

ROSA IGNOTA  
A POEM FOR PILGRIMS

BY  
VICTOR B. NEUBURG

*βαιὰ μὲν, ἀλλὰ ῥόδα.*

"There is no Samadhi without Sila."—BUDDHA.

ROSAE  
VERAE  
SEMPER QUAE VIVIT  
ET DILIGET

I SEARCHED the world for life ; at length I came  
    Unto a gateway I could not pass through ;  
And then I turned, calling upon the name  
    Of you.

And so you came to me : each dawn was new,  
    And every sunset was a scarlet flame,  
And noon was glorious in gold and blue.

So now I care not for my mystic shame ;  
    Love brings no fears, and life gives nought to rue,  
So I may sing unto the love and fame  
    Of you.

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## THE PROEM

A MINSTREL, through a forest wayfaring,  
Feeling his heart stirred in him, seized his lyre,  
And tuned his strings, and so began to sing :

Oh ! Woe to me who have to sing this thing !

The sun uprose, and his song mounting higher,  
Reached to the summit of the Olympian hill,  
Filling the gods with new and strange desire  
To stain earth's mire with their immortal fire :

Oh ! Woe to me who have to sing this thing !

He sang of blood, and how men mar and spill ;  
He sang of love, and how men love and kill ;  
He sang the world as never yet 'twas sung ;  
He sang the will to fashion joy from ill :

Oh ! Woe to me who have to sing this thing !

And even as he sang with easy tongue,  
With lips that quivered as his spirit stung,  
Crying aloud unto the Muse who sings,  
New glory flung unto him to him clung :

Oh ! Woe to me who have to sing this thing !

Oh ! Woe to me who have to sing these things ;  
I was the Minstrel whom Enchantment brings :  
She led her Poet captive through the world ;  
Alas ! his wings were tangled in life's strings :

Oh ! Woe to me who have to sing this thing !

## THE EQUINOX

Oh ! Woe to me whose soul's wings are unfurled,  
Within my heart's core ever shall be curled  
A little tendril softly that doth cling,  
Softly impearled, a thing from heaven hurled ;  
    Oh ! Woe to me who have to sing this thing !

A minstrel through a forest wayfaring  
Hath brought his love a shy and tender thing,  
A gentle bloom of the gods' gardening.  
Oh ! woe to me who have to tell this thing !  
The Rose doth sing : my song hath here its sting :  
    Oh ! Woe to me who have to sing this thing !

*O Rose Unknown ! I heard the secret Call  
    Out of the dark : there came unto mine ears  
    A sound of laughter and a sound of tears,  
And then an utter silence. That was all ;  
Until it happened one day to befall,  
    There came to me the spirits of the years  
    That I had wasted : Lose, they said, thy fears ;  
Thou art before Love's throne imperial !*

*So then I bent mine eyes unto the earth,  
    And fell upon my knees, and cried for grace,  
    Fearing to gaze upon the royal face.  
But suddenly there came the sound of mirth  
    Mingled with tears, from that imperial throne,  
    And then a voice : Come, Lord, unto thine own.*

# ROSA IGNOTA

## I

### INVOCATION

MY unknown Rose !  
Sweet-hearted, scented purely  
With all the passion of my heart, if now  
I sing new songs to thee  
Where many songs before have marked thee surely  
Their own, let vagrant Liberty  
Inform my songs ; for I, of the pure brow  
And the soul that glows  
With the fervency of eld, invoke thee ; for I have known thee :  
Wandering far into the cities I found thee,  
Unsuspected still, and round thee  
The idle worshippers that the wind hath blown thee.  
It is well ; for I know thee and thy magic grace,  
And the history of thy race,  
And the times of eld  
When thou wast born, compelled  
By sundawn to ope thine eyes.—  
Ah ! Wise !  
Thou hast not shadowed the thunder,  
And thereunder  
Is set the manifold wonderment of thee,  
Star, star of the sea ! . . .

## THE EQUINOX

Well do I know my magic shall not avail  
To unveil thee.  
Too well I know I may not hope to impale thee  
On the spear of my song ; my song  
Is thine, and thou dost not remain for long :  
Thou tarriest not at all,  
Thou guardest all men's bale  
Within the web of the Mystery called Time.  
And so no rime  
Of beauty or of truth shall serve  
Thee, until thou shalt swerve  
And fall.

Who shall undo the wrong ?  
What hand shall set thee free ?  
And who shall lend his light that it may bring  
An end to the light I sing ?  
My song, my song  
Is blasphemy to thee,  
Who knowest naught, I know, of thee and me ;  
But only the wild grace,  
Abandoned, but in silent harmony,  
Under the starred sky's face,  
Under the green hills, free  
In the most sacred time, in the most secret place,  
Is thine.  
Oh, Wine ! Wine ! Wine !  
Sang the poet of the world.  
But what wine may suit thee,  
Thee, with thy petals curled,  
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## ROSA IGNOTA

And thy scented breath  
That only may be known in tranced death  
To me?—

Yea! And to all those  
That worship thee, my Rose,  
My Rose! My Rose! My Rose!

For thou dost glance through all the veils of life,  
Lending thy light unwon,  
O subtlest syren thou, who wouldst entrance the sun!  
Behind what secret hill shall I find thee?  
In what chains shall I bind thee?  
O Rose! Wert thou but mine  
I would blind thee  
With the sacred sign  
Of five,  
Making thee mine.  
Alive  
Thou wouldst kill me,  
But dead, dead thou wouldst fill me  
With the low breath I seek, and I should be  
The incarnate spring's gold immortality.  
Rose of the mire  
Where courses sacred fire. . . .

Oh! In what far land  
Shall I weave thee a garland  
That shall contain thee,  
And shall not contain thee?  
That shall restrain thee,  
And shall not restrain thee?

## THE EQUINOX

O thou whose scent enchanted my vain youth  
From the more bitter truth  
Of easy things,  
How hast thou led me on  
To the mire?  
Thou madest thyself wings  
Of false and fecund fire ;  
Thou bad'st me don  
An alien robe of shame.  
Ah ! Sweetheart, thee I blame,  
And may not blame,  
For the sweet, eternal shame  
That seared my soul,  
And left my spirit free,  
Free ! to weep before thee,  
And thou hast slain me ;  
Thou hast slain me whole,  
I am all dead to thee,  
My Rose, my Rose, my Rose,  
And the things I have said to thee  
Are but the foolish echoes the wind blows  
Into mine ears from the most secret world  
Wherein thy faded petals dropped,  
And stopped  
Decaying, for eternally are curled  
Tightly new petals. So this my song shall be  
The last I shall sing to thee,  
To thee. Oh, the wind blows  
Thy secret to me, Rose !

## ROSA IGNOTA

### II

#### THE GARDEN

BECAUSE of the gray dreams  
In the garden of yellow roses,  
A thrill of the quiet streams  
In the garden of lost delight :  
Ah! youth, so slim and white,  
The one sure blossom uncloses :  
When thou art lying still and dead, it blooms in the heart of  
the night.

Shattered the golden sword in the great bronze hands of the  
old  
Hermaphrodite of the ages !  
O youth, so sad and wise,  
Shattered the strong hilt lies ;  
The great bronze god for wages  
Has a hilt of gold, and eyes of gold,  
Beneath the sunless skies.

Yet it were well to have been  
Idle and young and tender,  
Ignorantly and idly wise, disdainful in the dawn,  
Sweetest of all the green  
And gold that the gods surrender  
Of the sweet dead times that have seen  
The marriage of nymph with faun.

## THE EQUINOX

See! With an idle rime  
I slip again to the splendour,  
With eyes all blinded by time,  
To this thing that the gods surrender—  
Ineffably sad and tender  
As a girl-babe born to die  
Ere she hath known the blue of the sky,  
And the light that her love shall lend her.

So in an idle dream  
I have slipped from the yellow-gray ;  
On the wings of song I have crossed the stream  
To the dawn of immortal youth—  
To the long-lost love-lit day  
When the gods in glamour and ruth  
Passed as a dream away,  
In a dream that was known for the truth.

