

KAHLIL GIBRAN

CLASSIC COLLECTION

ILLUSTRATED



SAND AND FOAM
THE PROPHET
THE MADMAN
HIS PARABLES
AND POEMS

Kahlil Gibran was a Lebanese-American writer, poet, activist, and visual artist. Deeply thoughtful and spiritual, Gibran was also considered a philosopher although he rejected the title.

Gibran is celebrated as a literary hero in Lebanon. He is widely considered the single most important influence on Arabic poetry and literature during the first half of the twentieth century.

Sand and Foam

The Prophet

The Madman, His Parables And Poems

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SAND AND FOAM

“His power came from some great reservoir of spiritual life else it could not have been so universal and so potent, but the majesty and beauty of the language with which he clothed it were all his own.”

– Claude Bragdon

I am for ever walking upon these shores,
Betwixt the sand and the foam.
The high tide will erase my foot-prints,
And the wind will blow away the foam.
But the sea and the shore will remain
For ever.

* * *



Once I filled my hand with mist.

Then I opened it, and lo, the mist was a worm.

And I closed and opened my hand again, and behold there was a bird.

And again I closed and opened my hand, and in its hollow stood a man with a sad face, turned upward.

And again I closed my hand, and when I opened it there was naught but mist.

But I heard a song of exceeding sweetness.

* * *

It was but yesterday I thought myself a fragment quivering without rhythm in the sphere of life.

Now I know that I am the sphere, and all life in rhythmic fragments moves within me.

* * *

They say to me in their awakening, "You and the world you live in are but a grain of sand upon the infinite shore of an infinite sea."

And in my dream I say to them, "I am the infinite sea, and all worlds are but grains of sand upon my shore."

* * *

Only once have I been made mute. It was when a man asked me, "Who are you?"

* * *

The first thought of God was an angel.
The first word of God was a man.

* * *

We were fluttering, wandering, longing creatures a thousand thousand years before the sea and the wind in the forest gave us words.

Now how can we express the ancient of days in us with only the sounds of our yesterdays?

* * *

The Sphinx spoke only once, and the Sphinx said, "A grain of sand is a desert, and a desert is a grain of sand; and now let us be silent again."

I heard the Sphinx, but I did not understand.



* * *

Once I saw the face of a woman, and I beheld all
her children not yet born.

And a woman looked upon my face and she knew
all my forefathers, dead before she was born.

* * *

Now would I fulfil myself. But how shall I unless
I become a planet with intelligent lives dwelling upon
it?

Is not this every man's goal?

* * *

A pearl is a temple built by pain around a grain of
sand.

What longing built our bodies and around what
grains?

* * *

When God threw me, a pebble, into this
wondrous lake I disturbed its surface with countless
circles.

But when I reached the depths I became very still.

* * *

Give me silence and I will outdare the night.

* * *

I had a second birth when my soul and my body
loved one another and were married.

* * *

Once I knew a man whose ears were exceedingly
keen, but he was dumb. He had lost his tongue in a
battle.

I know now what battles that man fought before
the great silence came. I am glad he is dead.

The world is not large enough for two of us.

* * *



Long did I lie in the dust of Egypt, silent and
unaware of the seasons.

Then the sun gave me birth, and I rose and
walked upon the banks of the Nile,

Singing with the days and dreaming with the
nights.

And now the sun treads upon me with a thousand
feet that I may lie again in the dust of Egypt.

But behold a marvel and a riddle!

The very sun that gathered me cannot scatter me.

Still erect am I, and sure of foot do I walk upon
the banks of the Nile.

* * *

Remembrance is a form of meeting.

* * *

Forgetfulness is a form of freedom.

* * *

We measure time according to the movement of
countless suns; and they measure time by little

machines in their little pockets.

Now tell me, how could we ever meet at the same place and the same time?

* * *

Space is not space between the earth and the sun to one who looks down from the windows of the Milky Way.

* * *

Humanity is a river of light running from ex-eternity to eternity.

* * *

Do not the spirits who dwell in the ether envy man his pain?

* * *

On my way to the Holy City I met another pilgrim and I asked him, "Is this indeed the way to the

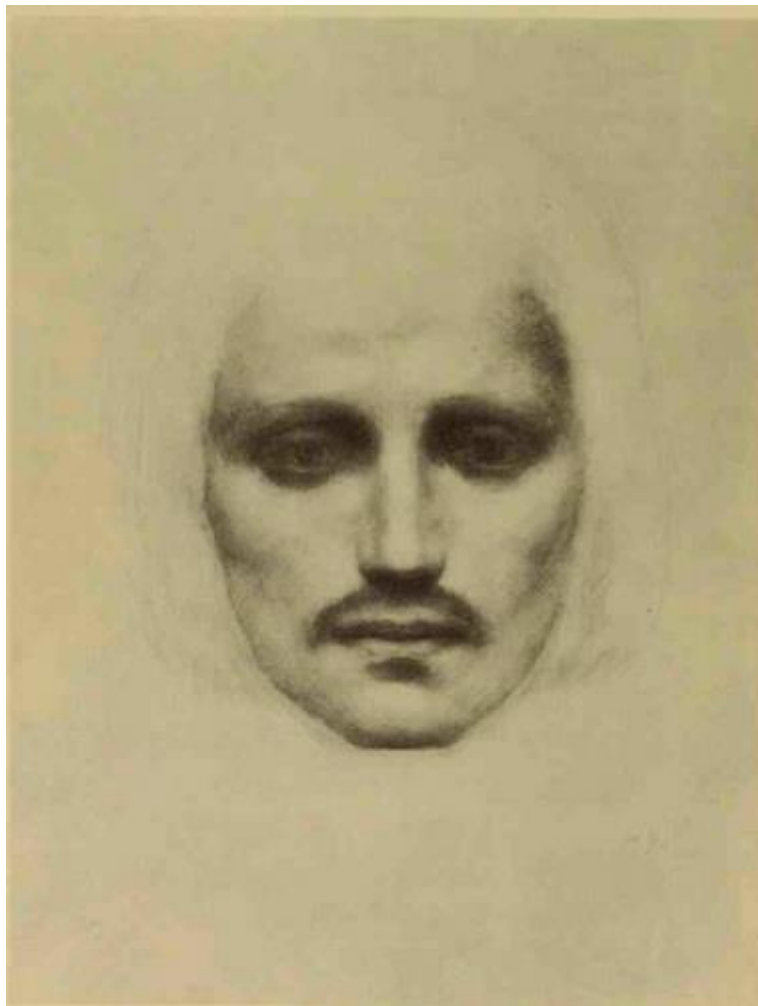
Holy City?”

And he said, “Follow me, and you will reach the Holy City in a day and a night.”

And I followed him. And we walked many days and many nights, yet we did not reach the Holy City.

And what was to my surprise, he became angry with me because he had misled me.

* * *



Make me, O God, the prey of the lion, ere You
make the rabbit my prey.

* * *

One may not reach the dawn save by the path of
the night.

* * *

My house says to me, "Do not leave me, for here
dwells your past."

And the road says to me, "Come and follow me,
for I am your future."

And I say to both my house and the road, "I have
no past, nor have I a future. If I stay here, there is a
going in my staying; and if I go there is a staying in my
going. Only love and death change all things."

* * *

How can I lose faith in the justice of life, when
the dreams of those who sleep upon feathers are not
more beautiful than the dreams of those who sleep upon
the earth?

* * *

Strange, the desire for certain pleasures is a part of my pain.

* * *

Seven times have I despised my soul:

The first time when I saw her being meek that she might attain height.

The second time when I saw her limping before the crippled.

The third time when she was given to choose between the hard and the easy, and she chose the easy.

The fourth time when she committed a wrong, and comforted herself that others also commit wrong.

The fifth time when she forbore for weakness, and attributed her patience to strength.

The sixth time when she despised the ugliness of a face, and knew not that it was one of her own masks.

And the seventh time when she sang a song of praise, and deemed it a virtue.

* * *

I am ignorant of absolute truth. But I am humble before my ignorance, and therein lies my honour and my reward.

* * *

There is a space between man's imagination and man's attainment that may only be traversed by his longing.

* * *

Paradise is there, behind that door, in the next room; but I have lost the key.

Perhaps I have only mislaid it.

* * *



You are blind and I am deaf and dumb, so let us
touch hands and understand.

* * *

The significance of man is not in what he attains,
but rather in what he longs to attain.

* * *

Some of us are like ink and some like paper.
And if it were not for the blackness of some of us,
some of us would be dumb.
And if it were not for the whiteness of some of
us, some of us would be blind.

* * *

Give me an ear and I will give you a voice.

* * *

Our mind is a sponge; our heart is a stream.
Is it not strange that most of us choose sucking

rather than running?

* * *

When you long for blessings that you may not name, and when you grieve knowing not the cause, then indeed you are growing with all things that grow, and rising toward your greater self.

* * *

When one is drunk with a vision, he deems his faint expression of it the very wine.

* * *

You drink wine that you may be intoxicated; and I drink that it may sober me from that other wine.

* * *

When my cup is empty I resign myself to its emptiness; but when it is half full I resent its half-fullness.

* * *

The reality of the other person is not in what he reveals to you, but in what he cannot reveal to you.

Therefore, if you would understand him, listen not to what he says but rather to what he does not say.

* * *

Half of what I say is meaningless; but I say it so that the other half may reach you.

* * *

A sense of humour is a sense of proportion.



* * *

My loneliness was born when men praised my talkative faults and blamed my silent virtues.

* * *

When Life does not find a singer to sing her heart she produces a philosopher to speak her mind.

* * *

A truth is to be known always, to be uttered sometimes.

* * *

The real in us is silent; the acquired is talkative.

* * *

The voice of life in me cannot reach the ear of life in you; but let us talk that we may not feel lonely.

* * *

When two women talk they say nothing; when
one woman speaks she reveals all of life.

* * *

Frogs may bellow louder than bulls, but they
cannot drag the plough in the field nor turn the wheel of
the winepress, and of their skins you cannot make
shoes.

* * *

Only the dumb envy the talkative.

* * *

If winter should say, "Spring is in my heart," who
would believe winter?

* * *

Every seed is a longing.

* * *

Should you really open your eyes and see, you
would behold your image in all images.

And should you open your ears and listen, you
would hear your own voice in all voices.

* * *

It takes two of us to discover truth: one to utter it
and one to understand it.

* * *

Though the wave of words is for ever upon us,
yet our depth is for ever silent.

* * *



Many a doctrine is like a window pane. We see truth through it, but it divides us from truth.

* * *

Now let us play hide and seek. Should you hide in my heart it would not be difficult to find you. But should you hide behind your own shell, then it would be useless for anyone to seek you.

* * *

A woman may veil her face with a smile.

* * *

How noble is the sad heart who would sing a joyous song with joyous hearts.

* * *

He who would understand a woman, or dissect genius, or solve the mystery of silence is the very man who would wake from a beautiful dream to sit at a

breakfast table.

* * *

I would walk with all those who walk. I would not stand still to watch the procession passing by.

* * *

You owe more than gold to him who serves you. Give him of your heart or serve him.

* * *

Nay, we have not lived in vain. Have they not built towers of our bones?

* * *

Let us not be particular and sectional. The poet's mind and the scorpion's tail rise in glory from the same earth.

* * *

Every dragon gives birth to a St. George who slays it.

* * *

Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky. We fell them down and turn them into paper that we may record our emptiness.

* * *

Should you care to write (and only the saints know why you should) you must needs have knowledge and art and magic-the knowledge of the music of words, the art of being artless, and the magic of loving your readers.

* * *

They dip their pens in our hearts and think they are inspired.

* * *

Should a tree write its autobiography it would not be unlike the history of a race.

* * *

If I were to choose between the power of writing a poem and the ecstasy of a poem unwritten, I would choose the ecstasy. It is better poetry.

But you and all my neighbours agree that I always choose badly.

* * *

Poetry is not an opinion expressed. It is a song that rises from a bleeding wound or a smiling mouth.

* * *

Words are timeless. You should utter them or write them with a knowledge of their timelessness.

* * *

A poet is a dethroned king sitting among the ashes of his palace trying to fashion an image out of the ashes.

* * *

Poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary.

* * *

In vain shall a poet seek the mother of the songs of his heart.

* * *

Once I said to a poet, "We shall not know your worth until you die."

And he answered, saying, "Yes, death is always the revealer. And if indeed you would know my worth, it is that I have more in my heart than upon my tongue, and more in my desire than in my hand."

* * *

If you sing of beauty, though alone in the heart of the desert, you will have an audience.

* * *

Poetry is wisdom that enchants the heart.
Wisdom is poetry that sings in the mind.
If we could enchant man's heart and at the same time sing in his mind,
Then in truth he would live in the shadow of God.

* * *

Inspiration will always sing; inspiration will never explain.

* * *

We often sing lullabies to our children that we ourselves may sleep.

* * *

All our words are but crumbs that fall down from
the feast of the mind.

* * *

Thinking is always the stumbling stone to poetry.

* * *

A great singer is he who sings our silences.

* * *

How can you sing if your mouth be filled with
food?

How shall your hand be raised in blessing if it is
filled with gold?

* * *

They say the nightingale pierces his bosom with a
thorn when he sings a love song.

So do we all. How else should we sing?

* * *

Genius is but a robin's song at the beginning of a slow spring.

* * *

Even the most winged spirit cannot escape physical necessity.

* * *

A madman is not less a musician than you or myself; only the instrument on which he plays is a little out of tune.



* * *

The song that lies silent in the heart of a mother
sings upon the lips of her child.

* * *

No longing remains unfulfilled.

* * *

I have never agreed with my other self wholly.
The truth of the matter seems to lie between us.

* * *

Your other self is always sorry for you. But your
other self grows on sorrow; so all is well.

* * *

There is no struggle of soul and body save in the
minds of those whose souls are asleep and whose

bodies are out of tune.

