

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Sara Teasdale**

**- poems -**

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## **A Ballad of the Two Knights**

Two knights rode forth at early dawn  
A-seeking maids to wed,  
Said one, "My lady must be fair,  
With gold hair on her head."

Then spake the other knight-at-arms:  
"I care not for her face,  
But she I love must be a dove  
For purity and grace."

And each knight blew upon his horn  
And went his separate way,  
And each knight found a lady-love  
Before the fall of day.

But she was brown who should have had  
The shining yellow hair --  
I ween the knights forgot their words  
Or else they ceased to care.

For he who wanted purity  
Brought home a wanton wild,  
And when each saw the other knight  
I ween that each knight smiled.

Sara Teasdale

## **A Cry**

Oh, there are eyes that he can see,  
And hands to make his hands rejoice,  
But to my lover I must be  
Only a voice.

Oh, there are breasts to bear his head,  
And lips whereon his lips can lie,  
But I must be till I am dead  
Only a cry.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **A Fantasy**

Her voice is like clear water  
That drips upon a stone  
In forests far and silent  
Where Quiet plays alone.

Her thoughts are like the lotus  
Abloom by sacred streams  
Beneath the temple arches  
Where Quiet sits and dreams.

Her kisses are the roses  
That glow while dusk is deep  
In Persian garden closes  
Where Quiet falls asleep.

Sara Teasdale

## **A Little While**

A little while when I am gone  
My life will live in music after me,  
As spun foam lifted and borne on  
After the wave is lost in the full sea.

A while these nights and days will burn  
In song with the bright frailty of foam,  
Living in light before they turn  
Back to the nothingness that is their home.

Sara Teasdale

## **A Maiden**

Oh if I were the velvet rose  
Upon the red rose vine,  
I'd climb to touch his window  
And make his casement fine.

And if I were the little bird  
That twitters on the tree,  
All day I'd sing my love for him  
Till he should harken me.

But since I am a maiden  
I go with downcast eyes,  
And he will never hear the songs  
That he has turned to sighs.

And since I am a maiden  
My love will never know  
That I could kiss him with a mouth  
More red than roses blow.

Sara Teasdale

## **A Minuet of Mozart's**

Across the dimly lighted room  
The violin drew wefts of sound,  
Airily they wove and wound  
And glimmered gold against the gloom.

I watched the music turn to light,  
But at the pausing of the bow,  
The web was broken and the glow  
Was drowned within the wave of night.

Sara Teasdale

## A November Night

There! See the line of lights,  
A chain of stars down either side the street --  
Why can't you lift the chain and give it to me,  
A necklace for my throat? I'd twist it round  
And you could play with it. You smile at me  
As though I were a little dreamy child  
Behind whose eyes the fairies live. . . . And see,  
The people on the street look up at us  
All envious. We are a king and queen,  
Our royal carriage is a motor bus,  
We watch our subjects with a haughty joy. . . .  
How still you are! Have you been hard at work  
And are you tired to-night? It is so long  
Since I have seen you -- four whole days, I think.  
My heart is crowded full of foolish thoughts  
Like early flowers in an April meadow,  
And I must give them to you, all of them,  
Before they fade. The people I have met,  
The play I saw, the trivial, shifting things  
That loom too big or shrink too little, shadows  
That hurry, gesturing along a wall,  
Haunting or gay -- and yet they all grow real  
And take their proper size here in my heart  
When you have seen them. . . . There's the Plaza now,  
A lake of light! To-night it almost seems  
That all the lights are gathered in your eyes,  
Drawn somehow toward you. See the open park  
Lying below us with a million lamps  
Scattered in wise disorder like the stars.  
We look down on them as God must look down  
On constellations floating under Him  
Tangled in clouds. . . . Come, then, and let us walk  
Since we have reached the park. It is our garden,  
All black and blossomless this winter night,  
But we bring April with us, you and I;  
We set the whole world on the trail of spring.  
I think that every path we ever took  
Has marked our footprints in mysterious fire,  
Delicate gold that only fairies see.  
When they wake up at dawn in hollow tree-trunks  
And come out on the drowsy park, they look  
Along the empty paths and say, "Oh, here  
They went, and here, and here, and here! Come, see,  
Here is their bench, take hands and let us dance  
About it in a windy ring and make  
A circle round it only they can cross  
When they come back again!" . . . Look at the lake --  
Do you remember how we watched the swans  
That night in late October while they slept?  
Swans must have stately dreams, I think. But now  
The lake bears only thin reflected lights  
That shake a little. How I long to take

One from the cold black water -- new-made gold  
To give you in your hand! And see, and see,  
There is a star, deep in the lake, a star!  
Oh, dimmer than a pearl -- if you stoop down  
Your hand could almost reach it up to me. . . .

There was a new frail yellow moon to-night --  
I wish you could have had it for a cup  
With stars like dew to fill it to the brim. . . .

How cold it is! Even the lights are cold;  
They have put shawls of fog around them, see!  
What if the air should grow so dimly white  
That we would lose our way along the paths  
Made new by walls of moving mist receding  
The more we follow. . . . What a silver night!  
That was our bench the time you said to me  
The long new poem -- but how different now,  
How eerie with the curtain of the fog  
Making it strange to all the friendly trees!  
There is no wind, and yet great curving scrolls  
Carve themselves, ever changing, in the mist.  
Walk on a little, let me stand here watching  
To see you, too, grown strange to me and far. . . .  
I used to wonder how the park would be  
If one night we could have it all alone --  
No lovers with close arm-encircled waists  
To whisper and break in upon our dreams.  
And now we have it! Every wish comes true!  
We are alone now in a fleecy world;  
Even the stars have gone. We two alone!

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **A Prayer**

When I am dying, let me know  
That I loved the blowing snow  
Although it stung like whips;  
That I loved all lovely things  
And I tried to take their stings  
With gay unembittered lips;  
That I loved with all my strength,  
To my soul's full depth and length,  
Careless if my heart must break,  
That I sang as children sing  
Fitting tunes to everything,  
Loving life for its own sake.

Sara Teasdale

## **A Song of the Princess**

The princess has her lovers,  
A score of knights has she,  
And each can sing a madrigal,  
And praise her gracefully.

But Love that is so bitter  
Hath put within her heart  
A longing for the scornful knight  
Who silent stands apart.

And tho' the others praise and plead,  
She maketh no reply,  
Yet for a single word from him,  
I ween that she would die.

Sara Teasdale

## **A Winter Bluejay**

Crisply the bright snow whispered,  
Crunching beneath our feet;  
Behind us as we walked along the parkway,  
Our shadows danced,  
Fantastic shapes in vivid blue.  
Across the lake the skaters  
Flew to and fro,  
With sharp turns weaving  
A frail invisible net.  
In ecstasy the earth  
Drank the silver sunlight;  
In ecstasy the skaters  
Drank the wine of speed;  
In ecstasy we laughed  
Drinking the wine of love.  
Had not the music of our joy  
Sounded its highest note?  
But no,  
For suddenly, with lifted eyes you said,  
"Oh look!"  
There, on the black bough of a snow flecked maple,  
Fearless and gay as our love,  
A bluejay cocked his crest!  
Oh who can tell the range of joy  
Or set the bounds of beauty?

Sara Teasdale

## **A Winter Night**

My window-pane is starred with frost,  
The world is bitter cold to-night,  
The moon is cruel, and the wind  
Is like a two-edged sword to smite.

God pity all the homeless ones,  
The beggars pacing to and fro.  
God pity all the poor to-night  
Who walk the lamp-lit streets of snow.

My room is like a bit of June,  
Warm and close-curtained fold on fold,  
But somewhere, like a homeless child,  
My heart is crying in the cold.

Sara Teasdale

## **Advice to a Girl**

No one worth possessing  
Can be quite possessed;  
Lay that on your heart,  
My young angry dear;  
This truth, this hard and precious stone,  
Lay it on your hot cheek,  
Let it hide your tear.  
Hold it like a crystal  
When you are alone  
And gaze in the depths of the icy stone.  
Long, look long and you will be blessed:  
No one worth possessing  
Can be quite possessed.

Sara Teasdale

## **After Death**

Now while my lips are living  
Their words must stay unsaid,  
And will my soul remember  
To speak when I am dead?

Yet if my soul remembered  
You would not heed it, dear,  
For now you must not listen,  
And then you could not hear.

Sara Teasdale

## **After Love**

There is no magic any more,  
We meet as other people do,  
You work no miracle for me  
Nor I for you.

You were the wind and I the sea --  
There is no splendor any more,  
I have grown listless as the pool  
Beside the shore.

But though the pool is safe from storm  
And from the tide has found surcease,  
It grows more bitter than the sea,  
For all its peace.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **After Parting**

Oh I have sown my love so wide  
That he will find it everywhere;  
It will awake him in the night,  
It will enfold him in the air.

I set my shadow in his sight  
And I have winged it with desire,  
That it may be a cloud by day  
And in the night a shaft of fire.

Sara Teasdale

## **Alchemy**

I lift my heart as spring lifts up  
A yellow daisy to the rain;  
My heart will be a lovely cup  
Altho' it holds but pain.

For I shall learn from flower and leaf  
That color every drop they hold,  
To change the lifeless wine of grief  
To living gold.

Sara Teasdale

## **Alone**

I am alone, in spite of love,  
In spite of all I take and give&mdash;  
In spite of all your tenderness,  
Sometimes I am not glad to live.

I am alone, as though I stood  
On the highest peak of the tired gray world,  
About me only swirling snow,  
Above me, endless space unfurled;

With earth hidden and heaven hidden,  
And only my own spirit's pride  
To keep me from the peace of those  
Who are not lonely, having died.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Anadyomene**

The wide, bright temple of the world I found,  
And entered from the dizzy infinite  
That I might kneel and worship thee in it;  
Leaving the singing stars their ceaseless round  
Of silver music sound on orbéd sound,  
For measured spaces where the shrines are lit,  
And men with wisdom or with little wit  
Implore the gods that mercy may abound.  
Ah, Aphrodite, was it not from thee  
My summons came across the endless spaces?  
Mother of Love, turn not thy face from me  
Now that I seek for thee in human faces;  
Answer my prayer or set my spirit free  
Again to drift along the starry places.

Sara Teasdale

## **April**

The roofs are shining from the rain.  
The sparrows tritter as they fly,  
And with a windy April grace  
The little clouds go by.

Yet the back-yards are bare and brown  
With only one unchanging tree--  
I could not be so sure of Spring  
Save that it sings in me.

Sara Teasdale

## **April Song**

Willow in your April gown  
Delicate and gleaming,  
Do you mind in years gone by  
All my dreaming?

Spring was like a call to me  
That I could not answer,  
I was chained to loneliness,  
I, the dancer.

Willow, twinkling in the sun,  
Still your leaves and hear me,  
I can answer spring at last,  
Love is near me!

Sara Teasdale

## **At Midnight**

Now at last I have come to see what life is,  
Nothing is ever ended, everything only begun,  
And the brave victories that seem so splendid  
Are never really won.

Even love that I built my spirit's house for,  
Comes like a brooding and a baffled guest,  
And music and men's praise and even laughter  
Are not so good as rest.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **At Night**

We are apart; the city grows quiet between us,  
She hushes herself, for midnight makes heavy her eyes,  
The tangle of traffic is ended, the cars are empty,  
Five streets divide us, and on them the moonlight lies.

Oh are you asleep, or lying awake, my lover?  
Open your dreams to my love and your heart to my words.  
I send you my thoughts--the air between us is laden,  
My thoughts fly in at your window, a flock of wild birds.

Sara Teasdale

## **Barter**

Life has loveliness to sell,  
All beautiful and splendid things,  
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,  
Soaring fire that sways and sings,  
And children's faces looking up,  
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,  
Music like the curve of gold,  
Scent of pine trees in the rain,  
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,  
And for your spirit's still delight,  
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,  
Buy it and never count the cost;  
For one white singing hour of peace  
Count many a year of strife well lost,  
And for a breath of ecstasy  
Give all you have been, or could be.

Sara Teasdale

## Beatrice

Send out the singers -- let the room be still;  
They have not eased my pain nor brought me sleep.  
Close out the sun, for I would have it dark  
That I may feel how black the grave will be.  
The sun is setting, for the light is red,  
And you are outlined in a golden fire,  
Like Ursula upon an altar-screen.  
Come, leave the light and sit beside my bed,  
For I have had enough of saints and prayers.  
Strange broken thoughts are beating in my brain,  
They come and vanish and again they come.  
It is the fever driving out my soul,  
And Death stands waiting by the arras there.

Ornella, I will speak, for soon my lips  
Shall keep a silence till the end of time.  
You have a mouth for loving -- listen then:  
Keep tryst with Love before Death comes to tryst;  
For I, who die, could wish that I had lived  
A little closer to the world of men,  
Not watching always thro' the blazoned panes  
That show the world in chilly greens and blues  
And grudge the sunshine that would enter in.  
I was no part of all the troubled crowd  
That moved beneath the palace windows here,  
And yet sometimes a knight in shining steel  
Would pass and catch the gleaming of my hair,  
And wave a mailed hand and smile at me,  
Whereat I made no sign and turned away,  
Affrighted and yet glad and full of dreams.  
Ah, dreams and dreams that asked no answering!  
I should have wrought to make my dreams come true,  
But all my life was like an autumn day,  
Full of gray quiet and a hazy peace.

What was I saying? All is gone again.  
It seemed but now I was the little child  
Who played within a garden long ago.  
Beyond the walls the festal trumpets blared.  
Perhaps they carried some Madonna by  
With tossing ensigns in a sea of flowers,  
A painted Virgin with a painted Child,  
Who saw for once the sweetness of the sun  
Before they shut her in an altar-niche  
Where tapers smoke against the windy gloom.  
I gathered roses redder than my gown  
And played that I was Saint Elizabeth,  
Whose wine had turned to roses in her hands.  
And as I played, a child came thro' the gate,  
A boy who looked at me without a word,  
As tho' he saw stretch far behind my head  
Long lines of radiant angels, row on row.

That day we spoke a little, timidly,  
And after that I never heard the voice  
That sang so many songs for love of me.  
He was content to stand and watch me pass,  
To seek for me at matins every day,  
Where I could feel his eyes the while I prayed.  
I think if he had stretched his hands to me,  
Or moved his lips to say a single word,  
I might have loved him -- he had wondrous eyes.

Ornella, are you there? I cannot see --  
Is every one so lonely when he dies?,p>  
The room is filled with lights -- with waving lights --  
Who are the men and women 'round the bed?  
What have I said, Ornella? Have they heard?  
There was no evil hidden in my life,  
And yet, and yet, I would not have them know --

Am I not floating in a mist of light?  
O lift me up and I shall reach the sun!

Sara Teasdale

## **Because**

Oh, because you never tried  
To bow my will or break my pride,  
And nothing of the cave-man made  
You want to keep me half afraid,  
Nor ever with a conquering air  
You thought to draw me unaware --  
Take me, for I love you more  
Than I ever loved before.

And since the body's maidenhood  
Alone were neither rare nor good  
Unless with it I gave to you  
A spirit still untrammeled, too,  
Take my dreams and take my mind  
That were masterless as wind;  
And "Master!" I shall say to you  
Since you never asked me to.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Blue Squills**

How many million Aprils came  
    Before I ever knew  
How white a cherry bough could be,  
    A bed of squills, how blue.

And many a dancing April  
    When life is done with me,  
Will lift the blue flame of the flower  
    And the white flame of the tree.

Oh, burn me with your beauty, then,  
    Oh, hurt me, tree and flower,  
Lest in the end death try to take  
    Even this glistening hour.

O shaken flowers, O shimmering trees,  
    O sunlit white and blue,  
Wound me, that I through endless sleep  
    May bear the scar of you.

Sara Teasdale

## **Broadway**

This is the quiet hour; the theaters  
Have gathered in their crowds, and steadily  
The million lights blaze on for few to see,  
Robbing the sky of stars that should be hers.  
A woman waits with bag and shabby furs,  
A somber man drifts by, and only we  
Pass up the street unwearied, warm and free,  
For over us the olden magic stirs.

