



MARY C. F. HALL-WOOD

Sea-Leaves

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

The Text-Tech Papers | Los Angeles, 2026

Sea-Leaves

Mary C. F. Hall-Wood

A Critical Reading Edition

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

The Text-Tech Papers

Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

Archival Images

A short selection from the source record



Prelude.

WHAT if some traveler should espy these leaves—
These summer sea-leaves lying on the sand?
Some stranger grown half-weary of the land,
Should gather up these strains my fancy weaves,
With love and longing? Ah, my hope believes
Too much! As fallen downward from my hand
These sea-songs flutter, they upon this strand
Shall waste their bloom, shall die, while no one grieves.
O sanguine leaves, by furious tempest shocks
Torn rude and bleeding from your native rocks,
Faint adumbrations only can ye give
Of that far underworld. The gift of speech
Betrays me too, upon this alien beach,
Then why should song of mine presume to live?

The opening poem of Sea-Leaves in the Santa Barbara printing of 1887.

Editorial Note

This edition resets the complete 1887 *Sea-Leaves* from the original Santa Barbara scan. The index establishes the sequence; every poem begins on a new page. Running heads, folios, and scan debris are omitted. Stanza breaks and meaningful indentation follow the printed pages, while physical wraps caused only by the narrow source measure are rejoined. The 1884 printing of “At the Fair” remains a variant witness.

Contents

Archival Images	I
Editorial Note	2
Introduction	8
<i>Sea-Leaves</i>	10
<i>Prelude</i>	11
<i>Sweet Home</i>	12
<i>A Street Lyric</i>	13
<i>Return</i>	14
<i>Song</i>	16
<i>On Santa Ynez</i>	17
<i>A Dead Rose</i>	19
<i>The Hermit's Conclusions</i>	20
<i>Delaware</i>	22
<i>One Life</i>	24
<i>At the Fair</i>	25
<i>Rosamond</i>	26
<i>Mountain Wine</i>	27
<i>Awaken, O Poet</i>	29
<i>After Death</i>	30
<i>Justice to One</i>	32
<i>Bankrupt</i>	33
<i>Undaunted and Unmoved</i>	34
<i>Dancing Triolets</i>	35
<i>It Is Not Your Mountains</i>	36
<i>Capriccioso</i>	37
<i>Christmas Roses</i>	38
<i>Anathema</i>	39
<i>To a Sweet Singer</i>	40
<i>Love Too Tender</i>	41
<i>Thanksgiving</i>	42
<i>Poetic Paganism</i>	43

<i>Christmas Lyric</i>	45
<i>Undertones</i>	46
<i>Amreeta</i>	47
<i>Dead Day</i>	48
<i>Symphony</i>	49
<i>Eschscholtzia</i>	50
<i>Too Late</i>	51
<i>Under the Mountains</i>	52
<i>Write Tenderly</i>	53
<i>Sea Dream</i>	54
<i>Adversity</i>	55
<i>After the Storm and Before the Storm</i>	56
<i>Red Lilies</i>	57
<i>Presentiment</i>	58
<i>Death Sleeps</i>	60
<i>Coronado Beach in 1870</i>	61
<i>Silence</i>	63
<i>Success</i>	64
<i>Carmelita</i>	65
<i>A Tourist</i>	66
<i>October</i>	67
<i>Omens</i>	68
<i>There the Bold Day</i>	70
<i>China Lilies</i>	71
<i>Garden Song</i>	72
<i>At Bay</i>	73
<i>Wealth</i>	74
<i>Sea-Leaf</i>	75
<i>Eaglet</i>	76
<i>Episode</i>	77
<i>Signals</i>	78
<i>Transitions</i>	79
<i>Clios</i>	80
<i>Footsteps—On Santa Ynez</i>	81
<i>Cecile</i>	82
<i>Illusion, Delusion</i>	83

<i>Atlas</i>	84
<i>Poet's Song</i>	85
<i>Sweet Sea-City</i>	87
<i>Lamia</i>	88
<i>Rhapsody</i>	90
<i>Sympathy</i>	91
<i>In the Channel</i>	92
<i>Suicide of Sixteen</i>	93
<i>An Island</i>	94
<i>Mystery of Music</i>	96
<i>Penseroso</i>	97
<i>Annette</i>	98
<i>Elise</i>	99
<i>After All</i>	100
<i>Reverie</i>	101
<i>In My Garden</i>	102
<i>Fate</i>	103
<i>Beauty</i>	104
<i>Linnet</i>	105
<i>Smoke</i>	106
<i>Saved from Wreck</i>	107
<i>Message</i>	108
<i>Till Death</i>	109
<i>Alain</i>	110
<i>Laurence</i>	111
<i>Improvisation</i>	112
<i>Last Ride</i>	113
<i>N. L.</i>	114
<i>Atalanta</i>	115
<i>Oak and Grevillea</i>	116
<i>De Profundis</i>	117
<i>H. G.</i>	118
<i>Sylvie</i>	119
<i>Duetto</i>	120
<i>In Extremes</i>	121
<i>Barbara</i>	122

<i>Old Days</i>	123
<i>In Church</i>	124
<i>Reminiscence</i>	125
<i>Grapes Are Good</i>	127
<i>In Memoriam</i>	128
<i>A Modern Pythias</i>	129
<i>Christmas, 1883</i>	130
<i>Siesta</i>	131
<i>A Saint</i>	132
<i>Dear Earthly Mother</i>	134
<i>A Syren</i>	135
<i>Saint Delicious</i>	137
<i>Songs and Singers</i>	138
<i>Passing Santa Barbara</i>	139
<i>Masque</i>	140
<i>August</i>	141
<i>Gods to Hear</i>	142
<i>Aspiration</i>	143
<i>Love in the South</i>	144
<i>Italy and California</i>	145
<i>Santa Barbara's Centennial</i>	146
<i>Broken</i>	148
<i>The Last Mermaid</i>	149
<i>I Will No Heaven</i>	153
<i>Mandhatar</i>	154
<i>Lyric</i>	158
<i>Poverty</i>	159
<i>Happily Waken</i>	161
<i>Modern Circe</i>	162
<i>Wait</i>	163
<i>Last Illusion</i>	164
<i>To-Day; At Early Dawn</i>	165
<i>Eureka</i>	166
<i>Forgotten River</i>	169
<i>Prayer for Rain</i>	170
<i>Clink of Hammer</i>	171

<i>Christmas</i>	172
<i>End of Love</i>	173
<i>Fragments</i>	174
<i>Envoi</i>	180
 Bibliography	 182
 Colophon	 183

Introduction

Mary C. F. Hall-Wood made a literary life out of Santa Barbara when the city was still building its public voice. Widowed twice and forced to earn her living, she learned newspaper production, helped establish the *Index*, and became editor of the *Independent*. Under the name Camilla K. von K., she published *Sea-Leaves* in 1887: a restless, locally rooted collection filled with Pacific weather, Santa Ynez roads, California poppies, the Old Mission, civic celebrations, intimate grief, wit, and experiment. This edition restores the complete book from its Santa Barbara printing and places Hall-Wood where she belongs—as a working editor and one of the region’s earliest sustained poets.

Biography

Mary Camilla Foster was born in New York City in 1842 or 1843. She married Bradley Hall, moved with him to California, and lived first in San Rafael, where Hall served as district attorney of Marin County. After his death she moved to Santa Barbara in 1871 with their son, a relocation that established the setting of the rest of her career.

In Santa Barbara she married physician and journalist Edward Nelson Wood. Her first known poem appeared in a local journal in 1872. That fall the Woods and A. W. Sefton founded the Santa Barbara *Index*. Edward Wood died in 1874 after illness and unsuccessful investments, and Hall-Wood learned the practical work of newspaper production to support herself. The *Index* absorbed competing papers and became the *Independent* in 1878; when the *Daily Independent* began in 1883, Hall-Wood served as editor. Contemporary accounts differ on the exact length of her tenure, but agree that she led the paper for roughly a decade and retired because of poor health.

Her anonymously issued guide *Santa Barbara as It Is* appeared in 1884, with copyright registered to her and with her signed poem “At the Fair.” In 1887 the *Independent* office printed *Sea-Leaves* under the pseudonym Camilla K. von K. Its poems range well beyond local color, but the collection repeatedly returns to Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez, the Pacific, wine, rain, flowers, and the Old Mission. Some poems were translated into French, and the book was later described as both a literary and financial success despite never being regularly marketed.

Hall-Wood belonged to the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association and linked Santa Barbara's daily press to the developing professional network of women journalists. She died in Santa Barbara on 14 December 1899 after several years of illness. Her editorial labor and her two books make her a foundational figure in Southern California literary culture.

Sea-Leaves

The complete Santa Barbara collection | 1887

The complete 1887 collection, printed in Santa Barbara under the name Camilla K. von K.

Prelude

What if some traveler should espy these leaves—
These summer sea-leaves lying on the sand?
Some stranger grown half-weary of the land,
Should gather up these strains my fancy weaves,
With love and longing? Ah, my hope believes
Too much! As fallen downward from my hand
These sea-songs flutter, they upon this strand
Shall waste their bloom, shall die, while no one grieves.
O sanguine leaves, by furious tempest shocks
Torn rude and bleeding from your native rocks,
Faint adumbrations only can ye give
Of that far underworld. The gift of speech
Betrays me too, upon this alien beach,
Then why should song of mine presume to live?

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 5.

Sweet Home

I am sickened with sweets, I pine
 For the sound of a northern storm;
The golden roses are too divine,
 The glimmering seas too warm.

I am tired of the sunburnt South,
 Of her indolent circling doves;
Her wines grow bitter upon my mouth
 And bitter her languid loves.

I weary to hear once more
 The wind blowing wild and free;
Not sighing over a sleeping shore
 But a power to shake the sea!
But a savage breeze that thrills
 The Delaware's icy breast;
That flings in torrents the foaming kills
 From the Shawangunk's lordly crest;

 But a wind that crashes through
 Great forests of fir and pine,
That screams its war song up to the blue
 Of the Catskill's distant line.
How I long to behold again
 Those hills, when snowstorms, hurled
In maddening masses across the plain
 Cover the careless world!

And the wealth of that winter-land
 Its brave hearts, warm and true;
O blooming gardens! O golden strand!
I am weary—to death—of you!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 7.

A Street Lyric

There goes Happiness down the street,
With tangled hair and bare brown feet.
A world of shadowy mischief lies
In his bewildering Spanish eyes;
 The jacket is ragged, but gay the air,
 And Happiness runs—he knows not where!

Here comes Misery, riding slow;
Cheeks and lips all wan with woe.
Her sulky steeds their manes may toss,
Slow must they pace, while she mourns her loss.
 Smothered in crape is the gracious air,
 And Misery rides—she knows not where!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 8.

Return

Hope spread her airy wings for flight;
She left the sweet southwestern main,

And wrapped in visions of delight,
She sought her native land again.

And I shall see, she said, and smiled,
Again gay woodland waters flow
Down deep descents, or wandering wild
With wayward rivers seaward go.

And I shall feel, she said, and sighed,
The blessed breath of boundless woods;
Shall greet the hemlock's ragged pride,
King Lear of central solitudes.
By woodland stream and woodland growth
And waterfalls' resistless might,
I shall revive the dreams of youth,
She said, and spread her wings for flight
By hope beguiled from sunlit seas
I too my native country sought;
O'erborne by childish memories,
And Heaven, alas! restrained me not.

Dawn smiled the smiling isles above,
Night vexed my eyes with deserts gray;
Blow, western wind! The land I love
Still lies a thousand leagues away.

Sierras, deserts, prairie land,
Fields, cities, gardens, turn and wheel
In mystic waltz; broad rivers, spanned
With slender webs of thrilling steel,

Reel back and vanish! In the night
I listen to the muffled roar
Of mighty lakes, whose billows white
Plunge madly on a narrow shore.

Or, following embroidered banks,
The lovely Mohawk vale behold;

Whose ancient forests' failing ranks
Are touched with dying red and gold.

At last, the river of my dreams!
The pale moon glittered on its breast:
I saw therein the thousand streams
That led me far in youthful quest.

At last, at last, the purple range
That colored all my thoughts for years;
But O, the heights have suffered change,
And barren seemed through barren tears.

What are these icy hills to me?
The dying beech—the maples bare—
And what to me the hemlock tree
That shudders in the wintry air?
Steel skies above—a piercing blast
That shrieks of death on polar plains;
Love stands with stiffening hands aghast,
Remembering his own domains.

It is the country of my youth,
It is the land I longed to see;
These mountain streams are wells of truth
And they reflect the change in me!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 9.

Song

Sing of happy home, my love,
Of blessed rest for thee and me!
The minstrel's eyes were fixed above:
"I only sing of what I see!"

Sing of love that lives for years,
Of faithful love, before you go!
The minstrel's eyes were filled with tears:
"I only sing of what I know!"

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 11.

On Santa Ynez

Icy springs assuage us not;
Thirst of wilder streams assaults us.

Banished from this lovely spot,
Is the whirl of Elfin waltzes!

Since strange feet have stirred these waters
Lead the way to wilder woods.
Break through manzanita barriers,
Into untouched solitudes.

Hither comes no scheming mortal,
To profane the sylvan dawn;
Rivers run in wilful currents,
Opalescent bars upon.
Tiny hoofs of wandering satyr
Crush the beds of dewy fern;
Hush! amid the fairy clatter,
Pipe of Pan I may discern.
Here the timid fawn may mirror
In the pool his limpid eyes;
Jeweled trout unknown of anglers,
Up through twinkling ripples rise.

Tiger lilies nod a welcome
To the wood-birds and the elves;
Larkspurs show us where the wanton
Purple berries hide themselves.

And the slender, sweet quiote,
Stands, a mountain maiden queen;
While above her floats her lover,
Humming bird, in gold and green.

Night draws near, a tender shadow,
Lit by myriad starry eyes;
While I drink, the sole beholder,
Rare delights of midnight skies.

And my camp-fire, only, lonely,
Sending up its single light,
Shall not shame the savage silence

On the dusky lips of night.
Lark and linnet, follow, follow!
Carpintero, follow me!
Tufted quail, from hill and hollow,
Follow, follow, where I flee.
Grey doves sing—We know it, know it!
Humming-bird—We know it well;
You're no hunter, but a poet,
Come among your kin to dwell.
Elfin comrades, fleet and fleeter,
Be your airy figures whirled;
If the world were sweet, were sweeter,
I would ne'er forsake the world.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 12.

A Dead Rose

The best of my garden I give to you.

Perfume, and color and songs;

That gay little red-headed linnet

To him who will listen belongs.

I, walking daily and sadly,

In blooming dream gardens divine,

Lament for the merciless limits

Which compass this garden of mine,

You see but the flower as it opened,

And not as I willed it to be;

When I think of that possible glory

The gold rose is ruined for me.

Red lilies may flaunt their bold petals,

And passion-flowers swing overhead:

But you have the best of my garden

Who knew not the rose that is dead.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 14.

The Hermit's Conclusions

Sometimes I fancy that I grieve
 For human lives about me;
Though well I know the world can weave
 Her complex web without me.

Then, from my visionary height,
 I turn to daily labor;
To help the poor and speed the right,
 And try to love my neighbor.

But human hearts are weak and vain,
 And human griefs appalling;
The city's streets are paved with pain.
 Then, happier wilds recalling,

I think how hidden canons track
 The heart of mystic mountains;
Where summer burns the berries black
 And winter fills the fountains;
How gold untended blossoms tinge
 The drooping boughs above them
Of oak and sycamore, that fringe
 The streams, they know I love them!

