

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.

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 wed–
Bee– pledges his– in minutes– flagons–
Dainty– 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!

I can wade Grief–
Whole Pools of it–
I'm used to that–
But the least push of Joy
Breaks up my feet–
And I tip– drunken–
Let no Pebble– smile–
'Twas the New Liquor–
That was all!

Power is only Pain–
Stranded, thro' Discipline,
Till Weights– will hang–
Give Balm– to Giants–
And they'll wilt, like Men–
Give Himmaleh–
They'll Carry– Him!

1101

Between the form of Life and Life
The difference is as big
As Liquor at the Lip between
And Liquor in the Jug

The latter– excellent to keep–
But for ecstatic need–
The corkless is superior–
I know for I have tried–

1645

The Ditch is dear to the Drunken man
For is it not his Bed—
His Advocate— his Edifice?
How safe his fallen Head—

In her disheveled Sanctity—
Above him is the sky—
Oblivion bending over him—
And Honor leagues away.

1725

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!