I robbed the Woods—
The trusting Woods.
The unsuspecting Trees
Brought out their Burs and mosses—
My fantasy to please.
I scanned their trinkets curious—
I grasped—I bore away—
What will the solemn Hemlock—
What will the Oak tree say?

Bring me the sunset in a cup, Reckon the morning's flagons up And say how many Dew, Tell me how far the morning leaps— Tell me what time the weaver sleeps Who spun the breadths of blue!

Write me how many notes there be In the new Robin's ecstasy Among astonished boughs— How many trips the Tortoise makes— How many cups the Bee partakes, The Debauchee of Dews!

Also, who laid the Rainbow's piers, Also, who leads the docile spheres By withes of supple blue? Whose fingers string the stalactite— Who counts the wampum of the night To see that none is due?

Who built this little Alban House And shut the windows down so close My spirit cannot see? Who'll let me out some gala day With implements to fly away, Passing Pomposity? I bring an unaccustomed wine To lips long parching Next to mine, And summon them to drink,

Crackling with fever, they Essay, I turn my brimming eyes away, And come next hour to look.

The hands still hug the tardy glass— The lips I would have cooled, alas— Are so superfluous Cold—

I would as soon attempt to warm The bosoms where the frost has lain Ages beneath the mould–

Some other thirsty there may be To whom this would have pointed me Had it remained to speak—

And so, I always bear the cup, If, haply, mine may be the drop Some pilgrim thirst to slake—

If, haply, any say to me "Unto the little, unto me," When I at last awake.

'Tis so much joy! 'Tis so much joy! If I should fail, what poverty! And yet, as poor as I, Have ventured all upon a throw! Have gained! Yes! Hesitated so—This side the Victory!

Life is but Life! And Death, but Death! Bliss is, but Bliss, and Breath but Breath! And if indeed I fail, At least, to know the worst, is sweet! Defeat means nothing but Defeat, No drearier, can befall!

And if I gain—Oh Gun at Sea! Oh Bells, that in the Steeples be! At first, repeat it slow! For Heaven is a different thing—Conjectured, and waked sudden in—And might extinguish me! I taste a liquor never brewed— From Tankards scooped in Pearl— Not all the Vats upon the Rhine Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of Air— am I— And Debauchee of Dew— Reeling— thro' endless summer days— From inns of Molten Blue—

When "Landlords" turn the drunken Bee Out of the Foxglove's door— When Butterflies—renounce their "drams"— I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats—And Saints—to windows run—To see the little Tippler
Leaning against the—Sun—

We— Bee and I— live by the quaffing— 'Tisn't all Hock— with us— Life has its Ale— But it's many a lay of the Dim Burgundy— We chant— for cheer— when the Wines— fail—

Do we "get drunk"?
Ask the jolly Clovers!
Do we "beat" our "Wife"?
I- never wedBee- pledges his- in minutes- flagonsDainty- as the tress- on her deft Head-

While runs the Rhine—
He and I— revel—
First— at the vat— and latest at the Vine—
Noon— our last Cup—
"Found dead"— "of Nectar"—
By a humming Coroner—
In a By-Thyme!

Wild Nights- Wild Nights! Were I with thee Wild Nights should be Our luxury!

Futile— the Winds
To a Heart in Port—
Done with the Compass
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden Ah, the Sea! Might I but moor—Tonight— In Thee! You see I cannot see— your Lifetime—I must guess—How many times it ache for me—today—Confess—How many times for my far sake
The brave eyes film—But I—guess guessing hurts—Mine—get so dim!

Too vague—the face— My own—so patient—covers— Too far—the strength— My timidness enfolds— Haunting the Heart— Like her translated faces— Teasing the want— It—only—can suffice! There's a certain Slant of light, Winter Afternoons— That oppresses, like the Heft Of Cathedral Tunes—

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us— We can find no scar, But internal difference, Where the Meanings, are—

None may teach it—Any— 'Tis the Seal Despair— An imperial affliction Sent us of the Air—

When it comes, the Landscape listens—Shadows—hold their breath—When it goes, 'tis like the Distance On the look of Death—

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, And Mourners to and fro Kept treading—treading—till it seemed That Sense was breaking through—

And when they all were seated, A Service, like a Drum– Kept beating– beating– till I thought My Mind was going numb–

And then I heard them lift a Box And creak across my Soul With those same Boots of Lead, again, Then Space—began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell, And Being, but an Ear, And I, and Silence, some strange Race Wrecked, solitary, here—

