

Poems and Songs :

Incompatible

The sun once loved the moon and then
 They in the sky appeared together
Romantically, they'd swoon, and when
 They smiled, would smile in total tether.
And this was sweet, yet much perplexed
It left the world, and strangely vexed,
For men at night, misled, would rise
While owls then slept - which was not wise.

For Nature change disdains to chart
For two who should be kept apart.
The moon with sun can't share a prize.
Nor I with you one life devise.

The rose once doffed its summer gloss
 And in December sought fruition.
For snowdrop's love it chose to toss
 Quite windward every inhibition.
But then the rose that softly chose
The snowdrop, sank to winter snows.
Of cold it died; it could not live.
Nor I with you. My love, forgive.

For Nature cannot stand the cause
Which dares defy eternal laws.
Too frail the rose – too sensitive,
As I. Farewell. My love, forgive.

Oh let me sing with calling birds
And fill your hair with whispered words
But still my love away I sieve
Away – as now. Farewell. Forgive.

* * * * *

Opening of 'The Red House Mystery'

[Scene opens on the house interior. Characters from the play discovered in costumes of the 1920's in an introductory number. They range from flappers with short skirts and cigarette-holders to men and women in country tweeds, and from Bright Young People to elderly Majors and Vicars. Their song itself references the 1920's Cornish setting.]

Music No.1.

Opening Chorus and Song – Audrey Scullery

Chorus :

In land of curd
And skies grey-blue
Where mid the herd
The throstles coo,
Where naught is furred
But someone's flue,
We're here – absurd
But partly true.

For this is in
The past, we guess,
When girls were thin
And garments less.
The Bright Young Thing,
The Parvenu :
They'll have their fling.
They often do.

Oh Jazz Age din,
Oh fever fret,
There's some well in
That cocktail set,
While some compile
The older view.
That country style
Is coming too.

Oh ancient land,
Now speeding up,
Of houses grand
And stirrup cup
And jolly japes
Regatta crew :
Now from the drapes
They're coming through.

Oh ancient land,
 Of tea on lawns
Where some old hand
 The squire suborns.
And mad old girls
 Try dances new,
What there unfurls
 We're bringing you.

Oh ancient land!
 Oh lords in debt!
And p'raps a band
 Still learning yet.
And tennis net
 And racing blue :
They're here on set.
 And we are too.

Yes, tennis net
 And boating crew.
We're here. Forget
 A quick adieu!

[They move to the sides as a maid, Audrey Scullery, is seen cleaning a grate and keeling a pot, surrounded by a few other skivvying housemaids.]

Song – Audrey with Housemaids

Audrey :

From kitchen (cold) arrived in bliss
I come - I serve the upper ranks.
What joy to have a life like this.
I for it give extended thanks.
The upper set – they give me wings.
They're very good at killing things.
A 'tweedy set , they change at night
To gold – bring yet more dear delight.

Oh noble young – well, some are old
And smell of dung in which they've rolled -
How yet in pearls they jet at night.
Oh upper set. Dear parasite.

Oh how I long to emulate
These noble souls I elevate
But I'm a maid. I know what's right.
The grate I rub – my joy and plight.

Maids :

Yes, she's a maid. It's only right.
The grate we scrub both day and night.

(Maids seem distinctly less keen, however, than Audrey.)

Audrey :

Oh how I'd like to reach that height
On which these noble people live.
I know they're wise. They're very bright.
(More brains than holes within a sieve).
They rear the grouse – both cock and hen -
Then shoot them gaily down again.
I clap their skills – God bless the sight.
Good God! How great their appetite.

Oh noble young – well, some are old
With shotguns slung on body-mould :
How yet they grace this noble rite.
Good God! How great an appetite.

Oh let us bravely emulate
These noble souls of high estate.
No. I'm a maid – I'm yet contrite.
Rub grates – I'm black – they're semi-white.

Maids :

Yes, how she yearns and vows to fête
Each noble highborn heavyweight -

Ensemble :

Audrey :

Maids :

But I'm a maid – I know
what's right –
Rub grates – use soot
and anthracite.

But she's a maid - that
fish won't bite -
Rubs grates – we too -
we will or might.

[At end of Ensemble exeunt all except Audrey.]

Audrey : Ah yes, what a joy it is to serve in this noble household. To scrub the grate and disinfect the sewers for the likes of Lady Frobisher Backlog, her professor son David, and their occasional guest Prince Rockhardt von Steckelstein. Ah, Mrs. Plump – for I see you there up the chimney – ah. Mrs. Plump, is it not indeed an honour?

Mrs. Plump (entering from the chimney attired as a cook) :
Audrey , indeed it is.

Audrey : And to think we could have been deprived of it – could have been born heathen or even yodelling cowherds – can you yodel at all, Mrs. Plump?

Mrs. Plump : I can, Audrey, though I only do it in moments of privacy. That's why I was up the chimney. Well, that and another reason.

Audrey : Another reason? Oh heavens. If you would only tell it me! Is it because you were looking for a vampire?

Song : Myself and Narcissus

So many days in vain I seek

To find reflected beauty's grace.

So many days of outlook bleak

With little charm in any place.

The failure here I daily trace

Must pierce my heart – but be aware

When self-love isn't in the case

More love for *you* remains to spare.

And I for you my form, physique

Would wish more foul – nay, near-antique,

If pity then for me you'd air,

Not him – the youth with golden hair.

Oh how when void of self-belief

We still can think, to ease the grief,

Were we *more* foul, some hope we'd share

With him – the youth with golden hair.

ii.

How sad the lad whose coarse displays

No joy could bring in any nook.

In limpid stream he'll sadly gaze

And sigh – read plainness like a book.

In any stream when down I look

No charm I see - no beauty rare.

Where shall I find in any brook

Narcissus with the golden hair?

So still the stream, no dimpled wave

Shows me the heart's self-loving slave.

Such am not I. Who has my share?

Narcissus with the golden hair.

But then Narcissus could not yet

Love you – he'd scorn to self-forget.

So do not I, who yet despair

For what? My lack of golden hair.

Song for Early Morning

Rising light and day is dawning.
Limbs a bit are stretching.
Babies wake – and early yawning
Sees a bit of retching.
Maids the jars and jugs are fetching.
Errand boys are spawning.
That's the scene we're simply sketching,
That's our early morning.

Maids the jars and jugs are fetching.
(Some abed love-lorning.)
That's the scene we're briefly etching,
Quite dismissing scorning.

Tavern Landlord (entering onto the street) :

Sweep the stairs and mop the alley.
Clear the glass – don't shilly-shally.

Greengrocer (likewise) :

Stack the shelves with new potatoes.

Grumpy woman (likewise) :

Jackets brush – and sponge the gaiters.

Mistress (to maid, likewise) :

Clean the grate – list all the shopping.

Sleepy Man (likewise) :

Wake the aunt who isn't stopping.

Pawnbroker (likewise, to his boy) :

Check the goods from recent pawning.

That's our merry Monday morning.

Half the above :

Check the goods – we're giving warning.

The other half :

That's our merry Monday morning.

Chorus

Rising light and day is dawning.

Sun the sky is etching.

Babes awake that early morning

Arrow-light is fletching.

Maids the many jugs are fetching -

Puppy-dogs are fawning.

That's the scene we've finished sketching -

Raising up an awning.

Now the night is gone and finished –
Life we hope is not diminished.
That's the end we've finished etching -
- Finished all suborning.

Bring the day and bring the story
Make it fun and slightly gory.
That's the end – no over-stretching
- Nothing more adorning.

Song for Edwin Drood

This comes from a script for a music drama based on the novel. First tableau. A split stage. On the one hand, Cathedral Choristers, robed, singing a holy anthem, with incense smoke rising. On the other, an opium den in which lounge, among others, a Lascar and a Chinaman and in which the Princess Puffer hands round and stimulates the pipes. Prominent among the opium-addicts is John Jasper, a dark handsome man of about forty who also happens to be the Cathedral Precentor.

Music No.1.

CHORUS OF CHORISTERS

Resound ye bells, as well ye might

(Yet hushed the angels sigh) :
Proclaim the high immortal light
That dazzles every eye.
Bring incense to our sober sight -
In smoke of double-dye,
For God as well is double - right? -
From stable riding high.

For God is all. In mode devout
His glories we espy
And sing - but fiends are all about.
What vice may devils ply?

The balm of God can rule the rout,
The devil to defy.
Oh God your love-drug put about.
Swing scented lullaby.