### III

#### AMOR INTELLECTUALIS

THE soft, gray autumn's radiant stars  
Bend down, like pallid nenuphars  
Over a woodland pool, and I  
See night, blind night, beyond the sky :  
Autumn in London, gray and gold.  
Autumn in London, chaste and cold.  
By woodland ways, with silent tread,  
Pass, dusty dreams ! dreams dim and dead

## ROSA IGNOTA

In the gold of a faded summer sun  
Burnished and dull, in clouds of dun  
And brilliant amber. Soft! Let be  
The tender dream! Stay here with me!  
So, to this dream, this dream, I give  
Again the pulsing life I live :  
The faded sunset thrills the sweet  
Core of my soul ;—ah ! nimble feet  
Grown old ! Oh ! autumn woodlands fraught  
With pensiveness of waking thought !  
The gray night gathers, soft and cold,  
The old dead dreams, dead dreams of old,—  
The cold, gray, windy breath of time,  
The old dead loves, the unsung rime :  
Autumn, the pale, gray, crispèd star,  
Virginal, golden nenuphar,  
Folden upon itself to sleep,  
To sleep and die, to wake and weep  
Soft silver tears of old desire.  
O molten silver of my lyre,  
Transmute, transmute my autumn dream,  
Transmute the winding star-lit stream  
To the stream of olden grace and love ;  
The earth beneath, the sky above ;  
And round the russet autumn's chill  
The brown leaves swirling, swirling still  
Where London autumn waxes cold,  
Where night grows younger, fold on fold.  
The short, gray day fades softly down  
To dusk ; Night bears the radiant crown

## THE EQUINOX

Of twilight's dim remembered dreams  
Seen through a tremulous veil : who deems  
The past is dead—let London lights  
Mingle with London's autumn nights ! . . .  
The dull-red gleams of burnished fire,  
The wind-harp songs of old desire,  
Lost, pallid, steal through Autumn's veils,  
The unsung songs, forgotten tales. . . .  
Autumn in London, young and bare,  
Autumn in London, gray and fair. . . .  
Through hazes of the times of eld  
Through mazes of the world compelled  
By the magic of the memory  
Of the love born by a sunlit sea—  
Through the gray dusk a faint pink glows,  
The aureole of a flower that blows  
In the garden of the gods : too long  
I linger lost in sense of song ;  
Too long I stay, too late, too late  
I wander by the hidden gate  
Of the garden, and the night-wind blows  
Around me still, ah, Rose, my Rose !  
From thee the wind-borne breezes float :  
From thee ! the secret word, the note  
On the lips of a dying god, pierced through  
By the spear of Dawn. Is Dawn still new,  
Now thou art faded in the gloom ?  
Now thou art lost in death and doom ?  
I know not yet ; nor shall I know  
Till thou art faded quite, and snow

## ROSA IGNOTA

Upon thy grave shows bare and white  
In the chill heart of winter's night.  
Still shall I feel the wind that blows  
From the secret grave of thee, my Rose.

## IV

### DECADENCE

TWILIGHT, that is the thin gray ghost of day,  
Holds the dim way of death ; the darkness grows  
More sanguine-hearted as the hour is sped,  
    And with less light is fed ;  
    Thine hour grows, grows always :  
Thou art mine, mine own, mine own, thou sanguine Rose.

Thou sanguine Rose ! Deep-hearted as the hour  
Thou bearest as a flame ; more argent-shod  
Than the eloquent bringer of the god's delight :  
    Here, from the edge of night  
    I pluck thee forth, a flower  
Too fair for the garish day, the barren sod.

My Rose ! My ensanguined Rose ! For ever mine,  
Mine in the birth of the spirit : the flash that fades,  
Unveiling still, lights thee, that bloomest still  
    Till that thou dost fulfil  
    The old gray world, divine  
With the breath of thee in the cool, white colonnades.

## THE EQUINOX

Thou art too pure to love, too sweet to know,  
Too fair to bear unsullied through the world,  
Where love is blind with lust, and hate grows strong  
    On thine immortal song ;  
    Nor do the world's winds blow  
Abroad the forbidden word, in thee, in thee impearled.

My Rose ! my Rose ! my Rose ! my ensanguined Rose,  
Blood o' the heart of the love transcending life,  
Than death more cool, more eloquent, more still :  
    There is moonlight on the hill,  
    But thou art gone, as goes  
The promised joy of thee, the world's still-virgin wife.

They spurn thee from the temples of their Lady,  
Nor know the passion of thy virgin will,  
Nor heed the murmurous song of thee, that blows  
    Over their heads, my Rose :  
    But in cool paths and shady  
Of the old secret woods, ah ! they might find thee still !

Rose ! Rose ! the driving rain, the shadows growing  
Over the pathway of the doubtful land,  
Obscure thee from me, and no foot-fall now  
    I hear ; if it be thou,  
    So silent, that art going,  
I shall not know, nor in thy darkness understand.



ROSA IGNOTA

V

OF THE ROSE

“ THAT love and the lover  
Are mingled in me  
Night shall discover :  
Dreams shall not be  
The veil of the world that my heart doth disclose :  
The long night is over,  
And I am the Rose.

“ Night, like a cancer,  
Spread over my breast ;  
There was no answer,  
No truce to this rest,  
That, holding the world in a shower of white snows,  
Chilled the mad dancer  
Who bore me, the Rose.

“ Day, like a vision,  
Before me is fled ;  
Hate and derision  
Have fouled my soft bed.  
In the heart of the water the quenched vision glows ;  
Unborne, in division,  
By me, the world's Rose.”

Ah ! Rose of the mire  
That festering runs  
Through the lands of desire  
In the blaze of the suns ;—

## THE EQUINOX

I am stirred to the depths of me when the wind blows  
The notes of the lyre  
To me, O lost Rose !

My rose of the world,  
My rose of the mire,  
With petals soft-curved  
O'er the heart of desire,—  
I am he who shall bear thee ; who knows not and  
knows ;  
Whose heart is impearled  
In the heart of the Rose.

By the bow that is bent,  
By the veil that is torn,  
By the strength that is spent,  
By the babe that is born,  
By the river of starlight that ceaselessly flows  
By the god's starlit tent,  
Oh, I hail thee, my Rose.

So day and her lover,  
And night and her dream,  
Have passed thee, Rose, over ;  
And over the stream  
Thou shalt pass, and thy vigil not seek to impose,  
Nor thy secret discover,  
O thou, the world's Rose.

## ROSA IGNOTA

### VI

#### THE VALLEY

IT is undone, the spell, and I am cast  
Out to the winds ; at last  
I shall perish utterly, I know :  
But I shall lie asleep on the breast of the Past,  
Nor feel the sun, nor the tempest, nor the snow,  
And all my woe  
Shall be as naught to me,  
For I shall be utterly free  
As I am utterly dead.  
So let no requiem be said  
Over my mouldering head,  
And let no vague, sweet songs be sung  
By any tongue !  
For he to whom the songs are given  
Hath no ear to receive.  
The chord is riven,  
And he did not believe.  
He had no fear to die, for death could give  
No more pain  
Than that he knew whilst he did live.  
He lives again  
In the earth  
Whence he had birth.  
Gladly he lies at rest, asleep, unknown,  
His ashes scattered to the four winds, blown  
About the world : his songs

## THE EQUINOX

Forgotten utterly as he.  
So let him lie unknown where he belongs,  
Ask of the murmuring sea,  
Or of the silent stars that roll so ceaselessly,  
Where he be fled,—  
It is enough ; one word is enough : he is dead.

Rose! Ever-virgin Rose of the pulsing world,  
Whereover are thy petals curled,—  
It is for me alone to sing of thee,  
It is for me alone.

Yea! let my songs of thy fame  
Be as flame,  
That shall enhance, maybe,  
The liberty  
Of one.—

If one alone shall say :  
“ It is not dead, the day,  
Not utterly dead while one man sings,  
Having been brushed by the morning's wings,”  
It shall suffice  
For him ; and as for thee,  
Though the age be as ice,  
In one heart thou hast blossomed ; one was free  
To sing these things,  
These things.

For ever more the light shall fade from him,  
His eyes shall wax more dim,  
His ear more dull.  
And so the wonderful world less beautiful

## ROSA IGNOTA

Shall grow : he shall know no more  
The wonder of spring :  
He shall sing—  
But a shadow shall lie before.  
He shall find no thing  
Whereby he may linger, and say,  
Behold! I have found the day.

His day is over : utterly he shall die,  
My Rose, under the sky.  
He shall lie with the worm,  
And so no more with thee ;  
There shall be set this term  
To his mortality.

Yet shall he worship thee  
With his tears  
For a few short years.  
And then he shall be  
Nothing at all to thee,  
Who sang thee when no other man would sing thee,  
Who brought unto thee all that he could bring thee.

Night, that art mother of our quietness,  
Who bendest deep, dark eyes o'er our distress,  
In thee shall sleep his ashes ; let him lie  
Alone under the sky,  
Nor wake again :  
He hath paid for his life with his pain.  
He oweth naught  
Unto the universe,

## THE EQUINOX

For that whereof  
He was wrought  
Was bound up with the curse  
Of love.  
So let him lie with earth above,  
And earth below.  
He hath forgotten who was fulfilled of woe.  
He is buried deep, oh! deep:  
Leave him alone to sleep.

Leave him to sleep alone under the sky;  
He had one mighty vision, and did die.  
Now he is dead that dream shall be fulfilled  
While he doth sleep.  
For, whilst his song is utterly stilled,  
His dream doth wake again,  
And laugh and weep.  
But he is free, and knoweth no more pain.

