

## *On a Wedding Anniversary*

THE SKY is torn across  
This ragged anniversary of two  
Who moved for three years in tune  
Down the long walks of their vows.

Now their love lies a loss  
And Love and his patients roar on a chain;  
From every true or crater  
Carrying cloud, Death strikes their house.

Too late in the wrong rain  
They come together whom their love parted:  
The windows pour into their heart  
And the doors burn in their brain.

## *There was a Saviour*

THERE was a saviour  
Rarer than radium,  
Commoner than water, crueller than truth;  
Children kept from the sun  
Assembled at his tongue  
To hear the golden note turn in a groove,  
Prisoners of wishes locked their eyes  
In the jails and studies of his keyless smiles.

The voice of children says  
From a lost wilderness  
There was calm to be done in his safe unrest,  
When hindering man hurt  
Man, animal, or bird  
We hid our fears in that murdering breath,  
Silence, silence to do, when earth grew loud,  
In lairs and asylums of the tremendous shout.

There was glory to hear  
In the churches of his tears,  
Under his downy arm you sighed as he struck,  
O you who could not cry  
On to the ground when a man died  
Put a tear for joy in the unearthly flood  
And laid your cheek against a cloud-formed shell:  
Now in the dark there is only yourself and myself.

Two proud, blacked brothers cry,  
Winter-locked side by side,  
To this inhospitable hollow year,  
O we who could not stir  
One lean sigh when we heard  
Greed on man beating near and fire neighbour  
But wailed and nested in the sky-blue wall  
Now break a giant tear for the little known fall,

For the drooping of homes  
That did not nurse our bones,  
Brave deaths of only ones but never found,  
Now see, alone in us,  
Our own true strangers' dust  
Ride through the doors of our unentered house.  
Exiled in us we arouse the soft,  
Unclenched, armless, silk and rough love that breaks all  
rocks.

## *On the Marriage of a Virgin*

WAKING alone in a multitude of loves when morning's light  
Surprised in the opening of her nightlong eyes  
His golden yesterday asleep upon the iris  
And this day's sun leapt up the sky out of her thighs  
Was miraculous virginity old as loaves and fishes,  
Though the moment of a miracle is unending lightning  
And the shipyards of Galilee's footprints hide a navy of  
doves.

No longer will the vibrations of the sun desire on  
Her deepsea pillow where once she married alone,  
Her heart all ears and eyes, lips catching the avalanche  
Of the golden ghost who ringed with his streams her mercury  
bone,  
Who under the lids of her windows hoisted his golden lug-  
gage,  
For a man sleeps where fire leapt down and she learns through  
his arm  
That other sun, the jealous coursing of the unrivalled blood.

*In my Craft or Sullen Art*

IN my craft or sullen art  
Exercised in the still night  
When only the moon rages  
And the lovers lie abed  
With all their griefs in their arms,  
I labour by singing light  
Not for ambition or bread  
Or the strut and trade of charms  
On the ivory stages  
But for the common wages  
Of their most secret heart.

Not for the proud man apart  
From the raging moon I write  
On these spindrift pages  
Nor for the towering dead  
With their nightingales and psalms  
But for the lovers, their arms  
Round the griefs of the ages,  
Who pay no praise or wages  
Nor heed my craft or art.

## *Ceremony After a Fire Raid*

### I

MYSELVES

The grievers

Grieve

Among the street burned to tireless death

A child of a few hours

With its kneading mouth

Charred on the black breast of the grave

The mother dug, and its arms full of fires.

Begin

With singing

Sing

Darkness kindled back into beginning

When the caught tongue nodded blind,

A star was broken

Into the centuries of the child

Myselfs grieve now, and miracles cannot atone.

Forgive

Us forgive

Us your death that myselfs the believers

May hold it in a great flood

Till the blood shall spurt,

And the dust shall sing like a bird

As the grains blow, as your death grows, through our heart.

Crying  
Your dying  
Cry,  
Child beyond cockcrow, by the fire-dwarfed  
Street we chant the flying sea  
In the body bereft.  
Love is the last light spoken. Oh  
Seed of sons in the loin of the black husk left.

