IMMORTAL EVE

Songs of the triumph and mystery of beauty.
IMMORTAL EVE

I

1
I the first man, the majesty
Of creatures, Time’s tall birth,
Spring at God’s finger-touch erect,
Glorying upon earth.

Above me the blue solemn heavens,
Around, the sun, the shade,
Green, whispering, glorious wilderness,
I knew for me were made;

For me all broad Euphrates flowed
As stooping down I quaffed
Water’s triumphant glory: winds
And waves, for me they laughed.

And the first bird sang piercing sweet;
Leaves danced; the rose its new
First odour infinitely breathed
For me—oh, where were you?

2
You, the first woman, who should bloom
Out of creation’s bud,
Perfect the six days’ handiwork
And show that all was good?

You were not: yet your fresh idea
Made leafier greenest shows,
Haunted the silence, something rare
Augured behind the rose.
IMMORTAL EVE

In all things, pure streams, mountain grand,
   Sky, valley, clouds that roamed,—
One awful sweet foreshadowing,—
   The world to beauty homed.

And something flowerier than flowers
   And dewier than dew
Foreboded uncreated Eve,
   Thrilled Eden through and through.

3
The freshest of the cherubim,
   When I paced forth to see
Eden in my first natal hour,—
   Two angels—went with me,

Wonder and Rapture. To my soul
   God’s fair works Wonder showed ;
And fairer, far more glorious,
   Through Rapture’s eyes they glowed.

Perfect, profound, mysterious, grand
   Was all t’wixt earth and sky ;
A miracle the mighty scheme,
   And the chief wonder, I

Bowed, worshipping the sovereign hand,
   Marvelling, full of pride ;
I kinship with the glory owned,
   Yet, why I knew not, sighed.
Joyful, sufficient to thyself,
An image of the power
That made thee go domesticate
The brute, and train the flower,

God’s gardener, upwards lift! For friends,
Companions from the sky,
Angels shall visit thee and raise
Thy soul with converse high.

Invisible or dim-perceived,
Oft in the cedar walk
Perchance at cool of eve with thee,
As friend with friend, shall talk

Thy heavenly Maker. Eden shall
No desert be, nor lack
Sublimest friendships. For whose hand
Lookest thou, lingerest back?

I roamed through Nature’s paradise
Tired, pensive, solitary.
Seeking you, Eve, in shapes I clothed
Cloud, water, crag, and tree.

For the whole sympathy of heaven
And earth into the mood
Seemed wrought of that divine idea,
The image I pursued.
IMMORTAL EVE

Now through the wave diaphanous,
    A Naiad to my hopes
You shone; a swimming glory rose
    Showering the water drops;

The cloud wraith of your loveliness
    Flew in every breeze.
Sprung on the hills an Oread;
    A Dryad peered through trees.

'Twas in a valley first I thrilled,
    Intranced wonder, Eve,
Hints of your softer majesty,
    Your sweet strength, to perceive.

From the elm's leafy loftiness,
    The poplar soaring fair,
Ash, beech, the willow's bending grace,
    The woodland goddess there

Limbed into loveliness.—I gazed,
    The souls of those fair trees,
Unbarked, disbranched, and, what they were,
    Shy gentle Dryades,

Approached me; calm tranquillities,
    The spirits of the wood,
Shadowed my heart with peacefulness,
    Hush, coolness, solitude.
IMMORTAL EVE

7
O ye whose fair umbrageous forms,
Though softer, seem allied
To mortal, glories of the glade,
What are ye, speak! I cried.

Your sky-embowering holy shapes
In shadowy secrecy
Seem to breathe joy and peace. Ye drop
Large leafy thoughts on me.

Hovering, yet motionless, ye stand:
Speak! Language seems to start
From those soft whispering lips, like leaves
By fresh winds blown apart.

Creation's hopeless quest I seek,
The softer Adam, bliss,
Undreamed perfection; which of you
Creation's glory is?

