

ANADYOMENE

(FROM ATALANTA IN CALYDON)

WE have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair ; thou art
 goodly, O Love ;

Thy wings make light in the air as the wings of a
 dove.

Thy feet are as winds that divide the stream of the
 sea ;

Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the garment of thee ;
 Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a flame of fire ;
 Before thee the laughter, behind thee the tears of
 desire ;

And twain go forth beside thee, a man with a maid ;
 Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom delight makes
 afraid ;

As the breath in the buds that stir is her bridal breath :
 But Fate is the name of her ; and his name is Death.

For an evil blossom was born
 Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
 Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
 And the seed of it laughter and tears.

And the leaves of it madness and scorn ;
A bitter flower from the bud,
Sprung of the sea without root,
Sprung without graft from the years.

The weft of the world was untorn
That is woven of the day on the night,
The hair of the hours was not white
Nor the raiment of time overworn,
When a wonder, a world's delight,
A perilous goddess was born ;
And the waves of the sea as she came
Clove, and the foam at her feet,
Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
A fleshly blossom, a flame
Filling the heavens with heat
To the cold white ends of the north.

And in air the clamorous birds,
And men upon earth that hear,
Sweet articulate words
Sweetly divided apart,
And in shallow and channel and mere
The rapid and footless herds,
Rejoiced, being foolish of heart.

For all they said upon earth,
She is fair, she is white like a dove,
And the life of the world in her breath

Breathes, and is born at her birth ;
For they knew thee for mother of love,
And knew thee not mother of death.

What hadst thou to do being born,
Mother, when winds were at ease,
As a flower of the springtime of corn,
A flower of the foam of the seas ?
For bitter thou wast from thy birth,
Aphrodite, a mother of strife ;
For before thee some rest was on earth,
A little respite from tears,
A little pleasure of life ;
For life was not then as thou art,
But as one that waxeth in years
Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife ;
Earth had no thorn, and desire
No sting, neither death any dart ;
What hadst thou to do amongst these,
Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,
Thou, sprung of the seed of the seas
As an ear from a seed of corn,
As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,
As a ray shed forth of the morn,
For division of soul and disease,
For a dart and a sting and a thorn ?
What ailed thee then to be born ?

Was there not evil enough,
Mother, and anguish on earth
Born with a man at his birth,
Wastes underfoot, and above
Storm out of heaven, and dearth
Shaken down from the shining thereof,
Wrecks from afar overseas
And peril of shallow and firth,
And tears that spring and increase
In the barren places of mirth,
That thou, having wings as a dove,
Being girt with desire for a girth,
That thou must come after these,
That thou must lay on him love ?

Thou shouldst not so have been born :
But death should have risen with thee,
Mother, and visible fear,
Grief, and the wringing of hands,
And noise of many that mourn ;
The smitten bosom, the knee
Bowed, and in each man's ear
A cry as of perishing lands,
A moan as of people in prison,
A tumult of infinite griefs ;
And thunder of storm on the sands,
And wailing of wives on the shore ;

And under thee newly arisen
Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
Fierce air and violent light ;
Sail rent and sundering oar,
Darkness, and noises of night ;
Clashing of streams in the sea,
Wave against wave as a sword,
Clamour of currents, and foam ;
Rains making ruin on earth,
Winds that wax ravenous and roam
As wolves in a wolfish horde ;
Fruits growing faint in the tree,
And blind things dead in their birth ;
Famine, and blighting of corn,
When thy time was come to be born.

All these we know of ; but thee
Who shall discern or declare ?
In the uttermost ends of the sea
The light of thine eyelids and hair,
The light of thy bosom as fire
Between the wheel of the sun
And the flying flames of the air ?
Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor have pity,
But abide with despair and desire
And the crying of armies undone,
Lamentation of one with another
And breaking of city by city ;

The dividing of friend against friend,
The severing of brother and brother ;
Wilt thou utterly bring to an end ?
Have mercy, mother !

For against all men from of old
Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,
And cast out gods from their places.
These things are spoken of thee.
Strong kings and goodly with gold
Thou hast found out arrows to pierce,
And made their kingdoms and races
As dust and surf of the sea.
All these, overburdened with woes
And with length of their days waxen weak,
Thou slewest ; and sentest moreover
Upon Tyro an evil thing,
Rent hair and a fetter and blows
Making bloody the flower of the cheek,
Though she lay by a god as a lover,
Though fair, and the seed of a king.
For of old, being full of thy fire,
She endured not longer to wear
On her bosom a saffron vest,
On her shoulder an ashwood quiver ;
Being mixed and made one through desire
With Enipeus, and all her hair
Made moist with his mouth, and her breast
Filled full of the foam of the river.