





FOOTSTEPS  
OF THE NIGHT

**POETRY BY ETON LANGFORD**

**Footsteps of the Night (2003)**

**Twelve Seasons (2002)**

**From High Crests (2001)**

**A Place to Bloom (2000)**

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OF THE NIGHT

ETON LANGFORD

Irving Poetry Press

2003

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ISBN-10: 1541178009

ISBN-13: 978-1541178007

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## DEDICATION

Kind reader, though we've been deceived  
In love and life, I'm reassured:  
These rhymes of mine, for you conceived,  
Can stand full proof that we've endured.

Eton Langford



## THE SILENT CLOUD

INCONSUMMATE IN their undying realm,  
Soft rays of light distend and overwhelm  
The modest splendor of the silent cloud,  
Which hurries through without a sigh aloud.

Besought by doubt in his eternal dome,  
The slender angel leaves again his home  
In search of passion wrung from longing hearts  
Which dream, awake, of handsome Cupid's darts.

Again, alone, amiss, afar, aloof,  
The tree of light has pierced the sturdy roof  
Of thick despair and taken from the sky  
What ancient gods had stolen by their lie.

Yet here, below, where nothing bars the way  
Of tepid life on its naïve display,  
The ring of freedom shines celestial peace  
And makes all sadness shrink, decline and cease.

## THE DIVINER

WHEN THE diviner reaches out for truth  
And winds of fury hurry through the plains,  
The youth of summer loses all her gains  
Though love's caresses linger long and smooth.

When time is lost at silly childhood's will  
Or gained again at life's untimely end,  
The heart is keen old sorrows to amend  
Though all this fades and grudges come to nil.

When all seems lost, though much has been regained  
By toil and sweat or at the will of chance,  
The hero's heart is piercèd by the lance  
Of old remorse, confessed anew or feigned.

When joy stands still and anger rises mute  
Against the schemes put forth across its way,  
The lot of man seems dull and merely play  
To those who hear the graveyard's solemn lute.

When the diviner moves unheard until  
The joy of youth is but an old man's pain,  
The wind of death blows out downwind at will:  
The shine of life is washed away by rain.

## BRIDGELESS BOUND

A LONELY path across the hills  
Calls back to me on nights of woe  
In hope that its lost course fulfills  
More needs than even I would know.

A playful glimmer in the vale  
Reminds me cruelly of your life,  
And that I must not ever fail  
To break despair's unwieldy knife.

I pass my days and pine to hear  
The gentle solace of your voice,  
A falling star now chased by fear:  
There's naught in which I can rejoice.

The moon has risen, blushed and set  
More times than I might care to count  
Since you were forced to pay your debt  
To death's unending, bridgeless bound.

And yet, I sense, a trace remains  
Of you, your beauty, and your charm  
And though, admittedly, this pains,  
It also makes life's winter warm.

## ANOTHER SPRING

OUT OF the depth of time foregone  
The light of hope may flicker still,  
Although the charm of youth has come  
Unfelt to bend my strength and will.

Descending, brisker than a hawk  
Whose claws hold fast their aching prey,  
The ghost of dusk may never talk  
If shining dawn has naught to say;

And yet your memory is close—  
Much closer than the road to joy—  
And blooms like autumn's lonely rose  
To challenge winter's frosty ploy.

Away from light, away from all,  
The winds of solitude remain  
The only voices fit to call  
Those whom both grief and time can blame.

A grievous aeon may go by  
Before another spring arrives  
To warm the earth, to kiss the sky  
And call the bees from empty hives.

As yet, the chain of life shall break  
For me, for you, for all we are,  
And scatter us away to make  
More space for younger seeds afar.

## DREAM OF HOPE

THE LIGHT has burned, the rain has fallen thin,  
Blank years have passed since boyhood roamed the streets,  
And youth has died away in grief and sin  
To melt old age and weigh its scattered seeds.

A moth falls captive to a dream of hope  
Which shines unhindered in the listless night,  
Though not a soul has ever stayed afloat  
To see its end or sever wrong from right.

We wake, we breathe, we dream, we fail, we die  
To bear our longings into lasting void,  
Where no one's left to hear the lightest sigh  
Of distant memories, of lives enjoyed.

## WINGS OF SONG

FULL MANY years of hope slipped by  
Before I scrutinized the sky  
And came to learn that I'm alone,  
Though free—at last—to soar and roam

The fated space of destiny,  
Where quests for immortality  
Are set to rise, suspire and fall  
And never hear or heed the call

Of hope, which sprang on wings of song  
And gladly followed me along  
The edge of fate and stream of thought  
Where life is born and dearly bought.

## WOODS OF OLD

FROM DEEP within the winter night  
A voice has wakened and soared high  
With never but a single light  
To shine upon its shriek and cry.