8
Then one, the elm tree's shady soul,
Rooted in loftiness
Immovable. "In my large height,
Adam, thy dream possess.

"The skyward ivy of thy thoughts
Clasping my bark, let stand
Earth fixed for ever in my shade,
Thy darkness cool and grand,"
IMMORTAL EVE

"Heights upon heights of bowery, fresh,
Soft-hanging shelter shall,
Fretted with sky-peeps, lure thee up;
And strong boughs, lest thou fall,

"Support thee. Root thy finger's clutch
Into my stem, this pride
Of rough-barked grandeur, shadowy grace,
Nor seek another bride."

She smiled. That sovereign stature next,
The lady of the oak,
Seemed over Eden broad to stretch
Her shady arm. She spoke:

"If grandeur, not sole height, thou seek,
Thy acre-shadowing glade,
Enter this Dodonæan girth,
Millennial, undecayed.

"Here shall the eagle of thy hope
Rest wings; here, one by one,
Thy callow aspirations fledge,
Imp pinions for the sun.

"Hyperborean doves be here
Prophetic, and when snow
Hoars nature, cut thou, Druid-like,
The immortal mistletoe."
IMMORTAL EVE

10
I, Adam, I, who felt you, Eve,
My halved self, other heart,
Under my rib, diviner far,
Yet like in every part,

Answered: "Too mightily ye tower,
Too broadly do ye space
God's roomy dim idea, for me
Your sweet glooms to embrace.

"The leafier leafiness of you,
Your whispering soul of peace,
Lies far beyond my grasp, that dusk
Of shadowy secrecies.

"Virgin to your vast grandeur cool
Remain then, solemn trees,
Image your maker's holiness
And sway but to the breeze."

11
Oh lady of the rugged knees,
Whose vast girth hour by hour,
Gnarled, knotted through a thousand years,
Beneath the hand of power

Swaying, the blast and hurricane
Of the creative thought
Which gloriously to quiet gloomed
Thy acre-shadowing plot
IMMORTAL EVE

Of million whispers, still be thou
All day earth’s canopy.
Glimmering and rustling, drink all night
Dew, darkness from the sky.

God’s day of thousand years for him
Date thou, with annual bark
Ring upon ring, that he from thee
An æon sped may mark.

12
And thou, whose soaring heights of shade,
Thick-leaved, though rough thy rind,
Must effortlessly tall have climbed
Out of the heavenly mind,

Let the low ivy round thee ring
Her thousand fingers high,
Take tremulously undismayed
Those blue peeps of the sky;

Still let the poise and grace of you
All day his thought embower,
Height by degrees ascending soft,
The placid ease of power.

Oft shall the Maker, visiting
Eden, with thee hold talk,
Thou whisper-laden majesty
Who crown’st the garden walk.

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IMMORTAL EVE

13
Around those sylvan goddesses
Awful the stillness grew.
As back into their branching glooms
The holy shapes withdrew.

Once more to leafy loveliness
They limbed; I, solitary,
Stood panged with alien beauty, lured,
Fretted, a hushed cold tree

Wishing myself. Could I so stand,
Said I, O dryads fair,
Whom the all-sapient heavenly hand
Rooted to rise in air,

In mossed contentment here would I
Anchor. A restless heart
He gave me, see, and wandering feet,—
Desires that shoot and dart.

14
Vaguely dim shadowy hints of thee
Spurred me, yet I delayed
'Twixt lofty elm and glorious oak
In that sequestered glade.

Here should her stature limb to life,
Here leaf her lovely hair,
Yet yonder on the lawn I spy
Her cheek, and eyes how fair.

51
IMMORTAL EVE

Creation's wonder, where lurks she?
I questioned; in these bowers?
Or in that deep grass virginal,
With faces that are flowers?

As thus I lingered to be gone,
Answering my very thought,
I heard a soft still voice; it seemed
The spirit of the spot.

