
hayricks,

Land, land, land, nothing remains  
Of the pacing, famous sea but its  
speech,  
And into its talkative seven tombs  
The anchor dives through the  
floors of a church.

Good-bye, good luck, struck the  
sun and the moon,  
To the fisherman lost on the land.  
He stands alone in the door of his  
home,

## BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

With his long-legged heart in his  
hand.

## HOLY SPRING

O  
Out of a bed of love  
When that immortal hospital made  
one more move to soothe  
The cureless counted body,  
And ruin and his causes  
Over the barbed and shooting sea

## HOLY SPRING

---

assumed an army  
And swept into our wounds  
and houses,  
I climb to greet the war in which I  
have no heart but only  
That one dark I owe my light,  
Call for confessor and wiser mirror  
but there is none  
To glow after the god stoning  
night  
And I am struck as lonely as a holy  
marker by the sun.

No  
Praise that the spring time is  
all  
Gabriel and radiant shrubbery as  
the morning grows joyful  
Out of the woebegone pyre

## HOLY SPRING

---

And the multitude's sultry tear  
turns cool on the weeping wall,  
My arising prodigal  
Sun the father his quiver full of the  
infants of pure fire,  
But blessed be hail and up-  
heaval  
That uncalm still it is sure alone to  
stand and sing  
Alone in the husk of man's  
home  
And the mother and toppling  
house of the holy spring,  
If only for a last time.

## FERN HILL

Now as I was young and easy un-  
der the apple boughs  
About the lilting house and happy  
as the grass was green,  
The night above the dingle  
starry,  
Time let me hail and climb

## FERN HILL

---

Golden in the heydays of his  
eyes,  
And honoured among wagons I  
was prince of the apple towns  
And once below a time I lordly had  
the trees and leaves  
Trail with daisies and barley  
Down the rivers of the windfall  
light.

And as I was green and carefree, fa-  
mous among the barns  
About the happy yard and singing  
as the farm was home,  
In the sun that is young once  
only,  
Time let me play and be  
Golden in the mercy of his  
means,

## FERN HILL

---

And green and golden I was hunts-  
man and herdsman, the calves  
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the  
hills barked clear and cold,  
And the sabbath rang slowly  
In the pebbles of the holy  
streams.

All the sun long it was running, it  
was lovely, the hay  
Fields high as the house, the tunes  
from the chimneys, it was air  
And playing, lovely and watery  
And fire green as grass.  
And nightly under the simple  
stars  
As I rode to sleep the owls were  
bearing the farm away,  
All the moon long I heard, blessed



## FERN HILL

---

among stables, the nightjars  
Flying with the ricks, and the  
horses  
Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm,  
like a wanderer white  
With the dew, come back, the cock  
on his shoulder: it was all  
Shining, it was Adam and  
maiden,  
The sky gathered again  
And the sun grew round that  
very day.  
So it must have been after the birth  
of the simple light  
In the first, spinning place, the  
spellbound horses walking  
warm

## FERN HILL

---

Out of the whinnying green stable  
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and  
pheasants by the gay house  
Under the new made clouds and  
happy as the heart was long,  
In the sun born over and over,  
I ran my heedless ways,  
My wishes raced through the  
house high hay  
And nothing I cared, at my sky  
blue trades, that time allows  
In all his tuneful turning so few  
and such morning songs  
Before the children green and  
golden  
Follow him out of grace.

## FERN HILL

---

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white  
days, that time would take me  
Up to the swallow thronged loft by  
the shadow of my hand,  
In the moon that is always rising,  
Nor that riding to sleep  
I should hear him fly with the  
high fields  
And wake to the farm forever fled  
from the childless land.  
Oh as I was young and easy in the  
mercy of his means,  
Time held me green and dying  
Though I sang in my chains like  
the sea.

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

I

Never and never, my girl riding far  
and near  
In the land of the hearthstone tales,  
and spelled asleep,  
Fear or believe that the wolf in a  
sheepwhite hood

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

Loping and bleating roughly and  
blithely shall leap,

My dear, my  
dear,

Out of a lair in the flocked leaves in  
the dew dipped year

To eat your heart in the house in  
the rosy wood.