A voice, a heart, a face, a star  
Now roam above the woods of old  
To carry anguished thoughts afar  
Into the storm of ice and cold.

The woods might stir, the embers quake,  
The rills of life can turn to snow  
Far long before the dead can wake  
To deal the living one last blow.

Dull rain falls thick, the moon grows thin,  
The wolves close in around their prey  
While life laments that it has been  
No more than game to hunt and slay.

Another world can rise anew:  
A brighter sun shall reign at last  
Above the bravest and the few  
Who have outdone their bitter past.

## TEARS OF DARKNESS

A NEST of sorrows built in ages past  
Clings tight to branches in the tree of life  
Atop the snowy mountain, where the last  
Warm breath of summer died by winter's knife.

The voice of starlight whispers in the night  
A fairy tale unknown to living men,  
Who turn to blocks of granite at the sight  
Of slothful silence in its wordless den.

All life is dead: the earth is cold and still  
And tears of darkness wet the bloody moon,  
Whose lonely crescent stays unseen until  
Its cup of paleness shatters Hera's noon.

With this, another arc of hope is born,  
Though not a single soul is left to count  
The empty ages, lightless and forlorn,  
As Time drinks deep from Envy's poisoned fount.

## ETERNAL NIGHTS

UNKNOWN TO most, forgotten by the rest,  
Unblemished reason flickers in the night's  
Unending gloom, persistent in its quest  
Until its vigor kindles brighter lights.  
Beset by whispers from a living fold  
Before whose eyes it rises high or falls,  
Bedridden Virtue shivers in the cold  
Beneath the skies where harpies voice their calls.  
Alike, when wolves are cornering their prey  
Against the void which offers no escape,  
A beam of hope announces a new day  
Amid loud calls to end young Beauty's rape.  
    If only fools could speak the wise man's tongue,  
    Eternal nights could never last too long.

## GATE OF MEMORY

THE PAST is present, life and death,  
Upon whose altar passions burn  
And every one, in its own turn,  
Bequeaths to doom its sweetest breath.

When time sinks deep within the mind  
And wakes dim memories of old  
To pine for heartbeats bought or sold,  
A darker place is hard to find.

The moon sails white and cold at night—  
Strange witness to a murdered day—  
And, slithering, thoughts turn away  
From those who deem it wrong or right.

The arrow flies; the quail must fall,  
Or else the hinge of fate breaks loose  
And hangs all creatures by its noose  
Where only winds can hear their call.

Be light the silence of the just  
Or darkness music for the damned,  
The gate of memory is slammed  
Before all who can die or must.

## SONG OF THE LAST BIRD

"I AM alone: the world is dead  
And all its vigor has been bled.  
May trees fill once again the plains  
Where not a single soul remains!"

"The cities have been emptied out  
Of all the men who roamed about  
And whose unsparing, gruesome fight  
Had pitted darkness against light."

"They deemed their earthen realm to be  
Bold proof of their eternity  
And fancied that they still could thrive  
When nothing else was left alive."

"Well here I am: the world's last bird!  
I've seen the fall of their absurd  
Dominion over all the sky  
By their own hands and lurid lie."

“Not long ago I flew above  
The lovely mountains with my love,  
But she is gone. She died in vain  
And nothing fills the air but pain.”

“All I have left to do is wait  
Until I suffer the same fate  
Which killed my kind by sword and flame  
And left me longing, lone and lame.”

“I have been sentenced to live on,  
Though all I treasured is now gone.  
I pour my sorrow out in song  
And pray that death won't tarry long!”

## HIDDEN MEANINGS

A DIM and dying candle; a glass wine, then another;  
A flicker in the mirror and rustling of the leaves  
Bring back to life old mem'ries to torture and to smother  
The mind's uncanny whispers bound tight in withered sheaves.

The distichs of the ancients run down on yellow pages  
Whose murky, hidden meanings the living fear to know,  
As if a curse had covered the writings of the sages,  
On whose unmoving shoulders the world has failed to grow.

The owl's forbidding summons reach out across the valleys  
To kindle back the wisdom and knowledge of the past.  
Alas, the crowds are sailing adrift on wayward galleys  
Whose unsuspecting helmsmen are doomed from first to last.

The candle's wick is failing; the wine is all but finished.  
The wind gives way to silence; the woods are fast asleep.  
My mind falls into darkness, much lessened and diminished,  
And there's no one remaining to mourn for life or weep.

## PASTELS

IT'S when I hear the little birds  
As they chirp carelessly outside  
And leaves still whisper longing words  
That I feel comfort in my hide.

You may be far, but you draw near  
With every drop of sand blown off  
The pedestal of rabid fear,  
Which is like fire breath to the moth.

The sun is weak, our nest is warm  
And seems eternal in the light  
Of playful rays which jump and swarm  
In a pastel of red and white.