Yes, the divine soft solemn soul
Of Nature in that place,—
Its genius, its embowered whole
Of earth, sky, tree and grass;

All that of loftiness had gnarled
In branching attitudes
High over-arched, that noble grove
Trained out of many moods;

In heaven's tranquillity above,
The cold still ground below,
Its pensive self to think and breathe
Its dim self love and know;

What voiced in landscape, God's vast peace
Just there, from depths of shade,
The woodland's dreamy heart profound,
"Adam!" it called and said:
IMMORTAL EVE

16

"Creation's wonder and thy wife
Here selfed in landscape, see!
Soul of thy soul, thy fairer self,
Virgin I wait for thee.

"With hilly and encircling sweep
My solitary arms
Reach out, to fold thee to my heart,
This breezy dusk of charms.

"This leaf-stirred forest, whose fair brows
Whose heaven-deep eyes how fair
Leaned down to shadow thee, and shroud
With verdurous wealth of hair,

"Beauty, that glorious thing thou seest
Shyly, invisibly,
To wed thee waits, this maidenhood
Of greensward, tree, and sky."

17

"No longer fan thy heart's pent fire
That fair invisible
To find, nor with an image seek,
With a dream-face, to dwell.

"Could she be lovelier, thinkest thou,
The soft majestic she,
Than this calm glorious face of things
That smiles for ever free?"
IMMORTAL EVE

"The heart of nature, pure and warm,
Offered thee glad and near
Tranquillities of noble form
And secracies of fear.

"Peace and pure solitude am I.
Stay! fairer shalt thou find
None to companion thy lone thought,
Balm, solace thy sad mind."

18

"What shape art thou? And whence proceeds
Thy solemn voice?" I cry,
"Divine soul of this valley soft,
Who fain wouldst be my bride.

"Thy secret, shadowy charm I feel,
Like a cool finger laid
Upon my throbbing heart; thy voice
I hear my haste upbraid.

"Come forth, twilight oblivion
Undraped, and her sweet form
Show me, that lovelier self I feel
Under my heart's rib warm.

"Thou, glorious valley, well may'st limb,
Thou forest, body forth
That splendour, fairest of God's works,
Perfection's sovereign worth."

54
Dear, could the wise creator make
Me, nor imagine you,
When from his wisdom's awful breath
I came like trembling dew,

You under my heart's rib I felt
Shiver and sparkle sweet,
With my first shock of being pulse
Your starry infinite.

Already in his thought you were
Enfolded like a bud,
Fragile and feminine, man's flower
And Nature's crowning good;

Could He without the glorious stars
Make hollow heaven alone,
Make yearn the sad wave, and no shore
To break its heart upon?

Far mountains unapproachable,
Stern and aloof, yon blue;
Sad, solitary range! and we
Alone in Eden, two!

Beautiful, homeless wilderness
Around, waste skies above;
Stung by his lonely star-fires, two
To hunger into love.
IMMORTAL EVE

This grandeur as in granite cut
The world’s face. Two to press
Shivering for love, warmth, each to each
In Nature’s loneliness.

He zoned us with disdainful things,
Cold and austere to make;
Tremble to each two hearts, and fear
Each other to forsake.

3

Above all other loves I place
The husband’s and the wife’s.
The kiss that was in Eden kissed
Is both love’s base and life’s.

Without the heart-beat’s two-fold rhythm
Life cannot be, nor show
In action perfect: feet and hands,
Eyes, lips, are only two.

Marriage: it is the world’s sane curb
The very school of trust,
The nurse of sanctity. It builds
Joy out of daily dust.

How else could heaven on ocean print
One soft perpetual kiss?
Or earth in tender green toward heaven
Bosom to merge her bliss?
IMMORTAL EVE

4
God placed the awful rondure vast
Of this great marriage-ring
The world, with consecrating earth,
Sky, ocean, everything,

To bind our two hearts chastely wed
With mutual exchange
Of the year's gold circumference,
Jewelled with beauty strange;

Stars, diamonds of the distance, night's
Black opal, ruby new
Of sunrise, and leaves emerald-fresh,
And the clear pearling dew.

