



Poems And Ballads

(First Series)

**Algernon Charles
Swinburne**

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A Ballad Of Life

I found in dreams a place of wind and flowers, Full of sweet
trees and colour of glad grass, In midst whereof there was
A lady clothed like summer with sweet hours.
Her beauty, fervent as a fiery moon, Made my blood burn
and swoon Like a flame rained upon.
Sorrow had filled her shaken eyelids' blue,
And her mouth's sad red heavy rose all through Seemed sad
with glad things gone.

She held a little cithern by the strings, Shaped heartwise,
strung with subtle-coloured hair Of some dead lute-player
That in dead years had done delicious things.
The seven strings were named accordingly; The first string
charity, The second tenderness,
The rest were pleasure, sorrow, sleep, and sin,
And loving-kindness, that is pity's kin And is most pitiless.

There were three men with her, each garmented With gold
and shod with gold upon the feet; And with plucked ears of
wheat
The first man's hair was wound upon his head.
His face was red, and his mouth curled and sad; All his gold
garment had Pale stains of dust and rust.
A riven hood was pulled across his eyes;
The token of him being upon this wise Made for a sign of
Lust.

The next was Shame, with hollow heavy face
Coloured like green wood when flame kindles it.
He hath such feeble feet
They may not well endure in any place.

His face was full of grey old miseries,
And all his blood's increase
Was even increase of pain.

The last was Fear, that is akin to Death;
He is Shame's friend, and always as Shame saith
Fear answers him again.

My soul said in me; This is marvellous,
Seeing the air's face is not so delicate
Nor the sun's grace so great,
If sin and she be kin or amorous.

And seeing where maidens served her on their knees,
I bade one crave of these
To know the cause thereof.

Then Fear said: I am Pity that was dead.

And Shame said: I am Sorrow comforted.
And Lust said: I am Love.

Thereat her hands began a lute-playing
And her sweet mouth a song in a strange tongue;
And all the while she sung

There was no sound but long tears following
Long tears upon men's faces waxen white
With extreme sad delight.
But those three following men

Became as men raised up among the dead;

Great glad mouths open and fair cheeks made red
With child's blood come again.

Then I said: Now assuredly I see
My lady is perfect, and
transfigureth
All sin and sorrow and death,
Making them fair as her own eyelids be,
Or lips wherein my whole soul's life abides;
Or as her sweet
white sides
And bosom carved to kiss.
Now therefore, if her pity further me,
Doubtless for her sake all my days shall be
As righteous as
she is.

Forth, ballad, and take roses in both arms,
Even till the top
rose touch thee in the throat
Where the least thornprick harms;
And girdled in thy golden
singing-coat,
Come thou before my lady and say this;
Borgia, thy gold
hair's colour burns in me,
Thy mouth makes beat my blood
in feverish rhymes;
Therefore so many as these roses
be,
Kiss me so many times.
Then it may be, seeing how sweet she is,
That she will stoop
herself none otherwise
Than a blown vine-branch doth,
And
kiss thee with soft laughter on thine eyes,
Ballad, and on thy
mouth.

A Ballad Of Death

Kneel down, fair Love, and fill thyself with tears,
Girdle thyself with sighing for a girth
Upon the sides of mirth,
Cover thy lips and eyelids, let thine ears
Be filled with rumour of people sorrowing;
Make thee soft raiment out of woven sighs
Upon the flesh to cleave,
Set pains therein and many a grievous thing,
And many sorrows after each his wise
For armlet and for gorget and for sleeve.

O Love's lute heard about the lands of death,
Left hanged upon the trees that were therein;
O Love and Time and Sin,
Three singing mouths that mourn now underbreath,
Three lovers, each one evil spoken of;
O smitten lips wherethrough this voice of mine
Came softer with her praise;
Abide a little for our lady's love.
The kisses of her mouth were more than wine,
And more than peace the passage of her days.
O Love, thou knowest if she were good to see.
O Time, thou shalt not find in any land
Till, cast out of thine hand,
The sunlight and the moonlight fail from thee,
Another woman fashioned like as this.
O Sin, thou knowest that all thy shame in her
Was made a goodly thing;
Yea, she caught Shame and shamed him with her kiss,
With her fair kiss, and lips much lovelier
Than lips of amorous roses in late spring.