## VII

### THE SONG

YEA! I who have lain dead among the roses  
Have slain love utterly in my soul  
By mine own death! O constant-playing fount  
Under the shadow of our Venus' mount—  
Thou whom I love, unto whose vine uncloses  
The gaping wound whose sap hath made me whole,—

## ROSA IGNOTA

O riot of the gods ! O thou !  
O thou of the pale brow,  
And pale, most pale, blue eyes,  
Upon thy bosom  
Oh, the bud and blossom !  
The flaunting wanton leaps on the stage of the world,  
And cries :  
I am the love, the love that never dies,  
Being born with the lover's death,  
Yielding mine easy breath  
Under the never-failing skies,  
That fail not for shelter over the dim world.  
And so am I closely curled  
Upon myself, with petals still, still furled. . . .

Over the plains of Art with scornful feet  
And trailing amber robes, a nymph of time  
Floats, nimbly fleet  
Before the vision,  
And in derision  
She mocks me for my rime,  
Mocks me with song most sweet,  
Most utterly sweet, and I,  
Who have slain the shells  
Of the gods who haunted me  
And flaunted me,  
Lie,  
Listening to the spells  
That she hath woven about me.  
Yea ! should she flout me,

## THE EQUINOX

I should burst with song, I know,  
And go,  
An ill-starred victim, to the lost low land  
Where the wailing voices—  
That are voices only,  
Having burst the husk of song—  
Wander lonely,  
While the Muse rejoices,  
Bearing within her hand  
The lyre,  
And the sacred fire,  
Serene and strong,  
That lights the dusky underworld.  
Ah! hurled, ah! hurled  
By Zeus  
From the skies,  
Prometheus, lost Prometheus  
Gasp and dies  
For ever on the rock of my desire,  
And the lusty Raven  
Hath sought at last his haven,  
Under the streams that flow from that lost fire. . . .

Oh, woe! Oh, woe to me that have seen this,  
Oh, woe unutterable! the last long kiss  
Hath slain me, O thou nymph with wanton eyes!  
And now the sunlight dies  
A moment from the skies  
Over the Abyss. . . .



## ROSA IGNOTA

Descent ! Descent ! Ah ! I am fallen far  
Under the low, bright star  
That led me on, a dreamer, to the veil  
That parted, and left pale  
The dark beyond ; for there was nothing there—  
Nothing ! A shell ! A husk  
Born of the dusk  
In the afterglow of passion, wild and fair  
I saw it. Yea !  
I had been stolen away,  
A changeling bodily ; my soul was thrust  
To moulder with the dust :  
I was the love that dies,  
And I had slain the lover  
With song.  
Ah ! Night ! discover  
Her of the wanton eyes  
That fled before me  
So long,  
And scattered o'er me  
Alas ! the star-dust that should blind mine eyes,  
And hide me from the skies.  
Is love so strong ?  
So weak the lover ?  
Yea, night shall yet discover  
My song, my veiled song.

# THE EQUINOX

## VIII

### INSPIRATION

THE wingèd globe that holds the stars enchained,  
The secret, silver pools of the lost desires—  
These be thy fires, thy fires !  
O lone Osiris in thy wintry tomb  
Of doom  
O lonely one, so utterly silent there,  
Too weary for despair—  
Yea, I have found thee too, thee too,  
And round thee all the blue  
Of the skies is blackened ; waned  
The light of thine eyes to the dusk.  
The husk, the husk  
Of all dead dreams, dead dreams  
Is come upon thee ;  
Dust and ash and musk, and musk, and musk—  
All these are on thee. . . .

I bear a chalice of red-tipped lilies under the moon.  
Bestrewn  
The dim pathway of delight  
With night,  
And her dim, pale stars that swoon  
In the circle of the skies.  
Thine eyes,  
O radiant god, are waning, and there dies

## ROSA IGNOTA

Along the barren waste thine echoing cry.  
And all the sky  
Is a chalice of white lilies rimmed with blood,  
With blood ; and the bitter flood  
Of thy tears is dying away, away, away,  
Beyond the hills, the hidden hills of day.

These are but lilies, O my silent god ;  
Where thy feet have trod  
Upon the earthly way  
They have sprung,  
And the songs that have been sung  
Are faded with the day.  
My little heap of ashes, thou wast god,  
Yea, utterly wast thou god !

So there are no more roses, no more roses ;  
There shall be no more songs to thee,  
Lord of the lilies and the silent sea  
Of Time.  
No rime  
This night brings to thee : closes  
The hour in dusk ; there is no song sung to thee,  
And thou art fled from all thy toil, set free. . . .

## IX

### THE DESCENT INTO MATTER

YEA! All the veils of the spirit come to this—  
To this, that they are veils of thee, of thee ;

## THE EQUINOX

And the flesh, alas! is the core of thee. Be it so.  
I have wandered through the worlds in seeking thee,  
And I have found thee, and thou art as pure  
As dung, as sweet as sweat, as light as lust.  
All these, all these I have found, oh, bitterness!  
O forsaken one, whom I have found, thou art ravished  
By the phallus of Time, of Time that pierceth thee  
So keenly that thou art torn, thy virgin body  
A prey to the lust of Time! Oh, bitterness!  
Oh, threefold sadness! I have found thee now  
Too late, too late, too late. I am weary of flesh;  
It burns me now I have lost thee! I sicken of time,  
It sears me, sears me! Now, no longer unknown,  
I have found thee, the harlot goddess. Why camest  
thou not

When thou wast pure as I, a new-purged soul  
Weary for a space from the lusts of the world, set free  
From the clutches of flesh? For ever I have lost thee,  
And I damn thee, for that thou hast seduced me far  
From the olden way of the gods. O Rose! Rose!  
Rose

Unknown, ah! wherefore hast thou done this thing?  
The spirit is dead within me, and the flesh  
Wearies of thee, whom never I have known:  
For thou art foul to me—a leprous worm  
Of sticky slime; a clamorous courtesan  
With itching sores, thou bidd'st me scratch thee, ease  
Thine ill with the touches of love. Ah! slimy one,  
Rose of the world polluted, thou who holdest  
A boy's dreams in derision, a man's desires

## ROSA IGNOTA

As food for thy body—thy body!—how shall I come to  
thee

Who am at last awakened? Oh, my Rose,  
My Rose of my lost World, O Rose! Rose! Rose!  
Pity me for that now I may not love thee,  
Pity me for the unquenchable desire,  
Never to be gratified, I bear toward thee!  
Pity me for my youth, the scattered dreams  
That are fallen from the shattered casket of my soul.

Yet will I ravish thee even now, my queen;  
I will fasten my fangs in thy breast, and drink thy  
blood,  
Thy leprous blood, to make me mad with hate,  
And frenzied with unsatisfied desire.—  
I will make my bed with thee, thou harlot Rose  
Set 'twixt the limbs of the world, hate and desire.  
I will make me foul as thou that I may be  
A citizen of the world! I will quench the fire  
Immortal in me! I will be as thou,  
Prostitute unto Pan and unto Time.—  
I will live upon the dreams thou givest me  
In fee for sated passion! Yea! I will be  
A vanquisher of genius, a dream palled  
With life and time, knowing naught else there be  
But thou, who art slime, whose fingers through the veil  
Transform the world to dust, the sun to fire,  
Life unto lust, love to polluted dreams  
Of rose-buds ruined by slimy worms that crawl,  
Seeking desire, through the crapulous bed of love.

## THE EQUINOX

So shall the lust of love be sated on thee  
In spite of thee, who knowest no ecstasy.  
And I will win a pallid way to the stars  
In spite of thee! Yea, and because of thee.  
For the end of every path must be the same,  
And at the end of thee, immortal one,  
Is Nothing! Yea, thou shalt know, Rose, even  
as I,  
How the last dust of the world is naught but dust,  
And how thou shalt die, being the Immortal Rose.

## X

### LIFE

MEN say: "For love's sake and for beauty's sake  
We would make our songs immortal; we would  
give  
The passionate cry of summer, the secret ache  
That thou, our poet, knowest;" I would live  
A lonely virgin for thy sake, and I  
Would fret no more the earth, nor tire the sky  
With ever-unbidden song. Ah! I would give  
All that my spirit hath learned of thee, to live  
Lonely and pure with the memory of thy kiss,  
And thy passionate, tearing lips, and thine arms around  
me,  
Knowing naught of the world, and caring naught, save  
this:  
Love, through this woman, hath found me. . . .

## ROSA IGNOTA

But last night, when betwixt thy breasts I lay,  
Sucking thy soul away,  
I dreamed of a song I would make thee, a song so fair,  
It should charm the wandering air,  
And make it stay with me for ever,  
A thought of thee within my mind :  
Dearest, I am deaf and blind,  
Believe me, to all but thee ; yea, too, I am dumb,  
Save when I sing thee,  
When my songs I bring thee.  
O passionate endeavour !  
O love more rare  
Than the fabled loves of the gods, I too succumb  
Unto the olden immemorial spell,  
And have no words to tell  
Of thee, and of the grace of thee,  
And of the face of thee,  
Who art mine, whom I made mine own.

Rosa Ignota ! Ah ! the Rose is blown.