He with betrothing grandeur girt
Our hearts, and gorgeously
Made nature's sacrament of charm
Our wedding-ring to be.

5
God made the world for me, for you,
That his dream-paradise
Re-imaged in first freshness, two
Might see in either's eyes;

Revive lost Eden, fence out all
With forest, mountain-high;
Yet through our leafy garden close,
Its whispering secrecy,
IMMORTAL EVE

The giant ages murmuring,—
Strife, hatred, anger rude,—
Faint, far-off, like a rumour strange,
Alarm our solitude.

We hear it; smile, yet fearfully,
As 'twere the serpent's hiss,
Bosom to beating bosom, crush
Our wild hearts' lonely bliss.

Love, heavenly
Love, in your fair eyes
Fashioned the primal dew,
Ensouled me in pure paradise
To dwell with only you.

Love, the world's maker, Love divine,
Creative, hedged from sight
And hushed with whispering wilderness
Far tumult, loud affright,

There where hate is, battle and fear,
The fruit of knowledge bad,
Which should I taste with hungering ear
Toward shadowy history sad

Turn from you, dear,—like flaming swoi
The angels of your eyes
Would drive me forth from joy and you
And dewy paradise.
IMMORTAL EVE

7
For hints, for prophecies of you,
That flowered from age to age,
I roam each lovely legend old
Where beauty strews the page:

Evadne, Phyllis, Hero sad,
I think of them; I burn
Dido’s too perishable dust,
And Procris in her urn,

You come, the sweet fulfilment, you,
Of all they once foretold;
Straight at your touch they burst their tombs,
The lovely dames of old.

As conjured by your spell they rise,—
Dead faces, glorious hair;
And beauty, once more beautiful,
Remembers to be fair.

8
When your sole beauty, the world’s charm,
Grows perilously fair;
And shadowy tall heroes arm
To battle for your hair;

When from your brow’s triumphant worth
It seems the ages bled,
And through the leaves stern armour shone
Of glorious knights long dead;
IMMORTAL EVE

And swords flamed, spears to splinters crashed,
   And the rich blood streamed bright
Of Arthur's peers or Charlemagne's
   For you in thundering fight;

Enough then is one tranquil look
   Out of your heavenly eyes,
To tell me we two are alone
   And round us paradise.

Sole peace of Eden, though your cheek
   The world's worth summarise,
Though passionate dead ages haunt
   Those memories, your eyes;

Oh, from that pageantry of dooms
   Past or foreboded, where
You dwell with dim disastrous things,
   With beauty and with fear;

Though like a trumpet-blast your brow
   Has power my soul to thrill
With famous battles long forgot
   That bleed for beauty still;

Lest Eden's lone peace perilous
   With armies grow, refrain,
Lest from my sight you disappear
   Into that pomp of pain.
IMMORTAL EVE

10

Ah! tell me not of heroines
And ladies long since dead;
All their perfections, all their parts,
In you are summed and said.

To look upon you is to hear
The clash of battles old;
And tournaments of gentle knights
And splintering lances cold.

For your sake, for the prize of you,
Do Troy towers flame again;
And Hector and Achilles fight,
And for your sake are slain.

So perilous your beauty seems
With rumour of old wars,
With crash and conflict. But 't is I
Who bleed and bear the scars.

11

What power is in your gentle eyes,
Immortal, blissful Eve,
With the whole race to sympathise
And even in Eden grieve?

Though, in your smile, Temptation, Fall,
In that world-saving ark
Caught up, the Deluge we survive
Earth's giant ages dark,
IMMORTAL EVE

Blot out the past; in your brows' arch,
Their rainbow peace, I see
Remembered the sad surge and flood
Of woful history.

Though you revive lost bliss, your heart
Cradles august the pain,
The ancient primal woe of man,
And aches to mother Cain.