II

I know not whether  
Adam or Eve, the adorned holy bullock  
Or the white ewe lamb  
Or the chosen virgin  
Laid in her snow  
On the altar of London,  
Was the first to die  
In the cinder of the little skull,  
O bride and bride groom  
O Adam and Eve together  
Lying in the lull  
Under the sad breast of the head stone  
White as the skeleton  
Of the garden of Eden.

I know the legend  
Of Adam and Eve is never for a second  
Silent in my service  
Over the dead infants  
Over the one  
Child who was priest and servants,

Word, singers, and tongue  
In the cinder of the little skull,  
Who was the serpent's  
Night fall and the fruit like a sun,  
Man and woman undone,  
Beginning crumbled back to darkness  
Bare as the nurseries  
Of the garden of wilderness.

III

Into the organpipes and steeples  
Of the luminous cathedrals,  
Into the weathercocks' molten mouths  
Rippling in twelve-winded circles,  
Into the dead clock burning the hour  
Over the urn of sabbaths  
Over the whirling ditch of daybreak  
Over the sun's hovel and the slum of fire  
And the golden pavements laid in requiems,  
Into the bread in a wheatfield of flames,  
Into the wine burning like brandy,  
The masses of the sea  
The masses of the sea under  
The masses of the infant-bearing sea  
Erupt, fountain, and enter to utter for ever  
Glory glory glory  
The sundering ultimate kingdom of genesis' thunder.



## *Once below a time*

### I

ONCE below a time,  
When my pinned-around-the-spirit  
Cut-to-measure flesh bit,  
Suit for a serial sum  
On the first of each hardship,  
My paid-for slaved-for own too late  
In love torn breeches and blistered jacket  
On the snapping rims of the ashpit,  
In grottoes I worked with birds,  
Spiked with a mastiff collar,  
Tasselled in cellar and snipping shop  
Or decked on a cloud swallower,  
  
Then swift from a bursting sea with bottlecork boats  
And out-of-perspective sailors,  
In common clay clothes disguised as scales,  
As a he-god's paddling water skirts,  
I astounded the sitting tailors,  
I set back the clock faced tailors,  
Then, bushily swanked in bear wig and tails,  
Hopping hot leaved and feathered  
From the kangaroo foot of the earth,  
From the chill, silent centre  
Trailing the frost bitten cloth,  
Up through the lubber crust of Wales  
I rocketed to astonish  
The flashing needle rock of squatters,  
The criers of Shabby and Shorten,  
The famous stitch droppers.

My silly suit, hardly yet suffered for,  
 Around some coffin carrying  
 Birdman or told ghost I hung.  
 And the owl hood, the heel hider,  
 Claw fold and hole for the rotten  
 Head, deceived, I believed, my maker,

The cloud perched tailors' master with nerves for cotton,  
 On the old seas from stories, thrashing my wings,  
 Combing with antlers, Columbus on fire,  
 I was pierced by the idol tailor's eyes,  
 Glared through shark mask and navigating head,  
 Cold Nansen's beak on a boat full of gongs,

To the boy of common thread,  
 The bright pretender, the ridiculous sea dandy  
 With dry flesh and earth for adorning and bed.  
 It was sweet to drown in the readymade handy water  
 With my cherry capped dangler green as seaweed  
 Summoning a child's voice from a webfoot stone,  
 Never never oh never to regret the bugle I wore  
 On my cleaving arm as I blasted in a wave.  
 Now shown and mostly bare I would lie down,  
 Lie down, lie down and live  
 As quiet as a bone.

## *When I Woke*

WHEN I woke, the town spoke.  
Birds and clocks and cross bells  
Dinned aside the coiling crowd,  
The reptile profligates in a flame,  
Spoilers and pokers of sleep,  
The next-door sea dispelled  
Frogs and satans and woman-luck,  
While a man outside with a billhook,  
Up to his head in his blood,  
Cutting the morning off,  
The warm-veined double of Time  
And his scarving beard from a book,  
Slashed down the last snake as though  
It were a wand or subtle bough,  
Its tongue peeled in the wrap of a leaf.

