Rediscovering Herbert Horne

Fletcher, Ian

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By the middle 1880s Horne had become a habitué of the Alhambra. For a short while it was a circus, but developed in the late 1870s and 1880s into one of the centres of London nightlife. The entertainment, as at the Empire, which opened in 1887, consisted of ballet, singing and variety turns, and the 1890s were to be the golden age of this type of entertainment, murdered by D.O.R.A. and embalmed by T. S. Eliot. The Alhambra and Empire were regarded as theatres rather than music halls. They hardly provided family entertainment. The principal feature at the Alhambra was a salon where the ladies of chorus and ballet mingled with the audience, and not unnaturally, as a contemporary chronicler put it, "some of the fair members of the company were eventually translated to the upper house." At the Empire, the main attraction was the promenade, which resembled an indoor Piccadilly: a stalking-ground for middle-range prostitutes. In such a context, Headlam, Image and Horne would meet their women friends and adjourn to the Crown in Charing Cross Road.¹

As has been frequently noted, the theatre and the music hall formed part of the deliberately anti-natural subject matter of the 1890s poets. It is this context also that Horne celebrates in many of his early poems. Mackmurdo's comment that
Horne's work in design was "not so much creative as assimilative" applies equally to the poetry, which at its best remains an accomplished pastiche of his favourite seventeenth-century models. Horne had begun his career with translation of Latin erotic verse by Petronius, Catullus and a poem attributed to Cornelius Gallus: "Lydia, bella, puella candids."\(^2\)

At the end of this chapter I have included as much of Horne's poetry as I can locate. Only a small proportion, though the best, of Horne's verse was to be published in book form.\(^2\) His earliest work, dating from 1882 and 1883, shows his experiments with translations of Latin verse, fragments of closet drama and humorous occasional verse. "Pictor suae Amicae Loquitur" dated 9 January 1887 is a Browningesque monologue, interesting in that it gives expression to Horne's early antinomianism:

For as to me, I hold a singular faith  
And do believe that Christ is yet to rise,  
Out of a Hell of custom, church and sect,  
Upon the third day of some coming mind  
To part his Godhead with the Magdalen . . .

We are curiously near Lawrence's "Man Who Died," and the resurrection of the whole body. An earlier fragment, a closet drama, has three protagonists, "Ejus, of God," Thur the Knower, and The Harlot. These represent the complex sides of Horne's own nature: the frigid, the torrid, and the temptations of the world and the flesh. The theme is the failure of a promised union of flesh and spirit (the Christ in man) and although the verse is bad, an ardent mind is clearly at work. The climax comes when the reviled harlot, idealised by Ejus, breaks his trance of idealisation:

Ejus:  
Easily can I make  
A gold crown for these sere leaves (crows her)  
now indeed,
We are the king and queen of the world and he
Minister to us. Scan him how he is.
All of his notions are night-mare to the earth.
He dare not move, he is kind. Now play the queen—
  (thunders)

Hark. Tis the anthem of our coronation—
The sweet psalm of our coronation, sung
By primal intellect of element.
Most golden psalm,—most golden psaltery,
Wherein is gold more golden than thrice purged gold:—
The spirit of gold:—the gold of these sere leaves,—
Of thy dear golden head, thy golden flesh—

Harlot: Ha, ha, sweet sin.

Ejus: Hence, foul and fiendish snake.
  My tears are but manure unto your laughter. (thunders)
  I love you too much to taunt you with my death.
  Remember tho’ your eyes see not my blood
  Grow knotted at the temples, as of old
  I do not die—Tho’ I am utterly hid
  Awhile, I do not die as others, but I
  Merely forget my sorrows and my flesh.

"Amata Loquitur," published in the *Century Guild Hobby Horse* (1888), recounts how a girl murders her lover, Jeffrey, by strangling him with her wimple, mistaking him for another man, Thwayne, who also loves her and whom she fears and hates. She is discovered by Thwayne who presses her to come away with him and says that he will take the blame for the murder, but she will now be in his power: the weight of guilt becomes heavier each year. The psychology is rudimentary but powerful and another twist is given to the story when the girl escapes from Thwayne and denounces him as a murderer. Thwayne's girdle is found around Jeffrey's neck, but the man himself escapes, and the poem concludes:
So the pain
Of these things grows with me, grows for I hear
The daily tattle call him murderer,
Who only loved—Loved? Nay, speak Christ! Thou
knowest,
Had I but loved as he, Jeffrey had lived.

