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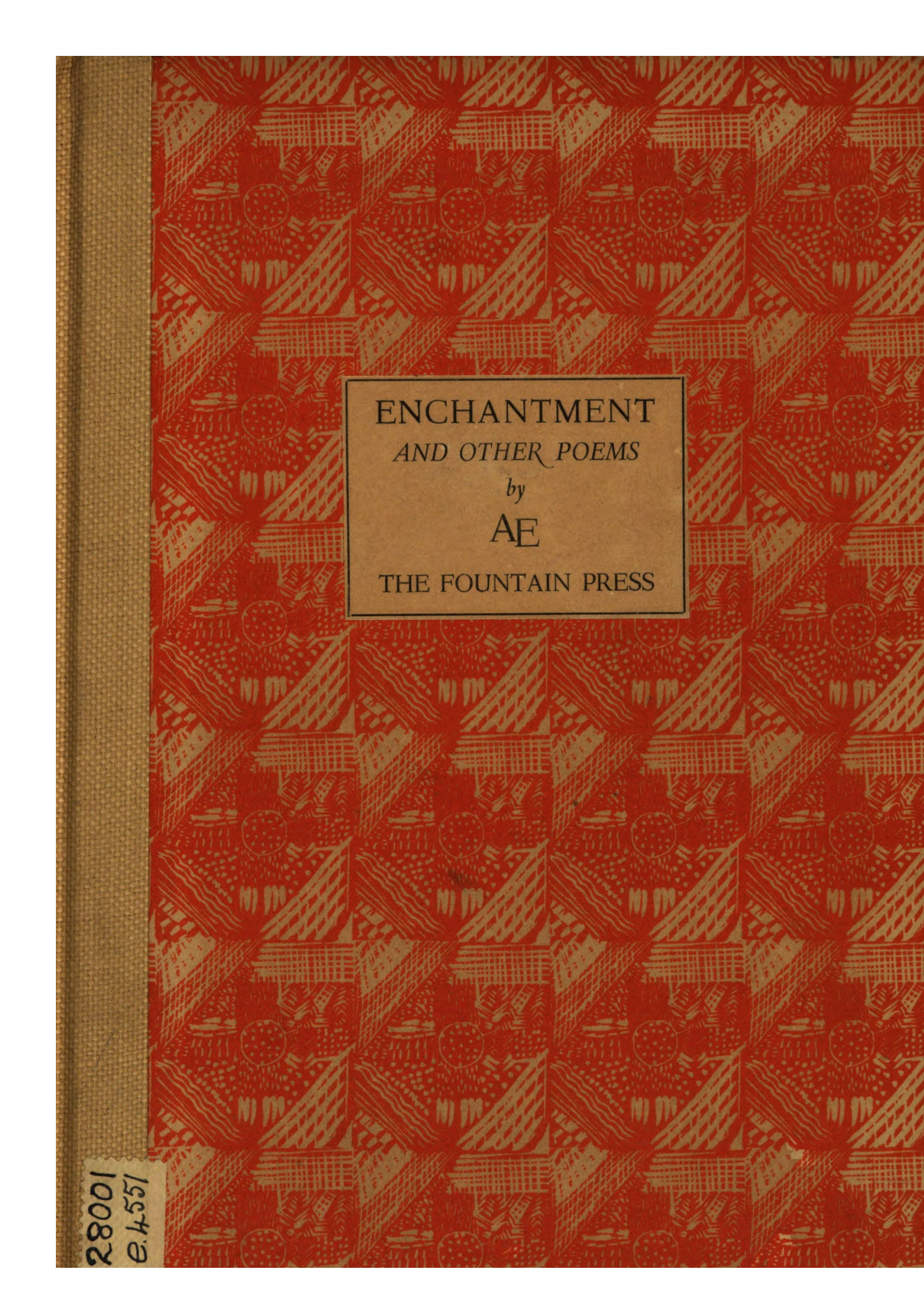
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ENCHANTMENT