Beneath the liquid splendor of the lights  
We live a little ere the charm is spent;  
This night is ours, of all the golden nights,  
The pavement an enchanted palace floor,  
And Youth the player on the viol, who sent  
A strain of music through an open door.

Sara Teasdale

## **Buried Love**

I shall bury my weary Love  
Beneath a tree,  
In the forest tall and black  
Where none can see.

I shall put no flowers at his head,  
Nor stone at his feet,  
For the mouth I loved so much  
Was bittersweet.

I shall go no more to his grave,  
For the woods are cold.  
I shall gather as much of joy  
As my hands can hold.

I shall stay all day in the sun  
Where the wide winds blow,  
But oh, I shall weep at night  
When none will know.

Sara Teasdale

## **But Not to Me**

The April night is still and sweet  
With flowers on every tree;  
Peace comes to them on quiet feet,  
But not to me.

My peace is hidden in his breast  
Where I shall never be,  
Love comes to-night to all the rest,  
But not to me.

Sara Teasdale

## **By the Sea**

Beside an ebbing northern sea  
While stars awaken one by one,  
We walk together, I and he.

He woos me with an easy grace  
That proves him only half sincere;  
A light smile flickers on his face.

To him love-making is an art,  
And as a flutist plays a flute,  
So does he play upon his heart

A music varied to his whim.  
He has no use for love of mine,  
He would not have me answer him.

To hide my eyes within the night  
I watch the changeful lighthouse gleam  
Alternately with red and white.

My laughter smites upon my ears,  
So one who cries and wakes from sleep  
Knows not it is himself he hears.

What if my voice should let him know  
The mocking words were all a sham,  
And lips that laugh could tremble so?

What if I lost the power to lie,  
And he should only hear his name  
In one low, broken cry?

Sara Teasdale

## **Central Park at Dusk**

Buildings above the leafless trees  
Loom high as castles in a dream,

While one by one the lamps come out  
To thread the twilight with a gleam.

There is no sign of leaf or bud,  
A hush is over everything--

Silent as women wait for love,  
The world is waiting for the spring.

Sara Teasdale

## **Child, Child**

Child, child, love while you can  
The voice and the eyes and the soul of a man,  
Never fear though it break your heart -  
Out of the wound new joy will start;  
Only love proudly and gladly and well  
Though love be heaven or love be hell.

Child, child, love while you may,  
For life is short as a happy day;  
Never fear the thing you feel -  
Only by love is life made real;  
Love, for the deadly sins are seven,  
Only through love will you enter heaven.

Sara Teasdale

## Christmas Carol

The kings they came from out the south,  
All dressed in ermine fine;  
They bore Him gold and chrysoprase,  
And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north,  
Their coats were brown and old;  
They brought Him little new-born lambs--  
They had not any gold.

The wise men came from out the east,  
And they were wrapped in white;  
The star that led them all the way  
Did glorify the night.

The angels came from heaven high,  
And they were clad with wings;  
And lo, they brought a joyful song  
The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,  
The wise men entered in,  
The shepherds followed after them  
To hear the song begin.

The angels sang through all the night  
Until the rising sun,  
But little Jesus fell asleep  
Before the song was done.

Sara Teasdale

## **Come**

Come, when the pale moon like a petal  
Floats in the pearly dusk of spring,  
Come with outstretched arms to take me,  
Come with lips pursed up to cling.

Come, for life is a frail moth flying  
Caught in the web of the years that pass,  
And soon we two, so warm and eager,  
Will be as the gray stones in the grass.

Sara Teasdale

## **Coney Island**

Why did you bring me here?  
The sand is white with snow,  
Over the wooden domes  
The winter sea-winds blow--  
There is no shelter near,  
Come, let us go.

With foam of icy lace  
The sea creeps up the sand,  
The wind is like a hand  
That strikes us in the face.  
Doors that June set a-swing  
Are bolted long ago;  
We try them uselessly--  
Alas there cannot be  
For us a second spring;  
Come, let us go.

Sara Teasdale

## **Crowned**

I wear a crown invisible and clear,  
And go my lifted royal way apart  
Since you have crowned me softly in your heart  
With love that is half ardent, half austere;  
And as a queen disguised might pass anear  
The bitter crowd that barterers in a mart,  
Veiling her pride while tears of pity start,  
I hide my glory thru a jealous fear.  
My crown shall stay a sweet and secret thing  
Kept pure with prayer at evensong and morn,  
And when you come to take it from my head,  
I shall not weep, nor will a word be said,  
But I shall kneel before you, oh my king,  
And bind my brow forever with a thorn.

Sara Teasdale

## **Debt**

What do I owe to you  
Who loved me deep and long?  
You never gave my spirit wings  
Or gave my heart a song.

But oh, to him I loved  
Who loved me not at all,  
I owe the little open gate  
That led thru heaven's wall.

Sara Teasdale

## **Deep in the Night**

Deep in the night the cry of a swallow,  
Under the stars he flew,  
Keen as pain was his call to follow  
Over the world to you.

Love in my heart is a cry forever  
Lost as the swallow's flight,  
Seeking for you and never, never  
Stilled by the stars at night.

Sara Teasdale

## **Desert Pools**

I love too much; I am a river  
Surging with spring that seeks the sea,  
I am too generous a giver,  
Love will not stoop to drink of me.

His feet will turn to desert places  
Shadowless, reft of rain and dew,  
Where stars stare down with sharpened faces  
From heavens pitilessly blue.

And there at midnight sick with faring,  
He will stoop down in his desire  
To slake the thirst grown past all bearing  
In stagnant water keen as fire.

Sara Teasdale

## **Dew**

As dew leaves the cobweb lightly  
Threaded with stars,  
Scattering jewels on the fence  
And the pasture bars;  
As dawn leaves the dry grass bright  
And the tangled weeds  
Bearing a rainbow gem  
On each of their seeds;  
So has your love, my lover,  
Fresh as the dawn,  
Made me a shining road  
To travel on,  
Set every common sight  
Of tree or stone  
Delicately alight  
For me alone.

Sara Teasdale

## **Did You Never Know?**

Did you never know, long ago, how much you loved me&mdash;  
That your love would never lessen and never go?  
You were young then, proud and fresh-hearted,  
You were too young to know.

Fate is a wind, and red leaves fly before it  
Far apart, far away in the gusty time of year&mdash;  
Seldom we meet now, but when I hear you speaking,  
I know your secret, my dear, my dear.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Doctors**

Every night I lie awake  
And every day I lie abed  
And hear the doctors, Pain and Death,  
Conferring at my head.

They speak in scientific tones,  
Professional and low--  
One argues for a speedy cure,  
The other, sure and slow.

To one so humble as myself  
It should be matter for some pride  
To have such noted fellows here,  
Conferring at my side.

Sara Teasdale

## **Dooryard Roses**

I have come the selfsame path  
To the selfsame door,  
Years have left the roses there  
Burning as before

While I watch them in the wind  
Quick the hot tears start--  
Strange so frail a flame outlasts  
Fire in the heart.

Sara Teasdale

## **Doubt**

My soul lives in my body's house,  
And you have both the house and her&mdash;  
But sometimes she is less your own  
Than a wild, gay adventurer;  
A restless and an eager wraith,  
How can I tell what she will do&mdash;  
Oh, I am sure of my body's faith,  
But what if my soul broke faith with you?

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Dreams**

I gave my life to another lover,  
I gave my love, and all, and all--  
But over a dream the past will hover,  
Out of a dream the past will call.

I tear myself from sleep with a shiver  
But on my breast a kiss is hot,  
And by my bed the ghostly giver  
Is waiting tho' I see him not.

Sara Teasdale

## **Dusk in June**

Evening, and all the birds  
In a chorus of shimmering sound  
Are easing their hearts of joy  
For miles around.

The air is blue and sweet,  
The few first stars are white,--  
Oh let me like the birds  
Sing before night.

Sara Teasdale

## **Dusk in War Time**

A half-hour more and you will lean  
To gather me close in the old sweet way--  
But oh, to the woman over the sea  
Who will come at the close of day?

A half-hour more and I will hear  
The key in the latch and the strong quick tread--  
But oh, the woman over the sea  
Waiting at dusk for one who is dead!

Sara Teasdale

## **Dust**

When I went to look at what had long been hidden,  
A jewel laid long ago in a secret place,  
I trembled, for I thought to see its dark deep fire—  
But only a pinch of dust blew up in my face.

I almost gave my life long ago for a thing  
That has gone to dust now, stinging my eyes—  
It is strange how often a heart must be broken  
Before the years can make it wise.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Ebb Tide**

When the long day goes by  
And I do not see your face,  
The old wild, restless sorrow  
Steals from its hiding place.

My day is barren and broken,  
Bereft of light and song,  
A sea beach bleak and windy  
That moans the whole day long.

To the empty beach at ebb tide,  
Bare with its rocks and scars,  
Come back like the sea with singing,  
And light of a million stars.

Sara Teasdale

## Embers

I said, "My youth is gone  
Like a fire beaten out by the rain,  
That will never sway and sing  
Or play with the wind again."

I said, "It is no great sorrow  
That quenched my youth in me,  
But only little sorrows  
Beating ceaselessly."

I thought my youth was gone,  
But you returned --  
Like a flame at the call of the wind  
It leaped and burned;

Threw off its ashen cloak,  
And gowned anew  
Gave itself like a bride  
Once more to you.

Sara Teasdale

## Enough

It is enough for me by day  
To walk the same bright earth with him;  
Enough that over us by night  
The same great roof of stars is dim.

I have no care to bind the wind  
Or set a fetter on the sea--  
It is enough to feel his love  
Blow by like music over me.

Sara Teasdale

## Erinna

They sent you in to say farewell to me,  
No, do not shake your head; I see your eyes  
That shine with tears. Sappho, you saw the sun  
Just now when you came hither, and again,  
When you have left me, all the shimmering  
Great meadows will laugh lightly, and the sun  
Put round about you warm invisible arms  
As might a lover, decking you with light.  
I go toward darkness tho' I lie so still.  
If I could see the sun, I should look up  
And drink the light until my eyes were blind;  
I should kneel down and kiss the blades of grass,  
And I should call the birds with such a voice,  
With such a longing, tremulous and keen,  
That they would fly to me and on the breast  
Bear evermore to tree-tops and to fields  
The kiss I gave them. Sappho, tell me this,  
Was I not sometimes fair? My eyes, my mouth,  
My hair that loved the wind, were they not worth  
The breath of love upon them? Yet he passed,  
And he will pass to-night when all the air  
Is blue with twilight; but I shall not see.  
I shall have gone forever. Hold my hands,  
Hold fast that Death may never come between;  
Swear by the gods you will not let me go;  
Make songs for Death as you would sing to Love --  
But you will not assuage him. He alone  
Of all the gods will take no gifts from men.  
I am afraid, afraid.

Sappho, lean down.  
Last night the fever gave a dream to me,  
It takes my life and gives a little dream.  
I thought I saw him stand, the man I love,  
Here in my quiet chamber, with his eyes  
Fixed on me as I entered, while he drew  
Silently toward me -- he who night by night  
Goes by my door without a thought of me --  
Neared me and put his hand behind my head,  
And leaning toward me, kissed me on the mouth.  
That was a little dream for Death to give,  
Too short to take the whole of life for, yet  
I woke with lips made quiet by a kiss.  
The dream is worth the dying. Do not smile  
So sadly on me with your shining eyes,  
You who can set your sorrow to a song  
And ease your hurt by singing. But to me  
My songs are less than sea-sand that the wind  
Drives stinging over me and bears away.  
I have no care what place the grains may fall,  
Nor of my songs, if Time shall blow them back,  
As land-wind breaks the lines of dying foam

Along the bright wet beaches, scattering  
The flakes once more against the laboring sea,  
Into oblivion. What care have I  
To please Apollo since Love hearkens not?  
Your words will live forever, men will say  
"She was the perfect lover" -- I shall die,  
I loved too much to live. Go Sappho, go --  
I hate your hands that beat so full of life,  
Go, lest my hatred hurt you. I shall die,  
But you will live to love and love again.  
He might have loved some other spring than this;  
I should have kept my life -- I let it go.  
He would not love me now tho' Cypris bound  
Her girdle round me. I am Death's, not Love's.  
Go from me, Sappho, back to find the sun.

I am alone, alone. O Cyprian...

Sara Teasdale

## **Fault**

They came to tell your faults to me,  
They named them over one by one;  
I laughed aloud when they were done,  
I knew them all so well before, --  
Oh, they were blind, too blind to see  
Your faults had made me love you more.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Faults**

They came to tell your faults to me,  
They named them over one by one;  
I laughed aloud when they were done,  
I knew them all so well before, --  
Oh, they were blind, too blind to see  
Your faults had made me love you more.

Sara Teasdale

## **Fear**

I am afraid, oh I am so afraid!  
The cold black fear is clutching me to-night  
As long ago when they would take the light  
And leave the little child who would have prayed,  
Frozen and sleepless at the thought of death.  
My heart that beats too fast will rest too soon;  
I shall not know if it be night or noon, --  
Yet shall I struggle in the dark for breath?  
Will no one fight the Terror for my sake,  
The heavy darkness that no dawn will break?  
How can they leave me in that dark alone,  
Who loved the joy of light and warmth so much,  
And thrilled so with the sense of sound and touch, --  
How can they shut me underneath a stone?

Sara Teasdale

## February

They spoke of him I love  
With cruel words and gay;  
My lips kept silent guard  
On all I could not say.

I heard, and down the street  
The lonely trees in the square  
Stood in the winter wind  
Patient and bare.

I heard . . . oh voiceless trees  
Under the wind, I knew  
The eager terrible spring  
Hidden in you.

Sara Teasdale

## **February Twilight**

I stood beside a hill  
Smooth with new-laid snow,  
A single star looked out  
From the cold evening glow.

There was no other creature  
That saw what I could see--  
I stood and watched the evening star  
As long as it watched me.

Sara Teasdale

## **For the Anniversary of John Keats' Death**

At midnight, when the moonlit cypress trees  
Have woven round his grave a magic shade,  
Still weeping the unfinished hymn he made,  
There moves fresh Maia, like a morning breeze  
Blown over jonquil beds when warm rains cease.  
And stooping where her poet's head is laid,  
Selene weeps, while all the tides are stayed,  
And swaying seas are darkened into peace.  
But they who wake the meadows and the tides  
Have hearts too kind to bid him wake from sleep,  
Who murmurs sometimes when his dreams are deep,  
Startling the Quiet Land where he abides,  
And charming still sad-eyed Persephone  
With visions of the sunny earth and sea.

Sara Teasdale

## **Four Winds**

"Four winds blowing thro' the sky,  
You have seen poor maidens die,  
Tell me then what I shall do  
That my lover may be true."  
Said the wind from out the south,  
"Lay no kiss upon his mouth,"  
And the wind from out the west,  
"Wound the heart within his breast,"  
And the wind from out the east,  
"Send him empty from the feast,"  
And the wind from out the north,  
"In the tempest thrust him forth,  
When thou art more cruel than he,  
Then will Love be kind to thee."

Sara Teasdale

## **From the North**

The northern woods are delicately sweet,  
The lake is folded softly by the shore,  
But I am restless for the subway's roar,  
The thunder and the hurrying of feet.  
I try to sleep, but still my eyelids beat  
Against the image of the tower that bore  
Me high aloft, as if thru heaven's door  
I watched the world from God's unshaken seat.  
I would go back and breathe with quickened sense  
The tunnel's strong hot breath of powdered steel;  
But at the ferries I should leave the tense  
Dark air behind, and I should mount and be  
One among many who are thrilled to feel  
The first keen sea-breath from the open sea.

