

There have been times when I well might have passed and the ending have come –

Points in my path when the dark might have stolen on me, artless, unrueing,

Ere I had learnt that the world was a welter of futile doing:
Such had been times when I well might have passed, and the ending have come.

Say, on the noon when the ½ sunny hours told that april was nigh,
And I upgathered and cast forth the snow from the crocus border,

Fashioned and furbished the soil into a summer-seeming order,
Glowing in gladsome faith that I quickened the year thereby.

Or on that loneliest of eves when afar & benighted we stood,
She who upheld me and I, in the midmost of EGDON together,
Confident I in her watching & ward through the blackening heather,
Deeming her matchless in might & with measureless scope endured.

Or on that winter-wild night when, reclined by the chimney-nook quoin,
Slowly a drowse overgat me, the smallest & feeblest of folk there,

Weak from my baptism of pain; when at times & anon I awoke there –
Heard of a world wheeling on, with no listing or longing to join.

Even then, while unweeting that vision could vex or that knowledge could numb,

That sweets to the mouth in the belly are bitter, & tart, & untoward,

Then, on some dim-coloured scene should my briefly raised curtain have lowered,

Then might the voice that is law have said, ‘Cease!’ and the ending have come.