I won't let go of you! Instead,  
Your eyes, your hair, your skin, your mind  
Shall linger, as if newly wed  
To my weak soul in deed and kind.

## LADY OF THE SCYTHE

STRONG CLAWS of ice hold fast to barren peaks  
Where bitter winds cry out for life in vain;  
The sun has longed to rise in many lifeless weeks:  
All stars are dim and bleed with blinding pain.

A sleepless night gives way to haunting caws  
Voiced madly when fast wraiths of life are slain  
And blood is spilled by quick and hungry jaws  
Whose callous bites unleash their poisoned aim.

A dirgeful, aged widow stares at graves  
Of guiltless children killed by leaden rain;  
Its piercing drops upswell the sullen waves,  
Whose bleak abyss and curse shall never wane.

The wretched mother lifts her sodden eyes  
And pleads that angels, in their kindness, deign  
To summon pity for her wretched sighs,  
Which pierce the bleak and lifeless night amain.

The Lady of the Scythe, upon her throne,  
Stares down and grins with cold and harsh disdain:  
No tearful gaze can move her, let alone  
Abate Death's lust to glorify her reign.

The mourning woman understands then well  
That all too desperate is her cruel bane:  
With withered hands, she reaches out to Hell  
With a resolve which Life cannot contain.

The snake of Death descends at this request  
And coils around her swiftly like a chain:  
"My queen abides," it hisses, "you may rest  
In her eternal, vast and dark domain."

## NORTHERN NIGHTS

I SEE you longing for the dim and distant past—  
Old memories call out and night envelops you,  
But know this: none of summer's thrills are made to last  
In minds whose rise to calm and truth is overdue.

I know that wine delights the fruit fly in its quest  
For lust and may distract it from a greater love.  
Alike, the slyest man may think that he can rest,  
Each hand within a silken—though unfitting—glove.

The northern nights grow long with every passing week  
While withered leaves are covered by the falling snow  
And old remembrances chase off the peace you seek  
To quell your aching thirst and heal their lasting blow.

To praise the chiefest works of nature would seem dull  
If I, instead, your mien and firmness could well praise,  
Or else pretend that you're a nearly lifeless hull  
To Love herself and to her charm box of displays.

What youth and fate have given us for faithful keeps  
Is now the charming memory of yesternight:  
The golden urn of tears which every mermaid weeps  
Before the dawn of reason sets the mind alight.

Our kingdom, know, extends outside the broken gates  
Of cheap and shrill disdain or un beholden lust,  
Where love can die astray and sorrow hardly waits  
To wreck the ship of hope which duty holds in trust.

We were both doomed to birth and wonder. Beauty dies,  
But do not let your life expire in heavy sighs!

## OATH OF LOVE

OUR LODESTAR'S fragile youth shines brightly in your eyes  
And bears me far, to where no worldly spirit flies  
But only clouds of blinding ecstasy are born  
To awe and overwhelm the knowledge of the wise.

Your graceful hand unveils a realm of fantasy  
Unknown to earthly beings, and whose melody  
Calls out to all I am and lingers in my mind  
Unhindered by the gaze of scrutiny.

A heart which beats must also rest: I do not mind  
Because I've been allowed to know you and to bind  
My fate to yours, on this warm day whose memory  
Shall never wane, nor twin lights fail to find.

Our odyssey begins and may it never end,  
But rather join our hearts and let us both ascend  
Where vatic eagles fly to own the wondrous skies  
And help our wordless song and ceaseless light to blend.

Anew I pledge my burning and lasting soul to you:  
The cosmos is our witness and stars are ever true  
Confessors of our joy. The rainbow is the sign  
Of bliss where it belongs and love where it is due.

## THE NEW MAN

THE REPOSE of the ocean embroiders the skies  
On the ancients' first morning while winter birds rest  
By the limestone cathedral whose luminous rise  
Uncontrollably wrecks the monotonous quest  
Of a vengeful marauder tormenting the wise.

Unannounced, from the winter's unbreakable store,  
The audacious archangel of Doomsday comes down  
To reclaim the unfathomed abysses of lore  
In a tempest of lightning whose terror can drown  
All which stands in its way while death's hungry for more.

When the creature of darkness descends at long last,  
The full vim of all nature awakes with a thud  
And engulfs the proud fiend in a fiery blast  
Whose quick strength, overbearing, envelops in blood  
The scorched earth, while the multitudes scatter aghast.

And thus fell the behemoth, whose quivering wing  
Had been broken with merciless speed by the breath  
Of life's mighty defendant, the king of all kings,  
Who then banished and sentenced to torture and death  
The fair villain, whose downfall announced the first spring.

A new order's assembled but mankind forgets,  
As long centuries pass, the grim battle of old  
While the sea of despair births anew the old threats  
Which had simmered for ages, unfit to unfold  
Their dark wings or to settle for good their old debts.

