

By intuition, Mightiest Things  
Assert themselves – and not by terms –  
“I’m Midnight” – need the Midnight say –  
“I’m Sunrise” – Need the Majesty?

Omnipotence – had not a Tongue –  
His lisp – is Lightning – and the Sun –  
His Conversation – with the Sea –  
“How shall you know”?  
Consult your Eye!

c. 1862

1935

421

A Charm invests a face  
Imperfectly beheld –  
The Lady dare not lift her Veil  
For fear it be dispelled –

But peers beyond her mesh –  
And wishes – and denies –  
Lest Interview – annul a want  
That Image – satisfies –

c. 1862

1891

422

More Life – went out – when He went  
Than Ordinary Breath –  
Lit with a finer Phosphor –  
Requiring in the Quench –

A Power of Renowned Cold,  
The Climate of the Grave  
A Temperature just adequate  
So Anthracite, to live –

For some – an Ampler Zero –  
A Frost more needle keen  
Is necessary, to reduce  
The Ethiop within.

Others – extinguish easier –  
A Gnat's minutest Fan  
Sufficient to obliterate  
A Tract of Citizen –  
  
Whose Peat lift – amply vivid –  
Ignores the solemn News  
That Popocatapel exists –  
Or Etna's Scarlets, Choose –

c. 1862

1935

423  
The Months have ends – the Years – a knot –  
No Power can untie  
To stretch a little further  
A Skein of Misery –

The Earth lays back these tired lives  
In her mysterious Drawers –  
Too tenderly, that any doubt  
An ultimate Repose –

The manner of the Children –  
Who weary of the Day –  
Themself – the noisy Plaything  
They cannot put away –

c. 1862

1935

424  
Removed from Accident of Loss  
By Accident of Gain  
Befalling not my simple Days –  
Myself had just to earn –

Of Riches – as unconscious  
As is the Brown Malay  
Of Pearls in Eastern Waters,  
Marked His – What Holiday

Would stir his slow conception –  
Had he the power to dream  
That but the Dower's fraction –  
Awaited even – Him –

c. 1862

1935

425

Good Morning – Midnight –  
I'm coming Home –  
Day – got tired of Me –  
How could I – of Him?

Sunshine was a sweet place –  
I liked to stay –  
But Morn – didn't want me – now –  
So – Goodnight – Day!

I can look – can't I –  
When the East is Red?  
The Hills – have a way – then –  
That puts the Heart – abroad –

You – are not so fair – Midnight –  
I chose – Day –  
But – please take a little Girl –  
He turned away!

c. 1862

1929

426

It don't sound so terrible – quite – as it did –  
I run it over – "Dead", Brain, "Dead."  
Put it in Latin – left of my school –  
Seems it don't shriek so – under rule.

Turn it, a little – full in the face  
A Trouble looks bitterest –  
Shift it – just –  
Say "When Tomorrow comes this way –  
I shall have waded down one Day."

I suppose it will interrupt me some  
Till I get accustomed – but then the Tomb  
Like other new Things – shows largest – then –  
And smaller, by Habit –

It's shrewder then  
Put the Thought in advance – a Year –  
How like "a fit" – then –  
Murder – wear!

c. 1862

1945

427

I'll clutch – and clutch –  
Next – One – Might be the golden touch –  
Could take it –  
Diamonds – Wait –  
I'm diving – just a little late –  
But stars – go slow – for night –

I'll string you – in fine Necklace –  
Tiaras – make – of some –  
Wear you on Hem –  
Loop up a Countess – with you –  
Make – a Diadem – and mend my old One –  
Count – Hoard – then lose –  
And doubt that you are mine –  
To have the joy of feeling it – again –

I'll show you at the Court –  
Bear you – for Ornament  
Where Women breathe –  
That every sigh – may lift you  
Just as high – as I –

And – when I die –  
In meek array – display you –  
Still to show – how rich I go –  
Lest Skies impeach a wealth so wonderful –  
And banish me –

c. 1862

1945

Taking up the fair Ideal,  
 Just to cast her down  
 When a fracture – we discover –  
 Or a splintered Crown –  
 Makes the Heavens portable –  
 And the Gods – a lie –  
 Doubtless – “Adam” – scowled at Eden –  
 For *his* perjury!

Cherishing – our poor Ideal –  
 Till in purer dress –  
 We behold her – glorified –  
 Comforts – search – like this –  
 Till the broken creatures –  
 We adored – for whole –  
 Stains – all washed –  
 Transfigured – mended –  
 Meet us – with a smile –

c. 1862

1945

The Moon is distant from the Sea –  
 And yet, with Amber Hands –  
 She leads Him – docile as a Boy –  
 Along appointed Sands –

He never misses a Degree –  
 Obedient to Her Eye  
 He comes just so far – toward the Town –  
 Just so far – goes away –

Oh, Signor, Thine, the Amber Hand –  
 And mine – the distant Sea –  
 Obedient to the least command  
 Thine eye impose on me –

c. 1862

1891

It would never be Common – more – I said –  
 Difference – had begun –  
 Many a bitterness – had been –  
 But that old sort – was done –

Or – if it sometime – showed – as 'twill –  
 Upon the Downiest – Morn –  
 Such bliss – had I – for all the years –  
 'Twould give an Easier – pain –

I'd so much joy – I told it – Red –  
 Upon my simple Cheek –  
 I felt it publish – in my Eye –  
 'Twas needless – any speak –

I walked – as wings – my body bore –  
 The feet – I former used –  
 Unnecessary – now to me –  
 As boots – would be – to Birds –

I put my pleasure all abroad –  
 I dealt a word of Gold  
 To every Creature – that I met –  
 And Dowered – all the World –

When – suddenly – my Riches shrank –  
 A Goblin – drank my Dew –  
 My Palaces – dropped tenantless –  
 Myself – was beggared – too –

I clutched at sounds –  
 I groped at shapes –  
 I touched the tops of Films –  
 I felt the Wilderness roll back  
 Along my Golden lines –

The Sackcloth – hangs upon the nail –  
 The Frock I used to wear –  
 But where my moment of Brocade –  
 My – drop – of India?

## 431

Me – come! My dazzled face  
 In such a shining place!  
 Me – hear! My foreign Ear  
 The sounds of Welcome – there!

The Saints forget  
 Our bashful feet –

My Holiday, shall be  
 That They – remember me –  
 My Paradise – the fame  
 That They – pronounce my name –

c. 1862

1896

## 432

Do People moulder equally,  
 They bury, in the Grave?  
 I do believe a Species  
 As positively live

As I, who testify it  
 Deny that I – am dead –  
 And fill my Lungs, for Witness –  
 From Tanks – above my Head –

I say to you, said Jesus –  
 That there be standing here –  
 A Sort, that shall not taste of Death –  
 If Jesus was sincere –

I need no further Argue –  
 That statement of the Lord  
 Is not a controvertible –  
 He told me, Death was dead –

c. 1862

1945

## 433

Knows how to forget!  
 But could It teach it?

Easiest of Arts, they say  
When one learn how  
  
Dull Hearts have died  
In the Acquisition  
Sacrifice for Science  
Is common, though, now –

I went to School  
But was not wiser  
Globe did not teach it  
Nor Logarithm Show

“How to forget”!  
Say – some – Philosopher!  
Ah, to be erudite  
Enough to know!

Is it in a Book?  
So, I could buy it –  
Is it like a Planet?  
Telescopes would know –

If it be invention  
It must have a Patent.  
Rabbi of the Wise Book  
Don’t you know?

c. 1865

1945

434

To love thee Year by Year –  
May less appear  
Than sacrifice, and cease –  
However, dear,  
Forever might be short, I thought to show –  
And so I pieced it, with a flower, now.

c. 1862

1914

Much Madness is divinest Sense –  
 To a discerning Eye –  
 Much Sense – the starest Madness –  
 'Tis the Majority  
 In this, as All, prevail –  
 Assent – and you are sane –  
 Demur – you're straightway dangerous –  
 And handled with a Chain –

c. 1862

1890

The Wind – tapped like a tired Man –  
 And like a Host – "Come in"  
 I boldly answered – entered then  
 My Residence within

A Rapid – footless Guest –  
 To offer whom a Chair  
 Were as impossible as hand  
 A Sofa to the Air –

No Bone had He to bind Him –  
 His Speech was like the Push  
 Of numerous Humming Birds at once  
 From a superior Bush –

His Countenance – a Billow –  
 His Fingers, as He passed  
 Let go a music – as of tunes  
 Blown tremulous in Glass –

He visited – still flitting –  
 Then like a timid Man  
 Again, He tapped – 'twas flurriedly –  
 And I became alone –

c. 1862

1891

Prayer is the little implement  
 Through which Men reach  
 Where Presence – is denied them.  
 They fling their Speech

By means of it – in God's Ear –  
 If then He hear –  
 This sums the Apparatus  
 Comprised in Prayer –

c. 1862

1891

Forget! The lady with the Amulet  
 Forget she wore it at her Heart  
 Because she breathed against  
 Was Treason twixt?

Deny! Did Rose her Bee –  
 For Privilege of Play  
 Or Wile of Butterfly  
 Or Opportunity – Her Lord away?

The lady with the Amulet – will fade –  
 The Bee – in Mausoleum laid –  
 Discard his Bride –  
 But longer than the little Rill –  
 That cooled the Forehead of the Hill –  
 While Other – went the Sea to fill –  
 And Other – went to turn the Mill –  
 I'll do thy Will –

c. 1862

1935

Undue Significance a starving man attaches  
 To Food –  
 Far off – He sighs – and therefore – Hopeless –  
 And therefore – Good –

Partaken – it relieves – indeed –  
But proves us  
That Spices fly  
In the Receipt – It was the Distance –  
Was Savory –

c. 1862

1891

440

'Tis customary as we part  
A trinket – to confer –  
It helps to stimulate the faith  
When Lovers be afar –  
  
'Tis various – as the various taste –  
Clematis – journeying far –  
Presents me with a single Curl  
Of her Electric Hair –

c. 1862

1945

441

This is my letter to the World  
That never wrote to Me –  
The simple News that Nature told –  
With tender Majesty

Her Message is committed  
To Hands I cannot see –  
For love of Her – Sweet – countrymen –  
Judge tenderly – of Me

c. 1862

1890

442

God made a little Gentian –  
It tried – to be a Rose –  
And failed – and all the Summer laughed –  
But just before the Snows

There rose a Purple Creature –  
That ravished all the Hill –  
And Summer hid her Forehead –  
And Mockery – was still –

The Frosts were her condition –  
The Tyrian would not come  
Until the North – invoke it –  
Creator – Shall I – bloom?

c. 1862

1891

443

I tie my Hat – I crease my Shawl –  
Life's little duties do – precisely –  
As the very least  
Were infinite – to me –

I put new Blossoms in the Glass –  
And throw the old – away –  
I push a petal from my Gown  
That anchored there – I weigh  
The time 'twill be till six o'clock  
I have so much to do –  
And yet – Existence – some way back –  
Stopped – struck – my ticking – through –  
We cannot put Ourself away  
As a completed Man  
Or Woman – When the Errand's done  
We came to Flesh – upon –  
There may be – Miles on Miles of Nought –  
Of Action – sicker far –  
To simulate – is stinging work –  
To cover what we are  
From Science – and from Surgery –  
Too Telescopic Eyes  
To bear on us unshaded –  
For their – sake – not for Ours –

"Twould start them –  
We – could tremble –  
But since we got a Bomb –  
And held it in our Bosom –  
Nay – Hold it – it is calm –

Therefore – we do life's labor –  
Though life's Reward – be done –  
With scrupulous exactness –  
To hold our Senses – on –

c. 1862

1929

444

It feels a shame to be Alive –  
When Men so brave – are dead –  
One envies the Distinguished Dust –  
Permitted – such a Head –

The Stone – that tells defending Whom  
This Spartan put away  
What little of Him we – possessed  
In Pawn for Liberty –

The price is great – Sublimely paid –  
Do we deserve – a Thing –  
That lives – like Dollars – must be piled  
Before we may obtain?

Are we that wait – sufficient worth –  
That such Enormous Pearl  
As life – dissolved be – for Us –  
In Battle's – horrid Bowl?

It may be – a Renown to live –  
I think the Man who die –  
Those unsustained – Saviors –  
Present Divinity –

c. 1862

1929

"Twas just this time, last year, I died.  
I know I heard the Corn,  
When I was carried by the Farms –  
It had the Tassels on –

I thought how yellow it would look –  
When Richard went to mill –  
And then, I wanted to get out,  
But something held my will.

I thought just how Red – Apples wedged  
The Stubble's joints between –  
And the Carts stooping round the fields  
To take the Pumpkins in –

I wondered which would miss me, least,  
And when Thanksgiving, came,  
If Father'd multiply the plates –  
To make an even Sum –

And would it blur the Christmas glee  
My Stocking hang too high  
For any Santa Claus to reach  
The Altitude of me –

But this sort, grieved myself,  
And so, I thought the other way,  
How just this time, some perfect year –  
Themself, should come to me –

c. 1862

1896

I showed her Heights she never saw –  
"Would'st Climb," I said?  
She said – "Not so" –  
"With *me* –" I said – With *me*?  
I showed her Secrets – Morning's Nest –  
The Rope the Nights were put across –  
And *now* – "Would'st have me for a Guest?"

She could not find her Yes –  
And then, I brake my life – And Lo,  
A Light, for her, did solemn glow,  
The larger, as her face withdrew –  
And could she, further, “No”?

c. 1862

1914

447

Could – I do more – for Thee –  
Wert Thou a Bumble Bee –  
Since for the Queen, have I –  
Nought but Bouquet?

c. 1862

1929

448

This was a Poet – It is That  
Distills amazing sense  
From ordinary Meanings –  
And Attar so immense

From the familiar species  
That perished by the Door –  
We wonder it was not Ourselves  
Arrested it – before –

Of Pictures, the Discloser –  
The Poet – it is He –  
Entitles Us – by Contrast –  
To ceaseless Poverty –

Of Portion – so unconscious –  
The Robbing – could not harm –  
Himself – to Him – a Fortune –  
Exterior – to Time –

c. 1862

1929

I died for Beauty – but was scarce  
 Adjusted in the Tomb  
 When One who died for Truth, was lain  
 In an adjoining Room –

He questioned softly “Why I failed”?  
 “For Beauty”, I replied –  
 “And I – for Truth – Themself are One –  
 We Brethren, are”, He said –

And so, as Kinsmen, met a Night –  
 We talked between the Rooms –  
 Until the Moss had reached our lips –  
 And covered up – our names –

c. 1862

1890

Dreams – are well – but Waking’s better,  
 If One wake at Morn –  
 If One wake at Midnight – better –  
 Dreaming – of the Dawn –

Sweeter – the Surmising Robins –  
 Never gladdened Tree –  
 Than a Solid Dawn – confronting –  
 Leading to no Day –

c. 1862

1935

The Outer – from the Inner  
 Derives its Magnitude –  
 ’Tis Duke, or Dwarf, according  
 As is the Central Mood –

The fine – unvarying Axis  
 That regulates the Wheel –  
 Though Spokes – spin – more conspicuous  
 And fling a dust – the while.

The Inner – paints the Outer –  
The Brush without the Hand –  
Its Picture publishes – precise –  
As is the inner Brand –

On fine – Arterial Canvas –  
A Cheek – perchance a Brow –  
The Star’s whole Secret – in the Lake –  
Eyes were not meant to know.

c. 1862

1935

452

The Malay – took the Pearl –  
Not – I – the Earl –  
I – feared the Sea – too much  
Unsanctified – to touch –

Praying that I might be  
Worthy – the Destiny –  
The Swarthy fellow swam –  
And bore my Jewel – Home –

Home to the Hut! What lot  
Had I – the Jewel – got –  
Borne on a Dusky Breast –  
I had not deemed a Vest  
Of Amber – fit –

The Negro never knew  
I – wooed it – too –  
To gain, or be undone –  
Alike to Him – One –

c. 1862

1945

453

Love – thou art high –  
I cannot climb thee –  
But, were it Two –  
Who knows but we –

Taking turns – at the Chimborazo –  
Ducal – at last – stand up by thee –  
  
Love – thou art deep –  
I cannot cross thee –  
But, were there Two  
Instead of One –  
Rower, and Yacht – some sovereign Summer –  
Who knows – but we'd reach the Sun?

Love – thou art Veiled –  
A few – behold thee –  
Smile – and alter – and prattle – and die –  
Bliss – were an Oddity – without thee –  
Nicknamed by God –  
Eternity –

c. 1862

1929

454

It was given to me by the Gods –  
When I was a little Girl –  
They give us Presents most – you know –  
When we are new – and small.  
I kept it in my Hand –  
I never put it down –  
I did not dare to eat – or sleep –  
For fear it would be gone –  
I heard such words as “Rich” –  
When hurrying to school –  
From lips at Corners of the Streets –  
And wrestled with a smile.  
Rich! 'Twas Myself – was rich –  
To take the name of Gold –  
And Gold to own – in solid Bars –  
The Difference – made me bold –

c. 1862

1945

Triumph – may be of several kinds –  
 There's Triumph in the Room  
 When that Old Imperator – Death –  
 By Faith – be overcome –

There's Triumph of the finer Mind  
 When Truth – affronted long –  
 Advance unmoved – to Her Supreme –  
 Her God – Her only Throng –

A Triumph – when Temptation's Bribe  
 Be slowly handed back –  
 One eye upon the Heaven renounced –  
 And One – upon the Rack –

Severer Triumph – by Himself  
 Experienced – who pass  
 Acquitted – from that Naked Bar –  
 Jehovah's Countenance –

c. 1862

1891

So well that I can live without –  
 I love thee – then How well is that?  
 As well as Jesus?  
 Prove it me  
 That He – loved Men –  
 As I – love thee –

c. 1862

1929

Sweet – safe – Houses –  
 Glad – gay – Houses –  
 Sealed so stately tight –  
 Lids of Steel – on Lids of Marble –  
 Locking Bare feet out –

Brooks of Plush – in Banks of Satin  
Not so softly fall  
As the laughter – and the whisper –  
From their People Pearl –

No Bald Death – affront their Parlors –  
No Bold Sickness come  
To deface their Stately Treasures –  
Anguish – and the Tomb –

Hum by – in Muffled Coaches –  
Lest they – wonder Why –  
Any – for the Press of Smiling –  
Interrupt – to die –

c. 1862

1945

458

Like Eyes that looked on Wastes –  
Incredulous of Ought  
But Blank – and steady Wilderness --  
Diversified by Night –

Just Infinites of Nought –  
As far as it could see –  
So looked the face I looked upon –  
So looked itself – on Me –

I offered it no Help –  
Because the Cause was Mine –  
The Misery a Compact  
As hopeless – as divine –

Neither – would be absolved –  
Neither would be a Queen  
Without the Other – Therefore –  
We perish – tho' We reign –

c. 1862

1945

A Tooth upon Our Peace  
 The Peace cannot deface –  
 Then Wherefore be the Tooth?  
 To vitalize the Grace –

The Heaven hath a Hell –  
 Itself to signalize –  
 And every sign before the Place  
 Is Gilt with Sacrifice –

c. 1862

1935

I know where Wells grow – Droughtless Wells –  
 Deep dug – for Summer days –  
 Where Mosses go no more away –  
 And Pebble – safely plays –

It's made of Fathoms – and a Belt –  
 A Belt of jagged Stone –  
 Inlaid with Emerald – half way down –  
 And Diamonds – jumbled on –

It has no Bucket – Were I rich  
 A Bucket I would buy –  
 I'm often thirsty – but my lips  
 Are so high up – You see –

I read in an Old fashioned Book  
 That People "thirst no more" –  
 The Wells have Buckets to them there –  
 It must mean that – I'm sure –

Shall We remember Parching – then?  
 Those Waters sound so grand –  
 I think a little Well – like Mine –  
 Dearer to understand –

c. 1862

1935

A Wife – at Daybreak I shall be –  
 Sunrise – Hast thou a Flag for me?  
 At Midnight, I am but a Maid,  
 How short it takes to make a Bride –  
 Then – Midnight, I have passed from thee  
 Unto the East, and Victory –

Midnight – Good Night! I hear them call,  
 The Angels bustle in the Hall –  
 Softly my Future climbs the Stair,  
 I fumble at my Childhood's prayer  
 So soon to be a Child no more –  
 Eternity, I'm coming – Sir,  
 Savior – I've seen the face – before!

c. 1862

1929

Why make it doubt – it hurts it so –  
 So sick – to guess –  
 So strong – to know –  
 So brave – upon its little Bed  
 To tell the very last They said  
 Unto Itself – and smile – And shake –  
 For that dear – distant – dangerous – Sake –  
 But – the Instead – the Pinching fear  
 That Something – it did do – or dare –  
 Offend the Vision – and it flee –  
 And They no more remember me –  
 Nor ever turn to tell me why –  
 Oh, Master, This is Misery –

c. 1862

1929

I live with Him – I see His face –  
 I go no more away

For Visitor – or Sundown –  
Death's single privacy

The Only One – forestalling Mine –  
And that – by Right that He  
Presents a Claim invisible –  
No wedlock – granted Me –

I live with Him – I hear His Voice –  
I stand alive – Today –  
To witness to the Certainty  
Of Immortality –

Taught Me – by Time – the lower Way –  
Conviction – Every day –  
That Life like This – is stopless –  
Be Judgment – what it may –

c. 1862

1896

464

The power to be true to You,  
Until upon my face  
The Judgment push His Picture –  
Presumptuous of Your Place –

Of This – Could Man deprive Me –  
Himself – the Heaven excel –  
Whose invitation – Yours reduced  
Until it showed too small –

c. 1862

1929

465

I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –  
The Stillness in the Room  
Was like the Stillness in the Air –  
Between the Heaves of Storm –

The Eyes around – had wrung them dry –  
And Breaths were gathering firm

For that last Onset – when the King  
Be witnessed – in the Room –

I willed my Keepsakes – Signed away  
What portion of me be  
Assignable – and then it was  
There interposed a Fly –

With Blue – uncertain stumbling Buzz –  
Between the light – and me –  
And then the Windows failed – and then  
I could not see to see –

c. 1862

1896

466

"Tis little I – could care for Pearls –  
Who own the ample sea –  
Or Brooches – when the Emperor –  
With Rubies – pelteth me –

Or Gold – who am the Prince of Mines –  
Or Diamonds – when have I  
A Diadem to fit a Dome –  
Continual upon me –

c. 1862

1896

467

We do not play on Graves –  
Because there isn't Room –  
Besides – it isn't even – it slants  
And People come –

And put a Flower on it –  
And hang their faces so –  
We're fearing that their Hearts will drop –  
And crush our pretty play –

And so we move as far  
As Enemies – away –

Just looking round to see how far  
It is – Occasionally –

c. 1862

1945

468

The Manner of its Death  
When Certain it must die –  
'Tis deemed a privilege to choose –  
"Twas Major André's Way –

When Choice of Life – is past –  
There yet remains a Love  
Its little Fate to stipulate –

How small in those who live –

The Miracle to tease  
With Babble of the styles –  
How "they are Dying mostly – now" –  
And Customs at "St. James"!

c. 1862

1945

469

The Red – Blaze – is the Morning –  
The Violet – is Noon –  
The Yellow – Day – is falling –  
And after that – is none –

But Miles of Sparks – at Evening –  
Reveal the Width that burned –  
The Territory Argent – that  
Never yet – consumed –

c. 1862

1945

470

I am alive – I guess –  
The Branches on my Hand

Are full of Morning Glory –  
And at my finger's end –

The Carmine – tingles warm –  
And if I hold a Glass  
Across my Mouth – it blurs it –  
Physician's – proof of Breath –

I am alive – because  
I am not in a Room –  
The Parlor – Commonly – it is –  
So Visitors may come –

And lean – and view it sidewise –  
And add "How cold – it grew" –  
And "Was it conscious – when it stepped  
In Immortality?"