Sara Teasdale

## From the Sea

All beauty calls you to me, and you seem,  
Past twice a thousand miles of shifting sea,  
To reach me. You are as the wind I breathe  
Here on the ship's sun-smitten topmost deck,  
With only light between the heavens and me.  
I feel your spirit and I close my eyes,  
Knowing the bright hair blowing in the sun,  
The eager whisper and the searching eyes.  
Listen, I love you. Do not turn your face  
Nor touch me. Only stand and watch awhile  
The blue unbroken circle of the sea.  
Look far away and let me ease my heart  
Of words that beat in it with broken wing.  
Look far away, and if I say too much,  
Forget that I am speaking. Only watch,  
How like a gull that sparkling sinks to rest,  
The foam-crest drifts along a happy wave  
Toward the bright verge, the boundary of the world.

I am so weak a thing, praise me for this,  
That in some strange way I was strong enough  
To keep my love unuttered and to stand  
Altho' I longed to kneel to you that night  
You looked at me with ever-calling eyes.  
Was I not calm? And if you guessed my love  
You thought it something delicate and free,  
Soft as the sound of fir-trees in the wind,  
Fleeting as phosphorescent stars in foam.  
Yet in my heart there was a beating storm  
Bending my thoughts before it, and I strove  
To say too little lest I say too much,  
And from my eyes to drive love's happy shame.  
Yet when I heard your name the first far time  
It seemed like other names to me, and I  
Was all unconscious, as a dreaming river  
That nears at last its long predestined sea;  
And when you spoke to me, I did not know  
That to my life's high altar came its priest.  
But now I know between my God and me  
You stand forever, nearer God than I,  
And in your hands with faith and utter joy  
I would that I could lay my woman's soul.

Oh, my love  
To whom I cannot come with any gift  
Of body or of soul, I pass and go.  
But sometimes when you hear blown back to you  
My wistful, far-off singing touched with tears,  
Know that I sang for you alone to hear,  
And that I wondered if the wind would bring  
To him who tuned my heart its distant song.  
So might a woman who in loneliness

Had borne a child, dreaming of days to come,  
Wonder if it would please its father's eyes.  
But long before I ever heard your name,  
Always the undertone's unchanging note  
In all my singing had prefigured you,  
Foretold you as a spark foretells a flame.  
Yet I was free as an untethered cloud  
In the great space between the sky and sea,  
And might have blown before the wind of joy  
Like a bright banner woven by the sun.  
I did not know the longing in the night--  
You who have waked me cannot give me sleep.  
All things in all the world can rest, but I,  
Even the smooth brief respite of a wave  
When it gives up its broken crown of foam,  
Even that little rest I may not have.  
And yet all quiet loves of friends, all joy  
In all the piercing beauty of the world  
I would give up--go blind forevermore,  
Rather than have God blot from out my soul  
Remembrance of your voice that said my name.

For us no starlight stilled the April fields,  
No birds awoke in darkling trees for us,  
Yet where we walked the city's street that night  
Felt in our feet the singing fire of spring,  
And in our path we left a trail of light  
Soft as the phosphorescence of the sea  
When night submerges in the vessel's wake  
A heaven of unborn evanescent stars.

Sara Teasdale

## From the Woolworth Tower

Vivid with love, eager for greater beauty  
Out of the night we come  
Into the corridor, brilliant and warm.  
A metal door slides open,  
And the lift receives us.  
Swiftly, with sharp unswerving flight  
The car shoots upward,  
And the air, swirling and angry,  
Howls like a hundred devils.  
Past the maze of trim bronze doors,  
Steadily we ascend.  
I cling to you  
Conscious of the chasm under us,  
And a terrible whirring deafens my ears.

The flight is ended.

We pass thru a door leading onto the ledge--  
Wind, night and space  
Oh terrible height  
Why have we sought you?  
Oh bitter wind with icy invisible wings  
Why do you beat us?  
Why would you bear us away?  
We look thru the miles of air,  
The cold blue miles between us and the city,  
Over the edge of eternity we look  
On all the lights,  
A thousand times more numerous than the stars;  
Oh lines and loops of light in unwound chains  
That mark for miles and miles  
The vast black mazy cobweb of the streets;  
Near us clusters and splashes of living gold  
That change far off to bluish steel  
Where the fragile lights on the Jersey shore  
Tremble like drops of wind-stirred dew.  
The strident noises of the city  
Floating up to us  
Are hallowed into whispers.  
Ferries cross thru the darkness  
Weaving a golden thread into the night,  
Their whistles weird shadows of sound.

We feel the millions of humanity beneath us,--  
The warm millions, moving under the roofs,  
Consumed by their own desires;  
Preparing food,  
Sobbing alone in a garret,  
With burning eyes bending over a needle,  
Aimlessly reading the evening paper,  
Dancing in the naked light of the café,  
Laying out the dead,

Bringing a child to birth--  
The sorrow, the torpor, the bitterness, the frail joy  
Come up to us  
Like a cold fog wrapping us round.  
Oh in a hundred years  
Not one of these blood-warm bodies  
But will be worthless as clay.  
The anguish, the torpor, the toil  
Will have passed to other millions  
Consumed by the same desires.  
Ages will come and go,  
Darkness will blot the lights  
And the tower will be laid on the earth.  
The sea will remain  
Black and unchanging,  
The stars will look down  
Brilliant and unconcerned.

Beloved,  
Tho' sorrow, futility, defeat  
Surround us,  
They cannot bear us down.  
Here on the abyss of eternity  
Love has crowned us  
For a moment  
Victors.

Sara Teasdale

## **Galahad in the Castle of the Maidens**

(To the maiden with the hidden face in Abbey's painting)

The other maidens raised their eyes to him  
Who stumbled in before them when the fight  
Had left him victor, with a victor's right.  
I think his eyes with quick hot tears grew dim;  
He scarcely saw her swaying white and slim,  
And trembling slightly, dreaming of his might,  
Nor knew he touched her hand, as strangely light  
As a wan wraith's beside a river's rim.  
The other maidens raised their eyes to see  
And only she has hid her face away,  
And yet I ween she loved him more than they,  
And very fairly fashioned was her face.  
Yet for Love's shame and sweet humility,  
She dared not meet him with their queenlike grace.

Sara Teasdale

## **Gifts**

I gave my first love laughter,  
I gave my second tears,  
I gave my third love silence  
Thru all the years.

My first love gave me singing,  
My second eyes to see,  
But oh, it was my third love  
Who gave my soul to me.

Sara Teasdale

## **Gramercy Park**

For W. P.

The little park was filled with peace,  
The walks were carpeted with snow,  
But every iron gate was locked.  
Lest if we entered, peace would go.

We circled it a dozen times,  
The wind was blowing from the sea,  
I only felt your restless eyes  
Whose love was like a cloak for me.

Oh heavy gates that fate has locked  
To bar the joy we may not win,  
Peace would go out forevermore  
If we should dare to enter in.

Sara Teasdale

## **Grandfather's Love**

They said he sent his love to me,  
They wouldn't put it in my hand,  
And when I asked them where it was  
They said I couldn't understand.

I thought they must have hidden it,  
I hunted for it all the day,  
And when I told them so at night  
They smiled and turned their heads away.

They say that love is something kind,  
That I can never see or touch.  
I wish he'd sent me something else,  
I like his cough-drops twice as much.

Sara Teasdale

## **Gray Eyes**

It was April when you came  
The first time to me,  
And my first look in your eyes  
Was like my first look at the sea.

We have been together  
Four Aprils now  
Watching for the green  
On the swaying willow bough;

Yet whenever I turn  
To your gray eyes over me,  
It is as though I looked  
For the first time at the sea.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## Guenevere

I was a queen, and I have lost my crown;  
A wife, and I have broken all my vows;  
A lover, and I ruined him I loved: --  
There is no other havoc left to do.  
A little month ago I was a queen,  
And mothers held their babies up to see  
When I came riding out of Camelot.  
The women smiled, and all the world smiled too.  
And now, what woman's eyes would smile on me?  
I still am beautiful, and yet what child  
Would think of me as some high, heaven-sent thing,  
An angel, clad in gold and miniver?  
The world would run from me, and yet am I  
No different from the queen they used to love.  
If water, flowing silver over stones,  
Is forded, and beneath the horses' feet  
Grows turbid suddenly, it clears again,  
And men will drink it with no thought of harm.  
Yet I am branded for a single fault.

I was the flower amid a toiling world,  
Where people smiled to see one happy thing,  
And they were proud and glad to raise me high;  
They only asked that I should be right fair,  
A little kind, and gowned wondrously,  
And surely it were little praise to me  
If I had pleased them well throughout my life.

I was a queen, the daughter of a king.  
The crown was never heavy on my head,  
It was my right, and was a part of me.  
The women thought me proud, the men were kind,  
And bowed right gallantly to kiss my hand,  
And watched me as I passed them calmly by,  
Along the halls I shall not tread again.  
What if, to-night, I should revisit them?  
The warders at the gates, the kitchen-maids,  
The very beggars would stand off from me,  
And I, their queen, would climb the stairs alone,  
Pass through the banquet-hall, a loathed thing,  
And seek my chambers for a hiding-place,  
And I should find them but a sepulchre,  
The very rushes rotted on the floors,  
The fire in ashes on the freezing hearth.  
I was a queen, and he who loved me best  
Made me a woman for a night and day,  
And now I go unqueened forevermore.  
A queen should never dream on summer eves,  
When hovering spells are heavy in the dusk: --  
I think no night was ever quite so still,  
So smoothly lit with red along the west,  
So deeply hushed with quiet through and through.

And strangely clear, and deeply dyed with light,  
The trees stood straight against a paling sky,  
With Venus burning lamp-like in the west.

I walked alone amid a thousand flowers,  
That drooped their heads and drowsed beneath the dew,  
And all my thoughts were quieted to sleep.  
Behind me, on the walk, I heard a step --  
I did not know my heart could tell his tread,  
I did not know I loved him till that hour.  
Within my breast I felt a wild, sick pain,  
The garden reeled a little, I was weak,  
And quick he came behind me, caught my arms,  
That ached beneath his touch; and then I swayed,  
My head fell backward and I saw his face.

All this grows bitter that was once so sweet,  
And many mouths must drain the dregs of it.  
But none will pity me, nor pity him  
Whom Love so lashed, and with such cruel thongs.

Sara Teasdale

## Helen of Troy

Wild flight on flight against the fading dawn  
The flames' red wings soar upward duskily.  
This is the funeral pyre and Troy is dead  
That sparkled so the day I saw it first,  
And darkened slowly after. I am she  
Who loves all beauty -- yet I wither it.  
Why have the high gods made me wreak their wrath --  
Forever since my maidenhood to sow  
Sorrow and blood about me? Lo, they keep  
Their bitter care above me even now.  
It was the gods who led me to this lair,  
That tho' the burning winds should make me weak,  
They should not snatch the life from out my lips.  
Olympus let the other women die;  
They shall be quiet when the day is done  
And have no care to-morrow. Yet for me  
There is no rest. The gods are not so kind  
To her made half immortal like themselves.  
It is to you I owe the cruel gift,  
Leda, my mother, and the Swan, my sire,  
To you the beauty and to you the bale;  
For never woman born of man and maid  
Had wrought such havoc on the earth as I,  
Or troubled heaven with a sea of flame  
That climbed to touch the silent whirling stars  
And blotted out their brightness ere the dawn.  
Have I not made the world to weep enough?  
Give death to me. Yet life is more than death;  
How could I leave the sound of singing winds,  
The strong sweet scent that breathes from off the sea,  
Or shut my eyes forever to the spring?  
I will not give the grave my hands to hold,  
My shining hair to light oblivion.  
Have those who wander through the ways of death,  
The still wan fields Elysian, any love  
To lift their breasts with longing, any lips  
To thirst against the quiver of a kiss?  
Lo, I shall live to conquer Greece again,  
To make the people love, who hate me now.  
My dreams are over, I have ceased to cry  
Against the fate that made men love my mouth  
And left their spirits all too deaf to hear  
The little songs that echoed through my soul.  
I have no anger now. The dreams are done;  
Yet since the Greeks and Trojans would not see  
Aught but my body's fairness, till the end,  
In all the islands set in all the seas,  
And all the lands that lie beneath the sun,  
Till light turn darkness, and till time shall sleep,  
Men's lives shall waste with longing after me,  
For I shall be the sum of their desire,  
The whole of beauty, never seen again.

And they shall stretch their arms and starting, wake  
With "Helen!" on their lips, and in their eyes  
The vision of me. Always I shall be  
Limned on the darkness like a shaft of light  
That glimmers and is gone. They shall behold  
Each one his dream that fashions me anew; --  
With hair like lakes that glint beneath the stars  
Dark as sweet midnight, or with hair aglow  
Like burnished gold that still retains the fire.  
Yea, I shall haunt until the dusk of time  
The heavy eyelids filled with fleeting dreams.

I wait for one who comes with sword to slay --  
The king I wronged who searches for me now;  
And yet he shall not slay me. I shall stand  
With lifted head and look within his eyes,  
Baring my breast to him and to the sun.  
He shall not have the power to stain with blood  
That whiteness -- for the thirsty sword shall fall  
And he shall cry and catch me in his arms,  
Bearing me back to Sparta on his breast.  
Lo, I shall live to conquer Greece again!

Sara Teasdale

## **Hidden Love**

I hid the love within my heart,  
And lit the laughter in my eyes,  
That when we meet he may not know  
My love that never dies.

But sometimes when he dreams at night  
Of fragrant forests green and dim,  
It may be that my love crept out  
And brought the dream to him.

And sometimes when his heart is sick  
And suddenly grows well again,  
It may be that my love was there  
To free his life of pain.

Sara Teasdale

## **Houses Of Dreams**

You took my empty dreams  
And filled them every one  
With tenderness and nobleness,  
April and the sun.

The old empty dreams  
Where my thoughts would throng  
Are far too full of happiness  
To even hold a song.

Oh, the empty dreams were dim  
And the empty dreams were wide,  
They were sweet and shadowy houses  
Where my thoughts could hide.

But you took my dreams away  
And you made them all come true --  
My thoughts have no place now to play,  
And nothing now to do.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **I Am Not Yours**

I am not yours, not lost in you,  
Not lost, although I long to be  
Lost as a candle lit at noon,  
Lost as a snowflake in the sea.

You love me, and I find you still  
A spirit beautiful and bright,  
Yet I am I, who long to be  
Lost as a light is lost in light.

Oh plunge me deep in love--put out  
My senses, leave me deaf and blind,  
Swept by the tempest of your love,  
A taper in a rushing wind.

Sara Teasdale

## **I Have Loved Hours At Sea**

I have loved hours at sea, gray cities,  
The fragile secret of a flower,  
Music, the making of a poem  
That gave me heaven for an hour;

First stars above a snowy hill,  
Voices of people kindly and wise,  
And the great look of love, long hidden,  
Found at last in meeting eyes.

I have loved much and been loved deeply --  
Oh when my spirit's fire burns low,  
Leave me the darkness and the stillness,  
I shall be tired and glad to go.

Sara Teasdale

## **I Love You**

When April bends above me  
And finds me fast asleep  
Dust need not keep the secret  
A live heart died to keep.

When April tells the thrushes,  
The meadow-larks will know,  
And pipe the three words lightly  
To all the winds that blow.

Above his roof the swallows,  
In notes like far-blown rain,  
Will tell the little sparrow  
Beside his window-pane.

O sparrow, little sparrow,  
When I am fast asleep,  
Then tell my love the secret  
That I have died to keep.

Sara Teasdale

## **I Remembered**

There never was a mood of mine,  
Gay or heart-broken, luminous or dull,  
But you could ease me of its fever  
And give it back to me more beautiful.  
In many another soul I broke the bread,  
And drank the wine and played the happy guest,  
But I was lonely, I remembered you;  
The heart belong to him who knew it best.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **I Shall Not Care**

When I am dead and over me bright April  
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,  
Though you shall lean above me broken-hearted,  
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful  
When rain bends down the bough;  
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted  
Than you are now.

Sara Teasdale

## **I Thought Of You**

I thought of you and how you love this beauty,  
And walking up the long beach all alone  
I heard the waves breaking in measured thunder  
As you and I once heard their monotone.