The casuistry is Browning’s, but the tone is melodramatic and
resembles such monologues as "Red Bradbury's End" and "Bell
in Camp" and Symons’s *Days and Nights* (1889).

Pre-Raphaelite influence, according to Loraine Hunt, is
readily apparent in Horne’s verse, and she cites the careful
topographical detail of "Amata Loquitur":

the hills are high,
Too high for any wind of earth to bear
The sound across the rush-pools on the heights,
The circle of bleached stones, the early way,
The fallen cromlechs, and the miles of waste...
It is not full time for the Angelus,
It is not six.

The poem’s narrative is sharp and rapid and suggests the
influence of William Morris’s adaptation of the Sagas in his
eyear romances while the names and the action recall "The
Haystack in the Flood." Similarly, Horne’s love poetry touches
the hieratic, transforms the beloved into an *objet de culte* quite
in the Rossettian manner:

You are the treasure that God
(O Blessed Lord!)
Made of gold light and ivory dew...
In that I lodge my soul with you.

or again:

dwell with me as a Psalm—
Twice sung within the House of Life,—
A sense of personal despair and dissatisfaction—and perhaps also a note of weary idealism—appear in the poems in which Horne seems to be speaking for himself and directly to the reader. This emerges in his complaint of the materialism that results in destroying the architecture of the past or defacing London with buildings, such as those erected in Northumberland Avenue at this time, which are void of all distinction. In general, Horne's poetry is very much that of the earnest young man. 

Other fragments, in the archives of the Museo Horne, reflect the influence of Blake and Rossetti, and a further early fragment in octosyllabics gives us an odd mixture of Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon" and Milton's Sabrina.

Horne's most distinguished work is in lyric form. What is notable is that he benefited from his association with Arnold Dolmetsch: his lyrics are singable; they fulfill Pound's prescription that one should compose in the sequence of the musical phrase. Their diction is stylish but not conspicuous.

A group of poems entitled Corona Corinnae, written in 1887 and published in the Century Guild Hobby Horse in 1888, celebrates Horne's admiration for one of the dancers in the Alhambra Ballet of the Season given in that year. The name Corinna is taken from Herrick and one of the poems in the group is addressed to the Caroline poet. With his ideal of "cleanly-wantonness" (in the manner restraint, in the matter exuberance) and his reconciliation of the religious and the sensual in the two parts of his oeuvre, Hesperides and His Noble Numbers, Herrick seems to have become Horne's general model in the later 1880s. In 1887 Horne produced a selection from the poet's work and wrote some carols in dialogue form modelled on Herrick, with an eye perhaps to Parry or Somervell, and on Dolmetsch's seventeenth-century instruments and his ensemble.
In 1891, Horne published a selection from his own poems with the title *Diversi Colores*. This is a small elegant book, with format and typography of his own design. The frontispiece is printed in red and black, the red being used for the flower which occupies the centre of the page and divides the date in roman numerals and the details of publication: "London. Published by the Author at the Chiswick Press." It is doubtful that this lettering, split non-phonetically, altogether satisfies the severe criteria of Horne's later articles on typography and book design. In the copy of *Diversi Colores* at the Museo Horne, there is a note in Horne's hand:

> Seven designs for poems, already written, which I made as a present to Mackmurdo.
> I afterwards altered and engraved some of them intending to have finished a set to publish in book form.
> I had not seen Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience when I drew the design for the frontispiece and the design for "Complain to Me."

Horne published only three poems after the appearance of his book, one in Rickett and Shannon's *Dial*, one in Headlam's *Church Reformer*, and one in the *Hobby Horse* (1893). Some fragmentary translations from Michelangelo also survive from the late 1890s.