## XI

### MELANCHOLY

OVER all is the greenness, in the slow-falling night  
Over the fields with dusk and dew, with dusk and dew,  
there flees  
A dying echo, faint and dim, fleeing towards the light ;  
Sombre streams cry mournfully in the sighing breeze  
With the rustling trees.

## THE EQUINOX

The old brown mellow houses grow mellow in the nightfall ;  
A charmed air is about them of the keen old days that  
are dead.

Oh, hushed is the song of the morning, hushed in the tremu-  
lous light-fall,  
For the light is fading slowly now, and all the legends  
are said,  
And all the glamour is fled.

Here in the soft grey twilight the mournful evening lingers  
Upon the road to dream and sleep and all the things that  
are past ;

Here in the shadowy night-fall, with slow reluctant fingers,  
The poet touches the silent strings, and falls into calm at  
last  
As the night grows dim and vast.

And the passionate hour of love, of love, is come unto dust  
and slumber,

A gracious memory only stays, a passionless sense remains  
Of golden hours that are passed and fled, when the joys of love  
without number

Fanned into fire his smouldering heart, and turned into  
flame his brains

With purple and crimson stains.

And the hour of the Rose is fallen, and the light of her eyes is  
fled,

There is only a sense of vaguest dream, of calm, unending  
repose



## ROSA IGNOTA

On the breast of a love that is fled afar, this is soft, and gentle,  
and dead ;  
That passed away on the stream of night ; that flows and  
flows and flows  
From the heart of a faded Rose.

## XII

### THE SEER

OVER the billows  
Of soft green grass,  
Under the willows,  
The gray sprites pass.  
In twilight's glamour  
The shadows grow,—  
Cadent life's clamour !  
So low, so low,  
That the world is hushed  
As the white light pales ;  
No longer flushed  
The daylight fails ;  
The fading light  
No longer glows  
In the west ; the night  
Still deeper grows :  
O secret Rose !  
O secret Rose !  
O secret Name !  
The west wind blows  
As the hot red flame

## THE EQUINOX

Dies down to dusk ;  
    The day is dim. . . .  
Hawthorn and musk. . . .  
    The seraphim  
Play on the breeze :  
    The ponds are stirred  
By the mysteries  
    Of the secret Word.  
The lost Word floats  
    Over the dunes  
In silver notes  
    And golden tunes,  
    And mystic runes.  
O secret Rose !  
    O secret Flame !  
The west wind blows  
    The secret Name  
Into the ears  
    Of the wandering lights  
That love their fears  
    In the summer nights,  
And in autumn rejoice  
    By the haunted meres,  
Hearing the voice  
    Of the seven spheres,  
Who are merged in the sun,  
    Whom the moonlight frees,  
And whose orison  
    The soft night-breeze  
    Blows over the leas.

## ROSA IGNOTA

To softest sleep  
    In the scented west  
In the moonlight deep  
    His ear is pressed  
To the earth, who wanders,  
    Unseen, alone ;  
Who dreams and ponders,  
    Whose face is stone,  
Carven by thought :  
    He unveils the skies,  
And the star-dreams wrought  
    By his frozen eyes  
Take shape and stand  
    In his argent dream ;  
And the old gray land  
    And the swift gray stream  
    Glitter and gleam.

The silver wonder  
    Of silent stars,  
The silent thunder  
    Of sunset's bars,  
The crimson flare  
    In the ashes of day,  
Are everywhere  
    On the secret way :  
Under the hill  
    The clamouring gnomes,  
For a moment still  
    In their darkened homes,  
Hear the deep night,

## THE EQUINOX

And the secret word  
That dies in light  
Is seen as a bird,  
As a vision heard.

The sylphs that skim  
The upper air,  
Light of limb,  
With floating hair,  
Tune their lyres  
To the faded west,  
And the sacred fires,  
As they pass to rest,  
For a moment stay  
As a note half-heard  
On their homeward way  
As a weary bird  
Lingers in space.  
O molten air!  
O dying grace!  
O dream most rare!  
O fire most fair!

The waves that wander  
Under the night,  
As stars that ponder  
The birth of light,  
Lift their crests  
To the flash of fire,  
And in their breasts  
There is born desire

## ROSA IGNOTA

For the maidens that float  
    In the heart of the river ;  
And the secret note  
    Sets the waves aquiver  
Till the naiads arise  
    To hear the choir  
Of the star-lit skies,  
    And the secret fire  
    Of death and desire.

And the rim of the flame  
    Is pierced and torn  
With the spirits made tame  
    By the breath of the morn,  
And the life of the fire  
    That surges and swells  
From the swamp and the mire,  
    From the million hells,  
And the one soft heaven  
    Where meetly blooms  
The heart of the seven  
    Supernal dooms.  
The water of life  
    Still flashes and flows  
From the heart of the strife  
    To the pathway that goes  
    To the core of the Rose.

## THE EQUINOX

### XIII

#### DEATH

THE ways are fixed unto the last abode  
Of death ; there is no sign-post on that road ;  
No man hath found it, and no man shall find  
The secret way under the heavens : blind  
Is knowledge, for within man's mortal brain  
There is an end to thought, an end to pain ;  
And there is death, a cool, gray, silent place,  
Calm in the afterglow of life ; one grace  
Kept pure and holy, and one sacred thing  
In the deep centre of the mystic ring  
Of life, whence all roads lead, a winding path  
Through plains of dumb despair and sunless wrath.  
There is one holy spot under the skies  
Kept sacred from the screaming herd : there lies  
The silent singer, and the dreamer asleep,  
Calm in the mother-earth, and sunken deep  
From all the toil of the world and the heat of day,  
Buried and quite forgotten ; hidden away  
From jarring strife, the myriad tongues that shout  
Their petty shibboleths of faith and doubt.  
One truth, one knowledge, and one thing shall save :  
The cool, dark temple of the silent grave.  
One knowledge and one truth : one thing alone  
Shall yield the calm man seeks— the upright stone.  
One life, one love, one death ; and Death at last  
Is master of all life to be, far passed

## ROSA IGNOTA

Into his silence ; from the earth where he  
Reigns in his silent, sunless dignity  
One hope still blossoms, one last flower still blows  
Upon the mystic earth, my Rose, my Rose.

## XIV

### THE BEGINNING

ROSE of the gardens of old Babylon,  
Red, scarlet Rose of fire in the breast of light :—  
I had a dream of thee, my Babylon ;  
Yea ; all thy petals were crimson with delight :  
And under the soft stars, the silent night  
Grew deeper, deeper, till the heart o' the world  
Lay bare before me, with no robe to don  
Save the lucent veil of spirit, argent-white ;  
And then there came a voice : Arise ! Smite ! Smite !  
Ere the portal of the temple may be won !  
Crash down the walls ! Lend all thy hidden might !  
I, in the bosom of the deep imperled,  
Cry from the cloud-place of the Underworld.  
Let the gold banner of the day be unfurled  
That I may manifest the secret curled  
In the darkling bosom of the world's great night !

Then I arose in majesty, and came,  
Spurning the loves of the world for thee, for thee,  
For that my soul had quenched all meaner flame,  
Than the flame that burned still for thy majesty !

## THE EQUINOX

And the voice of the world swept ever over me,  
And I gave answer: Come thou forth, my star!  
Oh! be it mine to see thy chariot flee!  
Oh! come thou in thine own triumphal car!  
And at the naming of the secret Name  
Thou camest unto me, Istar! Istar!

Istar! thou flaming rose-bud of the world!  
Istar! I call thee by thy secret Name!  
Istar! the snake within the red Rose curled,  
Come in thy triumph! Come thou in thy shame  
All uncontaminate—a lambent flame.  
Lick, lick the sores upon me!\* ah! thy name  
Hath burned me through: I scorch within thy star!  
Drain me to death, and slay me with thy flame!  
Death and destruction! O Istar! Istar!

Palace of dream! Red rose-leaves subtly hurled  
At the chariot-wheels of Time! O charioteer,  
Who drivest on the molten car o' the world  
Over desire, and love, and hope and fear,  
Hath not the name of the goddess on thine ear  
Fallen, and art thou still abashed with shame?  
Apollo! Apollo! Apollo! I name the Name,  
And the silver of the moon grows gold and clear;  
The sun-dawn breaks in everlasting flame,  
Shaming desire, and burning up the fear  
Of the world! O thou! I call thee by thy name  
Most secret! Yea! I smite the age-long year  
Of man's deliverance! And thy steeds I tame  
With the word of the sun-god! And the molten bar



## ROSA IGNOTA

Of flaming gold is flung back from thy throne!  
I stand unarmed before thee, and alone,  
Bearing the fallen mantle of a star;  
Rose of the world! Istar! Istar! Istar!

