

At last he yielded to the spell; his course of love he set-
Wisconsin his objective point; his object, Margaret.

With every mile of sea and land his longing grew and grew.
He practised all his pretty words, and these, I fear, were few.
At last, one frosty evening, with a cold chill down his spine,
He found himself before her house, the threshold of the shrine.
His courage flickered to a spark, then glowed with sudden flame-
He knocked; he heard a welcome word; she came—his goddess came.
Oh, she was fair as any flower, and huskily he spoke:
”I’m all the way from Klondike, with a mighty heavy poke.
I’m looking for a lassie, one whose Christian name is Peg,
Who sought a Klondike miner, and who wrote it on an egg.”

The lassie gazed at him a space, her cheeks grew rosy red;
She gazed at him with tear-bright eyes, then tenderly she said:
”Yes, lonely Klondike miner, it is true my name is Peg.
It’s also true I longed for you and wrote it on an egg.
My heart went out to someone in that land of night and cold;
But oh, I fear that Yukon egg must have been mighty old.
I waited long, I hoped and feared; you should have come before;
I’ve been a wedded woman now for eighteen months or more.
I’m sorry, since you’ve come so far, you ain’t the one that wins;
But won’t you take a step inside—I’LL LET YOU SEE THE TWINNS.”

The Man from Eldorado

He’s the man from Eldorado, and he’s just arrived in town,
In moccasins and oily buckskin shirt.
He’s gaunt as any Indian, and pretty nigh as brown;
He’s greasy, and he smells of sweat and dirt.
He sports a crop of whiskers that would shame a healthy hog;
Hard work has racked his joints and stooped his back;
He strops along the sidewalk followed by his yellow dog,
But he’s got a bunch of gold-dust in his sack.

He seems a little wistful as he blinks at all the lights,
And maybe he is thinking of his claim
And the dark and dwarfish cabin where he lay and dreamed at nights,
(Thank God, he’ll never see the place again!)
Where he lived on tinned tomatoes, beef embalmed and sourdough bread,
On rusty beans and bacon furred with mould;
His stomach’s out of kilter and his system full of lead,
But it’s over, and his poke is full of gold.

He has panted at the windlass, he has loaded in the drift,
He has pounded at the face of oozy clay;
He has taxed himself to sickness, dark and damp and double shift,
He has labored like a demon night and day.
And now, praise God, it’s over, and he seems to breathe again
Of new-mown hay, the warm, wet, friendly loam;
He sees a snowy orchard in a green and dimpling plain,
And a little vine-clad cottage, and it’s—Home.

II.

He’s the man from Eldorado, and he’s had a bite and sup,
And he’s met in with a drouthy friend or two;
He’s cached away his gold-dust, but he’s sort of bucking up,
So he’s kept enough to-night to see him through.
His eye is bright and genial, his tongue no longer lags;
His heart is brimming o’er with joy and mirth;
He may be far from savory, he may be clad in rags,
But to-night he feels as if he owns the earth.

Says he: ”Boys, here is where the shaggy North and I will shake;
I thought I’d never manage to get free.
I kept on making misses; but at last I’ve got my stake;
There’s no more thawing frozen muck for me.

I am going to God's Country, where I'll live the simple life;
 I'll buy a bit of land and make a start;
 I'll carve a little homestead, and I'll win a little wife,
 And raise ten little kids to cheer my heart."

They signified their sympathy by crowding to the bar;
 They bellied up three deep and drank his health.
 He shed a radiant smile around and smoked a rank cigar;
 They wished him honor, happiness and wealth.
 They drank unto his wife to be—that unsuspecting maid;
 They drank unto his children half a score;
 And when they got through drinking very tenderly they laid
 The man from Eldorado on the floor.

III.

He's the man from Eldorado, and he's only starting in
 To cultivate a thousand-dollar jag.
 His poke is full of gold-dust and his heart is full of sin,
 And he's dancing with a girl called Muckluck Mag.
 She's as light as any fairy, she's as pretty as a peach;
 She's mistress of the witchcraft to beguile;
 There's sunshine in her manner, there's music in her speech,
 And there's concentrated honey in her smile.

Oh, the fever of the dance-hall and the glitter and the shine,
 The beauty, and the jewels, and the whirl,
 The madness of the music, the rapture of the wine,
 The languorous allurement of a girl!
 She is like a lost madonna; he is gaunt, unkempt and grim;
 But she fondles him and gazes in his eyes;
 Her kisses seek his heavy lips, and soon it seems to him
 He has staked a little claim in Paradise.

