



ANNIE ELIZABETH CHENEY

Collected Poems

DREAMS OF HELLAS AND MAGAZINE VERSE

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

The poet's record, intellectual circle, and posthumous book

No authenticated portrait of Annie Elizabeth Cheney was found in the supplied archive or the public collections searched for this edition. The following nonrepeating plates therefore document her death notice, her husband and intellectual milieu, contemporary notice of her scholarship, the original book, and its reception without mislabeling an unidentified sitter as the poet.

CHENEY. At her residence, No 1913 Ocean View
avenue, Annie Elizabeth Cheney, beloved wife
of William A. Cheney, mother of Harvey D.
Cheney and sister of Mrs. Irving Bruce, a na-
tive of Worcester, Mass

Funeral from chapel of Peck & Chase Co.,
No 1213 South Figueroa street, Saturday, 10
a m : thence to Rosedale Cemetery. Funeral
private.

Death notice for Annie Elizabeth Cheney, Los Angeles, April 1916; it identifies her as the mother of Harvey D. Cheney and notes her private funeral.

WILLIAM ATWELL CHENEY.

Residence, 1048 South Hill Street; office, 645 South Hill Street, Los Angeles. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, February 18, 1848. Son of Benjamin F. and Martha (Whitney) Cheney. Married December, 1872, to Annie E. Skinner. Educated in public schools of Boston and preparatory academy. Admitted to the bar of California,



in Quincy, in 1878, to the District Court, and to the Supreme Court, in Sacramento, in 1879. Elected County Judge of Plumas County, California, in 1878, serving until 1880. Elected to the Senate in 1880, serving until 1883. In partnership with Creed Haymond 1881-82, and with General John Mansfield, 1882-84. Elected Judge of Superior Court of Los Angeles in 1884, serving until 1891, since which date he has been general counsel for the Los Angeles Gas and Electric Corporation. Lecturer on constitutional law in Law Department, University of Southern California, 1904-11. Fellow Academy of Sciences, Southern California. Member of Los Angeles Bar Association. Republican.

William Atwell Cheney, Annie's husband, in a contemporary biographical directory. His legal and philosophical careers formed part of her Los Angeles intellectual milieu.

“Mahayana Buddhism in Japan,” is the title of a most interesting paper in the August *Arena*, by Mrs. Annie Elizabeth Cheney, who has for years been a close student of the Flowery Land and the customs, manners and religions of her people. The impetus given to the study of Oriental religions by the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair has led to much serious investigation along these lines and has dispelled many of the absurd ideas in regard to Eastern religions which have so long gained currency amongst all Western peoples. Mrs. Cheney gives a definition of Nirvana which will be new to many readers, and her thoughtful and sympathetic analysis of Mahayana Buddhism will form a valuable contribution to the literature dealing with Oriental religions.

Contemporary notice of Annie Elizabeth Cheney's "Mahayana Buddhism in Japan," emphasizing her long study of Japanese religion and culture.

DREAMS OF HELLAS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ANNIE ELIZABETH CHENEY



LLOYD PUBLISHING CO.
NEW YORK AND LOS ANGELES
1917

Title page of Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, Lloyd Publishing Company, 1917.

BIOGRAPHY

Annie Elizabeth Cheney: poet, comparative religionist, and philosophical traveler

New England beginnings, 1847–1875

Anna Elizabeth Skinner was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, on December 7, 1847, the daughter of Franklin Skinner and Eliza Greenwood Perry Skinner. Her mother died while Anna was still a girl. On her twenty-fourth birthday, December 7, 1871, she married the Boston-born lawyer William Atwell Cheney in New Haven, Connecticut. Their son Harvey Dunn Cheney was born in North Brookfield, Massachusetts, on January 5, 1873. The family moved west in 1875, beginning the California life that would shape both Cheneys' public identities.

Northern California and Los Angeles, 1875–1892

William practiced in Plumas County, served as district attorney, county judge, and state senator, and later became a Los Angeles Superior Court judge. The family was recorded in Sacramento in 1880 and settled in Los Angeles in the early 1880s. William's legal career and his lifelong work in biology, sociology, psychical research, and speculative philosophy placed Annie in a wide reform and occult-intellectual network. Her own writing did not merely echo her husband's interests: it developed an independent comparative-religious argument grounded in long study of Asian traditions.

Comparative religion and the periodical years, 1892–1903

Cheney entered print through the California metaphysical press. *The New Californian* listed her essays “Hypothesis, Theory, and Fact” (1892) and “The Nirvana of Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism” (1893), followed by the poems “Harp Strings,” “Seraphita,” and “Sappho.” Her essay “Mahayana Buddhism in Japan” appeared in *The Arena* in August 1894; a contemporary notice described her as a long student of the Flower Land, its customs, manners, and religions. *The Arena* printed “Yosemite” that October. In 1898 the *Los Angeles Herald* apologized for omitting her name from a poem in its previous day’s poetry column. A 1903 newspaper notice quoted six lines of her memorial poem on Herbert Spencer.

Travel, late composition, and collaboration, 1904–1916

The poems collected after her death preserve an unusually broad geography: Greece, Egypt, Japan, Korea, Russia, Ireland, the Azores, the Caribbean, California, and Massachusetts. Some travel may have been physical and some literary, but the first-person itinerary and the dated 1915 music poem show that Cheney continued composing late in life. Her philosophical circle included Warren E. Lloyd and David Patterson Hatch; Lloyd Publishing Company eventually issued her poems, and the Cheneys’ shared inquiry into mortality culminated in William’s *Can We Be Sure of Mortality?* Annie died at her Ocean View Avenue home in Los Angeles on April 26, 1916. She was buried at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery beneath the inscription: “There Are No Dead. A Poet, A Philosopher, and a Great Soul.”

The posthumous book, 1917

William Atwell Cheney copyrighted *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* in 1917; the title page names Annie as author and the dedication names William. Lloyd Publishing Company issued the 219-page collection in New York and Los Angeles. Its long mythic sequences—“Dreams of Hellas,” “Phryne,” and “Circe”—surround scores of lyrics, poems of place, Asian and Russian renderings, and philosophical fragments. A *Los Angeles Times* review recognized the book shortly after publication. William, who survived her until 1925, remained a lawyer, judge, university lecturer, and philosophical writer; he was not the author of Annie’s poems.

EDITORIAL METHOD

Copy-text, chronology, lineation, and variants

Scope and order

This edition prints the complete 1917 *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* in the order of its authorial sections, preceded by the surviving magazine verse in chronological order. The book is posthumous but is the only known poetry collection under Cheney's name. Prose is documented in the biography and sources rather than inserted into *Collected Poems*.

Scan authority

The Library of Congress copy is the principal copy-text. Its scan lacks printed pages 68–69; those leaves are supplied from the complete Cornell copy. The text was rebuilt from these original scans, not from the older InDesign PDF or the downloaded Internet Archive transcription. The latter were used only to identify places requiring renewed inspection.

Lineation and typography

Verse lines and clear authorial indents are retained. Hanging continuations caused only by the narrow 1917 page are rejoined for the wider measure. Stanza spaces are preserved. Source italics in subtitles and dedications are retained; book and journal titles in editorial matter are italicized. Em dashes are closed up, while Cheney's eccentric compounds, capitalization, classical names, and deliberate archaisms remain.

Earlier and later versions

“Yosemite” (1894) and “O Vale Yosemite!” (1917) are so extensively reconceived that both are printed. “Harp Strings,” “Seraphita,” and the periodical “Sappho” are recorded as earlier publication evidence for poems or poem-groups in the book; without accessible issue scans, undocumented verbal variants are not invented.

The 1898 attribution

On April 18, 1898, the *Los Angeles Herald* apologized for omitting Cheney’s byline from a poem it called “Lift the Flag Higher” the previous day. The only unsigned poem in the April 17 poetry column is headed “The Cloud of War.” This edition prints it under the source-page title and marks the identification as strong but not certain.

MAGAZINE VERSE

Stage I | Independent appearances, 1894–1903

Yosemite

If thou in dreams hast stood upon some lofty crag,
Whose ragged peaks have torn to shreds the drifting clouds,
And down in wavy depths of amethystine blue
Beheld, like gossamer, a dim enchanted vale,
Where ghostly trees were lost in silver shrouding mist,
With river like a thread of coiling light and fire,
And beauty that was strange and weird as moonlight shade,
Then thou in fantasy hast seen the magic land.

If thou in dreams hast strayed, 'twixt giant walls of rock,
Domed with an arc of sky, and sad and shudd'ring felt
That space was lost, as high above thy bended head
The pendent stars were hung, for thee to count them all;
Then hast thou in thy dreams beheld Yosemite!

Its monumental pines swing their long arms and sing
In low and solemn tones their melody of praise;
The roving river steals among the shrubs of green,
To rest and brood upon the bosom of a lake,
Where trees and clouds and cliffs are kissed by rising suns.

Here midst this shady calm the lofty giants loom
Like carven gods of old, defying still the sharp
Attack of waters mad, which down their rugged sides
In daring anger leap.

Thou lonely mountain vale!
Mysteriously hid in fastnesses of deep
Ravines, and towering trees, and melancholy hills,
Through ages thou hast been a hermitage of gods.

Thy rocks reëchoing the eagle's piercing scream,
Thy buttments sounding back the thunder of the winds,
Thy pinnacles unmoved amid the shifting clouds,
Thy spires and minarets daring the lightning flash,
Thine awful, ponderous dome veiled in translucent mist,
Speak thy divinity. Thou matchless minster grand!
On ambient air, through thy strained light, the soul doth mount
Those heights celestial where thy gray and fading aisles,
Thine onyx-tinted walls, thy mighty parapets,
And thy stupendous nave, fade like a blissful dream,
And God Himself, thine Architect, stands forth revealed.

So standest thou, alone, unmoved, eternal Truth!
Revealed, unveiled to him who scales the heights of mind—
Feeling the fiercest onslaught of our narrow creeds
As but the touch of vultures' wings upon thy crags.

Publication. *The Arena*, vol. 10, no. 5 (October 1894), p. 600.

Textual note. The much shorter 1917 "O Vale Yosemite!" reuses the place and some architectural imagery but is a new poem; both versions are therefore retained.

The Cloud of War

A cloud hangs low and the signs token ill,
The war gods have spoken, the password is “kill,”
And the sons of the fathers impatiently stand,
And wait for the word that the time is at hand.

Here’s the tale of a fool who would play with a gun,
And a tyrant who turns human woe into fun,
And a monarch who weeps and prays loudly for peace,
But bids “Fight! for the proud rule of kings must not cease.”

Publication. *Los Angeles Herald*, April 17, 1898, p. 18; attribution correction, April 18, 1898, p. 4.

Textual note. The correction calls Cheney’s poem “Lift the Flag Higher.” “The Cloud of War” is the only unsigned poem in the preceding day’s poetry column and is printed here with that source-page title; the identification remains inferential.

[On Herbert Spencer]

Immortal! He will time defy
Who hath not where to lay his head.
On some far, fair Olympus high,
He dwells apart, he is not dead;
For virgin truth brought forth a god
Who soars aloft and scorns the sod.

Publication. Quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 1903, p. 20.

Textual note. No title is supplied in the notice; the bracketed descriptive title is editorial.

BOOK ONE | *DREAMS OF HELLAS*

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

Daphnis

Part One

Hellas, mother of Immortals,
Did Zeus with lightning quicken thee,
Or Helios kindle fires within thy breast?
The hem of thy enchanted robe
Is kissed by amorous seas;
Did sly Poseidon steal within thine arms
When rose the impassioned Deep,
Or were thy sons conceived
Through Love descending from the skies,
Or by the rays of iridescent stars?
And were thy daughters nursed upon a breast
Whose milk thou didst secrete from honeyed flowers?

A dreamer dreamed beside the sea,
He pondered wonderingly on man,
And age and death,
The ancient, young, the deep, deep sea,
The sea alive.

Between the dim and distant isles
And upland of the hazy hills
Great Helios lies in couch of gold,
And watches with his sleepy eyes
The soft and ever-changing view,

Designed with tender tints and true
On misty background of the skies.
The limner streams the blue and red,
The amethyst and purple dyes,
Along the water's foamy edge
And up the lofty vault
Of heaven's dusky dome.

Far cities with their minarets
And pale dim seas with phantom ships,
Fair maids with robes of filmy lace,
Grim scenes of war with charging steeds,
Green islands where young lovers dream,
With forests dim where Cupids hide,
All these he paints, while singing winds
Trill music into raptured ears,
And crashing in, and rushing on,
The white-maned valiant ocean steeds
Dash up the sandy beach.

At last the poet slept, while frothy waves
Stole softly over sandalled feet
And fringed with bubbling foam
His clinging robe.
A haze more golden than his hair,
Through whose pure sheen
The drowsy sun sent parting beams,
Fell like a blessing on his form.
Sweet visions of young pleading eyes,
Sea-tinted, changing like the deep,
Entranced his dreaming soul.

The god of Love stole softly by,
While sea-nymphs tangled in his locks
Small shells and dripping moss,
And one—ah one!—bent low and kissed his brow.
O music, beauty, bliss
A song was born to that mad kiss,
And music rolled within his ears
To torture his too happy soul
With still more happiness.

He plunged to gloomy ocean depths
And roamed about in crystal caves.
He rose to lofty mountain peaks
And floated in ethereal space.
He rode upon the rushing stars
And lashed his chariot steeds of suns
Across the trackless sky.

With sudden start the dreamer wakes.
Thou art most charming, Daphnis, and most fair.
Some siren needs must envy thee thine eyes;
Another fain would steal thy yellow hair.
Hellenic maids by ruse alone can win
Such dazzling whiteness as thy skin.
Too fair art thou for virile man,
And yet a man thou surely art;
No sign of weakness can be traced
In thy strong sinewy limbs.
Methinks thou shouldst contest
For honors at Olympic games.
Ah! woman fain might kneel in joy to thee
And sue for love eternally.

“What news?” he said. “Ah, me! I’ve slept,
And yet the rhythmic wheel turns round,
The ancient comes again to light.
Poor fools are we who see no farther
Than our eyes can roam.
To-day is but a slow return
Of some sad, other day
Which has been lived before.

“What cheat is that within the mind
That touches up the old
With powders, paints and dyes,
To call it new?

“And yet, and yet, I know that he
Who views the sea, the sky, and man
Through love’s clear, truthful lens
Perceives a beauty, changing, yet unchanged,
Innumerable in One.

“I know not love this hour,
But what of love, Uranian love!
Desire transcendent in delight
Yet never satiate?
Hast thou not felt the subtle thrill
That steals from virgin hearts to clinging hands,
The magic fire that flashes from the eye
And kindles in another’s breast
A never-dying flame?
To wander in the hazy realm of soul,
To revel in its sweets

And pluck its flowers of thought,
Aye, to explore its depths,
Is losing self in maze of Paradise.

“And Fame, O what of Fame?
A fickle wanton
Is this cherubin of Hell.

“Thou art not dear to me, O Fame
I asked for love, upon my knees
I plead for friendship—thou didst come.
I spurn thee as I ever spurn
The tempter of a struggling god.
I scorn thee as I ever scorn
Seducers of a blushing maid.
What offerest thou in lieu of love?
Show me thy charms, and weigh them now
Against the beauty of a friend.

“When I would grasp thy hands outstretched
I wring mine own in grief.
When I would fold thee in mine arms
Thou- meltest as the tearful snow
Beneath a heavenly kiss.
O, go and stay, forever stay
Beside the soul that longs for thee!
Twine thou the bay about his brows,
And cut his name in marble shafts
Till thy worn chisel breaks.
Announce the centuries with blasts
Of trumpet’s heralding.

Invoke wild thunders to delight
His ears insatiate.
But leave thou me, I called thee not.
I toss my laurels at thy feet,
I bribe thee with my jewelled rings,
I kiss the border of thy robe
And cringing beg of thee, depart!
O leave! and I will pray the gods
To send me one adoring friend.

“And thou, O Muse, come tell to me
The secret of my joy!
What strange afflatus, subtle, strong,
And sweet with perfume dost thou breathe,
That by the magic of thy wile
In face of death I still do smile?
Tell me, O Muse, thy charm!
Dost thou look out from eyes of doves,
Or warble in the throats of larks?
Art thou concealed in misty lace
That trembles near a woman’s heart?
Dost thou go singing on in brooks,
Or clingest thou about the pine
In emerald moss?
Art thou the voice within the wind
That rings along the cloud?
Art thou the spirit of the fire
Which shines in starry space,

Or dost thou thunder from the deep
Which bears upon its restless breast
The heaving, foam-flecked waves?

“And thou, Old Age! O what of thee?
Thou hateful, noisome thing!
That leavest trails of slime along thy path,
And spittest venom at fair youth.
Thou vampire, sucking children’s veins
Thou carrion-bird, gorged with decay!
Thou animated corpse!
That crunchest with thy toothless jaws
A scrap to keep thyself alive;
Touch thou not me!
The heart that loves is ever young.

“O Shade, phantasmal Death
Why lurkest thou in shadowy places dark, unseen,
To breathe thine icy breath on me?
Thou canst not chill a heart that loves

He bared his head unto the storm,
And faced with folded arms
The charging blast.
The lightning wreathed him round and round
In curling tongues of flame;
The thunders, impotent, denounced,
But still he stood unmoved and smiled.
“And Psyche what of thee?” he asked,
For Daphnis heard the singing
Through the garden ringing.
So lifting up his eyes.
He called Adonis from the skies.

“Adonis, speak! what bringest thou?
I long to sleep upon thy breast,

Upon thy heart I beg to rest,
Or waken to thy tender eyes
And dream again of Paradise,
Of streams where white-limbed naiads play
And deck their locks in jewelled spray,

Of breezes wantoning with trees,
And islands born of sapphire seas,
Of stars enticing stars in skies
Whose blue would rival Psyche's eyes,
Of blushing mountains kissed by dawns,
Each redder than her sister morn,
And lovers—how my heart doth beat
Say truly, can love be so sweet,
Celestial, pure, eternal, mine,
Inspiring, like a subtle wine,
Delighting with its smouldering fire,
Desire born gently from desire,
A bird which dreams upon the wing
Or pierces heaven again to sing,
A star that wheels towards passion's goal
To quench its quenchless burning soul,
A song which catches 'mid the calm
The echo of its thrilling charm,
A rhythmic sea enamored yet
Of moons it never can forget?
Speak, speak to me! what bringest thou?
Adonis, speak! and bless me now."

Adonis:

"Immense abyss of blue ethereal gleam,
Wild oceans raging over earth

Are naught to Love
And his eternal dream.
No depth was yet so dark, so deep,
That Love could not explore;
No mountain peak so high, so steep,
But Love hath struggled o'er.
Transcending all he cleaves the sky,
And borne on amber-flaming wings
He dares to live, and scorns to die."

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 11–19.

Psyche

Part Two

“Ourane! Love

With passion bid me melt and tremble,

Fire of suns, nor yet dissemble!

Prostrate to thee I am lying,

For thy blessing ever sighing,

For thy kisses living, dying,

Come, O come!

“With eyes uplifted I implore thee,

Come from thy far starry portal,

Come to me a sad Immortal,

Open wide the jewelled door,

Love me, Love, for evermore!

Nor can I soaring rise to thee

O fly, and flying, fly to me!

“Come with soul forever vernal,

All thy power of love eternal,

Heaving breast divinely young,

Songs within thy heart unsung,

To me, to me O come!

“O cover me in matchless splendor

With thy glances, fiery, tender,

Warmer than her burning blushes

When the smiling Eos flushes

Rosy red with dawn

“Intoxicate and softly woo me,

Love, enamour and pursue me,

Till my heart with thine is throbbing,

Till my breast on thine is sobbing,

Come, Ourane, come

Then Psyche rose, and called aloud to Love:

“O Love, dear Love!

I strained mine eyes

To look beyond the stars,

To search the heavens for thee;
I lay upon the ground
With face upturned,
That I might see thee 'mid the clouds.
If thou hadst cast thy shadow at my feet,
I should have swooned with joy,

O Love, dear Love!

I strained mine eyes
To view the mountain top,
To pierce the misty deep,
And then I scanned my very heart,
My very heart,
Where thee I found."

From bird and bower
Strange voices came,
From fountains and from singing brooks,
From raindrops, pelting dripping leaves,
From grasses breathing secret hopes,
And all in concert sang:

"Within thy soul behold him,
Seest thou the rushing waves
That run mad races on the shore,
And never-dying blooms
On patriots' graves?
Seest thou the sea far down and deep,
The caves of pearl where sirens sleep,
The caverns haunted by strange shapes
That slimy weed in beauty drapes,
And faces sad and pale, with eyes
Still watching for the tide to rise?
Look deeper yet within thy soul,
Around, and down the mystic whole;
Behold volcanoes breathing fire
And suns which scintillate desire;
See stars reflected from above,
And one, the brightest,
Star of Love.

“And wouldst thou know Love’s voice?
Hear, hear the whirring wings of birds
That, cleaving the resistant air,
Are scattering music everywhere,
The warble of the nightingale

That sings unto a star
And calls her mate from far,
Or to the echo as it flies
Back to its mother’s breast and dies.
Ah, listen! Over all thou hearest
Catch thou the purest tone and dearest,
Rising clear and sad and lone.
’Tis thine? Ah, yes. It is his own!”

Psyche:
“Whence comes this stillness
Following softly in the wake of storms?
With fury of the elements
My heart in all its passion raged,
But now like this soft eve
It floats on seas of calm.
Last night, when fiercest fought the clouds,
A passing gust of hurrying wind
Tossed me a message, fleeing as it spake:
’The poet Daphnis loveth thee.’
Ah, yes, ’tis true, ’tis true,
The poet Daphnis loveth me,
The soul of music whom the Muses know.
Clear merry streams laugh happily,
Cool fountains sing with him,
Sweet sea-nymphs, all enamoured, sport,
While goddesses seductively implore.
And Aphrodite—Ah me!—Aphrodite
Smiles and coaxes more.
To me he never yet hath spoken
Yet silently I, too, adore.

