

## OFF SHORE

WHEN the might of the summer  
 Is most on the sea ;  
 When the days overcome her  
 With joy but to be,  
 With rapture of royal enchantment, and sorcery that  
 sets her not free,

But for hours upon hours  
 As a thrall she remains  
 Spell-bound as with flowers  
 And content in their chains,  
 And her loud steeds fret not, and lift not a lock of their  
 deep white manes ;

Then only, far under  
 In the depths of her hold,  
 Some gleam of its wonder  
 Man's eye may behold,  
 Its wild-weed forests of crimson and russet and olive  
 and gold.

## OFF SHORE

Still deeper and dimmer  
And goodlier they glow  
For the eyes of the swimmer  
Who scans them below  
As he crosses the zone of their flowerage that knows not  
of sunshine and snow.

Soft blossomless frondage  
And foliage that gleams  
As to prisoners in bondage  
The light of their dreams,  
The desire of a dawn un beholden, with hope on the  
wings of its beams.

Not as prisoners entombed  
Waxen haggard and wizen,  
But consoled and illumed  
In the depths of their prison  
With delight of the light everlasting and vision of dawn  
on them risen,

From the banks and the beds  
Of the waters divine  
They lift up their heads  
And the flowers of them shine  
Through the splendour of darkness that clothes them,  
Of water that glimmers like wine.

Bright bank over bank  
Making glorious the gloom,  
Soft rank upon rank,  
Strange bloom after bloom,  
They kindle the liquid low twilight, the dusk of the dim  
sea's womb.

Through the subtle and tangible  
Gloom without form,  
Their branches, infrangible  
Ever of storm,  
Spread softer their sprays than the shoots of the wood-  
land when April is warm.

As the flight of the thunder, full  
Charged with its word,  
Dividing the wonderful  
Depths like a bird,  
Speaks wrath and delight to the heart of the night that  
exults to have heard,

So swiftly, though soundless  
In silence's ear,  
Light, winged from the boundless  
Blue depths full of cheer,  
Speaks joy to the heart of the waters that part not before  
him, but hear.

Light, perfect and visible  
Godhead of God,  
God indivisible,  
Lifts but his rod,  
And the shadows are scattered in sunder, and darkness  
is light at his nod.

At the touch of his wand,  
At the nod of his head  
From the spaces beyond  
Where the dawn hath her bed,  
Earth, water, and air are transfigured, and rise as one  
risen from the dead.

He puts forth his hand,  
And the mountains are thrilled  
To the heart as they stand  
In his presence, fulfilled  
With his glory that utters his grace upon earth, and her  
sorrows are stilled.

The moan of her travail  
That groans for the light  
Till dayspring unravel  
The weft of the night,  
At the sound of the strings of the music of morning,  
falls dumb with delight.

He gives forth his word,  
And the word that he saith,  
Ere well it be heard,  
Strikes darkness to death ;  
For the thought of his heart is the sunrise, and dawn  
as the sound of his breath.

And the strength of its pulses  
That passion makes proud  
Confounds and convulses  
The depths of the cloud  
Of the darkness that heaven was engirt with, divided  
and rent as a shroud,

As the veil of the shrine  
Of the temple of old  
When darkness divine  
Over noonday was rolled ;  
So the heart of the night by the pulse of the light is  
convulsed and controlled.

And the sea's heart, groaning  
For glories withdrawn,  
And the waves' mouths, moaning  
All night for the dawn,  
Are uplift as the hearts and the mouths of the singers  
on leaside and lawn.

And the sound of the quiring  
Of all these as one,  
Desired and desiring  
Till dawn's will be done,  
Fills full with delight of them heaven till it burns as the  
heart of the sun.

Till the waves too inherit  
And waters take part  
In the sense of the spirit  
That breathes from his heart,  
And are kindled with music as fire when the lips of the  
morning part,

With music unheard  
In the light of her lips,  
In the life-giving word  
Of the dewfall that drips  
On the grasses of earth, and the wind that enkindles  
the wings of the ships :

White glories of wings  
As of seafaring birds  
That flock from the springs  
Of the sunrise in herds  
With the wind for a herdsman, and hasten or halt at  
the change of his words :

At the watchword's change  
When the wind's note shifts,  
And the skies grow strange,  
And the white squall drifts  
Up sharp from the sea-line, vexing the sea till the low  
cloud lifts.

At the charge of his word  
Bidding pause, bidding haste,  
When the ranks are stirred  
And the lines displaced,  
They scatter as wild swans parting adrift on the wan  
green waste.

At the hush of his word  
In a pause of his breath  
When the waters have heard  
His will that he saith,  
They stand as a flock penned close in its fold for division  
of death.

As a flock by division  
Of death to be thinned,  
As the shades in a vision  
Of spirits that sinned;  
So glimmer their shrouds and their sheetings as clouds  
on the stream of the wind.

But the sun stands fast,  
And the sea burns bright,  
And the flight of them past  
Is no more than the flight  
Of the snow-soft swarm of serene wings poised and afloat  
in the light.

Like flowers upon flowers  
In a festival way  
When hours after hours  
Shed grace on the day,  
White blossomlike butterflies hover and gleam through  
the snows of the spray.

Like snow-coloured petals  
Of blossoms that flee  
From storm that unsettles  
The flower as the tree,  
They flutter, a legion of flowers on the wing, through the  
field of the sea.

Through the furrowless field  
Where the foam-blossoms blow  
And the secrets are sealed  
Of their harvest below  
They float in the path of the sunbeams, as flakes or as  
blossoms of snow.



Till the sea's ways darken,  
And the God, withdrawn,  
Give ear not nor hearken  
If prayer on him fawn,  
And the sun's self seem but a shadow, the noon as a  
ghost of the dawn.

No shadow, but rather  
God, father of song,  
Shew grace to me, Father  
God, loved of me long,  
That I lose not the light of thy face, that my trust in thee  
work me not wrong.

While yet I make forward  
With face toward thee  
Not turned yet in shoreward,  
Be thine upon me ;  
Be thy light on my forehead or ever I turn it again from  
the sea.

As a kiss on my brow  
Be the light of thy grace,  
Be thy glance on me now  
From the pride of thy place :  
As the sign of a sire to a son be the light on my face  
of thy face.

Thou wast father of olden  
Times hailed and adored,  
And the sense of thy golden  
Great harp's monochord  
Was the joy in the soul of the singers that hailed thee  
for master and lord.

Fair father of all  
In thy ways that have trod,  
That have risen at thy call,  
That have thrilled at thy nod,  
Arise, shine, lighten upon me, O sun that we see to be  
God.

As my soul has been dutiful  
Only to thee,  
O God most beautiful,  
Lighten thou me,  
As I swim through the dim long rollers, with eyelids  
uplift from the sea.

Be praised and adored of us  
All in accord,  
Father and lord of us  
Always adored,  
The slayer and the stayer and the harper, the light of  
us all and our lord.

At the sound of thy lyre,  
At the touch of thy rod,  
Air quickens to fire  
By the foot of thee trod,  
The saviour and healer and singer, the living and visible  
God.

The years are before thee  
As shadows of thee,  
As men that adore thee,  
As cloudlets that flee :  
But thou art the God, and thy kingdom is heaven, and  
thy shrine is the sea.