Sleep, good, for ever, slow and  
deep, spelled rare and wise,

My girl ranging the night in the  
rose and shire

Of the hobnail tales: no gooseherd  
or swine will turn

Into a homestall king or hamlet of  
fire

And prince of ice  
To court the honeyed heart from

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

your side before sunrise  
In a spinney of ringed boys and  
ganders, spike and burn,  
Nor the innocent lie in the rooting  
dingle wooed  
And staved, and riven among  
plumes my rider weep.  
From the broomed witch's spume  
you are shielded by fern  
And flower of country sleep and  
the greenwood keep.  
Lie fast and  
soothed,  
Safe be and smooth from the bel-  
lows of the rushy brood.  
Never, my girl, until tolled to sleep  
by the stern  
Bell believe or fear that the rustic

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

shade or spell  
Shall harrow and snow the blood  
while you ride wide and near,  
For who unmanningly haunts the  
mountain ravened eaves  
Or skulks in the dell moon but  
moonshine echoing clear  
From the starred  
well?  
A hill touches an angel. Out of a  
saint's cell  
The nightbird lauds through nun-  
neries and domes of leaves  
Her robin breasted tree, three  
Marys in the rays.  
*Sanctum sanctorum* the animal eye  
of the wood  
In the rain telling its beads, and the

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

gravest ghost  
The owl at its knelling. Fox and  
holt kneel before blood.

Now the tales  
praise  
The star rise at pasture and night-  
long the fables graze  
On the lord's-table of the bowing  
grass. Fear most

For ever of all not the wolf in his  
baaing hood  
Nor the tusked prince, in the rut-  
tish farm, at the rind  
And mire of love, but the Thief as  
meek as the dew.  
The country is holy: O bide in that  
country kind,  
Know the green



## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

good,  
Under the prayer wheeling moon  
in the rosy wood  
Be shielded by chant and flower  
and gay may you

Lie in grace. Sleep spelled at rest in  
the lowly house  
In the squirrel nimble grove, under  
linen and thatch  
And star: held and blessed, though  
you scour the high four  
Winds, from the dousing shade  
and the roarer at the latch,  
Cool in your  
vows.

Yet out of the beaked, web dark  
and the pouncing boughs  
Be you sure the Thief will seek a

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

way sly and sure

And sly as snow and meek as dew  
blown to the thorn,

This night and each vast night until  
the stern bell talks

In the tower and tolls to sleep over  
the stalls

Of the hearthstone tales my own,  
lost love; and the soul walks

The waters shorn.

This night and each night since the  
falling star you were born,

Ever and ever he finds a way, as the  
snow falls,

As the rain falls, hail on the fleece,  
as the vale mist rides

Through the haygold stalls, as the  
dew falls on the wind-

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

Milled dust of the apple tree and  
the pounded islands  
Of the morning leaves, as the star  
falls, as the winged  
Apple seed  
glides,  
And falls, and flowers in the yawn-  
ing wound at our sides,  
As the world falls, silent as the cy-  
clone of silence.

### II

Night and the reindeer on the  
clouds above the haycocks  
And the wings of the great roc rib-  
boned for the fair!  
The leaping saga of prayer! And  
high, there, on the hare-  
Heeled winds the

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

rooks

Cawing from their black bethels  
soaring, the holy books  
Of birds! Among the cocks like fire  
the red fox

Burning! Night and the vein of  
birds in the winged, sloe wrist  
Of the wood! Pastoral beat of  
blood through the laced leaves!  
The stream from the priest black  
wristed spinney and sleeves  
Of thistling frost  
Of the nightingale's din and tale!  
The upgiven ghost  
Of the dingle torn to singing and  
the surpliced

Hill of cypresses! The din and tale  
in the skimmed



## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

Music of elements, that a miracle  
makes!

Earth, air, water, fire, singing into  
the white act,

The haygold haired, my love  
asleep, and the rift blue

Eyed, in the haloed house, in her  
rareness and hilly

High riding, held and blessed and  
true, and so stillly

Lying the sky

Might cross its planets, the bell  
weep, night gather her eyes,

The Thief fall on the dead like the  
willy nilly dew,

Only for the turning of the earth in  
her holy

Heart! Slyly, slowly, hearing the

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

wound in her side go  
Round the sun, he comes to my  
love like the designed snow,  
And truly he  
Flows to the strand of flowers like  
the dew's ruly sea,  
And surely he sails like the ship  
shape clouds. Oh he

Comes designed to my love to steal  
not her tide raking  
Wound, nor her riding high, nor  
her eyes, nor kindled hair,  
But her faith that each vast night  
and the saga of prayer  
He comes to take  
Her faith that this last night for his  
unsacred sake  
He comes to leave her in the law-

## IN COUNTRY SLEEP

---

less sun awaking

Naked and forsaken to grieve he  
will not come.

Ever and ever by all your vows be-  
lieve and fear

My dear this night he comes and  
night without end my dear

Since you were  
born:

And you shall wake, from country  
sleep, this dawn and each first  
dawn,

Your faith as deathless as the out-  
cry of the ruled sun.