The new man disbelieves ancient scriptures and tales,  
But the burden of fear has grown deep in his heart:  
The brisk ship of sly knowledge raised anchor and sails  
To the bright constellations—though lacking a chart—  
And the Enemy steers to ensure that it fails.

New Odysseus fancies his future so bold  
That no villain can muster the strength to defeat  
The quick fleet of shrewd science though, deep in the cold  
Of dark space, only art may provide him the wit  
To prevent his vain pride from destroying the world.

## LOVE AND THIRST

YOUR MUCH praised beauty is your greatest weakness, know,  
For time will surely pass and take it all away!  
My love and thirst for you shall never cease to grow,  
Though over time and death I surely have no sway.

You have the chance to live and breathe but so do I,  
Despite the crushing burden on my troubled mind;  
Should I forsake you here and now, or should I vie  
To win your frozen heart anew, and be maligned?

No man should crave a startling gem far past his reach  
And, though I know this well, I lack the will or strength  
To bid you my farewell—alas, I still beseech  
My fate for what cannot be found at any length!

## RESTLESS DREAM

WHEN I was unconsolated, away from you,  
The face of life was but a specter's sight,  
For breathing is what only few can do  
While heart and mind are sinking in the night.

Yet, once, I saw you in a living dream:  
You stroked my hair and held me by your side  
As if you'd been alive! It did not seem  
That thirty years had passed since you had died.

Then, suddenly, I was a child again  
Who felt a joy whose image I had lost  
And knew at once that life births only pain  
If one must live it at a deadly cost.

Now I'm awake again... If only I were not,  
I'd be with you! Yet, surely, time will pass;  
Life's stream will dry; my dull aches rot  
And then I'll be with you again, at last!

## EYE OF REASON

THE OPAL eye of reason glares so bright  
That it turns empty darkness into light.  
Behold: it makes the careless sage go blind;  
The fool is swiftly shattered by its might!

It scorns the beasts and may, in time, refuse  
The humble offering of its quiet muse,  
Who dies of hollow grief full every night  
Upon the vaunted altar of its ruse.

To wit, it dies to live; it lives to die  
And turn the ghastly truth into the fairest lie.  
It strikes with ruthless cunning now and then,  
And kills the ancient gods without a sigh.

It stumbles, falls and rises then again  
To blame its fate upon the lot of men,  
Who stand to gain from it, yet sometimes lose  
Their sense of why or where or what or when.

## MELTING SKY

VAIN PROMISE fills the red and melting sky:  
The sip of vengeance fills its veins of smoke  
When droplets born of profligacy try  
To bind me to its stilted, crippling yoke.

I tasted of its will and felt ashamed  
To carry forth its burden of ill will  
When all the tearful birds were stuffed and framed  
By that grim Architect who bled their trill.

I, like a bird, was bought and sold below  
The deck of shame by traders from the shore  
Who saw in me a scient afterglow  
And maimed me with the symbol of their gore.

The thread of time lay tangled in the tree  
Where Life had once been ambushed and then hanged,  
Yet I resisted all idolatry  
Though love is often cruel and sharply-fanged.

It lifted me away as prize of war  
To lustful heights which I had never known,  
And though I reached Death's cold and leaden door,  
I tore it out and smashed away its bone.

Now all is finished; it has ceased to bite  
The root of passion out of youthful minds  
And, ever lorn, it ran into the night  
Where its lost empire plummets and unwinds.

## CUPID'S DART

I LOST the perspicuity of light  
Upon the altar of the aimless multitude which fled  
To bear and raise on high the solitudinous last kite  
Which spun man's dire philosophy of dread.

It was the serendipity of love  
That shook and tore apart my empty drowsiness at dawn  
Like stilted platitudes brought forward by a sacred dove  
To woodland hills well-guarded by their faun.

As I dozed off I felt, as in a dream,  
The slumber of the soul and mind, the cuckoo clock's demise,  
As they usurped away the ambivalence of a stream  
Which bid me well with tearful, wet goodbyes.

The great utilitarians behind  
The empty transmutation of this living world  
Lapideously crushed to sand this universe confined  
To viper pits where reason dies uncurled.

The peacock is redrawn into pure gold,  
But memories live apprehensive in the boldest heart.  
Shall I refrain from endless change and wither in my mould,  
Or bare my self to Cupid's silvern dart?

## WANING SUN

THE GENTLE ivy reaches for the glowing sky  
Although, full certain, there  
Is nothing it can try  
To make its life precipitous or fair.

The bashful snowflake falls upon a silent stone  
But no one sees it there,  
For it is not alone  
When winter comes and throws it from the air.

The lonely owl may settle in a sturdy fir  
And there await the night  
But, be that as it were,  
It longs to have affinity for light.

