

The posies on her inner windowsill,  
And the birds on her outer windowsill,  
And how she tended both, or had them tended:  
She never tended anything herself.  
She was 'shut in' for life. She lived her whole  
Life long in bed, and wrote her things in bed.  
I'll show You how she had her sills extended  
To entertain the birds and hold the flowers.  
Our business first's up attic with her books."

We trod uncomfortably on crunching glass  
Through a house stripped of everything  
Except, it seemed, the poetess's poems.  
Books, I should say! - if books are what is needed.  
A whole edition in a packing case  
That, overflowing like a horn of plenty,  
Or like the poetess's heart of love,  
Had spilled them near the window, toward the light  
Where driven rain had wet and swollen them.  
Enough to stock a village library —  
Unfortunately all of one kind, though.  
They had been brought home from some publisher  
And taken thus into the family.  
Boys and bad hunters had known what to do  
With stone and lead to unprotected glass:  
Shatter it inward on the unswept floors.  
How had the tender verse escaped their outrage?  
By being invisible for what it was,  
Or else by some remoteness that defied them  
To find out what to do to hurt a poem.  
Yet oh! The tempting flatness of a book,  
To send it sailing out the attic window  
Till it caught wind and, opening out its covers,  
Tried to improve on sailing like a tile  
By flying like a bird (silent in flight,  
But all the burden of its body song),  
Only to tumble like a stricken bird,