I am alive – because  
I do not own a House –  
Entitled to myself – precise –  
And fitting no one else –

And marked my Girlhood's name –  
So Visitors may know  
Which Door is mine – and not mistake –  
And try another Key –

How good – to be alive!  
How infinite – to be  
Alive – two-fold – The Birth I had –  
And this – besides, in – Thee!

c. 1862

1945

471

A Night – there lay the Days between –  
The Day that was Before –  
And Day that was Behind – were one –  
And now – 'twas Night – was here –

Slow – Night – that must be watched away –  
As Grains upon a shore –

Too imperceptible to note –  
Till it be night – no more –

c. 1862

1945

472

Except the Heaven had come so near –  
So seemed to choose My Door –  
The Distance would not haunt me so –  
I had not hoped – before –

But just to hear the Grace depart –  
I never thought to see –  
Afflicts me with a Double loss –  
'Tis lost – And lost to me –

c. 1862

1891

473

I am ashamed – I hide –  
What right have I – to be a Bride –  
So late a Dowerless Girl –  
Nowhere to hide my dazzled Face –  
No one to teach me that new Grace –  
Nor introduce – my Soul –

Me to adorn – How – tell –  
Trinket – to make Me beautiful –  
Fabrics of Cashmere –  
Never a Gown of Dun – more –  
Raiment instead – of Pompadour –  
For Me – My soul – to wear –

Fingers – to frame my Round Hair  
Oval – as Feudal Ladies wore –  
Far Fashions – Fair –  
Skill – to hold my Brow like an Earl –  
Plead – like a Whippoorwill –  
Prove – like a Pearl –  
Then, for Character –

Fashion My Spirit quaint – white –  
Quick – like a Liquor –  
Gay – like Light –  
Bring Me my best Pride –  
No more ashamed –  
No more to hide –  
Meek – let it be – too proud – for Pride –  
Baptized – this Day – A Bride –

c. 1862

1929

474

They put Us far apart –  
As separate as Sea  
And Her unsown Peninsula –  
We signified “These see” –

They took away our Eyes –  
They thwarted Us with Guns –  
“I see Thee” each responded straight  
Through Telegraphic Signs –

With Dungeons – They devised –  
But through their thickest skill –  
And their opaquest Adamant –  
Our Souls saw – just as well –

They summoned Us to die –  
With sweet alacrity  
We stood upon our stapled feet –  
Condemned – but just – to see –

Permission to recant –  
Permission to forget –  
We turned our backs upon the Sun  
For perjury of that –

Not Either – noticed Death –  
Of Paradise – aware –  
Each other’s Face – was all the Disc  
Each other’s setting – saw –

c. 1862

1935

Doom is the House without the Door –  
 'Tis entered from the Sun –  
 And then the Ladder's thrown away,  
 Because Escape – is done –  
  
 'Tis varied by the Dream  
 Of what they do outside –  
 Where Squirrels play – and Berries die –  
 And Hemlocks – bow – to God –

c. 1862

1929

I meant to have but modest needs –  
 Such as Content – and Heaven –  
 Within my income – these could lie  
 And Life and I – keep even –

But since the last – included both –  
 It would suffice my Prayer  
 But just for One – to stipulate –  
 And Grace would grant the Pair –

And so – upon this wise – I prayed –  
 Great Spirit – Give to me  
 A Heaven not so large as Yours,  
 But large enough – for me –

A Smile suffused Jehovah's face –  
 The Cherubim – withdrew –  
 Grave Saints stole out to look at me –  
 And showed their dimples – too –

I left the Place, with all my might –  
 I threw my Prayer away –  
 The Quiet Ages picked it up –  
 And Judgment – twinkled – too –  
 That one so honest – be extant –  
 It take the Tale for true –

That "Whatsoever Ye shall ask –  
Itself be given You" –

But I, grown shrewder – scan the Skies  
With a suspicious Air –  
As Children – swindled for the first  
All Swindlers – be – infer –

c. 1862

1891

477

No Man can compass a Despair –  
As round a Goalless Road  
No faster than a Mile at once  
The Traveller proceed –

Unconscious of the Width –  
Unconscious that the Sun  
Be setting on His progress –  
So accurate the One

At estimating Pain –  
Whose own – has just begun –  
His ignorance – the Angel  
That pilot Him along –

c. 1862

1935

478

I had no time to Hate –  
Because  
The Grave would hinder Me –  
And Life was not so  
Ample I  
Could finish – Enmity –

Nor had I time to Love –  
But since  
Some Industry must be –

[ 230 ]

The little Toil of Love –  
I thought  
Be large enough for Me –

c. 1862

1890

479

She dealt her pretty words like Blades –  
How glittering they shone –  
And every One unbared a Nerve  
Or wantoned with a Bone –

She never deemed – she hurt –  
That – is not Steel’s Affair –  
A vulgar grimace in the Flesh –  
How ill the Creatures bear –

To Ache is human – not polite –  
The Film upon the eye  
Mortality’s old Custom –  
Just locking up – to Die.

c. 1862

1929

480

“Why do I love” You, Sir?  
Because –  
The Wind does not require the Grass  
To answer – Wherefore when He pass  
She cannot keep Her place.

Because He knows – and  
Do not You –  
And We know not –  
Enough for Us  
The Wisdom it be so –

The Lightning – never asked an Eye  
Wherefore it shut – when He was by –  
Because He knows it cannot speak –  
And reasons not contained –

-Of Talk -

There be - preferred by Daintier Folk -

The Sunrise - Sir - compelleth Me -

Because He's Sunrise - and I see -

Therefore - Then -

I love Thee -

c. 1862

1929

481

The Himmaleh was known to stoop

Unto the Daisy low -

Transported with Compassion

That such a Doll should grow

Where Tent by Tent - Her Universe

Hung out its Flags of Snow -

c. 1862

1935

482

We Cover Thee - Sweet Face -

Not that We tire of Thee -

But that Thyself fatigue of Us -

Remember - as Thou go -

We follow Thee until

Thou notice Us - no more -

And then - reluctant - turn away

To Con Thee o'er and o'er -

And blame the scanty love

We were Content to show -

Augmented - Sweet - a Hundred fold -

If Thou would'st take it - now -

c. 1862

1896

483

A Solemn thing within the Soul

To feel itself get ripe -

And golden hang – while farther up –  
The Maker’s Ladders stop –  
And in the Orchard far below –  
You hear a Being – drop –

A Wonderful – to feel the Sun  
Still toiling at the Cheek  
You thought was finished –  
Cool of eye, and critical of Work –  
He shifts the stem – a little –  
To give your Core – a look –

But solemnest – to know  
Your chance in Harvest moves  
A little nearer – Every Sun  
The Single – to some lives.

c. 1862

1945

484

My Garden – like the Beach –  
Denotes there be – a Sea –  
That’s Summer –  
Such as These – the Pearls  
She fetches – such as Me

c. 1862

1935

485

To make One’s Toilette – after Death  
Has made the Toilette cool  
Of only Taste we cared to please  
Is difficult, and still –

That’s easier – than Braid the Hair –  
And make the Bodice gay –  
When eyes that fondled it are wrenched  
By Decalogues – away –

c. 1862

1935

I was the slightest in the House –  
 I took the smallest Room –  
 At night, my little Lamp, and Book –  
 And one Geranium –

So stationed I could catch the Mint  
 That never ceased to fall –  
 And just my Basket –  
 Let me think – I’m sure  
 That this was all –

I never spoke – unless addressed –  
 And then, ’twas brief and low –  
 I could not bear to live – aloud –  
 The Racket shamed me so –

And if it had not been so far –  
 And any one I knew  
 Were going – I had often thought  
 How noteless – I could die –

c. 1862

1945

You love the Lord – you cannot see –  
 You write Him – every day –  
 A little note – when you awake –  
 And further in the Day.

An Ample Letter – How you miss –  
 And would delight to see –  
 But then His House – is but a Step –  
 And Mine’s – in Heaven – You see.

c. 1862

1945

Myself was formed – a Carpenter –  
 An unpretending time

My Plane – and I, together wrought  
Before a Builder came –

To measure our attainments –  
Had we the Art of Boards  
Sufficiently developed – He'd hire us  
At Halves –

My Tools took Human – Faces –  
The Bench, where we had toiled –  
Against the Man – persuaded –  
We – Temples build – I said –

c. 1862

1935

489

We pray – to Heaven –  
We prate – of Heaven –  
Relate – when Neighbors die –  
At what o'clock to Heaven – they fled –  
Who saw them – Wherfore fly?

Is Heaven a Place – a Sky – a Tree?  
Location's narrow way is for Ourselves –  
Unto the Dead  
There's no Geography –

But State – Endowal – Focus –  
Where – Omnipresence – fly?

c. 1862

1929

490

To One denied to drink  
To tell what Water is  
Would be acuter, would it not  
Than letting Him surmise?

To lead Him to the Well  
And let Him hear it drip

Remind Him, would it not, somewhat  
Of His condemned lip?

c. 1862

1945

491

While it is alive  
Until Death touches it  
While it and I lap one Air  
Dwell in one Blood  
Under one Sacrament  
Show me Division can split or pare –  
  
Love is like Life – merely longer  
Love is like Death, during the Grave  
Love is the Fellow of the Resurrection  
Scooping up the Dust and chanting “Live”!

c. 1862

1945

492

Civilization – spurns – the Leopard!  
Was the Leopard – bold?  
Deserts – never rebuked her Satin –  
Ethiop – her Gold –  
Tawny – her Customs –  
She was Conscious –  
Spotted – her Dun Gown –  
This was the Leopard’s nature – Signor –  
Need – a keeper – frown?  
  
Pity – the Pard – that left her Asia –  
Memories – of Palm –  
Cannot be stifled – with Narcotic –  
Nor suppressed – with Balm –

c. 1862

1945

The World – stands – solemnner – to me –  
 Since I was wed – to Him –  
 A modesty befits the soul  
 That bears another's – name –  
 A doubt – if it be fair – indeed –  
 To wear that perfect – pearl –  
 The Man – upon the Woman – binds –  
 To clasp her soul – for all –  
 A prayer, that it more angel – prove –  
 A whiter Gift – within –  
 To that munificence, that chose –  
 So unadorned – a Queen –  
 A Gratitude – that such be true –  
 It had esteemed the Dream –  
 Too beautiful – for Shape to prove –  
 Or posture – to redeem!

c. 1862

1945

Going to Him! Happy letter!  
 Tell Him –  
 Tell Him the page I didn't write –  
 Tell Him – I only said the Syntax –  
 And left the Verb and the pronoun out –  
 Tell Him just how the fingers hurried –  
 Then – how they waded – slow – slow –  
 And then you wished you had eyes in your pages –  
 So you could see what moved them so –

Tell Him – it wasn't a Practised Writer –  
 You guessed – from the way the sentence toiled –  
 You could hear the Bodice tug, behind you –  
 As if it held but the might of a child –  
 You almost pitied it – you – it worked so –  
 Tell Him – no – you may quibble there –  
 For it would split His Heart, to know it –  
 And then you and I, were silenter.

Tell Him – Night finished – before we finished –  
And the Old Clock kept neighing “Day”!  
And you – got sleepy – and begged to be ended –  
What could it hinder so – to say?  
Tell Him – just how she sealed you – Cautious!  
But – if He ask where you are hid  
Until tomorrow – Happy letter!  
Gesture Coquette – and shake your Head!

*Version I*

c. 1862

1891

Going – to – Her!  
Happy – Letter! Tell Her –  
Tell Her – the page I never wrote!  
Tell Her, I only said – the Syntax –  
And left the Verb and the Pronoun – out!  
Tell Her just how the fingers – hurried –  
Then – how they – stammered – slow – slow –  
And then – you wished you had eyes – in your pages –  
So you could see – what moved – them – so –

Tell Her – it wasn’t a practised writer –  
You guessed –  
From the way the sentence – toiled –  
You could hear the Bodice – tug – behind you –  
As if it held but the might of a child!  
You almost pitied – it – you – it worked so –  
Tell Her – No – you may quibble – there –  
For it would split Her Heart – to know it –  
And then – you and I – were silenter!

Tell Her – Day – finished – before we – finished –  
And the old Clock kept neighing – “Day”!  
And you – got sleepy – and begged to be ended –  
What could – it hinder so – to say?  
Tell Her – just how she sealed – you – Cautious!  
But – if she ask “where you are hid” – until the evening –  
Ah! Be bashful!

Gesture Coquette –  
And shake your Head!

*Version II*

c. 1862

1955

495

It's thoughts – and just One Heart –  
And Old Sunshine – about –  
Make frugal – Ones – Content –  
And two or three – for Company –  
Upon a Holiday –  
Crowded – as Sacrament –

Books – when the Unit –  
Spare the Tenant – long eno' –  
A Picture – if it Care –  
Itself – a Gallery too rare –  
For needing more –

Flowers – to keep the Eyes – from going awkward –  
When it snows –  
A Bird – if they – prefer –  
Though Winter fire – sing clear as Plover –  
To our – ear –

A Landscape – not so great  
To suffocate the Eye –  
A Hill – perhaps –  
Perhaps – the profile of a Mill  
Turned by the Wind –  
Tho' *such* – are *luxuries* –

It's thoughts – and just two Heart –  
And Heaven – about –  
At least – a Counterfeit –  
We would not have Correct –  
And Immortality – can be almost –  
Not quite – Content –

c. 1862

1935

As far from pity, as complaint –  
 As cool to speech – as stone –  
 As numb to Revelation  
 As if my Trade were Bone –

As far from Time – as History –  
 As near yourself – Today –  
 As Children, to the Rainbow's scarf –  
 Or Sunset's Yellow play

To eyelids in the Sepulchre –  
 How dumb the Dancer lies –  
 While Color's Revelations break –  
 And blaze – the Butterflies!

c. 1862

1896

He strained my faith –  
 Did he find it supple?  
 Shook my strong trust –  
 Did it then – yield?

Hurled my belief –  
 But – did he shatter – it?  
 Racked – with suspense –  
 Not a nerve failed!

Wrung me – with Anguish –  
 But I never doubted him –  
 'Tho' for what wrong  
 He did never say –

Stabbed – while I sued  
 His sweet forgiveness –  
 Jesus – it's your little "John"!  
 Don't you know – me?

c. 1862

1945

I envy Seas, whereon He rides –  
 I envy Spokes of Wheels  
 Of Chariots, that Him convey –  
 I envy Crooked Hills

That gaze upon His journey –  
 How easy All can see  
 What is forbidden utterly  
 As Heaven – unto me!

I envy Nests of Sparrows –  
 That dot His distant Eaves –  
 The wealthy Fly, upon His Pane –  
 The happy – happy Leaves –

That just abroad His Window  
 Have Summer's leave to play –  
 The Ear Rings of Pizarro  
 Could not obtain for me –

I envy Light – that wakes Him –  
 And Bells – that boldly ring  
 To tell Him it is Noon, abroad –  
 Myself – be Noon to Him –

Yet interdict – my Blossom –  
 And abrogate – my Bee –  
 Lest Noon in Everlasting Night –  
 Drop Gabriel – and Me –

c. 1862

1896

Those fair – fictitious People –  
 The Women – plucked away  
 From our familiar Lifetime –  
 The Men of Ivory –

Those Boys and Girls, in Canvas –  
 Who stay upon the Wall

In Everlasting Keepsake –  
Can Anybody tell?

We trust – in places perfecter –  
Inheriting Delight  
Beyond our faint Conjecture –  
Our dizzy Estimate –

Remembering ourselves, we trust –  
Yet Blesseder – than We –  
Through Knowing – where We only hope –  
Receiving – where we – pray –

Of Expectation – also –  
Anticipating us  
With transport, that would be a pain  
Except for Holiness –

Esteeming us – as Exile –  
Themself – admitted Home –  
Through easy Miracle of Death –  
The Way ourself, must come –

c. 1862

1929

500

Within my Garden, rides a Bird  
Upon a single Wheel –  
Whose spokes a dizzy Music make  
As 'twere a travelling Mill –

He never stops, but slackens  
Above the Ripest Rose –  
Partakes without alighting  
And praises as he goes,

Till every spice is tasted –  
And then his Fairy Gig  
Reels in remoter atmospheres –  
And I rejoin my Dog,

And He and I, perplex us  
If positive, 'twere we –

Or bore the Garden in the Brain  
This Curiosity –

But He, the best Logician,  
Refers my clumsy eye –  
To just vibrating Blossoms!  
An Exquisite Reply!

c. 1862

1929

501

This World is not Conclusion.  
A Species stands beyond –  
Invisible, as Music –  
But positive, as Sound –  
It beckons, and it baffles –  
Philosophy – don't know –  
And through a Riddle, at the last –  
Sagacity, must go –  
To guess it, puzzles scholars –  
To gain it, Men have borne  
Contempt of Generations  
And Crucifixion, shown –  
Faith slips – and laughs, and rallies –  
Blushes, if any see –  
Plucks at a twig of Evidence –  
And asks a Vane, the way –  
Much Gesture, from the Pulpit –  
Strong Hallelujahs, roll –  
Narcotics cannot still the Tooth  
That nibbles at the soul –

c. 1862

1896

502

At least – to pray – is left – is left –  
Oh Jesus – in the Air –  
I know not which thy chamber is –  
I'm knocking – everywhere –

Thou settest Earthquake in the South –  
And Maelstrom, in the Sea –  
Say, Jesus Christ of Nazareth –  
Hast thou no Arm for Me?

c. 1862

1891

503

Better – than Music! For I – who heard it –  
I was used – to the Birds – before –  
This – was different – 'Twas Translation –  
Of all tunes I knew – and more –

'Twasn't contained – like other stanza –  
No one could play it – the second time –  
But the Composer – perfect Mozart –  
Perish with him – that Keyless Rhyme!

So – Children – told how Brooks in Eden –  
Bubbled a better – Melody –  
Quaintly infer – Eve's great surrender –  
Urging the feet – that would – not – fly –

Children – matured – are wiser – mostly –  
Eden – a legend – dimly told –  
Eve – and the Anguish – Grandame's story –  
But – I was telling a tune – I heard –

Not such a strain – the Church – baptizes –  
When the last Saint – goes up the Aisles –  
Not such a stanza splits the silence –  
When the Redemption strikes her Bells –

Let me not spill – its smallest cadence –  
Humming – for promise – when alone –  
Humming – until my faint Rehearsal –  
Drop into tune – around the Throne –

c. 1862

1945

You know that Portrait in the Moon –  
 So tell me who 'tis like –  
 The very Brow – the stooping eyes –  
 A-fog for – Say – Whose Sake?

The very Pattern of the Cheek –  
 It varies – in the Chin –  
 But – Ishmael – since we met – 'tis long –  
 And fashions – intervene –

When Moon's at full – 'Tis Thou – I say –  
 My lips just hold the name –  
 When crescent – Thou art worn – I note –  
 But – there – the Golden Same –

And when – Some Night – Bold – slashing Clouds  
 Cut Thee away from Me –  
 That's easier – than the other film  
 That glazes Holiday –

c. 1862

1935

I would not paint – a picture –  
 I'd rather be the One  
 Its bright impossibility  
 To dwell – delicious – on –  
 And wonder how the fingers feel  
 Whose rare – celestial – stir –  
 Evokes so sweet a Torment –  
 Such sumptuous – Despair –

I would not talk, like Cornets –  
 I'd rather be the One  
 Raised softly to the Ceilings –  
 And out, and easy on –  
 Through Villages of Ether –  
 Myself endued Balloon  
 By but a lip of Metal –  
 The pier to my Pontoon –

Nor would I be a Poet –  
It's finer – own the Ear –  
Enamored – impotent – content –  
The License to revere,  
A privilege so awful  
What would the Dower be,  
Had I the Art to stun myself  
With Bolts of Melody!

c. 1862

1945

506

He touched me, so I live to know  
That such a day, permitted so,  
I groped upon his breast –  
It was a boundless place to me  
And silenced, as the awful sea  
Puts minor streams to rest.

And now, I'm different from before,  
As if I breathed superior air –  
Or brushed a Royal Gown –  
My feet, too, that had wandered so –  
My Gypsy face – transfigured now –  
To tenderer Renown –

Into this Port, if I might come,  
Rebecca, to Jerusalem,  
Would not so ravished turn –  
Nor Persian, baffled at her shrine  
Lift such a Crucifixal sign  
To her imperial Sun.

c. 1862

1896

507

She sights a Bird – she chuckles –  
She flattens – then she crawls –  
She runs without the look of feet –  
Her eyes increase to Balls –

Her Jaws stir – twitching – hungry –  
Her Teeth can hardly stand –  
She leaps, but Robin leaped the first –  
Ah, Pussy, of the Sand,

The Hopes so juicy ripening –  
You almost bathed your Tongue –  
When Bliss disclosed a hundred Toes –  
And fled with every one –

c. 1862

1945

508

I'm ceded – I've stopped being Theirs –  
The name They dropped upon my face  
With water, in the country church  
Is finished using, now,  
And They can put it with my Dolls,  
My childhood, and the string of spools,  
I've finished threading – too –

Baptized, before, without the choice,  
But this time, consciously, of Grace –  
Unto supremest name –  
Called to my Full – The Crescent dropped –  
Existence's whole Arc, filled up,  
With one small Diadem.

My second Rank – too small the first –  
Crowned – Crowning – on my Father's breast –  
A half unconscious Queen –  
But this time – Adequate – Erect,  
With Will to choose, or to reject,  
And I choose, just a Crown –

c. 1862

1890

509

If anybody's friend be dead  
It's sharpest of the theme

The thinking how they walked alive –  
At such and such a time –

Their costume, of a Sunday,  
Some manner of the Hair –

A prank nobody knew but them  
Lost, in the Sepulchre –

How warm, they were, on such a day,  
You almost feel the date –

So short way off it seems –

And now – they're Centuries from that –

How pleased they were, at what you said –  
You try to touch the smile

And dip your fingers in the frost –

When was it – Can you tell –

You asked the Company to tea –  
Acquaintance – just a few –

And chatted close with this Grand Thing  
That don't remember you –

Past Bows, and Invitations –

Past Interview, and Vow –

Past what Ourselves can estimate –

That – makes the Quick of Woe!

c. 1862

1891

510

It was not Death, for I stood up,  
And all the Dead, lie down –

It was not Night, for all the Bells  
Put out their Tongues, for Noon.

It was not Frost, for on my Flesh  
I felt Siroccos – crawl –

Nor Fire – for just my Marble feet  
Could keep a Chancel, cool –

And yet, it tasted, like them all,  
The Figures I have seen

Set orderly, for Burial,  
Reminded me, of mine –

As if my life were shaven,  
And fitted to a frame,  
And could not breathe without a key,  
And 'twas like Midnight, some –

When everything that ticked – has stopped –  
And Space stares all around –

Or Grisly frosts – first Autumn morns,  
Repeal the Beating Ground –

But, most, like Chaos – Stopless – cool –  
Without a Chance, or Spar –

Or even a Report of Land –  
To justify – Despair.

c. 1862

1891

511

If you were coming in the Fall,  
I'd brush the Summer by  
With half a smile, and half a spurn,  
As Housewives do, a Fly.