AND OTHER POEMS

by

AE

THE FOUNTAIN PRESS

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NEW YORK: THE FOUNTAIN PRESS

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1930



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TO
ROBERT FROST

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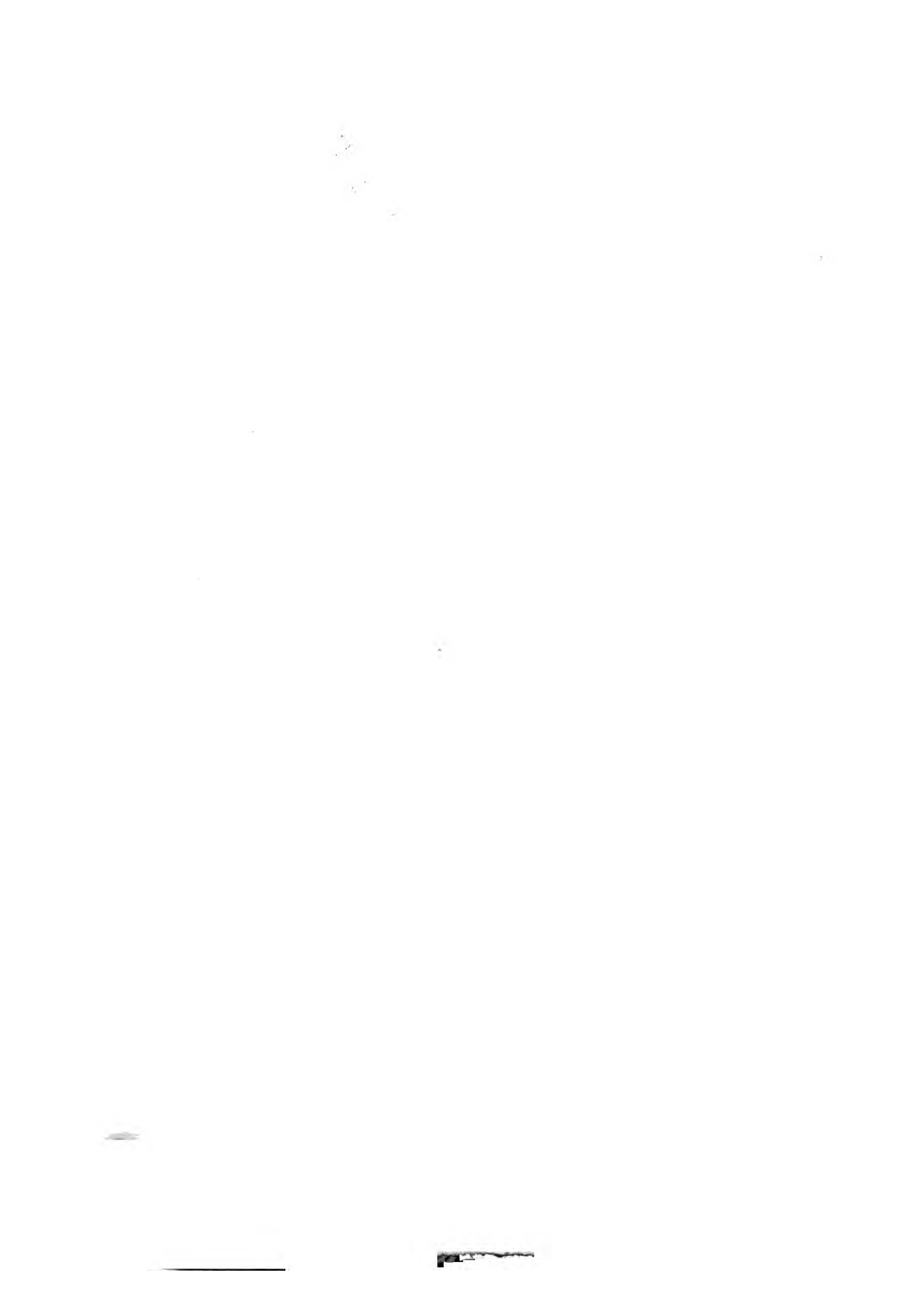
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ENCHANTMENT

Gordon Russell
AE





ENCHANTMENT

○ N this fawn-coloured shore,
All delicately strewn,
Gold dust and gleaming shell,
White stone and blue stone,
Lie sweetly together whether
Eyes be to see them or none.

