



Orpheus  
and  
Eurydice

and other poems

**ORPHEUS**  
**and**  
**EURYDICE**

**and other poems**

**compiled and edited by  
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I

Thence, in his saffron robe, for distant Thrace,  
Hymen departs, thro' air's unmeasur'd space;  
By Orpheus call'd, the nuptial Pow'r attends,  
But with ill-omen'd augury descends;

Nor cheerful look'd the God, nor prosp'rous spoke,  
Nor blaz'd his torch, but wept in hissing smoke.  
In vain they whirl it 'round, in vain they shake,  
No rapid motion can its flames awake.

With dread these inauspicious signs were view'd,  
And soon a more disastrous end ensu'd;

\*

For as the bride, amid the Naiad train,  
Ran joyful, sporting o'er the flow'ry plain,  
A venom'd viper bit her as she pass'd;  
Instant she fell, and sudden breath'd her last.

When long his loss the Thracian had deplor'd,  
Not by superior Pow'rs to be restor'd;  
Inflam'd by love, and urg'd by deep despair,

He leaves the realms of light, and upper air;

Daring to tread the dark Tenarian road,  
And tempt the shades in their obscure abode;  
Thro' gliding spectres of th' interr'd to go,  
And phantom people of the world below:

Persephone he seeks, and him who reigns  
O'er ghosts, and Hell's uncomfortable plains.

\*

Arriv'd, he, tuning to his voice his strings,  
Thus to the king and queen of shadows sings.

\*

Ye Pow'rs, who under Earth your realms extend,  
To whom all mortals must one day descend;  
If here 'tis granted sacred truth to tell:  
I come not curious to explore your Hell;

Nor come to boast (by vain ambition fir'd)  
How Cerberus at my approach retir'd.  
My wife alone I seek; for her lov'd sake  
These terrors I support, this journey take.

She, luckless wandring, or by fate mis-led,  
Chanc'd on a lurking viper's crest to tread;  
The vengeful beast, inflam'd with fury, starts,  
And thro' her heel his deathful venom darts.

Thus was she snatch'd untimely to her tomb;  
Her growing years cut short, and springing bloom.

Long I my loss endeavour'd to sustain,  
And strongly strove, but strove, alas, in vain:

At length I yielded, won by mighty love;  
Well known is that omnipotence above!  
But here, I doubt, his unfelt influence fails;  
And yet a hope within my heart prevails.

That here, ev'n here, he has been known of old;  
At least if truth be by tradition told;  
If fame of former rapes belief may find,  
You both by love, and love alone, were join'd.

\*

Now, by the horrors which these realms surround;  
By the vast chaos of these depths profound;  
By the sad silence which eternal reigns



O'er all the waste of these wide-stretching plains;

Let me again Eurydice receive,  
Let Fate her quick-spun thread of life re-weave.

\*

All our possessions are but loans from you,  
And soon, or late, you must be paid your due;  
Hither we haste to human-kind's last seat,  
Your endless empire, and our sure retreat.

She too, when ripen'd years she shall attain,  
Must, of avoidless right, be yours again:  
I but the transient use of that require,  
Which soon, too soon, I must resign entire.

But if the destinies refuse my vow,  
And no remission of her doom allow;  
Know, I'm determin'd to return no more;  
So both retain, or both to life restore.

\*

Thus, while the bard melodiously complains,  
And to his lyre accords his vocal strains,

The very bloodless shades attention keep,  
And silent, seem compassionate to weep;

Ev'n Tantalus his flood unthirsty views,  
Nor flies the stream, nor he the stream pursues;  
Ixion's wond'ring wheel its whirl suspends,  
And the voracious vulture, charm'd, attends;

No more the Belides their toil bemoan,  
And Sisiphus reclin'd, sits list'ning on his stone.  
Then first ('tis said) by sacred verse subdu'd,  
The Furies felt their cheeks with tears bedew'd:

Nor could the rigid king, or queen of Hell,  
Th' impulse of pity in their hearts repell.  
Now, from a troop of shades that last arriv'd,  
Eurydice was call'd, and stood reviv'd:

\*

Slow she advanc'd, and halting seem to feel  
The fatal wound, yet painful in her heel.  
Thus he obtains the suit so much desir'd,  
On strict observance of the terms requir'd:

For if, before he reach the realms of air,  
He backward cast his eyes to view the fair,  
The forfeit grant, that instant, void is made,  
And she for ever left a lifeless shade.