And then a Plank in Reason, broke, And I dropped down, and down— And hit a World, at every plunge, And Finished knowing—thenThe Drop, that wrestles in the Sea–Forgets her own locality–As I– toward Thee–

She knows herself an Incense small—Yet small—she sighs—if All—is All—How larger—be?—

The Ocean– smiles– at her Conceit– But she, forgetting Amphitrite– Pleads–"Me"? I send Two Sunsets— Day and I—in competition ran— I finished Two— and several Stars— While He—was making One—

His own was ampler—but as I Was saying to a friend— Mine— is the more convenient To Carry in the HandI cannot dance upon my Toes— No Man instructed me— But oftentimes, among my mind, A Glee possesseth me,

That had I Ballet knowledge—Would put itself abroad In Pirouette to blanch a Troupe—Or lay a Prima, mad,

And though I had no Gown of Gauze–No Ringlet, to my Hair, Nor hopped to Audiences–like Birds, One Claw upon the Air,

Nor tossed my shape in Eider Balls, Nor rolled on wheels of snow Till I was out of sight, in sound, The House encore me so—

Nor any know I know the Art I mention— easy— Here— Nor any Placard boast me— It's full as OperaBefore I got my eye put out I liked as well to see— As other Creatures, that have Eyes And know no other way—

But were it told to me—Today—That I might have the sky
For mine—I tell you that my Heart
Would split, for size of me—

The Meadows- mine-The Mountains- mine-All Forests- Stintless Stars-As much of Noon as I could take Between my finite eyes-

The Motions of the Dipping Birds— The Morning's Amber Road— For mine— to look at when I liked— The News would strike me dead—

So safer– guess– with just my soul Upon the Window pane– Where other Creatures put their eyes– Incautious– of the Sun– A Bird came down the Walk– He did not know I saw– He bit an Angleworm in halves And ate the fellow, raw,

And then he drank a Dew From a convenient Grass— And then hopped sidewise to the Wall To let a Beetle pass—

He glanced with rapid eyes That hurried all around— They looked like frightened Beads, I thought— He stirred his Velvet Head—

Like one in danger, Cautious, I offered him a Crumb And he unrolled his feathers And rowed him softer home—

Than Oars divide the Ocean, Too silver for a seam— Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon Leap, plashless as they swim. The Grass so little has to do—A Sphere of simple Green—With only Butterflies to brood And Bees to entertain—

And stir all day to pretty Tunes The Breezes fetch along— And hold the Sunshine in its lap And bow to everything—

And thread the Dews, all night, like Pearls—And make itself so fine
A Duchess were too common
For such a noticing—

And even when It dies— to pass In Odors so divine— Like Lowly spices, lain to sleep— Or Spikenards, perishing—

And then, in Sovereign Barns to dwell—And dream the Days away,
The Grass so little has to do
I wish I were a Hay—

I dreaded that first Robin, so, But He is mastered, now, I'm someway accustomed to Him grown, He hurts a little, though—

I thought if I could only live Till that first Shout got by— Not all Pianos in the Woods Had power to mangle me—

I dared not meet the Daffodils For fear their Yellow Gown Would pierce me with a fashion So foreign to my own—

I wished the Grass would hurry—So—when 'twas time to see—He'd be too tall, the tallest one Could stretch—to look at me—

I could not bear the Bees should come, I wished they'd stay away In those dim countries where they go, What word had they, for me?

They're here, though; not a creature failed—No Blossom stayed away
In gentle deference to me—
The Queen of Calvary—

Each one salutes me, as he goes, And I, my childish Plumes, Lift, in bereaved acknowledgment Of their unmindful DrumsAnswer July– Where is the Bee– Where is the Blush– Where is the Hay?

Ah, said July– Where is the Seed– Where is the Bud– Where is the May– Answer Thee– Me–

Nay- said the May-Show me the Snow-Show me the Bells-Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay— Where be the Maize— Where be the Haze— Where be the Bur?

Here– said the Year–

The first Day's Night had come— And grateful that a thing So terrible— had been endured— I told my Soul to sing—

She said her Strings were snapt— Her Bow— to Atoms blown— And so to mend her— gave me work Until another Morn—

And then—a Day as huge As Yesterdays in pairs, Unrolled its horror in my face— Until it blocked my eyes—

My Brain- begun to laugh— I mumbled- like a fool— And tho' 'tis Years ago— that Day— My Brain keeps giggling— still.