They know I never left my height
 Of happy dreams and fancies,
For pleasure in the world's delight
 Or faith in Mammon's chances.

Descending to the plains beneath
 From tranquil heights, I only
Discover lives more sad than death,
 Immeasurably more lonely.

Back to my mountains let me fly,
 Before the world can chill me;
The golden summer marches by,
 With fresh content to fill me;

Across my path the squirrels run,
 The quail is whistling to me;

The little dove's lament is done,
And life is thrilling through me.

And if grim hunger bars the way
With wicked eyes of beryl,
I'll eat the little dove to-day,
To-morrow trap the squirrel.

To bodily needs they minister,
To life and death I treat them;
What help were human creatures here?
I could not even eat them!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 15.

Delaware

These springs in rocky mountains rise
And down through sunny valleys flow;
And over them the linnet flies,
And by their beds wild roses grow.
But streams to lure the wandering child,
Whose sounds to me still dearest are,
In hemlock forests hide—the wild
Head waters of the Delaware.

These chaparral glooms are veiled with blooms
Where morning glories clamber up;
And, clothed with sleep's divine perfumes,
The poppy swings her painted cup.
The white Quiote's breath is sweet,
But not so subtly sweet as are
The violets, whose slender feet
Are kissed by the infant Delaware.

I have not missed the charm of power,
The world has been benign to me;
But Fate or Fame will not restore
Life's morning sun to gild this sea.

Now all the dreams of youth are dead,
And streams of youth forever are
To wider, wilder waters led—
As to the sea the Delaware.

O river wide, while yet I ride,
Beholding both thy blooming shores;
Ere Time shall sweep me to the deep
Or break with storms my slender oars;
Give me this grace—once more to trace
The little woodland brooks that are
No kin to these insatiate seas,
Dear children of the Delaware.

Their merry rippling waters sing,
And slide beneath the whispering beech;
The autumn scented breezes fling
Sweet scarlet love-notes down to each;

Or summer, proud and tender queen,
 Smiles through the swaying boughs that are
The maple's arms, with palms of green,
 Held up to bless the Delaware.
Or when the haggard hemlock thrills
 With sweetest tones of spring delight;
As icy winter quits the hills,
 And vanishes in northern night,
I long to see this dauntless tree
 Whose delicate-tipped branches are
Alive in spring with robins' glee,
 That twitter down the Delaware.

To warmer skies the robin flies
 When all the summer winds are gone;
The beech, the birch, the maple dies,
 The haggard hemlock stands alone!
O hemlock tree, wait yet for me;
 Returning soon from lands afar,
Thy gaunt and faithful boughs may be
 My grave-mark by the Delaware.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 17.

One Life

A serious childhood; a religious youth;
 High aims, indefinite, checked with real tears;
A womanhood of tedious household cares
And petty wars with human savages;
 In later years,
Enslaved by whirling Powers of the Press,
 My tale of bricks I bring, which as of old
Are gathered where no straw is, day by day,
Piled into palaces for ungrateful kings.
 The story's told!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 19.

At the Fair

Among the products of the soil,
The fruit of free and honest toil,
 Saint Barbara's wheat and wine and oil,
 What shall the landless poet bring,
 Who has but heaps of heathen spoil
 For harvesting?

The artist's dream of woodland grace
Or memory of a lovely face;
The maiden's web of filmy lace,
The housewife's skill, the mysteries
Of modern art, are all in place
And safe to please.

The flower and fruit of every zone
St. Barbara welcomes as her own.
And her enthusiast sons have shown
A courage in their work,
For greater victories to be won
Through honest work.

But we, who have no tenancies
In golden grain or olive trees;
No house nor land; instead of these,
In airy towers of fairy gold,
We weave but phantom tapestries
Against the cold.

O then, while farmers bring the spoil
They gather from a fertile soil,
St. Barbara's wheat and wine and oil;
A landless poet can but bring
A simple rhyme, not worth the toil
Of harvesting!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 20.

Rosamond

Do you look with regret back to youth and its lilies?

Oh! friend, though the lily be pure and a queen,
Her petals are scentless and pale, and there still is
The rose of the world your gold ringlets between.

Let the laborer tread the grape clusters, expressing
From purple of fruit the dark blood of the vine:
While you and I drink to bold Time with a blessing,
Who strengthens and sweetens our hearts and our wine.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 21.

Mountain Wine

To-day I drink my wine in peace,
Nor covet care nor plenty;
 Though every year the hopes decrease
 That lit my life at twenty!
Fill up my cup with rippling gold!
While vineyards crown our valleys,
No Barbareño needs be cold
Nor scant his simple chalice.

As with the wine, the amber streams
Of lavish memory glisten;
Content, alone, to tender dreams
Of happier days I listen.

Of him who sought me in my youth,
A careless minstrel only;
Who brought me home and taught me truth,
And dying left me lonely;

Of children's lips, with laughter red,
Then white in death's derision;
Each curl upon each golden head
Still glitters in my vision!

Of mirthful years that flew and flew,
 With lands and gold made precious;
Of merry friends that flitted too,
 When fortune grew ungracious.

I've tasted what the world can give,
 Of love and gold and glory;
Now all these gifts are gone, I live,
 And like some fairy story,

Seem gift and gain and loss and pain,
 Which in the fire before me,
Obtrude their lessons o'er again,—
 Yet why should I deplore me?

Nay—though this quiet hearth of mine
 By myriad ghosts is haunted;
I drink in golden mountain wine,
 Their ghostly healths,—undaunted!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 22.

Awaken, O Poet

Awaken, O poet, for morning
Transmute into tangible metal
Sea silver and gold of the sun.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 23.

After Death

When I shake off these earthly chains
Which now in prison bind me,
Unless some mightier will constrains,
I will not look behind me
To the sun of the world, or the sea thereof,
Earthly power or earthly love.

Whatever be my spirit's fate,
Absorbed—annihilated—
With endless torments desolate—
With endless glory sated—
Whatever be my final birth,
I am content,—it is not earth!

I've seen so much too much of sin,
So much too much of sighing,
So much too much of fruitless pain,—
O the bonds I break in dying
Are broken wholly! I shall not sink
Again to the earth by a single link.

Though sometimes, smiling in your dream,
A mystic presence lingers;
And on your aching brows you seem
To feel magnetic fingers;
O that way madness lies! No sign
Will ever come from soul of mine.

You too must die as I am dead;
Must pass the fatal portal
To know how flitting souls are sped,
If mortal or immortal.
I surely shall not turn to tell
The secret ways of heaven or hell.

Then reach no more bewildered hands
To dim delirious fancies;

No breath of undiscovered lands
Shall vivify your trances;
No power, how monstrous, can constrain
A free soul back to the earth again.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 24.

Justice to One

Justice to one who is stung by no doubt of me!
Fate has not flung me her torments in vain;
Since out from her thorns grows a flower, a mystery,
Rose of all roses, the blossom of pain.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 25.

Bankrupt

I had a garden, fair and fine
 With blood-red rose and lily;
 Palm and pine and passion vine
 And nodding daffodilly;

 With lemons in perpetual bloom,
 The daintily fruiting guava;
 Dark velvet pansies' faint perfume,
 The royal plum of Java;

 Vines running wild,—yet grapes they bear,
 In tints would tempt a Titian,
 Rose-of-Peru, Muscat, St. Pierre,
 Catawba, Tokay, Mission;

 A little bed of violets,
 A miniature forest,
 Ah! fair retreat when trouble frets!
 But now, my need being sorest,

 I kneel beneath your sheltering boughs,
 The last, the last, the last time!
 Soft sea-winds kiss my burning brows
 And tear-stained cheeks for pastime.
Egyptian lilies line the lane,
 The heliotrope is fragrant
With blessed comfort for the pain
 Of an unhappy vagrant.

Adieu! I will no longer grieve;
 Since God is just, to-morrow
He who has won shall likewise leave
 These garden walks in sorrow!

My white rose will not bloom for him,
 My poppies pale to know it;
O heavenly powers! what pain can limn
 The man who wronged a poet?

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 26.

Undaunted and Unmoved

I was so little that I loved
It is little that I hate.

Now free and unreprieved,
I smile in spite of fate.
He never can have loved
Who has never known to hate.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 27.

Dancing Triolets

Shake the silver fringe of Folly's bells,

Dance, as erst the Fauns in Grecian dells.

Shake the silver fringe of Folly's bells,

List the tale of love that laughter tells,

 Webs to trip the wary feet of Time.

Shake the silver fringe of Folly's bells,

 Dance, undaunted, to the magic chime.

Wait for age to teach thee melancholy,

 Foot it lightly in thy gallant prime.

 In thy youth be frolicsome and jolly,

Wait for age to teach thee melancholy,

 Bind about thy feet the bells of Folly,

 Joyously they swing to rhythm and rhyme.

 Wait for age to teach thee melancholy,

 Foot it lightly in thy gallant prime.

Here the youthful player stands, annointed

King of the soul-searching violin.

From his bow black demons fly, aointed!

Here the youthful player stands, annointed;

By Apollo's benison appointed

Dancing feet to revelry to win.

Here the youthful player stands, annointed

King of the soul-searching violin.

Where's the foolish working world? Forget it,

Dance, and jingle Folly's silver chime.

Fast departs the golden day,—O let it!

Where's the foolish working world? Forget it.

Here I take the merry dance, and set it,

In the mad mosaic of my rhyme.

Where's the foolish working world? Forget it,

Dance, and jingle Folly's silver chime!

It Is Not Your Mountains

It is not your mountains or magical chain
With gay racing billows by day, and by night
His monotone chant to uncomforted souls.
Not these; but the spirit of these, but the breath,
The reviving, the incomprehensible air,
That we float in, and live in, and love till we die.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 29.

Capriccioso

A rhyming devil haunts me,
 Born of a scattered brain.
His castle of castles bold behold,
Founded on air and fashioned of gold,
 Songs of the syrens and blood of the slain.

Awaken! The night with a fury
 Of winds the battlements shake;
And regiments stand on either hand,
Only awaiting a chief's command,
 Into the walls to break.

But the devil lowers the drawbridge,
 And offers the troopers wine;
Down martial throats it gurgling goes,
And the devil returns to his repose,
 This wary devil of mine.

Up in a turreted chamber,
 I wait when the morning dawns;
From the phantom bars of my aery prison
I see auroral worlds new risen,
 And dew on the velvet lawns.

Back to the past I wander,
 Kneeling by sparkling floods;
Free as the air I joyously sing,
And the rush and the glitter of youth and of Spring
 Brightens the hemlocks buds.

Down comes the tempest howling,
 Down the clattering rain!
Tower and turret rock and reel,
The lightning breaks on bars of steel,
—And the devil awakes again!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 30.

Christmas Roses

If friendship blossomed every day
I well might take your hands, and say
“I wish you well, dear friend, away.”
But, simple flower though it be.
It seldom bursts a bud for me.

With roses white and roses red
My garden still is tenanted;
But if the flower I love be dead,
What matters all the perfumed crew?
I miss them all in missing you?

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 31.

Anathema

To the traveler who goes
Spying all our wants and woes,
Cursing every wind that blows
 Through the land;
Naught have sapphire sea and islands
Emerald or amber highlands,
Winter storms or summer silence,
 Night or day,
 Naught to say
 That he can understand.

Wind, O sea-wind, bring him rain!
Wind, O land-wind, turn again,
Fling across the desert plain
 Storms of sand!
Fog, O mighty fog, brood over
Land and sea! Let him discover
Nothing sweet or light! Thy lover
 Knowing thee,
 Waits patiently.
 We wait, and understand.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 32.

To a Sweet Singer

Sweet as your song may be,
Tenderly smooth and complete,
Rhymed and measured so daintily;
Do you find the world so sweet?

You dream your delicate dreams
Of innocent, pale delight;
Stringing your lilacs by languid streams
Where violets blossom white;
And travelers stop to hear
The sound of your murmuring:
They rest by the river so pure and clear,
And bless you while you sing.

None will listen to me,
None respond to my cry,
Though the soul of the song I sing should be
As a lark in a stormy sky.

For I sing, as I love, the truth!
Bitter and wild shall it be:
Not rippling over the lips of youth
In a delicate melody;
But rather a wind that raves
Over a shuddering world;
A red and tattered banner that waves
In a desperate war unfurled.

Why, O true love of old,
Is my song then incomplete?
“Night may be black and Death be cold,
But a woman should be sweet!”

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 33.

Love Too Tender

How can a strong heart value these?

“Heart too rugged—O heart most true,
May not a lover kneel to you?”

“Kneel not! Who would my true love be
Must be no less than level with me.”

“Heart too stainless and high, adieu!
Love is too little for such as you.”

“As bold as the world is, as wild as the sea,
Such love shall be—or nothing to me.”

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 34.

Thanksgiving

Yet I keep my holiday

For all the careless world can say;
Sad refrains I lay away,
To keep my happy holiday.

How can I keep my holiday?
Thrice-blessed one, kneel down and pray!
Give thanks and render praise alway
For gifts that grace thy holiday.

Thanks—for a fortune fled,
It is so much less to leave;
Thanks—for the friends long dead
It is so many less to grieve.

Thanks—for physical pain,
It brings me courage to die;
Fools may cry and complain,
So much the wiser I.

The triple gift I do not scorn;
And on this fair Thanksgiving morn,
I kneel with happy heart to pray
For all mankind a holiday.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 35.

Poetic Paganism

Away with your modern theologies,
Bitter and tasteless and cold;
Give me the gods and the goddesses
Worshipped of old!

Here might the white Aphrodite
Arise from the sea, debonnaire,
With gay leaves and gray leaves engarlanded,
Wringing her hair;

Here might the Mænad dance under
Vine trellises, pausing to taste
With wine-reddened lips the wine rivers,
Now running to waste;

To join her, now down from the mountain
Comes flying the fleet-footed faun;
The Dryad slips into oak shadows
At breaking of dawn;

And here drives the radiant Apollo,
With wild fretted steeds all afoam;
He shakes his gold hair as he frowns at
The laurel in bloom;

Here jolly old Neptune carouses
In mid-channel, here in the lee
Of bold rocky cliffs sing the Sirens
To sailors at sea;

And the wise gray-eyed Pallas Athene
Descends upon earth once again,
Bearing wisdom—and surely they need it—
To councils of men.

Pan died;—but his ghost has appeared to me
Piping by mountain streams, sweet!
The Satyrs kept time to his music
With clattering feet.

Pan died;—from Olympus down driven,
Where could the fair goddesses flee,

If not to the loveliest valley,
The sunniest sea?

Take hands then, Melpomene, Thalia,
Bow to an audience new!
The reddest red rose in my garden
Is sacred to you.

Is sacred to you, though the churches
The facts of your godhead refuse;
Objecting alike to the manners
Of Mrenad and Muse.
Yet as sacred fire died on Greek altars,
So die down the flames, one by one,
Of all ancient or modern religions;
All gods are undone,

AnJ made powerless, sooner or later;
As you fell, the churches will fall;
As man dies the gods die! Faith changes,
Time vanquishes all.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 36.

Christmas Lyric

Drink to me, dearest! The name I pledge,
As I kiss the goblet's gleaming edge,
Is thine, is only thine!
Emerald cups to the board I bring,
With lily buds engarlanding,
Engraven with mystic sign.