“O Daphnis, waves in tides do rise,
And so my soul aspires to thee.
Thou mortal, yet invincible,
More lofty than the skies,
Yet deeper than the deepest sea.
Thou singest and the birds are mute;
Thou smilest, and the sun is dark.

“I hear the dewdrop fall upon the grass,
I see the life-sap flow in quivering leaves,
I feel the earth move when thou passest by.
And pausing thou, my head is bowed,
Laughter is silent, water falls in holy song,
Yet still the weaving of the spider’s web goes on.

“Oft times at night the sun doth shine
 A strange sun
Whose blended light in violet glows
Alone am I in thought with thee;
I cannot rise on pinions golden-tipped,
So thou descendest unto me.

“What matters it if ocean parts?
Can distance sunder loving hearts?
What matters it where he may be?
In mind he ever dwells with me.
Together we may never walk,
Yet ’mid the blue we meet and talk.

“I look into a star, my Love is there;
In silvery lakes I gaze, he smiles at me.

He comes upon the breeze that softly steals
O’er far enchanted mountains to my door;
He sighs among the trees, I hear his voice
In cadence tender where the shadows fall;
His breath is on my cheek when lilies bloom,
His face is cut in flame where embers die.

 Yet where, dear Love,
In all this wide world, where,
 O where art thou?”

The answer came like falling rain,
Upon her heart it fell:
“Lo, everywhere!”

So Psyche strolled among the sleepy shrubs,
To talk to melancholy trees
And waken dreaming birds.
From plant to plant she strayed
And learned a secret here,
A love-tale there,
Or comforted a drooping bud,
And trained a wilful vine.

At last her soul its love did tell
In singing,
Its music through the garden ringing
On to the stars.

“My heart will burst with ecstasy
O Love forgive!
Departed all expectancy,
Now, now I live!

“Waves of rapture rolling o’er me—
Love, I am thine
Sweet Ourane, I implore thee,
Be ever mine

“Ah the music! Ah the feeling!
All, all my heart
Is itself to thee revealing,
Thou, thou a part.

“Doubt has flown on sable pinions,
Faith strong, divine,
Bears me home to her dominions,
Bliss, bliss is mine!

“My heart will burst with ecstasy!
O Love forgive
Departed all expectancy,
Now, now I live!”

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 20–26.

Athos

Part Three

“O Zeus almighty! Thou who canst entwine
A chain of lightning round the form divine
 Of proud Olympus,
Snatch young Athos to thy powerful arms,
Protect him from a woman’s charms
Be still, thou Tempter!
He who soars on reason’s wings
To vast unending space of mind
Must rise alone,
Untrammelled by seducing arms,
Unfettered by the tangling charms
Of woman’s locks,
Unloved by children, who but carry on
The curse of woe.”

For Athos spake in plaintive tone
Grim words which seemed to sigh and moan
Along the quivering, shivering leaves
That rustled ’mid the stately trees
Across the valley and the lea
Of classic Hellas to the sea.

“Beneath the brooding wings of love
Hate lies concealed;
Black shadow sharply cuts across
 The noonday sun;
The ebb-tide follows close upon
 The leaping sea;
From womb of Hope
 Despair is born;
Indifference dances near
 Supreme desire;
But pure tranquility is found
 On that lone height
Where all of nature blends.

“I seek the goal of mind
Where love and hate,
Indifference, passions flame, and hope
Are seen from far,
And through the lucent air of soul
Are merged within the One.”

He ceased, and sadly gazed around.
Was it a voice or did he dream?
Some siren from a distant wood,
A Naiad from a whispering stream,
A soft vibration in the air,
Pathetic like a woman’s prayer,
Had startled him.

“Adonis, loved of Aphrodite!”
Aye, ’twas such a cry
As one would raise about to die.

ATHOS-OLYMPUS

It flew along electric air in very frenzy of despair.
Then prone he lay beneath the moon,
The pitiless, white moon!

Ah! he was young, if one can be,
Who lives and lives eternally,
And he was fair, if men are so,
With eyes as bright
As orbs of night.

“Once more, fair Athens, then will I depart,
I’ll tear from my revolting breast, my heart!”

He struggled to his feet and went
Desirous, vacillating, spent,
Amid the pile of Hellas’ palaces.

Helios arose and over Athens gleamed,
Ah! what cares he for wisdom's lore or maid's virginity?
Upon the evil and the good
Impartially he sheds his beams,
On palace roofs and rushing streams,
Save where the wood conceals their purity.
He listens not to human prayer,
Nor loveth he the young and fair,
But dandles with the locks of age voluptuously.
On haunts of guilt he blandly smiles,
And boldly he himself beguiles
 In dens of infamy.

 Beneath his glaring, scorching rays,
 More searching than a woman's gaze,
 Walked Athos wearily,
 Till, strolling near a palace door,
 He turned, as if to stay were sin,
 But halted once again, ah more
 He went within.

O passion—man
Immortal, but his soul, alas!
Is bound by chains of sense.
Desire intoxicates his blood
And leaps along his nerves
To rule his yielding heart,
And strike his reason blind.
In vain does his aspiring mind
Attempt, as would a captured bird,
To rise to those supernal heights
Where dwell the conquering gods.

 Again, again he dreams of love,
 Of music and sweet summer nights,
 Of Aphrodite and her doves.

But as cold breezes from the North
Bring doom to tender flowers,
So down from ice-peaks of his mind
The frost of logic fell,
And quenched the fire of his desire.

He broke the honeyed, subtle film

ATHOS-OLYMPUS

That held him like a vicious snare,
And spake aloud harsh virile words
 That sprang from soul itself.
“To scale the heights of mind
From passion must I flee.
To stand upon the dizzy crest
Mine eyes must upward gaze.
Truth shivers on the mountain peak,
She is my hope, ’tis she I seek.”

Adonis, shivering, bowed his golden head;
Fair Aphrodite with her doves had fled;
The tearful clouds all rushed in quick alarm
To wrap the sky which lay within the arm
 Of willing earth.
The sun retired to depths of dark,
Nor upward soared the rapturous lark;
In discord music moaned and sighed,
While fascination drooped and died.

The night was dark;
The moon in fright had hid herself,
And startled stars had fled.
Black clouds, in sullen groups,
Had crowded in the gloom,
Until their sap of life, the oozing rain,
Fell spattering to the ground.
The winds in mad battalions shrieked,
And giant oaks fought grimly with the blast.
Fantastic music, struck from Orphic lyre,
Rang past the quivering pines

Which swayed in pantomimic dance
To Delphic rhapsody.
Now fiercer raged the battle 'mid the clouds
That shocked the earth with thunderbolts
And hurled hot balls of fire,
While cutting with sharp knives of sleet
The vanquished and the dead.

Great Athos sat apart;
His flashing eyes gleamed like the double stars,
And when the thunder ceased
Its tragic moan, he spake:
“Ah, how my youth has flown!
Now Truth and I are here alone.
Nay, wait! Yet much I have not found;
So vast is she that when I touch the hem
Of her white robe, her face is lost above,
And when I fly on wings of thought
To spaces 'twixt the stars,
And gaze into her eyes?
Her form hath vanished from my view.

“Shall I go back to earth and worms,” he said,
“Give up my quest and dally with the dead,
Dig up a grave, embrace an old desire,
Play with decay and burn with evil fire?
No, no, forever no
Though heaven's bolts were hurled at me,
Though lightnings blinded me,
Though gods should weep
And demons curse!

ATHOS-OLYMPUS

Put me upon the rack
And twist my tortured limbs,
Pile faggots high
And scorch me in their flames,
Hang me upon a cross
And jeer and spit at me
No, no, forever no

"I stand on that lone height
Where silent stars and I
Hold converse sad.
The clouds are far beneath,
Like breath of mist.
No friend have I save the white moon;
Love could not climb so far;
He shivered and turned back
Unto' the plains below.
Hate comes not here,
Nor proud Ambition;
There are none,
For star-eyed Hope,
And cold Despair have flown.
No bird of song
E'er soars to realms which I have won,
In spaces silent, desolate,
I dwell and brood alone.

"I slew Earth's joy as up I came,
Fair children's eyes
Grew dim beneath my glance,
Sweet flowers were crushed,
And beauty fled dismayed.
Now bleeding, torn,
With thorn-pierced hands,
Indifferent eyes,
Upon this crag where love comes not,
Erect and poised,
I stand alone."

WINTER OLYMPUS

How the dark clouds glower and threaten,
Climbing up and gliding down the mountain peaks
The tyrant Death, in heartless glee,
Holds festivals in palaces of ice on winter nights,
And ghosts of maids, whose roses
He has blasted with a kiss,

Strong youth, stabbed ruthlessly in jealous rage,
Sweet children stolen with the flowers,
All gather there.

When 'twixt the somber curtains hung aloft
The moon peeps out and shivers with the cold,
Aeolus plays upon a harp of many strings,
And one loud discord rolls through depths of space In waves of misery.

Ice! Ice!
Sharp, cutting swords of ice!
Long, jagged knives of ice!
That cleave straight to the marrow-bone
Like ground and burnished steel,
Or tear and hack like metal red with rust.

ATHOS-OLYMPUS

Ice needles, fine and sharp
And stinging like an insect's barb,
Stiletos, piercing tender veins
For drops of scarlet blood,
Cold forms of women, men and children,
Stiff and stark, all, all of ice.
And the snow, an endless main of snow
A sea of pallid faces staring up with glazed eyes
Into the sky,
Great, shivering oaks that strive in vain to die,
Young plants enwrapped in shrouds,
And weary mountains
Crouching 'neath a weight of woe,
And the winds
'Mid snapping branches wrestling,
Moaning 'mong the skeletons of trees
As if Love's heart were breaking.

Near to the mountain top
There stands a pine
That sways and sings
To wail of winter storms.
Though buffeted by savage blasts,
And bent to earth with weight of snow,
Defiant and alone
It flings at Death
A challenge with its long, green arms,
And firmly holds its place
Upon Olympus' noble crest.

Thou Mountain deified,
Olympus, battle-scarred

Through fire thy head
Was reared above the clouds.
Into dim blue thou loomest,
And misty, distant, lone,
Thy brow is lost above!
And Athos, thou
Upon the icy heights of mind
To Reason wed, think on,
While down in dim and verdant vales
The song of earth is sung.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 27–36.

BOOK ONE | *PHRYNE*

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

Phryne

'Tis terrible to live;
'Tis passion, power, to feel and quiver
Till the moon grows warm
From glances of one's eyes;
To wrestle with the shade of thought
Till sunlight turns to glare of ice
To love and hate, to know and understand.
Alas, and I have lived
Here cold and haggard on the verge of death,
All charm departed, a wingless bird,
I still remember mine own beauty,
As though in ivory cut.

Beauty! 'Twas mirrored and flashed back at me
From passion's glittering eyes.
Each day I saw myself in wells of light
More lovely, fairer,
Flushing full-blooded to the heart of him
Who worshipped most,
Yet kissing right and left ambitious lips;
For I was vain.
Oft have I wound my red-gold hair
About the form of one
Who strove, alas! to chisel me in stone.

Ha! ha! Can marble quiver with the wild heart's beat,
Or cheat the world to dreams of life?
Praxiteles!—I laugh
Ambitious, yet defied,
And by a woman's breasts.
To capture Love is but to soil the hands
With dust of butterflies,
To imprison beauty is to strike her blind.
The statue has but sightless eyes.
Yet those were golden days,
And Athens flamed with light.

My hair tossed back the beams
Whence they had come.
So beautiful was I
That blushes found no spot
Whereon to paint me.
Like Eros I was flushed with dawn,
And rosy with the lust of life,
Nor virgin shy, yet modesty looked on
Forgetful of her name.
Ah me! Nor shame nor modesty
Did taunt me then.

How pink the gleaming of my skin,
How fair on that enchanted day,
When naked, save my hair,
A mantle that did here and there
Divide about my arms and panting breast,
Half hiding, half revealing faultless limbs
A shimmering veil about my face,
Through which mine eyes flashed deadly sweet.
On that charmed day
Before the gaze of Athens
And Apelles, the beloved,
I walked into the amorous sea
As passionate as she
Who rose upon the melting foam
And shall I breathe it?
As unearthly fair.
The sun's enraptured stare
Unveiled the ultimate,
And there of beauty was no more
Than it revealed in me.
Phryne! and thou sittest here
Dabbling thy withered limbs
In icy stream of death,
To prate of beauty
While thy straggling locks
Lie scant about thy neck,
Phryne! Ah, that day
When man elected thee as queen,

That golden day!
Who forced the cup of life upon my lips,
A chalice sparkling o'er with rosy blood,
Till drugged with drippings
From Love's bursting veins
I caught the taint of death?
Who forced the cup of life upon my lips?
Ye gods, O pity me!

'Tis sin to grow so cold,
To shrivel like the moon and freeze;
'Tis sin to pant no more with love.
Hesperides! I shrank
When last I yielded to thy mad embrace.
My flesh aglow,
Myself a clod,
My love-lit eyes
Seductive lies,
My smile a hint
Of frozen lips.
Alas, the shock!
I see thee yet
Forgive,
For sake of me—forget.

The fire but smouldered,
And I read my doom.
Loved Attica! O where
Have vanished summer suns?
Who stole mine eyes' hot glances
My lips a wine cup,
Who did dare
To drink the dregs?
My arms, my white arms
Where, O Phryne, fairest
Once among the fair,
Has Eros fled?

Life sleeps with pillowed head
On sterile breast,

While crawls the sluggish snake
In August sun.
Sluggish? Aye, I thrill no more.
Hark to the faint heat of my heart!
Across my knee there lies a wrinkled babe,
Lank-haired and fanged;
His very locks among themselves can move;
A leer is on his lips,
His wicked eyes are old.
When passion's fire burned low
The embers desperately I stirred
And found incarnate evil there.

Once, Phryne, once
Thy blood was warm with solar heat,
The sun once whitened thee like snow
And fondled thy long hair
With fiery finger-tips.
With kisses once
He rouged thy willing cheek,
While twining amorous arms
About thy breasts;
Now rotten, wretched, cursed and old,
His cruel rays
Like vultures pick
The carrion from thy bones.
A frozen monster thou, and cold in heaven's heat,
Debauched, condemned, afraid,
Alone,

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 37–41.

BOOK ONE | MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

The Heart of My Song

O Muse! Rain music in sounds
That falling rebound whence they flew.
O Muse! Send words from above,
The magic-fire language of love,
Catch, catch the Ideal and make it the real!

Lost in the web of spider-like words
That entangle and hold,
Allure and enfold
The heart of my song!
O Muse! Send words from above,
The magic-fire language of love.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 42.

Passion

Passion that tears the stars from the heaven,
That brings up the pearls from the sea,
Fire that burns the dross from the leaven
And thrills with the love of the free!

The bard who yields to flesh his emotion,
Knows naught of the frenzy divine.
The dreamer who ladles the drops from the ocean
Is scorned by the gods and the Nine.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 42.

“Queen of the Broidered Throne”

Winged bird of flame, cleaving the ether,
Up, up, where the doves of Love flutter
For me bear a message, even to Eros
Tenderly utter the passionate plaint of my soul.
Tell him the heart of me breaks with its sighing;
In music—O sing it—flying, aye flying
High to the throne of the Queen.
Gaze in her eyes,
Close, close to her lean,
Dove of the ethers, dove of the skies
A mortal—I love like a God;
My King lieth down on the sod,
And hugs the black breast of the earth.
Queen of mid-sky!
Thrill him through; thrill him through
With passion of you
That he hear me, adore me,—or die.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 43.

Magic

Alas! Alas! Red rapture dies;;
The glow on noon's hot breast must fade.
Sad evening with regretful eyes
Must sit and ponder in the shade.
'Twill vanish soon, my song, my love,
As passes Aphrodite's dove.

Where goes this happiness of mine?
I'd know the deeps of this delight;
This ecstasy that rivals wine
I'd drink and drink, all day, all night.
Where steals this subtle, unsolved bliss,
This joy, this curse, this frown, this kiss?

If dregs of rapture I might madly quaff,
The bitterness, the grief of bliss,
At death thereafter would I mock and laugh,
If once, once only I might taste of this.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 43.

Adonis

I love thee, Phaon!
How I love thee
The ocean tells the moon.
White the cliffs of Leucas,
Deep the sea!
I'd perish in thy beauty,
But death is shy of me.

The laurel thou didst give me,
For love hath taught me song,
And still it sweeps the lyre's strings along Through my soft fingers.
Ah, I love thee!

All my singing I do sing for thee,
Naught for the ages care,

Alone for thine eyes' glances,
Thy sun-fingered hair.
Naught for the Nine or Lesbos,
Only for thee.

White the cliffs of Leucas,
Deep the sea.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 44.

The Gardens of the Hesperides

Oft I dream of vales supernal,
Nectar glistening on the vine,
Shadowy home of Love eternal,
Serpent-guarded, dim, divine.

Oft I sense Elysian roses,
Moon-kissed phantom lilies see.
Ah, the couch where Love reposes
Love whose glance has flashed on me

Love, Hesperides, and rapture!
Love, the singer, Love, the song;
Love with eyes that subtly capture,
The beautiful, the strong.

Peril? Aye, for bliss means danger!
Kiss Hesperides and die,
Or to joy remain a stranger
Golden apples glisten high!

O, to feel Elysian breezes
One more draught of nectar, one
Lest my soul to rapture freezes,
Lest a raven hide the sun.

Die? Ah, yes—to rise in beauty
Die? To wake by Eden's stream!
Where, forgetting heartless duty,
I may live for Love's sweet dream.

Westwind! o'er the Gardens blowing,
Thrilled with fair Hesperides,
Come, O come, my cheeks are glowing!
Westwind! float across the seas.

Waft a flower to me, a stranger,
One rare leaf or petal bring;
What care I for death or danger?
Waft a rose, for I would sing!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 45.

O Music, Love and Light!

O music, love and light! If I should ever
Enjoy their awful charm complete,
If from me they need vanish never,
I then might rest at Beauty's feet.

But ah! The real is only known through sorrow,
The day from darkness leaps alive at dawn;
The yearning of my struggling soul to-morrow
Must sing itself into the fire of morn.

The grip of pain will sometime cease and rapture
Will hurl despair to dungeon depths afar;
Through cloud and mist I yet shall fly and capture
The lovelight of the Morning Star.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 46.

O Think of Me!

In lone, high places, think of me,
Where pines grow rank and earth is fair,
When you on mountain crest are free,
Lo, I am there!

Beside the ever-plaintive sea,
Half buried in the shifting sand,
When weary of the world you flee
From sight of land.

Remember one whose eyes with thine
Have gazed far off across the blue,
To life's divine horizon line
I've looked with you.

The heights and depths are ours forever,
All else may force us far apart,
But naught these vast extremes can sever,
Nor heart from heart.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 47.

The Bird of Paradise

Once, aye once, I tasted rapture,
 Haunting still in dreams to-day,
O to know again, to capture
 Bliss, the bird that flew away!

Come, descend, descend unto me!
 Bird of Paradise, be mine,
For 'twas thou didst once renew me,
 I was thine, Oh I was thine!

On some sunny stream of splendor,
 Come thou Soul of trembling rays!
Come through azure depths and tender,
 As before in happy days.

Flash thy rainbow-tinted singing
 'Cross my sense, entrance, entrance!
To mine ears thy music bringing,
 To mine eyes, thy glance, thy glance.

Once, aye once, I tasted rapture,
 Haunting still in dream to-day,
O to know again, to capture
 Bliss, the bird that flew away

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 48.

Your Eyes—Passion

Your eyes! An instant!

Ah, the spell!

Hereafter they are heaven or hell

To me your eyes!

Blue, profound and infinite,

Aglow with wild desire,

Azure dark with mystery,

Passionate with fire.

Your eyes, alas! have won me,

Nor can I turn and flee,

Nor find on earth some lonely spot

Where your blue, desperate eyes are not.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 49.

Hyacinthus

Apollo sees thy charm, loved boy,
And fascinated, beams;
While dwelling on some vanished joy
The muses, startled from their dreams,
Walk restless by their native streams.

Fair Lesbos, fair, where once long past,
The Tenth Muse struck the quivering lyre,
And all the Nine stood hushed, aghast,
At Sappho's song, that ever higher
Hath upward flown on wings of fire.

Here, Hyacinthine Boy, ablaze!
Thou then didst bind Apollo's hands,
And still mid flowery, perfumed maze,
In Hellas he enraptured stands
Enamoured of these favored lands.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 49.

A Fragment

My tears are for myself alone,
My smiles for those I love
His plumage o'er his wound he spreads,
When pants the injured dove.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 50.

Rhythm

To-night your promise you ignore, and I,
Intense with listening for your wayward feet,
Grow angry, grieved, and stare along the street,
Alive with hope and fear as minutes fly,
Condemning you and loving, too. I see
To-morrow your life's tide will turn, and then
You'll madly long to view my face again,
But O, lost love, you'll look in vain for me

You came not here; you went your wanton way,
Believing me forgiving and most kind,
That my rapt passion must your faults condone.
Ah, Rhythm! The ebb of love is hate; some day
You'll long and search for her you cannot find,
And on life's lonesome trail will walk alone.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 50.

Who Are the Men That Do Things?

The men of brawn or the men of wings
Who are the men that do great things?
Who make our vivid dreams come true?
To whom say we, "It's up to you"?
Who dares the confines called ideal?
Who seizes plans and makes them real?

Who tears the shaft from fertile brain,
To raise in marble high again?
Who fashions, fuses, welds and rears;
Who digs and cleanses, forms and clears?
Who naked, sweats in ditch and well;
Who mines for gold, who laughs at hell?

Does wizardry in reason lie?
Does genius dare and do and die?
Or is it brawn, the lump of clay,
That makes the fight and wins the day?

An Edison were less a god
Were he not brother to the sod.
Yet men of brawn are but a herd,
Till haughty genius speaks the word,
And urges strength to bring to light
The wonder that is out of sight.

Who are the men that do things?
O rank and file, that sweat and swear

O winged minds that cleave the air!
Strike hands and understand, and then
Combine and build the world again.