If I could see you in a year,  
I'd wind the months in balls –  
And put them each in separate Drawers,  
For fear the numbers fuse –

If only Centuries, delayed,  
I'd count them on my Hand,  
Subtracting, till my fingers dropped  
Into Van Dieman's Land.

If certain, when this life was out –  
That yours and mine, should be  
I'd toss it yonder, like a Rind,  
And take Eternity –

But, now, uncertain of the length  
Of this, that is between,

It goads me, like the Goblin Bee –  
That will not state – its sting.

c. 1862

1890

512

The Soul has Bandaged moments –  
When too appalled to stir –  
She feels some ghastly Fright come up  
And stop to look at her –

Salute her – with long fingers –  
Caress her freezing hair –  
Sip, Goblin, from the very lips  
The Lover – hovered – o'er –  
Unworthy, that a thought so mean  
Accost a Theme – so – fair –

The soul has moments of Escape –  
When bursting all the doors –  
She dances like a Bomb, abroad,  
And swings upon the Hours,

As do the Bee – delirious borne –  
Long Dungeoned from his Rose –  
Touch Liberty – then know no more,  
But Noon, and Paradise –

The Soul's retaken moments –  
When, Felon led along,  
With shackles on the plumed feet,  
And staples, in the Song,

The Horror welcomes her, again,  
These, are not brayed of Tongue –

c. 1862

1945

513

Like Flowers, that heard the news of Dews,  
But never deemed the dripping prize  
Awaited their – low Brows –

Or Bees – that thought the Summer's name  
Some rumor of Delirium,  
No Summer – could – for Them –

Or Arctic Creatures, dimly stirred –  
By Tropic Hint – some Travelled Bird  
Imported to the Wood –

Or Wind's bright signal to the Ear –  
Making that homely, and severe,  
Contented, known, before –

The Heaven – unexpected come,  
To Lives that thought the Worshipping  
A too presumptuous Psalm –

c. 1862

1890

514

Her smile was shaped like other smiles –  
The Dimples ran along –  
And still it hurt you, as some Bird  
Did hoist herself, to sing,  
Then recollect a Ball, she got –  
And hold upon the Twig,  
Convulsive, while the Music broke –  
Like Beads – among the Bog –

c. 1862

1935

515

No Crowd that has occurred  
Exhibit – I suppose  
That General Attendance  
That Resurrection – does –  
  
Circumference be full –  
The long restricted Grave  
Assert her Vital Privilege –  
The Dust – connect – and live –

On Atoms – features place –  
All Multitudes that were  
Efface in the Comparison –  
As Suns – dissolve a star –

Solemnity – prevail –  
Its Individual Doom  
Possess each separate Consciousness –  
August – Absorbed – Numb –

What Duplicate – exist –  
What Parallel can be –  
Of the Significance of This –  
To Universe – and Me?

c. 1862

1929

516

Beauty – be not caused – It Is –  
Chase it, and it ceases –  
Chase it not, and it abides –

Overtake the Creases

In the Meadow – when the Wind  
Runs his fingers thro' it –  
Deity will see to it  
That You never do it –

c. 1862

1929

517

He parts Himself – like Leaves –  
And then – He closes up –  
Then stands upon the Bonnet  
Of Any Buttercup –

And then He runs against  
And oversets a Rose –  
And then does Nothing –  
Then away upon a Jib – He goes –

And dangles like a Mote  
Suspended in the Noon –  
Uncertain – to return Below –  
Or settle in the Moon –

What come of Him – at Night –  
The privilege to say  
Be limited by Ignorance –  
What come of Him – That Day –

The Frost – possess the World –  
In Cabinets – be shown –  
A Sepulchre of quaintest Floss –  
An Abbey – a Cocoon –

c. 1862

1935

518

Her sweet Weight on my Heart a Night  
Had scarcely deigned to lie –  
When, stirring, for Belief's delight,  
My Bride had slipped away –

If 'twas a Dream – made solid – just  
The Heaven to confirm –  
Or if Myself were dreamed of Her –  
The power to presume –

With Him remain – who unto Me –  
Gave – even as to All –  
A Fiction superseding Faith –  
By so much – as 'twas real –

c. 1862

1945

519

"Twas warm – at first – like Us –  
Until there crept upon  
A Chill – like frost upon a Glass –  
Till all the scene – be gone.

The Forehead copied Stone –  
The Fingers grew too cold  
To ache – and like a Skater’s Brook –  
The busy eyes – congealed –

It straightened – that was all –  
It crowded Cold to Cold –  
It multiplied indifference –  
As Pride were all it could –

And even when with Cords –  
‘Twas lowered, like a Weight –  
It made no Signal, nor demurred,  
But dropped like Adamant.

c. 1862

1929

520

I started Early – Took my Dog –  
And visited the Sea –  
The Mermaids in the Basement  
Came out to look at me –

And Frigates – in the Upper Floor  
Extended Hempen Hands –  
Presuming Me to be a Mouse –  
Aground – upon the Sands –

But no Man moved Me – till the Tide  
Went past my simple Shoe –  
And past my Apron – and my Belt  
And past my Bodice – too –

And made as He would eat me up –  
As wholly as a Dew  
Upon a Dandelion’s Sleeve –  
And then – I started – too –

And He – He followed – close behind –  
I felt His Silver Heel  
Upon my Ankle – Then my Shoes  
Would overflow with Pearl –

Until We met the Solid Town –  
No One He seemed to know –  
And bowing – with a Mighty look –  
At me – The Sea withdrew –

c. 1862

1891

521

Endow the Living – with the Tears –  
You squander on the Dead,  
And They were Men and Women – now,  
Around Your Fireside –

Instead of Passive Creatures,  
Denied the Cherishing  
Till They – the Cherishing deny –  
With Death's Ethereal Scorn –

c. 1862

1945

522

Had I presumed to hope –  
The loss had been to Me  
A Value – for the Greatness' Sake –  
As Giants – gone away –

Had I presumed to gain  
A Favor so remote –  
The failure but confirm the Grace  
In further Infinite –

'Tis failure – not of Hope –  
But Confident Despair –  
Advancing on Celestial Lists –  
With faint – Terrestrial power –

'Tis Honor – though I die –  
For That no Man obtain  
Till He be justified by Death –  
This – is the Second Gain –

c. 1862

1929

## 523

Sweet – You forgot – but I remembered  
 Every time – for Two –  
 So that the Sum be never hindered  
 Through Decay of You –

Say if I erred? Accuse my Farthings –  
 Blame the little Hand  
 Happy it be for You – a Beggar's –  
 Seeking More – to spend –

Just to be Rich – to waste my Guineas  
 On so Best a Heart –  
 Just to be Poor – for Barefoot Vision  
 You – Sweet – Shut me out –

c. 1862

1945

## 524

Departed – to the Judgment –  
 A Mighty Afternoon –  
 Great Clouds – like Ushers – leaning –  
 Creation – looking on –

The Flesh – Surrendered – Cancelled –  
 The Bodiless – begun –  
 Two Worlds – like Audiences – disperse –  
 And leave the Soul – alone –

c. 1862

1890

## 525

I think the Hemlock likes to stand  
 Upon a Marge of Snow –  
 It suits his own Austerity –  
 And satisfies an awe

That men, must slake in Wilderness –  
 And in the Desert – cloy –  
 An instinct for the Hoar, the Bald –  
 Lapland's – necessity –

The Hemlock's nature thrives – on cold –  
The Gnash of Northern winds  
Is sweetest nutriment – to him –  
His best Norwegian Wines –

To satin Races – he is nought –  
But Children on the Don,  
Beneath his Tabernacles, play,  
And Dnieper Wrestlers, run.

c. 1862

1890

526

To hear an Oriole sing  
May be a common thing –  
Or only a divine.

It is not of the Bird  
Who sings the same, unheard,  
As unto Crowd –

The Fashion of the Ear  
Attireth that it hear  
In Dun, or fair –

So whether it be Rune,  
Or whether it be none  
Is of within.

The “Tune is in the Tree –”  
The Skeptic – showeth me –  
“No Sir! In Thee!”

c. 1862

1891

527

To put this World down, like a Bundle –  
And walk steady, away,  
Requires Energy – possibly Agony –  
’Tis the Scarlet way

Trodden with straight renunciation  
By the Son of God –

Later, his faint Confederates  
Justify the Road –

Flavors of that old Crucifixion –  
Filaments of Bloom, Pontius Pilate sowed –  
Strong Clusters, from Barabbas' Tomb –

Sacrament, Saints partook before us –  
Patent, every drop,  
With the Brand of the Gentile Drinker  
Who indorsed the Cup –

c. 1862

1935

### 528

Mine – by the Right of the White Election!  
Mine – by the Royal Seal!  
Mine – by the Sign in the Scarlet prison –  
Bars – cannot conceal!

Mine – here – in Vision – and in Veto!  
Mine – by the Grave's Repeal –  
Titled – Confirmed –  
Delirious Charter!  
Mine – long as Ages steal!

c. 1862

1890

### 529

I'm sorry for the Dead – Today –  
It's such congenial times  
Old Neighbors have at fences –  
It's time o' year for Hay.

And Broad – Sunburned Acquaintance  
Discourse between the Toil –  
And laugh, a homely species  
That makes the Fences smile –

It seems so straight to lie away  
From all the noise of Fields –

The Busy Carts – the fragrant Cocks –  
The Mower’s Metre – Steals

A Trouble lest they’re homesick –  
Those Farmers – and their Wives –  
Set separate from the Farming –  
And all the Neighbors’ lives –

A Wonder if the Sepulchre  
Don’t feel a lonesome way –  
When Men – and Boys – and Carts – and June,  
Go down the Fields to “Hay” –

c. 1862

1929

530

You cannot put a Fire out –  
A Thing that can ignite  
Can go, itself, without a Fan –  
Upon the slowest Night –

You cannot fold a Flood –  
And put it in a Drawer –  
Because the Winds would find it out –  
And tell your Cedar Floor –

c. 1862

1896

531

We dream – it is good we are dreaming –  
It would hurt us – were we awake –  
But since it is playing – kill us,  
And we are playing – shriek –

What harm? Men die – externally –  
It is a truth – of Blood –  
But we – are dying in Drama –  
And Drama – is never dead –

Cautious – We jar each other –  
And either – open the eyes –

Lest the Phantasm – prove the Mistake –  
And the livid Surprise

Cool us to Shafts of Granite –  
With just an Age – and Name –  
And perhaps a phrase in Egyptian –  
It's prudenter – to dream –

c. 1862

1935

532

I tried to think a lonelier Thing  
Than any I had seen –  
Some Polar Expiation – An Omen in the Bone  
Of Death's tremendous nearness –

I probed Retrieveless things  
My Duplicate – to borrow –  
A Haggard Comfort springs

From the belief that Somewhere –  
Within the Clutch of Thought –  
There dwells one other Creature  
Of Heavenly Love – forgot –

I plucked at our Partition  
As One should pry the Walls –  
Between Himself – and Horror's Twin –  
Within Opposing Cells –

I almost strove to clasp his Hand,  
Such Luxury – it grew –  
That as Myself – could pity Him –  
Perhaps he – pitied me –

c. 1862

1945

533

Two Butterflies went out at Noon –  
And waltzed upon a Farm –  
Then stepped straight through the Firmament  
And rested, on a Beam –

And then – together bore away  
Upon a shining Sea –  
Though never yet, in any Port –  
Their coming, mentioned – be –

If spoken by the distant Bird –  
If met in Ether Sea  
By Frigate, or by Merchantman –  
No notice – was – to me –

c. 1862

1891

534

We see – Comparatively –  
The Thing so towering high  
We could not grasp its segment  
Unaided – Yesterday –

This Morning's finer Verdict –  
Makes scarcely worth the toil –  
A furrow – Our Cordillera –  
Our Apennine – a Knoll –

Perhaps 'tis kindly – done us –  
The Anguish – and the loss –  
The wrenching – for His Firmament  
The Thing belonged to us –

To spare these Striding Spirits  
Some Morning of Chagrin –  
The waking in a Gnat's – embrace –  
Our Giants – further on –

c. 1862

1929

535

She's happy, with a new Content –  
That feels to her – like Sacrament –  
She's busy – with an altered Care –  
As just apprenticed to the Air –

She's tearful – if she weep at all –  
For blissful Causes – Most of all  
That Heaven permit so meek as her –  
To such a Fate – to Minister.

c. 1862

1935

536

The Heart asks Pleasure – first –  
And then – Excuse from Pain –  
And then – those little Anodynes  
That deaden suffering –  
  
And then – to go to sleep –  
And then – if it should be  
The will of its Inquisitor  
The privilege to die –

c. 1862

1890

537

Me prove it now – Whoever doubt  
Me stop to prove it – now –  
Make haste – the Scruple! Death be scant  
For Opportunity –

The River reaches to my feet –  
As yet – My Heart be dry –  
Oh Lover – Life could not convince –  
Might Death – enable Thee –

The River reaches to My Breast –  
Still – still – My Hands above  
Proclaim with their remaining Might –  
Dost recognize the Love?

The River reaches to my Mouth –  
Remember – when the Sea  
Swept by my searching eyes – the last –  
Themselves were quick – with Thee!

c. 1862

1935

'Tis true - They shut me in the Cold -  
 But then - Themselves were warm  
 And could not know the feeling 'twas -  
 Forget it - Lord - of Them -

Let not my Witness hinder Them  
 In Heavenly esteem -  
 No Paradise could be - Conferred  
 Through Their beloved Blame -

The Harm They did - was short - And since  
 Myself - who bore it - do -  
 Forgive Them - Even as Myself -  
 Or else - forgive not me -

c. 1862

1945

The Province of the Saved  
 Should be the Art - To save -  
 Through Skill obtained in Themselves -  
 The Science of the Grave

No Man can understand  
 But He that hath endured  
 The Dissolution - in Himself -  
 That Man - be qualified

To qualify Despair  
 To Those who failing new -  
 Mistake Defeat for Death - Each time -  
 Till acclimated - to -

c. 1862

1935

I took my Power in my Hand -  
 And went against the World -  
 'Twas not so much as David - had -  
 But I - was twice as bold -

I aimed my Pebble – but Myself  
Was all the one that fell –  
Was it Goliah – was too large –  
Or was myself – too small?

c. 1862

1891

541

Some such Butterfly be seen  
On Brazilian Pampas –  
Just at noon – no later – Sweet –  
Then – the License closes –

Some such Spice – express and pass –  
Subject to Your Plucking –  
As the Stars – You knew last Night –  
Foreigners – This Morning –

c. 1862

1935

542

I had no Cause to be awake –  
My Best – was gone to sleep –  
And Morn a new politeness took –  
And failed to wake them up –

But called the others – clear –  
And passed their Curtains by –  
Sweet Morning – When I oversleep –  
Knock – Recollect – to Me –

I looked at Sunrise – Once –  
And then I looked at Them –  
And wishfulness in me arose –  
For Circumstance the same –

'Twas such an Ample Peace –  
It could not hold a Sigh –  
'Twas Sabbath – with the Bells divorced –  
'Twas Sunset – all the Day –

So choosing but a Gown –  
And taking but a Prayer –  
The only Raiment I should need –  
I struggled – and was There –

c. 1862

1891

543

I fear a Man of frugal Speech –  
I fear a Silent Man –  
Haranguer – I can overtake –  
Or Babbler – entertain –  
  
But He who weigheth – While the Rest –  
Expend their furthest pound –  
Of this Man – I am wary –  
I fear that He is Grand –

c. 1862

1929

544

The Martyr Poets – did not tell –  
But wrought their Pang in syllable –  
That when their mortal name be numb –  
Their mortal fate – encourage Some –

The Martyr Painters – never spoke –  
Bequeathing – rather – to their Work –  
That when their conscious fingers cease –  
Some seek in Art – the Art of Peace –

c. 1862

1935

545

"Tis One by One – the Father counts –  
And then a Tract between  
Set Cypherless – to teach the Eye  
The Value of its Ten –

Until the peevish Student  
Acquire the Quick of Skill –

'Then Numerals are dowered back –  
Adorning all the Rule –

"Tis mostly Slate and Pencil –  
And Darkness on the School  
Distracts the Children's fingers –  
Still the Eternal Rule

Regards least Cypherer alike  
With Leader of the Band –  
And every separate Urchin's Sum –  
Is fashioned for his hand –

c. 1862

1945

546

To fill a Gap  
Insert the Thing that caused it –  
Block it up  
With Other – and 'twill yawn the more –  
You cannot solder an Abyss  
With Air.

c. 1862

1929

547

I've seen a Dying Eye  
Run round and round a Room –  
In search of Something – as it seemed –  
Then Cloudier become –  
And then – obscure with Fog –  
And then – be soldered down  
Without disclosing what it be  
'Twere blessed to have seen –

c. 1862

1890

548

Death is potential to that Man  
Who dies – and to his friend –

Beyond that – unconspicuous  
To Anyone but God –

Of these Two – God remembers  
The longest – for the friend –  
Is integral – and therefore  
Itself dissolved – of God –

c. 1862

1945

549

That I did always love  
I bring thee Proof  
That till I loved  
I never lived – Enough –

That I shall love alway –  
I argue thee  
That love is life –  
And life hath Immortality –

This – dost thou doubt – Sweet –  
Then have I  
Nothing to show  
But Calvary –

c. 1862

1890

550

I cross till I am weary  
A Mountain – in my mind –  
More Mountains – then a Sea –  
More Seas – And then  
A Desert – find –

And My Horizon blocks  
With steady – drifting – Grains  
Of un conjectured quantity –  
As Asiatic Rains –

Nor this – defeat my Pace –  
It hinder from the West

But as an Enemy's Salute  
One hurrying to Rest –  
What merit had the Goal –  
Except there intervene  
Faint Doubt – and far Competitor –  
To jeopardize the Gain?

At last – the Grace in sight –  
I shout unto my feet –  
I offer them the Whole of Heaven  
The instant that we meet –

They strive – and yet delay –  
They perish – Do we die –  
Or is this Death's Experiment –  
Reversed – in Victory?

c. 1862

1935

551

There is a Shame of Nobleness –  
Confronting Sudden Pelf –  
A finer Shame of Ecstasy –  
Convicted of Itself –  
  
A best Disgrace – a Brave Man feels –  
Acknowledged – of the Brave –  
One More – “Ye Blessed” – to be told –  
But that’s – Behind the Grave –

c. 1862

1891

552

An ignorance a Sunset  
Confer upon the Eye –  
Of Territory – Color –  
Circumference – Decay –

Its Amber Revelation  
Exhilarate – Debase –

Omnipotence' inspection  
Of Our inferior face –

And when the solemn features  
Confirm – in Victory –  
We start – as if detected  
In Immortality –

c. 1862

1935

553

One Crucifixion is recorded – only –  
How many be  
Is not affirmed of Mathematics –  
Or History –

One Calvary – exhibited to Stranger –  
As many be  
As persons – or Peninsulas –  
Gethsemane –

Is but a Province – in the Being's Centre –  
Judea –  
For Journey – or Crusade's Achieving –  
Too near –

Our Lord – indeed – made Compound Witness –  
And yet –  
There's newer – nearer Crucifixion  
Than That –

c. 1862

1945

554

The Black Berry – wears a Thorn in his side –  
But no Man heard Him cry –  
He offers His Berry, just the same  
To Partridge – and to Boy –

He sometimes holds upon the Fence –  
Or struggles to a Tree –

Or clasps a Rock, with both His Hands –  
But not for Sympathy –

We – tell a Hurt – to cool it –  
This Mourner – to the Sky  
A little further reaches – instead –  
Brave Black Berry –

c. 1862

1945

555

Trust in the Unexpected –  
By this – was William Kidd  
Persuaded of the Buried Gold –  
As One had testified –

Through this – the old Philosopher –  
His Talismanic Stone  
Discernéd – still withholden  
To effort undivine –

'Twas this – allured Columbus –  
When Genoa – withdrew  
Before an Apparition  
Baptized America –

The Same – afflicted Thomas –  
When Deity assured  
'Twas better – the perceiving not –  
Provided it believed –

c. 1862

1935

556

The Brain, within its Groove  
Runs evenly – and true –  
But let a Splinter swerve –  
'Twere easier for You –

To put a Current back –  
When Floods have slit the Hills –

And scooped a Turnpike for Themselves --  
And trodden out the Mills --

c. 1862

1890

557

She hideth Her the last --  
And is the first, to rise --  
Her Night doth hardly recompense  
The Closing of Her eyes --

She doth Her Purple Work --  
And putteth Her away  
In low Apartments in the Sod --  
As Worthily as We.

To imitate Her life  
As impotent would be  
As make of Our imperfect Mints,  
The Julep -- of the Bee --

c. 1862

1935

558

But little Carmine hath her face --  
Of Emerald scant -- her Gown --  
Her Beauty -- is the love she doth --  
Itself -- exhibit -- Mine --

c. 1862

1935

559

It knew no Medicine --  
It was not Sickness -- then --  
Nor any need of Surgery --  
And therefore -- 'twas not Pain --

It moved away the Cheeks --  
A Dimple at a time --  
And left the Profile -- plainer --  
And in the place of Bloom

It left the little Tint  
That never had a Name –  
You've seen it on a Cast's face –  
Was Paradise – to blame –

If momently ajar –  
Temerity – drew near –  
And sickened – ever afterward  
For Somewhat that it saw?

c. 1862

1935

560

It knew no lapse, nor Diminution –  
But large – serene –  
Burned on – until through Dissolution –  
It failed from Men –

I could not deem these Planetary forces  
Annulled –  
But suffered an Exchange of Territory –  
Or World –

c. 1862

1945

561

I measure every Grief I meet  
With narrow, probing, Eyes –  
I wonder if It weighs like Mine –  
Or has an Easier size.

I wonder if They bore it long –  
Or did it just begin –  
I could not tell the Date of Mine –  
It feels so old a pain –

I wonder if it hurts to live –  
And if They have to try –  
And whether – could They choose between –  
It would not be – to die –

I note that Some – gone patient long –  
At length, renew their smile –  
An imitation of a Light  
That has so little Oil –

I wonder if when Years have piled –  
Some Thousands – on the Harm –  
That hurt them early – such a lapse  
Could give them any Balm –

Or would they go on aching still  
Through Centuries of Nerve –  
Enlightened to a larger Pain –  
In Contrast with the Love –

The Grieved – are many – I am told –  
There is the various Cause –  
Death – is but one – and comes but once –  
And only nails the eyes –

There's Grief of Want – and Grief of Cold –  
A sort they call "Despair" –  
There's Banishment from native Eyes –  
In sight of Native Air –

And though I may not guess the kind –  
Correctly – yet to me  
A piercing Comfort it affords  
In passing Calvary –

To note the fashions – of the Cross –  
And how they're mostly worn –  
Still fascinated to presume  
That Some – are like My Own –

c. 1862

1896

562

Conjecturing a Climate  
Of unsuspended Suns –  
Adds poignancy to Winter –  
The Shivering Fancy turns

[ 273. ]

To a fictitious Country  
To palliate a Cold –  
Not obviated of Degree –  
Nor eased – of Latitude –

c. 1862

1929

563

I could not prove the Years had feet –  
Yet confident they run  
Am I, from symptoms that are past  
And Series that are done –

I find my feet have further Goals –  
I smile upon the Aims  
That felt so ample – Yesterday –  
Today's – have vaster claims –

I do not doubt the self I was  
Was competent to me –  
But something awkward in the fit –  
Proves that – outgrown – I see –

c. 1862

1945

564

My period had come for Prayer –  
No other Art – would do –  
My Tactics missed a rudiment –  
Creator – Was it you?