Every morning I make,  
God in bed, good and bad,  
After a water-face walk,  
The death-stagged scatter-breath  
Mammoth and sparrowfall  
Everybody's earth.  
Where birds ride like leaves and boats like ducks  
I heard, this morning, waking,  
Crossly out of the town noises  
A voice in the erected air,  
No prophet-progeny of mine,  
Cry my sea town was breaking.  
No Time, spoke the clocks, no God, rang the bells,  
I drew the white sheet over the islands  
And the coins on my eyelids sang like shells.

*Among those Killed in the Dawn Raid was a  
Man Aged a Hundred*

WHEN the morning was waking over the war  
He put on his clothes and stepped out and he died,  
The locks yawned loose and a blast blew them wide,  
He dropped where he loved on the burst pavement stone  
And the funeral grains of the slaughtered floor.  
Tell his street on its back he stopped a sun  
And the craters of his eyes grew springshoots and fire  
When all the keys shot from the locks, and rang.  
Dig no more for the chains of his grey-haired heart.  
The heavenly ambulance drawn by a wound  
Assembling waits for the spade's ring on the cage.  
O keep his bones away from that common cart,  
The morning is flying on the wings of his age  
And a hundred storks perch on the sun's right hand.

## *Lie Still, Sleep Becalmed*

LIE STILL, sleep becalmed, sufferer with the wound  
In the throat, burning and turning. All night afloat  
On the silent sea we have heard the sound  
That came from the wound wrapped in the salt sheet.

Under the mile off moon we trembled listening  
To the sea sound flowing like blood from the loud wound  
And when the salt sheet broke in a storm of singing  
The voices of all the drowned swam on the wind.

Open a pathway through the slow sad sail,  
Throw wide to the wind the gates of the wandering boat  
For my voyage to begin to the end of my wound,  
We heard the sea sound sing, we saw the salt sheet tell.  
Lie still, sleep becalmed, hide the mouth in the throat,  
Or we shall obey, and ride with you through the drowned.

## *Vision and Prayer*

I

Who  
Are you  
Who is born  
In the next room  
So loud to my own  
That I can hear the womb  
Opening and the dark run  
Over the ghost and the dropped son  
Behind the wall thin as a wren's bone?  
In the birth bloody room unknown  
To the burn and turn of time  
And the heart print of man  
Bows no baptism  
But dark alone  
Blessing on  
The wild  
Child.

I  
Must lie  
Still as stone  
By the wren bone  
Wall hearing the moan  
Of the mother hidden  
And the shadowed head of pain  
Casting to-morrow like a thorn  
And the midwives of miracle sing  
Until the turbulent new born  
Burns me his name and his flame  
And the winged wall is torn  
By his torrid crown  
And the dark thrown  
From his loin  
To bright  
Light.

W h e n  
T h e w r e n  
Bone writhes down  
And the first dawn  
Furied by his stream  
Swarms on the kingdom come  
Of the dazzler of heaven  
And the splashed mothering maiden  
Who bore him with a bonfire in  
His mouth and rocked him like a storm  
I shall run lost in sudden  
Terror and shining from  
The once hooded room  
Crying in vain  
In the caldron  
Of his  
Kiss



I n  
The spin  
Of the sun  
In the spuming  
Cyclone of his wing  
For I was lost who am  
Crying at the man drenched throne  
In the first fury of his stream  
And the lightnings of adoration  
Back to black silence melt and mourn  
For I was lost who have come  
To dumbfounding haven  
And the finding one  
And the high noon  
Of his wound  
Blinds my  
Cry.

There  
Crouched bare  
In the shrine  
Of his blazing  
Breast I shall waken  
To the judge blown bedlam  
Of the uncaged sea bottom  
The cloud climb of the exhaling tomb  
And the bidden dust upsailing  
With his flame in every grain.  
O spiral of ascension  
From the vultured urn  
Of the morning  
Of man when  
The land  
And

The  
Born sea  
Praised the sun  
The finding one  
And upright Adam  
Sang upon origin!  
O the wings of the children!  
The woundward flight of the ancient  
Young from the canyons of oblivion!  
The sky stride of the always slain  
In battle! the happening  
Of saints to their vision!  
The world winding home!  
And the whole pain  
Flows open  
A n d I  
Die.