## XV

### THE BLUE CIRCLE

FOR all the blue heart of the shifting summer,  
And all the grace of green, the fire of spring  
Grown olden in the world of space and time—  
Let the twin worlds rejoice! The sacrilege  
Of the mystery is unveiled; there is no word  
Uttered within the bosom of the spring.  
But the hornèd satyrs under the beechen boughs  
Still linger, as the hour of triumph grows  
In the Ram's mouth: and the heart of day is torn  
With the fear of the new Birth: no more is set  
The Crown on the temples of the dawn; no more  
Is heard the clarion of the day; the ways  
Are darkened for delight, and pure for pain  
Of birth, stretch forth to the ends of the universe—  
A long, still road of longing, passion-pale  
With the dust of lives, and strewn with the bitterness  
Of the heart of man, the weary heart of man!  
And deeply set betwixt the pillars of day,  
There stands the statue of a god, awaking  
From torpor; reaching up to the pale blue skies,  
And wingless, and with longing in his eyes  
For the unattainable goal; with lips that quiver

## THE EQUINOX

With slow anticipation of delight.

Ah! mouth half-opened to the warm spring air!  
Ah! eyes that smouldering never burst in flame!  
Ah! thou unsatisfied, immutable one  
In the key of blue . . . the threefold destiny,  
Is not for thee, nor ever shall be thine!

The lust of joy incarnate! Incarnate youth  
Of the world! Alack! No longer art thou King  
Of the Underworld; no more thy road is peace,  
For not by longing nor by wonderment  
Shalt thou gain the drooping west, the starless place,  
The sun-shot centre of the folden stars,  
The palace of the cloudy Underworld.  
Oh! in the key of blue my lyre is tuned  
To the threefold mystery. O wandering stars!  
O lonely lights! The mysteries of time  
Fade and grow pale before the eternal cry!  
Light! Light! The doom of time is thrown to the  
winds—

And I have set the secret wide and still  
In the heart of thee, my Mother; I have known  
The incarnate miracle of the birth of man,  
The twin of Time, the heir of the gods' debauch;  
The shedder of the raiment of the loom  
Whereon are woven birth and life and death.  
Yea! Is revealed the Sword, the eye of light!  
Hail to the fivefold star! The secret awe  
Of the world unborn; and thou, that hast the key,  
Let the lyre sound before thee! Let thy breath

## ROSA IGNOTA

Herald the day! Aha! Aha! Aha!  
Ho! Dance in the secret dances of the night,  
In the mystic windings of the mossy ways  
Of eld! Oh! let the silence break, break, break  
At the birth of man from out the universe!  
Hail to the Lord of the Sun, and the Sacred Rose!

Master of space and time, thou subject god!—  
Master of space and time! From the Underworld  
I speed upon the Way! Ho! Jupiter!  
I am Mercury, the little light-heeled god,  
The summoner of the stars at choring-time,  
When they sing thine earth, thine earth, thy sun-child.

Yea!

From out the deep is sung the song of joy,  
And the branches of all the trees in all the world  
Are shaken, and the twilight pools are stirred  
From slumber by the softly spoken word.  
And I am thine! Sunk in the heart of Time  
Is the memory of thee! Ah! deep! deep! deep  
In the core of the world! And I am set, a flame,  
On the altar of song; the old, forgotten ways  
Are set in me! I am the risen Pan,  
Risen from the rainy earth to bear the spring  
Within me! Oh, thou little soft, shy god,  
Half girl, half beauteous youth, oh, hail to thee  
Hail! For the morning is a misty birth,  
And the sun a shadow, and the world a lie!  
And I that sing in the early key of blue  
Am the Rose o' the World, the long-forgotten Rose!

## THE EQUINOX

Hail! on the altar of the awakening day ;  
Hail! in the temple of the night outworn  
By the vigils of the gods! Soft, secret Rose,  
I bear upon my breast the golden sign ;  
I wear thee on my breast, and I am thine—  
Light as the summer oak-leaves, gold as the god  
On the shimmering sea calling the winds to rest.  
Light, light be the earth upon thee, and below,  
Breath of the world unborn, long wave of song!  
Hail unto thee, and hail unto the star  
That bore thee! Hail! and hail! and hail! and hail  
Hail! For the word is spoken, and the light  
Is fallen, and the Rose is mine, is mine!  
The Rose is mine! O Rose! O secret Rose!

## XVI

### THE SILVER CRESCENT

IN the little cleft of the rocks whence life first sprang  
To birth, by the secret, shadowy, molten sea,  
Where Aphrodite sprang to greet the sun,  
Low voices murmur: shadowy Underworld  
In the void of time, light song of Erebus  
On the lips of a courtesan of Rome, ah! list!  
A wandering singer caught the light o' the stars  
On his lips, and the sun-dawn of the world in his heart.  
For I that dwelt within the city of Time  
Was lost in a cloudy dawn; the silken veil  
Of dew that clothed the green grass of the fields

## ROSA IGNOTA

Was the veil of Olympus! Now the shadowy night  
That sang to me, that sang, that sang to me  
Sprang from the underworld of Eld; the moon  
That circled in the heavens sang to me.  
And I that heard the olden monstrous lays  
Of eld, the dreaming wonders of the dawn,  
Died, and still lie imprisoned in the rocks  
By the salt sea, knowing of the doom of man,  
But being dumb, as is the doom of man.

For nightfall is delight of Eld, and I  
Wander bareheaded under the dark sky;  
Calling and calling from the windy deeps,  
The olden Night still draws me: moonlight weeps  
For sunlight faded in the dark; the sun  
Is under the dark clouds; still one by one  
Soft, silent stars creep silently upon me,  
Leaving soft trails of light. O wonder-dawn  
Of the inverted thunder of the skies—  
Back to the gardens of old Babylon!  
The hanging lamps, the slow enchanted moon,  
The gold-eyed stars, the pillars of the sea,  
And the call of Her forgotten! Oh! I lie  
Under the stars, upon the dewy sward,  
And all around me is the silent city,  
The soft, white city, softened by the dawn.  
And I hear the sistrons, and I hear the songs  
Sung to the hanging moon! And thou, Istar,  
Radiantly comest on the brains of men  
To slow illumination of desire;

## THE EQUINOX

The old enchanted palace of the will  
Is thine, and god-like dreams of Eld are thine,  
Of the Underworld of the stars, beneath the sea,  
Beyond the cloudy palaces of the hills.  
Ah! never hath the dawn been nearer thee!

Fallen to idle sleep, and borne within  
The temple of Mind, the soul of Night is laid  
Under the starry canopy of the worlds,  
And the lamp is set upon her bier; let be,  
Let her still slumber! Oh, my radiant one,  
Thou that art born of the dew and of the stars,  
Come thou to me, while that the soft night sleeps,  
O thou most inner and supernal dawn,  
Thou that bearest the torch for the feast of the gods!  
In the heart of eld I found thee, and a rose  
Was thy heart, and a rose thy crown, and tiny rosebuds  
Girt thy green mantle, and thy yellow hair,  
Glittered with the dust of the stars! By the river-side  
Thou camest to me! Oh, the secret night  
When I stared into the water under the moon,  
Singing and tumbling on its way to the sea!  
The soft stream flowed under the milky stars;  
And there were poplars by the water-side,  
Gazing upon themselves; but I was blind,  
Blinder than wood, more silent than the moon.  
And so thou camest to me, O my darling!  
My little rose-lipped darling! Fountain-cool  
Thy hands, and thine eyes warm with celestial fire  
Drawn from the world's heart! Oh! my little one,

## ROSA IGNOTA

Come to me here in the great, slow silences,  
In the radiant dimness of the after-glow  
Of the passionate ache of the world : I am Pan no more,  
But on my brow is set Diana's tiar !  
Diana, O Diana of the woods !  
Lie thou with me, for I am Pan no more,  
But the Virgin of the Star-drift of the world !  
Here in the silence, in the great green woods,  
Lie thou with me ! Slumber with me to-night  
Under the stars, and the yellow, drifting moon.  
We will love no more as Syrinx and Pan : Diana !  
Come unto me, and I will grant the thing  
Thou cravest ! Oh ! the foaming milk of the stars !  
I bear the red-tipped lilies under the moon !

Rosa Ignota ! Ah ! the pale moon-flowers,  
The soft, shy glances, and the virgin unwon !  
Oh ! the sweet burden of the sunless hours :  
Love ! I am conquered ! Nay, love ! I have won !  
O feeble moonlight ! O sweet stars undone  
By the pale longing of eld ! O virgin word !  
Under the silent moon I bear the sword !

Oh ! the soft burden of the sunken sun !  
I bear a chalice of lilies under the moon !  
I bear the red-tipped lilies under the moon !  
Light is no more : oh ! let us swoon and die !  
And the secret way is star-lit, star-bestrewn,  
Star-guarded, star-set, under the starry moon !  
Is there no way but this under the sky ?  
Oh, moon of Eld, ah ! shall we die or swoon ?

## THE EQUINOX

O Rose eclipsed ! O Rose ! my Rose of Roses !  
The night is pale to death : the lyre reposes  
Under the star-shot glamour of the moon,  
And all her palest roses.