God grows above – so those who pray  
Horizons – must ascend –  
And so I stepped upon the North  
To see this Curious Friend –

His House was not – no sign had He –  
By Chimney – nor by Door  
Could I infer his Residence –  
Vast Prairies of Air

Unbroken by a Settler –  
Were all that I could see –  
Infinitude – Had'st Thou no Face  
That I might look on Thee?

The Silence condescended –  
Creation stopped – for Me –  
But awed beyond my errand –  
I worshipped – did not “pray” –

c. 1862

1929

565

One Anguish – in a Crowd –  
A Minor thing – it sounds –  
And yet, unto the single Doe  
Attempted of the Hounds

’Tis Terror as consummate  
As Legions of Alarm  
Did leap, full flanked, upon the Host –  
’Tis Units – make the Swarm –

A Small Leech – on the Vitals –  
The sliver, in the Lung –  
The Bung out – of an Artery –  
Are scarce accounted – Harms –

Yet mighty – by relation  
To that Repealless thing –  
A Being – impotent to end –  
When once it has begun –

c. 1862

1945

566

A Dying Tiger – moaned for Drink –  
I hunted all the Sand –  
I caught the Dripping of a Rock  
And bore it in my Hand –

His Mighty Balls – in death were thick –  
But searching – I could see  
A Vision on the Retina  
Of Water – and of me –

’Twas not my blame – who sped too slow –  
’Twas not his blame – who died  
While I was reaching him –  
But ’twas – the fact that He was dead –

c. 1862

1945

567

He gave away his Life –  
To Us – Gigantic Sum –  
A trifle – in his own esteem –  
But magnified – by Fame –

Until it burst the Hearts  
That fancied they could hold –  
When swift it slipped its limit –  
And on the Heavens – unrolled –

’Tis Ours – to wince – and weep –  
And wonder – and decay  
By Blossoms gradual process –  
He chose – Maturity –

And quickening – as we sowed –  
Just obviated Bud –  
And when We turned to note the Growth –  
Broke – perfect – from the Pod –

c. 1862

1935

568

We learned the Whole of Love –  
The Alphabet – the Words –  
A Chapter – then the mighty Book –  
Then – Revelation closed –

But in Each Other's eyes  
An Ignorance beheld –  
Diviner than the Childhood's –  
And each to each, a Child –

Attempted to expound  
What Neither – understood –  
Alas, that Wisdom is so large –  
And Truth – so manifold!

c. 1862

1945

569

I reckon – when I count at all –  
First – Poets – Then the Sun –  
Then Summer – Then the Heaven of God –  
And then – the List is done –

But, looking back – the First so seems  
To Comprehend the Whole –  
The Others look a needless Show –  
So I write – Poets – All –

Their Summer – lasts a Solid Year –  
They can afford a Sun  
The East – would deem extravagant –  
And if the Further Heaven –

Be Beautiful as they prepare  
For Those who worship Them –  
It is too difficult a Grace –  
To justify the Dream –

c. 1862

1929

570

I could die – to know –  
'Tis a trifling knowledge –  
News-Boys salute the Door –  
Carts – joggle by –

Morning's bold face – stares in the window –  
Were but mine – the Charter of the least Fly –  
  
Houses hunch the House  
With their Brick Shoulders –  
Coals – from a Rolling Load – rattle – how – near –  
To the very Square – His foot is passing –  
Possibly, this moment –  
While I – dream – Here –

c. 1862

1935

571

Must be a Woe –  
A loss or so –  
To bend the eye  
Best Beauty's way –

But – once aslant  
It notes Delight  
As difficult  
As Stalactite

A Common Bliss  
Were had for less –  
The price – is  
Even as the Grace –

Our lord – thought no  
Extravagance  
To pay – a Cross –

c. 1862

1935

572

Delight – becomes pictorial –  
When viewed through Pain –  
More fair – because impossible  
That any gain –

The Mountain – at a given distance –  
In Amber – lies –

Approached – the Amber flits – a little –  
And That’s – the Skies –

c. 1862

1891

573

The Test of Love – is Death –  
Our Lord – “so loved” – it saith –  
What Largest Lover – hath –  
Another – doth –

If smaller Patience – be –  
Through less Infinity –  
If Bravo, sometimes swerve –  
Through fainter Nerve –

Accept its Most –  
And overlook – the Dust –  
Last – Least –  
The Cross’ – Request –

c. 1862

1935

574

My first well Day – since many ill –  
I asked to go abroad,  
And take the Sunshine in my hands,  
And see the things in Pod –

A'blossom just when I went in  
To take my Chance with pain –  
Uncertain if myself, or He,  
Should prove the strongest One.

The Summer deepened, while we strove –  
She put some flowers away –  
And Redder cheeked Ones – in their stead –  
A fond – illusive way –

To cheat Herself, it seemed she tried –  
As if before a child

To fade – Tomorrow – Rainbows held  
The Sepulchre, could hide.

She dealt a fashion to the Nut –  
She tied the Hoods to Seeds –  
She dropped bright scraps of Tint, about –  
And left Brazilian Threads

On every shoulder that she met –  
Then both her Hands of Haze  
Put up – to hide her parting Grace  
From our unfitted eyes.

My loss, by sickness – Was it Loss?  
Or that Ethereal Gain  
One earns by measuring the Grave –  
Then – measuring the Sun –

c. 1862

1935

### 575

“Heaven” has different Signs – to me –  
Sometimes, I think that Noon  
Is but a symbol of the Place –  
And when again, at Dawn,

A mighty look runs round the World  
And settles in the Hills –  
An Awe if it should be like that  
Upon the Ignorance steals –

The Orchard, when the Sun is on –  
The Triumph of the Birds  
When they together Victory make –  
Some Carnivals of Clouds –

The Rapture of a finished Day –  
Returning to the West –  
All these – remind us of the place  
That Men call “Paradise” –

Itself be fairer – we suppose –  
But how Ourselves, shall be

Adorned, for a Superior Grace –  
Not yet, our eyes can see –

c. 1862

1929

576

I prayed, at first, a little Girl,  
Because they told me to –  
But stopped, when qualified to guess  
How prayer would feel – to me –

If I believed God looked around,  
Each time my Childish eye  
Fixed full, and steady, on his own  
In Childish honesty –

And told him what I'd like, today,  
And parts of his far plan  
That baffled me –  
The mingled side  
Of his Divinity –

And often since, in Danger,  
I count the force 'twould be  
To have a God so strong as that  
To hold my life for me

Till I could take the Balance  
That tips so frequent, now,  
It takes me all the while to poise –  
And then – it doesn't stay –

c. 1862

1929

577

If I may have it, when it's dead,  
I'll be contented – so –  
If just as soon as Breath is out  
It shall belong to me –

Until they lock it in the Grave,  
'Tis Bliss I cannot weigh –

For tho' they lock Thee in the Grave,  
Myself – can own the key –

Think of it Lover! I and Thee  
Permitted – face to face to be –  
After a Life – a Death – We'll say –  
For Death was That –  
And this – is Thee –

I'll tell Thee All – how Bald it grew –  
How Midnight felt, at first – to me –  
How all the Clocks stopped in the World –  
And Sunshine pinched me – 'Twas so cold –

Then how the Grief got sleepy – some –  
As if my Soul were deaf and dumb –  
Just making signs – across – to Thee –  
That this way – thou could'st notice me –

I'll tell you how I tried to keep  
A smile, to show you, when this Deep  
All Waded – We look back for Play,  
At those Old Times – in Calvary.

Forgive me, if the Grave come slow –  
For Coveting to look at Thee –  
Forgive me, if to stroke thy frost  
Outvisions Paradise!

c. 1862

1896

## 578

The Body grows without –  
The more convenient way –  
That if the Spirit – like to hide  
Its Temple stands, alway,

Ajar – secure – inviting –  
It never did betray  
The Soul that asked its shelter  
In solemn honesty

c. 1862

1891

I had been hungry, all the Years –  
 My Noon had Come – to dine –  
 I trembling drew the Table near –  
 And touched the Curious Wine –

'Twas this on Tables I had seen –  
 When turning, hungry, Home  
 I looked in Windows, for the Wealth  
 I could not hope – for Mine –

I did not know the ample Bread –  
 'Twas so unlike the Crumb  
 The Birds and I, had often shared  
 In Nature's – Dining Room –

The Plenty hurt me – 'twas so new –  
 Myself felt ill – and odd –  
 As Berry – of a Mountain Bush –  
 Transplanted – to the Road –

Nor was I hungry – so I found  
 That Hunger – was a way  
 Of Persons outside Windows –  
 The Entering – takes away –

c. 1862

1891

I gave myself to Him –  
 And took Himself, for Pay,  
 The solemn contract of a Life  
 Was ratified, this way –

The Wealth might disappoint –  
 Myself a poorer prove  
 Than this great Purchaser suspect,  
 The Daily Own – of Love

Depreciate the Vision –  
 But till the Merchant buy –

Still Fable – in the Isles of Spice –  
The subtle Cargoes – lie –  
At least – 'tis Mutual – Risk –  
Some – found it – Mutual Gain –  
Sweet Debt of Life – Each Night to owe –  
Insolvent – every Noon –

c. 1862

1891

581

I found the words to every thought  
I ever had – but One –  
And that – defies me –  
As a Hand did try to chalk the Sun  
To Races – nurtured in the Dark –  
How would your own – begin?  
Can Blaze be shown in Cochineal –  
Or Noon – in Mazarin?

c. 1862

1891

582

Inconceivably solemn!  
Things so gay  
Pierce – by the very Press  
Of Imagery –  
Their far Parades – order on the eye  
With a mute Pomp –  
A pleading Pageantry –  
Flags, are a brave sight –  
But no true Eye  
Ever went by One –  
Steadily –  
Music's triumphant –  
But the fine Ear

Winces with delight  
Are Drums too near –

c. 1862

1929

583

A Toad, can die of Light –  
Death is the Common Right  
Of Toads and Men –  
Of Earl and Midge  
The privilege –  
Why swagger, then?  
The Gnat's supremacy is large as Thine –  
  
Life – is a different Thing –  
So measure Wine –  
Naked of Flask – Naked of Cask –  
Bare Rhine –  
Which Ruby's mine?

c. 1862

1896

584

It ceased to hurt me, though so slow  
I could not feel the Anguish go –  
But only knew by looking back –  
That something – had benumbed the Track –

Nor when it altered, I could say,  
For I had worn it, every day,  
As constant as the Childish frock –  
I hung upon the Peg, at night.

But not the Grief – that nestled close  
As needles – ladies softly press  
To Cushions Cheeks –  
To keep their place –

Nor what consoled it, I could trace –  
Except, whereas 'twas Wilderness –  
It's better – almost Peace –

c. 1862

1929

[ 285 ]

I like to see it lap the Miles –  
 And lick the Valleys up –  
 And stop to feed itself at Tanks –  
 And then – prodigious step  
 Around a Pile of Mountains –  
 And supercilious peer  
 In Shanties – by the sides of Roads –  
 And then a Quarry pare  
 To fit its Ribs  
 And crawl between  
 Complaining all the while  
 In horrid – hooting stanza –  
 Then chase itself down Hill –  
 And neigh like Boanerges –  
 Then – punctual as a Star  
 Stop – docile and omnipotent  
 At its own stable door –

c. 1862

1891

We talked as Girls do –  
 Fond, and late –  
 We speculated fair, on every subject, but the Grave –  
 Of ours, none affair –  
 We handled Destinies, as cool –  
 As we – Disposers – be –  
 And God, a Quiet Party  
 To our Authority –  
 But fondest, dwelt upon Ourselves  
 As we eventual – be –  
 When Girls to Women, softly raised  
 We – occupy – Degree –  
 We parted with a contract  
 To cherish, and to write

But Heaven made both, impossible  
Before another night.

c. 1862

1929

587

Empty my Heart, of Thee –  
Its single Artery –  
Begin, and leave Thee out –  
Simply Extinction's Date –

Much Billow hath the Sea –  
One Baltic – They –  
Subtract Thyself, in play,  
And not enough of me  
Is left – to put away –  
“Myself” meant Thee –

Erase the Root – no Tree –  
Thee – then – no me –  
The Heavens stripped –  
Eternity's vast pocket, picked –

c. 1862

1929

588

I cried at Pity – not at Pain –  
I heard a Woman say  
“Poor Child” – and something in her voice  
Convicted me – of me –

So long I fainted, to myself  
It seemed the common way,  
And Health, and Laughter, Curious things –  
To look at, like a Toy –

To sometimes hear “Rich people” buy  
And see the Parcel rolled –  
And carried, I supposed – to Heaven,  
For children, made of Gold –

[ 287 ]

But not to touch, or wish for,  
Or think of, with a sigh –  
And so and so – had been to me,  
Had God willed differently.

I wish I knew that Woman's name –  
So when she comes this way,  
To hold my life, and hold my ears  
For fear I hear her say

She's "sorry I am dead" – again –  
Just when the Grave and I –  
Have sobbed ourselves almost to sleep,  
Our only Lullaby –

c. 1862

1896

## 589

The Night was wide, and furnished scant  
With but a single Star –  
That often as a Cloud it met –  
Blew out itself – for fear –

The Wind pursued the little Bush –  
And drove away the Leaves  
November left – then clambered up  
And fretted in the Eaves –

No Squirrel went abroad –  
A Dog's belated feet  
Like intermittent Plush, he heard  
Adown the empty Street –

To feel if Blinds be fast –  
And closer to the fire –  
Her little Rocking Chair to draw –  
And shiver for the Poor –

The Housewife's gentle Task –  
How pleasanter – said she

Unto the Sofa opposite –  
The Sleet – than May, no Thee –

c. 1862

1891

590

Did you ever stand in a Cavern's Mouth –  
Widths out of the Sun –  
And look – and shudder, and block your breath –  
And deem to be alone

In such a place, what horror,  
How Goblin it would be –  
And fly, as 'twere pursuing you?  
Then Loneliness – looks so –

Did you ever look in a Cannon's face –  
Between whose Yellow eye –  
And yours – the Judgment intervened –  
The Question of "To die" –

Extemporizing in your ear  
As cool as Satyr's Drums –  
If you remember, and were saved –  
It's liker so – it seems –

c. 1862

1935

591

To interrupt His Yellow Plan  
The Sun does not allow  
Caprices of the Atmosphere –  
And even when the Snow

Heaves Balls of Specks, like Vicious Boy  
Directly in His Eye –  
Does not so much as turn His Head  
Busy with Majesty –

"Tis His to stimulate the Earth –  
And magnetize the Sea –

And bind Astronomy, in place,  
Yet Any passing by  
Would deem Ourselves – the busier  
As the Minutest Bee  
That rides – emits a Thunder –  
A Bomb – to justify –

c. 1862

1929

592

What care the Dead, for Chanticleer –  
What care the Dead for Day?  
'Tis late your Sunrise vex their face –  
And Purple Ribaldry – of Morning

Pour as blank on them  
As on the Tier of Wall  
The Mason builded, yesterday,  
And equally as cool –

What care the Dead for Summer?  
The Solstice had no Sun  
Could waste the Snow before their Gate –  
And knew One Bird a Tune –

Could thrill their Mortised Ear  
Of all the Birds that be –  
This One – beloved of Mankind  
Henceforward cherished be –

What care the Dead for Winter?  
Themselves as easy freeze –  
June Noon – as January Night –  
As soon the South – her Breeze

Of Sycamore – or Cinnamon –  
Deposit in a Stone  
And put a Stone to keep it Warm –  
Give Spices – unto Men –

c. 1862

1932

I think I was enchanted  
 When first a sombre Girl –  
 I read that Foreign Lady –  
 The Dark – felt beautiful –

And whether it was noon at night –  
 Or only Heaven – at Noon –  
 For very Lunacy of Light  
 I had not power to tell –

The Bees – became as Butterflies –  
 The Butterflies – as Swans –  
 Approached – and spurned the narrow Grass –  
 And just the meanest Tunes

That Nature murmured to herself  
 To keep herself in Cheer –  
 I took for Giants – practising  
 Titanic Opera –

The Days – to Mighty Metres stept –  
 The Homeliest – adorned  
 As if unto a Jubilee  
 'Twere suddenly confirmed –

I could not have defined the change –  
 Conversion of the Mind  
 Like Sanctifying in the Soul –  
 Is witnessed – not explained –

'Twas a Divine Insanity –  
 The Danger to be Sane  
 Should I again experience –  
 'Tis Antidote to turn –

To Tomes of solid Witchcraft –  
 Magicians be asleep –  
 But Magic – hath an Element  
 Like Deity – to keep –

## 594

The Battle fought between the Soul  
 And No Man – is the One  
 Of all the Battles prevalent –  
 By far the Greater One –

No News of it is had abroad –  
 Its Bodiless Campaign  
 Establishes, and terminates –  
 Invisible – Unknown –

Nor History – record it –  
 As Legions of a Night  
 The Sunrise scatters – These endure –  
 Enact – and terminate –

c. 1862

1929

## 595

Like Mighty Foot Lights – burned the Red  
 At Bases of the Trees –  
 The far Theatricals of Day  
 Exhibiting – to These –

"Twas Universe – that did applaud –  
 While Chieftest – of the Crowd –  
 Enabled by his Royal Dress –  
 Myself distinguished God –

c. 1862

1891

## 596

When I was small, a Woman died –  
 Today – her Only Boy  
 Went up from the Potomac –  
 His face all Victory

To look at her – How slowly  
 The Seasons must have turned  
 Till Bullets clipt an Angle  
 And He passed quickly round –

If pride shall be in Paradise –  
Ourself cannot decide –  
Of their imperial Conduct –  
No person testified –

But, proud in Apparition –  
That Woman and her Boy  
Pass back and forth, before my Brain  
As even in the sky –

I'm confident that Bravoes –  
Perpetual break abroad  
For Braveries, remote as this  
In Scarlet Maryland –

c. 1862

1890

### 597

It always felt to me – a wrong  
To that Old Moses – done –  
To let him see – the Canaan –  
Without the entering –

And tho' in soberer moments –  
No Moses there can be  
I'm satisfied – the Romance  
In point of injury –

Surpasses sharper stated –  
Of Stephen – or of Paul –  
For these – were only put to death –  
While God's adroiter will

On Moses – seemed to fasten  
With tantalizing Play  
As Boy – should deal with lesser Boy –  
To prove ability.

The fault – was doubtless Israel's –  
Myself – had banned the Tribes –  
And ushered Grand Old Moses  
In Pentateuchal Robes

Upon the Broad Possession  
"Twas little – But titled Him – to see –  
Old Man on Nebo! Late as this –  
My justice bleeds – for Thee!

c. 1862

1929

598

Three times – we parted – Breath – and I –  
Three times – He would not go –  
But strove to stir the lifeless Fan  
The Waters – strove to stay.

Three Times – the Billows tossed me up –  
Then caught me – like a Ball –  
Then made Blue faces in my face –  
And pushed away a sail

That crawled Leagues off – I liked to see –  
For thinking – while I die –  
How pleasant to behold a Thing  
Where Human faces – be –

The Waves grew sleepy – Breath – did not –  
The Winds – like Children – lulled –  
Then Sunrise kissed my Chrysalis –  
And I stood up – and lived –

c. 1862

1929

599

There is a pain – so utter –  
It swallows substance up –  
Then covers the Abyss with Trance –  
So Memory can step  
Around – across – upon it –  
As one within a Swoon –  
Goes safely – where an open eye –  
Would drop Him – Bone by Bone.

c. 1862

1929

It troubled me as once I was –  
 For I was once a Child –  
 Concluding how an Atom – fell –  
 And yet the Heavens – held –

The Heavens weighed the most – by far –  
 Yet Blue – and solid – stood –  
 Without a Bolt – that I could prove –  
 Would Giants – understand?

Life set me larger – problems –  
 Some I shall keep – to solve  
 Till Algebra is easier –  
 Or simpler proved – above –

Then – too – be comprehended –  
 What sorer – puzzled me –  
 Why Heaven did not break away –  
 And tumble – Blue – on me –

c. 1862

1945

A still – Volcano – Life –  
 That flickered in the night –  
 When it was dark enough to do  
 Without erasing sight –

A quiet – Earthquake Style –  
 Too subtle to suspect  
 By natures this side Naples –  
 The North cannot detect

The Solemn – Torrid – Symbol –  
 The lips that never lie –  
 Whose hissing Corals part – and shut –  
 And Cities – ooze away –

c. 1862

1929

Of Brussels – it was not –  
 Of Kidderminster? Nay –  
 The Winds did buy it of the Woods –  
 They – sold it unto me

It was a gentle price –  
 The poorest – could afford –  
 It was within the frugal purse  
 Of Beggar – or of Bird –

Of small and spicy Yards –  
 In hue – a mellow Dun –  
 Of Sunshine – and of Sere – Composed –  
 But, principally – of Sun –

The Wind – unrolled it fast –  
 And spread it on the Ground –  
 Upholsterer of the Pines – is He –  
 Upholsterer – of the Pond –

c. 1862

1945

He found my Being – set it up –  
 Adjusted it to place –  
 Then carved his name – upon it –  
 And bade it to the East

Be faithful – in his absence –  
 And he would come again –  
 With Equipage of Amber –  
 That time – to take it Home –

c. 1862

1945

Unto my Books – so good to turn –  
 Far ends of tired Days –  
 It half endears the Abstinence –  
 And Pain – is missed – in Praise –

As Flavors – cheer Retarded Guests  
With Banquettings to be –  
So Spices – stimulate the time  
Till my small Library –

It may be Wilderness – without –  
Far feet of failing Men –  
But Holiday – excludes the night –  
And it is Bells – within –

I thank these Kinsmen of the Shelf –  
Their Countenances Kid  
Enamor – in Prospective –  
And satisfy – obtained –

c. 1862

1891

605

The Spider holds a Silver Ball  
In unperceived Hands –  
And dancing softly to Himself  
His Yarn of Pearl – unwinds –

He plies from Nought to Nought –  
In unsubstantial Trade –  
Supplants our Tapestries with His –  
In half the period –

An Hour to rear supreme  
His Continents of Light –  
Then dangle from the Housewife's Broom –  
His Boundaries – forgot –

c. 1862

1945

606

The Trees like Tassels – hit – and swung –  
There seemed to rise a Tune  
From Miniature Creatures  
Accompanying the Sun –

Far Psalteries of Summer –  
Enamoring the Ear  
They never yet did satisfy –  
Remotest – when most fair

The Sun shone whole at intervals –  
Then Half – then utter hid –  
As if Himself were optional  
And had Estates of Cloud

Sufficient to enfold Him  
Eternally from view –  
Except it were a whim of His  
To let the Orchards grow –

A Bird sat careless on the fence –  
One gossipped in the Lane  
On silver matters charmed a Snake  
Just winding round a Stone –

Bright Flowers slit a Calyx  
And soared upon a Stem  
Like Hindered Flags – Sweet hoisted –  
With Spices – in the Hem –

"Twas more – I cannot mention –  
How mean – to those that see –  
Vandyke's Delineation  
Of Nature's – Summer Day!

c. 1862

1935

607

Of nearness to her sundered Things  
The Soul has special times –  
When Dimness – looks the Oddity –  
Distinctness – easy – seems –

The Shapes we buried, dwell about,  
Familiar, in the Rooms –  
Untarnished by the Sepulchre,  
The Mouldering Playmate comes –

In just the Jacket that he wore –  
Long buttoned in the Mold  
Since we – old mornings, Children – played –  
Divided – by a world –

The Grave yields back her Robberies –  
The Years, our pilfered Things –  
Bright Knots of Apparitions  
Salute us, with their wings –

As we – it were – that perished –  
Themself – had just remained till we rejoin them –  
And 'twas they, and not ourself  
That mourned.

c. 1862

1929

608

Afraid! Of whom am I afraid?  
Not Death – for who is He?  
The Porter of my Father's Lodge  
As much abasheth me!