\*

Now thro' the noiseless throng their way they bend,  
And both with pain the rugged road ascend;  
Dark was the path, and difficult, and steep,  
And thick with vapours from the smoaky deep.

They well-nigh now had pass'd the bounds of night,  
And just approach'd the margin of the light,  
When he, mistrusting lest her steps might stray,  
And gladsome of the glimpse of dawning day,

His longing eyes, impatient, backward cast  
To catch a lover's look, but look'd his last;  
For, instant dying, she again descends,  
While he to empty air his arms extends.

Again she dy'd, nor yet her lord reprov'd;  
What could she say, but that too well he lov'd?  
One last farewell she spoke, which scarce he heard;

So soon she drop'd, so sudden disappear'd.

All stunn'd he stood, when thus his wife he view'd  
By second Fate, and double death subdu'd:  
Not more amazement by that wretch was shown,  
Whom Cerberus beholding, turn'd to stone;

Nor Olenus cou'd more astonish'd look,  
When on himself Lethaea's fault he took,  
His beauteous wife, who too secure had dar'd  
Her face to vye with Goddesses compar'd:

Once join'd by love, they stand united still,  
Turn'd to contiguous rocks on Ida's hill.  
Now to repass the Styx in vain he tries,  
Charon averse, his pressing suit denies.

Sev'n days entire, along th' infernal shores,  
Disconsolate, the bard Eurydice deplores;  
Defil'd with filth his robe, with tears his cheeks,  
No sustenance but grief, and cares, he seeks:

Of rigid Fate incessant he complains,  
And Hell's inexorable Gods arraigns.

This ended, to high Rhodope he hastes,  
And Haemus' mountain, bleak with northern blasts.

\*

And now his yearly race the circling sun  
Had thrice compleat thro' wat'ry Pisces run,  
Since Orpheus fled the face of womankind,  
And all soft union with the sex declin'd.

Whether his ill success this change had bred,  
Or binding vows made to his former bed;  
Whate'er the cause, in vain the nymphs contest,  
With rival eyes to warm his frozen breast:

For ev'ry nymph with love his lays inspir'd,  
But ev'ry nymph repuls'd, with grief retir'd.

\*

A hill there was, and on that hill a mead,  
With verdure thick, but destitute of shade.  
here, now, the Muse's son no sooner sings,  
No sooner strikes his sweet resounding strings.

But distant groves the flying sounds receive,

And list'ning trees their rooted stations leave;  
Themselves transplanting, all around they grow,  
And various shades their various kinds bestow.

Here, tall Chaonian oaks their branches spread,  
While weeping poplars there erect their head.

The foodful Esculus here shoots his leaves,  
That turf soft lime-tree, this, fat beach receives;

Here, brittle hazels, lawrels here advance,  
And there tough ash to form the heroe's lance;  
Here silver firs with knotless trunks ascend,  
There, scarlet oaks beneath their acorns bend.

That spot admits the hospitable plane,  
On this, the maple grows with clouded grain;  
Here, watry willows are with Lotus seen;  
There, tamarisk, and box for ever green.

With double hue here mirtles grace the ground,  
And laurestines, with purple berries crown'd.

With pliant feet, now, ivies this way wind,  
Vines yonder rise, and elms with vines entwin'd.

Wild Ornus now, the pitch-tree next takes root,  
And Arbutus adorn'd with blushing fruit.  
Then easy-bending palms, the victor's prize,  
And pines erect with bristly tops arise...

-----

## II

### Pan Learns Music

Limber-limbed, lazy god, stretched on the rock,  
Where is sweet Echo, and where is your flock?  
What are you making here? "Listen," said Pan, --  
"Out of a river-reed music for man!"

-----

### III

#### The Fable of Midas

...Now loathing wealth, th' occasion of his woes,  
Far in the woods he sought a calm repose;  
In caves and grottos, where the nymphs resort,  
And keep with mountain Pan their sylvan court.

Ah! had he left his stupid soul behind!  
But his condition alter'd not his mind.

For where high Tmolus rears his shady brow,  
And from his cliffs surveys the seas below,  
In his descent, by Sardis bounded here,  
By the small confines of Hypaepa there,

Pan to the nymphs his frolick ditties play'd,  
Tuning his reeds beneath the chequer'd shade.  
The nymphs are pleas'd, the boasting sylvan plays,  
And speaks with slight of great Apollo's lays.