And Something's odd—within— That person that I was— And this One—do not feel the same— Could it be Madness—this? Good Morning- Midnight-I'm coming Home-Day- got tired of Me-How could I- of Him?

Sunshine was a sweet place— I liked to stay— But Morn—didn't want me—now— So—Goodnight—Day!

I can look— can't I— When the East is Red? The Hills— have a way— then— That puts the Heart— abroad—

You- are not so fair- Midnight- I chose- Day- But- please take a little Girl- He turned away!

The Red- Blaze- is the Morning-The Violet- is Noon-The Yellow- Day- is falling-And after that- is none-

But Miles of Sparks—at Evening— Reveal the Width that burned— The Territory Argent—that Never yet—consumedI am alive—I guess— The Branches on my Hand Are full of Morning Glory— And at my finger's end—

The Carmine– tingles warm– And if I hold a Glass Across my Mouth– it blurs it– Physician's– proof of Breath–

I am alive—because I am not in a Room— The Parlor—Commonly—it is— So Visitors may come—

And lean— and view it sidewise— And add "How cold— it grew"— And "Was it conscious— when it stepped In Immortality?"

I am alive—because I do not own a House— Entitled to myself—precise— And fitting no one else—

And marked my Girlhood's name— So Visitors may know Which Door is mine— and not mistake— And try another Key—

How good— to be alive! How infinite— to be— Alive— two-fold— The Birth I had— And this— besides, in— Thee! I started Early– Took my Dog– And visited the Sea– The Mermaids in the Basement Came out to look at me–

And Frigates— in the Upper Floor Extended Hempen Hands— Presuming Me to be a Mouse— Aground— upon the Sands—

But no Man moved Me— till the Tide Went past my simple Shoe— And past my Apron— and my Belt And past my Bodice— too—

And made as He would eat me up— As wholly as a Dew Upon a Dandelion's Sleeve— And then—I started—too—

And He– He followed– close behind– I felt His Silver Heel Upon my Ankle– Then my Shoes Would overflow with Pearl–

Until We met the Solid Town-No One He seemed to know-And bowing- with a Mighty look-At me- The Sea withdrewI measure every Grief I meet With narrow, probing, Eyes— I wonder if It weighs like Mine— Or has an Easier size.

I wonder if They bore it long— Or did it just begin— I could not tell the Date of Mine— It feels so old a pain—

I wonder if it hurts to live— And if They have to try— And whether—could They choose between— It would not be—to die—

I note that Some—gone patient long—At length, renew their smile—An Imitation of a Light
That has so little Oil—

I wonder if when Years have piled— Some Thousands— on the Harm That hurt them early— such a lapse Could give them any Balm—

Or would they go on aching still— Through Centuries of Nerve— Enlightened to a larger Pain— In Contrast with the Love—

The Grieved– are many– I am told– There is the various Cause– Death– is but one– and comes but once– And only nails the eyes–

There's Grief of Want– and Grief of Cold– A sort they call "Despair"– There's Banishment from native Eyes– In sight of Native Air–

And though I may not guess the kind–Correctly–yet to me A piercing Comfort it affords In passing Calvary– To note the fashions—of the Cross—And how they're mostly worn—Still fascinated to presume
That Some—are like My Own—

If I may have it, when it's dead, I'll be contented—so— If just as soon as Breath is out It shall belong to me—

Until they lock it in the Grave, 'Tis Bliss I cannot weigh– For tho' they lock thee in the Grave, Myself– can own the key–

Think of it Lover! I and Thee Permitted—face to face to be— After a Life— a Death—We'll say— For Death was That— And this—is Thee—

I'll tell Thee All– how Bald it grew– How Midnight felt, at first– to me– How all the Clocks stopped In the World– And Sunshine pinched me– 'Twas so cold–

Then how the Grief got sleepy– some– As if my Soul were deaf and dumb– Just making signs– across– to Thee– That this way– thou could'st notice me–

I'll tell thee how I tried to keep A smile, to show you, when this Deep All Waded—We look back for Play, At those Old Times—in Calvary.