Of Life? 'Twere odd I fear [a] thing  
That comprehendeth me  
In one or two existences –  
As Deity decree –

Of Resurrection? Is the East  
Afraid to trust the Morn  
With her fastidious forehead?  
As soon impeach my Crown!

c. 1862

1890

609

I Years had been from Home  
And now before the Door  
I dared not enter, lest a Face  
I never saw before

Stare stolid into mine  
And ask my Business there –

"My Business but a Life I left  
Was such remaining there?"

I leaned upon the Awe –  
I lingered with Before –  
The Second like an Ocean rolled  
And broke against my ear –

I laughed a crumbling Laugh  
That I could fear a Door  
Who Consternation compassed  
And never winced before.

I fitted to the Latch  
My Hand, with trembling care  
Lest back the awful Door should spring  
And leave me in the Floor –

Then moved my Fingers off  
As cautiously as Glass  
And held my ears, and like a Thief  
Fled gasping from the House –

c. 1872

1891

610

You'll find – it when you try to die –  
The Easier to let go –  
For recollecting such as went –  
You could not spare – you know.

And though their places somewhat filled –  
As did their Marble names  
With Moss – they never grew so full –  
You chose the newer names –

And when this World – sets further back –  
As Dying – say it does –  
The former love – distincter grows –  
And supersedes the fresh –

And Thought of them – so fair invites –  
It looks too tawdry Grace

To stay behind – with just the Toys  
We bought – to ease their place –

c. 1862

1929

611

I see thee better – in the Dark –  
I do not need a Light –  
The Love of Thee – a Prism be –  
Excelling Violet –

I see thee better for the Years  
That hunch themselves between –  
The Miner's Lamp – sufficient be –  
To nullify the Mine –

And in the Grave – I see Thee best –  
Its little Panels be  
Aglow – All ruddy – with the Light  
I held so high, for Thee –

What need of Day –  
To Those whose Dark – hath so – surpassing Sun –  
It deem it be – Continually –  
At the Meridian?

c. 1862

1914

612

It would have starved a Gnat –  
To live so small as I –  
And yet I was a living Child –  
With Food's necessity

Upon me – like a Claw –  
I could no more remove  
Than I could coax a Leech away –  
Or make a Dragon – move –

Nor like the Gnat – had I –  
The privilege to fly  
And seek a Dinner for myself –  
How mightier He – than I –

Nor like Himself – the Art  
Upon the Window Pane  
To gad my little Being out –  
And not begin – again –

c. 1862

1945

613

They shut me up in Prose –  
As when a little Girl  
They put me in the Closet –  
Because they liked me “still” –  
  
Still! Could themself have peeped –  
And seen my Brain – go round –  
They might as wise have lodged a Bird  
For Treason – in the Pound –

Himself has but to will  
And easy as a Star  
Abolish his Captivity –  
And laugh – No more have I –

c. 1862

1935

614

In falling Timbers buried –  
There breathed a Man –  
Outside – the spades – were plying –  
The Lungs – within –  
  
Could He – know – they sought Him –  
Could They – know – He breathed –  
Horrid Sand Partition –  
Neither – could be heard –  
  
Never slacked the Diggers –  
But when Spades had done –  
Oh, Reward of Anguish,  
It was dying – Then –

Many Things – are fruitless –  
'Tis a Baffling Earth –  
But there is no Gratitude  
Like the Grace – of Death –

c. 1862

1945

615

Our journey had advanced –  
Our feet were almost come  
To that odd Fork in Being's Road –  
Eternity – by Term –

Our pace took sudden awe –  
Our feet – reluctant – led –  
Before – were Cities – but Between –  
The Forest of the Dead –

Retreat – was out of Hope –  
Behind – a Sealed Route –  
Eternity's White Flag – Before –  
And God – at every Gate –

c. 1862

1891

616

I rose – because He sank –  
I thought it would be opposite –  
But when his power dropped –  
My Soul grew straight.

I cheered my fainting Prince –  
I sang firm – even – Chants –  
I helped his Film – with Hymn –

And when the Dews drew off  
That held his Forehead stiff –  
I met him –  
Balm to Balm –

I told him Best – must pass  
Through this low Arch of Flesh –

No Casque so brave  
It spurn the Grave –  
  
I told him Worlds I knew  
Where Emperors grew –  
Who recollect ed us  
If we were true –  
  
And so with Thews of Hymn –  
And Sinew from within –  
And ways I knew not that I knew – till then –  
I lifted Him –

c. 1862

1929

617

Don't put up my Thread and Needle –  
I'll begin to Sew  
When the Birds begin to whistle –  
Better Stitches – so –  
  
These were bent – my sight got crooked –  
When my mind – is plain  
I'll do seams – a Queen's endeavor  
Would not blush to own –  
  
Hems – too fine for Lady's tracing  
To the sightless Knot –  
Tucks – of dainty interspersion –  
Like a dotted Dot –  
  
Leave my Needle in the furrow –  
Where I put it down –  
I can make the zigzag stitches  
Straight – when I am strong –  
  
Till then – dreaming I am sewing  
Fetch the seam I missed –  
Closer – so I – at my sleeping –  
Still surmise I stitch –

c. 1862

1929

At leisure is the Soul  
 That gets a Staggering Blow –  
 The Width of Life – before it spreads  
 Without a thing to do –

It begs you give it Work –  
 But just the placing Pins –  
 Or humblest Patchwork – Children do –  
 To Help its Vacant Hands –

c. 1862

1929

Glee – The great storm is over –  
 Four – have recovered the Land –  
 Forty – gone down together –  
 Into the boiling Sand –

Ring – for the Scant Salvation –  
 Toll – for the bonnie Souls –  
 Neighbor – and friend – and Bridegroom –  
 Spinning upon the Shoals –

How they will tell the Story –  
 When Winter shake the Door –  
 Till the Children urge –  
 But the Forty –  
 Did they – come back no more?

Then a softness – suffuse the Story –  
 And a silence – the Teller's eye –  
 And the Children – no further question –  
 And only the Sea – reply –

c. 1862

1890

It makes no difference abroad –  
 The Seasons – fit – the same –

The Mornings blossom into Noons –  
And split their Pods of Flame –

Wild flowers – kindle in the Woods –  
The Brooks slam – all the Day –  
No Black bird bates his Banjo –  
For passing Calvary –

Auto da Fe – and Judgment –  
Are nothing to the Bee –  
His separation from His Rose –  
To Him – sums Misery –

c. 1862

1890

### 621

I asked no other thing –  
No other – was denied –  
I offered Being – for it –  
The Mighty Merchant sneered –

Brazil? He twirled a Button –  
Without a glance my way –  
“But – Madam – is there nothing else –  
That We can show – Today?”

c. 1862

1890

### 622

To know just how He suffered – would be dear –  
To know if any Human eyes were near  
To whom He could entrust His wavering gaze –  
Until it settled broad – on Paradise –

To know if He was patient – part content –  
Was Dying as He thought – or different –  
Was it a pleasant Day to die –  
And did the Sunshine face His way –

What was His furthest mind – Of Home – or God –  
Or what the Distant say –

At news that He ceased Human Nature  
Such a Day -

And Wishes - Had He Any -  
Just His Sigh - Accented -  
Had been legible - to Me -  
And was He Confident until  
Ill fluttered out - in Everlasting Well -

And if He spoke - What name was Best -  
What last  
What One broke off with  
At the Drowsiest -

Was He afraid - or tranquil -  
Might He know  
How Conscious Consciousness - could grow -  
Till Love that was - and Love too best to be -  
Meet - and the Junction be Eternity

c. 1862

1890

623

It was too late for Man -  
But early, yet, for God -  
Creation - impotent to help -  
But Prayer - remained - Our Side -

How excellent the Heaven -  
When Earth - cannot be had -  
How hospitable - then - the face  
Of our Old Neighbor - God -

c. 1862

1890

624

Forever - is composed of Nows -  
'Tis not a different time -  
Except for Infiniteness -  
And Latitude of Home -

From this – experienced Here –  
Remove the Dates – to These –  
Let Months dissolve in further Months –  
And Years – exhale in Years –

Without Debate – or Pause –  
Or Celebrated Days –  
No different Our Years would be  
From Anno Domini's –

c. 1862

1929

625

"Twas a long Parting – but the time  
For Interview – had Come –  
Before the Judgment Seat of God –  
The last – and second time

These Fleshless Lovers met –  
A Heaven in a Gaze –  
A Heaven of Heavens – the Privilege  
Of one another's Eyes –

No Lifetime – on Them –  
Appareled as the new  
Unborn – except They had beheld –  
Born infiniter – now –

Was Bridal – e'er like This?  
A Paradise – the Host –  
And Cherubim – and Seraphim –  
The unobtrusive Guest –

c. 1862

1890

626

Only God – detect the Sorrow –  
Only God –  
The Jehovahs – are no Babblers –  
Unto God –

God the Son – confide it –  
Still secure –  
God the Spirit's Honor –  
Just as sure –

c. 1862

1935

627

The Tint I cannot take – is best –  
The Color too remote  
That I could show it in Bazaar –  
A Guinea at a sight –

The fine – impalpable Array –  
That swaggers on the eye  
Like Cleopatra's Company –  
Repeated – in the sky –

The Moments of Dominion  
That happen on the Soul  
And leave it with a Discontent  
Too exquisite – to tell –

The eager look – on Landscapes –  
As if they just repressed  
Some Secret – that was pushing  
Like Chariots – in the Vest –

The Pleading of the Summer –  
That other Prank – of Snow –  
That Cushions Mystery with Tulle,  
For fear the Squirrels – know.

Their Graspless manners – mock us –  
Until the Cheated Eye  
Shuts arrogantly – in the Grave –  
Another way – to see –

c. 1862

1929

They called me to the Window, for  
 “ ‘Twas Sunset” – Some one said –  
 I only saw a Sapphire Farm –  
 And just a Single Herd –

Of Opal Cattle – feeding far  
 Upon so vain a Hill –  
 As even while I looked – dissolved –  
 Nor Cattle were – nor Soil –

But in their stead – a Sea – displayed –  
 And Ships – of such a size  
 As Crew of Mountains – could afford –  
 And Decks – to seat the skies –

This – too – the Showman rubbed away –  
 And when I looked again –  
 Nor Farm – nor Opal Herd – was there –  
 Nor Mediterranean –

c. 1862

1945

I watched the Moon around the House  
 Until upon a Pane –  
 She stopped – a Traveller’s privilege – for Rest –  
 And there upon

I gazed – as at a stranger –  
 The Lady in the Town  
 Doth think no incivility  
 To lift her Glass – upon –

But never Stranger justified  
 The Curiosity  
 Like Mine – for not a Foot – nor Hand –  
 Nor Formula – had she –

But like a Head – a Guillotine  
 Slid carelessly away –

Did independent, Amber –  
Sustain her in the sky –  
  
Or like a Stemless Flower –  
Upheld in rolling Air  
By finer Gravitations –  
Than bind Philosopher –  
  
No Hunger – had she – nor an Inn –  
Her Toilette – to suffice –  
Nor Avocation – nor Concern  
For little Mysteries  
  
As harass us – like Life – and Death –  
And Afterwards – or Nay –  
But seemed engrossed to Absolute –  
With shining – and the Sky –  
  
The privilege to scrutinize  
Was scarce upon my Eyes  
When, with a Silver practise –  
She vaulted out of Gaze –  
  
And next – I met her on a Cloud –  
Myself too far below  
To follow her superior Road –  
Or its advantage – Blue –

c. 1862

1945

630

The Lightning playeth – all the while –  
But when He singeth – then –  
Ourselves are conscious He exist –  
And we approach Him – stern –  
  
With Insulators – and a Glove –  
Whose short – sepulchral Bass  
Alarms us – tho' His Yellow feet  
May pass – and counterpass –  
  
Upon the Ropes – above our Head –  
Continual – with the News –

Nor We so much as check our speech –  
Nor stop to cross Ourselves –

c. 1862

1945

631

Ourselves were wed one summer – dear –  
Your Vision – was in June –  
And when Your little Lifetime failed,  
I wearied – too – of mine –

And overtaken in the Dark –  
Where You had put me down –  
By Some one carrying a Light –  
I – too – received the Sign.

'Tis true – Our Futures different lay –  
Your Cottage – faced the sun –  
While Oceans – and the North must be –  
On every side of mine

'Tis true, Your Garden led the Bloom,  
For mine – in Frosts – was sown –  
And yet, one Summer, we were Queens –  
But You – were crowned in June –

c. 1862

1945

632

The Brain – is wider than the Sky –  
For – put them side by side –  
The one the other will contain  
With ease – and You – beside –

The Brain is deeper than the sea –  
For – hold them – Blue to Blue –  
The one the other will absorb –  
As Sponges – Buckets – do –

The Brain is just the weight of God –  
For – Heft them – Pound for Pound –

And they will differ – if they do –  
As Syllable from Sound –

c. 1862

1896

633

When Bells stop ringing – Church – begins –  
The Positive – of Bells –  
When Cogs – stop – that's Circumference –  
The Ultimate – of Wheels.

c. 1862

1945

634

You'll know Her – by Her Foot –  
The smallest Gamboge Hand  
With Fingers – where the Toes should be –  
Would more affront the Sand –

Than this Quaint Creature's Boot –  
Adjusted by a Stem –  
Without a Button – I could vouch –  
Unto a Velvet Limb –

You'll know Her – by Her Vest –  
Tight fitting – Orange – Brown –  
Inside a Jacket duller –  
She wore when she was born –

Her Cap is small – and snug –  
Constructed for the Winds –  
She'd pass for Barehead – short way off –  
But as She Closer stands –

So finer 'tis than Wool –  
You cannot feel the Seam –  
Nor is it Clasped unto of Band –  
Nor held upon – of Brim –

You'll know Her – by Her Voice –  
At first – a doubtful Tone –

A sweet endeavor – but as March  
To April – hurries on –

She squanders on your Ear  
Such Arguments of Pearl –  
You beg the Robin in your Brain  
To keep the other – still –

c. 1862

1945

### 635

I think the longest Hour of all  
Is when the Cars have come –  
And we are waiting for the Coach –  
It seems as though the Time

Indignant – that the Joy was come –  
Did block the Gilded Hands –  
And would not let the Seconds by –  
But slowest instant – ends –

The Pendulum begins to count –  
Like little Scholars – loud –  
The steps grow thicker – in the Hall –  
The Heart begins to crowd –

Then I – my timid service done –  
Tho' service 'twas, of Love –  
Take up my little Violin –  
And further North – remove.

c. 1862

1945

### 636

The Way I read a Letter's – this –  
'Tis first – I lock the Door –  
And push it with my fingers – next –  
For transport it be sure –

And then I go the furthest off  
To counteract a knock –

Then draw my little Letter forth  
And slowly pick the lock –

Then – glancing narrow, at the Wall –  
And narrow at the floor  
For firm Conviction of a Mouse  
Not exorcised before –

Peruse how infinite I am  
To no one that You – know –  
And sigh for lack of Heaven – but not  
The Heaven God bestow –

c. 1862

1891

637

The Child's faith is new –  
Whole – like His Principle –  
Wide – like the Sunrise  
On fresh Eyes –  
Never had a Doubt –  
Laughs – at a Scruple –  
Believes all sham  
But Paradise –

Credits the World –  
Deems His Dominion  
Broadest of Sovereignties –  
And Caesar – mean –  
In the Comparison –  
Baseless Emperor –  
Ruler of Nought,  
Yet swaying all –

Grown bye and bye  
To hold mistaken  
His pretty estimates  
Of Prickly Things  
He gains the skill  
Sorrowful – as certain –

Men – to anticipate  
Instead of Kings –

c. 1862

1929

638

To my small Hearth His fire came –  
And all my House aglow  
Did fan and rock, with sudden light –  
'Twas Sunrise – 'twas the Sky –

Impanelled from no Summer brief –  
With limit of Decay –  
'Twas Noon – without the News of Night –  
Nay, Nature, it was Day –

c. 1862

1932

639

My Portion is Defeat – today –  
A paler luck than Victory –  
Less Paeans – fewer Bells –  
The Drums don't follow Me – with tunes –  
Defeat – a somewhat slower – means –  
More Arduous than Balls –

"Tis populous with Bone and stain –  
And Men too straight to stoop again,  
And Piles of solid Moan –  
And Chips of Blank – in Boyish Eyes –  
And scraps of Prayer –  
And Death's surprise,  
Stamped visible – in Stone –

There's somewhat prouder, over there –  
The Trumpets tell it to the Air –  
How different Victory  
To Him who has it – and the One  
Who to have had it, would have been  
Contenteder – to die –

c. 1862

1929

I cannot live with You –  
 It would be Life –  
 And Life is over there –  
 Behind the Shelf

The Sexton keeps the Key to –  
 Putting up  
 Our Life – His Porcelain –  
 Like a Cup –

Discarded of the Housewife –  
 Quaint – or Broke –  
 A newer Sevres pleases –  
 Old Ones crack –

I could not die – with You –  
 For One must wait  
 To shut the Other's Gaze down –  
 You – could not –

And I – Could I stand by  
 And see You – freeze –  
 Without my Right of Frost –  
 Death's privilege?

Nor could I rise – with You –  
 Because Your Face  
 Would put out Jesus' –  
 That New Grace

Glow plain – and foreign  
 On my homesick Eye –  
 Except that You than He  
 Shone closer by –

They'd judge Us – How –  
 For You – served Heaven – You know,  
 Or sought to –  
 I could not –

Because You saturated Sight –  
 And I had no more Eyes

For sordid excellence  
As Paradise

And were You lost, I would be –  
Though My Name  
Rang loudest  
On the Heavenly fame –

And were You – saved –  
And I – condemned to be  
Where You were not –  
That self – were Hell to Me –

So We must meet apart –  
You there – I – here –  
With just the Door ajar  
That Oceans are – and Prayer –  
And that White Sustenance –  
Despair –

c. 1862

1890

641

Size circumscribes – it has no room  
For petty furniture –  
The Giant tolerates no Gnat  
For Ease of Gianture –

Repudiates it, all the more –  
Because intrinsic size  
Ignores the possibility  
Of Calumnies – or Flies.

.. 1862

1935

642

Me from Myself – to banish –  
Had I Art –  
Impregnable my Fortress  
Unto All Heart –

But since Myself – assault Me –  
How have I peace  
Except by subjugating  
Consciousness?

And since We're mutual Monarch  
How this be  
Except by Abdication –  
Me – of Me?

c. 1862

1929

643

I could suffice for Him, I knew –  
He – could suffice for Me –  
Yet Hesitating Fractions – Both  
Surveyed Infinity –

"Would I be Whole" He sudden broached –  
My syllable rebelled –  
"Twas face to face with Nature – forced –  
"Twas face to face with God –

Withdrew the Sun – to Other Wests –  
Withdrew the furthest Star  
Before Decision – stooped to speech –  
And then – be audibler

The Answer of the Sea unto  
The Motion of the Moon –  
Herself adjust Her Tides – unto –  
Could I – do else – with Mine?

c. 1862

1935

644

You left me – Sire – two Legacies –  
A Legacy of Love  
A Heavenly Father would suffice  
Had He the offer of –

You left me Boundaries of Pain –  
Capacious as the Sea –  
Between Eternity and Time –  
Your Consciousness – and Me –

c. 1862

1890

645

Bereavement in their death to feel  
Whom We have never seen –  
A Vital Kinsmanship import  
Our Soul and theirs – between –  
  
For Stranger – Strangers do not mourn –  
There be Immortal friends  
Whom Death see first – 'tis news of this  
That paralyze Ourselves –  
  
Who, vital only to Our Thought –  
Such Presence bear away  
In dying – 'tis as if Our Souls  
Absconded – suddenly –

c. 1862

1935

646

I think to Live – may be a Bliss  
To those who dare to try –  
Beyond my limit to conceive –  
My lip – to testify –

I think the Heart I former wore  
Could widen – till to me  
The Other, like the little Bank  
Appear – unto the Sea –

I think the Days – could every one  
In Ordination stand –  
And Majesty – be easier –  
Than an inferior kind –

No numb alarm – lest Difference come –  
No Goblin – on the Bloom –  
No start in Apprehension’s Ear,  
No Bankruptcy – no Doom –

But Certainties of Sun –  
Midsummer – in the Mind –  
A steadfast South – upon the Soul –  
Her Polar time – behind –

The Vision – pondered long –  
So plausible becomes  
That I esteem the fiction – real –  
The Real – fictitious seems –

How bountiful the Dream –  
What Plenty – it would be –  
Had all my Life but been Mistake  
Just rectified – in Thee

c. 1862

1935

647

A little Road – not made of Man –  
Enabled of the Eye –  
Accessible to Thill of Bee –  
Or Cart of Butterfly –

If Town it have – beyond itself –  
’Tis that – I cannot say –  
I only know – no Curriele that rumble there  
Bear Me –

c. 1862

1890

648

Promise This – When You be Dying –  
Some shall summon Me –  
Mine belong Your latest Sighing –  
Mine – to Belt Your Eye –

Not with Coins – though they be Minted  
From an Emperor's Hand –  
Be my lips – the only Buckle  
Your low Eyes – demand –

Mine to stay – when all have wandered –  
To devise once more  
If the Life be too surrendered –  
Life of Mine – restore –

Poured like this – My Whole Libation –  
Just that You should see  
Bliss of Death – Life's Bliss extol thro'  
Imitating You –

Mine – to guard Your Narrow Precinct –  
To seduce the Sun  
Longest on Your South, to linger,  
Largest Dews of Morn

To demand, in Your low favor  
Lest the Jealous Grass  
Greener lean – Or fonder cluster  
Round some other face –

Mine to supplicate Madonna –  
If Madonna be  
Could behold so far a Creature –  
Christ – omitted – Me –

Just to follow Your dear feature –  
Ne'er so far behind –  
For My Heaven –  
Had I not been  
Most enough – denied?