* * *

When you reach the heart of life you shall find beauty in all things, even in the eyes that are blind to beauty.

* * *

We live only to discover beauty. All else is a form of waiting.

* * *

Sow a seed and the earth will yield you a flower. Dream your dream to the sky and it will bring you your beloved.

* * *

The devil died the very day you were born.
Now you do not have to go through hell to meet an angel.

* * *

Many a woman borrows a man's heart; very few could possess it.

* * *

If you would possess you must not claim.

* * *

When a man's hand touches the hand of a woman they both touch the heart of eternity.

* * *

Love is the veil between lover and lover.

* * *

Every man loves two women; the one is the creation of his imagination, and the other is not yet

born.

* * *

Men who do not forgive women their little faults
will never enjoy their great virtues.

* * *

Love that does not renew itself every day
becomes a habit and in turn a slavery.

* * *

Lovers embrace that which is between them
rather than each other.

* * *

Love and doubt have never been on speaking
terms.

* * *

Love is a word of light, written by a hand of light,
upon a page of light.

* * *

Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never
an opportunity.

* * *

If you do not understand your friend under all
conditions you will never understand him.

* * *



Your most radiant garment is of the other person's weaving;

Your most savoury meal is that which you eat at the other person's table;

Your most comfortable bed is in the other person's house.

Now tell me, how can you separate yourself from the other person?

* * *

Your mind and my heart will never agree until your mind ceases to live in numbers and my heart in the mist.

* * *

We shall never understand one another until we reduce the language to seven words.

* * *

How shall my heart be unsealed unless it be broken?

* * *

Only great sorrow or great joy can reveal your truth.

If you would be revealed you must either dance naked in the sun, or carry your cross.

* * *

Should Nature heed what we say of contentment no river would seek the sea, and no winter would turn to spring. Should she heed all we say of thrift, how many of us would be breathing this air?

* * *

You see but your shadow when you turn your back to the sun.

* * *

You are free before the sun of the day, and free before the stars of the night;

And you are free when there is no sun and no moon and no star.

You are even free when you close your eyes upon

all there is.

But you are a slave to him whom you love because you love him.

And a slave to him who loves you because he loves you.

* * *

We are all beggars at the gate of the temple, and each one of us receives his share of the bounty of the King when he enters the temple, and when he goes out.

But we are all jealous of one another, which is another way of belittling the King.

* * *

You cannot consume beyond your appetite. The other half of the loaf belongs to the other person, and there should remain a little bread for the chance guest.

* * *

If it were not for guests, all houses would be graves.

* * *

Said a gracious wolf to a simple sheep, “Will you not honour our house with a visit?”

And the sheep answered: “We would have been honoured to visit your house if it were not in your stomach.”

* * *

I stopped my guest on the threshold and said, “Nay, wipe not your feet as you enter, but as you go out.”

* * *

Generosity is not in giving me that which I need more than you do, but it is in giving me that which you need more than I do.

* * *

You are indeed charitable when you give, and while giving turn your face away so that you may not

see the shyness of the receiver.

* * *

The difference between the richest man and the poorest is but a day of hunger and an hour of thirst.

* * *

We often borrow from our to-morrows to pay our debts to our yesterdays.

* * *

I too am visited by angels and devils, but I get rid of them.

When it is an angel I pray an old prayer, and he is bored;

When it is a devil I commit an old sin, and he passes me by.

* * *

After all, this not a bad prison; but I do not like

this wall between my cell and the next prisoner's cell;

Yet I assure you that I do not wish to reproach the
warder nor the Builder of the prison.

* * *



Those who give you a serpent when you ask for a fish may have nothing but serpents to give. It is then generosity on their part.

* * *

Trickery succeeds sometimes, but it always commits suicide.

* * *

You are truly a forgiver when you forgive murderers who never spill blood, thieves who never steal, and liars who utter no falsehood.

* * *

He who can put his finger upon that which divides good from evil is he who can touch the very hem of the garment of God.

* * *

If your heart is a volcano how shall you expect

flowers to bloom in your hands?

* * *

A strange form of self-indulgence! There are times when I would be wronged and cheated, that I may laugh at the expense of those who think I do not know I am being wronged and cheated.

* * *

What shall I say of him who is the pursuer playing the part of the pursued?

* * *

Let him who wipes his soiled hands with your garment take your garment. He may need it again; surely you would not.

* * *

It is a pity that money-changers cannot be good gardeners.

* * *

Please do not whitewash your inherent faults with your acquired virtues. I would have the faults; they are like mine own.

* * *

How often have I attributed to myself crimes I have never committed, so that the other person may feel comfortable in my presence.

* * *

Even the masks of life are masks of deeper mystery.

* * *

You may judge others only according to your knowledge of yourself.

Tell me now, who among us is guilty and who is unguilty?

* * *

The truly just is he who feels half guilty of your misdeeds.

* * *

Only an idiot and a genius break man-made laws;
and they are the nearest to the heart of God.

* * *

It is only when you are pursued that you become swift.

* * *

I have no enemies, O God, but if I am to have an enemy
Let his strength be equal to mine,
That truth alone may be the victor.

* * *

You will be quite friendly with your enemy when
you both die.

* * *



Perhaps a man may commit suicide in
self-defence.

* * *

Long ago there lived a Man who was crucified for being too loving and too lovable.

And, strange to relate, I met Him thrice yesterday.

The first time He was asking a policeman not to take a prostitute to prison; the second time He was drinking wine with an outcast; and the third time He was having a fist-fight with a promoter inside a church.

* * *

If all they say of good and evil were true, then my life is but one long crime.

* * *

Pity is but half justice.

* * *

The only one who has been unjust to me is the one to whose brother I have been unjust.

* * *

When you see a man led to prison, say in your heart, "Mayhap he is escaping from a narrower prison."

And when you see a man drunken, say in your heart, "Mayhap he sought escape from something still more unbeautiful."

* * *

Oftentimes I have hated in self-defence; but if I were stronger I would not have used such a weapon.

* * *

How stupid is he who would patch the hatred in his eyes with the smile of his lips.

* * *

Only those beneath me can envy or hate me.
I have never been envied or hated; I am above no one.

Only those above me can praise or belittle me.
I have never been praised nor belittled; I am below no one.

* * *

Your saying to me, “I do not understand you,” is praise beyond my worth, and an insult you do not deserve.

* * *

How mean am I when life gives me gold and I give you silver, and yet I deem myself generous.

* * *

When you reach the heart of life you will find yourself not higher than the felon, and not lower than the prophet.

* * *

Strange that you should pity the slow-footed and not the slow-minded,
And the blind-eyed rather than the blind-hearted.

* * *

It is wiser for the lame not to break his crutches
upon the head of his enemy.

* * *

How blind is he who gives you out of his pocket
that he may take out of your heart.

* * *

Life is a procession. The slow of foot finds it too
swift and he steps out;
And the swift of foot finds it too slow and he too
steps out.

* * *

If there is such a thing as sin, some of us commit
it backward following our forefathers' footsteps;
And some of us commit it forward by overruling
our children.

* * *

The truly good is he who is one with all those who are deemed bad.

* * *

We are all prisoners, but some of us are in cells with windows and some without.

* * *

Strange that we all defend our wrongs with more vigour than we do our rights.

* * *

Should we all confess our sins to one another we would all laugh at one another for our lack of originality.

Should we all reveal our virtues we would also laugh for the same cause.

* * *

An individual is above man-made laws until he commits a crime against man-made conventions;

After that he is neither above anyone nor lower than anyone.

* * *

Government is an agreement between you and myself. You and myself are often wrong.

* * *

Crime is either another name of need or an aspect of a disease.

* * *



Is there a greater fault than being conscious of the other person's faults?

* * *

If the other person laughs at you, you can pity him; but if you laugh at him you may never forgive yourself.

If the other person injures you, you may forget the injury; but if you injure him you will always remember.

In truth the other person is your most sensitive self given another body.

* * *

How heedless you are when you would have men fly with your wings and you cannot even give them a feather.

* * *

Once a man sat at my board and ate my bread and drank my wine and went away laughing at me.

Then he came again for bread and wine, and I

spurned him;
And the angels laughed at me.

* * *

Hate is a dead thing. Who of you would be a
tomb?

* * *

It is the honour of the murdered that he is not the
murderer.

* * *

The tribune of humanity is in its silent heart,
never its talkative mind.

* * *

They deem me mad because I will not sell my
days for gold;
And I deem them mad because they think my
days have a price.

* * *

They spread before us their richest of gold and silver, of ivory and ebony, and we spread before them our hearts and our spirits;

And yet they deem themselves the hosts and us the guests.

* * *

I would be the least among men with dreams and the desire to fulfil them, rather than the greatest with no dreams and no desires.

* * *

The most pitiful among men is he who turns his dreams into silver and gold.

* * *

We are all climbing toward the summit of our hearts' desire. Should the other climber steal your sack

and your purse and wax fat on the one and heavy on the other, you should pity him;

The climbing will be harder for his flesh, and the burden will make his way longer.

And should you in your leanness see his flesh puffing upward, help him a step; it will add to your swiftness.

* * *

You cannot judge any man beyond your knowledge of him, and how small is your knowledge.

* * *

I would not listen to a conqueror preaching to the conquered.

* * *

The truly free man is he who bears the load of the bond slave patiently.

* * *

A thousand years ago my neighbour said to me “I hate life, for it is naught but a thing of pain.”

And yesterday I passed by a cemetery and saw life dancing upon his grave.

* * *

Strife in nature is but disorder longing for order.

* * *

Solitude is a silent storm that breaks down all our dead branches;

Yet it sends our living roots deeper into the living heart of the living earth.

* * *

Once I spoke of the sea to a brook, and the brook thought me but an imaginative exaggerator;

And once I spoke of a brook to the sea, and the sea thought me but a depreciative defamer.

* * *

How narrow is the vision that exalts the busyness of the ant above the singing of the grasshopper.

* * *

The highest virtue here may be the least in another world.

* * *

The deep and the high go to the depth or to the height in a straight line; only the spacious can move in circles.

* * *

If it were not for our conception of weights and measures we would stand in awe of the firefly as we do before the sun.

* * *

A scientist without imagination is a butcher with dull knives and outworn scales.

But what would you, since we are not all vegetarians?

* * *

When you sing, the hungry hears you with his stomach.

* * *

Death is not nearer to the aged than to the new-born; neither is life.

* * *

If indeed you must be candid, be candid beautifully; otherwise keep silent, for there is a man in our neighbourhood who is dying.

* * *

Mayhap a funeral among men is a wedding feast

among the angels.

* * *

A forgotten reality may die and leave in its will seven thousand actualities and facts to be spent in its funeral and the building of a tomb.

* * *

In truth we talk only to ourselves, but sometimes we talk loud enough that others may hear us.

* * *

The obvious is that which is never seen until someone expresses it simply.

* * *

If the Milky Way were not within me, how should I have seen it or known it?

* * *

Unless I am a physician among physicians they
would not believe that I am an astronomer.

* * *

Perhaps the sea's definition of a shell is the pearl.
Perhaps time's definition of coal is the diamond.

* * *

Fame is the shadow of passion standing in the
light.

* * *

A root is a flower that disdains fame.

* * *

There is neither religion nor science beyond
beauty.

* * *

Every great man I have known had something small in his make-up; and it was that small something which prevented inactivity or madness or suicide.

* * *

The truly great man is he who would master no one, and who would be mastered by none.

* * *

I would not believe that man is mediocre, simply because he kills the criminals and the prophets.

* * *



Tolerance is love sick with the sickness of haughtiness.

* * *

Worms will turn; but is it not strange that even elephants will yield?

* * *

A disagreement may be the shortest cut between two minds.

* * *

I am the flame and I am the dry brush, and one part of me consumes the other part.

* * *

We are all seeking the summit of the holy mountain; but shall not our road be shorter if we consider the past a chart and not a guide?

* * *

Wisdom ceases to be wisdom when it becomes too proud to weep, too grave to laugh, and too self-ful to see other than itself.

* * *

Had I filled myself with all that you know, what room should I have for all that you do not know?

* * *

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to these teachers.

* * *

A bigot is a stone-deaf orator.

* * *

The silence of the envious is too noisy.

* * *

When you reach the end of what you should know, you will be at the beginning of what you should sense.

* * *

An exaggeration is a truth that has lost its temper.

* * *

If you can see only what light reveals and hear only what sound announces,

Then in truth you do not see nor do you hear.

* * *

A fact is a truth unsexed.

* * *

You cannot laugh and be unkind at the same time.

* * *

The nearest to my heart are a king without a kingdom and a poor man who does not know how to beg.

* * *

A shy failure is nobler than an immodest success.

* * *

Dig anywhere in the earth and you will find a treasure, only you must dig with the faith of a peasant.

* * *

Said a hunted fox followed by twenty horsemen and a pack of twenty hounds, "Of course they will kill me. But how poor and how stupid they must be. Surely it would not be worth while for twenty foxes riding on

twenty asses and accompanied by twenty wolves to chase and kill one man.”

* * *

It is the mind in us that yields to the laws made by us, but never the spirit in us.

* * *

A traveller am I and a navigator, and every day I discover a new region within my soul.

* * *

A woman protested saying, “Of course it was a righteous war. My son fell in it.”

* * *

I said to Life, “I would hear Death speak.”

And Life raised her voice a little higher and said, “You hear him now.”

* * *

When you have solved all the mysteries of life
you long for death, for it is but another mystery of life.

* * *

Birth and death are the two noblest expressions of
bravery.

* * *

My friend, you and I shall remain strangers unto
life,
And unto one another, and each unto himself,
Until the day when you shall speak and I shall
listen,
Deeming your voice my own voice;
And when I shall stand before you
Thinking myself standing before a mirror.

* * *

They say to me, "Should you know yourself you

would know all men.”