"Who's for a juicy two-step?" cries the master of the floor;
 The music throbs with soft, seductive beat.
 There's glitter, gilt and gladness; there are pretty girls galore;
 There's a woolly man with moccasins on feet.
 They know they've got him going; he is buying wine for all;
 They crowd around as buzzards at a feast,
 Then when his poke is empty they boost him from the hall,
 And spurn him in the gutter like a beast.

He's the man from Eldorado, and he's painting red the town;
 Behind he leaves a trail of yellow dust;

The Ballad of Hard-Luck Henry

Now wouldn't you expect to find a man an awful crank
 That's staked out nigh three hundred claims, and every one a blank;
 That's followed every fool stampede, and seen the rise and fall
 Of camps where men got gold in chunks and he got none at all;
 That's prospected a bit of ground and sold it for a song
 To see it yield a fortune to some fool that came along;
 That's sunk a dozen bed-rock holes, and not a speck in sight,
 Yet sees them take a million from the claims to left and right?
 Now aren't things like that enough to drive a man to booze?
 But Hard-Luck Smith was hoodoo-proof—he knew the way to lose.

'Twas in the fall of nineteen four—leap-year I've heard them say—
 When Hard-Luck came to Hunker Creek and took a hillside lay.
 And lo! as if to make amends for all the futile past,
 Late in the year he struck it rich, the real pay-streak at last.
 The ruffles of his sluicing-box were choked with speckled earth,
 And night and day he worked that lay for all that he was worth.
 And when in chill December's gloom his lucky lease expired,
 He found that he had made a stake as big as he desired.

One day while meditating on the waywardness of fate,
 He felt the ache of lonely man to find a fitting mate;
 A petticoated pard to cheer his solitary life,
 A woman with soft, soothing ways, a confidant, a wife.
 And while he cooked his supper on his little Yukon stove,
 He wished that he had staked a claim in Love's rich treasure-trove;
 When suddenly he paused and held aloft a Yukon egg.
 For there in pencilled letters was the magic name of Peg.

You know these Yukon eggs of ours—some pink, some green, some blue—
 A dollar per, assorted tints, assorted flavors too.
 The supercilious cheechako might designate them high,
 But one acquires a taste for them and likes them by-and-by.
 Well, Hard-Luck Henry took this egg and held it to the light,
 And there was more faint pencilling that sorely taxed his sight.
 At lashe made it out, and then the legend ran like this—

"Will Klondike miner write to Peg, Plumbhollow, Squashville, Wis.?"

That night he got to thinking of this far-off, unknown fair;
 It seemed so sort of opportune, an answer to his prayer.
 She fitted sweetly through his dreams, she haunted him by day,
 She smiled through clouds of nicotine, she cheered his weary way.

*their fleeing jibe at the feast;
 He shall seek the caves and the shroud of night,
 and the fellowship of the beast.
 Outcast forever from homes of men, far and far shall he roam.
 Such be the doom, sadder than death, of him who shameth a home."*

In a whirl of senseless riot he is ramping up and down;
 There's nothing checks his madness and his lust.
 And soon the word is passed around—it travels like a flame;
 They fight to clutch his hand and call him friend,
 The chevaliers of lost repute, the dames of sorry fame;
 Then comes the grim awakening—the end.

IV.

He's the man from Eldorado, and he gives a grand affair;
 There's feasting, dancing, wine without restraint.
 The smooth Beau Brummels of the bar, the féro men, are there;
 The tinorns and pureyors of red paint;
 The sleek and painted women, their predacious eyes aglow—
 Sure Klondike City never saw the like;
 Then Muckluck Mag proposed the toast, "The giver of the show,
 The livest sport that ever hit the pike."

The "live one" rises to his feet; he stammers to reply—
 And then there comes before his muddled brain
 A vision of green vastitudes beneath an April sky,
 And clover pastures drenched with silver rain.
 He knows that it can never be, that he is down and out;
 Life leers at him with foul and fetid breath;
 And then amid the revelry, the song and cheer and shout,
 He suddenly grows grim and cold as death.

