

## 1 The Voice

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,  
Saying that now you are not as you were  
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,  
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,  
Standing as when I drew near to the town  
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,  
Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness  
Travelling across the wet mead to me here,  
You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness,  
Heard no more again far or near?

Thus I; faltering forward,  
Leaves around me falling,  
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,  
And the woman calling.

## 2 The Walk

You did not walk with me  
Of late to the hill-top tree  
By the gated ways,  
As in earlier days;  
You were weak and lame,  
So you never came,  
And I went alone, and I did not mind,  
Not thinking of you as left behind.

I walked up there to-day  
Just in the former way;  
Surveyed around  
The familiar ground  
By myself again:  
What difference, then?  
Only that underlying sense  
Of the look of a room on returning thence.

### 3 I Found Her Out There

I found her out there  
On a slope few see,  
That falls westwardly  
To the salt-edged air,  
Where the ocean breaks  
On the purple strand,  
And the hurricane shakes  
The solid land.

I brought her here,  
And have laid her to rest  
In a noiseless nest  
No sea beats near.  
She will never be stirred  
In her loamy cell  
By the waves long heard  
And loved so well.

So she does not sleep  
By those haunted heights  
The Atlantic smites  
And the blind gales sweep,  
Whence she often would gaze  
At Dundagel's famed head,  
While the dipping blaze  
Dyed her face fire-red;

And would sigh at the tale  
Of sunk Lyonesse,  
As a wind-tugged tress  
Flapped her cheek like a flail;  
Or listen at whiles  
With a thought-bound brow  
To the murmuring miles  
She is far from now.

Yet her shade, maybe,  
Will creep underground  
Till it catch the sound  
Of that western sea  
As it swells and sobs  
Where she once domiciled,  
And joy in its throbs  
With the heart of a child.

#### 4 The Going

Why did you give no hint that night  
That quickly after the morrow's dawn,  
And calmly, as if indifferent quite,  
You would close your term here, up and be gone  
    Where I could not follow  
    With wing of swallow  
To gain one glimpse of you ever anon!

    Never to bid good-bye  
    Or lip me the softest call,  
Or utter a wish for a word, while I  
Saw morning harden upon the wall,  
    Unmoved, unknowing  
    That your great going  
Had place that moment, and altered all.

Why do you make me leave the house  
And think for a breath it is you I see  
At the end of the alley of bending boughs  
Where so often at dusk you used to be;  
    Till in darkening darkness  
    The yawning blankness  
Of the perspective sickens me!

Why, then, latterly did we not speak,  
Did we not think of those days long dead,  
And ere your vanishing strive to seek  
That time's renewal? We might have said,  
    'In this bright spring weather  
    We'll visit together  
Those places that once we visited.'

    Well, well! All's past amend,  
    Unchangeable. It must go.  
I seem but a dead man held on end  
To sink down soon. . . . O you could not know  
    That such swift fleeing  
    No soul foreseeing—  
Not even I—would undo me so!

#### 5 Without Ceremony

It was your way, my dear,  
To vanish without a word  
When callers, friends, or kin  
Had left, and I hastened in  
To rejoin you, as I inferred.

And when you'd a mind to career  
Off anywhere — say to town —  
You were all on a sudden gone  
Before I had thought thereon,  
Or noticed your trunks were down.

So, now that you disappear  
For ever in that swift style,  
Your meaning seems to me  
Just as it used to be:  
'Good-bye is not worth while!'

## 6 Your Last Drive

Here by the moorway you returned,  
And saw the borough lights ahead  
That lit your face — all undiscerned  
To be in a week the face of the dead,  
And you told of the charm of that haloed view  
That never again would beam on you.

And on your left you passed the spot  
Where eight days later you were to lie,  
And be spoken of as one who was not;  
Beholding it with a heedless eye  
As alien from you, though under its tree  
You soon would halt everlastingly.

I drove not with you.... Yet had I sat  
At your side that eve I should not have seen  
That the countenance I was glancing at  
Had a last-time look in the flickering sheen,  
Nor have read the writing upon your face,  
'I go hence soon to my resting-place;

'You may miss me then. But I shall not know  
How many times you visit me there,  
Or what your thoughts are, or if you go  
There never at all. And I shall not care.  
Should you censure me I shall take no heed,  
And even your praises no more shall need.'

True: never you'll know. And you will not mind.  
But shall I then slight you because of such?  
Dear ghost, in the past did you ever find  
The thought 'What profit,' move me much?  
Yet abides the fact, indeed, the same,—  
You are past love, praise, indifference, blame.

## 7 Epilogue

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me.