CHORUS IN OPIUM DEN :

The essence of the smoky drift
Of dreams in moony eye,
Breathe in - what is this gaping rift
In reason we espy?
What are these walls set here-about,
With fissures long and high?
Go in - defy the ditch of doubt,
A better dream to try.

Oh heaven : what can dreamers do
But pipe their vision sly? -
A shift – a vision coming through :
Dream truth in damaged sky.

JASPER (in an opium haze) :

Oh heaven : can I see you too
With top so holy-high?
The fiend? Now is it really you,
John Jasper - is it I?

DOUBLE CHORUS : ALL

(All characters, including Jasper and Princess Puffer, sing the bracketed material simultaneously)

(*CHORISTERS :*

(

(

(Resound ye bells,

(as well ye might

((Yet hushed the

(angels sigh).

(Proclaim, ye candles

(burning bright

(His eminence on

(high.

(Ye singers, fling

(the incense

(out

(In smoke of double-

(dye,

OPIUM

ADDICTS :

The essence of the

smoky drift

Of dreams in moony

eye

We breathe - the

dreams we cannot sift

That shift and merge

and die.

(To Jasper) A dream in

smoke you conjure

out

That troubles you -

for why?

(For God is double
(too - no
(doubt? -
(As us - his lower
(fry.)
(
(The balm of God can
(soothe the rout,
(Redeem the bitter
(cry.
(Oh God, your love-
(drug put
(about.

(Your soothing
(spirit try.
(
(*JASPER :*
(
(The essence of
(the smoky drift
(That blurs the
(senses : I
(Breathe in - but out
(I cannot sift
(The dark that fills
(the sty.

For better dreams
we look
about.
How false what
visions buy.

With balmy drug
we usher out
Our bitter torments
- aye,
Or not? For
visions still we
scout.

They all to
nothing fly.

PRINCESS PUFFER :

The essence of the
smoky drift
Of dreams in
moony eye
We breathe - the
gain is in my gift
Where profits
may apply.

(Oh drug, bring
(better visions out
(To daze the inner
(eye
(Or leave – depart the
(devil-lout
(Ere light he
(crucify.

(
(Oh drug, dispel the
(devil-rout,
(Redeem the bitter
(cry.
(Oh God, your love-
(put too
(about.
(How split am
(little I.

The drug can turn
the world about.
To new delights
we fly,
Or not? Do we but
dull the doubt,
The fears that
mortify?

The drug can soothe
the bitter shout,
And soften every
cry -
Or not? For
visions still we
scout.
They go without
a sigh.

Song – Lust Triumphant

In rainbow hues the web was spun
Of love in my too kindly dream.
It down the gutter now has run
To die - what can my love redeem?
The corpse decays. A vision rich
In gold grows now a speckled crust.
The web has lost each holy stitch
It wove - to gild its love and trust.

Ah what a dream. Too passing fair.
Awake, how can I re-adjust?
It's dead - but where it's lying there
Oh look : it makes such pretty dust.

ii.

And there's another sort of love,
Of wild abandoned passion-flings -
Such rites as cause the Lord above
To blush - taint pink the angel wings.
That love still lives - it thrives apart
Where pale-eyed fancy dare not look.

It wreathes - entwines my lustful heart
Though still its force I cannot brook.

For that's a dream that's savage-rare
And strong - leaves moral sense nonplussed.
Awake, I hardly even dare
Look there - that dream away I thrust.

Come back, the corpse so passing fair
Of hope and joy and simple trust
Or die - all further sleep forbear.
Depraved I dream - I ever must.

* * * * *

Song : A Youth in his Sickness

A petty life, a wasted life that cannot rise
 To tragic throes,
A spring that reaches winter, wise
 Enough to know where summer goes.
A summer lost, a vacant sieve
 That yields no autumn harvest. Why?
I am not worth enough to live,
 Though worthy well enough to die.

For there's the reason I must give :
 I wasted time in short supply
And time from me is fugitive
 And waves – bids very quick goodbye.

ii.

No summer sun, no autumn croft
 For one who was a shallow thing.
My buds were shaken, broken oft
 And burst in pox's bitter sting.
A summer lost, an autumn gone
 Before it came - drained quickly dry.
I cannot run a marathon;
 One spring - enough - and then I die.

For that's the reason I must give
 So weak beneath a stormy sky.
I am not great enough to live,
 No tragic man in death am I.

Oh petty fool that cannot rise
 To heights of worth, nor ever try
To sound the depth : so many lies
 I told. In *this* I cannot lie.

To my Beloved from Two Living in Separation

Vision of loveliness,
 Light of the sun,
 Day that can dazzle me quite,
Phoebus Apollo
 Your course as you run,
 Bathe my beloved in light.
Warm her poor heart through its blanket of frost,
Curdled and cold through the joys she has lost.
Give to her woe your sublimest riposte.
 Melt it and put it to right.

Vision of loveliness,
 Light of the sun,
 Aura that dazzles the sight,
Phoebus Apollo,
 Your course as you run,
 Set all her sorrow to flight.

ii.

Maiden Diana,
 Who shine from your car,
 Silver, to welcome the night,
Scarf up your banner
 And fling it afar.
 Swathe my beloved in light.
Brighten his grief - and so lighten my own,
Knowing my love to his presence has flown.
Thus in the rays let me freely atone.
 Bring me in beams to his sight.

Maiden Diana,
 Who shine from your car,
 Silver, my hope to invite,
Scarf up your banner
 And fling it afar.
 Bring my beloved good night!

Maiden Diana,
 Who shine from your car,
 Silver, my pledges to plight,
Wrap in your banner
 My passionate star.
 Love to my love re-unite.

Ballad : To a Child Sleeping

Sleep, my child, for none will harm you,
I will stay through all upsetting.
Sleep, my child. Let peace becalm you
On the shore of sweet forgetting.
Sleep, and soon, when off you travel,
Keep the windy side of care.
Sleep - the earth is dust and gravel.
Crowns are less, though golden-fair.

Sleep, my child : my sure protection
Keep the wolves in distant lair.
Crowns are less – no true perfection,
Better this - your lovely hair.

ii.

Sad that best protective caring
Cannot always save the tender.
Sad that worlds of grim despairing
Long distress may soon engender.
Sad that strife and sore ambition
Weave in all their serpent-snare.
Sleep - defy the slow attrition.
Sleep - let peace in dreams be there.

Sleep, my child : my sure protection
Ease the wolves' too hungry stare.
Weave in life my long affection.
Wrap it in your golden hair.

Disillusion

I was belov'd. A garden fair
I saw with fountains playing there.
Soft whispers filled the budding trees
And blossoms' scent was in the breeze.
There love-birds sang in cloud their song
While, hand-to-hand, I moved along,
And bees in buds dipped wings of lace
Where roses too blushed red of face.

For then was I at Eden's gate,
And ruby-rich seemed then my fate.
I was beloved – on every stem
Sun shone – served passion's stratagem.

ii.

I was bereft. I entered there
Again, and nature showed despair.
I looked and rust on hinges hung,
All cracked, and not a song was sung.
There ravish'd Eden lacked repose.
The bee disdained the drooping rose,
That shameful blushed for on its stem
Were thorns - her vice's diadem.

For I was not the first. The gate
Led to a much too plundered state.
No sin but love. Let all condemn.
Ring, bells - my passion's requiem.

Yes, I was not the first. The gate
Led to a much too plundered state.

No sin but love. Let all condemn.
I curse – kiss still her muddy hem.

Duet for Repentant Lovers

He :

Did I say one word too loudly?

Did I tease too much one day?

Do I sneer a mite too proudly

In some pride of life display?

Did I in unkind proceeding

Slight the things you do and say?

I'm the brute – an ego feeding

Fit for you to beat and flay.

You should beat me, you should hate me.

When I'm loud you might sedate me.

But that you're of higher breeding.

That's my own, not *your* sweet way.

We our dose of gall and bitters

Have to take – unpleasing critters –

We are worst of hardest hitters.

Purge - though yet I much inveigh.

ii.

She :

Did I sing a bit too sweetly?
Did I bless your life too much?
Did I press your gown too neatly
With too kind a tender touch?
Did I in unkind performing
Cloy – which makes affection stray?
Beat me – though it's not heart-warming
Purge my less than perfect clay.

You should beat me – so I press you.
Still I'll love and only bless you.
Let me then at last caress you.
Link us yet another day.

