

# OTHERS

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# OTHERS

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## LALLA RAM

The garden was warm, languid,  
The tiny shadows of nime trees softly fingered white  
balconies,  
The palms fell limply back from the heavy sun,  
Everything was old, beautifully old,  
Everything was old, with the energy of life forgotten.

Lalla Ram passed through the garden,  
The nime trees gathered in their tiny wavering shadows  
and grouped themselves in bold patterns on the  
walls,  
The marigolds burst into generous peals of orange  
laughter,  
The small yellow flowers rippled in mellow chuckles  
that shook their fat green bushes,  
The smooth trunks of the palms straightened with easy  
royalty and strode about the garden.  
The sun shadows were suddenly black and bold in the  
white light,  
Everything was life and the joy of life,  
When Lalla Ram passed through the garden.



## HONGKONG

I have sat long at the far-above window  
    With the things I am going to leave,  
    Until it has grown too dark to see.  
The white cloud that crept across the little strip of sky  
    Has faded into greyness  
    With the soft greyness of night.

Far above mountain and cloud are lost in each other  
Tiny sleepy lights blink through the mist  
    Hung in the sky  
    Like stars.  
They are the eyes of the houses of men who live on  
    the Peak.

The flat trees detach themselves from the Chinese street  
    below  
    And climb up into the sky  
    Where the fire-eyes beckon,  
Pause, caught for a moment in the night, and are lost.



## HERM-APHRODITE-US

Behold me!  
The perfect one!  
Epitome of the universe!  
The crystal sphere,—  
reflecting  
sex,—  
being,—  
God.

For long ages,—  
moonlike,—  
I turned one hemisphere  
away from God,—  
stubbornly reflecting  
only half of His perfection,—  
Man.

For this sin  
God mocked me,—  
showing himself in me;  
monster of masculinity,—  
tyrannous,  
cruel,



war-mad,  
death-gluttonous,  
God,—inverted.

Then through love,  
God saved me,—  
melted my perverseness,  
set me spinning,  
in full God-light,—  
reflecting wholly  
His perfection,  
woman in man,  
man in woman,—  
herm-aphrodite-us.

Behold me!  
The perfect one!  
The crystal sphere,—  
reflecting perfect sex,—  
reflecting perfect being,—  
reflecting God.



## ELUSION

I dive from height,  
And swim  
Out through a clinging sea,

Far in, I see a monstrous god. . . .  
Stone upon stone of agony  
Piled  
Calmly to heaven.

I heard it cry:  
"Make an image to fill them with fear.  
In love there is no awe;  
They must tremble."

We have made the image. . . .  
It advances flaming upon me.  
I drown in brass. . . .  
I sink  
Crushed beneath all weight.



## THE PRAIRIE

Before me the great dark broad-breasted prairie expands,  
Bared to the pale moon's quiet light,  
A few trees rustle gently, steadily, insistently.  
Weary I sink upon the great broad breast.  
On every side the mist arises—  
A huge strange figure with pale shifting garments and  
cool white arms that close on me more and more—  
Till the turbid fever cools,  
And all the wild desires are lulled at last to languid  
rest.

## THE SEA

Far out into the sea the tide-bared straggling reefs have  
crept, and I lie there as one of them.  
Above and before me, the sun-dashed joyous blue sings  
one clear note of whole-world blitheness.  
The great sea is quiet, only endless quivering light-tipped  
ripples show that it breathes,  
While afar off pale haze-limned sails steal faintly by like  
dreams, the dreams of our deeds yet to do—  
My eyes close:  
Hot and hotter the noon sun beats on the shimmering  
sea, the rocks, and me—  
It runs through my blood till I become all warmth and  
light—  
Till the whole world is turned into warmth and light—  
No world, no I, but only warmth and light, red-flimmer-  
ing, flickering warming light!



## OVER THE ULTIMATE

Who asketh when  
We that have done with doing and the blood-red  
tides of men  
Shall hold fast  
Ourselves at last?  
Who cares when?

We that have dived o'er the morning and the  
thither sides of night,  
What delight  
Should we have of your traces,  
Times and places,—  
What delight?

Ye that are day-things,  
Reckoners of north and south,  
Of great things ruinous,  
What should ye know of us,  
Us that have stars for our playthings,  
Yea, stars to browse on our mouth?