I drink to thee, dearest! In this wild cup,
Fathomless sparkles come bubbling up,
And my wits go wandering.
I see a wraith in the empty chair,
And could almost swear your soul was there,
To laugh at the songs I sing!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 37.

Undertones

At your garden gate I pause,
Thinking! Surely peace reposes
Under those enchanting walls,
Green with vines and gay with roses.

Every sea-wind wandering up,
Thrills with perfume, as it passes
Over waves of mignonette,
Heliotrope in purple masses.

In sweet shadows while you walk
Wrapped about with golden silence;
Sunshine paints your lilies white,
Paints with blue the distant islands.

Yes,—the heliotrope is sweet,
If the heart be sweet to feel it;
If heaven be not in the heart,
Can a passion-flower reveal it?

Of the flower and of the fruit,
If content be not the warden;
He who has a merry heart
Need not envy you your garden.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 39.

Amreeta

Bless the mystical perfume,
 The sacred juice of Orient bloom.
Drink—and the whole cold world is warm;
Drink—and thou shalt forget the storm
 That sweeps the deeps of passion's sea;
 O wine of wide eternity.

 Within this sculptured chalice beats
 Of Death's content the soul and sweets.
Now farewell Fate and farewell Fame;
Adieu, O dearer deathless name;
 Naught stirs the soul that sinks to thee,
 That melts into eternity.

 I bless the land that gave thee birth,
 O vision-blossom of the earth!
“I bless the silent slaves that sow,
The Indian heats that bid thee grow,
 The streams that bear thee to the sea,
 O flower of fair eternity!
For one the rose, for one the vine,
For one heroic bays,—but mine,
The poppy garland's gracious gift,
As down to dreamless seas I drift.
Beyond the dream to dreamless peace,
Nirvana's near eternities.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 40.

Dead Day

A hopeless day has died a hopeless death;
And nothing left of prayers or tears undone.
 To Heaven I cried, with vain beseeching breath,
 And Heaven denied me even the setting sun.
For this day died not as all others die,
With gold and purple glory garmented;
At noon black raiment overspread the sky,
And day was cold, ere ever she was dead.
With bloodless hands upon a soulless breast,
When I shall lie, untouched by love or pain;
It will not charm nor change me, though the west
Be clad in gold or cowed in gloom again.
I only asked one day—this day—no more,
What comes beyond I dared to trust untried.
And lo!—the day is dead,—was dead before
I knew how much to me her death implied!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 41.

Symphony

In the wild exaltation of music,
 Transfixed by the glory of sound;
In the midmost deep ocean of rapture,
 My heart is in harmonies drowned.

But over the sea, from the limits
 Of light, come tumultuous cries;
“O pity me, pray for me, help me,
 From dust to awake and arise!”
The wild music flutters and falters,
 The singers grow pale and are still;
The stars are unseen and forgotten,
 The night wind is heavy and chill.

And over the water at midnight
 Is ringing a mystical bell;
It strikes on my heart without ceasing,
 A strange uninterpreted knell.
What voice is in distance? What anguish
 Appeals to my senses, I cry;
But the bell, tolling tangible terrors,
 But mutters and mocks in reply.
I wait for the morning—I listen
 For sounds from the shore and the sea;
The gray gulls in troops flying inland
 Forerunners of tempest must be.
I know it! I feel it! I fear it!
 Yet in God’s good sunlight I stand,
And the sphinx who could answer my questions
 Lies low—with her face in the sand!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 42.

Eschscholtzia

O the rose garden, the garden—
Of roses, of roses alone.

Fair is it, rare is it, yet in my garden
A daintier blossom has blown;
A flower of the South and the Sun,
Sown upon limitless plains;
Fed by the death of the summer grasses,
Watered by winter rains.
When the wild spring streams are running,
She raises her head, and cries,
“Blow off my emerald cap, good wind,
And the yellow hair out of my eyes!”
And a fair, fine lady she stands,
And nods to the dancing sea;
O the rose you have trained is a lovely slave,
But the wild gold poppy is free!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 43.

Too Late

Has the trampled slave arisen,
Liberal, forbearing, free;
Out of hateful chains and prison
 Freshly born to liberty?

Can he, with sweet freedom gifted,
 Rise at once to pure delight,
Into sudden sunshine lifted,
 Out of night?

Cruel wounds that festered under
 Iron links, can he forget?
Though the chain be torn asunder,
 Memory feels its thralldom yet.

Years of black despair have taught him
 Savage hates that cannot cease.
Sudden sunshine has not brought him
 Sudden peace!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 44.

Under the Mountains

The sycamore's emerald palms to me
Are shadowy figures that flee and fade.
And beckon me up from the sun-burnt sea
To a silent cañon's dreamy shade;
For the hills are green, and the heights arise
Over the level of weary eyes.

Here is the delicate pink wild rose,
And purple flowers whose petals fly
From the careless hand,—and faintly blows
The sweet wind under the shining sky,
Flying up from the far-off sea,—
And wild birds sing to the wilds in me.

The squirrel looks out of his burrow, with eyes
Cunningly turned askance, and over
The grass before us the road-runner flies,
And the tufted quail from his cover of clover
Whistles as clear as he can, and shrill
Answers his mate from her nest on the hill.

What if it might be all forever—
That we in the blessing of forest palms,
Through endless cañons might ride, and never
Pass from this plenty of golden calms
To the raging city—the torrid plain—
Or the fitful lights of a savage main!

Is this a time to be torn with fears,
Or worn with doubts of a future fate—
To mourn the ashes of wasted years,
Or the drifting lives left desolate—
While the hills are green, and the heights arise
Over the level of weary eyes?

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 45.

Write Tenderly

Write tenderly, you tell me, dear,
No false-mouthed friend need know or hear
Of midnight watch you keep.

I know it! Even you, O one
More honest than the rest;
Would fain behold the weeping done;
You love a laugh the best!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 46.

Sea Dream

To-day the ocean softly smiles,
And floats my dreams to Indian isles.

Temptations draw them south and west
To regions of unbounded rest.

Though sweet of sweetest, you may say
Were love and roses yesterday—

The past is done—the future dim,
By headlands bold, Hope's darlings swim;

It may be wreck, it may be peace,
They win beyond unsounded seas;

Life's clinging weeds may catch their oars, g
And hold them off from golden shores,

Death's dripping weeds may drag them down,
In sight of dreamed lands to drown!

But seas are sweet and still to-day,
About my boat green ripples play,

As, lured by Love's last avatar,
I boldly steer from beach and bar,

To unknown waters, wide and blue,
O, gift of God, I follow you!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 47.

Adversity

I was born a butterfly,
 To live beneath a cloudless sky;
 To dream among enchanted trees,
 With happy leaves and birds and bees.

When from south the rain winds blow,
And in each gorge wild torrents flow;
I crouch beneath denuded boughs,
And curse the wind that swept my house.

Storms may cleanse and fire refine
The golden metal of the mine;
The storm that ruins—tire that brings
Destruction unto golden wings!

Sweet, O prophet, sweet may he
The uses of adversity
To tempered souls like yours; but I,
I was born a butterfly!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 48.

After the Storm and Before the Storm

Faces cover the grey of heaven,
 Crowd this colorless curve of sea;
Over the whole broad earth are driven
 Shapes to terrify me.

These are the souls of men, I know;
 In every one I feel
The presence of crime or care or woe
 That each would fain conceal.

And yet—if the winter's olden grace
 Were here, and the sea were blue;
And the gracious sun unveiled his face,
 Some souls might be born anew.

Some faces then might smile in the light,
 Some burdens sink in the sea;
And the cowardly visions that come in the night
 Vanish away from me!

After the Storm

Morning and sunshine are out on the sea,
But when I ride under the sycamore tree,
 On me and my grief he drops a leaf,
 Recalling with falling of desolate leaf,
 The shadow of grief,

O sycamore, give me my morning again!
The storm that drove earthward with banners of rain
Has passed,—mocking me with the peace of the sea.
Behold, the old gladness comes back to the sea,
Why not also to me?

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 49.

Red Lilies

Strike fuller chords, or let the music rest!
Of tender songs the world has yet no dearth,

Which scarce survive the moment of their birth;
Be thine in passionate cadences expressed.
And banish morning glories from thy breast!
A purple dream flower of the woods is worth
So little in the gardens of the earth;
If gift thou givest, give what we love best!
Since life is wild with tears and red with wrongs,
Let these red lilies typify thy songs,
If with full fame thou would'st be comforted.
Since life is red with wrongs and wild with tears,
O move us, haunt us, kill our souls with fears,
And we will praise thee,—after thou art dead!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 50.

Presentiment

When, lingering late on the mountain,
The rosy last light of the day
Lies tenderly, while all the valley
In twilight is chilly and grey;
I think of your life, as it seems to me,
Flushed with love's colors divine;
And sadden, remembering the darkness
That long ago fell upon mine,

I stand, truly, down in the shadows;
Yet see—how they creep! how they rise!
As night comes to cover the mountains,
So trouble shall come to your eyes!
But with darkness or sorrow encompassed,
Mountain and valley and sea
Are still in their places, and you are
No nearer, no nearer to me.

There is nothing I ask of you, nothing!
When sea winds come up from the south;
Blow up and blow over us, turning
To white the warm red of your month;
And white wings beat inland in horror,
And white seas fly up on the sand,
You will shrink from the pallid forerunners
Of Fate,—but will not understand!

Your quiet grey eyes in the gloaming
Shall some time see clearly,—yet pass,
For the night is to come, and the tender
Pale color is yet on the grass.
Not yet over sea-way and highway
Has Fate driven you. Let us wait,
Lest shudder of knowledge should hasten
The fast-flying footsteps of Fate.

Still feel the dear day in its glory,
And live, while life clings to your side;
Look out on the lovely blue water
Nor think of the turn of the tide;

Of the night that comes surely, ah, surely,
With storm birds blown in from the sea;
But rest, still content and beloved,
Unmindful of storms and of me!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 51.

Death Sleeps

Death sleeps and is quiet, Death lieth so still,
When the soul has flown out with a desperate thrill
And the body encumbers its place.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 52.

Coronado Beach in 1870

A strong wind sweeps the ancient town,
Her leveled walls, her quivering palms,

Her plaza, wide and bare and brown,
Across the land locked harbor's calms,
From merry seas that whitely shine
Where Ocean's plunging ranks align.

And gaily beats against the breeze,
And veers, and turns, and tacks, and dips,
Our little bark, with pretty ease,
By walls and wharf and anchored ships;
Some mocking Ariel seems to hold
Her back from yonder bar of gold.

But gaily still she turns and flies.
My love, the world is ours to day:
Above us rest the luminous skies—
Beneath us bound the wavelets gay—
Beyond us in wide spaces free
To meet us springs the joyful sea!

At last we reach the strip of sand
Dividing bay from sea, and borne
Through tinted shelving shallows, land.
Our boat awaiting the return,

Swings idly on her anchor-chain,
While we, across the barren plain,
Walk ankle deep in sandy drifts,
Where with rare crystals jeweled o'er,
Her scarlet face the ice-plant lifts,
Sole blossom of this sterile shore:

An eerie flower she is, to be
The darling of this southern sea.
What treasures crowd the sands to-day,

By savage billows flung to us;
Red sea-leaves, sea-shells pearly grey,
And the pretty purple nautilus;
The big wave loves to play with him,
This little sailor quaint and trim.

Poor waif from unknown distances,
 The storms that drove you rage no more;
Lie quietly, while roll the seas
 In surging dactyls to the shore—
As wandering souls that have been driven
By earthly storms to coasts of heaven.
And lingering here, with doubt and dream
 Of life that might be, life that is;
We, like these purple sailors, seem
 Upon the golden breadth of peace
Left stranded.—ah! but heart by heart,
No more to drift—no more to part.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 53.

Silence

Fine it is, when winds are blowing
 Straight from an insatiate sea,
To accept and praise them, knowing
 Naught can bar their savagery;
Praise the life that lies the nearest,
Who can know'tis not the dearest?

One may weave most subtle fancies
 From dark threads of pain and power;
Fashion gay and wild romances
 In despair's most gloomy hour;
Sing of hope and happy dreams
In the roar of raging streams.

Wind that truly warms and blesses
 Needs no help of rhythm or rhyme;
Since her full and free caresses
 Satisfy the summer time,
In the happy day no space is
To be filled with barren praises.

Dove now calling, cooing, calling,
 With a melancholy thrill;
From your feet the dead leaves falling
Strike my hair and brows at will.
Do you wonder why I only
Linger,—still, content and lonely?
Ah, to-day the woodlands love me,
And to-day I have a right
To be silent! Dove above me
Spread your wings in fairy flight;
Let me dream that time is bringing
Dearer days, too sweet for singing!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 55.

Success

You too have learned the secret of success!
The wild flower's purple petals scattered lie;
In human hands her delicate odors die,
Though touched with love's extremest tenderness.
Yet see the red rose on my lady's dress,
Serene, where whirling laughing dancers fly;
Or bound on bowls of midnight revelry,
Trained, tortured, cultured into lastingness.
Leave then the hidden stream, O heart of mine,
Since he who drinks the city's turbid wine,
Shall gain thereby new forces to resist.
O cultivate the double rose of fame!
If once the world be conscious of your name,
Humility's wild flower will not be missed.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 56.

Carmelita

Carmelita's perfumed curl

In the maddening waltz's whirl
Swings across Felipe's mouth;
What new beauty seeketh he
Who beneath her lids may see
Sleepy midnights of the South?

Carmelita kneels, arrayed
In her triple crown of braid,
With a rapt and saintly air;
Yet she does not fail to hold
Her black mantle's brodered fold
Daintily, with certain care.

Carmelita's glances rise
To Felipe's earnest eyes;
Turns he yet, untouched—heart whole?
With a cheek of tinted cream,
With the figure of a dream,
Carmelita lacks—a soul!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 57.

A Tourist

At the Old Mission, Santa Barbara.

He was a stranger in the land;
The Padre took him by the hand.

He showed with pride the whitened towers,
The bells that swing to mark the hours,
The skulls above the arched gate
With dust of years disconsolate,
The Mission garden, planted when
The Church was rich in serving men;
Then gravely asked, "And who are you
Who come our fallen state to view?"

The stranger straightened consciously:
"I am from Boston!" "Boston? Why,
You speak the English language, friend,
So well we all can comprehend
Your meaning! Yes, there have been men
From Boston here before you, when
We could not understand a word
Of all they said!" The tourist heard
And downward from the Mission went,
Contempt lost in astonishment.

In sandaled feet, with figure gowned
In coarse gray cloth, and rudely bound
About the waist with ropes, I knew
A marvel he must seem to you.
His life's as dusty as his gown;
Unknown beyond his native town:
But more than yours is his surprise,
To see the curious pride that lies
In one poor modern city's fame,
Which none of his old volumes name!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 58.

October

The Indian summer's happy haze
Made smooth old Shawangunk's sternest frown;
 And scarlet maple leaves flew down
 To light the earth a little space.
By rustic walls the ferns were brown;
And robins sang their roundelay
Beyond our steel-blue shivering bays,
To softer airs of Southland flown.
The beech's golden guidons streamed
Above us, as we rode, aware
Of dead leaf odors, scents that seemed
Too sweet for meadows blowing bare.
Asleep by purpling vines, I dreamed,
That once again we wandered there.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 59.