By night there stood over against my bed
Queen Venus with a hood striped gold and black,
Both sides drawn fully back
From brows wherein the sad blood failed of red,
And temples drained of purple and full of death.
Her curled hair had the wave of sea-water
And the sea's gold in it.
Her eyes were as a dove's that sickeneth.
Strewn dust of gold she had shed over her,

And pearl and purple and amber on her feet.

Upon her raiment of dyed sendaline
Were painted all the secret ways of love
And covered things thereof,
That hold delight as grape-flowers hold their wine;
Red mouths of maidens and red feet of doves,
And brides that kept within the bride-chamber
Their garment of soft shame,
And weeping faces of the wearied loves
That swoon in sleep and awake wearier,
With heat of lips and hair shed out like flame.

The tears that through her eyelids fell on me
Made mine own bitter where they ran between
As blood had fallen therein,
She saying; Arise, lift up thine eyes and see
If any glad thing be or any good
Now the best thing is taken forth of us;
Even she to whom all praise
Was as one flower in a great multitude,
One glorious flower of many and glorious,
One day found gracious among many days:

Even she whose handmaiden was Love—to whom
At kissing times across her stateliest bed
Kings bowed themselves and shed
Pale wine, and honey with the honeycomb,
And spikenard bruised for a burnt-offering;
Even she between whose lips the kiss became
As fire and frankincense;
Whose hair was as gold raiment on a king,
Whose eyes were as the morning purged with flame,
Whose eyelids as sweet savour issuing thence.

Then I beheld, and lo on the other side
My lady's likeness crowned and robed and dead.
Sweet still, but now not red,
Was the shut mouth whereby men lived and died.
And sweet, but emptied of the blood's blue shade,
The great curled eyelids that withheld her eyes.
And sweet, but like spoilt gold,
The weight of colour in her tresses weighed.
And sweet, but as a vesture with new dyes,
The body that was clothed with love of old.

Ah! that my tears filled all her woven hair
And all the hollow bosom of her gown—
Ah! that my tears ran down
Even to the place where many kisses were,
Even where her parted breast-flowers have place,
Even where they are cloven apart—who knows not this?
Ah! the flowers cleave apart
And their sweet fills the tender interspace;
Ah! the leaves grown thereof were things to kiss
Ere their fine gold was tarnished at the heart.

Ah! in the days when God did good to me,
Each part about her was a righteous thing;
Her mouth an almsgiving,
The glory of her garments charity,
The beauty of her bosom a good deed,
In the good days when God kept sight of us;
Love lay upon her eyes,
And on that hair whereof the world takes heed;
And all her body was more virtuous
Than souls of women fashioned otherwise.

Now, ballad, gather poppies in thine hands
And sheaves of brier and many rusted sheaves
Rain-rotten in rank lands,
Waste marigold and late unhappy leaves
And grass that fades ere any of it be mown;
And when thy bosom is filled full thereof
Seek out Death's face ere the light altereth,
And say "My master that was thrall to Love
Is become thrall to Death."
Bow down before him, ballad, sigh and groan,
But make no sojourn in thine outgoing;
For haply it may be
That when thy feet return at evening
Death shall come in with thee.