In the name of the lost who glory in  
The swinish plains of carrion  
Under the burial song  
Of the birds of burden  
Heavy with the drowned  
And the green dust  
And bearing  
The ghost  
From  
The ground  
Like pollen  
On the black plume  
And the beak of slime  
I pray though I belong  
Not wholly to that lamenting  
Brethren for joy has moved within  
The inmost marrow of my heart bone

That he who learns now the sun and moon  
Of his mother's milk may return  
Before the lips blaze and bloom  
To the birth bloody room  
Behind the wall's wren  
Bone and be dumb  
And the womb  
That bore  
For  
All men  
The adored  
Infant light or  
The dazzling prison  
Yawn to his upcoming.  
In the name of the wanton  
Lost on the unchristened mountain  
In the centre of dark I pray him

That he let the dead lie though they moan  
For his briared hands to hoist them  
To the shrine of his world's wound  
And the blood drop's garden  
Endure the stone  
Blind host to sleep  
In the dark  
And deep  
Rock  
Awake  
No heart bone  
But let it break  
On the mountain crown  
Unbidden by the sun  
And the beating dust be blown  
Down to the river rooting plain  
Under the night forever falling.

Forever falling night is a known  
Star and country to the legion  
Of sleepers whose tongue I toll  
To mourn his deluging  
Light through sea and soil  
And we have come  
To know all  
P l a c e s  
W a y s  
M a z e s  
P a s s a g e s  
Quarters and graves  
Of the endless fall.  
Now common lazarus  
Of the charting sleepers prays  
Never to awake and arise  
For the country of death is the heart's size

And the star of the lost the shape of the eyes.  
In the name of the fatherless  
In the name of the unborn  
And the undesirers  
Of midwiving morning's  
Hands or instruments  
O in the name  
Of no one  
Now or  
No  
One to  
Be I pray  
May the crimson  
Sun spin a grave grey  
And the colour of clay  
Stream upon his martyrdom  
In the interpreted evening  
And the known dark of the earth amen.



I turn the corner of prayer and burn  
In a blessing of the sudden  
Sun. In the name of the damned  
I would turn back and run  
To the hidden land  
But the loud sun  
Christens down  
The sky.  
I  
Am found.  
O let him  
Scald me and drown  
Me in his world's wound.  
His lightning answers my  
Cry. My voice burns in his hand.  
Now I am lost in the blinding  
One. The sun roars at the prayer's end.

## *Ballad of the Long-legged Bait*

THE BOWS glided down, and the coast  
Blackened with birds took a last look  
At his thrashing hair and whale-blue eye;  
The trodden town rang its cobbles for luck.

Then good-bye to the fishermanned  
Boat with its anchor free and fast  
As a bird hooking over the sea,  
High and dry by the top of the mast,

Whispered the affectionate sand  
And the bulwarks of the dazzled quay.  
For my sake sail, and never look back,  
Said the looking land.

Sails drank the wind, and white as milk  
He sped into the drinking dark;  
The sun shipwrecked west on a pearl  
And the moon swam out of its hulk.

Funnels and masts went by in a whirl.  
Good-bye to the man on the sea-legged deck  
To the gold gut that sings on his reel  
To the bait that stalked out of the sack,

For we saw him throw to the swift flood  
A girl alive with his hooks through her lips;  
All the fishes were rayed in blood,  
Said the dwindling ships.

Good-bye to chimneys and funnels,  
Old wives that spin in the smoke,  
He was blind to the eyes of candles  
In the praying windows of waves

But heard his bait buck in the wake  
And tussle in a shoal of loves.  
Now cast down your rod, for the whole  
Of the sea is hilly with whales,

She longs among horses and angels,  
The rainbow-fish bend in her joys,  
Floated the lost cathedral  
Chimes of the rocked buoys.