## OVER SIR JOHN'S HILL

Over Sir John's hill,  
The hawk on fire hangs still;  
In a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk,  
    he pulls to his claws  
And gallows, up the rays of his  
    eyes the small birds of the bay  
And the shrill child's play

## OVER SIR JOHN'S HILL

---

Wars

Of the sparrows and such who  
swansing, dusk, in wrangling  
hedges.

And blithely they squawk  
To fiery tyburn over the wrestle of  
elms until

The flash the noosed hawk  
Crashes, and slowly the fishing  
holly stalking heron

In the river Towy below bows his  
tilted headstone.

Flash, and the plumes crack,  
And a black cap of jack-  
Daws Sir John's just hill dons, and  
again the gulled birds hare  
To the hawk on fire, the halter  
height, over Towy's fins,

## OVER SIR JOHN'S HILL

---

In a whack of wind.  
There  
Where the elegiac fisherbird stabs  
and paddles  
In the pebbly dab-filled  
Shallow and sedge, and 'dilly  
dilly,' calls the loft hawk,  
'Come and be killed,'  
I open the leaves of the water at a  
passage  
Of psalms and shadows among the  
pincer'd sandcrabs prancing

And read, in a shell  
Death clear as a bouy's bell:  
All praise of the hawk on fire in  
hawk-eyed dusk be sung,  
When his viperish fuse hangs  
looped with flames under the

## OVER SIR JOHN'S HILL

---

brand  
Wing, and blest shall  
Young  
Green chickens of the bay and  
bushes cluck, 'dilly dilly,  
Come let us die.'  
We grieve as the blithe birds, never  
again, leave shingle and elm,  
The heron and I,  
I young Aesop fabling to the near  
night by the dingle  
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the  
shell-hung distant

Crystal harbour vale  
Where the sea cobbles sail,  
And wharves of water where the  
walls dance and the white  
cranes stilt.

## OVER SIR JOHN'S HILL

---

It is the heron and I, under judging  
    Sir John's elmed  
Hill, tell-tale the knelled  
Guilt  
Of the led-astray birds whom God,  
    for their breast of whistles,  
Have Mercy on,  
God in his whirlwind silence save,  
    who marks the sparrows hail,  
For their souls' song.  
Now the heron grieves in the  
    weeded verge. Through win-  
dows  
Of dusk and water I see the tilting  
    whispering

Heron, mirrored, go,  
As the snapt feathers snow,  
Fishing in the tear of the Towy.

## OVER SIR JOHN'S HILL

---

Only a hoot owl  
Hollows, a grassblade blown in  
    cupped hands, in the looted  
    elms  
And no green cocks or hens  
Shout  
Now on Sir John's hill. The heron,  
    ankling the scaly  
Lowlands of the waves,  
Makes all the music; and I who  
    hear the tune of the slow,  
Wear-willow river, grave,  
Before the lunge of the night, the  
    notes on this time-shaken  
Stone for the sake of the souls of  
    the slain birds sailing.

## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

In the mustardseed sun,  
By full tilt river and switchback sea  
Where the cormorants scud,  
In his house on stilts high among  
    beaks  
And palavers of birds  
This sandgrain day in the bent

## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

---

bay's grave  
He celebrates and spurns  
His driftwood thirty-fifth wind  
turned age;  
Herons spire and spear.

Under and round him go  
Flounders, gulls, on their cold, dy-  
ing trails,  
Doing what they are told,  
Curlews aloud in the congered  
waves  
Work at their ways to death,  
And the rhymer in the long  
tongued room,  
Who tolls his birthday bell,  
Toils towards the ambush of his  
wounds;  
Herons, steeple stemmed, bless.



## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

---

In the thistledown fall,  
He sings towards anguish; finches  
fly

In the claw tracks of hawks  
On a seizing sky; small fishes glide  
Through wynds and shells of  
drowned

Ship towns to pastures of otters.  
He

In his slant, racking house  
And the hewn coils of his trade  
perceives

Hérons walk in their shroud,

The livelong river's robe  
Of minnows wreathing around  
their prayer;

And far at sea he knows,  
Who slaves to his crouched, eternal

## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

---

end

Under a serpent cloud,  
Dolphins dive in their turnturtle  
dust,  
The rippled seals streak down  
To kill and their own tide daubing  
blood  
Slides good in the sleek mouth.