The clever fox disdains the hunter's scrutiny,  
Yet quickly gains  
His prized tranquility  
In quiet woods where solace never wanes.

But I, forgotten prisoner of worldly care,  
Have no safe place to run  
Where I might cease to wear  
My crown of thorns below the waxing sun!

## NIGHT OF THE BLIND

IT WAS early in summer and years had elapsed  
Since the birth of my mind, since the days when my care  
Had not grown yet on me and then slowly collapsed  
The frail thread of my hope into listless despair.

I felt old as I walked on the path towards death  
In the depth of my sorrow and into the night  
Where the soul dwells immortal and heats with its breath  
What old memories raise from the grave into light.

I lay softly on grass and fell quickly asleep  
With the world very far, myself hateful of it,  
And I dreamed of a pearl at full rest in the deep  
Of a tomb where no candle of fear can be lit.

All the eons had passed by the time I awoke  
The eternally youthful magician of doom,  
Who beheld me with pity and shattered the yoke  
Which had kept me entranced in my alcove of gloom.

He then gave me his hand and again I arose—  
The last flicker of life and the last of my kind—  
To survey all around me the desolate pose  
Of a universe filled by the night of the blind.

## PETRIFYING WONDER

I SENSE my freedom shackled. In your arms,  
My memories of loneliness shall linger  
Until I cease to breathe, dispirited by harm's  
Last ruse: our immortality's dull singer.

I peer outside my nest of warmth to find  
Some trace of what the world can never sunder,  
But all is gone. Our beauty's clocks unwind,  
Yet time stands still in petrifying wonder.

I fail to see that all I have is you  
And that our love is greater and much deeper  
Than any ocean brimming with the blue  
And salty tears of the eternal weeper.

## SONG OF THE LAST MAN

“IN VAIN does morning chase the night  
And spread around its growing light!  
The darkness of this age draws near  
With nothing to defeat its might.”

“The witless puppets dance in tune  
And laugh out loud, as though immune  
To scorching death rays spreading wide:  
A dark fire’s unforgiving plume.”

“The oceans of the earth are gone;  
No shelter’s left where man can run,  
Nor gods who can forgive him still:  
His gravest misery’s outdone.”

“Left all alone to shriek and die,  
My song of dolour rises high:  
Why was I once condemned to birth?  
There is no hope my tears can buy!”

“The winds of scorching summer blow  
The wistful sand in endless flow  
Which stretches, dune upon a dune,  
Beneath death’s unforgiving glow.”

“Our cities lie all buried deep,  
Entombing in eternal sleep  
Our guiltless children lost to war,  
For whom there’s no one left to weep.”

“I am forlorn beneath the sky:  
My children only lived to die.  
There is no ship to bear me forth  
To distant realms where peace may lie.”

“Humanity—its glory spent  
Upon a boastful firmament  
Of aging ruins drowned by sand—  
Lives out, through me, its last lament.”

“I have no enemy but life,  
No means to end it but the knife,  
And yet for love of life I live,  
Tormented both by peace and strife.”

“A tombstone I shan’t have nor need,  
For I have killed the growing seed  
Of that vile plant which scars the soul  
And blossoms into guilt and greed.”

“Another if I only had  
To keep in kindness, I’d be glad,  
Yet all my kind have long dispersed  
Within the kingdom of the mad.”

“No matter! I was meant for birth:  
Regret is but of little worth  
As long as I am able still  
To roam and breathe upon this earth.”

“As long as my weak eyes can see,  
Much time is left before the fee  
To my dark angel must be paid:  
There’s freedom in my thirst to be!”

## FANTASIES OF YOUTH

I BURIED death and summoned truth  
Upon my youthful summer's shore,  
Where pleasant waves kept rolling smooth  
Like dreams I'd never had before.

I drank of love, I crumpled hate  
And stripped my mind of all its past,  
But never did I brave my fate  
Before my fear had breathed its last.

The road was dark, the mountains steep,  
And I knew nothing of the world  
Until, at last, I learned to keep  
Fair count of rain drops in the cold.

The years have passed, the tears have dried,  
But naught shall ever feel the same:  
The fantasies of youth have died  
Upon a catafalque of shame.

## REMINISCENCE

AS LIFE departs and night unfolds its wings  
To fly across the earth and never then return,  
It leaves behind the thoughts which autumn brings  
When minds grow dark with fear and ancient passions burn.

The rose which blossomed long ago is dead  
And winter grows impatient waiting at the door  
While hearts still crave the words of love once said  
On warm and restful days upon the ocean shore.

The curtain falls. The birds have flown away,  
But memories live on and linger in my mind,  
Whose dreams grow stronger for another day  
When bashful hope and peace discover their own kind.