Omens

Happy omens swarm to-day
With this golden weather;
Birds fly near, and daisies say,
Many and many and many a day
Life shall live, and love shall stay,
Love shall sing, and life be gay,
And we two ride together!

Down between these fluttering trees,
Shall we ride forever?
While from south delicious seas,
Many and many and many a breeze
Sings between the orange trees
Ringing with passionate melodies
O never, never sever!””

O Love, while omens crowd our ways
With musical sound and silence;
Take the message the wind conveys,
Fling the messenger flower and praise;
But look beyond to future days,
As through this delicate purple haze
We look on the channel’s islands.
Signs may cease when the day is done
And airs no more be golden;
But must we die for a dying sun?
O many and many and many a one
May sink in the sea,—but love begun
In trust and faith its course shall run
To the sunshine un beholden.

Praise the blessing of God to-day
Of love and golden weather;
Sunshine may not always stay,

But love may sing and life be gay,
Many and many and many a day
Till our hearts be dead, and hair be grey,
Then dead and grey together!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 60.

There the Bold Day

There the bold day caught me by the shoulder
Crying: Sylphs and undines, who has told her
 The secrets of the water and the air?
Yet she shall not, of your gay profusion,
 Carry miracles to yonder town;
Sober men will deem it a delusion,
 Silly women meet it with a frown!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 61.

China Lilies

A cynic smiles, because I wear
Celestial lilies in my hair.

The Chinese say the house is doomed
In which no New Year lily bloomed.

And so my small celestial friend.
Brings, to avert my sudden end,

A lily bulb, ordained to flower
Precisely at the lucky hour.

Each delicate rootlet curls and swells
Round pebbles rare and polished shells;

And day by day green leaves unroll
Above the quaintly painted bowl;

And swiftly, underneath my eyes
The slender blossom buds arise,

Till at the mystic time is born
This pagan fortune-flower you scorn,
A wish in blossom!—Nay; a sign
That fortune's gifts may yet be mine.

So, spite of cynic smiles, I wear
These China lilies in my hair.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 62.

Garden Song

Pines and roses, palms and lilies,
Make my garden sweet;
To be sweeter, needing only
Pressure of your feet.

Pale the coral woodbine groweth
Pale the heliotrope,
When you leave me, doubting, fearing,
Reft of transient hope.

Come again, and straightway blooming
Every rose is red!
Every violet lifts, alluring,
Up her darling head.

Every golden-hearted lily
Smiles with meaning sweet;
Ah, you love me! Now my garden
Truly is complete!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 63.

At Bay

Before me yawns a raging gulf,
A sleuth-dog bays behind me;
Beyond the chasm, men are sworn
With triple chains to bind me.

If I escape the furious beast,
Eseape the stormy water;
And fall not into human hands
Athirst for human slaughter—

I know not then what meadows sweet,
Where rippling rivers glimmer;
May wait to bless my weary feet,
Or whether, dim and dimmer,

An unknown darkness fills the space
Where nameless terror lingers;
Or through what baleful fires my face
Be struck by demon fingers.

But die I will not! Hereat bay,
Alone, unarmed, a woman;
What bitter strait were mine to-day
If all my foes were human!
I well might face with desperate eyes
The fiercest tool of nature;
By courage like his own, surprise
To truce this savage creature;

I well might swim across the bays
Of night in fearless fashion,
Though thick black billows beat my face,
And break in storms of passion—

If on that shore no enemies
Of kin and blood were waking,
Or if—beyond the reach of these—
Were pleasures worth the taking!

Wealth

Well enough I loved my fleecy laces,
O well enough I loved my flashing rings;
And well I loved the smile upon your faces,
When you passed me, children, fancying these things
Were happiness,—not noticing the traces
Of my tears, not remembering how the wings
Of wealth might spread, to light on distant places,
And leave me wounded, desolate,
Without a cup of water
From the world's unpitying springs.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 65.

Sea-Leaf

Why should the burden be always Love?
Or the season be always Spring?
Through passionless ether the answer clove,
The mysterious answer: "Behold, this Love
Is a sad and a wearisome thing!

But sad is never the wide salt sea,
In storm or in gold of repose;
And fast though the boats of the fishermen flee
From tempest and ruin and wreck of the sea,
The storm wind merrily blows.

And sweetly the white-winged sea-bird sleeps
On the buoy that rocks a-lee;
When the glittering tide in sunshine sweeps,
Joyously in from dark blue deeps
To dark green shallows of sea.

Wild Love, that is sweet in the time of Spring,
As wildly bitter shall be,
When the swallows of Spring have taken wing,
And what, in that bitter awakening,
Will the sweet dream matter to thee?

The swallow may follow the flight of Spring,
But Spring shall follow thee!
And the earth her shyest streams shall bring
To the lips of one who dares to sing
As a daughter of dawn and the sea!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 66.

Eaglet

Once there are heights you cannot reach,
Since pinions were denied you;
Would you the infant eagle teach
 To rest content beside you?
The wings are grown, the eaglet flown,
Now walk your gloomy vale alone!

Though sometimes down from heights sublime,
 The royal bird comes sailing,
To poise above you for a time,
 Your hopes are unavailing.
Upon your breast an hour she'll rest,
But far above she builds her nest.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 67.

Episode

Love has come, and gone again;
We were bound, and we are free.
Love, beloved of wiser men
Never waits too long for me.

This was just the golden hour!
Since a shadow of regret—
Odor of a faded flower—
Sweetens my resentment yet.

When it seemed no sin to say,
“All my love I dare not tell!”
Could I then foresee this day?
While I loved, I loved you well.

Yet though love’s enchanting speech
Breaks no longer on my mouth,
All hope’s silence shall not teach
Alien sadness to the south.

Seas shall sing, though lips be dumb;
Winters laugh with leaping streams;
Amber fields of summer come,
Smiling, spite of haggard dreams.

I shall find what peace there is!
Sweetheart lost, adieu, adieu!
Lips of mine you will not miss;
Other loves will comfort you.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 68.

Signals

How shall I guess at your coming?
Will not your soul send to mine
 A signal, unseen and electric,
 A mute, indisputable sign?

It may be a tone in the north wind,
It may be a rose light above
The grey granite heights, or an odor
Of heliotrope, flower of love;

Or the swinging of wings in a rapture
Of humming bird life and delight;
Or mystical meteors sailing
Together down rivers of night.

But be it a sound or a color,
Flower, flutter, or starlight divine;
Whatever shall herald your coming,
I must be aware of the sign.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 69.

Transitions

Has the night come? Not yet, O my darling.

The glory of morning is here;

Her sunlight transforms us, and lifts us

High into her holier sphere.

And Hope, a diviner Aurora,

Smiles out from her tresses again:

Let your face catch the brightness, my darling,

Your brows be forgotten of pain.

Still morning? The morning has faded,

The sun blazes high in the skies;

The prairies lie brown and unshaded,

The river burns white on my eyes.

Can I lead you! My hand is unsteady,

Hope left me with morning and youth;

And on the plain, treeless and torrid,

I, panting, yet shrink from the truth.

Is it night? It is night. In the darkness

The waves storm a desolate beach;

And I feel, though you cling to me, something—

A longing your love does not reach:

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 70.

Clios

Go as the wind goes, blithely away;
One flower blossomed and died in a day;
One voice trembled,—then hushed in sleep,
One star fell, and was lost in the deep.

One may be fettered, and one be free;
And the iron chains encircling me
Seem naught to you but the ribbon I wear,
The ring on my finger, the rose in my hair.

But whether I weep in some sea-blue cave,
Or sink to sleep in a deeper grave,
Be fetterless thou forever! O be
Unaware of the madness that clings to me.

And go as the wind goes, blithely away;
Fear me and fly from me while you may.
My hopes are as torches blown out by a breath,
To know me is sorrow,—to love me is death!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 71.

Footsteps—On Santa Ynez

Hush! This is no mountain's child!
Ne'er were roses grown so wild,
 So shyly hidden
 From the one who loves them best,
 But only from the transient guest
 Who comes unbidden.

Fairy feet, O flee from him
Into forests dark and dim;
Leave no trilling
Lark nor linnet! O be dumb,
Comrades dear, who used to come,
Our pulses thrilling.

Little spring,—O dearest spring,
Hush, I pray thee! Cease to sing
Till he passes.
Sweet quiete, do not blow;
Larkspur, lily, lie down low
In the grasses.

Humming-bird, be still I pray,
Let no sound your wings betray
While he lingers;
Now! Down comes the dappled herd,
He is gone—Now, humming-bird,
Bring the singers!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 72.

Cecile

I know every one of your tricks, Cécile,
 The smile, and the downcast eyes;
The upward eloquent look, the glance,
 The laughter threaded with sighs;
The folded hands, the averted head,
 The brown cascade on your shoulder;
The innocent song, that trills and thrills,
 Unconscious of any beholder!
You've lovers in plenty to kneel, Cécile,
 While the chains you weave are new;
But they weary so soon! When the last is gone
 What will become of you?
O you've every charm in the world, Cécile,
 But the charm to conquer me!
Every grace in the world, Cécile,
 But the grace of sincerity.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 73.

Illusion, Delusion

Illusion, delusion, whatever you name it,
The heaven was real to me.
A starlight in midnight, that lit, could I blame it?
The manifold spaces of sea;
And never was conscious of me.

Here dance the white waves in a rapturous measure,
And dawn is alive on the height.
They know not my grief, and they knew not my pleasure,
In stars that outwitted the night,
Stars glittering over the height.

For the sea was the world, and the gold stars above it
Were lights in the midnight of eyes.
The blond dawn is fair,—but O how could I love it,
Who worshiped, with paramount sighs,
Black brows and electrical eyes!

Ah!—fair youthful morning,—your gay golden tresses,
Your sweet eyes of heavenly blue;
Your tenderest smiles and your dearest caresses
Give lovers more worthy of you,
Who love the dawn's delicate blue!
But I stand at bay! Though the world may proclaim it
Aloud, in derision of me;
Illusion, delusion, whatever you name it,
I loved a wild light on the sea,
That never was conscious of me.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 74.

Atlas

Rest! And the great sea seems to beat,
And the stars hang low, like oranges,
Borne upon heaven's invisible trees.

Night! And an influence, rarely known
To my waking sense, is the undertone
Of sky and sea and the pallid rose,
That over my balcony sheds its snows.

I feel the pressure of crimes and cares;
'Tis the weight of the world my shoulder bears!
One may not be upright, but must be strong,
To carry the weight of the world along.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 75.

Poet's Song

A poet said: I will sing a song,
 Shall travel by land and sea,
 From heart to heart, and be sung, long, long,
 When the clover grows over me.

The song that I sing must be deep and free
Sweet and simple and wild;
To sink to the soul of the worker, said he,
And be dear to the little child.

He traversed the valley, he crossed the plain,
He climbed to the rocky height;
And many a faint melodious strain
Possessed his soul at night.

But under his hand there grew no song.
And he sat by a southern sea,
Lamenting:—the way is weary and long,
And the truth is far from me.

But sweet is the day on the velvet hills,
And sweet is the golden air;
And sweet is the bountiful sun, that fills
Full crystals everywhere.

He turned, and saw in the sand of the beach
 A flower blown late in Spring;
Insignificant, living to reach
 A colorless ripening.

Here is the sign at last! he cried.
 One on the shifting sand,
Hidden and strong,—and one blown wide,
 High on the mesa land.

Heartsease gold on the passionless plain,
 Dew plants down by the sea;
And under the oak trees after the rain
 The pale anemone.

Let poets crowned sing royal songs,
And simple singers sweet;
Mine to the infinite waste belongs,
Trodden by aimless feet.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 76.

Sweet Sea-City

Sweet sea-city! Though I turn
To the Gila's banks that burn
In torrid summers;
Ne'er shall I deny my love,
Or fail in fight to hold thy glove,
 Against all comers!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 77.

Lamia

I am Lamia! Beware of my voice,
Beware of my baleful eyes!

No man who is cursed by me
Answers in any wise;

For I am Lamia!
When the soft night winds arise,
I drop my sad disguise
Of womanhood,
And away to the wood,
Where the love of my true life lies.
For I am Lamia.

I steal through tangled bowers,
In marshy fens I wake
To the full swift joy of occult powers,
Like the famous Eden snake;
For I am Lamia!

O ancestor of ours,
Your sacred vision towers
Aloft in the night
Of my delight.
While womanly nature cowers;
For I am Lamia.

Over the sunrise plain
I go, to torture and tears;
Over across the wild champaign,
To the cruel loves of years.
Yet I am Lamia.

And I watch for the bloody stain
Of the sun's decline again;
Then away to the wood
Where womanhood
In the serpent folds is slain,
For I am Lamia!

Go-day.

O-DAY the sea is blue;
To-morrow it will be grey.

But change as it may, blue or grey,
We shall have had to-day!

To-day I cling to you;
To-morrow I'm up and away.
But change as I may, here or away,
We shall have had to-day!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 78.

Rhapsody

Give me scarlet for my head,
Let me shine in royal red
Once—ah! just to-night.
Crown me! It shall fade away
With the dawning of the day,
With the faintest light
Of the sweet flowered summer morn,
Though I am a poet born.

Let my weary fingers hold
Handfuls of the heart's-ease gold;
All bright colors bring—
Flaming poppies in their cups,
Lupines, where the wild bee sups,
Wheat in green of spring;
Salvias from the mesa land,
White stramonium from the sand.

Open all the windows wide,
Till the soul be satisfied
With sea-winds sweeping through—
Till the brows, too pale and wan
For such wreath to rest upon,
Reddening anew,
Bear their blossoms, tempest-warm,
Flower of sea and fruit of storm.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 80.

Sympathy

Grief is so common and pleasure so rare,
Let sorrow be lonely and lonely despair.
But the moment of grace
Needs an answering face,
For perfection of joy,—Ah, so fast in its flight!
Companionless, what is more sad than delight?

When I suffer, I shrink from the world and from you,
When I sigh, shall no soul be un comforted too!
I will cover my face
In distress or disgrace;
But rejoicing in hope, under luminous skies,
Let my pleasure be doubled in joy of your eyes!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 81.

In the Channel

By the daytime loitering, loitering,
Under my lemon trees;
In the evening listening, listening,
 To the monotone of the seas.
The tides arise and the moon also,
 And she makes a path for me,
Straight to the Isles of the Blest as I row
 Over the silvered sea.

Then in the moonlight rowing, rowing
 Out in the lane of light;
My boat and I are going, going
 Beyond the reach of night.

Let the winds arise, and the rains come down
 To water my thirsting trees;
The tempest strikes the indolent town
 With myriad harmonies.

Do I feel the wind? Do I fear the rain?
 No tempest frightens me!
Swimming in sweets, forgotten of pain,
 I sing with the singing sea:
By thee I am loitering, loitering,
 Sea, O sea of my heart!
To thee I am listening, listening,
 Till the sun shall sink
 In a sea of blood,
 And demons drink
 Of the sanguine flood;
And all the pleasures of life and of love,
Green fields below, blue heavens above,
 In torrents of flame depart!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 82.

Suicide of Sixteen

O brave unhappy child, whose heart foresaw
A desolate future, and whose little hands
 Laid hold on Fate and bent her to thy will,
 Thy courage and thy wisdom shame us all.
A just God cannot blame thee, and a God
Of mercy will not,—thou art safe in death.
So many women hold their coward lives
 Too sacred—ah, so bitter is the best,
 So terrible the worst of womanhood,
—When clouds arise, it is a crime to live!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 83.

