

I cautious, scanned my little life—
I winnowed what would fade
From what would last till Heads like mine
Should be a-dreaming laid.

I put the latter in a Barn—
The former, blew away.
I went one winter morning
And lo— my priceless Hay

Was not upon the “Scaffold”—
Was not upon the “Beam”—
And from a thriving Farmer—
A Cynic, I became.

Whether a Thief did it—
Whether It was the wind—
Whether Deity’s guiltless—
My business is, to find!

So I begin to ransack!
How is it Hearts, with Thee?
Art thou within the little Barn
Love provided Thee?

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 Hand—

A precious– mouldering pleasure– ’tis
To meet an Antique Book–
In just the Dress his Century wore–
A privilege– I think–

His venerable Hand to take–
And warming in our own–
A passage back– or two– to make–
To Times when he– was young–

His quaint opinions– to inspect–
His thought to ascertain
On Themes concern our mutual mind–
The Literature of Man–

What interested Scholars– most–
What Competition ran–
When Plato– was a Certainty–
And Sophocles– a Man–

When Sappho– was a living Girl–
And Beatrice wore
The Gown that Dante– deified–
Facts Centuries before–

He traverses– familiar–
As One should come to Town–
And tell you all your Dreams– were true–
He lived– where Dreams were born–

His presence is Enchantment–
You beg him not to go–
Old Volumes shake their Vellum Heads
And tantalize– just so–

I died for Beauty– but was scarce
Adjusted in the Tomb
When One who died for Truth, was lain
In an adjoining Room–

He questioned softly “Why I failed”?
“For Beauty”, I replied–
“And I– for Truth– Themselves are One–
We Brethren, are”, He said–

And so, as Kinsmen, met a Night–
We talked between the Rooms–
Until the Moss had reached our lips–
And covered up– our names–

I would not paint– a picture–
I'd rather be the One
Its bright Impossibility
To dwell– delicious– on–

And wonder how the fingers feel
Whose rare– celestial– stir
Evokes so sweet a Torment–
Such sumptuous– Despair–

I would not talk, like Cornets–
I'd rather be the One
Raised softly to the Ceilings–
And out, and easy on–

Through Villages of Ether–
Myself endued Balloon–
By but a lip of Metal–
The pier to my Pontoon–

Nor would I be a Poet–
It's finer– own the Ear–
Enamored– Impotent– content–
The License to revere,

A privilege so awful
What would the Dower be,
Had I the Art to stun myself
With Bolts– of Melody!

Again– his voice is at the door–
I feel the old Degree–
I hear him ask the servant
For such an one– as me–

I take a flower– as I go–
My face to justify–
He never saw me– in this life–
I might surprise his eye!

I cross the Hall with mingled steps–
I– silent– pass the door–
I look on all this world contains–
Just his face– nothing more!

We talk in careless– and in toss–
A kind of plummet strain–
Each– sounding– shyly–
Just– how– deep–
The other’s one– had been–

We walk– I leave my Dog– at home–
A tender– thoughtful Moon–
Goes with us– just a little way–
And– then– we are alone–

Alone– If Angels are “alone”–
First time they try the sky!
Alone– if those “veiled faces” be–
We cannot count– on High!

I’d give– to live that hour– again–
The purple– in my Vein–
But He must count the drops– himself–
My price for every stain!

My 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–

These– saw Visions–
Latch them softly–
These– held Dimples–
Smooth them slow–
This– addressed departing accents–
Quick– Sweet Mouth– to miss thee so–

This– We stroked–
Unnumbered Satin–
These– we held among our own–
Fingers of the Slim Aurora–
Not so arrogant– this Noon–

These– adjust– that ran to meet us–
Pearl– for Stocking– Pearl for Shoe–
Paradise– the only Palace
Fit for Her reception– now–

The Veins of other Flowers–
The Scarlet Flowers– are
Till Nature leisure has for Terms
As “Branch,” and “Jugular.”

We pass, and she abides.
We conjugate Her Skill
While She creates and federates
Without a syllable.

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The Poets light but Lamps–
Themselves– go out–
The Wicks they stimulate–
If vital Light

Inhere as do the Suns–
Each Age a Lens
Disseminating their
Circumference–

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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—