Laus Veneris

Lors dit en plourant; Hélas trop malheureux homme et maudict pescheur, oncques ne verrai-je clémence et miséricorde de Dieu. Ores m'en irai-je d'icy et me cacherai dedans le mont Horsel, en requérant de faveur et d'amoureuse merci ma douce dame Vénus, car pour son amour serai-je bien à tout jamais damné en enfer. Voicy la fin de tous mes faicts d'armes et de toutes mes belles chansons. Hélas, trop belle estoyt la face de ma dame et ses yeulx, et en mauvais jour je vis ces chouses-là. Lors's'en alla tout en gémissant et se retourna chez elle, et là vescu tristement en grand amour près de sa dame. Puis après advint que le pape vit un jour esclater sur son baston force belles fleurs rouges et blanches et maints boutons de feuilles, et ainsi vit-il reverdir toute l'escorce. Ce dont il eut grande crainte et moult's'en esmut, et grande pitié lui prit de ce chevalier qui's'en estoyt départi sans espoir comme un homme misérable et damné. Doncques envoya force messaigers devers luy pour le ramener, disant qu'il aurait de Dieu grace et bonne absolution de son grand pesché d'amour. Mais oncques plus ne le virent; car toujours demeura ce pauvre chevalier auprès de Vénus la haulte et forte déesse ès flancs de la montagne amoureuse.

Livre des grandes merveilles d'amour, escript en latin et en françoys par Maistre Antoine Gaget. 1530.

LAUS VENERIS

Asleep or waking is it? for her neck,
Kissed over close, wears yet a purple speck
Wherein the pained blood falters and goes out;
Soft, and stung softly—fairer for a fleck.

But though my lips shut sucking on the place,
There is no vein at work upon her face;
Her eyelids are so peaceable, no doubt
Deep sleep has warmed her blood through all its ways.

Lo, this is she that was the world's delight;
The old grey years were parcels of her might;The strewings
of the ways wherein she trod
Were the twain seasons of the day and night.

Lo, she was thus when her clear limbs enticed
All lips that now grow sad with kissing Christ,Stained with
blood fallen from the feet of God,
The feet and hands whereat our souls were priced.
Alas, Lord, surely thou art great and fair.
But lo her wonderfully woven hair!And thou didst heal us
with thy piteous kiss;
But see now, Lord; her mouth is lovelier.

She is right fair; what hath she done to thee?
Nay, fair Lord Christ, lift up thine eyes and see;Had now
thy mother such a lip—like this?
Thou knowest how sweet a thing it is to me.

Inside the Horsel here the air is hot;
Right little peace one hath for it, God wot;The scented
dusty daylight burns the air,
And my heart chokes me till I hear it not.

Behold, my Venus, my soul's body, lies
With my love laid upon her garment-wise,Feeling my love in
all her limbs and hair

And shed between her eyelids through her eyes.

She holds my heart in her sweet open hands
Hanging asleep; hard by her head there stands, Crowned
with gilt thorns and clothed with flesh like fire,
Love, wan as foam blown up the salt burnt sands—

Hot as the brackish waifs of yellow spume
That shift and steam—loose clots of arid fume
From the sea's panting mouth of dry desire;
There stands he, like one labouring at a loom.
The warp holds fast across; and every thread
That makes the woof up has dry specks of red; Always the
shuttle cleaves clean through, and he
Weaves with the hair of many a ruined head.

Love is not glad nor sorry, as I deem;
Labouring he dreams, and labours in the dream, Till when
the spool is finished, lo I see
His web, reeled off, curls and goes out like steam.

Night falls like fire; the heavy lights run low,
And as they drop, my blood and body so
Shake as the flame shakes, full of days and hours
That sleep not neither weep they as they go.

Ah yet would God this flesh of mine might be
Where air might wash and long leaves cover me, Where

tides of grass break into foam of flowers,
Or where the wind's feet shine along the sea.

Ah yet would God that stems and roots were bred
Out of my weary body and my head, That sleep were sealed
upon me with a seal,
And I were as the least of all his dead.

Would God my blood were dew to feed the grass,
Mine ears made deaf and mine eyes blind as glass, My body
broken as a turning wheel,
And my mouth stricken ere it saith Alas!
Ah God, that love were as a flower or flame,
That life were as the naming of a name, That death were not
more pitiful than desire,
That these things were not one thing and the same!

Behold now, surely somewhere there is death:
For each man hath some space of years, he saith, A little
space of time ere time expire,
A little day, a little way of breath.

And lo, between the sundawn and the sun,
His day's work and his night's work are undone; And lo,
between the nightfall and the light,
He is not, and none knoweth of such an one.