An Island

*"My dream is of an island place,
By distant seas kept lonely."*—R. S. Browning

Could I leave it all behind me,
All this life's perplexities;
Fly to some enchanted island,
Hidden in the howling seas;
With wild storms shut in forever,
And where breakers warn away
Curious sailors, from the bar that
Guards the solitary bay;

Safe within this new Atlantis,
Might I miss the clanging chains
Of tyrant custom; find where only
Tropic freedom ever reigns.
Where the roses bloom in single
Lovely rows of petals; where
Trees grow as they will, and purple
Wild grapes swing in amber air.

If the fruits be somewhat bitter,
I shall taste in bitterness
Something sweeter than all sweetness,
Since the nearer nature is.
I have tried the world, and found its
Treasures all of fairy gold;
Gay in sunlight, bright and worthless,
Smiles too bright from hearts too cold.

When my trouble comes upon me,
No one shall be there to see;
Not a voice in all that island
Shall arise to madden me.
Neither clasping hands that hurt, nor
Strangling love's insensate cling:
Friendship's sober malice, taunting
Tortured hearts to rise and sing!

As the tiger—wounded—dying—

Crawls away from sight of sun;
Crouches, bleeding, in the bushes,
Knowing his last fight is done;
Moans alone, and sucks the gaping
Rents that slash his velvet skin;
So I vain would hide my torment
From the eyes of curious kin.

From the baleful eyes that glitter,
Watchful eyes, that count the red
Pulses,—seize the trembling fingers,
Know me mad—and wish me dead!
Let me die!—but not among them.
Heaven, that all things ordereth,
Knoweth I need them not, but rather
Choose alone to tilt with Death.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 84.

Mystery of Music

'Tis not always my own self that sings.
Sometimes an alien spirit, finding me
With dumb lips waiting a new melody,
Creeps through my passive fingers to the strings,
And plays thereon such sad and bitter things,
That I, too, wonder if this music be
Indeed my own,—who love not tragedy,
Nor sombre flights of black tumultuous wings.
A spirit takes my hands, my voice, my eyes,
And fashions therewith subtile harmonies
All unsubservient to my will's control.
No tone of me in all the music lies!
Yet, the blind world, abhorring mysteries,
Reads therein all the secrets of my soul!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 86.

Penseroso

Love is not a tender leaf
 Withered by life's ardent sun;
Blighted by the storms of grief,
 Dying just when life is done.

Love will cling when life recoils,
 Love will stay when pleasure flies;
So fill the cup with fiery spoils,
 Here's to love's unchanging eyes!

Friends, the clasp of love is sure,
 Ah! Were friendship so sublime,
Might this purer light endure
 We would ask no odds of time.

But let the mind blow where it will,
 Be sad or merry, wild or wise,
But fill the cups with amber still,
 Here's to friendship's changing eyes!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 87.

Annette

A dozen of loves I've strung, my dear,
 On jingling threads of rhyme;
Loves from far and loves from near,
Swept together and sung, my dear,
 To cheat my enemy, Time.

But take no heed of my tongue, my dear,
 You've never a rival yet!
The rhymes are folly—you need not fear.
Since Time his sickle has swung, my dear,
 No lover your soul need fret.

Love, to the heart that is young, my dear,
 Is the fruit of the tragic tree;
But Love, to one who has lingered here
Too long, is a blossom sprung, my dear,
 From the hedge of comedy.

If every lover I've sung, my dear,
 Could always be true—and new!
And rascally Time could quit this sphere,
I'd scorn to be fresh and young, my dear,
 If it parted me from you!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 88.

Elise

Dead you are, Elise.

& Dead in your maiden prime.

And your mother kisses your cold grey lips,

Missing you, all the time.

Now what if the girl were I?

If I lay dead and alone,

Would anyone, anyone, kiss my lips

When the beauty of blood had flown?

Would anyone touch my brow,

And linger lovingly there?

Would any one touch, without shrinking from death

In the folds, my tangled hair?

Better they did not—better!

What does the free soul care,

Floating, a luminous essence,

In boundless spheres of air.

Could any sense be left,

It must be a sense of pain,

That one should honor the earthly bands

Which could not bind me again.

Maidenly soul of Elise,

When they kneel down to pray;

Join thou: O Father, forgive the tears

They waste upon worthless clay!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 89.

After All

After all I have sworn to you,

The heart may be false that was meant to be true
But it never was made to break!

Stung as it is with tears,
And tired of a world too old;
The boon and the bane of desolate years,
Death only can make it cold!

The blood of my heart runs wild,
The fire of my heart burns free;
You may break the heart of a foolish child,
But never the heart of me!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 90.

Reverie

Between the dusty palms to-night
No ocean wind is blowing;
By moonbeams lit, the lilies white
In ghastly rows are growing.
A pallid mirror is the sea,
And silent. What then speaks to me?

I know these strange electric thrills
Which come to me unbidden,
Are efforts of some mighty wills
To break some barriers hidden.
Some bold intelligence, which strives
To enter into human lives,

Some chord must be, some way there is,
Unknown as yet to mortal;
That other worlds shall speak to this,
But who shall find the portal?
The vision seers still are dumb.
Whence shall the revelation come?

This knowledge lurks in human souls,
And saddens human senses—
A monstrous power somewhere controls
Magnetic influences.
Beyond all knowledges lies yet,
The universal alphabet.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 91.

In My Garden

Honeysuckles bloom for you,
Humming-bird, afloat in ether;
Lily bell and jasmine too,
Heliotrope and purple heather.
For the bronze-brown butterfly,
For the yellow bee so bonny;
Merrily all day labor I,
Asking not who stores up honey.
Chirping baby linnets flit
All among my pinks and pansies;
On my lemon trees they sit,
Twittering, full of whims and fancies.
For their pleasure labor I,
My land has no profit in it,
Save to bee and butterfly,
Humming-bird and red-cap linnet.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 92.

Fate

Foolish Fate, you've come too late;

I've emptied every cup of bliss!
Every pleasure has been mine—
Wealth-bought music, wit and wine,
Flattering friends and lover's kiss.

Long before you reached my door,
I was tired of song and glee,
Of the sparkling wines I quaffed,
Of the lips that always laughed,
Long before you came to me.

House and lands were goblin hands
That clothed my soul with bitterness.
Wealth perplexed me night and day.
Ah, foolish Fate! you sought to slay,
And saved my soul with storm and stress.

Do your worst! My life was cursed
With too much prosperity.
Sweet it seems to stand alone,
Where all the sands with wrecks are strown,
Defying Fate to vanquish me.

The breakers roar upon the shore,
And gulls fly in before the gale;
The sun and storm to me are one.
I have no need of storm nor sun—
No lands to plow, no fruits to fail.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 93.

Beauty

I'm no beauty? Nay, I know,
That is why you love me so!

If my face were fair, I'd look
In my mirror, not my book.

If I saw a winsome lass,
Blushing, smiling in the glass,

With soft eyes, narcissus-blue,
Would I turn to look at you?

Little recked he living sighs
Who saw in the river heavenly eyes.

Beauty's bliss is Beauty's bane;
Vanity her only gain.

She alone is sweet and true
Whose image cannot rival you!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 94.

Linnet

There's the audacious thief
Who stole my yellow bird's dinner?
There he sits on the white rose leaf,
A gay little red-headed sinner!

His sober mate peers out
From her nest in the white rose tree;
"And what is the mistress scolding about?"
She seems to be asking me.

Your wicked husband stole,
Brown lady, I tell you true,
From my own little gold bird's china bowl,
The dinner he gave to you!

Says the brown dame: "Are not we
Then also your very own?
You give us the rent of the white rose tree,
And we sing for you alone."
But you have a husband gay
And downy nestlings three;
My bird, in his golden cage all day,
Has never a friend but me!
Says the wise brown dame: "Behold,
Our love is the truest still;
For us you need no cage of gold,
We stay of our own free will."

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 95.

Smoke

In the smoke of my dear cigarito
 “Cloud castles rise gorgeous and tall,
 And Eros, divine muchachito,
 With smiles hovers over it all.

But dreaming, forgetting to cherish
The fire at my lips, as it dies,
The dream and the rapture must perish,
And Eros descend from the skies.

O wicked and false muchachito,
Your rapture I yet may recall;
But like my re-lit cigarito
A bitterness tinges it all!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 96.

Saved from Wreck

In an idle hour;
Whenever the wind blows loud and strong,
And the tempest crashes the coast along,
Flinging my ruined ships among
 The drift of a rocky shore;

 All these idle tales you tell me,
 Sooth I must forget!
For treasure in plenty—all my gold
Ts sinking in many a vessel's hold,
Silken nettings, fold over fold,
With the careless seas are wet.

 All these idle tales you tell
 I know the meaning of!
I've heard too often my bold bright brows
Sung in the waits of a gay carouse,
Mad adoration and passionate vows,
 The wild-eyed double of Love.
 All these idle tales you tell me,
 Now,—but are they done?
Is the love-lay over at last? Behold,
The storm ceased too when the story was told,
And into the harbor's daylight gold,
 My ships sail, one by one!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 97.

Message

I see a phantom at the open door.
The thoughtful air and close grave mouth I know;
The serious eyes, where humorous glances grow
To sudden recognition! Ah, no more

Shall I behold him coming, as of yore,
With eager questions of the day, below
Whose half-fictitious words, an undertow
Ran deep, of curious philosophic lore.

My friend is dead! This shadowy presence seems
The untranslatable counterpart of dreams.

O grave and gracious, kindly soul, I said:
Why wilt thou linger by these earthly themes,
Thou who can'st wander by immortal streams?
Go! Take my love to my triumphant dead!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 98.

Till Death

Before my memory takes its flight
 Into the gloom of saddest night;
While yet I know when south winds blow,
My garden walks shall overflow
 With blessed streams of rain;
While yet I see the olive tree
Between me and the joyous sea,
Or wake to hear, mid tempest drear,
Deemonic voices in mine ear,
 A prophecy of pain;

Let me alone keep fearful watch,
The leaders of my fate to catch;
Alone be conscious of that fate,
Which, long delaying, comes too late,
 While all my roses spread
Their breasts of gold before the sun,
And lemon blossoms, every one,
Are tossed to earth as lavishly
As if no prophet spoke to me,
 A warning from the dead.

At least the moan be mine alone,
The deep monotonous undertone
Of starry blooms and tropic glooms,
And wilding blossoms' faint perfumes;
That, when my body dies,
No voice shall say:—Ah! well away!
She lived indeed beyond her day.
But this instead: O doubly dead
To mirth and me is this dear head,
That now so lowly lies!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 99.

Alain

Happy Alain! The Queen has kissed thee.
Not for beauty and not for love;
But for lips that sing
The songs that ring
From the hells below to the heavens above?

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 100.

Laurence

I see the coast of Mexico,
Transfigured in the sunset's glow.
 Laurence, do you remember yet,
 How we two stood ere sun had set,
 And wished ourselves across the bay
 Where shadowy level gardens lay;
 And how we fancied we could see
 Brown nuts upon the cocoa tree,
 And happy children on the sands
 Who ran and clapped their dusky hands.

Now, wandering over waves again,
I seek forgetfulness in vain.
Your face comes, dimly fair, to me,
Through storms of the Caribbean Sea;
I see it when I walk the deck,
And look across Tehuantepec;
And when, at dawn, we sail away
From Acapulco's breathless bay,
My heart grows lighter, soul more free,
Knowing the ways of destiny!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 101.

Improvisation

While I sing the careless sweetness
Of these sunlit southern seas;
You will pardon incompleteness,
Since you love my melodies.

Many a poet waits before you,
Sings from printed notes his score;
Yet for grace I still implore you,
Since my visions run before,

Ah, so far beyond the measures;
Far beyond the rhythm and rhyme,
Singing only simple pleasures,
Songs of youth and summer-time.

And my song goes rippling, streaming,
Back to youthful dear delights;
Fills the currents of your dreaming
With the wines of vanished nights.

If I sing, like Goethe's linnet,
Clinging to my native vine;
And you feel no meaning in it,
Is that any fault of mine?

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 102.

Last Ride

Shall I one day make the journey?

Even so.

All alone through sombre portals

Riding slow;

Letting flying feet go by me;

Then shall speechless Death deny me,

Voice to cry—

Although I die,

Let the horses go!

Friends who follow, friends who love me,

Riding slow;

Will they nurse their natural sadness?

Even so!

And the dearest will deny me,

While the flying feet go by me,

The final grace

Of a final race,

And think I do not know!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 103.

N. L.

Inscribed to N. L.

Purple grapes of olden time!
Your blood ran clear in rhythm and rhyme.
We drank with thankful hearts and free,
The brimming chalice;
Looking out across the sea,
From golden valleys.

Now alone, distressed, forlorn,
Why was singer ever born?
Just to brave an adverse gale,
Helpless, shivering,
Songless, wineless, hopeless, pale,
With sorrow quivering?

Why? Except the gods delight
In the torments of their might;
Love to see their creatures lie,
Cowed, defenseless;
Lifting prayers to the sky.
The gods are senseless!

Wiser were they not, to give
A little hope to those who live?
O blind and cruel deities,
Who reign above;
We ask but justice,—a little peace,
And a little love!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 104.

Atalanta

From sand to sand, with dripping feet
And yellow hair blown backward, fly
 O youthful Queen, so fair and fleet,
 Arcadia's eager striplings by.
The sapphires of the cloudless sky,
The mountain's emerald crown complete,
Are jewels born to render, sweet,
Fair tributes to thy royalty.
But, flying Queen, by brows untanned
And curling lips thou shalt not be
Remembered in that far-off land
Of future,—but by songs that we,
Thy poets sang, when on the sand
Thy steps were swifter than the sea.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 105.

Oak and Grevillea

When you plant Grevilleas gay,
Dash the tender limbs with spray;
Clear of weeds the walks around
And well enrich the garden ground.

Up the tender sapling springs,
Borne aloft on emerald wings;
Flings his orange plumes afar
Like savage chiefs adorned for war.

But who the ancient oak has set
In wide and wild cañadas, let
The trunks uprear, the leaflets stir?
The oak disdains the gardener!

In spring he greets the building birds;
In summer heats the panting herds
Collect about the massive stem,
Whose branches cool and shelter them.

So, tended, watched and warded, see
How often dames of high degree
Wear barbarous colors, while the best
Brave womanhood is simply dressed.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 106.

De Profundis

A Pariah! I forlorn!

Nay, my friend, you dream.
Here's the gold and glowing morn,
Here's the glancing stream.

Out of misery's depth I rose
To this blooming height;
Changed the sombre sea of woes
For rivers of delight.

Yet you doubt me? Yet you look
Down to kith and kin?
Better read this mountain brook
Which mirrors no man's sin.

Where the forest's dreamy hosts
By real winds are stirred,
Sin and shame seem formless ghosts,
Fame a foolish word!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 107.

H. G.

The Master's hand is cold,
The Master's cheek is pale;
And hear the rabble, clamoring bold
At the gates where his children wail.

Was then his life in vain?
Blossoms of labor and pain
Shall redden and rise again!

His words flew into the heart of me
Like wonderful birds of the south and the sea,
With outspread wings that were broad to bear
The full sweet weight of the gracious air.

This is a dainty world!
Bountiful unto those
Who glide in the sun with canvas furled,
Crowned with the crimson rose
Of silence and repose.