And I say, “Only when I seek all men shall I know myself.”

* * *

Man is two men; one is awake in darkness, the other is asleep in light.

* * *

A hermit is one who renounces the world of fragments that he may enjoy the world wholly and without interruption.

* * *

There lies a green field between the scholar and the poet; should the scholar cross it, he becomes a wise man; should the poet cross it, he becomes a prophet.

* * *

Yestereve I saw philosophers in the market-place

carrying their heads in baskets, and crying aloud, “Wisdom! Wisdom for sale!”

Poor philosophers! They must needs sell their heads to feed their hearts.

* * *

Said a philosopher to a street sweeper, “I pity you. Yours is a hard and dirty task.”

And the street sweeper said, “Thank you, sir. But tell me, what is your task?”

And the philosopher answered, saying, “I study man's mind, his deeds and his desires.”

Then the street sweeper went on with his sweeping and said with a smile, “I pity you too.”

* * *

He who listens to truth is not less than he who utters truth.

* * *

No man can draw the line between necessities and luxuries. Only the angels can do that, and the

angels are wise and wistful.

Perhaps the angels are our better thoughts in space.

* * *

He is the true prince who finds his throne in the heart of the dervish.

* * *

Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need.

* * *

In truth you owe naught to any man. You owe all to all men.

* * *

All those who have lived in the past live with us now. Surely none of us would be an ungracious host.

* * *

He who longs the most lives the longest.

* * *

They say to me, "A bird in the hand is worth ten in the bush."

But I say, "A bird and a feather in the bush is worth more than ten birds in the hand."

Your seeking after *that feather* is life with winged feet; nay, it is life itself.

* * *

There are only two elements here, beauty and truth; beauty in the hearts of lovers, and truth in the arms of the tillers of the soil.

* * *

Great beauty captures me, but a beauty still greater frees me even from itself.

* * *

Beauty shines brighter in the heart of him who longs for it than in the eyes of him who sees it.

* * *



I admire the man who reveals his mind to me; I honour him who unveils his dreams. But why am I shy, and even a little ashamed, before him who serves me?

* * *

The gifted were once proud in serving princes.
Now they claim honour in serving paupers.

* * *

The angels know that too many practical men eat their bread with the sweat of the dreamer's brow.

* * *

Wit is often a mask. If you could tear it you would find either a genius irritated or cleverness juggling.

* * *

The understanding attributes to me understanding and the dull dullness. I think they are both right.

* * *

Only those with secrets in their hearts could
divine the secrets in our hearts.

* * *

He who would share your pleasure but not your
pain shall lose the key to one of the seven gates of
Paradise.

* * *

Yes, there is a Nirvanah; it is in leading your
sheep to a green pasture, and in putting your child to
sleep, and in writing the last line of your poem.

* * *

We choose our joys and our sorrows long before
we experience them.

* * *

Sadness is but a wall between two gardens.

* * *

When either your joy or your sorrow becomes great the world becomes small.

* * *

Desire is half of life; indifference is half of death.

* * *

The bitterest thing in our to-day's sorrow is the memory of our yesterday's joy.

* * *

They say to me, "You must needs choose between the pleasures of this world and the peace of the next world."

And I say to them, "I have chosen both the

delights of this world and the peace of the next. For I know in my heart that the Supreme Poet wrote but one poem, and it scans perfectly, and it also rhymes perfectly.”

* * *

Faith is an oasis in the heart which will never be reached by the caravan of thinking.

* * *

When you reach your height you shall desire, but only for desire; and you shall hunger for hunger; and you shall thirst for greater thirst.

* * *

If you reveal your secrets to the wind you should not blame the wind for revealing them to the trees.

* * *

The flowers of spring are winter's dreams related

at the breakfast table of the angels.

* * *

Said a skunk to a tuberose, "See how swiftly I run, while you cannot walk nor even creep."

Said the tuberose to the skunk, "Oh, most noble swift runner, please run swiftly!"

* * *

Turtles can tell more about the roads than hares.

* * *

Strange that creatures without backbones have the hardest shells.

* * *

The most talkative is the least intelligent, and there is hardly a difference between an orator and an auctioneer.

* * *

Be grateful that you do not have to live down the
renown of a father nor the wealth of an uncle.

But above all be grateful that no one will have to
live down either your renown or your wealth.

* * *

Only when a juggler misses catching his ball does
he appeal to me.

* * *

The envious praises me unknowingly.

* * *

Long were you a dream in your mother's sleep,
and then she woke to give you birth.

* * *

The germ of the race is in your mother's longing.

* * *

My father and mother desired a child and they begot me.

And I wanted a mother and a father and I begot night and the sea.

* * *

Some of our children are our justifications and some are but our regrets.

* * *

When night comes and you too are dark, lie down and be dark with a will.

And when morning comes and you are still dark, stand up and say to the day with a will, "I am still dark."

It is stupid to play a role with the night and the day.

They would both laugh at you.

* * *

The mountain veiled in mist is not a hill; an oak tree in the rain is not a weeping willow.

* * *

Behold, here is a paradox: the deep and high are nearer to one another than the mid-level to either.

* * *

When I stood a clear mirror before you, you gazed into me and saw your image.

Then you said, "I love you."

But in truth you loved yourself in me.

* * *

When you enjoy loving your neighbour it ceases to be a virtue.

* * *

Love which is not always springing is always dying.

* * *

You cannot have youth and the knowledge of it at the same time;

For youth is too busy living to know, and knowledge is too busy seeking itself to live.

* * *

You may sit at your window watching the passers-by. And watching you may see a nun walking toward your right hand, and a prostitute toward your left hand.

And you may say in your innocence, "How noble is the one and how ignoble is the other."

And should you close your eyes and listen awhile you would hear a voice whispering in the ether, "One seeks me in prayer, and the other in pain. And in the spirit of each there is a bower for my spirit."

* * *

Once every hundred years Jesus of Nazareth meets Jesus of the Christian in a garden among the hills of Lebanon. And they talk long; and each time Jesus of Nazareth goes away saying to Jesus of the Christian, "My friend, I fear we shall never, never agree."

* * *

May God feed the over-abundant!

* * *

A great man has two hearts: one bleeds and the other forbears.

* * *

Should one tell a lie which does not hurt you nor anyone else, why not say in your heart that the house of his facts is too small for his fancies, and he had to leave it for larger space?

* * *

Behind every closed door is a mystery sealed
with seven seals.

* * *

Waiting is the hoofs of time.

* * *

What if trouble should be a new window in the
Eastern wall of your house?

* * *

You may forget the one with whom you have
laughed, but never the one with whom you have wept.

* * *

There must be something strangely sacred in salt.
It is in our tears and in the sea.

* * *

Our God in His gracious thirst will drink us all,
the dewdrop and the tear.

* * *

You are but a fragment of your giant self, a
mouth that seeks bread, and a blind hand that holds the
cup for a thirsty mouth.

* * *

If you would rise but a cubit above race and
country and self you would indeed become godlike.

* * *

If I were you I would not find fault with the sea at
low tide.

It is a good ship and our Captain is able; it is only
your stomach that is in disorder.

* * *

What we long for and cannot attain is dearer than what we have already attained.

* * *

Should you sit upon a cloud you would not see the boundary line between one country and another, nor the boundary stone between a farm and a farm.

It is a pity you cannot sit upon a cloud.

* * *

Seven centuries ago seven white doves rose from a deep valley flying to the snow-white summit of the mountain. One of the seven men who watched the flight said, "I see a black spot on the wing of the seventh dove."

To-day the people in that valley tell of seven black doves that flew to the summit of the snowy mountain.

* * *



In the autumn I gathered all my sorrows and buried them in my garden.

And when April returned and spring came to wed the earth, there grew in my garden beautiful flowers unlike all other flowers.

And my neighbours came to behold them, and they all said to me, “When autumn comes again, at seeding time, will you not give us of the seeds of these flowers that we may have them in our gardens?”

* * *

It is indeed misery if I stretch an empty hand to men and receive nothing; but it is hopelessness if I stretch a full hand and find none to receive.

* * *

I long for eternity because there I shall meet my unwritten poems and my unpainted pictures.

* * *

Art is a step from nature toward the Infinite.

* * *

A work of art is a mist carved into an image.

* * *

Even the hands that make crowns of thorns are better than idle hands.

* * *

Our most sacred tears never seek our eyes.

* * *

Every man is the descendant of every king and every slave that ever lived.

* * *

If the great-grandfather of Jesus had known what was hidden within him, would he not have stood in awe of himself?

* * *

Was the love of Judas' mother for her son less

than the love of Mary for Jesus?

* * *

There are three miracles of our Brother Jesus not yet recorded in the Book: the first that He was a man like you and me; the second that he had a sense of humour; and the third that He knew He was a conqueror though conquered.

* * *

Crucified One, you are crucified upon my heart; and the nails that pierce your hands pierce the walls of my heart.

And tomorrow when a stranger passes by he will not know that two bled here.

He will deem it the blood of one man.

* * *

You may have heard of the Blessed Mountain.
It is the highest mountain in our world.

Should you reach the summit you would have only one desire, and that to descend and be with those

who dwell in the deepest valley.

That is why it is called the Blessed Mountain.

* * *

Every thought I have imprisoned in expression I must free by my deeds.

THE PROPHET

“His power came from some great reservoir of spiritual life else it could not have been so universal and so potent, but the majesty and beauty of the language with which he clothed it were all his own?”

– **Claude Bragdon**

Almustafa, the chosen and the beloved, who was a dawn unto his own day, had waited twelve years in the city of Orphalese for his ship that was to return and bear him back to the isle of his birth.

And in the twelfth year, on the seventh day of Ielool, the month of reaping, he climbed the hill

without the city walls and looked seaward; and he beheld his ship coming with the mist.

Then the gates of his heart were flung open, and his joy flew far over the sea. And he closed his eyes and prayed in the silences of his soul.

But as he descended the hill, a sadness came upon him, and he thought in his heart:

How shall I go in peace and without sorrow? Nay, not without a wound in the spirit shall I leave this city. Long were the days of pain I have spent within its walls, and long were the nights of aloneness; and who can depart from his pain and his aloneness without regret?

Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets, and too many are the children of my longing that walk naked among these hills, and I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache.

It is not a garment I cast off this day, but a skin that I tear with my own hands.

Nor is it a thought I leave behind me, but a heart made sweet with hunger and with thirst.

Yet I cannot tarry longer.

The sea that calls all things unto her calls me, and I must embark.

For to stay, though the hours burn in the night, is to freeze and crystallize and be bound in a mould.

Fain would I take with me all that is here. But how shall I?

A voice cannot carry the tongue and the lips that gave it wings. Alone must it seek the ether.

And alone and without his nest shall the eagle fly across the sun.

Now when he reached the foot of the hill, he turned again towards the sea, and he saw his ship approaching the harbour, and upon her prow the mariners, the men of his own land.

And his soul cried out to them, and he said:

Sons of my ancient mother, you riders of the tides,

How often have you sailed in my dreams. And now you come in my awakening, which is my deeper dream.

Ready am I to go, and my eagerness with sails full set awaits the wind.

Only another breath will I breathe in this still air, only another loving look cast backward,

And then I shall stand among you, a seafarer among seafarers. And you, vast sea, sleepless mother,

Who alone are peace and freedom to the river and the stream,

Only another winding will this stream make, only another murmur in this glade,

And then shall I come to you, a boundless drop to

a boundless ocean.

And as he walked he saw from afar men and women leaving their fields and their vineyards and hastening towards the city gates.

And he heard their voices calling his name, and shouting from field to field telling one another of the coming of his ship.

And he said to himself:

Shall the day of parting be the day of gathering?

And shall it be said that my eve was in truth my dawn?

And what shall I give unto him who has left his plough in midfurrow, or to him who has stopped the wheel of his winepress? Shall my heart become a tree heavy-laden with fruit that I may gather and give unto them?

And shall my desires flow like a fountain that I may fill their cups?

Am I a harp that the hand of the mighty may touch me, or a flute that his breath may pass through me?

A seeker of silences am I, and what treasure have I found in silences that I may dispense with confidence?

If this is my day of harvest, in what fields have I sowed the seed, and in what unremembered seasons?

If this indeed be the hour in which I lift up my

lantern, it is not my flame that shall burn therein.

Empty and dark shall I raise my lantern,

And the guardian of the night shall fill it with oil
and he shall light it also.

These things he said in words. But much in his heart remained unsaid. For he himself could not speak his deeper secret.

And when he entered into the city all the people came to meet him, and they were crying out to him as with one voice.

And the elders of the city stood forth and said:

Go not yet away from us.

A noontide have you been in our twilight, and your youth has given us dreams to dream.

No stranger are you among us, nor a guest, but our son and our dearly beloved.

Suffer not yet our eyes to hunger for your face.

And the priests and the priestesses said unto him:

Let not the waves of the sea separate us now, and the years you have spent in our midst become a memory.

You have walked among us a spirit, and your shadow has been a light upon our faces.

Much have we loved you. But speechless was our love, and with veils has it been veiled.

Yet now it cries aloud unto you, and would stand revealed before you.

And ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation.

And others came also and entreated him. But he answered them not. He only bent his head; and those who stood near saw his tears falling upon his breast.

And he and the people proceeded towards the great square before the temple.

And there came out of the sanctuary a woman whose name was Almitra. And she was a seeress.

And he looked upon her with exceeding tenderness, for it was she who had first sought and believed in him when he had been but a day in their city. And she hailed him, saying:

Prophet of God, in quest of the uttermost, long have you searched the distances for your ship.

And now your ship has come, and you must needs go.

Deep is your longing for the land of your memories and the dwelling place of your greater desires; and our love would not bind you nor our needs hold you.

Yet this we ask ere you leave us, that you speak to us and give us of your truth.

And we will give it unto our children, and they unto their children, and it shall not perish.