Ensemble :

He :

She :

Pray forgive me, pale and ashen,	I forgive you. Follow fashion.
Sad at heart with sorry passion.	Pardon me, in fullest ration.
I in grief now re-address you.	I with love will re-assess you,
I the price will fully pay.	Brushing both our tears away.

I in grief now re-address you.

All for love my roundelay.

I with love will re-assess you.

All for love my roundelay.

Classical

The sun, Apollo, hung aloft
And held on high his burning bow
 As weapon for the noble youth
 To strike the maiden fair.
His kiss of flame, though subtly soft,
Would sear her cheek of driven snow -
 Aye, scorch her lips - in very sooth
 He'd lay her body bare.

But then the sun, with power replete,
Brings also life's redeeming heat.
He smiles - and sorrow's in retreat.
 He saves her then and there.

For by the sunshine, melting ice,
We're guided into Paradise.
Oh love, be not a sheer defeat.
 Be happiness my share!

Classical (Reply)

The moon, great Cybele above,
A sickle to the maiden gave
To rob the youth of life and breath
In ivy-tangled lair.
The maiden, half awake to love,
Would bring him to an early grave.
A cloud concealed the lamp of death
Which prophesied despair.

But then the moon as Artemis
Shone forth from heaven's dark abyss
In silver, spreading peace - and this
Destroyed Diana's snare.

For gods, as much as human life,
Are good and bad - are joy and strife.
A light and then a sudden kiss
And love is lying there.

A treble moon but a trice -
We're guided into Paradise.
It's Love. It's going up a beat.
It's blessing everywhere!

Song

In the fragrant summer garden,
 In the years of sunny sowing,
Apples fall on grass – a pardon
 This for former winter snowing.
Do we note what Fate delivers
 In those days of gaudy growing?
No, where still no shadow quivers,
 Blind, we take whatever's showing.

In the fragrant summer garden
 By the river softly flowing
Apples grow – oh give a pardon
 You, the gifts so well bestowing.

Yes, for winds can change completely,
 All the glories overthrowing.
Suddenly – and none too sweetly –
 Down we fall to caw and crowing.
Gone the fruit that June delivers,
 Gone (The grass needs better mowing).
In the grass the serpent quivers.
 Now we see where winds are blowing.

I

In the fragrant summer garden,
By the hill, the cattle lowing,
Apples fall – we beg a pardon
Late – so much we're heavy-owing.

In the fragrant summer garden
Beauty still is sweetly showing.
Now too late the choices harden.
Now too late we're backward rowing.

* * * *

Cherry Blossom

The cherry blossom dangled
 On brown untended bough.
No gain it sought, but spangled
 The peasant at the plough.
But sweets give brief caressing.
 The sun is chased by rain.
What can we do but long, my friend,
For spring our winter woe to end
And send you (prepossessing)
 A cherry counterpane?

For sweets with grief are tangled.
 There's sorrow in their train.
Here's joy in blended blessing
 At cherry time again.

ii.

The cherry bloom's a tissue –
 As fragile paper thin,
But oh, there lies the issue.
 For tissue dreams we spin.
What's beauty but a dressing
 Made sweeter by the loss?

The poignancy of beauty rare

Is this : it cannot linger there.

Its death is then a blessing.

It's better than the dross.

Then oh, what can I wish you?

The lasting (weed and moss)?

No, this : the cherry soft and pink

That dies when on perfection's brink.

That's joy. I'm re-assessing

But wouldn't re-emboss.

Yes, oh, what can I wish you?

The dull in double-cross?

No this : the cherry soft and pink

That trembles on perfection's brink.

There's heaven coalescing,

When down the blossoms toss.

* * * * *

A Song for Paula Tanqueray

The green grass wet with river-dew
 Seeps sweetly to the Hanging Wood.
The beeches in their brazen hue
 Die back - this loss is hardly good.
And I could weep to see each leaf
 That falls - in mud beneath the heel.
Life's comedy to those that think -
 A tragedy to those that feel.

Yet brazen in the mud and red
 The leaves still shine nor yet congeal
As once in spring - I'm mere misled.
 I'll wait - in spring make new appeal.

ii.

And now it's here – but hope is not.
 For still I'm thought a brazen thing
And cold - like winter which has got
 Frost hands - gives frozen nurturing.
I only see how very brief
 Spring beauties are - there's no appeal
Life's fun to those who preen and prink.
 To me it's but a new ordeal.

Yet hope will come - the winter dead
Revive – new suns may help and heal.
But ah, lost leaves stay sunk and shed
All gone – my life's unhappy seal.

Oh, see the leaves - the winter red,
The yellow - how they turn and wheel.
Life's comedy to those that think;
A tragedy to those that feel.

* * * * *

On Failure to Think

The swallow who the heaven scans
Has blessings in alliance.
His code is not the mortal man's
He treats it with defiance.
He knows not the demanding lore
Of morals. Abnegation's door
He never opens, any more
Than learns atomic science.
And yet he's happy, he is good.
Less harm he does, God knows,
Than mortals with their moral sense
And all the great pre-eminence
Of mental parts and aims immense
And learning, I suppose.

ii.

The robin with the ruddy breast
Now twitters on the thistles.
The poor have never once depressed
His most melodic whistles.
He never feels his conscience ache
For those the gods at will forsake.
He sings to bounder, rogue and rake.
His temper never bristles.

And yet he's harmless – even good.

Less grief he brings, I swear,
Than those who call existence bleak
Yet nothing do to aid the weak.

He's happy. I his lesson seek.

Be happiness my share.

Two Loves

He : Censure not my deep devotion.
What restraint is needed here?
He who strangles all emotion
Loves with feelings insincere.
Let me gaze upon thy beauty,
Drink the fervour from thine eye –
Then – a final act of duty –
Still adoring, I will die!

She :

Hush, my love! Such indiscretion
Bears the mark of empty show.
Love must temper strong expression
Ere true tenderness can grow.
You may shake the skies above you –
Swell my praises far and wide.
I can only say, “I love you.”
'Tis enough. Be satisfied.

ENSEMBLE :

He :

Let me gaze upon thy
beauty,
Sing thy praises far and
wide.
Only thus – by loving
duty -
Can my heart be
satisfied.

She :

You may shake the skies
above you,
Sing my praises far and
wide.
I can only say, “I love
you.”
'Tis enough. Be
satisfied.

* * * *

Song of (and for) Maisie

A rising politician

In an amorous condition

Once adored a modest maiden who was holy as a nun

And he said to her, “Dear lady,

May I call you “Sexy Sadie”? –

And she answered, “My name’s Maisie – and your
levity I shun.”

His approach to wooing shocked her,

For she really thought he mocked her

- Well, a rising politician never speaks the sober truth

And the maid, who’d been a teacher

And a Sunday School lay-preacher,

Hadn’t ever heard a lie from the beginning of her
youth –

And his compliments, you’ll find,

All were terribly inclined

To upset her very literal pedantic turn of mind!

ii.

If this gentleman said, “Maisie,

You’re as light as any daisy,”

She’d remark, “Oh no, I’m not, sir. I’m as heavy as a
ham” –

While, when once he'd crossed this hurdle,

She'd continue, "It's my girdle

Which explains why I seem slimmer than I actually
am."

If, to overcome her loathing,

He admired her pretty clothing,

She would answer, "Second-hand, sir – quite the cheapest I
could get" –

While, when called 'angelic treasure',

She would counter with displeasure,

"Oh, I *mean* to get to Heaven – but I haven't done it yet!"

For such compliments refined

All were terribly inclined

To upset her very literal pedantic turn of mind!

iii.

So he faltered in his wooing.

All the chasing and pursuing

Left his chivalry quite shaken and his stomach most
put out,

For he found that her resistance

To his flattering persistence

Soon unmanned him absolutely – gave him flatulence and
gout.

The result was most unhappy.

So despairing was the chappie

That he turned aside from women and became a lone
recluse,

While young Maisie (getting slicker)

Won the favour of a vicar

And eloped with him to China at the very first excuse –

Where, since luckily I find

He is deaf and dumb and blind

There's an end to tribulation for her too pedantic mind!

* * * * *

A rose there was that newly sprung
 By love was once flushed red.
Each petal white, with dew-drop hung,
 Blushed crimson, it is said.
But lily rivals round it clung
 Whence more the rose-heart bled.
The lilies by the rose were stung.
 They crumbled then as dead.

But rosy love to powder dries
And, when a rose is cut, it cries.
The end was tears for all. Surmise
 What tears has passion bred.