Ah God, that I were as all souls that be,

As any herb or leaf of any tree,As men that toil through
hours of labouring night,
As bones of men under the deep sharp sea.

Outside it must be winter among men;
For at the gold bars of the gates againI heard all night and
all the hours of it
The wind's wet wings and fingers drip with rain.

Knights gather, riding sharp for cold; I know
The ways and woods are strangled with the snow;And with
short song the maidens spin and sit
Until Christ's birthnight, lily-like, arow.
The scent and shadow shed about me make
The very soul in all my senses ache;The hot hard night is
fed upon my breath,
And sleep beholds me from afar awake.

Alas, but surely where the hills grow deep,
Or where the wild ways of the sea are steep,Or in strange
places somewhere there is death,
And on death's face the scattered hair of sleep.

There lover-like with lips and limbs that meet
They lie, they pluck sweet fruit of life and eat;But me the
hot and hungry days devour,
And in my mouth no fruit of theirs is sweet.

No fruit of theirs, but fruit of my desire,
For her love's sake whose lips through mine respire; Her
eyelids on her eyes like flower on flower,
Mine eyelids on mine eyes like fire on fire.

So lie we, not as sleep that lies by death,
With heavy kisses and with happy breath; Not as man lies
by woman, when the bride
Laughs low for love's sake and the words he saith.

For she lies, laughing low with love; she lies
And turns his kisses on her lips to sighs, To sighing sound of
lips unsatisfied,
And the sweet tears are tender with her eyes.
Ah, not as they, but as the souls that were
Slain in the old time, having found her fair; Who, sleeping
with her lips upon their eyes,
Heard sudden serpents hiss across her hair.

Their blood runs round the roots of time like rain:
She casts them forth and gathers them again; With nerve
and bone she weaves and multiplies
Exceeding pleasure out of extreme pain.

Her little chambers drip with flower-like red,
Her girdles, and the chaplets of her head, Her armlets and
her anklets; with her feet
She tramples all that winepress of the dead.

Her gateways smoke with fume of flowers and fires,
With loves burnt out and unassuaged desires; Between her
lips the steam of them is sweet,
The languor in her ears of many lyres.

Her beds are full of perfume and sad sound,
Her doors are made with music, and barred round With
sighing and with laughter and with tears,
With tears whereby strong souls of men are bound.

There is the knight Adonis that was slain;
With flesh and blood she chains him for a chain; The body
and the spirit in her ears
Cry, for her lips divide him vein by vein.
Yea, all she slayeth; yea, every man save me;
Me, love, thy lover that must cleave to thee Till the ending
of the days and ways of earth,
The shaking of the sources of the sea.

Me, most forsaken of all souls that fell;
Me, satiated with things insatiable; Me, for whose sake the
extreme hell makes mirth,
Yea, laughter kindles at the heart of hell.

Alas thy beauty! for thy mouth's sweet sake
My soul is bitter to me, my limbs quake As water, as the
flesh of men that weep,

As their heart's vein whose heart goes nigh to break.

Ah God, that sleep with flower-sweet finger-tips
Would crush the fruit of death upon my lips; Ah God, that
death would tread the grapes of sleep
And wring their juice upon me as it drips.

There is no change of cheer for many days,
But change of chimes high up in the air, that sways
Rung by the running fingers of the wind;
And singing sorrows heard on hidden ways.

Day smiteth day in twain, night sundereth night,
And on mine eyes the dark sits as the light; Yea, Lord, thou
knowest I know not, having sinned,
If heaven be clean or unclean in thy sight.
Yea, as if earth were sprinkled over me,
Such chafed harsh earth as chokes a sandy sea, Each pore
doth yearn, and the dried blood thereof
Gaspeth by sick fits, my heart swims heavily,

There is a feverish famine in my veins;
Below her bosom, where a crushed grape stains
The white and blue, there my lips caught and clove
An hour since, and what mark of me remains?

I dare not always touch her, lest the kiss
Leave my lips charred. Yea, Lord, a little bliss, Brief bitter

bliss, one hath for a great sin;
Nathless thou knowest how sweet a thing it is.