In a cavernous, swung  
Wave's silence, wept white angelus  
knells.  
Thirty-five bells sing struck  
On skull and scar where his loves  
lie wrecked,  
Steered by the falling stars.  
And to-morrow weeps in a blind  
cage  
Terror will rage apart

## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

---

Before chains break to a hammer  
flame

And love unbolts the dark

And freely he goes lost

In the unknown, famous light of  
great

And fabulous, dear God.

Dark is a way and light is a place,  
Heaven that never was

Nor will be ever is always true,

And, in that brambled void,

Plenty as blackberries in the woods  
The dead grow for His joy.

There he might wander bare

With the spirits of the horseshoe  
bay

Or the stars' seashore dead,

Marrow of eagles, the roots of

## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

---

whales  
And wishbones of wild geese,  
With blessed, unborn God and His  
Ghost,  
And every soul His priest,  
Gulled and chanter in young  
Heaven's fold  
Be at cloud quaking peace,

But dark is a long way.  
He, on the earth of the night, alone  
With all the living, prays,  
Who knows the rocketing wind  
will blow  
The bones out of the hills,  
And the scythed boulders bleed,  
and the last  
Rage shattered waters kick  
Masts and fishes to the still quick

## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

---

stars,  
Faithlessly unto Him  
Who is the light of old  
And air shaped Heaven where  
souls grow wild  
As horses in the foam:  
Oh, let me midlife mourn by the  
shrined  
And druid herons' vows  
The voyage to ruin I must run,  
Dawn ships clouted aground,  
Yet, though I cry with tumbledown  
tongue,  
Count my blessings aloud:  
Four elements and five  
Senses, and man a spirit in love  
Tangling through this spun slime  
To his nimbus bell cool kingdom

## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

---

come  
And the lost, moonshine domes,  
And the sea that hides his secret  
selves  
Deep in its black, base bones,  
Lulling of spheres in the seashell  
flesh,  
And this last blessing most,  
  
That the closer I move  
To death, one man through his sun-  
dered hulks,  
The louder the sun blooms  
And the tusked, ramshackling sea  
exults;  
And every wave of the way  
And gale I tackle, the whole world  
then,  
With more triumphant faith

## POEM ON HIS BIRTHDAY

---

Than ever was since the world was  
said,  
Spins its morning of praise,  
I hear the bouncing hills  
Grow larked and greener at berry  
brown  
Fall and the dew larks sing  
Taller this thunderclap spring, and  
how  
More spanned with angles ride  
The mansouled fiery islands! Oh,  
Holier then their eyes,  
And my shining men no more  
alone  
As I sail out to die.

## LAMENT

When I was a windy boy and a bit  
And the black spit of the chapel  
fold,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of  
women),  
I tiptoed shy in the gooseberry  
wood,



## LAMENT

---

The rude owl cried like a telltale tit,  
I skipped in a blush as the big girls  
    rolled  
Ninepin down on donkey's com-  
    mon,  
And on seesaw sunday nights I  
    wooed  
Whoever I would with my wicked  
    eyes,  
The whole of the moon I could love  
    and leave  
All the green leaved little wed-  
    dings' wives  
In the coal black bush and let them  
    grieve.

When I was a gusty man and a half  
And the black beast of the beetles'  
    pews,

## LAMENT

---

(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of  
bitches),  
Not a boy and a bit in the wick-  
Dipping moon and drunk as a new  
dropped calf,  
I whistled all night in the twisted  
flues,  
Midwives grew in the midnight  
ditches,  
And the sizzling beds of the town  
cried, Quick!-  
Whenever I dove in a breast high  
shoal,  
Wherever I ramped in the clover  
quilts,  
Whatsoever I did in the coal-  
Black night, I left my quivering  
prints.

## LAMENT

---

When I was a man you could call a  
man  
And the black cross of the holy  
house,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of  
welcome),  
Brandy and ripe in my bright, bass  
prime,  
No springtailed tom in the red hot  
town  
With every simmering woman his  
mouse  
But a hillocky bull in the swelter  
Of summer come in his great good  
time  
To the sultry, biding herds, I said,  
Oh, time enough when the blood  
creeps cold,  
And I lie down but to sleep in bed,

## LAMENT

---

For my sulking, skulking, coal  
black soul!

When I was half the man I was  
And serve me right as the preach-  
ers warn,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of  
downfall),  
No flailing calf or cat in a flame  
Or hickory bull in milky grass  
But a black sheep with a crumpled  
horn,  
At last the soul from its foul  
mousehole  
Slunk pouting out when the limp  
time came;  
And I gave my soul a blind,  
slashed eye,  
Gristle and rind, and a roarers' life,

## LAMENT

---

And I shoved it into the coal black  
sky  
To find a woman's soul for a wife.