1862

1935

Carriages – Be sure – and Guests – too –  
But for Holiday

"Tis more pitiful Endeavor  
Than did Loaded Sea  
O'er the Curls attempt to caper  
It had cast away –

Never Bride had such Assembling –  
Never kinsmen kneeled  
To salute so fair a Forehead –  
Garland be indeed –

Fitter Feet – of Her before us –  
Than whatever Brow  
Art of Snow – or Trick of Lily  
Possibly bestow

Of Her Father – Whoso ask Her –  
He shall seek as high  
As the Palm – that serve the Desert –  
To obtain the Sky –

Distance – be Her only Motion –  
If 'tis Nay – or Yes –  
Acquiescence – or Demurral –  
Whosoever guess –

He – must pass the Crystal Angle  
That obscure Her face –  
He – must have achieved in person  
Equal Paradise –

c. 1862

1935

650

Pain – has an Element of Blank –  
It cannot recollect  
When it begun – or if there were  
A time when it was not –

It has no Future – but itself –  
Its Infinite contain

Its Past – enlightened to perceive  
New Periods – of Pain.

c. 1862

1890

651

So much Summer  
Me for showing  
Illegitimate –  
Would a Smile's minute bestowing  
Too exorbitant  
  
To the Lady  
With the Guinea  
Look – if She should know  
Crumb of Mine  
A Robin's Larder  
Would suffice to stow –

c. 1862

1945

652

A Prison gets to be a friend –  
Between its Ponderous face  
And Ours – a Kinsmanship express –  
And in its narrow Eyes –

We come to look with gratitude  
For the appointed Beam  
It deal us – stated as our food –  
And hungered for – the same –

We learn to know the Planks –  
That answer to Our feet –  
So miserable a sound – at first –  
Nor ever now – so sweet –

As plashing in the Pools –  
When Memory was a Boy –  
But a Demurer Circuit –  
A Geometric Joy –

The Posture of the Key  
That interrupt the Day  
To Our Endeavor – Not so real  
The Cheek of Liberty –

As this Phantasm Steel –  
Whose features – Day and Night –  
Are present to us – as Our Own –  
And as escapeless – quite –

The narrow Round – the Stint –  
The slow exchange of Hope –  
For something passiver – Content  
Too steep for looking up –

The Liberty we knew  
Avoided – like a Dream –  
Too wide for any Night but Heaven –  
If That – indeed – redeem –

c. 1862

1929

653

Of Being is a Bird  
The likest to the Down  
An Easy Breeze do put afloat  
The General Heavens – upon –

It soars – and shifts – and whirls –  
And measures with the Clouds  
In easy – even – dazzling pace –  
No different the Birds –

Except a Wake of Music  
Accompany their feet –  
As did the Down emit a Tune –  
For Ecstasy – of it

c. 1862

1929

## 654

A long – long Sleep – A famous – Sleep –  
 That makes no show for Morn –  
 By Stretch of Limb – or stir of Lid –  
 An independent One –

Was ever idleness like This?  
 Upon a Bank of Stone  
 To bask the Centuries away –  
 Nor once look up – for Noon?

c. 1862

1896

## 655

Without this – there is nought –  
 All other Riches be  
 As is the Twitter of a Bird –  
 Heard opposite the Sea –

I could not care – to gain  
 A lesser than the Whole –  
 For did not this include themself –  
 As Seams – include the Ball?

I wished a way might be  
 My Heart to subdivide –  
 'Twould magnify – the Gratitude –  
 And not reduce – the Gold –

c. 1862

1935

## 656

The name – of it – is “Autumn” –  
 The hue – of it – is Blood –  
 An Artery – upon the Hill –  
 A Vein – along the Road –

Great Globules – in the Alleys –  
 And Oh, the Shower of Stain –  
 When Winds – upset the Basin –  
 And spill the Scarlet Rain –

It sprinkles Bonnets – far below –  
It gathers ruddy Pools –  
Then – eddies like a Rose – away –  
Upon Vermilion Wheels –

c. 1862

1892

657

I dwell in Possibility –  
A fairer House than Prose –  
More numerous of Windows –  
Superior – for Doors –  
  
Of Chambers as the Cedars –  
Impregnable of Eye –  
And for an Everlasting Roof  
The Gambrels of the Sky –  
  
Of Visitors – the fairest –  
For Occupation – This –  
The spreading wide my narrow Hands  
To gather Paradise –

c. 1862

1929

658

Whole Gulfs – of Red, and Fleets – of Red –  
And Crews – of solid Blood –  
Did place about the West – Tonight –  
As 'twere specific Ground –  
  
And They – appointed Creatures –  
In Authorized Arrays –  
Due – promptly – as a Drama –  
That bows – and disappears –

c. 1862

1945

659

That first Day, when you praised Me, Sweet,  
And said that I was strong –

And could be mighty, if I liked –  
That Day – the Days among –  
Glows Central – like a Jewel  
Between Diverging Golds –  
The Minor One – that gleamed behind –  
And Vaster – of the World's.

c. 1862

1935

660

"Tis good – the looking back on Grief –  
To re-endure a Day –  
We thought the Mighty Funeral –  
Of All Conceived Joy –

To recollect how Busy Grass  
Did meddle – one by one –  
Till all the Grief with Summer – waved  
And none could see the stone.

And though the Woe you have Today  
Be larger – As the Sea  
Exceeds its Unremembered Drop –  
They're Water – equally –

c. 1862

1935

661

Could I but ride indefinite  
As doth the Meadow Bee  
And visit only where I liked  
And No one visit me  
  
And flirt all Day with Buttercups  
And marry whom I may  
And dwell a little everywhere  
Or better, run away

With no Police to follow  
Or chase Him if He do

Till He should jump Peninsulas  
To get away from me -

I said "But just to be a Bee"  
Upon a Raft of Air  
And row in Nowhere all Day long  
And anchor "off the Bar"

What Liberty! So Captives deem  
Who tight in Dungeons are.

c. 1862

1896

### 662

Embarrassment of one another  
And God  
Is Revelation's limit,  
Aloud  
Is nothing that is chief,  
But still,  
Divinity dwells under seal.

c. 1862

1945

### 663

Again - his voice is at the door -  
I feel the old *Degree* -  
I hear him ask the servant  
For such an one - as me -

I take a *flower* - as I go -  
My face to *justify* -  
He never *saw* me - *in this life* -  
I might *surprise* his eye!

I cross the Hall with *mingled steps* -  
I - silent - pass the door -  
I look on all this world *contains* -  
*Just his face* - nothing more!

We talk in *careless* - and in *toss* -  
A kind of *plummet strain* -

Each – sounding – shyly –  
Just – how – deep –  
The other's one – had been –  
  
We walk – I leave my Dog – at home –  
A tender – thoughtful Moon  
Goes with us – just a little way –  
And – then – we are *alone* –  
  
*Alone* – if Angels are “alone” –  
*First time* they try the sky!  
*Alone* – if those “veiled faces” – be –  
We cannot count – on High!  
  
I'd give – to live that hour – *again* –  
The purple – *in my Vein* –  
But He must count the drops – *himself* –  
*My price for every stain!*

c. 1862

1945

### 664

Of all the Souls that stand create –  
I have elected – One –  
When Sense from Spirit – files away –  
And Subterfuge – is done –  
When that which is – and that which was –  
Apart – intrinsic – stand –  
And this brief Drama in the flesh –  
Is shifted – like a Sand –  
When Figures show their royal Front –  
And Mists – are carved away,  
Behold the Atom – I preferred –  
To all the lists of Clay!

c. 1862

1891

### 665

Dropped into the Ether Acre –  
Wearing the Sod Gown –

Bonnet of Everlasting Laces –  
Brooch – frozen on –  
  
Horses of Blonde – and Coach of Silver –  
Baggage a strapped Pearl –  
Journey of Down – and Whip of Diamond –  
Riding to meet the Earl –

c. 1863

1914

666

Ah, Teneriffe!  
Retreating Mountain!  
Purples of Ages – pause for *you* –  
Sunset – reviews her Sapphire Regiment –  
Day – drops you her Red Adieu!  
  
Still – Clad in your Mail of ices –  
Thigh of Granite – and thew – of Steel –  
Heedless – alike – of pomp – or parting  
  
Ah, Teneriffe!  
I'm kneeling – still –

c. 1863

1914

667

Bloom upon the Mountain – stated –  
Blameless of a Name –  
Efflorescence of a Sunset –  
Reproduced – the same –  
  
Seed, had I, my Purple Sowing  
Should endow the Day –  
Not a Tropic of a Twilight –  
Show itself away –

Who for tilling – to the Mountain  
Come, and disappear –  
Whose be Her Renown, or fading,  
Witness, is not here –

While I state – the Solemn Petals,  
Far as North – and East,  
Far as South and West – expanding –  
Culminate – in Rest –

And the Mountain to the Evening  
Fit His Countenance –  
Indicating, by no Muscle –  
The Experience –

c. 1863

1914

### 668

“Nature” is what we see –  
The Hill – the Afternoon –  
Squirrel – Eclipse – the Bumble bee –  
Nay – Nature is Heaven –  
Nature is what we hear –  
The Bobolink – the Sea –  
Thunder – the Cricket –  
Nay – Nature is Harmony –  
Nature is what we know –  
Yet have no art to say –  
So impotent Our Wisdom is  
To her Simplicity.

c. 1863

1914

### 669

No Romance sold unto  
Could so enthrall a Man  
As the perusal of  
His Individual One –  
’Tis Fiction’s – to dilute to Plausibility  
*Our* Novel – When ’tis small enough  
To Credit – ”Tisn’t true!

c. 1863

1914

One need not be a Chamber – to be Haunted –  
 One need not be a House –  
 The Brain has Corridors – surpassing  
 Material Place –

Far safer, of a Midnight Meeting  
 External Ghost  
 Than its interior Confronting –  
 That Cooler Host.

Far safer, through an Abbey gallop,  
 The Stones a'chase –  
 Than Unarmed, one's a'self encounter –  
 In lonesome Place –

Ourself behind ourself, concealed –  
 Should startle most –  
 Assassin hid in our Apartment  
 Be Horror's least.

The Body – borrows a Revolver –  
 He bolts the Door –  
 O'erlooking a superior spectre –  
 Or More –

c. 1863

1891

She dwelleth in the Ground –  
 Where Daffodils – abide –  
 Her Maker – Her Metropolis –  
 The Universe – Her Maid –

To fetch Her Grace – and Hue –  
 And Fairness – and Renown –  
 The Firmament's – To Pluck Her –  
 And fetch Her Thee – be mine –

c. 1863

1945

The Future – never spoke –  
 Nor will He – like the Dumb –  
 Reveal by sign – a syllable  
 Of His Profound To Come –

But when the News be ripe –  
 Presents it – in the Act –  
 Forestalling Preparation –  
 Escape – or Substitute –

Indifferent to Him –  
 The Dower – as the Doom –  
 His Office – but to execute  
 Fate's – Telegram – to Him –

c. 1863

1914

The Love a Life can show Below  
 Is but a filament, I know,  
 Of that diviner thing  
 That faints upon the face of Noon –  
 And smites the Tinder in the Sun –  
 And hinders Gabriel's Wing –

'Tis this – in Music – hints and sways –  
 And far abroad on Summer days –  
 Distils uncertain pain –  
 'Tis this enamors in the East –  
 And tints the Transit in the West  
 With harrowing Iodine –

'Tis this – invites – appalls – endows –  
 Flits – glimmers – proves – dissolves –  
 Returns – suggests – convicts – enchant –  
 Then – flings in Paradise –

c. 1863

1929

## 674

The Soul that hath a Guest  
 Doth seldom go abroad –  
 Diviner Crowd at Home –  
 Obliterate the need –

And Courtesy forbid  
 A Host's departure when  
 Upon Himself be visiting  
 The Emperor of Men –

c. 1863

1914

## 675

Essential Oils – are wrung –  
 The Attar from the Rose  
 Be not expressed by Suns – alone –  
 It is the gift of Screws –

The General Rose – decay –  
 But this – in Lady's Drawer  
 Make Summer – When the Lady lie  
 In Ceaseless Rosemary –

c. 1863

1891

## 676

Least Bee that brew –  
 A Honey's Weight  
 The Summer multiply –  
 Content Her smallest fraction help  
 The Amber Quantity –

c. 1863

1945

## 677

To be alive – is Power –  
 Existence – in itself –  
 Without a further function –  
 Omnipotence – Enough –

To be alive – and Will!  
‘Tis able as a God –  
The Maker – of Ourselves – be what –  
Such being Finitude!

c. 1863

1914

678

Wolfe demanded during dying  
“Which obtain the Day”?  
“General, the British” – “Easy”  
Answered Wolfe “to die”  
  
Montcalm, his opposing Spirit  
Rendered with a smile  
“Sweet” said he “my own Surrender  
Liberty’s beguile”

c. 1863

1945

679

Conscious am I in my Chamber,  
Of a shapeless friend –  
He doth not attest by Posture –  
Nor Confirm – by Word –  
  
Neither Place – need I present Him –  
Fitter Courtesy  
Hospitable intuition  
Of His Company –  
  
Presence – is His furthest license –  
Neither He to Me  
Nor Myself to Him – by Accent –  
Forfeit Probit –  
  
Weariness of Him, were quainter  
Than Monotony  
Knew a Particle – of Space’s  
Vast Society –

Neither if He visit Other –  
Do He dwell – or Nay – know I –  
But Instinct esteem Him  
Immortality –

c. 1863

1929

680

Each Life Converges to some Centre –  
Expressed – or still –  
Exists in every Human Nature  
A Goal –

Embodied scarcely to itself – it may be –  
Too fair  
For Credibility's presumption  
To mar –

Adored with caution – as a Brittle Heaven –  
To reach  
Were hopeless, as the Rainbow's Raiment  
To touch –

Yet persevered toward – sure – for the Distance –  
How high –  
Unto the Saints' slow diligence –  
The Sky –

Ungained – it may be – by a Life's low Venture –  
But then –  
Eternity enable the endeavoring  
Again.

c. 1863

1891

681

Soil of Flint, if steady tilled –  
Will refund the Hand –  
Seed of Palm, by Libyan Sun  
Fructified in Sand –

c. 1863

1896

## 682

"Twould ease – a Butterfly –  
 Elate – a Bee –  
 Thou'rt neither –  
 Neither – thy capacity –  
  
 But, Blossom, were I,  
 I would rather be  
 Thy moment  
 Than a Bee's Eternity –  
  
 Content of fading  
 Is enough for me –  
 Fade I unto Divinity –  
  
 And Dying – Lifetime –  
 Ample as the Eye –  
 Her least attention raise on me –

c. 1863

1945

## 683

The Soul unto itself  
 Is an imperial friend –  
 Or the most agonizing Spy –  
 An Enemy – could send –  
  
 Secure against its own –  
 No treason it can fear –  
 Itself – its Sovereign – of itself  
 The Soul should stand in Awe –

c. 1862

1891

## 684

Best Gains – must have the Losses' Test –  
 To constitute them – Gains –

c. 1863

1891

685

Not "Revelation" – 'tis – that waits,  
But our unfurnished eyes –

c. 1863

1891

686

They say that "Time assuages" –  
Time never did assuage –  
An actual suffering strengthens  
As Sinews do, with age –

Time is a Test of Trouble –  
But not a Remedy –  
If such it prove, it prove too  
There was no Malady –

c. 1863

1896

687

I'll send the feather from my Hat!  
Who knows – but at the sight of *that*  
My Sovereign will relent?  
As trinket – worn by faded Child –  
Confronting eyes long – comforted –  
Blisters the Adamant!

c. 1861

1894

688

"Speech" – is a prank of *Parliament* –  
"Tears" – a trick of the *nerve* –  
But the Heart with the heaviest freight on –  
Doesn't – always – move –

c. 1862

1894

## 689

The Zeroes – taught us – Phosphorus –  
 We learned to like the Fire  
 By playing Glaciers – when a Boy –  
 And Tinder – guessed – by power  
 Of Opposite – to balance Odd –  
 If White – a Red – must be!  
 Paralysis – our Primer – dumb –  
 Unto Vitality!

c. 1863

1894

## 690

Victory comes late –  
 And is held low to freezing lips –  
 Too rapt with frost  
 To take it –  
 How sweet it would have tasted –  
 Just a Drop –  
 Was God so economical?  
 His Table's spread too high for Us –  
 Unless We dine on tiptoe –  
 Crumbs – fit such little mouths –  
 Cherries – suit Robins –  
 The Eagle's Golden Breakfast strangles – Them –  
 God keep His Oath to Sparrows –  
 Who of little Love – know how to starve –

c. 1863

1891

## 691

Would you like summer? Taste of ours.  
 Spices? Buy here!  
 Ill! We have berries, for the parching!  
 Weary! Furloughs of down!  
 Perplexed! Estates of violet trouble ne'er looked on!  
 Captive! We bring reprieve of roses!  
 Fainting! Flasks of air!

Even for Death, a fairy medicine.  
But, which is it, sir?

c. 1863?

1894

692

The Sun kept setting – setting – still  
No Hue of Afternoon –  
Upon the Village I perceived –  
From House to House 'twas Noon –

The Dusk kept dropping – dropping – still  
No Dew upon the Grass –  
But only on my Forehead stopped –  
And wandered in my Face –

My Feet kept drowsing – drowsing – still  
My fingers were awake –  
Yet why so little sound – Myself  
Unto my Seeming – make?

How well I knew the Light before –  
I could see it now –  
'Tis Dying – I am doing – but  
I'm not afraid to know –

c. 1863

1890

693

Shells from the Coast mistaking –  
I cherished them for All –  
Happening in After Ages  
To entertain a Pearl –

Wherfore so late – I murmured –  
My need of Thee – be done –  
Therefore – the Pearl responded –  
My Period begin

c. 1863

1945

The Heaven vests for Each  
 In that small Deity  
 It craved the grace to worship  
 Some bashful Summer's Day -

Half shrinking from the Glory  
 It importuned to see  
 Till these faint Tabernacles drop  
 In full Eternity -

How imminent the Venture -  
 As one should sue a Star -  
 For His mean sake to leave the Row  
 And entertain Despair -

A Clemency so common -  
 We almost cease to fear -  
 Enabling the minutest -  
 And furthest - to adore -

c. 1863

1935

As if the Sea should part  
 And show a further Sea -  
 And that - a further - and the Three  
 But a presumption be -

Of Periods of Seas -  
 Unvisited of Shores -  
 Themselves the Verge of Seas to be -  
 Eternity - is Those -

c. 1863

1929

Their Height in Heaven comforts not -  
 Their Glory - nought to me -  
 'Twas best imperfect - as it was -  
 I'm finite - I can't see -

The House of Supposition –  
The Glimmering Frontier that  
Skirts the Acres of Perhaps –  
To Me – shows insecure –

The Wealth I had – contented me –  
If 'twas a meaner size –  
Then I had counted it until  
It pleased my narrow Eyes –

Better than larger values –  
That show however true –  
This timid life of Evidence  
Keeps pleading – “I don’t know.”

c. 1863

1891

697

I could bring You Jewels – had I a mind to –  
But You have enough – of those –  
I could bring You Odors from St. Domingo –  
Colors – from Vera Cruz –

Berries of the Bahamas – have I –  
But this little Blaze  
Flickering to itself – in the Meadow –  
Suits Me – more than those –

Never a Fellow matched this Topaz –  
And his Emerald Swing –  
Dower itself – for Bobadilo –  
Better – Could I bring?

c. 1863

1945

698

Life – is what we make it –  
Death – We do not know –  
Christ’s acquaintance with Him  
Justify Him – though –

He – would trust no stranger –  
Other – could betray –  
Just His own endorsement –  
That – sufficeth Me –

All the other Distance  
He hath traversed first –  
No New Mile remaineth –  
Far as Paradise –

His sure foot preceding –  
Tender Pioneer –  
Base must be the Coward  
Dare not venture – now –

c. 1863

1929

### 699

The Judge is like the Owl –  
I've heard my Father tell –  
And Owls do build in Oaks –  
So here's an Amber Sill –

That slanted in my Path –  
When going to the Barn –  
And if it serve You for a House –  
Itself is not in vain –

About the price – 'tis small –  
I only ask a Tune  
At Midnight – Let the Owl select  
His favorite Refrain.

c. 1863

1945

### 700

You've seen Balloons set – Haven't You?  
So stately they ascend –  
It is as Swans – discarded You,  
For Duties Diamond –

Their Liquid Feet go softly out  
Upon a Sea of Blonde –  
They spurn the Air, as 'twere too mean  
For Creatures so renowned –

Their Ribbons just beyond the eye –  
They struggle – some – for Breath –  
And yet the Crowd applaud, below –  
They would not encore – Death –

The Gilded Creature strains – and spins –  
Trips frantic in a Tree –  
Tears open her imperial Veins –  
And tumbles in the Sea –

The Crowd – retire with an Oath –  
The Dust in Streets – go down –  
And Clerks in Counting Rooms  
Observe – “ ‘Twas only a Balloon” –

c. 1863

1896

701

A Thought went up my mind today –  
That I have had before –  
But did not finish – some way back –  
I could not fix the Year –

Nor where it went – nor why it came  
The second time to me –  
Nor definitely, what it was –  
Have I the Art to say –

But somewhere – in my Soul – I know –  
I've met the Thing before –  
It just reminded me – 'twas all –  
And came my way no more –

c. 1863

1891

A first Mute Coming –  
 In the Stranger's House –  
 A first fair Going –  
 When the Bells rejoice –

A first Exchange – of  
 What hath mingled – been –  
 For Lot – exhibited to  
 Faith – alone –

c. 1863

1935

Out of sight? What of that?  
 See the Bird – reach it!  
 Curve by Curve – Sweep by Sweep –  
 Round the Steep Air –  
 Danger! What is that to Her?  
 Better 'tis to fail – there –  
 Than debate – here –

Blue is Blue – the World through –  
 Amber – Amber – Dew – Dew –  
 Seek – Friend – and see –  
 Heaven is shy of Earth – that's all –  
 Bashful Heaven – thy Lovers small –  
 Hide – too – from thee –

c. 1863

1929

No matter – now – Sweet –  
 But when I'm Earl –  
 Won't you wish you'd spoken  
 To that dull Girl?

Trivial a Word – just –  
 Trivial – a Smile –

But won't you wish you'd spared one  
When I'm Earl?