Where the anchor rode like a gull  
Miles over the moonstruck boat  
A squall of birds bellowed and fell,  
A cloud blew the rain from its throat;

He saw the storm smoke out to kill  
With fuming bows and ram of ice,  
Fire on starlight, rake Jesu's stream;  
And nothing shone on the water's face

But the oil and bubble of the moon,  
Plunging and piercing in his course  
The lured fish under the foam  
Witnessed with a kiss.

Whales in the wake like capes and Alps  
Quaked the sick sea and snouted deep,  
Deep the great bushed bait with raining lips  
Slipped the fins of those humpbacked tons

And fled their love in a weaving dip.  
Oh, Jericho was falling in their lungs!  
She nipped and dived in the nick of love,  
Spun on a spout like a long-legged ball

Till every beast blared down in a swerve  
Till every turtle crushed from his shell  
Till every bone in the rushing grave  
Rose and crowed and fell!

Good luck to the hand on the rod,  
There is thunder under its thumbs;  
Gold gut is a lightning thread,  
His fiery reel sings off its flames,

The whirled boat in the burn of his blood  
Is crying from nets to knives,  
Oh the shearwater birds and their boatsized brood  
Oh the bulls of Biscay and their calves

Are making under the green, laid veil  
The long-legged beautiful bait their wives.  
Break the black news and paint on a sail  
Huge weddings in the waves,

Over the wakeward-flashing spray  
Over the gardens of the floor  
Clash out the mounting dolphin's day,  
My mast is a bell-spire,

Strike and smoothe, for my decks are drums,  
Sing through the water-spoken prow  
The octopus walking into her limbs  
The polar eagle with his tread of snow.

From salt-lipped beak to the kick of the stern  
Sing how the seal has kissed her dead!  
The long, laid minute's bride drifts on  
Old in her cruel bed.

Over the graveyard in the water  
Mountains and galleries beneath  
Nightingale and hyena  
Rejoicing for that drifting death

Sing and howl through sand and anemone  
Valley and sahara in a shell,  
Oh all the wanting flesh his enemy  
Thrown to the sea in the shell of a girl

Is old as water and plain as an eel;  
Always good-bye to the long-legged bread  
Scattered in the paths of his heels  
For the salty birds fluttered and fed

And the tall grains foamed in their bills;  
Always good-bye to the fires of the face,  
For the crab-backed dead on the sea-bed rose  
And scuttled over her eyes,

The blind, clawed stare is cold as sleet.  
The tempter under the eyelid  
Who shows to the selves asleep  
Mast-high moon-white women naked

Walking in wishes and lovely for shame  
Is dumb and gone with his flame of brides.  
Sussanah's drowned in the bearded stream  
And no-one stirs at Sheba's side

But the hungry kings of the tides;  
Sin who had a woman's shape  
Sleeps till Silence blows on a cloud  
And all the lifted waters walk and leap.

Lucifer that bird's dropping  
Out of the sides of the north  
Has melted away and is lost  
Is always lost in her vaulted breath,

Venus lies star-struck in her wound  
And the sensual ruins make  
Seasons over the liquid world,  
White springs in the dark.

Always good-bye, cried the voices through the shell,  
Good-bye always for the flesh is cast  
And the fisherman winds his reel  
With no more desire than a ghost.

Always good luck, praised the finned in the feather  
Bird after dark and the laughing fish  
As the sails drank up the hail of thunder  
And the long-tailed lightning lit his catch.

The boat swims into the six-year weather,  
A wind throws a shadow and it freezes fast.  
See what the gold gut drags from under  
Mountains and galleries to the crest!

See what clings to hair and skull  
As the boat skims on with drinking wings!  
The statues of great rain stand still,  
And the flakes fall like hills.

Sing and strike his heavy haul  
Toppling up the boatside in a snow of light!  
His decks are drenched with miracles.  
Oh miracle of fishes! The long dead bite!