But for the rower afloat
On a stormy sea at night;
She coils like a serpent around his boat,

She flies like a sea-devil at his throat,
Her satellites delight
To chatter and hiss and bite.

That the Master's soul at last is free
Of the clamorous rabble, glad are we;
Glad that the struggling hands should be
Free of the oars on a darkened sea.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 108.

Sylvie

Bring your roses back again
Sylvie dear, my Sylvie.

I'm too old to follow you,
Sylvie, Sylvie.

Mortal men in vain pursue
The flying steps of Sylvie.

Call her now,—she will not stir;
Sylvie! Sylvie!
Rooted roses cover her,
Death overtook my Sylvie!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 109.

Duetto

The coast was muttering in depth of night;
I looked across the sea:
When—when shall dearest nature's signal light
From dead love set me free?

O on that beach what seaweed clings forlorn
Awaiting overflow;
As I from heaven await the lingering morn,
And fresh hope's tender glow.

II

Though waters may submerge the drifted leaf
When all its tints have fled;
And sunlight kiss the barren lips of grief,
The primal rose is dead.

No wave shall wash the greyness from thy cheek;
No shallow ocean cover
The helpless heart, and voice that can but speak
To curse the love and lover.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 110.

In Extremes

What does it matter, if after the end,
Father or brother or lover or friend
Will weep for a moment, walk slowly, speak low:
Dead is the woman who loved us so!
Then plant for a sign a useless stone,
Forgetting, before the weeds have grown,
My smile and my presence, my raptures and sighs,
And the reckless heart that so coldly lies.

Nay—if you love me at all, give me
The marble for hearthstone—the tears to be
A comfort for present sorrows—and when
My voice shall no longer answer again,
Cover me quickly, and let me lie
Ungrieved at the first, as surely I
Am forgotten at last,—and go your way
Merrily! I shall have had my day!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. III.

Barbara

My daughter has grown so tall,
 So wise and tender and sweet;
And here in the dusk is a caballero,
 Down at her feet!

 O Padre! What shall I do?
 The child is still so young;
But she has a heart, and the caballero
 A silver tongue.

 The Padre smiled, and said:
 Truly the maiden grows
Wise and tall, and I see that the rosebud
 Has blown a rose.

 To-day is St. Barbara's feast,
 Send your daughter to me;
The truth will be told in confession, no doubt.
 Benedicite!

 The priest is lithe and blond,
 With downcast, eloquent eyes;
What if a girl, lifting lids in the twilight,
 Were not so wise?

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 112.

Old Days

I talk of love—and think of tears!
The only love my life could know
Is buried now so many years,
 My tears long since have ceased to flow.

I've played at love and mimicked grief
 So many times, and sometimes, when
The autumn flings her dying leaf
 Upon my head, I dream again;

And ancient passions, waking, sting
 My heart to madness; and the streams
Run once again, and linnets sing
 The music of my youthful dreams.

Yet well I know my day is done.
 That love upon some fairer head
His largess lays,—and I, alone,
 With roses dead engarlanded,

 Walk down deserted streets,—a shade
 That just remembers how the sun
 Of happy seasons was arrayed
 In gold—before my day was done!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 113.

In Church

The preacher's dreary monotone I hear,
 "As 'twere a murmuring brook in pleasant fields,
 Whose mellow, measured ripples, broken oft
 By skimming birds, as are the priest's low words
 By voices of the chanting choir—flow on;
 Telling of waving trees in summer woods
 And yellow-winged songsters, fluttering
 In little trills of pure content; and flowers
 That catch the balmy air with fingers white,
 Or blue or palest pink. And so, I hear
 The preacher's dreamy monotone that flows
 Too gently for a soul to comprehend
 That life and death and all the mysteries
 Of Time and of Eternity, are woven
 In his discourse, which only serves to lull
 The senses to a musical repose.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 114.

Reminiscence

What hushes all this dreary rain

With summer melodies?

How is it that I see again

The beech and maple trees,

And hear the endless sound of streams

That glide and glimmer through all my dreams!

A forest flower—crushed and brown,

With faded moss around it!

I look, and lo! the chill runs down

Between the woods that bound it,

Over grey rocks whereon the sun

Shines downward through the leaves at noon.

And nameless blossoms cluster in

A hundred hidden places,

Pale, faintly veiled with azuline,

Or flushed, like Mzenad faces;

Enthroned among these mosses green,

I reign again, a sylvan queen.

Ambition flies this throne of mine,

That green boughs arch above;

I hear no earthly music in

The waters that I love.

But fairy feet reel down the river

In whirling waltzes forever and ever.

And eerie glances gild the rift

And rippling voices rise

From eddy and turn and tangled drift

Of rustling leaves that lies

On the edge of the stream, and warm winds blow

Over the rye of the fields below.

But, ah! the swift years pass away,

And I see through tears again

My dreary life—this dreary day,
This dreary dripping rain—
A rolling tide of years and seas
Between those joyful days and these.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 115.

Grapes Are Good

Grapes are good,—and love is good
But very full of fiery blood
Is the grape, and strong the love that could
Be sweet if the day were rough!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 116.

In Memoriam

Mary Bennett Hasbrouck. Born in New York City, May 16, 1877; died Nov. 16, 1884.

Even as delicious winds most softly blow

From Orient lands of cruelty and crime,
Nor bear one hint prophetic of that time
When sudden earthquakes rend them; even so,

Thy sacred grief this sunlight could not show
Nor mine to thee this ineffectual rhyme.
As well the zephyrs of this cloudless clime
Might melt your savage mountains heaped with snow.

This is the world's despair! Pure loneliness
That language cannot utterly express.
Yet think,—how smiling angels took the hand,
The little, little hand you dropped with tears;
And gently led her to that perfect land
Where you shall follow after many years.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 117.

A Modern Pythias

She knew that I lied when I promised to love her

Forever, Lulu, O Lulu!

And I knew the hand that she put up to cover

Her face in its blushes was plighted to you.

But, friend of my heart, do not therefore disclaim her,

It is not the fault of Lulu;

An innocent soul you have truly, to blame her,

What woman last night clung so closely to you?

Bel's song's were a-ringing, her ringlets a-flying,

Her wild fingers clinging to you;

And how could I help in the moonlight espying

The sorrowful eyes of the lonely Lulu?

She walked all alone in the garden of roses

(And Bel was a-singing to you!)

And I on my knees practised prayers and poses

To win back the smiles to the lovely Lulu.

She listened, I own it, but Phil, on my honor,

I knew she was thinking of you?

And yet for the arts that I wasted upon her,

You're angry, you seems, with the charming Lulu.

I told her I loved her, yes, over and over,

And why should I hide it from you?

A lie, as I said, but dear Phil, if you love her,

Don't tempt me again to make love to Lulu!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 118.

Christmas, 1883

This Christmas Eve no whirling snows
Conceal Christ's angels as they pass;
But violets glimmer in the grass,
And fair unfolds the royal rose;

And free the gay arroyo flows
To smiling seas of chroastas.
Heaven's blue above,—and I, alas!
Am blinded, faint with fortune's blows.

Yet of my best I offer up,
To grace this golden season;
And paint upon my Christmas cup
This flower of rhythmic reason:

The winds are still,—the waves at peace,
And I—forgive my enemies!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 119.

Siesta

I will not barter calm for any crown.
Bathed in delight of summer silences,
 I feel the wild blood of the swaying trees
Beat underneath my clasping arms; and down
Among alfalfa blooms the crickets brown
 Chirp faintly; and from out the hazy seas,
 One ship, with canvas spread to catch the breeze.
Sails slowly in, toward the sleepy town.
At rest amid these blessed monotones,
No fleshless fingers point to empty thrones,
 Nor voices break my dreams with comments rude.
Let chord or discord shake Æolian strings;
When on my lips the surging passion sings,
 The echo shall be sweet in solitude!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 120.

A Saint

A Fancy Sketch. (1872.)

Lovely saint! Your face is fair,

A halo rests upon your hair.

Were you not a saint, you'd be
A pretty maiden, fresh and free.
No one knows your story,—yet
I shall try to fancy it.

In a town of Africa
You were young and bold and gay;
A Spanish rover captured you,
Sailing with his thieving crew;
Bore you to his castle grim.
There you calmly murdered him.

You closely cut your trailing hair,
And donned the beard he used to wear;
You took your choice of brodered suits,
You cased your little feet in boots;
Placed his sombrero on your brows,
And tranquilly you left the house.
I think you must have taken to
The highway next, having in view,
The dreadful impecunious way
Your parents lived in Africa;
And with sweet filial piety
You went to work!—Ah! Woe is me!

In following this adventurous path
You roused a fiery monarch's wrath.
His soldiers dragged you, rudely too,
Before the irate sovereign who
Saw with dismay and then delight
Your cherry lips and tresses bright.

Your punishment was not so bad;
The king just ordered all he had,
His wife—his children—army—fleet—
In short, himself, thrown at your feet!

But you stood up and sweetly said:
O horrors! No! I'll die instead.

O then he raged and howled and swore
And kicked. In fact, like many more
Enlightened princes that we read of,
The truth he did not stand in need of;
But claimed a place in every heart
Without exertion on his part.

When this my saint he tried to catch,
This wicked monarch met his match.
Half choked with choler and surprise,
With red rage rolling in his eyes,
He made them build a funeral pyre.
And flung her on the blazing fire!

In plainest speech, it would not do!
The soldiers roasted her, 'tis true,
But could not hush the tongue that mocked
The tyrant yet. His courtiers, shocked,
Heard many facts about his size,
His bunchy nose and squinting eyes.

And there, you see, the story ends;
Our saint found influential friends
Somewhat too late, perhaps, to be
Of interest to her bodily;
Since those that most bewailed her fate
Were full three hundred years too late!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 121.

Dear Earthly Mother

O dear earthly mother, beloved and true
In this world no other shares empire with you;
 Yet changed and estranged, from your life let me flee.
O one friend whose kisses were dear in the past,
Your love my life misses,—yet I leave you at last,
 Who am born of the dawn and betrothed to the sea.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 123.

A Syren

She took up her comb of gold
To straighten her tangled hair;
Her glancing eyes were blue and bold.
Her song was false and fair.

Come, she sang, O come,
To the tranquil deeps below;
There is my heart and there is my home,
And there shall my true love go.

Down to the underland
My dolphins diving are,
To a wonderful stretch of fairy strand,
Unlit by moon or star.

Down to a crystal cave,
With pillars of pearl upright;
Beyond the roar of the shoreward wave,
Beyond the sad world's light.

Come, she sang, O come,
Mariner, come with me;
To rest in the depths of my ocean home
Beneath the billowing sea.

There shalt thou find repose,
No tempest dares to vex,
Nor any dominant wind that blows
To scatter the listless wrecks.

But Love shall be our guide,
And music lead the way;
Mariner, come! thy fate abide,
And loyal Love obey!

Grey is the earth and cold,
Azure and warm the sea;
Leave your loves and leave your gold
For the golden love of me!

The youthful sailor hears
The sea nymph's wondrous lay;

But the wise old Captain stops his ears,
And hears not a word they say.

The ship sails on and on,
The syren fluting still;
But the Captain to the helm has gone
And sailors must do his will.

Adieu, my dear! Adieu!
The Captain grimly said:
Could sailor of mine but listen to you,
Ma foy!—he were but dead!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 124.

Saint Delicious

Saint Delicious! Saint supreme!

How can poet lack a theme,
Who beneath thy skies may dream,
Fortunes grand?

Who between thy olive trees
Catches glimpse of azure seas,
Need not lack new melodies
Of the land.

Every curling wave that rides,
Every broken wave that slides,
Every creeping wave that glides
Up the sand,

Beats and breaks with accents new,
Melodies divine and true,
Only poets, such as you,
Understand.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 126.

Songs and Singers

I am weary of feminine voices,
 That murmur and moan and complain;
That utter sweet sibylline noises,
 Interpreting only their pain.
O give me a voice that rejoices
 In tumult and torrent and rain;
The masculine spirit whose choice is
 In battle to slay or be slain.
 That murmur and moan and complain.

I am tired of effeminate singers,
 Who mutter a bitter refrain;
Whose nervous intractable fingers
 Strike discords again and again.
O give me a music that lingers
 Like dawn on a storm-driven main;
Like bells out at sea, when the ringers
 Take heart and take hope from the strain.
I am tired of effeminate singers,
 Who murmur and moan and complain.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 127.

Passing Santa Barbara

The sun is down, the ship goes on.

We hear, through hapless night,
The breakers' roar upon the shore,
Now hidden from our sight;
Awaiting the morning light.

The wind is strong, we bound along,
Beyond the channel's scope;
When morning breaks on distant peaks
And lightens down the slope,
To the gardens, farewell hope!

Shall, haunting them, the slender stem,
Uprising in her time,
As bravely hold her cups of gold,
And yellow heartsease chime,
Courtesying to the rhyme;

And we be borne beyond the morn
On blackening waves to toss,
With sad surprise in swollen eyes
And sense of final loss,
Stricken our lives across?

But no! but no! When wind-flowers blow,
And streams run wild again;
And sunlight shines on budding vines,
And riders sweep the plain,
After the joyful rain;

We too shall feel spring currents steal
With sweet resistless flow,
To nerve and blood, and with the flood,
From pallid fields of snow,
Merrily southward go!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 128.

Masque

Put your face in flimsy lace
Lady mine!
Let no sun upon it shine.
So shall all men glance, and say,
“She is sweet as dawn of day.”

Though you may be tired of play
 Lady fair,
And sigh for breath of honest air,
Once the veil is lifted, pass,
You’re no longer fair, alas!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 129.

August

Purple bells begin to chime,
 This is summer's marching time.

 To the front the squirrels run;
 Through thick hazes peers the sun.

Little streamlets hide their heads
Underneath their sandy beds.

Mother quail has led her brood,
Twittering, through the dusky wood.

I'm a careless summer tramp;
Welcome, comrade, to my camp!

Welcome: If you care to know
Where the white quailotes blow,

Welcome! If you love the stream
Where the tiger lilies dream!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 130.

Gods to Hear

If you wish the gods to hear,
Do not whisper in their ear;

Do not cower with the crowd,
Tell them what they are, aloud!

Call them deaf, call them dull,
Perjured, blind, unbeautiful.

Then to quit a poet's scorning,
They will come on wings of morning:

Swift and sweet and nothing loth;
Breaking through the undergrowth

Of tyrannous and ignoble deeds,
Barbarous customs, cruel creeds,

In the poet's sight to be
Gay and gentle, wise and free.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 131.

Aspiration

A Dream.

Go follow Christ from star to star,
 To stoop where countless millions are,
 Undone, oppressed;
To lift the lowly, check the strong,
To help the right and baffle wrong,
 And then to rest,
My work being done, to rest with thee,
Through measureless eternity!

This is the glorious theme of themes!
O Christ of love, O Lord of dreams,
 Let me not stray
Beyond thine infinite universe,
Though steeped in degradation's curse,
 Show me the way
To heaven at last! O Christ, my soul,
Take thou the part,—give me the whole!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 132.

Love in the South

Love is like a pampas plume,
That sways in summer air.
See the gay wind play with it,
And toss its golden hair.

Banish now the pampas plume
A thousand leagues away;
Where's the evanescent bloom
That lit the summer day?