In your aloneness you have watched with our days, and in your wakefulness you have listened to the weeping and the laughter of our sleep.

Now therefore disclose us to ourselves, and tell us all that has been shown you of that which is between birth and death.

And he answered,

People of Orphalese, of what can I speak save of that which is even now moving within your souls?

Then said Almitra, Speak to us of **Love** .

And he raised his head and looked upon the people, and there fell a stillness upon them. And with a great voice he said:

When love beckons to you, follow him,

Though his ways are hard and steep.

And when his wings enfold you yield to him,

Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.

And when he speaks to you believe in him,

Though his voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind lays waste the garden.

For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning.

Even as he ascends to your height and caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun,

So shall he descend to your roots and shake them
in their clinging to the earth.

Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself.

He threshes you to make you naked.

He sifts you to free you from your husks.

He grinds you to whiteness.

He kneads you until you are pliant;

And then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that
you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast.

All these things shall love do unto you that you
may know the secrets of your heart, and in that
knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart.

But if in your fear you would seek only love's
peace and love's pleasure,

Then it is better for you that you cover your
nakedness and pass out of love's threshing-floor,

Into the seasonless world where you shall laugh,
but not all of your laughter, and weep, but not all of
your tears.

Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but
from itself.

Love possesses not nor would it be possessed;

For love is sufficient unto love.

When you love you should not say, "God is in my
heart," but rather, "I am in the heart of God."

And think not you can direct the course of love,
for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.

Love has no other desire but to fulfil itself.

But if you love and must needs have desires, let
these be your desires:

To melt and be like a running brook that sings its
melody to the night. To know the pain of too much
tenderness.

To be wounded by your own understanding of
love;

And to bleed willingly and joyfully.

To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give
thanks for another day of loving;

To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's
ecstasy;

To return home at eventide with gratitude;

And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in
your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.

Then Almitra spoke again and said, And what of
Marriage master?

And he answered saying:

You were born together, and together you shall be
forevermore.

You shall be together when the white wings of
death scatter your days.

Aye, you shall be together even in the silent
memory of God.

But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between
you.

Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores
of your souls.

Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from
the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous,
but let each one of you be alone,

Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they
quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's
keeping.

For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each
other's shadow.

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom
said, Speak to us of **Children** .

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing
for itself.

They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not
to you.

You may give them your love but not your
thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to
make them like you. For life goes not backward nor
tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as
living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the
infinite, and He bends you with His might that His
arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for
gladness;

For even as he loves the arrow that flies, so He
loves also the bow that is stable.

Then said a rich man, Speak to us of **Giving** .

And he answered:

You give but little when you give of your
possessions.

It is when you give of yourself that you truly

give.

For what are your possessions but things you keep and guard for fear you may need them tomorrow?

And tomorrow, what shall tomorrow bring to the overprudent dog burying bones in the trackless sand as he follows the pilgrims to the holy city?

And what is fear of need but need itself?

Is not dread of thirst when your well is full, the thirst that is unquenchable?

There are those who give little of the much which they have-and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome.

And there are those who have little and give it all.

These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty.

There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward.

And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism.

And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of virtue;

They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.

Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth.

It is well to give when asked, but it is better to

give unasked, through understanding;

And to the open-handed the search for one who shall receive is joy greater than giving.

And is there aught you would withhold?

All you have shall some day be given;

Therefore give now, that the season of giving may be yours and not your inheritors'.

You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving."

The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture.

They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.

Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights, is worthy of all else from you.

And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream.

And what desert greater shall there be, than that which lies in the courage and the confidence, nay the charity, of receiving?

And who are you that men should rend their bosom and unveil their pride, that you may see their worth naked and their pride unabashed?

See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving.

For in truth it is life that gives unto life-while you, who deem yourself a giver, are but a witness.

And you receivers-and you are all

receivers-assume no weight of gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives.

Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings;

For to be overmindful of your debt, is ito doubt his generosity who has the freehearted earth for mother, and God for father.

Then an old man, a keeper of an inn, said, Speak to us of ***Eating and Drinking*** .

And he said:

Would that you could live on the fragrance of the earth, and like an air plant be sustained by the light.

But since you must kill to eat, and rob the newly born of its mother's milk to quench your thirst, let it then be an act of worship,

And let your board stand an altar on which the pure and the innocent of forest and plain are sacrificed for that which is purer and still more innocent in man.

When you kill a beast say to him in your heart,

“By the same power that slays you, I too am slain; and I too shall be consumed. For the law that delivered you into my hand shall deliver me into a mightier hand.

Your blood and my blood is naught but the sap that feeds the tree of heaven.”

And when you crush an apple with your teeth, say
to it in your heart,

“Your seeds shall live in my body,

And the buds of your tomorrow shall blossom in
my heart,

And your fragrance shall be my breath, And
together we shall rejoice through all the seasons.”

And in the autumn, when you gather the grapes of
your vineyards for the winepress, say in your heart,

“I too am a vineyard, and my fruit shall be
gathered for the winepress,

And like new wine I shall be kept in eternal
vessels.”

And in winter, when you draw the wine, let there
be in your heart a song for each cup;

And let there be in the song a remembrance for
the autumn days, and for the vineyard, and for the
winepress.

Then a ploughman said, Speak to us of **Work** .

And he answered, saying:

You work that you may keep pace with the earth
and the soul of the earth.

For to be idle is to become a stranger unto the
seasons, and to step out of life's procession, that
marches in majesty and proud submission towards the
infinite.

When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music.

Which of you would be a reed, dumb and silent, when all else sings together in unison?

Always you have been told that work is a curse and labour a misfortune.

But I say to you that when you work you fulfil a part of earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born,

And in keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving life,

And to love life through labour is to be intimate with life's inmost secret.

But if you in your pain call birth an affliction and the support of the flesh a curse written upon your brow, then I answer that naught but the sweat of your brow shall wash away that which is written.

You have been told also that life is darkness, and in your weariness you echo what was said by the weary.

And I say that life is indeed darkness 'save when there is urge,

And all urge is blind save when there is knowledge,

And all knowledge is vain save when there is work,

And all work is empty save when there is love;

And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.

And what is it to work with love?

It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth.

It is to build a house with affection, even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.

It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.

It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit,

And to know that all the blessed dead are standing about you and watching.

Often have I heard you say, as if speaking in sleep, "He who works in marble, and finds the shape of his own soul in the stone, is nobler than he who ploughs the soil. And he who seizes the rainbow to lay it on a cloth in the likeness of man, is more than he who makes the sandals for our feet."

But I say, not in sleep but in the overwakefulness of noontide, that the wind speaks not more sweetly to the giant oaks than to the least of all the blades of grass;

And he alone is great who turns the voice of the wind into a song made sweeter by his own loving.

Work is love made visible.

And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half man's hunger.

And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the wine. And if you sing though as angels, and love not the singing, you muffle man's ears to the voices of the day and the voices of the night.

Then a woman said, Speak to us of *Joy and Sorrow* .

And he answered:

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.

And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.

And how else can it be?

The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.

Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven?

And is not the lute that soothes your spirit, the very wood that was hollowed with knives?

When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you

sorrow that is giving you joy.

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.

Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow," and others say, "Nay, sorrow is the greater."

But I say unto you, they are inseparable.

Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.

Verily you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy.

Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced.

When the treasure-keeper lifts you to weigh his gold and his silver, needs must your joy or your sorrow rise or fall.

Then a mason came forth and said, Speak to us of *Houses* .

And he answered and said:

Build of your imaginings a bower in the wilderness ere you build a house within the city walls.

For even as you have home-comings in your twilight, so has the wanderer in you, the ever distant and alone.

Your house is your larger body.

It grows in the sun and sleeps in the stillness of the night; and it is not dreamless. Does not your house dream? and dreaming, leave the city for grove or hilltop?

Would that I could gather your houses into my hand, and like a sower scatter them in forest and meadow.

Would the valleys were your streets, and the green paths your alleys, that you might seek one another through vineyards, and come with the fragrance of the earth in your garments.

But these things are not yet to be.

In their fear your forefathers gathered you too near together. And that fear shall endure a little longer. A little longer shall your city walls separate your hearths from your fields.

And tell me, people of Orphalese, what have you in these houses? And what is it you guard with fastened doors?

Have you peace, the quiet urge that reveals your power?

Have you remembrances, the glimmering arches that span the summits of the mind?

Have you beauty, that leads the heart from things fashioned of wood and stone to the holy mountain?

Tell me, have you these in your houses?

Or have you only comfort, and the lust for

comfort, that stealthy thing that enters the house a guest, and then becomes a host, and then a master?

Ay, and it becomes a tamer, and with hook and scourge makes puppets of your larger desires.

Though its hands are silken, its heart is of iron.

It lulls you to sleep only to stand by your bed and jeer at the dignity of the flesh.

It makes mock of your sound senses, and lays them in thistledown like fragile vessels.

Verily the lust for comfort murders the passion of the soul, and then walks grinning in the funeral.

But you, children of space, you restless in rest, you shall not be trapped nor tamed.

Your house shall be not an anchor but a mast.

It shall not be a glistening film that covers a wound, but an eyelid that guards the eye.

You shall not fold your wings that you may pass through doors, nor bend your heads that they strike not against a ceiling, nor fear to breathe lest walls should crack and fall down.

You shall not dwell in tombs made by the dead for the living.

And though of magnificence and splendour, your house shall not hold your secret nor shelter your longing.

For that which is boundless in you abides in the mansion of the sky, whose door is the morning mist,

and whose windows are the songs and the silences of night.

And the weaver said, Speak to us of ***Clothes*** .

And he answered:

Your clothes conceal much of your beauty, yet they hide not the unbeautiful.

And though you seek in garments the freedom of privacy you may find in them a harness and a chain.

Would that you could meet the sun and the wind with more of your skin and less of your raiment,

For the breath of life is in the sunlight and the hand of life is in the wind.

Some of you say, "It is the north wind who has woven the clothes we wear."

And I say, Ay, it was the north wind,

But shame was his loom, and the softening of the sinews was his thread.

And when his work was done he laughed in the forest. Forget not that modesty is for a shield against the eye of the unclean.

And when the unclean shall be no more, what were modesty but a fetter and a fouling of the mind?

And forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair.

And a merchant said, Speak to us of ***Buying and Selling*** .

And he answered and said:

To you the earth yields her fruit, and you shall not want if you but know how to fill your hands.

It is in exchanging the gifts of the earth that you shall find abundance and be satisfied.

Yet unless the exchange be in love and kindly justice, it will but lead some to greed and others to hunger.

When in the market place you toilers of the sea and fields and vineyards meet the weavers and the potters and the gatherers of spices,-

Invoke then the master spirit of the earth, to come into your midst and sanctify the scales and the reckoning that weighs value against value. And suffer not the barren-handed to take part in your transactions, who would sell their words for your labour.

To such men you should say,

“Come with us to the field, or go with our brothers to the sea and cast your net;

For the land and the sea shall be bountiful to you even as to us.”

And if there come the singers and the dancers and the flute players,-buy of their gifts also.

For they too are gatherers of fruit and frankincense, and that which they bring, though fashioned of dreams, is raiment and food for your soul.

And before you leave the market place, see that

no one has gone his way with empty hands.

For the master spirit of the earth shall not sleep peacefully upon the wind till the needs of the least of you are satisfied.

Then one of the judges of the city stood forth and said, Speak to us of ***Crime and Punishment*** .

And he answered, saying:

It is when your spirit goes wandering upon the wind,

That you, alone and unguarded, commit a wrong unto others and therefore unto yourself.

And for that wrong committed must you knock and wait a while unheeded at the gate of the blessed.

Like the ocean is your god-self;

It remains for ever undefiled.

And like the ether it lifts but the winged.

Even like the sun is your god-self;

It knows not the ways of the mole nor seeks it the holes of the serpent. But your god-self dwells not alone in your being.

Much in you is still man, and much in you is not yet man,

But a shapeless pigmy that walks asleep in the mist searching for its own awakening.

And of the man in you would I now speak.

For it is he and not your god-self nor the pigmy in the mist, that knows crime and the punishment of

crime.

Oftentimes have I heard you speak of one who commits a wrong as though he were not one of you, but a stranger unto you and an intruder upon your world.

But I say that even as the holy and the righteous cannot rise beyond the highest which is in each one of you,

So the wicked and the weak cannot fall lower than the lowest which is in you also.

And as a single leaf turns not yellow but with the silent knowledge of the whole tree, So the wrong-doer cannot do wrong without the hidden will of you all.

Like a procession you walk together towards your god-self.

You are the way and the wayfarers.

And when one of you falls down he falls for those behind him, a caution against the stumbling stone.

Ay, and he falls for those ahead of him, who though faster and surer of foot, yet removed not the stumbling stone.

And this also, though the word lie heavy upon your hearts:

The murdered is not unaccountable for his own murder,

And the robbed is not blameless in being robbed.

The righteous is not innocent of the deeds of the

wicked,

And the white-handed is not clean in the doings
of the felon.

Yea, the guilty is oftentimes the victim of the
injured,

And still more often the condemned is the burden
bearer for the guiltless and unblamed.

You cannot separate the just from the unjust and
the good from the wicked;

For they stand together before the face of the sun
even as the black thread and the white are woven
together.

And when the black thread breaks, the weaver
shall look into the whole cloth, and he shall examine
the loom also.

If any of you would bring to judgment the
unfaithful wife,

Let him also weigh the heart of her husband in
scales, and measure his soul with measurements.

And let him who would lash the offender look
unto the spirit of the offended.

And if any of you would punish in the name of
righteousness and lay the ax unto the evil tree, let him
see to its roots;

And verily he will find the roots of the good and
the bad, the fruitful and the fruitless, all entwined
together in the silent heart of the earth.

And you judges who would be just,

What judgment pronounce you upon him who though honest in the flesh yet is a thief in spirit?