The ideal yielding like a wife,
To physical demand and life,
Comes down to matter, sinew, bone,
On earth at last to claim its own.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 51.

A Coyote Prowled

A coyote came one night to the sea,
And howled at the waves and howled at me,
And the white-maned monster roared and mumbled
At the dog that prowled and starved and grumbled.
Thin and lank and ruffled and grey,
He stalked and stalked in search of prey,
And snarled and snapped and wailed at fate
That dealt him dust and the dregs of hate.
I gave him a bone and words and sighs,
And he showed me his teeth and he showed me his eyes
And his teeth were clean and strong and white,
And his eyes were fine as a frosty night.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 52.

Textual note. Reprinted posthumously in *Poetry's Plea for Animals* (1927), p. 214.

Even the Rock

The barren rock, 'tis said—ah, no!
Upon its bosom lichens grow;
And lichens nourished by the dew,
May strengthen me and succor you.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 52.

Constant?

O Moon! As constant as art thou am I,
A strange one-sided thief of light like thee.
I give my heart, the fickle soul of me,
And then from all I fain would love, I fly.
Ah, thou returnest, stealing softly nigh
O'er those adored to subtly brood and smile,
Unstinting, lavish, full of transient guile,
A mocking splendor forced to poise on high.

We wax and wane together, come and go
Anon a phantom's shifting glimpse of fire,
Like mask of hallowe'en, or sickle's show,
To thrill with doubtful rapture and desire,
And promise give of glamour's brighter glow,
Ere we to longing, distant loves aspire.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 53.

Smiling

They tell us to smile all the while,
“Keep on smiling, the world beguiling,
Smile, smile, lie and smile.”
But who are they, these imps of wile
That caution us to smile, smile, smile?

I cannot tell a lie,
For smiling when I ought to cry
My conscience I defy;
And yet they say, lie.

I wonder if grim fiends they are
Who laugh by proxy,
And spend their time
Suggesting orthodoxy,
An unctuous hierarchy
Nudging us from astral spaces,
Urging us to court the graces.

If I were Mona Lisa, I'd comply,
But being just a human
I'd rather cry
Than smile and lie.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 53.

Laughing

With the Immortals laughing at us
And the grim world all awry,
I try to pierce the arch above
And gaze into the sky.

I can hear their sharp staccatoes,
For angels laugh aloud,
But they hide behind a rampart
Of grey and sullen cloud.

We play our little game for them,
Old earth is but a stage,
We fume and fret and curse and sweat,
We storm and dance and rage.

We fight and challenge, blind and kill,
And live by rule and text,
And down they gaze on us and thrill,
And breathless wait the next.

And then they laugh, O how they laugh!
Their very souls ashape
With fun of living while they watch
Our game of give and take.

We slay or torture, pray or preach,
And grovel on the clod;
We smirk and sputter, scold and teach,
And implicate our God.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 54.

The West

Wings that are glancing, wings of my soul,
That speeding like arrows fly to their goal;
Wings that have cut the keen ethers above,
O carry me on to the West of my love

The West it is magic, perspective and fire,
Its peaks are like daggers thrust up by desire;
It is Tyre, it is Sidon and Ophir in one,
This land by the waters, this land of the sun.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 55.

O Let Me Sing!

Just one night let me sing to you;
The years are many and long!
One night remembered forever
Through my heavenly gift of song.

I would pour out my soul in music,
With tones that should carry far,
Like the longing bird in the zenith,
Who covets the distant star.

O just one night I would stand, Love,
Beneath your casement alone,
And strike the gamut of living
In rhythm for you, my own!

For the years stretch on into nowhere,
The bird and the star must part;
But for one rare night—O yield, Love,
To the mad, wild song of my heart

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 56.

O Beautiful Boy!

There is often in my dreaming,
Though the vision is but seeming,
A fair Levantine country where the stately stone-pine
grew.
In the spell of dear romancing,
Is Ariadne dancing
Where the restless sea remembers its springtime love of
you.

The ghost of Ischia lying
On the waters that are sighing,
Where Crete is floating dimly on a mystic haze of blue;
And Corfu's swooning splendor,
Makes a rhapsody so tender
That my heart and soul are weeping with tragic thoughts
of you.

Only in a dream I find you,
With the garlands that must bind you
To the happy realm of laughter, the magic Southern
seas,
Lost in some fair land of singing
Where the wind-blown bells are ringing,
And the lyre is struck divinely by fingers of the breeze.

All of spring was woven round you
Where Eros searching found you,
And Diomedes was fruitful in its flowery beds of love;
But Apollo spied you playing
By Eurotas, nor delaying
Struck with deadly aim and malice from his fiery realm
above.

Yet the hyacinth is growing
Where your sacred blood was flowing,
For the bloom is self-revealing, its petals stamped with
woe.
And I forlorn am grieving,
No joy today relieving
The pain of your departing in the ages long ago.

Ah! The stone-pine tells the story,
And the grapes of Hellas glory
In libations poured so freely for Beauty, Spring and
Love
And the wind bells whisper faintly,
Of the Boy so young and saintly,
His virtues purple-tinted like the ringed and tragic dove.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 56–57.

A Broken Wing

A bird flew heavenward, soaring high,
To poise in blue, blue air and sing;
An archer saw it upward fly,
And broke its glorious, fluttering wing.

A Poet rose to spaces lone,
To pour his music from the skies;
Hate aimed and struck where he had flown,
The singer fell no more to rise.

Alas, frail bird with broken wing!
The Poet's hope like thine is dead
No more does genius rise to sing,
The Muse in agony has fled.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 58.

O Sing and Sing More

Sweet lark in high spaces,
To Venus or Mars
Your melody pour,
Along the waste places
Far out to the stars!

Sing beauty and love,
Send harmonies swelling,
To verge of the sky
Around and above,
That music impelling
May fall from on high.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 59.

The Roses

Pluck not the rose but kiss it
Full, full upon the mouth;
'Tis quivering with the rapture
And the glamour of the South.

Bruise not sweet Love with frenzy,
But breathe its perfumed breath;
In tenderness is paradise,
In mad desire is death.

O music turned to witchery
Warm blushes on the flower.
When west winds fan the roses
In Love's entangled bower!

O, wine and fair Adonis!
Aroma on the breeze
That steals from fragrant gardens
Of far Hesperides!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 59.

O Memory!

Dear Heart! I loved you once long since;
Remember, can you not?
That kiss, that rapture quivering joy
We've lost, but ne'er forgot.

Though you are you, and I am I,
We two were one that day,
But ah! the kiss on gauzy wings
Has softly flown away.

A sweetheart once, a stranger now;
In memory still my lover.
The real is fair, but O the dream
Where fluttering kisses hover!

The dream! The dream! Once bliss new-born
Gleamed lambent from your eyes,
While I, disdaining desert earth,
Was lost in paradise.

Yes, I am I, and you are you
Alas, that other day
Eros has flown; but memory, love,
Can never pass away.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 60.

The Scarab

Old, a gem before the Parthenon
Rose like a dream in snow
On rock-ribbed, famed Acropolis;
Or doomed and sad Jerusalem
Re-echoed with a Master's voice.

Old as the pillared halls of Thebes,
And shrivelled, mummied king of Khem,
This scarab, cut, mysterious, clean,
Fresh from antiquity's shrunk hand,
The subtle spell has brought along
Of ancient time and silent land.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 61.

The Lotus—Fancy

Ah! love before had ne'er been spoken,
Nor lover's tragic heart been broken,
Till these soft, azure, lotus eyes
Looked upward to the vaulting skies.

And I, in shimmering, golden fancies,
Have revelled in phantasmal dances
With moonbeams, trembling, timid, fair,
That stole along the silent air
To kiss the lotus o'er and o'er,
And thrill my soul forevermore.

O Fancy! lock the door of day,
Lest love ecstatic pass away.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 61.

“What Is a Friend?”

Near to the brink of some high peak I go,
And watching the dim, fading vale below,
I dumbly wonder: is this then the end?
O speak, my Soul! What is a friend?

Far out at sea the billows melt like dreams,
The ocean gulfs its transient, golden gleams,
As once I lost in dread embrace of night,
A love whose eyes were wells of liquid light.

Is aught secure? On what may I depend?
 speak, my Soul! What is a friend?

Through crowded city streets I stray,
And seek the Lost both night and day.
I search the faces that I pass,
And searching breathe, alas! alas!
What is a friend?

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 62.

Your Friends

Your friends, with eyes like sunsets,
That lean on shadows grey,
And smiles as vague as Buddha's
When Dawn kneels down to Day,
Hang on your dim remembrance,
With pleasure and with gloom,
For lives are bound to lives and lives,
By womb of Earth—the tomb.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 63.

Tones Celestial

March 10, 1915, on hearing the compositions of Count Axel Raoul Wachtmeister.

I have loved pure tones terrestrial,
 Earthly music, virile, strong,
All the gamut of grim matter,
 From bass to lyric song.

I have loved the growl of thunder,
 The boom of mighty seas,
The rattle of the shingle,
 The whimper of the breeze.

I have loved the blare of trumpets,
 The tom-tom, drum and flute,
Barbaric, pagan rhapsodies
 On zither, harp or lute.

Ah! my soul is tuned to frenzy,
 Like pipes of magic Pan,
Ah! my heart leaps wild to singing
 Of primal earth and man.

But now I hear in depths of azure,
 Falling sheer as from on high,
Downward, downward, nearer, nearer,
 A rain of music from the sky.

Grand contraltos, pure sopranos,
 Weird fantasias hurrying fast,
Mighty fugues of earth translated,
 Witching melodies recast.

Hark! 'Tis magic of great spaces!
 Echoes roam and shiver there,
Madly seeking natal places,
 In rapture or despair.

Hymns of ghostly Goths and Vandals,
Trained to sing with morning stars,
Love notes of the Saxon Siren
Calling from the river bars.

Faint stornello flying softly,
Like Aphrodite's dove,
Tonal tints of Southern oceans,
The fluttering wings of Love.

A wizard waves his wand, and lo
Harmonics from on high,
Are caught by flute and harp and lyre,
And flung back to the sky.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 63–64.

Fragment

Thou towerest silent, lone, O Rock! Eternal Truth!
The fiercest onslaughts of our narrow creeds
Are but the touch of vultures' wings
Upon thy crags.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 65.

Forever

To Champa

Once in Greece the gods were busy,
Forming friendships hard and fast;
Then Athena called Artemis:
“Make one friendship that will last;

“One to stand the test of ages,
Distance, helplessness, despair;
One defying rules of sages,
One that’s constant everywhere.

“Whether felt at Himalaya,
Persia, Khem, eternal Rome,
Ancient Troas, grim Parnassus,
High Olympus, here at home.

“Make this friendship in the furnace
Of experience fierce with fire,
Throw in love, awe, adoration,
Tears and laughter, pain, desire.

“Drive these twin-locked souls asunder,
Oceans, sons, put between,
Yet perchance they’ll meet to wonder,
And live again the old-time dream.

“In some tender soft-eyed glory,
Of virgin land or fairy fen,
An ancient, half-forgotten story
Will break love’s rusty chains again.

“Eyes will flash at eyes and kindle,
Embers smouldering into flame;
Hands will clasp with hands in rapture,
Memory calls the ancient name.

“All the mornings, all the evenings,
Hopes and longings centering then,
On this recurring magic union,
When friend with friend shall meet again.

Artemis glanced along her quiver,
Strung taut her fatal bow and strong,
This huntress of the mount and river,
This virgin of the land of Song.

Athene in upper air was waiting,
The aegis round her, stormy, drear,
Her spear the lightning; truth impatient,
Wrung with rapture, stung with fear.

And yet and yet Artemis pondered,
Her splendid being sifting light
As gleams the haunting moon o'er Hellas,
On stream and mountain pass at night.

At last she raised her eyes to heaven,
And caught Athene's commanding glance,
She saw the shadow on her aegis,
The keen-edged glitter of her lance.

"This miracle, this ring-like wonder,
Is forged already, I declare
Nor flash of yours nor threatening thunder,
Can make eternity more fair.

"True friendship is of past and future,
The life behind, the life ahead;
'Tis never born, begun, created,
'Tis never lost; 'tis never dead.

"Beyond the Gods is the Eternal.
Athene begone! Mad boars are free.
Rise, rise to regions more supernal,
And spare the hunter's moon to me."

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 65–66.

A Fair California Day

Like a dream of a dream were the mountains,
Like the mist of a dream was the sea,
And paradise captured the valley,
The vista, the woodland and me.
A day when the earth and the heavens.
The sun, and the glamour-screened moon.
The oak-shadowed etchings, the roses.
The Madre Sierra at noon

Wove a spell that will rival fair Egypt,
The swan-called Damascus, the glow
Of the Alps, or the veiling
Of Chamouni's peaks in the snow.

Sunbeams vying with poppies.
Perspectives of infinite line,
A mezzo-tint stolen from Hellas,
Hauntings of temple and shrine.

I love them forever and ever.
Fair epic and lyric in one.
This land of the mountain and ocean.
This dream of the shadow and sun.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 67.

Peace

Peace conceived mid scenes of plunder.
Caught in mesh from lightning wove.
When the sky to crash of thunder
Flashed the blood-red bolts of Jove

Fathered by the demon Chaos,
Mothered by insane desire.
Kin to passion, blood and frenzy,
Quickened by eternal fire;

Peace that sucked the cloud's red nipple,
Tragedy its grim behest.
Swathed in smoke from field of carnage.
Soothed upon barbaric breast;

Tell me, perfect Peace, O tell me!
Mate art thou some time of one
That clangs the bell of destiny.
And shrouds the living sun?

Then the voice of Peace rang clarion
"Cruel war and I are wed;
We kiss on field of battle
And marry mid the dead."

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 68.

The Wireless

Young Genius gazes rapt on his ideal.
And worships its evasive, subtle charm.
While doubt unveils before his eyes the real.
And strives his muse to humble and alarm.
But he, enamoured of transcendent strings.
That quiver 'cross the singing harps on high.
Defiant to the winds his message flings.
And waits the answer from the pregnant sky.
What need has he for gross material wire.
When vibrant azures to his touch resound.”
Fulfilled at last is his sublime desire;
The secret of ethereal air is found.
And some day I may calmly send afar,
A wireless message to my lucky star.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 69.

A Rhapsody

Immeasurable blue, far-reaching space!
Where in the ether, where, in what place,
Tired with my seeking, tired with my flight.
Shall I rest me this night?
Sirius, color and fire, star of desire,
To music aeonic I've come from afar,
To wander and wander around you, my star

And yet have I flown from the Earth—little Earth,
Where life without hope is despair.
The place of my birth is a clod
Which rushes through space with a sun for its god,
Whose passionate face
Is darkness to you, darkness to you.

With wings of the soul have I come
And followed a dove, the ghost of a dove,
In search of my love.

Speak, speak, is she where the splendor, the glare
Are lost in the azures of space?
A dove! cease your race with a star
And tell me how far must I fly
Ere paradise lie on the breast of the sky?

No note, nor an echo, but silence so sad
That sobbing of grief would make the heart glad;
Deepes ever more deep, height piled upon height,
Day dead at its birth, night buried by night.

Alas in rapture's madness,
There sleeps the germ of sadness;
In womb of ecstasy
Is infant misery.

Old Earth has drawn me back, aye back,
Though I fled from her arms
On the track of a sun,
And followed a dove,
The ghost of a dove,
In search of my love.

How the wind doth tease the leaves
How maliciously it grieves
The cracking branches,
Shaking with its blows and breaking the great trees

How the sea melts into foam,
As if to woo the land and roam
On islands' rounded breast were bliss,
And love and life ebbed in a kiss;
And kissing, how it steals
Some treasure from the fields
Of shining sands

Soul of the winds
Grim spirit of the sea!
Twin brothers, speak to me!
Tell me wherefore is your madness,
Your misery and your gladness?

Have you lost her; have you found her
Is endless blue of space around her;
Or has she subtly vanished,
By heaven's fiat banished
Evermore?

The night broods o'er the deep,
And grief and I with hands together
Upon the strand may walk and weep,
'Mid wintry winds and chilling weather,
While shrouds of deathless beings glisten,
Who float upon the waves and listen
With dull eyes staring at the sky
So vacant, pitiless and high,
A heaven with stars and moon departed,
And rayless to the broken hearted.

I dreamed- 'twas when the crescent lingered on the blue
I dreamed, O Love, I dreamed of you!
Your eyes glanced backward as you passed,
'Twas passion's look, ah me! the last.

Eternity is long again.

But where, O where, mine own, and when,
On what cool, far-off silvery strand,
What tropic, green, enchanted land,
What island, or what emerald sea,
Will you bring rapture unto me?

Black clouds, put out the star
Which glares on me from far;
I would be bridegroom of the moon
And bask in borrowed light.
I hate the lustre of the noon,
I love the shades of night.

Passion burning me like fire,
Freeing from my heart desire
Which leaps to heaven and drinks
The wine of stars, or downward sinks,
And revels there,
With vicious phantoms of despair,
At what eternal, ghastly cost
Am I myself disgraced and lost?

'Twas once I lay beside a placid brook,
Where lilies vain with beauty look,
And watching their reflections gleam,
I lost myself within a dream.
I heard the bended grass that grieves,
Tell plaintive secrets to the leaves;
I saw the field of grain afire
With captured sunbeams, and yet higher
On distant mountain's gleaming crest,
Beheld a black-winged bird at rest.

Would she descend or upward go?
I waited. From the mountain, lo, she soared;
Then noiseless sank and poised
Beside the placid river bank;

Unerring, quickly there she found
The ghastly dead upon the ground;
With carrion gorged, she strove to rise
Endowed with wings, and yet the skies
Were vague, impossible and high,
For fool of lust she could not fly.

I wake and wrench the chains that bind me,
For wanton passion has confined me.
I tear and wrestle with the gyves
That hold me to a thousand lives.
I wring my clenched hands in prayer
To one who dwelleth everywhere;
And like a mist upon the sea,
Comes brooding peace and shelters me.

Melody faint as the sound of the dew
That falls on the roses;
Music that fluttered and flew
With the bird on the wing;
Songs that come sighing over the waste
Where echoes are dying;
Melody, show me your beauty, your color, your form
Conquer the rage, the passion, the storm
Of my heart!

Siren of magic, full-throated lark,
Pour out your music, sing to the dark,
Sing unto death!

Nightingale, torture my ears with delight,
Warble to women all the long night
Passionate dove, rain notes from above
Though Venus should suffer with love

Even in chaos harmonies tremble;
In storm and disaster, sweet notes assemble.
In agony's shriek love's laughter is glad.
Death marshals a chorus; the harps of the sky
Strung true to the pitch of the stars as they fly,
 Are melody mad.

The ghost of the dove will woo me along,
And I 'mid the clouds am thrilling with song.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 70–74.

O Let Me Dream My Dream!

Why crudely break the sun-lit spell
And drag me down from my blue sky,
 To your cold scientific hell
Where visions fade and poets die?
O let me dream my dream!

I've had no joys like yours of yore,
 Nor gems wore I, nor cloth of gold,
Nor fair, far lands have wandered o'er;
 I'm young, I'm young, and you are old.

O let me dream my dream!
 My mystic world alone have I,
Your cruel facts are my despair;
 'Twere better that I droop and die
Than that my hopes lie shattered there.
O let me dream my dream!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 75.

But Alas!

Once into my soul
 Came the peacock shimmer of wings,
That subtle, that flagrant delight
 That flames but to pale in the night,
And dims but to glimmer in flight.
 And drunk with the wine of my madness
I prayed the Eternal to pause
 And time to revel in gladness,
That all my soul's rapture
 Might crystallize then to a gem.
But alas

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 76.

A Cheat

The sea with fingers white and thin,
Takes living jewels from the sand;
With hiss and roar he rakes them in,
And pays in weeds the beggared land.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 76.

Foam

The rock with silent taunt and sneer,
 Stares scornfully across the brine
In strength content; and yet the sea
 With foam and sputter whispers, “Mine.”

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 77.

Isolate

One lonesome ship upon the sea,
One camel on the scorching plain,
One bird in heaven, and I—and I
Am with myself again.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 77.

Efficient, Primitive and More

My hating soul will gangrene, die.
Revolt I must, my heart is sore,
From these most sickening terms I fly.

Tautology is naught indeed
To “cave man,” “mate” and “primal need”
And repetition stands abashed
At tongue-end phrases, glib, rehashed.

Why get we back to herd with brutes,
Unshackle instincts held in leash,
Or prate initial useless strength
To scale the sky and stick and line
To gauge its azure length?

We boast of our efficiency
In one long bluffing breath,
And next of our primeval gifts
Of sex and blood and death.

And when crude man calls loud his mate,
As roars the lion 'cross the sands,
We plug our ears and calmly wait
In guru-pose, with meek limp hands;
For pass, it will, this fakir's God
That kills the Modern with its fist,
Dissolves veneer, displays the raw,
And scrapes and scrubs until the gist
Of life, the bare initiative wrist,
Is pulsing with efficiency,
And cramps and brutal twist
Of idiocy.
Come back, Illusion! Beauty, come!
Wear all your clothes and frills and lace,
Paint out your scars, evolve and grow,
O come with smiling old time grace!

Come, hypnotize and wield your spell,
Till dreams shall once again be true.
Wave but your hand, and all the world
Will kneel again to love and you.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 77–78.

Misery

Come to my arms, O Misery
My heart is sick with sighs.
Great angel o'er me brooding, come!
Fold round me your black wings,
Gaze in my mournful eyes,
O Misery, Misery, come!

To see you fluttering there
Drear, drear, beyond compare,
Is more than I can bear.
There's light of fire in hell;
Break now this awful spell,
Come Misery, Misery, come

A pearl hast thou concealed;
'Tis mine, black Misery, mine!
'Twas tinted by the wine
From my impassioned veins.
Give me the gem, the glory
Of our dark, tragic story.
Misery, Misery, come!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 79.