The sadly depleted volumes of English poetry in Horne's library at Florence are an index to his models and aims. Restoration drama and poetry are represented, but the main holdings consist in seventeenth-century poetry and prose, most in contemporary editions. Sir Thomas Browne is prominent; Donne's *Devotions* of 1624 and his *Paradoxes* of 1633 suggest that Horne shared the general nineteenth-century taste for Donne's prose above his verse. Besides the expected figures, including no less than four volumes of Rochester, there are more recondite volumes such as S. P. Gent's *Gestum Voluptatis*
(1639); John Gollop's *Poesis Revidiva* (1656); A. Ross's *Muses' Interpreter* (1648) and Hunnis's *Hive of Honeysuckles* (1629), along with several Cavalier anthologies. Though Crashaw and Marvell are represented in the library, it seems Horne clearly preferred the Cavalier lyrists above the Metaphysical, though his own lyrics recall the Elizabethans. Yet those are not precisely pastiche for such assumes another's voice or a personality or personal language. What Horne's lyrics aspire to is "anonymity," timeless diction. Like his contemporaries of the Rhymers' Club, he favours long Latin titles, often culled from the Vulgate and, occasionally, like them, Latin refrains. Some are faintly Pre-Raphaelite; others are plain and unsentimental, though in some a hint of a pre-Georgian mode, the sentimental urban pastoral.

A verse from a poem published in the *Century Guild Hobby Horse* (1891) suggests that his reason for abandoning verse was not confined to a sense of artistic failure:

Tell him, that beauty is but lent  
So long as, neither brief desire  
Be quenched through glut, nor yet be spent  
By lack of that, which feeds its fire.

It seems that the area of his experience had somehow contracted, bringing with it perhaps some compensating intensity in new fields.
AMICO SUO

When on my country walks I go,  
I never am alone:  
Though, whom 'twere pleasure then to know,  
Are gone, and you are gone;  
From every side discourses flow.

There are rich counsels in the trees,  
And converse in the air;  
All magic thoughts in those and these  
And what is sweet and rare;  
And everything, that living is.

But most I love the meaner sort,  
For they have voices too;  
Yet speak with tongues, that never hurt,  
As ours are apt to do:  
The weeds, the grass, the common wort.

UPON RETURNING A SILK HANDKERCHIEF

Winged with my kisses go, go thou to her,  
And bid her bind thee round her faultless throat;  
Till thou, close-lying o'er the charmed stir  
Of her white breast, grow warm and seem to float  
Away into the golden noon, the still,  
Deep sunlight of her. Oh, sleep on! 'Tis thine,  
Love's summer day. No, not June's thronged hours  
So glad are, when the songs of birds fulfil  
Earth, and the breezes in the grass decline,  
Held by the scent of many thousand flowers.
Yet loose that flood of kisses, which thou hast,
Into her bosom, and through all her hair;
Whispering, it is my utmost wealth amassed
For her, being fairest; nor do thou Forebear,
Until she feel my spirit, like a blush,
Steal by her shoulder and frail neck; for when
The gorgeous scarlet, burning, shall have moved
Over her cheek, the little after-hush
Will tell to her, that I am happy then,
God! for how short a time, and she is loved.

Loved? Wherefore loved that never, but in thought,
May be possessed? Is it, that thus might grow
From out a look, a touch, long past to naught,
My Beatrice, and my perfect love; and so
Dwell with me here, although the while I guess,
'Tis but a dream, which only does me wrong?
O wretched truth! and yet the hour, that girds
My pensive nature with her loveliness,
Would bitter be, as 'tis unto this Song
To wed these thoughts too stern for dainty words.

Would 'twere no dream, this dream; this long, devout,
Untiring worship, vainly yet essayed;
This absolute love; then were the torturing doubt,
The troubled ocean of the soul allayed:
Desire would have her lust, and we have ease,
Here, from her everlasting thirst; nor pine
Vainly; but feel the fret, the harrowed breath,
The throbbing heart, that will not, will not cease,
Stilled into marble, Greek-like, calm, divine,
Remembering not the past. Stay! This is Death.
MULIEREM EX OMNIBUS NON ENVENI

Of late, a sadness often strays
Here, in my mind: and what besides?
   Within your hair, your face abides;
As summer, through the summer days.