What penalty lay you upon him who slays in the flesh yet is himself slain in the spirit?

And how prosecute you him who in action is a deceiver and an oppressor,

Yet who also is aggrieved and outraged?

And how shall you punish those whose remorse is already greater than their misdeeds?

Is not remorse the justice which is administered by that very law which you would fain serve?

Yet you cannot lay remorse upon the innocent nor lift it from the heart of the guilty.

Unbidden shall it call in the night, that men may wake and gaze upon themselves. And you who would understand justice, how shall you unless you look upon all deeds in the fullness of light?

Only then shall you know that the erect and the fallen are but one man standing in twilight between the night of his pigmy-self and the day of his god-self, And that the corner-stone of the temple is not higher than the lowest stone in its foundation.

Then a lawyer said, But what of our *Laws* , master?

And he answered:

You delight in laying down laws,
Yet you delight more in breaking them.

Like children playing by the ocean who build
sand-towers with constancy and then destroy them with
laughter.

But while you build your sand-towers the ocean
brings more sand to the shore,

And when you destroy them the ocean laughs
with you.

Verily the ocean laughs always with the innocent.

But what of those to whom life is not an ocean,
and man-made laws are not sand-towers,

But to whom life is a rock, and the law a chisel
with which they would carve it in their own likeness?
What of the cripple who hates dancers?

What of the ox who loves his yoke and deems the
elk and deer of the forest stray and vagrant things?

What of the old serpent who cannot shed his skin,
and calls all others naked and shameless?

And of him who comes early to the
wedding-feast, and when over-fed and tired goes his
way saying that all feasts are violation and all feasters
lawbreakers?

What shall I say of these save that they too stand
in the sunlight, but with their backs to the sun?

They see only their shadows, and their shadows
are their laws.

And what is the sun to them but a caster of shadows?

And what is it to acknowledge the laws but to stoop down and trace their shadows upon the earth?

But you who walk facing the sun, what images drawn on the earth can hold you?

You who travel with the wind, what weather-vane shall direct your course?

What man's law shall bind you if you break your yoke but upon no man's prison door?

What laws shall you fear if you dance but stumble against no man's iron chains?

And who is he that shall bring you to judgment if you tear off your garment yet leave it in no man's path?

People of Orphalese, you can muffle the drum, and you can loosen the strings of the lyre, but who shall command the skylark not to sing?

And an orator said, Speak to us of ***Freedom*** .

And he answered:

At the city gate and by your fireside I have seen you prostrate yourself and worship your own freedom,

Even as slaves humble themselves before a tyrant and praise him though he slays them.

Ay, in the grove of the temple and in the shadow of the citadel I have seen the freest among you wear their freedom as a yoke and a handcuff.

And my heart bled within me; for you can only be free when even the desire of seeking freedom becomes a harness to you, and when you cease to speak of freedom as a goal and a fulfilment.

You shall be free indeed when your days are not without a care nor your nights without a want and a grief,

But rather when these things girdle your life and yet you rise above them naked and unbound.

And how shall you rise beyond your days and nights unless you break the chains which you at the dawn of your understanding have fastened around your noon hour?

In truth that which you call freedom is the strongest of these chains, though its links glitter in the sun and dazzle your eyes.

And what is it but fragments of your own self you would discard that you may become free?

If it is an unjust law you would abolish, that law was written with your own hand upon your own forehead.

You cannot erase it by burning your law books nor by washing the foreheads of your judges, though you pour the sea upon them.

And if it is a despot you would dethrone, see first that his throne erected within you is destroyed.

For how can a tyrant rule the free and the proud,

but for a tyranny in their own freedom and a shame in their own pride?

And if it is a care you would cast off, that cart has been chosen by you rather than imposed upon you.

And if it is a fear you would dispel, the seat of that fear is in your heart and not in the hand of the feared.

Verily all things move within your being in constant half embrace, the desired and the dreaded, the repugnant and the cherished, the pursued and that which you would escape.

These things move within you as lights and shadows in pairs that cling.

And when the shadow fades and is no more, the light that lingers becomes a shadow to another light.

And thus your freedom when it loses its fetters becomes itself the fetter of a greater freedom.

And the priestess spoke again and said: Speak to us of ***Reason and Passion*** .

And he answered, saying:

Your soul is oftentimes a battlefield, upon which your reason and your judgment wage war against your passion and your appetite.

Would that I could be the peacemaker in your soul, that I might turn the discord and the rivalry of your elements into oneness and melody.

But how shall I, unless you yourselves be also the peacemakers, nay, the lovers of all your elements?

Your reason and your passion are the rudder and the sails of your seafaring soul.

If either your sails or your rudder be broken, you can but toss and drift, or else be held at a standstill in mid-seas. For reason, ruling alone, is a force confining; and passion, unattended, is a flame that burns to its own destruction.

Therefore let your soul exalt your reason to the height of passion, that it may sing;

And let it direct your passion with reason, that your passion may live through its own daily resurrection, and like the phoenix rise above its own ashes.

I would have you consider your judgment and your appetite even as you would two loved guests in your house.

Surely you would not honour one guest above the other; for he who is more mindful of one loses the love and the faith of both

Among the hills, when you sit in the cool shade of the white poplars, sharing the peace and serenity of distant fields and meadows-then let your heart say in silence, "God rests in reason."

And when the storm comes, and the mighty wind shakes the forest, and thunder and lightning proclaim

the majesty of the sky,-then let your heart say in awe,
“God moves in passion.”

And since you are a breath in God’s sphere, and a leaf in God’s forest, you too should rest in reason and move in passion.

And a woman spoke, saying, Tell us of **Pain** .

And he said:

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.

Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain.

And could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy;

And you would accept the seasons of your heart, even as you have always accepted the seasons that pass over your fields.

And you would watch with serenity through the winters of your grief.

Much of your pain is self-chosen.

It is the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self.

Therefore trust the physician, and drink his remedy in silence and tranquillity: For his hand, though heavy and hard, is guided by the tender hand of the Unseen, And the cup he brings, though it burn your lips, has been fashioned of the clay which the Potter has

moistened with His own sacred tears.

And a man said, Speak to us of *Self-Knowledge*

And he answered, saying:

Your hearts know in silence the secrets of the days and the nights.

But your ears thirst for the sound of your heart's knowledge.

You would know in words that which you have always known in thought.

You would touch with your fingers the naked body of your dreams.

And it is well you should.

The hidden well-spring of your soul must needs rise and run murmuring to the sea;

And the treasure of your infinite depths would be revealed to your eyes.

But let there be no scales to weigh your unknown treasure;

And seek not the depths of your knowledge with staff or sounding line.

For self is a sea boundless and measureless.

Say not, "I have found the truth," but rather, "I have found a truth."

Say not, "I have found the path of the soul." Say rather, "I have met the soul walking upon my path."

For the soul walks upon all paths.

The soul walks not upon a line, neither does it grow like a reed.

The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals.

Then said a teacher, Speak to us of *Teaching* .

And he said:

“No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness.

If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

The astronomer may speak to you of his understanding of space, but he cannot give you his understanding.

The musician may sing to you of the rhythm which is in all space, but he cannot give you the ear which arrests the rhythm nor the voice that echoes it. And he who is versed in the science of numbers can tell of the regions of weight and measure, but he cannot conduct you thither.

For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man.

And even as each one of you stands alone in God's knowledge, so must each one of you be alone in his knowledge of God and in his understanding of the earth.

And a youth said, Speak to us of *Friendship* .

And he answered, saying:

Your friend is your needs answered.

He is your field which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving.

And he is your board and your fireside.

For you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace.

When your friend speaks his mind you fear not the "nay" in your own mind, nor do you withhold the "ay."

And when he is silent your heart ceases not to listen to his heart;

For without words, in friendship, all thoughts, all desires, all expectations are born and shared, with joy that is unclaimed.

When you part from your friend, you grieve not;

For that which you love most in him may be clearer in his absence, as the mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain. And let there be no purpose in friendship save the deepening of the spirit.

For love that seeks aught but the disclosure of its own mystery is not love but a net cast forth: and only

the unprofitable is caught.

And let your best be for your friend.

If he must know the ebb of your tide, let him know its flood also.

For what is your friend that you should seek him with hours to kill?

Seek him always with hours to live.

For it is his to fill your need, but not your emptiness.

And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures.

For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.

And then a scholar said, Speak of ***Talking*** .

And he answered, saying:

You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts;

And when you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a pastime.

And in much of your talking, thinking is half murdered.

For thought is a bird of space, that in a cage of words may indeed unfold its wings but cannot fly.

There are those among you who seek the talkative through fear of being alone.

The silence of aloneness reveals to their eyes their naked selves and they would escape.

And there are those who talk, and without knowledge or forethought reveal a truth which they themselves do not understand.

And there are those who have the truth within them, but they tell it not in words.

In the bosom of such as these the spirit dwells in rhythmic silence.

When you meet your friend on the roadside or in the market place, let the spirit in you move your lips and direct your tongue.

Let the voice within your voice speak to the ear of his ear;

For his soul will keep the truth of your heart as the taste of the wine is remembered

When the colour is forgotten and the vessel is no more.

And an astronomer said, Master, what of ***Time*** ?
And he answered:

You would measure time the measureless and the immeasurable.

You would adjust your conduct and even direct the course of your spirit according to hours and seasons.

Of time you would make a stream upon whose

bank you would sit and watch its flowing.

Yet the timeless in you is aware of life's timelessness,

And knows that yesterday is but today's memory and tomorrow is today's dream.

And that that which sings and contemplates in you is still dwelling within the bounds of that first moment which scattered the stars into space. Who among you does not feel that his power to love is boundless?

And yet who does not feel that very love, though boundless, encompassed within the centre of his being, and moving not from love thought to love thought, nor from love deeds to other love deeds?

And is not time even as love is, undivided and paceless?

But if in your thought you must measure time into seasons, let each season encircle all the other seasons,

And let today embrace the past with remembrance and the future with longing.

And one of the elders of the city said, Speak to us of ***Good and Evil*** .

And he answered:

Of the good in you I can speak, but not of the evil.

For what is evil but good tortured by its own hunger and thirst?

Verily when good is hungry it seeks food even in dark caves, and when it thirsts it drinks even of dead waters.

You are good when you are one with yourself.

Yet when you are not one with yourself you are not evil.

For a divided house is not a den of thieves; it is only a divided house.

And a ship without rudder may wander aimlessly among perilous isles yet sink not to the bottom. You are good when you strive to give of yourself.

Yet you are not evil when you seek gain for yourself.

For when you strive for gain you are but a root that clings to the earth and sucks at her breast.

Surely the fruit cannot say to the root, "Be like me, ripe and full and ever giving of your abundance."

For to the fruit giving is a need, as receiving is a need to the root.

You are good when you are fully awake in your speech,

Yet you are not evil when you sleep while your tongue staggers without purpose.

And even stumbling speech may strengthen a weak tongue.

You are good when you walk to your goal firmly and with bold steps.

Yet you are not evil when you go thither limping. Even those who limp go not backward.

But you who are strong and swift, see that you do not limp before the lame, deeming it kindness.

You are good in countless ways, and you are not evil when you are not good,

You are only loitering and sluggard.

Pity that the stags cannot teach swiftness to the turtles.

In your longing for your giant self lies your goodness: and that longing is in all of you.

But in some of you that longing is a torrent rushing with might to the sea, carrying the secrets of the hillsides and the songs of the forest.

And in others it is a flat stream that loses itself in angles and bends and lingers before it reaches the shore.

But let not him who longs much say to him who longs little, "Wherefore are you slow and halting?"

For the truly good ask not the naked, "Where is your garment?" nor the houseless, "What has befallen your house?"

Then a priestess said, Speak to us of **Prayer** .
And he answered, saying:

You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance.

For what is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living ether?

And if it is for your comfort to pour your darkness into space, it is also for your delight to pour forth the dawning of your heart.

And if you cannot but weep when your soul summons you to prayer, she should spur you again and yet again, though weeping, until you shall come laughing.

When you pray you rise to meet in the air those who are praying at that very hour, and whom save in prayer you may not meet.

Therefore let your visit to that temple invisible be for naught but ecstasy and sweet communion.

For if you should enter the temple for no other purpose than asking you shall not receive:

And if you should enter into it to humble yourself you shall not be lifted:

Or even if you should enter into it to beg for the good of others you shall not be heard.

It is enough that you enter the temple invisible.

I cannot teach you how to pray in words.

God listens not to your words save when He Himself utters them through your lips.

And I cannot teach you the prayer of the seas and the forests and the mountains. But you who are born of the mountains and the forests and the seas can find their prayer in your heart,

And if you but listen in the stillness of the night you shall hear them saying in silence,

“Our God, who art our winged self, it is thy will in us that willeth.

It is thy desire in us that desireth.

It is thy urge in us that would turn our nights, which are thine, into days which are thine also.

We cannot ask thee for aught, for thou knowest our needs before they are born in us:

Thou art our need; and in giving us more of thyself thou givest us all.”

Then a hermit, who visited the city once a year, came forth and said, Speak to us of **Pleasure** .

And he answered, saying:

Pleasure is a freedom-song,

But it is not freedom.

It is the blossoming of your desires,

But it is not their fruit.

It is a depth calling unto a height,

But it is not the deep nor the high.

It is the caged taking wing,

But it is not space encompassed.

Ay, in very truth, pleasure is a freedom-song.

And I fain would have you sing it with fullness of heart; yet I would not have you lose your hearts in the singing.

Some of your youth seek pleasure as if it were all, and they are judged and rebuked. I would not judge nor rebuke them. I would have them seek.

For they shall find pleasure, but not her alone;

Seven are her sisters, and the least of them is more beautiful than pleasure.

Have you not heard of the man who was digging in the earth for roots and found a treasure?

And some of your elders remember pleasures with regret like wrongs committed in drunkenness.