Forgetting

Long, coiling, fog-swept Lethe,
 Silent, slumbering, free,
I'd drink of thy still waters,
 And lose myself in thee

I'd yield as lyric music
 Yields to the sway of rhyme,
And blend as fading distance
 Forever blends with time.

Forgetting joy and sorrow,
 Sweet Lethe, still and grey,
I'll drink of thee; to-morrow
 Shall banish yesterday.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 79.

The First and Last

I kissed you! 'Twas the first one.

I never shall forget.

The dew was on the rose leaves,

The garden grass was wet.

And tears were in your startled eyes,

And mist fell from the blue;

When all the world was weeping,

I said farewell to you.

I kissed you! 'Twas the last one.

Though lonely years have passed,

The first kiss when the dew fell,

O dearest, was the last!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 80.

O Shining Moon

Why tremble on the surging deep?
O'er me above you softly float,
And yet on breast of ocean sleep,
O Moon! O Moon!

And I in heavenly azure sail,
On, on like you, in sunlight's gleam,
Yet here below, on earth's rough breast
A clod, I kiss the sod and dream.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 81.

Far Land

Far sky, whose zenith bids the sun stand still,
Far land, where serpent crawls and vulture flies,
Where trembling moons have swooned with thrill
Of dead-black, fatal eyes
Far land of amorous joy and flame,
Far land, far land without a name

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 81.

Rubies

Blood fell softly drop by drop,
From quivering wounds of pain,
And rubies grew and multiplied
In this red, gruesome rain.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 81.

Orchestral

I hear the symphonies of harps celestial,
That falling softly on the ear terrestrial,

Lull me to dreams of ecstasy.

I catch the echo of a far voice singing;
Through centuries a hymn is ringing,
As though by Miriam sung triumphantly.

A song comes stealing over years of sighing,
To soothe the heart which otherwise were dying
In dreary throes of agony.

From distant, misty, long-forgotten ages,
The tones of lonely ones, the Sages,
In music flood my life unceasingly.

Ah! never lone, for mystic ones supernal
From out of all the universe eternal
Seek and combine true hearts mysteriously.
Those subtle souls that know not time nor nation,
But in the vast, unlimited creation,
Find me my loved and lost unerringly.

And when in stubborn mood or bitter sorrow
I ponder on the unrevealed to-morrow,
I catch the tones of symphonies celestial,
That falling softly on the ear terrestrial,
Lull me to dreams of ecstasy.
From far off times and climes still softly ringing,
I hear the echo of a voice yet singing
The hymn that Miriam sang triumphantly.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 82.

The Sleep of Brahm

Brahm slept.
Long since the universe of suns
Had passed away as do our dreams,
And like a statue frozen Darkness
Sat upon the throne.
The never-ending sky—
Had rolled upon itself
As doth a scroll,
While gently rose and fell
The rhythmic pulse of God.

Far, far where thought goes not,
Into the distance far
Stole Echo on her naked feet
Through night and endless space,
Alive, alone.
Nay, not alone,
For near her glowing in the dark
As fireflies gleam,
Were living memories
Quivering on the wing,
Dim recollections hovering close,
Enchanted by the passion of her voice,
For Echo sang of love and hate,
Of life and death.
Even the ceaseless drip of tears
That once had fallen on a stone,
An army's solemn tread

Like beat of surf upon the strand,
The mountains' lava speech,
The bittern's cry,
The hiss of fiery tongues
Where yellow snakes of flame
Once shot across the breast
Of new-born suns,
The groans of Stellar Mothers
Bringing forth their young,
The crash and clash

From shock of star on star
Mad in each other's arms,
The thunder of the universe
When skies bombarded skies
That pregnant burst
With lightning storms,
All this is Echo's voice,
While firefly memories
Gleamed and paled.

The blood of tragedy
Dyes red the cheek of youth.
Alas, and they had not forgot!
The eyes of many memories stared
Far down the spaces
Whence flew patient Time,
And gazed on ancient dawns
When Æons born from Æons
Painted bright those morning skies
And on some fated planet
Saw the Immortal—mortal,

Dead—alive,
A winged man
Whose ether plumes
He strove to hide,
A clod—a God.

Brahm dreamed a dream
That once in far off days
He quivered in the aspen's leaves.
And sucked the breast of Earth,
Then burrowed in the ground
A crawling thing,
Till on a summer's morn
He saw the light,
And hot for blood
In jungles roved
A red-tongued beast of prey.

At last he stood erect
A Man,
And climbed upon a cross,
And died.

And while he dreamed
A woman's voice
Rose pure and passionate,
High, high above
The echo paeon of the vanished stars,
And wove upon the soul of Brahm
The magic spell of human love.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 83–85.

The Master

A hermit, silent as a mountain crag,
For years a thinker, dumb;
Then thought in thunder breaks the spell,
And lo, the Master speaks!

Night drugs her victim till he prostrate lies
A breathing puppet in her arms;
But day salutes him with her fawning kiss,
And rousing, drunk with nectar of her lips,
He marries her and lives.

Rest sleepily rocks to and fro,
And suckles Action at her breast,
The Master dreams and dreams and dreams,
Then wakes to level mountains to the plain,
And wrench the continents apart.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 86.

Have I Forgot?

If I am I again and yet again,
Why know I not the wherefore and the when?
If vanished years and friends are ever mine,
Then Memory's shock should thrill like ancient wine.

Thief-like she steals and takes me unaware,
A vision veiled, coquettish, fair.
Insidious Memory, tantalizing, weak,
Thy proof I ask. Speak, Memory, speak!

Reveal the homes where I have grown and dwelt,
The mother soils where I have thought and felt,
The mountain's crest, the inland or the sea
Where other suns have flashed their beams on me.

Around me weave the rainbow-tinted spell
Of love's one ecstasy, and tell
Of one dear face, O let me hear once more
Forgotten music I have heard before
Shock me with rapture, magic, fine,
And haunt with passions rare, divine.
Ah! vaguer than sweet Zephyr's faint good-bye,
Is Memory's answer shading to a sigh;
But Reason, on his icy throne, the Czar,
Hurls logic through the spaces far:

"Set is the black, imperial seal
On buried ages which can none reveal
Save one, the Prophet; he and he alone
From off this sacred tomb may lift the stone.
He feels the mystic, subtle ebb and flow
Of tidal aeons, and can backward go
Till in some ancient time and land he sip
The potent nectar from the rose's lip.

“On vantage point of now he stands,
And gazes far o’er many lands;
Along the centuries casts his glance,
In lightning flash and dizzy trance.
Himself he sees in many, One,
And like the rising, setting sun,

He feels the earth turn east away
To find him young another day.

“The spinning universe whirls round and round,
But poised, alive, he hears the echo sound
Of ancient strains; the Coming Age he sees,
And scents the spices on the unborn breeze.”

Have I forgot?
Prophetic causes! Seeming mocking lies
Cocoons! and big with butterflies.
Your shells are crushed! Concealed effects appear;
The future and the past are here.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 86–87.

Herself

A Naiad gazed into a brook
And spied a vision there;
Each day she came to slyly look,
For it was heavenly fair.

To it she prayed and kisses threw,
She loved it more and more;
Her admiration throve and grew,
For self she did adore,

But knew it not, till one sad morn
She learned the simple truth,
And startled, looked with eyes forlorn
On her reflected youth.

The conscious Naiad—Ah, 'tis true!
Can ne'er herself forget,
But seeks her own sweet face to view,
And blushing, worships yet.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 88.

Hush!—A Fragment

Dead is the Sun on the breast of the West;
In the dark are the slayer and slain.
Hush! Dawn has been born mid the shrouds of the
night,
And the East is a mother again.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 89.

Lone Bird

Around thee heaven, beneath, the sea;
Immensity, thyself and me;
For I on phantom wings have flown
To sing with thee, who sang alone.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 89.

Fragment

From wild Atlantic's rugged shores,
 To calm Pacific's silvery sea,
From Arctic cold to tropic heat,
 There floats the Ensign of the Free.

Float on, if one stripe shall be left yon!
 Float on, if one star but be true!
Float on in your splendor of color,
 Float on in your red, white and blue!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 89.

Seraphita

Seraphitus! Seraphita
In skies far off thou soarest
Toward that which thou adorest.
Thy gleaming hair like waves of light
Against the background of the night
Shines round thee—and thine eyes!—

My sad soul in its fancies
Still catches backward glances,
As higher yet and higher, breathing
Airs of heaven, while softly wreathing
Mystic clouds that veil the sight
From wilder splendors of the night,
Thou risest in the Infinite.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 90.

Textual note. Earlier publication: “Seraphita,” *The New Californian*, vol. 2, no. 12 (June 1893), p. 376; the issue text has not been located for collation.

The Song

A singer wandering over earth,
 Could tarry nowhere long,
But fled to brighter, kinder stars,
 And fleeing left his song.

Alone, the song in restless quest
 Among the race of men,
Is searching vainly for its home>
 The singer's heart again.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 90.

Love, Be Kind!

O Love, be kind, the spell is broken,
And on my heart there falls no token
Of all our burning thoughts unspoken.
 Love, be kind

The vanished bird will come again
And hover over moor and glen
Where once it sang, and then, and then,
 O Love, be kind!

But if farewell thy heart is saying,
Like passing breeze with wild rose playing,
Go thou, nor blast my life with staying!
 O Love, be kind!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 91.

Lovers

The Moon is high, Venus and Jupiter
With bliss entrancing
Upon each other's beams are glancing,
And I—my heart is thine.

Blue heaven, I lift beseeching eyes
And longing gaze on endless skies,
Dim spaces, scintillating fire,
And starry passion, hope, desire,
Ah Love!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 91.

Poise

Midway 'tis calm,
For Hate flew East, and Love flew West;
My heart beats softly in my breast.
Midway 'tis calm.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 92.

Sorrow

O Sorrow,
Love looks down into your eyes
And trembling turns about and flies!
No friend have you, and drear the land
Around, and far the desert sand,
For Death you pray and pray and pray;
He too in scorn has turned away.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 92.

Mona Lisa

Smile on! I hear faint melody,
An echo from far Italy.
Sweet, subtle face of witchery
Smile ever, ever on.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 92.

Red Rose

Red rose, with thorn under cover,
Pierce not the hand of your lover,
 But wrap yourself round with green leaves
Seduce him—O never, O never
The pain of your stabbing, forever
 It grieves, Ah, it grieves

Harlot in red! Scented flame!
 Your petals too fiery for dew,
Paint not your rapt lover with shame
 Caught subtly from you!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 93.

O Rose!

Bliss nestles in your heart, O rose
To depths of pain your thorns belong.
Love pierced is gory tragedy,
Love kissed, immortal song.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 93.

Where?

In heaven? Nay, Elysian music
 Would drown our voices there.
The light would blind our eyes with splendor,
 But where, O dearest, where?

In some fair half-enchanted region
 Where clouds and sunshine blend,
And ice melts under burning kisses,
 I'd speak with thee, my friend.

Or where the skies in mist descending
 Seek solace in the sea,
And happy tones with sad are blending,
 I'd meet and talk with thee.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 93.

A Memory

A face like the early morning,
With never a semblance of care,
And Tantalus eyes of beauty
Shaded by mischievous hair.

Her lips, they were begging my kisses,
Her arms were entrancingly white,
I thought that I had forgotten;
The past is the present to-night.

Mystery, Orphan of Friendship
Far, far 'long the file of the years
I seem to be peering through moonbeams
That gleam with the dew of my tears.

There's a vanishing wing of a sea bird,
A shimmer of silvery spray,
And pebbles—we found them together
Alas! we threw them away.

Blue eyes! Swift time goes ever
Toward the life that is yet to be.
Blue eyes! Their light shines never
On the sheen of the summer sea.

O face like the early morning,
A stranger to sorrow and care,
O Tantalus eyes of beauty
Shaded by mischievous hair!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 94.

Vanished

Vanished—a page from the book of my life,
A leaf torn out by the hand of Fate,
But I learned it well, like a song to sing,
And I ponder still and sadly wait.

For the coming of one who once does come,
For the voice of one who spake before,
Ah, cruel Fate! I stand alone,
And call and call from the ocean shore.

But the sun comes up in the sickly East,
The sun goes down in the blood-red West,
The sea is grieved, and the stars are sad,
And the bird goes home to a lonely nest.

Vanished!—where in the ethers, where
Is the light blown dim by the breath of woe?
O tell me, angels or demons, how
To kindle again the flame aglow!

He went as a star of the dawn goes out
In the light of a summer day,
He went like the clouds; he went like the moon,
He smiled, he sighed, and he stole away.

O Grief, thou bird with a brooding wing,
Thou bird still hovering over my head,
Fly on and away to the cypress grove,
Stay not till my heart is cold and dead!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 95.

To Helen

Ah, do you still remember
The grove in Attica,
The grassy mound,
The rustling leaves, and me?

Oft when your glance is upward cast
I seem to see those other eyes,
So like your own
That once swept longingly
The waste of blue
That sank and melted
In the Ægean sea.

A memory faint and sweet
Brings back a waking dream,
When one, tall, beautiful and white,
A breathing statue by my side,
Spoke calmly of Olympian gods
As we to-day of heaven talk.
O tell me, was it you?

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 96.

Captured

Hast thou beheld the temple, an imprisoned prayer,
Or, listening, heard the statue's ardent sighs?
And beauty captured from the blue, blue air
Hast thou beheld in woman's azure eyes?

The silence throttles the gods of sound,
The calm within its breast the storm conceals,
And matchless language lazily sleeps on
Till rushing speech its heritage reveals.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 97.

Happiness

I thought to find her in elusive dream,
I looked in vain, she was not there.
I plucked a rose by Sharon's sacred stream,
It drooped and seemed no longer fair.

I stared in Love's impassioned sphinx-like eyes,
But smiling Happiness had fled.
Those fatal depths were mystic mocking lies,
And Hope, alas! was withered, dead.

Ah! I had looked away too far, too far,
At phantom islands in the air,
Or some enthralling, fascinating star,
She was not there, she was not there

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 97.

Thy Name?

Before a dank and shadowy secret place
Within my soul or out, I care not which,
I sat one time, and peered into its gloom
Until from cobweb maze and mystery
There stole a cautious unfamiliar thing,
A puzzling aspect that I could not name.
'Twas neither man, nor insect, beast nor bird,
Impalpable, with shifting eyes,
Perchance a snake, and opaline and green.
"Thy name?" said I, "Thy name?"
It turned upon me its peculiar orbs
And glanced askance, then pursed its livid lips
As if to speak.
"Thy name?" Once more said I, "Thy name?"
"Pray, dost thou know me not?"
His voice, a whisper in the dusk,
"Behind a mortal's back full liberty I crave,
And hide-and-seek with human imps I play;
The beast will have me not at all,
To men and devils am I all in all.
Suspicion! Aye, Suspicion is my name."
And slowly back he crawled whence first he came.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 98.

Happiness—Alas!

She came so unexpectedly,
 When I had thought her miles away,
In Venus, Jupiter or Mars.
 I prayed and prayed to her to stay,
But back she flew among the stars,
 So unexpectedly

A willful jade, perverse is she,
 Upon my knees I flattered, plead,
Cajoled, and promised more and more;
 She threw a kiss and wished me dead,
And skyward higher still did soar.
 Perverse is she

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 99.

There's a Boy in the House

There's a boy in the house, I can tell you,
Of that you are surely aware;
His cap lies under the table,
His overcoat under the chair.

His boots are off in the corner,
His playthings scattered about;
Yes, a boy in the house, I assure you,
Of that you've never a doubt.

Forever and ever he's hungry
And crying for something to eat,
So fond of sugar and candy
And honey or anything sweet.

And he's always torn and dirty,
Though I wash him every time
I can catch the little rascal,
This mischievous boy of mine.

And he fights—O I hate to tell it
With the boy that's over the way,
For he comes to me bruised and crying
From his battles every day.

He's an angel, I will acknowledge,
And in life he is sure to win,
But then he has—but a touch of course
Just a touch of original sin.

Yes, a boy in the house, you would know it
By the wrinkles crossing my brow,
By the gray hairs coming from somewhere,
I don't know when nor how.

By the slates and broken pencils,
By my album tattered and torn,
By the jacket minus buttons,
And the muddy shoes half-worn;

By the gun and the bow and arrow,
And the cunning, broken chair,
By the top beneath the table,
And his playthings everywhere.

At night when the house is quiet,
And I rest my weary head,
He comes to me cross and sleepy,
And wants to be put to bed.

Too tired to kiss his mother,
Too tired to walk up-stairs,
Too tired to eat any supper,
Too tired to say his prayers.

And I sing him to sleep in the twilight,
And tuck him up ever so tight,
And brush back the tangled ringlets,
As I kiss my boy good-night.

And I sit and watch by his bed awhile,
And wonder how it would be,
If the little fellow should go away
And never come back to me.

Then I push up the golden masses
That tumble over his brow,
And wonder if any future
Could be as good as now.

Too big to sit in his mother's lap,
 Too big to skip and run,
The day is coming, Mamma,
 Too big for boyish fun;

Too big for his crib and little chair,
 Too big to play with the girls,
Too big for the ruffles round his neck,
 Too big for the baby curls.

He'll be wanting shirts and neckties,
 All the fixings that he can,
To look exactly as he should,
 To look just like a man.

Yes, a boy in the house, I can tell you,
Of that you are surely aware,
His cap lies under the table,
His overcoat under the chair.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 99–101.

Ashes—A Fragment

She crouches by the ashes, gone the fire,
Nor is there ember left or smouldering spark.
Her soul is dead to flutter of desire,
She whispers with the phantoms of the dark.

The ash of love's red heart lies scattered there,
Her heart, no more in pain and joy to beat
The ash is on her long and trailing hair,
That falls neglected to her weary feet.

'Tis greyer than a shrouded winter sky,
Alas, love's cruel, fatal dart!
'Tis paler than the sick who droop and die,
The ash of her impassioned heart.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 102.

Pain—What?

What devil horned or imp of fire
 Shocks the trailing nerves with pain
 Upward, onward to the brain?
What ethereal phantom dire,
Sent from inquisition straight,
Merges into life, like Fate,
To stab and burn and tantalize,
Till, desperate, man in frenzy dies?

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 103.

Harpstrings

A quivering harp, this soul of mine,
All day the songs are played;
Upon the strings of this sad thing
Some harmony is made.
Its chords are struck by phantom hands
Of ghosts of all things known,
And oftentimes mad, wild rhapsody
Is made for me alone.

'Tis like the strung Æolian;
The sobbing wind, the sea,
Are mystic players strange and weird
Upon this harp to me.
Ring on, sing on your melody,
Or shiver with the touch
Of some rough finger on the strings
You fear and love so much.

From out the trees, from out the air,
From briny, weed-fringed shells,
Come phantoms stealing one by one,
And each his story tells
Upon this harp, this quivering,
Shivering harp of mine,
Responsive to the plaintive spell,
O mother Earth, of thine

All days are but the one to-day,
The summer moons may go,
The sky be dark, and on my head
May fall the winter snow.
It matters not, my harp with age
Will sweeter, stronger be,
And on its strings will still be played
The magic songs for me.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 103–104.

Textual note. Earlier publication: “Harp Strings,” *The New Californian*, vol. 2, no. 10 (April 1893), p. 309; the issue text has not been located for collation.

A Fragment

A pilgrim I wander at dawn.
Or rest 'neath the sycamore shade,
My seat is a cushionless stone,
My shelter the branches have made.

I gaze at the sky overhead
Amaze at the glitter afar,
And shivering shrink from the cold
That has polished the light of a star.

A mystery coils at my feet,
I spring at its touch and I thrill;
Alas, in the murk of the dawn
I know not a snake from a rill,

Nor cloud from the mist. In a trance
I plod on my perilous way,
For the future untried and unknown
Has married the night to the day.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 105.

The Whistler

A snatch of music trilling fast,
Then rising high, is flying past;
I catch staccato note on note,
From pipes of Pan they seem to float.

My heart, alas, has throbbed with pain,
But now with rapture bounds again.
From other days have come—O joy!
The songs he whistled once—my boy

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 105.

Beauty

Ambition took the marble block and said,
 "From this shall Beauty's face emerge."
He chiseled on till day had fled
 And tragic Echo sang its dirge.

Then Strength drove stalwart blows and fast
 Athwart the marble's vein;
"Rare Beauty, come—divine at last
 But day had fled again.

Pain dreary-eyed and pale and sore,
 The chisel stole and straight
He wrought the battered marble o'er
 And Beauty came—too late.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 106.

Extremes

I seized my rough companion, Pain,
And faced him straight:
“O Pain, what is your name?”
He answered, “Hate,
Ambition, Grief,
And Wear and Tear without relief
Hunger and Sickness, Age and Care.”

“’Tis false!” I said, “Love is your name,
And Joy and Sympathy and Fame,
And Ecstasy. Within your eyes
Is magic rapture of the wise.”

“Ha, ha!” he sneered, “your head doth ache;
Your heart is bursting, it will break.
Your purse is empty, friends have fled,
The joy you thought alive is dead.”

I smiled in scorn and answered, “No,
The fairest gems are tears of woe.
The pearl from sickness’ breast is born,
And roses blossom near the thorn.
What happiness in ease is there,
Unless ’tis wrenched from you, Despair?
What dear delight in hearthstone warm,
Unless from you it come, O Storm?
What bard to youth hath ever sung,
O Age! like you that once were young,
And where doth Love dare sullen Fate
Save in your deadly shadow, Hate?

“Scoff not! The secret lies in this,
Thy names are wings that fly to bliss.”

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 106.

The Emerald—Immortality

A flake of yellow light,
A bit of azure blue,
Somewhere they met to blend,
And then the Emerald grew.

In emerald depths I gaze,
Beholding two in one;
The calm of cloudless skies,
The passion of the sun.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 107.

The Stars

Ye splendid constellations gemmed with suns,
Fast-rushing over trackless wastes of blue,
What star in distant ethers draws you on?

What awful magnet, in whose dazzling light
The fires of Sirius pale, compels you
Ever in terrific race to seek the goal?