Around me were the echoing dunes, beyond me  
The cold and sparkling silver of the sea --  
We two will pass through death and ages lengthen  
Before you hear that sound again with me.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **I Would Live In Your Love**

I would live in your love as the sea-grasses live in the sea,  
Borne up by each wave as it passes, drawn down by each wave that recedes;  
I would empty my soul of the dreams that have gathered in me,  
I would beat with your heart as it beats, I would follow your soul as it leads.

Sara Teasdale

## **If Death Is Kind**

Perhaps if Death is kind, and there can be returning,  
We will come back to earth some fragrant night,  
And take these lanes to find the sea, and bending  
Breathe the same honeysuckle, low and white.

We will come down at night to these resounding beaches  
And the long gentle thunder of the sea,  
Here for a single hour in the wide starlight  
We shall be happy, for the dead are free.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Immortal**

So soon my body will have gone  
Beyond the sound and sight of men,  
And tho' it wakes and suffers now,  
Its sleep will be unbroken then;  
But oh, my frail immortal soul  
That will not sleep forevermore,  
A leaf borne onward by the blast,  
A wave that never finds the shore.

Sara Teasdale

## **In a Railroad Station**

We stood in the shrill electric light,  
Dumb and sick in the whirling din  
We who had all of love to say  
And a single second to say it in.

"Good-by!" "Good-by!"--you turned to go,  
I felt the train's slow heavy start,  
You thought to see me cry, but oh  
My tears were hidden in my heart.

Sara Teasdale

## **In a Restaurant**

The darkened street was muffled with the snow,  
The falling flakes had made your shoulders white,  
And when we found a shelter from the night  
Its glamor fell upon us like a blow.  
The clash of dishes and the viol and bow  
Mingled beneath the fever of the light.  
The heat was full of savors, and the bright  
Laughter of women lured the wine to flow.  
A little child ate nothing while she sat  
Watching a woman at a table there  
Learn to kiss beneath a drooping hat.  
The hour went by, we rose and turned to go,  
The somber street received us from the glare,  
And once more on your shoulders fell the snow.

Sara Teasdale

## **In a Subway Station**

After a year I came again to the place;  
The tireless lights and the reverberation,  
The angry thunder of trains that burrow the ground,  
The hunted, hurrying people were still the same--  
But oh, another man beside me and not you!  
Another voice and other eyes in mine!  
And suddenly I turned and saw again  
The gleaming curve of tracks, the bridge above--  
They were burned deep into my heart before,  
The night I watched them to avoid your eyes,  
When you were saying, "Oh, look up at me!"  
When you were saying, "Will you never love me?"  
And when I answered with a lie. Oh then  
You dropped your eyes. I felt your utter pain.  
I would have died to say the truth to you.  
After a year I came again to the place--  
The hunted hurrying people were still the same...

Sara Teasdale

### **In Memoriam F.O.S.**

You go a long and lovely journey,  
For all the stars, like burning dew,  
Are luminous and luring footprints  
Of souls adventurous as you.

Oh, if you lived on earth elated,  
How is it now that you can run  
Free of the weight of flesh and faring  
Far past the birthplace of the sun?

Sara Teasdale

## **In the Carpenter's Shop**

Mary sat in the corner dreaming,  
Dim was the room and low,  
While in the dusk, the saw went screaming  
To and fro.

Jesus and Joseph toiled together,  
Mary was watching them,  
Thinking of kings in the wintry weather  
At Bethlehem.

Mary sat in the corner thinking,  
Jesus had grown a man;  
One by one her hopes were sinking  
As the years ran.

Jesus and Joseph toiled together,  
Mary's thoughts were far--  
Angels sang in the wintry weather  
Under a star.

Mary sat in the corner weeping,  
Bitter and hot her tears--  
Little faith were the angels keeping  
All the years.

Sara Teasdale

## **In The End**

All that could never be said,  
All that could never be done,  
Wait for us at last  
Somewhere back of the sun;

All the heart broke to forego  
Shall be ours without pain,  
We shall take them as lightly as girls  
Pluck flowers after rain.

And when they are ours in the end  
Perhaps after all  
The skies will not open for us  
Nor heaven be there at our call.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **In the Metropolitan Museum**

Inside the tiny Pantheon  
We stood together silently,  
Leaving the restless crowd awhile,  
As ships find shelter from the sea.

The ancient centuries came back  
To cover us a moment's space,  
And through the dome the light was glad  
Because it shone upon your face.

Ah, not from Rome but farther still  
Beyond sun-smitten Salamis,  
The moment took us, till you learned  
To find the present with a kiss.

Sara Teasdale

## **In the Train**

Fields beneath a quilt of snow  
From which the rocks and stubble sleep,  
And in the west a shy white star  
That shivers as it wakes from deep.

The restless rumble of the train,  
The drowsy people in the car,  
Steel blue twilight in the world,  
And in my heart a timid star.

Sara Teasdale

## Indian Summer

Lyric night of the lingering Indian summer,  
Shadowy fields that are scentless but full of singing,  
Never a bird, but the passionless chant of insects,  
Ceaseless, insistent.

The grasshopper's horn, and far off, high in the maples  
The wheel of a locust slowly grinding the silence,  
Under a moon waning and warn and broken,  
Tired with summer.

Let me remember you, voices of little insects,  
Weeds in the moonlight, fields that are tangled with asters,  
Let me remember you, soon the winter will be on us,  
Snow-hushed and heartless.

Over my soul murmur your mute benediction  
While I gaze, oh fields that rest after harvest,  
As those who part look long in the eyes they lean to,  
Lest they forget them.

Sara Teasdale

## **Interlude: Songs out of Sorrow**

### I. Spirit's House

From naked stones of agony  
I will build a house for me;  
As a mason all alone  
I will raise it, stone by stone,  
And every stone where I have bled  
Will show a sign of dusky red.  
I have not gone the way in vain,  
For I have good of all my pain;  
My spirit's quiet house will be  
Built of naked stones I trod  
On roads where I lost sight of God.

### II. Mastery

I would not have a god come in  
To shield me suddenly from sin,  
And set my house of life to rights;  
Nor angels with bright burning wings  
Ordering my earthly thoughts and things;  
Rather my own frail guttering lights  
Wind blown and nearly beaten out;  
Rather the terror of the nights  
And long, sick groping after doubt;  
Rather be lost than let my soul  
Slip vaguely from my own control --  
Of my own spirit let me be  
In sole though feeble mastery.

### III. Lessons

Unless I learn to ask no help  
From any other soul but mine,  
To seek no strength in waving reeds  
Nor shade beneath a straggling pine;  
Unless I learn to look at Grief  
Unshrinking from her tear-blind eyes,  
And take from Pleasure fearlessly  
Whatever gifts will make me wise --

Unless I learn these things on earth,  
Why was I ever given birth?

#### IV. Wisdom

When I have ceased to break my wings  
Against the faultiness of things,  
And learned that compromises wait  
Behind each hardly opened gate,  
When I can look Life in the eyes,  
Grown calm and very coldly wise,  
Life will have given me the Truth,  
And taken in exchange -- my youth.

#### V. In a Burying Ground

This is the spot where I will lie  
When life has had enough of me,  
These are the grasses that will blow  
Above me like a living sea.

These gay old lilies will not shrink  
To draw their life from death of mine,  
And I will give my body's fire  
To make blue flowers on this vine.

"O Soul," I said, "have you no tears?  
Was not the body dear to you?"  
I heard my soul say carelessly,  
"The myrtle flowers will grow more blue."

#### VI. Wood Song

I heard a wood thrush in the dusk  
Twirl three notes and make a star --  
My heart that walked with bitterness  
Came back from very far.

Three shining notes were all he had,  
And yet they made a starry call --  
I caught life back against my breast  
And kissed it, scars and all.

## VII. Refuge

From my spirit's gray defeat,  
From my pulse's flagging beat,  
From my hopes that turned to sand  
Sifting through my close-clenched hand,  
From my own fault's slavery,  
If I can sing, I still am free.

For with my singing I can make  
A refuge for my spirit's sake,  
A house of shining words, to be  
My fragile immortality.

Sara Teasdale

## **It Is Not A Word**

It is not a word spoken,  
Few words are said;  
Nor even a look of the eyes  
Nor a bend of the head,

But only a hush of the heart  
That has too much to keep,  
Only memories waking  
That sleep so light a sleep.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **It Is Not a Word"**

It is not a word spoken,  
Few words are said;  
Nor even a look of the eyes  
Nor a bend of the head,

But only a hush of the heart  
That has too much to keep,  
Only memories waking  
That sleep so light a sleep.

Sara Teasdale

## **It Will Not Change**

It will not change now  
After so many years;  
Life has not broken it  
With parting or tears;  
Death will not alter it,  
It will live on  
In all my songs for you  
When I am gone.

Sara Teasdale

## **Jewels**

If I should see your eyes again,  
I know how far their look would go --  
Back to a morning in the park  
With sapphire shadows on the snow.

Or back to oak trees in the spring  
When you unloosed my hair and kissed  
The head that lay against your knees  
In the leaf shadow's amethyst.

And still another shining place  
We would remember -- how the dun  
Wild mountain held us on its crest  
One diamond morning white with sun.

But I will turn my eyes from you  
As women turn to put away  
The jewels they have worn at night  
And cannot wear in sober day.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Jewls**

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I know how far their look would go --  
Back to a morning in the park  
With sapphire shadows on the snow.

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As women turn to put away  
The jewels they have worn at night  
And cannot wear in sober day.

Sara Teasdale

## Joy

I am wild, I will sing to the trees,  
I will sing to the stars in the sky,  
I love, I am loved, he is mine,  
Now at last I can die!

I am sandaled with wind and with flame,  
I have heart-fire and singing to give,  
I can tread on the grass or the stars,  
Now at last I can live!

Sara Teasdale

## Leaves

One by one, like leaves from a tree  
All my faiths have forsaken me;  
But the stars above my head  
Burn in white and delicate red,  
And beneath my feet the earth  
Brings the sturdy grass to birth.  
I who was content to be  
But a silken-singing tree,  
But a rustle of delight  
In the wistful heart of night--  
I have lost the leaves that knew  
Touch of rain and weight of dew.  
Blinded by a leafy crown  
I looked neither up nor down--  
But the little leaves that die  
Have left me room to see the sky;  
Now for the first time I know  
Stars above and earth below.

Sara Teasdale

## **Less Than the Cloud to the Wind**

Less than the cloud to the wind,  
Less than the foam to the sea,  
Less than the rose to the storm,  
Am I to thee.

More than the star to the night,  
More than the rain to the tree,  
More than heaven to earth  
Art thou to me.

Sara Teasdale

## **Let It Be Forgotten**

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,  
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,  
Let it be forgotten forever and ever,  
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten  
Long and long ago,  
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall  
In a long-forgotten snow.

Sara Teasdale

## Lights

When we come home at night and close the door,  
Standing together in the shadowy room,  
Safe in our own love and the gentle gloom,  
Glad of familiar wall and chair and floor,

Glad to leave far below the clanging city;  
Looking far downward to the glaring street  
Gaudy with light, yet tired with many feet,  
In both of us wells up a wordless pity;

Men have tried hard to put away the dark;  
A million lighted windows brilliantly  
Inlay with squares of gold the winter night,  
But to us standing here there comes the stark  
Sense of the lives behind each yellow light,  
And not one wholly joyous, proud, or free.

Sara Teasdale

## **Like Barley Bending**

Like barley bending  
In low fields by the sea,  
Singing in hard wind  
Ceaselessly;

Like barley bending  
And rising again,  
So would I, unbroken,  
Rise from pain;

So would I softly,  
Day long, night long,  
Change my sorrow  
Into song.

Sara Teasdale

## Longing

I am not sorry for my soul  
That it must go unsatisfied,  
For it can live a thousand times,  
Eternity is deep and wide.

I am not sorry for my soul,  
But oh, my body that must go  
Back to a little drift of dust  
Without the joy it longed to know.

Sara Teasdale

## Love and Death

Shall we, too, rise forgetful from our sleep,  
And shall my soul that lies within your hand  
Remember nothing, as the blowing sand  
Forgets the palm where long blue shadows creep  
When winds along the darkened desert sweep?  
Or would it still remember, tho' it spanned  
A thousand heavens, while the planets fanned  
The vacant ether with their voices deep?  
Soul of my soul, no word shall be forgot,  
Nor yet alone, beloved, shall we see  
The desolation of extinguished suns,  
Nor fear the void wherethro' our planet runs,  
For still together shall we go and not  
Fare forth alone to front eternity.

Sara Teasdale

## Love in Autumn

I sought among the drifting leaves,  
The golden leaves that once were green,  
To see if Love were hiding there  
And peeping out between.

For thro' the silver showers of May  
And thro' the summer's heavy heat,  
In vain I sought his golden head  
And light, fast-flying feet.

Perhaps when all the world is bare  
And cruel winter holds the land,  
The Love that finds no place to hide  
Will run and catch my hand.

I shall not care to have him then,  
I shall be bitter and a-cold --  
It grows too late for frolicking  
When all the world is old.

Then little hiding Love, come forth,  
Come forth before the autumn goes,  
And let us seek thro' ruined paths  
The garden's last red rose.

Sara Teasdale

## **Love Me**

Brown Thrush singing all day long  
In the leaves above me,  
Take my love this little song,  
"Love me, love me, love me!"

When he harkens what you say,  
Bid him, lest he miss me,  
Leave his work or leave his play,  
And kiss me, kiss me, kiss me!

Sara Teasdale

## Love Songs

I have remembered beauty in the night,  
Against black silences I waked to see  
A shower of sunlight over Italy  
And green Ravello dreaming on her height;  
I have remembered music in the dark,  
The clean swift brightness of a fugue of Bach's,  
And running water singing on the rocks  
When once in English woods I heard a lark.

But all remembered beauty is no more  
Than a vague prelude to the thought of you --  
You are the rarest soul I ever knew,  
Lover of beauty, knightliest and best;  
My thoughts seek you as waves that seek the shore,  
And when I think of you, I am at rest.

Sara Teasdale

## **Love-Free**

I am free of love as a bird flying south in the autumn,  
Swift and intent, asking no joy from another,  
Glad to forget all of the passion of April  
Ere it was love-free.

I am free of love, and I listen to music lightly,  
But if he returned, if he should look at me deeply,  
I should awake, I should awake and remember  
I am my lover's.

Sara Teasdale

## **Madeira from the Sea**

Out of the delicate dream of the distance an emerald emerges  
Veiled in the violet folds of the air of the sea;  
Softly the dream grows awakening -- shimmering white of a city,  
Splashes of crimson, the gay bougainvillea, the palms.  
High in the infinite blue of its heaven a quiet cloud lingers,  
Lost and forgotten of winds that have fallen asleep,  
Fallen asleep to the tune of a Portuguese song in a garden.

Sara Teasdale

## Marianna Alcoforando

The sparrows wake beneath the convent eaves;  
I think I have not slept the whole night through.  
But I am old; the aged scarcely know  
The times they wake and sleep, for life burns down;  
They breathe the calm of death before they die.  
The long night ends, the day comes creeping in,  
Showing the sorrows that the darkness hid,  
The bended head of Christ, the blood, the thorns,  
The wall's gray stains of damp, the pallet bed  
Where little Sister Marta dreams of saints,  
Waking with arms outstretched imploringly  
That seek to stay a vision's vanishing.  
I never had a vision, yet for me  
Our Lady smiled while all the convent slept  
One winter midnight hushed around with snow --  
I thought she might be kinder than the rest,  
And so I came to kneel before her feet,  
Sick with love's sorrow and love's bitterness.  
But when I would have made the blessed sign,  
I found the water frozen in the font,  
And touched but ice within the carved stone.  
The saints had hid themselves away from me,  
Leaving the windows black against the night;  
And when I sank upon the altar steps,  
Before the Virgin Mother and her Child,  
The last, pale, low-burnt taper flickered out,  
But in the darkness, smooth and fathomless,  
Still twinkled like a star the holy lamp  
That cast a dusky glow upon her face.  
Then through the numbing cold peace fell on me,  
Submission and the gracious gift of tears,  
For when I looked, Oh! blessed miracle,  
Her lips had parted and Our Lady smiled!  
And then I knew that Love is worth its pain  
And that my heart was richer for his sake,  
Since lack of love is bitterest of all.

