

Thomas Collins et al., ed., The Broadview Anthology of
Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory (Peterborough:
Broadview Press, 1999)

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"Ah, Eros doth not always smite"

Ah, Eros¹ doth not always smite
With cruel, shining dart,
Whose bitter point with sudden might
Rends the unhappy heart—
5 Not thus forever purple-stained,
And sore with steely touch,
Else were its living fountain drained
Too oft and overmuch.

O'er it sometimes the boy will deign
Sweep the shaft's feathered end;
And friendship rises without pain
Where the white plumes descend.

—1893

"Sometimes I do despatch my heart"

Sometimes I do despatch my heart
Among the graves to dwell apart:
On some the tablets are erased,
Some earthquake-tumbled, some defaced,
5 And some that have forgotten lain
A fall of tears makes green again;
And my brave heart can overtread
Her brood of hopes, her infant dead,
And pass with quickened footsteps by
10 The headstone of hoar memory,
Till she hath found
One swelling mound
With just her name writ and *beloved*,
From that she cannot be removed.

—1893

An Apple-Flower

I felt my leaves fall free,
I felt the wind and sun,

¹ the god of love, and son of Aphrodite.

At my heart a honey-bee:
And life was done.

—1893

"Solitary Death, make me thine own"

Solitary Death, make me thine own,
And let us wander the bare fields together;
Yea, thou and I alone,
Roving in unembittered unison forever.

5 I will not harry thy treasure-graves,
I do not ask at thy still hands a lover;
My heart within me craves
To travel till we twain Time's wilderness discover.

To sojourn with thee my soul was bred,
10 And I, the courtly sights of life refusing,
To the wide shadows fled,
And mused upon thee often as I fell a-musing.

Escaped from chaos, thy mother Night,
In her maiden breast a burthen that awed her,
15 By cavern waters white
Drew thee her first-born, her unfathered off-spring,
toward her.

On dewy plats, near twilight dingle,
She oft, to still thee from men's sobs and curses
In thine ears a-tingle,
20 Pours her cool charms, her weird, reviving chaunt
rehearses.

Though mortals menace thee or elude,
And from thy confines break in swift transgression.
Thou for thyself art sued
Of me, I claim thy cloudy purlieus² my possession.

² environs.

25 To a lone freshwater, where the sea
Stirs the silver flux of the reeds and willows,
Come thou, and beckon me
To lie in the lull of the sand-sequestered billows:

Then take the life I have called my own
30 And to the liquid universe deliver;
Loosening my spirit's zone,
Wrap round me as thy limbs the wind, the light,
the river.
—1893

"A curling thread"

A curling thread
Uncoils overhead—
From the chimney-stack
A replenished track
5 Of vapour, in haste
To increase and waste,
Growing wings as it grows
Of amber and rose,
With an upward flight
10 To the frosty light.
Puff on puff
Of the soft breath-stuff,
Till the cloudy fleece
Thickens its feathers; its rounds increase,
15 Mingle and widen, and lose the line
Of their dull confine,
Thinning mote by mote¹
As they upward float,
And by-and-bye
20 Are effaced on the sky.

To evoke,
Like the smoke,
Dower on dower

¹ a speck of dust.

By the power
25 Of our art:
To have part
In the air and the sun,
Till our course be run,
Till the sigh be breathed,
30 Till the wreath be wreathed,
And we disappear,
Leaving heaven clear!
—1893

A Spring Morning By the Sea

I did not take me to the sea,
When the winged morning wakened me
With beamy plumes: I used them right
To bear me in an Eastern flight
5 Of arrowy swiftness to the bed
Where my beloved still slumberèd,
Lying half poet and half child,
The twin divineness reconciled.
And I, who scarce could breathe to see
10 Her spirit in its secrecy
So innocent, drew back in awe
That I should give such creature law;
Then looked and found God standing near,
And to His Rule resigned my Dear.
—1893

Love's Sour Leisure

As a poem in my mind
Thy sweet lineaments are shrined:
From the memory, alas!
Sweetest, sweetest verse will pass;
5 And the fragments I must piece
Lest the fair tradition cease.
There is balmy air I trow
On the uplands of thy brow,