Tmolus was arbiter; the boaster still  
Accepts the tryal with unequal skill.



The venerable judge was seated high  
On his own hill, that seem'd to touch the sky.

Above the whisp'ring trees his head he rears,  
From their encumbering boughs to free his ears;  
A wreath of oak alone his temples bound,  
The pendant acorns loosely dangled round.

In me your judge, says he, there's no delay:  
Then bids the goatherd God begin, and play.

Pan tun'd the pipe, and with his rural song  
Pleas'd the low taste of all the vulgar throng;  
Such songs a vulgar judgment mostly please,  
Midas was there, and Midas judg'd with these.

The mountain sire with grave deportment now  
To Phoebus turns his venerable brow:  
And, as he turns, with him the listning wood  
In the same posture of attention stood.

The God his own Parnassian laurel crown'd,  
And in a wreath his golden tresses bound,  
Graceful his purple mantle swept the ground.

High on the left his iv'ry lute he rais'd,  
The lute, emboss'd with glitt'ring jewels, blaz'd  
In his right hand he nicely held the quill,  
His easy posture spoke a master's skill.

The strings he touch'd with more than human art,  
Which pleas'd the judge's ear, and sooth'd his heart;  
Who soon judiciously the palm decreed,  
And to the lute postpon'd the squeaking reed.

All, with applause, the rightful sentence heard,  
Midas alone dissatisfy'd appear'd;  
To him unjustly giv'n the judgment seems,  
For Pan's barbarick notes he most esteems.

The lyrick God, who thought his untun'd ear  
Deserv'd but ill a human form to wear,  
Of that deprives him, and supplies the place  
With some more fit, and of an ampler space:

Fix'd on his noddle an unseemly pair,  
Flagging, and large, and full of whitish hair;  
Without a total change from what he was,  
Still in the man preserves the simple ass.

He, to conceal the scandal of the deed,  
A purple turbant folds about his head;  
Veils the reproach from publick view, and fears  
The laughing world would spy his monstrous ears.

One trusty barber-slave, that us'd to dress  
His master's hair, when lengthen'd to excess,  
The mighty secret knew, but knew alone,  
And, tho' impatient, durst not make it known.

Restless, at last, a private place he found,  
Then dug a hole, and told it to the ground;  
In a low whisper he reveal'd the case,  
And cover'd in the earth, and silent left the place.

In time, of trembling reeds a plenteous crop  
From the confided furrow sprouted up;  
Which, high advancing with the ripening year,  
Made known the tiller, and his fruitless care:

For then the rustling blades, and whisp'ring wind,  
To tell th' important secret, both combin'd.

-----

#### IV.

Then an herald cried aloud,  
To you it is commanded,  
oh people, nations, and languages,

That at what time ye hear the  
sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut,  
psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick,  
ye fall down and worship the golden image  
that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

And whoso falleth not down and worshipping  
shall the same hour be cast into the midst  
of a burning fiery furnace.

Therefore at that time,  
when all the people heard the  
sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut,  
psaltery, and all kinds of musick,  
all the people, the nations, and the languages,  
fell down and worshipped the golden image  
that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

----

And a mighty angel  
took up a stone like a great millstone,  
and cast it into the sea, saying,  
Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon  
be thrown down, and shall be found  
no more at all.

And the voice of harpers, and musicians,  
and of pipers, and trumpeters,  
shall be heard no more at all in thee;  
and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be,  
shall be found any more in thee;  
and the sound of a millstone  
shall be heard no more at all in thee;

And the light of a candle  
shall shine no more at all in thee;  
and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride  
shall be heard no more at all in thee:  
for thy merchants were the great men of the earth;  
for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

----

By the rivers of Babylon,  
there we sat down, yea, we wept,  
when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps  
upon the willows in the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away  
captive required of us a song;  
and they that wasted us required of us mirth,  
saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion

-----

Thou art my hiding place;  
thou shalt preserve me from trouble;  
thou shalt compass me about  
with songs of deliverance.

Selah.

I will instruct thee and teach thee  
in the way which thou shalt go:  
I will guide thee with mine eye.

-----

V.

'Tis said, the pipe and lute that charm our ears  
Derive their melody from rolling spheres;  
But Faith, o'erpasing speculation's bound,  
Can see what sweetens every jangled sound.

We, who are parts of Adam, heard with him  
The song of angels and of seraphim.  
Our memory, though dull and sad, retains  
Some echo still of those unearthly strains.