## XVII

### THE RED TRIANGLE

THE eye of Fate is closed ; the olden doom  
Lies in the wrack of things. There is no sign ;  
Only the wind cries through the lonely woods,  
And the barren motherhood of the world is manifest  
Shamelessly ; in the dank, pale, autumn woods  
The fallen leaves lie squelching under the feet  
Of the desolate gnomes : and now the birds are silent,  
And the streams are sluggish in the veins of the world.  
Dark gray and cloudy, the skies no more are blue,  
And grayness reigning solitary makes music  
Drearly on the wind-harp. The dripping rain  
Soddens the earth, and the stones lie thick and wet  
Among the leaves ; and the trees wave naked arms  
In despair to the sky. The light is quickly dying,  
And there is no more day ; the dull red sun,  
A sore and aching eye in a face of gray,  
Droops down to slumber. All the world seems dead.

Rose ! Rose ! Where art thou ? O my Rose ! my Rose !  
My secret Rose ! Art lost among the gray ?  
There is no voice in the silence ; in the woods  
The brownness glistens under the weeping rain,



## ROSA IGNOTA

And I am in despair of Thee and Time.  
Weeping the trees, and all the streams grown sullen,  
Under the lowering skies and the bitter blasts—  
There is no living thing in the temple of Summer,  
And the ashes of spring lie cold on the hearth of day.

Gray dreams again ! And all my hope is fled.  
Gray dreams ! gray dreams ! and the day is tired and  
dead.

The bitter aftermath of summer brings  
Time's memory back to the world : there are no stings  
In the world's pain, but only bitterness  
Of the memory of Time ; no sore distress,  
Save for the thought of Summer waned and dead,  
And faded with the gold skies overhead,  
And the young green beneath ; ah ! secret Rose !  
Here from the heart of the woods I pluck thee forth,  
Fragrant with the smell of summer, crimson-bright !  
And, for the world under the stars to-night,  
It shall be thine, and thine the star that draws  
The world to worship thee : the days are faded  
Under the heavens ; there is no more sun,  
And no more love. The world is hushed and dead.

Slim-passing dryads through the lonely woods,  
I will follow ye in the paths of dank decay ;  
Decadent Autumn, with thy lonely broods  
Of active gnomes and little red-capped fays,  
That feasted in the summer under the trees  
Now dripping with Autumn rains—ah ! take me too,  
Me too into the silence of the past,

## THE EQUINOX

The grave of desolation ; I am weary  
Of all things : let me dream my life away.

The breast of Fate is pregnant with Despair,  
Got on her by the piercing shaft of Time.  
Oh ! Unborn child of Fate and Time, I am weary  
Of them that gave thee birth. Shall I love thee ?  
O darling ! Wilt thou come to me in the silence,  
Saying : " I bear the mystery of Time,  
And the secret of Fate ? " I know not yet, but surely  
Thou shalt know of the Rose, the Rose, the Rose o' the  
World !

With thee shall I bear the chalice of blood-tipped lilies,  
The chalice of red, sweet lilies under the moon ?  
But now there is no moon, nor any sun ;  
Only the world's gray noon is for thee and me ;  
There is no sound in the nerveless silences  
Of the fading world ; there is no quiver of light  
On the river of life ; we are unwed, my Rose,  
Nor knoweth each the other ; we are undone,  
My Rose, my secret Rose, my unknown Rose.

And still the Autumn woods are rustling dankly  
With sodden leaves made brown by wind and rain ;  
And the satyrs are fled under the earth to hide  
From the sunless world, and the nymphs are frozen to  
air

To be reborn in the sunlight ; there is no more joy,  
For mournfulness is fallen on the world,  
And decadence, and decay, and the odour of Eld.  
The spirit sleeps ; the Rose o' the World lies buried

## ROSA IGNOTA

Under the soil of every star that glows,  
A hanging lamp, under the Firmament :  
There shall be no more roses, no more roses . . .  
Until the spring of the stars shall fall on the world ;  
Then shall be light again, O secret Rose,  
And thou shalt be born anew, with radiant starlight  
For dew, and all thy petals shall be dreams  
Crystallised of the gods who swing the wheels  
Of the worlds in space ; and at the heart of thee  
Shall be the secret knowledge, the sacred Word,  
The ΛΟΓΟΣ of the throbbing Universe.  
And the years shall pass in myriads over the Tree  
Whereon thou bloomest, O my Rose o' the worlds,  
And one shall pluck thee forth ; and Love and Death  
Shall lie together, and there shall be born  
He who shall bear for ever into life  
The rose-tipped lilies under the silent stars,  
The silent stars, and the new-blushing roses.  
O Rose ! my Rose o' the World, my Rose of Roses,  
Thou shalt be born anew, and live for ever !

## XVIII

### THE YELLOW SQUARE

DEATH ! Death ! In the cool green colonnades of time  
I pursue thee ; thou art fled before me now  
In the silence. By the secret door I wait  
For a sign of thee ; but thou art fled before me

## THE EQUINOX

In the mist, and in the sunshine, and the day!  
Thou art married to Love, maybe, for Love sits weeping  
In my desolate heart, nor know I what can ail him,  
Save it be that thou art fled; immortal Love  
And mortal Death, and are ye separate still,  
Even as I and as the unknown Rose?

Maybe the Rose is Death, and I am Love,  
Wed to young Life, and jealous of desire  
Of Death! Oh, in the cool green colonnades  
I have lingered late, even till the night's slow fall,  
And I have heard the dying voices of day,  
The market-women's chatter growing faint  
In the twilight, and the drovers plodding home  
With their heavy beasts; and the dark blue sky and the  
stars

Have lingered together there, and stayed with me,  
So sunset's hour hath passed before me, slow  
Receding on the pathway of the day.

Wherefore still strive when all must end in death?  
How shall be freedom when the insistent lover  
Shall seize thee at length in sleep, and, ravishing thee,  
Bear thee, unknowing, back to the heart of things,  
The dim, black centre whence sprang Love and Fire  
Who made the world, and made all suns and worlds,  
Tearing the thing I now make manifest  
From the heart of the silent god? Oh, wherefore strive?

Art thou not still content to die, sweetheart?  
Or wilt thou seek me still through all the lives

## ROSA IGNOTA

Whose yoke we must bear? And wilt thou break the spell?  
But now the murmur comes to me again,  
Insistent as the rain upon the thatch,  
And the cry of the lonely wind at the blurring pane :  
I bear the red-tipped lilies under the moon  
For ever! the red-tipped lilies under the moon !

And now there is no cry to stir the dark,  
And the day is faded ; there is no more light.  
There is no more light, but through the dusky air  
The wind-harps play, the strings respond to the winds,  
As the droning oceans call to the listening skies ;  
The hills stand dark and deep in steadfast gloom ;  
Twilight is slain by the old black, wandering god.  
Summer is buried. There is no more light.

But in the breast of the world there stirs again  
The flaming heart that is my Rose, my Rose,  
My secret Rose, whom but to name, to name,  
Is a sacrament upon the altar of Fire :  
Oh ! yellow Fire! Oh ! aureate-petalled Rose !

Because swift Sorrow hath stricken me, I sing  
Here in the wavering gloom, the sunless deep,  
Calling slow dreams from their immortal sleep ;  
Wakening the murmuring sigh, the spirit's spring—  
The bitter pangs of the birth of everything,  
Immortal Matter and the wandering Soul.  
And they have sought to slay me in the night,  
Because I am blind, and hear not the dark wings ;  
Because I am a prisoner in the flesh ;  
Because I am mortal, O immortal Rose !

## THE EQUINOX

### XIX

#### THE BLACK EGG

THE splendid summer splashes on the city  
In little leaping lights, the flames of spring ;  
And the waters of the world and the Underworld  
Are stirred by the quickening breath of the unknown  
god.

Life, a strong pulse within the heart of Day,  
Glows in the western skies ; the morning pales  
Before the influx of this newer dawn.—

This for the argent dream that stands apart,  
The image of Activity unveiled,

The violation of Life by the thorn of Time.

Ah ! fever of a strong distempered god,  
Stirred into life by the mystery of birth :

Sure and secure is set the secret Way

Through all this endless maze of whirling things.

Ah ! let me pierce to the heart, to the heart of the Rose.

I am pale as the Rose : last night came Love to me,

And brushed me with his wing ; and I arose,

And stared out from my window into the dark.

There was rain and wind, and the unforgotten cry

Of her who hath striven for ever, and failed at last

For that Life had conquered her. But she came to me,

Crying, “ Wilt thou not lend me of thy strength,

And yield thy love to me ? ” How should I tell

Of this silent thing, this wise debauch of a goddess,

Who hath no way but this to know she lives ?

## ROSA IGNOTA

She cried : " I bring you wonder from the skies,  
And star-lit lilies, and pale, purple roses ;  
Roses ; still roses ; still the intoxication  
Of the scent of the world ; the virgin still unborn  
To this riot of life, this sensuous crash of things,  
This fulsome fever fretting out her life."