Here do all times, once glad, arise,
   Which now have lost their pleasantness:
Here dwell the voices of your dress;
Your fragrant ways, your lifted eyes.

Here are all words, you've said; whereof
   Hope never made a tale more dear:
All, that in Danae showed, is here;
But where is Love?

CEASE, CEASE REPROACHFUL EYES!

Cease, cease reproachful eyes! I have not done
   Aught, that should bring me over this unrest.
Tell me my fault! Have end! Search, one by one,
   All possible errors, which have Time possessed:
I swear you, naught upon me shall you prove;
Unless it be a fault in me to love.

Oh! were you here with me, that I might speak
   No matter what unheeded words, and vain;
I would persuade me, that the look I seek
   Was given: but for me there must remain,
Beneath the one, unalterable guise,
This torture. Nay! Cease, cease; relentless eyes!
CORONA CORINNAE

Being a Celebration, in Six Songs, of a Masque of Dancing, Named the Seasons.

I. To His Muse, by Way of Prologue

Go! bid Love stay,
   And make a maddening rhyme
   Unto the dancing feet;
   That may perchance repeat,
   Within some other brain, another time,
This measure done, forgotten, put away!

Ah! if it might, might in an hastening year
   Re-woo its magic from the ravening past;
   Make suddenly the movement, the delight,
The gaiety, the freshness, re-appear:
   Although no longer than a thought it last!
   Ah, if it might!

II. Of this Land of Love's

This is Love's land, and here we find
   The birds and flowers, that are his own;
Nothing there is unlike his mind,
   Nothing, but he therein is shown:
For wings, and leaves, and blossoms, prove
   Themselves the very heart of Love.
Here are the seasons, that Love's year,
    Nay, that each hour of Love, must know;
Though they the gaudy June do bear,
    They bring him wintry times also:
Still, still, methinks, he would not change;
Though, in their stead, 'twere his to range
Through the deep grass, by flowery roads,
Where gleam the white feet of the Gods.

III. The Measure

Between the pansies and the rye,
Flutters my purple butterfly;
Between her white brow and her chin,
Does Love his fairy wake begin:

By poppy-cups and drifts of heather,
Dances the sun and she together;

But o'er the scarlet of her mouth,
Whence those entreated words come forth,
Love hovers all the live-long day,
And cannot, through its spell, away;
But here, where he was born, must die,
Between the pansies and the rye.
IV. To Herrick

In vain, at all to my content,
Have I my thoughts through nature sent
   To search, with keenest glance,
All things on high, around, below,

But for one figure, that would show
   Corinna in the dance.

Either my brain is dull, or we
With narrow bounds content must be;
   Contented, too, to find
The same sweet flowers, that used to win
The eyes of poets dead, within
   The meadows of the mind:

For only this worn image wrought,
In marble words, the eluding thought
   Justly; and one, I fear,
Familiar as the trees or the sky,
"She dances like my heart, when I
   "Set eyes upon my dear."

Still might I say, as well I could,
When thinking of a summer wood;
   And, truly, one believes
It is the best yet hit upon:
"She dances like the dancing sun,
   "Among the dancing leaves."
But even this, expressing much,
Yet wants, I think, the human touch,
    Which all such styles demand;
For though it laughs upon the wing
Of verse, 'tis but a pretty thing,
    And lacks the master hand.

Ah! Herrick, now where are those rhymes,
Which we in former, thoughtless, times
    And deemed omnipotent
To tell, as never yet was told
In song, all things, which Life of old
    Has unto Beauty lent?

Truly, to thee each joy, that stirs
That secret, wayward, heart of hers,
    Is clay upon the wheel:
These you can fashion as you list;
But not the turning of her wrist,
    The glancing of her heel.

V. "If She Be Made of White and Red"

If she be made of white and red,
As all transcendent beauty shows;
If heaven be blue above her head,
And earth be golden, as she goes:
Nay, then thy deftest words restrain;
Tell not that beauty, it is vain.
If she be filled with love and scorn,
As all divinest natures are;
If 'twixt her lips such words are born,
As can but Heaven or Hell confer:
Bid Love be still, nor ever speak,
Lest he his own rejection seek.

