

A DREAM IN EARLY SPRING

Now when I sleep the thrush breaks through my dreams
With sharp reminders of the coming day:
After his call, one minute I remain
Unwaked, and on the darkness which is Me
There springs the image of a daffodil,
Growing upon a grassy bank alone,
And seeming with great joy his bell to fill
With drops of golden dew, which on the lawn
He shakes again, where they lie bright and chill.

His head is drooped; the shrouded winds that sing
Bend him which way they will: never on earth
Was there before so beautiful a ghost;
Alas! he had a less than flower-birth,
And like a ghost indeed must shortly glide
From all but the sad cells of memory,
Where he will linger, an imprisoned beam,
Or fallen shadow of the golden world,
Long after this and many another dream.

LITURGY

I

O deliver me, deliver me from my own self,
From treachery, from fear, from hate;
It seems so long that I have been laid up on the shelf
Like a broken cup or a too, too brittle plate;
Take me, O take me; wash me with your beams;
O good Lord, deliver me,
Deliver me from the horror and from the dishonour of my
dreams;
Set me free.

II

At Easter Christ rose up out of the sepulchre and from the
sheet,
From bitterness, from hate, from death;
He rose as an example of the assured, the fleet,
The strong and the possessor and the stainless faith.
Show us, O show us how the earth bore that flight;
O deliver us from this—
From the tumult, the battle, from the axe and from the night;
Gloria in excelsis.

III

Deliver us and exalt us in the teeth of the gale,
From the galleys of time, the loom and from the yarn
Whereof our fear is spun, and from the forge and the flail,
And from the stable, the ship and the barn.

Free us as you have freed the frail sisterhood
Of the windflowers where they spin their white sheaves
In the labyrinths of the forest
And in the lightening of the wood;—
Make us as the leaves,—

IV

Praising and singing when the life and when the peace
Are begun in those nests where the eggs are laid low
And the cocks strut abroad and the rain comes without cease
Making the grass grow:
Acting and desiring as the sower and as the plough
Going forth under the great, bare ribs of the sky;
Give us the life after death, Lord, now, even now,
And the voice to cry:

V

'O deliver me, deliver me, from evil and sin
From scorn, from absence, from hate and from lust
And give me the robe wherewith to come proudly in,
Not weeping with moth, not creeping with rust,
But confident, but splendid,—quicken'd after the shower
Like to a pear tree that is green with all the white:
O Lord, render my heart a fruitful bower
For thy delight.

VI

Deliver me, deliver me; for my flesh is of the stuff
Of labour, of heaviness, of doubt and of care;
 But I have grieved and I have languished
 And O I have been punished enough;
 Why should I despair?
Take me, then, take me from the halter and from the hook,
 Bury my sorrow,
Bury my shadow and my false likeness in the brook;
 Give me to-morrow.

VII

Wherefore, I beseech you that are the beginning and the end,
 Show me thy splendour in the appearance of its shape
And come to me at my calling by the wicket like a friend,
 Giving me the vision which is the only escape;
Not that I may maunder and may wonder and may dream
 But that I may give clothing and food,
Beauty to my descendants and water to my team,
 In the name of all good.'

SNOWDROPS

‘When did you first see snowdrops?’
‘The day that I was born,
With candles by the cradle
And frost upon the lawn,
Icicles on the laurels
And nothing yet begun
Except the march of snowdrops
Behind the winter sun.’

UPSTAIRS

No one can follow me
Upstairs,
Up my shady stairs, my stairs of cedar wood,
My polished stairs
Leading to the attic,
Neighbour to the stars.
No one can follow me
Into my dreams,
My meditations, the refuges which my hunger finds for me:
Holes amid the clouds,
Shelter among the tangled howling winds,
Deserted hearths upon the stoop of the air.
Bits of broken plaster and the blessed skulls of angels,
Lonely forlorn dells amid the water-ways of space,
Wayward bowers in the sunlight.
Freshness, forlornness, solitude, peace,
The roof peaks of aerial cities,
Remote shores where the blazoning ether-waves
Thunder, reverberate everlastingly
Echoing Time.

Here I sit watching, here I lose touch with earth,
And am born again amid the bodiless
Bells, and the shadows where souls are shaken
By eddies and gusts of invisible laughter.

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And here the five senses that have shepherded
 My soul from the cradle,
 And will soon propel her to the grave,
 Turn into five arrows of fire
 Pointing intensely towards the zenith of my hopes, my
 dreams,
 My first-born dreams, my fragile imaginings.
 Here they bid me live as a wire does,
 Stretched out taut against the sea of everlasting air
 Here they bid me ponder.

Now the voice of the city beneath me
 Is blown forth and upward like a naked spire—
 All the cries that are swept out of the sepulchre—
 All the emanations of its human sadness—
 Toil, machinery, domesticity and decay,
 Are made vocal, are composed, and distilled and imprisoned
 Into that one thin shoot of the spiral striking aloft
 And trembling like a form from which the
 Sheets of corruption
 Have been silently and quickly withdrawn.

There it stands, the frail and guilty echo—
 The mortal voice that has discarded its mantle of soot—
 It stands shaking in the amphitheatre of live space,
 Uttering its last long cry of dissolution and despair:
 ‘Comfort, O comfort’ it seems to cry

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‘Earth that is an outcast among the stars of heaven
Vexed close to the heart and foul in her grave—
Her airy grave of wonders,
Her deep bed of seas.
Give rest, give peace and the first pure glimmer of the
planets—
Give tongues, the yellow harps of happiness, and joy, and
harmony,
Give wings, the gay wings of spirit everlastingly dipped
In dappled rivers and in cold ponds
And in spangled orchards.
Give melody, give fire, give youth, give colour
To the strayed sister, to the dying star, to Earth—
Give, give grace to the thirsty.’

‘No one can follow me’
Says the earth,
‘When I have unhooked and disbanded my garments of clay,
When I have put off the loud apparent
Mind and speech of the city,
And have risen in the hot clear, sapphire-coloured air
To address myself to my Author
And to receive my absolution.’

O I can hear it all very clearly—
The Earth-Voice and the other voices of the unknown
stars,

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And the loud, rude bellowing of the gales
 Tearing the ship-shroud to tatters—
Then I am at one with the earth in my wishes,
And the vision which begot all harmonies, which are souls,
Looks at me nearly thro' a pane of glass,
 Looks deep into my crooked abysmal human soul,
Built and plaited like a basket made by the cunning of ages—
It looks, and before I have time to answer,
It is gone and I am alone: lonely as before.

SOPS OF LIGHT

Stop still on the stair,
 (Draw in your breath):
Love is the whole air,
 There is no death:
Set the jug aside
 For beams to fill:
Peace is the housetide;
 Then be still.

Let the window stand
 Open to tree;
Light is the whole land
 And the whole sea:
The clocks in the house chime
 On the day's steep;
But the soul knows no time
 Nor any sleep.