So many silent sorrows but
 What petals love has shed,
What blooms that, torn or killed or cut,
 Weep blood in dropping dead.

We cannot hear the grief intense
 Below the drooping head.
Believe - ye maids whose love immense
 Is brought by pain to bed.

My lady is as sunbeams bright
 Yet dark has turned my day.
My lady shines in all men's sight,
 Yet makes my world decay.
My maiden looks to heaven aloft
 More low I count her sin.
My lady is as petals soft
 Yet very hard to win.

I must appraise
My thoughts and gaze
 Where heaven's planets spin.
My lady every art has doffed
 But how my heart to pin.

ii.

I have not yet achieved my goal
 Though daily still I try.
I plead to her from soul to soul,
 But hers makes no reply.
She knows I am an earthy case
 Of lower pedigree.
My lady is a thing of grace
 But shows no grace to me.

I must upraise
My thoughts and gaze
 Oh her, from bended knee.
My lady has no art – no base -
 But grief to guarantee.

Yet plants in earth
Root deep - the worth
 Of earth in them we see.
Oh rose-leaf girl,
One tear of pearl
 Drop down to water me.

My lady is as sunbeams bright
 Yet dark has turned my day.
My lady shines in all men's sight,
 Yet makes my world decay.
My maiden looks to heaven aloft
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My thoughts and gaze
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My lady has no art – no base -
 But grief to guarantee.

Yet plants in earth
Root deep - the worth
 Of earth in them we see.
Oh rose-leaf girl,
One tear of pearl

Drop down to water me.

The moon upon the silver lake
Shows rippled half-ashamed to break
 So deep the grief the water-spirits bear.
The gold of love - their precious charge-
Is lost - disorder swells at large
 And waste - there's blight and sorrow
 everywhere.
But when to quite the lowest trough
You reach - what's left for lifting off?
 What waits - when hope has melted into air?
Why, peace. When at their bottom worst
Things find they cannot be reversed -
 Release – there's joy of absolute despair.

A comfort in the loss of all
 Where grief no more can interpose.
That is the highest gain. That pall
 Of dark my heart supremely knows.

No looking up; no new alarm
Of hope - no twitch in deadened arm.
No nurture of such flights as those.
That's rest - that's comfort, I suppose.

(Black-out)

The moon upon the silver lake
Shows rippled half-ashamed to break
 So deep the grief the water-spirits bear.
The gold of love - their precious charge-
Is lost - disorder swells at large
 And waste - there's blight and sorrow
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Of hope - no twitch in deadened arm.
No nurture of such flights as those.
That's rest - that's comfort, I suppose.

(Black-out)

Sombre-suited fall the shadows
 (Wasted time, now Time wastes me)
Now no more. I drink the bitters
 Made of gall with guarantee -
Guaranteeing loss of plenty
 Loss of friends of all degree.
Maidens – I had two and twenty.
 Still I end by losing me.

Sombre-suited fall the shadows,
 Death demands a ready fee.
Spring is first of ready quitters.
 Dark more early seems to be.

ii.

In my youth I was Adonis,
 Safe in shelter's shady lee.
Now my visage drains its colour.
 Every sense would up and flee.
Every sense the cognoscenti
 Name, define, with ready key -
Tutto – now is turned *niente*.
 All in all, you finish me.

In my youth I was Adonis.
 I was Spring still springing free.
Now my world grows ever duller.
 Winter's overcoming me.

In my youth I was Adonis,
 Springing on a youthful spree.
Now my world has lost its colour.
 Summer : where did passion flee?

Male Singer (entering first, alone) :

There was a rose that newly sprung
 By love was once flushed red.
Each petal white, with dew-drop hung,
 Blushed crimson, it is said.
But lily rivals round it clung
 Whence more the rose-heart bled.
The lilies by the rose were stung.
 They crumbled then as dead.

But rosy love to powder dries
And, when a rose is cut, it cries.
The end was tears for all. Surmise
 What tears has passion bred.

So many silent sorrows but
 What petals love has shed,
What blooms that, torn or killed or cut,
 Weep blood in dropping dead.

We cannot hear the grief intense
 Below the drooping head.
Believe - ye maids whose love immense
 Is brought by pain to bed.

Male Singer :

So many tears so quickly shed,
So few expressing bliss.
Of these I sing. Unlimited
My knowledge here in this.
So many human sorrows but
It comes as no surprise
Some say the rose whose stem is cut
Shrieks out before it dies.

We cannot hear such pain intense.
That power in no one lies.
Believe it - we whose pain immense
We cannot advertise.

Female Singer (entering just before singing) :

So many griefs as pearls are strung
Around this neck of swan.
So many words of angry tongue
To make my beauty wan.
The rose, when cut, will never pale.
The red retains its blush.
But I believe its heart will fail
And blench in sorrow-rush.

So many woes : the rose's tale
To air the bullies brush.
But I believe - whose woes prevail
In rose's double flush.

Both :

So many griefs that so assail

The rose that sorrows crush.

Or do I lie in such a tale,

Though voice of this I hush?

He :

Oh rose of grace, oh loveliness complete,
 If words I spoke were bitter or unjust,
Yet is your gentle nature so discreet
 They'll pass you like an empty summer gust.
Then let my fancy no more force distrust,
 But know my blood in time with yours must beat.
And let me lay my pride within the dust
 And leave my heart a vassal at your feet.

Blow, summer rose, whose beauty bans deceit.
Blow summer rose. May shame with mercy meet.

She :

By all my grief for that which I did speak,
 By all the light of love that never dies,
By Paradise that we are taught to seek
 And by its twin that in your beauty lies,
 By thoughts of you that like the dew arise,
Or like the sun each day in every week,
 Or like the stars in musing on your eyes
Forgive – remove the shame upon my cheek.

Blow, winter rose – in bed too bare and bleak.
Blow, winter rose – now better love I speak.

The sun once loved the moon and then
Both in the sky made altered weather.
Romantically, they'd swoon, and when
They smiled – they did it there together.
And this was sweet, yet much perplexed
It left the world, and strangely vexed,
For men at night, misled, would rise
While owls then slept - which was not wise.

For Nature change disdains to chart
For two who should be kept apart.
The moon and sun can't twofold rise,
Nor I with you new life devise.

ii.

The rose once doffed its summer glow
And in December sought fruition.
For snowdrop's love it chose to toss
Quite windward every inhibition.
But then the rose that softly chose
The snowdrop, sank to winter snows.
Of cold it died; now dead it lies.
I go. My love, 'tis no surprise!

For Nature cannot stand the cause
Which dares defy eternal laws.
From snow the rose turns petal-eyes
As I, from you, my summer guise.

Little and Great

I saw a bird with broken wing
Where predators encroached.
It hopped about - poor pretty thing -
As, vicious, they approached.
No pity they had ever had.
The bird was but their prey.
They pounced. I found it very sad
And turned from it away.

But in my heart I pondered yet
And heard a small voice say :
How small the power of little things
How tough the living fray.

ii.

I heard a sound above and saw
A swallow flying fast.
Migrating out of hunger's maw
To sun and rich repast.
Through wind and rain; o'er land and sea
It flew both night and day,
Magnetic fields its compass - we
Encompass lesser sway.

And in my heart I ceased to fret
And sang an altered lay :
How great the power of little things
That get in time away.

* * * *

Jewel Song – A Fragment

The draught of love grows bitter.
 The worm in rosebud curls.
Fair fate is now the knitter
 Of shrouds for paper earls.
No more the thrush's twitter -
 What gain from this unfurls? :
Neck cut with diamond glitter,
 Heart shot to death with pearls.

The petals yet will litter
 The ground in bloody swirls.
Neck cut with diamond glitter.
 Heart broken yet by churls.

* * * * *

ALL : Take a rogue – a brute unfeeling.
To his side a maiden flies,
Welcomes him with trust appealing,
Open heart and dancing eyes.

1st Man: Is he loutish, cold and coarse?

1st Woman : Maiden still feels no remorse.

2nd Man : Does he have a heart of stone?

2nd Woman : Greater bliss she's never known.

ALL : Though his vows are all pretended,
Insincere his softest sighs,
Maid is his till life is ended,
Constant till the day she dies.

ii.

ALL : Picture then a knight devoted.
Maiden scorns his tender sighs,
Ridicules his valour noted,
Tears his heart with angry lies.

1st Man : Is he constant, kind and true?

1st Woman : Maiden bids him fast adieu.

2nd Man : Does he love her more than life?

2nd Woman : Maid will never be his wife.