Love that lives by sun and sea
And southern zephyrs fanned;
Exists, a cruel mimicry,
Beyond his native land.

Strangers say: Behold the grace,
The shaking golden head!
They never saw dear Love alive,
And dream he is not dead.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 133.

Italy and California

Was it to see thy roses, Italy!

That men and women, friends and lovers, went
In chattering shoals across the continent?
Or for thy jasmine buds they braved the sea?

Was it to see the Albans smile on thee?

Ah no! far otherwise, they only scent
The perfume of the century's discontent,
And cull from thee the rose of memory!

Our own beloved needs no alien grace.
The rapt, seraphic glory of her face,
Her gracious tresses, flowers that inter-twine,

Draw distant worshippers of every race.
She needs no stumbling footsteps on a shrine,
Needs not this stammering tenderness of mine!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 134.

Santa Barbara's Centennial

December 4, 1886.

The flags of all nations are flying to-day;
They float in a friendly inconsequent way;
German, Italian and Austrian,
Russian and French for the moment agree,
And the dragon of China winks slyly to see
Ireland's harp and the moon of Japan.

Here swings the Mexican tricolor; here
Britannia's ensign; strange colors appear
In queer combinations unknown;—but hold!
Where flies the victorious scarlet and gold
Of the Conquistadores? Commingled and twined
With Columbia's colors, they flaunt in the wind!

Salute ye, salute ye the banner of Spain,
As we march down the fluttering highway again;
Through arches triumphal that hold over all
Cypress and lilies and palms; and call
Santa Barbara's fairest to lead the array
To honor the city's centennial day.

Embowered in flowers the fair maidens ride
With gay knights galloping at their side,
In serapes or wild chapareras;
In satin and velvet and lace they fare,
With fajas astream on the indolent air;
Descendants of old caballeros.

Here saunters the burro in train and here
Glitters the old time truculent spear,
The dominant race adorning.
And over all, to the southern breeze
Flutters the banner that graced the seas
When Cabrillo's guns gave warning.

O Conquistadores! What greeting can we
Extend to the men of your century? See
How beneath the bold waving of banners we go,
Untouched and unthrilled by the music below.

The long vanished galleons of Spain
Shall never be seen in the channel again.

Though we wear gay golden and burning red,
The saint that we honor is dead, is dead!
Centennial days of December are sweet
And gaily we march down the holiday street;
Stepping along to the wild rolling drum,
While our saint, in her anger, refuses to come.

O prophet and saint of the future! Aread us,
Where shall our imminent destiny lead us?
In spite of bold trappings, the songs of the day
Carry us constantly farther away.
The old time, the fair time, the sweet time has flown,
And the century only can pipe to its own.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 135.

Broken

Yourself it was that let the crystal fall,
Which might for years to come have held your wine.
 Your careless heart it was, and none of mine,
 That let the sweet hour slip beyond recall.
Now foolishly you sigh,—regretting all
 The flying hours in which nor word nor sign
 Gave any token of the feeling fine
 Which now would fain retard love's burial.
Since love is dead, it shall be buried deep!
 A bitter shame it were, for one to keep
 In all men's sight irreparable decay.
And though your whole heart's crystal shattered lies,
 Unmoved I listen to your tragic sighs.
 Yourself it was that threw the cup away!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 137.

The Last Mermaid

Seen on the coast of Ireland.

The little one cries for a story. Pet,

I'll tell you the story that Margaret,
The ancient nurse, I remember yet,

Used, to rock me, a child, to sleep
And made my very flesh to creep
With the doleful wail from a foreign deep.

I took—all breathless, Margaret's word,
For the beautiful Ellen who loved a lord,
And the brown girl killed by Lord Thomas' sword;

Of the ship that sailed from the north countrie,
The boy that breasted the boiling sea,
To sink the Yellow Golden Tree.

And many a rhyme of sinner or saint,
Songs and stories, old and quaint,
Come back. But the shadows are growing faint.

Of all her stories, I loved the best
The one she told with the greatest zest,
Queer enough, it must be confessed.

Only the tongue of an Irishman
Could mimic Margaret's brogue. I can
But tell the tale "à l'Américain."

It was the last mermaid, she swore,
That ever was seen on the Irish shore,
Where mermaids once had swum galore.

There was a day, my nurse would say,
When mermaids came ashore to play
About the borders of Bantry Bay.

They gathered about the beach in flocks,
Climbing over the wave-worn rocks,
Combing forever their golden locks.

They frolicked like children on the sand

And every mermaid held in her hand
Her golden comb, as she left the land.

There was some reason,—not quite clear
To my childish mind, why mermaids here
Must carry their combs to disappear.

But it was true, as Margaret's
Own cousin knew,—that who regrets
His youth, his strength, his love, his debts,

Could make all square by borrowing
A mermaid's comb! While she, poor thing,
Must die on the sand with sorrowing!

Now John Magrath had seen the girls
Of ocean rise from foaming swirls
Of the underworld; had seen the curls

Of one little mermaid flung in play
Upon the billows of Bantry Bay;
And vowed her comb to steal away!

A jolly son of the Emerald Isle
Was John Magrath. With a knowing smile,
He went, to work his wicked wile.

He pounced upon the mermaid class
One summer night, as bold as brass
—Frightened them into the sea, alas!

His pretty mermaid dropped her comb,
And could not follow her sisters home
To their sea-green halls beneath the foam.

John Magrath had picked it up!
Then soberly went home to sup.
But over the fumes of a steaming cup

He told it all! Then, woes on woes,
A din of wild dispute arose;
Some menaced his eyes, and some his nose!

"A mermaid is not lightly crossed,"
Sobbed one. One screamed: "Your soul is lost!"
From tongue to tongue the taunt was tossed.

John Magrath thought little but this:
To come to me her duty is;
I'd like to feel a mermaid's kiss.

About the borders of Bantry Bay
The billows broke in a wondrous way
And lightnings glanced athwart the spray.

John Magrath was sleeping sound,
Dreaming of the mermaid's ground;
Heedless of the tempests round.

He woke in terror!—A frightful wail
Mingled with the clashing hail.
A voice outshrieked the driving gale.

“John Magra’—gi’ me me comb!
John Magra’, I’ll haunt your home
Unless you gi’ me back me comb!”

All the night the mermaid kept
Her keening at the window; wept
And wailed. Magrath, he never slept.

He did not tell of the mournful maid
Who sung his doleful serenade.
He kept the comb. He was not afraid.

The second night was bright and clear,
And John Magrath awaked, to hear
A gentler tone:—“O brother dear,

Give me my comb! My sisters all,
Are dancing in their sea-swept hall;
Give!—or I’m lost beyond recall!”

The third night came with driving sleet.
John Magrath strode down the street,
And heard a fainter accent, sweet

But strong:—“I invoke the ban o’ ye!
John Magra’ gi’ me me comb,
Or I’ll make a sorry man of ye

Here Margaret’s voice would shrill and shriek,

We clung to her side, all scared and meek,
We did not dare to move or speak.

“John Magra’, gi’ me me comb!”
Or I’ll make a sorry man o’ ye;
John Magra’, gi’ me me comb,
Or I’ll haunt every wan o’ ye;

John Magra’, gi’ me me comb,
Or I’ll invoke the ban o’ ye;
John Magra’ (this with a howl that made us wince)
I’ll make a sorry man o’ ye!”

John Magrath the comb would keep.
He heard the seething waters weep,
And mermaids moaning in the deep.

Long years have passed, and now, they say
No mermaid comes to Bantry Bay.
From the Irish coast they have fled away.

No single gentle mermaid
Has ever been seen by fishermen
Peasant or lord of the land, since then.

And John Magrath? Why John Magrath,
My little one? There was gold
In the comb, be sure, but what befell
John Magrath, or ill, or well,
Old Margaret never told!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 138.

I Will No Heaven

I will no heaven but eternal rest.

When all these visions shall have passed away,
The dreams of night and false dreams of day,
How sweetly, O how quietly, how blest

Above desert I shall be, dispossessed
Of tyrannous Life which now I must obey.
For still eternities of peace I pray,
And Death, dear leader, is a welcome guest.

Now let the armies of the world go by,
And strike, with joy, their unrelenting foes;
If only in the earth where I shall lie
Is mystic silence, and the deep repose
Which feels not when the routed soldiers fly,
Nor trembles at the roots of the growing rose!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 144.

Mandhatar

*“Eastward roll the orbs of Heaven,
Westward turn the thoughts of men;
Let the poet, nature-driven,
Wander eastward now and then.”—Alger*

You who would follow your fate too far,
Hear the story of Mandhatar;
The wisest monarch, the bravest man,
And the proudest father in Hindustan!

When Mandhatar went forth to fight,
 A thousand youths, supple and slim,
All in warlike guise bedight,
 Took up their spears and followed him.

And a woful noise was heard behind
Like the moaning of a desert wind;
 Maidens, wives and mothers were these,
 Crying in the King’s palaces.

Time and trouble and constant war
Brought new possessions to Mandhatar.
For there dwelt no doubt in the royal breast
That a throne was his who could hold it best.

And so well his tall brown sons had cast
Their deadly spears and arrows,
The heart of the King grew heavy at last:
“Aha!—How the whole world narrows!
Here there is no one left to fight.
What can I do to keep my hand in?”
Then he glanced at the distant height
Of Mount Meru,—there was a land in
That mystical distance, said to be fair.
Could Mandhatar not venture there?

He gathered his army again about him.
Away and away, day after day,
No one knew what the King was seeking.
His sons did not presume to doubt him;
Some of the older soldiers may,

But they judged it wise to refrain from speaking.

On they marched, in solemn fashion,
One hundred million fighting men!
Swarming over the streams that splash on
Bare brown ankles, and out again.
Clambering cliffs, still mounting higher,
Each summit revealing new peaks afar;
Till the King's grey veterans wondered why, or
Where went his Majesty, Mandhatar!

They marched,—and day by day, grown bolder,
The King's sons laughed and frolicked, as when
With arrows hanging upon the shoulder,
They mocked the tiger in his den.

Up steeper slopes the army pressed,
The green earth sank below,
And the mountain wind blew through them;
In icy mail the troops were dressed,
In icy chains the streams repressed.
Through pathless wastes of dazzling snow
And swallowed in clinging mists they go.
Some mighty influence drew them!

—The mist unfolded its arms of might,
The wind dispersed it slowly;
And there—there—on the utmost height
A vision filled the monarch's sight
A vision pure and holy;
A splendid temple unknown of stains,
The pure white palace where Indra reigns.

Not then did Mandhatar retreat;
He urged his soldiers to Indra's feet.

A cloud of deities met the King,
Beckoning;
With terrible eyes they beckoned him
Through countless corridors, vast and dim,
Till he stood alone,
On the ivory steps of Indra's throne.

The god looked calmly upon the King.

“What wilt thou have?” he said.
About the throne a wondrous ring
Of lesser gods sat listening,
As the monarch raised his head.

Now Mandhatar was bold enough,
Made of the sternest warlike stuff;
So he gazed on the godheads there,
And owned what chiefly his soul desired,
In a few plain words. The King aspired
To Indra’s ivory chair!

He looked around for his veteran horde
Who might uphold his royal word;
But some curious occult force
Had hidden from eye and hushed from ear
Plume and shell and shining spear,
Foot, chariot and horse!

Upon his throne grave Indra smiled.
“Take thou the half,” quoth Indra mild.

Then Mandhatar sat side by side
With the god, and his heart was oppressed with pride.

He gazed askance at the priceless throne,
Where heavenly Indra had reigned alone
For countless ages. Then there stirred
A vague ambition. And Indra heard
A low, persuasive voice at his side:
“Power is never so deep and wide
That it serves for two. Ah!—fain would I
Reign alone in the earth and sky!”

—Then vanished in demoniac mirth
Tower and terrace;—shook the earth
In a furious transport. The gods arose
To whiter heights beyond the snows,
And Mandhatar, uncrowned, alone,
Groped wildly for his ivory throne.

All had been granted—all been given,
Until he claimed the whole of heaven!

Down the mountain side there came
One sad grey figure, bent and lame.

To a ryot's hut he made his way,
 Dying, dying;
His sons dispersed, his army lost,
Locked in adamantine frost,
 All his warrior legions lying.

The ryot raised the royal head;
To him the monarch, faltering, said:

“Were a mountain of gold like Himavant,
It could not satisfy the want
 Of a single human creature,
Far to go and little to win,
Confusion of pride and folly and sin,
 This is human nature!”

The ryot held the royal head;
And shrieked a prayer. The King was dead!

You who would follow your fate too far,
Ponder the lesson of Mandhatar!

In Indian lore this tale is known,
 Redacted by some ancient sage
From faint tradition, that had grown
 The mythus of another age.

From myth to metaphor it passed,
Religion—poetry—at last
Transplanted to my modern page,
It only serves a light to cast
On human nature's heritage.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 145.

Lyric

O amethyst splendor of dawn on the height,
Full smiling and tender, O dawn of delight,
Descend from insensible peaks to my breast!
The crystalline arches of heaven are not far,
March downward, as marches by channel and bar
The great tidal billow's unconquerable crest.

O billow, defiant of fate, limitless,
Upreaching and giant,—O wave of success,
Mount up to my heart with your hurrying tide;
Sweep over the islands and over the beach,
And up to the highlands of happiness reach
With floods of delight spreading boldly and wide.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 151.

Poverty

Wrapped in precious poverty,
Let the world go wrangle;
Work and worry! I am free
Of the coil and tangle.

I sit under scented trees,
Listening to the linnet;
A running brook of melodies,
With heaven's own sunshine in it.

No one seeks my bower out,
No one mars the singing
With a tone of vulgar doubt,
Bitter comment flinging,

On my life, my hope, my aim!
No, I dream securely;
Debtor to no low-born fame,
Taking pleasure purely.

World, go by me! I am free
Of doubt and toil and money;
On the bread of poverty
Is spread life's sweetest honey.

Black vexatious fiends, avaunt!
Column after column,
Yon have spoiled my gayest chant,
With monitions solemn.

Strike them out! The figures lie!
They shall not deceive me;
Guarded now by poverty
The devils needs must leave me.

I am free! O blessed birth,
When from fate's unkindness
Burst the beauty of the earth.
O marvellous the blindness,

That, beholding from this sea,
The living sun arisen,
Barters free-limbed poverty
For wealth in chains and prison.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 152.

Happily Waken

Happily waken, my dear, to-day;

And see how the mountainous islands shine,
Tender and pure as that soul of thine,

While here I wait—wait—wait—

For melodious footsteps, the feet of Fate.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 153.

Modern Circe

Wise and sharp the woman is.
Slender, willowy, pale of face;
Lightnings lurk within her kiss,
 Love within her subtle grace.

Youth, be wise, and pass her by!
 Be not woven in her chains.
All the sweetness soon shall fly,
 Only bitter truth remains.

While her lips are red with mirth,
 While her eyes lie deep below
Half-shut lids, she rules the earth
 Better than her lovers know.

Neither time nor grief shall touch
 Her who is net debtor to
Youth or gladness overmuch
 For the spell that conquers you.

Let her pass the fiery path
 All alone, disconsolate,
Reap the whirlwind's furrowing wrath
 Scorned of gods and cursed of fate.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 154.

Wait

Wait till the time has come to part,
 Before you scan my faults so near.
There's little enough in a human heart
 To surfeit with praise while you hold it dear.
Wait till the last hour to say: I knew
 Love could be never enough for you!