He grips the table tensely, and he says: "Dear friends of mine,
 I've let you dip your fingers in my purse;
 I've crammed you at my table, and I've drowned you in my wine,
 And I've little left to give you but—my curse.
 I've failed supremely in my plans; it's rather late to whine;
 My poke is mighty weasened up and small.
 I thank you each for coming here; the happiness is mine—
 And now, you thieves and harlots, take it all."

He twists the thong from off his poke; he swings it o'er his head;
 The nuggets fall around their feet like grain.
 They rattle over roof and wall; they scatter, roll and spread;
 The dust is like a shower of golden rain.
 The guests a moment stand aghast, then grovel on the floor;
 They fight, and snarl, and claw, like beasts of prey;
 And then, as everybody grabbed and everybody swore,
 The man from Eldorado slipped away.

V.

He's the man from Eldorado, and they found him stiff and dead,
 Half covered by the freezing ooze and dirt.
 A clotted Colt was in his hand, a hole was in his head,
 And he wore an old and oily buckskin shirt.
 His eyes were fixed and horrible, as one who hails the end;
 The frost had set him rigid as a log;
 And there, half lying on his breast, his last and only friend,
 There crouched and whined a mangy yellow dog.

Softly he padded the pathway unto the porch, and within
 Heard he the low laugh of dalliance, heard he the rapture of sin.
 Knew he her eyes were mystic with light that no man should see,
 No man kindle and joy in, no man on earth save he.
 And never for him would it kindle. The bloodlust surged in his brain;
 Through the senseless stone could he see them, wanton and warily fain.
 Horrible! Heaven he sought for, gained it and gloried and fell—
 Oh, it was sudden—headlong into the nethermost hell. . . .

Was this he, Tellus, this marble? Tellus . . . not dreaming a dream?
 Ah! sharp-edged as a javelin, was that a woman's scream?
 Was it a door that shattered, shell-like, under his blow?
 Was it his saint, that strumpet, dishevelled and cowering low?
 Was it her lover, that wild thing, that twisted and gouged and tore?
 Was it a man he was crushing, whose head he beat on the floor?
 Laughing the while at its weakness, till sudden he stayed his hand—
 Through the red ring of his madness flamed the thought of the Brand.

Then bound he the naked Philo with thongs that cut in the flesh,
 And the wife of his bosom, fear-frantic, he gagged with a silken mesh,
 Choking her screams into silence; bound her down by the hair;
 Dragged her lover unto her under her frenzied stare.
 In the heat of the hearth-fire embers he heaped the hideous Brand;
 Twisting her fingers open, he forced its haft in her hand.
 He pressed it downward and downward; she felt the living flesh sear;
 She saw the throe of her lover; she heard the scream of his fear.
 Once, twice and thrice he forced her, heedless of prayer and shriek—
 Once on the forehead of Philo, twice in the soft of his cheek.
 Then (for the thing was finished) he said to the woman: "See
 How you have branded your lover! Now will I let him go free."
 He severed the thongs that bound him, laughing: "Revenge is sweet",
 And Philo, sobbing in anguish, feebly rose to his feet.
 The man who was fair as Apollo, god-like in woman's sight,
 Hideous now as a satyr, fled to the pity of night.

*Then came they before the Judgment Seat,
 and thus spoke the Lord of the Land:
 "He who seeketh his neighbor's wife
 shall suffer the doom of the Brand.
 Brutish and bold on his brow be it stamped,
 deep in his cheek let it scar;
 That every man may look on his shame, and shudder and sicken and fear.
 He shall hear their mock in the market-place,*

Womenkind fought for his favor and loved to their uttermost harm.
Such was his craft and his knowledge, such was his skill at the game,
Never was woman could flout him, so be he plotted her shame.
And so he drank deep of pleasure, and then it fell on a day
He gazed on the wife of Tellus and marked her out for his prey.

Tellus, the smith, was merry, and the time of the year it was June,
So he said to his stalwart helpers: "Shut down the forge at noon.
Go ye and joy in the sunshine, rest in the coolth of the grove,
Drift on the dreamy river, every man with his love."
Then to himself: "Oh, Beloved, sweet will be your surprise;
To-day will we sport like children, laugh in each other's eyes;
Weave gay garlands of poppies, crown each other with flowers,
Pull plump carp from the lilies, rifle the ferny bowers.
To-day with feasting and gladness the wine of Cyprus will flow;
To-day is the day we were wedded only a twelvemonth ago."