The day is broad awake -- the first long beam  
Of level sun finds Sister Marta's face,  
And trembling there it lights a timid smile  
Upon the lips that say so many prayers,  
And have no words for hate and none for love.  
But when she passes where her prayers have gone,  
Will God not smile a little sadly then,  
And send her back with gentle words to earth  
That she may hold a child against her breast  
And feel its little hands upon her hair?  
We weep before the Blessed Mother's shrine,  
To think upon her sorrows, but her joys  
What nun could ever know a tithing of?  
The precious hours she watched above His sleep  
Were worth the fearful anguish of the end.

Yea, lack of love is bitterest of all;  
Yet I have felt what thing it is to know  
One thought forever, sleeping or awake;  
To say one name whose sweetness grows so strange  
That it might work a spell on those who weep;  
To feel the weight of love upon my heart  
So heavy that the blood can scarcely flow.  
Love comes to some unlooked-for, quietly,  
As when at twilight, with a soft surprise,  
We see the new-born crescent in the blue;  
And unto others love is planet-like,  
A cold and placid gleam that wavers not,  
And there are those who wait the call of love  
Expectant of his coming, as we watch  
To see the east grow pallid ere the moon  
Lifts up her flower-like head against the night.  
Love came to me as comes a cruel sun,  
That on some rain-drenched morning, when the leaves  
Are bowed beneath their clinging weight of drops,  
Tears through the mist, and burns with fervent heat  
The tender grasses and the meadow flowers;  
Then suddenly the heavy clouds close in  
And through the dark the thunder's muttering  
Is drowned amid the dashing of the rain.

But I have seen my day grow calm again.  
The sun sets slowly on a peaceful world,  
And sheds a quiet light across the fields.

Sara Teasdale

## May

The wind is tossing the lilacs,  
The new leaves laugh in the sun,  
And the petals fall on the orchard wall,  
But for me the spring is done.

Beneath the apple blossoms  
I go a wintry way,  
For love that smiled in April  
Is false to me in May.

Sara Teasdale

## May Day

The shining line of motors,  
The swaying motor-bus,  
The prancing dancing horses  
Are passing by for us.

The sunlight on the steeple,  
The toys we stop to see,  
The smiling passing people  
Are all for you and me.

"I love you and I love you!"--  
"And oh, I love you, too!"--  
"All of the flower girl's lilies  
Were only grown for you!"

Fifth Avenue and April  
And love and lack of care--  
The world is mad with music  
Too beautiful to bear.

Sara Teasdale

## **May Night**

The spring is fresh and fearless  
And every leaf is new,  
The world is brimmed with moonlight,  
The lilac brimmed with dew.

Here in the moving shadows  
I catch my breath and sing--  
My heart is fresh and fearless  
And over-brimmed with spring.

Sara Teasdale

## **May Wind**

I said, "I have shut my heart  
As one shuts an open door,  
That Love may starve therein  
And trouble me no more."

But over the roofs there came  
The wet new wind of May,  
And a tune blew up from the curb  
Where the street-pianos play.

My room was white with the sun  
And Love cried out in me,  
"I am strong, I will break your heart  
Unless you set me free."

Sara Teasdale

## Message

I heard a cry in the night,  
A thousand miles it came,  
Sharp as a flash of light,  
My name, my name!

It was your voice I heard,  
You waked and loved me so --  
I send you back this word,  
I know, I know!

Sara Teasdale

## **Moods**

I am the still rain falling,  
Too tired for singing mirth--  
Oh, be the green fields calling,  
Oh, be for me the earth!

I am the brown bird pining  
To leave the nest and fly--  
Oh, be the fresh cloud shining,  
Oh, be for me the sky!

Sara Teasdale

## **Moonlight**

It will not hurt me when I am old,  
A running tide where moonlight burned  
Will not sting me like silver snakes;  
The years will make me sad and cold,  
It is the happy heart that breaks.

The heart asks more than life can give,  
When that is learned, then all is learned;  
The waves break fold on jewelled fold,  
But beauty itself is fugitive,  
It will not hurt me when I am old.

Sara Teasdale

## **Morning**

I went out on an April morning  
All alone, for my heart was high,  
I was a child of the shining meadow,  
I was a sister of the sky.

There in the windy flood of morning  
Longing lifted its weight from me,  
Lost as a sob in the midst of cheering,  
Swept as a sea-bird out to sea.

Sara Teasdale

## **My Heart Is Heavy**

My heart is heavy with many a song  
Like ripe fruit bearing down the tree,  
But I can never give you one --  
My songs do not belong to me.

Yet in the evening, in the dusk  
When moths go to and fro,  
In the gray hour if the fruit has fallen,  
Take it, no one will know.

Sara Teasdale

## **New Love and Old**

In my heart the old love  
Struggled with the new;  
It was ghostly waking  
All night thru.

Dear things, kind things,  
That my old love said,  
Ranged themselves reproachfully  
Round my bed.

But I could not heed them,  
For I seemed to see  
The eyes of my new love  
Fixed on me.

Old love, old love,  
How can I be true?  
Shall I be faithless to myself  
Or to you?

Sara Teasdale

## **New Year's Dawn - Broadway**

When the horns wear thin  
And the noise, like a garment outworn,  
Falls from the night,  
The tattered and shivering night,  
That thinks she is gay;  
When the patient silence comes back,  
And retires,  
And returns,  
Rebuffed by a ribald song,  
Wounded by vehement cries,  
Fleeing again to the stars--  
Ashamed of her sister the night;  
Oh, then they steal home,  
The blinded, the pitiful ones  
With their gew-gaws still in their hands,  
Reeling with odorous breath  
And thick, coarse words on their tongues.  
They get them to bed, somehow,  
And sleep the forgiving,  
Comes thru the scattering tumult  
And closes their eyes.  
The stars sink down ashamed  
And the dawn awakes,  
Like a youth who steals from a brothel,  
Dizzy and sick.

Sara Teasdale

## **Night in Arizona**

The moon is a charring ember  
Dying into the dark;  
Off in the crouching mountains  
Coyotes bark.

The stars are heavy in heaven,  
Too great for the sky to hold --  
What if they fell and shattered  
The earth with gold?

No lights are over the mesa,  
The wind is hard and wild,  
I stand at the darkened window  
And cry like a child.

Sara Teasdale

## **Night Song at Amalfi**

I asked the heaven of stars  
What I should give my love --  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea  
Down where the fishers go --  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,  
Or I could give him song --  
But how can I give silence,  
My whole life long?

Sara Teasdale

## **Night Song of Amalfi**

I asked the heaven of stars  
What I should I give my love--  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea  
Down where the fishermen go--  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,  
Or I could give him song--  
But how can I give silence  
My whole life long?

Sara Teasdale

## November

The world is tired, the year is old,  
The little leaves are glad to die,  
The wind goes shivering with cold  
Among the rushes dry.

Our love is dying like the grass,  
And we who kissed grow coldly kind,  
Half glad to see our poor love pass  
Like leaves along the wind.

Sara Teasdale

## **Oh Day of Fire and Sun"**

Oh day of fire and sun,  
Pure as a naked flame,  
Blue sea, blue sky and dun  
Sands where he spoke my name;

Laughter and hearts so high  
That the spirit flew off free,  
Lifting into the sky  
Diving into the sea;

Oh day of fire and sun  
Like a crystal burning,  
Slow days go one by one,  
But you have no returning.

Sara Teasdale

## **Oh You Are Coming**

Oh you are coming, coming, coming,  
How will hungry Time put by the hours till then? --  
But why does it anger my heart to long so  
For one man out of the world of men?

Oh I would live in myself only  
And build my life lightly and still as a dream --  
Are not my thoughts clearer than your thoughts  
And colored like stones in a running stream?

Now the slow moon brightens in heaven,  
The stars are ready, the night is here --  
Oh why must I lose myself to love you,  
My dear?

Sara Teasdale

## Old Tunes

As the waves of perfume, heliotrope, rose,  
Float in the garden when no wind blows,  
Come to us, go from us, whence no one knows;  
So the old tunes float in my mind,  
And go from me leaving no trace behind,  
Like fragrance borne on the hush of the wind.  
but in the instant the airs remain  
I know the laughter and the pain  
Of times that will not come again.  
I try to catch at many a tune  
Like petals of light fallen from the moon,  
Broken and bright on a dark lagoon.  
But they float away--for who can hold  
Youth, or perfume or the moon's gold?

Sara Teasdale

## **On the Death of Swinburne**

He trod the earth but yesterday,  
And now he treads the stars.  
He left us in the April time  
He praised so often in his rhyme,  
He left the singing and the lyre and went his way.

He drew new music from our tongue,  
A music subtly wrought,  
And moulded words to his desire,  
As wind doth mould a wave of fire;  
From strangely fashioned harps slow golden tones he wrung.

I think the singing understands  
That he who sang is still,  
And Iseult cries that he is dead, --  
Does not Dolores bow her head  
And Fragoletta weep and wring her little hands?

New singing now the singer hears  
To lyre and lute and harp;  
Catullus waits to welcome him,  
And thro' the twilight sweet and dim,  
Sappho's forgotten songs are falling on his ears.

Sara Teasdale

## **Only in Sleep"**

Only in sleep I see their faces,  
Children I played with when I was a child,  
Louise comes back with her brown hair braided,  
Annie with ringlets warm and wild.

Only in sleep Time is forgotten --  
What may have come to them, who can know?  
Yet we played last night as long ago,  
And the doll-house stood at the turn of the stair.

The years had not sharpened their smooth round faces,  
I met their eyes and found them mild --  
Do they, too, dream of me, I wonder,  
And for them am I too a child?

Sara Teasdale

## Open Windows

Out of the window a sea of green trees  
Lift their soft boughs like the arms of a dancer;  
They beckon and call me, "Come out in the sun!"  
But I cannot answer.

I am alone with Weakness and Pain,  
Sick abed and June is going,  
I cannot keep her, she hurries by  
With the silver-green of her garments blowing.

Men and women pass in the street  
Glad of the shining sapphire weather,  
But we know more of it than they,  
Pain and I together.

They are the runners in the sun,  
Breathless and blinded by the race,  
But we are watchers in the shade  
Who speak with Wonder face to face.

Sara Teasdale

## **Other Men**

When I talk with other men  
I always think of you --  
Your words are keener than their words,  
And they are gentler, too.

When I look at other men,  
I wish your face were there,  
With its gray eyes and dark skin  
And tossed black hair.

When I think of other men,  
Dreaming alone by day,  
The thought of you like a strong wind  
Blows the dreams away.

Sara Teasdale

## Over the Roofs

I

Oh chimes set high on the sunny tower  
Ring on, ring on unendingly,  
Make all the hours a single hour,  
For when the dusk begins to flower,  
The man I love will come to me! . . .

But no, go slowly as you will,  
I should not bid you hasten so,  
For while I wait for love to come,  
Some other girl is standing dumb,  
Fearing her love will go.

II

Oh white steam over the roofs, blow high!  
Oh chimes in the tower ring clear and free !  
Oh sun awake in the covered sky,  
For the man I love, loves me I . . .

Oh drifting steam disperse and die,  
Oh tower stand shrouded toward the south,--  
Fate heard afar my happy cry,  
And laid her finger on my mouth.

III

The dusk was blue with blowing mist,  
The lights were spangles in a veil,  
And from the clamor far below  
Floated faint music like a wail.

It voiced what I shall never speak,  
My heart was breaking all night long,  
But when the dawn was hard and gray,  
My tears distilled into a song.

IV

I said, "I have shut my heart  
As one shuts an open door,  
That Love may starve therein  
And trouble me no more."

But over the roofs there came  
The wet new wind of May,  
And a tune blew up from the curb  
Where the street-pianos play.

My room was white with the sun  
And Love cried out in me,

"I am strong, I will break your heart  
Unless you set me free."

Sara Teasdale

## Paris in Spring

The city's all a-shining  
Beneath a fickle sun,  
A gay young wind's a-blowing,  
The little shower is done.  
But the rain-drops still are clinging  
And falling one by one --  
Oh it's Paris, it's Paris,  
And spring-time has begun.

I know the Bois is twinkling  
In a sort of hazy sheen,  
And down the Champs the gray old arch  
Stands cold and still between.  
But the walk is flecked with sunlight  
Where the great acacias lean,  
Oh it's Paris, it's Paris,  
And the leaves are growing green.

The sun's gone in, the sparkle's dead,  
There falls a dash of rain,  
But who would care when such an air  
Comes blowing up the Seine?  
And still Ninette sits sewing  
Beside her window-pane,  
When it's Paris, it's Paris,  
And spring-time's come again.

Sara Teasdale

## **Peace**

Peace flows into me  
As the tide to the pool by the shore;  
It is mine forevermore,  
It ebbs not back like the sea.

I am the pool of blue  
That worships the vivid sky;  
My hopes were heaven-high,  
They are all fulfilled in you.

I am the pool of gold  
When sunset burns and dies--  
You are my deepening skies,  
Give me your stars to hold.

Sara Teasdale

## **Pierrot**

Pierrot stands in the garden  
Beneath a waning moon,  
And on his lute he fashions  
A little silver tune.

Pierrot plays in the garden,  
He thinks he plays for me,  
But I am quite forgotten  
Under the cherry tree.

Pierrot plays in the garden,  
And all the roses know  
That Pierrot loves his music,  
But I love Pierrot.

Sara Teasdale

## **Pierrot's Song**

(For a picture by Duncan Walker)

Lady, light in the east hangs low,  
Draw your veils of dream apart,  
Under the casement stands Pierrot  
Making a song to ease his heart.  
(Yet do not break the song too soon--  
I love to sing in the paling moon.)

The petals are falling, heavy with dew,  
The stars have fainted out of the sky,  
Come to me, come, or else I too,  
Faint with the weight of love will die.  
(She comes--alas, I hoped to make  
Another stanza for her sake!)

Sara Teasdale

## **Pity**

They never saw my lover's face,  
They only know our love was brief,  
Wearing awhile a windy grace  
And passing like an autumn leaf.

They wonder why I do not weep,  
They think it strange that I can sing,  
They say, "Her love was scarcely deep  
Since it has left so slight a sting."

They never saw my love, nor knew  
That in my heart's most secret place  
I pity them as angels do  
Men who have never seen God's face.

Sara Teasdale

## **Primavera Mia**

As kings, seeing their lives about to pass,  
Take off the heavy ermine and the crown,  
So had the trees that autumn-time laid down  
Their golden garments on the dying grass,  
When I, who watched the seasons in the glass  
Of my own thoughts, saw all the autumn's brown  
Leap into life and wear a sunny gown  
Of leafage fresh as happy April has.  
Great spring came singing upward from the south;  
For in my heart, far carried on the wind,  
Your words like winged seeds took root and grew,  
And all the world caught music from your mouth;  
I saw the light as one who had been blind,  
And knew my sun and song and spring were you.

Sara Teasdale

## **Riches**

I have no riches but my thoughts,  
Yet these are wealth enough for me;  
My thoughts of you are golden coins  
Stamped in the mint of memory;

And I must spend them all in song,  
For thoughts, as well as gold, must be  
Left on the hither side of death  
To gain their immortality.

Sara Teasdale

## **Rispetto**

Was that his step that sounded on the stair?  
Was that his knock I heard upon the door?  
I grow so tired I almost cease to care,  
And yet I would that he might come once more.

It was the wind I heard, that mocks at me,  
The bitter wind that is more cruel than he;  
It was the wind that knocked upon the door,  
But he will never knock nor enter more.

Sara Teasdale

## Roundel

If he could know my songs are all for him,  
At silver dawn or in the evening glow,  
Would he not smile and think it but a whim,  
If he could know?

Or would his heart rejoice and overflow,  
As happy brooks that break their icy rim  
When April's horns along the hillsides blow?