But regret is the beclouding of the mind and not its chastisement.

They should remember their pleasures with gratitude, as they would the harvest of a summer.

Yet if it comforts them to regret, let them be comforted.

And there are among you those who are neither young to seek nor old to remember;

And in their fear of seeking and remembering they shun all pleasures, lest they neglect the spirit or offend against it.

But even in their foregoing is their pleasure.

And thus they too find a treasure though they dig for roots with quivering hands.

But tell me, who is he that can offend the spirit?

Shall the nightingale offend the stillness of the night, or the firefly the stars?

And shall your flame or your smoke burden the wind?

Think you the spirit is a still pool which you can trouble with a staff?

Oftentimes in denying yourself pleasure you do but store the desire in the recesses of your being.

Who knows but that which seems omitted today, waits for tomorrow?

Even your body knows its heritage and its rightful need and will not be deceived.

And your body is the harp of your soul,

And it is yours to bring forth sweet music from it or confused sounds.

And now you ask in your heart, "How shall we distinguish that which is good in pleasure from that which is not good?"

Go to your fields and your gardens, and you shall learn that it is the pleasure of the bee to gather honey of the flower,

But it is also the pleasure of the flower to yield its honey to the bee.

For to the bee a flower is a fountain of life,

And to the flower a bee is a messenger of love,

And to both, bee and flower, the giving and the receiving of pleasure is a need and an ecstasy.

People of Orphalese, be in your pleasures like the flowers and the bees.

And a poet said, Speak to us of *Beauty* .

And he answered:

Where shall you seek beauty, and how shall you find her unless she herself be your way and your guide?

And how shall you speak of her except she be the weaver of your speech?

The aggrieved and the injured say, "Beauty is kind and gentle.

Like a young mother half-shy of her own glory she walks among us."

And the passionate say, "Nay, beauty is a thing of might and dread.

Like the tempest she shakes the earth beneath us and the sky above us."

The tired and the weary say, "Beauty is of soft whisperings. She speaks in our spirit. Her voice yields to our silences like a faint light that quivers in fear of the shadow."

But the restless say, "We have heard her shouting among the mountains,

And with her cries came the sound of hoofs, and the beating of wings and the roaring of lions."

At night the watchmen of the city say, "Beauty

shall rise with the dawn from the east.”

And at noontide the toilers and the wayfarers say,
“We have seen her leaning over the earth from the
windows of the sunset.”

In winter say the snow-bound, “She shall come
with the spring leaping upon the hills.”

And in the summer heat the reapers say, “We
have seen her dancing with the autumn leaves, and we
saw a drift of snow in her hair.” All these things have
you said of beauty,

Yet in truth you spoke not of her but of needs
unsatisfied,

And beauty is not a need but an ecstasy.

It is not a mouth thirsting nor an empty hand
stretched forth,

But rather a heart enflamed and a soul enchanted.

It is not the image you would see nor the song
you would hear,

But rather an image you see though you close
your eyes and a song you hear though you shut your
ears.

It is not the sap within the furrowed bark, nor a
wing attached to a claw,

But rather a garden for ever in bloom and a flock
of angels for ever in flight.

People of Orphalese, beauty is life when life

unveils her holy face.

But you are life and you are the veil. Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror.

But you are eternity and you are the mirror.

And an old priest said, Speak to us of **Religion** .

And he said:

Have I spoken this day of aught else?

Is not religion all deeds and all reflection,

And that which is neither deed nor reflection, but a wonder and a surprise ever springing in the soul, even while the hands hew the stone or tend the loom?

Who can separate his faith from his actions, or his belief from his occupations?

Who can spread his hours before him, saying, "This for God and this for myself; This for my soul, and this other for my body?"

All your hours are wings that beat through space from self to self. He who wears his morality but as his best garment were better naked.

The wind and the sun will tear no holes in his skin.

And he who defines his conduct by ethics imprisons his song-bird in a cage.

The freest song comes not through bars and wires.

And he to whom worshipping is a window, to open but also to shut, has not yet visited the house of

his soul whose windows are from dawn to dawn.

Your daily life is your temple and your religion.

Whenever you enter into it take with you your all.

Take the plough and the forge and the mallet and the lute,

The things you have fashioned in necessity or for delight.

For in revery you cannot rise above your achievements nor fall lower than your failures.

And take with you all men: For in adoration you cannot fly higher than their hopes nor humble yourself lower than their despair.

And if you would know God be not therefore a solver of riddles.

Rather look about you and you shall see Him playing with your children.

And look into space; you shall see Him walking in the cloud, outstretching His arms in the lightning and descending in rain.

You shall see Him smiling in flowers, then rising and waving His hands in trees.

Then Almitra spoke, saying, We would ask now of **Death** .

And he said:

You would know the secret of death.

But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life?

The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day cannot unveil the mystery of light.

If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life.

For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one.

In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond;

And like seeds dreaming beneath the snow your heart dreams of spring.

Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity. Your fear of death is but the trembling of the shepherd when he stands before the king whose hand is to be laid upon him in honour.

Is the shepherd not joyful beneath his trembling, that he shall wear the mark of the king?

Yet is he not more mindful of his trembling?

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun?

And what is it to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.

And when you have reached the mountain top,

then you shall begin to climb.

And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance. And now it was evening.

And Almitra the seeress said, Blessed be this day and this place and your spirit that has spoken.

And he answered, Was it I who spoke? Was I not also a listener?

Then he descended the steps of the Temple and all the people followed him. And he reached his ship and stood upon the deck.

And facing the people again, he raised his voice and said:

People of Orphalese, the wind bids me leave you.
Less hasty am I than the wind, yet I must go.

We wanderers, ever seeking the lonelier way, begin no day where we have ended another day; and no sunrise finds us where sunset left us. Even while the earth sleeps we travel.

We are the seeds of the tenacious plant, and it is in our ripeness and our fullness of heart that we are given to the wind and are scattered.

Brief were my days among you, and briefer still the words I have spoken.

But should my voice fade in your ears, and my love vanish in your memory, then I will come again,

And with a richer heart and lips more yielding to

the spirit will I speak.

Yea, I shall return with the tide,

And though death may hide me, and the greater
silence enfold me, yet again will I seek your
understanding.

And not in vain will I seek.

If aught I have said is truth, that truth shall reveal
itself in a clearer voice, and in words more kin to your
thoughts.

I go with the wind, people of Orphalese, but not
down into emptiness; And if this day is not a fulfilment
of your needs and my love, then let it be a promise till
another day.

Man's needs change, but not his love, nor his
desire that his love should satisfy his needs.

Know therefore, that from the greater silence I
shall return.

The mist that drifts away at dawn, leaving but
dew in the fields, shall rise and gather into a cloud and
then fall down in rain.

And not unlike the mist have I been.

In the stillness of the night I have walked in your
streets, and my spirit has entered your houses,

And your heart-beats were in my heart, and your
breath was upon my face, and I knew you all.

Ay, I knew your joy and your pain, and in your
sleep your dreams were my dreams.

And oftentimes I was among you a lake among

the mountains.

I mirrored the summits in you and the bending slopes, and even the passing flocks of your thoughts and your desires.

And to my silence came the laughter of your children in streams, and the longing of your youths in rivers.

And when they reached my depth the streams and the rivers ceased not yet to sing.

But sweeter still than laughter and greater than longing came to me.

It was the boundless in you;

The vast man in whom you are all but cells and sinews;

He in whose chant all your singing is but a soundless throbbing.

It is in the vast man that you are vast,

And in beholding him that I beheld you and loved you.

For what distances can love reach that are not in that vast sphere?

What visions, what expectations and what presumptions can outsoar that flight?

Like a giant oak tree covered with apple blossoms is the vast man in you. His might binds you to the earth, his fragrance lifts you into space, and in his durability you are deathless.

You have been told that, even like a chain, you are as weak as your weakest link.

This is but half the truth. You are also as strong as your strongest link.

To measure you by your smallest deed is to reckon the power of ocean by the frailty of its foam.

To judge you by your failures is to cast blame upon the seasons for their inconstancy.

Ay, you are like an ocean,

And though heavy-grounded ships await the tide upon your shores, yet, even like an ocean, you cannot hasten your tides.

And like the seasons you are also,

And though in your winter you deny your spring,

Yet spring, reposing within you, smiles in her drowsiness and is not offended. Think not I say these things in order that you may say the one to the other, "He praised us well. He saw but the good in us."

I only speak to you in words of that which you yourselves know in thought.

And what is word knowledge but a shadow of wordless knowledge?

Your thoughts and my words are waves from a sealed memory that keeps records of our yesterdays,

And of the ancient days when the earth knew not us nor herself,

And of nights when earth was up-wrought with

confusion.

Wise men have come to you to give you of their wisdom. I came to take of your wisdom:

And behold I have found that which is greater than wisdom.

It is a flame spirit in you ever gathering more of itself,

While you, heedless of its expansion, bewail the withering of your days. It is life in quest of life in bodies that fear the grave.

There are no graves here.

These mountains and plains are a cradle and a stepping-stone.

Whenever you pass by the field where you have laid your ancestors look well thereupon, and you shall see yourselves and your children dancing hand in hand.

Verily you often make merry without knowing.

Others have come to you to whom for golden promises made unto your faith you have given but riches and power and glory.

Less than a promise have I given, and yet more generous have you been to me.

You have given me my deeper thirsting after life.

Surely there is no greater gift to a man than that which turns all his aims into parching lips and all life into a fountain.

And in this lies my honour and my reward,-
That whenever I come to the fountain to drink I
find the living water itself thirsty;
And it drinks me while I drink it.

Some of you have deemed me proud and
over-shy to receive gifts.

Too proud indeed am I to receive wages, but not
gifts.

And though I have eaten berries among the hills
when you would have had me sit at your board,

And slept in the portico of the temple when you
would gladly have sheltered me,

Yet was it not your loving mindfulness of my
days and my nights that made food sweet to my mouth
and girdled my sleep with visions?

For this I bless you most:

You give much and know not that you give at all.
Verily the kindness that gazes upon itself in a mirror
turns to stone,

And a good deed that calls itself by tender names
becomes the parent to a curse.

And some of you have called me aloof, and drunk
with my own aloneness,

And you have said, "He holds council with the
trees of the forest, but not with men.

He sits alone on hill-tops and looks down upon our city.”

True it is that I have climbed the hills and walked in remote places.

How could I have seen you save from a great height or a great distance?

How can one be indeed near unless he be far?

And others among you called unto me, not in words, and they said,

“Stranger, stranger, lover of unreachable heights, why dwell you among the summits where eagles build their nests? Why seek you the unattainable?

What storms would you trap in your net,

And what vaporous birds do you hunt in the sky?

Come and be one of us.

Descend and appease your hunger with our bread and quench your thirst with our wine.”

In the solitude of their souls they said these things;

But were their solitude deeper they would have known that I sought but the secret of your joy and your pain,

And I hunted only your larger selves that walk the sky.

But the hunter was also the hunted;

For many of my arrows left my bow only to seek my own breast.

And the flier was also the creeper;

For when my wings were spread in the sun their shadow upon the earth was a turtle.

And I the believer was also the doubter; For often have I put my finger in my own wound that I might have the greater belief in you and the greater knowledge of you.

And it is with this belief and this knowledge that I say,

You are not enclosed within your bodies, nor confined to houses or fields.

That which is you dwells above the mountain and roves with the wind.

It is not a thing that crawls into the sun for warmth or digs holes into darkness for safety,

But a thing free, a spirit that envelops the earth and moves in the ether.

If these be vague words, then seek not to clear them.

Vague and nebulous is the beginning of all things, but not their end,

And I fain would have you remember me as a beginning.

Life, and all that lives, is conceived in the mist and not in the crystal. And who knows but a crystal is mist in decay?

This would I have you remember in remembering me:

That which seems most feeble and bewildered in you is the strongest and most determined.

Is it not your breath that has erected and hardened the structure of your bones?

And is it not a dream which none of you remember having dreamt, that builded your city and fashioned all there is in it?

Could you but see the tides of that breath you would cease to see all else,

And if you could hear the whispering of the dream you would hear no other sound.

But you do not see, nor do you hear, and it is well.

The veil that clouds your eyes shall be lifted by the hands that wove it,

And the clay that fills your ears shall be pierced by those fingers that kneaded it. And you shall see.

And you shall hear.

Yet you shall not deplore having known blindness, nor regret having been deaf.

For in that day you shall know the hidden purposes in all things,

And you shall bless darkness as you would bless light.

After saying these things he looked about him, and he saw the pilot of his ship standing by the helm

and gazing now at the full sails and now at the distance.

And he said:

Patient, over patient, is the captain of my ship.

The wind blows, and restless are the sails;

Even the rudder begs direction;

Yet quietly my captain awaits my silence.

And these my mariners, who have heard the choir
of the greater sea, they too have heard me patiently.
Now they shall wait no longer.

I am ready.

The stream has reached the sea, and once more
the great mother holds her son against her breast.

Fare you well, people of Orphalese.

This day has ended.

It is closing upon us even as the water-lily upon
its own tomorrow.

What was given us here we shall keep,

And if it suffices not, then again must we come
together and together stretch our hands unto the giver.

Forget not that I shall come back to you.

A little while, and my longing shall gather dust
and foam for another body.

A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind,
and another woman shall bear me.

Farewell to you and the youth I have spent with
you.

It was but yesterday we met in a dream. You have

sung to me in my aloneness, and I of your longings have built a tower in the sky.

But now our sleep has fled and our dream is over, and it is no longer dawn.

The noontide is upon us and our half waking has turned to fuller day, and we must part.

If in the twilight of memory we should meet once more, we shall speak again together and you shall sing to me a deeper song.

And if our hands should meet in another dream we shall build another tower in the sky.

So saying he made a signal to the seamen, and straightway they weighed anchor and cast the ship loose from its moorings, and they moved eastward.