The larks trilled high in the heavens; his heart was lyric with joy;
He plucked a posy of lilies; he sped like a love-sick boy.
He stole up the velvety pathway—his cottage was sunsteeped and still;
Vines honeysucked the window; softly he peeped o'er the sill.
The lilies dropped from his fingers; devils were choking his breath;
Rigid with horror, he stiffened; ghastly his face was as death.
Like a nun whose faith in the Virgin is met with a prurient jibe,
He shrank—'twas the wife of his bosom in the arms of Philo, the scribe.

Tellus went back to his smithy; he reeled like a drunken man;
His heart was riven with anguish; his brain was brooding a plan.
Straight to his anvil he hurried; started his furnace aglow;
Heated his iron and shaped it with savage and masterful blow.
Sparks showered over and round him; swiftly under his hand
There at last it was finished—a hideous and infamous Brand.

That night the wife of his bosom, the light of joy in her eyes,
Kissed him with words of rapture; but he knew that her words were lies.
Never was she so beguiling, never so merry of speech
(For passion ripens a woman as the sunshine ripens a peach).
He clenched his teeth into silence; he yielded up to her lure,
Though he knew that her breasts were heaving from the fire of her paramour.
"To-morrow," he said, "to-morrow"—he wove her hair in a strand,
Twisted it round his fingers and smiled as he thought of the Brand.

The morrow was come, and Tellus swiftly stole up the hill.
Butterflies drowsed in the noon-heat; coverters were sunsteeped and still.

My Friends

The man above was a murderer, the man below was a thief;
And I lay there in the bunk between, ailing beyond belief;
A weary armful of skin and bone, wasted with pain and grief.

My feet were froze, and the lifeless toes were purple and green and gray;
The little flesh that clung to my bones,
You could punch it in holes like clay;
The skin on my gums was a sullen black, and slowly peeling away.

I was sure enough in a direful fix, and often I wondered why
They did not take the chance that was left and leave me alone to die,
Or finish me off with a dose of dope—so utterly lost was I.

But no; they brewed me the green-spruce tea,
and nursed me there like a child;
And the homicide he was good to me, and bathed my sores and smiled;
And the thief he starved that I might be fed,
and his eyes were kind and mild.

Yet they were woefully wicked men, and often at night in pain
I heard the murderer speak of his deed and dream it over again;
I heard the poor thief sorrowing for the dead self he had slain.

I'll never forget that bitter dawn, so evil, askew and gray,
When they wrapped me round in the skins of beasts
and they bore me to a sleigh,
And we started out with the nearest post an hundred miles away.

I'll never forget the trail they broke, with its tense, unuttered woe;
And the crunch, crunch, crunch as their snowshoes sank
through the crust of the hollow snow;
And my breath would fail, and every beat of my heart was like a blow.

And oftentimes I would die the death, yet wake up to life anew;
The sun would be all ablaze on the waste, and the sky a blighting blue,
And the tears would rise in my snow-blind eyes
and furrow my cheeks like dew.

And the camps we made when their strength outplayed
and the day was pinched and wan;

And oh, the joy of that blessed halt, and how I did dread the dawn;
And how I hated the weary men who rose and dragged me on.

And oh, how I begged to rest, to rest—the snow was so sweet a shroud;

And oh, how I cried when they urged me on, cried and cursed them aloud;
Yet on they strained, all racked and pained,
and sorely their backs were bowed.

And then it was all like a lurid dream, and I prayed for a swift release
From the ruthless ones who would not leave me to die alone in peace;
Till I awakened up and I found myself at the post of the Mounted Police.

And there was my friend the murderer, and there was my friend the thief,
With bracelets of steel around their wrists, and wicked beyond belief:
But when they come to God's judgment seat—may I be allowed the brief.

The Ballad of the Brand

'Twas up in a land long famed for gold, where women were far and rare,
Tellus, the smith, had taken to wife a maiden amazingly fair;
Tellus, the brawny worker in iron, hairy and heavy of hand,
Saw her and loved her and bore her away from the tribe of a Southern land;
Deeming her worthy to queen his home and mother him little ones,
That the name of Tellus, the master smith, might live in his stalwart sons.
Now there was little of law in the land, and evil doings were rife,
And every man who joyed in his home guarded the fame of his wife;
For there were those of the silver tongue and the honeyed art to beguile,
Who would cozen the heart from a woman's breast
and damn her soul with a smile.