VI. To His Muse in Intercession for Love

Now all be hushed, all, all be wholly still;
For Love is far too glad for song or speech,
Love that hath stayed: now let him have his will;
The mouth, the eyes, the cheek, he did beseech.

Why should he sing? Is it not song enough,
That she, between those sighs that ever start
Suddenly from him, as from Boreas rough,
Should hear the measure from his beating heart?

Therefore constrain him, that he speak no word,
Till the consuming stillness do eclipse
All but delight: then shall no sound be heard,
Save only falling hair, and nestling lips.
AMATA LOQUITUR:

Again, O Christ, the bell at Llanagryn!
I heard aright? No, no! the hills are high,
Too high for any wind of earth to bear
The sound across the rush-pools on the heights,
The circle of bleached stones, the early way,
The fallen cromlechs, and the miles of waste:
It cannot be. Yet, hush!—again, twice, thrice.
Fool, that I am! my conscience's in my ears;
It is not full time for the Angelus,
It is not six. And yet 'twas thus I heard
The very sound on Pensarn that foul night
Which makes all days and nights, that follow it,
Terrible as itself; for on that night
I bade Thwane come. 'Twas he alone of man
Or living thing I hated. Well he knew
I loved but Jeffrey, yet he asked my love;
Nor asked it only, but he dogged my steps
And daily made unholy taunts, till he
Seemed like a storm of slander o'er our heads,
Ready to burst, and with a flood of lies
Deluge my love for—nay, 'twas more than love,—
Myself in Jeffrey. Therefore hour by hour
A swift consuming hatred grew in me,
A hatred of his looks, his ways, his words,
Unbearable and restless, and became
Stronger than Love, Love that is strong as Death.
And so I said to him, "Come, Thwane, to-night
Be Ave-bell at nightfall (for it was
Well in the waning of the year); come, Thwane,
To Merlin's seat on Pensarn, half-way up
That silent mountain. Know you it? It hangs
Over the ocean towards Anglesea."
And he replied, "I know it." And I said,
"Thwane, I will give until you ask no more."

Then all that afternoon it seemed the sun
Scarce journied in the heavens, but held the day
The space of many days; and when at length
He past into the sea the hurrying night
Dropt oversoon, like Death, upon the land
And all the ocean. So in haste I sped
Up Pensarn till I reached old Merlin's seat,
And crouched beside it. Then I heard him come
Over the gorse and bracken; and I said
Within myself, "'Tis early that he comes."
And when he came I feigned a stricken voice,
"Hush! speak not for God's sake; someone is near."
And this I feigned, because I inly feared
That if I heard some word that Jeffrey used
Fall from his lips, it might abate my purpose;
So whispered, "Hush!" Nor did I look on him,
Lest seeing he was flesh and blood as we,
I should forget my hatred; so I clenched
My eyes, and drove my soul into my hands
And all my fingers: and I spoke again,
"The night is cold and biting, you shall have
My wimple for a neckcloth." And undid
Quickly my linen wimple from my face
And made a neckcloth. He was looking round,
I think, into the night, perchance to find
The feigned intruder, and scarce heeded he
My words: yet I stayed not for yea or nay,
But threw my linen wimple round his throat
And tied it thus, and thus, and thus; and he
Sank like a sleeping child, down at my feet.
Then knew I I had given as I said,
Nor should he ask again; and so I laughed,
And all the hill-side rang out with my laugh.

Whether it was that I had tied too well
The neckcloth I had made him; or that the night
Grew darker then, so that I could not see
How I had tied the knot; yet this I know,
That, fumbling at the wimple, I had bowed
Myself over his body, and my thoughts
Presently wandered from my fingers, on,
On till I found my eyes held by his eyes.