Hot-hearted stars, ecstatic in your passion's haste,
In motion, motionless and calm,
Where go ye? Ah! is Love awaiting there?

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 108.

Success

You say that I have failed;
I ask you then,
By what strange measure
Do you gauge success?
Is it by fame? Then I have lost.
By happiness? I know it not.
By love? The god is blind.

By wealth? My garments hang in rags.
By valiant deeds? No sword have I.
By prospects? Death is on my track.
Look you at me, distressed and sick, in poverty and old,
And yet I dare to tell you, friend,
Success is mine.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 108.

Louise

I loved thee when the sunshine fell
Upon thy shining head;
I love thee still, though moans the pine,
And thou, they say, art dead.

Sad tale of woe! Sweet song of hope
The pine tree moans and sighs,
The shadow on the sunshine falls,
But genius never dies.

If thou art dead, thou still dost live,
The heart can ne'er forget;
Though flown, as flies the shivering bird,
Thy soul is with me yet.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 109.

Fragment

Hark! the breeze,
Pregnant with song frenzy,
Heavy with the scents of tropic seas.

Hark! O listen!
Zephyr woos the yellow poppies,
Kisses nodding buds to waking.
Listen rapturously

Hark! the sighing of the pine
The undying plaint of Time,
Weighted to his shaggy locks with snow.
Hark! the song of woe

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 109.

Each Day

The dawn grows pale
And dies just after birth,
But from its grave
Upon the edge of earth
Will rise again
And gaze across the sea,
As Cupid smiles
And slyly passes me.

The sun descends
From heaven's azure arc,
But from its tomb
Of shadows and the dark
Will flash once more
Across the endless skies,
As love returns
And looks into mine eyes.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 110.

To Sarah Elizabeth Lloyd

The bards were feasting once in Greece,
The sun flashed fire on Attica,
And sifted gold upon the board
Weighed down with fruit from vine and tree.
It was a day Olympian, rare,
And you, I feel, were with us there.

Ah, wine we drank to all the gods,
And poured libations on the ground
To Aphrodite and to Zeus.
I see you faintly, yet afar,
As if upon some other star,
That muse-mad, dancing, happy throng,
Alive with rapture and with song.

Has Mitylene faded, gone?
Or floats it in your realm of dreams?
The vines that trailed upon the ground,
The wine, the oil, the shifting gleams,
The soft Levant,
The breath of Asia, fancies' flights,
The golden days, the silvery nights?
Have you forgot the Sapphic lyre,
Its tone, its ecstasy, its fire?

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. III.

Doom

Are we doomed as the sky is doomed,
 To the lightning and the thunder?
Are we doomed as the beast is doomed,
 To save his life by plunder?

Are we doomed to love and despair,
 To ecstasy, fierce or slow,
To choke in heaven's air
 From the grip and clutch of woe?

Fate! Down, down, down on your knees!
 Go smother your head in the wave!
My doom is adrift on the seas
 And Liberty scorns her grave.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 112.

Near Asia

Back to the heights, O Asia!

Back to the rivers where Kailasa soars,
The Satlej, Indus, Ganges, Tsangbo flow
Down from the Lake of Brahm, whose water pours
In mighty torrents to the sea below.

Back to the source, O Golden East!

The peaks of my soul's Himala

Pierce heaven and melt in blue.

The burning desert of my dreary pain
Is merging into glittering crests anew
That sought, long since, for paradise in vain.

My clear, calm eyes look o'er the path I've trod,
And o'er the rivers where my barque has sailed,
The savage heights I've tried to climb to God,
The valleys where I've dreamed and failed.

I know the West-wind singing still of love,
The distant plateau, poppy-tinted fields,
The trees, the lakes, the nightingale, the dove,
The passion, the despair that nature yields.

At last, the love, the hate, the friend, the foe,
The dear, sweet eyes that laughed and laughed in mine,
The scowling brow, the desert sign, the woe
Of my high destiny, the hair-breadth line
'Twixt life and death I calmly scan,
And poisoning now, myself I see the Man
With bow stretched taut for Mastery.

The puzzling questions of the years are not,
The answer looms, my doubts forgot,
As clear as sunlight after night has flown,
When I was stumbling on by faith alone.

O Asia! The incense and the perfumes come,
The far soft jangle of a thousand bells,
The minaret, the dome, the hum
Of life, the tale it tells

Of jewelled glass and subtle eyes,
Of mystic brothers ancient, wise.
The pageant of the East I see;
My Asia, take me back to thee
Back to thy heart and mind and fate,
 The weary eagle seeks his nest;
Tired on the wing, I cannot wait,
 O Asia, take me home to rest!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 112–114.

BOOK ONE | POEMS OF PLACE

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

Massachusetts

Land of the bramble-bush and thorn,
O hardy land where I was born
The home of ice and sleet and fire,
Of golden-rod and spruce and brier,
Where sunbeams burn into the snow,
And eastern winds on lilies blow,
Where autumn leaves are dipped in dyes
The frost has stolen from the skies,
Where huddled hills hug close together
The shivering woods in stormy weather,
Where white-robed birches straight and clean
Are temple-priests 'mid evergreen,
Land of the clover-field and kine,
From thee I came, and thou art mine
From thee, where clouds sink low and glower
In lightning-tragedy and power;
Where sullen the Atlantic roars
Along the edge of jagged shores,
And dashes treasures high on strands
That dare the wrath of alien lands!
O Mother Mine!
Wan genius nurses at thy breast,
Thy bitter-sweet on fame shall rest,

The great that thou didst wake through pain,
Upon thy heart shall sleep again.
O Mother Mine, I've wandered far,
And followed Fortune's luring star,
Yet ever, ever, I remember
Thy rosy June and grey December,
Thy bramble bush and hidden thorn,
Thou hardy land where I was born

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 115.

California

There are lands where the poppies are golden,
Where the skies are a rapture in blue,
Where the breezes on roses are stealing,
But land of my love, what of you?

There are lands where the birds warble ever,
Where the air is a thrill in the sun,
Where the singer and song sever never,
And beauty and passion are one.

There are lands where the pine and the palm-tree,
The rose and the lily are fair,
Where color is married to music,
But magic—thy magic—O where?

There are lands where the hills silver-crested
Flash far on a foam-glitt'ring sea,
Where Winter weds amorous Summer,
But land of my love, what of thee?

Thy heart like thy poppy is golden,
Thy story is writ in a gleam,
Thy magic like wine it is olden,
And hid in the web of a dream.

When the padre and poet had found thee,
Thy bells with a prophecy tolled,
For duty loved beauty, and round thee
The fabric of romance was rolled.

The vale with the snow peak above her
Through ages in sunlight has lain,
Here art fondles nature, a lover
Forever in shine or in rain.

There is fire where the poppy is dreaming,
And romance in woman's large eyes,
There is splendor where sunbeams are streaming
From the far, lucid vault of thy skies.

And the stars and the moon look in wonder
On thy mountains and ocean and vale,
From azures too tender for thunder,
Too clear for the lightning or gale.

There are lands drunk with summer and beauty,
But none, magic country, like thee
Where the palm and the pine—love and duty
Are friends from the hills to the sea.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 116–117.

The Cliffs of San Juan

Past the cliffs of San Juan enchanted I gaze
Far over the waste till the soft lucent haze
Of the air and the wave dim islands enshroud,
And the wings of my fancy are lost in a cloud.

The ocean majestic defying the sky,
His green-dragon splendor unrivalled and high,
His scales flashing flame, his voice a soft lull,
Caresses Hawaii, his tropic sea-gull.

And farther my sight pierces, certain and keen,
Till the bridge of delight "Arkashima" is seen,
And Hondo and Yezo appear like the morn
With sunrise and softness and dew of the dawn.

And Pacific Sargasso all flotsam and wreck
Like a ravishing serpent entangles the deck,
Of a derelict caught by the folds that entwine
The sails and the hulks of the tramps of the brine.

O the range of my eyes! no limits have they
Astray with the muse on this vast water-way.
Afar in the north, cut and ground, I behold
The diamonds of ice that flashing and cold
Mock curtly my sight with their glamour and spell,
The flame of delight or the prescience of hell.

Great sea of the Seven! the awful, the blue,
The mirror of heaven, away far from you,
Must I draw my rapt fancy, and strive to forget
The cliffs of San Juan that are haunting me yet.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 118.

The Blue Grotto

A blue more subtle than the heaven's gleam,
More azure than the open sea,
No artist yet has dreamed thy dream,
No Tyrian dye has rivaled thee.

Nor easily is beauty bought,
Nor cheap is magic fair as thine
The tints of paradise I've sought
In thee are found, intense, divine.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 119.

Domremy

Oh, the gnarled, wizened shrubs of Domremy
Are telling us yet of Joan,
Her adorers as ardent and many
As when she rode head of her clan.

Not a bird but is valiantly singing
Of her, the courageous, supreme;
Not a bell in the vale but is ringing
Its tale of the Maid and her dream.

The trees where she talked with the Angels,
The blossoms that spring from the sod,
Are harking again for the voices,
And waiting the mandate of God.

And the storms are the crash and the thunder
When she scaled the enemies' crag,
While the foe, in despair, fled from under
The lilies of France on her flag.

Domremy remembers forever,
Nor France, nor Orleans can forget,
Champagne from Lorraine cannot sever;
The flag of Joan flutters yet.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 119.

O Vale Yosemite!

Thy dome imperial, vanishing above,
Thy pinnacles sharp shafts of flame,
Forked lightning flung from thy sheer flanks,
Belligerent scorn upon thy crest
Speak thy Divinity.

With tremolos the singing air
Above, below and everywhere,
Throbs tone on tone, a rhapsody.
Thy spell, thy wizard chanting spell,
Thy snare of light and shade, thy witchery
On me shall brood and brood forevermore.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 120.

Textual note. A substantially different “Yosemite” appeared in *The Arena* in 1894 and is printed in the Magazine Verse section.

The Most Beautiful!

At the Mosque of Sultan Hassan.

Dead beauty? Ah no, yet alive!
Mid the ruin and wreck there survive
The mimbar, the court and the span,
The marvel and grace of the plan,
The holy of holies, designs
Lily-formed, the curves and the lines,
The gigantic sweep of the arches,
Maksoorah, where often there marches
One faithful to prayer.
Dead beauty? Ah no, all the air
Is alive with the thrill of the old,
Exquisite, stupendous and bold.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 121.

The Temple of Minerva

Nor Sabine hills, nor Alban height

Sierra Madre is our own

Nor snare of Italy, but light

Of flaming Southern skies alone

Shall cast the spell, when one shall rear

Minerva's matchless temple here.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 121.

At the Mosque of Mohammed Ali

Its minarets that stab the blue,
Like needles pierce the azure through;
The sharp defiance that can dare
To laugh at Khem in upper air
But foils its citadel sublime,
A challenge to the Nile and time.

Within, desire that melts away
Is caught in mesh of lantern's play,
Or on the alabaster's gleam
Is traced a Saracenic dream.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 122.

The Desert Loth—Iran

Desert Loth! Like metal seething.
I, alas! thy hot air breathing,
Fascinated still am gazing
Where an angry sun is blazing.

Dread remembrance! burning ever,
Haunting vision! fading never,
Void of green or shadow, deadly,
Hue of blood and gleaming redly,
Break, O break this awful spell,
Thou, O dearest Loth, art Hell!

Nay, far out upon thy brink
Uplands misty, purple, pink,
Loom like wavering phantoms high
Iran's mountains touch the sky.

O desert of my soul! is there
Some distant verge, where rosy, fair,
The upland rises soft of view,
And deadly wastes are lost in blue?

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 122.

The Pearl of the Antilles

'Twas long ago a tropic sky
Came down to greet the sea, and I
Saw floating on the shrouded deep
A fog-draped island lost in sleep.
Beneath the mystic, hazy dome
I walked the ship's broad deck alone,
And listened to the tragic sigh
That stole in echoes faintly by.

Off to a phantom shore the breeze
Flew gently—Ah, 'twas long ago!
The mist-draped isle, the midnight seas,
The echoes' sad refrain, the sky,
The lonely deck, far space—and I

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 123.

A Sierra Minster

Those aisles among the trees of, pine,
Those far dim aisles, I see them yet!
The temple where long since I strayed
Amid its columns hoary, great,

Upholding with their giant strength
The Minster's mighty dome of blue.
O mystic haunt of wandering shade!
The sun has left his frescoed arch,
And Time is sleeping on the wing.
Orchestral music gently steals
Upon mine ears from unseen harps,
While rhythmic anthems rise and fall
With sobbing, sougning winds.
Ah! singing voices come from far
And float along these dim, mysterious aisles,
Like echoes from the ages gone.
The place is haunted. Now a priest
Peers round an altar draped with moss;
Another strides with fine and lofty mien
Along the vista of the nave.
While suppliants kneel,
Pale, pleading ghosts
That shudder as they pray.
Thou Minster, 'mid Sierra's snows
Thy lofty height, thy matchless dome,
Thy long perspectives stretching on
In shadowy, narrowing aisles,
Thy mellow light and pregnant calm
Set thee apart
Unrivalled, mystical, alone!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 123–124.

From Lesbos

Sappho

At thy white feet to-day are lovers kneeling,
As they in Mitylene knelt,
To-day thine endless passion fiercely feeling,
As they in Mitylene felt.

'Twas Lesbos only that could bear thee,
Alcaeus' mother and thine own.
The Tenth Muse thou! To whom compare thee?
The Nine have left thee here alone.

Tear out the faded leaf of history,
That tells of love's incarnate bliss,
Enwrap the Parthenon in mystery,
Forget the crowned Acropolis

But thou! From Hellas' shores still ringing
Comes music o'er the Ægean sea,
A spirit to a star is singing,
And raptured tells the world of thee.

Speed on, fleet time! Though pausing never,
Eternity enfolds thee yet!
To music wilt thou hurry ever,
For Sappho thou canst not forget.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 125.

Attica

Blue Dome! that arches high o'er Attica
Blue Dome! I lift mine eyes
Unto thy vastness—satisfied.
Thy clouds, thy moon, thy stars
Blue Dome, o'er Attica—blue Dome
To my enchanted ears comes thundering
An epic's grand refrain,
While echoes on and ever
The Greek's majestic strain.
And to mine eyes a vision
Athena, peerless, strong!
Ionic temples, marble white,
The Porticoes, the Painted Porch,
The five-fold gates,
The virgin goddess, ivory, gold
With griffin and with sphinx,
Medusa on her breast,
A spear within her hand,
The aegis at her feet,
A slimy serpent, subtle, near.
Overwhelmed, I close my wondering eyes,
But wake again at Memory's thrill.
Behold Ceramicus! sculptured, sublime,
And high above Acropolis, the bronze Colossus deified.
Minerva flashing helmet plumes,
The Hill of Mars! an owl, a tomb
And while entranced I onward gaze
Across this spectral, classic land,

I hear the clash at Marathon, Salamis and Thermopylae,
And shuddering, watch the ancient great
That slowly, slowly, pass me by.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 126.

In Thessaly

In Thessaly still are the bright-sandaled Muses
Haunting the mountain, plucking the bay leaves,
Weaving the garlands;
But where is the singer,
Where is the song?

Soft comes the breeze from afar North,
Wafting the breath of the roses,
Floating by Pelion, Ossa caressing,
Soft like a spell.

Droop must the roses,
The poet has flown;
And the Muses despairing
Wander alone.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 127.

Kailasa

Thou Terrible, the Mount Meru!
A “lotus pistil” in the blue.
The Hindu thy far crest adores
That like a gleaming symbol soars,

Or humble in thy shadow lies,
And trembling lies, or trembling dies.
The lips of thy mysterious cave
The Satlej and the Indus lave,
While down thy massive deep-gorged flanks,
Between their sinuous, fickle banks,
A Ganges or a Tsangbo steals
And daringly thy wealth reveals.
Near by, where float through countless dawns
A flock of spotless sacred swans,
A jewel lake lies blue and calm,
Created by the breath of Brahm.
Kailasa, one, unsealed, sublime,
Death-scorning, thou repellst time
From thy scarped breast the sacred Four
Rush on to unplumbed depths, and pour
Into the vast, dread human sea
The myriad treasures born of thee.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 127.

Aspasia—Meletus

She was Greek, and claiming this
I'm singing you a song of Hellas' azure skies,
And moons that gazed on sister moons
In opal seas.

She was Greek, and stately with long draperies,
A noble breast, imperial brows,
She swept Hellenic shores with splendid eyes,
Where genius half-concealed and thinly veiled

Stole glances at great Pericles.
Ah, Pericles, thou wast undone
Upon thy soul she softly fell
As dew upon the branching oak.

Did she conceal beneath her drooping sleeves
With tender heart of Pericles
The throbbing heart of Greece?
Did she entangle in Hellenic hair
 The sunbeams of her native skies,
And hide 'mid witching Grecian folds
 Sweet Loves with dangerous eyes?

Fair Phantom of the Classic Past!
Among the groves of Attica
Dost thou, unseen and sad,
Gaze wistfully on Hellas' ruined pile?
Or are transcendent memories of ancient palmy days
Still haunting thee
As thou dost haunt the magic Helicon?

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 128.

The Taj Mehal

O Beauty!

Soft sighs the wind within the echoing turrets of the
Taj.

What fair, unearthly, dim mirage
On the horizon matches thee,
Or what rare dream of ecstasy
Is like thy moonlit magic, O Mehal!

Majestic, lone,
Time brushes thee with feathery wing,
While flying past the ages sing
Of life, nor can the years forget,
But chant of love eternal yet.
The heart of Mogul merged itself in thee,
Tribute divine to memory
The Saracen yet calls unto his own,
Where swells thy perfect, gleaming dome.
The mind that glitters on and will not die
Still dwells in marble under India's sky.

In sadness oft I steal away to weep,
When rises in my soul, though buried deep,
A vision of this magic, peerless tomb,
Where laughing gems defy the shadow's gloom;
Where golden memories perfumed by the breeze
Come floating in from somber cypress trees.
A tomb to Love! Transcendent irony
As if a passion so divine could die!

Beyond the Jumna rolls,
To-day and yesterday a mystery,
To-morrow still the same. While Fate stalks on
Weighed down with written scrolls,
Still unconcerned and young
The Jumna rolls and rolls.

Ah! I have prayed and yearned
That life's deep river might flow on like thee
From crystal source to sapphire sea,
Young, changeless, unconcerned,

Although a tomb should send its minarets
Straight to the sky, or mighty parapets
And mystic dome resound
With phantom singing and the ghost of sound.

Am I eternal? Am I wise?
Then let the skull have gems for eyes
Am I imperial—aye, a god?
Then let the buried spurn the sod
Fair Moomtaj, speak! Did Love depart?
Illusion, is its name the heart?
Or is the god where Jumna flows,
Where still the breeze through cypress blows,
Where flash the jewels, gleam on gleam,
Of fair Mehal, the lover's dream?

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 129–130.

I Have Been Under Irish Skies

When the slant rain fell on the sod,
Like the silver threads of a wind-swept harp
Strung loose by the hand of God.

I have been under Irish Skies
As clear as the Shannon stream,
As blue as a colleen's eyes
That flash like the water's gleam.

O, the Irish Skies are grey or fair
As the breeze-tossed Irish Sea!
O, the Irish soul has cast its spell
On the Irish land and me!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 131.

Among the Azores

Down came the sky everywhere
To the rim of the ocean, and there
Blinked Fayal, Moorish and old
Like tapestry sprinkled with gold.

And Pico bit into the cloud
That wrapped him about in a shroud,
A frenzy of shades faded dim,
A fantasy tuned to a hymn.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 132.

The Mediterranean

I shall never forget, but cherish,
Though the stone-pines cease to be,
Though the grapes of Ischia perish,
And dry is the matchless sea.

O, Khem, I shall ever feel you!
Though the reeds and date-palm go,
Though the Libyan Sands conceal you,
And the Nile shall cease to flow.

For my soul in giving holds you,
As harmony clings to time,
And memory's scroll enfolds you
As melody wraps a rhyme.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 132.

The Euphrates

The Vale of Arm drenched in light.
Hugged close to milk and honey breasts,
The huge, bold gem of Babylon,
The sun sailed high Medusa-mad;
It scorched the rocks and distant plains,
And sent its tongues of flame
To lick the luscious river dry.
Along the banks seared mounds of earth
Threw off malignant heat
That burned the eyes of men,
And made them dizzy, amorous, drunk
With poisoned lust of life.

Meandering here and there a lazy snake,
Euphrates, sick, careened its neck,
While spurting fire from jewelled scales
That dared the jealous source of life,
And flaunted sneers at burning hell.
It clung to temples, columns, trees,
Where Bel shot up from pyramidal base,
And walls of chiselled brick
Or gates of gleaming brass
Defied the ramparts of the Syrian hills.

From somewhere in the Taurus peaks it sprang,
Its river-soul like winking dawn,
As crystal-clear as morning air,
Then down and down and down it came

To Vale of Anu. Ah!
Aflame with love of life, in splendid heat,
On Mesopotamia's breast it flowed,
And carnal things, the rank, the good,
Leaped forth and closed it in,
While man with eyes bequeathed by Eve,
Adored the waters gushing rich
With seeds and bloom and fruit.

The Moon, alas! when full of ravished light,
Still longs and strives for more,

And staggering as she climbs the sky,
In greed of getting, giving all,
Spills beams in careless waste
On mountain, valley, sea.
A concubine of artful fate,
Yet roaming free with men and gods,
And drinking glances from their eyes,
The Woman-soul of Babylon,
Once soaring mid the purple heights
Like moons and moons went glamour-mad,
And down to Vale of Anu came,
And rich with getting, gave up all:

Her soul, Euphrates' own;
Her ears, Euphrates' shells that sang;
Her hair, the plaything of Euphrates' breath;
Her eyes, the mirrors of Euphrates' dreams.
The hanging gardens, panting air,
The darts and quivers of its heat,
The shivering dawn, the clouds, the night,

The ecstasies and pangs of birth,
The rigors and extremes of death,
Euphrates knew. And she?
All Babylon was in her eyes,
All evil and all good.

