The Cross of Snow

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,
    A gentle face—the face of one long dead—
Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.
Here in this room she died; and soul more white
    Never through martyrdom of fire was led
To its repose; nor can in books be read
The legend of a life more benedight.
There is a mountain in the distant West
    That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
    These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Poems and Other Writings, ed. J.D. McClatchy (New York: Library of America, 2000), 671