It was not all at once I knew the truth.
It came not as the bell’s sound came just now,
Suddenly, in an instant. It dawned, dawned
Mysteriously and terribly by degrees
Upon my half-numbed sense. It seemed as though
Someone had told it me again, again;
And my poor ears had heard again, again,
What had been told me, but my wretched heart
Dared not to understand it. Yet, at last,
The iron truth broke on me that not Thwane,
Not Thwane—’twas Jeffrey! Then it was I heard
The Angelus ring out from Llanagryn.
It must have been the loosening of the knot
That did release the little dregs of life
From out his lips; for suddenly I caught
A struggling word, as yet I knelt by him
Bowed, like a stone and speechless. Why did he

Speak as he did? He should have cursed me there,
There where I knelt! But no, 'twas not to be;
For his poor heart of grief too soon divined,
From half-said words and broken sentences,
As life came back in waves to ebb again,
Ebb unto death, how he had heard it tost,
For gossip 'twixt the serfs, that I that night
Should meet with Thwane at some appointed place.
But here his soul, as if't had been aware,
Endeavor as it might, it could but speak
Once and begone, shook like a winter leaf
Within its fair-made house of flesh; and he
Strained all his passing breath into these words,
Crying, "I thought to follow unobserved
And find the truth; now have I found the truth.
"'Twas but a snare that you might strangle me?
But I forgive you." Then the thin life went
Up from him like a bubble in a stream.

Whereat my tongue was loosened, and I poured
The bitter, bitter truth into his ears
In vain, for his was dead and heard me not.
But Thou, Christ, Who canst disabuse the soul,
Wilt Thou permit him the in the dismal grave
To say unto his ever-breaking heart,
"Woe! woe! 'twas but a snare to strangle me!"
Still did I pour into his ruthless ears
My own exceeding love for him, my hate
of Thwane; my love, my fear, and my revenge;
Until I knew there stood above my head
A shadow of darkness. And I raised my eyes,
And it was Thwane; and Thwane said, "Even thus
You would have sated me." And so I knew

That nothing of this grief was hid from him.
And Thwane went on, "Now shall you come with me,
Into a place where we shall not be found,
And do my bidding. Come, or I will go
To Hendre telling all that I have seen."
Then I rose up, and with my finger-tips
Smote him upon the mouth, and answered, "Go!"
Yet neither did he go, nor did he make
Me any answer; but from Jeffrey's neck
He took my wimple, and he bound instead
His leathern girdle, and he gave to me
My wimple, crying, "Haste, or I will do
More evil to you than you would. Haste, get
To Hendre, and keep silence; for't shall be,
When they shall find my girdle at his throat,
I shall have past into another land
And in no place be found. Then will they say
Jeffrey by Thwane was killed; but you shall keep
The secret of this evil in your heart,
And day by day its weight shall grow on you,
Till life become as grievous to be borne
As love was sweet."

Then thought I, "I will go
Swiftly to Hendre, and arouse the serfs;
And they will overtake him on the hills,
And he will suffer what my hate of him
Has brought to pass." So I, without a word,
Turned like a hind to Hendre, and I ran
Into the Hall dishevelled, and in my hand
My wimple, and a lie upon my lips,
Crying, "Lo! I was walking by the beach
And heard a shriek as of a murdered man
Come from the hills towards Pensarn!"

Then they rose,
Each knight and serf of Hendre, and they searched
Height after height, even until they came
To Cader Idris; yet they found no man,
But only one chill body; and round the neck
Thwane's leathern girdle wound. And so it was,
As he had said, they called him murderer.
But I still keep the secret of these things
Deep in my heart, untold to any man,
For none may understand it. So the pain
Of these things grows with me, grows for I hear
The daily tattle call him murderer,
Who only loved—Loved? Nay, speak Christ! Thou
knowest,
Had I but loved as he, Jeffrey had lived.
ON CERTAIN NEW BUILDINGS IN COVENT GARDEN

O Inigo,
  Could you arise again,
Then men might know
  What sins in stone they chain:

Even in that street
  Where once you did upraise
The calm, discreet
  Sad lesson of your ways.

Was it of old,
  Or is it some new blight,

Men strive for gold
  As you so strove for right?