12

Infinite Pity made the heavens,
Infinite Love the earth.
Yet shattering tempests rage, and here
Injustice laughs for mirth.

I stuff my fingers in both ears
To hear those piteous cries.
I weep to see the groaning sphere
Drown in her miseries.

The murderer of his brother's hope,
The sweater and the slave,
The oppressor hideously enthroned,
Make human life a grave.

There seems no pity in the heavens,
No love on earth, a hell
Full of all shames and wrongs. Meanwhile
You, you amongst us dwell.

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IMMORTAL EVE

13
And did eternal Pity then
Make all? Ah! sure it did:
And out of the eternal Love
The heavens in glory shed.

I mind not now the mystery
Of cruel wrong and strife,
This ancient wail through history
This tangle deep as life.

I know there is a power that works
All things to harmonise.
I know it from the ruth that lurks
Deep in your gentle eyes.

Since first that pitying, loving look
Made heaven of my poor earth,
I know the suffering soul of things
Weeps to an angel birth.

14
I cannot wonder, O my Sweet,
That you alone are you,
Could beauty else seem beautiful,
Or truth itself be true?

Were you not, could majestic heaven
So tranquilly secure
Arch, or the everlasting hills
Or solid earth endure,
IMMORTAL EVE

Or flowers be flowers? creation knows
That you are you, and none,
In the least like you, fellow shall
Your peerless paragon.

And the high stars' recurring pomp,
Days, seasons, whisper me
Of that one certainty divine,
Assuring, she is she.

15

Dear, were you other than you are
By a hair's breadth, a swerve,
Were your cheek softly strange to me
By just the littlest curve;

Were your voice other, not the trill,
The timbre sweet I know,
The way you have, to look, smile, speak,—
Only that way, just so,

That selfs you, lovely trick of you,
That darts such arrowy
Perfume, your individual rose,
To make us cry 'tis she!

Were that gone, all were gone for me;
I should go wandering,
Blind, stumbling, seeking everywhere
The one thing, the one thing.
Lilies are lilies and no more;
The rose is just a rose.
But your sweet loveliness to find—
Where is it? no one knows.

Not in your face, that paradise,
I find the sovereign spell.
Not in the gardens of your cheek,
Brow, chin, does beauty dwell.

Vaguer than violets, your eyes
Dim sweetness oracle,—
Breathe of a flower more lovely-rare,
Fragrance ineffable!

The rubies of your lips were mined
From richer depths below.
The lily and the rose of you
No white, no red can show.

The something more by which your eyes
Shine fairer than the sun,
The just a little that is your rose—
And mystery’s begun.

What the world’s myriad-petalled flower
Misses by some delight,
I know not what, some charm that’s yours,
Divinely yours by right;
IMMORTAL EVE

What in your tresses never yet
   Breathed Helen, and outstrips
Just Cleopatra's witchcraft glance,
   Just Rosamond's shy lips;

The something that is everything,
   And you in one apart,
Like but with heavenly difference,—
   That is the sting, the dart.
IMMORTAL EVE

III

1

Peace, clamorous trumpets! Silence, drums!
Be breathless all and hush!
Let die applause. My lady comes,
My lady of the blush.

She's bashfuller than dew to hide,
Or dew-hung drooping rose.
Down-bent she keeps her queenly head,
Her eyes down-lidded close.

Of sentient fibre to the quick
She trembles, shrinks from praise.
To look on her too earnestly
Sets all her cheek ablaze.

Cease, gazing eyes, to disconcert
Her holy modesty;
And you, my songs, with shamefast awe
Her pomp accompany.

2

My rose, she blushes to be praised,
She wonders to be fair.
My lily of her pale pure bloom
Is shyly unaware.

At clear stars, water, woods, the flowers,
She looks with great wide eyes.
The world to her a marvel is,
And life a rich surprise.
IMMORTAL EVE

Yet the prime marvel, what I find
In her to love, makes shine
Open in wistful wonder large
Her childlike eyes divine.