Forgive me, If the Grave come slow— For Coveting to look at Thee— Forgive me, if to stroke thy frost Outvisions Paradise! I think I was enchanted When first a sombre Girl– I read that Foreign Lady– The Dark– felt beautiful–

And whether it was noon at night— Or only Heaven— at Noon— For very Lunacy of Light I had not power to tell—

The Bees– became as Butterflies– The Butterflies– as Swans– Approached– and spurned the narrow Grass– And just the meanest Tunes

That Nature murmured to herself To keep herself in Cheer– I took for Giants– practising Titanic Opera–

The Days—to Mighty Metres stept— The Homeliest—adorned As if unto a Jubilee 'Twere suddenly confirmed—

I could not have defined the change— Conversion of the Mind Like Sanctifying in the Soul— Is witnessed— not explained—

'Twas a Divine Insanity— The Danger to be Sane Should I again experience— 'Tis Antidote to turn—

To Tomes of solid Witchcraft– Magicians be asleep– But Magic– hath an Element Like Deity– to keep– The Spider holds a Silver Ball In unperceived Hands— And dancing softly to Himself His Yarn of Pearl— unwinds—

He plies from Nought to Nought In unsubstantial Trade— Supplants our Tapestries with His In half the period—

An Hour to rear supreme His Continents of Light– Then dangle from the Housewife's Broom His Boundaries–forgot– It would have starved a Gnat— To live so small as I— And yet I was a living Child— With Food's necessity

Upon me– like a Claw– I could no more remove Than I could coax a Leech away– Or make a Dragon– move–

Nor like the Gnat- had I-The privilege to fly And seek a Dinner for myself-How mightier He- than I-

Nor like Himself— the Art Upon the Window Pane To gad my little Being out— And not begin— againGlee– The great storm is over– Four– have recovered the Land– Forty– gone down together– Into the boiling Sand–

Ring- for the Scant Salvation— Toll- for the bonnie Souls— Neighbor— and friend— and Bridegroom— Spinning upon the Shoals—

How they will tell the Story—When Winter shakes the Door—Till the Children urge—But the Forty—Did they come back no more?

Then a softness– suffuses the Story– And a silence– the Teller's eye– And the Children– no further question– And only the Sea– reply– They called me to the Window, for 'Twas Sunset- Some one said-I only saw a Sapphire Farm-And just a Single Herd-

Of Opal Cattle– feeding far Upon so vain a Hill– As even while I looked– dissolved– Nor Cattle were– nor Soil–

But in their stead—a Sea—displayed—And Ships—of such a size
As Crew of Mountains—could afford—And Decks—to seat the skies—

This—too—the Showman rubbed away—And when I looked again—Nor Farm—nor Opal Herd—was there—Nor Mediterranean—

The Brain– is wider than the Sky–For– put them side by side– The one the other will contain With ease– and You– beside–

The Brain is deeper than the sea– For– hold them– Blue to Blue– The one the other will absorb– As Sponges– Buckets– do–

The Brain is just the weight of God–For–Heft them–Pound for Pound–And they will differ– if they do–As Syllable from Sound–

To my small Hearth His fire came— And all my House aglow Did fan and rock with sudden light— 'Twas Sunrise—'twas the Sky—

Impanelled from no Summer brief With limit of Decay– 'Twas Noon– without the News of Night– Nay, Nature, it was Day– I think to Live– may be a Bliss To those who dare to try– Beyond my limit to conceive– My lip– to testify–

I think the Heart I former wore Could widen—till to me The Other, like the little Bank Appear—unto the Sea—

I think the Days—could every one In Ordination stand— And Majesty—be easier Than an inferior kind—

No numb alarm—lest Difference come— No Goblin—on the Bloom— No start in Apprehension's Ear, No Bankruptcy—no Doom—

But Certainties of Sun– Midsummer– in the Mind– A steadfast South– upon the Soul– Her Polar time– behind–

The Vision– pondered long– So plausible becomes That I esteem the fiction– real– The Real– fictitious seems–

How bountiful the Dream— What Plenty—It would be— Had all my Life but been Mistake Just rectified—in TheeCould I but ride indefinite As doth the Meadow Bee And visit only where I liked And No one visit me

And sport all Day with Buttercups And marry whom I may And dwell a little everywhere Or better, run away

With no Police to follow Or chase Him if He do Till He should jump Peninsulas To get away from me—

I said "But just to be a Bee" Upon a Raft of Air And row in Nowhere all Day long And anchor "off the Bar"

What Liberty! So Captives deem Who tight in Dungeons are.

One need not be a Chamber– to be Haunted– One need not be a House– The Brain has Corridors– surpassing Material Place–

Far safer, of a Midnight Meeting External Ghost Than its interior Confronting— That Cooler Host.