I may not speak till Eros' torch is dim,  
The god is bitter and will have it so;  
And yet to-night our fate would seem less grim  
If he could know.

Sara Teasdale

## Sappho

The twilight's inner flame grows blue and deep,  
And in my Lesbos, over leagues of sea,  
The temples glimmer moonwise in the trees.  
Twilight has veiled the little flower face  
Here on my heart, but still the night is kind  
And leaves her warm sweet weight against my breast.  
Am I that Sappho who would run at dusk  
Along the surges creeping up the shore  
When tides came in to ease the hungry beach,  
And running, running, till the night was black,  
Would fall foespent upon the chilly sand  
And quiver with the winds from off the sea?  
Ah, quietly the shingle waits the tides  
Whose waves are stinging kisses, but to me  
Love brought no peace, nor darkness any rest.  
I crept and touched the foam with fevered hands  
And cried to Love, from whom the sea is sweet,  
From whom the sea is bitterer than death.  
Ah, Aphrodite, if I sing no more  
To thee, God's daughter, powerful as God,  
It is that thou hast made my life too sweet  
To hold the added sweetness of a song.  
There is a quiet at the heart of love,  
And I have pierced the pain and come to peace.  
I hold my peace, my Cleis, on my heart;  
And softer than a little wild bird's wing  
Are kisses that she pours upon my mouth.  
Ah, never any more when spring like fire  
Will flicker in the newly opened leaves,  
Shall I steal forth to seek for solitude  
Beyond the lure of light Alcaeus' lyre,  
Beyond the sob that stilled Erinna's voice.  
Ah, never with a throat that aches with song,  
Beneath the white uncaring sky of spring,  
Shall I go forth to hide awhile from Love  
The quiver and the crying of my heart.  
Still I remember how I strove to flee  
The love-note of the birds, and bowed my head  
To hurry faster, but upon the ground  
I saw two winged shadows side by side,  
And all the world's spring passion stifled me.  
Ah, Love, there is no fleeing from thy might,  
No lonely place where thou hast never trod,  
No desert thou hast left uncarpeted  
With flowers that spring beneath thy perfect feet.  
In many guises didst thou come to me;  
I saw thee by the maidens while they danced,  
Phaon allured me with a look of thine,  
In Anactoria I knew thy grace,  
I looked at Cercolas and saw thine eyes;  
But never wholly, soul and body mine,  
Didst thou bid any love me as I loved.

Now I have found the peace that fled from me;  
Close, close, against my heart I hold my world.  
Ah, Love that made my life a lyric cry,  
Ah, Love that tuned my lips to lyres of thine,  
I taught the world thy music, now alone  
I sing for one who falls asleep to hear.

Sara Teasdale

## Sea Longing

A thousand miles beyond this sun-steeped wall  
Somewhere the waves creep cool along the sand,  
The ebbing tide forsakes the listless land  
With the old murmur, long and musical;  
The windy waves mount up and curve and fall,  
And round the rocks the foam blows up like snow,--  
Tho' I am inland far, I hear and know,  
For I was born the sea's eternal thrall.  
I would that I were there and over me  
The cold insistence of the tide would roll,  
Quenching this burning thing men call the soul,--  
Then with the ebbing I should drift and be  
Less than the smallest shell along the shoal,  
Less than the sea-gulls calling to the sea.

Sara Teasdale

## Silence

(To Eleonora Duse)

We are anhungered after solitude,  
Deep stillness pure of any speech or sound,  
Soft quiet hovering over pools profound,  
The silences that on the desert brood,  
Above a windless hush of empty seas,  
The broad unfurling banners of the dawn,  
A faery forest where there sleeps a Faun;  
Our souls are fain of solitudes like these.  
O woman who divined our weariness,  
And set the crown of silence on your art,  
>From what undreamed-of depth within your heart  
Have you sent forth the hush that makes us free  
To hear an instant, high above earth's stress,  
The silent music of infinity?

Sara Teasdale

## **Sleepless**

If I could have your arms tonight-  
But half the world and the broken sea  
Lie between you and me.

The autumn rain reverberates in the courtyard,  
Beating all night against the barren stone,  
The sound of useless rain in the desolate courtyard  
Makes me more alone.

If you were here, if you were only here-  
My blood cries out to you all night in vain  
As sleepless as the rain.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **Snow Song**

Fairy snow, fairy snow,  
Blowing, blowing everywhere,  
Would that I  
Too, could fly  
Lightly, lightly through the air.

Like a wee, crystal star  
I should drift, I should blow  
Near, more near,  
To my dear  
Where he comes through the snow.

I should fly to my love  
Like a flake in the storm,  
I should die,  
I should die,  
On his lips that are warm.

Sara Teasdale

## **Snowfall**

"She can't be unhappy," you said,  
"The smiles are like stars in her eyes,  
And her laughter is thistledown  
Around her low replies."  
"Is she unhappy?" you said--  
But who has ever known  
Another's heartbreak--  
All he can know is his own;  
And she seems hushed to me,  
As hushed as though  
Her heart were a hunter's fire  
Smothered in snow.

Sara Teasdale

## **Song**

You bound strong sandals on my feet,  
You gave me bread and wine,  
And sent me under sun and stars,  
For all the world was mine.

Oh, take the sandals off my feet,  
You know not what you do;  
For all my world is in your arms,  
My sun and stars are you.

Sara Teasdale

## **Song at Capri**

When beauty grows too great to bear  
How shall I ease me of its ache,  
For beauty more than bitterness  
Makes the heart break.

Now while I watch the dreaming sea  
With isles like flowers against her breast,  
Only one voice in all the world  
Could give me rest.

Sara Teasdale

## **Soul's Birth**

When you were born, beloved, was your soul  
New made by God to match your body's flower,  
And were they both at one same precious hour  
Sent forth from heaven as a perfect whole?  
Or had your soul since dim creation burned,  
A star in some still region of the sky,  
That leaping earthward, left its place on high  
And to your little new-born body yearned?  
No words can tell in what celestial hour  
God made your soul and gave it mortal birth,  
Nor in the disarray of all the stars  
Is any place so sweet that such a flower  
Might linger there until thro' heaven's bars,  
It heard God's voice that bade it down to earth.

Sara Teasdale

## Spring in War Time

I feel the Spring far off, far off,  
The faint far scent of bud and leaf--  
Oh how can Spring take heart to come  
To a world in grief,  
Deep grief?

The sun turns north, the days grow long,  
Later the evening star grows bright--  
How can the daylight linger on  
For men to fight,  
Still fight?

The grass is waking in the ground,  
Soon it will rise and blow in waves--  
How can it have the heart to sway  
Over the graves,  
New graves?

Under the boughs where lovers walked  
The apple-blooms will shed their breath--  
But what of all the lovers now  
Parted by death,  
Gray Death?

Sara Teasdale

## Spring Night

The park is filled with night and fog,  
The veils are drawn about the world,  
The drowsy lights along the paths  
Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,  
gold and gleaming the misty lake,  
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,  
Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be  
Here with this beauty over me?  
My throat should ache with praise, and I  
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.  
O, Beauty are you not enough?  
Why am I crying after love,  
With youth, a singing voice and eyes  
To take earth's wonder with surprise?  
Why have I put off my pride,  
Why am I unsatisfied,--  
I for whom the pensive night  
Binds her cloudy hair with light,--  
I, for whom all beauty burns  
Like incense in a million urns?  
O, Beauty, are you not enough?  
Why am I crying after love?

Sara Teasdale

## Spring Rain

I thought I had forgotten,  
But it all came back again  
To-night with the first spring thunder  
In a rush of rain.

I remembered a darkened doorway  
Where we stood while the storm swept by,  
Thunder gripping the earth  
And lightning scrawled on the sky.

The passing motor busses swayed,  
For the street was a river of rain,  
Lashed into little golden waves  
In the lamp light's stain.

With the wild spring rain and thunder  
My heart was wild and gay;  
Your eyes said more to me that night  
Than your lips would ever say. . . .

I thought I had forgotten,  
But it all came back again  
To-night with the first spring thunder  
In a rush of rain.

Sara Teasdale

## Stars

Alone in the night  
On a dark hill  
With pines around me  
Spicy and still,

And a heaven full of stars  
Over my head  
White and topaz  
And misty red;

Myriads with beating  
Hearts of fire  
The aeons  
Cannot vex or tire;

Up the dome of heaven  
Like a great hill  
I watch them marching  
Stately and still.

And I know that I  
Am honored to be  
Witness  
Of so much majesty.

Sara Teasdale

## Summer Night, Riverside

In the wild soft summer darkness  
How many and many a night we two together  
Sat in the park and watched the Hudson  
Wearing her lights like golden spangles  
Glinting on black satin.  
The rail along the curving pathway  
Was low in a happy place to let us cross,  
And down the hill a tree that dripped with bloom  
Sheltered us,  
While your kisses and the flowers,  
Falling, falling,  
Tangled in my hair. . . .

The frail white stars moved slowly over the sky.

And now, far off  
In the fragrant darkness  
The tree is tremulous again with bloom  
For June comes back.

To-night what girl  
Dreamily before her mirror shakes from her hair  
This year's blossoms, clinging to its coils?

Sara Teasdale

## **Swallow Flight**

I love my hour of wind and light,  
I love men's faces and their eyes,  
I love my spirit's veering flight  
Like swallows under evening skies.

Sara Teasdale

## Swans

Night is over the park, and a few brave stars  
Look on the lights that link it with chains of gold,  
The lake bears up their reflection in broken bars  
That seem too heavy for tremulous water to hold.

We watch the swans that sleep in a shadowy place,  
And now and again one wakes and uplifts its head;  
How still you are--your gaze is on my face--  
We watch the swans and never a word is said.

Sara Teasdale

## Testament

I said, "I will take my life  
And throw it away;  
I who was fire and song  
Will turn to clay."

"I will lie no more in the night  
With shaken breath,  
I will toss my heart in the air  
To be caught by Death."

But out of the night I heard,  
Like the inland sound of the sea,  
The hushed and terrible sob  
Of all humanity.

Then I said, "Oh who am I  
To scorn God to his face?  
I will bow my head and stay  
And suffer with my race."

Sara Teasdale

## **The Answer**

When I go back to earth  
And all my joyous body  
Puts off the red and white  
That once had been so proud,  
If men should pass above  
With false and feeble pity,  
My dust will find a voice  
To answer them aloud:

"Be still, I am content,  
Take back your poor compassion,  
Joy was a flame in me  
Too steady to destroy;  
Lithe as a bending reed  
Loving the storm that sways her--  
I found more joy in sorrow  
Than you could find in joy."

Sara Teasdale

## **The Blind**

The birds are all a-building,  
They say the world's a-flower,  
And still I linger lonely  
Within a barren bower.

I weave a web of fancies  
Of tears and darkness spun.  
How shall I sing of sunlight  
Who never saw the sun?

I hear the pipes a-blowing,  
But yet I may not dance,  
I know that Love is passing,  
I cannot catch his glance.

And if his voice should call me  
And I with groping dim  
Should reach his place of calling  
And stretch my arms to him,

The wind would blow between my hands  
For Joy that I shall miss,  
The rain would fall upon my mouth  
That his will never kiss.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Broken Field**

My soul is a dark ploughed field  
In the cold rain;  
My soul is a broken field  
Ploughed by pain.

Where grass and bending flowers  
Were growing,  
The field lies broken now  
For another sowing.

Great Sower when you tread  
My field again,  
Scatter the furrows there  
With better grain.

Sara Teasdale

## The Carpenter's Son

The summer dawn came over-soon,  
The earth was like hot iron at noon  
In Nazareth;  
There fell no rain to ease the heat,  
And dusk drew on with tired feet  
And stifled breath.

The shop was low and hot and square,  
And fresh-cut wood made sharp the air,  
While all day long  
The saw went tearing thru the oak  
That moaned as tho' the tree's heart broke  
Beneath its wrong.

The narrow street was full of cries,  
Of bickering and snarling lies  
In many keys--  
The tongues of Egypt and of Rome  
And lands beyond the shifting foam  
Of windy seas.

Sometimes a ruler riding fast  
Scattered the dark crowds as he passed,  
And drove them close  
In doorways, drawing broken breath  
Lest they be trampled to their death  
Where the dust rose.

There in the gathering night and noise  
A group of Galilean boys  
Crowding to see  
Gray Joseph toiling with his son,  
Saw Jesus, when the task was done,  
Turn wearily.

He passed them by with hurried tread  
Silently, nor raised his head,  
He who looked up  
Drinking all beauty from his birth  
Out of the heaven and the earth  
As from a cup.

And Mary, who was growing old,  
Knew that the pottage would be cold  
When he returned;  
He hungered only for the night,  
And westward, bending sharp and bright,  
The thin moon burned.

He reached the open western gate  
Where whining halt and leper wait,  
And came at last

To the blue desert, where the deep  
Great seas of twilight lay asleep,  
Windless and vast.

With shining eyes the stars awoke,  
The dew lay heavy on his cloak,  
The world was dim;  
And in the stillness he could hear  
His secret thoughts draw very near  
And call to him.

Faint voices lifted shrill with pain  
And multitudinous as rain;  
From all the lands  
And all the villages thereof  
Men crying for the gift of love  
With outstretched hands.

Voices that called with ceaseless crying,  
The broken and the blind, the dying,  
And those grown dumb  
Beneath oppression, and he heard  
Upon their lips a single word,  
"Come!"

Their cries engulfed him like the night,  
The moon put out her placid light  
And black and low  
Nearer the heavy thunder drew,  
Hushing the voices . . . yet he knew  
That he would go.

A quick-spun thread of lightning burns,  
And for a flash the day returns--  
He only hears  
Joseph, an old man bent and white  
Toiling alone from morn till night  
Thru all the years.

Swift clouds make all the heavens blind,  
A storm is running on the wind--  
He only sees  
How Mary will stretch out her hands  
Sobbing, who never understands  
Voices like these.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Cloud**

I am a cloud in the heaven's height,  
The stars are lit for my delight,  
Tireless and changeful, swift and free,  
I cast my shadow on hill and sea--  
But why do the pines on the mountain's crest  
Call to me always, "Rest, rest"?

I throw my mantle over the moon  
And I blind the sun on his throne at noon,  
Nothing can tame me, nothing can bind,  
I am a child of the heartless wind--  
But oh the pines on the mountain's crest  
Whispering always, "Rest, rest."

Sara Teasdale

## **The Crystal Gazer**

I shall gather myself into myself again,  
I shall take my scattered selves and make them one,  
Fusing them into a polished crystal ball  
Where I can see the moon and the flashing sun.

I shall sit like a sibyl, hour after hour intent,  
Watching the future come and the present go,  
And the little shifting pictures of people rushing  
In restless self-importance to and fro.

Sara Teasdale

## **"The Dreams of My Heart"**

The dreams of my heart and my mind pass,  
Nothing stays with me long,  
But I have had from a child  
The deep solace of song;

If that should ever leave me,  
Let me find death and stay  
With things whose tunes are played out and forgotten  
Like the rain of yesterday.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Faery Forest**

The faery forest glimmered  
Beneath an ivory moon,  
The silver grasses shimmered  
Against a faery tune.

Beneath the silken silence  
The crystal branches slept,  
And dreaming thro' the dew-fall  
The cold white blossoms wept.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Flight**

Look back with longing eyes and know that I will follow,  
Lift me up in your love as a light wind lifts a swallow,  
Let our flight be far in sun or windy rain--  
But what if I heard my first love calling me again?

Hold me on your heart as the brave sea holds the foam,  
Take me far away to the hills that hide your home;  
Peace shall thatch the roof and love shall latch the door--

But what if I heard my first love calling me once more?

Sara Teasdale

## **The Fountain**

Oh in the deep blue night  
The fountain sang alone;  
It sang to the drowsy heart  
Of a satyr carved in stone.

The fountain sang and sang  
But the satyr never stirred--  
Only the great white moon  
In the empty heaven heard.

The fountain sang and sang  
And on the marble rim  
The milk-white peacocks slept,  
Their dreams were strange and dim.