My foolish weakness—my foolish pride—
 Look not upon it too wisely yet.
There's time enough, in my youth I cried,
 To weep when the whole wild world is wet.
And I flew from the quick videttes of pain,
Waiting till winter to think of the rain!

Then why, with summer still sweet on the sea,
 Torture us both with jealous fears?
Can you think to change the soul that is me,
 Or that love can live in anger and tears?
You say true love is jealous. But I,
Love is no longer sweet! Good Bye!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 155.

Last Illusion

Is my last illusion nearer,
Friendly Time, and let me see,
Since my sight is surely clearer
 Than the sight of youth could be,
(Dream and dream go by so fast,)
Why the sweetest is the last?

Dearest Time, in dispossessing
 Me of youthful charm and power;
You have brought a better blessing,
 Gift not born of any hour!
(Dream and dream go by so fast,
Still the sweetest is the last.)

If a color yet were wanting,
 One more charm—a tint—a tone—
To fulfill my last enchanting,
'Tis to know'twill soon be flown!
(Dream and dream go by so fast,
Still the sweetest is the last!)

While I hoped for endless pleasure,
Hoped for hours forever sweet;
Fiercely clasped a fading treasure,
Paradise was incomplete.
(Dream and dream go by so fast,
Still the sweetest is the last!)

I, who feel how fleet the minute
Capture it before'tis past;
Finding three-fold rapture in it,
Knowing that it cannot last.
Brighter must be love and laughter,
With black death before and after.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 156.

To-Day; At Early Dawn

To-day at early dawn I heard
The whistle of an early bird.

He whistled loud, he whistled clear,
Willing all the world should hear,
And every cadence seemed to say,
“Good morning to this lovely day!”
The music made my pulses stir.
It was a whistling carpenter!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 157.

Eureka

Written in early youth after devouring Jean Paul's Titan.

Away with the glitter and glimmer of life!

Shall I follow hell-goddesses, pale from the strife

Of ruin and corpses and things without name,

Of marriage-bells tolling out utterless shame?

Shall I sit in the gleam of their scarlet robes

While the wilderness echoes with tempests and sobs?

No! Throw down the banners and bring in the pall,

Let the darkness of death be flung over it all.

They smiled in the front of all battles. They came

Between me and the sabres with faces aflame.

They smiled and sang: Sweetest soul we would win,

And it heated my heart into madness and sin.

O I lie in the meadows; I dream and despair

Of the bare lithe arms and the wild flowing hair.

And I fly to the poppy-beds, longing for rest,

With the light of temptation afire in my breast.

Let me sleep! I have sought inaccessible shrines,

Over the mountains and under the mines.

Through myriad agonies shrinking I pass,

Finding no Lethe-cup of confusions. Alas!

Let me turn from the lithe arms and wild streaming hair,

To the poppies that lie in the luminous air.

So gently upon me their odors shall creep,

I never shall wake, but live always asleep.

I have found it! No hell-goddess beckons me now.

The sound of the waters is gentle and low;

The poppies reach not to the height of my eyes,

Yet the murmur and odor can deafen all cries;

Can dispel all delusions of glances and forms

That drift through red terrors of beauty and storms;

Spread quiet around me and peace in my breast,

And lull me to sleep on the lilies of rest.

The fiery-eyed world seems so dim in the past

That I fancy sweet Death has relieved me at last.
But the dear mother, Nature, smiles back a denial
And I thrill underneath the rare bloom of her smile.
Then shadowy forms of the brute-world arise,
Looking into my covert with opal-hued eyes,
And star faces brighten, and leafy arms wave,
And waterfalls call me from out of my grave.
There is peace in the air, full contentment and peace;
The trees never die, and the streams never cease.
Let me lie in the shadow and dream on the shore
Of the joy that possesseth the earth evermore.
Of pale clinging mosses and delicate flowers,
Gold blossoming vines and gold blossoming stars;
And winds bearing music from tropical seas;
The guerdons of nature, the blessings of peace.

O thou dear mother, Nature, what talent is mine
Which brings me access to thy holiest shrine?
What tone of the soul or of presence have I
To accord with thy song-bursts of pure melody?
And she answers: My darlings I know and accept.
Through eons of ages these plains I have kept
For the ripened and purified ones that I see
Return love for love in full measure to me!

They start in the world with young hearts incomplete,
And worship their idols of clay; till they meet
The fierce tide of revenges and tumults and wars,
Whose foam steameth up between them and the stars.
Then they rise from their altars, and boldly march forth
With the masses who go to enfranchise the earth;
They try to uplift the great standard of Right
With their feeble young wrists,—and they fall in the fight!

Or caught by the whirlwinds of passion, they drive
With the Furies around the fierce maelstroms of life;
They exult in the storm: Death is better than calm!
They follow the phantoms of blood and of flame;
With lurid eyes glowing and white lips that burn,
The lessons of battle and tumult they learn;
Till their souls shrink away from the bitter unrest,

And drop down from the height, and lie cold in the breast.

Then I find them! I take the spent lives in my hands,
I revive them with breezes from warm unknown lands;
I cover the blood-stains defiling the ground
With my deep purple pansies; and heal them of wound
With the juice of my poppies; and sweet quiet lies
And shall lie forever upon the tired eyes.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 158.

Forgotten River

Where some fair forgotten river

Ran so many years ago;
Love took all I had to give her,
Left me by the sighing river,
Years ago;
Laughed and left me, years ago!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 161.

Prayer for Rain

Here to the south are the wild geese going,
South, from the south are the rain-winds blowing,
Lilies thrill in the ground for growing.
Rain, give us rain!

All are singing the self-same ditty;
Come, black clouds, come cover the city;
Cry, clouds, cry with heavenly pity,
Sweet tears of rain.

For the air is sick with the sound of sighing
Over the heads of the children dying,
Listen, Lord, to the children crying;
Rain, give them rain!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 162.

Clink of Hammer

Clink of hammer and clash of saw!
Over the way my neighbor-in-law
 Is building a house of quirks and quirls,
 With a foretop banged like a forward girl's.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 162.

Christmas

The “ghost of Christmas past” has haunted me
Through all the merry music of the day;
Faint, quivering hands upon my spirit play,
As on a time-worn harp! I would be free!

So saying I looked across the surging sea,
And saw, beyond the islands, far away,
A light uprisen, and heard deep voices say:
All strength is born through great extremity.

From dead delights to power would'st thou climb?
Rise, crowned with resolution! Seek no more
The petty pleasures of thy youthful prime,
But cast thy lines upon an ampler shore,

So shalt thou find, when earthly follies flee,
Life's best reward—the joys of poverty!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 163.

End of Love

Golden days of love are over,
“Golden dreams of love and lover.

Now I turn to house and lands,
Undeterred by warning hands;

Undismayed by voices crying:
Can you sing with Love a-dying?

Sing? Ay, can I, songs that soar
Into heaven evermore.

Surely life has other measures,
Ampler and more lasting pleasures.

Yet will foolish poets hold
Love above my lands and gold.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 164.

Fragments

O ye, rich in joy and rich in youth,
We have been long ago;
 But on the meadows where we trod
 Has fallen fatal snow.

 Time's cold translucent mantle hides
 The verdure of the plain,
 And on the whiteness of her breast
 Lie sanguine flowers of pain.

Between the mountains and the sea
 The good physician lies;
Mother and children cry in-vain
For the kindly voice that stilled their pain,
For never, never, never again
 Shall the friendly form arise,
Till the heights are still and the hills are dumb,
 In the hush of the Judgment Day;
Then shall the good physician come,
 And sorrow be banished away.

Caballeros! Black or gold
 As your beards may be;
Here my chosen Knight behold,
Frank and faithful, gay and bold,
Wise enough,—and nine years old!

What's a foe? A man who hates
But never haunts my soul's estates;
A man who curses me—
 but goes!
Heaven! Take my friends and spare my foes.

 Once, the red beauty of blood
 Rushed, an impetuous flood,
 To the signal place.
 Once, it was blushes that came,
 In sudden surges of flame,
 Over my face.

Now, the emotions that rise

Spring from my heart to my eyes,
While the cheek is cold.
And the blossoms of youthful pain
Rise not, nor redden again,
Over brows grown old!

Chattering world, adieu, adieu!
This is my last warning;
I have paid my debts to you,
Paid you scorn for scorning.
From you I forever fly
On silver wings of morning.

O soul that is watching! O soul that despairs
Of any delight or of dawn;
Behold in the East where the yellow sun flares
And the terrible phantom has gone.

Let me leave this wretched people,
Leave their ghastly monuments;
Things that might be better buried
Out of sight! The wind-blown tents,
The pretentious palace, shaken
By the earthquake, or the low
Tile-roofed cottage on the seashore,
Washed by tides in overflow.

O pitiless city! Unholy, accursed!
I beg not for pity. The cloud that has burst,
That floods the fair lowlands and breaks to the sea,
Has never yet humbled the spirit in me.

No one knows how wild the world is,
Who was always sheltered warm;
No one knows how fierce the cold is
Who has never felt the storm.
Friends like frightened sea-birds, fly
Fast before the weather;
Friendship and prosperity
Blow down the wind together.

The wanderer, borne over seas,
Grows weary of watching the foam,

And longs for the village's peace,
The quiet contentment of home.

Despite the glance of bold electric eyes;
Despite delirious kisses, which have pressed
The truth from shrinking lips, I cannot rest
In this ignoble gloom,—I will arise
From base material joys to purer skies.
With spiritual light I must be blessed
Naught else can soothe and satisfy my breast,
Since in all earth delights a demon lies!

Quaint and saucy cyclamen,
Lift your little head again!
All the wild cañada lies
Bare beneath the smiling skies,
And madroños, peeling red,
Tell the world of winter dead.

Whirring insects stop to look
At their shadows in the brook;
When the saucy cyclamen
Lifts her rosy head again.

What manner of men are these?
Tossed in the trough of the seas,
With strange lands lying a-lee;
On a ship without a helm,
The muttering waves must overwhelm,
Singing so merrily?

These are the wisest of all,
Before the storm can fall,
Terror of death at sea;
While the thunder groans aloud,
And lightning leaps from the ragged cloud,
Singing so merrily!

Golden-bearded Hylas, wake!
Nymphs are hidden in the brake,
Wreaths of coral have been wound;
Shall thy manly strength be bound,
And thou, lying cold and white,

Mock with death the nymphs' delight?
Hylas, rise! O rise and flee!
Leave the borders of the sea.
Inland flowers are blossoming
On the bosom of the Spring;
And a faithful maiden waits
At an inland city's gates.

Now the morning glories twine
Paler on their listless vine;
Every bird whose blessings rang,
Brings me now another pang.
Heavenly songs and smile of stars
Enter not your prison bars.

I die without quailing. I owe you no debt
Of foolish bewailing or fonder regret.
O sad cruel city! Your sunlight and sea
Are all that have ever dealt gently with me.

When all youth's fairy lights are out,
Her fitful friendships over;
What lamp henceforth shall shine about
My life?—What faithful lover
Remain to me beyond the hour
Of youthful charms and worldly power?

She may not wear the tulip's dress
Of many-colored loveliness
Or lily's stainless bravery.
Yet give her, in your garden place,
A little space
To blossom and to die.

Here a nameless singer waits
At your shut rose-garden gates,
No lofty dreams nor themes have I.
Yet give me in your heart a place,
A little space,
To sing my song and die.

She sleeps with her face to the south,
With vine leaves her tresses adorning;

With moisture of wine on her mouth,
And kisses of moonlight and morning.

The day is for peace and the night is for dreams.
But peace is too tame for me;
And the dream that I will comes never again.
Listen!—and learn of the sea!

The waters are flung up against the cliff
And slide back over the sand;
But we surely know that their ebb and flow
Are measured by God's own hand.

So billows of trouble that fly at my heart
Will some time glide away;
But in ebb or in flow, I surely know,
God's limits they must obey.

I would fain be young and fair
Ever, ever, ever;
What's the charm? O Sibyl, tell me,
What will keep me fresh and sweet,
What bring lovers to my feet?

Love, my girl, will keep you fair,
Ever, ever, ever;
Love's a charm, renewing beauty,
Love will make you ever sweet,
Love brings lovers to your feet.

No painted and smiling Delilah could lure you,
If in your own soul lay not stuff for the burning;
It needs not a prophet or priest to assure you,
That back from her toils is no hope of returning!

She takes all your life for a passionless pastime,
She vanquishes you with her wild reeling eyes;
And you drink her nepenthe, the first and the last time,
With bitter forebodings, and pleasureless sighs.

The future, that veiled is to mortal,
In clearness of vision shall be
Fore-known to the earth and the sunlight,
To cañon and summit and sea.

Our poor eyes we strain, and see only
An island at farthest; but far
By island and island the endless
Bold fronts of new continents are.

Dead! And I sigh as I say it.
Should not a woman weep?
It is dead, my love, and I lay it
In a grave very dark and deep,
Remembering only to pray it
May never awake from its sleep.

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 165.

Envoi

Leaves I give you, friend, too hastily gathered,
Songs which never felt the breath of the people;
Flung hap hazard over these tinted pages;
Just as they lighted.

Singing softly my youthful recollections;
Singing wildly of happy days departed;
Singing faintly of fast encroaching twilight,
Whims of the moment;

Gaiety grown pale with timorous horror;
Grief grown red with touch of tremulous passions;
Gaunt despair, burnt white in a fiery furnace,
Hot for the anvil;

Songs, with patient care, some, flattered and moulded;
Some thrown off in an hour of reckless revels,
Some which sprang unwittingly to my fingers,
Wherefrom, I know not!

Wise it were, for an unknown poet, doubtless,
Leaves to pluck more carefully for the critics,
Those who minded are to upbraid the singer,
Noting his limits;

If he chance to follow an ancient master,
If he paint impossible truthful pictures.
Is it then in power of immanent genius
Roses to gather,

Out of sullen fields or dustiest highways,
Marsh-flowers, all untainted with stagnant water,
Cactus blooms away from the sandy desert,
Figs upon thistles?

Not the same grow maddening pains and roses!
Pearl of the world, my love, my friend, my comrade
,

Even if drops of heartsblood stain the pages,
Do not betray me!

Yet believe, believe not all I teach thee,
Idler sage, or innocent trustful maiden.
Take the good and eschew ye all the evil.
That will reward me!

Publication. First published in *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887, p. 177.

Bibliography

Selected primary and secondary sources

Book and periodical titles are italicized throughout.

Works by the Author

Hall-Wood, Mary C. F. *Santa Barbara as It Is: Topography, Climate, Resources, and Objects of Interest*. Independent Publishing Company, 1884.

———, writing as Camilla K. von K. *Sea-Leaves*. Independent Print, 1887.

———. “A Cigarette Vagary.” *The Humbler Poets*, edited by Slason Thompson, A. C. McClurg, 1899, p. 421.

Works About the Author

Willard, Frances E., and Mary A. Livermore, editors. “Mary C. F. Wood.” *A Woman of the Century*. 1893, p. 796.

James, George Wharton. *Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on California Literature and Its Spirit*. 1916.

Colophon

Publication and production notes

This critical reading edition was edited by Brian Kim Stefans for The Text-Tech Papers, Los Angeles, in 2026, as part of *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. The poems were reset from the source pages identified in the publication notes and datasheet. The book was composed in EB Garamond on a cream field at 6 × 9 inches. The cover uses original abstract artwork prepared for this edition.