The air is gay with voices
Of children. The sun
Casts flowers of purple shadow
Before them as they run;
Blows clouds and blooms of shadow
Where the swift feet may run.

Onward the children race
To leap into the sea
That bubbles silver bright
In the lovely revelry
Of foam and limbs together
In a white revelry.

How grew that airy tumult
On shores that were so still,

That wind of flowers and shadows?
What art invisible
Made all that airy wonder,
At what enchanter's will?

BLIGHT

THEY stilled the sweetest breath of song
Who loosed from love its chains,
Who made it easy to be borne,
A thing that had no pains.

A dusk has blighted Psyche's wings
And the wild beauty dies;
The fragrance and the glow were born
From its own agonies.

SIBYL

A MYRIAD loves
Her heart would confess,
That thought but one
To be wantonness.

And this was why
She could not stay,
From the gilded fireside
Running away,

To be on the hillside,
Gay and alone,
A twilight sibyl,
With rock for her throne.

There she was sweetheart
To magical things,
To cloudland, woodland,
Mountains and springs.

She yielded to them
But was not the less
Pure, but the more
For that wantonness.

For through these lovers
Her spirit grew
To be clear as crystal
And cool as dew.

Their bridal gift
Was to make her be
Initiate
Of their company.

To know the lovely
Voices of these,
Of light, of earth,
Of winds and of seas.

Whose wisdom flowed
From a fulness, yea,
From bygone ages
And far away.

So thronged was her spirit
It seemed a pack
That carried the moon
And stars on her back.

When the spirit wakens
It will not have less

Than the whole of life
For its tenderness.

And that was why
She could not stay,
From the gilded fireside
Running away.

She laughed in herself
On her seat of stone,
"It would be wanton
To love but one."

ANCESTRY

HAD thine art not skill to change
Dream into a deed of sense?
Did the baffled heart recoil
On itself in penitence?

When thy lovely sin has been
Wasted in a long despair,
World-forgetting, it may look
Upon thee with an angel air.

There was never sin of thine
But within its heart did dwell
A beauty that could whisper thee
Of the high heaven from which it fell.

DARK RAPTURE

AH, did he climb, that man, nigher to heaven than I,
Babbling inarticulately along the road
His drunken chaotic rapture, lifting to the sky,
His wild darkness, his hands, his voice, his heart that
glowed,
Gazing with intoxicated imagination on
The dance the tireless fiery-footed watchers make
Through unending ages on the blue, luminous lawn?
Oh, could that maddened will, those riotous senses
break
Into the astral ecstasy, for a moment feel
The profundities? Did he offer his sin to the Most
High?
Or was he like those spoilers who break through and
steal,
Not by the strait gate, into the city of the sky?
I heard him cry GOD in amazement as if his eyes
Saw through those reeling lights the one eternal Light.
Was that madness of his accepted as sacrifice?
Did fire fall on him from some archangelic height?
I, who was stricken to dumbness of awe, could not
endure
The intolerable vastness still to the uttermost star.
Was it not enough the heart humble, contrite and
pure?

Must hell with heaven be knit ere the ancient gates
unbar,
The Pleroma open? I hurried, unaccepted, forlorn,
From the deep slumbering earth, the heavens that
were not mine,
Hearing murmurs still from the dark rapture born
Where the Holy Breath was mixed with the unholy
wine.

“THE THINGS SEEN”

THE shadow drifted apart leaving the shadowless
soul;

A high, winged, glittering, aery creature of the sky.
What had we known of it but a fugitive flash of wing?
We had been drowned in our own shadows, you and I.

Our love was breathed upon phantom lips; shade
wrought with shade.