What life saith  
Shall we care,  
We that have juttied through death  
And despair?  
We that have joked with the mountain-gales  
And sent them rattling home,  
We that have held the morning's sails  
O'er the foam,  
Laughing at sails and mornings, all things  
that are still or roam?  
What life saith  
Of its strife  
Shall we care,  
We that have juttied through death  
And despair—  
Yea, and life!  
Shall we care?  
Of what shall we care?



## POEMS OF WISTFULNESS

## I. WANDERER

Why do ye find me in these waters?

Well, the old wander-dog in me whined;  
So we came,  
Baying at the moon,  
Wistfully over the world.

## II. SOMNAMBULIST

Last night I went a-walking with my dreams—  
Folk such as ye ha' never seen the like of,  
With faces like moonlight on water,  
Wistful folk.  
One of them had eyes  
The color of will-o'-the-wisp,  
And another had hair  
The color of wind.  
We walked in silence  
In a grey wood  
Until dawn.



## III. VISITANTS

In the pale hours  
Often they come to me stealthily,  
Tremulous,  
Ghostly with twilight,  
Vain as air,—  
The wraiths o' the gone folk,  
Whispering,  
Bidding me be of good cheer,  
Good hope.

## IV. HEART'S-EASE

Say it again. It is not often  
One hears "I love you."  
There is much talk of the winds,  
But that is of death;  
And there is great chatter of birds  
But there is not much in it;  
And the talking of the sea  
Says only over and over again  
Pitiful things with sobs in them.  
In the words of a woman alone  
Is there that which is heart-easing.  
Say it again.



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## SUNDAY MORNING

I have come out here into the woods  
Because there are hob-nails in my shoes,  
And because the people I saw in the town back there  
    were so spick and span  
(Even the rosy little tot with his wide, white collar)  
And because there are so many churches in the town.

I have come out here into the woods.

The great oak is not spick and span  
And the little oak does not wear a wide, white collar.  
And none of us,  
    Not the stone,  
    Nor the wood-mouse,  
    Nor I,  
Wrangles over the meaning of printer's ink in heavy  
    books.

## THE THIEF

This man, then, is very much like God.  
The scoundrel.

One can excuse omnipotence in deity  
(An arm gone, or a friend dead,



And one need not even be a Presbyterian to say:  
God wills it).

I say, having made a God, one can forgive Him.

But this man, who by bowing before a minister  
Can take the girl,  
Body, mind and soul,  
And build about her unassailable eternal ramparts  
Against the world—  
This man is a sort of God.  
The scoundrel.

But he is tangible  
And waxes hot and cold  
And fears hell—

There is no forgiveness.

### SATISFACTION

How could any god be happy  
With only one hell?  
Why, even a dog has different teeth  
To crush this flea or that flea.



## MAISONNETTES

The houses in Windermere Street are 'let off in floors'  
Which perhaps is the reason it always seems so alert.  
Little groups of young men and girls gather round its  
front doors,  
And keen eyes at all windows observe their endeavors to  
flirt.

Every one in the street knew at once about Lizzie Brown.  
They saw the flash bloke she took up with, and 'knew  
how 'twould be.'  
And they knew why the blinds of the house at the corner  
are down,  
And who pays the second floor's rent, at 103.

## THE HIGHBROWETTES

*(Merveilleuses de nos jours)*

"We will now call on Alberic Morphine to give us a  
reading."  
The rows of young women look up; their eyes glisten;  
they shiver  
With the kind of emotion that's really *very* misleading.  
All have fine eyes, yellow faces, vile clothes and a liver.  
They smoke a great deal, bathe little, and wear no stays.  
Their artistic garments are made on the Grecian plan;  
They flock in their crowds to the pit, for Mr. Shaw's  
plays;  
And aspire to a union of souls, with some pimply young  
man.



## NOSTALGIA

## I.

I dreamed my father sent me into his garden  
To gather an armful of flowers.  
I found no flowers at all  
Nor any garden,  
And so returned with empty hands outspread.  
Then with pitying smile  
He led me forth along the frosty pavement  
Swarming with men and women that jostled and scurried  
Like maggots deep in the cracks of a mouldy cheese.  
But as we met them,  
And each one raised an eager and lustrous face—  
Though seared with struggle and pain—  
My father seemed to gather them into his arms  
And hold them tenderly there as a precious burden,  
Speaking the names of each with lingering relish—  
The names were courage, love, endurance, faith—  
And smiling as mother used in her summer garden  
To speak of jonquils or of marigolds.

