

Adrift! A little boat adrift!
And night is coming down!
Will no one guide a little boat
Unto the nearest town?

So Sailors say– on yesterday–
Just as the dusk was brown
Away one little boat gave up its strife
And gurgled down and down.

So angels say– on yesterday
Just as the dawn was red
One little boat– o’erspent with gales
Retrimmed its masts– redecked its sails
And shot– exultant on!

My River runs to thee—
Blue Sea! Wilt welcome me?
My River waits reply—
Oh Sea— look graciously!
I'll fetch thee Brooks
From spotted nooks—
Say— Sea— Take Me!

The 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 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 withdrew–

You left me— Sire— two Legacies—
A Legacy of Love
A Heavenly Father would suffice
Had He the offer of—

You left me Boundaries of Pain—
Capacious as the Sea—
Between Eternity and Time—
Your Consciousness— and Me—

'Tis good— the looking back on Grief—
To re-endure a Day—
We thought the Mighty Funeral—
Of All Conceived Joy—

To recollect how Busy Grass
Did meddle— one by one—
Till all the Grief with Summer— waved—
And none could see the stone.

And though the Woe you have Today
Be larger— As the Sea—
Exceeds its Unremembered Drop—
They're Water— equally—

Glee— 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—

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An Everywhere of Silver
With Ropes of Sand

To keep it from effacing
The Track called Land.

1210

The Sea said "Come" to the Brook–
The Brook said "Let me grow"–
The Sea said "Then you will be a Sea–
I want a Brook– Come now"!

The Sea said "Go" to the Sea–
The Sea said "I am he
You cherished"– "Learned Waters–
Wisdom is stale– to Me"