Oh, music is the meat of all who love,  
Music uplifts the soul to realms above.  
The ashes glow, the latent fires increase:  
We listen and are fed with joy and peace.

-----

VI.

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?  
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.  
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,

Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?  
If the true concord of well-tunèd sounds,  
By unions married, do offend thine ear,  
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds  
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.  
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,  
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,  
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,  
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing;  
Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,  
Sings this to thee: "Thou single wilt prove none."

----

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,  
Upon that blessèd wood whose motion sounds  
With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st  
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,  
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap  
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,  
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,  
At the wood's holdness by thee blushing stand!  
To be so tickled, they would change their state  
And situation with those dancing chips  
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,



Making dead wood more blest than living lips.  
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,  
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

----

## VII.

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won  
By Philip's warlike son --  
Aloft in awful state  
The godlike hero sate  
On his imperial throne;  
His valiant peers were placed around,  
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound  
(So should desert in arms be crown'd);  
The lovely Thais by his side  
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride  
In flower of youth and beauty's pride: --  
Happy, happy, happy pair!  
None but the brave  
None but the brave  
None but the brave deserves the fair!

Timotheus placed on high

Amid the tuneful quire  
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre:  
The trembling notes ascend the sky  
And heavenly joys inspire.

The song began from Jove  
Who left his blissful seats above  
Such is the power of mighty love!  
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;  
Sublime on radiant spires he rode  
When he to fair Olympia prest,  
And while he sought her snowy breast,  
Then round her slender waist he curl'd,  
And stamp'd an image of himself,  
a sovereign of the world.  
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound;  
A present deity! they shout around:  
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound:  
With ravish'd ears  
The monarch hears,  
Assumes the god;  
Affects to nod,  
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,

Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:  
The jolly god in triumph comes;  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!  
Flush'd with a purple grace  
He shows his honest face:  
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes!  
Bacchus, ever fair and young,  
Drinking joys did first ordain;  
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,  
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:  
Rich the treasure,  
Sweet the pleasure,  
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;  
Fought all his battles o'er again,  
And thrice he routed all his foes,  
and thrice he slew the slain!  
The master saw the madness rise,  
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;  
And while he Heaven and Earth defied  
Changed his hand and check'd his pride.  
He chose a mournful Muse  
Soft pity to infuse:

He sung Darius great and good,  
By too severe a fate  
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,  
Fallen from his high estate.  
And weltering in his blood;  
Deserted at his utmost need  
By those his former bounty fed;  
On the bare earth exposed he lies  
With not a friend to close his eyes.  
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,  
Revolving in his alter'd soul  
The various turns of chance below;  
And now and then a sigh he stole,  
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see  
That love was in the next degree;  
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,  
For pity melts the mind to love.  
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures  
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.  
War, he sung, is toil and trouble,  
Honour but an empty bubble;  
Never ending, still beginning,

Fighting still, and still destroying;  
If the world be worth thy winning,  
Think, O think, it worth enjoying:  
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,  
Take the good the gods provide thee!  
The many rend the skies with loud applause;  
So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.  
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,  
Gazed on the fair  
Who caused his care,  
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,  
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:  
At length with love and wine at once oppress  
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again:  
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!  
Break his bands of sleep asunder  
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.  
Hark, hark! the horrid sound  
Has raised up his head:  
As awaked from the dead  
And amazed he stares around.  
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,

See the Furies arise!  
See the snakes that they rear  
How they hiss in their hair,  
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!  
Behold a ghastly band,  
Each a torch in his hand!  
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain  
And unburied remain  
Inglorious on the plain:  
Give the vengeance due  
To the valiant crew!  
Behold how they toss their torches on high,  
How they point to the Persian abodes  
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.  
The princes applaud with a furious joy:  
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;  
Thais led the way  
To light him to his prey,  
And like another Helen, fired another Troy!

Thus, long ago,  
Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,  
While organs yet were mute,  
Timotheus, to his breathing flute

And sounding lyre  
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.  
At last divine Cecilia came.  
Inventress of the vocal frame;  
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store  
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,  
And added length to solemn sounds,  
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.  
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,  
Or both divide the crown;  
He raised a mortal to the skies,  
She drew an angel down!