Sin, is it sin whereby men's souls are thrust
Into the pit? yet had I a good trust
To save my soul before it
slipped therein,
Trodden under by the fire-shod feet of lust.

For if mine eyes fail and my soul takes breath,
I look between the iron sides of death
Into sad hell where all
sweet love hath end,
All but the pain that never finisheth.

There are the naked faces of great kings,
The singing folk with all their lute-playings;
There when one cometh he shall have to friend
The grave that covets and the worm that clings.
There sit the knights that were so great of hand,
The ladies that were queens of fair green land,
Grown grey and black now, brought unto the dust,
Soiled, without raiment, clad about with sand.

There is one end for all of them; they sit
Naked and sad, they drink the dregs of it,
Trodden as grapes in the wine-press of lust.
Trampled and trodden by the fiery feet.

I see the marvellous mouth whereby there fell

Cities and people whom the gods loved well,
Yet for her sake on them the fire gat hold,
And for their sakes on her the fire of hell.

And softer than the Egyptian lote-leaf is,
The queen whose face was worth the world to kiss,
Wearing at breast a suckling snake of gold;
And large pale lips of strong Semiramis,

Curled like a tiger's that curl back to feed;
Red only where the last kiss made them bleed;
Her hair most thick with many a carven gem,
Deep in the mane, great-chested, like a steed.

Yea, with red sin the faces of them shine;
But in all these there was no sin like mine;
No, not in all the strange great sins of them
That made the wine-press froth and foam with wine.
For I was of Christ's choosing, I God's knight,
No blinkard heathen stumbling for scant light;
I can well see, for all the dusty days
Gone past, the clean great time of goodly fight.

I smell the breathing battle sharp with blows,
With shriek of shafts and snapping short of bows;
The fair pure sword smites out in subtle ways,
Sounds and long lights are shed between the rows

Of beautiful mailed men; the edged light slips,
Most like a snake that takes short breath and dipsSharp
from the beautifully bending head,
With all its gracious body lithe as lips

That curl in touching you; right in this wise
My sword doth, seeming fire in mine own eyes,Leaving all
colours in them brown and red
And flecked with death; then the keen breaths like sighs,

The caught-up choked dry laughters following them,
When all the fighting face is grown a flameFor pleasure,
and the pulse that stuns the ears,
And the heart's gladness of the goodly game.

Let me think yet a little; I do know
These things were sweet, but sweet such years ago,Their
savour is all turned now into tears;
Yea, ten years since, where the blue ripples blow,
The blue curled eddies of the blowing Rhine,
I felt the sharp wind shaking grass and vineTouch my blood
too, and sting me with delight
Through all this waste and weary body of mine

That never feels clear air; right gladly then
I rode alone, a great way off my men,And heard the
chiming bridle smite and smite,
And gave each rhyme thereof some rhyme again,

Till my song shifted to that iron one;
Seeing there rode up between me and the sun
Some certain of my foe's men, for his three
White wolves across their painted coats did run.

The first red-bearded, with square cheeks—alack,
I made my knave's blood turn his beard to black;
The slaying of him was a joy to see:
Perchance too, when at night he came not back,

Some woman fell a-weeping, whom this thief
Would beat when he had drunken; yet small grief
Hath any for the ridding of such knaves;
Yea, if one wept, I doubt her teen was brief.

This bitter love is sorrow in all lands,
Draining of eyelids, wringing of drenched hands,
Sighing of hearts and filling up of graves;
A sign across the head of the world he stands,
An one that hath a plague-mark on his brows;
Dust and spilt blood do track him to his house
Down under earth; sweet smells of lip and cheek,
Like a sweet snake's breath made more poisonous

With chewing of some perfumed deadly grass,
Are shed all round his passage if he pass,
And their quenched savour leaves the whole soul weak,

Sick with keen guessing whence the perfume was.