Out of the urn the size of a man  
Out of the room the weight of his trouble  
Out of the house that holds a town  
In the continent of a fossil

One by one in dust and shawl,  
Dry as echoes and insect-faced,  
His fathers cling to the hand of the girl  
And the dead hand leads the past,

Leads them as children and as air  
On to the blindly tossing tops;  
The centuries throw back their hair  
And the old men sing from newborn lips:

*Time is bearing another son.  
Kill Time! She turns in her pain!  
The oak is felled in the acorn  
And the hawk in the egg kills the wren.*

He who blew the great fire in  
And died on a hiss of flames  
Or walked on the earth in the evening  
Counting the denials of the grains

Clings to her drifting hair, and climbs;  
And he who taught their lips to sing  
Weeps like the risen sun among  
The liquid choirs of his tribes.

The rod bends low, divining land,  
And through the sundered water crawls  
A garden holding to her hand  
With birds and animals



With men and women and waterfalls  
Trees cool and dry in the whirlpool of ships  
And stunned and still on the green, laid veil  
Sand with legends in its virgin laps

And prophets loud on the burned dunes;  
Insects and valleys hold her thighs hard,  
Time and places grip her breast bone,  
She is breaking with seasons and clouds;

Round her trailed wrist fresh water weaves,  
With moving fish and rounded stones  
Up and down the greater waves  
A separate river breathes and runs;

Strike and sing his catch of fields  
For the surge is sown with barley,  
The cattle graze on the covered foam,  
The hills have footed the waves away,

With wild sea fillies and soaking bridles  
With salty colts and gales in their limbs  
All the horses of his haul of miracles  
Gallop through the arched, green farms,

Trot and gallop with gulls upon them  
And thunderbolts in their manes.  
O Rome and Sodom To-morrow and London  
The country tide is cobbled with towns,

And steeples pierce the cloud on her shoulder  
And the streets that the fisherman combed  
When his long-legged flesh was a wind on fire  
And his loin was a hunting flame

Coil from the thoroughfares of her hair  
And terribly lead him home alive  
Lead her prodigal home to his terror,  
The furious ox-killing house of love.

Down, down, down, under the ground,  
Under the floating villages,  
Turns the moon-chained and water-wound  
Metropolis of fishes,

There is nothing left of the sea but its sound,  
Under the earth the loud sea walks,  
In deathbeds of orchards the boat dies down  
And the bait is drowned among hayricks,

Land, land, land, nothing remains  
Of the pacing, famous sea but its speech,  
And into its talkative seven tombs  
The anchor dives through the floors of a church.

Good-bye, good luck, struck the sun and the moon,  
To the fisherman lost on the land.  
He stands alone at the door of his home,  
With his long-legged heart in his hand.

## *Holy Spring*

O

Out of a bed of love  
When that immortal hospital made one more move to soothe  
The cureless counted body,  
And ruin and his causes  
Over the barbed and shooting sea assumed an army  
And swept into our wounds and houses,  
I climb to greet the war in which I have no heart but only  
That one dark I owe my light,  
Call for confessor and wiser mirror but there is none  
To glow after the god stoning night  
And I am struck as lonely as a holy maker by the sun.

No

Praise that the spring time is all  
Gabriel and radiant shrubbery as the morning grows joyful  
Out of the woebegone pyre  
And the multitude's sultry tear turns cool on the weeping  
wall,  
My arising prodigal  
Sun the father his quiver full of the infants of pure fire,  
But blessed be hail and upheaval  
That uncalm still it is sure alone to stand and sing  
Alone in the husk of man's home  
And the mother and toppling house of the holy spring,  
If only for a last time.

## *Fern Hill*

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs  
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,  
    The night above the dingle starry,  
    Time let me hail and climb  
    Golden in the heydays of his eyes,  
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns  
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves  
    Trail with daisies and barley  
    Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns  
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,  
    In the sun that is young once only,  
    Time let me play and be  
    Golden in the mercy of his means,  
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the  
    calves  
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,  
    And the sabbath rang slowly  
    In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay  
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it  
    was air  
    And playing, lovely and watery  
    And fire green as grass.