Oh, beloved, it was not I, but the shadow, who cried
In bitterness, who stabbed. Oh, world, they were shad-
ows, too,

Who bound their gods to the cross, and those that were
crucified.

GERMINAL

CALL not thy wanderer home as yet,
Though it be late.
Now is his first assailing of
The invisible gate.
Be still through that light knocking. The hour
Is thronged with fate.

To that first tapping at the invisible door
Fate answereth.
What shining image or voice, what sigh
Or honied breath,
Comes forth, shall be the master of life
Even to death.

Satyrs may follow after. Seraphs
On crystal wing
May flame. But the delicate first comer
It shall be king.
They shall obey, even the mightiest,
That gentle thing.

All the strong powers of Dante were bowed
To a child's mild eyes,
That wrought within him that travail
From depths up to skies,

Inferno, Purgatorio
And Paradise.

Amid the soul's grave councillors
A petulant boy
Laughs under the laurels and purples, the elf
Who snatched at his joy,
Ordering Caesar's legions to bring him
The world for his toy.

In ancient shadows and twilights,
When childhood had strayed,
The world's great sorrows were born
And its heroes were made.
In the lost boyhood of Judas
Christ was betrayed.

Let thy young wanderer dream on:
Call him not home.
A door opens, a breath, a voice,
From the ancient room
Speaks to him now. Be it dark or bright—
He is knit with his doom.

COMPANIONS

WE have a choice when young
Of an immortal friend,
One of the shining host,
Who will come to us at our call
And stay with us to the end.

When I was in my youth
I called the starry Child
To play with me in my thought,
Who breathed sweetness and joy,
Making lovely the wild.

Now body and soul stumble,
And heart is filled with ruth;
Yet the other lightly moves,
Breathing within a ruin
The bitter fragrance of youth.

Oh, had my youth been wise,
I had called upon the Sage—
Not on that starry Child.
What had been harsh to youth
Would have been sweet in age.

Too burning bright, that Child,
Drawn from the heavenly air
By the magic will of youth—
Our prayers are always answered.
Oh, to be wise in prayer!

EARTH-BOUND

SOUL whirled with young body
In a frolic so gay
It grew forgetful of
 Its heavenly yesterday,
Its natural solemn music,
 So giddy was the play.

Then body grew a-weary
 And leaned to soul in tears;
But the soul was dreaming over
 The folly of young years.
It had nothing but ancient folly
 To soothe its lover's fears.

When body lay in stillness
 The soul could not recall
The aery solemn being
 It had before its fall.
It was tangled in old folly;
 The earth had it in thrall.

RETRIBUTION

THE soul into itself withdraws, thinking on all
The gay, heroical ardours it forsook, the years
That were made over-sweet with passion, the tears
Love wept, dying of its own fullness, and the fall
Into the pit where seven unholy spirits conspire
Against the Holy Ones, turning the sky-born fire
Unto infernal uses, feeding beauty to the beast
Remembering the dark joys that were born of the feast,
It dreads the everlasting fire, the torment of sense.
Oh, unhappy, the judge is not without thee but within,
Who shall condemn thee, as retribution for thy sin,
To the consuming fire of thine own penitence.

EVANESCENCE

WE stood in silence deep as trance, but yet how
gay we were!

Beauty, the fiery plaything, ran through the sun-gilded
air.

From dazzling cloud to dazzling cloud it climbed. Then
from that height

Unto your feet it sped adown long cataracts of light.
It flickered mid the daffodils, and danced their gentle
dance;

Then rose up slenderly in air. It was as still as trance.
It entered in, that magic thing into your being flowed:
Through lips and eyes and fluttered hair its precious
substance glowed.

Its fairy candles burned on brow and ivory slender
limb,

Lights that the spirit only sees and to all else are dim.
It was so nigh I broke the trance to clutch that radiant
thing;

But it was gone, fleeter than bird upon a homing wing.
Where is its home? Could you and I whene'er the light
appears

Cry at the wonder "I am That," as did the Vedic seers?
How can we stay it? By what art? However swift de-
sire—

It's gone! Its precious substance is unclutchable as fire.