ALL :

Though he's selfish, mild, adoring,
Maiden mocks his tender cries,
Breaks a heart where hope was soaring,
Kills him with her harsh replies.

Only when his love's pretended,
Insincere his softest sighs,
Maid is his till life is ended,
Constant till the day she dies.

- - - - -

Society

When Kings to save that sinking wreck,
Society, invented courts,
They hoped high aims would hold in check,
Ignoble deeds and vicious thoughts.
They hoped, poor Kings, that new-found grace
Would raise the tone and make men view
No task as mean or commonplace
That Pomp was linked and banded to.
But Kings were wrong! They failed and now
Men mock them - and their noble creeds
Seem merely masks which more allow
Unworthy thoughts and selfish deeds.
Thus was it since our life began :
Reform breeds merely fresh abuse,
And even now that monster Man
Claims precedence as his excuse.

- - - - -

Reflections

When by the stream in springtime sweet
Comes May in sleeves of green,
The knight his lady fair will greet.
With passion Florentine.
But do not trust
His heady oath.
Show wise disgust –
Be nothing loth
To scorn his golden verse effete
And every lie between.

The whistling plough-boy tells more truth
Who scarce can pen a line, poor youth.
The bleating lamb on yonder hill
Speaks fair – more than Ambition will.

ii.

When in the glass we look and greet
A beauty rich and rare,
An image – that is all we meet
Of surface debonair.
Reflections fair
Have substance small.
We move – they're there
No more at all.

Fine words – they but the scene repeat.
They fade in empty air.

In glass we see no deeper truth
Than surface gloss of glancing youth.
In streams we hook both carp and brill.
How sad! Love's dream we never will.

In streams we hook both carp and brill.
Love's dream – love's face - we never will.

She :

A rose once in the desert sprung.
It bloomed, when young,
extremely fair.
Its head in modest grace it hung.
No human tongue
remarked it there.
No human eye surveyed that plot.
It grew in desert-land forgot.
Its petals dropped - their perfume rare
Was lost – 'twas I - poor solitaire.

How sad to be a rose unseen
And waste your charms on empty air,
Unknown as if they'd never been,
’Twas I - quite lost beyond repair.

The Rest :

She lived apart. She was a rose.
A better life she might propose.
Her petals dropped. Her perfume rare
Was lost – that rose so sorry-fair.

ii.

She :

And then he came – and to the court
As fast besought
He took me there.
Around me he would oft cavort
And take his sport
Full debonair.
And lo, I thus too soon was viewed
And plucked – by men both coarse and
crude.
I withered – cut and torn and bare,
Too much observed with little care.

How sad to be a lovely rose
Whose beauty's an unwitting snare,
Then, snared, to sink and drop and close.
What grief. More sweet the desert
air!

The Rest :

She was a sweet and lovely rose,
Then snared she lost all sweet repose.

Ensemble :

Mazurka :

That beauty's gone
beyond repair.
How sad! Poor sorry
solitaire!

The Rest (except László) :

Her beauty's gone - was
never there.
How sad! How grim her
sorry share!

Song for Alice Brown

(See W.S. Gilbert)

As a child of brigand parents, each a psychopath first class,
I'm a bad, unfeeling creature – in my genes it came to pass.
I am very keen to burgle – I will crash your intercom.
First I'll say to you. 'Good morning', then I'll cosh you with
aplomb,
As I'll spit through all your houses – sparing not my horrid
phlegm
Then I'll steal your pearls and rubies – it's my daily stratagem.

But in spite of all bravado (it's a prelude to each act
Of this evil disposition which may not a lot attract,
I would give it up tomorrow – it would give me more élan
To be kind and sweet and loving to a kind and gentle man.

Yes, I'd give it up tomorrow – forge a safe and better plan :
To be kind and sweet and loving to a kind and gentle man.

ii.

Now I rarely stop for matins and I rarely kneel to God,
I dissected once a chaffinch – left it lying on the sod.
Then a nun I quick-divested of collections for the poor.
I'm the sinner disaffected she must still keep praying for.
How I'd love to squash a baby – I have done it – you can check
And for what? A bit of coral hanging brightly from its neck.

And I rob a bank each morning – kill the clients at a push.
I, for birdies in the pocket add another in the bush!

But in spite of such confession – it's enough to make you yelp -
My dysfunctional obsession still I really cannot help
And I'd give it up tomorrow – find a more exciting joy
Being sweet and kind and loving to a very loving boy.

Oh, my horrid grim upbringing : it has forced me to the bad.
(I rob beggars of their breakfast – then go out upon the gad)
But I'd give it up tomorrow – find a bliss that couldn't cloy
Being sweet and kind and married to a kind and loving boy.

* * * * *

Alone I sit – and do not find it wrong, for
The scene's been set – a scene I've lingered long] for.
To wait for love a heroine is fated,
But will he come? Pray God it's not abated!

Air

Quid me aluit me extinxit.

Cupid slept – a nymph came running,
Stole his torch still blazing fair :
All its heat she'd plans for shunning,
Sought a more sequestered lair.
Aeons-long, this Cupid cunning
Hearts had stung beyond repair.
Now a nymph with vigour stunning
Stole it – meant to douse the flare –

And a cooling pool locating
In it flung the fire, elating
Thus in very well deflating
Love that lays the body bare.

Yes, the flame at once abating
There she came and flung it there.

ii.

But the torch could not be riven.
Slowly rose the water's heat.

Flame that once a pain had given
Bubble-boiled at maiden's feet.
Swiftly then (as drawn and driven)
Lovers came, the heat to share.
All in vain the nymph had striven.
Love can heal as well as snare.

Lay me in a shade sequestered
Where I'll not by love be pestered.
No! The loss has further festered.
Love, your water-cure prepare.

Nymph who stole the taper burning
Vain your views – of little learning.
Love's a spa – I'm there returning.
Love will win us everywhere.

Nymph who stole the taper burning
(Vain your views – I'm now discerning)
Not a chance for backward turning
Love's a joy we'll not forswear.

Not a chance for backward turning. (I'm so discerning)
Love : it warms us – everywhere.

Soft and Hard

Soloist :

Oh maidens how our courtship's course
Is hard – how doomed to fail perforce.
Too prim repels; too bold is worse,
Men look, prevail, then quick-disperse.
We cannot win. By angel grace
At first a little gain we trace,
But men grow tired – they quick-discard
The thing they sought – they're very hard.

To fail to yield (which may excite)
Yet sets impatience soon alight.
And thus they mark our angel card
How soft – we maids who try too hard.

Chorus :

Oh what a case when maidens so
Seek much to shimmer, shine and glow,
Their flame of love – it's swiftly charred
Too soft. Alas, it's very hard.

2nd Soloist :

And so they harden so they think
No more they'll lurk on danger's brink.
They'll sneer and laugh and with the boys
Will flirt – indulge more brittle joys.

And then they're thought more easy prey
Inviting it, so people say,
More roughly grabbed, more ill they're starved
How soft – to think of being hard.

Oh maidens must your truth be barred
Behind a glowing soft façade?
Or - worse – be beaten soft and scarred.
For what? Alas, for growing hard.

Chorus :

Oh what a case when maidens so
Cease yet to shimmer, shine and glow,
And harden – think it's more a guard.
Alas. How soft. It's very hard.

* * * * *

Poems and Songs :

Incompatible

The sun once loved the moon and then
 They in the sky appeared together
Romantically, they'd swoon, and when
 They smiled, would smile in total tether.
And this was sweet, yet much perplexed
It left the world, and strangely vexed,
For men at night, misled, would rise
While owls then slept - which was not wise.

For Nature change disdains to chart
For two who should be kept apart.
The moon with sun can't share a prize.
Nor I with you one life devise.

The rose once doffed its summer gloss
 And in December sought fruition.
For snowdrop's love it chose to toss
 Quite windward every inhibition.
But then the rose that softly chose
The snowdrop, sank to winter snows.
Of cold it died; it could not live.
Nor I with you. My love, forgive.

For Nature cannot stand the cause
Which dares defy eternal laws.
Too frail the rose – too sensitive,
As I. Farewell. My love, forgive.

Oh let me sing with calling birds
And fill your hair with whispered words
But still my love away I sieve
Away – as now. Farewell. Forgive.

* * * * *

Opening of 'The Red House Mystery'

[Scene opens on the house interior. Characters from the play discovered in costumes of the 1920's in an introductory number. They range from flappers with short skirts and cigarette-holders to men and women in country tweeds, and from Bright Young People to elderly Majors and Vicars. Their song itself references the 1920's Cornish setting.]