And a cry came from the people as from a single heart, and it rose into the dusk and was carried out over the sea like a great trumpeting.

Only Almitra was silent, gazing after the ship until it had vanished into the mist.

And when all the people were dispersed she still stood alone upon the sea-wall, remembering in her heart his saying,

“A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me.”

THE MADMAN, HIS PARABLES AND POEMS

HOW I BECAME A MADMAN

You ask me how I became a madman. It happened thus: One day, long before many gods were born, I woke from a deep sleep and found all my masks were stolen,-the seven masks I have fashioned and worn in seven lives,-I ran maskless through the crowded streets shouting, "Thieves, thieves, the cursed thieves."

Men and women laughed at me and some ran to their houses in fear of me.

And when I reached the market place, a youth standing on a house-top cried, "He is a madman." I looked up to behold him; the sun kissed my own naked face for the first time. For the first time the sun kissed my own naked face and my soul was inflamed with love for the sun, and I wanted my masks no more. And as if in a trance I cried, "Blessed, blessed are the thieves who stole my masks."

Thus I became a madman.

And I have found both freedom of loneliness and the safety from being understood, for those who understand us enslave something in us.

But let me not be too proud of my safety. Even a Thief in a jail is safe from another thief.

GOD

In the ancient days, when the first quiver of speech came to my lips, I ascended the holy mountain and spoke unto God, saying, “Master, I am thy slave. Thy hidden will is my law and I shall obey thee for ever more.”

But God made no answer, and like a mighty tempest passed away.

And after a thousand years I ascended the holy mountain and again spoke unto God, saying, “Creator, I am thy creation. Out of clay hast thou fashioned me and to thee I owe mine all.”

And God made no answer, but like a thousand swift wings passed away.

And after a thousand years I climbed the holy mountain and spoke unto God again, saying, “Father, I am thy son. In pity and love thou hast given me birth, and through love and worship I shall inherit thy kingdom.”

And God made no answer, and like the mist that veils the distant hills he passed away.

And after a thousand years I climbed the sacred mountain and gain spoke unto God, saying, "My God, my aim and my fulfilment; I am thy yesterday and thou are my tomorrow. I am thy root in the earth and thou art my flower in the sky, and together we grow before the face of the sun."

Then God leaned over me, and in my ears whispered words of sweetness, and even as the sea that enfoldeth a brook that runneth down to her, he enfolded me.

And when I descended to the valleys and the plains God was there also.

MY FRIEND

My friend, I am not what I seem. Seeming is but a garment I wear-a care-woven garment that protects me from thy questionings and thee from my negligence.

The "I" in me, my friend, dwells in the house of silence, and therein it shall remain for ever more, unperceived, unapproachable.

I would not have thee believe in what I say nor trust in what I do-for my words are naught but thy own thoughts in sound and my deeds thy own hopes in action.

When thou sayest, "The wind bloweth eastward," I say, "Aye it doth blow eastward"; for I would not have thee know that my mind doth not dwell upon the wind but upon the sea.

Thou canst not understand my seafaring thoughts, nor would I have thee understand. I would be at sea alone.

When it is day with thee, my friend, it is night with me; yet even then I speak of the noontide that dances upon the hills and of the purple shadow that steals its way across the valley; for thou canst not hear the songs of my darkness nor see my wings beating against the stars-and I fain would not have thee hear or see. I would be with night alone.

When thou ascendest to thy Heaven I descend to my Hell-even then thou callest to me across the unbridgeable gulf, "My companion, my comrade," and I call back to thee, "My comrade, my companion"-for I would not have thee see my Hell. The flame would burn thy eyesight and the smoke would crowd thy

nostrils. And I love my Hell too well to have thee visit it. I would be in Hell alone.

Thou lovest Truth and Beauty and Righteousness; and I for thy sake say it is well and seemly to love these things. But in my heart I laughed at thy love. Yet I would not have thee see my laughter. I would laugh alone.

My friend, thou art good and cautious and wise; nay, thou art perfect-and I, too, speak with thee wisely and cautiously. And yet I am mad. But I mask my madness. I would be mad alone.

My friend, thou art not my friend, but how shall I make thee understand? My path is not thy path, yet together we walk, hand in hand.

THE SCARECROW

Once I said to a scarecrow, "You must be tired of standing in this lonely field."

And he said, "The joy of scaring is a deep and lasting one, and I never tire of it."

Said I, after a minute of thought, "It is true; for I too have known that joy."

Said he, "Only those who are stuffed with straw can know it."

Then I left him, not knowing whether he had complimented or belittled me.

A year passed, during which the scarecrow turned philosopher.

And when I passed by him again I saw two crows building a nest under his hat.

THE SLEEP-WALKERS

In the town where I was born lived a woman and her daughter, who walked in their sleep.

One night, while silence enfolded the world, the woman and her daughter, walking, yet asleep, met in their mist-veiled garden.

And the mother spoke, and she said: "At last, at last, my enemy! You by whom my youth was destroyed—who have built up your life upon the ruins of mine! Would I could kill you!"

And the daughter spoke, and she said: "O hateful

woman, selfish and old! Who stand between my freer self and me! Who would have my life an echo of your own faded life! Would you were dead!”

At that moment a cock crew, and both women awoke. The mother said gently, “Is that you, darling?” And the daughter answered gently, “Yes, dear.”

THE WISE DOG

One day there passed by a company of cats a wise dog.

And as he came near and saw that they were very intent and heeded him not, he stopped.

Then there arose in the midst of the company a large, grave cat and looked upon them and said, “Brethren, pray ye; and when ye have prayed again and yet again, nothing doubting, verily then it shall rain mice.”

And when the dog heard this he laughed in his heart and turned from them saying, “O blind and foolish cats, has it not been written and have I not known and my fathers before me, that that which raineth for prayer and faith and supplication is not mice but bones.”

THE TWO HERMITS

Upon a lonely mountain, there lived two hermits who worshipped God and loved one another.

Now these two hermits had one earthen bowl, and this was their only possession.

One day an evil spirit entered into the heart of the older hermit and he came to the younger and said, "It is long that we have lived together. The time has come for us to part. Let us divide our possessions."

Then the younger hermit was saddened and he said, "It grieves me, Brother, that thou shouldst leave me. But if thou must needs go, so be it," and he brought the earthen bowl and gave it to him saying, "We cannot divide it, Brother, let it be Thine."

Then the older hermit said, "Charity I will not accept. I will take nothing but mine own. It must be divided."

And the younger one said, "If the bowl be broken, of what use would it be to thee or to me? If it be thy pleasure let us rather cast a lot."

But the older hermit said again, "I will have but justice and mine own, and I will not trust justice and mine own to vain chance. The bowl must be divided."

Then the younger hermit could reason no further and he said, "If it be indeed thy will, and if even so thou wouldst have it let us now break the bowl."

But the face of the older hermit grew exceedingly dark, and he cried, "O thou cursed coward, thou wouldst not fight."

ON GIVING AND TAKING

Once there lived a man who had a valley-full of needles. And one day the mother of Jesus came to him and said: "Friend, my son's garment is torn and I must needs mend it before he goeth to the temple. Wouldst thou not give me a needle?"

And he gave her not a needle, but he gave her a learned discourse on Giving and Taking to carry to her son before he should go to the temple.

THE SEVEN SELVES

In the stillest hour of the night, as I lay half asleep, my seven selves sat together and thus conversed

in whisper:

First Self: Here, in this madman, I have dwelt all these years, with naught to do but renew his pain by day and recreate his sorrow by night. I can bear my fate no longer, and now I rebel.

Second Self: Yours is a better lot than mine, brother, for it is given to me to be this madman's joyous self. I laugh his laughter and sing his happy hours, and with thrice winged feet I dance his brighter thoughts. It is I that would rebel against my weary existence.

Third Self: And what of me, the love-ridden self, the flaming brand of wild passion and fantastic desires? It is I the love-sick self who would rebel against this madman.

Fourth Self: I, amongst you all, am the most miserable, for naught was given me but odious hatred and destructive loathing. It is I, the tempest-like self, the one born in the black caves of Hell, who would protest against serving this madman.

Fifth Self: Nay, it is I, the thinking self, the fanciful self, the self of hunger and thirst, the one doomed to wander without rest in search of unknown

things and things not yet created; it is I, not you, who would rebel.

Sixth Self: And I, the working self, the pitiful labourer, who, with patient hands, and longing eyes, fashion the days into images and give the formless elements new and eternal forms-it is I, the solitary one, who would rebel against this restless madman.

Seventh Self: How strange that you all would rebel against this man, because each and every one of you has a preordained fate to fulfil. Ah! could I but be like one of you, a self with a determined lot! But I have none, I am the do-nothing self, the one who sits in the dumb, empty nowhere and nowhen, while you are busy re-creating life. Is it you or I, neighbours, who should rebel?

When the seventh self thus spake the other six selves looked with pity upon him but said nothing more; and as the night grew deeper one after the other went to sleep enfolded with a new and happy submission.

But the seventh self remained watching and gazing at nothingness, which is behind all things.

WAR

One night a feast was held in the palace, and there came a man and prostrated himself before the prince, and all the feasters looked upon him; and they saw that one of his eyes was out and that the empty socket bled. And the prince inquired of him, "What has befallen you?" And the man replied, "O prince, I am by profession a thief, and this night, because there was no moon, I went to rob the money-changer's shop, and as I climbed in through the window I made a mistake and entered the weaver's shop, and in the dark I ran into the weaver's loom and my eye was plucked out. And now, O prince, I ask for justice upon the weaver."

Then the prince sent for the weaver and he came, and it was decreed that one of his eyes should be plucked out.

"O prince," said the weaver, "the decree is just. It is right that one of my eyes be taken. And yet, alas! both are necessary to me in order that I may see the two sides of the cloth that I weave. But I have a neighbour, a cobbler, who has also two eyes, and in his trade both eyes are not necessary."

Then the prince sent for the cobbler. And he came. And they took out one of the cobbler's two eyes.

And justice was satisfied.

THE FOX

A fox looked at his shadow at sunrise and said, "I will have a camel for lunch today." And all morning he went about looking for camels. But at noon he saw his shadow again-and he said, "A mouse will do."

THE WISE KING

Once there ruled in the distant city of Wirani a king who was both mighty and wise. And he was feared for his might and loved for his wisdom.

Now, in the heart of that city was a well, whose water was cool and crystalline, from which all the inhabitants drank, even the king and his courtiers; for there was no other well.

One night when all were asleep, a witch entered the city, and poured seven drops of strange liquid into the well, and said, "From this hour he who drinks this water shall become mad."

Next morning all the inhabitants, save the king and his lord chamberlain, drank from the well and became mad, even as the witch had foretold.

And during that day the people in the narrow streets and in the market places did naught but whisper to one another, “The king is mad. Our king and his lord chamberlain have lost their reason. Surely we cannot be ruled by a mad king. We must dethrone him.”

That evening the king ordered a golden goblet to be filled from the well. And when it was brought to him he drank deeply, and gave it to his lord chamberlain to drink.

And there was great rejoicing in that distant city of Wirani, because its king and its lord chamberlain had regained their reason.

AMBITION

Three men met at a tavern table. One was a weaver, another a carpenter and the third a ploughman.

Said the weaver, “I sold a fine linen shroud today for two pieces of gold. Let us have all the wine we want.”

“And I,” said the carpenter, “I sold my best coffin. We will have a great roast with the wine.”

“I only dug a grave,” said the ploughman, “but my patron paid me double. Let us have honey cakes too.”

And all that evening the tavern was busy, for they called often for wine and meat and cakes. And they were merry.

And the host rubbed his hands and smiled at his wife; for his guests were spending freely.

When they left the moon was high, and they walked along the road singing and shouting together.

The host and his wife stood in the tavern door and looked after them.

“Ah!” said the wife, “these gentlemen! So freehanded and so gay! If only they could bring us such luck every day! Then our son need not be a tavern-keeper and work so hard. We could educate him, and he could become a priest.”

THE NEW PLEASURE

Last night I invented a new pleasure, and as I was giving it the first trial an angel and a devil came rushing toward my house. They met at my door and fought with

each other over my newly created pleasure; the one crying, "It is a sin!"-the other, "It is a virtue!"

THE OTHER LANGUAGE

Three days after I was born, as I lay in my silken cradle, gazing with astonished dismay on the new world round about me, my mother spoke to the wet-nurse, saying, "How does my child?"

And the wet-nurse answered, "He does well, Madame, I have fed him three times; and never before have I seen a babe so young yet so gay."

And I was indignant; and I cried, "It is not true, mother; for my bed is hard, and the milk I have sucked is bitter to my mouth, and the odour of the breast is foul in my nostrils, and I am most miserable."

But my mother did not understand, nor did the nurse; for the language I spoke was that of the world from which I came.

And on the twenty-first day of my life, as I was being christened, the priest said to my mother, "You should indeed be happy, Madame, that your son was born a Christian."

And I was surprised,-and I said to the priest, "Then your mother in Heaven should be unhappy, for you were not born a Christian."

But the priest too did not understand my language.

And after seven moons, one day a soothsayer looked at me, and he said to my mother, "Your son will be a statesman and a great leader of men."

But I cried out,-"That is a false prophet; for I shall be a musician, and naught but a musician shall I be."

But even at that age my language was not understood-and great was my astonishment.

And after three and thirty years, during which my mother, and the nurse, and the priest have all died, (the shadow of God be upon their spirits) the soothsayer still lives. And yesterday I met him near the gates of the temple; and while we were talking together he said, "I have always known you would become a great musician. Even in your infancy I prophesied and foretold your future."

And I believed him-for now I too have forgotten

the language of that other world.

THE POMEGRANATE

Once when I was living in the heart of a pomegranate, I heard a seed saying, "Someday I shall become a tree, and the wind will sing in my branches, and the sun will dance on my leaves, and I shall be strong and beautiful through all the seasons."