ATLANTIC

HOW lonely and lovely those valleys
That quivered with silver and gold,
And changed in a dream to blue mountains
From which snow was up-rolled.

The sun was white in the heaven,
And over the glitter of snow
That fell from those hills to those hollows
Seven fires were aglow.

For what winged and wonderful creatures
Shall this wide beauty be home?
Their feet who shall tread on these meadows
Must be lighter than foam.

When earth is outworn for the spirit,
Its body made light by desire,
Shall it walk on this glory of waters
Ere it climb through the Air to the Fire.

NEW YORK

WITH these heaven-assailing spires
All that was in clay or stone
Fabled of rich Babylon
By these children is out-done.

Earth has spilt her fire in these
To make them of her mightier kind ;
Has she that precious fire to give,
The starry-pointing Magian mind,

That soared from the Chaldean plains
Through zones of mystic air, and found
The Master of the Zodiac,
The Will that makes the Wheel go round ?

THE CITIES

THEY shall sink under water ;
They shall rise up again :
They shall be peopled
By millions of men.

Cleansed of their scarlet,
Absolved of their sin,
They shall be like crystal
All stainless within.

Paris and Babel,
London and Tyre
Reborn from the darkness
Shall sparkle like fire.

From the folk who throng in
Their gardens and towers
Shall be blown fragrance
Sweeter than flowers.

Faery shall dance in
The streets of the town,
And from sky headlands
The gods looking down.

BEAUTY AND SCIENCE

THE star-gazers turn to earth star-dazzled eyes
And find it hollow as air, a cavern lit
With faint electric constellations that are
Whirled inconceivably to deceive the sense.
From these frail, fiery infinitesimals,
That, were they still, earth would not heap a spade,
The apparition of earth and we ourselves
Are builded. So their mathematic proves.
But, heart, we can prove their mathematic to have erred.
There is a still, lovely, unaltering image
That has glowed like an ever-burning lamp
Within the psyche for these many years.
How could that still, unaltering loveliness
Be fashioned from light fires that wander only
In the orbits that their mathematic shows.
Or, if indeed they be, they are mind-governed
And yield to beauty which may be the power
Our science seeks that can break up the atom.
For, at the first thought of that loveliness
Within the psyche, the image began to glow
As if those delicate lights had ceased to circle
Around their suns, and hurrying to the image
They had grown still within it, lighting there
Myriads and myriads of their fairy fires.

LOGOS

WAKE, drowsy spirit in the ear,
The voices in that murmuring shell
Echo the Zodiac. You may hear
The planets ringing like a bell.

Your sister spirit in the eyes
Pierced them with its own light, to see
The high-hung lanterns in the skies,
Echoing its own infinity.

Within that quivering shell, the ear,
Far borne, a myriad voices throng.
Be still and listen. You shall hear
The universe revealed as song.

A FAREWELL

THIS might be Pan's last supper for me, so solemn
the house ;

His sweet apostles bend so tenderly their brows.

They spread the table with stars and scents, and with
me share

The odorous bread of earth, the holy wine of air.

Lest I remember scarlet hours they make all new,

Hang the dusk tapestries and spray with coolth of dew.

They cleanse the feet that danced at the satyric sport

With fauns and silvery witches at the Midnight Court.

And I forget the goat heels and the shaggy thighs

For the face so lofty, the voice so gentle, the eyes so
wise.

"Farewell, farewell, O fortunate for whom death waits;

O bird who shall be winged when the body opens its
gates:

Who can fly to the Infinite Glory. We, who are slaves
of Its law,

Who harden the pure to diamond and break the base
like a straw ;

Exiled, we pine for the King in His beauty. We long
for the day

When this shadow show shall be over, the masks we
wore thrown away—

The monstrous masks that veiled us, of satyr, demon
and faun—

And be lovely, starry and ancient with youth as we were
in the dawn.

Be swift, O wingéd one, be swift to the King, and tell
Our anguish exiled from His beauty. Fly swift, free bird,
and farewell! "



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