A harlot of supreme unrest,
A temple-virgin without stain,
Prolific as the Tigris' banks,
As barren as the desert sands,
She fawned on earth with eyes afire
Till Death was warmed to virile life
And life lay swooning, trembling, dead.
She was the pearl made flawless by the flaw,
The ruby born of blood and pain,
The sunset opal on horizon's rim,
The diamond in the meteor's heart,
Life's river on the desert's brim.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 133–134.

A Kiss

In Ghilan and Mazandaran
Caucasia's lips to Iran's cling;
Afire with unspent melody
The poet's soul must deathless sing.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 135.

BOOK ONE | OLD CATHAY

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

Chang Tzu

O Chang Tzu! remember the spice on the breeze,
The sandalwood fragrance from over the seas,
The ruler in yellowy Confucius, the seer,
The passion of Hui Tzu, the glamour, the cheer
When Hanchih was played in the wilds of Tung-ting
The maddest of music on rhapsody's string.

Remember the yin and remember the yang,
The wind and the rain, the darkness, the light,
Remember high Sung, remember great Tang,
Mount Ming in the North, the distance, the night.
O forget not the pipe, the reed and the flute,
The singer that sang, the bard that was mute
Forget not the cords that were knotted, and then
Remember the women, remember the men.

O Chang Tzu come back to your yellow Cathay
Come back with your riddles and show us "the way"
From the vastness of nowhere, O somewhere appear
Come home to your people who wait for you here

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 136.

'Twas in the Days of Sanghu

Where keen Yin cuts the heights,
Where the moon smiles o'er Liao,
On the waning summer nights,
Where the temple ceases climbing
And yields its site to none,
That you walked in magic sandals,
And dreamed your dream alone.

Softly backward go you floating,
Like a sampan with the tide,
To the music of the ages
With the symphonies you glide
Into visions clear, imperial,
Mystic subtleties sublime,
The Yin and Yang, the earth and sky,
Eternity and time.

Ah! has the dream come over
From the mighty Kingan snows?
Does it cling upon the aeons,
A perfumed, deathless rose?
And the sparkle of Liao
Are the diamonds flashing still?
And the gold and silver emblems
In the temple on the hill?

O look through glass of glamour
To the summit and the moon,
To the ancient and the holy
Of the morning and the noon
For Tao you are searching,
Once known by young Hei Wy,
The Tao of the streams and Ping,
The Tao of the sky.

Of the Great Bear and Kanpi
That uplifted Kuen-Lun,
The Tao of the streams and Ping,
The Tao of the sun.

Tzu Kung was softly singing
And the Zytha with him rang;
I hear the echo ringing,
I hear the song he sang.

“Ah! Wilt thou come back to us Sanghu?”
“Ah! Wilt thou come back to us Sanghu?”

And the mystic Zytha shivers
Yet with tremolos of song,
And the phantom Orient quivers
With the life for which you long.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 137–138.

Ah Kim

A white gull passes, like a love most fond,
A fading sail skims on the ocean's rim,
And solemn, calm as Buddha's image grim,
Ah Kim is fixed on things beyond

The Flowery Kingdom, death and life,
Tight-clenched in passion's gnawing feast,
Creating pleasure, caution, strife,
The soul, the jewel of the East.

The spirit of the sword is there,
The cry of torture, plague, despair,
The clutch on earth, with sharp-nailed claws,
That all her mountain flanks and flaws
Which loom above this land of silk
Yield from themselves a mother's milk.

"Home, home to China!" where his own have died,
And fluttering paper prayers are hung!
Home, back to China where the temples bide,
And trembling wind-blown bells are rung!

Back to the Yangtse, Hoang-Ho,
Back to Peking, the yellow soil,
Back to the wife and babies, lo!
Back to the game, the luck, the spoil.

Back to the bones of honored sires
That rattling in their boxes know
His simple instincts and desires,
Back to the chop-sticks, bowl of rice,
Back to the cousins, back to life,
"Back, back to China

Land of extremes in bliss and sighs,
Land of mysterious almond eyes,
The mass a unit, tragic, grim,
"Home, home China prays Ah Kim.
to!"

And
 still he gazes “cross the sea,”
 On fertile field and magic stream,
 The sampan, hut, pagoda’s gleam,
And then, as patient as the beast
 That knows alone the mystic name,
Evil as earth at heaven’s feast,
 He goes about his menial “game.”

This Chinaman, “a mere machine,”
“Automaton,” “who never basks
In mediaeval dream.”

He garnishes and sweeps and brews,
 A slave to modern cult and plan,
His face a mask, his smile a cheat,
 “For Cathay never breeds a man

His heathenism just a joke,
 A superstition, paper prayer,
His joss and devil but the yoke
 That keeps him steady everywhere.

So carps the undiluted West,
Complacent, understanding naught
Save vetoes, negatives and words,
Proof-positive or “ought.”

Meantime Kingan is soaring still,
The Kiang flows, the flowers bloom,
The dragon climbs the rugged hill,
The great wall staggers to its doom.

Along the bosses of the heights,
The rice fields thrive in heaven’s air,
And ’neath the stars on winter nights
Life grim, undaunted everywhere,
Alert, and starving, out of breath
Escapes, perchance, the fangs of death.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 139–140.

The Light on Namsan

A beacon blazes on each Corean crest,
Each hill in flame salutes the rest,
From Namsan fiery signals fly
Along the waste of sea and sky.

From peak to peak, from height to height,
Across the gloomy realms of night,
The full, assuring news to tell
In Corea's kingdom all is well.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 141.

BOOK ONE | NIPPON

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

The Sword of Old Japan

Its sheen was more bewildering
Than a rare Damascus blade;
There was sunrise in its glitter,
And a sunset in its shade.
In the mirror of its surface
Was the Inland Sea, a gleam,
And the crest of Fujiyama,
With a flash of ice, a dream.

Chorus—

O, the sword of Old Japan,
Which was forged for the valiant clan
That fought at Hinamoto
For the feudal rights of man!

Its lover hugged his trusty sword
As though it were his bride;
In the making of his weapon
A man, perhaps, had died.
So keen its edge it vanished,
'Twas a danger out of sight,
A blend of earth and sun and air,
Of morning, noon and night.

And it lunged and glanced and glittered,
A peacock frenzy when
Its deadly shift of color
Defied the foe, and then
With a lightning flash and fury
It rained a crimson shower
From hilt to point, avenger,
Compelling in its power.

Chorus—

O, the sword of Old Japan,
Which was forged for the valiant clan
That fought at Hinamoto
For the feudal rights of man

It was sacred, for the people
 In the sword had put their trust,
'Nor on its purple gleaming
 Was a hint of cloud or rust.
From the sheath it came and flying
 Of Death a playmate made,
For the living were the dying
 With the flashing of the blade.

But like magic it has vanished;
 On a well-remembered day
To the scabbard it was banished,
 And the sword was laid away.
Yet keen its edge as ever
 When fought the valiant clan!
Its ancient blade is potent yet,
 The sword of Old Japan.

Chorus—

O, the sword of Old Japan,
 Which was forged for the valiant clan
That fought at Hinamoto
 For the feudal rights of man

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 142–143.

Nippon's "Go-Down"

Her blade with its fire and its edge and its sheen,
Her sword that has rivaled the famed Damascene

Is laid in the scabbard, they say.

Her battleship Fugi may shiver and growl,
Her cruiser Asama may tremble and howl,
But the demon, the devil that rivaled the fan,
The subtle, the flashing, quick sword of Japan
Is laid in the "Go-down" away.

Her gunboat Akagi may blaze on the foe,
Defiant of Russia, of death or of woe,
But look, surly Bear,
For a gleam in the air
That might be a sunbeam, or might be a blade,
A moonbeam gone rampant, a sword in the shade,
An icicle fallen from Fuji's white crown!
Have a care, have a care,
Lest the scabbard, old Bear,
Lie empty in Nippon's "Go-down"

There are fighters and fighters and fighters ashore,
On mines of torpedoes are fighters still more;

There's the bomb and the bullet, the rifle and gun,
The battle well lost, the battle well won,
Have a care, have a care
For the edge in the air,
The demon, the devil that rivaled the fan,
The subtle, the tragic, quick sword of Japan.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 144.

Akagi

Shot in the back! Ah, what a destiny
Killed at his post, as fits a man!
And this, the hero's tragic victory,
Who saved the honor of Japan.

From far, the mainmast of Akagi,
Rang out his voice above the wave,
Defiant, lone, erect in majesty
He challenged death, for he was brave.

No more cared he for years of living;
A fame immortal he has won,
His land to him her heart is giving,
On his escutcheon shines the sun.

The rising sun! A cloudless morning!
Aye, nail the gleaming banner fast!
Flag of Japan, the East adorning,
Float on above Akagi's mast!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 145.

O the Saki of Kioto!

Far in the West is Fujiyama,
Great phantasmal “Ar Kishima”
Waves of blue are thundering on
“The Bridge of Heaven”—Fair Nippon.

Where the cherry-blossoms tremble
And their petals fly like snow,
'Mid the temples of Kioto,
Where the royal plum-trees grow,

Sits the smiling, patient Buddha,
On Nirvana pondering long,
While the rhythmic river sighing
Flows to melody and song.

O the saki of Kioto
Where the priest and scholar tread
O the wine of Hinamoto!
O the living and the dead!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 146.

BOOK ONE | RENDERINGS FROM THE JAPANESE

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

Suma Beach, Japan

From Kinza Hirai

O where did Tara's army drown?
Far north the Rocko's towering peak
Frowns grimly on the Inland Sea.
Like distant echo comes the shriek
Of steamer whistle, frantic, free,
Where rushes swiftly the black breath
Of dusky smoke, as if to flee
From melancholy fate of death.

O where did Tara's army drown?
The restless, sighing breakers
With their tragic undertone
Unfold no tale, but rend my heart
As listening here I brood alone.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 147.

Otowa Falls, Japan

From Kinza Hirai

Among the clouds the temple roof
And massive terrace seem to float,

While darkly-robed the priest-like pines
With effort climb the steep hillside
To pause before the sacred door,
And chant in melancholy tones,
A hymn to Daishi, the divine.

Three waterfalls, like silver threads,
Leap from Otowa's rugged loin
And fill the air with cooling sound
That mingles tenderly its tones
With the Cicada's winged notes,
And fills the sacred, calm retreat
With purest melody.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 147.

On the Genkai Sea

From Kinza Hirai

The singing wind hums round the straining sail
While moonlight glitters on the rail
And flashes from an angry sea
That tosses up its spray at me.

A monster wave, a slimy whale,
Spouts filmy froth into the gale,
Or like a dragon turns and coils
To clutch the ship within its toils.

The Genkai sea is lost in night,
And timid souls are faint with fright.
Above, the yawning, eager wave,
Is open like a hungry grave.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 148.

The Nightingale

The spring has come:
Does the nightingale fancy the snow is the flower,
When she warbles sweet notes on the snow-sprinkled
bower?

(Sosei Heshi)

The nightingale has failed to sing;
Whate'er men say, it is not Spring.

(Mibu no Tadamine)

(At the Poetry Match in the Empress' Palace in the
period of Kwampe)

By the wind the bloom's fragrance
I send far and wide,
For enticing 'twill serve
As the nightingale's guide.

(Ki no Tomonori)

The valley breezes cleave the ice,
And out from crevice here and there,
The flower-hued ripples quickly rise,
Like Spring's first blossoms everywhere.

(Minamoto no Masazumi)

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 149.

A Love Poem

Inconstant seems the cherry-bloom,
 Yet lovely petal scatters not,
It waits for one who for a year
 To gaze on it has quite forgot.

Reply

Inconstant to the flower, you say,
 To-day I timely come, nor wait.
To-morrow like the snow 'twill fall,
 And though not dead 'twere loved too late.

(Nauhira no Asomi)

When cherry-blossoms fluttering fly
 Like ebbing tides in limpid air,
Then roll the white waves in the sky
 Although the water is not there.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 150.

The Cherry

To pluck the charming cherry-bloom,
Makes sad my tender heart;
Come let me lodge beside the tree
Until its splendor shall depart.

Who knows where dwells the cruel wind,
That on the cherry-blossoms blow?
Who knows, I ask, show me the way,
And there to tell my woes I'll go.

(Address to flower newly opened on a cherry-tree)

Young cherry-flower, one Spring alone
Canst thou this whole year know;
Avoid the fate of kindred blooms
That from thy tree shall sometime blow.

(Tsuiayumi)

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 150.

The Plum

More winning than its hue,
The perfume of the flower.
Whose sleeve, I wonder, softly touched
The plum-tree of my bower?

(Unknown)

Near home no plum-tree will I plant,
Lest I its fragrance should mistake
For that of one for whom I wait.

(Unknown)

O where is the bloom of the plum?
All things on the earth are white,
To follow its scent is my only guide
On a gleaming, moonlight night.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 151.

Palace of Prince Royal

Thou wind of Spring,
Blow not upon the flowers,
If petals scatter willingly,
Without the aid of thee.

(Fugiwara no Toshikaza)

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 152.

Gazing Upon the Capital

The willows interlace and twine,
The Capital is overlaid
With interweaving cherry-blooms,
The Miya Ko is Spring's brocade.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 152.

The Willow Tree Near Saidaiji

Spring's willow!

From its boughs the light green twisted threads are hung;
Like beads the snowy drops of dew
Are close together lightly strung.

(Sojo Haijo)

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 152.

To What Can the World Be Compared?

The deep abyss of yesterday is the shoal of to-day.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 152.

BOOK ONE | RUSSIA

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

To Lermontov

Thou bard of Caucasus,
Whose melancholy eyes
Once swept the Russian plains,
To thee I bring from distant clime
An offering.

They said that thou wast dead;
Love knelt to thee and bade thee speak;
Thy lips, thy youthful lips were dumb.
Hark, hark! is that thy golden voice
Still ringing mid the giant pines?
Does yon lone bird sing thy weird song?
And are those thundering tones
Which echo from the hills thine own?

Love bade thee open thy young eyes,
Those stars that saw the face of God;
Thy pallid lids were still
Nay! nay! dost thou behold again
The light that blazes far for thee
On land and sea?

Where Kasbek glitters, and the Dnieper flows,
Where Terek flashes 'midst eternal snows,
Across the Steppes, or in the forest depths,
Where rises high the spire and dome
Of Caucasus,
As once before, we crown thee now,
Here, here, in Muscovy art thou

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 153.

To My Russian Friend P. A. Demens

We've dreamed on the heights together,
We've scanned the Russian plain,
We've listened in sunny weather,
And faced the gale and rain.

For the bard of bards was singing
The famous minstrel song,
Tzar Terrible was bringing
His mighty hosts along.

And Orsha wildly shouted,
Arsense with lightning played;
Injustice he had flouted,
His heart was with the maid.

The Demon too was calling
Where Terek leaped and roared,
And we saw the flash of Kasbek,
As the bird of the mountain soared.

Or young Tamara dancing
Where beauty was like fire,
And sunbeams hotly glancing
Were symbols of desire.

We've pierced the fog together
On the Dnieper, cold and drear,
We've seen the trees that bowed like ghosts
And the wild beast shrunk with fear.

We've gazed on the vale of Groosia
Where song birds love and sing,
And the shades of green-decked Chinar
Enhance the bliss of Spring.

On Moscow in the sunrise
And on the Kremlin white
We saw the shifting clouds in skies
That played with day and night.

Ah yes! the poet with us,
 We've gone to the Steppes afar,
From North to Caspian's border
 Under the Russian star.

From you I've ravished splendor
 Of the old-time court and king,
From you the beauty tender
 Of the Groosian vale in Spring.

OF LERMONTOV

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 154–155.

BOOK ONE | RENDERINGS FROM LERMONTOV

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

Oath of the Demon

(Rendered into English by Annie E. Cheney and P. A.
Demens)

I swear by creation's first day,
 I swear by its last day,
I swear by disgrace of crime,
 By the triumphs of truth
I swear by the bitter torture of my fall,
 By my short hope of victory.
I swear by my meeting with thee,
 And by the coming parting;
I swear by the hosts of spirits,
 My subordinates by fate,
By the words of the passionless angels,
 My watchful foes;
I swear by Hell and by Heaven,
 By all that is sacred on Earth,
And by thee!
 I swear by thy last look,
By thy first tear,
 By the breath of thy life,
By waves of thy silken curls,

 I swear by bliss and by sorrow,
I swear by my love:
 Thou art my religion,
Thou art my God.
 My might I cast at thy feet.
I wait for thy heart as a gift,
 And O, for one moment of bliss
Take thou Eternity!

Forget thy past desires,
 Leave this revolting spot.
Instead of it, I'll freely give
 Proud Wisdom's fruits.
Aye, from the Eastern Star for thee
 I'll tear her golden crown.
I'll take the midnight dew from flowers
 And deck thy coronet.
I'll bring a ribbon of the dawn
 To twine about thy form.
With pure aroma will I fill
 The lucid balmy air.

I'll ravish thy young ears
 With melody divine;
With amber and with turquoise gems
 I'll build a home for thee.
I'll plunge into the ocean's depths,
 I'll fly beyond the clouds,
I'll give thee all the earth
 Love met!

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 156–157.

Extract from the Poem of Lermontov Written in 1837 on the Death of Pushkin

Gone the Poet! He, proud honor's slave,
By slander crushed, is dead
With lead and vengeance in his breast. A grave
Entombs his haughty head.

The petty stings of trifles never
Could his great soul retain;
Against the world, alone as ever,
He rose; and he was slain.

No more will music follow him,
Nor will he sing his song again,
The Poet's house is narrow, grim;
A seal is on his lips and pen.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 158.

The Gifts of Terek

(A Free Rendering from Lermontov)

Terek, wild and angry, midst the great rocks roars,
And like a storm is moaning, sighing,
While in foam his tears are flying,
Nearing the green valley spying
Caspian's shores.

He calm becomes, and close beside the sea
He whispers, gently smiling, smiling:
"Make a place for me,"—thus whiling
With tender soft beguiling,
"Make a place for me."

"Tired of freedom, I desire sweet rest to take.
I was born where Kasbek wonders,
Nursed upon a breast that thunders;
With the power of man who blunders
Bitter war I make,

"For Daryal ruined I, thy children to delight,
Their greed to gratify.
A mass of stones that lie
Where valley grasses die,
I brought with all my might."

The blue sea dreams as if asleep beside the shore,
Voluptuous banks his form encasing,
Their tender arms with love embracing,
While Terek now is boldly facing
Old Caspian to implore.

And whispering low: "A treasure I have brought to thee;
No common gift is this I hold.
From where the clouds of battle rolled
I bring a warrior true and bold,
A brave Circassian he!

“His brow is knit, a trace of blood has left its track;
His look is fearless as the day
With hatred that will not away,
His forelock recklessly doth stray
Across his back.

“Beyond a price the cuirass on his breast,
With plates of steel where lies enrolled
A holy verse inscribed in gold,
A motto from the Koran old
Is there to rest.”

But lying low by curving shores dumb Caspian slept,
And trembling Terek spoke once more:
“O, listen, listen I implore
For surely now must thou adore
The gift I’ve kept.

“All else is naught, the world alone could this avail,
I’ll bring thee with my rushing waves,
The boon thy longing spirit craves,
A Cossack girl. The water laves
Her shoulders pale.

“Her dreamy face is sorrowful, but free from care;
In sleep her aspect is most sweet.
A wound bleeds where her heart once beat,
The blood is streaming to her feet,
Her locks are fair.

“One only feels no sorrow for the maiden dead,
A noble Cossack, proud and brave,
Who caring not his life to save
Will seek a melancholy grave
And lose his head.

“He saddled his black horse, and in a midnight fray
Must be by fatal dagger killed;
By vile Circassian will be spilled
The blood he ruthlessly has willed
To flow away.”

The river ceases talk so querulous and grim,
For white above him as the snow
A head, where dripping tresses show
And tremble on the waves that flow,
Looks down at him.

A glittering king, the sea in majesty of strength arose
As mighty as a thunder storm,
His dark blue eyes with passion warm,
While vanished from his slippery form
Was sweet repose.

He trembled with expectancy, he thrilled with passion's
joy.
Then clasped in his embracing arms
The Cossack girl with all her charms
And murmured love that conquers, calms
Without alloy.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 158–161.

The Rock

(Rendering from the Russian of Lermontov)

There softly stole upon the breast
Of lonely rock, gigantic, grim,
A golden cloud to sleep and rest,
And dream and dream again of him.

It sweetly slept the whole night through,
But in the early hour of dawn
Whence it had come into the blue
It gaily went on wings of morn.

Imbued with thought, upon its brow
The rock retains a moistened trace.
Alone as once before, but now
The tears are trickling down his face.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 162.

The Valley of Groosia

(Rendering from The Demon)

Beneath him came floating a vale,
Fair Groosia! a picture new-spread
With a carpet of green,
A region of columned ruins
Where murmuring streams ever glide
Over beds of translucent stones,
Rose-vines where the nightingales sing

To women their song
Unravished by sound of their love,
The chinár's deep shadows crowned by thick ivy,
The cavern where hides through the heat of the day
The graceful gazelle,
The light and the life, the murmur of leaves,
The hundred-voiced throng, all alive,
The breathing of numberless plants,
The sensual heat of the noon,
The ever-full nights with aroma of dews,
And the bright magic stars,
Like a Groosian girl's eyes.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 162.

On the Dnieper—Winter

(Rendering from Lermontov)

'Tis winter, from a ghastly depth
Appear the sable trunks of trees
That to the freezing Dnieper bow like ghosts.
Day dim and wan is gazing in a glass of ice,
And all the rifts are full of snow.
A rabbit finds his hole at dawn.
And springing back and forth leaves many tracks.
Oftimes at night the house-dog barks and growls
When steals a thin and hungry wolf too near,
Or 'cross the quiet fields
His trampling steps and gnashing teeth are heard.
And in the dark amid the bush, by hundreds
Glittering eyes like candles flash.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 163.

