

I 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!

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 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 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 Thee–

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–

You taught me Waiting with Myself–
Appointment strictly kept–
You taught me fortitude of Fate–
This– also– I have learnt–

An Altitude of Death, that could
No bitterer debar
Than Life– had done– before It–
Yet– there IS a Science more–

The Heaven you know– to understand
That you be not ashamed
Of Me– in Christ's bright Audience
Upon the further Hand–

The first Day that I was A Life
I recollect it– How still–
That last Day that I was A Life
I recollect it– as well–

'Twas stiller– though the first
Was still–
'Twas empty– but the first
Was full–

This– was my finallest Occasion–
But then–
My tenderer Experiment–
Toward Men–

“Which choose I”?
That– I cannot say–
“Which choose They”?
Question Memory!

1249

The Stars are old, that stood for me—
The West a little worn—
Yet newer glows the only Gold
I ever cared to earn—

Presuming on that lone result—
Her infinite Disdain—
But vanquished her with my defeat—
'Twas Victory was slain.

With Pinions of Disdain
The soul can farther fly
Than any feather specified
In Ornithology—
It wafts this sordid Flesh
Beyond its dull— control
And during its electric gale—
The body is a soul—
Instructing by the same—
How little work it be—
To put off filaments like this
For immortality

1638

Go thy great way!
The Stars thou meetst
Are even as Thyself—
For what are Stars but Asterisks
To point a human Life?

1643

Extol thee— could I? Then I will
By saying nothing new—
But just the truest truth
That thou art heavenly.

Perceiving thee is evidence
That we are of the sky
Partaking thee a guaranty
Of immortality