And nightly under the simple stars  
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,  
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the night-  
jars  
Flying with the ricks, and the horses  
Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white  
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all  
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,  
The sky gathered again  
And the sun grew round that very day.  
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light  
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking  
warm  
Out of the whinnying green stable  
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house  
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,  
In the sun born over and over,  
I ran my heedless ways,  
My wishes raced through the house high hay  
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows  
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs  
Before the children green and golden  
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would  
take me  
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,  
In the moon that is always rising,

Nor that riding to sleep  
I should hear him fly with the high fields  
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.  
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,  
Time held me green and dying  
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

## *In country sleep*

### I

NEVER and never, my girl riding far and near  
In the land of the hearthstone tales, and spelled asleep,  
Fear or believe that the wolf in a sheepwhite hood  
Loping and bleating roughly and blithely shall leap,  
My dear, my dear,  
Out of a lair in the flocked leaves in the dew dipped year  
To eat your heart in the house in the rosy wood.

Sleep, good, for ever, slow and deep, spelled rare and wise,  
My girl ranging the night in the rose and shire  
Of the hobnail tales: no gooseherd or swine will turn  
Into a homestall king or hamlet of fire  
And prince of ice  
To court the honeyed heart from your side before sunrise  
In a spinney of ringed boys and ganders, spike and burn,

Nor the innocent lie in the rooting dingle wooed  
And staved, and riven among plumes my rider weep.  
From the broomed witch's spume you are shielded by fern  
And flower of country sleep and the greenwood keep.  
Lie fast and soothed,  
Safe be and smooth from the bellows of the rushy brood.  
Never, my girl, until tolled to sleep by the stern

Bell believe or fear that the rustic shade or spell  
Shall harrow and snow the blood while you ride wide and  
near,

For who unmanningly haunts the mountain ravened eaves  
Or skulks in the dell moon but moonshine echoing clear  
From the starred well?  
A hill touches an angel. Out of a saint's cell  
The nightbird lauds through nunneries and domes of leaves

Her robin breasted tree, three Marys in the rays.  
*Sanctum sanctorum* the animal eye of the wood  
In the rain telling its beads, and the gravest ghost  
The owl at its knelling. Fox and holt kneel before blood.  
Now the tales praise  
The star rise at pasture and nightlong the fables graze  
On the lord's-table of the bowing grass. Fear most

For ever of all not the wolf in his baaing hood  
Nor the tusked prince, in the ruttish farm, at the rind  
And mire of love, but the Thief as meek as the dew.  
The country is holy: O bide in that country kind,  
Know the green good,  
Under the prayer wheeling moon in the rosy wood  
Be shielded by chant and flower and gay may you

Lie in grace. Sleep spelled at rest in the lowly house  
In the squirrel nimble grove, under linen and thatch  
And star: held and blessed, though you scour the high four  
Winds, from the dousing shade and the roarer at the latch,  
Cool in your vows.  
Yet out of the beaked, web dark and the pouncing boughs  
Be you sure the Thief will seek a way sly and sure



And sly as snow and meek as dew blown to the thorn,  
This night and each vast night until the stern bell talks  
In the tower and tolls to sleep over the stalls  
Of the hearthstone tales my own, lost love; and the soul  
walks

The waters shorn.

This night and each night since the falling star you were born,  
Ever and ever he finds a way, as the snow falls,

As the rain falls, hail on the fleece, as the vale mist rides  
Through the haygold stalls, as the dew falls on the wind-  
Milled dust of the apple tree and the pounded islands  
Of the morning leaves, as the star falls, as the winged  
Apple seed glides,  
And falls, and flowers in the yawning wound at our sides,  
As the world falls, silent as the cyclone of silence.

II

Night and the reindeer on the clouds above the haycocks  
And the wings of the great roc ribboned for the fair!  
The leaping saga of prayer! And high, there, on the hare-  
Heeled winds the rooks  
Cawing from their black bethels soaring, the holy books  
Of birds! Among the cocks like fire the red fox

Burning! Night and the vein of birds in the winged, sloe  
wrist  
Of the wood! Pastoral beat of blood through the laced  
leaves!

