

OF NICOLETTE

dreaming in marble all the castle lay
 like some gigantic ghost-flower born of night
 blossoming in white towers to the moon,
 soft sighed the passionate darkness to the tune
 of tiny troubadours, and (phantom-white)
 dumb-blooming boughs let fall their glorious snows,
 and the unearthly sweetness of a rose
 swam upward from the troubled heart of May;

a Winged Passion woke and one by one
 there fell upon the night, like angel's tears,
 the syllables of that mysterious prayer,
 and as an opening lily drowsy-fair
 (when from her couch of poppy petals peers
 the sleepy morning) gently draws apart
 her curtains, and lays bare her trembling heart,
 with beads of dew made jewels by the sun,

so one high shining tower (which as a glass
 turned light to flame and blazed with snowy fire)
 unfolding, gave the moon a nymphlike face,
 a form whose snowy symmetry of grace
 haunted the limbs as music haunts the lyre,
 a creature of white hands, who letting fall
 a thread of lustre from the castle wall
 glided, a drop of radiance, to the grass—

shunning the sudden moonbeam's treacherous snare
 she sought the harbouring dark, and (catching up
 her delicate silk) all white, with shining feet,
 went forth into the dew: right wildly beat
 her heart at every kiss of daisy-cup,
 and from her cheek the beauteous colour went
 with every bough that reverently bent
 to touch the yellow wonder of her hair.