## II.

A thousand fountains in a thousand valleys  
Bubble and leap and run from the fountain-head,  
And never a one turns back to its cradled spring.

The shining and circling planets  
Never unravel the magical web they have woven,  
Fixed to the irreversible shuttles of fate.



## THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS

At the Pest House dance  
The undertaker and a midwife  
Were sitting out a hesitation,  
And this is what he said to her:  
"Poets say that Birth and Death  
Are the two great sacraments of life.  
You are priestess of the one  
And I high-priest of the other.  
We minister at the awful altars,  
We open the gates of joy and woe,  
We tune the carol and the dirge,  
And for all this we are outcasts,  
Despised and rejected of men.  
They praise the song and loathe the singer.  
But isn't this pest house delightful?  
*Dansons! dansons!"*



## THE CITY IN SUMMER

A dusty vista  
Down which a cat  
Darkly moves.  
Bleak doors  
And bleaker windows;  
A withered vine  
Patters against the wall.  
A newspaper  
Shambling in the gutter;  
A ragged child  
Stands at the corner  
Beside a hungry dog  
Looking in a dust can.  
A murky  
Silence over all:  
The city dead.



## QUESTION NOCTURNAL

Eyes like little green apples  
in a wrinkled apple blossom face,  
Why do you look at me?  
The wind lifts gold up and down the street  
And through the windows  
even the windows no not the windows  
Of me.

## THE CURRENT

The white soul of the water  
Dips—gnawing the tree-roots.  
It is broken.  
Across the implacable bronze-green scummed bark  
And the glistening water-rats  
Are tired.

IN THE PARK: FOR FAROUCHE, NOVEMBER,

1914

Even when I look at the locomotive  
Holding the round earth from falling into space  
by means of its magnetic feet,  
I see the caterpillar  
Green, wet, fat,  
A stain on greyness,  
Dead beside, or under. Or is it above?



## HELLENICA

## I.

Cleon doth not forget the gentle footsteps  
Of Scylla, a little maiden,  
Who returneth not unto her father's dwelling,  
But walketh the long descent into the silence  
Tired and alone.

## II.

Rhodoclea, whose body veiled the sun,  
Hath fallen into shadow  
Under the grasses.

## III.

Plato's passion troubled Timon's soul.  
His body followed beauty to the end.  
Sunlight sifts across his earthy bed.

## IV.

Comatas dreameth of music in soft pastures.  
His fellow-shepherds have laid his pipe beside him.

## V.

Maidenly Bacchis wove her wedding tunic.  
Now it lies in the dust  
That claspeth her loveliness.

## VI.

Myrrha, whose body was clearer than light on water,  
Remembereth not her beauty  
In the stillness.



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## NEW YORK ETCHINGS

### THE SUBWAY

A tube of impenetrable black shadows,  
Through which  
Dart  
Yellow-blotched things of steel,  
With a crunching, grinding cry  
Of souls in torture.  
The dismal realm of Darkness,  
Where Man conceals  
His unnatural lust for speed  
From the frank and placid gaze of the sun.

### THE SEA-LINER

Eight convulsive tugboats,  
Unheroic toilers,  
Transmute their life strength  
Into a motion imperceptible  
Of the giant sea-liner.  
The leviathan  
With vulgar contempt  
Spits from a thousand mouths;  
Meeting the admiring screech  
Of humbler kin  
With haughty silence.



## THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

A mausoleum,  
Of stained marble and gilded trappings,  
Of spacious vaults and shadowed silences  
Broken, only, by the hollow echo  
Of hurrying foot-steps.  
In certain chambers,  
Tier upon tier of shelves,  
Like miniature unsealed graves,  
Bear at rest  
The tiny coffins of paper and cloth:  
The final abode of mortal thought.  
And here, the ghouls—  
Mute, furtive and light-of-foot—  
Prowl about;  
Peering into the barren homes of the dead  
For precious words to help the living.

## THE TERMINAL

Ravenous stomach of stone and steel  
Gulping in  
Sizzling, steaming morsels.  
Now, a string of wooden sausages  
Hurls itself  
Into the deep, cavernous maw,  
And a moment later  
A hissing, stenchful mess  
Is vomited forth.















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