## FOOTSTEPS OF THE NIGHT

A SHREWD dilemma lingers in my mind  
And calls me out to trace the footsteps of the night  
Where memories dare never go and where the might  
Of fear disturbs the silence of the blind.

On secret paths where love ascends in vain  
To draw the stars and moon in unafflicted hue,  
Your eyes and thoughts still follow me, although their view  
Reminds me of the day my heart was slain.

At once I turn around: I see your face  
Enveloped in the mist of tearful years gone by  
And kiss you tenderly, but then I see you sigh  
And join the cold enormity of space.

## THE ELDER TREE

OH, LINGER still, my mother! The trail of fallen leaves  
Has called me to your gravestone, where cold and leaden sheaves  
Of agony surround me: just yesterday you were  
With me, yet now you're covered by earth's uncaring fur!

Embrace me now, my children! My life shall be too brief  
For you to learn my story and catch that hurried thief  
Who lingers in the shadows: one day you'll be like me,  
You'll watch how time defeats life and cruelly sets it free.

You'll visit me with longing beneath the elder tree  
And call me from the dark whence my mother calls for me:  
The leaves shall fall upon me a blanket in the cold,  
Yet I shall ever cherish their everlasting fold.

## RESTLESS WINGS

I FOUND you sleeping on a bed of flowers  
And breathed at length the mist of dew showers  
Which bore your lasting scent on restless wings  
Within my lustful heart and heaven's rings.

You raised your head at once and grasped my hand  
While seagulls trod upon the silken sand:  
A smile, a kiss and, unawares, I sold  
My lasting soul and mind a thousand fold.

Although I knew that jewels dearly bought  
Can be most swiftly lost and cruelly wrought  
Into an instrument of loss, I sighed  
And gave myself to blooming beauty's tide.

Now all that's left is but a memory  
Whose distant sight and calm serenity  
Reminds me of our love: the die is cast,  
But I still own one thing: our treasured past.

## THE GREAT PLAINS

AGAIN WE stand atop the ancient mound  
Where ancestors and kings of men once fought  
For their descendants dreadful wars and bought  
This land of peaceful glory free of bound.

Wild horses roam these plains beneath the sky  
And search, with longing, for the limpid lake  
Where mountains challenge the divine mistake  
Of leaving time for lovers to defy.

These grasses grow together: you and I  
Know well how gentle are the flowing tunes  
Of sprightly winds which bear away the plumes  
Which once adorned the firebirds in the rye.

A lonely oak resigns itself to rain,  
Whose drops descend to kiss the holy dust  
And then I understand: though die we must,  
A dream of love is worth all future pain.

## DORMANT HILLS

WHEN THE horizon births its waves of endless calm,  
The birds impart their song  
A hope which carries them along  
The quiet river bound to teach them Flora's candid psalm.

A rising murmur born at night's refreshing bid  
Descends upon the vale  
And soothes to sleep the nested quail  
While silence reigns above the shrubs where lazy turtles hid.

A gentle mist descends upon the dormant hills.  
These deepest woods  
Where clever owls abscond their broods  
Lie undisturbed and challenge life as lasting Nature wills.

## THE WAKEFUL MIND

IN ANCIENT times, when light was young and stars were dim,  
The flicker of man's timid mind awoke  
To fight both fate and godly whim,  
And strive to break the yoke  
Which burdened him.

He forged the blade of night within the mountains' hold,  
Where wraiths had reigned for dreadful years  
And spirits withered in the cold,  
Enslaved by bitter fears  
A thousand fold.

Today the gods are gone; the wakeful mind remains  
To hide the blade from warring knaves and thieves  
But hate, demurring, slyly feigns  
Assent and slowly weaves  
Our sturdy chains.

## RUBIES OF THE EARTH

THE BLOOD of embers, rubies of the earth,  
Unlocks the learning trapped within the bark  
Of the anointed fir, whose striking girth  
Hides, deep within, the spirit of the lark.

A dying sun projects its waning rays  
Into the grotto dug by lifeless streams  
Where evil tortures in such frightful ways  
The drops of water shed by hollow beams.

No sound escapes the void, where ice and storm  
Embrace the forest far from any man  
Who could perturb life's harmony and flow  
Far more than any other creature can.

The winter has no end; the birds fall dead  
And clouds of soot have risen to the sky.  
The hope of all the living has been bled  
Into a silent pool, but no one's left to cry.

## DREAM CATCHER

COLD MEMORIES, disdainful of their owners,  
Escaped to hell in search of a new host  
So that no living man can ever boast  
That callous thoughts are hidden in its corners.

This strange event was witnessed by so many,  
That even mad men who'd torn out their eyes  
Could see through the full panoply of lies  
Proclaimed by fools and hardly worth a penny.

They took their matter to the closest court  
For reparations and acknowledgment,  
But soon were in a strange predicament  
When their dream catcher failed to show support.