Bright dew was on the grass,  
And on the ilex dew,  
The dreamy milk-white birds  
Were all a-glisten too.

The fountain sang and sang  
The things one cannot tell,  
The dreaming peacocks stirred  
And the gleaming dew-drops fell.

Sara Teasdale

## The Ghost

I went back to the clanging city,  
I went back where my old loves stayed,  
But my heart was full of my new love's glory,  
My eyes were laughing and unafraid.

I met one who had loved me madly  
And told his love for all to hear --  
But we talked of a thousand things together,  
The past was buried too deep to fear.

I met the other, whose love was given  
With never a kiss and scarcely a word --  
Oh, it was then the terror took me  
Of words unuttered that breathed and stirred.

Oh, love that lives its life with laughter  
Or love that lives its life with tears  
Can die -- but love that is never spoken  
Goes like a ghost through the winding years. . . .

I went back to the clanging city,  
I went back where my old loves stayed,  
My heart was full of my new love's glory, --  
But my eyes were suddenly afraid.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **The Giver**

You bound strong sandals on my feet,  
You gave me bread and wine,  
And sent me under sun and stars,  
For all the world was mine.

Oh, take the sandals off my feet,  
You know not what you do;  
For all my world is in your arms,  
My sun and stars are you.

Sara Teasdale

## **The India Wharf**

Here in the velvet stillness  
The wide sown fields fall to the faint horizon,  
Sleeping in starlight. . . .

A year ago we walked in the jangling city  
Together . . . . forgetful.  
One by one we crossed the avenues,  
Rivers of light, roaring in tumult,  
And came to the narrow, knotted streets.  
Thru the tense crowd  
We went aloof, ecstatic, walking in wonder,  
Unconscious of our motion.  
Forever the foreign people with dark, deep-seeing eyes  
Passed us and passed.  
Lights and foreign words and foreign faces,  
I forgot them all;  
I only felt alive, defiant of all death and sorrow,  
Sure and elated.

That was the gift you gave me. . . .

The streets grew still more tangled,  
And led at last to water black and glossy,  
Flecked here and there with lights, faint and far off.  
There on a shabby building was a sign  
"The India Wharf " . . . and we turned back.

I always felt we could have taken ship  
And crossed the bright green seas  
To dreaming cities set on sacred streams  
And palaces  
Of ivory and scarlet.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Inn of Earth**

I came to the crowded Inn of Earth,  
And called for a cup of wine,  
But the Host went by with averted eye  
From a thirst as keen as mine.

Then I sat down with weariness  
And asked a bit of bread,  
But the Host went by with averted eye  
And never a word he said.

While always from the outer night  
The waiting souls came in  
With stifled cries of sharp surprise  
At all the light and din.

"Then give me a bed to sleep," I said,  
"For midnight comes apace"--  
But the Host went by with averted eye  
And I never saw his face.

"Since there is neither food nor rest,  
I go where I fared before"--  
But the Host went by with averted eye  
And barred the outer door.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Kind Moon**

I think the moon is very kind  
To take such trouble just for me.  
He came along with me from home  
To keep me company.

He went as fast as I could run;  
I wonder how he crossed the sky?  
I'm sure he hasn't legs and feet  
Or any wings to fly.

Yet here he is above their roof;  
Perhaps he thinks it isn't right  
For me to go so far alone,  
Tho' mother said I might.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Kiss**

I hoped that he would love me,  
And he has kissed my mouth,  
But I am like a stricken bird  
That cannot reach the south.

For though I know he loves me,  
To-night my heart is sad;  
His kiss was not so wonderful  
As all the dreams I had.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Lamp**

If I can bear your love like a lamp before me,  
When I go down the long steep Road of Darkness,  
I shall not fear the everlasting shadows,  
    Nor cry in terror.

If I can find out God, then I shall find Him,  
If none can find Him, then I shall sleep soundly,  
Knowing how well on earth your love sufficed me,  
    A lamp in darkness.

Sara Teasdale

## The Lighted Window

He said:

"In the winter dusk  
When the pavements were gleaming with rain,  
I walked thru a dingy street  
Hurried, harassed,  
Thinking of all my problems that never are solved.  
Suddenly out of the mist, a flaring gas-jet  
Shone from a huddled shop.  
I saw thru the bleary window  
A mass of playthings:  
False-faces hung on strings,  
Valentines, paper and tinsel,  
Tops of scarlet and green,  
Candy, marbles, jacks--  
A confusion of color  
Pathetically gaudy and cheap.  
All of my boyhood  
Rushed back.  
Once more these things were treasures  
Wildly desired.  
With covetous eyes I looked again at the marbles,  
The precious agates, the pee-wees, the chinies--  
Then I passed on.

In the winter dusk,  
The pavements were gleaming with rain;  
There in the lighted window  
I left my boyhood."

Sara Teasdale

## **The Lights of New York**

The lightning spun your garment for the night  
Of silver filaments with fire shot thru,  
A broidery of lamps that lit for you  
The steadfast splendor of enduring light.  
The moon drifts dimly in the heaven's height,  
Watching with wonder how the earth she knew  
That lay so long wrapped deep in dark and dew,  
Should wear upon her breast a star so white.  
The festivals of Babylon were dark  
With flaring flambeaux that the wind blew down;  
The Saturnalia were a wild boy's lark  
With rain-quenched torches dripping thru the town--  
But you have found a god and filched from him  
A fire that neither wind nor rain can dim.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Long Hill**

I must have passed the crest a while ago  
And now I am going down--  
Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,  
But the brambles were always grabbing at the hem of my gown.

All the morning I thought how proud I should be  
To stand there straight as a queen,  
Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under me--  
But the air was dull, there was little I could have seen.

It was nearly level along the beaten track  
And the brambles caught in my gown--  
But it's no use now to think of turning back,  
The rest of the way will be only going down.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Look**

Strephon kissed me in the spring,  
Robin in the fall,  
But Colin only looked at me  
And never kissed at all.

Strephon's kiss was lost in jest,  
Robin's lost in play,  
But the kiss in Colin's eyes  
Haunts me night and day.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Metropolitan Tower**

We walked together in the dusk  
To watch the tower grow dimly white,  
And saw it lift against the sky  
Its flower of amber light.

You talked of half a hundred things,  
I kept each little word you said;  
And when at last the hour was full,  
I saw the light turn red.

You did not know the time had come,  
You did not see the sudden flower,  
Nor know that in my heart Love's birth  
Was reckoned from that hour.

Sara Teasdale

## The Mother of a Poet

She is too kind, I think, for mortal things,  
Too gentle for the gusty ways of earth;  
God gave to her a shy and silver mirth,  
And made her soul as clear  
And softly singing as an orchard spring's  
In sheltered hollows all the sunny year--  
A spring that thru the leaning grass looks up  
And holds all heaven in its clarid cup,  
Mirror to holy meadows high and blue  
With stars like drops of dew.

I love to think that never tears at night  
Have made her eyes less bright;  
That all her girlhood thru  
Never a cry of love made over-tense  
Her voice's innocence;  
That in her hands have lain,  
Flowers beaten by the rain,  
And little birds before they learned to sing  
Drowned in the sudden ecstasy of spring.

I love to think that with a wistful wonder  
She held her baby warm against her breast;  
That never any fear awoke whereunder  
She shuddered at her gift, or trembled lest  
Thru the great doors of birth  
Here to a windy earth  
She lured from heaven a half-unwilling guest.

She caught and kept his first vague flickering smile,  
The faint upleaping of his spirit's fire;  
And for a long sweet while  
In her was all he asked of earth or heaven--  
But in the end how far,  
Past every shaken star,  
Should leap at last that arrow-like desire,  
His full-grown manhood's keen  
Ardor toward the unseen  
Dark mystery beyond the Pleiads seven.  
And in her heart she heard  
His first dim-spoken word--  
She only of them all could understand,  
Flushing to feel at last  
The silence over-past,  
Thrilling as tho' her hand had touched God's hand.  
But in the end how many words  
Winged on a flight she could not follow,  
Farther than skyward lark or swallow,  
His lips should free to lands she never knew;  
Braver than white sea-faring birds  
With a fearless melody,  
Flying over a shining sea,

A star-white song between the blue and blue.

Oh I have seen a lake as clear and fair  
As it were molten air,  
Lifting a lily upward to the sun.  
How should the water know the glowing heart  
That ever to the heaven lifts its fire,  
A golden and unchangeable desire?  
The water only knows  
The faint and rosy glows  
Of under-petals, opening apart.  
Yet in the soul of earth,  
Deep in the primal ground,  
Its searching roots are wound,  
And centuries have struggled toward its birth.  
So, in the man who sings,  
All of the voiceless horde  
>From the cold dawn of things  
Have their reward;  
All in whose pulses ran  
Blood that is his at last,  
>From the first stooping man  
Far in the winnowed past.  
Out of the tumult of their love and mating  
Each one created, seeing life was good--  
Dumb, till at last the song that they were waiting  
Breaks like brave April thru a wintry wood.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Mystery**

Your eyes drink of me,  
Love makes them shine,  
Your eyes that lean  
So close to mine.

We have long been lovers,  
We know the range  
Of each other's moods  
And how they change;

But when we look  
At each other so  
Then we feel  
How little we know;

The spirit eludes us,  
Timid and free&mdash;  
Can I ever know you  
Or you know me?

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **The Old Maid**

I saw her in a Broadway car,  
The woman I might grow to be;  
I felt my lover look at her  
And then turn suddenly to me.

Her hair was dull and drew no light  
And yet its color was as mine;  
Her eyes were strangely like my eyes  
Tho' love had never made them shine.

Her body was a thing grown thin,  
Hungry for love that never came;  
Her soul was frozen in the dark  
Unwarmed forever by love's flame.

I felt my lover look at her  
And then turn suddenly to me,--  
His eyes were magic to defy  
The woman I shall never be.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Poor House**

Hope went by and Peace went by  
And would not enter in;  
Youth went by and Health went by  
And Love that is their kin.

Those within the house shed tears  
On their bitter bread;  
Some were old and some were mad,  
And some were sick a-bed.

Gray Death saw the wretched house  
And even he passed by--  
"They have never lived," he said,  
"They can wait to die."

Sara Teasdale

## **The Prayer**

My answered prayer came up to me,  
And in the silence thus spake he:  
"O you who prayed for me to come,  
Your greeting is but cold and dumb."

My heart made answer: "You are fair,  
But I have prayed too long to care.  
Why came you not when all was new,  
And I had died for joy of you."

Sara Teasdale

## **The Princess in the Tower**

I

The Princess sings:

I am the princess up in the tower  
And I dream the whole day thro'  
Of a knight who shall come with a silver spear  
And a waving plume of blue.

I am the princess up in the tower,  
And I dream my dreams by day,  
But sometimes I wake, and my eyes are wet,  
When the dusk is deep and gray.

For the peasant lovers go by beneath,  
I hear them laugh and kiss,  
And I forget my day-dream knight,  
And long for a love like this.

II

The Minstrel sings:

I lie beside the princess' tower,  
So close she cannot see my face,  
And watch her dreaming all day long,  
And bending with a lily's grace.

Her cheeks are paler than the moon  
That sails along a sunny sky,  
And yet her silent mouth is red  
Where tender words and kisses lie.

I am a minstrel with a harp,  
For love of her my songs are sweet,  
And yet I dare not lift the voice  
That lies so far beneath her feet.

III

The Knight sings:

O princess cease your dreams awhile  
And look adown your tower's gray side --  
The princess gazes far away,  
Nor hears nor heeds the words I cried.

Perchance my heart was overbold,  
God made her dreams too pure to break,  
She sees the angels in the air  
Fly to and fro for Mary's sake.

Farewell, I mount and go my way,  
-- But oh her hair the sun sifts thro' --  
The tilts and tourneys wait my spear,  
I am the Knight of the Plume of Blue.

Sara Teasdale

## The Return

I turned the key and opened wide the door  
To enter my deserted room again,  
Where thro' the long hot months the dust had lain.  
Was it not lonely when across the floor  
No step was heard, no sudden song that bore  
My whole heart upward with a joyous pain?  
Were not the pictures and the volumes fain  
To have me with them always as before?  
But Giorgione's Venus did not deign  
To lift her lids, nor did the subtle smile  
Of Mona Lisa deepen. Madeleine  
Still wept against the glory of her hair,  
Nor did the lovers part their lips the while,  
But kissed unheeding that I watched them there.

Sara Teasdale

## **The River**

I came from the sunny valleys  
And sought for the open sea,  
For I thought in its gray expanses  
My peace would come to me.

I came at last to the ocean  
And found it wild and black,  
And I cried to the windless valleys,  
"Be kind and take me back!"

But the thirsty tide ran inland,  
And the salt waves drank of me,  
And I who was fresh as the rainfall  
Am bitter as the sea.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Rose**

Beneath my chamber window  
Pierrot was singing, singing;  
I heard his lute the whole night thru  
Until the east was red.  
Alas, alas Pierrot,  
I had no rose for flinging  
Save one that drank my tears for dew  
Before its leaves were dead.

I found it in the darkness,  
I kissed it once and threw it,  
The petals scattered over him,  
His song was turned to joy;  
And he will never know--  
Alas, the one who knew it!  
The rose was plucked when dusk was dim  
Beside a laughing boy.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Rose and the Bee**

IF I were a bee and you were a rose,  
Would you let me in when the gray wind blows?  
Would you hold your petals wide apart,  
Would you let me in to find your heart,  
If you were a rose?

"If I were a rose and you were a bee,  
You should never go when you came to me,  
I should hold my love on my heart at last,  
I should close my leaves and keep you fast,  
If you were a bee."

Sara Teasdale

## **The Sea Wind**

I am a pool in a peaceful place,  
I greet the great sky face to face,  
I know the stars and the stately moon  
And the wind that runs with rippling shoon--  
But why does it always bring to me  
The far-off, beautiful sound of the sea?

The marsh-grass weaves me a wall of green,  
But the wind comes whispering in between,  
In the dead of night when the sky is deep  
The wind comes waking me out of sleep--  
Why does it always bring to me  
The far-off, terrible call of the sea?

Sara Teasdale

## **The Shrine**

There is no lord within my heart,  
Left silent as an empty shrine  
Where rose and myrtle intertwine,  
Within a place apart.

No god is there of carven stone  
To watch with still approving eyes  
My thoughts like steady incense rise;  
I dream and weep alone.

But if I keep my altar fair,  
Some morning I shall lift my head  
From roses deftly garlanded  
To find the god is there.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Solitary**

My heart has grown rich with the passing of years,  
I have less need now than when I was young  
To share myself with every comer  
Or shape my thoughts into words with my tongue.

It is one to me that they come or go  
If I have myself and the drive of my will,  
And strength to climb on a summer night  
And watch the stars swarm over the hill.

Let them think I love them more than I do,  
Let them think I care, though I go alone;  
If it lifts their pride, what is it to me  
Who am self-complete as a flower or a stone.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Song for Colin**

I sang a song at dusking time  
Beneath the evening star,  
And Terence left his latest rhyme  
To answer from afar.

Pierrot laid down his lute to weep,  
And sighed, "She sings for me,"  
But Colin slept a careless sleep  
Beneath an apple tree.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Song Maker**

I made a hundred little songs  
That told the joy and pain of love,  
And sang them blithely, tho' I knew  
No whit thereof.

I was a weaver deaf and blind;  
A miracle was wrought for me,  
But I have lost my skill to weave  
Since I can see.

For while I sang -- ah swift and strange!  
Love passed and touched me on the brow,  
And I who made so many songs  
Am silent now.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Tree of Song**

I sang my songs for the rest,  
For you I am still;  
The tree of my song is bare  
On its shining hill.

For you came like a lordly wind,  
And the leaves were whirled  
Far as forgotten things  
Past the rim of the world.

The tree of my song stands bare  
Against the blue --  
I gave my songs to the rest,  
Myself to you.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Wanderer**

I saw the sunset-colored sands,  
The Nile, like flowing fire between,  
Where Ramses stares forth serene  
And ammon's heavy temple stands.