And there were women too quick to heed a look or a whispered word,
And once in a while a man was slain, and the ire of the King was stirred;
So far and wide he proclaimed his wrath, and this was the law he willed:
"That whosoever killeth a man, even shall he be killed."

Now Tellus, the smith, he trusted his wife; his heart was empty of fear.
High on the hill was the gleam of their hearth, a beacon of love and cheer.
High on the hill they bided their bower,
where the broom and the bracken met;
Under a grave of oaks it was, hushed and drowsily sweet.
Here he enshrined her, his dearest saint, his idol, the light of his eye;
Her kisses rested upon his lips as brushes a butterfly.
The weight of her arms around his neck was light as the thistle down;
And sweetly she studied to win his smile, and gently she mocked his frown.
And when at the close of the dusty day his clangorous toil was done,
She hastened to meet him down the way all lit by the amber sun.

Their dove-cot gleamed in the golden light, a temple of stainless love;
Like the hanging cup of a big blue flower was the topaz sky above.
The roses and lilies yearned to her,
as swift through their throng she pressed;
A little white, fragile, fluttering thing
that lay like a child on his breast.
Then the heart of Tellus, the smith, was proud,
and sang for the joy of life,

And there in the bronzing summertime he thanked the gods for his wife.
Now there was one called Philo, a scribe, a man of exquisite grace,
Carved like the god Apollo in limb, fair as Adonis in face;
Eager and winning in manner, full of such radiant charm,

It weltered round with a woozy sound, and ere I could retreat,
With the witless roll of a sodden soul it wanted to my feet.

And here I swear by this Cross I wear, I heard that "Hoater" say:
"I am the man from whom you ran, the man you sought to slay.
That you may note and gaze and gloat, and say 'Revenge is sweet',
In the grit and grime of the river's slime I am rotting at your feet.

"The ill we rue we must e'en undo, though it rive us bone from bone;
So it came about that I sought you out, for I prayed I might atone.
I did you wrong, and for long and long I sought where you might live;
And now you're found, though I'm dead and drowned, I beg you to forgive."

So sad it seemed, and its cheek-bones gleamed,
and its fingers flicked the shore;
And it lapped and lay in a weary way, and its hands met to implore;
That I gently said: "Poor, restless dead, I would never work you woe;
Though the wrong you rue you can ne'er undo, I forgave you long ago."

Then, wonder-wise, I rubbed my eyes and I woke from a horrid dream.
The moon rode high in the naked sky, and something bobbed in the stream.
It held my sight in a patch of light, and then it sheered from the shore;
It dipped and sank by a hollow bank, and I never saw it more.

*This was the tale he told to me, that man so warped and gray,
Ere he slept and dreamed, and the camp-fire gleamed
in his eye in a wolfish way—
That crystal eye that raked the sky in the weird Auroral ray.*

The Prospector

I strolled up old Bonanza, where I staked in ninety-eight,
A-purpose to revisit the old claim.

I kept thinking mighty sadly of the funny ways of Fate,
And the lads who once were with me in the game.

Poor boys, they're down-and-outers, and there's scarcely one to-day
Can show a dozen colors in his poke;

And me, I'm still prospecting, old and battered, gaunt and gray,
And I'm looking for a grub-stake, and I'm broke.

I strolled up old Bonanza. The same old moon looked down;

The same old landmarks seemed to yearn to me;

But the cabins all were silent, and the flat, once like a town,

Was mighty still and lonesome-like to see.

There were piles and piles of tailings where we toiled with pick and pan,

And turning round a bend I heard a roar,

And there a giant gold-ship of the very newest plan

Was tearing chunks of pay-dirt from the shore.

It wallowed in its water-bed; it burrowed, heaved and swung;

It gnawed its way ahead with grunts and sighs;

Its bill of fare was rock and sand; the tailings were its dung;

It glared around with fierce electric eyes.

Full fifty buckets crammed its maw; it bellowed out for more;

It looked like some great monster in the gloom.

With two to feed its satelless greed, it worked for seven score,

And I sighed: "Ah, old-time miner, here's your doom!"

The idle windlass turns to rust; the sagging sluice-box falls;

The holes you digged are water to the brim;

Your little sod-roofed cabins with the snugly moss-chinked walls

Are deathly now and mouldering and dim.

The battle-field is silent where of old you fought it out;

The claims you fiercely won are lost and sold;

But there's a little army that they'll never put to rout—

The men who simply live to seek the gold.