----

### VIII.

There be none of Beauty's daughters  
With a magic like thee;  
And like music on the waters  
Is thy sweet voice to me:  
When, as if its sound were causing  
The charmed ocean's pausing,  
The waves lie still and gleaming,  
And the lulled winds seem dreaming;

And the midnight moon is weaving  
Her bright chain o'er the deep,  
Whose breast is gently heaving  
As an infant's asleep:  
So the spirit bows before thee,  
To listen and adore thee,  
With a full but soft emotion,  
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

----

IX.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
But being too happy in thine happiness,—  
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.



O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
O for a beaker full of the warm South,  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stained mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs,  
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:  
    Already with thee! tender is the night,  
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
    Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;  
    But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
    Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
    White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
    Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
    And mid-May's eldest child,  
    The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,  
    To take into the air my quiet breath;

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
    In such an ecstasy!  
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
    To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down;  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
    In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
    She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
    The same that oft-times hath  
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
    Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
    As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
In the next valley-glades:  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

----

X.

Musicians wrestle everywhere --  
All day -- among the crowded air  
I hear the silver strife --  
And -- walking -- long before the morn --  
Such transport breaks upon the town  
I think it that "New Life"!

If is not Bird -- it has no nest --  
Nor "Band" -- in brass and scarlet -- drest --  
Nor Tamborin -- nor Man --  
It is not Hymn from pulpit read --  
The "Morning Stars" the Treble led  
On Time's first Afternoon!

Some -- say -- it is "the Spheres" -- at play!  
Some say that bright Majority

Of vanished Dames -- and Men!  
Some -- think it service in the place  
Where we -- with late -- celestial face --  
Please God -- shall Ascertain!

----

Dying at my music!  
Bubble! Bubble!  
Hold me till the Octave's run!  
Quick! Burst the Windows!  
Ritardando!  
Phials left, and the Sun!

----

## XI.

I hear America singing,  
the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics,  
each one singing his as it should be  
blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his  
as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his

as he makes ready for work,  
or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing  
what belongs to him in his boat,  
the deckhand singing  
on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing  
as he sits on his bench,  
the hatter singing as he stands,

The wood-cutter's song,  
the ploughboy's on his way in the morning,  
or at noon intermission or at sundown,  
The delicious singing of the mother,  
or of the young wife at work,  
or of the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him  
or her  
and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day --  
at night the party of young fellows,  
robust, friendly,  
Singing with open mouths  
their strong melodious songs.

-----

That music always round me, unceasing, unbeginning  
—yet long untaught I did not hear;  
But now the chorus I hear, and am elated;  
A tenor, strong, ascending, with power and health,  
with glad notes of day-break I hear,  
A soprano, at intervals, sailing  
buoyantly over the tops of immense waves,  
A transparent bass, shuddering lusciously  
under and through the universe,  
The triumphant tutti—the funeral wailings,  
with sweet flutes and violins --  
all these I fill myself with;  
I hear not the volumes of sound merely --  
I am moved by the exquisite meanings,  
I listen to the different voices  
winding in and out, striving, contending  
with fiery vehemence to excel each other in emotion;  
I do not think the performers know themselves—but  
now I think I begin to know them.

-----

## XII.

The neighbour sits in his window and plays the flute.

From my bed I can hear him,

And the round notes flutter and tap about the room,

And hit against each other,

Blurring to unexpected chords.

It is very beautiful,

With the little flute-notes all about me,

In the darkness.

In the daytime,

The neighbour eats bread and onions with one hand

And copies music with the other.

He is fat and has a bald head,

So I do not look at him,

But run quickly past his window.

There is always the sky to look at,

Or the water in the well!

But when night comes and he plays his flute,

I think of him as a young man,

With gold seals hanging from his watch,

And a blue coat with silver buttons.

As I lie in my bed

The flute-notes push against my ears and lips,

And I go to sleep, dreaming.



### XIII.

Was it light that spake from the darkness,  
or music that shone from the word,  
When the night was enkindled with sound  
of the sun or the first-born bird?  
Souls enthralled and entrammelled in bondage  
of seasons that fall and rise,  
Bound fast round with the fetters of flesh,  
and blinded with light that dies,  
Lived not surely till music spake,  
and the spirit of life was heard.

Music, sister of sunrise, and herald of life to be,  
Smiled as dawn on the spirit of man,  
and the thrall was free.  
Slave of nature and serf of time,  
the bondman of life and death,  
Dumb with passionless patience that breathed  
but forlorn and reluctant breath,  
Heard, beheld, and his soul made answer,  
and communed aloud with the sea.