I saw the rocks where long ago,  
Above the sea that cries and breaks,  
Bright Perseus with Medusa's snakes  
Set free the maiden white like snow.

And many skies have covered me,  
And many winds have blown me forth,  
And I have loved the green, bright north,  
And I have loved the cold, sweet sea.

But what to me are north and south,  
And what the lure of many lands,  
Since you have learned to catch my hands  
And lay a kiss upon my mouth.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Wayfarer**

Love entered in my heart one day,  
A sad, unwelcome guest;  
But when he begged that he might stay,  
I let him wait and rest.  
He broke my sleep with sorrowing,  
And shook my dreams with tears,  
And when my heart was fain to sing,  
He stilled its joy with fears.

But now that he has gone his way,  
I miss the old sweet pain,  
And sometimes in the night I pray  
That he may come again.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Wind**

A wind is blowing over my soul,  
I hear it cry the whole night thro' --  
Is there no peace for me on earth  
Except with you?

Alas, the wind has made me wise,  
Over my naked soul it blew, --  
There is no peace for me on earth  
Even with you.

Sara Teasdale

## **The Years**

To-night I close my eyes and see  
A strange procession passing me--  
The years before I saw your face  
Go by me with a wistful grace;  
They pass, the sensitive, shy years,  
As one who strives to dance, half blind with tears.

The years went by and never knew  
That each one brought me nearer you;  
Their path was narrow and apart  
And yet it led me to your heart--  
Oh, sensitive, shy years, oh, lonely years,  
That strove to sing with voices drowned in tears.

Sara Teasdale

## **There will come Soft Rain**

There will come soft rain and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild plum-trees in tremulous white;

Robins will wear their feathery fire  
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire.

And not one will know of the war, not one  
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,  
If mankind perished utterly.

And Spring herself when she woke at dawn,  
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

Sara Teasdale

## **There Will Come Soft Rains**

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild plum trees in tremulous white;

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Would scarcely know that we were gone.

Sara Teasdale

## Thoughts

When I can make my thoughts come forth  
To walk like ladies up and down,  
Each one puts on before the glass  
Her most becoming hat and gown.

But oh, the shy and eager thoughts  
That hide and will not get them dressed,  
Why is it that they always seem  
So much more lovely than the rest?

Sara Teasdale

## **Tides**

Love in my heart was a fresh tide flowing  
Where the starlike sea gulls soar;  
The sun was keen and the foam was blowing  
High on the rocky shore.

But now in the dusk the tide is turning,  
Lower the sea gulls soar,  
And the waves that rose in resistless yearning  
Are broken forevermore.

Sara Teasdale

## **To a Castilian Song**

We held the book together timidly,  
Whose antique music in an alien tongue  
Once rose among the dew-drenched vines that hung  
Beneath a high Castilian balcony.  
I felt the lute strings' ancient ecstasy,  
And while he read, my love-filled heart was stung,  
And throbbed, as where an ardent bird has clung  
The branches tremble on a blossomed tree.  
Oh lady for whose sake the song was made,  
Laid long ago in some still cypress shade,  
Divided from the man who longed for thee,  
Here in a land whose name he never heard,  
His song brought love as April brings the bird,  
And not a breath divides my love from me!

Sara Teasdale

## **To an Aeolian Harp**

The winds have grown articulate in thee,  
And voiced again the wail of ancient woe  
That smote upon the winds of long ago:  
The cries of Trojan women as they flee,  
The quivering moan of pale Andromache,  
Now lifted loud with pain and now brought low.  
It is the soul of sorrow that we know,  
As in a shell the soul of all the sea.  
So sometimes in the compass of a song,  
Unknown to him who sings, thro' lips that live,  
The voiceless dead of long-forgotten lands  
Proclaim to us their heaviness and wrong  
In sweeping sadness of the winds that give  
Thy strings no rest from weariless wild hands.

Sara Teasdale

## To Cleïs

(The daughter of Sappho)

When the dusk was wet with dew,  
Cleïs, did the muses nine  
Listen in a silent line  
While your mother sang to you?

Did they weep or did they smile  
When she crooned to still your cries,  
She, a muse in human guise  
Who forsook her lyre awhile

Did you hear her wild heart beat?  
Did the warmth of all the sun  
Through your little body run  
When she kissed your hands and feet?

Did your fingers, babywise,  
Touch her face and touch her hair  
Did you think your mother fair,  
Could you bear her burning eyes?

Are the songs that soothed your fears  
Vanished like a vanished flame,  
Save the line where shines your name  
Starlike down the graying years? . . .

Cleïs speaks no word to me,  
For the land where she has gone  
Lies as still at dusk and dawn,  
As a windless, tideless sea.

Sara Teasdale

### **To Dick, on his Sixth Birthday**

Tho' I am very old and wise,  
And you are neither wise nor old,  
When I look far into your eyes,  
I know things I was never told:  
I know how flame must strain and fret  
Prisoned in a mortal net;  
How joy with over-eager wings,  
Bruises the small heart where he sings;  
How too much life, like too much gold,  
Is sometimes very hard to hold. . . .  
All that is talking--I know  
This much is true, six years ago  
An angel living near the moon  
Walked thru the sky and sang a tune  
Plucking stars to make his crown--  
And suddenly two stars fell down,  
Two falling arrows made of light.  
Six years ago this very night  
I saw them fall and wondered why  
The angel dropped them from the sky--  
But when I saw your eyes I knew  
The angel sent the stars to you.

Sara Teasdale

## **To E.**

I have remembered beauty in the night,  
Against black silences I waked to see  
A shower of sunlight over Italy  
And green Ravello dreaming on her height;  
I have remembered music in the dark,  
The clean swift brightness of a fugue of Bach's,  
And running water singing on the rocks  
When once in English woods I heard a lark.

But all remembered beauty is no more  
Than a vague prelude to the thought of you--  
You are the rarest soul I ever knew,  
Lover of beauty, knightliest and best,  
My thoughts seek you as waves that seek the shore,  
And when I think of you I am at rest.

Sara Teasdale

## To Erinna

Was Time not harsh to you, or was he kind,  
O pale Erinna of the perfect lyre,  
That he has left no word of singing fire  
Whereby you waked the dreaming Lesbian wind,  
And kindled night along the lyric shore?  
O girl whose lips Erato stooped to kiss,  
Do you go sorrowing because of this  
In fields where poets sing forevermore?  
Or are you glad and is it best to be  
A silent music men have never heard,  
A dream in all our souls that we may say:  
"Her voice had all the rapture of the sea,  
And all the clear cool quiver of a bird  
Deep in a forest at the break of day"?

Sara Teasdale

## **To One Away**

I heard a cry in the night,  
A thousand miles it came,  
Sharp as a flash of light,  
My name, my name!

It was your voice I heard,  
You waked and loved me so--  
I send you back this word,  
I know, I know!

Sara Teasdale

## To Rose

Rose, when I remember you,  
Little lady, scarcely two,  
I am suddenly aware  
Of the angels in the air.  
All your softly gracious ways  
Make an island in my days  
Where my thoughts fly back to be  
Sheltered from too strong a sea.  
All your luminous delight  
Shines before me in the night  
When I grope for sleep and find  
Only shadows in my mind.

Rose, when I remember you,  
White and glowing, pink and new,  
With so swift a sense of fun  
Altho' life has just begun;  
With so sure a pride of place  
In your very infant face,  
I should like to make a prayer  
To the angels in the air:  
"If an angel ever brings  
Me a baby in her wings,  
Please be certain that it grows  
Very, very much like Rose."

Sara Teasdale

## **To the Years**

To-night I close my eyes and see  
A strange procession passing me--  
The years before I saw your face  
Go by me with a wistful grace;  
They pass, the sensitive shy years,  
As one who strives to dance, half blind with tears.

The years went by and never knew  
That each one brought me nearer you;  
Their path was narrow and apart  
And yet it led me to your heart--  
Oh sensitive shy years, oh lonely years,  
That strove to sing with voices drowned in tears.

Sara Teasdale

## **Tonight**

The moon is a curving flower of gold,  
The sky is still and blue;  
The moon was made for the sky to hold,  
And I for you;

The moon is a flower without a stem,  
The sky is luminous;  
Eternity was made for them,  
To-night for us.

Sara Teasdale

## Twilight

Dreamily over the roofs  
The cold spring rain is falling,  
Out in the lonely tree  
A bird is calling, calling.

Slowly over the earth  
The wings of night are falling;  
My heart like the bird in the tree  
Is calling, calling, calling.

Sara Teasdale

## **Two Minds**

Your mind and mine are such great lovers they  
Have freed themselves from cautious human clay,  
And on wild clouds of thought, naked together  
They ride above us in extreme delight;  
We see them, we look up with a lone envy  
And watch them in their zone of crystal weather  
That changes not for winter or the night.

Sara Teasdale

## **Understanding**

I understood the rest too well,  
And all their thoughts have come to be  
Clear as grey sea-weed in the swell  
Of a sunny shallow sea.

But you I never understood,  
Your spirit's secret hides like gold  
Sunk in a Spanish galleon  
Ages ago in waters cold.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## Union Square

With the man I love who loves me not,  
I walked in the street-lamps' flare;  
We watched the world go home that night  
In a flood through Union Square.

I leaned to catch the words he said  
That were light as a snowflake falling;  
Ah well that he never leaned to hear  
The words my heart was calling.

And on we walked and on we walked  
Past the fiery lights of the picture shows --  
Where the girls with thirsty eyes go by  
On the errand each man knows.

And on we walked and on we walked,  
At the door at last we said good-bye;  
I knew by his smile he had not heard  
My heart's unuttered cry.

With the man I love who loves me not  
I walked in the street-lamps' flare --  
But oh, the girls who can ask for love  
In the lights of Union Square.

Sara Teasdale

## **Villa Serbelloni, Bellaggio**

The fountain shivers lightly in the rain,  
The laurels drip, the fading roses fall,  
The marble satyr plays a mournful strain  
That leaves the rainy fragrance musical.

Oh dripping laurel, Phoebus sacred tree,  
Would that swift Daphne's lot might come to me,  
Then would I still my soul and for an hour  
Change to a laurel in the glancing shower.

Sara Teasdale

## **Vox Corporis**

The beast to the beast is calling,  
And the soul bends down to wait;  
Like the stealthy lord of the jungle,  
The white man calls his mate.

The beast to the beast is calling,  
They rush through the twilight sweet,  
But the soul is a wary hunter,  
He will not let them meet.

Sara Teasdale

## **Water Lilies**

If you have forgotten water lilies floating  
On a dark lake among mountains in the afternoon shade,  
If you have forgotten their wet, sleepy fragrance,  
Then you can return and not be afraid.

But if you remember, then turn away forever  
To the plains and the prairies where pools are far apart,  
There you will not come at dusk on closing water lilies,  
And the shadow of mountains will not fall on your heart.

Sara Teasdale

## **What Do I Care?**

What do I care, in the dreams and the languor of spring,  
That my songs do not show me at all?  
For they are a fragrance, and I am a flint and a fire,  
I am an answer, they are only a call.

But what do I care, for love will be over so soon,  
Let my heart have its say and my mind stand idly by,  
For my mind is proud and strong enough to be silent,  
It is my heart that makes my songs, not I.

Submitted by Venus

Sara Teasdale

## **When Love Goes**

I

O mother, I am sick of love,  
I cannot laugh nor lift my head,  
My bitter dreams have broken me,  
I would my love were dead.

"Drink of the draught I brew for thee,  
Thou shalt have quiet in its stead."

II

Where is the silver in the rain,  
Where is the music in the sea,  
Where is the bird that sang all day  
To break my heart with melody?

"The night thou badst Love fly away,  
He hid them all from thee."

Sara Teasdale

## **When Love was Born**

When Love was born I think he lay  
Right warm on Venus' breast,  
And whiles he smiled and whiles would play  
And whiles would take his rest.

But always, folded out of sight,  
The wings were growing strong  
That were to bear him off in flight  
Erelong, erelong.

Sara Teasdale

## **While I May**

Wind and hail and veering rain,  
Driven mist that veils the day,  
Soul's distress and body's pain,  
I would bear you while I may.

I would love you if I might,  
For so soon my life will be  
Buried in a lasting night,  
Even pain denied to me.

Sara Teasdale

## **Wild Asters**

In the spring I asked the daisies  
If his words were true,  
And the clever, clear-eyed daisies  
Always knew.

Now the fields are brown and barren,  
Bitter autumn blows,  
And of all the stupid asters  
Not one knows.

Sara Teasdale

## **Wisdom**

When I have ceased to break my wings  
Against the faultiness of things,  
And learned that compromises wait  
Behind each hardly opened gate,  
When I have looked Life in the eyes,  
Grown calm and very coldly wise,  
Life will have given me the Truth,  
And taken in exchange--my youth.

Sara Teasdale

## Young Love

I

I cannot heed the words they say,  
The lights grow far away and dim,  
Amid the laughing men and maids  
My eyes unbidden seek for him.

I hope that when he smiles at me  
He does not guess my joy and pain,  
For if he did, he is too kind  
To ever look my way again.

II

I have a secret in my heart  
No ears have ever heard,  
And still it sings there day by day  
Most like a caged bird.

And when it beats against the bars,  
I do not set it free,  
For I am happier to know  
It only sings for me.

III

I wrote his name along the beach,  
I love the letters so.  
Far up it seemed and out of reach,  
For still the tide was low.

But oh, the sea came creeping up,  
And washed the name away,  
And on the sand where it had been  
A bit of sea-grass lay.

A bit of sea-grass on the sand,  
Dropped from a mermaid's hair --  
Ah, had she come to kiss his name  
And leave a token there?

IV

What am I that he should love me,  
He who stands so far above me,  
What am I?  
I am like a cowslip turning  
Toward the sky,  
Where a planet's golden burning  
Breaks the cowslip's heart with yearning,  
What am I that he should love me,  
What am I?

V

O dreams that flock about my sleep,  
I pray you bring my love to me,  
And let me think I hear his voice  
Again ring free.

And if you care to please me well,  
And live to-morrow in my mind,  
Let him who was so cold before,  
To-night seem kind.

VI

I plucked a daisy in the fields,  
And there beneath the sun  
I let its silver petals fall  
One after one.

I said, "He loves me, loves me not,"  
And oh, my heart beat fast,  
The flower was kind, it let me say  
"He loves me," last.

I kissed the little leafless stem,  
But oh, my poor heart knew  
The words the flower had said to me,  
They were not true.

VII

I sent my love a letter,  
And if he loves me not,  
He shall not find my love for him  
In any line or dot.

But if he loves me truly,  
He'll find it hidden deep,  
As dawn gleams red thro' chilly clouds  
To eyes awaked from sleep.

VIII

The world is cold and gray and wet,  
And I am heavy-hearted, yet  
When I am home and look to see  
The place my letters wait for me,  
If I should find one letter there,  
I think I should not greatly care  
If it were rainy or were fair,  
For all the world would suddenly

Seem like a festival to me.

IX

I hid three words within my heart,  
That longed to fly to him,  
At dawn they woke me with a start,  
They sang till day was dim.

And now at last I let them fly,  
As little birds should do,  
And he will know the first is "I",  
The others "Love" and "You".

X

Across the twilight's violet  
His curtained window glimmers gold;  
Oh happy light that round my love  
Can fold.

Oh happy book within his hand,  
Oh happy page he glorifies,  
Oh happy little word beneath  
His eyes.

But oh, thrice happy, happy I  
Who love him more than songs can tell,  
For in the heaven of his heart  
I dwell.

Sara Teasdale

## **Youth and the Pilgrim**

Gray pilgrim, you have journeyed far,  
I pray you tell to me  
Is there a land where Love is not,  
By shore of any sea?

For I am weary of the god,  
And I would flee from him  
Tho' I must take a ship and go  
Beyond the ocean's rim.

"I know a port where Love is not,  
The ship is in your hand,  
Then plunge your sword within your breast  
And you will reach the land."

Sara Teasdale