Is it mockery or flattery?
Her dear look puzzled says;
So utterly unconscious she
Of her own loveliness.

3

In your perfection secretly
I longed some fault to see;
Some frailty, that this hopeless gulf
Might bridge 'twixt you and me.

I found the foible, thought I found;
For when your eyes I praised,
They laughed with pleasure, yet a blush
Rebuked the joy I raised.

In that rich crimson some small tinge
Of conscious pride might be.
I but a new perfection found,
Your lovely modesty.

The virgin glory of a blush
Made you more perfect flower.
Still must your rich humanity
Above me seem to tower.
IMMORTAL EVE

4

Transparent as some lake, and calm
As mountain torrent’s rest,
You keep the maidhood of the soul,
The childhood of the breast.

Around you in blue mystery
The eternal mountains lean,
Shoulder each other, rise to catch
The depths of your serene;

And down to you the happy brooks,
A hundred laughers, come
To find in your pellucid depth
Peace, purity, a home.

Though fast the trembling torrents rush,
Play, babble, without cease,
They deepen but your limpid hush,
They add but to your peace.

5

Subtraction were detraction, dear,
Multiplication tires,
And to divide perfection’s sum
Were tasking angel-lyres.

I would in moments, Time’s poor slave,
Your millioned worth make shine;
You lie beyond the shot of praise,
Or slander’s counter-mine.
IMMORTAL EVE

I do but vex arithmetic
With details of delight,
And shiver into fragments up
Your perfect chrysolite.

Vain torment of the pen, though sweet!
For after all is done,
Unknown, enchanting you remain,
Forever whole and one.

The weakness of a woman’s strength
You have, Love, you are frail
Only as harebells tremble soft,
As creepers catch and trail.

The lovelypliant strength is yours
To yield, yet win your ends.
You have the weeping sympathy
With which the willow bends;

The witchery of freakish fault,
Caprice and waywardness,
Allies you to our human earth,
Endearing weaknesses.

The richness of the garden soil
You show. All noble seeds
Flower in your nature, nor disdain
Some wild and random weeds.
IMMORTAL EVE

7
The violets unforgettable
   Of those dark lovely eyes
Upon my spirit vaguely bloom,
   With colour tantalise.

I strive to paint on baffled sight
   The mystery of their hue.
Black are they, pansies of delight?
   Black? Purple? darkest blue?

Those undeterminable hints
   Are colour's sanctuary,
To hide from us inviolable
   The world's dear mystery.

What spirit, the angel of your eyes,
   Sits there invisible,
Their infinite deep shining darks
   May hint, but never tell?

8
Dear, when I look within your eyes,
   What heaven do I see?
What starry glorious universe
   That gazes down on me?

Infinite distance there I see,
   And soaring oft see burn
Orion with his belt severe
   And sworded brilliance stern ;
And oft to baffle sight almost,
   Radiant and soft, while flees
Their dovelike shimmer, peers the host
   Of the sweet Pleiades;

And then, when tender gloaming dusks
   The evening of your eyes,
I see the lonely star of Love,
   The planet Venus rise.

Tell me what sage astronomy
   May fathom those fair eyes,
Where still profounder depths elude
   And show yet deeper skies.

There, past the eagle's sparkling wings,
   And past the swan I soar,
And past the Pegasean flight
   Those heavenly deeps explore.

That glorious arch of streaming looks,
   Your spirit's milky way,
Love, I have dared, and dreamed beyond,
   With these poor eyes of clay.

Yet never could I gauge as yet
   The distance infinite
It takes one heavenly look of yours
   To shine down to my sight.
IMMORTAL EVE

10
Was she not graceful, formed so fair?
    Could I her shape exalt
Or God’s hand save from faultlessness
    Yet keep without a fault?

Not tall, her stature seemed the rule
    To inch perfection by.
Beauty, whate’er her attitude,
    Stood with her just so high.