As one who hidden in deep sedge and reeds
Smells the rare scent made where a panther feeds, And
tracking ever slotwise the warm smell
Is snapped upon by the sweet mouth and bleeds,

His head far down the hot sweet throat of her—
So one tracks love, whose breath is deadlier, And lo, one
springe and you are fast in hell,
Fast as the gin's grip of a wayfarer.

I think now, as the heavy hours de cease
One after one, and bitter thoughts increase One upon one,
of all sweet finished things;
The breaking of the battle; the long peace

Wherein we sat clothed softly, each man's hair
Crowned with green leaves beneath white hoods of
vair; The sounds of sharp spears at great tourneyings,
And noise of singing in the late sweet air.
I sang of love too, knowing nought thereof;
"Sweeter," I said, "the little laugh of love Than tears out of
the eyes of Magdalen,
Or any fallen feather of the Dove.

"The broken little laugh that spoils a kiss,
The ache of purple pulses, and the bliss Of blinded eyelids

that expand again—

Love draws them open with those lips of his,

"Lips that cling hard till the kissed face has grown
Of one same fire and colour with their own; Then ere one
sleep, appeased with sacrifice,
Where his lips wounded, there his lips atone."

I sang these things long since and knew them not;

"Lo, here is love, or there is love, God wot, This man and
that finds favour in his eyes,"

I said, "but I, what guerdon have I got?"

"The dust of praise that is blown everywhere
In all men's faces with the common air; The bay-leaf that
wants chafing to be sweet
Before they wind it in a singer's hair."

So that one dawn I rode forth sorrowing;

I had no hope but of some evil thing, And so rode slowly
past the windy wheat

And past the vineyard and the water-spring,

Up to the Horsel. A great elder-tree

Held back its heaps of flowers to let me see The ripe tall
grass, and one that walked therein,

Naked, with hair shed over to the knee.

She walked between the blossom and the grass;

I knew the beauty of her, what she was, The beauty of her
body and her sin,
And in my flesh the sin of hers, alas!

Alas! for sorrow is all the end of this.
O sad kissed mouth, how sorrowful it is! O breast whereat
some suckling sorrow clings,
Red with the bitter blossom of a kiss!

Ah, with blind lips I felt for you, and found
About my neck your hands and hair enwound, The hands
that stifle and the hair that stings,
I felt them fasten sharply without sound.

Yea, for my sin I had great store of bliss:
Rise up, make answer for me, let thy kiss
Seal my lips hard
from speaking of my sin,
Lest one go mad to hear how sweet it is.

Yet I waxed faint with fume of barren bowers,
And murmuring of the heavy-headed hours; And let the
dove's beak fret and peck within
My lips in vain, and Love shed fruitless flowers.
So that God looked upon me when your hands
Were hot about me; yea, God brake my bands
To save my
soul alive, and I came forth
Like a man blind and naked in strange lands

That hears men laugh and weep, and knows not whence
Nor wherefore, but is broken in his sense; Howbeit I met
folk riding from the north
Towards Rome, to purge them of their souls' offence,

And rode with them, and spake to none; the day
Stunned me like lights upon some wizard way, And ate like
fire mine eyes and mine eyesight;
So rode I, hearing all these chant and pray,

And marvelled; till before us rose and fell
White cursed hills, like outer skirts of hell Seen where
men's eyes look through the day to night,
Like a jagged shell's lips, harsh, untunable,

Blown in between by devils' wrangling breath;
Nathless we won well past that hell and death, Down to the
sweet land where all airs are good,
Even unto Rome where God's grace tarrieth.

Then came each man and worshipped at his knees
Who in the Lord God's likeness bears the keys To bind or
loose, and called on Christ's shed blood,
And so the sweet-souled father gave him ease.
But when I came I fell down at his feet,
Saying, "Father, though the Lord's blood be right sweet, The
spot it takes not off the panther's skin,
Nor shall an Ethiop's stain be bleached with it.

