

He eyed her for a while  
For a woman and a puzzle.  
He flicked and flung the flower,  
And another sort of smile  
Caught up like fingertips  
The corners of his lips  
And cracked his ragged muzzle.  
She was standing to the waist  
In golden rod and brake,  
Her shining hair displaced.  
He stretched her either arm  
As if she made it ache  
To clasp her - not to harm;  
As if he could not spare  
To touch her neck and hair.  
"If this has come to us  
And not to me alone -"  
So she thought she heard him say;  
Though with every word he spoke  
His lips were sucked and blown  
And the effort made him choke  
Like a tiger at a bone.  
She had to lean away.  
She dared not stir a foot.  
Lest movement should provoke  
The demon of pursuit  
That slumbers in a brute.  
It was then her mother's call  
From inside the garden wall  
Made her steal a look of fear  
To see if he could hear  
And would pounce to end it all  
Before her mother came.  
She looked and saw the shame:  
A hand hung like a paw,  
An arm worked like a saw  
As if to be persuasive,