On the Dnieper—Dawn

(Rendering from Nobleman Orsha)

“Tis early morn and peaceful are the fields,
Thick fog, a fleecy arras silver-trimmed
Above the Dnieper hangs,
And through its mists upon the rugged bank
The trees gaze on themselves within the waves.
Beyond the forest sails a group of clouds,
And far, like fire, appears the ruddy dawn.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), p. 164.

The Gates of the Caucasus

(Rendering from The Demon)

And the exile from Paradise over the Caucasus flew,
Under him Kasbek flashed white with eternal snow,
Cut like a diamond's edge,
And like an abyss deep and black,
The reptiles' cavernous home,
Gleamed the meandering Daryal.
Like a lion Terek leaped,
His thick-massed mane on his back,
And plunging and bounding roared,
While the mountain, beast, and the bird,
Up, up in the azure heights,
His voice, like the thunder, heard.
And violet clouds from the South
Follow him far to the North,

As the peaks embracing him,
Full of mysterious dreams,
Bend low their sleepy heads
To watch his glittering waves,
Their lofty, haggard brows
Piercing the tattered fog,
Gigantic sentinels grim,
The Gates of the Caucasus.

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Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 164–165.

BOOK ONE | EGYPT

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917

The Nile

Once in Memory's misty realm
I saw the tawny Nile
And that far azure line that cuts the desert's brink,
Whence crept the Libyan sands
Close to the river's edge
To drink and drink and drink,
And clothe themselves in green.
And I? Alas for memory

Listening I heard a plaintive chant,
As though the river sang:
"Hail to thee, Osiris,
Hail to thee, Osiris,
Each day is Ammon with thee.
Hail to thee, Osiris!
Thou seest with thine eyes
Thou hearest with thine ears;
Thy soul is made divine in heaven;
Thyself thou canst transform;
Joy of the Persea-tree in On,
Hail to thee, Osiris

And calmly looking down
I saw a dead man's face.
"Hail! hail!" I also sang,
"Hail to thee, Osiris!"

How like a snake the river moved,
How like a serpent I
How musical and lithe the reeds,
How gaunt the sycamores;
"Hail to thee, Osiris

O man! Osiris dead!
And I alive,
Aflame with motion,
Clear of eye, a thing of power,
While close art thou to earth,
Inert, cold, rigid,
Sunken down before thy grave is dug,
Sucked toward thy mother's heart.

How scornfully I spurn the sod,
How airy, how far off, how high
My fancy roves
My eyes see heaven where stars are sown,
My ears discern soft, souging sounds
Which float in breezes off the Nile.
But thou? Thine eyes are set,
Thine ears are stopped.
"Hail to thee, Osiris

Here Libya lies in never ceasing trance;
Bedecked with countless gems

It stretches outward toward the sky
A swooning ecstasy that cannot die;
But thrilled with rhythmic, surging life,
The epic-singing Nile rolls on,
Though ruins hug its curving banks,
And Age rots slowly in its tombs,
Though Karnak casts a mummied spell
Across the hoary land of Khem,
And Thebes lies drugged beneath the sky.

What, what, alluring Nile,
tell me! what is death?
Then to my soul the river sang:
“The bittern booms
Amid the tombs,
The raven cries
When mortal dies,
But cheated of his prey
Great Typhon sighs and sighs.
Earth unto earth
Behold Osiris rise!”

“Hail to thee, Osiris!
Escaped hast thou thy prison;
The soul of man hath risen.
Hail to thee, Osiris!”

I said, “Thou sinuous, subtle stream
Alive amid the dead,
O Nile, the mystic’s dream,
Where hath Osiris fled?”

And as I spake I gazed again
Upon the dead man’s face,
While sang once more
The flowing Nile:
“Hail to thee, Osiris,
Joy to the Persea-tree in On,
The immortal soul is God and One,
Hail! Hail to thee, Osiris!”

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 166–169.

Textual note. Author’s note in the 1917 edition: at burial, a dead person justified by Osiris was addressed as Osiris, having become a creative unit of energy and conquered Set or Typhon; the chant “Hail to thee, Osiris” is taken from an Egyptian sacred book. The source footnote has been moved here from the foot of p. 166.

A Tale of Khem

As India produced a Gautama, and Syria a Jesus, it would seem that Egypt must have flowered in another than the imagined Hermes Trismegistus. The history of Egypt dates only from its decline, and yet it brought over with it from a palmy age a tenet of immortality, implying a teacher and a school of thought unwritten in hieroglyphics.

Egypt, mysterious,
Embalmed, and yet with eyes
That from their sockets gaze
As if a deathless soul were dwelling there,
O tell me! art thou dead?

Do I forget thee, Nile,
Where dreams are lost in dreams,
And moons have drowned themselves in thee,
Where suns with passion kiss thy breast,
And stars smile down at stars—do I forget?

Some mystic impulse felt by thee
Impelled me far where records fail,
Ere Memnon's statue spoke at Thebes
Or Isis wore the mocking veil.

I stood beside the pyramid,
And where the tombs of Gizeh rise
I conjured time whose tragic eyes
Gazed into mine.

Erect and coming nearer, near,
Majestic, human, cameo-clear
I saw the ancient Khem of Khem,
And then to me, as flowers unfold,
The tale of Egypt there was told.
His voice like echoes sighed and sung;
His words were pearls as yet unstrung;
A shade, a man, he showed in part
The secret splendors of his heart.
“As Buddha came the truth to teach,” he said,

“As Jesus rose celestial from the dead,
As Mecca held Mohammed’s shrine,
So here to weave his spell divine
The son of Khem once wandering, lone,
Through teaching made this land his own.”
And then the unwrit past, nor scrip nor scroll,
Was etched and stabbed into my soul:

“I lived beside a stream
Where sycamores and palms
Threw shadows over rustling reeds
That ’mid its ripples bathed their lives away.
Along the river bank strange birds
Stalked ’mid the waving grass
In that lone time when lotus throve
And Isis sat apart and nursed her child.

I was a poet and I wandered there
Deep breathing the enchanted air,
While gazing with young, ardent eyes
On cloudless, vast, mysterious skies,
Though far extended, ne’er begun,
An opal setting for the dazzling sun.

“With lotus blooms I wooed the moon,
I whispered with the Cyprus leaves,
And kissed the hand of Isis
As she hurried by.
Dim nights! Fair nights!
Come back and bring again
Your virgin spell,
When all was passion, passionless,
And in my heart the germ of love slept on.
And as I dreamed, upon mine ears there fell
The music of the spaces far,
Faint whisperings passed from star to star,
And sound of trembling ethers
Where the mystics are.
Yet this was but the flow of life;
The ebb, alas, was near!
Egyptian nights,

When from the haunts of Horror
Crept Despair and Fear.

“And on my heart—upon my startled heart
There fell the woe of Earth,
The pain of mothers at their infants’ birth,
Their sorrow when they die,

The eyes of frightened children peering out
’Neath dripping lashes at the world,
The puzzled mind of youth,
Strong men who wrestled restlessly,
Sweet tenderness rebuffed,
And kisses met with blows.
And then I wrenched the stern-jawed tomb apart
And prayed the gods to strike me dead.
Dost thou know love and passion,
Mighty as a torrent by the sun excited,
By the moon impelled?
Knowest thou its mystery, its terror,
And its rapture?

“When the night of Egypt
Kissed the lips of morning,
When the Nile rolled inland,
When the embers smouldering in the ashes
Burst to flame,
I looked into the glorious eyes of Isis,
Caught the frenzy of Osiris,
Felt the warm desire of heaven,
Trembled with the quivering earth.
Then, then, I loved.

“Alas, a god goes straying forth
To woo a mortal woman;
He seeks a star amid the blue,
The land beside the sea,
A tree upon the sands.
And so he lights as daintily

As does a feather
By the river, 'mid green grasses,
Coaxes woman's eyes to waking,
Kisses woman's lips to singing,
This and more, when a god
Comes straying over earth.
When man ascends to distant heaven,
Begging love of an Immortal,
Scaling heights in golden sandals,
Winging flights with flaming pinions,
He storms the very gates of Bliss,
To wed the sacred muse in her."

And then in rhapsody the Ancient sang
"O Love, I see thee yet, and ever shall,
When singing blends with singing,
'Mid the sycamores and palms,
When music floats to music,
In the ripples of the Nile
 Love, I see thee yet
When rise the mists of morning
From lilies on the stream,
When fall the dews of evening
On the sorrow-stricken reeds
I remember all the glory of thy hair;
Like shadows on the sunlight, night on the noon,
Was the glory of thy hair.
I remember all the glamour of thine eyes,
All the splendor of their blackness,
All the magic of their flashing into mine,
Even yet, though the ages

Are sepulchred or buried, though temples have
 arisen
On the ruined site of tombs,
Even yet they flash into mine.

“Something misty and uncertain,
Revealing, unrevealed,
Ever blending, ever ending
Was our love.
She retreated to advance,
Averted, yet her glance met my own,
I felt her arms about me,
Though she lived amid the stars,
I knew her burning kisses,
Though I dwelt all alone.”

The Ancient paused with head bent low,
Then suddenly addressed the night long gone,
Which once had been so bitter
And again so sweet;
Invoked it as he oft had done
In other days:

“Come ye Shades that walk abroad at night
The sun went down long hours ago,
My heart was hot from basking in the light.

I wait—O come!

Sweet Love, arise and gaze with me into the moon
Sweet Love, art thou still weaving dreams?

Come, O thou dearest,

Who left me when the sunlight shone!

Come, O thou nearest!

For I am sad, alone.

“Roll back thy curtain, awful Night!
Unveil still other stars!
Then ’mid thy splendors may I roam,
And hear the voice of Earth
Whose breath comes fast.
Ah, passion sweet!
The shade of Love has wandered near
And our lips meet.

“Dim Night, indefinite, uncertain Night,
Stay but the coming of the day one hour
Veil it with clouds, black like thyself,
Enshroud the Dawn in mourning for the dead,
Keep back the sun, and bid the moon
To gleam still longer in the arch o’erhead
That I may know the secret of thy heart.
O stay the onward march of the approaching day
Till she, my Love, doth come

Then turned great Khem
And looked into mine eyes and spake again:

“Ah! once hi that remembered time
My life was ecstasy,
But ere she sought the river bank and died
She bore a child, and prophesied:
’A paradox, his hour is near;
Thy son shall be the uncrowned seer.’

Osiris shudders; Isis trembles.
Where, O where ’mid wilds of Egypt
Strayed the Teacher, sang the Singer?

The Nile rolls on and tells no tale,
The desert bears a sphinx upon its breast,
And skies above are blank and dumb.

Then towering in full majesty,
This lofty phantom
Formed from mist impalpable,
The ancient Khem,
Addressed the Libyan Sphinx:

“Shall man succumb to thy weird eyes?
Humanity, triumphant, knows no sphinx
Save unsolved Law.
Behold a paradox: The Mystic ignores mystery.
Before thy symbol rose on Libyan sands,
Ere Hellas caught the meaning of thy spell,
Another Edipus had dared thy glance,
Supreme, magnificent above thy head,
No rival hath he ’neath the sun and moon.”

I watched this mighty Shade, as thus he stood
Against the background of the blue,
Where Libya spread far out to meet the sky.
“O thou,” I said, “who conquerest rhythm itself and time,
Interpret to my wondering mind thy speech.”

“Learn lessons from revolving stars,” he sighed,
“From waves along the ocean strand,
From shifting seasons in their flight,
From fire in wake of ice, and ice in trail of fire.”
And then a smile like sunlight
Flashed athwart his face.

“Unless with Amnion thou art wed, death conquereth thee.
If it thou knowest,
Time will speed thee by
Like flock of birds across the blue,
And leave no mark upon the sky.
Our gods seem many,, but are One,
Creation uncreated, proof unproved,
Sin sinless, this knows he
Who learns the truth of Khem.”

“But tell me of the Flower, thy son,” said I,
“How lived he? Was he doomed to die?”

“On others’ wings thou canst not rise,
By others’ lives thou livest not,
The Nameless did himself disguise,
Lest in the Singer were the song forgot.
In tremolos the dewdrop falls on lotus leaves,
So falls his love upon the heart that grieves.

“O eyes, that wandered restfully
From star to star,
Deep eyes, sunlit and calm;
How soft their look when they on Egypt gazed!

“Mysterious, restless Nile, flow on,
And murmuring, breathe of Him.
Where rushes grow and reeds are wet,
His echoing words are whispered yet.

"I remember that fair heaven whence he came,
A world of hallowed rapture, and its name
Lingers still half-forgotten like the gleam
Of moon-enchanted lilies on the stream.

"In His heart he carried with him all the bliss,
And the sweetness, of His mother, when her kiss
Thrilled like wine, and the story softly told
In a life did then unfold. It was mine

"Yet sunlight 'neath the cypress weds the dark;
For the loved, the lost, the longing, sings the lark.
My son had heard the bittern's tragic cry;
For Egypt did he live, for Egypt did he die.

"Sweet Paradise!
It hangs unconscious over hell
Like floating garden, reckless, green
Above the Stygian wave.

"Sad Paradise!
The poet's eyelids gravely droop,
To veil from glamour of the stars,
While music, sad with melody, weeps on.

"Where art thou, Rapture?
Eyes, thine own, I see above the precipice
When danger hovers near,
A whirr of wings, a rainbow gleam,
And thou hast vanished like a dream,
Sweet Paradise!

"A teacher, he forgot to teach;
A lover, he forgot to love;
Inconstant is mankind, and why?
Defame the temple, and the dove will fly.

“Behold my Son, a white-limbed slave
Who fights for liberty!
The arena stretches toward a distant sky,
The gleaming stars look on,
Himself his enemy,
Yet one by one his chains he wrenches off;
Then glows the moon with fire,
Earth trembles,
Constellations flash,
 ’Tis victory.

“And didst thou ask me how he died?
It was alone as falls the stag,
Bewildered, staring with large eyes at man,
As poets die who sing their songs too soon.
 My son! My son!”

Then turned the ghost of Khem
Unto the site of Memphis solemnly:
“Thou mausoleum of the dead, Earth’s center, Memphis
With thy huge stones, great Cairo sports;
Is this stupendous wreck
But sign of Egypt’s fall?
Or dost thou dream, O man
Who wanders melancholy midst these graves,

That all these buried treasures
Point to Egypt’s prime?
Priest of Amakis, knowest thou this pile is young
When measured by the flight of years
Above the ruins of the past?
That Kephren is a puny child
Of a once splendid art
That flourished in an age
When thou didst sleep?
Seest thou these pyramids,
Cemented stone to stone with blood?
Ah, Egypt had grown hoary in her crimes
When these her monster monuments were reared

“Though man hath found the Nile’s mysterious
 source,

Doth he yet know the spring
Whence gushed Egyptian life,
That long forgotten spring
Concealed beneath the debris of the past?
Dig up the sands of Africa.
Bring scholars from afar
By science labeled,
Conjure ghosts of Thebes,
And call the gods, aye God,
To point thee whence great Egypt sprang
Peer down the centuries,
And as thou gazest hear the voice
That comes from far
Where lips alive still speak!
Awaking to the moon,

The lotus trembling sighs,
A nation buds to bloom,
And blooming dies;
Yet from its grave behold a phantom rise
That chants in echoes still.”

I lifted up mine eyes,
Which, as the Ancient spake, I reverently had closed,
And scanning Libyan vastness at a glance,
I found myself alone
Beside the Pyramid.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 170–184.

BOOK ONE | *CIRCE*

Stage II | Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems, 1917 | Dedicated to Alma

Circe—My Apology

I am well aware that the world's conception of Circe is quite unlike my own; nevertheless, basing on the myth, I have conceived of a far different motif as the initiative of her acts from that ascribed to her by the general public.

Though a goddess in a sense, she roams over earth in the form of woman and is found here and there under a guise entirely her own and never to be mistaken for that of the majority of mothers, sweethearts, sisters and wives that go to make up a part of the human race. Her unique, subtle, almost unbearable charm is caused by the fire celestial, rather than earthly flame. She turns men into swine by her dangerous fascination, which in her own soul is simply ideal aspiration. She is seeking "the lost"—her other self—and in the search is often misled by the light of men's eyes, imagining each lover the divine affinity that constantly eludes her. The Ulysses of her soul, whom she would carry with her to the high place of her dreams, not having sailed to her across seas through storm and danger, she waits and watches, irresponsible for the utter temptation which her alluring attitude presents, unconscious of the beasts

she has made of men, till the bitter truth bursts upon her.

In ideal, intense being, the paradox is inevitable, and Circe by her celestial fervor presents to the eyes of animal man the effect of a siren. She becomes a veritable Scylla to wreck and degrade him. Her far—glancing eyes, straining over seas for the sight of the dim sail of Ulysses, are misconstrued into those of a courtesan.

Such is the Circe of my dream.

Words! Words! Words
Come like the rush of the birds,
Come and express the passion, the stress
Of my heart!

Cease to conceal, but clearly reveal
The subtle ideal, the perilous real,
Like fireflies thrilling in flight,
Unalarmed at the clutch of the night!

Words! Words! Words
Spiders that yearn as they spin,
That catch and entangle and win
The singer, the listener, the song!
Muse of my soul, I crave in thy name
The language of danger and flame

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 185–187.

The Sea—Actaeon

Perchance upon our senses steal
The plaint and shudder of the world,
A fugue in tremolo. We feel
Its vast crescendos onward whirled
To faint at last in vaulted air,
Enshrouded, shriven by despair,
Where echoes, humming, dream and play
Mid flame and cloud of dying day.

Waves of quivering ether, space unending,
Skies above the haze of skies extending,
Oceans into dimmer oceans blending,
Waste of air and water, seeming two,
But wed by distance, blue on blue,
Upheaving monsters of the unsolved deep,
That lap with foamy tongues the curving shore,
Green dragons flashing as you coil and leap,
To dive again with sullen hiss and roar,
With you, O Sea, we mount to rhythm's flow,
Ere down into the ebb of life we go!

CIRCE AND ACTAEON

At Circe's feet sat Actaeon,
And gazed bewildered in her magic eyes
Along the mazy labyrinth
That led unto the trysting place of love.

Ah, Circe's glance
And when she smiled
When Circe smiled
Alas, when Circe smiled

No gross desire had surged as yet
Like ruddy wine through Actaeon's blood,
He asked no other bliss than this,
To touch the hem of Circe's robe.
"Loved Siren, whence your charm?" he plead,
"I fain from you would fly, yet here am I."

She glanced afar, through balmy space afar,
And gazing smiled, and smiling softly sighed.
Behind a cloud there sailed a fading star,
A Zephyr drooped its wings and died.

“Brave Actaeon, leave me ere it be too late.
Go forth and dare the shafts of fate

“Alas, and still I stay!
Enough for me to breathe this tropic air,
To watch the fires resplendent in your eyes,
To revel in the tangle of your hair.
Alas, and still I stay

“Lo, women like rich mushrooms spring/” she said,
“From earth, clean, luscious and to spare;
Why worship me with mingled bliss and dread?
The world’s alive with women everywhere.”

“You snare me with your tawny braids
Till willing prey am I;
A chain about me you have wound,
As strong as destiny.
By jewel glances of your eyes
Transfixed am I with ecstasy.
Dear love, mysterious love!”

“Am /, O Actaeon, Fate disguised?”

“You seem forever young;
Your speech means centuries.
Your face in years a score;
A Phoenix, Circe, do you rise
From glowing ash that never dies,
A mystic wonder and surprise

“My father is the burning Sun,” she said,
“Speak not of age to me;
Immortals live; the old are dead,
And youth alone is free.”

“Your smile of mystery
Fair Circe, history
Is writ upon your face,
A legend for its theme,

The lore of some great race
Its paradox, its dream.
You conjure melody from far;
I hear the plaint of Zephyr—then
The singing of a love-mad star
Sweet Circe, smile again

“Unreasoning Actaeon,
Tell your chief desire
What fans your smouldering flames to fire?”

“O Circe! You!”

“Apart from me, what love you best?”

“My native land.”

“Has it a soul?
Do you revere its peaks and vales,
Its orchards and its streams?”

“Lay bare the heart of pain,
The spirit of the law;
And I will tell you then,
What love of country means.”

“Impassioned fool, you have a foe
Go challenge him! O go, O go
'Tis ecstasy, 'tis bliss to die!
Ye gods above, if only I
Were

mortal too!” she sighed.

“Your land is but yourself grown great.
Within you are its streams and vales,

Its trees and mountain crest,
Its rulers and its laws of state,
Its North, its South, its East and West.
Within you are its calm and gales
In you its peoples' heart and dreams;
In you its stars and soft moonbeams;
In you its joy, in you its woe,
Go serve yourself, and kill your foe!"
"But Circe!

"What deadly charm have I
That you should hold my sight
More dear than honor's crown?
Could I behold you in your might
But strike your victim down,
Or could I see you cold and prone
Where vultures wheel and dive,
Your dead face stern and fixed and lone,
Though I were yet alive;
Or would you now but say Adieu;
Then should I love, and love but you!"

"O, Circe, have you loved?"

"Loved! Actaeon,—loved!
A fair enchantress I, so prates the world,
By all mankind condemned.
A harlot clad in red!
A sorceress, a wily snake
Entwining the limp limbs of men
And kissing their warm mouths

With poisoned lips.
Loved! Actaeon,—loved
Could Circe love?
Immortal, I the mortal seek,
My other half, the fallen man.
What value has eternity
Without its erring mate in time?
What reason for infinity
If finite failure is not there?
What charm has immortality
Unless it knows despair?”

She raised a sea-shell from the waves
And listened to its haunting strain.
“O hark! It sings of mystery—again and yet
again

Circe misunderstood;
Of vestal purity, the good,
Of beauty fleeing from desire.
No tender wind-swept lyre
Is keyed to such high destiny.
Ah, Music of Eternity!
The deep-sea heart within this shell
Is sighing for the loved-lost wonder
That descending into hell
Then soared aloft to voice of thunder,
As virgin moons majestic rise
Aloof and regal to the skies.