So! It is said! No more may I unveil  
The mystery! The way is hidden from me.  
I know not ; but the aching dream still stays,  
Burning me up to death ; the cool, strong death,  
Even death I shall slay in the cool, strong colonnades :  
I shall bear the Rose of life to the heart of death.  
And death shall lead me back to the shadowy river,  
The murmuring waters shall mock me then no more.  
I shall know, and knowing I shall strive again,  
Shall ever strive until the petals fall !

There is no way for me, my darling, now,  
Save one ; the hour is passed, and I have chosen.  
I have chosen, and the mellow river calls  
Insistently ; the darkness grows more deep,  
And night more luminous, yielding me her heart.  
For I have chosen : it is over now.  
We are one for ever, O my secret Rose,  
Pale phantom of the vastest god of rest,  
His wandering ghost, obsessed by space and time,  
Set free, a torment to the rolling worlds.

And Life, a foe for ever more of Time  
Springs still, the ghost of No Thing. Oh, sweet hour

## THE EQUINOX

Of this sweet spring, I hear the call again :  
I bear the chalice of lilies under the moon,  
I bear the red-tipped lilies under the moon.

And the blue light is merged into the flame  
Unquenchable of matter. We are sunk to sleep  
In the clods of earth, . . . and now we have forgotten,  
And the moods break upon us as they list  
From all the quarters of the lower worlds,  
Calling us hither and thither ; where, we know not,  
We know not, O my silent one, but still  
The sorrowfulness of Eld, the romance of sorrow,  
Are ours ; we are parted, but the search is still  
Though all the worlds wherethrough we have ever ranged :  
Through all the planes where we have ever sought  
The hidden root, and the pale, yellow blossom.  
Oh, I must name thee again, my Rose, my Rose.

Through the blue depths of the skies ; in the tumbling  
waters ;  
Midst the antic winds ; through the red heart of the fire ;  
How shall I know thee in the maze of things,  
In the monotonous gold of the rolling worlds ?

The mage hath seen thee with the eye of Fire ;  
The lover hath known thee in the sea of Air.  
The worlds hath hung all trembling on the lyre  
That the old god bears still with unwearying hand,  
Touching the strings to passionate mortal prayer,  
Answering or answering not, immortal still.  
Oh, through the maze how can I understand ?



## ROSA IGNOTA

How can I know thee, O my secret Rose ?  
In the old enchanted palace of the Will  
Still shall I bear the lilies under the moon,  
The blood-rimmed lilies under the harvest moon ?  
But there are no more roses, no more roses,  
And the ways stretch out, unending ; no god knows  
If thou shalt be reborn or late or soon.  
O poet of the world ! the agony closes.  
Shall there be no more roses, no more roses  
Under the immortal moon ?

## XX

### THE KEY

THE sign of the lover is hidden in vain  
From the eyes of the mage, from the sight of the sun :  
The laughter of life and the pæan of pain,  
The chords of the lyre and the answer of one.  
The toil of the pilgrim shall never be done ;  
The love of the lover shall never be over :  
For there is no end, ah ! no end to the Way,  
As there is no end to the love of the lover.  
And there is no cry : but some god shall obey,  
And there is no toil that shall ever know ending ;  
And there is no answer to life and to love,  
The mystical union unblending and blending.  
The pathway is set 'twixt the Eagle and Dove.

Gray world, the petals of the ensanguined Rose  
Open at dusk, and with the daylight close,

## THE EQUINOX

Because the priest is risen from the sod,  
Because he bears the mantle of a god.  
The hour has struck at last ; henceforth the Way  
Is sundered from the sunlight and the day.  
No one shall heed my singing ; there shall be  
—How well I know!—no seer that shall see.  
And none shall know the secret thing I write  
With speeding pen in the dim candle-light.  
Because my Rose is mine, no man shall find  
Wherefore I know, that was erewhile so blind ;  
Nor wherefore, by the light of one dim star,  
I see thee here, Lady of the Rose, Istar.

## XXI

### THE POET SPEAKS

*HERE shall be set the sigil of the sun,  
Gray world, soft light, strong wind, and burning day .  
I take the arrows cast by Blake away,  
And fling them surely at the sacred One.  
And the barbed arrow on its way shall run  
More swiftly : my swift heart it shall obey ;  
And it shall hit ! And thou no more shalt say  
The archer was blind, for the thing that I have done.  
Swift night, slow-burning stars, the wavering lyre  
Breathes fitfully beneath the moon's white fire,  
In rhythm to the cadence of the sigil  
Whose symbols sing, making the night to swoon,  
The day to tremble : from my secret vigil  
I shall return to meet thee, Love, and soon.*

## ROSA IGNOTA

*When for an age of craft-long loveliness  
I lay mine head against thy beating heart,  
And hear thy bosom throb, and soft sighs start  
Through all thy hot young breath, ah! canst thou guess  
How the artist longs to frame thy murmured "yes"  
In Parian marble, wrought with subtle art  
To immortal wonder, so to rend apart  
The curtains of the tomb with easy stress?  
Ah! wert thou here, sweetheart, I would not sing  
These foolish songs. I only turn to rime  
When thou art absent; for thine eyes would bring  
A light too dazzling for mine eyes; but time,  
When thou art from me, surely makes thee live  
For ever, from mine arms a fugitive.*

(I)

Red light and mirrored roses! Is the world  
A mirror only of life? Is death the thing  
Within the heart of life so deeply curled  
That only at life's end the thorn can sting?  
It may be. Yet I only care to know  
The imagery of the most fairest Rose;  
So that I dwell where that last Rose doth blow,  
I can forget life in the garden-close.  
Sweet wind of all the wide world's empery!  
Slow-purling streams of pure and fresh delight;  
Within thy breath and voices can I see  
White flesh, dark eyes, and longing dusky-bright:  
I care not any more for death, O life,  
Being slain by love with one thrust of the knife!

## THE EQUINOX

(II)

I care not though my love hath murdered me  
    With one soft touch of her most tender lips ;  
For dying on her breast, love's face I see :  
    Love calls me back from death ; my spirit slips  
Back to the old forgetfulness, ere I  
    Was risen to life's surface, virgin-pure  
To tinge my soul with the blueness of the sky,  
    The sun's gold, and earth's blacknesses secure.

Wherefore shall I repine that I must fade ?  
    Shall there not always be immortal roses ?  
How, losing life then, shall I be afraid  
    If at the sunset my tired soul reposes ?  
Oh, I shall lie on my love's breast for ever,  
For we, being dead, shall lose each other never !

(III)

I turn to mortal love ; imagining  
    Hath made a world that I may wander in ;  
Where Love sits crowned, a blind and wingèd thing,  
    Winged for delight of roving, blind to sin.  
This temple of Desire is pure and white,  
    Transparent to the sunlight and the day !  
Most deeply calm under the star-lit night :  
    Love's lamp guides lonely pilgrims on their way.

My staff hath flowered with love's immortal Rose ;  
    And I, that long be excommunicate,  
At early noon wait till the gates unclose :  
    I loll in the sunshine at the Eastern gate.

## ROSA IGNOTA

O love, my love ; I make my songs while waiting,  
My lips in missing thine but idly prating.

(iv)

For all the glowing panoply of earth  
The wingèd god must stand responsible ;  
The mavis' song, the roses' scent, the mirth  
Of spring, the spirit's passion, aping hell.  
So I, knowing my love, am girded round  
With all the armour of the wanton spring  
And her pagan festivals ; the swelling ground,  
The ripe blue sky, the ever-moving wing  
Of birth, have lent me glamour of desire,  
And I will go as a god, to mould afresh  
With my most inner and supernal fire  
A veil for a soul, a veil of soft, white flesh ;  
Yea ! I will mould from out the universe  
A new blind angel, with a spirit's curse.

(v)

The hour of love is passed ; we lie asleep  
Dreaming of love ; we wake to love again.  
Upon my heart you hide your eyes and weep,  
And so I understand, and share your pain.  
And when you ask of love I will not speak,  
But crush your lips for only answering ;  
I feel your hot breath on my neck and cheek,  
And crush you to my breast, a tender thing.

## THE EQUINOX

The livid lightning strikes us, and we fall  
    With one last cry into a vast abyss,  
And time and space exist there not at all:  
    We have encompassed heaven in a kiss.  
And for a moment we are gods, immortal,  
Stricken to death within the secret portal.

(VI)

In the red dusk of Autumn, when the day  
    Died down to night, and lamps were lit, and we  
Stared at the flames that made the ceiling gray  
    With wavering shadows, sporting eerily,  
We lay all naked, talking of the things  
    Of the old dim world, when life and art were young ;  
Of the old bards who lightly touched their strings ;  
    Who sang of love and life as I have sung.