O sweet proportion! How shall I
    Describe her going’s grace?
Slow was it, stately, gliding? Nay,
    ’Twas hers and beauty’s pace.

So perfectly in her God blent
    The mean that never cloys,
To hold my heart in balances
    And keep admiring poise.

11
O fair as hawthorn buds are fair!
    O pure as privet meek!
With thy complexion shall I dare
    The snowdrop’s spotless cheek?

She winnowed whiteness. Radiance’ self
    Had touched the common day,
Silvered the world with some rare dawn
    That was her spirit’s ray.
IMMORTAL EVE

The laughter, the simplicity
Of sunlight, what is it?
The rainbow’s glory of all hues,
The candour infinite!

So the eternal soul-blanch, she,—
Olympus, awful snow,—
To sheen to mortals, took life’s prism,—
Sped Iris-like below.

12
I think God meant that youth should fire
To beauty his bright dream,
That with his pomp of loveliness
Our passion too might stream.

So flowery He the pitfall makes,
So sure he sets the gin,
Some glorious purpose beauty hides
To have our hearts fall in.

What are these mighty heavens he prank’d
With stars? What azure day?
What sunset? What this orb of things,
This rondure? Who shall say?

I know that to besiege my thoughts
Your face he framed so fair,
Tangled so rich and massed like storm
That purple cloud of hair.
IMMORTAL EVE

13
Who is it talks of ebony,
   Who of the raven's plume?
The glory of your tresses black
   Will yield to neither room.

So thick the ambrosial dusk of you
   Glooms in your locks, soul, sight,
The world itself is swallowed up
   In darkness and delight.

Tell me no more that black must be
   Light's baffle, colour's loss.
Your tresses shoot into the sun
   A richly purple gloss.

It was the sunshine white of you
   Which cast that wealth of shade.
There from the burning light of you
   The world and I am laid.

14
I think a soul-shape grows behind
   Your body's screening view.
'Tis what the deathless sculptor, Life,
   Carves out of what is you.

Your essence, spiritual stuff,
   Laughter, thought, effort, will,
Joy, suffering, all you feel, think, do,
   Like Parian marble still
IMMORTAL EVE

Life chisels, the ulterior you,
Brow, cheek angelical,
And figure on life’s handsome mould
Modelled till it excel.

Then when the atom-quarried mask
You drop, shall beam to sight
The dear familiar face I know,
Grown deathless, infinite!

15

Age and decay, ply, ply your powers,
Assault her beauty. She,
That which she is, what inly flowers,
For ever blooms, is free.

Rain, sorrow, down those lovely cheeks!
Stream your remorseless flood!
You drench deep, happy roots, to make
Her spirit freshly bud.

Parch, fever’s burning eye, this park,
This greensward beautiful,
Her flesh; the eternal violet
Lies caverned, mossy, cool;

It trembles ineradicable,
That harebell sweet; it grows.
Rough winds but shake down the dead leaves
That feed the deathless rose.

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16
And do they perish, the fair flowers—
This blushing come-and-go
Of roses, that so crimson burn,
Of lilies, pure as snow?

Dust, nothing, they? Such vital charm,
Such bloom? It cannot be!
They too, like us, are spirits clothed
For thought, joy, agony.

They too, though stirless, souls that live
In the eternal life,
Take armour, fragrantly enlist,
Sweet soldiers, to the strife,

Here in the battle beautiful,
Where fights the universe,
To God's far dream, the unknown good,
The bliss without a curse.

17
Is all we know, then, that we know
Nothing? For certain, yes.
Yet your face time's arch-riddle put.
We risk a pregnant guess.

No more deep-browed philosophy
Questions the world, content
To read its secret in your smile,
The secret that God meant.
IMMORTAL EVE

Vision, dream, beauty, that far search,
Perfection, through all time,
Poets forget, to muse upon
Your eyebrow's married rhyme;

And sculpture finds in your soft chin,
And painting in your cheek
The eternal rose of mystery
Ever on point to speak.

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