Morning spake, and he heard:

and the passionate silent noon  
Kept for him not silence:  
and soft from the mounting moon  
Fell the sound of her splendour,  
heard as dawn's in the breathless night,  
Not of men but of birds whose note  
bade man's soul quicken and leap to light:  
And the song of it spake, and the light and the  
darkness of earth were as chords in tune.

----

#### XIV.

Sometimes the mist overhangs my path,  
And blackening clouds about me cling;  
But, oh, I have a magic way  
To turn the gloom to cheerful day --  
I softly sing.

And if the way grows darker still,  
Shadowed by Sorrow's somber wing,  
With glad defiance in my throat,  
I pierce the darkness with a note,  
And sing, and sing.

I brood not over the broken past,  
Nor dread whatever time may bring;  
No nights are dark, no days are long,  
While in my heart there swells a song,  
And I can sing.

----

XV.

Hungry for music with a desperate hunger  
I prowled abroad, I threaded through the town;  
The evening crowd was clamoring and drinking,  
Vulgar and pitiful--my heart bowed down--  
Till I remembered duller hours made noble  
By strangers clad in some suprising grace.  
Wait, wait my soul, your music comes ere midnight  
Appearing in some unexpected place  
With quivering lips, and gleaming, moonlit face.

----

XVI.

The earth keeps some vibration going

There in your heart, and that is you.  
And if the people find you can fiddle,  
Why, fiddle you must, for all your life.  
What do you see, a harvest of clover?  
Or a meadow to walk through to the river?  
The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands  
For bees hereafter ready for market;  
Or else you hear the rustle of skirts  
Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.  
To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust  
Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth;  
They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy  
Stepping it off, to "Toor-a-Loor."  
How could I till my forty acres  
Not to speak of getting more,  
With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos  
Stirred in my brain by crows and robins  
And the creak of a wind-mill--only these?  
And I never started to plow in my life  
That some one did not stop in the road  
And take me away to a dance or picnic.  
I ended up with forty acres;  
I ended up with a broken fiddle --  
And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,

And not a single regret.

----

XVII.

Music: breathing of statues. Perhaps:  
silence of paintings. You language where all language  
ends. You time  
standing vertically on the motion of mortal hearts.

Feelings for whom? O you the transformation  
of feelings into what?--: into audible landscape.

You stranger: music. You heart-space  
grown out of us. The deepest space in us,  
which, rising above us, forces its way out,--  
holy departure:

when the innermost point in us stands  
outside, as the most practiced distance, as the other  
side of the air:

pure,  
boundless,  
no longer habitable.

-----

## XVIII.

Gimme red lipstick and a bright purple rouge  
A shingle bob haircut and a shot of good boo'  
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn  
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone

Come along young man, everything settin' right  
My husband's goin' away 'till next Saturday night  
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' you horn  
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone

Now, I'm raring to go, got red shoes on my feet  
My mind is sittin' right for a Tin Lizzie seat  
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' you horn  
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone

The red rooster said, "Cockle doodle do do"  
The Richland woman said, "Any dude will do"  
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' you horn  
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone

With rosy red garters, pink hose on my feet  
Turkey red bloomer, with a rumble seat

Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' you horn  
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone

Every Sunday mornin', church people watch me go  
My wings sprouted out and the preacher told me so  
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' you horn  
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone

Dress skirt cut high, then they cut low  
Don't think I'm a sport, keep on watchin' me go  
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' you horn  
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone

-----

## XIX.

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,  
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,  
I heard a Negro play.  
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night  
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light  
He did a lazy sway . . .  
He did a lazy sway . . .

To the tune o' those Weary Blues.  
With his ebony hands on each ivory key  
He made that poor piano moan with melody.  
O Blues!

Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool  
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.  
Sweet Blues!

Coming from a black man's soul.  
O Blues!

In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone  
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—  
"Ain't got nobody in all this world,  
Ain't got nobody but ma self.  
I's gwine to quit ma frownin'  
And put ma troubles on the shelf."

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.  
He played a few chords then he sang some more—  
"I got the Weary Blues  
And I can't be satisfied.  
Got the Weary Blues  
And can't be satisfied—  
I ain't happy no mo'  
And I wish that I had died."