I shan't need it - then -  
Crests - will do -  
Eagles on my Buckles -  
On my Belt - too -

Ermine - my familiar Gown -  
Say - Sweet - then  
Won't you wish you'd smiled - just -  
Me upon?

c. 1863

1945

705

Suspense - is Hostiler than Death -  
Death - tho'soever Broad,  
Is just Death, and cannot increase -  
Suspense - does not conclude -

But perishes - to live anew -  
But just anew to die -  
Annihilation - plated fresh  
With Immortality -

c. 1863

1929

706

Life, and Death, and Giants -  
Such as These - are still -  
Minor - Apparatus - Hopper of the Mill -  
Beetle at the Candle -  
Or a Fife's Fame -  
Maintain - by Accident that they proclaim -

c. 1863

1896

707

The Grace - Myself - might not obtain -  
Confer upon My flower -

Refracted but a Countenance –  
For I – inhabit Her –

c. 1863

1935

708

I sometimes drop it, for a Quick –  
The Thought to be alive –  
Anonymous Delight to know –  
And Madder – to conceive –

Consoles a Woe so monstrous  
That did it tear all Day,  
Without an instant's Respite –  
'Twould look too far – to Die –

Delirium – diverts the Wretch  
For Whom the Scaffold neighs –  
The Hammock's Motion lulls the Heads  
So close on Paradise –

A Reef – crawled easy from the Sea  
Eats off the Brittle Line –  
The Sailor doesn't know the Stroke –  
Until He's past the Pain –

c. 1863

1935

709

Publication – is the Auction  
Of the Mind of Man –  
Poverty – be justifying  
For so foul a thing

Possibly – but We – would rather  
From Our Garret go  
White – Unto the White Creator –  
Than invest – Our Snow –

Thought belong to Him who gave it –  
Then – to Him Who bear

Its Corporeal illustration – Sell  
The Royal Air –

In the Parcel – Be the Merchant  
Of the Heavenly Grace –  
But reduce no Human Spirit  
To Disgrace of Price –

c. 1863

1929

710

The Sunrise runs for Both –  
The East – Her Purple Troth  
Keeps with the Hill –  
The Noon unwinds Her Blue  
Till One Breadth cover Two –  
Remotest – still –

Nor does the Night forget  
A Lamp for Each – to set –  
Wicks wide away –  
The North – Her blazing Sign  
Erects in Iodine –  
Till Both – can see –

The Midnight's Dusky Arms  
Clasp Hemispheres, and Homes  
And so  
Upon Her Bosom – One –  
And One upon Her Hem –  
Both lie –

c. 1863

1929

711

Strong Draughts of Their Refreshing Minds  
To drink – enables Mine  
Through Desert or the Wilderness  
As bore it Sealed Wine –

To go elastic – Or as One  
The Camel's trait – attained –

How powerful the Stimulus  
Of an Hermetic Mind –

c. 1863

1929

712

Because I could not stop for Death –  
He kindly stopped for me –  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –  
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste  
And I had put away  
My labor and my leisure too,  
For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess – in the Ring –  
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –  
We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –  
The Dews drew quivering and chill –  
For only Gossamer, my Gown –  
My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed  
A Swelling of the Ground –  
The Roof was scarcely visible –  
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet  
Feels shorter than the Day  
I first surmised the Horses' Heads  
Were toward Eternity –

c. 1863

1890

713

Fame of Myself, to justify,  
All other Plaudit be

Superfluous – An Incense  
Beyond Necessity –

Fame of Myself to lack – Although  
My Name be else Supreme –  
This were an Honor honorless –  
A futile Diadem –

c. 1863

1945

714

Rests at Night  
The Sun from shining,  
Nature – and some Men –  
Rest at Noon – some Men –  
While Nature  
And the Sun – go on –

c. 1863

1945

715

The World – feels Dusty  
When We stop to Die –  
We want the Dew – then –  
Honors – taste dry –

Flags – vex a Dying face –  
But the least Fan  
Stirred by a friend's Hand –  
Cools – like the Rain –

Mine be the Ministry  
When thy Thirst comes –  
And Hybla Balms –  
Dews of Thessaly, to fetch –

c. 1863

1929

716

The Day undressed – Herself –  
Her Garter – was of Gold –

Her Petticoat – of Purple plain –  
Her Dimities – as old

Exactly – as the World –  
And yet the newest Star –  
Enrolled upon the Hemisphere  
Be wrinkled – much as Her –

Too near to God – to pray –  
Too near to Heaven – to fear –  
The Lady of the Occident  
Retired without a care –

Her Candle so expire  
The flickering be seen  
On Ball of Mast in Bosporus –  
And Dome – and Window Pane –

c. 1863

1935

717

The Beggar Lad – dies early –  
It's Somewhat in the Cold –  
And Somewhat in the Trudging feet –  
And haply, in the World –

The Cruel – smiling – bowing World –  
That took its Cambric Way –  
Nor heard the timid cry for “Bread” –  
“Sweet Lady – Charity” –

Among Redeemed Children  
If Trudging feet may stand –  
The Barefoot time forgotten – so –  
The Sleet – the bitter Wind –

The Childish Hands that teased for Pence  
Lifted adoring – then –  
To Him whom never Ragged – Coat  
Did supplicate in vain –

c. 1863

1945

## 718

I meant to find Her when I came –  
 Death – had the same design –  
 But the Success – was His – it seems –  
 And the Surrender – Mine –

I meant to tell Her how I longed  
 For just this single time –  
 But Death had told Her so the first –  
 And she had past, with Him –

To wander – now – is my Repose –  
 To rest – To rest would be  
 A privilege of Hurricane  
 To Memory – and Me.

c. 1863

1896

## 719

A South Wind – has a pathos  
 Of individual Voice –  
 As One detect on Landings  
 An Emigrant's address.

A Hint of Ports and Peoples –  
 And much not understood –  
 The fairer – for the farness –  
 And for the foreignhood.

c. 1863

1945

## 720

No Prisoner be –  
 Where Liberty –  
 Himself – abide with Thee –

c. 1863

1932

## 721

Behind Me – dips Eternity –  
 Before Me – Immortality –  
 Myself – the Term between –

Death but the Drift of Eastern Gray,  
Dissolving into Dawn away,  
Before the West begin –

'Tis Kingdoms – afterward – they say –  
In perfect – pauseless Monarchy –  
Whose Prince – is Son of None –  
Himself – His Dateless Dynasty –  
Himself – Himself diversify –  
In Duplicate divine –

'Tis Miracle before Me – then –  
'Tis Miracle behind – between –  
A Crescent in the Sea –  
With Midnight to the North of Her –  
And Midnight to the South of Her –  
And Maelstrom – in the Sky –

c. 1863

1929

722

Sweet Mountains – Ye tell Me no lie –  
Never deny Me – Never fly –  
Those same unvarying Eyes  
Turn on Me – when I fail – or feign,  
Or take the Royal names in vain –  
Their far – slow – Violet Gaze –

My Strong Madonnas – Cherish still –  
The Wayward Nun – beneath the Hill –  
Whose service – is to You –  
Her latest Worship – When the Day  
Fades from the Firmament away –  
To lift Her Brows on You –

c. 1863

1945

723

It tossed – and tossed –  
A little Brig I knew – o'ertook by Blast –

It spun – and spun –  
And groped delirious, for Morn –

It slipped – and slipped –  
As One that drunken – stept –  
Its white foot tripped –  
Then dropped from sight –

Ah, Brig – Good Night  
To Crew and You –  
The Ocean's Heart too smooth – too Blue –  
To break for You –

c. 1863

1891

724

It's easy to invent a Life –  
God does it – every Day –  
Creation – but the Gambol  
Of His Authority –

It's easy to efface it –  
The thrifty Deity  
Could scarce afford Eternity  
To Spontaneity –

The Perished Patterns murmur –  
But His Perturbless Plan  
Proceed – inserting Here – a Sun –  
There – leaving out a Man –

c. 1863

1929

725

Where Thou art – that – is Home –  
Cashmere – or Calvary – the same –  
Degree – or Shame –  
I scarce esteem Location's Name –  
So I may Come –

What Thou dost – is Delight –  
Bondage as Play – be sweet –

Imprisonment – Content –  
And Sentence – Sacrament –  
Just We two – meet –

Where Thou art not – is Woe –  
Tho' Bands of Spices – row –  
What Thou dost not – Despair –  
Tho' Gabriel – praise me – Sir –

c. 1863

1929

726

We thirst at first – 'tis Nature's Act –  
And later – when we die –  
A little Water supplicate –  
Of fingers going by –

It intimates the finer want –  
Whose adequate supply  
Is that Great Water in the West –  
Termed Immortality –

c. 1863

1896

727

Precious to Me – She still shall be –  
Though She forget the name I bear –  
The fashion of the Gown I wear –  
The very Color of My Hair –

So like the Meadows – now –  
I dared to show a Tress of Theirs  
If haply – She might not despise  
A Buttercup's Array –

I know the Whole – obscures the Part –  
The fraction – that appeased the Heart  
Till Number's Empery –  
Remembered – as the Milliner's flower

When Summer's Everlasting Dower –  
Confronts the dazzled Bee.

c. 1863

1945

728

Let Us play Yesterday –  
I – the Girl at school –  
You – and Eternity – the  
Untold Tale –

Easing my famine  
At my Lexicon –  
Logarithm – had I – for Drink –  
'Twas a dry Wine –

Somewhat different – must be –  
Dreams tint the Sleep –  
Cunning Reds of Morning  
Make the Blind – leap –

Still at the Egg-life –  
Chafing the Shell –  
When you troubled the Ellipse –  
And the Bird fell –

Manacles be dim – they say –  
To the new Free –  
Liberty – Commoner –  
Never could – to me –

'Twas my last gratitude  
When I slept – at night –  
'Twas the first Miracle  
Let in – with Light –

Can the Lark resume the Shell –  
Easier – for the Sky –  
Wouldn't Bonds hurt more  
Than Yesterday?

Wouldn't Dungeons sorier grate  
On the Man – free –

Just long enough to taste –  
Then – doomed new –

God of the Manacle  
As of the Free –  
Take not my Liberty  
Away from Me –

c. 1863

1935

729

Alter! When the Hills do –  
Falter! When the Sun  
Question if His Glory  
Be the Perfect One –

Surfeit! When the Daffodil  
Doth of the Dew –  
Even as Herself – Sir –  
I will – of You –

c. 1863

1890

730

Defrauded I a Butterfly –  
The lawful Heir – for Thee –

c. 1863

1929

731

“I want” – it pleaded – All its life –  
I want – was chief it said  
When Skill entreated it – the last –  
And when so newly dead –

I could not deem it late – to hear  
That single – steadfast sigh –  
The lips had placed as with a “Please”  
Toward Eternity –

c. 1863

1945

She rose to His Requirement – dropt  
 The Playthings of Her Life  
 To take the honorable Work  
 Of Woman, and of Wife –

If ought She missed in Her new Day,  
 Of Amplitude, or Awe –  
 Or first Prospective – Or the Gold  
 In using, wear away,

It lay unmentioned – as the Sea  
 Develop Pearl, and Weed,  
 But only to Himself – be known  
 The Fathoms they abide –

c. 1863

1890

The Spirit is the Conscious Ear.  
 We actually Hear  
 When We inspect – that's audible –  
 That is admitted – Here –

For other Services – as Sound –  
 There hangs a smaller Ear  
 Outside the Castle – that Contain –  
 The other – only – Hear –

c. 1863

1945

If He were living – dare I ask –  
 And how if He be dead –  
 And so around the Words I went –  
 Of meeting them – afraid –

I hinted Changes – Lapse of Time –  
 The Surfaces of Years –  
 I touched with Caution – lest they crack –  
 And show me to my fears –

Reverted to adjoining Lives –  
Adroitly turning out  
Wherever I suspected Graves –  
'Twas prudenter – I thought –

And He – I pushed – with sudden force –  
In face of the Suspense –  
"Was buried" – "Buried"! "He!"  
My Life just holds the Trench –

c. 1863

1929

735  
Upon Concluded Lives  
There's nothing cooler falls –  
Than Life's sweet Calculations –  
The mixing Bells and Palls –

Makes Lacerating Tune –  
To Ears the Dying Side –  
'Tis Coronal – and Funeral –  
Saluting – in the Road –

c. 1863

1945

736  
Have any like Myself  
Investigating March,  
New Houses on the Hill descried –  
And possibly a Church –

That were not, We are sure –  
As lately as the Snow –  
And are Today – if We exist –  
Though how may this be so?

Have any like Myself  
Conjectured Who may be  
The Occupants of the Abodes –  
So easy to the Sky –

"Twould seem that God should be  
The nearest Neighbor to –  
And Heaven – a convenient Grace  
For Show, or Company –

Have any like Myself  
Preserved the Charm secure  
By shunning carefully the Place  
All Seasons of the Year,

Excepting March – 'Tis then  
My Villages be seen –  
And possibly a Steeple –  
Not afterward – by Men –

c. 1863

1935

737

The Moon was but a Chin of Gold  
A Night or two ago –  
And now she turns Her perfect Face  
Upon the World below –

Her Forehead is of Amplest Blonde –  
Her Cheek – a Beryl hewn –  
Her Eye unto the Summer Dew  
The likest I have known –

Her Lips of Amber never part –  
But what must be the smile  
Upon Her Friend she could confer  
Were such Her Silver Will –

And what a privilege to be  
But the remotest Star –  
For Certainty She take Her Way  
Beside Your Palace Door –

Her Bonnet is the Firmament –  
The Universe – Her Shoe –

The Stars – the Trinkets at Her Belt –  
Her Dimities – of Blue –

c. 1863

1896

738

You said that I “was Great” – one Day –  
Then “Great” it be – if that please Thee –  
Or Small – or any size at all –  
Nay – I’m the size suit Thee –

Tall – like the Stag – would that?  
Or lower – like the Wren –  
Or other heights of Other Ones  
I’ve seen?

Tell which – it’s dull to guess –  
And I must be Rhinoceros  
Or Mouse  
At once – for Thee –

So say – if Queen it be –  
Or Page – please Thee –  
I’m that – or nought –  
Or other thing – if other thing there be –  
With just this Stipulus –  
I suit Thee –

c. 1863

1945

739

I many times thought Peace had come  
When Peace was far away –  
As Wrecked Men – deem they sight the Land –  
At Centre of the Sea –

And struggle slacker – but to prove  
As hopelessly as I –  
How many the fictitious Shores –  
Before the Harbor be –

c. 1863

1891

You taught me Waiting with Myself –  
 Appointment strictly kept –  
 You taught me fortitude of Fate –  
 This – also – I have learnt –

An Altitude of Death, that could  
 No bitterer debar  
 Than Life – had done – before it –  
 Yet – there is a Science more –

The Heaven you know – to understand  
 That you be not ashamed  
 Of Me – in Christ's bright Audience  
 Upon the further Hand –

c. 1863

1929

Drama's Vitallest Expression is the Common Day  
 That arise and set about Us –  
 Other Tragedy

Perish in the Recitation –  
 This – the best enact  
 When the Audience is scattered  
 And the Boxes shut –

"Hamlet" to Himself were Hamlet –  
 Had not Shakespeare wrote –  
 Though the "Romeo" left no Record  
 Of his Juliet,

It were infinite enacted  
 In the Human Heart –  
 Only Theatre recorded  
 Owner cannot shut –

c. 1863

1929

Four Trees – upon a solitary Acre –  
 Without Design  
 Or Order, or Apparent Action –  
 Maintain –

The Sun – upon a Morning meets them –  
 The Wind –  
 No nearer Neighbor – have they –  
 But God –

The Acre gives them – Place –  
 They – Him – Attention of Passer by –  
 Of Shadow, or of Squirrel, haply –  
 Or Boy –

What Deed is Theirs unto the General Nature –  
 What Plan  
 They severally – retard – or further –  
 Unknown –

c. 1863

1945

The Birds reported from the South –  
 A News express to Me –  
 A spicy Charge, My little Posts –  
 But I am deaf – Today –

The Flowers – appealed – a timid Throng –  
 I reinforced the Door –  
 Go blossom to the Bees – I said –  
 And trouble Me – no More –

The Summer Grace, for Notice strove –  
 Remote – Her best Array –  
 The Heart – to stimulate the Eye  
 Refused too utterly –

At length, a Mourner, like Myself,  
 She drew away austere –

Her frosts to ponder – then it was  
I recollect Her –

She suffered Me, for I had mourned –  
I offered Her no word –

My Witness – was the Crape I bore –  
Her – Witness – was Her Dead –

Thenceforward – We – together dwelt –  
I never questioned Her –  
Our Contract  
A Wiser Sympathy

c. 1863

1935

744

Remorse – is Memory – awake –  
Her Parties all astir –  
A Presence of Departed Acts –  
At window – and at Door –

Its Past – set down before the Soul  
And lighted with a Match –  
Perusal – to facilitate –  
And help Belief to stretch –

Remorse is cureless – the Disease  
Not even God – can heal –  
For 'tis His institution – and  
The Adequate of Hell –

c. 1863

1891

745

Renunciation – is a piercing Virtue –  
The letting go  
A Presence – for an Expectation –  
Not now –  
The putting out of Eyes –  
Just Sunrise –  
Lest Day –

Day's Great Progenitor –  
Outvie  
Renunciation – is the Choosing  
Against itself –  
Itself to justify  
Unto itself –  
When larger function –  
Make that appear –  
Smaller – that Covered Vision – Here –

c. 1863

1929

746

Never for Society  
He shall seek in vain –  
Who His own acquaintance  
Cultivate – Of Men  
Wiser Men may weary –  
But the Man within  
  
Never knew Satiety –  
Better entertain  
Than could Border Ballad –  
Or Biscayan Hymn –  
Neither introduction  
Need You – unto Him –

c. 1863

1894

747

It dropped so low – in my Regard –  
I heard it hit the Ground –  
And go to pieces on the Stones  
At bottom of my Mind –

Yet blamed the Fate that flung it – less  
Than I denounced Myself,  
For entertaining Plated Wares  
Upon my Silver Shelf –

c. 1863

1896

## 748

Autumn – overlooked my Knitting –  
 Dyes – said He – have I –  
 Could disparage a Flamingo –  
 Show Me them – said I –

Cochineal – I chose – for deeming  
 It resemble Thee –  
 And the little Border – Dusker –  
 For resembling Me –

c. 1863

1929

## 749

All but Death, can be Adjusted –  
 Dynasties repaired –  
 Systems – settled in their Sockets –  
 Citadels – dissolved –

Wastes of Lives – resown with Colors  
 By Succeeding Springs –  
 Death – unto itself – Exception –  
 Is exempt from Change –

c. 1863

1929

## 750

Growth of Man – like Growth of Nature –  
 Gravitates within –  
 Atmosphere, and Sun endorse it –  
 But it stir – alone –

Each – its difficult Ideal  
 Must achieve – Itself –  
 Through the solitary prowess  
 Of a Silent Life –

Effort – is the sole condition –  
 Patience of Itself –  
 Patience of opposing forces –  
 And intact Belief –

Looking on – is the Department  
Of its Audience –  
But Transaction – is assisted  
By no Countenance –

c. 1863

1929

751

My Worthiness is all my Doubt –  
His Merit – all my fear –  
Contrasting which, my quality  
Do lowlier – appear –

Lest I should insufficient prove  
For His beloved Need –  
The Chieftest Apprehension  
Upon my thronging Mind –

'Tis true – that Deity to stoop  
Inherently incline –  
For nothing higher than Itself  
Itself can rest upon –

So I – the undivine abode  
Of His Elect Content –  
Conform my Soul – as 'twere a Church,  
Unto Her Sacrament –

c. 1863

1896

752

So the Eyes accost – and sunder  
In an Audience –  
Stamped – occasionally – forever –  
So may Countenance

Entertain – without addressing  
Countenance of One  
In a Neighboring Horizon –  
Gone – as soon as known –

c. 1863

1929

My Soul – accused me – And I quailed –  
 As Tongues of Diamond had reviled  
 All else accused me – and I smiled –  
 My Soul – that Morning – was My friend –

Her favor – is the best Disdain  
 Toward Artifice of Time – or Men –  
 But Her Disdain – 'twere lighter bear  
 A finger of Enamelled Fire –

c. 1863

1929

My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –  
 In Corners – till a Day  
 The Owner passed – identified –  
 And carried Me away –

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods –  
 And now We hunt the Doe –  
 And every time I speak for Him –  
 The Mountains straight reply –

And do I smile, such cordial light  
 Upon the Valley glow –  
 It is as a Vesuvian face  
 Had let its pleasure through –

And when at Night – Our good Day done –  
 I guard My Master's Head –  
 'Tis better than the Eider-Duck's  
 Deep Pillow – to have shared –

To foe of His – I'm deadly foe –  
 None stir the second time –  
 On whom I lay a Yellow Eye –  
 Or an emphatic Thumb –

Though I than He – may longer live  
 He longer must – than I –

For I have but the power to kill,  
Without – the power to die –

c. 1863

1929

755

No Bobolink – reverse His Singing  
When the only Tree  
Ever He minded occupying  
By the Farmer be –

Clove to the Root –  
His Spacious Future –  
Best Horizon – gone –  
Whose Music be His  
Only Anodyne –  
Brave Bobolink –

c. 1863

1945

756

One Blessing had I than the rest  
So larger to my Eyes  
That I stopped gauging – satisfied –  
For this enchanted size –

It was the limit of my Dream –  
The focus of my Prayer –  
A perfect – paralyzing Bliss –  
Contented as Despair –

I knew no more of Want – or Cold –  
Phantasms both become  
For this new Value in the Soul –  
Supremest Earthly Sum –

The Heaven below the Heaven above –  
Obscured with ruddier Blue –  
Life's Latitudes leant over – full –  
The Judgment perished – too –

Why Bliss so scantily disburse –  
Why Paradise defer –  
Why Floods be served to Us – in Bowls –  
I speculate no more –

c. 1863

1896

757  
The Mountains – grow unnoticed –  
Their Purple figures rise  
Without attempt – Exhaustion –  
Assistance – or Applause –  
  
In Their Eternal Faces  
The Sun – with just delight  
Looks long – and last – and golden –  
For fellowship – at night –

c. 1863

1929

758  
These – saw Visions –  
Latch them softly –  
These – held Dimples –  
Smooth them slow –  
This – addressed departing accents –  
Quick – Sweet Mouth – to miss thee so –  
  
This – We stroked –  
Unnumbered Satin –  
These – we held among our own –  
Fingers of the Slim Aurora –  
Not so arrogant – this Noon –  
  
These – adjust – that ran to meet us –  
Pearl – for Stocking – Pearl for Shoe –  
Paradise – the only Palace  
Fit for Her reception – now –

c. 1863

1935

He fought like those Who've nought to lose –  
 Bestowed Himself to Balls  
 As One who for a further Life  
 Had not a further Use –

Invited Death – with bold attempt –  
 But Death was Coy of Him  
 As Other Men, were Coy of Death –  
 To Him – to live – was Doom –

His Comrades, shifted like the Flakes  
 When Gusts reverse the Snow –  
 But He – was left alive Because  
 Of Greediness to die –

c. 1863

1935

Most she touched me by her muteness –  
 Most she won me by the way  
 She presented her small figure –  
 Plea itself – for Charity –

Were a Crumb my whole possession –  
 Were there famine in the land –  
 Were it my resource from starving –  
 Could I such a plea withstand –

Not upon her knee to thank me  
 Sank this Beggar from the Sky –  
 But the Crumb partook – departed –  
 And returned On High –

I supposed – when sudden  
 Such a Praise began  
 'Twas as Space sat singing  
 To herself – and men –

'Twas the Winged Beggar –  
 Afterward I learned

To her Benefactor  
Making Gratitude

c. 1863

1929

761

From Blank to Blank –  
A Threadless Way  
I pushed Mechanic feet –  
To stop – or perish – or advance –  
Alike indifferent –

If end I gained  
It ends beyond  
Indefinite disclosed –  
I shut my eyes – and groped as well  
'Twas lighter – to be Blind –

c. 1863

1929

762

The Whole of it came not at once –  
'Twas Murder by degrees –  
A Thrust – and then for Life a chance –  
The Bliss to cauterize –

The Cat reprieves the Mouse  
She eases from her teeth  
Just long enough for Hope to tease –  
Then mashes it to death –  
  
'Tis Life's award – to die –  
Contenteder if once –  
Than dying half – then rallying  
For consciousness Eclipse –

c. 1863

1945

763

He told a homely tale  
And spotted it with tears –

Upon his infant face was set  
The Cicatrice of years –  
  
All crumpled was the cheek  
No other kiss had known  
Than flake of snow, divided with  
The Redbreast of the Barn –  
  
If Mother – in the Grave –  
Or Father – on the Sea –  
Or Father in the Firmament –  
Or Brethren, had he –  
  
If Commonwealth below,  
Or Commonwealth above  
Have missed a Barefoot Citizen –  
I've ransomed it – alive –

c. 1863

1945

764

Presentiment – is that long Shadow – on the Lawn –  
Indicative that Suns go down –  
  
