



## *The Housekeeper*

I let myself in at the kitchen door.  
"It's you," she said. "I can't get up. Forgive me  
Not answering your knock. I can no more  
Let people in than I can keep them out.  
I'm getting too old for my size, I tell them.

My fingers are about all I've the use of  
So's to take any comfort. I can sew:  
I help out with this beadwork what I can."  
"That's a smart pair of pumps you're beading there.

Who are they for?"  
"You mean? - oh, for some miss.  
I can't keep track of other people's daughters.  
Lord, if I were to dream of everyone  
Whose shoes I primped to dance in!"  
"And where's John?"  
"Haven't you seen him? Strange what set you off  
To come to his house when he's gone to yours.  
You can't have passed each other. I know what:  
He must have changed his mind and gone to Garlands.  
He won't be long in that case. You can wait.  
Though what good you can be, or anyone--  
It's gone so far. You've heard? Estelle's run off."  
"Yes, what's it all about? When did she go?"  
"Two weeks since."

"She's in earnest, it appears."  
"I'm sure she won't come back. She's hiding somewhere.  
I don't know where myself. John thinks I do.  
He thinks I only have to say the word,  
And she'll come back. But, bless you, I'm her mother--  
I can't talk to her, and, Lord, if I could!"