Music No.1.

Opening Chorus and Song – Audrey Scullery

Chorus :

In land of curd
And skies grey-blue
Where mid the herd
The throstles coo,
Where naught is furred
But someone's flue,
We're here – absurd
But partly true.

For this is in
 The past, we guess,
When girls were thin
 And garments less.
The Bright Young Thing,
 The Parvenu :
They'll have their fling.
 They often do.

Oh Jazz Age din,
 Oh fever fret,
There's some well in
 That cocktail set,
While some compile
 The older view.
That country style
 Is coming too.

Oh ancient land,
 Now speeding up,
Of houses grand
 And stirrup cup
And jolly japes
 Regatta crew :
Now from the drapes
 They're coming through.

Oh ancient land,
 Of tea on lawns
Where some old hand
 The squire suborns.
And mad old girls
 Try dances new,
What there unfurls
 We're bringing you.

Oh ancient land!
 Oh lords in debt!
And p'raps a band
 Still learning yet.
And tennis net
 And racing blue :
They're here on set.
 And we are too.

Yes, tennis net
 And boating crew.
We're here. Forget
 A quick adieu!

[They move to the sides as a maid, Audrey Scullery, is seen cleaning a grate and keeling a pot, surrounded by a few other skivvying housemaids.]

Song – Audrey with Housemaids

Audrey :

From kitchen (cold) arrived in bliss
I come - I serve the upper ranks.
What joy to have a life like this.
I for it give extended thanks.
The upper set – they give me wings.
They're very good at killing things.
A 'tweedy set , they change at night
To gold – bring yet more dear delight.

Oh noble young – well, some are old
And smell of dung in which they've rolled -
How yet in pearls they jet at night.
Oh upper set. Dear parasite.

Oh how I long to emulate
These noble souls I elevate
But I'm a maid. I know what's right.
The grate I rub – my joy and plight.

Maids :

Yes, she's a maid. It's only right.
The grate we scrub both day and night.

(Maids seem distinctly less keen, however, than Audrey.)

Audrey :

Oh how I'd like to reach that height
On which these noble people live.
I know they're wise. They're very bright.
(More brains than holes within a sieve).
They rear the grouse – both cock and hen -
Then shoot them gaily down again.
I clap their skills – God bless the sight.
Good God! How great their appetite.

Oh noble young – well, some are old
With shotguns slung on body-mould :
How yet they grace this noble rite.
Good God! How great an appetite.

Oh let us bravely emulate
These noble souls of high estate.
No. I'm a maid – I'm yet contrite.
Rub grates – I'm black – they're semi-white.

Maids :

Yes, how she yearns and vows to fête
Each noble highborn heavyweight -

Ensemble :

Audrey :

Maids :

But I'm a maid – I know
what's right –
Rub grates – use soot
and anthracite.

But she's a maid - that
fish won't bite -
Rubs grates – we too -
we will or might.

[At end of Ensemble exeunt all except Audrey.]

Song for Edwin Drood

This comes from a script for a music drama based on the novel. First tableau. A split stage. On the one hand, Cathedral Choristers, robed, singing a holy anthem, with incense smoke rising. On the other, an opium den in which lounge, among others, a Lascar and a Chinaman and in which the Princess Puffer hands round and stimulates the pipes. Prominent among the opium-addicts is John Jasper, a dark handsome man of about forty who also happens to be the Cathedral Precentor.

Music No.1.

CHORUS OF CHORISTERS

Resound ye bells, as well ye might
 (Yet hushed the angels sigh) :
Proclaim the high immortal light
 That dazzles every eye.
Bring incense to our sober sight -
 In smoke of double-dye,
For God as well is double - right? -
 From stable riding high.

For God is all. In mode devout
His glories we espy
And sing - but fiends are all about.
What vice may devils ply?

The balm of God can rule the rout,
The devil to defy.
Oh God your love-drug put about.
Swing scented lullaby.

CHORUS IN OPIUM DEN :

The essence of the smoky drift
Of dreams in moony eye,
Breathe in - what is this gaping rift
In reason we espy?
What are these walls set here-about,
With fissures long and high?
Go in - defy the ditch of doubt,
A better dream to try.

Oh heaven : what can dreamers do
But pipe their vision sly? -
A shift – a vision coming through :
Dream truth in damaged sky.

JASPER (in an opium haze) :

Oh heaven : can I see you too
With top so holy-high?
The fiend? Now is it really you,
John Jasper - is it I?

DOUBLE CHORUS : ALL

(All characters, including Jasper and Princess Puffer, sing the bracketed material simultaneously)

(*CHORISTERS :*

(

(

(Resound ye bells,

(as well ye might

((Yet hushed the

(angels sigh).

(Proclaim, ye candles

(burning bright

(His eminence on

(high.

(Ye singers, fling

(the incense

(out

(In smoke of double-

(dye,

OPIUM

ADDICTS :

The essence of the

smoky drift

Of dreams in moony

eye

We breathe - the

dreams we cannot sift

That shift and merge

and die.

(To Jasper) A dream in

smoke you conjure

out

That troubles you -

for why?

(For God is double
(too - no
(doubt? -
(As us - his lower
(fry.)
(
(The balm of God can
(soothe the rout,
(Redeem the bitter
(cry.
(Oh God, your love-
(drug put
(about.

(Your soothing
(spirit try.
(
(*JASPER :*
(
(The essence of
(the smoky drift
(That blurs the
(senses : I
(Breathe in - but out
(I cannot sift
(The dark that fills
(the sty.

For better dreams
we look
about.
How false what
visions buy.

With balmy drug
we usher out
Our bitter torments
- aye,
Or not? For
visions still we
scout.

They all to
nothing fly.

PRINCESS PUFFER :

The essence of the
smoky drift
Of dreams in
moony eye
We breathe - the
gain is in my gift
Where profits
may apply.

(Oh drug, bring
(better visions out
(To daze the inner
(eye
(Or leave – depart the
(devil-lout
(Ere light he
(crucify.
(
(Oh drug, dispel the
(devil-rout,
(Redeem the bitter
(cry.
(Oh God, your love-
(put too
(about.
(How split am
(little I.

The drug can turn
the world about.
To new delights
we fly,
Or not? Do we but
dull the doubt,
The fears that
mortify?

The drug can soothe
the bitter shout,
And soften every
cry -
Or not? For
visions still we
scout.
They go without
a sigh.

Song – Lust Triumphant

In rainbow hues the web was spun
Of love in my too kindly dream.
It down the gutter now has run
To die - what can my love redeem?
The corpse decays. A vision rich
In gold grows now a speckled crust.
The web has lost each holy stitch
It wove - to gild its love and trust.

Ah what a dream. Too passing fair.
Awake, how can I re-adjust?
It's dead - but where it's lying there
Oh look : it makes such pretty dust.

ii.

And there's another sort of love,
Of wild abandoned passion-flings -
Such rites as cause the Lord above
To blush - taint pink the angel wings.
That love still lives - it thrives apart
Where pale-eyed fancy dare not look.

It wreathes - entwines my lustful heart
Though still its force I cannot brook.

For that's a dream that's savage-rare
And strong - leaves moral sense nonplussed.
Awake, I hardly even dare
Look there - that dream away I thrust.

Come back, the corpse so passing fair
Of hope and joy and simple trust
Or die - all further sleep forbear.
Depraved I dream - I ever must.

* * * * *

Song : A Youth in his Sickness

A petty life, a wasted life that cannot rise
 To tragic throes,
A spring that reaches winter, wise
 Enough to know where summer goes.
A summer lost, a vacant sieve
 That yields no autumn harvest. Why?
I am not worth enough to live,
 Though worthy well enough to die.

For there's the reason I must give :
 I wasted time in short supply
And time from me is fugitive
 And waves – bids very quick goodbye.

ii.

No summer sun, no autumn croft
 For one who was a shallow thing.
My buds were shaken, broken oft
 And burst in pox's bitter sting.
A summer lost, an autumn gone
 Before it came - drained quickly dry.
I cannot run a marathon;
 One spring - enough - and then I die.

For that's the reason I must give
 So weak beneath a stormy sky.
I am not great enough to live,
 No tragic man in death am I.

Oh petty fool that cannot rise
 To heights of worth, nor ever try
To sound the depth : so many lies
 I told. In *this* I cannot lie.