Ensnared by the necessity of hope,  
They shunned the past and occupied the void  
For all eternity, much like a herd deployed  
Without a shepherd, patriarch or pope.

## DROWNING

I CANNOT rise; I feel that every breath  
Pulls me away from life and that I fall  
Into paralysis, whence only death  
Can save me at long last and hear my call.

I know that evil eyes are watching me  
And waiting for the ocean's brine to fill  
My weary lungs, until my thirst to be  
Is smothered by cold claws that reach for kill.

I look beneath: I see the gaping doom  
As currents draw me to the ocean floor,  
And then I know that I'm within the womb  
Of an old demon plunging to earth's core.

Is there no hope for me? Is this the end?  
My eyes are gasping, yet I barely see  
The sky at all, and how its colors blend  
With those of Death, his eyes affixed on me.

My life behind, I understand at last  
That I have been deceived and tortured all along:  
Relief was never near. What time I passed  
In carefree joy or even bliss among

The earth's dull-witted creatures was ordained  
To be forgotten, swallowed by regret.  
What I had ever cherished, even gained  
Was naught when faced with evil's certain bet.

The waters close above! The great abyss  
Embraces me and pulls me down beneath  
The curtain of the waves, whose final kiss  
Remains behind: my final trace and wreath.

## MEMORIES OF BRASS

THICK, RUSTY branches plunge beneath the growth  
Of longing thoughts commended by the rain  
And, though their erudite discoveries are vain,  
The autumn breeze is fond of reaching both.

The fog itself is better suited still  
To cling unto the memories of brass  
Whose unsubdued progenitors are crass  
But, in the end, it bends to no one's will.

A heavy dome of platitude protects  
The pond of molten intrigue caught askance  
By the eclipse of rationality, whose lance  
Has cleaved all passions into warring sects.

For now, the string of similes may hold:  
There are no specters rising from the crypt  
Of restive creatures whose black wings were clipped,  
Yet life must rise and then be duly sold.

## OUR SUMMER'S RAIN

AM I awake? The pines stand sullen witnesses to winter's reign  
And snow falls thick upon my memories of your forgetful love.  
The wind blows wild across the desolation of our longing past  
And I dare ask myself: Are hearts but saplings born from hatred's vein,  
Or can the waning sun and dying birds—which crave us from above—  
Revive the dormant grass of distant spring before we breathe our last?

I venture out of the abyss and search anew for thoughts I cannot find—  
The numbing music of our summer's rain outside the fallen gate  
Of wasted pride. The mind's old codex—once unburdened by the ink  
Which traced our fate—begins to burn away and scatter far behind  
My own reflection. Falling prey to men who watch us from above and wait  
For our demise, I turn to rain, dissolve myself and slowly sink.

## CRANES

WHEN CRANES fled south from winter's winds  
I thought of you. The hills were bare  
And I was haunted by the stare  
Sprung from the sockets of dead fiends.

Can love return? Mine cannot wait  
For ancient strings to bend and sing  
Of old dreams shattered by the wing  
Whose sunken span enslaved our fate.

The filter of my sight turns green  
When passing notes evoke the ark  
Which rose to hit the missing mark  
Of solitude and of its sheen.

The labyrinth where you are still  
Pursuing shadows in the mist  
Or adding penance to the list  
Of your despair has its own will.

The end of days draws ever near  
And the brief song of youth shall die.  
Could hope start growing if the sigh  
Of life unspent is drowned by fear?

## PRINCE OF GOBLINS

THERE WAS a heavy mist of madness  
Within the sacred forest where I slept  
And, all around me, quiet fireflies kept  
A lazy count of layered sadness.

The owl awoke from dreams of morrows  
Unhinged by fantasies of wings  
While yuletide rushed: life always sings  
And, manifestly, lends and borrows.

I ran and hid behind some arches  
Left standing, for I could not bear  
To linger by the crevice where  
The deathly prince of goblins marches.

And then I saw him: pale as winter,  
His ruggèd robes like midnight's orb  
Ascending, hungry to absorb  
The frosty sunlight growing fainter.

I stood unmoved, but he was clever  
And turned his eyes, which met my own.  
I pried into his heart of stone;  
My trust in life began to waiver.

I rushed in the cold lake's direction.  
The water, dark and deep, lay still;  
I leaned above it from the hill:  
The face I saw was his reflection.

## SAND CASTLES

LET US stand where the desert descends to the sea,  
And sand castles won't crumble when memories rain!  
Our bright light is beginning to burn into pain  
That our dreams cannot grow like young leaves on a tree.

The young sapling we watered is dying. The sun  
Is far darker than pitch, and the moon is asleep  
Above us, and I marvel how long and how deep  
Is the canyon shielding young souls when they're gone.