Now I am a man no more no more  
And a black reward for a roaring  
life,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of  
strangers),  
Tidy and cursed in my dove cooed  
room  
I lie down thin and hear the good  
bells jaw—  
For, oh, my soul found a sunday  
wife  
In the coal black sky and she bore  
angels!  
Harpies around me out of her  
womb!

## LAMENT

---

Chastity prays for me, piety sings,  
Innocence sweetens my last black  
    breath,  
Modesty hides my thighs in her  
    wings,  
And all the deadly virtues plague  
    my death!

## IN THE WHITE GIANT'S THIGH

Through throats where many  
rivers meet, the curlews cry,  
Under the conceiving moon, on the  
high chalk hill,  
And there this night I walk in the  
white giant's thigh  
Where barren as boulders women

## IN THE WHITE GIANT'S THIGH

---

lie longing still

To labour and love though they lay  
down long ago.

Through throats where many  
many rivers meet, the women  
pray,

Pleading in the waded bay for the  
seed to flow

Though the names on their weed  
grown stones are rained away,

And alone in the night's eternal,  
curving act

They yearn with tongues of  
curls for the unconceived

And immemorial sons of the cud-  
gelling, hacked

Hill. Who once in gooseskin winter



## IN THE WHITE GIANT'S THIGH

---

loved all ice leaved  
In the courters' lanes, or twined in  
the ox roasting sun  
In the wains tonned so high that  
the wisps of the hay  
Clung to the pitching clouds, or  
gay with any one  
Young as they in the after milking  
moonlight lay  
Under the lighted shapes of faith  
and their moonshade  
Petticoats galed high, or shy with  
the rough riding boys,  
Now clasp me to their grains in the  
gigantic glade,  
Who once, green countries since,  
were a hedgerow of joys.  
Time by, their dust was flesh the

## IN THE WHITE GIANT'S THIGH

---

swineherd rooted sly,  
Flared in the reek of the wiving sty  
with the rush  
Light of his thighs, spreadeagle to  
the dunghill sky,  
Or with their orchard man in the  
core of the sun's bush  
Rough as cows' tongues and  
thrashed with brambles their  
buttermilk  
Manes, under the quenchless sum-  
mer barbed gold to the bone,  
Or rippling soft in the spinney  
moon as the silk  
And ducked and draked white  
lake that harps to a hail stone.  
Who once were a bloom of wayside  
brides in the hawed house

## IN THE WHITE GIANT'S THIGH

---

And heard the lewd, wooed field  
flow to the coming frost,  
The scurrying, furred small friars  
squeal, in the dowse  
Of day, in the thistle aisles, till the  
white owl crossed

Their breast, the vaulting does roister,  
the horned bucks climb  
Quick in the wood at love, where a  
torch of foxes foams,  
All birds and beasts of the linked  
night uproar and chime

And the mole snout blunt under  
his pilgrimage of domes,  
Or, butter fat goosegirls, bounced  
in a gambo bed,  
Their breasts full of honey, under  
their gander king

## IN THE WHITE GIANT'S THIGH

---

Trounced by his wings in the hissing  
shippen, long dead  
And gone that barley dark where  
their clogs danced in the spring,  
And their firefly hairpins flew, and  
the ricks ran round—

(But nothing bore, no mouthing  
babe to the veined hives  
Hugged, and barren and bare on  
Mother Goose's ground  
They with the simple Jacks were a  
boulder of wives)—

Now curlew cry me down to kiss  
the mouths of their dust.

The dust of their kettles and clocks  
swings to and fro  
Where the hay rides now or the  
bracken kitchens rust

## IN THE WHITE GIANT'S THIGH

---

As the arc of the billhooks that  
flashed the hedges low  
And cut the birds' boughs that the  
minstrel sap ran red.  
They from houses where the har-  
vest kneels, hold me hard,  
Who heard the tall bell sail down  
the Sundays of the dead  
And the rain wring out its tongues  
on the faded yard,  
Teach me the love that is evergreen  
after the fall leaved  
Grave, after Belovéd on the grass  
gulfed cross is scrubbed  
Off by the sun and Daughters no  
longer grieved  
Save by their long desires in the fox  
cubbed  
Streets or hungering in the crum-

## IN THE WHITE GIANT'S THIGH

---

bled wood: to these  
Hale dead and deathless do the  
women of the hill  
Love for ever meridian through the  
courters' trees  
And the daughters of darkness  
flame like Fawkes fires still.

*Ebook producer's note:*

*At this point, most editions of Collected Poems, 1934-1952 include a posthumously published poem titled "Elegy." It has been omitted here because of its uncertain copyright status.*

**THE END**