To my Beloved from Two Living in Separation

Vision of loveliness,
 Light of the sun,
 Day that can dazzle me quite,
Phoebus Apollo
 Your course as you run,
 Bathe my beloved in light.
Warm her poor heart through its blanket of frost,
Curdled and cold through the joys she has lost.
Give to her woe your sublimest riposte.
 Melt it and put it to right.

Vision of loveliness,
 Light of the sun,
 Aura that dazzles the sight,
Phoebus Apollo,
 Your course as you run,
 Set all her sorrow to flight.

ii.

Maiden Diana,
 Who shine from your car,
 Silver, to welcome the night,
Scarf up your banner
 And fling it afar.
 Swathe my beloved in light.
Brighten his grief - and so lighten my own,
Knowing my love to his presence has flown.
Thus in the rays let me freely atone.
 Bring me in beams to his sight.

Maiden Diana,
 Who shine from your car,
 Silver, my hope to invite,
Scarf up your banner
 And fling it afar.
 Bring my beloved good night!

Maiden Diana,
 Who shine from your car,
 Silver, my pledges to plight,
Wrap in your banner
 My passionate star.
 Love to my love re-unite.

Ballad : To a Child Sleeping

Sleep, my child, for none will harm you,
I will stay through all upsetting.
Sleep, my child. Let peace becalm you
On the shore of sweet forgetting.
Sleep, and soon, when off you travel,
Keep the windy side of care.
Sleep - the earth is dust and gravel.
Crowns are less, though golden-fair.

Sleep, my child : my sure protection
Keep the wolves in distant lair.
Crowns are less – no true perfection,
Better this - your lovely hair.

ii.

Sad that best protective caring
Cannot always save the tender.
Sad that worlds of grim despairing
Long distress may soon engender.
Sad that strife and sore ambition
Weave in all their serpent-snare.
Sleep - defy the slow attrition.
Sleep - let peace in dreams be there.

Sleep, my child : my sure protection
Ease the wolves' too hungry stare.
Weave in life my long affection.
Wrap it in your golden hair.

Disillusion

I was belov'd. A garden fair
I saw with fountains playing there.
Soft whispers filled the budding trees
And blossoms' scent was in the breeze.
There love-birds sang in cloud their song
While, hand-to-hand, I moved along,
And bees in buds dipped wings of lace
Where roses too blushed red of face.

For then was I at Eden's gate,
And ruby-rich seemed then my fate.
I was beloved – on every stem
Sun shone – served passion's stratagem.

ii.

I was bereft. I entered there
Again, and nature showed despair.
I looked and rust on hinges hung,
All cracked, and not a song was sung.
There ravish'd Eden lacked repose.
The bee disdained the drooping rose,
That shameful blushed for on its stem
Were thorns - her vice's diadem.

For I was not the first. The gate
Led to a much too plundered state.
No sin but love. Let all condemn.
Ring, bells - my passion's requiem.

Yes, I was not the first. The gate
Led to a much too plundered state.

No sin but love. Let all condemn.
I curse – kiss still her muddy hem.

Duet for Repentant Lovers

He :

Did I say one word too loudly?

Did I tease too much one day?

Do I sneer a mite too proudly

In some pride of life display?

Did I in unkind proceeding

Slight the things you do and say?

I'm the brute – an ego feeding

Fit for you to beat and flay.

You should beat me, you should hate me.

When I'm loud you might sedate me.

But that you're of higher breeding.

That's my own, not *your* sweet way.

We our dose of gall and bitters

Have to take – unpleasing critters –

We are worst of hardest hitters.

Purge - though yet I much inveigh.

ii.

She :

Did I sing a bit too sweetly?
Did I bless your life too much?
Did I press your gown too neatly
With too kind a tender touch?
Did I in unkind performing
Cloy – which makes affection stray?
Beat me – though it's not heart-warming
Purge my less than perfect clay.

You should beat me – so I press you.
Still I'll love and only bless you.
Let me then at last caress you.
Link us yet another day.

Ensemble :

He :

She :

Pray forgive me, pale and ashen,
Sad at heart with sorry passion.
I in grief now re-address you.
I the price will fully pay.

I forgive you. Follow fashion.
Pardon me, in fullest ration.
I with love will re-assess you,
Brushing both our tears away.

I in grief now re-address you.

All for love my roundelay.

I with love will re-assess you.

All for love my roundelay.

Classical

The sun, Apollo, hung aloft
And held on high his burning bow
 As weapon for the noble youth
 To strike the maiden fair.
His kiss of flame, though subtly soft,
Would sear her cheek of driven snow -
 Aye, scorch her lips - in very sooth
 He'd lay her body bare.

But then the sun, with power replete,
Brings also life's redeeming heat.
He smiles - and sorrow's in retreat.
 He saves her then and there.

For by the sunshine, melting ice,
We're guided into Paradise.
Oh love, be not a sheer defeat.
 Be happiness my share!

Classical (Reply)

The moon, great Cybele above,
A sickle to the maiden gave
To rob the youth of life and breath
In ivy-tangled lair.
The maiden, half awake to love,
Would bring him to an early grave.
A cloud concealed the lamp of death
Which prophesied despair.

But then the moon as Artemis
Shone forth from heaven's dark abyss
In silver, spreading peace - and this
Destroyed Diana's snare.

For gods, as much as human life,
Are good and bad - are joy and strife.
A light and then a sudden kiss
And love is lying there.

A treble moon but a trice -
We're guided into Paradise.
It's Love. It's going up a beat.
It's blessing everywhere!

Song

In the fragrant summer garden,
 In the years of sunny sowing,
Apples fall on grass – a pardon
 This for former winter snowing.
Do we note what Fate delivers
 In those days of gaudy growing?
No, where still no shadow quivers,
 Blind, we take whatever's showing.

In the fragrant summer garden
 By the river softly flowing
Apples grow – oh give a pardon
 You, the gifts so well bestowing.

Yes, for winds can change completely,
 All the glories overthrowing.
Suddenly – and none too sweetly –
 Down we fall to caw and crowing.
Gone the fruit that June delivers,
 Gone (The grass needs better mowing).
In the grass the serpent quivers.
 Now we see where winds are blowing.

I

In the fragrant summer garden,
By the hill, the cattle lowing,
Apples fall – we beg a pardon
Late – so much we're heavy-owing.

In the fragrant summer garden
Beauty still is sweetly showing.
Now too late the choices harden.
Now too late we're backward rowing.

* * * *

Cherry Blossom

The cherry blossom dangled
 On brown untended bough.
No gain it sought, but spangled
 The peasant at the plough.
But sweets give brief caressing.
 The sun is chased by rain.
What can we do but long, my friend,
For spring our winter woe to end
And send you (prepossessing)
 A cherry counterpane?

For sweets with grief are tangled.
 There's sorrow in their train.
Here's joy in blended blessing
 At cherry time again.

ii.

The cherry bloom's a tissue –
 As fragile paper thin,
But oh, there lies the issue.
 For tissue dreams we spin.
What's beauty but a dressing
 Made sweeter by the loss?

The poignancy of beauty rare

Is this : it cannot linger there.

Its death is then a blessing.

It's better than the dross.

Then oh, what can I wish you?

The lasting (weed and moss)?

No, this : the cherry soft and pink

That dies when on perfection's brink.

That's joy. I'm re-assessing

But wouldn't re-emboss.

Yes, oh, what can I wish you?

The dull in double-cross?

No this : the cherry soft and pink

That trembles on perfection's brink.

There's heaven coalescing,

When down the blossoms toss.

* * * * *

A Song for Paula Tanqueray

The green grass wet with river-dew
 Seeps sweetly to the Hanging Wood.
The beeches in their brazen hue
 Die back - this loss is hardly good.
And I could weep to see each leaf
 That falls - in mud beneath the heel.
Life's comedy to those that think -
 A tragedy to those that feel.

Yet brazen in the mud and red
 The leaves still shine nor yet congeal
As once in spring - I'm mere misled.
 I'll wait - in spring make new appeal.

ii.

And now it's here – but hope is not.
 For still I'm thought a brazen thing
And cold - like winter which has got
 Frost hands - gives frozen nurturing.
I only see how very brief
 Spring beauties are - there's no appeal
Life's fun to those who preen and prink.
 To me it's but a new ordeal.

Yet hope will come - the winter dead
Revive – new suns may help and heal.
But ah, lost leaves stay sunk and shed
All gone – my life's unhappy seal.

Oh, see the leaves - the winter red,
The yellow - how they turn and wheel.
Life's comedy to those that think;
A tragedy to those that feel.