My dull middays seem bleaker than night, and I blink  
As grey blindness envelops my mind, for I know  
That your shadow is brighter than life and its glow  
When to feel is a curse and far worse than to think.

## AGING SUN

UPON THE altitude of light  
An aging sun begins to shred  
Its full eternity of might  
Whose claim to lightning has been bled.

When the apostasy descends  
To shatter marble into dust,  
Its cataracted signage blends  
With amplitudes of pain and lust.

A restless pontifex of hope  
Has been anointed by the crowd,  
But he is destined to elope  
With tarnished words repressed aloud.

The shore of emptiness is built  
With bricks of lettered journeys spent  
Around the leverage of silt,  
Upon the bridges of the bent.

## TREE OF DESTINY

TO LINGER in the midst of life,  
We braved the world and seldom thought again  
Of what befits the listless knife  
Which shreds simplicities of what and when.

Below the cavalcade of souls  
Which drowns the eminence of filtered light,  
The cusp of heritable goals  
Destroys and births again the sashes of the night.

You lived? I died? It matters not  
To stronger men who maimed and cruelly shrugged  
Away our minds to save their lot:  
The tree of destiny was felled and logged.

## DYNASTY OF FOSSILS

THE MODEST monkey crucified at dawn  
For riding centaurs through the gates of hell  
Is hardly better than the frigid faun  
Whose shameful face adorns Miranda's well.

A dynasty of fossils buried deep  
Beneath the soil of great amoebic fame  
May represent a fretful, cosmic leap  
In life's unending, unforgiving game.

Against the tragic actions of the horse  
Which killed the raven and deceived the fox,  
Life pits young cannibals who carry forth  
Man's criminal affair to please the rocks.

Though levitation saved the prophet once  
When the volcano burst with burning force,  
We shouldn't think that cobras like to dance  
Or that life's music cannot make death worse.

## EYE OF LIGHT

I MOVE delicacies within the eye of light,  
Where dull contingencies of midnight linger  
Like dry opinions belabored by the blight  
Of morbid seasons strung by graveyard singers.

I chase the platitudes of life until I find  
The shell of your anatomy in wedges  
Of the eternal and subversive mind  
Which overcomes the temper of the ages.

I bear the burden of the unborn spring,  
Which must delay catastrophes whose gender  
Delay obscure divinities who sing  
Dry vespers to your absolute pretender.

I burn my hopes upon a pyre of dread  
While touching the unseen with pious wonder,  
And yet I mourn and mourn the days which fled  
Away when dimmer worlds were torn asunder.

## FACE OF THE NIGHT

ALLOW ME to draw the wan face of the night  
When light wants to chase it and evening collides  
With lonesome emotions long kept in the sight  
Of nymphs who can dream of what fortune betides!

Once trees have extended their sorrowful arms  
To cradle your face in the warmth of my love,  
The life of this earth can bewitch me with charms  
Which lend me your vision's descent from above.

Your warmth wraps around me like mist on the clines  
Of time's undefended and luminous quest;  
I float in the air as I long for the wines  
Whose poisonous madness have laid you to rest.

## EDGE OF LIFE

I STAND upon the edge of life and think:  
Are love and hope condemned to drown and sink  
At hatred's hand within a deep abyss  
Where hopeful minds and thoughts all go amiss?

If our short fate be thus decided then,  
May our two hearts both stand united when  
We linger still to dodge this distant foe,  
Though mankind surely can't escape its blow!

And when the cold embrace of death enshrouds  
Our souls and carries them away on clouds  
Of darkness, let the universe receive  
Our ashes, proof that we now love and live!

## WORDS TO DIVINITY

THE BALD academy of drunken vultures meets at dawn  
Before a planetary wasteland on their flattened earth,  
To judge both arsonist and prophet for their lack of worth  
And watch the lustful bishop sodomize his pawn.

A predatory hunger for disaster looms aloof  
While restless, dull tranquility consumes the archers' hunt  
And spews bizarre chronologies whose quick and blunt  
Divorce from life is stamped beneath Thy unicornal hoof.

Allow Thyself to die with poise and pride: the world is Thine  
As long as mummies lie forgetful in their tomb  
Or ancestors haunt women's dreams to maul their womb:  
I may not get my due revenge, but prosody is Mine!

## BIRD OF HOPE

YOUR TENDER voice, full ransom for my greed,  
Must now relearn the sirens' song and grow  
To be the slim façade of Hermes and his need  
To bathe our world in a chromatic glow.

The hibernation of the hostile crowd  
Gave birth to a democracy of taste  
Which mutilates the eye and dons the proud  
In full, grotesque eternity and waste.

You wish to leave this earth and me behind,  
But did you see the bird of hope take flight  
As Chronos slept? Our clocks unwind  
And, lest we stay and wait, we lose our sight!