The Notice to the startled Grass  
That Darkness – is about to pass –

c. 1863

1890

765

You constituted Time –  
I deemed Eternity  
A Revelation of Yourself –  
"Twas therefore Deity  
  
The Absolute – removed  
The Relative away –  
That I unto Himself adjust  
My slow idolatry –

c. 1863

1945

My Faith is larger than the Hills –  
 So when the Hills decay –  
 My Faith must take the Purple Wheel  
 To show the Sun the way –

’Tis first He steps upon the Vane –  
 And then – upon the Hill –  
 And then abroad the World He go  
 To do His Golden Will –

And if His Yellow feet should miss –  
 The Bird would not arise –  
 The Flowers would slumber on their Stems –  
 No Bells have Paradise –

How dare I, therefore, stint a faith  
 On which so vast depends –  
 Lest Firmament should fail for me –  
 The Rivet in the Bands

c. 1863

1929

To offer brave assistance  
 To Lives that stand alone –  
 When One has failed to stop them –  
 Is Human – but Divine

To lend an Ample Sinew  
 Unto a Nameless Man –  
 Whose Homely Benediction  
 No other – stopped to earn –

c. 1863

1929

When I hoped, I recollect  
 Just the place I stood –  
 At a Window facing West –  
 Roughest Air – was good –

Not a Sleet could bite me –  
Not a frost could cool –  
Hope it was that kept me warm –  
Not Merino shawl –

When I feared – I recollect  
Just the Day it was –  
Worlds were lying out to Sun –  
Yet how Nature froze –

Icicles upon my soul  
Prickled Blue and Cool –  
Bird went praising everywhere –  
Only Me – was still –

And the Day that I despaired –  
This – if I forget  
Nature will – that it be Night  
After Sun has set –  
Darkness intersect her face –  
And put out her eye –  
Nature hesitate – before  
Memory and I –

c. 1863

1929

769

One and One – are One –  
Two – be finished using –  
Well enough for Schools –  
But for Minor Choosing –

Life – just – Or Death –  
Or the Everlasting –  
More – would be too vast  
For the Soul's Comprising –

c. 1863

1929

770

I lived on Dread –  
To Those who know

The Stimulus there is  
In Danger – Other impetus  
Is numb – and Vitalless –  
  
As 'twere a Spur – upon the Soul –  
A Fear will urge it where  
To go without the Spectre's aid  
Were Challenging Despair.

c. 1863

1891

771

None can experience stint  
Who Bounty – have not known –  
The fact of Famine – could not be  
Except for Fact of Corn –

Want – is a meagre Art  
Acquired by Reverse –  
The Poverty that was not Wealth –  
Cannot be Indigence.

c. 1863

1945

772

The hallowing of Pain  
Like hallowing of Heaven,  
Obtains at a corporeal cost –  
The Summit is not given

To Him who strives severe  
At middle of the Hill –  
But He who has achieved the Top –  
All – is the price of All –

c. 1863

1945

773

Deprived of other Banquet,  
I entertained Myself –

At first – a scant nutrition –  
An insufficient Loaf –  
  
But grown by slender addings  
To so esteemed a size  
'Tis sumptuous enough for me –  
And almost to suffice  
  
A Robin's famine able –  
Red Pilgrim, He and I –  
A Berry from our table  
Reserve – for charity –

c. 1863

1945

774

It is a lonesome Glee –  
Yet sanctifies the Mind –  
With fair association –  
Afar upon the Wind  
  
A Bird to overhear  
Delight without a Cause –  
Arrestless as invisible –  
A matter of the Skies.

c. 1863

1945

775

If Blame be my side – forfeit Me –  
But doom me not to forfeit Thee –  
To forfeit Thee? The very name  
Is sentence from Belief – and Home –

c. 1863

1945

776

Purple –

The Color of a Queen, is this –  
The Color of a Sun

At setting – this and Amber –  
Beryl – and this, at Noon –  
  
And when at night – Auroran widths  
Fling suddenly on men –  
'Tis this – and Witchcraft – nature keeps  
A Rank – for Iodine –

c. 1863

1945

777

The Loneliness One dare not sound –  
And would as soon surmise  
As in its Grave go plumbing  
To ascertain the size –

The Loneliness whose worst alarm  
Is lest itself should see –  
And perish from before itself  
For just a scrutiny –

The Horror not to be surveyed –  
But skirted in the Dark –  
With Consciousness suspended –  
And Being under Lock –

I fear me this – is Loneliness –  
The Maker of the soul  
Its Caverns and its Corridors  
Illuminate – or seal –

c. 1863

1945

778

This that would greet – an hour ago –  
Is quaintest Distance – now –  
Had it a Guest from Paradise –  
Nor glow, would it, nor bow –

Had it a notice from the Noon  
Nor beam would it nor warm –

Match me the Silver Reticence –  
Match me the Solid Calm –

c. 1863

1945

779

The Service without Hope –  
Is tenderest, I think –  
Because 'tis unsustained  
By stint – Rewarded Work –

Has impetus of Gain –  
And impetus of Goal –  
There is no Diligence like that  
That knows not an Until –

c. 1863

1945

780

The Truth – is stirless –  
Other force – may be presumed to move –  
This – then – is best for confidence –  
When oldest Cedars swerve –

And Oaks untwist their fists –  
And Mountains – feeble – lean –  
How excellent a Body, that  
Stands without a Bone –

How vigorous a Force  
That holds without a Prop –  
Truth stays Herself – and every man  
That trusts Her – boldly up –

c. 1863

1945

781

To wait an Hour – is long –  
If Love be just beyond –

[ 380 ]

To wait Eternity – is short –  
If Love reward the end –

c. 1863

1945

782

There is an arid Pleasure –  
As different from Joy –  
As Frost is different from Dew –  
Like element – are they –

Yet one – rejoices Flowers –  
And one – the Flowers abhor –  
The finest Honey – curdled –  
Is worthless – to the Bee –

c. 1863

1945

783

The Birds begun at Four o'clock –  
Their period for Dawn –  
A Music numerous as space –  
But neighboring as Noon –

I could not count their Force –  
Their Voices did expend  
As Brook by Brook bestows itself  
To multiply the Pond.

Their Witnesses were not –  
Except occasional man –  
In homely industry arrayed –  
To overtake the Morn –

Nor was it for applause –  
That I could ascertain –  
But independent Ecstasy  
Of Deity and Men –

By Six, the Flood had done –  
No Tumult there had been

Of Dressing, or Departure –  
And yet the Band was gone –

The Sun engrossed the East –  
The Day controlled the World –  
The Miracle that introduced  
Forgotten, as fulfilled.

c. 1863

1945

784

Bereaved of all, I went abroad –  
No less bereaved was I  
Upon a New Peninsula –  
The Grave preceded me –

Obtained my Lodgings, ere myself –  
And when I sought my Bed –  
The Grave it was reposed upon  
The Pillow for my Head –

I waked to find it first awake –  
I rose – It followed me –  
I tried to drop it in the Crowd –  
To lose it in the Sea –

In Cups of artificial Drowse  
To steep its shape away –  
The Grave – was finished – but the Spade  
Remained in Memory –

c. 1863

1896

785

They have a little Odor – that to me  
Is metre – nay – 'tis melody –  
And spiciest at fading – indicate –  
A Habit – of a Laureate –

c. 1863

1945

Severer Service of myself  
 I – hastened to demand  
 To fill the awful Vacuum  
 Your life had left behind –

I worried Nature with my Wheels  
 When Hers had ceased to run –  
 When she had put away Her Work  
 My own had just begun.

I strove to weary Brain and Bone –  
 To harass to fatigue  
 The glittering Retinue of nerves –  
 Vitality to clog

To some dull comfort Those obtain  
 Who put a Head away  
 They knew the Hair to –  
 And forget the color of the Day –

Affliction would not be appeased –  
 The Darkness braced as firm  
 As all my stratagem had been  
 The Midnight to confirm –

No Drug for Consciousness – can be –  
 Alternative to die  
 Is Nature's only Pharmacy  
 For Being's Malady –

c. 1863

1945

Such is the Force of Happiness –  
 The Least – can lift a Ton  
 Assisted by its stimulus –

Who Misery – sustain –  
 No Sinew can afford –  
 The Cargo of Themselves –

Too infinite for Consciousness'  
Slow capabilities.

c. 1863

1945

788

Joy to have merited the Pain –  
To merit the Release –  
Joy to have perished every step –  
To Compass Paradise –  
  
Pardon – to look upon thy face –  
With these old fashioned Eyes –  
Better than new – could be – for that –  
Though bought in Paradise –  
  
Because they looked on thee before –  
And thou hast looked on them –  
Prove Me – My Hazel Witnesses  
The features are the same –  
  
So fleet thou wert, when present –  
So infinite – when gone –  
An Orient's Apparition –  
Remanded of the Morn –  
  
The Height I recollect –  
'Twas even with the Hills –  
The Depth upon my Soul was notched –  
As Floods – on Whites of Wheels –  
  
To Haunt – till Time have dropped  
His last Decade away,  
And Haunting actualize – to last  
At least – Eternity –

c. 1863

1929

789

On a Columnar Self –  
How ample to rely

[ 384 ]

In Tumult – or Extremity –  
How good the Certainty  
That Lever cannot pry –  
And Wedge cannot divide  
Conviction – That Granitic Base –  
Though None be on our Side –  
Suffice Us – for a Crowd –  
Ourself – and Rectitude –  
And that Assembly – not far off  
From furthest Spirit – God –

c. 1863

1929

790

Nature – the Gentlest Mother is,  
Impatient of no Child –  
The feeblest – or the waywardest –  
Her Admonition mild –  
In Forest – and the Hill –  
By Traveller – be heard –  
Restraining Rampant Squirrel –  
Or too impetuous Bird –  
How fair Her Conversation –  
A Summer Afternoon –  
Her Household – Her Assembly –  
And when the Sun go down –  
Her Voice among the Aisles  
Incite the timid prayer  
Of the minutest Cricket –  
The most unworthy Flower –  
When all the Children sleep –  
She turns as long away  
As will suffice to light Her lamps –  
Then bending from the Sky –  
With infinite Affection –  
And infiniter Care –

Her Golden finger on Her lip –  
Wills Silence – Everywhere –

c. 1863

1891

791

God gave a Loaf to every Bird –  
But just a Crumb – to Me –  
I dare not eat it – tho' I starve –  
My poignant luxury –  
  
To own it – touch it –  
Prove the feat – that made the Pellet mine –  
Too happy – for my Sparrow's chance –  
For Ampler Coveting –  
  
It might be Famine – all around –  
I could not miss an Ear –  
Such Plenty smiles upon my Board –  
My Garner shows so fair –  
  
I wonder how the Rich – may feel –  
An Indiaman – An Earl –  
I deem that I – with but a Crumb –  
Am Sovereign of them all –

c. 1863

1891

792

Through the strait pass of suffering –  
The Martyrs – even – trod.  
Their feet – upon Temptation –  
Their faces – upon God –  
  
A stately – shriven – Company –  
Convulsion – playing round –  
Harmless – as streaks of Meteor –  
Upon a Planet's Bond –  
  
Their faith – the everlasting troth –  
Their Expectation – fair –

The Needle – to the North Degree –  
Wades so – thro' polar Air!

c. 1863

1891

793

Grief is a Mouse –  
And chooses Wainscot in the Breast  
For His Shy House –  
And baffles quest –

Grief is a Thief – quick startled –  
Pricks His Ear – report to hear  
Of that Vast Dark –  
That swept His Being – back –

Grief is a Juggler – boldest at the Play –  
Lest if He flinch – the eye that way  
Pounce on His Bruises – One – say – or Three –  
Grief is a Gourmand – spare His luxury –

Best Grief is Tongueless – before He'll tell –  
Burn Him in the Public Square –  
His Ashes – will  
Possibly – if they refuse – How then know –  
Since a Rack couldn't coax a syllable – now.

c. 1863

1945

794

A Drop fell on the Apple Tree –  
Another – on the Roof –  
A Half a Dozen kissed the Eaves –  
And made the Gables laugh –

A few went out to help the Brook  
That went to help the Sea –  
Myself Conjectured were they Pearls –  
What Necklaces could be –

The Dust replaced, in Hoisted Roads –  
The Birds jocoser sung –

The Sunshine threw his Hat away –  
The Bushes – spangles flung –

The Breezes brought dejected Lutes –  
And bathed them in the Glee –  
Then Orient showed a single Flag,  
And signed the Fete away –

c. 1863

1890

795

Her final Summer was it –  
And yet We guessed it not –  
If tenderer industriousness  
Pervaded Her, We thought

A further force of life  
Developed from within –  
When Death lit all the shortness up  
It made the hurry plain –

We wondered at our blindness  
When nothing was to see  
But Her Carrara Guide post –  
At Our Stupidity –

When duller than our dullness  
The Busy Darling lay –  
So busy was she – finishing –  
So leisurely – were We –

c. 1863

1891

796

Who Giants know, with lesser Men  
Are incomplete, and shy –  
For Greatness, that is ill at ease  
In minor Company –

A Smaller, could not be perturbed –  
The Summer Gnat displays –

Unconscious that his single Fleet  
Do not comprise the skies –

c. 1863

1929

797

By my Window have I for Scenery  
Just a Sea – with a Stem –  
If the Bird and the Farmer – deem it a “Pine” –  
The Opinion will serve – for them –

It has no Port, nor a “Line” – but the Jays –  
That split their route to the Sky –  
Or a Squirrel, whose giddy Peninsula  
May be easier reached – this way –

For Inlands – the Earth is the under side –  
And the upper side – is the Sun –  
And its Commerce – if Commerce it have –  
Of Spice – I infer from the Odors borne –

Of its Voice – to affirm – when the Wind is within –  
Can the Dumb – define the Divine?  
The Definition of Melody – is –  
That Definition is none –

It – suggests to our Faith –  
They – suggest to our Sight –  
When the latter – is put away  
I shall meet with Conviction I somewhere met  
That Immortality –

Was the Pine at my Window a “Fellow  
Of the Royal” Infinity?  
Apprehensions – are God’s introductions –  
To be hallowed – accordingly –

c. 1863

1929

798

She staked her Feathers – Gained an Arc –  
Debated – Rose again –

[ 389 ]

This time – beyond the estimate  
Of Envy, or of Men –  
  
And now, among Circumference –  
Her steady Boat be seen –  
At home – among the Billows – As  
The Bough where she was born –

c. 1863

1935

799

Despair's advantage is achieved  
By suffering – Despair –  
To be assisted of Reverse  
One must Reverse have bore –

The Worthiness of Suffering like  
The Worthiness of Death  
Is ascertained by tasting –

As can no other Mouth  
Of Savors – make us conscious –  
As did ourselves partake –  
Affliction feels impalpable  
Until Ourselves are struck –

c. 1863

1935

800

Two – were immortal twice –  
The privilege of few –  
Eternity – obtained – in Time –  
Reversed Divinity –

That our ignoble Eyes  
The quality conceive  
Of Paradise superlative –  
Through their Comparative.

c. 1863

1945

I play at Riches – to appease  
 The Clamoring for Gold –  
 It kept me from a Thief, I think,  
 For often, overbold

With Want, and Opportunity –  
 I could have done a Sin  
 And been Myself that easy Thing  
 An independent Man –

But often as my lot displays  
 Too hungry to be borne  
 I deem Myself what I would be –  
 And novel Comforting

My Poverty and I derive –  
 We question if the Man –  
 Who own – Esteem the Opulence –  
 As We – Who never Can –

Should ever these exploring Hands  
 Chance Sovereign on a Mine –  
 Or in the long – uneven term  
 To win, become their turn –

How fitter they will be – for Want –  
 Enlightening so well –  
 I know not which, Desire, or Grant –  
 Be wholly beautiful –

c. 1863

1935

Time feels so vast that were it not  
 For an Eternity –  
 I fear me this Circumference  
 Engross my Finity –

To His exclusion, who prepare  
 By Processes of Size

For the Stupendous Vision  
Of His diameters –

c. 1863

1935

803

Who Court obtain within Himself  
Sees every Man a King –  
And Poverty of Monarchy  
Is an interior thing –

No Man depose  
Whom Fate Ordain –  
And Who can add a Crown  
To Him who doth continual  
Conspire against His Own

c. 1863

1929

804

No Notice gave She, but a Change –  
No Message, but a Sigh –  
For Whom, the Time did not suffice  
That She should specify.

She was not warm, though Summer shone  
Nor scrupulous of cold  
Though Rime by Rime, the steady Frost  
Upon Her Bosom piled –

Of shrinking ways – she did not fright  
Though all the Village looked –  
But held Her gravity aloft –  
And met the gaze – direct –

And when adjusted like a Seed  
In careful fitted Ground  
Unto the Everlasting Spring  
And hindered but a Mound

Her Warm return, if so she chose –  
And We – imploring drew –

Removed our invitation by  
As Some She never knew -

c. 1863

1935

805

This Bauble was preferred of Bees -  
By Butterflies admired  
At Heavenly - Hopeless Distances -  
Was justified of Bird -

Did Noon - enamel - in Herself  
Was Summer to a Score  
Who only knew of Universe -  
It had created Her.

c. 1863

1935

806

A Plated Life - diversified  
With Gold and Silver Pain  
To prove the presence of the Ore  
In Particles - 'tis when

A Value struggle - it exist -  
A Power - will proclaim  
Although Annihilation pile  
Whole Chaoses on Him -

c. 1863

1935

807

Expectation - is Contentment -  
Gain - Satiety -  
But Satiety - Conviction  
Of Necessity

Of an Austere trait in Pleasure -  
Good, without alarm

Is a too established Fortune –  
Danger – deepens Sum –

c. 1863

1929

808

So set its Sun in Thee  
What Day be dark to me –  
What Distance – far –  
So I the Ships may see  
That touch – how seldomly –  
Thy Shore?

c. 1864

1914

809

Unable are the Loved to die  
For Love is Immortality,  
Nay, it is Deity –

Unable they that love – to die  
For Love reforms Vitality  
Into Divinity.

c. 1864

1932

810

Her Grace is all she has –  
And that, so least displays –  
One Art to recognize, must be,  
Another Art, to praise.

c. 1864

1914

811

The Veins of other Flowers  
The Scarlet Flowers are  
Till Nature leisure has for Terms  
As “Branch,” and “Jugular.”

We pass, and she abides.  
We conjugate Her Skill  
While She creates and federates  
Without a syllable.

c. 1864

1945

812

A Light exists in Spring  
Not present on the Year  
At any other period –  
When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad  
On Solitary Fields  
That Science cannot overtake  
But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,  
It shows the furthest Tree  
Upon the furthest Slope you know  
It almost speaks to you.

Then as Horizons step  
Or Noons report away  
Without the Formula of sound  
It passes and we stay –

A quality of loss  
Affecting our Content  
As Trade had suddenly encroached  
Upon a Sacrament.

c. 1864

1896

813

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies  
And Lads and Girls –  
Was laughter and ability and Sighing  
And Frocks and Curls.

This Passive Place a Summer's nimble mansion  
Where Bloom and Bees  
Exists an Oriental Circuit  
Then cease, like these -

c. 1864

1914

814

One Day is there of the Series  
Termed Thanksgiving Day.  
Celebrated part at Table  
Part in Memory.

Neither Patriarch nor Pussy  
I dissect the Play  
Seems it to my Hooded thinking  
Reflex Holiday.

Had there been no sharp Subtraction  
From the early Sum -  
Not an Acre or a Caption  
Where was once a Room -

Not a Mention, whose small Pebble  
Wrinkled any Sea,  
Unto Such, were such Assembly  
'Twere Thanksgiving Day.

c. 1864

1896

815

The Luxury to apprehend  
The Luxury 'twould be  
To look at Thee a single time  
An Epicure of Me

In whatsoever Presence makes  
Till for a further Food  
I scarcely recollect to starve  
So first am I supplied -

The Luxury to meditate  
The Luxury it was  
To banquet on thy Countenance  
A Sumptuousness bestows

On plainer Days, whose Table far  
As Certainty can see  
Is laden with a single Crumb  
The Consciousness of Thee.

c. 1864

1914

816

A Death blow is a Life blow to Some  
Who till they died, did not alive become –  
Who had they lived, had died but when  
They died, Vitality begun.

c. 1864

1891

817

Given in Marriage unto Thee  
Oh thou Celestial Host –  
Bride of the Father and the Son  
Bride of the Holy Ghost.

Other Betrothal shall dissolve –  
Wedlock of Will, decay –  
Only the Keeper of this Ring  
Conquer Mortality –

c. 1864

1896

818

I could not drink it, Sweet,  
Till You had tasted first,  
Though cooler than the Water was  
The Thoughtfulness of Thirst.

c. 1864

1932

## 819

All I may, if small,  
 Do it not display  
 Larger for the Totalness –  
 'Tis Economy

To bestow a World  
 And withhold a Star –  
 Utmost, is Munificence –  
 Less, tho' larger, poor.

c. 1864

1914

## 820

All Circumstances are the Frame  
 In which His Face is set –  
 All Latitudes exist for His  
 Sufficient Continent –

The Light His Action, and the Dark  
 The Leisure of His Will –  
 In Him Existence serve or set  
 A Force illegible.

c. 1864

1914

## 821

Away from Home are some and I –  
 An Emigrant to be  
 In a Metropolis of Homes  
 Is easy, possibly –

The Habit of a Foreign Sky  
 We – difficult – acquire  
 As Children, who remain in Face  
 The more their Feet retire.

c. 1864

1894

This Consciousness that is aware  
 Of Neighbors and the Sun  
 Will be the one aware of Death  
 And that itself alone

Is traversing the interval  
 Experience between  
 And most profound experiment  
 Appointed unto Men –

How adequate unto itself  
 Its properties shall be  
 Itself unto itself and none  
 Shall make discovery.

Adventure most unto itself  
 The Soul condemned to be –  
 Attended by a single Hound  
 Its own identity.

c. 1864

1945

Not what We did, shall be the test  
 When Act and Will are done  
 But what Our Lord infers We would  
 Had We diviner been –

c. 1864

1929

The Wind begun to knead the Grass –  
 As Women do a Dough –  
 He flung a Hand full at the Plain –  
 A Hand full at the Sky –  
 The Leaves unhooked themselves from Trees –  
 And started all abroad –  
 The Dust did scoop itself like Hands –  
 And throw away the Road –

The Wagons quickened on the Street –  
The Thunders gossiped low –  
The Lightning showed a Yellow Head –  
And then a livid Toe –  
The Birds put up the Bars to Nests –  
The Cattle flung to Barns –  
Then came one drop of Giant Rain –  
And then, as if the Hands  
That held the Dams – had parted hold –  
The Waters Wrecked the Sky –  
But overlooked my Father’s House –  
Just Quartering a Tree –

*first version*

c. 1864

1955

The Wind begun to rock the Grass  
With threatening Tunes and low –  
He threw a Menace at the Earth –  
A Menace at the Sky.

The Leaves unhooked themselves from Trees –  
And started all abroad  
The Dust did scoop itself like Hands  
And threw away the Road.

The Wagons quickened on the Streets  
The Thunder hurried slow –  
The Lightning showed a Yellow Beak  
And then a livid Claw.

The Birds put up the Bars to Nests –  
The Cattle fled to Barns –  
There came one drop of Giant Rain  
And then as if the Hands

That held the Dams had parted hold  
The Waters Wrecked the Sky,