* * * * *

On Failure to Think

The swallow who the heaven scans
Has blessings in alliance.
His code is not the mortal man's
He treats it with defiance.
He knows not the demanding lore
Of morals. Abnegation's door
He never opens, any more
Than learns atomic science.
And yet he's happy, he is good.
Less harm he does, God knows,
Than mortals with their moral sense
And all the great pre-eminence
Of mental parts and aims immense
And learning, I suppose.

ii.

The robin with the ruddy breast
Now twitters on the thistles.
The poor have never once depressed
His most melodic whistles.
He never feels his conscience ache
For those the gods at will forsake.
He sings to bounder, rogue and rake.
His temper never bristles.

And yet he's harmless – even good.

Less grief he brings, I swear,
Than those who call existence bleak
Yet nothing do to aid the weak.

He's happy. I his lesson seek.

Be happiness my share.

Two Loves

He : Censure not my deep devotion.
What restraint is needed here?
He who strangles all emotion
Loves with feelings insincere.
Let me gaze upon thy beauty,
Drink the fervour from thine eye –
Then – a final act of duty –
Still adoring, I will die!

She :

Hush, my love! Such indiscretion
Bears the mark of empty show.
Love must temper strong expression
Ere true tenderness can grow.
You may shake the skies above you –
Swell my praises far and wide.
I can only say, “I love you.”
'Tis enough. Be satisfied.

ENSEMBLE :

He :

Let me gaze upon thy
beauty,
Sing thy praises far and
wide.
Only thus – by loving
duty -
Can my heart be
satisfied.

She :

You may shake the skies
above you,
Sing my praises far and
wide.
I can only say, “I love
you.”
'Tis enough. Be
satisfied.

* * * *

Song of (and for) Maisie

A rising politician

In an amorous condition

Once adored a modest maiden who was holy as a nun

And he said to her, “Dear lady,

May I call you “Sexy Sadie”? –

And she answered, “My name’s Maisie – and your
levity I shun.”

His approach to wooing shocked her,

For she really thought he mocked her

- Well, a rising politician never speaks the sober truth

And the maid, who’d been a teacher

And a Sunday School lay-preacher,

Hadn’t ever heard a lie from the beginning of her
youth –

And his compliments, you’ll find,

All were terribly inclined

To upset her very literal pedantic turn of mind!

ii.

If this gentleman said, “Maisie,

You’re as light as any daisy,”

She’d remark, “Oh no, I’m not, sir. I’m as heavy as a
ham” –

While, when once he'd crossed this hurdle,

She'd continue, "It's my girdle

Which explains why I seem slimmer than I actually
am."

If, to overcome her loathing,

He admired her pretty clothing,

She would answer, "Second-hand, sir – quite the cheapest I
could get" –

While, when called 'angelic treasure',

She would counter with displeasure,

"Oh, I *mean* to get to Heaven – but I haven't done it yet!"

For such compliments refined

All were terribly inclined

To upset her very literal pedantic turn of mind!

iii.

So he faltered in his wooing.

All the chasing and pursuing

Left his chivalry quite shaken and his stomach most
put out,

For he found that her resistance

To his flattering persistence

Soon unmanned him absolutely – gave him flatulence and
gout.

The result was most unhappy.
So despairing was the chappie
 That he turned aside from women and became a lone
 recluse,
While young Maisie (getting slicker)
Won the favour of a vicar
 And eloped with him to China at the very first excuse –

 Where, since luckily I find
 He is deaf and dumb and blind
There's an end to tribulation for her too pedantic mind!

* * * * *

Girls discovered in summer frocks and sunhats with ribbons. They are admiring the great mysteries of creative nature though mainly in the mode of a tick-list appropriate to a slightly short-sighted young person's nature-study group.

In the sylvan groves of grasses
Sleeps the leaf (or else may rot).
Periwinkle there (but sparse) is.
There's a clump of bergamot.
There's a root that someone classes
As a rose from garden plot.
Oh the spirit : see, it passes.
Universal – is it not?

There's a bug and there's a prickle.
There's a bit of someone's pickle
In a sandwich. There's a trickle
From a stream – so make a jot.

Oh the spirit universal.
Oh infinitude's rehearsal.
There's a seed in slow dispersal.
Note it down upon the spot.

Fiona :

Thus observing nature's splendour
Here we note and names allot.
There's a spoor we'd like to tender
As a proof – not sure of what.

Melanie :

There's a frog. Our strict agenda
Bids us name it like a shot.

Isobel : There's a bit of rusty fender.
 There's a plug and there's a cot.

All Three :

 Oh the spirit full of bounty
 Here –in every town and county.

Isobel : There's a tramp – been on a bender.

Melanie : There's a snake. (*About to pick it up*) No
 better not.

All Three : Nature's spirit's all-embracing
 Note it – every detail tracing,

Fiona : Full account we duly render.
 File and check each 't' and dot.

Chorus :

 Full account we duly render.
 In pursuit we gaily trot.

All :

In the sylvan groves of grasses
 Sleeps the petal (or may rot).
Periwinkle there (but sparse) is.
 There's a clump of bergamot.
There's a leaf that someone classes
 As a gift from time forgot.

Oh the spirit : see, it passes.

Universal – done a blot!

(Referring to an accidental ink spillage)

Universal – wide – eternal

Shown in mode that's more diurnal.

There's a note – return to sender.

Make a tick. I'm such a swot.

Fiona, Melanie and Isobel :

Triple-note each sight and reading.

We in this are well succeeding.

Melanie :

There's some witches old suspender.

Isobel :

Tick. The ink begins to clot.

Chorus :

There's some witch's old suspender.

Fiona :

Tick. We've slightly overshot.

(Exeunt all but Fiona, Melanie and Isobel)

Love walked in one sunny morning.
Love shed then a golden ray.
Hope and joy gained early dawning.
Fear and doubt were swept away.
Then came pain and more love-lorning.
Then came fog across the bay.
Then came grief and loss and scorning.
Weather – fine but seeming grey.

And, for me, I lost all caution,
Every sense of good proportion.
Love is sure the worst extortion,
Conquers all – will not gainsay.

ii.

Some remark that love's a blessing.
Brings you gains in rich array.
Lovers spread their joy, caressing
All in merry roundelay.
Yes, but when love brings strain and stressing
Do we sweetly sport and play?
No. We're then unprepossessing.
None we like – would all betray.

Thus, for me : for none now caring
I for me stayed self-despairing.
Cared for none – was quite past bearing.
Love : what selfish passion-play.

When we're loved we're bright and sunny -
Scorned, we render gall for honey.
Love : too soon it's tart and runny.
Love : let's cast it quick away.

But if now he'd come, canoodle,
Then I'd be his happy poodle.
Then I'd love the whole caboodle.
Love : what games we overplay.

MASQUE :

Chorus (possibly masked) :

The rites of fair Adonis sing.
It is the sunshine of the Spring.
Weave garlands in the scented hair
And loose the coif that covered there.
It is the time of joy and mirth
When rains make bloom again the earth.
It is the hyacinthine dew.
It is the heaven's breath of you.

Let climate of our times now mesh
Our world in blooms forever fresh.
Renew the earth – let slip the cue
For death - that cut keep overdue.

1st Singer (Soprano) :

When Zephyrus pursued the maid
 Called Chloris, he approaching blew
Sweet airs to cool his fusillade.
 She fled - tripped o'er the morning dew.
“Alas,” she cried – but in a glade
 Was saved - transformed in bliss anew
To Flora - goddess flower-arrayed
 Of Spring - her breath's the blossoms' cue.

1st and 2nd Soloists (Soprano and Alto) :

Adonis died. How great the pang
When from his blood new blossoms sprang.
But Flora lived – restored him too.
She breathes. The buds come shining through.

Soloists and Chorus :

And we ourselves would gladly die
To grace our king - we so reply -
And bless our Queen - a floral cue
Of love - our love grows unto you.

(softly)

Renew the world - revive its gloss
That gods may, effervescent, toss
To all the joys now flowing through
The earth – the source of blessed you.

The rites of fair Adonis sing.
It is the sunshine of the Spring.
Weave garlands in the scented hair
And let the vines entangle there.
It is the time of joy and mirth
When rains refresh the winter dearth.

It is the hyacinthine dew.

It is the heaven's breath of you.

Let climate of our times now mesh

With blooms our too corrupted flesh.

Renew the earth – let slip the cue

For death - that cut keep overdue.