And then I felt you kiss me as I roved  
    Back to the brightness of the world of old ;  
And so the past grew dearer, as I loved  
    And loved you more : the path grew ever gold,  
Merging at last into the golden light  
Of the Golden Age : we were re-born that night.

(VII)

More sombrely the secret summer broods  
    Upon the world ; there is no sense of green  
—In all the listening, virgin solitudes  
    Of the spirit—that is not stirred ; ah, love ! we lean

## ROSA IGNOTA

Over the brink of the world to cull fresh roses ;  
Roses, still roses, myriad roses bloom  
In the silence. Oh ! the world's great Rose uncloses  
Her petals still, to the Nothingness of doom.

Last Rose ! Last love ! Last night thou camest to me,  
A silver dream under a sapphire sky ;  
The winds of the world ran ever and ever through me,  
Until, at last, the end : then did I lie  
In dream, and dream that made mine eyes unclose,  
And so I lost thee, O immortal Rose.

(VIII)

I swing a censer in a temple of fire ;  
I chant slow mantrams to a holy Name ;  
I fall in swoon unstained by earth's gray mire,  
Being wrapped about in a sheet of scarlet flame.  
Lo ! through the fire the mantram comes to me,  
Shouted by the world in chorus, and I lie  
In utter rapture ; the virginity  
Of the inmost Light, that knows not how to die.

Oh, cast thy mantle over me ! I am taken  
By the goddess ! Sprinkle water on my head,  
Lest I in rapture care not to awaken,  
Knowing the utter glory of the dead.  
Oh ! I am back, wet-eyed, with panting breath :  
I have seen the nuptials of Desire and Death !

(IX)

There are no mortal songs that shall avail  
To bring the Mystery into the mind

## THE EQUINOX

Of him who hath not been behind the veil,  
Who, having ears, is deaf ; and eyes, is blind.  
Yet, wherefore do I know not, I must sing,  
Being of them to whom the Song is given :  
My only gift in reverent love I bring  
Before the bowl is shattered, and is riven

The chord that binds the spirit to the flesh :  
I sing because the notes have sought so long,  
And found at last one soul serene and fresh  
To bear the burden of eternal song.  
So for this hour of song I have tuned my lyre  
Unto the Rose of the Immortal Fire.

(x)

When I am faded into nothingness,  
And thou of whom I sing art earth and dust ;  
And when the soul I bear for my distress  
Is faded in the sun ; when love and lust  
Are nothing to us, dear—my songs shall tell  
Of all thou wast to those who knew not thee :  
In the immortal groves of asphodel,  
They shall seek, drawn onwards by my melody.

There shall be no more songs for us, I know,  
When at the last my throbbing lyre reposes  
In endless sleep ; yet one last rose shall blow  
Upon our graves, one rose, one Rose of roses.  
“Out of his heart a rose, from hers a briar.”  
O Love ! my flame-flower of immortal fire !



## ROSA IGNOTA

(XI)

I gaze into the calm, cool eyes of death ;  
I seize him gladly by his strong, calm hand ;  
I hear him murmur, underneath his breath,  
Thou knowest me ; dost thou not understand ?  
Thou hast sought Love ; he hath eluded thee  
In the shadows ; life hath worn thy soul away ;  
Wilt thou not dwell in endless rest with me,  
No more deceived by hope, nor burned by day ?  
Wherefore delay ? My love is calm and sure,  
Not passionate, but certain of its end ;  
Wilt thou not come—and gladly ? I can cure  
Alone the weariness of time, O friend.  
I shall not weary of thee ; thou shalt sleep  
For ever on my breast, nor wake, nor weep.

(XII)

Still must I sing of thee ? O Fate, delaying  
The last reward of unremitting toil,  
Give me the cup I crave ! How shall my praying  
Avail me ? For alas ! I've neither oil,  
Nor wine, nor grape, nor corn, nor anything  
That may palliate thee ! One only thing is mine,  
And that is but a sweet and bitter thing,  
Rarer than grape, or corn, or oil, or wine.  
I may not speak it. Yet my tongue still mutters  
Cravingly, eagerly, oh ! desperately.  
What is the thing that still my glad mouth utters ?  
I may not say it, Darling, even to thee :

## THE EQUINOX

Thou that hast granted heaven in a kiss,  
O Darling, need I tell thee what is this?

(XIII)

I linger happily by the muddy river,  
Watching the lights, the dappled waters shine  
Under them, and the little leaves that quiver  
Along the dull green waters' broken line.  
And thou art there still mirrored; thou art calling  
Through the trees, and through the clouds, and through  
the rain;  
In reverie I wander: oh, enthralling,  
To see thee mirrored in my poet's pain!

O mariner! What wayward, rock-bound stream  
Is this? Past what immemorable town  
Of fable flows it? What forgotten dream  
Evokes this image—rill and moor and down,  
And a far shore where, under a rainy moon,  
Are nuptials, and a feasting, and a swoon?

(XIV)

For art's sake let there be no more delaying;  
Since we have found Love, with him let us linger:  
Upon our hearts new chords he'll still be playing—  
Upon what secret strings shall stray his finger?  
We talk so foolishly of love! We lie  
Lip unto lip, heart pressed to beating breast  
All too oblivious of the hours that fly  
For ever onward to eternal rest.

## ROSA IGNOTA

Oh, shall they be renewed, those sacred hours?  
Or shall the jealous gods our love destroy,  
Being jealous that with only mortal powers  
We have dared to steal their own immortal joy?  
Yet, for each hour that we have stolen, give  
An æon of the life the high gods live!

## XXII

### IN THE END

FROM bud to bud the butterfly of thought  
Hovers; around the red Rose of the Will  
He lingers, seeking for the honey wrought  
In its golden heart; the long hours linger still  
In silent sweetness, and from flower to flower  
He brings desire of love from hour to hour.

The song is sung; the way is sharply set  
Under dim willowy woods; the thing is done:  
For me no more to linger or regret;  
Fulfilment comes, in sight of day and sun.  
From night's dense darkness let the spark be struck,  
With life for candle, and with love for luck.

Green Night, the virgin mother of my song,  
Green Youth, the sire of all my songs; let be:  
It may befall I shall not linger long  
Under the daylight's golden empery;  
In light and dark still shall the silent river  
Bear on my soul, my soul shall bear for ever.

## THE EQUINOX

The dusk is fallen ; there is no more green ;  
The day is past, and love and life are fled :  
Out from my window in the night I lean  
To hear the waiting ghosts of hours long dead.  
But, being dead, they dwell at rest in me,  
Turned into song by love's strange alchemy.

Wherefore I sing of things long past and dead ;  
Wherefore I murmur foolishly in sleep ;  
The old, old pain still throbbing through my head  
In dreams of desert valleys, mountains steep,  
With winding paths ; hot suns and scorching plains.  
There is a fire unquenched within my brains.

Because I sing in unknown cadences,  
Because I strive so hotly to recall  
Some murmur I have heard on sunken seas,  
Some vision I have seen beyond the wall,  
Now sombrely I await the secret rime,  
Known of the poet—and the Ghost of Time !

And so before the bloom has left the Rose,  
While life's strong youth is surging through me still,  
I end the songs here wrought ; the loves and woes  
Of old dead lives and lovers and their ill—  
Because a poet's curse I bear away,  
My payment for the vision of the day.

Because my heart is as a ten-stringed lyre,  
I cannot still the music of my mouth ;  
Because my tongue is wrought of molten fire,  
I cannot quench my spirit's ceaseless drouth :

## ROSA IGNOTA

Till the gods grant me sleep I drink and drink  
Immortal dew : I am drunken on the brink. . . .

So may I fall into the shadowy sea  
That surges under my unsteady feet ;  
Already has the morning fled from me,  
And the stars call, and they are madly sweet  
With some lost vision that I know not of :  
It is not Death ; I think it is not Love.

For I have tasted death and love, and these  
Shall not suffice ; for love and death are one ;  
In all the secret star-wrought harmonies,  
By married death and love is man undone.  
There is some secret thing I wot not of ;  
It is not death ; I know it is not love.

So do my songs end here ; the hour is fled,  
And there are no more roses ; I am fain  
To cease from singing. Wait! the hour is sped,  
My songs are turning into dreams again.  
Oh! now the hour is dead, and I am fain  
Awake life's young song back to soul again!

## THE EPILOGUE

SHALL they avail, O wind,  
The things that I have heard ?  
Because I am utterly blind,  
Did I hear the wings that whirred ?

## THE EQUINOX

Even as flutters a bird,  
I fluttered : before and behind  
Thundered the secret Word  
Into mine ears. I have pined  
Because the Word was unkind ;  
But now the spirit hath stirred.  
I sought not, yet did I find,  
For the wonderful thing occurred.  
Though I be blind, shall I gird  
Because I see not ? The gods bind  
Mine eyes. But I heard ! I heard !  
Shall it avail, O wind ?

EXPLICIT OPUSCULUM

NONDUM

FINIS

SCANS FROM ALEISTER CROWLEY'S  
**THE EQUINOX**

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