The stream from the priest black wisted spinney and sleeves  
Of thistling frost  
Of the nightingale's din and tale! The upgiven ghost  
Of the dingle torn to singing and the surpliced

Hill of cypresses! The din and tale in the skimmed  
Yard of the buttermilk rain on the pail! The sermon  
Of blood! The bird loud vein! The saga from mermen  
To seraphim  
Leaping! The gospel rooks! All tell, this night, of him  
Who comes as red as the fox and sly as the heeled wind.

Illumination of music! the lulled black-backed  
Gull, on the wave with sand in its eyes! And the foal moves  
Through the shaken greensward lake, silent, on moonshod  
hooves,

In the winds' wakes.  
Music of elements, that a miracle makes!  
Earth, air, water, fire, singing into the white act,

The haygold haired, my love asleep, and the rift blue  
Eyed, in the haloed house, in her rareness and hilly  
High riding, held and blessed and true, and so stilly  
Lying the sky  
Might cross its planets, the bell weep, night gather her eyes,  
The Thief fall on the dead like the willy nilly dew,

Only for the turning of the earth in her holy  
Heart! Slyly, slowly, hearing the wound in her side go  
Round the sun, he comes to my love like the designed snow,  
And truly he  
Flows to the strand of flowers like the dew's ruly sea,  
And surely he sails like the ship shape clouds. Oh he

Comes designed to my love to steal not her tide raking  
Wound, nor her riding high, nor her eyes, nor kindled hair,  
But her faith that each vast night and the saga of prayer

He comes to take

Her faith that this last night for his unsacred sake  
He comes to leave her in the lawless sun awaking

Naked and forsaken to grieve he will not come.

Ever and ever by all your vows believe and fear

My dear this night he comes and night without end my dear

Since you were born:

And you shall wake, from country sleep, this dawn and each  
first dawn,

Your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun.

## *Over Sir John's hill*

OVER Sir John's hill,  
The hawk on fire hangs still;  
In a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk, he pulls to his claws  
And gallows, up the rays of his eyes the small birds of  
the bay  
And the shrill child's play  
Wars  
Of the sparrows and such who swansing, dusk, in wrangling  
hedges.  
And blithely they squawk  
To fiery tyburn over the wrestle of elms until  
The flash the noosed hawk  
Crashes, and slowly the fishing holy stalking heron  
In the river Towy below bows his tilted headstone.

Flash, and the plumes crack,  
And a black cap of jack-  
Daws Sir John's just hill dons, and again the gulled birds  
hare  
To the hawk on fire, the halter height, over Towy's fins,  
In a whack of wind.  
There  
Where the elegiac fisherbird stabs and paddles  
In the pebbly dab-filled  
Shallow and sedge, and 'dilly dilly,' calls the loft hawk,  
'Come and be killed,'  
I open the leaves of the water at a passage  
Of psalms and shadows among the pincer'd sandcrabs  
prancing

And read, in a shell,  
Death clear as a buoy's bell:  
All praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be sung,  
When his viperish fuse hangs looped with flames under the  
    brand  
Wing, and blest shall  
Young  
Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck, 'dilly dilly,  
Come let us die.'  
We grieve as the blithe birds, never again, leave shingle  
    and elm,  
The heron and I,  
I young Aesop fabling to the near night by the dingle  
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distant

Crystal harbour vale  
Where the sea cobbles sail,  
And wharves of water where the walls dance and the white  
    cranes stilt.  
It is the heron and I, under judging Sir John's elmed  
Hill, tell-tale the knelled  
Guilt  
Of the led-astroy birds whom God, for their breast of  
    whistles,  
Have mercy on,  
God in his whirlwind silence save, who marks the sparrows  
    hail,  
For their souls' song.  
Now the heron grieves in the weeded verge. Through  
    windows  
Of dusk and water I see the tilting whispering

Heron, mirrored, go,  
As the snapt feathers snow,  
Fishing in the tear of the Towy. Only a hoot owl  
Hollows, a grassblade blown in cupped hands, in the looted  
elms

And no green cocks or hens

Shout

Now on Sir John's hill. The heron, ankling the scaly  
Lowlands of the waves,  
Makes all the music; and I who hear the tune of the slow,  
Wear-willow river, grave,  
Before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken  
Stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds sailing.