

I never lost as much but twice,
And that was in the sod.
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!

Angels– twice descending
Reimbursed my store–
Burglar, Banker– Father!
I am poor once more!

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– then–

Alone, I cannot be—
For Hosts— do visit me—
Recordless Company—
Who baffle Key—

They have no Robes, nor Names—
No Almanacs— nor Climes—
But general Homes
Like Gnomes—

Their Coming, may be known—
By Couriers within—
Their going— is not—
For they're never gone—

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?

Much Madness is divinest Sense—
To a discerning Eye—
Much Sense— the starkest Madness—
'Tis the Majority

In this, as All, prevail—
Assent— and you are sane—
Demur— you're straightway dangerous—
And handled with a Chain—

The Brain, within its Groove
Runs evenly- and true-
But let a Splinter swerve-
'Twere easier for You-

To put a Current back-
When Floods have slit the Hills-
And scooped a Turnpike for Themselves-
And trodden out the Mills-

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 stepped–
 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–

I Years had been from Home—
And now, before the Door
I dared not enter, lest a Face
I never saw before

Stare stolid into mine
And ask my Business there—
“My Business but a Life I left—
Was such remaining there?”

I leaned upon the Awe—
I lingered with Before—
The Second like an Ocean rolled
And broke against my ear—

I laughed a crumbling Laugh—
That I could fear a Door—
Who Consternation compassed
And never Winced before.

I fitted to the Latch
My Hand, with trembling care
Lest back the awful Door should spring
And leave me standing there—

Then moved my Fingers off—
As cautiously as Glass—
And held my ears, and like a Thief
Fled gasping from the House—

They shut me up in Prose–
As when a little Girl
They put me in the Closet–
Because they liked me “still”–

Still! Could themselves have peeped–
And seen my Brain– go round–
They might as wise have lodged a Bird
For Treason– in the Pound–

Himself has but to will
And easy as a Star
Abolish his Captivity–
And laugh– No more have I–

Me from Myself- to banish
Had I Art
Impregnable my Fortress
Unto All Heart-

But Since Myself- assault Me-
How have I peace
Except by subjugating
Consciousness?

And since We're mutual Monarch
How this be
Except by Abdication-
Me- of Me?

The Soul that hath a Guest
Doth seldom go abroad—
Diviner Crowd at Home
Obliterate the need—

And Courtesy forbid
A Host's departure when
Upon Himself be visiting
The Emperor of Men—

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To be alive— is Power—
Existence— in itself—
Without a further function—
Omnipotence— Enough—

To be alone— and Will!
'Tis able as a God—
The Maker— of Ourselves— be what—
Such being— Finitude!

I felt a Cleaving in my Mind—
As if my Brain had split—
I tried to match it— Seam by Seam—
But could not make them fit.

The thought behind, I strove to join
Unto the thought before—
But Sequence unravelled out of Sound—
Like Balls— upon a Floor.