Then another seed spoke and said, "When I was as young as you, I too held such views; but now that I can weigh and measure things, I see that my hopes were vain."

And a third seed spoke also, "I see in us nothing that promises so great a future."

And a fourth said, "But what a mockery our life would be, without a greater future!"

Said a fifth, "Why dispute what we shall be, when we know not even what we are."

But a sixth replied, "Whatever we are, that we shall continue to be."

And a seventh said, "I have such a clear idea how

everything will be, but I cannot put it into words.”

Then an eight spoke-and a ninth-and a tenth-and then many-until all were speaking, and I could distinguish nothing for the many voices.

And so I moved that very day into the heart of a quince, where the seeds are few and almost silent.

THE TWO CAGES

In my father’s garden there are two cages. In one is a lion, which my father’s slaves brought from the desert of Ninavah; in the other is a songless sparrow.

Every day at dawn the sparrow calls to the lion, “Good morrow to thee, brother prisoner.”

THE THREE ANTS

Three ants met on the nose of a man who was asleep in the sun. And after they had saluted one another, each according to the custom of his tribe, they stood there conversing.

The first ant said, “These hills and plains are the most barren I have known. I have searched all day for a grain of some sort, and there is none to be found.”

Said the second ant, "I too have found nothing, though I have visited every nook and glade. This is, I believe, what my people call the soft, moving land where nothing grows."

Then the third ant raised his head and said, "My friends, we are standing now on the nose of the Supreme Ant, the mighty and infinite Ant, whose body is so great that we cannot see it, whose shadow is so vast that we cannot trace it, whose voice is so loud that we cannot hear it; and He is omnipresent."

When the third ant spoke thus the other ants looked at each other and laughed.

At that moment the man moved and in his sleep raised his hand and scratched his nose, and the three ants were crushed.

THE GRAVE-DIGGER

Once, as I was burying one of my dead selves, the grave-digger came by and said to me, "Of all those who come here to bury, you alone I like."

Said I, "You please me exceedingly, but why do you like me?"

“Because,” said he, “They come weeping and go weeping-you only come laughing and go laughing.”

ON THE STEPS OF THE TEMPLE

Yestereve, on the marble steps of the Temple, I saw a woman sitting between two men. One side of her face was pale, the other was blushing.

THE BLESSED CITY

In my youth I was told that in a certain city every one lived according to the Scriptures.

And I said, “I will seek that city and the blessedness thereof.” And it was far. And I made great provision for my journey. And after forty days I beheld the city and on the forty-first day I entered into it.

And lo! the whole company of the inhabitants had each but a single eye and but one hand. And I was astonished and said to myself, “Shall they of this so holy city have but one eye and one hand?”

then I saw that they too were astonished, for they were marvelling greatly at my two hands and my two eyes. And as they were speaking together I inquired of

them saying, “Is this indeed the Blessed City, where each man lives according to the Scriptures?” And they said, “Yes, this is that city.”

“And what,” said I, “hath befallen you, and where are your right eyes and your right hands?”

And all the people were moved. And they said, “Come thou and see.”

And they took me to the temple in the midst of the city. and in the temple I saw a heap of hands and eyes. All withered. Then said I, “Alas! what conqueror hath committed this cruelty upon you?”

And there went a murmur amongst them. And one of their elders stood forth and said, “This doing is of ourselves. God hath made us conquerors over the evil that was in us.”

And he led me to a high altar, and all the people followed. And he showed me above the altar an inscription graven, and I read:

“If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that the whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend

thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.” Then I understood. And I turned about to all the people and cried, “Hath no man or woman among you two eyes or two hands?”

And they answered me saying, “No, not one. There is none whole save such as are yet too young to read the Scripture and to understand its commandment.”

And when we had come out of the temple, I straightway left that Blessed City; for I was not too young, and I could read the scripture.

THE GOOD GOD AND THE EVIL GOD

The Good God and the Evil God met on the mountain top.

The Good God said, “Good day to you, brother.”

The Evil God did not answer.

And the Good God said, “You are in a bad humour today.”

“Yes,” said the Evil God, “for of late I have been often mistaken for you, called by your name, and treated as if I were you, and it ill-pleases me.”

And the Good God said, “But I too have been mistaken for you and called by your name.”

The Evil God walked away curing the stupidity of man.

DEFEAT

Defeat, my Defeat, my solitude and my aloofness;
You are dearer to me than a thousand triumphs, And
sweeter to my heart than all world-glory.

Defeat, my Defeat, my self-knowledge and my
defiance, Through you I know that I am yet young and
swift of foot And not to be trapped by withering laurels.
And in you I have found aloneness And the joy of
being shunned and scorned.

Defeat, my Defeat, my shining sword and shield,
In your eyes I have read That to be enthroned is to be
enslaved, and to be understood is to be levelled down,
And to be grasped is but to reach one's fullness and like
a ripe fruit to fall and be consumed.

Defeat, my Defeat, my bold companion, You shall hear my songs and my cries an my silences, And none but you shall speak to me of the beating of wings, And urging of seas, And of mountains that burn in the night, And you alone shall climb my steep and rocky soul.

Defeat, my Defeat, my deathless courage, You and I shall laugh together with the storm, And together we shall dig graves for all that die in us, And we shall stand in the sun with a will, And we shall be dangerous.

NIGHT AND THE MADMAN

“I am like thee, O, Night, dark and naked; I walk on the flaming path which is above my day-dreams, and whenever my foot touches earth a giant oak tree comes forth.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman, for thou still lookest backward to see how large a foot-print thou leavest on the sand.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, silent and deep; and in the heart of my loneliness lies a Goddess in child-bed; and in him who is being born Heaven touches Hell.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman, for thou

shudderest yet before pain, and the song of the abyss terrifies thee.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, wild and terrible; for my ears are crowded with cries of conquered nations and sighs for forgotten lands.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman, for thou still takest thy little-self for a comrade, and with thy monster-self thou canst not be friend.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, cruel and awful; for my bosom is lit by burning ships at sea, and my lips are wet with blood of slain warriors.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman; for the desire for a sister-spirit is yet upon thee, and thou has not become a low unto thyself.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, joyous and glad; for he who dwells in my shadow is now drunk with virgin wine, and she who follows me is sinning mirthfully.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman, for thy soul is wrapped in the veil of seven folds and thou holdest not thy heart in Thine hand.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, patient and passionate;

for in my breast a thousand dead lovers are buried in shrouds of withered kisses.”

“Yea, Madman, art thou like me? Art thou like me? And canst thou ride the tempest as a steed, and grasp the lightning as a sword?”

“Like thee, O, Night, like thee, mighty and high, and my throne is built upon heaps of fallen Gods; and before me too pass the days to kiss the hem of my garment but never to gaze at my face.”

“Art thou like me, child of my darkest heart? And dost thou think my untamed thoughts and speak my vast language?”

“Yea, we are twin brothers, O, Night; for thou revealest space and I reveal my soul.”

FACES

I have seen a face with a thousand countenances, and a face that was but a single countenance as if held in a mould.

I have seen a face whose sheen I could look through to the ugliness beneath, and a face whose sheen I had to lift to see how beautiful it was.

I have seen an old face much lined with nothing,
and a smooth face in which all things were graven.

I know faces, because I look through the fabric
my own eye weaves, and behold the reality beneath.

THE GREATER SEA

My soul and I went to the great sea to bathe. And
when we reached the shore, we went about looking for
a hidden and lonely place.

But as we walked, we saw a man sitting on a grey
rock taking pinches of salt from a bag and throwing
them into the sea.

“This is the pessimist,” said my soul, “Let us
leave this place. We cannot bathe here.”

We walked on until we reached an inlet. There
we saw, standing on a white rock, a man holding a
bejewelled box, from which he took sugar and threw it
into the sea.

“And this is the optimist,” said my soul, “And he
too must not see our naked bodies.

Further on we walked. And on a beach we saw a man picking up dead fish and tenderly putting them back into the water.

“And we cannot bathe before him,” said my soul. “He is the humane philanthropist.”

And we passed on.

Then we came where we saw a man tracing his shadow on the sand. Great waves came and erased it. But he went on tracing it again and again.

“He is the mystic,” said my soul, “Let us leave him.”

And we walked on, till in a quiet cover we saw a man scooping up the foam and putting it into an alabaster bowl.

“He is the idealist,” said my soul, “Surely he must not see our nudity.”

And on we walked. Suddenly we heard a voice crying, “This is the sea. This is the deep sea. This is the vast and mighty sea.” And when we reached the voice it was a man whose back was turned to the sea, and at his ear he held a shell, listening to its murmur.

And my soul said, "Let us pass on. He is the realist, who turns his back on the whole he cannot grasp, and busies himself with a fragment."

So we passed on. And in a weedy place among the rocks was a man with his head buried in the sand. And I said to my soul, "We can bath here, for he cannot see us."

"Nay," said my soul, "For he is the most deadly of them all. He is the puritan."

Then a great sadness came over the face of my soul, and into her voice.

"Let us go hence," she said, "For there is no lonely, hidden place where we can bathe. I would not have this wind lift my golden hair, or bare my white bosom in this air, or let the light disclose my sacred nakedness."

Then we left that sea to seek the Greater Sea.

CRUCIFIED

I cried to men, "I would be crucified!"

And they said, “Why should your blood be upon our heads?”

And I answered, “How else shall you be exalted except by crucifying madmen?”

And they heeded and I was crucified. And the crucifixion appeased me.

And when I was hanged between earth and heaven they lifted up their heads to see me. And they were exalted, for their heads had never before been lifted.

But as they stood looking up at me one called out, “For what art thou seeking to atone?”

And another cried, “In what cause dost thou sacrifice thyself?”

And a third said, “Thinkest thou with this price to buy world glory?”

Then said a fourth, “Behold, how he smiles! Can such pain be forgiven?”

And I answered them all, and said:

“Remember only that I smiled. I do not atone-nor sacrifice-nor wish for glory; and I have nothing to forgive. I thirsted-and I besought you to give me my blood to drink. For what is there can quench a madman’s thirst but his own blood? I was dumb-and I asked wounds of you for mouths. I was imprisoned in your days and nights-and I sought a door into larger days and nights.

And now I go-as others already crucified have gone. And think not we are weary of crucifixion. For we must be crucified by larger and yet larger men, between greater earths and greater heavens.”

THE ASTRONOMER

In the shadow of the temple my friend and I saw a blind man sitting alone. And my friend said, “Behold the wisest man of our land.”

Then I left my friend and approached the blind man and greeted him. And we conversed.

After a while I said, “Forgive my question; but since when has thou been blind?”

“From my birth,” he answered.

Said I, “And what path of wisdom followest thou?”

Said he, “I am an astronomer.”

Then he placed his hand upon his breast saying, “I watch all these suns and moons and stars.”

THE GREAT LONGING

Here I sit between my brother the mountain and my sister the sea.

We three are one in loneliness, and the love that binds us together is deep and strong and strange. Nay, it is deeper than my sister's depth and stronger than my brother's strength, and stranger than the strangeness of my madness.

Aeons upon aeons have passed since the first grey dawn made us visible to one another; and though we have seen the birth and the fullness and the death of many worlds, we are still eager and young.

We are young and eager and yet we are mateless and unvisited, and though we lie in unbroken half embrace, we are un comforted. And what comfort is there for controlled desire and unspent passion?

Whence shall come the flaming god to warm my sister's bed? And what she-torrent shall quench my brother's fire? And who is the woman that shall command my heart?

In the stillness of the night my sister murmurs in her sleep the fire-god's unknown name, and my brother calls afar upon the cool and distant goddess. But upon whom I call in my sleep I know not.

Here I sit between my brother the mountain and my sister the sea. We three are one in loneliness, and the love that binds us together is deep and strong and strange.

SAID A BLADE OF GRASS

Said a blade of grass to an autumn leaf, "You make such a noise falling! You scatter all my winter dreams."

Said the leaf indignant, "Low-born and low-dwelling! Songless, peevish thing! You live not in the upper air and you cannot tell the sound of singing."

Then the autumn leaf lay down upon the earth and slept. And when spring came she waked again-and she was a blade of grass.

And when it was autumn and her winter sleep was upon her, and above her through all the air the leaves were falling, she muttered to herself, "O these autumn leaves! They make such noise! They scatter all my winter dreams."

THE EYE

Said the Eye one day, "I see beyond these valleys a mountain veiled with blue mist. Is it not beautiful?"

The Ear listened, and after listening intently awhile, said, "But where is any mountain? I do not hear it."

Then the Hand spoke and said, "I am trying in vain to feel it or touch it, and I can find no mountain."

And the Nose said, "There is no mountain, I cannot smell it."

Then the Eye turned the other way, and they all began to talk together about the Eye's strange delusion. And they said, "Something must be the matter with the Eye."

THE TWO LEARNED MEN

Once there lived in the ancient city of Afkar two learned men who hated and belittled each other's learning. For one of them denied the existence of the gods and the other was a believer.

One day the two met in the marketplace, and amidst their followers they began to dispute and to argue about the existence or the non-existence of the gods. And after hours of contention they parted.

That evening the unbeliever went to the temple and prostrated himself before the altar and prayed the gods to forgive his wayward past.

And the same hour the other learned man, he who had upheld the gods, burned his sacred books. For he had become an unbeliever.

WHEN MY SORROW WAS BORN

When my Sorrow was born I nursed it with care, and watched over it with loving tenderness.

And my Sorrow grew like all living things, strong and beautiful and full of wondrous delights.

And we loved one another, my Sorrow and I, and

we loved the world about us; for Sorrow had a kindly heart and mine was kindly with Sorrow.

And when we conversed, my Sorrow and I, our days were winged and our nights were girdled with dreams; for Sorrow had an eloquent tongue, and mine was eloquent with Sorrow.