

BALLADE OF SOUL

Not for the naked make I this my prayer,
 That up and down the streets of life do go,
 Having, save rags, no pleasant thing to wear,
 Albeit the timid ways have put on snow
 Against such wind as only God can blow:
 Well 'ware art Thou that these have no redress,
 For always in Thine eyes is all distress
 Of bodies that without due raiment be;
 But are there Souls in winter garmentless,
 Be with them, God! and pity also me.

Not for the hungry has my spirit care,
 Whether their bodies shall be filled or no,
 With whom the world her bounty will not share,
 Wherefore they move on feeble feet and slow,
 Feeling dear Death within their bodies grow:
 Thou knowest these at pain beyond confess,
 For sorrow never may Thy ears transgress,
 Though lips be locked and pain shall hold the key;
 But are there Souls whom hunger doth oppress.
 Be with them, God! and pity also me.

Not for the homeless do I ask, where e'er
 The lights of Hell their haunting faces show,
 The legion undesired anywhere,
 Whose hearts Love shall not build in,—who shall sow
 And reap such loneliness as murder's woe:
 Thy gracious mouth to these shall acquiesce,
 Which is so very wonderful to bless
 The plundered heart with joy held long in fee;
 But are there Souls that know not Love's caress,
 Be with them God! and pity also me.

Envoi

Father, for this we thank Thee without cesse:
 Death is the body's birthright, as I guess,
 But are there Souls that walk in hopelessness,
 Be with them God! and pity also me.