The men who can't remember when they learned to swing a pack,

Or in what lawless land the quest began;

The solitary seeker with his grub-stake on his back,

The restless buccaneer of pick and pan.

On the mesas of the Southland, on the tundras of the North,

You will find us, changed in face but still the same;

And it isn't need, it isn't greed that sends us faring forth—
It's the fever, it's the glory of the game.

For once you've panned the speckled sand and seen the bonny dust,
Its peerless brightness blinds you like a spell;
It's little else you care about; you go because you must,
And you feel that you could follow it to hell.

You'd follow it in hunger, and you'd follow it in cold;

You'd follow it in solitude and pain;

And when you're stiff and battered down let someone whisper "Gold",

You're lief to rise and follow it again.

Yet look you, if I find the stuff it's just like so much dirt;

I fling it to the four winds like a child.

It's wine and painted women and the things that do me hurt,

Till I crawl back, beggared, broken, to the Wild.

Till I crawl back, sapped and sodden, to my grub-stake and my tent—

There's a city, there's an army (hear them shout).

There's the gold in millions, millions, but I haven't got a cent;

And oh, it's me, it's me that found it out.

It was my dream that made it good, my dream that made me go

To lands of dread and death disprized of man;

But oh, I've known a glory that their hearts will never know,

When I picked the first big nugget from my pan.

It's still my dream, my dauntless dream, that drives me forth once more

To seek and starve and suffer in the Vast;

That heaps my heart with eager hope, that glimmers on before—

My dream that will uplift me to the last.

Perhaps I am stark crazy, but there's none of you too sane;

It's just a little matter of degree.

My hobby is to hunt out gold; it's fortified in my brain;

It's life and love and wife and home to me.

And I'll strike it, yes, I'll strike it; I've a hunch I cannot fail;

I've a vision, I've a prompting, I've a call;

I hear the hoarse stampeding of an army on my trail,

To the last, the greatest gold camp of them all.

Beyond the shark-tooth ranges sawing savage at the sky

There's a lowering land no white man ever struck;

There's gold, there's gold in millions, and I'll find it if I die,

And I'm going there once more to try my luck.

Maybe I'll fail—what matter? It's a mandate, it's a vow;

The Ballad of One-Eyed Mike

This is the tale that was told to me by the man with the crystal eyes,

As I smoked my pipe in the camp-fire light,

and the Glories swept the sky;

As the Northlights gleamed and curved and streamed,

and the bottle of "hoob" was dry.

A man once aimed that my life be shamed, and wrought me a deadly wrong;

I vowed one day I would well repay, but the heft of his hate was strong.

He thonged me East and he thonged me West; he harried me back and forth,

Till I fled in fright from his peerless spite

to the bleak, bald-headed North.

And there I lay, and for many a day I hatched plan after plan,

For a golden haul of the wherewithal to crush and to kill my man;

And there I strove, and there I clove through the drift of icy streams;

And there I fought, and there I sought for the pay-streak of my dreams.

So twenty years, with their hopes and fears and smiles and tears and such,

Went by and left me long bereft of hope of the Midas touch;

About as far as a chance rat, and lo! despite my will,

In the weary fight I had clean lost sight of the man I sought to kill.

'Twas so far away, that evil day when I prayed to the Prince of Gloom

For the savage strength and the sullen length of life to work his doom.

Nor sign nor word had I seen or heard, and it happened so long ago;

My youth was gone and my memory wan, and I willed it even so.

It fell one night in the waning light by the Yukon's oily flow,

I smoked and sat as I marvelled at the sky's port-winey glow;

Till it paled away to an absinthe gray, and the river seemed to shrink,

All wobbly flakes and wriggling snakes and goblin eyes a-wink.

'Twas weird to see and it 'wildered me in a queer, hypnotic dream,

Till I saw a spot like an ink blot come floating down the stream;

It bobbed and swung; it sheered and hung; it romped round in a ring;

It seemed to play in a tricksome way; it sure was a merry thing.

In freakish flights strange oily lights came fluttering round its head,

Like butterflies of a monster size—then I knew it for the Dead.

Its face was rubbed and slicked and scrubbed as smooth as a shaven pate;

In the silver snakes that the water makes it gleamed like a dinner-plate.

It gurgled near, and clear and clear and large and large it grew;

It stood upright in a ring of light and it looked me through and through.