HER EYES

Her eyes dwell with me as Psalm—
  Twice sung within the House of Life,—
A Prophet made so glad and calm
  That sometimes when with worship rife,
We learn through its mysterious breath
To hear the voice of God beneath.
Indeed a holy, joyful Song!
Though those repeated chords are still,
It echoes all the day along
The laughing ways that skirt the hill;
By meadows that no frosts control
Through all the summer of the soul.

FOR MADONNA OF YESTERDAY—DAISY

Life is young and Love's a maying
Ours the gust of April days
In Love's hour there's no delaying
Time to sigh or time to praise
What are blisses
She but kisses
And those warm sweets close confined
Which thus these happy girdles bind.

Time is coming—fires shall robe her
O but hers are too short hours
When shall follow sad October
Those dead leaves of these our flowers
You must pass by
As well as I
And the cold earth shall kiss the cheek
Which now my burning lips do seek.
TO THE FLOWERS, TO WEEP

Weep, roses, weep, and straightway shed
Your purest tears.
Weep, honeysuckles, white and red:
And with you, all those country dears;

Violets, and every bud of blue,
More blue than skies;
Pinks, cowslips, jasmines, lilies, too,
Pansies and peonies.

For she, that is the Queen of flowers,
Though called the least
Lies dropping beneath dreadful Hours,
Megaera has from Hell released.

Weep, till your lovely heads are bent:
Weep, you, that fill
The meadow-corners; and frequent
All the green margins of the rill.

Flood, flood your cups with crystal tears,
Until each leaf,
Each flower, through all the upland, wears
The dole and brilliance of your grief,

So that the Lark, who had from Heaven withdrawn,
Re-sing to you
His song, mistaking noon for dawn,
And those your tears for dew.
A Song

The wistful wind is weaving
Her whispers o'er the sea;
To lull it, ere her leaving
The waves to tempestry—
Wilt thou not whisper something even to me?

I knew many tempests—
Storms of strange delight,
Storms of sorrow's conquests,
I can still them quite
So that thou whisper something tho' love it blight.

The Bread and the Wine

There were words that our Lord said
The while before he bowed his head
Within the House of Death; and he
Spake these words to the world and thee.
When he had kept the Passover;
And the going forth of the Lord was over:
When he had fulfilled the written Law
That year, as the years before:
He took the wine and took the bread,
And blessing them, 'twas then he said,
"This is my blood, the wine; and this
The bread my very body is.
So it was given to me
That my father might dwell in me,
When the word took the flesh on;
For I and my father are one."
"Little children, if ye love me,
Do this in remembrance of me,
Ever then ye drink and eat
The wine and the meat;
Saying after me,
'This is my blood, the wine; and this
The bread, my very body is.'
With trembling and humility,
Lest ye, eating unworthily——
Not discerning the Lord within
The bread and the wine, do cause, thro' sin,
The honour of God to pass,
And the glory of God as grass."
"Eat, drink then, so that ye may
With love and with works make full the day;
For toil is the prayer of God;
And living this life is the coming of God;
(presence)
And the love for thy brother the light of God."
"Therefore, if ye love me,
Do this in remembrance of me:
Nor constrain me to depart——
Me and my father from your heart,
By fasting and by abstinence,
By feasting and intemperance."
These were the words that our Lord said
The while before he bowed his head
Within the House of Death. Now he
Spake these words to the World and Thee.

PICTOR SUAE AMICAE LOQUITUR

*You call me idle; for, you say, this canvass
Is ten days old and still immaculate.*

Yes I have had a score of girls to strip
And scores of studies are the outcome:—one
Has thighs like Titian; another has the breasts
And arms of Michael Angelo: this and this
With some great modern would possess one:—all,
The Harlots, strive to sink one's soul a pander
To what's already done and better done
Than ever I shall do it. But the day,
I had yet to break over the world, nor stoop
To sell her soul for bawdry with the night,
Forestalls no light in them; since they forbid
Me bring out my inner treasury
The new that is so old and yet so new.
For, as to me, I hold a singular faith
And do believe that Christ is yet to rise,
Out of a Hell of custom, church and sect,
Upon the third day of some coming mind
To part his Godhead with the Magdalen.
So it suffices not that whoso gives,
Gives the whole woman in the Magdalen
If she foreshadow not the God. But you—

Whether it is the mistress makes the soul
Or you thro' knowledge have imbibed my nature—
When you release that Paradise of yours
From the strong flaming angels of your dress
There do uprise such possibilities
As must eclipse the soul of Blake himself
And mar the art of Sarto.