Far safer, through an Abbey gallop, The Stones a'chase— Than Unarmed, one's a'self encounter— In lonesome Place—

Ourself behind ourself, concealed—Should startle most—Assassin hid in our Apartment Be Horror's least

The Body– borrows a Revolver– He bolts the Door– O'erlooking a superior spectre– Or More–

A Thought went up my mind today— That I have had before— But did not finish— some way back— I could not fix the Year—

Nor where it went– nor why it came The second time to me– Nor definitely, what it was– Have I the Art to say–

But somewhere— in my Soul— I know I've met the Thing before— It just reminded me—'twas all— And came my way no more—

Behind Me– dips Eternity– Before Me– Immortality– Myself– the Term between– Death but the Drift of Eastern Gray, Dissolving into Dawn away, Before the West begin–

'Tis Kingdoms- afterward- they say-In perfect- pauseless Monarchy-Whose Prince- is Son of None-Himself- His Dateless Dynasty-Himself- Himself diversify-In Duplicate divine-

'Tis Miracle before Me- then-'Tis Miracle behind- between-A Crescent in the Sea-With Midnight to the North of Her-And Midnight to the South of Her-And Maelstrom- in the SkyMy Life had stood– a Loaded Gun– In Corners– till a Day The Owner passed– identified– And carried Me away–

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods—And now We hunt the Doe—And every time I speak for Him—The Mountains straight reply—

And do I smile, such cordial light Upon the Valley glow— It is as a Vesuvian face Had let its pleasure through—

And when at Night- Our good Day done— I guard My Master's Head— 'Tis better than the Eider-Duck's Deep Pillow- to have shared-

To foe of His– I'm deadly foe– None stir the second time– On whom I lay a Yellow Eye– Or an emphatic Thumb–

Though I than He– may longer live He longer must– than I– For I have but the power to kill, Without– the power to die– One Blessing had I than the rest So larger to my Eyes That it stopped gauging—satisfied— For this enchanted size—

It was the limit of my Dream— The focus of my Prayer— A perfect— paralyzing Bliss— Contented as Despair—

I knew no more of Want- or Cold-Phantasms both become For this new Value in the Soul-Supremest Earthly Sum-

The Heaven below the Heaven above— Obscured with ruddier Blue— Life's Latitudes leant over—full— The Judgment perished—too—

Why Bliss so scantily disburse— Why Paradise defer— Why Floods be served to Us—In Bowls— I speculate no moreWhen I hoped, I recollect Just the place I stood— At a Window facing West Roughest Air—was good—

Not a Sleet could bite me Not a frost could cool Hope It was that kept me warm Not Merino shawl—

When I feared—I recollect Just the Day it was Worlds were lying out to Sun Yet—how Nature froze—

Icicles upon my soul Prickled Blue and Cool Bird went praising everywhere Only Me– was still–

And the Day that I despaired This—If I forget Nature will—that It be Night After Sun has set—

Darkness intersect her face And put out her eye Nature hesitate— before Memory and I— Bereaved of all, I went abroad— No less bereaved was I Upon a New Peninsula— The Grave preceded me—

Obtained my Lodgings, ere myself—And when I sought my Bed—The Grave it was reposed upon
The Pillow for my Head—

I waked to find it first awake— I rose—It followed me— I tried to drop it in the Crowd— To lose it in the Sea—

In Cups of artificial Drowse– To steep its shape away– The Grave– was finished– but the Spade Remained In Memory– To my quick ear the Leaves— conferred— The Bushes— they were Bells— I could not find Privacy From Nature's sentinels—

In Cave if I presumed to hide The Walls– begun to tell– Creation seemed a mighty Crack– To make me visible–

My Cocoon tightens– Colors tease– I'm feeling for the Air– A dim capacity for Wings Demeans the Dress I wear–

A power of Butterfly must be The Aptitude to fly Meadows of Majesty implies And easy Sweeps of Sky-

So I must baffle at the Hint And cipher at the Sign And make much blunder, if at last I take the clue divine—

Your thoughts don't have words every day— They come a single time— Like signal esoteric sips Of the communion Wine—

Which while you taste so native seems— So easy so to be— You cannot comprehend its price— Nor its infrequency—

I took one Draught of Life—I'll tell you what I paid—Precisely an existence—The market price, they said.

They weighed me, Dust by Dust— They balanced Film with Film, Then handed me my Being's worth— A single Dram of Heaven!

The words the happy say Are paltry melody— But those the silent feel Are beautiful—

Too happy Time dissolves itself And leaves no remnant by— 'Tis Anguish not a Feather hath Or too much weight to fly—