And far into the night he crooned that tune.  
The stars went out and so did the moon.  
The singer stopped playing and went to bed  
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.  
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

-----

## XX.

It's a jazz affair, drum crashes and cornet razzes.  
The trombone pony neighs and the tuba jackass snorts.  
The banjo tickles and titters too awful.  
The chippies talk about the funnies in the papers.  
The cartoonists weep in their beer.  
Ship riveters talk with their feet  
To the feet of floozies under the tables.  
A quartet of white hopes mourn with interspersed snickers:  
"I got the blues.  
I got the blues.  
I got the blues."  
And . . . as we said earlier:  
The cartoonists weep in their beer.

-----

## XXI.

When your sweetie tells you  
Everything'll be okay  
Just skeep-beep de bop-bop beep bop bo-dope  
Skeetle-at-de-op-de-day

If you feel like shoutin'  
Advertise it just this way  
And skeep-beep de bop-bop beep bop bo-dope  
Skeetle-at-de-op-de-day

Don't give a hang  
What words you use at any time  
Sing this silly language  
Without any reason or rhyme

When you face the preacher  
There's only one thing to say  
Just skeep-beep de bop-bop beep bop bo-dope  
Skeetle-at-de-op-day

-----

## XXII.

My friend went to the piano; spun the stool  
A little higher; left his pipe to cool;  
Picked up a fat green volume from the chest;  
And propped it open. Whitely without rest,  
His fingers swept the keys that flashed like swords,  
... And to the brute drums of barbarian hordes,  
Roaring and thunderous and weapon-bare,  
An army stormed the bastions of the air!  
Dreadful with banners, fire to slay and parch,  
Marching together as the lightnings march,  
And swift as storm-clouds. Brazen helms and cars  
Clanged to a fierce resurgence of old wars  
Above the screaming horns. In state they passed,  
Trampling and splendid on and sought the vast --  
Rending the darkness like a leaping knife,  
The flame, the noble pageant of our life!  
The burning seal that stamps man's high indenture  
To vain attempt and most forlorn adventure;  
Romance, and purple seas, and toppling towns,  
And the wind's valiance crying o'er the downs;  
That nerves the silly hand, the feeble brain,  
From the loose net of words to deeds again



I used to walk down to where the bus stopped  
Over the hill where the eucalyptus trees  
Moved in the fog, and stared down  
At the lights coming on, in the white rooms.

And always, when I came back to my sister's  
I used to get out the records you made  
The year before all your terrible trouble,  
The records the critics praised and nobody bought  
That are almost worn out now.

Now, sometimes I wake in the night  
And hear the sound of dead leaves  
against the shutters. And then a distant  
Music starts, a music out of an abyss,  
And it is dawn before I sleep again.

-----

## XXV.

Glory of architect, glory of painter,  
and sculptor, and bard,  
Living forever in temple

and picture and statue and song, --  
Look how the world with the lights  
that they lit is illumined and starred,  
Brief was the flame of their life,  
but the lamps of their art burn long!

Where is the Master of Music,  
and how has he vanished away?  
Where is the work that he wrought  
with his wonderful art in the air?  
Gone, -- it is gone like the glow on the cloud  
at the close of the day!  
The Master has finished his work,  
and the glory of music is -- where?

Once, at the wave of his wand,  
all the billows of musical sound  
Followed his will, as the sea  
was ruled by the prophet of old:  
Now that his hand is relaxed,  
and his rod has dropped to the ground,  
Silent and dark are the shores  
where the marvellous harmonies rolled!

Nay, but not silent the hearts  
that were filled by that life-giving sea;  
Deeper and purer forever  
the tides of their being will roll,  
Grateful and joyful, O Master,  
because they have listened to thee, --  
The glory of music endures  
in the depths of the human soul.

----

## XXV.

Orpheus with his lute made trees,  
And the mountain tops that freeze,  
Bow themselves when he did sing:  
To his music plants and flowers  
Ever sprung; as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring.  
Every thing that heard him play,  
Even the billows of the sea,  
Hung their heads, and then lay by.  
In sweet music is such art,  
Killing care and grief of heart  
Fall asleep, or hearing, die.

----

The weeping of the guitar  
begins.  
The goblets of dawn  
are smashed.  
The weeping of the guitar  
begins.  
Useless  
to silence it.  
Impossible  
to silence it.  
It weeps monotonously  
as water weeps  
as the wind weeps  
over snowfields.  
Impossible  
to silence it.  
It weeps for distant  
things.  
Hot southern sands  
yearning for white camellias.  
Weeps arrow without target  
evening without morning  
and the first dead bird  
on the branch.  
Oh, guitar!



**Heart mortally wounded  
by five swords.**

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