"Lo, I have sinned and have spat out at God,
Wherefore his hand is heavier and his rod
More sharp because of mine exceeding sin,
And all his raiment redder than bright blood

"Before mine eyes; yea, for my sake I wot
The heat of hell is waxen seven times hot
Through my great sin." Then spake he some sweet word,
Giving me cheer; which thing availed me not;

Yea, scarce I wist if such indeed were said;
For when I ceased—lo, as one newly dead
Who hears a great cry out of hell, I heard
The crying of his voice across my head.

"Until this dry shred staff, that hath no whit
Of leaf nor bark, bear blossom and smell sweet,
Seek thou not any mercy in God's sight,
For so long shalt thou be cast out from it."

Yea, what if dried-up stems wax red and green,
Shall that thing be which is not nor has been?
Yea, what if sapless bark wax green and white,
Shall any good fruit grow upon my sin?
Nay, though sweet fruit were plucked of a dry tree,
And though men drew sweet waters of the sea,
There should not grow sweet leaves on this dead stem,

This waste wan body and shaken soul of me.

Yea, though God search it warily enough,
There is not one sound thing in all thereof; Though he
search all my veins through, searching them
He shall find nothing whole therein but love.

For I came home right heavy, with small cheer,
And lo my love, mine own soul's heart, more dear
Than mine own soul, more beautiful than God,
Who hath my being between the hands of her—

Fair still, but fair for no man saving me,
As when she came out of the naked sea
Making the foam as fire whereon she trod,
And as the inner flower of fire was she.

Yea, she laid hold upon me, and her mouth
Clove unto mine as soul to body doth, And, laughing, made
her lips luxurious;
Her hair had smells of all the sunburnt south,

Strange spice and flower, strange savour of crushed fruit,
And perfume the swart kings tread underfoot
For pleasure when their minds wax amorous,
Charred frankincense and grated sandal-root.
And I forgot fear and all weary things,
All ended prayers and perished thanksgivings,
Feeling her

face with all her eager hair
Cleave to me, clinging as a fire that clings

To the body and to the raiment, burning them;
As after death I know that such-like flame
Shall cleave to me for ever; yea, what care,
Albeit I burn then, having felt the same?

Ah love, there is no better life than this;
To have known love, how bitter a thing it is,
And afterward be cast out of God's sight;
Yea, these that know not, shall they have such bliss

High up in barren heaven before his face
As we twain in the heavy-hearted place,
Remembering love and all the dead delight,
And all that time was sweet with for a space?

For till the thunder in the trumpet be,
Soul may divide from body, but not we
One from another; I hold thee with my hand,
I let mine eyes have all their will of thee,

I seal myself upon thee with my might,
Abiding alway out of all men's sight
Until God loosen over sea and land
The thunder of the trumpets of the night.
explicit laus veneris.

Phædra

HIPPOLYTUS; PHÆDRA; CHORUS OF TRÆZENIAN
WOMEN.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Lay not thine hand upon me; let me go;
Take off thine eyes that put the gods to shame;
What, wilt thou turn my loathing to thy death?

PHÆDRA

Nay, I will never loosen hold nor breathe
Till thou have slain me; godlike for great brows
Thou art, and thewed as gods are, with clear hair:
Draw now thy sword and smite me as thou art god,
For verily I am smitten of other gods,
Why not of thee?

CHORUS

O queen, take heed of words;
Why wilt thou eat the husk of evil speech?
Wear wisdom for that veil about thy head
And goodness for the binding of thy brows.

PHÆDRA

Nay, but this god hath cause enow to smite:
If he will slay me, baring breast and throat,
I lean toward the stroke with silent mouth
And a great heart. Come, take thy sword and slay;
Let me not starve between desire and death,
But send me on my way with glad wet lips;
For in the vein-drawn ashen-coloured palm
Death's hollow hand holds water of sweet draught
To dip and slake dried mouths at, as a deer
Specked red from thorns laps deep and loses pain.
Yea, if mine own blood ran upon my mouth,
I would drink that. Nay, but be swift with me;
Set thy sword here between the girdle and breast,
For I shall grow a poison if I live.
Are not my cheeks as grass, my body pale,
And my breath like a dying poisoned man's?
O whatsoever of godlike names thou be,
By thy chief name I charge thee, thou strong god,