

My heart aches, and a drowsy

numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock

I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to

the drains

One minute past, and Letho-wards

had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy

happy lot,

But being too happy in thine

happiness, -

That thou, light-winged Dryad

of the trees

In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and shadows

numberless,

Singest of summer in

full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage!

that hath been

Cool'd a long age in the

deep-delv'd earth,

Tasting of Flora and the

country green,

Dance, and Provençal song, and

sunburnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm

South,

Full of the true, the blushful

Hippocrene,

With beaded bubbles winking at

the brim,

And purple-stained mouth;

That I might drink, and leave

the world unseen,

And with thee fade away into

the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and

quite forget

What thou among the leaves hast

never known,

The weariness, the fever, and the

fret

Here, where men sit and hear each

other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad,

last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and

spectre-thin, and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of

sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs,

Where Beauty cannot keep her

lustrous eyes,

Or new Love pine at them beyond

to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to

thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus and his

pards,

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

Though the dull brain perplexes

and retards:

Already with thee! tender is the

night,

And haply the Queen-Moon is

on her throne,

Cluster'd around by all her starry

Fays;

But here there is no light,

Save what from heaven is with

the breezes blown

Through verdurous glooms and

winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at

my feet,

Nor what soft incense hangs upon

upon the boughs,

But, in embalmed darkness, guess

each sweet

Wherewith the seasonable month

endows

The grass, the thicket, and the

fruit-tree wild;

White hawthorn, and the pastoral

eglantine;

Fast fading violets cover'd up in

leaves;

And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of

dewy wine,

The murmurous haunt of flies

on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for

many a time

I have been half in love with

easeful Death,

Call'd him soft names in many

a mused rhyme,

To take into the air my quiet

breath;

Now more than ever seems it rich

to die,

To cease upon the midnight with

no pain,

While thou art pouring forth thy

soul abroad

In such an ecstasy!

Still wouldst thou sing, and I

have ears in vain—

To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death,

immortal Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee

down;

The voice I hear this passing

night was heard

In ancient days by emperor and

clown:

Perhaps the self-same song that

found a path

Through the sad heart of Ruth,

when, sick for home,

She stood in tears amid the alien

corn;

The same that oft-times hath

Charm'd magic casements,

opening on the foam

Of perilous seas, in faery lands

forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a

bell

To toll me back from thee to my

sole self!

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so

well

As she is fain'd to do, deceiving

elf.

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive

anthem fades

Past the near meadows, over the

still stream,

Up the hill-side; and now 'tis

buried deep

In the next valley-glades:

Was it a vision, or a waking

dream?

Fled is that music:—Do I wake

or sleep?

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!

Bird thou never wert,

That from Heaven, or near it,

Pourest thy full heart

In profuse strains of

unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher

From the earth thou springest

Like a cloud of fire;

The blue deep thou wingest,

And singing still dost soar, and

soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning

Of the sunken sun,

O'er which clouds are bright'ning,

Thou dost float and run;

Like an unbodied joy whose race

is just begun.

The pale purple even

Melts around thy flight;

Like a star of Heaven,

In the broad day-light

Thou art unseen, but yet I hear

thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows

Of that silver sphere,

Whose intense lamp narrows

In the white dawn clear

Until we hardly see, we feel that

it is there.

All the earth and air

With thy voice is loud,

As, when night is bare,

From one lonely cloud

The moon rains out her beams,

and Heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;

What is most like thee?

From rainbow clouds there flow

not

Drops so bright to see

As from thy presence showers a

rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden

In the light of thought,

Singing hymns unbidden,

Till the world is wrought

To sympathy with hopes and

fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden

In a palace-tower,

Soothing her love-laden

Soul in secret hour

With music sweet as love, which

overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden

In a dell of dew,

Scattering unbeholden

Its aerial hue

Among the flowers and grass,

which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd

In its own green leaves,

By warm winds deflower'd,

Till the scent it gives

Makes faint with too much sweet

those heavy-winged thieves:

Sound of vernal showers

On the twinkling grass,

Rain-awaken'd flowers,

All that ever was

Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy

music doth surpass.

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,

What sweet thoughts are thine:

I have never heard

Praise of love or wine

That panted forth a flood of

rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,

Or triumphal chant,

Match'd with thine would be all

But an empty vaunt,

A thing wherein we feel there is

some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains

Of thy happy strain?

What fields, or waves, or

mountains?

What shapes of sky or plain?

What love of thine own kind?

what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance

Languor cannot be:

Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee:

Thou lovest: but ne'er knew love's
sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,

Thou of death must deem

Things more true and deep

Than we mortals dream,

Or how could thy notes flow in

such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not:

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are those that

tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn

Fate, and pride, and fear;

If we were things born

Not to shed a tear,

I know not how thy joy we ever

should come near.

Better than all measures

Of delightful sound,

Better than all treasures

That in books are found,

Thy skill to poet were, thou

scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness

That thy brain must know,

Such harmonious madness

From my lips would flow

The world should listen then, as

I am listening now.