“O sad, sad heart in this pink shell
Tried heart of all the tragic seas

Like me you seek the Lost. 'Tis well!
Among these mortals, on his knees,
Perchance my other self I'll find,
My other self—for Love is kind.
Can it be true that vestal glow
Is flame too bright for profane eyes?
And is it right of gods alone
To watch the fires of Paradise?

"I, Circe, stranded here
Like this sad-singing shell,
And harking to the gods with fear,
And gazing far from heaven to hell
Have stumbled on a man, and see
Perchance a beast perchance divinity.

"Like all immortals humanized
I'm innocent, unwise, disguised
And lost in woe and ecstasy.
I pray to heaven; in cold disdain
It flashes fire upon my pain.
I hug the earth and kiss the sod
And plead with Nature for its God,
But only weeds spring up and grow
To wrap me in a shroud of woe.
O ask me not if / have loved!"

Paler than lilies
Grew young Actaeon's face.
"Perchance in me you'll find," he said,
"The mortal self you love and dread."

"In you? Give me a sign!"

"A sign! Love's sign is passion,
His colors white and red,
His gems, blood-rubies pilfered from the dead,
His pass-word is 'Surrender.'
Again, again, again
The flag of truce he scorns, nor waits,
But fiercely holds and subjugates.
A glutton tasting, he devours
And plucks the bud before it flowers.
Love loves himself, through all Love's hours

"Ye gods wrung her hands and
!" she cried,
"If, Actaeon, you have told the truth,
Love is a brute, undeified,
And Cupid but a fabled youth.
Ha, Ha! And I have thought of love

As heaven-aspiring like the dove.
Is earth on high, the sky below?
Can rivers to their sources flow?
Do human beings walk on air
And stalk their victims everywhere?
Are birds struck dumb that long to sing?
Does beast four-footed sprout a wing?
Of mortal and Immortal wed,
Which is the living, which the dead?
Your ship's a stranded wreck," she sighed,
"Your trireme bruised and danger tried,
Yourself sea-battered seeking wine
That burns your lips, alas! and mine,

Your passion quenches that soft fire
That flashed in many-hued desire
When once you proudly onward bore
From mountain pass to ocean shore
The flag, the sword, the shield—Ah me
Can you not see that banner yet
Afloat from yonder parapet?
Can you not see? Can you not see
The flames of burnished copper there,
The metaled sun, sunk in despair,
The splendor of that fine-tipped spear,
Translucent as a lake and clear,
The edge, the keenness, gleam and glare
Of that unbuckled sword, the flare
Of knife and cutlass? Can you hear
The solemn beat of drums, the sheer,
The sharp shrill shrieks, the awful groans
Of human throats, the sobs, the moans?
O can you hear and can you see
Your life, your fate, yet think of me?"

He looked upon her rapt and dazed;
Deep in her stormy eyes he gazed;
Then far in fancy's distant seas
Beheld again upon the breeze
The signal of himself a part,
The unfurled ensign of his heart.
But back he flew; his hope was dead;
For lo, his vestal love had fled.
"Circe! Circe! Where art thou?"
The sullen waves moaned on the shore,

Sepulchral thunder, nothing more.
"Circe! Circe! Where art thou?"
He strove to rend the mist in twain
In frenzy calling, yet in vain,
"Circe! Circe! Where art thou?"
Hid by the arras of the haze
She lay upon a jagged stone,
And Nature in her tender ways
Brought comfort to herself alone.
With love she clung to Circe there,
With soothing fingers combed her hair,
And on her lips she pressed the kiss
Of mingled misery and bliss.

O Circean sea! Sea of intensity
Deep with the depths of drear immensity!
Deep to the realms of dumbness and desire
Where sound is not and Siren's shell and lyre
 Are deadly mute!
Sea of unfathomed mystery,
Attuned to poignant thrills of pain,
Potential with primeval ecstasy,
Sea of the Circean heart! Again
Your surging billows storm and rise
To greet the stars, the moon, the skies;

And on voluptuous summer days,
Empyrean blest your gems ablaze,
You call and call Urania's dove,
In far mid-air awaiting love.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 188–197.

The Desert—Nana

Far gleaming, farther, farther on
The desert stretches.

Upon its bosom here and there
An emerald flashes,
And where it steals into the blue
The topaz pierces through.

How it glitters, glitters, glitters
Scintillating rays
That dazzle human eyes.
How it scatters fire that reaches
Even up to amorous skies

Thou scorner of all life
Save what is bred by thee,
Immensity of rank desire
That boldly dares to be,
Gigantic Sphinx

That filches jewels from the sun,
And steals the white milk of the moon,
What kisses thou dost give

And what fierce joy of heat and space
Is granted him who gazes on thy face.

Fair Circe singing
Sat beneath the boughs of brooding trees
Near to the desert's trysting place,
With verdant soil. The perfumed breeze
With wings aquiver cooled and fanned
The grasses of this tropic land.

“O longing soul, grieve thou no more
Life surges to the flow,
The tide is high,
Hope will not go.
O longing soul, grieve thou no more
Forget thy tragedies and fears,
Thy weary waiting and thy tears;
Forget thine agony of years,
Grieve thou no more I”

And as she sang
The boughs were softly parted
As if by muses tender-hearted,
And in his priestly robe and youth
Stood Nana, harbinger of truth.

“Why wait I wistfully,” she said,
“Beneath this sheltering tree?
’Twere far more seemly had you watched,
And sighing, longed for me.

“Behold the moon
A dead globe desert-born,
Soft glare of borrowed fire,
The progeny this waste brings forth
Is free from all desire.”

Said he regretfully,
“I would that I some progeny might bear
Full worthy of my vows;
This arid desert fills my heart with shame
That I, forbidden, give the world
Naught save an honored name.”

“Most surely from the East are you,”
Sighed Circe tenderly,
“And Orient-born are passion-true.
Pray tell me, for I deem you wise,
Why all your vows you sacrifice?”

“What fatal glamour
Has this waste,” he said;
“This Sphinx with heart of fire,

This heat conceived in ice,
This frenzy's calm,
This love's disdain,
This sorrow's ecstasy?
If you were not a sorceress,
A riddle which yourself must solve,
Then would I wander in the temple aisle
And in a scroll of vellum lose your smile.
Forgetting all save sanctity and lore
I'd dream and dream of you no more."

Then Circe's eyes filled full with tears,
Her dark, unfathomed, haunting eyes
She gazed through sorrow's mist of years
Far out upon the glittering seas
Of desert's sand.

"O golden Orient!
Fair country of my dreams
Where sound and color blend,
A rhapsody of incense-breathing form,
A paradise of tombs,
golden Orient!
I long to blend with thee
And scale thy soaring hills
Or bask beneath thy flaming sun.

"To-night the moon full-orbed and bright
Is shining in this arc of blue,
And and
turns to phantasy thy temples thy mosques,
While snow-white palaces sail vaguely on the clouds
Or sink to sombre depths of mystery.
Fair land, whose perfume-laden air
Intoxicates my raptured sense,
I love thee with a passion bred of grief,
In dimness floating to the music of the tides
Thou earnest on my soul a dream of ecstasy.
O golden Orient!
My heart is sick for thee.
Must I a stranger roam again

And view thy mountain peaks from far
In sorrow's realm of memory?"

She bowed her head upon her knees
And sat in silence, while the breeze
Sang hymns of woe amid the trees.

"Sweet Circe, sigh no more,"
Plead Nana tenderly;
"My country is your home,
My heart your resting place.
What claims have I to priestly vows?
Have you not splendor in your eyes?"

"I thought this day that I mayhap
Could tear myself away
And fold about me once again
The robes of sanctity;
But now, divinity begone
This gem of mine, honor,
Toss I in your lap.
A jewel dearer than my very eye,
It sparkles like Orion in the blue;
I scorn it now for you.

"This power of intellect
With which I conquer mystery,
Explain the unexplained
And shatter trembling creeds,
Or grapple with the riddles of the East,
This proud ambition which can rise
Above cold reason's peak
To that volcanic crest of fire,
The soul's white heat,
All, all to you I give.

"I spurn my vows, my creed, my fame.
Compared with you
I hold them worthless as the muddy pool
To one who longs for wine.
Fair Circe, set the seal
Of your red lips on mine,
And all my heart is ever thine

"And after that?" she said.

"If you could give me more,
Together we would steal
Far from this desert sea and verdant shore
Into some mountain fastness near the sky
Where spring the limpid drops
Which gather in their flow
The very dregs of India's woe.
Alone in that celestial air
Our lives would purer grow
In temples of resisting ice
Entombed in virgin snow.
And O, to rest upon your beating heart,
Absorb the mystery of your eyes,
And taste the nectar of your lips
'Twere very bliss of woe!"

He towered above the sheen of desert sands
 In rapture's majesty,
In mad abandon of desire.
That he might taste of mortal ecstasy,
His pearl of immortality he threw
 At Circe's feet.

His classic face with roses all aglow
That sprung from his voluptuous blood,
His eyes ablaze with passion's flame
Appalled and captured Circe's heart
And drew her to his side
As earth's most central fire
Draws all its life down to itself.

She listens—then admires, adores,

Alas! she fain would yield,
When like the water to the flame
A chill of cold suspicion steals
Across her burning soul.
Recoiling as one stung by asp
Beneath the velvet leaves
Of some voluptuous plant,
She draws her trailing robe
About her limbs
And folds her arms across her breast;
Then lifting high her head,
Speaks words that cut like gleaming knives
Clean through his panoply of sense
Straight to his naked soul!

“Your honor, fame and intellect
Have you renounced?
Pray would you die upon my breast
While drinking carnal poison from my lips?
A God are you among mankind,
A Master heaven-sent,
Ordained to re-create the world

And leave within the archives of the years
The essence of your thought;
But like a swine you are,
And I, alas! have been the cause.
Ah, I had longed to come to you
As steals a zephyr to a burning brow!
To you would I have been the moon
That guides the traveller on his way,
The star, the very sun!
To you would I have been the voice
Heard through the din of sound
Like haunting bells that ring afar,
To you the dream of dreams,
But if myself I sully for your sake
My love will perish in your mad embrace
As in a hot simoon the wanderer dies.”

She paused;
A prayer was on her lips,
A supplication in her eyes;
But he, as if some living thing
Had turned at once to stone
Or molten mass to ice,
Stood rigid, deaf, a fiend!
Then suddenly in imprecation spoke,
His voice an echo from some nether world,
So far away it seemed.

“I kneel to you no more!
A freezing liquid courses through my veins;
My nerves are silver cords,

My muscles tempered steel.
I loved you, aye, and hated too,
But heaven and hell are blotted out.

 smile, and smile again
Beam over me with lustrous eyes
Caress me with your finger tips,
Or clasp me in your pliant arms
Sing in my ears—Sing, sing
Unto my very soul! But what care I?
Forever are you cursed
Doomed to virginity, of love you make a lie
Stripped of my majesty,
With beasts I’ll herd
With beasts I’ll die!”

An instant with her eyes on his,
Defiant Circe stood,
Enfolded in white light
Then spoke in voice as vibrant
As a wind-swept harp
Struck by harsh fingers in the gloom:

“Circe am I, who changes men to swine
Great God above, can I transform
A thing divine?
What slimy trail is that
Which creeps from you away
And vanishes in mist?
I thought that I had found a god,
When from your eyes there peered the beast.
Go go! I make no self-defense,

And pitiless, no pity ask.
Go! Suffer what I too shall bear!
Get down to earth and kiss the clod,
You, whom I thought a man—a god!

“White peaks of Himala, farewell!
And thou, blue dome,
Where all thy fires are suns
And all thy suns transcendent stars!
Farewell ye streams of India!
And Cashmere’s verdant vale,
And thou, great desert,
With thy jewelled breast,
Thy million diamonds
Scintillating flame,
To thee I bid adieu!
Ye gods that comfort hearts of men,
What consolation bring you now?
I call upon you! Come,
And on my longing lips one drop
Of your narcotic pour,
Or plunge me deep beneath the waves
Of Lethe’s sluggish stream,
And to my tortured soul
Send you the balm of sleep once more

She waited while her upraised glance
Searched longingly the vast expanse,
Then turning to the earth below
She cursed her body that had bred such woe:

“On these bright eyes of mine

May blindness steals
And may the bane of deafness
Strike mine ears,
And these enticing braids
Be blasted as with touch of years
Nor would I smile
Nor walk erect,
But bent and crippled be
Till God shall end this misery

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 198–208.

The Mountain—Leon

Ascending, rugged, scarped in limpid air,
Like Ida, this hoar summit seeks the light,
And flings to man a challenge here and there
To dare its awful height;
Like Ida, bearing Zeus upon its breast,
Who brooding groans in thunder
Till the mountain's crest
Has shocked grim earth to wonder
At flash of deadly eyes
That glance o'er Thessaly and rise
To scorn the stars; like Ida here
This god-like peak, intrepid, sheer,
Has thrust itself aloft, sublime and drear.

A comrade of the Moon art thou,
Wedded to lunar charm
The bans are published, and the vow,
She nestles in thine arm,
Caressing thy large virile head,
While on thy breast her prayer is said.
One other! This Moon-soul of thine
Has bred a singer, young, divine,

Who like Minerva climbs thy sides
And with thy love and thee abides.
He bathes himself in lunar light
As on thy crest he rests at night,
And paints his words on fragrant air
With color's magic everywhere.
An Eden midst the crags he sees,
A temple 'mong the storm-tossed trees.
Within his tender, fleeing notes
A soul, complaining, strives to break
The spell of music as it floats
Adrift with griefs which softly make
Harmonics, like the plaintive lute
That wailing tenderly stops mute
And waits the echo of its strain
In dread that it may sigh again.

Immortal are the gods and great;
But he whose tones are big with fate
The knees of Zeus one time embraced
And stroked his chin, then boldly faced
His scowling eyes and sang his song
That deathless through the space along
Hums on mid azures of the sky,
Hums on and on, and does not die,
While birds, enraptured, beat their wings
In harmony with that which sings,
And Zeus, entranced, is listening yet
To music he would fain forget.

Barbaric! Aye, barbaric, rare
These mystic tones of lucid air,

Initial in their greed of sound,
Like Nature in the matrix found,
A wild tattoo of drums that thrill
The dancing goblins of the hill,
Clear trumpet throats upon the height
That lure and charm the soul of night.
A soft, wind-fingered phantom lyre
Sings to the mountain's heart of fire.
Sweet viols and thin reeds love-lorn
Cry out for life and light and dawn,
Faint echoes, like a tale half told,
A child's far whimper in the cold,
The call of ghosts and ghouls, the drear
Dank voice of wind and rain and fear.
Barbaric! Aye, and fierce and clear
Intrinsic Nature lives again
In these high tones of limpid air,
The poet's rapture and despair.

'Twas dawn.

A wild bird scattered pearls of foam
As forth he flew the waste to roam,
Till wed to clouds as white as he,
He saw no more the surging sea.

O Morning!
Crowned with gems of pink and dusk,
Beholding earth with blue-black sinless eyes,
O Morning! redolent with rose and musk,
Bewitched with youth that never dies
Bridesmaid of Night and Day that marry where
The Sun has kissed the Dark's long hair,

Departing with the dallying star,
O Dawn! thou still art not so far
But that to-morrow thou wilt come once more
To ravish hill and vale and shore!

From dawn till in the zenith shone the sun
Young Leon searched for his loved Muse, the one
Fair ideal of his hope, the fire
Of his impassioned strong desire,
And wandering sang:

"O Muse, show me thy face!
To gaze but once into thine eyes
Were essence of a burning bliss.
I ask no greater joy than this,
To gaze but once into thine eyes!"

"And O, to hear but once thy voice
The music it reveals in dreams,
Where myriad-tinted beauty gleams,
To hear but once thy voice!"

"And O, to touch but once thy lips
The perfect flower one instant mine,
Eternal life were then divine
To touch but once thy lips

"'Twas only yesterday," young Leon said,
"And when the sun was mounting high
I met a priestess as she wandered by

And she was veiled. I've never seen before
A garb so strange as that she wore."

When in their witches' webs the spiders swarm,
When lizards seek the sheltering rocks at noon,
When plants droop lazily and hum and sigh,
And Earth in stupor seems about to die,
He sought her lonely home and found her there,
Fearless of light and sun in open air.

"Why have you come?" she asked, "I dwell apart,
Communing with my own sad heart.
For me, alas! mankind is not,
By all the world am I forgot."
"Are you an oracle?" he plead, "a seer?
And can you riddles read and mysteries clear?
You veil your features, which I cannot see,
I pray you, flash their light on me!
A dreamer am I of true dreams and deep,
A goddess comes to me in sleep.
When I awake she steals away.
If I might view her by the light of day,
Like incense would my songs arise
From magic memory of her eyes."

"Is there no means by which to tell
Who she may be that weaves this spell?"

"At night," he answered, "when my soul is free,
At night she smiles and broods o'er me.

I know her longing and despair.
Her reason, rapture—shall I dare
My burning heart lay bare to you
And beg this boon, herself to view?"
"Speak
 on!" she sighed.

"By that strange gift akin to instinct of the birds,
The weal it is of singers, without words
To feel, to see, to hear through naked soul;
Upon creation's verge my love would find its goal!
Since first I saw the stars above
And greeted the forsaken moon,
From far-off altitudes unknown

Have floated magic notes of love,
And vital pictures, color-burned,
I've caught and held, like doves returned.
The ravishment of amorous flowers,
The drone and hum of busy bees,
The chant of pines hard-beat with showers,
The moans and groans of straining seas,
The stress of pinioned winds and gales,
The on-rush, the despair, the wails
Of tempests that a truce refuse
All these, incarnate, are my Muse,
Who, seeing, I have yet not seen,
And hearing, I have yet not heard.
O tell me, woman, priestess, queen,
If from her lips one kiss, one word
May fall on me. Speak! Where, O where,
Is she, the answer to my prayer?"

"What if a curse is on her life/' she said,
"Her beauty withered by the touch of Pan,
Her fatal charm extinguished, dead,
The fire blown out by breath of man
Love cruel may have pierced her heart,
Rejected, wrecked her throbbing brain.
The charms of woman soon depart;
Why think you that from grief and strain
Forth she shall come, unspoiled again?
Still dazzling with Uranian fire,
Time mocking and all vain desire,
Her smiles alive, despising age,
Head held erect, with eyes of rage,
Or joy, outlooking space,
The stellar flames, defying race,
A soul alive with storm and bliss
O tell me, friend, how know you this?"

“A soldier once and now deplored
Her garments’ very hem adored;
Perchance she wrapped his body round
And passion’s subtle witchery found.
A priest debased his ardent soul
And drank the lees of dark despair,
With her in hell he sought his goal
How know you but she’s with him there?

“By dower of her humanity
She should be old and worn and bent,
Her strength, her vanity
By savage time entirely spent,

Her voice the rough, virago breeze
Which croaks and mumbles mid the trees,
Her eyes alone betraying fire
That tells the tale of her desire.

“O bard divine, may she refuse!
Ask not, ask not, to view your Muse,
Lest in the vision music fly
And all the charm of genius die

“Then grief be mine,” he said,
“Loved beauty dumb and music dead!
Then perish all the gods above
If from me flies my Muse, my Love
If her mysterious charm is o’er
And glamour veils the world no more,
Then while I drag my years along
I’ll curse the singer and the song.”

“But man blasts beauty,” she replied,
“The Muse within his arms has died.
As if the holy were a clod,
He blames divinity, or God.
The Bard is man with face reversed,
He upward looks, not down
Upon young Leon’s brow there stole
The shadow of a frown.

“Would you behold your loved Muse now?” she sighs,
And seeks the soul within his eyes.

“Aye, now!”

“In body, face to face?”

“Aye, face to face!”

“O think! your joy may turn to pain,
Your love to hate;
Refrain! I beg of you, refrain!
Nor challenge Fate.”

“No fear have I

“If she find favor in your eyes,
O can you, can you break the spell
And in the fog of grief and sighs
Bid her a long farewell?
In realization let her go,
In memory live the joy, the woe?”

“Aye! all the future shall be this
One hour of rapt and perfect bliss,
One climax shall suffice for me
Through days and years—Eternity!”

’Twas strange, but she, the oracle, the seer,
Was trembling as do poplar leaves, that sheer
With beauty turn their sheen unto the light;
And then she rose to her full, splendid height,
And spake in voice that seemed to moan,
So low and tender was its tone.

“Your Muse, O Bard of mountain crest and sky,
Your Muse, O Leon of the Wilds, am I
Ah, rapture, color, paradise and song!
One kiss ere from your clinging arms I fly
Love, Love, my Love! I’ve waited long.”

She stepped into the day's clear glow,
And with a trembling hand and slow
The veil uplifted that concealed her face,
And then in all the splendor and the grace
Of noon that quivers ere it turns and flies,
She flashed the fire of her mysterious eyes
Full into his, while to her longing breast
She lured him, tenderly, as she caressed
His cheeks, his hair, nor smiling ceased
Till on his ardent lips were pressed
The fiery kisses of the East;

Then drew herself far back, away,
As goes the spirit of the day,
Till vanished save a rose-red gleam
That haunts forever like a dream,
His Circe that his lips had known,
His Muse of Melody had flown
Amid the foliage of the trees
Whose branches like tumultuous seas
Bard
Called "Victory!" to the alone.

Vague time may pass, the day, the night,
And stars spin onward in their flight,
The hours skim by like butterflies
Aflame with joy that seldom dies;
Yet here on Hellas' wooded hill,
Where Pindus sheer, aspiring, true,
Is looming in a waste of blue,
A singer sang and singeth still.

Publication. *Dreams of Hellas and Other Poems* (New York and Los Angeles: Lloyd Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 209–218.

SOURCES AND OPEN ARCHIVE

Primary witnesses and bibliographical evidence

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Colophon

Set in EB Garamond at a six-by-nine-inch trim. The cover uses the user's unlettered Cheney artwork with live edition typography. The 1917 book was reconstructed from the Library of Congress and Cornell scans; narrow-page hanging wraps were rejoined while authorial lineation, stanza spaces, and clear indentation were retained. Archival evidence appears near the front of the book, and publication information follows every poem.