As it is
You call me idle. Idle is to you
This extremity of labour. But in truth,
That almost doing the impossible;—
That wondrous fathom of heaven one or two
Exceed above the rest of the low world;—
Those self-conceptions not to be expressed;
These are they which diffuse God through the work
Saving them from Hell—Oblivion;
Even so that they shall never wholly die.
And most I wish you should not wholly die.
For I believe the soul alone shall live;
And yet most men possess not soul to live.
For I believe that souls are those white wings
That lift men up into that fathom of heaven;
Which, since the dull world has no faith to see
The blessed sway and flutter of those wings,
Speaks of them as an essence in the mind,
Calling them genius.

Then what soul have you
To raise you out of Death? Thus much have you—
I do believe that whatsoever thing
I touch in genius that shall never die;
So I endeavor that you above all things
Should know that resurrection of my spirit.
And since I wait until the power be come
You only call me idle.

Look you:—this
(Not that way up, the other—don't you see?)
This charcoal "smudge" you call it—is the soul
The Christ that saves the picture or the sketch
In common language. This—better you think?
More to your mind—is right!—I kist it right,
Each limb for limb, each line for line of you:
So like it is the Devil could not mind it.
To me the thing's necessity:—to the world
A picture. (Would to God that all the Lord's People were prophets; Ah! but who is the Lord's.)
Well both are right and perfect sketch and study.
But still they wait.
Why not begin at once?
Endue the sketch with form and make it glow
With all the rainbow glory of the soul—
An intellectual dinner—nothing more?
More, how much more—more above me to say—
Still more to do: and here, my love they stand
Till God himself shall fuse one in the other.
And yet sometimes I think the spirit comes;
But 'tis as when your hair touches my face
To pass.—And sometimes I'm sure 'tis come:
And I who have been waiting brush in hand
Leap to the canvass, but it is not come.
Then all those holy possibilities,
Before my eyes as ghosts, hurry away
Into an everlasting death of shame.
You know not what a night I make of day;
And what a day of night:—how should you know?
And sometimes I grow weary of high aims:—
Seem to myself a traveller that has past
Over the earth again, again; and yet
The line where earth and heaven meet and kiss
Is still far off as ever. So it is:
And still you call me idle, since I wait
For power to fuse the soul and body. Love,
I am content to wait: well—kiss me dear!

Little Things

I bring her little things whene'er
I seek the guerdon of the fair
But O would that her love repay
If I could give the world away?
Nay—you whose mouths are filled with scorn
Nay; why was love so lowly born
And Beauty so exceeding clad
With wealth no Croesus ever had.

Had poor love loved in his estate
He had not known the rod of fate
But only held the gentle sway
Which true love feels from day to day.

I bring her little things whene'er
I seek the guerdon of the fair
But O would that her love repay
If I could give the world away?

A COPY FROM CATULLUS

Nay, had but you, most beautiful, most loved,
Given me all my way:
Thrown back your gorgeous head out of pure joy,
Nor stirred at all, till I
Had with three hundred thousand kisses shut
Those honied eyes of yours;
My heart would not have sated been. No, no!
Not if our kisses' score
Surpassed the infinite ears of ripened corn,
That summer looks upon.
A Carol for Christmas Eve

We are but of such mortal mould,
Nos exaudi, Domine!
That the night can scarce withhold
In its shroud our sins from Thee.

That night comes, when Thou shalt come
Nos exaudi, Domine!
From Thy home to this sad home,
And die for us upon the tree.

If then the stars shine out so bright,
Nos exaudi, Domine!
That Thou seest by their light,
How great our sins and many be;

Thou wilt come, as they were not,
Nos exaudi, Domine!
Or as they were all forgot,
Or forgiven, Lord, by Thee.